

ANN HILL RESEARCH

Interview with Mrs Nan Anderson (nee Irving)
Irvington

17th February 1987

Mrs Anderson's husband was a cousin of Mrs Wield's. she lives in an attractive cottage on the road down from Irvington - in the house that used to belong to Sam Wallace, the tailoring family. The house went from Martindale to Sam Wallace.

The interview in fact took place over two days - on the first Mr Will Turnbull was there, visiting, and on the second her next door neighbour, Mrs Carlyle.

It was emphasised that nothing would be printed until 'cleared' by Mrs Anderson.

Her father, Mr Irving farmed Nouthill until World War 1 but had to give it up when his parents both died (he was 19) and the rest of the family had to get a share of their parents' estate - there were 7 children. George Steele, farm worker, died 17.8.1982.

School

u.c. She pointed out the house where the old Irvington school was - just a cottage. her son, who lives at Annan, said that the last teacher must be buried at Kirkpatrick Fleming.

She herself went to Kirkpatrick Fleming school where the heads were Christie and Rae. Christie had an odd sense of humour. Instead of PE he would march the pupils out the Chapelknowe road, and on a given signal the girls were to push the boys into the whins. The boys would chase the girls - so they all got exercise! She liked Rae better. Her other teachers were Misses Crooke, Brown, Anderson and Douglas.

Mr Christie had, she thought, been in the Boer War. The classes were big, the classroom full. Mr Turnbull said he was taught by Miss Young, Miss Davidson and Mr Hogg. One married Scott, of Lockerbie milk business. There was a partition between Mr Christie and Miss Anderson.

The school was lit by hanging lamps, heated from a cellar where, Mr Turnbull said, he sometimes used to help fill it with coke. The heating system seemed very old then. She lunched at the soup kitchen, run by Will Turnbull's granny, where you got broth or lentil soup (her sister told her it was tattie soup till Friday, when it was broth), made in a big boiler, which you ate at big long tables, or took standing up. The soup kitchen floor was made of cinders or something like that. You could take your soup outside on a nice day.

They used to learn tables by heart, used slates, had to learn the 10 Commandments and poems. It was strict. Miss Anderson was a bit stiff in manner, Miss Brown, nice, married a Mackie but probably too old to have a family.

She remembered Mr Rae coming by motor bike from Canonbie to see the school when he was first appointed.

Church

Mr Walker christened Will Turnbull and was the minister when she joined the church, aged about 17. She went to Sunday School but did not take part in cantatas. She also showed me a photo, which she said I could borrow, of the Session whom she named - left to right, back to front:-

Willie Rogerson - Holt (Blackcleugh) - John Lamont (back road) - John Beattie (Blackyett) - James Rae (school) - Jimmy Elliot (with moustache) - Mr Anderson (gardener at Mossknow).

Mr Hall - John Davidson (coal) - Mr Walker - Mr Fleming - Abe Mitchell.

No date. Hall had a moustache, Beattie a wing collar.

Mr Holt's grand-daughter, Marjorie Holt, lives across from the school, in Burnholm. Marjorie Holt's husband drove for Floss, and then Express Dairies. He was Bill Rogerson. Willie Rogerson's son is in Williamsfield still.

Their own elder was Tom Beattie for a while, now Jimmy Collinge. John Turnbull between (brother Will still beadle).

Her verdict on W.R -
Willie Rogerson's verdict - 'a good living man'.

She went to Mr Fyffe's Bible Class, and liked him - he knew all the family by first name, and would walk round to visit the parish. Mr Fyffe christened her son David (like many others she dates ministers by whom they christened). Mr Duncan christened her son Robert. She liked Mr McKenzie - very plain. She'd a story about her father going to visit uncle Andra, who was Andy Burnett's dairyman, and meeting Mr McKenzie. When her father was going to cycle home. McKenzie said he'd come with them - despite a warning about the language he was likely to hear from the lorrymen.

