

Interviewee: Pamela Baillie (PB)	Interviewers: Susan Howell (SH)
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TITLE	<i>Pamela Baillie interviewed by Susan Howell</i>
REGION	<i>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</i>
SUBJECTS/KEYWORDS	<i>KEY THEMES AND SUBJECTS Cultural life; working life; family life; social life;</i>
COUNTY	<i>Dumfries &amp; Galloway</i>
TOWN	<i>Kirkcudbright</i>
DATE OF INTERVIEW	<i>27/01/2018</i>
INTERVIEWER	<i>Susan Howell</i>
YEAR RANGE	<i>1954 - 2018</i>
SUMMARY	<i>Pamela tells of her early days in Kirkcudbright and the artists she knew who lived in the town. In her younger days there were few shops selling the work of the local artists. She left the town in 1972 but returned later and she tells of the changes made, the new shops and galleries where the artist's work can now be seen.</i>

00.00.00

**PB:** Have you pressed it?

**SH:** Hello Pam, yes, hello Pam this is Susan Howell and I'm interviewing Pam Baillie on January the 27th 2018 in Kirkcudbright. This is a first interview so we're slightly testing the equipment which seems to be working. Hi Pam glad you could come along. I think you know what this . . . project is about. Are right have you had?

**PB:** Yes, yes I've, I, I have read the background and have been present at some of the meetings so yes.

**SH:** OK.

**PB:** I'm aware of the aims of the project.

**SH:** OK that's, that's good. So can, can you tell me a little bit about yourself and, and why you're interested in being involved in this?

**PB:** Well I was born and in Kirkcudbright itself my mother also was born in Kirkcudbright so from her, from my mother's side we're a Kirkcudbright family, and I was born in 1954 and lived in Kirkcudbright till 1972. I've just returned recently so I was living during, well I was very young so I've got a few memories of some of the artists and definitely growing up in Kirkcudbright I

was all, I was always aware that it was an artist's town that, you know, the history of the artists and their beginning of that century.

**SH:** Yes, yes, yes. Did, did you go to school in Kirkcudbright?

**PB:** I did yes, yes.

**SH:** And were, were, was art a big.

**PB:** I, I actually I.

**SH:** Object?

**PB:** I was pondering on this and . . . I wondered whether Kirkcudbright influenced or whether, anyway, you know, one has that in, in one's self because in fact all, all of my siblings were interested in art particularly my sister and, and, and myself and I ended up doing an Art O level in sixth year at school and used to love it. We would be just allowed to go out into the town and be an artist. Actually we'd go down Castle Dykes and, and we would draw and paint.

**SH:** So there were, there was always a dedicated art teacher at school?

**PB:** Ah yes actually in fact when I was at school there were, there was always two and I also remember in primary school our, certainly one of our teachers in, I think it was Primary Six, she, she was an artist herself so we [unclear].

**SH:** Do, do you remember who that was?

**PB:** Ah it was a Miss Smith.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** Can't, can't remember her first name but she had been a teacher of my mother as well at school, but she used to, we'd get a dedicated afternoon where we would paint, yes.

00.03.33

**SH:** You said, you said you felt growing up that Kirkcudbright was an artist's town. What made you think, gave you that feeling?

**PB:** Well I can't remember whether it was my parents or, or just at school, but, you know, hearing the history of Jessie M King. And I remember myself asking my mother if she remembered Jessie M King. She wasn't very, she said she just remembered her, she wore a lot of black and a big hat or something and cycled round the town, but I don't think she knew her very well. But, for example my mum was a, a best friend of Justine Jeffs or I think her name was Lees, her married name the daughter of Tim Jeffs ( James Gunyeon Jeffs) and so we knew that family and the son of Justine was in one of my brother's classes at school. And I used to occasionally visit; I remember an elderly relative used to come maybe once a year and he always liked to go down I think and buy some of the, the weaving there and we would go in and I would be, I would go with him and, you know the, he always sat and had long conversations with Tim Jeffs. And for myself when I was quite a bit older I think actually I'd left Kirkcudbright and when I would go back I'd bump into him in town, Mr Jeffs, and always end up having about an hour long conversation in the street about rather existential things or spiritual matters which were very [unclear].

**SH:** That's interesting.

**PB:** Yeah for me.

**SH:** That's interesting, yes. How, how did the artists sell their work, were there galleries in those, at that time and?

**PB:** Well . . . the, I mean, the Harbour Cottage Gallery was functioning at that time. I can't remember which year that was launched. I think it was around; it was in the 50's at some point. There was Miles Johnston (William Miles Johnston) who had his shop, so he had a shop and Tim Jeffs the, in that lovely Close where, you know, the house that he lived.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** It had his name on a, there was a, a sign there and I think you could just go down and into their studio. Mr Lochhead, Tommy Lochhead, had the pottery and you basically that was the.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** The studio you could go and you would buy pots there and as a child we used to love it. We, we would go along there and, you know, wonder in hoping that he would invite us to go and show us how to do, to throw pots on the wheel, which he did quite often, and that was really.....

