



Project: Ploughing Up Our Past
 Respondent: Jim Smith
 Year of Birth: 1954
 Age: 68
 Connection to project: Farming
 Date of Interview: 2nd November 2022
 Interviewer: Ailsa McInnes
 Recording Agreement: Yes
 Information & Content: Yes
 Photographic Images: Yes/ No (Number of:)
 Length of Interview: 55 minutes
 Location of Interview: Skerrington Mill
 Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n Pro



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.00 – 00.35	Introduction re early life on the farm.	
00.35 – 03.18	<p>Jim's grandpa buying Skerrington Mill from the National Coal Board. He was a steam winding engine man at Cronberry pit and had been a tenant for some 10 years.</p> <p>Once the pits were nationalised the farm was put on the market. Jim's grandpa could offer £50 above the best offer, much to the astonishment of the local lawyer.</p>	
03.18 – 04.26	Jim's dad worked at the pits and the family moved to a new council house at Drumbrochan, which was a delight after the miner's rows.	
04.26 – 05.43	In 1959, aged 5 Jim and family moved to the farm. The farmhouse was a wreck compared to the new council house and renovation of the farmhouse was challenging.	
05.43 – 06.23	Jim's uncle Tom worked for Stevenson's dairy farm and his uncle Archie had a wholesale fruit and veg business and Jim remembers going to the markets	

	with him, previously he had worked for Stoddart's the bakers and had a bike with the basket on the front for deliveries.	
06.23 – 08.01	Jim's uncle Taylor ran a shop in Cumnock, previously it had been Jessie Dale's shop. Jim learned entrepreneurial skills from his uncles as well as learning to drive the shop van aged 14.	
08.01 – 09.51	Materials acquired from the demolition of the Cronberry and Lugar Miners' rows to help rebuild the farmhouse and steadings. Jim remembers chipping the lime mortar off the bricks for an hour every night when he came home from school so the bricks could be reused.	
09.51 – 11.00	It was a one bedroom farmhouse and their granny stayed with them and slept in the built-in bed.	
11.00 – 11.24	Great childhood memories of life on the farm and grandpa making porridge on the Rayburn.	
11.24 – 11.42	Many photographs have been shared with Cumnock History group.	
11.42 – 13.46	Skerrington Mill is over 300 years old and Jim says that Kay keeps finding out more history of the place! Extensions have been built to the farmhouse and it was originally two rooms. It was owned by Lord Skerrington of Glaisnock House.	
13.46 – 16.48	Division of the estate amongst the children after his grandpa's death. They were left with a rundown farmhouse and granny to look after.	
16.48 – 18.10	Dealings with the local banks to secure a loan for improvements.	
18.10 – 21.30	Friends and family mucking in to help with improvements to the farmhouse. Alexander Sawmills delivering wood and Jim reversing the lorry out for them. It was dirty work knocking down walls and there were crates of lemonade from Carey's Lemonade van.	
21.30 – 23.29	The farm was 36 acres. There were six black and white cows for milking. Jim's father worked in the pits so it was a 'hobby' farm. Local farmers grazed the land.	
23.29 – 26.19	His parents were gifted two Highland Cows for their fortieth wedding anniversary, appropriately named Bill and Agnes. They were like pets although they	

	<p>did breed and sell some. With Covid they did away with the Highland cows and now have a couple of belted Galloways.</p>	
26.19 – 29.53	<p>Jim's dad kept bees for his friend Hugh Blackwood. Looking after bees is fascinating and the honey was sold to Michael Sloan's shop in Cumnock.</p>	
29.53 – 32.11	<p>There were crops on the farm and Jim remembers his uncle Tom driving a Fordson major and his grandpa the Albion reaper. CHG have some of the photos. They also cut the grass at Broomfield before it was the school or the rugby pitches. His uncle Taylor collected the hay on his Fordson A27 and took it back to the farm, using a large broomstick to signal that he was turning right.</p>	
	<i>'Local farmers helped each other out'</i>	32.11 – 32.30
32.30 – 32.50	<p>There was a large vegetable patch on the farm which can be seen in aerial photos.</p>	
32.50 – 34.00	<p>Skyways took aerial photos back in the 1950s of important landmarks and many of the farms</p>	
34.00 – 36.16	<p>Food and baking on the farm</p>	
36.16 – 38.16	<p>Holidays were few. To Butlins, Ayr or down the coast. Also Scarborough and Whitley Bay with other pit families.</p>	
38.16 – 44.20	<p>Play was self-made, fishing, ice skating, sledging. Visiting Benston Smiddy which was like an outdoor adventure park. Playing in the orchard and the 'scheme boys' trying to steal the fruit.</p>	
44.20 – 46.28	<p>Brother's motor bike accident and other accidents. Being able to phone the chemist and they opened up on Christmas day!</p>	
46.28 – 49.20	<p>His mum's story as she was not from a farming background. A good 'courting' story involving a claw hammer!</p>	
49.20 – 50.20	<p>All farmers helped each other and were less self-sufficient than nowadays. Jim's dad could offer three healthy sons to help out others when required.</p>	
50.20 – 51.35	<p>Jim and Audrey took over the farm when his dad died, aged ninety-two. He worked in the pits all his</p>	

	days, sometimes double shifts. He liked a wee dram, right until the end.	
	<i>'It was a hard but decent life on the farm and dad provided well for the family in this environment having started off in the town.'</i>	51.02 – 51.18
51.35 – 54.46	Jim gifted his dad a retired trotting horse one birthday which did not go down well at first but they became firm friends and the horse lived another twenty two years.	
54.46 – 54.53	More stories could be told and thank you.	



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