



<p>Project: 'Memories of Seven Lochs' Communities: A people's history'. Respondent: Thomas McMillan Year of Birth: 1935 Age: 88 Connection to project: Born in Glenboig Date of Interview: 07/06/2023 Interviewer: Dr Sue Morrison Recording Agreement: Information & Consent: Photographic Images: Length of Interview: 42.58 Location of Interview: Glenboig Centre Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)</p>		 	
Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)	
00.42	<i>Where were you born?</i>		
	It's down on my birth certificate as Main Street Glenboig. But it was the corner house because my mother was pregnant, obviously, and that's where I was born. But I was actually living in Garnqueen Square. As soon as I was born...	00.47-01.07	
01.08	<i>Have you always lived in Glenboig?</i>		
	Yes, except for my time at the National Health Service in the Army.	01.09-01.16	
01.17	<i>Where did you do your National Service?</i>		
	I did four months in England and then twenty months at the Suez Canal.	01.20-01.24	
01.25	<i>What was that like?</i>		
	It was dangerous at times. But you were never allowed out of camp unless you had a sten gun with five rounds in it all the time, that was carried with you. If you done guard at night, you had ammunition with a rifle.	01.30-01.52	
01.52	<i>Did you make good friends there?</i>		
	Yes, met a lot of friends and whatnot being in the army.	01.53-01.58	
01.59	<i>Are you still in contact with them?</i>		
	No. Unfortunately, no, I'm too old now.	02.00	
02.06-02.07	<i>I'm going to take you back to your early life. Could you tell me about your parents?</i>		
	My mother and father, both their names is on one of the bricks out there. They were both born in the same year. I can't mind off hand the date, but they were both born in the same year. You would be able to get that from	02.16-03.15	

	the brick out there on the wall. They were born in the same year and they died in the same year. One died three months after the other. Well, I was married in 1960. They both died just after that. They both died. My mother died first in Strathclyde Hospital with complete kidney failure that they didn't pick up on. And my father dropped dead in Hurl's brickwork.	
03.16	<i>I'm so sorry.</i>	
	It was sad. But these things happen.	03.20
03.22	<i>What were their names?</i>	
	Nan. Annie Park was her single name, McMillan married. And my father was John McMillan.	03.30-
03.42	<i>And were they born and brought up in Glenboig?</i>	
	My father was born in Glenboig. My mother was born in Baillieston. In Church Street in Baillieston I believe it was.	03.43-03.54
03.55	<i>So did she come here after getting married?</i>	
	Yes.	03.56
03.58	<i>Do you know anything about their families?</i>	
	No, not a great lot, not about my mother's family, my Granny Park stayed in Baillieston. She lived till she was 100. And I think the rest of the family were in Parkhead. But we didn't really, well, we didn't have transport to get to these places. But my father was born here as well. And he worked in Hurl's brickwork.	04.03-04.35
04.36	<i>Do you know what your dad did?</i>	
	I don't know when he started. But that's where he did work. He was the boiler fireman. He done near enough everything in the brickwork. He was the gaffer in the brickwork for a while when the gaffer was on holiday, he took over. And when we lived in Garnqueen Square we were several houses which we kept moving about the square. And then when we got the thingmy my father got a house up beside Hurl's brickwork. And we moved away from here when I was about six years of age up to Gartliston. And we lived there until such times as I got a house in Ramoan when my brother and sister lived with us. I was given the house after my father died so as to keep the family together. But when they got married and moved out I got another house in Marnock and I left the brickwork as well and went to be a common ambulance driver.	04.41-05.50
05.51	<i>Can I take you back to the house that you lived in the square?</i>	
	We lived in three different houses in the Garnqueen Square. Garnqueen Square this part of the place was an E shape like the shape of an E. And if you can think of an E, you have got the main body running and there was two closes, two closes. There was a close on the bottom square and a close on the top square. And the middle prong was the row that went in and there was houses on one side of it and that was called the top square. And then you had houses running up the main stem. And then along level with the road round there. And the bottom square was roughly the same,	05.53-07.23

