

Interviewee: Elizabeth Ray (ER)	Interviewer: Robert McQuistan (RM)
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ER: We start when I went tae the school.

RM: Aye, well just [tae] say that my name's Robert McQuistan, I'm talking to Elizabeth Ray from Creetown, and...aye, start from the school, because the schule was the big building up at the hill?

ER: What's the Gem Rock Museum noo.

RM: Aye.

ER: And I just had tae cross the road and jump the dyke.

RM: Intae the school?

ER: Intae the school.

RM: And that was what...primary one ye'd be five years auld?

ER: I was five when I went.

RM: So what was the class like, what was it like?

ER: Well the infant room I can remember had three clesses in it.

RM: So one big room, yin big room, wi' three different clesses [at] a'...

ER: It was one big room, and twa fireplaces in it.

RM: Really?

ER: Twa fires on. And while I was in the infant room, the central heating went intae the schule, during the summer holidays.

RM: So how many weans would be in yin room?

ER: Oh golly I don't know Robert, the room was...ye ken it was fu', and yin o' the things that stuck in my memory was the desks were tiered, there were steps.

RM: Right like...really? Up?

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ER: That's right, up that wey.

RM: So was the floor sloping you mean?

ER: The floor was...there was steps fae...so that naebody was sitting behin' ye [?]

RM: Like so ye could see the teachers strecht...

ER: They could see everybody. And when the central heating went in they levelled the flairs.

RM: I never realised that.

ER: Uh huh they did.

RM: I never realised that, so it's like a kinna steps?

ER: Mm hmm. Like what would be in the gallery in the Kirk.

RM: Right, right. Like a lecture ha' in the university or something like that?

ER: Mm hmm.

RM: And was there ony order o' the weans did guid weans gaun tae the back or the front or...?

ER: Oh aye the best pupils went tae the back.

RM: Is that right?

ER: Aye.

RM: And did that change according tae...?

ER: Oh the mischief makers I suppose would be at the front.

RM: And there were three groups in the yin room?

ER: There was three groups in the infant room.

RM: So what age kinna range would that be from?

ER: It'd be five tae seven, would it?

RM: Five to seven. So there could be about what, twenty-five, thirty in each o' the

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groups or...?

ER: Would be twenty-odd oh aye there were a lot of weans about.

RM: And did that make a lot o' noise? Was it a noisy...?

ER: No oh no really because ye [dar'n'y] speak, wi' Miss Murray. I wouldny say she was the ideal infant teacher, really. But...she did teach us, I mean we learnt to coont and we learnt to write, wi' her. And I can remember reading, at the fire, there was groups ta'en roond tae the fire to read. And then we moved across...the infant room had a door tae itsel' and a passage, and there was a door off intae what became yer mother's room. I think she came in Nineteen thir...did she come in Nineteen thirty-six?

RM: About that, aye.

ER: Well, I would be in the first class that she took, when she came. I moved oot o' the infant room across in there.

RM: And how were they divided was it glass partition or...or just was it in the same...?

ER: No no they were solid walls.

RM: Solid walls, right.

ER: You'd gaun intae the Gem Rock Museum the noo and ye gan towards the...to gan

tae the toilets fae the tearoom, the lobby is just the same as it was when I went tae the schule, wi' the black and red tiles on the flair.

RM: And the big room on the left was the infant...?

ER: The big room on the left was the infant room and the room on the right was the start o' the big schule.

RM: So yer lessons would be reading and writing and geography and...?

ER: The infant room as I can remember was reading and writing, and singing. We learnt a hymn or something, and nursery rhymes probably. And the seasons o' the year I can remember the pictures being on the wall. And then when we moved across, we got reading, writing...we got joined-up writing. I dinna remember getting geography in the primary at all.

RM: No, and then later on when you move up...?

ER: As what geography means to me noo.

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RM: And then later on youse move up to the next room, higher higher.

ER: Then moved up there to...to yer father, and he had a couple o' classes, and stuck at the back o' the room were some that were never fit tae gaun on tae the what they ca'ed the advance division. They went in there when they would be what, ten or something, and they steyed tae they were fourteen, left the schule.

RM: So they were in the primary section a' the time?

ER: A' the time.

RM: And never went tae the secondary?

ER: No they never went to secondary.

RM: Because they didny make ony progress?

ER: They didny make ony progress.

