

Visit to Mrs Ferguson, The Corb, May 1996.

Preparing to use the recorder.....

Mrs N - I was going to ask, Mrs Ferguson, where you grew up, which house?

Mrs F – What house, where was I born? In Glenshee, a little house on the hillside up Beinn Shee across – if you're at the Church and look across over on the hill.

Mrs N – That's a way up, about the height –

Mrs F – It's what's Lee Ericht (?) – ye call it.

Mrs N – Is it still occupied?

Mrs F – Yes, we went up there. My son from Kirriemuir took me up there a run one day, and it's occupied, but I don't know who's in it. I don't know the people.

Mrs N – Not a farmer? A holiday place, do you think?

Mrs F – I don't think so. Well, my father wasn't a farmer, he was a shepherd with the Robertsons up at Glen Lochsie.

Mrs N – I see. Were you a big family?

Mrs F – Well, there were seven of us.

Mrs N – The Jacksons, is that right?

Mrs F – That's right. Seven of us, there were seven. Not now, unfortunately.

Mrs N – There's just you and Jim?

Mrs F – No, there's Adam and Nellie and Annie. My sister, Annie, is in Northlands – she's a' wrong. Have ye not seen Danny McKenzie – do you know the McKenzies? Dan McKenzie, he was at the Tulloch. Well, that was my brother-in-law and his wife, and they took a house down in Blairgowrie. Well, their sons got the house for them and then she went away – she just.....

(Interruption in taping)

Mrs N – Did you go to Glenshee School?

Mrs F – I didn't go to Glenshee School. My father left there and came to Wester Bleaton.

Mrs N – Did he work for the Marshalls?

Mrs F – No, he worked at Wester Bleaton, **Wester** Bleaton.

Mrs N – Oh, beg pardon.

Mrs F – And that was with Howson, A.W. Howson, Lochbank? You know he was a long time, the Howson, he had Ranngulzion (?), he had up Beinn Shee, all these places.

Mrs N – May I interrupt here. What years are we talking about, what period? Is this 1940, or something or earlier, or when?

Mrs F – 1940? No, no I was born in 1912.

Mrs J – So we're talking pre-war?

Mrs F – Yes, well I remember, I can just remember the 1st World War finishing, because I think I was at Kirkmichael School, and I remember we were all sitting round and we got mugs – we got something, but I can't remember what it was.

Mrs J – Yes, I was wondering. I was wanting to place this. The people you are mentioning, what period was it?

Mrs N – You were at school during the.....

Mrs F – And then I went to Kirkmichael School, yes, we walked from Wester Bleaton.

Mrs N – You didn't!

Mrs F – Well, yes, everybody walked.

Mrs J – How far would it have been?

Mrs F – Well, it's two miles anyway, perhaps a little more.

Mrs N – I've forgotten where Wester Bleaton is.

Mrs F – It's up the hillside.

Mrs N – On the quarry road?

Mrs F – That's right.

Mrs J – Ashintully way?

Mrs F – That's right, opposite Ashintully, up the brae thonder. So that's where we went and we went to school there.

Mrs N – And it was before Miss Mcgregor's time, was it?

Mrs F – Oh yes. A Mr Anderson and a Miss Gould. There was just two teachers at that time.

Mrs N – And you enjoyed it there?

Mrs F – Yes, there were over 60 pupils, though, you know.

Mrs J – Was Mrs Walker there, I mean the present Mrs Walker there, was she a Petrie – Violet Walker?

Mrs F – Violet Petrie, yes.

Mrs J – She was at school about the same sort of period?

Mrs F – Yes, same time. You know that Violet Petrie is related to me? Yes, her mother and my father were full cousins.

Mrs J – When you mentioned Kirkmichael School, I know she was there about that sort of time.

Mrs F – Well, she's a bit younger than me. Yes, that's right, and the Crichtons, of course, had the Smiddy.

Mrs J – Not the present Crichton – his parents?

