

ANN HILL BEQUEST

Interview with Campbell Beattie

30th November, 1986

Campbell Beattie is one of those that everyone says I should meet - intensely interested in local history, a native of the parish, and son of the local councillor. He was in Grace Carson's class at school - so aged perhaps 51. I understand he has a Glasgow University degree possibly B.Sc. Agric. His house (Wyseby Mains) is also noteworthy for its fine garden, largely created by his wife (Photographs show the 'before', a veritable wilderness). They got advice from landscape gardeners in Ambleside. The wall is decorated with framed plans of the old farm-building complex.

Entertainment Very little discussed. He mentioned Thomson, the second last station master, as being a great organiser, especially of the badminton club in Victoria Hall.

Mrs. Beattie was for a time secretary of the W.R.I. and gave me some old Minute books which she had in her possession, principally 1927-1933.

Major Brian Johnson-Ferguson was the man he recalled as dealing with Scouts.

See also Lamont, Lamb.

School

When he was at school in Kirkpatrick Fleming the master was Mr. Doull, very severe, keen on A.R.P. and on the Hall Committee. Still living in Ayr, visited Campbell Beattie quite recently (I think). There were then 3 teachers. He also mentioned Mrs. Irving, who'd come out of retirement, a born teacher. I think, but am not certain, that she was connected with the Irving family who were in turn related to Campbell Beattie's mother. See G.G. Irving, below.

Before the war there was a school outing, but this was not possible in wartime, so they had sports in a local field, at Newton.

James Rae went to Cummertrees.

Church

Pincod Church had been given a 99 year lease, and reverted to Springkell when it closed down. Campbell Beattie seemed to think it a pity that it reverted.

His family (living at Wicketthorn) went to the parish

MINISTERS

HONDURAS

church. Eric Duncan was the Minister. He left around 1946 and went, he thought, perhaps to Geneva, perhaps to the World Council of Churches. He thought he had also been at some point, perhaps when he retired, in Aberdeen.

Next came McKenzie, from Port Glasgow. He had vivid memories of the induction soiree, which was on the night of the great snowstorm (March 1947). When he left he went to Aberdeenshire. Campbell Beattie liked McKenzie, who got on very well with his father. He did not give the same academic impression as Duncan, spoke in a Glasgow accent, and had worked on the ship yards. McKenzie was 'harmless'.

Cartwright

A later Minister was not - the one who was there when Mr. Beattie died in 1959. He had, without consulting the Kirk session removed the choir rails in front of the pulpit (these used to separate the choir from the congregation). There was a huge row about this. Campbell Beattie's father was so incensed by the Minister that he refused to be buried by him - Campbell Beattie got a family friend who was a Minister - although Campbell Beattie himself thought that the removal of the rails was an improvement.

Black, likewise, had been hard to get on with.

Of Mr. Walker he had heard an old farmer say, 'He was a guid plooman wasted' because he looked after the Glebe so well. He has a photo which, he thinks, probably shows Walker at a local/general election. Also 'guid plooman ...' because he used to cut peats.

Duncan was a very popular Minister (which is not to say McKenzie was not).

School (2)

Mrs. Irving was a natural, dedicated teacher. Married to Graham Irving's brother. The other teacher married the Manager of the British Honduras camp - a man, he thought, of Spanish extraction - called (he thought) Phillips.

Economics

Much of the interview could come under that heading.

Apparently there is still (or again) a dispute about the Braes/Springkell boundaries. The river eats into the Braes bank.

Now most of the farms, but not all, dairy. In his grandfather's day it was more stock rearing. Dairying was stimulated by the railways, which opened up

RAILWAY
QUARRY
HONDURAS, ITAL
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Newcastle and the like to Kirkpatrick Fleming farmers. Quite a few have given up dairying.

He wasn't sure when the railway closed. The goods service went on after the passenger closed. There would be sidings to the quarries. Among buildings built by Cove stone were the Dean Bridge and the Caley Hotel, Edinburgh. He'd been told that, although the Statue of Liberty is usually said to be Corsehill stone, in fact there is a lot of Cove stone in the base. It is a distinctive, very hard sandstone - so hard that the pincer marks in the blocks still show, instead of being worn away. A fairly dark red sandstone.

There was also a quarry at Annanlea, and at Geddes Hole. There was a little bit of a quarry at Wicketthorn. It had flooded while it was working and - according to folk lore - the tools are supposed still to be down there.

There was a quarry at Springkell.

There were a number of rights of way associated with the quarries - including one through his own (and, for Cove Quarry workmen).

The British Honduras camp has already been mentioned. There was also an Italian P.O.W. camp. He thought - but not sure - that the Honduras camp later was used by German and then Ukrainian P.O.W's.

The sawmill at Mossknow existed when he was a boy, but was little used. Johnstone descendants are still there. They used occasionally to get barrows or the like thence. They had an old mantlepiece, made of elm, which they got at the sawmill.

He could not recollect Beltenmont Mill working. It's ancestors had lived at Beltenmont. Jim Johnstone of Raeburnhead told him people used to come down, taking corn to the mill.

Farms and
Farmers

Wyseby Mains - 1789 stone with H M (Hugh Mair) above original door - but house rebuilt in 1901, so only part of early building left - relatively low - in what he calls the 'Cumberland style'. It is an exceptionally well laid out farm, split exactly in two by the road, with a big field on either side. He bought Wyseby Mains about 21 years ago. A small part (which he showed me) is beyond the dual carriageway.

SPRINGS KIBBU

WYSEBY MAINS

Springkell. He has a friend with the sale catalogue for he thinks - 1889. The story is that Heron Maxwells were financially embarrassed, and sold the estate under reversion if they could raise money to re-purchase. The Johnson-Ferguson's built new houses in every farm, to make it impossible for the Heron-Maxwell's to buy back - and they have neglected it ever since, so that it must be one of the most neglected estates in Scotland. The farms are said to be badly drained.

Around 1940 his father took one/two grass parks, and Campbell Beattie went to the leasing. The whole Johnson-Ferguson family came out, making a really big occasion of it, and walked round the fields. Each one was set in situ. The whole thing took a full day. Lady Johnson-Ferguson was all dressed up. He remembers her going on about the trees.

Raeburnhead - was owned by Irving of Cove c 1722 - see stone on door(?). Jim Johnstone of Raeburnhead was friendly with his father. Raeburnhead is very much the 'vintage' farm lay out. A new house was being built there when the sale book was written.

Wyseby Mains. Trees cut down in the wood (oak, ash, beech) are about 180 years old - i.e. the same age as the old house. He loves the hedge, although some say he should cut it down. He cuts out the elder and ash 'weeds' so that the beech re-grows. The hedge probably planted by the Mairs. Whitehill is supposed to have the earlier titles. There is a plaque in the Kirk to Ann Mackie, daughter of Hugh of Wyseby. Ownership passed, by marriage, to the Grahams, and then - again through marriage - to two Miss Smiths. He thinks there were at one point two sons of the Grahams, one went to Australia (the eldest), and the estate went to the younger son. An Australian Graham descendant turned up recently with a camera. Another was a Barton, descended from Hugh Mair Barton, who called. He understood that (they)? were buried in Wyseby Old Town, at the bottom of the road.

Wyseby Old Town. We visited it, or the remains. He thinks that the Roman road and a more modern road ran through it. When there was a very dry Summer, the old road became very clear. The whole area has a landscaped appearance, as if the higher bit has been made up. He understood that a trench had been dug by archaeologists at one time, but when, or with what result, he did not know. He bought Wyseby Old Town about 5 years ago. The farm use would go into disuse

