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ANN HILL RESEARCH

Interview with Miss Ann Graham, West Bretton

30th December 1986

Accompanied by my daughter Sheila on a really dreadful wet day. ~~Miss Graham sees herself and her brother as the end of the line.~~ We spent about 3 or more hours there and were shown a large number of photographs featuring the family and the estate.

Miss Graham (born 1925) has already donated Mossknow material to the Society, and gave in Game Books, of much social interest, on this occasion. Her attitude to family history was refreshing, cheerful and at times quite caustic. She lives alone, but with 3 dogs, two of which were in the room with us, demonstrably affectionate. There was an interval during the visit so that the hens could be fed - and tea consumed. ~~She sees herself & her brother as the end of the Graham line. (NB to discussion of the 'beginning' of the line see Paper by R.C. Reid, Trans., 1959-60).~~ She has been researching the history of Eaglesfield for Crichton WRI, of which she is a committee member.

School Miss Graham didn't go to the local school. It was unthinkable - they would be bullied. The local children would simply not be able to comprehend people whose way of life was so different.

She did not think 'accent' would be a problem, since people could easily learn two languages. The Johnson-Ferguson girls, when young, spoke in a Scots accent in Scotland.

She thought Tom Leslie, as well as his father, may have been on the School Board.

Her great(?) - her doubt) grandmother had a dame school at the South Lodge - and also a Penny Bank.

Church In the churchyard is what they used to call the 'dog kennel', the aisle on the North wall where her ancestor, Rev William Graham's grave had been desecrated. She thinks that may have been because after the Revolution he did not turn presbyterian.

They were Episcopalian. She thinks that may go back to her grandfather (Gordon Graham) sending the boys to Rugby. They had a pew in the local church, downstairs, and they sometimes went. Mrs Fleming sat upstairs in her balcony. She remembered Mr Fyffe, a gentle little soul, who killed himself with lycil. He'd had a throat operation and couldn't face it again. He was a clever man, but not strong either physically or in face of criticism. The congregation had, subsequently, the reputation of having 'some right 'uns', who would put

the minister to the sword.

Sport and Entertainment

Much of this could come under 'Gentry'.

The Mossknow flower show was before her time. ~~Races~~ and so on. It was said to have stopped when the bell ringer fell in the ditch and her father thereupon decreed that 'enough is enough'. I felt that she felt that it had become something of a drunken spree.

Her grandfather kept steeple chasers with names like 'Home Rule'. His colours were blue and silver. She recalled it being said that they were never properly trained, but the same was said of their other horses. Some horses were kept at Mossknow. One was called 'Tot Ronald'. She reckoned they'd be Irish horses, but didn't know whether the name 'Home Rule' signified support or opposition.

Her father had a football team for the Scouts. She had heard of 'Mossknow Rovers' and thought that might be the team.

She had not joined the Kirkpatrick Fleming WRI, feeling they should have a free hand. Her mother had been much involved with it.

She recalled no billiard room at Mossknow. But they got up cricket teams from time to time.

She knew of coursing from Mossknow, but not - I think - in her day, when they had no greyhounds.

They also had their own tennis courts. The courts at Toppinghead, she thought, had been made for the benefit of the Mackie girls (a touch of caustic here).

Hunting was part of the social scene, but not from Mossknow. It was too dangerous to go near Cove Quarry, where stones could easily be sent flying down. They'd had hounds in her grandfather's time, and the girls hunted. But Cove Quarry ~~might move~~. Besides, there were 2 railways and 2 main roads in the way. She remarked in another context that catching the fox wasn't ~~Really~~ of any importance.

Scouting was a very strong interest of her fathers. At one time there were two troops, Springkell and Kirkpatrick. Fergus Graham and Brian Johnston-Ferguson had completely different attitudes towards Scouting. Fergus Graham was much more old fashioned, Baden-Powell's ideas, whereas Johnson Ferguson took many more risks and was more 'modern'.

made hunting difficult.

One of her exhibits was a printed programme, dated 29th August 1907 of a Dramatic Show put on by members of the household - with, for example, Fergus Graham and Elliot Lockhart taking part in a sketch.

They always had a gamekeeper. Hogg - the one who got the sack (1911) - is depicted in one photo. Later McDonald. Shooting was poor during the war.

In one of her photos was Dunbar, the station master. I think she mentioned him in a cricketing context.

A photo of the junior Red Cross - undated - has Sadie Thomson, Fiona Halliday, Mary Rae, Helen Miller and Lorna (?) Mills (?).

