

Project: **'Memories of Seven Lochs' Communities: A people's history'.**

Respondent: Swales "Swaley" Forrest

Year of Birth: 1956

Age:

Connection to project: Lived locally

Date of Interview: 19/09/2023

Interviewer: Dr Sue Morrison

Recording Agreement: Yes/ No

Information & Consent: Yes/ No

Photographic Images: Yes/ No (Number of:)

Length of Interview: 34.51

Location of Interview: Back room, Ruchazie Pantry

Recording Equipment: Zoom H4n (internal mics)



Time (from: mins/secs)	Description	Transcribed Extract (from- to: mins/secs)
00.34	<i>Where were you born?</i>	
	I was born in Stobhill Hospital, but I immediately went back to 29 Bellrock Crescent, Cranhill.	00.36-00.44
00.50	<i>Were you raised locally?</i>	
	Yes partially, I lived with my Mother and older sibling in Parkhead and Cranhill, passed from pillar to post.	00.51-01.09
01.13	<i>What are your first memories of the Seven Lochs area?</i>	
	Well my Grandfather used to have a little dog called Islay and when I was young, old enough to go a walk with them, we used to walk up over the canal that used to be there and go up into Hogganfield Loch with Islay and it was the highlight of my life. There was so much more to Hogganfield Loch, you had a boating pond, there was a big restaurant area, and it was just fabulous, plus in the summertime it was packed. I used to go fishing for baggy minnies in the wee burn. They disappeared for many years and I was up there last week and there were some baggy minnies back. So there you go, the water's clear again.	01.14-01.56
02.01	<i>Did you ever go on the paid boats?</i>	
	Yes. I always remember I went with my Uncle and he was young, maybe 15 or 16, and the man kept shouting Come in number whatever it was, your time's up, and he just kept rowing. The guy used to come out with a motor boat and brought us back. The other thing he did was, he used to take my friends as well and take them out to the wee island out there and he'd let them go on the wee island and go away and leave them there. Just daft things you know.	02.02-02.18
02.30	<i>Were there a lot of birds on the island then?</i>	
	No, not as many. There wasn't as much wildlife there at that time and there wasn't as much greenery either, it was different.	02.35-02.53

02.55	<i>Can you tell me a bit more about your days out at Hogganfield Loch?</i>	
	<p>Well it was an adventure. If you can just imagine as a little kid being taken up there. The canal itself here on the way up was something you threw stones in, put bits of wood in it. Along a bit in Cranhill, there was the sugarolly mountains and this waste from a chemical plant in Glasgow that was dumped off in the canal, to where the high flats are now in Cranhill and they were very steep and we used to slide down them on bread boards, in the days when bread was delivered on boards, and they made excellent sledges and we used to slide down the sugarolly mountains. It would likely be toxic, it would be toxic actually when you think about it. It was a well known chemical works Glasgow near the canal, I think it began with a 'G', I can't really remember.</p> <p>Hogganfield, it was just a fact it was something to do. It's hard to remember exactly but I looked forward to going. I went with my Grandfather mainly because it was about five years or so before my next brother came along, so I had him to myself mainly. It was good, I liked that. I also did a bit of fishing as well, sometimes my Grandfather would take along a wee rod and we'd catch the odd perch. It was good. We let them go they were small, but there was a big one, one time, that got away. I still remember that, it's funny how you remember things.</p>	03.00-04.58
04.59	<i>Did you ever go to Hogganfield Loch with friends?</i>	
	<p>Later on in life, yes, mainly my Uncle who wasn't that much older than me. I went with him and his friends and that was fun, a bit of high jinx, you know, climbing the trees, playing hide and seek and all that kind of stuff. That was about the extent of it really. You seemed to make your own entertainment in those days, you can't imagine how you passed your time but that's how you did it.</p>	05.01-05.29
05.30	<i>Did you go in winter?</i>	
	<p>Yes, because of the wee dog Islay. I used to take him a walk every day, along the canal or up to Hogganfield.</p>	05.31-05.38
05.39	<i>What was the area like when you were little?</i>	
	<p>It was completely different. When I was quite young it was a lovely place. The houses hadn't been renovated. There was a lot of like high flats in Cranhill. I say high flats like four or five stories. It was quite modern, but by the time I was in my late teens it had deteriorated terrible, so much so that my Granny and Grandad had to move to Carntyne. There was a block of flats at the corner, there was a lot of drug dealing, the place just deteriorated terribly. So that was a sad ending there.</p>	05.42-06.22
06.23	<i>Were the houses okay?</i>	
	<p>Yes, it was a three bedroom, four-in-a-block that we stayed in and it was great, yeh, and it's still there today. It had a back garden, we used to grow rhubarb and we had an apple tree and a lovely lilac tree at the back door. I It was very comfortable there, I liked it.</p>	06.23-06.45
06.46	<i>I there a lot of rhubarb grown in this area</i>	
	<p>Up at Hogganfield, if you're standing at the gate and you look across the road, everything to the right hand side is a rhubarb field and it belonged to a man called Pinkerton who had one of the houses at the other side of the road. He was quite a character, he used to race stock cars and all that sort of thing and</p>	06.48-07.30