RM: Which you could never dae nooadays.

ER: Oh no that wouldny dae.

RM: And then ye eventually efter primary seeven ye got ontae the secondary?

ER: Ye got onto the secondary.

RM: And that was the same building?

ER: I did a year and three months in the secondary at Creetown Schule. And there was a glass partition between your fathers room and the next room which I think at yin time had been a science lab, because there were...there was a gless cabinet wi' things in it, and of course when your father come to Creetown School he came as a science teacher.

RM: Oh right.

ER: Did ye no ken that?

RM: I didny think sae no, [that] never struck me it never really dawned on me. I must [away at the] university. And so he took science as his subject presumably?

ER: I but the time I reached there science...they'd done away wi' science.

RM: Oh! Got rid o' it a'thegither?

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ER: They got rid o' it a'thegither.

RM: Get away.

ER: And of course the headmaster was Major Salmond. And the first...the teacher in the advanced division was Miss Stewart, who taught French and Latin, and English. And Major...no, Major Salmond taught English, Latin and Maths.

RM: And did ye tak that a' the way through tae...?

ER: Well I left...I think it would be Nineteen forty, my mother took me away and sent

me to the Ewart. Because by that time we really wereny getting taught.

RM: And that was a normal thing to do, if ye had...if ye wanted to move on, ye gan tae the Ewart?

ER: It really didny worry me whether onywhere or no, the schule was just something I had tae dae.

RM: And how did you get to the Ewart how did you travel?

ER: Well that's quite interesting! I got a lift into Newton Stewart wi' Howard Nicholson the manager o' the Cree Mills. I had to be there for a quarter to eight in the morning tae get the car, and then I got the train back at nicht.

RM: Get away.

ER: I wa'ked to Newton Stewart Station fae the Ewart and then wa'ked fae the station here.

RM: And ye couldny get the train in the morning?

ER: No, it didny suit.

RM: [There'd be] nae train, naw it didny suit. And ye [paid] for that yersel' did ye?

ER: Well of course my father worked on the railway so I think we got privileged tickets, we got privileged travel but we had to pey for it. And eventually they put a bus on, because there were so mauny gan independently. And, I can always remember we'd to pey for that. And at that time we had also to pay for our education at the Ewart.

RM: Oh?

ER: I think it amounted to about sixteen pounds a year, but that...it had to be paid.

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RM: Aye. So what was the difference between the Ewart education and what ye'd been yased tae?

ER: At Creetown?

RM: Aye.

ER: The teachers taught ye at the Ewart. Miss Stewart was a good teacher. Yer father was a very good teacher and so was your mother, but Major Salmond by that time was hitting the bottle. And there was an itinerant teacher came on a Friday.

RM: Did that affect the teaching in the class?

ER: I think it did.

RM: Did it? It would dae wouldn't it!

ER: An itinerant teacher came tae the schule on a Friday, and she...we got sewing fae her, and I think the tap clesses got cookery I'm no [share], but we were asked tae get something oot o' a drawar in what was the domestic science room, and we discovered it was full o' bottles, and that's when the balloon went up.

RM: Really?

ER: Mm hmm. Miss Rosie went for your father, and I don't know what happened efter that! But Major Salmond disappeared.

RM: And that was the end o' him?

ER: That was the end o' him?

RM: Was that when my faither took ower, would that be aboot that time when he applied for the job I suppose it would?

ER: It must hae been, it must hae been.

RM: He'd be a Major at the Second World War I presume?

ER: A Major in the First World War.

RM: First World War?

ER: Aye.

RM: Right, right of course, I'm no working my dates oot right. I see what ye mean of course he would. And he maybe wasny born tae be a teacher in the first place?

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ER: I really don't know.

RM: ...What his background was?

ER: What his background was. He steyed in a hotel in...was it the Coonty Hotel in Dumfries? And I remember Willie saying he'd met him, when he was moving fae a train tae try and get a lift or something, and he said he hailed him wi' open arms, "One o' my boys."

RM: Gosh.

ER: It was pathetic really, because he must hae been really clever at yin time.

RM: So when you went to the Ewart there was never that, it was all very...focused.

ER: Oh no, it was all very focused.

RM: And the difference was what, how did you sense that difference in the atmosphere, and teaching...?

ER: Well for the first time in my life I got homework, which my father didny approve o'.