Economic

Again, since the interview was about Mossknow, it is artificial to abstract some items as 'Economic', while leaving others under 'Gentry'. An attempt, nevertheless, is made:-

She thought the Colonel (?) had been on the board of the Caledonian Railway Company.

When she was young there were rabbits everywhere.

She seemed to say that there were two sawmills on the estate at one time. After the Great War her father gave John Johnstone (shell shocked), £5 to set up his own business. There was another sawmill higher up - tho' not in her memory.

She mentioned incidentally that the Eaglesfield Smithy was at Kirtle. She thought the Greens made suits for the staff at Springhill and for her Uncle John Bell-Irving. l.c

There was a mystery - to her - about an earlier 'terrible crash' at Kirtle Bridge. She had read that a crash had happened, but had not been able to find details. She did remember the railway turntable at Kirtle Bridge.

Her mother had an ambulance group, who went to help at Quintingshill, but it was really no place for amateurs, who couldn't face the carnage, and most of the work was left to the professionals. /

carnage

The remains of the soup kitchen wall were long to be seen in the car park. It was riddled with rats. The farmers used to bring in produce.

She remembered the transition period when Notwen House stopped having permanent inmates - 'the funny old men' went away.

She had an old map - now in the burgh museum - which predated the Hollee road. 'Flemingshaw' is marked, and there were a lot of clachans around the farms.

Quintingshill - her uncle (Bell-Irving) went over, and her mother drove some to the infirmary.

Gentry

The story of the 18th century murder was that there was trouble over a girl with John Scott of Beltenmont. Two Scotts set on Fergus Graham with flails, so he drew his sword and killed one. He was never brought to court. The Kirkyard memorial has a Victorian plinth. She thinks there is also a Rosina Scott in Beltenmont stone nearby.

Fergus never had the estate. Reverend William Graham left it to William who was bankrupt. The family was Jacobite. The story was that William hid Kirkpatrick Sharpe of Hoddam (a Jacobite) in the Mossknowe pigsties.

There is an old archway, possibly part of the old house, with a 17th century marriage stone in the wall - but she thinks the stone had been moved from an earlier position. The stableyard stones are very old. The marriage stone is in a gateway into the garden - William Graham and Margaret Irving. Her father told her that the original house had been burnt down (probably before 1765, when the new one was planned), but she has never found any documentary evidence of this.

She had some interesting and not always flattering comments on the other families. Mrs Fleming of Woodhouse thought of herself as a great lady. The Johnston-Fergusons were a law unto themselves. Sir Jabez Edward - a Manchester Jew - was alleged to 'have bought' his title. He promised money for the title, got it, but never paid up - so the story goes. Someone found out about it, and made sure that everyone else in the locality knew too (which is no doubt why I've heard part of the story before). Sir Jabez Edward was the sort who always wanted to solve disputes by going to law. But Alex., the scholar, was ~~alright~~ all right.

The Graham coat of arms has the Irving holly leaves, scallop shells (Graham?) and bear's head and fetlock (Gordon - or vice versa). The crest shows a falcon catching a herring.

She had a very high regard for her ancestor, John Graham, whose memo book showed that he was usually generous to his brother's two bastard mulatto children (c 1790). He brought them to Dumfries to be educated, and set the boy up as a carpenter. He also left Mossknow, to let his son have the rents. On his disputes with his son, she remarked that they always had such: each son expected his father to give more than the father thought he could afford. John lived at Dumfries, with his daughter, Margaret.

Her impression of her forebears, before her father, was that they were very autocratic. The colonel had done much to lose the family fortune by buying his way up, ^{in the army} but also did something to regain it by developing it as an agricultural estate. Small crofts were united. There was a story of how he had been riding with two English companions near Williamsfield. They remarked, in typical English fashion, that it would make a marvellous sporting estate; but he said, no, he would develop it agriculturally.

(I had a feeling here that she was confusing two generations of William Graham, but I didn't want to argue and put her off telling the story her way.)

Her father, Fergus Graham, fought in the KOSB in the Boer War, was badly wounded, and nearly killed by the dreadful hospital treatment and being shunted here and there all over Africa till they got him to hospital. He never really recovered - broken ribs were mentioned as part of it - although he was also in the Great War till he was invalided out - spent all his time in barracks. He was a Chairman of the Liquor Board. Married near the end of the Great War, she a Bell-Irving - being a lot younger (19 years). He wrote rather discursive stories for Blackwoods Magazine, about village worthies and so on. Her mother as previously mentioned, ran a Nursing Association.