	and it had houses coming down, a big close, and then you went along the front. And at the start, thingme, after I was born, we lived in the very end of the E, in the bottom square. Then we moved from there to the one at the opposite end of the E which was right next to the loch. We stayed in that one for a while and then we moved up to the one next to the road. And we moved from there to Gartliston.	
07.24	<i>Can you describe the houses in the square?</i>	
	The beds... The thingmy, the living room had a bed in. The bed was set back and off the thingmy and you had another room. And that is the way you lived.	07.29-07.40
07.42-	<i>Did you have running water and bathrooms?</i>	
	Yes, you had running water and the bathroom was actually outside. You went out the door and into the toilet. The toilet was attached to the wall.	07.43-07.49
08.00	<i>And where was the bath?</i>	
	There was no bath. You just washed at the sink. And when you wanted a pail of hot water, in the middle of each leg of the thingmy there was a building, which was the wash-house and the coal cellars. And when you wanted hot water, you just went out to the boiler and dipped the bucket in and carried it back to the house for to get washed. You got washed at the sink.	08.03-08.13
08.14	<i>So you didn't have tin baths?</i>	
	No, the first tin bath I had was when I went to Gartliston with a zinc bath and we used to pull that into the room in front of the fire, the coal fire, and fill it with hot water and lie and have a bath in it.	08.30-08.1
08.31	<i>Do you remember your first ever bath?</i>	
	No, I would say no. I can't remember it, but I remember the time my mother was almost drowned in the loch.	08.56-09.06
09.07	<i>Tell me about that.</i>	
	There was one young fella dug a hole in the middle of the ice in the loch. And he called the girl over to see the hole. And the ice gave way, and they fell in. They fell into the ice. We were facing the loch, well side on to the loch. And my mother run onto the loch and my father and another man, I can't mind his name, they went and got stretchers. Cloth stretchers. And they came onto the ice. And my mother went out to the ice and she got a hold of the girl that was in the loch. But then the ice broke and she went in as well. And she was holding on to the girl. And the boy kicked her in the stomach. So I think with fighting, trying to get out. So the result is she lost her grip on the girl. And I can't just quite remember whether the girl was saved. But my mother had to be rescued from the loch as well and taken back up to the house. But everything else was alright, but the boy died. And his mother never spoke to my mother for years. She blamed her for her son drowning. Which it was not. Jim Cassidy was the other man that went on to the loch with my father to try and get them out.	09.08-10.56
10.57	<i>So did many people go on the ice during the winter?</i>	

	Yes, they used to go out skating on it, when they were told not to. I was threatened never to go in the loch or on the ice. We weren't allowed to go. My mother and father were strict on that because they knew the danger. But apparently it was my brother that told me, I fell in the loch when I shouldn't have been in it and there was a gentleman called John Sneddon who pulled me out. But I was all right.	11.05-11.41
11.42	<i>So when it wasn't icy, did you play around the loch?</i>	
	Played around about it but never went into it because it was full of leeches.	11.44-11.52
11.53	<i>What was it like back then? The actual loch? Was it clear?</i>	
	Yes, it was quite clear. There was a hot bit down at one end. We used to call it the hot place. That was because it was the water coming from the brickworks, and the pits, was warm. And it used to be steaming all the time. And there was always two swans on the loch.	11.54-12.18
12.22	<i>Did they come back, migrate and come back every year?</i>	
	They stayed there all the time until they died, and then when the swans died, another two took their place. And there are still two swans on the loch to this day. They have got six cygnets at the moment.	12.30-12.42
12.44	<i>You mentioned a brother. Did you have brothers and sisters then?</i>	
	Yes, I had a brother and three sisters - Jim, Margaret, Annie and Jean.	12.57
12.59	<i>You've got a photo of one of your sisters. Tell me about that.</i>	
	That is my sister Annie, and that is me. And that was we used to go together, I was a blonde then, and then I turned dark. Now I'm white!	13.09-13.19
13.20	<i>What is in the background to the photo?</i>	
	That is the Old Work, Glenboig Old Work. They were called two different names, you had the Old Work and the Star Work but they were both more or less the one work.	13.22-13.33
13.34	<i>And they were both brickworks?</i>	
	Yes.	13.35
13.36-13.40	<i>Could you explain the difference between the brickworks and the fireclay work?</i>	
	The fire clay work is for furnaces. The ordinary brick, which was not made in Glenboig, was for building houses.	13.45-13.54
13.55-14.02	<i>So all the bricks that were made in Glenboig were fireclay. And do you know what happened to those bricks?</i>	
	Well, they were used in different places. They used to get orders from Doran Long and they lined the furnaces for making weapons for the army and everything. And they were made in Hurl's. There were four brickworks in Glenboig. There was the Star Work, the Old Work, the Garnqueen work and Hurl's brickwork. Garnqueen was owned by Hurl. They had the two works which is further up, that's where we had our cottage. We lived in the cottage and they had their own pit that mined the clay and brought the clay up. But Hurl's bricks were harder	14.03-15.33

