

Interviewee: Pam Walker (PM)	Interviewer: Betty Paisley (BP)
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Betty Paisley interviewing Pam Walker in Collin on the 17th July.

Key Words: Schooling 00m 56s; Play 04m 48s; Lochside Church 11m 43s; Housing 12m 40s; Work 13m 32s.

BP: Can you tell me about your earlier memories, Pam?

PW: Well, ma earlier memories, ah havenae got, ah've only got kind o one memory of when, before ah moved to Lochside, ma young days were actually really start from Lochside and then having a big new house to move into but ah can't actually remember moving into, ah can just remember staying there and loads o flats round about this house. The day ah started school was probably ma more clear memories.

Schooling 00m 56s.

BP: Which school was it?

PW: It was Lochside Primary School in Lochside Road which was just oh, a five minute walk fae Mum's house, which was in Ainsley Avenue at the time but has now changed the name.

BP: Do you remember your first teacher?

PW: Yes, ma first teacher was actually a Mr Robertson who'd came to stand in cause there was two primary one's and there was only one teacher so ma first real teacher was Miss Jardine, who ah thought was absolutely ancient, even now when ah think about her but she could have been forty or whatever. You know what you're like when you're young, you just think everybody's, anybody older than you is old [*laughs*]. Ma, ah was, the day that ah started school ah can remember very clearly, ah met this girl who actually became ma lifelong friend and now had passed away, sadly, which has had quite a big effect on me. Ah better no go on too much about that, but anyway, and then ah remember Mr Robertson pulling me into the classroom and holding me so that Mum could go away. The next time, [?] she marched me back up of course, said I'd to stay there until ah was told to come home and that and she would meet us, she always came to meet us. Ah cannae actually remember what ah done apart from coloured rods, you know, yellows, one was a small white one or something then they aw had their colours for which, and that's how you learnt tae count and it was more or less based on counting and the teacher reading to ye. She would sit ye, ye'd tae sit on yer chair and she would come and read tae ye and that school, that part, the back part of it, the school was just in scaffolding when ah first started, it was a huge pile o scaffolding and I was only in the first wee four classrooms. Ah actually started the day Lochside School opened which was 1960, ah was born in 1955, and we spent the first two years there and then we moved into the secondary school which was a different kettle of fish because there was, then the way, now when ah think about it, it went intae divisions.

03m 19s.

Ye went intae a, so many kids who'd done probably better than anybody else in the wee school, went intae the higher primary three and then there was other ones who weren't stupid but just, werenae just as smart as these other ones. And then, now ah can remember

there came a division between the brighter people and the people who werenae exactly stupid but weren't super-bright. An ah went through primary school very happy but, wi ma friends an that ah was happy, ah wasnae, ah wasnae that happy at home because Mum was very strict, probably had tae be because she had a big family at the time and ma friends, me and two other people, Linda, Christine and John Gilbertson we were always top three in the class and sometimes ah was first and sometimes ah a wis second. The teacher, ah remember a teacher called Miss Clark who used, I had tae go and wash painting things in a cupboard and she was reading oot who was first in the class, who was second an ah remember washing these paint things in a cupboard and her saying 'Oh, Pamela Wright is first and ah dived oot o this cupboard and everybody started tae laugh, everybody started tae laugh [laughter] because ah just came oot and ah can see Miss Clark's face yet, 'Calm down, Calm down', ah was so excited.

Play 04m 48s.

But that was it and then jist normal play things, ah liked doin throwing balls up against the wall and jumpin and we had this, do different rhymes and Mary Queen o Scots got her head chopped off and things like that. And then skipping, it was, we used to The Wind, the Wind and it was always a boy's name that said 'He loved her' and things, it was just aw, that's what, ye didnae have a lot to play on. At the time, there wasnae monkey bars or nothing, when ah went into primary four or five they built monkey bars and things like that in the playground.

BP: Did you play marbles at all?

PW: Ah did play marbles, yes, aye, yer finger along the front of, it was always covered in muck [laughs] and I used to play this guy called Sturgeon, Brian Sturgeon his name was, he was a super, super guy, he was the top of marble players, but he used to rook aw ma marbles off me an there'd be nae point in gaun hame and cryin because she wouldnae listen tae ye, ye know, she didn't really listen tae you aboot anything, that's Mum of course.

05m 53s.

BP: You've said your Mum was one of a large family.