She recalled a cook, house maid, parlour maid, nanny, nanny's maid, two garden boys, an estate worker (an earlier one was Fraser, who seemed to have been a character - photo 1905). The gardener was Anderson, then Goldie - one of these young men who was 'always about 70', with a lad to help. There was also a curious, accident-prone person, MacKenzie, recalled mending the greenhouse and breaking more than he mended. He had, for reason unknown, a fire bucket and

a stick.

Fergus had three sisters - Violet, Alice and Theresa. When showing us photos she didn't want to talk about Violet. Good looking, 'a tragedy', never able to work. Theresa was a strong, lively character.

The Graham's don't seem to have been close friends with any of the parish gentry. The people they knew best were the two Miss Graham's. Mrs Fleming thought herself grand (Mr Fleming was on the County Council). Elsie Dorothy Johnston-Ferguson was 'always right'. Other comments recorded above.

^{there}
At Mossknowe are carvings on the cheese room. The slaughter house has the rung on the floor. There was also a coach house.

The Sandbed cottages at Calvertsholm were bought (in the days of plural voting) so that her father could vote in Dumfriesshire. She imagined he may have been conservative - but not really political.

Until 1933 they had no electricity - just carbide gas - and lucky to have no accidents. Water came from a well in the yard. There was a hand-worked water pump in the pumphouse.

She remembered dark and unattractive red wall-paper in the dining room.

The house was built in 1767, by William Graham (Jamaica) who was amazed at the prices in Britain.

Her father, who was part of a large family, had a lot of books. The Grahams were good at sketching (and decidedly not good musically), but the Bell-Irvings a good bit better, especially Aunt Molly who was potentially very good. Fergus did play the violin till the Boer War. He was awarded the O.B.E. for estate management. The story was that he was considered for a knighthood, but there was a plumber on the committee who said the estate plumbing was wrong.

He died in 1953.

His father (John) Gordon Graham had left little money and Fergus had to sell a lot of the farms so that he could bring up his family - the farms being sold at very low prices. His sisters thought he had lots of money. Before succeeding he had lost two brothers, John and Malcolm, identical twins. John died at Rugby. He had an arm accident playing rugby, I think, which developed into TB, and then amputation, and finally

decidedly

artist

death. Malcolm was a mining engineer in the West Indies and was drowned there. His body was never found. Some suggested suicide, which they thought totally without foundation. But the twins did live in their own world.

Her grandfather used to talk about a 'proper regiment', meaning a line regiment. So far as she knew none of them went to university - ~~but it~~ wasn't a Graham sort of thing. Her grandfather, as part of his army career, was trained at Chatham as a draughtsman. He succeeded to the estate because his older brother, William Mair, was mentally retarded. There unspeakable sister, Rosa, caused much ill feeling by bringing a court case about it, dragging poor William Mair into court - although she thought he may not have been as retarded as was thought. His photo (and her description) suggested a gentle soul.

Wysebie had come into their possession. It was rented to Arnott for a time. I may have this wrong but I think it was kept for the 'girls' for a time, for income, then to their cousin, Ameliora Clemintina Smith (not one of her favourites), of Gretna Hall.

Charlie, John's younger brother, went to Australia, married Sarah White (against family wishes). She - Ann Graham - recently went to Australia and met a lot of her cousins. Uncle Claude comes into the story somehow.

A lot of photographs were shown. A famous feature was a massive rhododendron bush 'the roridandum' - after the way the gardener spoke. People used to go along the back road to see it. It looked a pink in the photographs. Another was of Scottish pottery for an exhibition organised by her mother and shown in Gracefield following the Festival of Britain, 1951.

Among the photographs were :-

- The stables, and the stickhouse - which probably had stones from the earlier house.
- Finley, the coachman, - on several.
- The 1663 marriage stone 'solideo honor et gloria'.
- Also several of the Peel Hole Bridge, or(?) the 'Penny Bridge', where there is a so-called ford. The keeper's bridge was replaced by a bailey bridge as an army exercise after World War 2.
- Numerous photographs of the family from the Colonel onwards.

Her mother was one of the early car drivers.

An old - now lost - cart road featured on the photographs.

At one time the house was dismal, with unattractive paintings and dreary decor. These were removed and much more interesting paintings brought in by Atkinsone (two of them at least are in West Bretton). One was of a horse fair at Brough.

l.c.