	<p>than the Star Works because Hurl's left the metal in the clay, it stayed in the clay so the bricks were all marked. If you've seen a brick, there is one out there, I think, a Hurl's brick, and they were spotted with iron. But they were harder. Some of them I know went to China for I think they had the water walls and they were on the inside because they helped to stop the water going into the town.</p>	
15.34	<i>So is that like the dams?</i>	
	<p>Yes. And the bricks that were made in Glenboig all lined furnaces and whatnot all over for the steel and everything.</p>	15.35-13.49
15.53-16.03	<i>Famous! So can I take you back to your early days? Where did you use to play and what did you get up to?</i>	
	<p>We played in Garnqueen Square and we run about all round the square and round about, and that's where we played. But once our family moved to Gartliston we played in the brickworks at night. We done no damage. And the personnel knew we were in the brickwork at night but they didn't stop us. Because we didn't do any damage, we just used to run in and out all the different stoves and whatnot and we had fun. When there was only the three cottages, there was three people, three young ones and next house. And we used to play together, they had three in their family and there was five of us, so it made eight. And we run about and played, the sort of games we played was we played beds, aeroplane beds. We only drew them on the ground. The aeroplane beds, we played on them. And sometimes we would get skittles and play skittles. We would get the plugs off the railway that fell out and put them down in a ring. And you had to throw others to try and knock them down and out it. We played hide and seek. When you're playing hide and seek, of course you running all through the work. And kick the knacker. Some says 'what was kick the knacker?' Well, you had a circle drawn and a tin, and someone was het, what we called het. That was the keeper of the tin. And he had to find you and then get back to the tin before you, and then you became his prisoner. You became the prisoner and you had to try and get them all. But the ones that was hiding come back and kicked the can out, they all run away again. It was a good game. And I played with a gird and cleek. We used to run around with girds all over the place.</p>	16.04-18.14
18.16	<i>Would you explain the gird and cleek for me please?</i>	
	<p>The gird was a ring and the cleek was another metal rod, metal iron, and on the end of it was like a horseshoe that was curved like that and you ran with the gird and the cleek and you could do tricks with it all over the place.</p>	18.17-18.36
18.37	<i>Where did you play that?</i>	
	<p>Up in Hurl's. We had flats out the thingme and we had a flat just down from the gardens and that and we could run about, but we used to run about everywhere with them.</p>	18.42-18.50
18.54	<i>Would you also explain aeroplane beds?</i>	