No comment on Mr Cartwright except that he did visit. Her cousin, a cabinet maker in Drkney, packed Mr Cartwright's furniture for him.

The Woodhouse loft in Church faced the minister, and was occupied by Fleming family, who were kind of gentry. The side loft to the left as you went in was Mossknow's. Anyone could use the other one - like Miss Steel. On either side were outside stairs to the lofts.

Sport and
Entertainment

She didn't get out much because she was in service and was frightened to ask off too often, but you always got a week's holiday before the term days (28th November, 28th May), which were celebrated with the term dances. There would be Jock Notman on the fiddle, someone with an accordion, and the more Jock drank, the harder he fiddled. She can't remember who played the piano.

Quoiting - at Peel Hole.

Tennis - played by the better off.

Economic

The house once belonged to Sam Wallace. Tom and Nat Wallace were tailors. Tom had a wee house at Fairy Row, had 2 sons, went to a holding. Nat Wallace's house was at Wicketthorn. Mrs Anderson knew Nat's son, Irving, well. He was killed, she thought, in Italy, being in a tank corps., and was blown up.

Her father, Kit Irving, was in the horse artillery in World War 1. He'd gone to work in iron furnaces near Edinburgh, then called up, then returned to Dumfriesshire to work on the railway. Her uncle John was killed in World War 1, uncle Andrew wounded at - perhaps - the Somme. Her husband worked on the roads. In his time the parish team included Willie John White (Moorend), Willie Glendinning (Hollie), Jock Paterson, Dod Anderson and Jim Wyllie (Irvington). (Jim Wyllie lived in the old schoolhouse, Irvington. He is still alive but in CRI). Jim and Dod started after World War 2 and worked 32 years with the Council till Dod had to give up roadwork with bad health and got an easier job working in Gretna for 4 years doing office work connected with the dual carriageway. Willie John White was a 'grand' man, who lived at Moorend (used to be 2 Council houses, now one). She also knew of Davie Davidson, the former roadman at the other end of the parish - that was much earlier.

The railway gang her father was in was always referred to as 'Kit, Chapman, Park and Hind' (whose daughter, Annie, lives in Annan) - Kit being her father. Chapman lodged with Park. At this time her father lived in

Hollie. The roadmen and railway men used to cycle to their place of work.

At Hollie also lived Davie Burnie, the cobbler, who was getting hunched when she knew him. He used to grow prize vegetables, including cabbage which he used to bury and bring out at Christmas. He called it, 'the white goose', since the burial had given it a white colour.

Next to him was another store of sorts, occupied by David Johnstone, a draper, who used to take things all around. Mrs Stevenson had another grocer's shop. A much bigger business was Tom Irving, drapers. All the locals used to get clothes twice yearly, at the end of term.

The hiring fair was by her day very much in decline. She was never hired. It was mostly men who were hired at Annan Fair.

In summer - from about Easter on - they went barefooted, getting nicely warmed in the stour at the side of the road. The road was never tarred. The stones were knapped, put on with soil, rolled and watered. The previous occupant of her present cottage, 'old Willie Murra' used to knap the stones. (It was not Willie Murray, but his son, who lived in her present house).

Before that, she thought, was a Martindale in the cottage, (after him Wallace), and before him probably Thomson who at one time lived in the Quarry House. This took us on to talking about Cove Quarry Cottage, whose last occupant, she thought, was Porteous.

T C M Irving is not to be confused with the butcher, who started in the Hamper, then Newton Cottage, where Post Office is now. T C M Irving had just one daughter, Ella May, who married Willie McIntosh. Willie McIntosh went to Annan, perhaps and then to Carlisle. His youngest daughter, Wilma, was born at Stanwix in Carlisle and lives in Gretna. A boy died at birth.

