

13th May, 1971

Interviewers: Rev. J.C. Glennie
Ian Lyall
John Strawhorn

Interviewing: Miss Hyslop.

You've actually lived in Mauchline all your life?

Oh yes, I was born here and my father and mother before me. My grandfather before that, I think.

How long have you lived here, or is that an awkward question to ask?

Not at all, I'm eighty.

Well that gives us the idea. You went right through Mauchline school?

Yes, and went straight to University from Mauchline school, the only girl who ever did that, as a pupil teacher.

Yes I thought that would be quite an interesting thing to start with.

Yes.

Was the school actually in the same place?

Same place but much smaller. There were just nine teachers, I think, in the old days and four pupil teachers.

What kind of standard did they take you up to then when you were able to go from school to University?

As a pupil teacher you got extra tuition. It was a sort of advanced division in those days. The best pupils actually went to Kilmarnock but I stayed on and became a pupil teacher at thirteen and was for four years. I went to college when I was seventeen but it was pretty hard work in those days because we went in at half past eight in the morning and had an hour's tuition from the second master, Mr D. K. Campbell. The school did not go in until half past nine in those days and then we were supposed to teach in the forenoon and study in the afternoon but you did your studying in the classroom sitting in a corner and there wasn't very much peace so we had a lot of work to do at night at home.

And in your time was there still the old school where the Mission Hall is?

No, no. Not in my time. My father told me about it, the Educational Institute, I think they called it. But that wasn't in my time.

That was where my grannie, I thought, had gone.

My father went there I think. I never quite understood the difference between the two schools. I think at one time you paid some kind of modified fee at one of them but I don't know which.

Yes, I heard something about that. Mrs Murdoch told me about it.

I think the classes were much bigger in those days.

Yes, there was just one intake in the year. They took in at the beginning of May which was rather an unusual time. Quite a good time I think because they had a short time before the summer holidays to get broken in.

How many would be in the class?

Oh about sixty usually.

And the pupil teacher would be helping?

The pupil teacher had to stand in if there was anybody off or to help in the infant room principally. There were two teachers in the infant room, Miss Littlejohn and Miss Pollock for many years. Were they there when you were there, Ian?

Oh I really don't remember. I think Miss Pollock had left.

Had she? Miss Littlejohn left before her.

And the headmaster in those days?

Mr Campbell, and then he was succeeded by Mr Rawson but he was just there for four years when he took a shock, then Mr White came; he was there till 1945 then Mr McPherson came.

Did the teachers have to live in the village?

Oh yes, the teachers all had to live in the village in lodgings, those who were unmarried. It was a kind of club really. The teachers met in each others houses and had quite a good time.

What kind of qualifications had the teachers? Were they University trained?

Not many were University trained. The men usually had a degree but there were no women with degrees in my time. I was the first who went to University. The first woman who went to University from Mauchline. They went to the Normal for two years. It was a two year course then. Usually they were ex-pupil teachers till they passed their entrance to the training college.

You'd have to stay in Glasgow, of course?

Yes, I was four years in lodgings in Glasgow.

Did you come home at the weekend by train?

Oh yes, half a crown from Glasgow. There were no grants in those days, no assistance whatever when I went to college. Well, I had my fees paid for two years by Carnegie. I didn't get it the first year because I had only lower Maths and I took a correspondence course for that year while I was studying at University; to pass my prelim higher

Maths and then the second and third years I had my fees paid.

Did you get the Stewart Bequest, money bursaries, or anything?

No, no. There was nothing of that kind. It gave free books to children, that was all I think. Some children had free books. I had no assistance whatever. No grants of any kind.

I seem to remember that Molly Learmont had some assistance from that Stewart fund, I think I have heard it said: I had never anything of that kind.

Mentioning the School Board, the Mauchline School Board....

Oh yes they were all local people. Mr Marcus Bain was the chairman in my time.

In some places there used to be an examination day at the end of the session and the School Board came and visited. I've heard about it but I never heard of either school being visited.

I don't remember anything but just that they signed the registers and had a look round the school. I don't think they ever examined in my time. They had to pay so many visits in the year and sign the register.