	Aeroplane beds. It was three beds, one two three, and then you had two, and then you had one. And then you had two, and the you had one and a big ring. That was the den. So the idea was you had a peever, you put the peever down. You put it all around, they were all numbered to try and get into the den.	18.55-19.23
19.24	<i>Is that what I would call something like hopscotch?</i>	
	Yes, something similar. That's what we call them, aeroplane beds. You had ordinary beds as well where it was nine squares. Because we just drew it on the ground with a stick. And you push the peever about. An empty polish tin. And put some stones in it to make it weigh. And you would work your way up it.	19.26-19.55
19.57	<i>Were there any games that you played, particularly in the snow?</i>	
	Well, we always had sledging because we were living up at Gartiliston, it was at the time where there was a great big hill behind the house, so we sledged down the hill. And every time the work came out because there was lorries using it and when the lorries went up it, they were sliding on it, so they put ashes on it. But every time they put ashes on it we went into the field beside it and put the snow back on again so we could sledge!	19.59-20.31
20.39	<i>How many of you used to do this?</i>	
	The whole eight of us.	20.40
20.40	<i>What was Glenboig like when you were small?</i>	
	It wasn't as big as it is now because with all these new houses round about it, but a lot of it has not changed. The Main Street was there. It is still there. And there was a shop on the corner which was called Johnny Rumson's. Well, it is no longer there now, it is a new building that is there. But the two pubs was there and there was a grocer's shop next to the shop, the big shop in the centre of the village and that was run by thingmy Henderson's. There was also a Cooperative in the Main Street, a draper's and that.	20.46-21.35
21.36	<i>It sounds like a lot of shops for a small village.</i>	
	For a small village, they had a lot of shops, the Cooperative, they had a butcher's and ice cream shop and a chemist, they had a chemist at one time. Yes, it was quite easy for shopping.	21.39-21.56
21.57	<i>Did you have a doctor's surgery?</i>	
	Yes, Dr Clark. Dr Clark's surgery was there. It is now a house. It was sold there not that long ago, but there was other people moved into it after Clark moved away up to Marnock here, up round Marnock.	21.58-22.16
22.17	<i>Where is it?</i>	
	It was in the middle of the Main St. But we never ever went to Dr Clark. We always went to Dr Finlay in Muirhead for some reason. That's where my father went, so the family went. I still go there. And it is a doctor Nalagatla that is there now. So it's Dr Nalagatla. Before here it was a Dr Barrie and McNeil.	22.19-22.47

22.50-23.00	<i>Coming back to Glenboig, it sounds like a very well equipped village. What was the community like?</i>	
	Very friendly because you had the church as well. You had the Masonic Hall and the wee meeting across the road, the Eastern Star. But the village was a happy place to be. And of course you always had the loch, you could always walk around the loch.	23.01-23.18
23.19	<i>Do you remember any gala days?</i>	
	Yes, they had gala days. At the coronation there was a gala day on as well at the coronation and I'm actually on cine walking beside the school children down to the church. It's all on a cine, it was thingmy taped. And then they paraded from Marnock, they came out of the church and went to Marnock and picked up all the children in Marnock and they came back to the football park. And there was races, pipe bands, everything in the park. There was a gala day.	23.22-24.11
24.12	<i>Do you remember what month it was?</i>	
	Well the coronation was actually in May 1953 when the Queen was made thingme, the Queen of Britain.	24.24.26
24.28	<i>So did the Gala Day follow every May?</i>	
	Yes.	24.30
24.31	<i>Did you ever get dressed up for the gala?</i>	
	No, I didn't bother. I just went to it, but there always was a gala day.	24.38-24.44
24.46	<i>Were there any other kind of community events?</i>	
	Well, there were football matches and everything like, you know, and sometimes you would get a woman's football match, which was good fun to watch. I remember once going to one of them and there was a woman called Nennie Weir, she was the headmaster's daughter. And a ball was crossed over and she jumped and headed the ball into the goal for a goal. And there was, I think another woman looked and says 'she headed that ball'. The next one decided to try it. And she landed on the ground, the ball was too heavy. Because in they days when you played football it was a leather football. And if it was wet it got soaked and it got heavier. Not like nowadays where it is a plastic ball that doesn't get wet. But we had good fun. It was fun to live in Glenboig.	24.50-25.55
25.56	<i>Which school did you go to?</i>	
	Glenboig Primary. It was good. I enjoyed it. In the primary you had all the classes, and then you worked your way up through them. Then you went to Coatbridge School. When I was 12, I went then to Kildonan, it was Kildonan then it changed to the Central School in Coatbridge.	26.08-26.37
26.38	<i>Can you describe primary school for me?</i>	
	It was a main building, it was one building and it was outside toilets. And you had the playgrounds all around it. When you had a sports day, they were held at the back of the school. It was only in the last few years that the school got knocked down. It was when they built the new school,	26.39-28.30