RM: How no?

ER: My father thought if they had ye in the schule a' day they should be able tae teach ye without daein' ocht at night!

RM: He's maybe right!

ER: That's true!

RM: That's interesting.

ER: The only thing that I regret about it is that naebody actually...at the start o' that,

advised me, that there was a future in education.

RM: That's interesting.

ER: Which didn't...that happens noo because Catherine said when she went she said if you were in One-A, she said you were automatically assessed...

RM: Fast-tracked.

ER: ...you were on the way for university and it was made very clear to ye, but that didn't happen when wi' me, it was just the schule and I really couldn't care less.

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RM: But ye enjoyed the Ewart, ye enjoyed it?

ER: Oh yes I did, because it was quite a friendly place, and Mr Geddie was a very good rector, he knew the name o' every pupil in the school.

RM: So, if ye'd had a wee bit mair encouragement, in yer secondary schule, what...

ER: I woudn't have been sitting here the day I don't think.

RM: What would ye have done?

ER: I really don't know. Possibly taught domestic science or something like that.

RM: If ye'd just got that wee bit...push?

ER: If I'd got that push, [somebody to] advise to.

RM: 'Cause ye enjoyed the subjects there?

ER: My mother ruled the hoose. There's nae doot about that. And what mother said went. If she decided that I was gan tae the Ewart, it woudn't have mattered what I'd said.

RM: Mm hmm, you went.

ER: I went.

RM: So did she decide that...

ER: But, she didn't push me to go any further.

RM: Right.

ER: And I realise now that she couldn't because she herself went to Glasgow to do something and was home-seeking and come back. And she probably by that time realised.

RM: So do you think she was a bit scary for you...?

ER: I really don't regret any of it except that.

RM: That lack of push.

ER: That lack of push.

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RM: And maybe from your mother I suppose [?].

ER: It was me that pushed for Catherine to go on. And by that time I realised that I had done a wee bit...I applied myself a wee bit more, I would have been able to contribute more to the house because Willie had had a heart attack, and there was no future as far as income was concerned.

RM: So what age were you when you left school?

ER: I was just about eighteen I think...seventeen I think.

RM: So you went through your Highers?

ER: Mm hmm oh I went through the highers. I got them all but English. I even got Science.

RM: So were there other people in your class that did go on to university?

ER: Mm hmm. Oh aye.

RM: Did you no think, how no me?

ER: No. Because I was astute enough to realise that it was my ain fault.

RM: 'Cause you were as brainy as what they were?

ER: Oh I suppose I was.

RM: If no mair?

ER: If I had applied mysel'. I went into the King's Arms in Glenluce yince, for our tea, on yin o' our sorties, and Moat was there. And he said...telt my daughter, he says, "You know your mother was very bright she had a good brain but she wouldn't use it!"

RM: And your...and Moat, 'cause the folks on the tape recorder'll no ken what a moat was, you ken and I ken, he was the fellow that went on tae...

ER: Everybody treated it as a joke, I mean he wasny a good teacher really. By the time we got...I think that year there was only three folk in the class got their English.

RM: So ye left at eighteen?

ER: I left at eighteen and went into...Mary got married, and I went into the bakery to work in the shop, to do what I could. And at that stage we had a very good youth club. You didny join the youth club till you were eighteen. And we had a good

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committee. And we ran...onybody gaun away tae dae National Service of course we gien them...we had a party for them.

RM: Right.

ER: The first auld folks party in Creetown, it was the youth club o' my generation that did it, and we raised the money wi' a concert, and we did everything we did the catering it was sandwiches and cakes, and we put on a show for them, entertained them, and that was the start o' it and of course it got to the pitch where some folk had tae gan yin better and it should be a set-doon meal and a glass o' sherry. And

really and truly, a' that onybody needs is a cup o' tea and a biscuit and a bit o' entertainment.

RM: And a wee craic.

ER: And a wee craic.

RM: Aye aye. And so wha organised...did ye organise that yersel's at that age ye would?

ER: We did and we had folk that helped us like C. T. Bould, who was ex-station master, Willie Hughes and...

RM: And did ye's meet yince a week or...?

ER: ...Mrs Coyne. Aye we met up in the aul' canteen there.

RM: Oh right.

ER: We had great fun we had a table-tennis and we had a record player and somebody helped us wi' country dancing and somebody helped us wi' a choir and drama.