Who decided on the salary?

The School Board. It was a princely salary. When I started I got £10 the first year and it increased by £2 10s each year. I think I had £17 10s a year when I went to University. And when I started teaching I started in Glasgow which was supposed to be a good thing in those days because they paid £5 more than other people and I started at the princely salary of £70 and I was four years in Glasgow and when I came back to Mauchline I had the handsome salary of £90 and after teaching for forty years I retire with less than £600. I wonder what the teachers would say nowadays to these salaries.

And you came back and taught in Mauchline?

Yes I was four years in Glasgow and then my health wasn't good and I came back home.

Any interesting characters at the school in Mauchline, in your day, that we ought to know about?

Oh I don't know, the usual bad boys I suppose, I don't think they were so wicked as they are now.

We came across a photograph in Mr McFarlane's house, of a school group of staff and there is a Miss Hay, in the front row and a gentleman in it with a long beard and some kind of smoking cap, any idea?

Would that be Mr Kilgour, the old school master? He would die about 1894, I think. He actually lived in Johnfield, the house we lived in before we came here. I remember when we flitted into Johnfield, I was four years old. I think Mr Kilgour had just died then. His daughter, Miss Marcle, none of you will remember her, went to South Africa and married, and her husband was poisoned by eating bad fish out there and she came back to Mauchline and taught music. She became secretary to Miss Allen in Ballochmyle.

And what happened to any of the other pupil teachers along with you, are they Mauchline people along with you, are they still alive?

Yes, well ahead of me, when I started, was George Armour, brother of the Armour's next door, he went to the war and was killed. Then after him came Andrew Wyllie; he was from Kingenleuch, his father was the coachman to the Thomson's at Kingenleuch. He became headmaster at Mountop School at Motherwell. Then there was Alex Milne, that's Jean Jamieson's half brother, he became a headmaster at Clydebank. But they are all dead these folks. When I was in college there was Andrew Wyllie, Jack Baird, Bobby Walker, Alex Johnston and Robert MacMin, they are all dead. Bobby Walker was the headmaster at Crosshouse. Jack Baird was Dr J. Baird's son. His son's a professor in Leeds.

You became a pupil teacher at thirteen, was that the usual schoolleaving age?

No, fourteen. I wasn't supposed to go until I was fourteen.

What about the village itself, this is one thing we are interested in, the changes and what was it like?

Yes it has very much increased since these days.

Of course an awful lot of the older buildings have been taken down.

Yes, in fact there was a time when there was kind of vandals at the taking down. I think they took away a lot of building that could have been kept and restored. Like building up the Cross where the post office is, there was quite a historic old building. But they had a kind of passion for knocking down at that time.

What was the name of the place near the school, was it Wilson Place?

Albert Place, yes, where the library is now. There was a whole row of houses ther. And then behind it there was the smithy - Hughie Bailey was the blacksmith then. There was a well there, I remember one Saturday, there was a flower show and a man had drowned himself in the well, there was a great furore. The flower show was held in the school, the classrooms all opened out one to another, with glass partitions between them. If a teacher was off she could open the partitions and get the classes together.

We're actually back to this at Auchinleck Academy, some of our classrooms have partitions, for different reasons from what you used them for.

Yes, many a time I had two classes with the partition door drawn back.

How many pupils would there be at your school in your day?

Wekk there was about nine classes. The two top classes wouldn't be so big but the rest would be about sixty-five hundred children.

It's just about the same, five hundred now.

Big families in these days?

Yes there were.

They would be a lot poorer then than they are today?

Yes, they were poor children.

Now what about the farm children in those days, would they mostly just walk in?

Oh they all walked, there was nothing else for it.

And then what about their meals? I mean I've read about where they went and got a bowl of soup.

Well they usually just had a piece. Mrs Learmont used to make them cups of tea, I think. In fact I used to wish that my mother would go away for a day and give me a penny to go to Mrs Learmont's to buy a chester cake. You'll never hear of a chester cake, it was a kind of gingerbread thing with a pastry - a great dod for a penny. I thought it would be the height of luxury to get a penny to go and buy it.