	<p>round in Marnock where it accommodates I think St Josephs and the Glenboig Primary. They're like two separate schools in the one campus. But before that, it was in Ramoan. When I started school we walked it from here up to Ramoan to school and back down. And of course you got a penny or a half pence, I am not just to sure for your bus, but we didn't bother getting the bus and I just used to go into Johnny Rumson's and put it in the puggy machine. And I put it in the puggy machine one day and I went up to the school and my brother says 'what is wrong with you?' I says 'we're rich!' He says 'how are you rich?' I says, 'I won the puggy'. He says 'how much have we got?' I said 'I have got 7/6.' And in they days 7/6 was a lot of money. So we were deciding what we were going to do with it till we came home. And when we come home my mother turned round and said to me 'hand over the 7/6, and you get no more bus money to go and play on a puggy!' But my mother was told that I had won the puggy so the 7/6 was handed over.</p>	
28.31-28.39	<i>So 7/6 is 37 and a half p. Can you describe what puggy is?</i>	
	<p>It was a slot machine you put your money in and just pulled the lever. And it gave you one go. That was me, I was quite happy I turned that one go but won it that morning and up to school. And we had planned how we were going to spend it, but it got took off us!</p>	28.40-28.58
29.00	<i>What were the teachers like at school?</i>	
	<p>The teachers were good. We had a Miss Shaw. I can't mind all their names, but they were good in the school. They were never no bother and you got your dinner and all if you wanted it. And you got a half pint of milk every day.</p>	29.02-29.25
29.36	<i>Is that the small bottles of milk?</i>	
	<p>Yes, they were brought in each day to the school.</p>	29.28
29.31	<i>Who were your friends at school?</i>	
	<p>Different ones, the ones that we were living beside because they went to the same school. And then, once they left school, I had pals, Davie Shaw was the son of Jock Shaw the famous footballer with Rangers known as Tiger. I played with his son and his pal and I had other pals, Johnny Miller and Jimmy Findlater who were our pals and we used to go to any of the dances that was on, they run dances in the village in the old church hall. They run dances in the Masonic Hall, sometimes there was a dance in Gartcosh. You went to Gartcosh for a dance and then walked home. Other times you went up to Annathill, there was a dance in Annathill. We went there as well.</p>	29.35-20.59
30.40	<i>What age were you when he went to these dances?</i>	
	<p>That was before I was 18, because when I turned 18 I went into the army. I went into the army seven days after the coronation of the Queen in 1953. I done my training and then shipped out to Egypt.</p>	30.42-31.01
31.02	<i>Did you come back at all during that two years?</i>	

	<p>No. After my training was done, I got a 72 hour pass. I came home for 72 hours and then back to thingmy and then shipped out. And I had no holidays while I was in the army then until I was demobbed. I got demobbed during the rail strike but there was only an odd train running, so we were trucked to Liverpool. And then when we were in Liverpool, we found out there was a train going from Crewe to Glasgow. So we asked to get passes to go on it, so they took us down to thingme and gave us passes and then we got onto the train up to Glasgow. And we arrived at the station in Crewe. And the MPs met us, there was a group of us and they met us and turned round and says "youse have not to go on the train." We says "why not?" "Because" he says "you are required for escort duty for trucks going to Glasgow." But we said "we are demobbed". So the RP turned round and says "we never seen you". So we got the train to Crewe, from Crewe to Glasgow. Then when we got to Glasgow I got my way back to Glenboig.</p>	31.04-32.40
32.41	<i>Had it changed any?</i>	
	<p>No, it was exactly the same as I could mind. Where we lived up in Gartliston it was a 10 minute walk up the work road. And when I went when I went up the work road to the house. And I met my mother... I found out after it, the door had never been locked. Sorry... The door was never locked until I came home. Two year, a door lying open. Then it was a while after that I met Emily and got married.</p>	32.43-33.39
33.40	<i>Where did you meet Emily?</i>	
	<p>In Coatbridge, we used to go to the dancing in Coatbridge Town Hall and we used the bicycles to get to Coatbridge. But we had friends and relatives that stayed down Burnbank and we took the bikes there and left the bikes there and went to the dancing. We came back from the dancing, got the bikes and home. And that saved us any bother. And that's Emily and her cousin came to visiting because they were relatives of theirs in Coatbridge and we took them to the dancing. And that's where I met Emily. She went back to Ireland and I started writing to her. The two of us were corresponding by letter. They invited us, any of the three of us, Johnny, Jimmy and myself and David, four, if we wished to come and visit we would be made welcome and accommodation would be supplied. But unfortunately I was the only one that went. So I got the boat from Glasgow at 9:00 at night. And made my way to Northern Ireland. And got a taxi to the station in Belfast and then the train to Portadown where Emily met me and I stayed with her auntie because they didn't have room in their house for me and I stayed with her auntie. I met her the one year, we were engaged the next year, we were married the following year and our son was born the following year. Year at a time. And that was... we were since 1960 and I'm still married to the same woman.</p>	33.42-39.49
35.49	<i>Is Emily here today?</i>	
	She is. She is in the hall.	35.50
35.56	<i>That's lovely. Did you and Emily live in Glenboig?</i>	