RM: Quite a lot o' folk went tae National Service at that time?

ER: That's right, they did, uh huh.

RM: And what year would that be roughly?

ER: Well I left school Nineteen forty-six. Right up intae the early Fifties I think? The boys that I grew up wi' were called up they had tae dae six months at least. Then of course there was the Korean War and stuff like that.

RM: But the start o' the war in Thirty-eight I mean there'd be boys leaving at that point tae.

ER: Oh that's right enough.

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RM: And that'd be a big gap in yer...?

ER: It was a big gap.

RM: ...Yer youth. And some o' these boys wouldny come back either?

ER: Of course I was still at the schule then. So I didny notice a lot o' it. I did notice fae the Ewart point o' view, because they had an ATC club, and ony o' them that were gan it was usually the Airforce they went tae, through that.

RM: You worked in the bakery till what, till ye got merried or what?

ER: Uh huh, till we got...we got married January Fifty-six and the bakery closed in November Fifty-five, by that time it wasny a viable proposition.

RM: Right, so in a wey ye had tae leave it ye had nae choice?

ER: I had nae choice no, that's right, we were getting married onywey it was just a case o' when we could get the hoose sorted up for ourself.

RM: And Willie was working...?

ER: He was working at the fishing at that time at Cassencarrie, and we started off at the lodge at Cassencarrie. I think Catherine was seven when we moved up here. We were only up here six months when he had a very bad heart attack and that sort of feenished the plans, ye sort o' coasted then.

RM: And did ye ever go back to ony kind o' work efter ye left the bakery?

ER: Well efter we come up here I went oot and did home help, and I went to Greenburn Farm.

RM: Oh aye.

ER: And Catherine got...she came wi' me, Saturdays and holidays, and she got an education Robert, that she would never hae got onywhere else.

RM: In what sense?

ER: Well she got an insight intae a way o' life.

RM: In Greenburn?

ER: At Greenburn at the farm. Because at that time they were dairying. And they had sheep and they were lambing and they were...and she used tae gan oot wi' Robbie roond the sheep. I have actually known him to 'phone her and ask her what was in the

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field the year before. Because whatever she has been involved in she has given it a hundred percent.

RM: Did she ever fancy gaun intae that?

ER: No, no really, no. I mean she went tae the fishing wi' her father she could tell ye a' about hoo tae set a net and hoo tae catch the fish and everything. So, fae that angle it certainly wasny wasted.

RM: Right.

ER: And there were three bachelor brothers and an old lady that had lost her memory, and it taught me an awful lot tae.

RM: But Catherine left and went and got training.

ER: She went to start the university and got a two-one.

RM: So you'd be quite pleased about that in a way.

ER: Oh yes!

RM: In a wey she was daein' what...

ER: The fact that she got away.

RM: Aye. Kind of broke the pattern.

ER: If she'd decided to come back, and work in the Co, I would hae respected it.

RM: Okay, right.

ER: I maybe wouldny hae said that I enjoyed it, but if that was what she really...if she didny want tae gaun away...her father didny care what she did as long as she was happy. But I knew that she wouldny be happy in a dead end job.

RM: So in a funny kind o' way ye kind o' broke the pattern o' yer mum, yer mother, yerself and then the third generation Catherine, you nudged her gently. Maybe didny push but ye nudged her.

ER: She's been away since she was eighteen, and she's only been back...well we got her back for eighteen months efter the university because jobs were scarce and she'd absolutely nae idea what she wanted tae dae. She kent she didny want tae teach, but she worked doon at the smoked salmon place and she got market research on the ferries between Ireland and Stranraer, and she wrote letter efter...applied for jobs and she got replies fae some she got nae interviews at all, and eventually she got the

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interview for the police.

RM: So she'll be quite pleased that she made the move and kinna got oot the bit.

ER: Well I'll put it this way, I'm quite happy that she has been able tae dae what she wanted tae dae, and she's retired noo and she's got enough money and enough sense tae have quite a good comfortable lifestyle.

RM: And that is as I said earlier on that has been a change in everybody I suppose o' this generation, education mair accessible.

ER: I think when she went to the school there were...I'm nearly certain there were thirty pupils, in the infant room. And there's not...well Rhona Nichol's back, but she was at Carsluith Scool, that I don't think there's one o' them living in the village.