Where was this you.

Mrs Learmont the baker, where Young is now. We had two famous bakers in these days, Blair and Learmont. Blair was Mrs Clark's father.

Is that where the Co-operative shoe shop is?

Yes, Blairs pies were very famous, you got seven for a shilling. We went on Saturday nights and got seven pies for the weekend.

Your pocket money now?

Oh, you got a penny occasionally, that was all. I don't remember getting any regular pocket money at all. There was a wee shop across from the school, Mrs McMinn had it at one time, Mrs MacIntyre's mother.

Was there any special treat that you would save up for instead of spending the penny?

No, there was the Sunday School Trip, that was mainly the only treat we had in these days.

Was that on the farmer's carts?

Yes.

Where did you go on the carts?

Well, I remember once going to Montgomerie and it was the coldest, wettest day I ever remember. And I remember my mother had a cape, a brown cape, mine was tartan, made by Jimmy Lambie, he was the greatest tailor in these days, he had a shop at the cross, his daughter lives there still, and I got this cape to wrap round me sitting in the cart going to Montgomerie. And they said Andrew Wyllie, who later was the headmaster at Motherwell, fell into the burn at Montgomerie and had to be dried by the gardener's wife. Oh it was a dreadful day. We went to Gilmilnscroft another time.

And what about holidays, summer holidays?

Well, the first time we had a house, I think, was at Troon, for a week, then later my mother took us to Girvan, and we went to Girvan, year in, year out for ever so long.

I've heard that Mauchline was quite a holiday resort.

Yes. A great many of the houses took in boarders, it was supposed to be very good for chest complaints. This house was a great letting house, it was a Miss Manson who lived here, she always kept teachers and in the summer holidays she had summer boarders or let the house and went out.

Was that quite regular?

Yes. There were a good many houses that just made a point of letting. Beechgrove, for instance, and Rosebank, and St. Davids, they were all letting houses. So families came year after year.

Letting the whole house or providing food for them?

Well you could either have one way or the other. You could have the house and attend to yourself, or you could have rooms with attendance if the landlady was living in.

What about entertainments in the winter time?

There was a dramatic society and there was a choral society. Dr Mitchell had a very good choral society. We had Templars and Rechabites, and all sorts of things like that.

Any Sunday School treats?

Yes. There was a Sunday School Treat. There was a Christmas tree.

Was it Miss Hyslop's father who built the Church Hall?

Yes. He also built the U.P. Kirk.

My father was a very keen footballer in his young days, and he actually was on the point of becoming professional. He had his ticket to go to some club in the North of England, in Newcastle or in that neighbourhood. Just at the time his father got the job of building the U.P. Kirk and persuaded him not to go.

And where was the football park?

Down opposite the lodge at Netherplace.

It used to be down through the football field that they took the mailbags to put them on the train. It was an outing for the children to go down and see the express picking up the mailbags over the wall at the football field.

What about Mauchline races, that's a thing that is forgotten about now?

It was the last Thursday in April. I remember when they were held in the Laurieland field up at the Monument. Then later they were in the Bogwood field, the one below the bridge.

In the old days, they actually ran them on the road, the Mossgiel road.

When did they finally stop?

It went on quite a long time, they certainly survived the first war, but stopped before the second one.

What actually did they compete in?

Horse racing, always horse racing. No, it was all horse racing, there were no childrens races.

And were there any other side events?

The shows. The shows were on the Loan Green at that time. I believe they stood on the Cross in the old days. In my time it was always the Loan Green. It was a great event when the shows came in. That was when we had our school holidays, we didn't have Easter holidays. We had the race week, the last week in April.

Then you'd have eight weeks in summer, was it?

Six weeks. And a week at Christmas.

Were there any circuses came to the Green?

Yes, travelling menageries and circuses, they came to Loan Green too; big tents and the kind of travelling dramatic show of sorts in a tent came occasionally, with "aria and the Red Barn, and all these sensational things - East Lin. I was never allowed to go, I'm sorry to say.

When did the first sort of cinema films come to Mauchline? Were they up there?

Yes, they were up there too.

Opposite the Library?