	my Dad used to mention him quite a lot. A lot of people used to get money harvesting the rhubarb by hand and I'm sure a lot of people miss that. I didn't like rhubarb.	
07.41-07.46	<i>You said the area deteriorated, what was the area like before it deteriorated?</i>	
	I remember going to the shops at the North East end of Cranhill in Bellrock Street with my Granny and there were all different shops, like a Grocer, a Butcher, the Bakers, and there were queues. Everybody had message bags and a lot of women had scarves on their heads and the serious thing was that even though they'd stayed next to each other, or across the road from each other for many years, they called each other Mrs. It was Mrs this and Mrs that and Mrs the other, and I used to think it was so so funny. There was a community there as well, everybody knew everybody. It was quite nice actually to be in this.	07.49-08.35
08.38	<i>Were there any community parties?</i>	
	Not that I can remember. It was different days, different days. Nobody had a phone. Just different days.	08.39-08.50
08.52	<i>What was the traffic like?</i>	
	None. When I started to drive, I'd pull up out in front of my Granny and Grandad's house and I could park in the whole street. Now you can't get along the street.	08.54-09.07
09.09	<i>Did kids play in the street back then?</i>	
	Yes, very much so. I was mayhem. There were so many young couples in those days but obviously many have died now, but there were so many young couples with kids. I had lots of friends. The kids would play cowboys and Indians and the girls would do skipping in the street and do the wee blocks with the squares and jump, that sort of thing. For the guys it was usually cowboys and indians that was the kind of thing, the cowboys. Somebody usually got hit in the head with a hatchet. They used to get a tin can and bash it, put it on a stick, that was you, an indian.	09.10-09.50
09.56	<i>What did you do for birthdays?</i>	
	We never really bothered with birthdays and still to this day we don't bother with birthdays at all. Every day's your birthday, you should treat every day like a birthday, that's how we live.	10.00-10.16
10.17	<i>What about Christmas?</i>	
	Christmas was a good time yeh because I got something. I always got something. I was very lucky I always got something, there was just too few of them. I was the first grandchild on both sides and I was totally spoiled. I mean totally ridiculously spoiled. My Grandfather bought me a pony. I've got a picture somewhere and I was in my nappy and I'm sitting on the back of it and apparently it was the smallest pony in Scotland and he bought me that. I was spoiled definitely, so I had everything. I was very lucky but you don't look back, I thought that was normal, I thought everybody was like me, you don't compare when you're a child, that's what it was like. It's only as you get older you realise how privileged you were.	10.18-11.26
11.27	<i>What did your parents do?</i>	
	My Dad used to have a commercial vehicle business, he sold trucks and my Mum she was ill, she couldn't work at all. I spent more time with my	11.30-13.47

