



Project: Ploughing Up Our Past
 Respondent: Robert Mills
 Year of Birth: 1934
 Connection to project: Born in Borland Mill
 Date of Interview: 21st June 2021
 Interviewer: Roberta McGee
 Recording Agreement: Yes
 Information & Content: Yes
 Photographic Images: Yes (4)
 Length of Interview: 29 mins 55 secs
 Location of Interview: Old Cumnock
 Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro



Robert Mills

Time (from: mins/secs)	Time Coded Summary/Transcript	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.00 – 00.17	Introduction	
00.18 – 00.27	Details of Respondent Robert Mills	
00.28 – 00.33	Connection to Borland Mill	
00.34 – 01.38	Respondent describes Borland Mill when his family first moved there in 1937. It was rented from Dumfries Estate. It was very damp and in poor condition. The previous occupants had been elderly and it was poorly ventilated,	

01.39 – 05.23	The Respondent explains that it was a water mill powered by a water wheel which was 22ft in diameter and it was set into a well in the ground the shaft being at ground level. It actually had five grindstones. They worked two of them, one to shell the corn and one to grind it into oatmeal. He then goes on to describe how the grindstones worked,	
	‘I personally helped my father to make the oatmeal’	03.26- 03.29
	‘We never attempted the flour. It was hard enough to do the oatmeal,’.	03.40- 03.47
05.24 – 08.09	Robert tells us about how his father developed ‘Farmer’s Lung’ caused by the dust off the corn and hay after it had been heated. Robert finished up running the Mill by himself. He mentions that by this time he wasn’t making oatmeal but did a lot of bruising oats. He goes on to describe how quiet the big heavy cast-iron machinery was because of the beech teeth.	
	‘Before the farms had their own machinery and they would bring their corn in and we would bruise it’.	06.25- 06.29
	‘No noise. Just this gentle murmur of all this machinery working’.	08.04- 08.09
08.10 – 10.05	Father retires from the Mill and Robert describes their small dairy of 5 or 6 cows which they had during the was years.	
10.06 – 13,22	Robert talks about the war years when the government contractors came in and ploughed the ground then Robert would prepare it and sow it.He mentions that he had 2 or 3 acres of corn and when it was ready the neighbours would cut it using the horse and reaper. He goes on to explain how the reaper worked and how he would make corn sheaves. He then tells us how they used to borrow the horse from the neighbours by going over to Borland Farm, catching the horse, harnessing it and taking it back to Borland Mill to	

	help him empty the midden, cleaning it down and then taking it back to its stall at Borland Farm.	
	'If you can imagine an 8/9 year old, maybe 10 year old catching a Clydesdale and harnessing it. You see the big collar going round their neck. That big horse just stands with its head up and says "A-ha! You'll no' put that on me" '.	13.02- 13.19
13.23 – 14.40	The Respondent talks about meeting his wife, who was a farmer's daughter from Laigh Glenmuir Farm, at the Pavilion in Ayr.	
14.41 – 17.35	Robert tells us about his family's involvement with the National Farmers' Union and how his father was one of the founder members. He says that his father was the poultry man because of his experience and goes on to tell us that they had poultry at the Mill and that all the eggs went to Auld, the hatchery at Mauchline.	
17.36 – 21.51	The Respondent gives us an insight as to what it was like to be a Young Farmer back then and how he did a lot in amateur dramatics which he was involved in. He then goes on to discuss the rivalry among the Young Farmers' Clubs in amateur dramatics competitions saying that New Cumnock nearly always came out on top, and tells us about the Young Farmers' cattle shows in the area.	
21.52 – 22.56	Robert talks about how they came to the decision to purchase Timbermills.	
22.57 – 23.20	He explains that Borland Mills is now stables and that the old Mill was demolished to make way for two luxury flats.	
23.21 – 24.06	Robert tells us why he broke up the old water wheel.	
24.07 – 25.54	Robert says that in general life at Borland Mill was a good life and that the war years didn't really bother him because they were never short of food and were self-sufficient.	
25.55 – 26.45	He felt that the worst thing about living in Borland Mill was his father's illness. He goes on to talk about being called up for National Service.	
26.46 – 29.11	The Respondent is thanked for his memories and asked if there was anything more he would like to	

	add. He tells us about the night of the Clydebank Blitz and about hearing the 'planes travelling overhead having come up from the south and followed the Nith Valley right through Kilmarnock and on to Clydebank. They were sitting around the fire when the 'planes were heading back and they heard the whistling sound of a bomb being dropped nearby. It fell on soft ground and didn't explode.	
	'Once you hear it you never forget the noise of the drone of a couple of hundred planes close.....it's a sound that never leaves you.'	27.51- 28.01
	'On the return journey we heard this whistling scream. We thought "Here it comes" '.	28.08- 28.14
29.12 – 29.55	Respondent relates the story about another bomb which destroyed Kirkconnel Co-operative.	