Mrs F – No, there was Bessie Crichton, ye mind thon? Do you not remember these? Peter Crichton was the Smiddy.

Mrs J – The Smiddy had gone by the time we came.

Mrs N – That's where the Blairs Live?

Mrs F – Yes, that's right, and the McMillans were in the shoppie. Do you remember them?

Mrs N – Yes, very well. Yes, Flora had a lending library. Do you remember?

Mrs F – No, I don't remember about that. There was Flora, and there was Lily – Lily piped.

Mrs N – Lily played the pipes, yes.

Mrs F – It's no awfy long since Flora died.

Mrs N – And they had a brother.....?

Mrs F – Oh, they had two or three brothers, I think

Mrs N – Who went to Rhodesia?

Mrs F – Yes, that was Ian. But he's dead as well, and that's the only one I knew. He as at school when I was at school.

Mrs N – He had a daughter who came back to the country and had a hairdressing business in Blairgowrie.

Mrs F – I've heard of that, that was right. But there were other ones, they were away from Kirkmichael by that time. I didn't know them, but there was a Jess, and she married Helen Reid's husband's brother, Sandy Reid's brother.

Mrs N – Yes, Balvarron Reids.

Mrs F – Yes, they went to Canada, I think. I don't know if they ever been back. I couldn't really tell you.

Mrs J – Do people, if they come back, do you meet each other again?

Mrs F – Oh, I've never met her anyway.

Mrs J – Any others? Any that you used to know?

Mrs F – No, not really, no. No unless they were round about Kirkmichael. Ye see they're a' – there's a lot of them dead.

Mrs J – And they've moved away, a lot of them, of course.

Mrs F – Oh, yes, their families would move, the fathers and mothers, and then they would just move too, shepherds and that sort of thing, they'd just move on somewhere. But they never really kept in touch. And then from Wester Bleaton, we came to the Crichton (Crichton?).

Mrs N – Did you buy the Crichton?

Mrs F – No, we never bought it. Thorneycrofts had it. They had Dalrulzion, which is into a hotel now, and they came up there every year, ye see, for the shootin'.

Mrs N- Somebody wrote down that the Thorneycrofts were Lancashire mill owners, but I always thought that they were coal mine owners.

Mrs F – I think something like that, because there was one stayed at Plean. Well, That's Stirling way, isn't it? So probably you are right, I couldn't really tell you. So that was the Thorneycrofts, they just came up for the shooting, and Father was with them. Well, Father wasn't really with them, but T. was the laird, and he had to pay a rent, ye see, to them, and he farmed.

Mrs N – But your brother, James?

Mrs F – Ah, yes, that's different now, of course. Well, and then we came from there up to Blackhall, and that was how that wis in there then.

Mrs N – And how old were you then?

Mrs F – Oh, I wis quite – eh?

Mrs N – Had you left school?

Mrs F – Oh, yes. I was working wi' the Marshalls, wi Mr and Mrs Marshall, aye, for quite a long time. I will say I was very friendly with Mrs Marshall, right up until she died. From here like, I mean going down and having tea with her at Rosemount.

Mrs N – And her husband, Jim Marshall? Everybody loved him, didn't they?

Mrs F – Oh, yes.

Mrs N – He gave the community the hall.

Mrs F – Yes, that was right. Supposed to be for their silver wedding in 1937. It wis, I think, their silver wedding, either before or after it, I'm not quite sure. The Mitchells at the Bleaton, Chrissie Mitchell, well, she's Chrissie McGregor, she used to phone up to me, and she used to know them

better than I did, of course, because they stayed at the Bleaton, ye see. It was Marshall and Mitchell. Marshall was the laird, ye see, and Mr Mitchell was the farmer at the Bleaton.

Mrs N – Which Bleaton?

