

ANN HILL RESEARCH

(Final interview

2.3.1987)

Interview with Mr & Mrs Moffat and Mrs A.Y. Johnston

I'd arranged to see Mr Moffat about the history of the business, but he thought his aunt would know more, and had invited her from Lockerbie for the evening, and most of the talk was with her. Mrs Johnston (nee Moffat), aged 82, taught - mainly at Lochmaben - and was one of the few who remember the Hill girls.

Mrs Moffat is the daughter of Mr Rogerson (Williamsfield), but I did not know that till the end, or I would have asked her about her grandfather, who was a prominent church elder. She gave a lovely supper.

I felt guilty about coming on the night of Scotland v Eire, but Mr Moffat isn't a football follower, and anyway it turned out to be a total disaster!

Their house is an example of local work, being built by Whites. Without having any building expertise, I'd say it reminded me strongly of R.K. Brown Houses in Dumfries.

They have a number of old photographs.

NB Information is from Mrs Johnston unless otherwise stated.

School

She knew Natalie Hill from going to school from Kirtlebridge - and Annie slightly. Natalie was fair, Annie darker. Also on the Lockerbie train were a boy Miller from Branteth (who still drives - George Moffat), a lad who had asthma. The Hills no doubt would cycle to the station. The train left (Kirkpatrick Fleming?) about 8.55, and didn't reach Lockerbie till well after 9.00, so the school times were altered to accomodate the railway timetable. For the first two years they had to change at Kirtlebridge and await the 'express' as they called it, which - unlike the 'local' had corridors.

A few other children cycled to Annan Academy - such as Lizzie Harkness (but see later), a great character, who will now be over 90 (lives with daughter in Sherwood Park, Lockerbie). Another contemporary was John Davidson of Hayfield, who was in the same class at Kirkpatrick Fleming, and who went to Lockerbie.

A lot of homework, especially Latin, was done in the train, for you got a row if your Latin was wrong. She later qualified to teach Latin, English and French, but seemed nonetheless to feel that Latin had been a bit of

a waste, that German or Italian, would have been better. And, of course, she got a job in primary teaching.

You had to go to Dumfries Academy if you wanted a bursary to Edinburgh University, so she made the transfer and - extraordinarily as it might seem to anyone who has not experienced Dumfries Academy, 'Yon bossy Rector' Mr Critchley insisted that she must re-sit the Highers she had already passed at Lockerbie. (I wonder if such restrictions affected Annie Hill and stopped her going to further education?). So she didn't let on she had Higher Science, and was able to drop it, but she did Latin, as her sister had done before, for the teacher remarked of her handwriting that, unlike her sister's, 'Yours doesn't go up to heaven'.

John Davidson presumably also came to Dumfries, for he went on to Glasgow University.

She went to Lockerbie a year early, (possibly because her parents were fed up with her knocking things over in the shop!) so her father had to pay for a season's ticket ~~for which was written '£5 per annum + fortnight at end of year'~~. But she sat the exam at Lockerbie and got the bursary, which paid your fare, the next year. Also at Lockerbie were the Martindales (Wee Woodhouse), her older sister, Barbara, and Clarence Davidson. This started us talking about the Davidsons. Harold and Syd (who went to ? Eagleswick) were both very clever, and Mabel was a teacher. She died in Carlisle.

Her first teacher was not Miss Crooks. It may have been Miss Graham. Whoever it was was stern, and used to send a different child - one of the older ones - to pay the papers each day. At the end of the week she would reward the messengers with a box of chocolates or sweeties.

I have a story which is a little garbled. I think there was a young teacher who used to come to their shop, and one day, expecting to meet her sweetheart gave a man a huge and passionate hug only to discover that it was the local policeman. Much embarrassed! This may have been Miss McNish.

Mr Christie drank occasionally, and was frequently out of the room. On such occasions she would sometimes while away the time by studying a glass wall case which explained how cotton was made. She didn't remember the story (see Mrs A) about him and the whins. She remembered a boy who lived at Cove Lodge dying of diphtheria, and that the ambulance used to come to take

which cost £5,
with a fortnight's 'bonus'
+ the end of the year.

Pull Anderson

away children with scarlet fever. (A horse drawn ambulance.)

When she went to Edinburgh she sometimes baby sat for Mr Mc Kerchar, who had a permanent post with the army and lived in Edinburgh (but not, she thought, Glencorse or Redford).

Mr Moffat was taught by Mrs Irving and Miss Douglas from Carlisle. Miss Douglas had been at Moniaive, where she taught his mother. Mrs Irving taught his father and himself - and also Mrs Moffat, who liked her. Miss Douglas frightened him. She used to come in a 3 carriage train which they called 'Spuggy's train', that being her nickname. The headmaster, Sydney Hope, had a son David in the class who cut the belt up one day. Sydney Hope went to Hoddum. He had a very clever daughter. I think Mrs Moffat had Mr Mitchell and also 'a great big man whose son was run over'. Mr Ferguson would be the last teacher to live in the schoolhouse.

Of course they got up to a lot of mischief on the train. There was one lucky occasion when a girl escaped relatively unhurt after putting her head right through the window. She'd left her bag in the train at the station and was ^{rushing} hurrying to get it back. ~~She remembered them going to the sewing teacher after that - she being the person who sorted things out.~~ (Ann Thomson, married Jocky Johnston the clogger).

At Christmas they always put on an operatta at Kirkpatrick Fleming and Lizzie Harkness was always the baddie. When she went to Lockerbie Mr Walker told the minister there that she was really talented.

When Mr Christie was away the class sometimes persuaded Charlie Mackie to sing. He had a repertoire of - I gather - comic, or perhaps vulgar songs which he'd picked up.

At Kirkpatrick Fleming she had no pupil-teachers, nor ever acted as such, but quite a few of her 6th year Dumfries Academy contemporaries were. She taught for 3 months in Lockerbie, then Lochmaben. Her sister taught Maths. She thought her sister was for a time at Dumfries Academy.

As a child her mother would not allow her to use the soup kitchen, because they lived right beside it. Occasionally, as a special treat, she'd get some of the soup.

I think she said she got the strap only once.

(before the train left.
They took the girl to the
ewing teacher, who was
the person at Lockerbie
academy who dealt
with mis-haps of all
kinds -

She mentioned a Miss Bonn who used to teach at Kirkpatrick Fleming and married a Lockerbie man, McKinnon, quarry master at Corncockle, who died recently, having taught in Lochmaben for a bit.

She also knew Miss Barclay, whom she met in Edinburgh, and liked. She shifted about a lot. Grace Jardine finished when she was in Edinburgh, and enjoyed cycling - she used to ask her to go for a run to Rigg (or Eastriggs ?)./

Church

We'd very little time to discuss the Church. George Moffat's father had - like others - fallen out with Cartwright. Mrs Moffat had gone hill walking with Mr Gregory, who was keen on that sort of thing. He was a bit particular, fussy. And Black was thunder and lightning. Mrs Moffat still sometimes goes to Church - especially children's services, but their business goes on during Sunday morning.

Sport and Entertainment

See school for operattas.

Billiards used to be played in the school infant room - George Moffat's father played. He himself played some carpet bowls. Mrs Johnston's daughter, who lives in Mauritius seems to be the only keen card player in the family. She visited the Lockerbie Club, and won.

Campbell Beattie and a few others used to take a minibus to the Carlisle United games.

Economic

To help me to follow the business I give a partial family tree:-



