

THE ULSTER-SCOTS LANGUAGE SOCIETY

ANDY BROWN of Dunover, near Ballywalter talks to Willie Cromie and Will McAvoy, about growing up on a farm in County Down. He shares his memories of butter-churning, good home-baking, townland and field names, and visiting family on Sundays.

[00:00:00.00] We went up tae the Hill then whaniver we wur oul enough that we jaist didnae need oniethin immediately, ye know, if ocht went wrang: an in that days, it wud hae been oul Balmer in the taxi ye know.

[00:00:11.03] So, A wus on the Hill in the Haa Hill tae A wus ten yeir oul, and that was whun my Da soul it an cum tae Bellywalter.

[00:00:21.28] Whaniver we wur on it in them days, ma Ma waashed wi the waash-boords. Thair was nae electric iver on it whun we were on it.

[00:00:31.04] An she kep a coo an a calf whun it cum roon that time o the yeir an the calf wud hae been reared up an soul, mebbe at six months: an the coo wud hae been pit intae calf again an that brought the guid milk.

[00:00:44.21] Thair wus mair dugs, as they say, than sheep, an ye know - an mebbe in them days mebbe mair pigs than kye, as the' wud hae sayed.

[00:00:54.26] An she wud hae went oot in the moarnin monies a time, tuk yin o iz oot below the airm, and haed the ither yin sittin in the cot beside her whan she milked the coo.

[00:01:04.14] An she wud hae cum in an it wus pit intae a big enamel dish, straint throu a strainer wi a bit o gauze in it. It wud be laik whut we wud uise for strainin vegetables aff the day.

[00:01:14.26] An then she wud hae skimmed the crame aff it an it wud hae been püt intae a churn an she churned it then - an then made it intae butter.

[00:01:25.16] Aa the wattèr wus carriet frae the Wal Gairden whutch wus aboot, aw, it wus a hunner an fifty / twa hunner yairds doon the fiel in the Wal Gairden an it wus brought up an püt in a big...

[00:01:37.13] Willie Cromie: Haed ye a pump on that...?

[00:01:39.21] Andy: Ay, thair wus a pump. Thair wus three wattèr sources on the farm: thair wus a pump doon at the bottom o the hill between the bottom o the lane an McCracken's.

[00:01:50.14] Then thair was a wal at the en o the loanen, jaist as ye cum aff the hill. Noo, ma Da wud hae pit an odd bag o lime in it, but whaniver it wus used, he wud hae drew the wattèr aff fur the pigs or somethin laik that in the yaird.

[00:02:02.20] Willie Cromie: That wus for livestock, that yin?

[00:02:04.14] Andy: Then the wattèr doon the Wal Gairden wus brought up in a white enamel bucket an it wus cowped intae a crock in the scullery. Noo, the scullery wus away fae the heat and it wus a cool place: ye cud hae püt oniethin in thair an kep it cos thair was nae fridges or naethin.

[00:02:17.07] If thair was a fowl or oniethin kilt, or ocht laik that thair, a duck shot, we wur raired on pigeons an ducks an rebbits an stuff - we niver got meat! The onie thing ye got wus, maybe if ye wur lucky, ye got a leg o lamb or a turkey at Christmas.

[00:02:32.24] An ma Ma baked soda breid up tae we left the farm on the griddle. She baked it here, doon here tae but, ye know, no as much. It was baked iverie day an thair wus eggs püt in the oven an baked in the oven.

[00:02:44.05] So, ye know, so monie things daen different wyes, ye know, an she haed aa this pit in an it wus lovely; whan we cum hame frae schuil an we got a baked egg, we thocht this wus brilliant, the wye it was daen in the oven, ye know, on the oul range.

[00:02:54.10] It wus slowly cooked, aw ay, the' wur lovely.

Willie Cromie: I niver heerd o that in ma life.

[00:02:57.16] Ay. Or whaniver A wus a wean an whaniver we wur rinnin aboot an ma Ma wus busy, monies a time she did it fur us. We uist tae make whut we caa'ed bread püddin.

[00:03:05.27] Willie Cromie: Aye, panaida.

Andy Brown: Panaida.

Willie Cromie: Panaida we caa'ed it. They caa'ed it breid püddin, breid-an-butter püddin.

[00:03:11.14] Andy Brown: It wus a big plain loaf in them days an ye wud hae sliced her as thick as ye wantit an cut her up intae these squares...

[00:03:16.26] Pit her in the dish, pit the waarm wattèr on her tae waarm her, drained it aff, and then, ye see, the milk off the coo, boy, wi the crame in it an then a taste o shüggar iver the tap o it ...

[00:03:25.21] Bi sowl, ye cud hae ate thon boy for lang enough.

[00:03:28.24] Will McAvoy: Remember ye uist tae püt corrans in it?

Andy Brown: That's right.

[00:03:31.12] Willie Cromie: Ma Granda made it wi the bleck tay...

Andy Brown: Ay, ay.

Willie Cromie: Ye know the oul tay pot haed bin lyin oan the fire for an oor an wus laik stew? Weel, he daen that, ivver the tap o it.

[00:03:40.01] Andy Brown: Ay, it wus lovely.

Willie Cromie: Ye wud hae heard the slurps an slooters o him...

[00:03:44.23] Andy Brown: That's right, it was lovely, boy. A mean, we wud cum hame frae the school an wud hae got, mebbe, that an that wud hae kep us goin til ma Da cum hame fae the Ulster Transport Authority (UTA) in them days.