Mrs F – Easter Bleaton, not Wester. Oh, a long time they were there. Of course, they had a big family too, the Mitchells, and they're all scattered, a lot of them is dead, of course. There's only Jim, you know, Jim at Tullymurdoch. No, you don't know him at all? Well, that's the only son, and there's Kate, she's alive too, but that's all. I think there was six of them. Willie Mitchell had the.....?

Mrs J – You mention people like the Marshalls and the Mitchells, and you say he was a farmer, or Mitchell farmed – were they tenants?

Mrs F – The Marshalls owned it. The Mitchells, he farmed it.

Mrs J – So would they be tenant farmers?

Mrs F – Yes, tenant farmers.

Mrs J – So there was what you call the "laird". Was he the boss man? And he would come and go?

Mrs F – Yes, but the Marshalls, Mr and Mrs Marshall, always stayed there at Bleaton Hallet. They had a lovely big house at Bleaton Hallet.

Mrs N – You would know the old house that is now in ruins?

Mrs F – Oh, yes. It was beautiful. The Queen Mother, when she was Duchess of York, she came up, of course, and saw the gardens. The gardens at that time, the rock gardens, were beautiful. Mr Pratt used to be at Bleaton Hallet, he was there over forty years. He came with them, or shortly after they came. So he was there all the time with them.

Mrs N – And the Blairs, that I know. Their grandfather was coachman.

Mrs F – Years ago, yes, that'd be right. I didna' know them when they had the coach, but they came down and stayed in the coachman's house.

Mrs J – Are we talking about the thirties now, or late twenties?

Mrs F – Oh, the coachman would be before that, I couldnae tell ye.

Mrs N – Maybe while you were still at school?

Mrs F – I remember, of course, the Constables, two ladies, they used to come over to Bleaton Hallet for tea.

Mrs N – That would be Cecil and Mary.

Mrs JH – The Constable sisters, are you talking about Canadian twin sisters?

Mrs N – Oh, no. A generation before that, my great aunts.

Interruption

Mrs N – And they all had beautiful cars, did they?

Mrs F – That I couldna' tell ye.

Mrs N - There wouldn't be many on the road.

Mrs F – And then the McGowans had Persie.

Mrs J – Were they there for many generations?

Mrs F – Oh, aye, a good long time. They didna' stay there all the year round, of course.

Mrs N – What was his business?

Mrs F – I don't know, because he used to hire McLauchlan's car when they came up to Bleaton Hallet for tea or dinner. The McLauchlans did a lot of work for the Marshalls. I mean driving, of course. She was a very punctual lady and Hugh, old Hugh, he was there on the dot. Of course, he would stop down at the lodge, and he would know exactly when to be there. We were very friendly with Marshalls for years.

Mrs N – They would have great respect for you.

Mrs F – Well, I suppose they did, in a way. They were very upset when I left there.

Mrs N – Did you leave to get married?

Mrs F – Oh, no. I left there and went down to Dr. Peter Shaw in the High Street.

Mrs N – Dr Shaw's father?

Mrs F – Yes.

Mrs N – Did he start that business?

Mrs F – Dr. Peter? I don't know. Ye see, there was a head one, a Dr. Charlie over in Montrose.

Mrs N – Anyway, it was in Blairgowrie that he opened a surgery.

Mrs F – That's right. I can't remember him opening a surgery – I mean, he would be there for years when I was born. My mother would have him up at Glenshee, old Peter.

Mrs N – He delivered me too. And then his son, Will, delivered my son.

Mrs F – Well, I was with Dr. Peter, and he took ill, oh yes, he was very ill, and they went down to – they bought a house in Rosemount, the Knowe they call it. And I went down with them, so I was there till he died. And then she had a sister, a Miss Currie, she used to come down a lot, of course, and stay. I must say, I had a very happy life.

Mrs J – A very busy one.

Mrs F – Well, I loved them, and they seemed to get on with me, and I got on with them. They were very good.