Davie Burnie made and sold shoes. She thought Jock Johnstone's business was much, much bigger - probably the biggest of all the local cloggers. He and Doodley used to cut down 'clog wood' - soft wood - in the Fairyraw wood. They took it to their cabin, cut it into rough sizes, and stacked it up. She described the machine they had for cutting. The clogs were just

- women's clasped, mens' laced. Friday was the cloggers busy day, for the farmers used to buy or mend their clogs then. I think they would hand them in on the way to Annan market, collect them on the way back. Mrs Anderson used to watch one - Doodley, I think - at work. The wood is now down, but stretched from the corner cottage in the village to Beltenmont. She surmised that Moffat might sell more new shoes but Jock Johnstone made more clogs. Doodley's cabin was made from sleepers.

Another parish feature was the hearse which belonged to the parish and was lodged, appropriately, in the 'hearse house' by John Davidson the coal merchant up the back road across from Grahamsfield at Jolly Buildings. It was coloured black, all closed in, and John Davidson had a black horse to drive it. Sometimes Henry Graham did the funerals and he too had a black horse. Mrs Watson of Jolly Buildings used to look after the hearse. Then they got a new one, still black but with glass at the sides, much nicer looking.

She thought the parish never had a fire engine.

She talked about the development of the business at Flish. Bill Halliday started by taking over Sanderson's shop. He took a cart to Chapelknowe and farms, a whole day to a round, selling groceries and collecting eggs and butter. Milly Halliday (now White) lives just down the road - and they've bought Shawrigg, which they let as a holiday home.

The other shop was Curries - mother and 3 daughters, a wee shop, who baked their own really good bread. She (Mrs Anderson) loved the smell of yeast.

There were no thatched cottages when she was young.

Davie Burnie used to grow for the Mossknow garden fete, which she remembered going on long after she left Mouthill.

Mrs Graham of Mossknow did a lot for the Red Cross and also collected for Barnardos. People used to gather spagnum moss for dressings.

The sawmill was at Grahamshill as you go to Redhall. All the folk used to get their carts mended there, and went to Jim Graham, the blacksmith, for metal work. It was first auld Willie Graham, then his son Jim.

The British Hondurans were generally pleasant to speak to. At that time she had her son, Robert, in the pram

and she used to say that people peered in the pram to see what colour he was!

She remembered Fraser from the mill with his marble figures and big hat. When she served in Kirkpatrick House she fell down a stair, hurt her foot, and had to go to hospital. Naturally she was limping afterwards. She met Mr Fraser: 'Come here my girl and I'll give you a stick' - which was a walking stick with a sheep's horn. But, he told her, if she really wanted to get better she should put a cow pat in a bag, take it home and put her foot in it.

A Mrs Earl from Ecclefechan used to come round with a pack of clothes, like a big tablecloth over her back - and 'with a tongue that would clip clouts'.

There used to be about 8 houses, small cottages, at Grahamshill. Now some have been demolished. They belonged to Mossknow. Anderson the gardener's son, Willie, who married Mary Stevenson, lived there - in 'Grahamshill Square'. They used to be pretty poor houses. The Andersons were quiet living people. She mentioned other Grahamshill families - Gordon, Duff and Goldie.

Her granny, Mrs Murray, lived at North Angle, on Broats. (Mrs Murray lived afterwards at Mrs Carlyle's present house, then 'McDusky's weigh house' - but this was probably my mis-hearing of 'wee house', at Moorend, next to Milly White's Aunt Jane Gourlay. Finally Kirtle(ton)). They kept hens, a cow - and her granny's uncle, George Coltart, stayed there too. They got peats by cart from Floss Moss. The road through Broats has now been closed, which is a pity, for it saved a good distance of cycling to Annan. It was called North Angle road. North Angle was a clay bigging - single storey - just 'a wee pendicle'.

Another two cottages were demolished at the top end of Hollee - one faced and one gabled the road. The ground belonged to Nutberry. Now the houses are mainly privately owned.

She used to lie in bed sometimes when the trainee pilots were flying low and wonder if they would get over the house.

In World War 1 two families - McCormick and Sword - both lost 2 children. The Swords lived in the Fairyraw Road where she lives. They were farm workers and drainers. Draining - dug by a spade - was quite a common occupation then.