[00:03:55.15] An whun he cum in aff an oul motorbike, if it wus a really bad nicht, ma Ma wud hae had the spuds on because we wud hae dug spuds an thair wus carrots growein.

[00:04:03.06] Ma Da wud hae haed a gairden wi aa this stuff in it - ye cudnae afford tae buy it, an then mebbe whar ye wud hae got it wusnae great quality oniewye.

[00:04:10.20] Ye cud hae grew better stuff on the fairm yersel, ye know, that's the wye it wus jaist.

[00:04:15.17] Away back in them days, even whaniver oor farm wus goin, I hae mine iverie fiel had a name; an whan ye cum oot o oor dorr an lukked doon the first hill, whar the daffodils wus thair that Chairlie grew, that wus 'Big Wullie's Hill'

[00:04:30.08] Ma Da says thair wus a man yin time, Wullie Bryce (thair wus ten acres in it) laboured that fiel wi a spade an then the nixt fiel roon then wus the Plantin Fiel because it lay intae, ye know, Tamsin's Plantin Fiel.

[00:04:45.15] Thair wus anither fiel beyond that, nixt McCrackens, wus 'Irvin's Knowe'. Then whan ye cum across the loanin, the nixt fiel wus the Point Hill because it went intae a wee point.

[00:04:57.12] An then the yin nixt tae the fourth en, up the side o the loanin (it wus across from Big Wullie's Hill), wus the Front Hill because it lukked nixt the road, ye see.

[00:05:08.00] Then the Back Hill wus the yin thair wus sae very steep, whaur the mill cum in an aa the millin wus daen.

[00:05:14.28] An then the fiel nixt tae that, between it an the Wal Gairden, wus the Churn Hill fur ma Da sayed whun he wus a wean, thair wus a churn thair.

[00:05:26.08] That's whaur the motorbike wus kep in that oul hoose in below thair, an thair wus a hole oot through the waa an thair wus a horse churn thair.

[00:05:32.02] An the horse wus hooked up an it went roon an it churmt the milk. An ma Da says, Oul Tam, whan he wus a fresh man, wus oot about (he wus onie a youngster at the time), he said he haed a big whusker - oh about 18 inches lang...

[00:05:45.11] an he said he tuk the tap aff iverie noo an agane an lukked in tae see hoo the milk wus daein, but he says this nicht, 'A weighted wi a stane' he says. 'Whan he tuk the tap aff,' he says, 'A hut the horse on the rump

[00:05:55.02] an, he said, the buttermilk wus aa oot owre the tap o his heid an, he says, if he'd hae got him that nicht, he'd hae kilt him.

[00:06:01.05] An then thair wus the two boags doon at the bottom an that. An ye'd hae got a shot at ducks thair doon, ye know, at the Lint Hole - that's whaur they used to rett the lint an that, ye know.

[00:06:10.24] But iveriethin... See, same wi the road thair. That wee hill doon thair at the back o Tamsin's, between Tamsin's thair, ye know wi the two bits o grun on each side o the road whar the Plantin is?

[00:06:21.13] That wus the 'Flush Brae', that wee hill ye cum doon thair. A suppose mebbe a flush o watter cummin doon, it wud hae got its name.

[00:06:28.10] An Big Jones's Brae wus the wee brae cummin up nixt Frankie McCracken's thair whar James McCracken an them wus reared thair...

[00:06:36.09] or whar Frankie wus reared, that wus Jones's Brae - an aa these braes, aa these wee bits on the road, ma Da haed a name for aa these. Cairdy Brig thair an them aa, ye know, they aa haed thair names.

[00:06:45.06] Willie Cromie: That's what we say... the'r bein loast noo, the'r toonlans.

Andy Brown: (Over the top of Willie) But the'r deein oot ye see. Ay.

[00:06:49.23] Andy Brown: But it wus so much slower - fur ma Da says whan they cum hame frae church on a Sunday, an the denner wus got an the soda breid wus baked an that, an the eggs gethert aff the hens...

[00:06:59.15] fur they wur intae the hens in a big way at a time... An the trap wus brought oot an yoked up, an they wud hae visited thrie o thair familie this Sunday, an then they wud hae went an visit anither three the nixt Sunday...

[00:07:17.10] An that's hoo the time wus spent at the weeken. Whan ye cum hame fae church, ye went an visited: ye went roon in the powny an trap an ye tuk eggs tae them, or ye tuk buttermilk or milk or a bit o soda breid that wus baked.

[00:07:31.03] Willie Cromie: Aye somethin.

Andy Brown: An he had tae go oot and dae his bit laik, whan he was a wean laik.

[00:07:37.01] Ye see, whan thair wus an auction, if ma Da... Ma Da an thaim, the way they worked wus, whan they haed horses in them days - an, as A say, mair horses than kye, an mair dugs than sheep,

[00:07:48.14] Well, whan they wur haein an auction, it wus tae sell horses. They haed three foals cummin on iverie yeir, six-quarter foals. They wud hae soul them.

[00:07:59.09] An then thair was anither three follaein up an they wud hae bred three iverie yeir.

[00:08:02.10] An they wud hae kep a couple or three horses or mebbe four horses workin on the fairm aa the time. Even though it wus onie forty-seven acres, it tuk that amount o horses tae work them.

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