

ANN HILL RESEARCH

Interview with Bob Sloan,  
Langshaw Cottages.

1st February, 1987

Bob Sloan, aged 85, was working on the farm when I arrived, and would be so doing again in the afternoon. Smallish, alert, with a twinkling eye, his face would light up at the mention of someone he liked. He said people tell him that he's good at making friends - which is easy to believe. ~~(although he~~

Born at Carmaddie, Irongray, his father came to Wyseby Mains first as tenant, in 1907, then as proprietor. In 1947 Bob Sloan bought Langshaw, and when he retired he moved to the cottage beside the A74, while his son runs the farm next door.

Most of the interview concerned farming, but there was also some new material on Pincod and the tennis club. A follow up could be to list the prize tickets from various shows.

He lent me two <sup>estate</sup> books about Langshaw.

School and  
Teaching

Kirkpatrick Fleming short time, then Eaglesfield, a year or so at Annan, but railway timetable unsatisfactory so father moved them to Lockerbie Academy, which he left aged 13.

Eaglesfield:- infants Miss Scott, also Miss Boyle and her brother who took oldest.

Not long at Kirkpatrick Fleming - remembers taking big tree across road where he took a big drink. Caught pneumonia (attended by Dr. Carruthers) and was off a long time (he remembered lying in front room at Wyseby Mains). One teacher whose name he thought he remembered was Miss Murray.

Jack — [It  
looks just like a dash  
eve - perhaps put a  
double dash?]

He walked both to Kirkpatrick Fleming and Eaglesfield but took the train to Annan and Lockerbie, travelling with Mabel Donaldson, the Hill girls, a boy Young (Eaglesfield) and Jack - and one or two others. The boys got up to a lot of mischief in the train - but not the Hills.

He left school to work a pair of horses, but he later started attending evening school at Kirkpatrick Fleming, under Mr. Mckerchar, a tall man. (I think

this may have been after the War). He remembered Mr. McKerchar telling him that if you joined the army it was like wheeling a barrow with 2 cwt in it.

His own two bairns went to Breconbeds, the nearest school.

His wife, Violet Burnett, was a Domestic Science teacher. She taught at Langholm, and then - about 1927/28, just before their marriage, at Sanquhar. He remembered taking her up one Sunday to hunt for digs, at a time of an exceptional hard frost which lasted for weeks. She never taught after marriage.

When I asked about Mrs./Miss Moffat who taught music, he remembered Miss Stewart - who lived near the Burnetts house at ? Catbridge - see Church. The Mrs. Moffat may have been the coal agent's mother.

#### Church

He went to Pincod Church where his father was an elder, & he later a Deacon, and Mr. Hill, a grand church-man, sang in the choir. Miss Stewart played the organ at Kirtle Church for many years.

The Pincod Minister, Mr. Donaldson, was there many years, a real gentleman, very popular, probably without many hobbies outside the Church, which he was wrapped up in. He died at the Rigg, and had two adopted children, Bob and Mabel, both now dead, with whom Mr. Sloan used to go to school.

The elders he remembered were Mr. Henderson, Mr. Green, both from Eaglesfield, and Mr. Graham of Wysebyhill. There was also Mr. Irving, the caretaker, who put on the stove. It was a small Church with a little vestibule and square inside, most of the seats at the middle and the side, with 2 or 3 at each corner. They went to the Sunday School at 11, then Church at 12 - and, he said, it was a Sunday School, with 3 or 4 teachers. The one he remembered was Mrs. Donaldson.

Mr. Donaldson also used to preach in an old cottage in Eaglesfield, in which a loose box had been built as a sort of Minister's changing room. As Deacon one of Bob's jobs was to help arrange these services.

Another great churchgoer was Mr. Davidson, the road man, who died an old man. Mr. Sloan himself went to Band of Hope Meetings and to everything concerned with the Church. He has been a merry tee-totaller all his life. He mentioned the Burnetts too as non-drinkers.