Yes, the first picture house was in at the Market Inn. Morton's was the first pictures. The same Mortons as of the Cumnock one. And then Lawrence succeeded Morton in that place, before he went to the free kirk.

Now, Miss Hyslop, you were the founder of the Guides here in Mauchline?

No, not the founder. The first was Miss Gretchen Campbell, the headmaster's daughter. But I succeeded her. I had them for eight years.

When would they be started about?

Well, I took them over in 1925. I had them from 1925 to 1933. Miss Campbell might have two or three years before that.

Just after the First World War?

Yes.

Do you I think we are a little behind the boys

Yes.

..... various organisations which were started before the war

..... Yes. Mnn.

Were the Boys Brigade

It was the Boys Brigade. They did - did they do training with

There certainly was a Boys Brigade. I've seen them walking out with Dr Mitchell with his bonnet.

Yes I heard that.

And then you were on of the founder members of the Rural?

Well yes, yes. I was the first secretary. And then I was the President for fifteen years.

And when was the Rural founded?

1923.

And has there been any great difference in the form of the meetings over that time?

Not a great deal, no. Pretty much the same. The membership has fluctuated a little bit but it's never been very different. It stopped for a month or two at the beginning of the War, but I think it was just about for two months and then we started up again.

What about the church?

Well, the church was better attended in the old days. There was the family pew, the whole family went. And that seat where we are, my grandfather and his two sons: one was in Kilmarnock Post Office, one was in the Greenock Post Office, but they were home nearly every weekend and in the church; and his daughter, and my father and mother and ourselves. My grandmother sat upstairs it was a kind of treat to get going with her because she sat in the back pew at the back and there was kind of a loft behind it. I don't know whether it's still like that or not.

There was a rivalry between the three churches then, and you have gone to see the two become one.

Yes. No, I would not say there was a rivalry, they co-operated to a certain extent. Evening services for instance. They had one in each church, the three Sundays of the month, and the fourth Sunday there was none. There were three evening services in the month. Each church had one Sunday. Then there were debating societies and literary societies connected with the church. They were very good in connection with the Free Church. Mr D.K. Campbell was the kind of moving person in that. We had a very good library too.

In connection with the church?

No, in the village. A village library. An excellent library, we got a lot of books from the Baird Trust for that.

And the Ferguson too?

And the Ferguson Bequest, yes.

We have the various minutes for the meeting of the Library Committee in the Museum?

Yes.

And the ordering of books?

Yes.

And the suggestions?

Yes. I had a lot to do with the library too. I was on the committee a long time. To get the books to read.

It used to be a public meeting. I mean, the library was still going on when I came to Mauchline. I was on the committee and then it was wound up.

And taken over. Yes. By the county.

That was down underneath the Temperance Hall. Under the Temperance Hall, yes. We got books from Ayr, latterly, into the library, boxes of books. But there were good books in the library.

Was this financed by the Mauchline people and the grant?

Yes, you paid a membership. I think it was something like 1s.6d. a year - but I seemed to manage to get along. But the entertainments were lectures - we had a series of lectures throughout the winter. We had a lot of very good speakers. They were brought in and we made money off Lantern Lectures. I remember the Rev. James Barr came several times; Annie Swann came once, and O. Douglas (Miss Buchan) and a man on Prison reform - what was his name? - Dr. Somebody from Glasgow; he was a good lecturer.

It would cost some money to bring these people.

Yes. Sometimes they had a fee, sometimes they came voluntarily - they always had to get hospitality in the village, of course, for they couldn't get back the same night - no cars in these days to take them

Was the lecture in the Temperance Hall?

Yes, in the Temperance Hall.

You would need a lot of Bazaars to raise money; they'd be quite common in those days?

Occasionally there'd be bazaars. I remember the Bowling Green having a tremendous Bazaar once. I think that was to build a pavilion. Oh, and the Church had a bazaar each year, of course.

You would be here when they put the new organ at our church. In 1912 was it?

Oh yes, I remember Dr. Mitchell coming round himself to all the houses collecting subscriptions for the organ. I was a student at the time. Was it 1912? Earlier than that, I think, for I remember feeling very noble because I gave him 10s. which I couldn't afford.

