

THE ULSTER-SCOTS LANGUAGE SOCIETY

Interview with ELLA TAYLOR of Greyabbey, conducted by Willie Cromie and Will McAvoy on 19th October 2002. Ella was born about 1930. They talk about smuggling butter over the Border during the War, preserving fish and eggs, the pig-killer, eating pigs, and pranks in the local Concert Hall.

[00:00:00.00] Ella Taylor: An then, dae ye mine durin the War, the rations? We had tae go to the shop wi the coupons, the ration books - tae Davy Davidson an Wullie Duncan.

[00:00:11.01] Willie Cromie: Wullie Duncan, he went roon wi the cairt an the van.

[00:00:13.19] Ella Taylor: He went roon, an Sammy Broon - an ye went an all, if ye haed sae monie coupons for a tin o salmon an butter.

[00:00:22.25] An then we haed yins wud hae went doon the South, an the' wud hae brought tha butter beck

[00:00:27.02] an the' wud hae paid aboot, wus it ten shillin, fur it - a poun fur 'black market' as the' called it.

[00:00:33.06] Oniebodie ye knew went doon wud hae brought it up.

[00:00:36.17] Willie Cromie: It wus a great thing on the oul bus runs.

[00:00:38.14] Ella Taylor: The oul bus runs.

[00:00:39.18] Willie Cromie: Ye went tae Omeath, Warrenpoint...

[00:00:42.02] Ella Taylor: Dundalk an then ivver tae Omeath. Monies a time we did it, monies a time.

[00:00:45.19] A hae mine o Harol an them all goin doon wi iz, an Lizzie, his mother an all - Lizzie, ye know?

[00:00:51.08] An A hae mine then the' got sae much money off the men, an the men went away tae the pub an the weemin went tae tha shaps.

[00:00:58.19] A can remember that as well like. D'ye mine wee James Taggart? He uist tae go on them, ye know Kathleen's James, the road man?

[00:01:07.22] Will McAvoy: He leaved beside us, sure we got Lizzie's hoose. Jimmy loved the saut herrin. He haed saut herrin hingin on tha line ootside.

[00:01:15.16] Oor back wunda lukked oot on thair yaird.

[00:01:18.12] Ella Taylor: Thair yaird, that's right Will.

[00:01:19.26] Will McAvoy: An thair wur a bit o wire across fae hoose tae hoose whaur she dried the claes, hung the claes up.

[00:01:24.09] An Jimmy aye haed saut herrin, they hung on the line aa the time.

[00:01:27.18] Ella Taylor: The oul folk all daed that.

[00:01:29.09] Will McAvoy: Oh ay, saut herrin.

[00:01:31.13] Ella Taylor: An the' haed another thing the' uist tae hae in thair hoose - the ling-fish. It hung on the back o the door - saut-fish.

[00:01:38.13] Ye cut a bit an it was steeped an then boiled.

[00:01:40.15] Will McAvoy: It hung on the back o the door.

[00:01:42.00] Willie Cromie: It wus like a strip o leather, wusn't it?

[00:01:43.06] Ella Taylor: It was.

[00:01:44.09] Will McAvoy: Ye haed tae steep it.

[00:01:45.07] Ella Taylor: Steep it. An then thair wus the eggs uist tae get püt doon in stuff, some kine o glass, tae keep, tae preserve them now, whatever the' were.

[00:01:53.28] Will McAvoy: That's right. A don't know what thon wus.

[00:01:55.11] Willie Cromie: Was it done wi a fresh egg or boiled egg? A fresh egg?

[00:01:57.16] Ella Taylor: Ay, a fresh egg. The' crocked them - a big crock an the' püt stuff intae it. It nearly went like jelly but it wus tae preserve them or somethin.

[00:02:05.12] Will McAvoy: A niver seen it daen but A heerd wurd o it.

[00:02:07.25] Willie Cromie: A niver heerd o that noo.

[00:02:09.21] Will McAvoy: Oh ay, the' preserved the eggs - but A hae mine o us killin a pig an pittin it in a tub wi salt. Kilt yin o oor ain pigs.

