

Interviewee(s): Elizabeth Strachan (ES)	Interviewer(s): Helen Bleck (HB)
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REGION	East Lothian
COUNTY	Haddingtonshire
TOWN/VILLAGE	Pencaitland

TITLE	<i>Helen Bleck interviews Elizabeth Strachan.</i>
REGION	<i>Lothian</i>
SUBJECTS/KEYWORDS	<i>Community, rural life, moving to Scotland, teaching, clubs and societies.</i>
COUNTY	<i>East Lothian</i>
TOWN	<i>Pencaitland</i>
DATE OF INTERVIEW	<i>21/04/19</i>
INTERVIEWER	<i>Helen Bleck</i>
YEAR RANGE	<i>2019</i>
SUMMARY	<i>Fieldworker Helen Bleck interviews Elizabeth Strachan about her life, career and moving up to Scotland. Elizabeth talks about her background, being born in Surrey to Scottish parents and eventually studying at St Andrews and moving up to Scotland following her parents' retirement up here. Elizabeth talks about how she got into teaching, after a spell of working in the University of London library, and how she became qualified to teach in Scotland at Moray House. Elizabeth talks about moving to Pencaitland, and retiring there. They discuss neighbours, the community and such. Helen also asks Elizabeth about her involvement in community groups, such as helping to organise music and lecture societies in the surrounding area.</i>

Keywords: Background; Moving to Scotland; Teaching; Moving to Pencaitland; Societies/Clubs; Building Work Protests.

Background – 0h 00m 00s

HB: Ok, so this is an interview with fieldworker Helen Bleck.

ES: Yes *[laughter]*.

HB: And I am talking to Elizabeth Strachan?

ES: Strachan.

HB: Yes?

ES: That may come up in it...

HB: Yes. Ok.

ES: Yes.

HB: And it's Easter Sunday, in 2019. So, first of all I'm going to take you through the fieldworker's reference sheet, those questions.

ES: Yeah.

HB: And then we'll on our chat.

ES: Yeah.

HB: Ok?

ES: Ok.

HB: So, could you let me know your age?

ES: Yes, it's no secret. I'm going to be celebrating a big one in August.

HB: Ooh.

ES: Ninety coming up.

HB: Wow.

ES: So, I'm eighty-nine.

HB: Eighty-nine at the moment. Wow, ninety, that's exciting. Um, place of recording, well that's your house, Tyneholm Cottages in Pencaitland.

ES: Mmhm.

HB: Area of birth – where were you born, Elizabeth?

ES: In, um, Surrey – [Cheam?].

HB: Cheam.

ES: London suburb. I don't know which is most appropriate.

HB: I'll put Cheam, Surrey.

ES: Yes.

HB: And, um, I'll fill in your current address. Previous areas lived. Where else have you lived? Well you started off in Cheam...

ES: Yes. Various places I've worked.

HB: Yes?

ES: Anywhere that I can remember really?

HB: Yes.

ES: I mean, probably other things will come to me-

HB: Yeah, that's fine.

ES: -slowly. Spent quite a lot of time in Yorkshire, as an evacuee with aunts during the war.

HB: Mmhm.

ES: Um, then moved to Scotland because I was a student at St Andrews. So, Scotland-

HB: Just continue-

ES: -is Scotland precise enough?

HB: Whereabouts in Scotland?

Moving to Scotland – 0h 02m 00s

ES: Actually lived, when I was a student at St Andrews, and then I was at Edinburgh, and then Pencaitland I think that's about it.

HB: Ok. When did you move to Pencaitland?

ES: That was '76, I think.

HB: Ok.

ES: I could be wrong.

HB: Righty-ho. Well, that sounds good. Quite a lot of Scotland in there.

ES: Mmhm.

HB: Why did you move to Scotland in the first place?

ES: Well, parents were Scottish.

HB: Mmhm.

ES: Father retired to Scotland. So, started spending more time and decided I would like to live here.

HB: Ok.

ES: I think. Can't remember more precisely than that.

HB: Whereabouts in Scotland were your parents from?

ES: Where they were from?

HB: Mm.

ES: Well, actually my mother was from Edinburgh. Well, she was born in Fife, but she was Edinburgh really. My father was a generation away, he was born in Sunderland. His father came from Fyvie in Aberdeenshire.

HB: Right, ok. Right of course, so really covers Scotland. *[laughter]*.

ES: Yes. *[laughter]*.

HB: Right. So, you moved up to Scotland to go to university, what did you study and how did that lead into what you did next?

ES: Well, I did English and History, and then that doesn't really fit you for anything. *[laughter]*. Except for teaching. And one thing I knew I didn't want to do was teach. So, I got a job as a librarian in the University of London library.

HB: Oh right.