It was Miss McIlveen gave me the card all about the organ and the programme.

Dr. Ross from Edinburgh had given her it.

You mentioned Ballochmyle earlier, did people from there take much part in the life of the village?

Well, Miss Allen was a very good person in a lot of ways in the village, she was a benefactress, she took a lot of interest in it.

The Thornycrofts in Netherplace were very good too; they came to church and Mrs Dunlop of Barskimming was an excellent member too; the Hamilton-Campbells didn't come so much. They had all the special seats up at the front of the gallery. All these houses are down now, no gentry left.

Were there any special functions at Ballochmyle or Netherplace?

Yes, well the Guides had a sale at Netherplace one time, raised quite a bit of money. Then there was the big bazaar at Ballochmyle, Dr Clement organized it for the church.

I remember one at Netherplace in my time - a Baby Show, I remember was a feature. I'm trying to remember what it was in aid of, and who was running it - maybe it was for the committee or something.

There used to be concerts at Ballochmyle, Chiors, Burns gathering in the summer-time - it is just a kind of faint recollection I have. They seemed to me to come from all over Ayrshire in a particular Saturday. What it was to raise money for I don't know.

In those days the quarry would still be in full production?

Oh yes. Two quarries - the Bains and the one down at Barskimming - Mr Baxter, the nurse's father, was the manager at Barskimming Factory.

How many men would they employ?

I couldn't say, couldn't put a number on it, but a lot of men were employed in the quarry. It was going down, the stone wasn't so good. They had come on a kind of bad stone, some of it was kind of porous, it wasn't in such demand.

What about the various factories that were down at the Haugh?

Well, there was the wool mill, when it was working; and there was the curling stone factory, Wylie's was down at the Haugh then; and the margerine factory, it was margerine they made in the old days.

That was why the lade was necessary?

Yes, the lade went to the wool mill. That was why ma' granny moved up to Mauchline, because ma' daddy was fallin' in the lade too often. One of the Wylie children was drowned in the lade.

How many houses did there used to be at the Haugh?

There was quite a row of houses, further along than there are now. They have completely disappeared - along where Dr. Walker had built his house, there was a whole row there. Nice wee houses with lovely gardens running down to the lade, there were always lovely daffodils, it was very mild down there.

Round about George Hardy's house, would it be one of the McGawn's, one of his houses seemed to be used as a church or church hall?

Yes, when I was at school as a pupil the janitor was Andrew McGawn and he would be an old soldier, I think, because he took the drill at school. We were marched round the playground and formed fours and did all the things. That was all the drill we got in these days. There was no hall in the school. That would be George Hardy's grandfather.

The children from the Haugh would come up to Mauchline school?

Oh, yes.

Were there any little schools round about the countryside?

No, not near. There was one at Crosshands. When they came to the qualifying they came to Mauchline. Annie Young of Rough Dyke was one of the pupil teachers after me; she was my mate for two years in Glasgow when she went to Training College. She had to walk to Mauchline, three miles, every day. People would say, would you take a lift if anybody offered you it on the road? Take a lift; I would take a lift in a wheelbarra'.

Can you remember when there was a really great stir when there was a motor car?

I remember one of the daughters at Sorn Castle, a MacIntyre, was married and it was a great day, because all the folk had turned out to see how many motors stuck on the hill on their way up.

Have you any idea who would be the first person in Mauchline, for example, to have a car?

No. I cannot remember that. I remember Marcus Bain had a wee thing with three wheels. It was supposed to go very fast. It was a pretty early one. The first motor car I was ever in was in Edinburgh, in Princes Street. You could get a run along Princes Street for tuppence. I was in Edinburgh with my aunt and I got a run in a motor car.

Do you want to ask Miss Hyslop anything about the Box Works? That is something we were all interested in.

My Grandfather worked in the Box works. My Mother worked in the Box Works, too when she was married. I think all the young women worked in the Box Works. There was nothing else for them to do. My Grandfather was always engaged in the Box Works. That table behind you is one he made. That is much in line with the Turnbridge stuff. I have your book here.