[00:02:18.04] Ella Taylor: Right. That wus the best bacon ye cud hae got.

[00:02:20.07] Will McAvoy: Wullie Gilmore wud hae killed it an then he wud hae cum an he wud hae cut it up, ye know, in bits

[00:02:25.21] an pit it in pieces an ye püt it doon in a big tub o salt, brine.

[00:02:33.18] Ella Taylor: A remember him ivver at Bill's, cuttin the, ye know, daein the pigs. We used tae waatch him an all, an we uist tae eat the turnip ivver at Bill's.

[00:02:43.24] It wus the turnip-cutter, ye know, fur tae feed the animals an we liftit the slices o it an ett it - it was quare an juicy an good.

[00:02:52.08] Will McAvoy: Ye wudnae get a turnip now.

[00:02:53.17] Ella Taylor: Ay, ye wudnae get it now, no.

[00:02:55.20] We're on the turnip - I mine ma Mammy an ma late sister tae, gaun ivver tae Will's yin time, an Will's Da said tae them, cummin through the fiels,

[00:03:03.18] the' wur tae tak a couple o turnips each wi them fur thair denner - so that was all right.

[00:03:07.27] So the nixt time the' wur beck ivver, mebbe say in a fortnight or that, his Da had said, 'Well, yiz got yer turnips alright?'

[00:03:14.25] The' said, 'We did'. 'Well,' he says, 'A wunner the nixt time ye'r takkin them, wud ye tak them oot o my fiel, no Sam Finlay's?'

[00:03:21.03] (Laughter) He haed been waatchin them an the'd tuk them oot o the wrang fiels o turnip.

[00:03:27.24] Ay, Jimmy aye said the' needit a frost on them, the turnips, tae make them tae be really tasty -

[00:03:33.13] that an a bit o guid bacon - but sure ye wudnae get it noo ether.

[00:03:37.07] We used tae gaither spuds: we used tae get aff school tae gaither potatas.

[00:03:40.19] Will McAvoy: Ay, ye aye got a week or a fortnight's holiday.

[00:03:42.19] Ella Taylor: For gaein tae gaither them an get a wheen o shillins like - wud mebbe hae bought ye a pair o shoes (laughter). Och ay, A know.

[00:03:50.07] Will McAvoy: D'ye mine the big fire the' haed in the Concert Hall? The' uist tae light the great big open fire.

[00:03:54.22] Ella Taylor: Oh ay, an sure John an them yin time pit the squibs in it, d'ye mine? The' pit the things in that blew up.

[00:03:59.21] Will McAvoy: Jimmy Acheson threw a büllet intae it an who cum in but Mrs Filson. An thair she stud, she'd a bit o a stutter.

[00:04:07.28] She said, "A, A, A, A'll tell the Keptin". An we aa run tae the bottom o tha Hall an this büllet explodit in the fire - it micht hae kilt the oul wumman.

[00:04:16.22] Ella Taylor: A'm sure it might hae kilt her. Oh that wus terrible, that wusnae right.

[00:04:21.23] Will McAvoy: An John... The' used tae ride... D'ye mine the forms? Thair wur nae back on them, the' wur jaist...

[00:04:27.24] We uist tae püt them up on the pletfoarm an ride the bike - an John broke his toe!

[00:04:31.26] Your John broke his toe, fell aff an broke his toe.

[00:04:36.04] Ella Taylor: An the time he broke his airm, Doctor Huston says, 'Ach away an stick it in a barrel o water, it'll be all right in the mornin'. He broke his arm! (Laughter)

[00:04:45.14] A barrel o water, oh dear.

[00:04:48.04] Willie Cromie: Wait til I tell ye, the doctors haed some quare cures then, ah dear!

[00:04:54.01] Will McAvoy: Thair wur nae tablets then.

[00:04:55.29] Ella Taylor: Thair wus nae tablets then.

ULSTER-SCOTS LANGUAGE SOCIETY