RM: And that's a big change 'cause when you were young folk steyed in the village and the reason for that is just there's nae work?

ER: There's nae work, there's no work. And it's noticeable noo in the Kirk, and the community cooncil and the gala, because we're very short o' leaders.

RM: And even in the businesses, the shops, nowadays folk that maybe in the auld days would hae run the shop who could hae maybe gone tae management or

business courses, they managed in business...here they didn't go away.

ER: No.

RM: They didn't get on.

ER: I always remember...you mind o' the McKays that were in Westwood? They came from Glasgow.

RM: Right.

ER: I think yin o' the sons did something with stamps.

RM: Mrs McKay?

ER: There was Mrs McKay but her husband died a few years before her.

RM: Oh right I think I know what...Westwood what house is that?

ER: It's the house up with the steps up to it, next to where Dorothy and David were.

RM: Oh this side?

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ER: Aye on this side. They bought it, and she said to me shortly after she came, that she was quite impressed with the intelligence o' the workmen about, and I thought she'd give a good cheek quite honestly! But after I stopped and thought about it, really to be any kind of good at a trade you really need a sense o' intelligence.

RM: And that's changed folk didn't get into trades as much as they used to. They went off to university and all the rest o' it.

ER: And then there's nothing to bring them back.

RM: No. Community life fifty years ago was stronger than wasn't it?

ER: Oh very much so.

RM: Folks were oot in the streets, daein stuff, ta'kin tae each other and mixing.

ER: That's right. And of course women...when I got married women didny gaun oot tae work efter they got married.

RM: They wereny alloo'd tae were they, I mean...

ER: Well, it wasn't...

RM: ...It wasny done.

ER: It wasny expected, quite honestly.

RM: And nooadays...

ER: And nooadays it is. And women would be gethering about maybe just roond the doors.

RM: Folk stood at the doors?

ER: Folk stood at their doors, that and the window sill.

RM: And waited for folk tae wa'k by and hae a craic.

ER: Mm hmm and hae a craic. I mean maybe somebody o' my generation would be put oot tae the door on a chair on a guid morning.

RM: *[laughs]*

ER: And sit there!

RM: And would ye dae that noo?

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ER: Nuh. No' really.

RM: And folks nooadays are staying in the hoose they're watching the telly and...

ER: That's right.

RM: And if ye gaun oot on the street noo, ye hardly see onybody wa'king up and doon.

ER: No. Ye don't even see the folk in the shop the same as ye did.

RM: How's that?

ER: I don't know. And of course even the corner shop there the young couple are very nice, but it's a very different thing fae Hazel and June. 'Cause if ye wanted information aboot something or if ye wondered if somebody was ill and ye hadny seen them and ye said tae them they would be able to tell you whether they were ill or no, but this can't this doesny happen noo. And it's no' that yer really curious you're interested.

RM: Aye aye that was the normal thing tae dae.

ER: That was the normal thing tae dae, you meet somebody you would ask hoo they were get...'specially ony o' them that had weans away in the forces or at university or something, just ask how they were'n keep up and ken what was gaun on.

RM: There was mair sense o' folk kenning each other.

ER: It was a much better community feeling that what it is noo because noo it's quite selfish. Folk are just interested in themselves.

RM: And no' their neighbours.

ER: And no' their neighbours.

RM: And it's no' nosiness it's just...it was the normal wey o' daein'.

ER: It was the normal wey o' daein'.

RM: And then ye had organisations like the Kirk that bought folks thegither tae.

ER: There was the Kirk and the youth club brought folk thegither. And of course they had the dramatic club in the village which also brought folk thegither.

RM: And the band.

ER: And the band.

RM: And they would come oot on a summer's night.

ER: And the band...they come oot in the guid weather yince on a Seturday nicht they would either play at the Square or doon at the Cross, and yince a year they went up the [cheyne] and played!

RM: So they came oot twice a week?

ER: Oh they come oot twice a week they practiced twice a week.

RM: And ye had a toon crier, was there no' a toon crier?

ER: No' in my day no.

RM: Old Willie Blake?

ER: Oh Jimmy Blake?

RM: Jimmy Blake.

ER: Aye, he was still gan aroond during the war, but I think shortly efter that, it stopped.