After Mr. Donaldson came Mr. Fulton, quite a short man,

with one boy, a good Minister, buried in a Cemetery not far along the Dumfries - Castle Douglas road, but he couldn't remember which.

which

He thought Pincod stopped when the lease expired, probably a 99 year lease. It reverted to Springkell, and the building was demolished. Mr. Sloan then joined Kirtle, under Mr. Malseed, a great sportsman - he gave the bairns a grand sledge he had. Latterly his voice got done. Mr. Sloan was on the Hall Committee. At that time the Kirtle shop was taken by Craik, the Annan-grocer, whose nephew - Johnston - became Hall treasurer (N.B. - This not to be published). They had a big fund raising day in the field and got quite a lot which Johnston put in a biscuit tin below his bed.

~~Some of the money was spent on a new hall, but I don't know what year. It was a very nice building and was used for many years. It was the property of the Annan family and was the old hall. It was the property of the Annan family and was the old hall. It was the property of the Annan family and was the old hall.~~

(N.B. I'm not sure whether this was for the Church hall or the public hall). So <sup>were</sup> his next door neighbour Mr Clowe and Mr Calvert - the blacksmith.

Although he went to Pincod, he - and other young ones - used to go down whiles to Mr. Walker's evening services at Kirkpatrick Fleming. Walker was well liked, and taught a lot of young people to play the fiddle. I have a note at this point 'with Davidson, George Notman, and the two John Mackies of Hillhead and Redhouse', as if they used to go to Church together. Mr. Sloan also went to the Bible Class at Pincod.

See Mr. Sloan (senior), p.

Sport and Entertainment

Unless you count showing horses and cattle as such, Mr. Sloan denied any interest in sport. It later transpired, however, that he had been a regular tennis player when the Court was at Newton - in fact it was the former bowling green. When the green closed, the tennis club was formed, perhaps about 1921 or 1922. It moved to beside the water tank at Toppinghead perhaps about 1926. It certainly had moved there by his marriage in 1928. He never played at Toppinghead. They had regular tournaments. Among the best players were Billy Walker and Vi Burnett (Bob's future wife).

He met Vi through local dances. She came from Cranberry, and was the youngest of the family.

He mentioned Dave Mitchell, who died very recently, as a keen tennis player.

The bowling green he described as being for Cove Quarry.

His other 'sporting' interest is cards, although he pays little now. He and his wife used to go to whist drives, and did quite well. He mentioned one night at Middlebie when they should have won but the scores were added up wrong. The organisers apologised to them later. But he much prefers bridge, a grand game with much more to it. He learned to play at Wicket-thorn from Tom Beattie, who played a lot - the Beatties were good players. He played socially with the Beatties, Tom Graham of Wysebyhill, Mackie of Aitchisonbank and Fred Moffat the coal agent. He loves the game so long as it is played properly without any suggestion of cheating.

Shooting -See Farming and Miscellaneous.

Economic

Most economic material comes under farming.

Farming

I got the impression that you could almost say Mr. Sloan had farmed for fun. Most of the local farmers were dairy and he thought there had been - until recently - far more money that way, yet he concentrated more on beef cattle (and horses, sheep, and pigs) simply because that was what he liked.

He had been a judge at horse and cattle shows on many occasions, and has himself won many prizes for Clydesdales and for cattle. On two or three occasions he won the Cawder Cup (~~spelling?~~), which is the top prize. Not so many years ago he sold a horse at Carlisle for £2000, about 8 or 9 years ago one at Glasgow for £1000. He learned about horses from Jim Burnett and his brother, who had good ones. He used to breed horses himself - having 8 or 10 at a time, and they broke a lot in, often purchased from Wigtown. We also discussed how to judge horses.

He used to sell fat bullocks at Lockerbie, or elsewhere, the auctioneers would ring him up and ask when he wanted half a dozen or so.

*\* If possible we  
must check this  
before  
printing*