ES: Think I was there for about three years. Found it terribly boring. And if I was going to progress up the librarian ladder, I was going to have to take all kinds of tedious exams. And meanwhile a friend had- we'd all thought we don't want to be teachers, and one of them said, well I had to take a job teaching but actually it was good fun. So, I thought I'd give teaching a go, and I found it much more entertaining than being a librarian anyway.

Teaching – 0h 04m 27s

HB: Whoops. What did you like about teaching?

ES: Well... Well, I suppose it was the interaction with the children, and doing my subject, cause I was always keen on my subject.

HB: So, what was your subject?

ES: English.

HB: English.

ES: I did History as well. When I had to. *[laughter]*. Not that I didn't like it but I much preferred English. And Drama I did- I used to produce school plays. Can't remember anything else off hand.

HB: Whereabouts did you do that?

ES: I started my first teaching job... Well, apart from one or two part-time... Or temporary ones... First one was in Kent, in Tunbridge.

HB: Oh? Right.

ES: Tunbridge Wells Grammar. And then I came to Scotland because my parents retired up here and I'd already got to think it would be a nice place to live. And then when I came here, they wouldn't have me as a teacher, except in private schools.

HB: Oh.

ES: Didn't have the right teacher's training. So, I did my teacher's training at Moray House.

HB: Right, and then what made you come up here?

ES: Well, my relations, still do actually, run- ran Crieff Hydro.

HB: Right.

ES: And when my father retired – he was a GP – um, it was all rather a complicated story, but anyway, he went- he moved up to Crieff to be- they used to have a resident doctor. He was the resident doctor at the Hydro at the time. But, you know, he was retirement age. But, anyway, that's what he did. So, he moved to Crieff, and so I moved up afterwards when I discovered what a lovely place Scotland was to live. *[laughter]*.

0h 06m 32s

HB: So, you studied your teachers' training at Moray House?

ES: Yes.

HB: And then what happened?

ES: I must've got jobs. *[laughter]*.

HB: Where was your- can you remember the first place that you worked in- was it in Edinburgh?

ES: Oh, my very first place was a crummy little girls' school, um, called St Serf's.

HB: Oh, right.

ES: And they didn't mind that I wasn't qualified.

HB: Mm.

ES: I mean I had a degree but you know I didn't have a teacher's training, and I thought well, I can't stay here forever if I want to have access to reputable schools-

HB: Yeah.

ES: -I've got to get trained. So, I went to Moray House.

HB: Right.

ES: They do teacher's training.

HB: Ok. And then once you got your teachers' training, where did you go?

ES: I think I... I went to a very tough school.

HB: Sorry, can you speak up a bit?

ES: I'm just thinking really.

HB: Right.

ES: I tell you what, if I can't remember something, I'll write down what I can't remember.

HB: Ok.

ES: And I'll think, I'll come back...

HB: Ok. Well, it doesn't really matter. I mean, when- I mean you were teaching- how long were you teaching for? Would you have qualified in the fifties? Sixties?

0h 08m 02s

ES: I'd have qualified in '60.

HB: In the sixties- in 1960?

ES: I think so.

HB: So, you were teaching for quite a long time?

ES: Oh, yes I- well, I didn't teach all the time, cause I ran out of steam for teaching at some stage. And that's where I became a... School librarian.

HB: School librarian? Yes, I think you were- you told me that before.

ES: Yes. Had I already qualified as a- got a library qualification?

HB: Yes, because your first job was in the library in London, wasn't it? And you found it incredibly dull.

ES: Yes. I don't think I had a library qualification at that time.

HB: Oh, right.

ES: Because at that time they- if you had a degree, that was ok.

HB: Right.

ES: And I think they were tougher in Scotland. I think you had to have a library qualification.

HB: That's interesting.

ES: But who knows it's all... Could be inaccurate.

HB: No, I'm sure it-

ES: To the best of my knowledge. *[laughter]*.

HB: Ah, fine. So, em, what took you between qualifying at Moray House and moving to Pencaitland in 1976? And you must've been- did you work in lots of different places during that time? ...

ES: I tried- yes, I was quite keen to work in state schools, for sort of idealistic reasons I didn't just want to be with privileged private schools. But I just found it incredibly difficult. I spoke a different language for a start. They all fell about at my voice. *[laughter]*. And, um, I was not a great success in state schools. And I'm afraid somebody offered me a job in a small girls' private school, what bliss it was! *[laughter]*.

Oh 10m 10s

HB: Were they all very well behaved?

ES: Well, I mean, compared with state schools: big mixed classes of broad-speaking Scots-

HB: Yes.

ES: -laughing their heads off at my voice. *[laughter]*. It's just as I remember it, I may be wrong. But, um, yes I mean, it was a holiday.

HB: Yeah, it must've been nice. Yeah, I can imagine. I think I would've felt the same.