O.C.

Her mother tried to teach them politics by taking them to the hen run where she erected a blue flag for Conservatives, Yellow for Liberals, and red for Labour. When the last was put up they were all to 'boo'. The gardener of the time - McCracken - was labour. She was brought up on tales about a very wicked man 'Loey George'. She had a rather amusing story about how they once went to Cricceth, where she saw a silver haired man whom she assumed to be Loey George himself. See also 'Politics'. Mrs Leslie, the washer woman, very small, had a terrible temper and gave forth to terrible language. She and Ed Carruthers lived together for a long time (nature of association unspecified). She mentioned 'Old Tom' Leslie in East Lodge, the fiddlemaker and on School Board - (meaning John Leslie).

John Gordon Graham went to Sandhurst and to India. When he came back he went to Wysebie, the Colonel still being alive. Wysebie was originally bought by Hugh Mair, an Edinburgh Merchant.

The Moseknow home farm was Cranberry.

Gordon Graham was a bad speller - always 'pritty' instead of 'pretty'.

She knew a lot about Eaglesfield Smith - minor ballad writer, owner of Langshaw and Allerbeck, founder of Eaglesfield. She mentioned a lot of books in Eaglesfield Hall. The original Miss Eaglesfield (from Queens College, Oxford??) descended from the founder married Smith, who had an estate at E & M. He(?) / Lem inherited Blacket, or Blackwood House.

There is a secret passage at Cove? She had always understood it to be Bruce's Cave. - after all Bruce's standard bearer was there. Cove is falling down because it is built on old Dunskelly House. She had a story about Ritchie, in his hunt for 'authentic' period pieces. They found an old chest with 'K C' on it. 'Look! K.C. - "King Charles"!'

was

In her time Langshaw owned by Bob Sloan, Allerbeck by Tinning.

Bowing? By her time the custom of bowing to the gentry had certainly died out.

Miscellaneous About 25 years ago 'Annandale Observer' had a series, not very good, on Eaglesfield and elsewhere.

The family they knew best were the two Misses Graham, Jenny a cook, looked after her mother till she was over 90. Bess was for a long time treasurer and secretary of the WRI. She did the bookwork for Henry Graham, the elder.

Politics. There were a lot of Liberals in the district, like Tom Beattie. She herself had little political knowledge, but she mentioned, as one of her own involvements in local affairs, that she was Chairman of the Local Unionists. Her brother, James and James Rae really got them going.

Famous people. She understood that one of the Napier's lived at Calvertsholm, and then went to South Lodge - a charming place. It may have been Admiral Napier.

She remarked Frank Miller's account of Fair Helen doesn't make sense, since Fair Helen was allegedly 15th Century, yet he calls the 'hero', Andrew Fleming 'probably of Mossknow'.

PEOPLE and PLACES

Ann Graham
Johnson-Fergusons
Tom Leslie
Rev Wm Graham
Mrs Fleming
Rev Fyffe
J G Graham
Fergus Graham
Mackie -Molly & Annie
Elliot Lockhart
Hogg (gamekeeper)
Sadie Thomson
Fiona? Halliday
Mary Rae
Helen Miller
Lorna Mills ?
Colonel Graham
John Johnstone (sawmill)
Green (Eaglesfield)
John Bell-Irving
Mrs Graham
John Scott (c1730)
Fergus Graham (1730)
William Graham (c1700)
Kirkpatrick Sharpe (c1700)
John Graham (c1790)
William Graham (c1800)
Margaret Graham
Fraser
William Anderson
Goldie (gardener)
McKenzie
Violet Graham
Alice Graham
Theresa Graham
Bessy Graham
Jenny Graham
Mr Fleming
William Graham (1767)
Bell-Irvings
Jo Graham
Malcolm Graham
Rosa Graham
William Mair
ArnottAmeliora C Smith
Ameliora C Smith
Charlie Graham
Sarah White
Claude Graham
Finley (coachman)
Mrs Leslie
Edward Carruthers

J B Leslie
Eaglesfield Smith
Miss Eaglesfield
Bob Sloan
Tinning
Henry Graham
Tom Beattie
James Rae
James Graham
Napier
Andrew Fleming
Fair Helen
Mossknow = passim
Cove
Toppinghead
Kirtlebridge
Springkell
Notwen
Quintingshill
Williamsfield
Sandbed cottages
Calvertsholm
Wysbie
Cranberry
Langshaw
Allerbeck
Dunskelly