

□ Dundee Advertiser, Tuesday, November 24th, 1874

A RUSSIAN BEAR OUT FOR A STROLL IN DUNDEE

□□ Street traffic in the neighbourhood of the Joint Stocks was kept in a pretty lively state for the space of about twenty minutes on Saturday night. Two bears – a white Polar and a brown Russian – have lately been on exhibition in that locality, and about seven o'clock on Saturday night the brown one, in the momentary absence of the owner, broke loose, with part of a chain dangling at the heels, set out for a stroll. No sooner did his presence become known in the street than a panic appeared to seize the people, who rushed helter-skelter in the direction of the Wellgate as fast as if a troop of dragoons had been pursuing them.

Into shop-doors and closes they ran, quaking with fear and terror. A large crowd took refuge in a coal-shed, to the astonishment of the dealer, who by the light of a few candles was quietly pursuing his calling. Into this shed the bear entered, and the scene that followed was, in the language of our informant, quite as good as a pantomime. The coals were stacked against the walls, and men and women, boys and girls scrambled up the heaps, presenting to the eye of the bear when they reached the rafters an amphitheatre of frightened faces gazing on him “down

among the coals.” Apparently concluding that it would be useless further to “bear” the coal market, the animal turned away, no doubt with feelings of contemptuous disgust, and once more reaching the street retraced his steps as if with the intention of returning leisurely to his den.

A thought seemed to strike him, however, that being out on the loose he might as well make a night of it, and proceeding up Idvies Street he reached Victoria Road, where the multitude of courses open to him was dazing. He could go on to the

Victoria

Bridge

, or inspect Councillor Brownlee’s new property, or risk breaking his neck by attempting to descend the ingenious flight of steps at the top of the Wellgate, or he could make a few “calls.” He resolved on doing the latter, and the first call he made was at a crockery shop, the proprietor of which by a most dextrous and rapid strategical flank movement leaped over the counter and ran to the street shouting for the police and the fire-brigade. Bruin, being thus left master of the field, broke a few dishes, and finding nothing to eat left the premises plainly in a savage mood, for, meeting a boy who had incautiously ventured too near the door, he made a snap at his head and bit rather severely some of the fingers. The boy scampered off howling, and the bear next looked in at the shop of a baker.

The baker began to make other preparations for a vigorous defence, but Master Bruin did not resent the violent reception. He lay quietly down on the floor, began to gnaw

at the missile flung at him, and in this condition was ultimately secured. The escapade caused much excitement and some merriment. It is singular that about the same time consternation was caused in another part of the town by the sight of an old man running wildly up and down several streets with nothing on to cover his nakedness save a shirt.