

ANN HILL BEQUEST

Interview with Campbell Beattie

30th November, 1986

Campbell Beattie is one of those that everyone says I should meet - intensely interested in local history, a native of the parish, and son of the local councillor. He was in Grace Carson's class at school - so aged perhaps 51. I understand he has a Glasgow University degree possibly B.Sc. Agric. His house (Wyseby Mains) is also noteworthy for its fine garden, largely created by his wife (Photographs show the 'before', a veritable wilderness). They got advice from landscape gardeners in Ambleside. The wall is decorated with framed plans of the old farm-building complex.

Entertainment Very little discussed. He mentioned Thomson, the second last station master, as being a great organiser, especially of the badminton club in Victoria Hall.

Mrs. Beattie was for a time secretary of the W.R.I. and gave me some old Minute books which she had in her possession, principally 1927-1933.

Major Brian Johnson-Ferguson was the man he recalled as dealing with Scouts.

See also Lamont, Lamb.

School

When he was at school in Kirkpatrick Fleming the master was Mr. Doull, very severe, keen on A.R.P. and on the Hall Committee. Still living in Ayr, visited Campbell Beattie quite recently (I think). There were then 3 teachers. He also mentioned Mrs. Irving, who'd come out of retirement, a born teacher. I think, but am not certain, that she was connected with the Irving family who were in turn related to Campbell Beattie's mother. See G.G. Irving, below.

Before the war there was a school outing, but this was not possible in wartime, so they had sports in a local field, at Newton.

James Rae went to Cummertrees.

Church

Pincod Church had been given a 99 year lease, and reverted to Springkell when it closed down. Campbell Beattie seemed to think it a pity that it reverted.

His family (living at Wicketthorn) went to the parish

MINISTERS

HONDURAS

church. Eric Duncan was the Minister. He left around 1946 and went, he thought, perhaps to Geneva, perhaps to the World Council of Churches. He thought he had also been at some point, perhaps when he retired, in Aberdeen.

Next came McKenzie, from Port Glasgow. He had vivid memories of the induction soiree, which was on the night of the great snowstorm (March 1947). When he left he went to Aberdeenshire. Campbell Beattie liked McKenzie, who got on very well with his father. He did not give the same academic impression as Duncan, spoke in a Glasgow accent, and had worked on the ship yards. McKenzie was 'harmless'.

Cartwright

A later Minister was not - the one who was there when Mr. Beattie died in 1959. He had, without consulting the Kirk session removed the choir rails in front of the pulpit (these used to separate the choir from the congregation). There was a huge row about this. Campbell Beattie's father was so incensed by the Minister that he refused to be buried by him - Campbell Beattie got a family friend who was a Minister - although Campbell Beattie himself thought that the removal of the rails was an improvement.

Black, likewise, had been hard to get on with.

Of Mr. Walker he had heard an old farmer say, 'He was a guid plooman wasted' because he looked after the Glebe so well. He has a photo which, he thinks, probably shows Walker at a local/general election. Also 'guid plooman ...' because he used to cut peats.

Duncan was a very popular Minister (which is not to say McKenzie was not).

School (2)

Mrs. Irving was a natural, dedicated teacher. Married to Graham Irving's brother. The other teacher married the Manager of the British Honduras camp - a man, he thought, of Spanish extraction - called (he thought) Phillips.

Economics

Much of the interview could come under that heading.

Apparently there is still (or again) a dispute about the Braes/Springkell boundaries. The river eats into the Braes bank.

Now most of the farms, but not all, dairy. In his grandfather's day it was more stock rearing. Dairying was stimulated by the railways, which opened up

RAILWAY
QUARRY
HONDURAS, ITAL
GERMAN, UKR

Newcastle and the like to Kirkpatrick Fleming farmers. Quite a few have given up dairying.

He wasn't sure when the railway closed. The goods service went on after the passenger closed. There would be sidings to the quarries. Among buildings built by Cove stone were the Dean Bridge and the Caley Hotel, Edinburgh. He'd been told that, although the Statue of Liberty is usually said to be Corsehill stone, in fact there is a lot of Cove stone in the base. It is a distinctive, very hard sandstone - so hard that the pincer marks in the blocks still show, instead of being worn away. A fairly dark red sandstone.

There was also a quarry at Annanlea, and at Geddes Hole. There was a little bit of a quarry at Wicketthorn. It had flooded while it was working and - according to folk lore - the tools are supposed still to be down there.

There was a quarry at Springkell.

There were a number of rights of way associated with the quarries - including one through his own (and, for Cove Quarry workmen).

The British Honduras camp has already been mentioned. There was also an Italian P.O.W. camp. He thought - but not sure - that the Honduras camp later was used by German and then Ukrainian P.O.W's.

The sawmill at Mossknow existed when he was a boy, but was little used. Johnstone descendants are still there. They used occasionally to get barrows or the like thence. They had an old mantlepiece, made of elm, which they got at the sawmill.

He could not recollect Beltenmont Mill working. It's ancestors had lived at Beltenmont. Jim Johnstone of Raeburnhead told him people used to come down, taking corn to the mill.