Mrs J – Do you think that sort of relationship, you know, you relied on them and they relied on you so much, both ways. That sort of thing isn't the same any more. You must have seen a lot of changes in that respect?

Mrs F – Well, there's nothing up here for anybody, is there? In a sense, the like of Rachel here. We all got a job because there were servants. And there was not the machinery on the farms. There was nothing like that, and there were a lot of men working at the Bleaton, Easter Bleaton, like with the Marshalls and the Mitchells. A lot of men, and my brother was there for quite a long time, as shepherd. And they also had Glenkilry, the Mitchells, and Peter, my brother, used to stay up there in the bothy.

Mrs J – So what became of the Mitchells? Did they have children?

Mrs F – Oh yes, they had a lot of children, they went over here to Tullymurdoch.

Mrs J – Who were the people who had Easter Bleaton, or was it Wester Bleaton?

Mrs F – That was Howson, what happened to them, I can't remember.

Mrs J – Did they sell out?

Mrs F – Yes, they sold out. He died. He never passed, though, when Mother and them was at Blackhall, and he never passed the door once without calling in to see them.

Mrs J – That was nice.

Mrs F – She was a Swan of Monifieth, his wife. He was a wee bit younger. They had only one daughter. My Annie, my sister, was a while with Mr and Mrs Marshall at Bleaton Hallet, and then, when I left school, I went. She left there, and I went to fill her shoes, and she went down to the Lochbank with the Howsons. She went there and cleaned and sort of brought up the wee girl till a certain time, till she went to school.

Mrs J – Did you finish school at Kirkmichael?

Mrs F – Yes. Oh no, I was a wee while at Blackwater when I came up.

Mrs J – But nobody went to Blairgowrie in those days?

Mrs F – No, no. They were all finished at school.

Mrs J – What sort of age did they finish, at 15 or 14?

Mrs F – No, it would be 14.

Mrs J – So they stayed at this one school in the village until they were 14?

Mrs F – That’s right. Well, Ian McMillan was a big fellow, you know. You know they were all sort of young men, but they never went to Blair. Of course, they go to Blair now when they are 12.

Mrs J – And then they expect you to stay on until you’re 18, then you can’t get a job anyway. I know everyone should be educated to the fullest, but if you don’t want to be educated, without that kind of schooling, there are other things to do without schooling.

Mrs F – Oh yes, that’s quite true. It’s an awfy job getting anything at all, isn’t it?

Mrs N – Even practical things – labouring.

Mrs F – Well, we haven’t had any experience of that. It’s the younger ones coming up – my grandchildren – you feel sorry for them.

Mrs J – What are they interested in? What would they like to do?

Mrs F – Well, a lot of my grandchildren are really in jobs. Well, they are married. Chick, my eldest son, has three boys and a girl. Charles is in the RAF away down south, and he’s married. He has two little girls, that’s my great grandchildren. Then there’s David, he’s a policeman in Dunoon, and he has a girl and a boy who’s not long born. Then there’s Simon, for he’s the youngest, and he’s in Germany just now. He is in the Army, but he’s a very clever chap. I think he would be like Mr Melville. Don’t you remember Mr Melville at Corriefodly?

Mrs N – Yes.

Mrs F – Well, Margaret is Chick’s wife. So I think he’s a clever chap like his grandfather, but he’s supposed to be staying out to see a bit of the world. He’s supposed to be coming back and going to college, so I don’t know what he’s going to do.

Mrs J – So these are your great grandchildren?

Mrs F – They are my great grandchildren. And then there’s Carol. That’s the daughter. She’s a postman just now at Carricklaw, and she has a wee girl. She’s married, too. So there ye are. That’s Charles, and then there is Jimmy, he’s over in the Middleton of Kilry. He used to work from Coupar Angus for a firm there. They’re on their own now. He’s in partnership with the laird over there, can’t remember his name. Jimmy’s been over there at the Middleton of Kilry for over thirty years, and he’s married with a family of two. He has a boy who is very clever, he’s a doctor, not a medical doctor, no, but he’s got some letters behind his name, and he’s away down south managing a farm in connection with the college, that’s Andrew you call him. And the daughter’s married to Jim Forbes up at Blair Atholl.