ES: Yes. They were funny. I mean, they were... I think it was just I was exhausted by-

HB: Yeah.

ES: -battling away with difficult mixed- large mixed classes.

HB: Yes. How long did- were you doing that for?

ES: I think about three years. I think I stuck with it.

HB: Yeah. So, you went to a small girls' school after that.

ES: Yes.

HB: Did- was that where you stayed?

ES: Yes.

HB: Right, ok. Can you remember the name of the school?

ES: Yes. Cranley.

HB: Cranley?

ES: Yeah.

HB: I don't know that. Is that in Edinburgh?

ES: Yes, it closed quite a long time ago.

HB: Right.

ES: Yeah.

HB: Was that- obviously you'd already retired by then presumably?

ES: Yeah... Well, I went to- I worked at Watson's.

HB: Right.

ES: As a school librarian.

HB: Right.

ES: And Cranley closed. Is that why I moved? Yes, I think it must have.

HB: Yes. Ok.

ES: It was just too small, it wasn't really viable.

HB: Yeah. So, you were a school librarian at Watson's?

ES: Mmhm.

HB: And were you a librarian when you moved to Pencaitland? Or were you still teaching?

0h 12m 08s

ES: I think I was a librarian by then.

HB: Right. And what made you decide to come out to Pencaitland?

ES: Oh, I know. Yes, I'd had a year in Canada.

HB: Oh!

ES: My mother had died, my sister had died, and it had all been a terribly stressful time.

HB: Mm.

ES: And I felt I needed a break. And my brother- my older brother was working out in Canada, and they said why didn't I go and spend- have a break and spend some time with him? So, I ended up spending a year there. And when I came back, I mean I was in Vancouver but... So, it was in a city but it was a very spacious city with great mountains and everything round about it. Came back to my little top flat in Edinburgh's west end and I just felt incredibly hemmed in.

HB: Mm.

ES: So, that's really why, I think.

HB: Oh, that's interesting.

ES: Mmhm.

HB: So, did you go back to your job at Watson's after Canada or did you-?

ES: No, I went back to Cranley.

HB: Ah, right, ok.

ES: They kept the job for me.

HB: Oh, that was nice.

ES: Yes.

HB: And then you-

ES: And Cranley closed.

HB: Right. So, when you decided that Edinburgh was too hemming in-

ES: Mm.

HB: -what did you do? Did you just sort of- did you know you wanted to come out to East Lothian or-?

ES: I- no, I think I- I spent about a year exploring. It had to be in a certain radius so that I could commute quite easily.

HB: Yes.

ES: And I more or less explored, and decided that East Lothian was the most desirable.

HB: Mm, I agree. *[laughter]*. And then when you decided on East Lothian I suppose you had your- you already had your car by that stage?

Moving to Pencaitland – 0h 14m 10s

ES: Oh, yes.

HB: Yeah. So, you were doing all this by car?

ES: Yes.

HB: Em, did you have friends out here already?

ES: No, I don't think so. Well, I might have had them, but they were scattered, you know?

HB: Right.

ES: Not in the village. I don't think.

HB: So, tell me a bit about your exploring around East Lothian and how you plonked for Pencaitland? Oh, it doesn't matter if you can't remember that story.

ES: The thing is, I had a very good friend who was an architect, and he loved looking at properties. So, he was very good at sussing places out and telling whether they were good *[specs?]*, and sound, and good value, and all that sort of thing.

HB: Mm.

ES: I think I spent about a year until I found this one. And I remember looking at it from the outside, and thinking oh no, I don't want to live right on the street and I don't want any bother. To look at

just one- and I thought, I've got to look at it better and then I looked at it. This extension had already been built, and walked through here and looked out at the back and saw the cows in the fields. I thought, yes, yes this is it! *[laughter]*.

HB: Yes.

ES: And I thought this'll do for now, and here I still am.

HB: Well.

ES: Then I got the house next door you see.

HB: Right.

ES: Because it was a wee bit cramped. It was exactly the three rooms, and it was a bit cramped.

HB: Yeah.

ES: And then I got the house next door. I wasn't able to afford to do much to it, but I got an extra room out of it.

0h 16m 03s

HB: Right.

ES: I got a spill-over into the space.

HB: Yes. So, the rooms in this house which is a- is it a farmer's cottage originally?

ES: It's an old miner's road.

HB: Miners?

ES: Yeah.

HB: Right.

ES: I think originally, it could have been farmers, but I think it was a miners' road, because the owners of Tyneholm House were mine owners.

HB: Right.

ES: And they- and there were local mines-

HB: Yes.

ES: -those days.

HB: Right. Up along where the railway path is now?

ES: Yes, that's right.

