

Interviewee: Andrew Campbell (AC)	Interviewers: Vivien Scott (VS); Fiona Smith (FS)
Date of Interview: 5 April 2018	Ref: DG60-3-1-1-T

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COUNTY	Dumfries and Galloway.
TOWN	Kirkcudbright.
DATE OF INTERVIEW	5th April 2018.
INTERVIEWER	Vivien Scott and Fiona Smith
YEAR RANGE	2000-
SUMMARY	Andrew Campbell talks about his memories of the artists in the town when he was growing up. They discuss the changes in Kirkcudbright since the heyday of the original artists, many of whom took an active role in the community. He highlights the tremendous spirit of volunteering in the town that has seen it flourish in local amenities and promoting its cultural wealth.

FS: That's us then, we're all set we're all firin' on all cylinders I do believe and Vivien and I are with Andy Campbell who is gonna tell us about any reminiscences from other people.

AC: Few memories of what artists ah have got yeah, the one first of all is Jessie M. King, who Jessie Cummings - who was Brownie - lived in the close here, was a relation part o' the family, so we were back an' forward often enough to Greengate, but I don't recall the lady at all - but I know that I did huv a hard-boiled Easter egg hand-painted by Jessie M. King that hung about the house for a long long time but where it went or why it went I don't know - but as I say that was one memory we've got an' as ah say in an' out the close with Anna Hotchkiss, Dorothy Rey and Merle was it? Merle Taylor, the daughter, but I mean I worked in and out but it was only a case as ah say ah didny know them ah didny mix wi' them [an'] didny know them any other way, an' as ah say the other one would be Hornel at Broughton House, he had a lot of properties but I'm afraid in our house or in the joiners houses he was a dirty word! *[Laughter]* He took what he wanted, he scrounged I mean, well Broughton House is still like that it's all bits an' pieces that was collected from all sorts o' places an' as ah say he wis - he raked the countryside lookin' for them, an' takin' 'em!

FS: For the garden perhaps, as well as the house?

AC: Oh well anything, yes, yes, he just had an eye for somethin' different was what it always was you know if he found somethin' that was ye had tae hide it from Hornel! *[Laughs]*

VS: And why the joiners specifically?

AC: Well ma grandfather he wasny just a joiner but he was a builder a contractor, they did a lot o' work round about the town an' he was in and out for these places although he lost the place toward the end there is a letter of Jessie M. King's where she's sittin' waitin' on Mr. Campbell comin' tae see some work but she's not sure what sort o' state he'll be in! [*Laughs*] He got a wee bit - the drink got the better o' him in the end uh huh, but as ah say that was the only memories ah've got o' these artist at all, ah mean ah can remember Miles Johnston in his shop but ah were never in it, ah certainly wasny a collector of any o' his bits an' pieces, but where else they were and who else they were ah'm afraid that was not my circle at all! [*Laughs*]

FS: And did your father speak about them at all 'cause he probably did work -

AC: Well he did the work as well, oh ah mean ma father never had a bad word for anybody an' he was in an' out o' places like Greengate an' Broughton House doin' bits an' pieces but as ah say by that time they weren't well Anna Hotchkiss an'

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Dorothy Rey were still there, in fact ah've got a picture hangin' up on the wall there by Dorothy Rey that was a weddin' present tae my wife an' masel, she had the owls you know, there was a - she actually lived in the house an' there was an owl sat on the hot water cylinder, Jeeves.

VS: A live one?

AC: A live owl that was part o' the show, well there was more than one but Jeeves is the name that ah remember, but aye she kept it, it was a live owl in the house aye.

FS: Good heavens, did you ever see it fly?

AC: Yes, well no' fly, it would hop from place tae place - it didny fly whether it could or not ah don't know!

FS: I was wondering perhaps if it had been injured and couldn't fly?

AC: Aye well ah suppose that was the type o' thing they did wasn't it, they looked after these bits but it was just strange that when one died she got another one, ah remember there was two that ah did know aye, but as ah say other than that ah haveny got a lot o' memories of who they were?

VS: Do you remember the summer school comin' to -

AC: Ah remember the summer school an' the Jeffs an' their classes an' such like but again never any part of it or - ah know it was missed when it stopped, there was always folk lookin' and I can remember that the artists on the streets you know the

boards set up on the streets, it was quite a feature while that class was on [that] they were definitely there.

FS: And they organised the pageants and things?

VS: That was Jessie M. King that was instrumental in that ah think, yeah.

AC: But again I don't recall them at all, ah mean ah might hae been six year old say, ah might have seen the pageant but ah've a memory of a pageant that you know down the close it was a builders yard but Dovecroft had been made, just made, ah think it might have been the first year it was tarmacked an' there was a parade went down Dovecroft an' ah always remember that somebody off one o' the floats threw a leg and there was this leg sailed over, ah can remember bein' told tae fetch this leg and hand it back! [Laughter] But other than that whether there was a connection with Jessie M. King ah don't know.

FS: Absolutely fascinating, it seemed to me that the Kirkcudbright then was terribly vibrant there seemed to be an awful lot always going on?

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VS: Maybe there still is, is there?

AC: Aw come on, you must - there's nothing like it! Ah mean Kirkcudbright just now is so positive, so alive, so goin' places an' ah think it always has been - ah mean when ye look round about an' see that we did our own bridge, we did the Harbour Gallery, we did the tennis club, the golf club, we've done the swimmin' pool, we're now lookin' at the Johnston School - ah mean it's an amazin' place for we'll dae it oursel's.