Yes, Miss Hyslop, the book which I presented to the Museum. Have you seen it?

Yes, I have seen it.

I will give you it back now, thank you very much.

What was your Grandfather's job in the Box Works, Miss Hyslop?

I do not know really what particular line he did. My Mother, I heard her say, lined the boxes. You know they often had a velvet lining inside. That was her job. The men were turners and worked machines of some kind. I remember seeing the machine that made the tartan paper though. My Grandfather took me up once to see that. It was supposed to be a wonderful invention. They made their own tartan paper for the boxes.

Were there two different ways of making this tartan? We have discovered that there was one which has not lasted as well and comes off.

Well that was a maker; they did not make that; that was not their own. This was another cheaper thing that came in and the turners were not nearly so good. It was an inferior thing altogether. That was a later thing.

The impression I got from reading this book was that the real genius of the Mauchline Box works was this William Smith, the second.

The one who went to Birmingham.

Had your Grandfather any stories of him, or your Father or Mother?

No, I do not remember anything much. Mr. William Smith, who was the last member of the firm, was in the house next door to us. He died there. He was in the same class as my Father at school. He knew him all his days.

Was there really a great demand for the articles that were made there?

Well, at one time there was, but then, things came in from Germany and a lot of cheaper stuff and they just couldn't compete. It was a pity it went down when it did, I think, because if they had been able to hold on for a few more years they could have gone into the small furniture making. With the smaller houses people were buying the smaller tables and stools and chairs and things were. I think they could have competed if they had been able to hold out.

Whendid the famous fire take place? I had an argument with someone I was discussing about the date. Someone said about 1931.

There were various fires. It was not an unusual thing to have a fire at the Box Works. I remember when I was at school, the church bell rang, that was the signal. I remember the church bell ringing and my Father and Grandfather getting up in a great hurry and getting a pail and they went to the fire at the Box Works. You took a pail and they made a chain from the Box Works up to the loch and passed the pails of water down and up. There was no fire engine in those days; later on they had some kind of thing that was like a barrow that they pushed but there was no mechanical fire engine. You took a pail when you went to a fire.

Was it just a matter of everybody turning out?

Everybody turned out when the church bell rang. The church bell was the signal, and the water was got from the loch which has now disappeared.

We came across again in Mr. McFarlane's belongings a photograph of them paddling in the loch.

Yes, my Father was a keen curler because he couldn't work when the frost was out. I've heard them say that they curled for weeks on end. The weather must have been different then! I remember once taking up a can of Irish stew to him at dinner time because they had a match on and he couldn't come home for his dinner. Mother had a wee enamel can - there were no vacuum flasks in these days either - this was filled with Irish stew and I took it up at dinner time. There was a story of when they were curling at Craigie once. There was a match, a big pot of Irish stew was sent out from the inn to the loch and they were so keen on the match that they forgot and the pot was set down on the ice and the ice melted and the pot went through.

How did they get to a place like Craigie? Was it horse drawn?

Yes, the horse drawn gigs.

Was there anyone ran away?

Oh yes, there was Possie Nancy's. Gibson was the hirer there. He had a cab which met you at the station when you came off the train.

Was that the only regular service, from the station up?

Yes. You could hire a vehicle if you had to go away. They had a brake which you could hire for trips. I remember once going a Bible Class trip in this brake, it was a long thing.

Was the railway your contract with the outside world, if you had to go to a place like Ochiltree?

Yes.

When did they build the houses from Craig Darroch up? Was it after the first World War that they started to build these houses?

Mossiel Terrace as it was then, yes, it must have been then, I think.

So that was up to the First World War, on the one side the Box Works was the last building.

There was a toll house beyond the Box Works.

Yes. I've heard of the toll house, then Miss Kay's house on the other side.

Yes. That was the outside. There was an old Aggie Wilson lived in the toll house and she had a wee shop there. I've been there often because my aunt was Maggie Marr of Knowehead, her father was the farmer in Knowehead and he often came for the weekend. They stayed at Knowehead, she had her husband. He was Tom McHull, my grandfather's son. And on the Sunday nights when she was going home to Knowehead I got going with her up to Aggie Wilson's and went in and paid a visit there, had a rest and then she went on. That was the toll house.