Farms and
Farmers

Wyseby Mains - 1789 stone with H M (Hugh Mair) above original door - but house rebuilt in 1901, so only part of early building left - relatively low - in what he calls the 'Cumberland style'. It is an exceptionally well laid out farm, split exactly in two by the road, with a big field on either side. He bought Wyseby Mains about 21 years ago. A small part (which he showed me) is beyond the dual carriageway.

SPRINGS KIBBU

WYSEBY MAINS

Springkell. He has a friend with the sale catalogue for he thinks - 1889. The story is that Heron Maxwells were financially embarrassed, and sold the estate under reversion if they could raise money to re-purchase. The Johnson-Ferguson's built new houses in every farm, to make it impossible for the Heron-Maxwell's to buy back - and they have neglected it ever since, so that it must be one of the most neglected estates in Scotland. The farms are said to be badly drained.

Around 1940 his father took one/two grass parks, and Campbell Beattie went to the leasing. The whole Johnson-Ferguson family came out, making a really big occasion of it, and walked round the fields. Each one was set in situ. The whole thing took a full day. Lady Johnson-Ferguson was all dressed up. He remembers her going on about the trees.

Raeburnhead - was owned by Irving of Cove c 1722 - see stone on door(?). Jim Johnstone of Raeburnhead was friendly with his father. Raeburnhead is very much the 'vintage' farm lay out. A new house was being built there when the sale book was written.

Wyseby Mains. Trees cut down in the wood (oak, ash, beech) are about 180 years old - i.e. the same age as the old house. He loves the hedge, although some say he should cut it down. He cuts out the elder and ash 'weeds' so that the beech re-grows. The hedge probably planted by the Mairs. Whitehill is supposed to have the earlier titles. There is a plaque in the Kirk to Ann Mackie, daughter of Hugh of Wyseby. Ownership passed, by marriage, to the Grahams, and then - again through marriage - to two Miss Smiths. He thinks there were at one point two sons of the Grahams, one went to Australia (the eldest), and the estate went to the younger son. An Australian Graham descendant turned up recently with a camera. Another was a Barton, descended from Hugh Mair Barton, who called. He understood that (they)? were buried in Wyseby Old Town, at the bottom of the road.

Wyseby Old Town. We visited it, or the remains. He thinks that the Roman road and a more modern road ran through it. When there was a very dry Summer, the old road became very clear. The whole area has a landscaped appearance, as if the higher bit has been made up. He understood that a trench had been dug by archaeologists at one time, but when, or with what result, he did not know. He bought Wyseby Old Town about 5 years ago. The farm use would go into disuse

rather earlier. The man who gave the information on the archaeologist was a Mr. Henderson, a fencer.

Sarkshields. Donaldsons had been in Sarkshields. Jimmy Donaldson went to Bedford and died quite recently. Gibson, at Greengatehouse, Waterbeck's mother was a Donaldson. Robert Wilson, councillor for Eaglesfield (now in Gretna) was also a Donaldson.

Wicketthorn & Fauldingcleugh. Lockharts were, and are, at Fauldingcleugh, and now also Wicketthorn. A number of the family were killed by T.B. (J.F. called Tom Beattie 'Wicketthorn')

Mackie - John Mackie and Mr. Beattie used to take the Springkell grass parks. The Mackie grandfather came as a dairyman (he owned the cows, but not the dairy - like the old share-croppers). There were a number of branches - including Dalfibble. Hugh Mackie saw the potential of the Gretna blacksmith's shop as a tourist attraction. He used to buy trinkets to sell and said he only made 1% off them - he bought them for 1d and sold them for 2d!

Lamont - His father, and also his son Dave, worked for Mr. Beattie. John Lamont was on the Council. The Lamonts didn't give the impression of being very intelligent, but somehow were able to make up for it.

Another - not the same family - was Joe Lamont, a worthy of whom many stories are told. He went to Canada and came back six months later with a Canadian accent. He used to play a 1 string fiddle at Toppinghead, which was a place where people foregathered. One tune he called 'The Reverend Rides to Carlisle'. He remembered his Aunt (?) asking him, as he played - 'Whaur's the Minister now, Joe' - 'Just passing Todholes'. (Todhills?)

Another story was how he was given (in Canada?) a wild horse to tame, and, he claimed, he kept riding it continuously for a fortnight. He'd have starved if people hadn't kept throwing pieces of food'.

Beatties. Campbell Beattie's father was at Torduff until he and the other tenants were evicted in order that a munitions works could be erected (?WW1) The land had been sold by the Earl of Mansfield. They were given only 21 days' notice, and he and about half a dozen tenants wrote to the M.P. seeking compensation. His Aunt told Campbell Beattie that they did get some compensation. His father moved to Wicketthorn, and he was brought up there.

He thinks that the reason for 'Wicketthorn' seeming to be so large in the Valuation Rolls is that the feus of a number of houses in the village belonged to Wicketthorn, so they were described as in 'Wicketthorn'.