Mrs J – Is he a well-known man?

Mrs F – Yes, I think he is, quite well-known.

Mrs N – What does he do?

Mrs F – He has a farm.

Mrs J – I’ve lost count now of how many great grandchildren you have.

Mrs F – Well, there's four, no, five on Chick's side. Then there's Muriel, that's Jimmy's, she has two girls.

Mrs J – That's seven.

Mrs F – Yes, and that's a' – the rest's my great grandchildren.

Mrs N – Can you go back a bit to your husband's side of the story?

Mrs F – Well, of course, they were up there at the Corb for generations. I don't know how long. I believe that Chick's grandfather went away out to the goldmines.

Mrs N – Australia?

Mrs F – No, it wasn't. Africa, I think. But he didn't make anything of it, because he didn't like farming, and he came back from there. And Chick's father.....

Mrs N – Chick is your husband, is that right?

Mrs F – Aye, that's right, and his father was Simon, and he farmed the Corb, and he had brothers and half- brothers, I think, but he was the one that farmed the Corb. There was one of them in here, but he went all wrong.

Mrs N – Was this house always combined with the Corb?

Mrs F – No, no. In fact, the Corb wasn't bought by the Fergusons, either, until later in years. It belonged to the Ramsays, and then they must have sold it, and then it was the Foremans of Cloquhat that had it. Do you mind the Foremans?

Mrs N – Yes.

Mrs F – Well, they had it, and then Chick and his father bought it.

Mrs N – When they sold Cloquhat?

Mrs F – Well, he lost a lot of money, didn't he? And it was after Chick and his father bought it and it was after he died, Chick's father, that he bought this property from the Methvens of Kingseat.

Mrs N – Does it march with Kingseat?

Mrs F – Yes, just over the dyke. So that's a good few years we've had it now. But we don't have Blackhall, mind. That's been rented. We took that after Jim went out. (N.B. Jim Jackson, her brother. Blackhall belongs to the Munros)

Mrs N – So you've done well. It's very nice to have them all.

Mrs F – Yes, that's right.

Mrs N – They all run one into the other, don't they?

Mrs F – Yes, that's right. And, of course, it was handy for the bairns going to the school, ye see.

Mrs N – What was it like on the Corb in the winter?

Mrs F – Oh, the first two or three winters we were married, it was dreadful, terrible.

Mrs N – You must have had to store up potatoes and flour, and all sorts of things.

Mrs F – Yes, always a bag of flour, and a bag of meal, and that sort of thing, but we always managed. There were no fridges, of course.

Mrs J – You just had ice houses, you didn't need them.

Mrs F – But you could always kill a sheep or something.

Mrs N – Was it paraffin lamps?

Mrs F – Yes, all paraffin lamps, lanterns for outside. I used to have them when they went out shawing neeps. I used to have two lanterns ready for when they passed by. Then they grew corn up there, but it wasn't much good because it was snow by the time it was put in. But oh, the grouse was in hundreds that Chick's father used to see. There's hardly any grouse now to be seen. They used to come to the stooks and eat the corn up, ye see, and Chick's father would go out in the mornings and shoot and shoot as many as what the tenant did. There was an awfy grouse.

Mrs N – That was an income, in a way.

Mrs F – That was right.

Mrs N – Letting out the shoots.

Mrs F – Oh yes, he did that. But I can't remember anything else. Nobody else went to the Corb, none of our family anyway, and it started to go then, and I thought it would be as well sold. But there's a piece of ground along with it because they keep horses.

Mrs N – Are they there all the year round?

Mrs F - Yes. They breed rabbits, I believe. I've never been back. And they're all in big sheds, specially rabbits. I don't know whether they sell them for human consumption, or pet food or what, I don't know.