HB: So, these weren't built by the same person who built the cottages across the road then? Cause those have-

ES: These are older.

HB: Oh, right. These are older? That's interesting.

ES: Yes. I used to know this... Basically, of course, there was one room-

HB: Yeah.

ES: -it was a button [?] then originally.

HB: Right.

ES: But if you look at the frontage, they're very low, look at the height of them. Because they're low that rather dates them too.

HB: Yeah.

ES: And the- oh, well I think their roofs had been raised, too. I did do quite a lot of research into it.

HB: Well, we'll have to talk about that another time-

ES: Ages ago.

HB: -when we can take a look at your notes, cause that sounds interesting. Because we're living right next door to you, my house is quite similar.

ES: It's quite similar, yes.

HB: But yours is still- it's all on one floor, and so you've got your front room, your middle room, which is your bedroom-

ES: Yes.

HB: -and then, um, and then this room, the living room.

ES: Would you like to see it? Because it's all been added on to in a very piecemeal kind of way.

HB: Well, maybe we can take a couple of photos later on, if you find it... Cause I'm quite interested in how these houses have changed over time.

0h 18m 07s

ES: Oh, yes.

HB: And I know people in the street are changing the houses quite a lot. You must've seen quite a lot of changes in the village, in the street in particular. Well, I don't know if we can call it a street, it's more of a road, really.

ES: Yes, yes.

HB: Yes. What kind of changes have you seen?

ES: Well, certainly... I've written it all down somewhere. Can't remember where.

HB: Well, look, doesn't matter just what filters up.

ES: Right. *[laughter]*. Um, next door, an old miner and his wife, a retired miner.

HB: Right, right.

ES: And they were very hostile to me.

HB: Oh, dear.

ES: To begin with. And then I think they realised I wasn't too bad. *[laughter]*. We became quite pally in the end.

HB: Why do you think they were hostile?

ES: Oh, class.

HB: Really?

ES: Oh, I think so.

HB: That's interesting.

ES: Their village, a mining village, was being invaded by the middle class.

HB: Yes. Really?

ES: I think so.

HB: I think there's still quite a lot of that, amongst the people who have been here for a long time.

ES: Mm.

HB: Well, not- not hostility, but regret, I think, about the changes. So, had they lived here forever? Were they Pencaitlandites?

ES: I must tell you, something has surfaced from the depths.

HB: Yes, yes.

ES: You know there's a gate there?

HB: Yes.

ES: Well, legally, because I'm the middle of a terrace, cause I'd just had, you know...

HB: Yes.

ES: I had to have the access round the back.

HB: Mm.

ES: And I had access through their garden. Legally.

HB: Right, right.

ES: And they blocked it up.

HB: Oh, dear.

ES: Fortunately, eventually I think they might've unblocked it by the time that they'd sort of accepted me. But anyway, I'd got the house to the other side, and once I had that gate it didn't matter because I could have access through the side gate there.

0h 20m 08s

HB: So, was that access- where was that access to?

ES: Well, the back door, deliveries and everything.

HB: Oh, right. Ok. So, because I don't- we don't get anything happening at the back anymore. It's just our gardens.

ES: Yes, but you've got access to your-

HB: Well, I've got it through the house as well.

ES: Yeah.

HB: So, you wanted access from- because that's always puzzled me because on the deeds, when I was buying next door-

ES: Mm.

HB: -there's a whole lot of hoo-ha about this mysterious gate and the pathway at the back.

ES: Yes.

HB: And about access. And I could tell it had been some controversy there, but when I had a look I couldn't see any gate or pathway. I didn't have a clue what was going on! It was just like, well, there's obviously been some bad blood but goodness knows what that was all about.

ES: Yes, that's what I had to get – I had coal delivered.

HB: Right.

ES: Deliveries all had to come through that way.

HB: Right, ok.

ES: Because I couldn't get through-

HB: Oh.

ES: -because-

HB: Oh, ok, so they came down the path at the side of my house?

ES: Yes.

HB: And through the garden. Oh.

ES: Because I had poor old Jenny next door.

HB: Right.

ES: Who was another part of history.

HB: Yes.

ES: She was away with the fairies. She- and she had- I can't remember what the official name for it is. She had a ...terror of strangers.

HB: Oh.

ES: And she had her- there was a gate through from my garden into her garden, and she had it not only locked up, barbed wire around it.

HB: Gosh.

ES: So, she was a- she was a strange one.

HB: Yeah.

ES: And, yes, her story was sad. She was the only daughter of horrible parents apparently.

HB: Oh?

ES: Can't remember her story. I suppose I've got it written down somewhere but... I did hear about her. So, she was really away with the fairies and she used to- sometimes she would stand- there was a big hedge, mine hardly had any garden at all.

HB: Mm.