Mr. Beattie had been brought up in a very strong Liberal tradition - like his fellow evicted Torduff tenant, Rogerson, who settled in Amisfield, another of whom many stories are told. Mr. Beattie told Campbell that his father was only once drunk that he knew of, - he'd gone to the Annan market on Friday, where it was the custom among many of the farmers to drink whisky and bring a bottle home. A number of them habitually came home the worse of it, but not usually Mr. Beattie (and Mrs. Beattie, was strongly anti-drink). Anyway, the occasion he got drunk was the 1906 landslide election.

His father was a very active councillor, in a great many committees - Hall, Kirk Session - but he didn't like dancing, so Campbell had to go to the hall dances as his father's representative. That's how he got to know Jim Johnstone.

Johnson-Ferguson. Brian Johnson-Ferguson was on the Council before the War, defeated by Mr. Beattie in 1945 (I think Mr. Beattie may have stood before without canvassing - this time he canvassed all over). Campbell Beattie was at the school on polling day and Brian Johnson-Ferguson gave him a lift, 80 m.p.h. in a Fraser-Nash, open topped, to Annan - quite an experience. Brian Johnson-Ferguson never stood again, nor anyone else.

Graham - He rarely came across Fergus Graham. Jim died air crash, Galloway Hills - said to have been advised against flying in the weather.

Miscellaneous

Vivid recollections of the '47 blizzard, 24 hrs. snowed, drifting over the road, cleared manually - and hairy journey by side roads to Lockerbie Academy, only to be turned back. His sister was blocked for 3 days at Beattock summit.

He speculated on reasons for so many towers and small estates in the area. Suggests (2) Kirkpatrick House. (1) Nouthill, (3) Woodhouse, Robgill, Bonshaw, and possibly Cove as series of Peels, as if Kirtle was main highway.

The Hamper. Another name for Victoria Terrace. One time, 26 houses - 2 rooms each, front and back, up and down. Later combined into a small number of residences. For the quarrymen.

Also - recently knocked down - were the 'Jolly Buildings' - or Nelson's Buildings, for the quarries too, but better houses, presumably for the senior employees. The manager, Mr. Lamb, built the 'Oaks' (I have a note I can't understand here - 'Mrs. Beattie once had, no expense (?)' Lamb, he understood, had also built the Victoria Hall and the bowling green. ~~(The Hall would, in fact, be built through a Committee, as no doubt the newspapers of the period will show).~~ The Quarry was said to have gone bankrupt twice - first there was Cove Quarry, then New Cove Quarry. It's heyday would be when the railways were built. There were remains of offices and a signal box, which he recalls, but the Quarry closed before his time.

Mrs. Davidson (Hillhead) had a Beattie Aunt, who went to Rhodesia. Aunt Maggie (presumably this Aunt?) was very musical.

Station Masters. Last was Johnston, Thomson before. They, like Ministers, Teachers, were expected to be active in community life.

I have a note of 'Mrs. ? Sproat' daughter in law Mrs. Johnstone, Sawmill. I can't recall the context, but he had just been mentioning Broatch as a common family name in the area.

His father was given some credit for getting sewage (and lighting?) for the houses - but these were really just inevitable developments. He was strongly opposed to prefabs, which is why none were built in Kirkpatrick Fleming - and he wanted the new houses to be built along the roadside instead of as a housing scheme, but lost that one.

In the holm there is a fairly massive well.

Nouthill is said to be so called because it was the gathering point of the cattle before being driven over the Solway to the English market.

Kirtlebridge was said to be, originally, a coaching inn.

Campbell Beattie Index.

People

Campbell Beattie passim
Thomson (station)
Mrs. C. Beattie
Major Brian Johnson-Ferguson
W. Doull
Mrs. A.O. Irving
Eric Duncan
A.H. McKenzie
Mr. Cartwright
Tom Beattie
Mr. Black
Mr. Walker
Mr. Phillips
Mr. Johnstone (sawmill)
Jim Johnstone
Hugh Mair
Johnson-Fergusons
Heron-Maxwells
Irving of Cove
Ann Mair
Misses Smith
Barton
Hugh Mair Barton
Mr. Henderson
Jimmy Donaldson
- Gibson
Robert Wilson
Lockharts
John Mackie
Hugh Mackie
Lamonts
Joe Lamont
Rogerson
Fergus Graham
Sheena Beattie
Jim Graham
T.C. Lamb
Mrs. Beattie
Mrs. Davidson (Hillhead)
Johnston (station)
Mrs. ? Sproat

Places

Newton
Pincod
Wicketthorn
Braes
Springkell
Cove
Annanlea
Mossknow
Beltenmont Mill
Wyseby Mains passim
Raeburnhead
Whitehill
Wyseby Old Town
Sarkshields
Greengatehouse
Fauldingcleugh
Dalfibble
Toppinghead
Todholes (?Todhills)
Torduff
Nouthill
Woodhouse
Robgill
Bonshaw
Hamper
Jolly Buildings
Kirtlebridge