Mrs J – I believe the French are very fond of rabbit. They have exported a lot of rabbits.

Mrs N - And the Chinese, if you want to export that far.

Mrs J – But I believe the French buy rabbits. I don't know whether they still do, but I heard that.

Mrs F – As far as when we were married, we just stayed up there, milked the cows, made butter and sold cream. We sold butter to the people in the shop in Blairgowrie, Farquharsons, where the glass (spectacles) people are, that was a grocer's shop. Farquharson's, ye called them. So he took the butter, and old Granny, Chick's mother, was a good, clever woman, making butter and cheese. She used to go down on her machine. You used to see her go down on her horse and machine, and sell it in Alyth, and that was going back a bit.

Mrs N - What do you call a horse and machine?

Mrs F – A horse and gig. There was one here. It was all in bits when we came down here to stay because it wasn't bought. We didn't buy it at that time, and Chick's mother came down and said, 'You lads will have to come down to the Shieldrum and stay, because the laird wants it to be occupied by the tenant.'

Mrs N – And who was the laird?

Mrs F – Methven. So, of course, we had to come down, very reluctant, we had to come down and stay here, and that was why the Corb was empty at that time.

Mrs N - So it has been empty quite a long time?

Mrs F – No, we had a shepherd in it for quite a short while. And then Chick got married, and he went into it for a while, my eldest laddie, and then he was in the police for a while, but he didn't settle very well at anything.

Mrs N – He wanted to farm all along, did he?

Mrs F – Chick, my son?

Mrs N – No, I'm thinking of Denise's husband, that son.

Mrs F – Oh, yes. So, anyway, that was how that happened.

Mrs N – So what about the old characters that were living around here in your time? I'm thinking of Tommy Smith, the minister?

Mrs F – He was the laird, of course, and there was a man, Drummond, up there at Cloquhat, just now a son, a grandson it will be, I think. Now what else could you say.

Mrs N – Nothing to do with Henry Drummond of Bridge of Cally?

Mrs F – No, no, not the same Drummond, don't think so, or were they. I believe they were, you know. And his wife, of course, Ella Beaton, I honestly can't remember.

Mrs N – Tell me, did you go to church at Persie?

Mrs F – Yes, yes. I walked to church at Persie.

Mrs N - Did you?

Mrs F – Yes, my father was an elder at Persie Kirk.

Mrs N – So did you have to put up with Tommy Smith and his wife?

Mrs F – Yes, but they were a fine couple, Mr and Mrs Smith.

Mrs N – You know somebody told me, perhaps it was Jenny McLauchlan, that Mrs Smith taught the children to swim in the river. Did she?

Mrs F – No, I never knew that. We joined the church with them. Both of us went down to church, we cycled down and joined the church.

Mrs N – Auchinflower was an inn, is that right?

Mrs F – Aye, a bit further back. Yes, that's right. I had an auntie that used to work in there.

Mrs N – Who kept it then, would you have heard?

Mrs F – Don't know, don't know.

Mrs J – Auchinflower, I thought it was a manse.

Mrs F – Then, of course, there's people who have built a house down there, you see, the side of the old church.

Mrs N – Yes, did you ever know the Thorns at Woodhill? They had a daughter, Sylvia. She is married, and they bought the church and are converting it into a house.

Mrs J – Do you know the Smarts in Persie Manse?

Mrs F – They're friends of Mrs Dutton. I go to church with Mrs Dutton every second Sunday at Netherton.

Mrs N – Did you know the Constables at Soilzarie?

Mrs F – Yes, Marjory Constable.

Mrs N – Oh, did you, good. She was a great rider, wasn't she? And she took part in the Mount Blair Show.

Mrs F – It was always Mount Blair, of course. That's where all these cups came from.

Mrs N – Oh, really?