ES: She would sometimes stand the other side of the hedge, which is only a few yards, and stare at me. *[laughter]*.

HB: Oh.

ES: *[laughter]*. Which was a bit unnerving.

HB: Yes. So, you never made friends?

ES: She wasn't able to make friends.

HB: No.

ES: But she accepted me.

HB: Oh, that's good.

ES: Yes, yeah.

HB: Yeah. And what about the other people in this area, what did they do? And did they all work locally or were they commuters like you?

ES: It slowly changed. If I, give me time, I would slowly be able to remember, I think. I know because I kept a village- what I called a village diary which I recorded changes in habit still.

HB: Oh. Interesting.

ES: Yes, I'll let you- when I find it, I'll let you have it.

HB: Ok, well, it sounds interesting. It does sound interesting, cause I know that, across the way, we've got those two cottages which have the AT symbol.

ES: Yes.

HB: Which is Arthur Trevelyan, isn't it?

ES: Right, yes.

HB: Who built the village hall.

ES: Yes. He was the local mine owner.

HB: Right.

ES: And, em, Tyneholm House, he lived in Tyneholm House.

HB: Ah. So, Trevelyan in Tyneholm? Ok, so he built those, and so did he build- he didn't build these as well did he though? Cause he was older.

ES: No, these were much older.

HB: Right, ok. And then, sort of at the end of those, there's Old Farm Court and wasn't that actually still a farmyard?

ES: Yes, it was.

HB: Was it still a farmyard when you moved here?

ES: Yes, it was.

HB: Ah, and what was- what else was-?

ES: Farm- the actual farm- ye know where the Glioris are?

HB: Yes.

ES: So, there's a track up there and there- the farm was at the back there.

HB: Right.

ES: It's a dead space now.

HB: Yes.

ES: [*laughter*]. And I mean, farm tractors were going up and down all the time.

HB: Yeah.

ES: And past the Glioris, up there.

HB: So, the Gliori's house, that looks like some sort of barn- converted barn.

ES: Cart shed.

HB: Sorry?

ES: It was an old cart shed.

HB: Cart shed? Was it still a cart shed when you moved here?

ES: Yes.

HB: When did it stop being a cart shed?

ES: I think it was when the Glioris bought it, that they changed it.

HB: Was that in the eighties? Nineties?

ES: It was earlier. When did I... When did I...

HB: You moved here in 1976?

ES: Oh, it must've been the eighties then.

HB: Yeah.

ES: I tell you Nino would probably know quite a lot, cause he still...

HB: Who?

ES: Nino Gliori.

HB: Oh, right, yes.

ES: Do you know him?

HB: No, not really. No.

ES: Well, I'll give him a ring and see.

HB: If he'd be up for talking?

ES: Yes. Sure he would be.

HB: Ok, that would be quite interesting. So, that is sort of on the way out of the village, isn't it? Out in the direction of the A68? Um...

ES: Do you know Lionel?

HB: Yes.

ES: Used to make harpsichords.

0h 26m 00s

HB: And violins?

ES: And violins.

HB: Yeah.

ES: Yes.

HB: Yeah. Ok, so, there've been quite a lot of changes here. What about the shop? Has that changed much?

ES: Yes. I'm trying to remember what it was like...

HB: I remember that, um-

ES: I think it changed such a long time ago, I've forgotten.

HB: Yeah. [Intiase] who runs the shop now, said that it used to be a shelter for the village during the war.

ES: Well. I never knew that.

HB: Yeah, it's quite interesting.

ES: Yes.

HB: And I think he's quite interested in history.

ES: Yes.

HB: Yeah. And... Across from my house, that used to be the post office, didn't it? Anyway, so once you moved to Pencaitland, you were still working and still commuting?

ES: Yes.

HB: How long were you doing that for?

ES: What year are we in?

HB: 1976, and now it's 2019. So, how old-

ES: Wait a minute, wait a minute, how old was I when I retired? Sixty-five, I think.

HB: So, that's-

ES: '74 would it be...? '74.

HB: So, you retired before you moved here?

ES: No. Trouble is, when you've lived a long time you get your decades muddled up.

HB: I know. I'm just trying to think... What year were you born in? If you're going to be ninety in-

ES: '29.

HB: '29. So, you would have been in your mid-forties when you moved here.

ES: Must have been, yes.

HB: And then- so you would've probably been working for another fifteen or so years before you retired?

0h 28m 08s

ES: I presume so.

HB: So, you would've retired in around about 1990, 1991 ish from the sounds of it.

ES: I think... I think it was '94.

HB: '94?

ES: '94 comes into my head.

HB: So, you were here for nearly twenty years before you retired, commuting.

ES: Must've been.

HB: So, did you- when you were commuting did you drive all the way into school?

ES: Yeah.

