

From a conversation with Mrs Katherine Wilkinson, nee Hutchinson, 5, Blackcraig, wife of John, mother of Robert and John, in February, 1997.

I was born at Ardlebank Cottage. We lived there for about five years. It belonged to Mr Crerar, the farmer at Ardlebank, and he retired and sold it to a Mr Muchart, and he needed our house for a worker, so we moved to Blackcraig at the Kennels Cottage, and my parents were there for forty years. My father was working for the Forestry Commission. I have a sister, Elizabeth, and a brother, Ian.

We had three miles to go to school at Ballintuim. We had lots of fun, and Miss Farquarson was so good.

My sons are Robert, the horn carver, and John, who married Sarah Kirkwood. The Websters are my husband's cousins.

At Ballintuim shop, there was Mr Mitchell. We used to go in for sweets and lemonade. Sir Cecil and Lady Owen used to come to the prize-giving at the hall. I know there was a bakehouse where the hall is now. The Hutchisons, my grandparents, stayed at Ballintuim, where Webster is in the lower part. Grandfather was a trapper. Granny used to look after the Readingroom, which was on the end of the house, you know, the little window that looks up the Glen, well that was the Readingroom. She lost her husband when he was in his thirties, and she was left with a big family. My husband belongs Dundee. Jimmy Wilkinson, and my John are step-brothers. His father married Madge Webster.

The Murrays are over at Auchinblae. He is retired and not at all well (last head forester). The Petries were at Crowhill – you remember Elma? The Forestry Commission owned that farm then, it was all part of Blackcraig Estate. The Wilsons lived at Blackcraig Farm. We had great fun when they were there. Their daughter, Maisie, kept on the farm. She was hard-working, she married and had two sons, the youngest was only little when she died. One of the workers where they went, took on the two boys. They are grown up now, and doing well.

We liked it when we were up at Whistlebare, also a Forestry Commission house. We were up there for four years. We were married in 1954, and went up there in 1958. In 1962, we came down here. At Whistlebare, we had no electricity or anything. There was another chap who wasn't there long before it was sold. There was a German, Steve, a chicken farmer at Balnabeggan. At one time, the Ogilvies stayed at Balnabeggan.

Hospitalfield at Arbroath, designed by Patrick Alan Frazer, is very like Blackcraig Castle. They have musical evenings there and pictures on display. There are some lovely paintings.

I've always enjoyed hearing Josie's husband playing the pipes when he is here. It carries all the way down the river to Lagan-dhu.

Do you remember the Blacksmith's shop that used to be at Ardlebank, it was just below the farmhouse. Mr Stewart came up from Netherton once or twice a week. We used to run in there on our way to school to get a heat. That was our first stop, the bellows were going. My mother got her milk from Ardlebank, from Mrs Crerar.

The McDonalds of Ballintuim House had parties for the children. Miss Farquharson went as well, and organised the games and dancing. There was a lovely Christmas tree. Mr Petrie (Archie's

father) was Santa Claus. He was the gardener there. Mrs Soutar was at the Lodge (grandmother of the Stagecoach brother and sister). Young Telfer was at Ballintuim Farm with the Thorns.

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