VS: And the caravan park.

AC: The caravan park is comin' on now as well, but as ah say ah think that wee bit of our the isolationism of Kirkcudbright is its strength you know, ye have tae make it work, we have tae make it work ourselves.

FS: Yes, when you put it like that in what has been done it is amazing for a small place.

AC: Uh huh, ah think there's nothin' like it ah mean these artists took that [again] they say it was the light an' the personalities that brought them here, but as ah say Kirkcudbright had somethin' goin' even yet when I find folk that come in on a Thursday night for the first time they'll come back time an' time again, it's the sort of place that attracts folk, it's a friendly, willin', co-operative type o' place.

FS: Yes I remember the first time it was very moving the first time I ever saw the Thursday night it really was, I was almost in tears, it was just well - I'd never seen anything like it, it was lovely, thanks to you Andy largely thanks to you.

AC: Oh no, ah'm just part o' the team.

VS: So that's the Scottish night that is on on a Thursday night?

FS: That's right, yes.

AC: But these traditions you know that ah know that we're talkin' about the 'artists town' that's got the history, but as ah say when ye look around now it's still there, we still have a huge artistic colony round about - maybe not with the names we had at the time but these names might come yet, there's nobody makes it while they're alive dae they? *[Laughter]*

VS: What do you think the new Kirkcudbright Gallery will do for the town?

AC: Ah'm hopin' it'll be somethin' special, somethin' spectacular, ah mean the plans and the reports ah'm hearin' are all good an' the initial exhibitions that are comin' are fantastic, but it has tae continue it has tae remain an' we have tae find

09:15

somewhere tae park all these thousands o' folk who are goin' to come, we have tae find somewhere for them tae stay when they come ah mean it's a way forward there no two ways about that, but we also have tae watch - I'm goin' to protest at a plannin' meetin' just in a weeks time about the windfarms round about you know we don't want these hundred and fifty metre high wind turbines hangin' over Kirkcudbright.

FS: I didn't know that had been proposed.

AC: *[Knockendarroch]* Wind Farm, ah think there's oh ah don't know how many but there's maybe ten hundred and fifty metre high turbines, ye'll see them from the golf club, ye'll see them fae the caravan park -

VS: Oh an' they're beautiful views over there.

AC: Yeah.

FS: When is that meeting?

AC: Third o' May.

FS: At?

AC: It'll be Dumfries. It's part o' the artists town ah can assure ye! *[Laughter]*

FS: I've always wondered who was it Hornel who invited his artist friends down originally, how did it all come about or was it sort of like osmosis, it just sort of - ?

AC: Aye well, ah think Hornel had the place an' as ah say he invited folks down [?] when Jessie M. King and company came they created quite a pull an' a mean they took part in the town, they were councillors, they saved the Harbour Art Gallery ye know, these folk were instrumental in creatin' what we have got no two ways about it, in more ways in just the artist that you know the art they produced, they were real community folk.

FS: And how long was that whole artists town period?

AC: Now ah don't know.

FS: I just wondered when it started and how it eventually petered out, I suppose people died?

AC: Aye well exactly yeah, but ah mean it would be right frae the Nineteen hundreds right through tae the Nineteen sixties.

FS: Really?

11:41

AC: Uh huh.

VS: D'you remember Donald Rudd?

AC: Oh yes, yes.

VS: He was quite a character?

AC: Very much so, there was well he was just famous for what he did but two or three stories but he created a shop round [in] Rudd's Spuds the chip shop! But as ah say the other thing when Donald died his wife in the close next tae Harry [Marland] and she was sellin' his car Harry [Marland] decided he would buy this car o' Donald Rudd's, now it was quite an old car but it had been bought new and it had no mileage on it whatsoever, but Donald's wife said to Harry, it'll go as far as [?] Brig it'll rear up on its hin' wheels turn roond and come hame again! *[Laughter]*

FS: Oh that's beautiful! What was Donald Rudd was he - ?

AC: He was an artist.

VS: He was an artist and it was when you mentioned the Harbour Gallery because I think he was quite instrumental in savin' it, from what I heard?

AC: Aye part o' the crew, uh huh.

VS: After the police houses were - that area was pulled down they were going to demolish the Harbour Gallery.

AC: Donald he was what the [range] safety boat for a while, aye he was quite a character.

FS: But as an artist as well as a - ?

AC: Oh yes, yes, he did a bit o' -

FS: What kind of a shop [it] was a fish and chip shop?

VS: It was Rudd's Spuds where Lily Knowles florist was in Castle Street for a while I think that was the one, wasn't it?

AC: Aye, an' he did upholstery and such like, previous to that he tried all sorts but in the end his fishin' boat an' his safety fleet was the thing that kept him. That's as much as ah've got for you guys.

VS: Well that was excellent thank you very much.

14:21

Clip 1

Start: 04:43

End: 07:13

In this clip they talk about the vibrancy of the town in Andrew's youth with its highly visible artists painting on their easels in the street at the summer schools and the pageants they were involved in. He goes on to emphasise how the energy of the current community has kept it thriving, suggesting that Kirkcudbright's relative isolation might have been a factor in the spirit of the place.

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