Yes. And when had they stopped taking the tolls?

Oh, I don't remember them ever taking tolls. It was just a name. They would at one time.

Was that where they lived, at the two big trees? I seem to remember an old photo.

Yes. There were big trees there. One either side of the road, I think. There were quite tall trees in all that bit of Meadow Place. Where the Community Centre is supposed to be, is going to be built.

And then, when did they take down the houses from North Church back to Burns' house and our Church Hall? when did these come down? I've seen a painting of about 1890 of quite a lot of houses.

Yes. Oh, it was quite late on. It was at that same time when they had this passion for knocking things down. I think it would be at the same time as the one at the Cross came down.

Brownlea was still in existence - very much in sort of slum conditions when I came to Mauchline.

Yes. But the others were down then. It wouldn't be a great time before that, though. I remember the Stewarts - Miss Stewart's family - lived there in that row.

How many smiddies did they have in Mauchline? In the _____, and the one out the...

In the Catrine road way, and then there was Hugh Bailey's at the foot of the Loan - an Pollock's.

And then was there still Randolph Miller's?

Yes. And one at Crosshands.

And what about the pits in the area? You can see signs out at Crosshands there of old workings.

I don't remember any.

It was supposed to be the Monks away ages ago.

There's something more recently than that.

I think Mauchline pit's the only one...

I remember the Mauchline pit being sunk, right enough.

It was Major Dunn.

Major Dunn who was in Beechgrove. Yes. He was from Kilmarnock. My father always said they were a hundred years too early with it. If they had left it another hundred years it would have been better coal.

Major Dunn's sister was a real character. She never referred to 'miners', it was always 'colliers'.

I've heard Mr. McFarlane and others speak of this character, Archie somethin-or-otha. There's a photo of.....

Was he the telegram boy - had he some connection with the Post Office?

Yes, I think so.

And he was one that was a comic sight - he had a beard down to his waist. It wisnae Archie though. We've a picture of him down at the Museum.

There's a character whose name always comes up at the Burns Club. There were a lot more characters in those days. Do you remember any of them?

There was John Hay - the Hay's father - he was a character. He played the organ in Ochiltree Church for many years and walked there every Sunday - and back.

And there was Jockie Clark at the Cross. He had a shop up the steps at that old place that was knocked down. He made potted head and black man. Have you ever tried a black man? A kind of treacle toffee stuff - you bought a pennyworth and got it in a newspaper. And another kind of toffee that was blown up with baking soda.

Kind of cheugh jeans"

Aye, cheugh jeans too, but this wasacheaper thing than cheugh jeans even, it just seemed to be sugar and baking soda kind of puffed up. It was put out in a tin and cut up, - got it at Jockie Clark's too. It wasn't a very reputable place, Jockie Clark's - I was never allowed to go there.

And what was the shop that Jenny Gilles

Oh, Mrs Gilles. It was down where the Co-operative grocer is now - where the pen is that goes through was Mrs Gilles's shop. She made chips and green peas. She made her living off that. Jenny used to assist her Grannie.

At some places there used to be great excitement over politics?

Oh yes. They were keener, much keener in the old days than they are now. You had a red rosette or a blue rosette at the election time. You were born "a little Liberal or Conservative" in these days.

Did any of the big names in politics come here to speak at any of the meetings?

I don't remember anyone of great consequence.

I notice that one of the proposers of the Immortal Memory at the Burns Club was Ramsay McDonald's son.

Oh? Malcolm McDonald?

Another one, not Malcolm.

I remember Major Trenchard coming to dedicate this memorial when it was opened. He was the one who came.

What effects had the First World War on the village here?

Oh, it had a very bad effect - a great many young men didn't come back. Far more casualties than in the Second one. You can see that from the names on the Memorial.

And a lot, or two or three from the same family

Yes, three Baxters, for instance.

We've been talking for a solid hour Miss Hyslop. Anything else that occurs to you?

I think you could do with a wee cup of tea. Put your machine off and I'll put the kettle on.