PW: Yea, she was one of sixteen, her mother and father, her father came from Dalbeattie originally and her mum was from, no, her father, sorry, her father came from Newton Stewart and her mum was a Dalbeattie lady. Ma granny died when ah was six, so ah've vague memories of her house on College Street, lookin over tae the swimmin pool. Ah remember asking ma grandfather what it was an he was down in his garden and his garden looked right over into the Nith and ah remember saying tae him 'Papa, what's that big thing over there?' He says 'Oh, it's a swimming pool' an he says 'Auch' he says 'They spend money on things they shouldnae spend money on.' And that was him but ah loved him to bits. He lived till ah was sixteen an he was eighty-nine an then he eventually, these houses in College Street were all knocked down so he was shoved into a house up in Lochside, across from the supermarket. But that was handy for us because he just stayed up roond the corner then and ah used to go and help him wi his messages and things, ah loved him tae bits.

BP: So you moved on to the High School at Marchmount?

PW: Ah moved on to Marchmount, what ah had learned at the primary school stays firmly in ma mind and ah know everything that ah learnt there but to be quite honest wi ye, the High

School was an absolute dead loss. First of all, we were all taken to the hall and we were told which class we were going tae be in and I was expecting to be in either an A or a B, at least, class and ah was put into 1c1, the girl who was always in the top wi me was put into 1c2 which was even lower and then, ah mean the only thing ah can actually remember learning at the High School was an Australia project which ah know quite a lot about Australia now and that's only because of that. We had loads and loads o free periods an ah don't know, ah ah didn't know at the time it was because there was not enough teachers or whether it was jist they werenae really interested in us but we used to be sent up to this guy called [REDACTED], whose wife also worked at the school and we saw her but this man was an absolute brute of a man when ah think back. Ah thought that then an ah think it now, he was just, you were only sat in his classroom to save ye bein in the hall because he, and what he used to do was, he would go in and he would put, there'd be a book sittin on your desk an he would just say 'Read, I'm going through here and ah can hear everything.' So he went through there and ma friend Alison, the one that passed away, she laughed at a dog out in the playgroup, playground, sorry, because it had three legs and he heard her and he come in and he banged the desk, the desk, wi the belt and said 'Right, who was laughing?' and she said, and she also said she was laughin at him and he thought, he just came right down and she got six of the belt and she broke her heart and still wouldnae say what she was, every stroke of the belt he said 'Was it me you were laughing at?' and she kept saying 'Yes' so that was it.

09m 10s.

So the high school, we only had three years then, we didnae get languages, we didnae get, what was it called, well typing, shorthand or nothing. We got nothing, aw we got, we did get domestic science, music, which was, very interested in music, always was in the choir. Mr Paton and Mr Carrick were the music teachers and ah liked them an a liked cookery as well but ah wisnae too keen on sewin and things but they had this flat there, this room, it was a school room but they turned it intae a modern sort of flat at the time and the girls were sent up there to learn how to keep a house, at fourteen years of age, ah thought it was ridiculous but then that's what happened and ye didnae oppose it because that's what happened, ye jist had tae get yer head down and get on wi it. And then ah left, ah left at fifteen, having just met ma boyfriend who works oot now tae be ma husband of forty years. We had a, we've had a happy, a comparatively happy life. Got married at nineteen, ah was nineteen on the Monday an ah got married on the Friday, stayed wi Mum for a year which was aw ah'll need tae get a word for it [*laughs*]. Horrific. She wouldnae let me cook, she wouldnae let me do anything and then ah had ma first child and he was, we stayed wi mum for that year and then we moved down to a little bungalow in Glencaple Road called 'High Kelton' and ah didnae like it down there then cause ah wasnae really a country person, ah was a town person having grown up in Lochside ah thought everybody lived in Lochside, well no specifically Lochside [*laughter*] but these sort of houses. But by this time ah'm talking about now ah knew there was class, ah knew there was definitely a class system going on wi people. Anyway, we stayed there for two year and then we moved up to our first flat which again was in Lochside but it was a nice flat right opposite Lochside Church and Dougie and I were happy and then two years later we had Paul and then a year, two years after that we had Naomi but ah was very, but going back to ma before a got married, ah was very involved wi the church maself and Alison, her parents were, her dad was an elder at the church.

BP: Which one was it? Which Kirk?

Lochside Church 11m 43s.