RM: Mm hmm. And during the war, I mean my impression I get was that certainly the women if no the men, cooked and baked using material using stuff they bocht oot the shop, in other words it was no' ready packed food, it wasny tinned food as much it was much mair ye made yer stews ye made yer soups.

ER: Aye the only thing that I remember getting in a tin was corned beef.

RM: Everything else was...?

ER: Everything else was made.

RM: In the kitchen.

ER: In the kitchen. There was tinned soup and stuff but it would be what, Heinz tomato? The choice in that even wasn't as good as what it is now.

RM: So folk baked?

ER: Folk baked. You didn't have cake every day, although possibly we did because my mother baked cakes and stuff but the norm was a scone and a pancake.

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RM: And then of course you came from...your mother came from a bakery anyway, she would know what she was doing, then she would know fine.

ER: Aye she was a good baker. I always remember her friend Nettie Hyslop saying that she used to say when she was a wee lass when she got married she would bake cakes and eat them!

RM: So those were days when you did baking and cooking and making [made] stuff?

ER: That's right, and of course I was an awful lot at Burnbank, with my Aunt Mary where your father and mother stayed, and I think that's where I would probably learn to keep a house.

RM: What does that mean, 'keep a house'?

ER: Well, I did shopping for her, originally, then I progressed from that to washing dishes cleaning brasses.

RM: In the bed and breakfast or whatever it was, the lodgings?

ER: In the bed and breakfast place aye and I had progressed from then to ironing and anything like that and I got a working knowledge of what it took to keep a house.

RM: So you were trained, you were under supervision?

ER: Well, I suppose I was trained.

RM: And did she teach you baking and cooking?

ER: Oh aye.

RM: Everything like that?

ER: Everything like that.

RM: And she took in lodgers didn't she?

ER: Oh aye. I've seen at this time o' year, washing dishes for echteen folk at dinnertime.

RM: And did she cook for echteen folk?

ER: Mm hmm. How she managed it I don't know.

RM: And then her ain family tae?

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ER: Well there was just Lewis.

RM: Just her husband.

ER: Aye. And Rob of course he served his time at [McHarry's], but he got his dinner in Newton Stewart so he would get his tea when he come back.

RM: But hoo would she keep echteen folk in that hoose? There wereny that number o' room, they must hae been merried couples?

ER: Oh aye maist o' them were. There was a room for a family and attic rooms and...

RM: Oh richt up at the tap?

ER: Oh aye. I think your father slept up there in the summertime, there was a...yin room I can remember at the heid o' the attic stair and it was a' lined wi' pine, and I think he slept up there in the summertime and to do his room.

RM: It's maybe a bigger hoose than ye think?

ER: It's was bigger hoose than ye thought, there was a bedroom off the dining room, and there was yin off the sitting room.

RM: Aye. And that's whaur you learnt to keep a hoose.

ER: Just learnt what had to be daein' sort o'. But she was a hard task master I can tell ye!

RM: Is that right?

ER: Oh aye. She certainly was.

RM: Did ye mind that no?

ER: I did.

RM: Did ye?

ER: Oh aye, I minded uh huh.

RM: But it taught ye how to keep a hoose!

ER: Hasny done me a lot o' harm.

RM: So the big cheynges since these days that compared wi' the day, is a different sense o' community folk are isolated in their hooses noo, their tellies, and then their

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cars.

ER: That's right.

RM: D'you miss that sense?

ER: I dae, since Mary went in tae Cornwall Park, I miss that because I used tae gaun doon there after Frank died, I would gaun in in the morning and maybe sit wi' her for half an oor and then gaun back doon later on maybe and help make her tea or something like that, and invariably met somebody when I was gan or coming, that's gone.

RM: And that's because...?

ER: It's just life is very very different the day.

RM: Folks aren't there, in the streets.

ER: They're not there.

RM: And there's not the warmth maybe?

ER: There's not the warmth, there's not the...there's not the folk around that are gaunty open the door and shout. And I'll tell you something else my door's locked now, which it didn't used to be.

RM: 'Cause you're never sure what's out there.

ER: That's right.

RM: And then there's the Kirk was very central too in the old days.

ER: Well the Kirk has always played a very important part in our family, since ever I can mind. The furthest back I can really mind is the carry on that there was when the two kirks were joined...it finished in Nineteen thirty-eight when Mr [McKechnie] came here, but it went on I think...did it go on for Nineteen thirty-six? Something like that. And there was a lot of bitterness, and folk just left the Kirk and never come back.