HB: Cause what I tended to do was drive down to the train station and get the train in. Just to save with the hassle of parking, and so on.

ES: Yes.

HB: Were you quite central in Edinburgh?

ES: No, see I was Morningside.

HB: Right.

ES: So, it would have been impossible to do that.

HB: Yeah. And was it quite busy as a commute? I mean were there lots of other people doing the same kind of commute?

ES: I think so.

HB: Yeah.

ES: Depended on the time.

HB: Yeah.

ES: Yes. Used to- thought being school hours slightly different from office hours, so I wasn't in the worst of the commuting rush.

HB: Mm, yeah. And when you were doing that, did you find that most of your life was in Edinburgh, or Pencaitland or East Lothian?

ES: Oh, it was mostly in Edinburgh to begin with certainly.

HB: Yeah?

ES: Yes.

HB: So, did you spend most of your social life in-

ES: Yes, I think so.

HB: Yeah.

ES: I spent- I had lots of friends, and if I wanted to spend nights, I spent nights if I was going out in the evenings.

HB: Yeah.

ES: I spent nights with them.

HB: You spent nights with your friends in Edinburgh. Yeah. And, so when did you start to, you know, transfer your energies into your life here? Because I think, from what we've talked about before, you've done quite a lot of things locally.

Societies/Clubs – 0h 30m 09s

ES: Yes.

HB: Like setting up the Lecture Society and the- wasn't it the Haddington Music Group or Choral Society? Or what is it, the music group that's in Haddington?

ES: Yes, I did have, I was involved with that, yes.

HB: Did you do that whilst you were still working? Or after you retired?

ES: I don't think so. Yes.

HB: See, you did spend quite a lot of time-

ES: I wanted to be involved here. I thought it was- I didn't want to just be a commuter.

HB: Yeah.

ES: I wanted to be involved in local life.

HB: Yeah.

ES: If I fish it out- I was going to do that before I saw you today.

HB: Right.

ES: If I fish out a lot of old diaries. I never sort of deliberately threw them away, so they'll be somewhere. I'll find out what I was doing. But I think I- I mean I wanted to be involved in local life so.

HB: And, well, it's always seemed to me that you were very successful at that.

ES: Well, certainly was after I retired. But I think that I was quite a lot before I retired.

HB: Yeah. What kind of things did you do to get involved? Well, em, how did you find that retirement was like when- once you gave up your job, and you decided, right, I'm retired now. I think you were quite active.

ES: Oh, yes, I think I was. I think I- yes, I think I- I did get involved with quite a lot of things. I thought, I'm getting involved with too many. I mustn't be involved with more than four things. *[laughter]*. I can't remember what they were. But I can check all this, certainly with the music society in Haddington music society. Helping to organise concerts. A reading group. U3A, when U3A started I got involved with that because a friend was- a friend I knew was involved in set up the whole thing in Scotland, helped set it all up. And, um, so I got very involved with that. I did things, you know- you know the way U3A works? Do you?

0h 32m 41s

HB: Tell me.

ES: Well, it's self-organised. You join and then you volunteer to- if you've got an interest, or a capacity. That's not the word, but. Um.

HB: Something you know about?

ES: Something you know about. You offer yourself as a leader. A group leader. And you sort of swap your skills, really that's how it works.

HB: And U3A, that stands for University of the Third Age, doesn't it?

ES: Mm.

HB: Was a good idea. And still quite active.

ES: Oh, it is, yes, I think so.

HB: Are you still doing things with the U3A?

ES: Not much. Do I still run the reading group? Oh, dear.

HB: You have been running a reading group for a long time.

ES: I have, yes.

HB: At least until recently.

ES: Yes. I think I handed it over.

HB: Right.

ES: Yes, I had handed it over.

HB: And who- who else goes to the U3A? Who's been part of your circle in the U3A? Has it been people like you who've come in to East Lothian or is it been local people or-? What kind of... Cause you seem to have quite a lot of friends that you've developed, as a result of it.

ES: Yes, it was a very good move to get involved with that. And also Haddington Music Society. I got involved with that. Just by, really going to the concerts and they were looking for people to be on the committee, so I volunteered. Got involved in that. Met quite a lot of people through that.

HB: What kind of music? Was that performing or-?

ES: Performing.

HB: Performing?

ES: Putting on- organising a concert series, which I think still goes on.

HB: Yes, I think it does.

ES: Haddington Concert Society, there we are.

HB: Right, excellent. So, do you invite people or do you have people to come and play, or-?

ES: I've got the program. Yes, 2018 to '19, that's the program.

HB: Oh, yes got quite a lot on. I think the last one- looks like the last one was in March.

ES: Yes.

HB: Right. That's very interesting.

ES: We used to bring live music to East Lothian.

HB: Right, ok. So, you never played at it?