PW: Lochside, Lochside Church, we went to Brownies, we went to Sunday School, we went on lovely trips, we went to Butlins at Ayr, and had a great time and then we went on, when we were age, ah think it was thirteen or something, to Youth Fellowship where we went round with the minister, who was Mr Nichol at the time, he was lovely, he collected logs and things for old folk and we would go round delivering logs and sometime tins o soup and things to the old folk in Lochside. Very involved in the church, and ah wouldnae say ah'm a real religious person now but ah think ah was then but then was a time when ah was bringing up ma family an ah never really went to church. But it was always somewhere at the back o ma mind that ah really wanted to sing again somewhere and ah moved, well we moved from the flat to Summerhill.

Housing 12m 40s.

We got a big new house at Summerhill because ah had three kids and they were aw stuck in one bedroom at the flat in Lochside and the Council man came tae tell us that we had a house. He looked at the bedroom, the kids were staying in one bedroom and he said 'It's like a hospital ward [*laughs*] because it was bed upon bed and aw their toys and everything, because it was so small. And we always had a dog, our wee dog then was Toby, who was a cross Jack Russell and an absolute nutcase [*laughter*]. Then, where was I? Yea, we moved to Summerhill into this brand new house which was an absolute godsend because the kids, Naomi could have her own room and the boys had a big room to share. It had a dining room where you could have a table and everything which was really big for us, you know, we didnae have room for a table in the flat.

Work 13m 32s.

And then ah started working after that wi, ah worked at Safeway's for a number o years, aboot four or five years and then ah went to the new butcher's in Dumfries, Cranston's, it was an early morning job, ah set up the counter and everything, the reason why I took the job was because it was early morning an ah could have kind of the rest of the day ah would always be there for the kids comin in. But ah done, after that, before that ah did pub work so ah worked in the evening when ma husband was at home because we always needed two wages, ma husband didnae make enough money jist, you know, for to live reasonably comfortable.

BP: So was it a big change when you came to Collin village?

14m 23s.

PW: It was a very big change, for the simple reason is, well the main reason ah came here was because ah needed a house on the flat because ah'd had back surgery and the house that ah'd had was too big. Ah couldnae get up the stairs tae ma bed, ah couldnae do anything. It was a life changing thing, the back thing, but anyway, when ah came to Collin, before that ah was tellin people where ah was comin, ah looked, scoured the place lookin for a cottage that was jist on the flat and because of ma disability, ah was registered disabled an knew that ah could never work as far as, you know, ah'd have tae be walking aboot or sittin when ah feel like, it, ah couldnae, nobody's going to employ ye like that but ah did join the Children's Panel which was very interesting an that. But anyway, the village of Collin, people were saying 'Oh, you'll never settle, you'll never like it there. You're a town person and, honest tae God, the whole thing o changing, it was a big change in ma life, wi the back surgery but moving to Collin

was a great change as well and ah've never been happier, ah've made a lot o nice friends and ah know if there was anything wrong ah could go to numerous people and Dougie loves it, ma husband, we've got a wee dog called Summer and she loves it. It works out that the garden in it is, it is up steps but when we first moved here it was straight up, ma brother-in-law terraced it all and Dougie put it all in bushes and things so that he wouldnae need tae tend tae that and we've got a lovely garden up the top which ah can get to if ah just take ma time gaun up and comin back down. An ah started, seeing as a couldnae work, ah was in the Children's Panel for ten years and ah gave a lot o ma time up to that an it was very interesting and ah learnt a lot of stuff but then ma hip started playing up an ah had tae give it up for a while an ah just decided ah wasnae goin back because the whole system was changing, ah didnae like the way it was changing. So now ah thought 'Ah need a hobby'. Anyway in-between aw this ah had a wee friend in, before this ah had a wee friend called Marion that a met in the village, Marion Burns, and she introduced me to the choir, she introduced me to the wee social club and the both things ah says 'That's the main things in ma life now.' Ah'm quite involved in the community, ah was on the Hall Committee, ah'm in the choir, ah'm Chair of the wee social club that we have now and that's really ma life and it is a different, a far different life, if ah hadn't had ma back surgery ah'd probably still be in Dumfries but ah'm glad ah have in a way, you know what ah mean, it's just, it's a better life, healthier life and everything else. Ah can gaun a walk wi the dog, an ah really have got a lot o friends, the first person that spoke tae me was Jean Clark who said 'You must be the new lady', ah had two dogs at the time and ah thought 'Where am ah gonnae walk them?' because at the time ah still wisnae very great wi ma walkin and things. But eventually got a drug that they gave me that's slow release and ah can manage most things, to keep ma house tidy and just dae what ah dae. Ah've got a wee hobby o making jewellery and ah paint a wee bit up in ma summerhouse, no that ah'm that good at the painting but never mind.