Joe Ellis lived in half of the house which was a school. In the garden he had 2 mills, 2 engines, 2 vans. Another who took a mill round was Davie Rome, who had a cleek-arm. He'd lost it, probably, in an accident

There used to be a great big crane at a wee cottage where Mrs Carlyle lives now. It would lift the drum from the mill for cleaning. Her husband worked on Robinson's mill before he went to the army. (He worked with John Carruthers, the builders at Eastriggs.)

She said John Johnstone was also the postman, came round by bike. There was a post box in Sanderson's shop wall.

Her son told her he found a library book at Annan about Cove Quarry.

She didn't know anything about lifts ever being given by aeroplane, although she once paid to go to a display at Broats.

Doctors - Carlyle, then Christie, then Pool (Gretna, now dead). For a time she served with Doctor Christie, but she gave it up because her room was above the front door, and you were awakened at all times of the night.

Mrs Margaret Wilson at Fairyraw is the daughter of Graham the coal merchant, and therefore worth seeing. Another worth visiting is Miss Steele (no relation of Jessie), who was in service.

I asked about the bacon business at Kirkpatrick House, but it had stopped before she went. They did still cure their own pigs - with brown sugar and saltpetre, and it was lovely. She described the crumbling sandstone walls where the curing had been.

When her husband was with Robinson he would be away for a whole week with the mill. They also used to empty Indian corn boats which came in (at 3d a ton).

Miscellaneous She'd never been in 'Bruce's Cave' and had never believed the story. She'd heard stories about people collecting spiders to put in it.

As a child when she had diptheria her mother and 3 month old brother also got it. Her throat would never clear.

Mrs Carlyle's father had hurt his ankle. Otherwise he'd have been on the Quintinshill disaster train. Mrs

Anderson's father and uncle worked all day at the disaster, the bodies being taken to Stormont Hall.

She told me quite a lot about Jessie Steel, the Irvington poet, and a character. Her husband was Geordie Steel (who died in the Crichton), her son David is in the Foreign Office, Bill well up in the Post Office down south, Geordie used to work in St. Andrew's House, Jimmy is in England, while Jean married, perhaps is now Mrs Cannon. She showed me a typed copy of one of her poems, 'The Tattie Howker', an amusing tale. She thinks the poems were never published, in which case we should collect as many as we can. She was a great Burns person (like the man from Blackhills, who married an Irving).

Her brothers and sisters - 6 of them. Tom, Sarah, Mrs Anderson, Enus (?), Jenny and John. Sarah married Frank Johnston, Jenny married, lives at the Rigg, John in Annan.

Her jobs: Kirkpatrick House (when she was off a year with her foot), Outerton, Kirtleton, with the Jeffries to Wyliehole, then Doctor Christie, and finally Cranberry, with Jim Burnett. The Wee Laird, for all his heavy drinking, was a real gentleman. He'd say 'Ah'm guid doon tae here' (middle). He'd bad legs. He used to play the tin whistle to his bairns. She went to his house at 14. He was well mannered ((and nicer than his wife, an Irving of Shawrigg)) (Iforgot to ask how many servants there were). She liked Doctor Christie, but not his house. Mr Turnbull had a Doctor Christie story - 'Stay in bed till I come back' - and he never did come back. The Nelsons were at Outerton, Jeffries at the next two. She said she liked working at Cranberry - as good as any to work for.

Although Mrs Anderson was born at Nouthill she could not remember the names of the fields - for they left it at the time of World War 1 - when both her father's parents died.

I think Mr Turnbull said he was born at Hillhead, when the Mackies were there. He, his father and his brother all worked for the Mackies at Redhall. Molly used to sing at entertainments: she and Annie were both very tall, easy to talk to, but Molly looked like her father and Annie like her mother (very ladylike).

It was said that there was an ancient Druid site where the British Honduran camp was built.

Mrs Anderson's cottage was fairly old when she bought it. She added the toilet.