Mrs F – Lovely cups, aren't they. There was maybe one or two from Kirkmichael, but it was always Mount Blair, you see. Oh, yes, in fact I worked with a girl at Bleaton Hallet and she was Martha Ferguson, no relation to us, you ken. She was very friendly with Marjory.

Mrs N – Another horsey person?

Mrs F – No' really. I don't know why they got friends, because they were very friendly. Then, of course, there were the Petries at the meeting.

Mrs N – Oh yes, can you explain the relationship? The Petries lived where?

Mrs F – At the Mains of Dulrulzion. A lot of them, a lot of young men.

Mrs N – Were they a big family of boys?

Mrs F – Oh, there was Heck Petrie. He married a girl, Low, you called her, and she came from Strathardle side, or further up, I believe, and they had one son, and he had that garage out the Perth road, the Rosemount Road. It's turned into something else now. The D.I.Y. place.

Mrs N – Petrie. Then there was big Jock Petrie. He was Marjory's friend.

Mrs F – Then there was Geordy Petrie.

Mrs N – Was he killed in the war?

Mrs F – No, he was sitting up there in his car, speaking to the Middleton, ye ken. Will Cameron at the Middleton – my memory isn't as good as it used to be - and anyway, he was sitting there speaking to him, and he just dropped away. His heart had given in.

Mrs N – Was he an old man?

Mrs F – Well, not terribly old, he was up in years, certainly.

Mrs N – That was very nice for him.

Mrs F – So he just got into the car, and took him up to.....

Mrs N – Did he live there all the time, where did he work?

Mrs F – I supposed he just worked for his father. He just worked at the Mains. Then there was Burk. Burk they called him, but James was his right name. So that was quite a lot of them. They were all young men, a great gathering place, the Mains. Always a lot of people there. Of course, there was Mrs McPherson, she was a Petrie as well, but I think her mother had had her before she was married, you see. She was the eldest, and she would be there, and she married the lad, McPherson, and then latterly – I don't remember her husband – but she had a son, Jamie McPherson. He used to work with us at the Corb, an awful nice chappie, dead now. Anyway, she married Bob Stewart afterwards – ye ken Sandy Stewart, the postie?

Mrs N – Yes, a brother of his?

Mrs F – No, his father. His father was Bob Stewart, and that was when she married Bob Stewart, you see. And then there's the twins. There's Elma and Winnie – Elma Cochrane and Winnie Gow – you see, they were twins. And there was another one, I think, Jean, did she not go abroad? She died, anyway.

Mrs N- All married within the Glen?

Mrs F – Yes, all married within the Gens. Then of course, there is the Post Office where Mrs, Blacklunans Post Office, it was.

Mrs N – There was an aunt of the Flemings had the Post Office.

Mrs F – Well, it was a Mrs Fenton, and there was Jock Cameron. That was Sarah Ann Cameron that this auntie brought them up, because at the Western, their father had the Western. I think their mother died when she had the twins as well, and this auntie, who will be sister of the father, Jock Cameron, she brought up the two girls at the Post Office. She had the Post Office at Blacklunans.

And then it was closed down after that. Well, Sarah got married to Adam Munro, do you not ken Adam Munro either, no? He looks after the Boreland up there at

Mrs N – Not the Kirkmichael Boreland?

Mrs F – No, the other one. Right up by the, well, it's no' a post office, it's no' a hotel now, but Drumore. Right up that road. It's this side before Drumore. When you go up you turn off on the left. He stays there and looks after the place. Who has it? He also has Whitehouse. If Simon was here, he would tell ye.

Mrs N – The Howmans?

Mrs F – Aye, it's Howman. The Howmans first let the big house, Whitehouse, to somebody there, because Winnie Gow said that she goes up there and looks after them when they have dinner parties and so forth. Is he not a doctor?

Mrs N – They have a cottage as well, I think.