17m 42s.

BP: It must be lovely looking out of your cottage window looking onto the field where you sometimes see deer.

PW: Yes, aye that's right, there's deer, an before, before it got so overgrown they had pigs in there, they had sheep in there, and it's nice, having been brought up in a town to look out and see trees and there are no houses. We chose a good place in Collin for our house and it was kind of breaking up when we moved into it but we've done a lot to it, spent what we made on the house in Summerhill, we just ploughed into the house in Collin and we've been here, we moved in on the 29th June, thirteen years ago, and this was the length o time ah stayed in Summerhill but ah always knew that Summerhill wasnae where ah wanted tae stay. Ah liked ma house but ah didnae like the area very much and then Mum wasnae talking to me for some reason, ah don't what ah done but for two years she never saw the house, an then when she came she got on tae me for moving as far out 'Oh what are ye daen away oot her?' she says. That's because ah'd been near her aw the time, see, even at Summerhill ah could hae walked fae Summerhill along the back road tae Mum. But ah needed to do that when ah needed to do it because ah had tae think on maself and the future, my disability, ah don't know how long ah'm gaunt tae be walkin for an, ye know, ah think it's because ah made this change and everything that ah'm still walking.

BP: Ye had some good holidays?

PW: Yea, we have holidays wi the wee social club, we have a wee Easter trip that we go on, it's getting less and less because people are older and they're no able tae go and this year we were away to Oban, four of us which was lovely and Dougie and I go holidays, we go one foreign holiday a year, this year it's to Lanzarote. The first holiday we ever could afford to go on was away back when we stayed in the house in Summerhill, Dougie's Mum said 'You need a holiday, you two' an we went o Portugal and she kept the three kids for two weeks which was marvellous. But ah missed they but it was good.

BP: Have you been to see your sister in Canada?

19m 55s.

PW: Yes, ah've been four or five times there, it's a beautiful island but then when ma sister left ah was fairly young and, well, ah was a teenager an ah missed her so much an it upsets me yet to see her goin an ah've never been a person that, although ah adjusted well to moving, an ma disability, ah've never been very good at people leaving, ah just, ah don't know what it is ah jist, it jist tears ma heart out if it's people that ah love and they're leaving, anybody, an just the person ah am, ah suppose.

BP: It's good that she's able to come over so regularly to see you.

PW: Yes, aye, aye. Well, she's always said, she said when mum and dad got to, she's been over their forty years in Prince Edward Island, and she always said 'Pam, you're the person ah'm going tae rely on to keep me informed o things because you're the only person that'll do it' an ah do, ah phone her regularly, she'll phone one fortnight, all phone the other an she, an ah tell her what's going on wi Mum who's now got dementia and Dad and just what's going on an she appreciates that, ah know she does. But when ah go over there ah feel quite free, ah says 'It's really nice to be in a country as far away' you know, ah've never been that far away before the first time. The first time ah went ah had, ah jist hadnae, ah had the three kids and we were staying at Summerhill and Dougie said 'We can afford for you tae go with Naomi, but we can't all afford to go' so ah took Naomi and she cried for her dad, she was ten at the time, and she cried for her dad every day, it wis ridiculous [*laughter*]. Ah couldnae move, an ah've been four or five times, four times, five times ah cannae just remember. Ah'm due to go back actually an ah'm just trying tae look at flights, no look at flights for tomorrow or anything but look at, there's no cheap airways there, cheap flights, an it's jist ah want tae go back, ah like tae go back an ah like tae be wi ma sister. When she comes over here, the main aim she comes over is to see Mum and Dad, because of the situation, but she squeezes in time for everybody. Ah'm really happy, ah'm quite happy here now and this is where ah'll probably, ah'm nearly sixty an ah cannae see me movin again, unless ah couldnae do the garden an something happened to Dougie.

BP: Well, it's been lovely hearing your story, Pam, thank you very much for telling us all about your family and your life.

PW: You're welcome.

BP: Thank you.

End of interview.