ES: Oh, no. No. *[laughter]*. Oh, we did- I'll tell you what we did organise. I used to play the piano, rather badly, and I don't know if you know... You're probably not old enough to remember there was a series of things, of comedies, called the coarse this, and the coarse that. The art of coarse acting and the art of coarse music, and the art of coarse... about people who did things badly.

Oh 36m 04s

HB: Yeah.

ES: Coarse acting was so funny. It was brilliant. Anyway, so I- I think I started, I'm not sure if I started it anyway... I started the Coarse Music Society. Anybody could come along, as long as you weren't good. But we got- because we had such fun, we got infiltrated by people who were good. You're not supposed to be here! *[laughter]*. That was great fun.

HB: So, what was that- what did you do? Did you put on ...?

ES: We had our coarse concerts once a year.

HB: Right.

ES: *[laughter]*. And we practiced. There's a chap up the road who played the guitar, and we managed to find some music for guitar and piano... And Lionel round the corner-

HB: Yes.

ES: -was- he wasn't a brilliant violinist but he was a violinist. He came in. We got infiltrated by him, he wasn't supposed to come. *[laughter]*. And I think we started with quite a small select group of bad players.

HB: How did you find them? How did you find each other?

ES: Well, it started with Graham up the road and me, and perhaps somebody he knew. I can't remember. Oh, yes, somebody else – a chap I knew played the clarinet. Oh, agonisingly. *[laughter]*.

HB: Ideal candidate for the group.

ES: Yes. An ideal candidate. I remember him. And then Marg Hall, was she still-

HB: I've no idea.

ES: -around? I haven't... But she was a very good flautist, I think. Oh no, there was a very bad flautist, *[laughter]* and he used to come round and practice and I don't know if you've ever heard anyone learning the flute? It's the most agonising noise. A seriously ghastly noise.

0h 38m 16s

HB: Oh, gosh.

ES: I would play the piano for him and he'd be playing the flute, and of course he- it's very skilled what you do with your mouth, to get pure sounds, terribly agonising squawks would come out of his... *[laughter]*. And we laughed so much we couldn't really play. *[laughter]*. So, that was great fun.

HB: That's nice.

ES: So, once a year we had a coarse music concert. Only bad musicians were allowed. We got infiltrated because it was a party.

HB: Yeah, yeah. Did lots of people come to your concerts?

ES: As few as possible. It was really only set up to be for other bad players. It was so we could perform. You see we did work away at things and got slightly better. *[laughter]*. And we thought it'd be quite nice to perform. Somebody uncritical of people.

HB: Mm.

ES: So, I think there were three or four of us that played like that, and we thought we would just play for each other. And then we actually- I think that's how it started, and we had rather a jolly time. Word got around and we got infiltrated.

HB: That sounds fun. So, how did the Lecture Society start? Cause you took me along to one of those once.

ES: Did I? Yes. I think that was Mona, did you ever meet Mona Lewis?

HB: No.

ES: Oh. Well, she was a great character. She lived in the village and she was a lecturer and I think she set it up. I think she'd been involved with some Edinburgh- or maybe she lectured in Edinburgh. When she retired out here, she was quite a bit older than I was. She thought she'd set up a Lecture Society here and that was a great success.

0h 40m 30s

HB: Hmm. Is it still going strong?

ES: I'm not sure. I should have a program if it is. Oh dear, I wish you'd come a year ago, before my memory had got so wobbly. Oh, I think I would still be going to it if it were. I could look in my diary.

HB: Oh, don't worry about it. It was just a... It's interesting to me, because it sometimes seems to me as if there are two or three Pencaitlands. You know, there's the Pencaitland with the music societies and the lecture societies-

ES: Yes.

HB: -and so on. And then there's the Pencaitland with, um, I don't know, the commuters, the people who don't really participate much. And then there's another layer of Pencaitland, of people who are born here, whose parents were born here-

ES: Yes.

HB: -who have their own networks but don't really do much with the other things. Or do they?

ES: I don't think so, no. I think- I mean, you know they're the indigenous people.

HB: Mm. Yes.

ES: Um, but I'm really rather out of touch now.

0h 42m 02s

HB: But what did you find when you were, you know, in those eighties and nineties years? Were they very- I mean, from what you were saying it sounds as if there was some hostility towards incomers?

ES: Yes. Certainly was from the old mining couple next door till we became quite friendly. Can't remember in the end what broke the barriers down but we used to set up the- wall, I called it the Berlin Wall at the back-gate cause [I want it stopped?] you know, I've already told you because this is one of my problems. I had access – legal access – through your garden, and she ripped it up. And then- but that was before I got the cottage next door, you see. It was my- well, I got logs and stuff delivered for the fire and I had sheds at the back for the logs to be delivered into. And the only access was through her place.