	<p>Yes, we were very fortunate because when we got married we got a house in Carrick Place belong to Chapman's who owned the pub. They had houses and I got a house there and I lived there until my son was born. My son was born in Bellshill. When he was born in Bellshill and then he came home and we used to walk up the railway to Gartliston to my mum and dad's. But unfortunately my mum died when John was a year old followed by, three months later, my dad. But then with my father dying the company offered me the house to keep my brother and sister there together. So we accepted the house at Gartliston and went up there to live until I moved to Ramoan, and I've been there since.</p>	36.01-37.12
37.18	<i>Thank you. Would you tell me about your career?</i>	
	<p>My career? Well, I done nearly every job in the brickwork. When I started, I left school, I started work, I worked on the Bradley and Craven, putting the green brick as they called them, that was them just made, and you had to slide them off, they slid down a plate. You put them onto a bogey with no sides and you put two rows on it, and then somebody would push that one away and another one would come in. I also done pushing them down and you took them down to the hot plates in the stove. Which were steam running underneath them all the time. And you set them there to dry so as they would be dry. They then moved me from there to one of the other machines that cut clods. Just like big lumps of rough clay. And then they went to another machine that pressed them into different shaped bricks. They were left to dry as well. Then they moved me from there on to the hand moulding when I was a hand moulder making special brick. They were very complicated, I mean more complicated brick and not enough of them to be made for to do the thingmy. Some of them you were making could be 30 inch long by 12 inches wide and three inches thick. And you made them at the thingmy, and dressed them and everything once they were dry, then they went to the kilns for burning. I then left the moulding and went to the green squad, which was taking the brick from the hot plates down to the kilns to be put into the kilns for burning for to become hard bricks. I've also then they moved me into, a setting thingmy as well sometimes. Then they went to forklifts instead of going with a bogey down, pushing a bogey down to the kiln, it was a folklift that done it all and I was on the forklifts then till I left the work and went to the ambulance service. I went to the ambulance service as a driver.</p>	37.20-39.52
39.53	<i>How old were you?</i>	
	<p>Oh, well I was married when I went to the ambulance... It is hard to say. I couldn't put a figure on it. But I mean I worked in the brickwork, well, I worked in it until I was 18. Then I went to the Army for two years and when I came back I went back into the brickwork. And I worked for several years until my brother and sister were married, and then I moved up to Ramoan. When I moved up to Ramoan then I went to the ambulance service. Then, after about 14 years in the ambulance service, I left the</p>	39.36-41.39

	ambulance service and went to R B Tennent the steel foundry as a full time first aider in the ambulance room. When I had a white coat. So I dealt with all the injuries or anything. Eventually I took ill and I left. I went on sick in Tennent's but they found that I had angina. I still have it to this day. And I had to go for a heart transplant. So I had a triple heart transplant and an artery moved from another part of the body and attached to the heart, which they said would give me long life. The company then made me redundant, and I have never worked since. It was 1995.	
41.40	<i>How old were you then?</i>	
	Well, I was born in 1935 and that was 95, so 60.	41.41-41.50
41.51-42.16	<i>I'm really sorry, we are actually running out of time. Could I wind it up? Thomas, thank you so much for everything, all the stories you have told me today. That is all my questions. Is there anything that you would like to add?</i>	
	No, not really. I mean, I've got in the house I've got a telegram from the Queen for 50 years married, oh no, was it 50 years that was my silver. 60 years married is a gold. And I am hoping that I can last another year and a half cos then I'll get one from the King for 65 years married, and I wouldn't change a thing.	42.17-42.51
   		
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