RM: Oh right. So the Kirk lost a lot of folk 'cause of that union too.

ER: Aye. Although looking at it...we sat up in the gallery, and my Grandfather sat behind us, and my Uncle James sat in front of us, and they were a' good singers but we were looking down into the Kirk, and it was a very different place.

RM: Because?

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ER: Because the seats were full. And then there was a spell, it was after I left the schule, I think it was after Bill McRory came here, the Sunday Schule just mushroomed. And there was classes all over the town.

RM: Ye mean wee groups o' weans?

ER: Aye, there wasny enough room for them.

RM: In the Mission Ha'?

ER: In the Mission Hall. They started coming at Kirk time, and then the wee yins went across tae the Mission Hall and the bigger yins I think there was three clesses there was a cless in the bakery, and yin in the Red Cross hut, and yin up in the vestry and yin in the back vestry.

RM: A lot o' weans.

ER: There was a lot o' weans.

RM: And in the auld days...I'm talking away back in the Forties, maybe, the Sunday School picnic was a village affair was it?

ER: Oh aye. The maist memorable picnic for me was Nineteen thirty-eight, and that was the year that the kirks were joined. And there was an upsurge o' enthusiasm fae certain quarters for it. And the provisions were taken doon wi' [Hillis's] van to Sandgreen first thing in the morning, and Mrs [McGoughie] and Mrs McGuinness went tae, and they had set up...and ye'll probably mind o' the things in the Mission Hall the kettles and the boiler and a' the rest o' it...primus stove and the oven, and they were the four runners. And then there was the weans, and there was Sanny's boss for the aul'er yins, and then the younger yins and there was a cavalcade o' cars, and I canny mind Robert how many cars there were, but I can remember being in Cantley's, for the [?] car, and gan tae Sandgreen for that picnic, it was tremendous, and then Sanny come back, and he ran a bus at dinner time and Sunday schule peyed for it, for the parents.

RM: To come doon to the shore?

ER: To come to the shore.

RM: Sandgreen?

ER: Tae Sandgreen.

RM: So it was set up like in the morning there was a kind o' advance guard gaun doon about...

ER: There was an advance guard went doon so that they could get the water and

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boil...and of course it had to be before the bakery needed the van for their roond.

RM: Oh so it was the same van that was yased for the roonds as what...?

ER: Aye they just took the...

RM: So they took the food doon and everything doon, set it up and then the weans came on Sanny's bus about what ten o'clock something like that?

ER: I think we set off fae here aboot half past ten or something. And even the street...there was folk oot tae wave tae ye!

RM: Streamers coming oot the bus!

ER: Streamers hanging oot o' the bus!

RM: And then, did Sanny come back for folk? No, the cars took the parents?

ER: No no, Sanny brought the bus back tae Creetown, and it loaded up wi' parents and taken them doon.

RM: Aboot lunchtime? And then the whole lot steyed the whole efternoon if it was sunny.

ER: And then I think he had tae run twice tae bring us back.

RM: He'd hae tae gaun back twice.

ER: The parents of course had tae leave early I suppose. For the men coming in.

RM: And also for the weans coming!

ER: That's right.

RM: Because you couldny have the weans gaun hame wi' nae parents. And it was the whole day, richt up tae...

ER: Oh it was a whole day, a whole day. It would be about six o'clock.

RM: Now that must hae been something different.

ER: Aye it was.

RM: That would be a kinna community thing, it'd be the whole village come oot.

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ER: And there was nae health and safety I mean you could gaun oot intae the water there was naebody cared whether ye were there! There was nae roll call or onything! I don't think we ever lost anybody but!

RM: Are ye sure!

ER: I'm quite sure!

RM: But ye haveny checked have ye! Ye didny coont them a' oot and coont them a' back?

ER: The year that I went to the Ewart, the first summer I was there, they ran a picnic tae Mossyard apparently every year up until then for first year. And there was a tragedy that day, there was a wee lass fae Kirkcowan drooned, that was the end o' the Ewart picnics that was it feenished.

RM: But Creetown was ok.

ER: We were alright. We had nae disasters like that.

RM: As far as yer aware. Thanks very much.

ER: I dinny ken whether that's ony use tae ye or no' Robert?

RM: It's lovely, oh it's fantastic.

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