**SH:** Yes, yes, yes. That sounds fun.

**PB:** Big fun yes.

**SH:** Yes, yes.

**PB:** So that was over at the Old Mill Pottery.

**SH:** Did he fire the pots for you and let you keep them?

**PB:** No, maybe none of them were to such a standard, but, but we would get some.....

00.07.10

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** Small instructions.

**SH:** Yes, yes.

**PB:** And I remember having at, I don't know what age I was, but taking I thought was a very, very lovely photograph he had all the pots, little; there were small bowls just sitting in the sunshine with, you know, shadows and I thought I took such a lovely photograph of them. But I've no idea where that photo is now.

**SH:** Do you have any of his pots?

**PB:** I think I've got one small one and a tiny little vase, yes.

**SH:** Yes

**PB:** Yeah. Yes.

**SH:** So are there any other people that you remember?

**PB:** That's right we lived in Barrhill Avenue and Phyllis Bone stayed just down the road basically, and she must've been, I think, a very private lady. We, we, we didn't she her very much and had no idea in fact that she was actually, had done some major.....

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** Major things.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** In their artist world.

**SH:** So you, you, you left Kirkcudbright and went into.

**PB:** I did yeah.

**SH:** Had your career elsewhere and are, are now back. Do you feel a difference, is it a different sort of a place vis-à-vis its art or do you think, does it still have that vibe for you?

**PB:** I think it definitely has a very special **vibe** still. I mean obviously it's going to be different there's different people **etcetera** but . . . I know it yeah it's difficult to put it into words isn't it, **but.....**

**SH:** Anyway.

**PB:** I think people, people have always been attracted to Kirkcudbright because of the art scene and the art scene it may be different but as I say different people. I think . . . I actually, you know, as, as a, as a young person in Kirkcudbright previously I used to think . . . you, you asked about how they marketed well there wasn't sort of nice shop windows apart from maybe one or two places. I think now it, it's, it's more organised, it's more; there are exhibitions there're different art studios where the art is shown. It, to me, it as a child anyway it wasn't that obvious and everything was at . . . basically not, not quite as well organised and at least I ; this was my impression, but then I wasn't involved in, in.....

00.10.11

**SH:** We're, we're, we're going to have this new, wonderful new gallery.

**PB:** Yeah.

**SH:** What do you think of that?

**PB:** Well I think it's, it's an excellent move actually. I like the idea and certainly if, if you do want to attract people to Kirkcudbright.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** Yeah it certainly it, it's, it's a great addition to the, the artistic nature of the town.

**SH:** Do, do, do you get a feel from the people you meet in town how Kirkcudbright's sort of viewed by the outsider and the incomers, is it in terms of the art?

**PB:** I, I think Kirk, well we know Kirkcudbright is an attractive town and you do hear people; I've, I've overheard conversations of incomers, you know, people visiting saying, you know gosh it, you know it's, it, it's very special. I think when, when you actually live in the town maybe if you've lived here all your life you're not so aware how charming it is actually and there's,

there's a lot, I mean all the, the, the little Closes down the High Street etcetera , there're very special.

**SH:** Yes. Yes, yes they are. So, you know, do you have, do you have any other sort of [unclear].

**PB:** I, I was; just one, one little I suppose thing I could say is that, I mean we used to go into Miles Johnston's shop there.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** He had a little shop and he was quite commercial with, he needed, you know, the money to, to live and as, as a young child I, I often thought, you know because he did, he did little animals on, on sort of cut-out pieces of plywood and so on.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** As, as a child I thought, mm, little bit unprofessional, that was my opinion which is a bit interesting.

**SH:** You were perhaps expecting pictures in frames and.

**PB:** Yeah. But, I mean, that sort of thing like my, my brother has; it, it was my aunt had it, a lovely stool of his and I can see now it's a shame, I mean it was basically used and there's like pu, it's got a lovely deer on the top and there's painting round the legs. But, you know, it's been used, there's paint, splashes of paint on it so things were bought as everyday objects.

**SH:** Yes.

**PB:** But they were now, now if, there're regarded, you know, really in, in perhaps a different light.

**SH:** Something, something special.

**PB:** Yeah.

**SH:** Yes.

00.13.11

**PB:** But probably because, you know, when an artist passes away then their work becomes more sought after, because there's going to be no more. Yeah.

**SH:** Yes. Yes, yes, yes. Excellent well . . . I think have you said all you think you might remember of the days gone by?

**PB:** Yes I think so.

**SH:** Right we'll close the interview now thank you.

00.13.45