HB: So, were there other people in the village that you had much contact with?

ES: I think...

HB: I know there's Gordon, who does your garden.

ES: Yes. But, I mean... There was people scattered through shared interests. Think I knew them. There was Brenda, who lived at number five. She was a good pal.

HB: Was she a teacher as well?

ES: No, she was a social worker. There was old Rita who lived in the last one in the row. She was friendly. Quite a character.

0h 44m 12s

HB: So, where they-

ES: Somewhere- I did think, when it was changing, I started to try to record things as it was changing.

HB: What kind of changes were you noticing?

ES: Well, I was looking mostly for the people who- I mean the buildings haven't changed.

HB: Mm.

ES: But, um, the people have changed.

HB: Mm. In what way?

ES: I was the first of the commuters.

HB: Right. Were you?

ES: And I don't think there were any other commuters in the whole Tyneholm row.

HB: So, were they- where were they working? Were they working in Pencaitland? Or in Haddington? Or Tranent?

ES: Or were they all old?

HB: Ah.

ES: No? Because it did change quite rapidly. I think the commuters moved in. The ones- I can only- the ones I can actually remember, apart from one or two of the old ones-

HB: Yeah.

ES: -also commuted.

HB: And now it seems quite different.

ES: I can do some trawling-

HB: Yes.

ES: -and see what comes up.

HB: Yeah. I was just thinking-

ES: It'll take a bit of time. One thing reminds you of another.

HB: Yes.

ES: Yeah.

HB: I'm just thinking how... How the village seems now, which it still does have quite a lot of born and bred Pencaitlandites, I think.

ES: Of course, you meet them through the lunch club, do you?

HB: Yes, I meet some of them that way.

ES: Yes.

HB: But sometimes just when I'm on a walk wandering around. But a lot of people are working for the council in Haddington, or around the region. And a lot of people are commuting to Edinburgh. With all the new builds that have been happening.

Building Work Protests – 0h 46m 24s

ES: Yes.

HB: Cause there's been a lot of building in Pencaitland, hasn't there?

ES: Oh, there has. A terrific lot.

HB: I think I remember you saying something about some protests for some of the building work that happened.

ES: Yes. We did, we did protest like anything against that big housing scheme up the road. On the grounds of the river it was narrow, and it wasn't really fit for the heavy traffic that would be coming to and fro but I don't know why...

HB: Yeah. Oh well.

ES: It's not all that bad. The traffic.

HB: No, it's fine. Well, they haven't finished the building work yet, they're still doing it.

ES: Yes. True enough.

HB: But I was thinking about Vineland- Vinefields.

ES: Oh, yes that was another one.

HB: And the Maltings. You told me there was quite a lot of protest about the Maltings going up.

ES: The Maltings itself?

HB: Yeah. I remember you saying how, um, the only reason that the protests sort of subsided was because lots of jobs were promised.

ES: That's right, that's right, yes.

HB: And then you were quite displeased because those jobs never seemed to materialise.

ES: Yes. About three people needed to run the whole lot.

HB: Yeah.

ES: And I don't know what happened, but it certainly was nothing like what was promised.

HB: Yeah. And who was doing the protesting?

ES: Well I suppose-

HB: And was it your circle, or was it people who lived here forever, or-?

ES: No, a lot of people thought it would bring jobs you see. So, they didn't protest. And then we felt bad about protesting.

HB: Yes.

ES: And stopping people getting jobs.

HB: Yeah, yeah. And what about the Vinefields development?

ES: That didn't really impinge so much. Oh, I think they protested away about anything. *[laughter]*.

HB: Yeah. Oh well. I think what we'll do is we'll wrap it up there and maybe have another chat another time?

ES: Yes.

HB: When you're feeling a little bit more like there's something you want to tell me.

ES: Yes, right.

HB: Ok.

ES: One thing might lead to another.

HB: Yeah.

ES: And I might- I'll rummage about to see if I can find any diaries.

HB: Ok.

ES: Perhaps help.

HB: Alright. Great!

[pause in recording]

HB: Sorry, carry on.

ES: I was hunting around East Lothian for somewhere to stay, to live, to move to, and... I saw Tyneholm Cottages and I drove out to have a look. And oh, it's right on the street. I don't want to live right on the street it's... No, I almost didn't bother to come in and have a look. And then I came in and I saw that it actually stretched right out at the back. And I- they showed me into the sitting room and of course it's a lovely, big, bright room. And then I looked out there, and we were looking across the field to the church and at that moment a cow came along, and peered in at me. And I was so, so enchanted by having a cow a few feet away from me *[laughter]*. That really clinched it.

HB: Yes, it would, wouldn't it?

ES: Yes.

HB: Lovely. Well, we'll end it there, with the-