Mrs F – Well, that will be it, that will be the Boreland. They did it up, ye see, it's quite a nice place, I believe, now. But this Adam Munro looks after it for them because he never goes near the Post Office now, and it's all gone down. It's a shame, but the Post Office belongs to Mrs Shaw.

Mrs N- Does it?

Mrs F – Uh ha. And the Shaws had Leyhilloch as well, but they bought it just a few years ago, Fergie and Sheila. That belonged to the Shaws, and so did the Milton, all that sort of thing, ye see, at that time.

Mrs N – All along Mount Blair, really?

Mrs F – Yes, that's right, aye. I used to work wi' that Mrs Shaw, of course. I went up there a while at the time of the shooting tenants, when they were shooting up there.

Mrs N – Poor old dear, on her own now.

Mrs F – Aye, she's ninety.

Mrs N – Who was it worked for her, that died recently? She was very upset about it.

Mrs F – Yes, that's right, it was Mrs Tulloch. She bide in the little cottage at the top. She had an awful job getting anybody though, suitable.

Mrs J - Well, one of the Stewart sisters helped at one time, didn't she?

Mrs F – Aye, Elma. She just stays up, of course, Dutberry Farm.

Mrs J – Yes, not very far away. I know that from the other connection through the original, because Winnie Gow used to go and sit with Will Stewart down here at the Lodge.

Mrs F – Aye, she used to go around, and Mrs Brabbit too. One time, she used to go across to Violet Petrie, too. Violet Walker. I might let you see this, too, since we're talking about (tape interruption) and there's no such left at Drumfork to see where he was.

Mrs J – Who is this?

Mrs F – This was Chick's grandfather. So there's some of the books. It was Willie Stewart, ye know, old Will Stewart that'd be at the Hallet, so he was great, and he was speaking about it, of course. One day, I said, oh well, I'll send them down for ye. But there's nothing really for ye to see, but I just thought ye'd like to see.

Mrs N – That's very good of you to bring it out. This is – that's not a schoolmaster's book, is it?

Mrs F – Well, I think it must be, I'm not quite sure. An exercise book, um. Chick not being here, I can't, I don't know what date or anything. Is there a date?

Mrs J – Here's 1849, 1840 in this one, written by Simon Ferguson.

Mrs F – 1842 here, ye see, so.....

Mrs J – This is a book, keeping set, etc. These are things that, what are you going to do with all these things? Are you going to hand them on to the family? Or will they be too much?

Mrs F – Well, there's quite a lot. There is a place, up there, full of books. And they must have been very religious people, long ago in the Ferguson family for I can assure you there's a lot of lovely bibles there, and there's a bible with a' the names – whit d'ye call it?

Mrs J – A family bible.

Mrs N – Oh, but your eldest son would want that.

Mrs F – Well, he's the eldest son, oh, I don't know.

Mrs J – Well, you mustn't destroy them. That's the only thing. They ought to be kept.

Mrs F – Yes.

Mrs J – And I'm not sure, even the local library in Blairgowrie, or something like that, unless....and school records and things.

Mrs N – Lovely writing too, isn't it?

Mrs F – Isn't it beautiful. So they're very old, and there's quite a lot of really rare books up there.

Mrs J – Yes, they are.

Mrs N – These school teachers did have wonderful script. I've got some letters to my great great uncle from the Bridge of Cally schoolmaster. And that's very fine writing too.

Mrs F – Well, ye see, when Chick's father went to the school, it was the Blackwater School. They had a great big stove, and they all had to take a peat every day – to keep the thing going, ye see. He was

a wonderful man, Chick's father. Ye'd had loved tae have a crack wi' him, because he went back the years, ye know, and he was really a lovely man, aye.

Mrs N – But it was his father, Chick's grandfather, who was the schoolmaster?

Mrs F – I think it was that, or it could be further back. There's a grandfather clock through here. I'll let you see it. Come and see it.

Conversation with Mrs Mary Ferguson, Shieldrum Farm, Mrs Johnston and Mrs Noonan, May, 1996.