	<p>Grandparents than I did with my own Father. My Grandfather was a bricklayer in the forge, he built furnaces. I was very proud of him. Obviously the furnaces were arched so he did that and my other Grandfather he did many things in his life and he was very successful, but he was still just an ordinary guy and he looked after me, he took me everywhere and he taught me everything, I mean everything. He made sure, as I was his first son's son that I knew everything. He had 11 children but only 3 grew to adulthood and he actually spoiled me, but he taught me everything. He sent me off on a real good journey, he put an old head on young shoulders. Thanks Granda. His name was Swales, same as me, Swaley. He was an Eastender, yeh, his business was in Parkhead, he lived in Parkhead. He never left, he stayed here, yeh, he was well known, I miss him terribly. I miss both my Grandparents because I never really got on with my Father.</p> <p>My Granny was a great baker. I sometimes walk by the old house and I think I can smell the baking. She baked every week, every week she would be baking something. She was really good, she was great actually. She was famous for baking, but apart from that she was a lovely lady.</p>	
13.48	<i>Where did you go to school?</i>	
	I actually went to a lot of schools because I got passed from pillar to post. I went to school in Tollcross, Mount Vernon, Parkhead and Cranhill, just all over. Eventually I went back to my Mum and Dad and I went to Tollcross, that was the longest time in a school.	13.51-14.13
14.16	<i>What did you do after leaving school?</i>	
	I actually started working before I left school. My Grandfather told me, listen to this, he said to me, I mean he's a business man and he says "I want you to buy and sell vans, to go to the market and buy vans and I want you to try and sell them. I don't care if you make mistakes, I'll never pull you up on it but I want you to go and do it." So I used to take the bus to Glasgow market and buy vans and within a few years, my business was bigger than my Father's. So there you are, that was just because a man had confidence in me and just gave me the push, plus the fact most of the people in the business were old at that, people were older. I had energy and made a good job of it. I was fearless because my Grandfather had lots of money and if they wanted to play rough I could actually outbid them on anything, or I really didn't need to buy it, I could just leave it on their toes, bid them up and say bye bye you've got that I've got cheaper ones at home. So yeh, it gave me courage, absolute courage, brilliant. I've never thought about that for years but that's exactly what happened. I stayed in the van business and retired young at 48.	14.18-15.55
16.03	<i>You saw changes, can you describe the changes?</i>	
	Changes for the worse. Although I qualified at school to go to Allen Glen's with a high I.Q., because of having to look after my Mother I went to the nearest secondary school which was pretty busy. I didn't think I needed any education to be honest, I was naive but it was just because it was closest to my Mother, to the house, and it was bad. The Teachers were second rate, though some were nice, but there were some who were sadistic and they would like hitting wee girls and stuff, it was just terrible, you were forgotten about. When I think about it, the boys wore short trousers and sandals in winter, some of them didn't have a jumper, it was criminal. It was	16.04-17.10

	absolutely criminal, though you took it for granted at the time, but looking back it was criminal at the time.	
17.15	<i>Did the area go downhill?</i>	
	Cranhill especially went downhill. It was the drugs. I don't think when I was young people took as many drugs as many were available. When the drugs started, you'd the gangs hanging about, you'd gangs fighting gangs, you had Ruchazie fighting Cranhill, you had Blackhill coming over to fight Cranhill and it was terrible, especially for old people in their 70s at that time. Walking through Cranhill at night was a no no. My grandparents were terrified so they got a nice Council house in Carntyne and they were very happy there.	17.17-53
17.56	<i>When would you say this change started to happen?</i>	
	I'd say the 70s, it started to go down, by the time the 80s came it was what it was, it wasn't very nice.	17.57-18.12
18.13	<i>Why do you think that happened?</i>	
	The simple answer, poverty. Just people not having enough money and Cranhill is kind of far from anything really plus the gang fights stopped kids from exploring other areas, so you couldn't go to Easterhouse, you couldn't go to Shettleston. Looking back you wonder how all this happened. It's all finished now, it's a nice place to live now actually. I still live here and I wouldn't move and I've got plenty of friends. I walk through the streets without a care in the world and nobody will say oh you come from Ruchazie or you come from Cranhill. Nothing. They're remembering how things were, it's not how things are today.	18.15-19.05
19.22	<i>What were the employment opportunities in the area growing up?</i>	
	You had the bus garage, it was a huge bus garage on Ruchazie Road. Apart from that, unless you were a School Teacher or something like that, there was nothing really, you had to travel. I think that was the problem with Easterhouse and Cranhill with not much industry close by.	19.27-19.51
19.52	<i>Did you have many tradespeople in the area?</i>	
	I would say so, yes. When I was young, everybody had a trade, but things did deteriorate. I think what actually happened was that the people that moved in originally became old and the kids started becoming teenagers and they didn't have anything to do. I think they just passed the time by fighting actually, it was something exciting. It was really really bad and it was on a nightly basis really there was something.	19.54-20.29
20.34	<i>How did that affect the community spirit?</i>	
	I think my Granny and Grandad left because of it. I think people locked their doors. I think that they maybe went shopping during the day and didn't leave at night. I think so, I don't know, I can't speak for everybody but it was uncomfortable, it was definitely uncomfortable. The shops closed. It became a run down estate.	20.40-21.03
21.12	<i>How did change come about?</i>	
	They started knocking the place down and thankfully they left parts of it because it wasn't all that bad. The houses weren't all that bad. They were cold, damp and cheaply made and they weren't really conducive to a happy	21.13-21.41

	life but the ones that are left have been all insulated and all that stuff, so that's okay. I wouldn't say no to one of them you know.	
21.43	<i>So what happened to the drug dealers?</i>	
	They're still there, they're still there, but there's a different world now. When do you see kids on the street now? Where are they? Where have they went to? It's a different world. I mean you were talking about two channels on the T.V., black and white, that's what you had to look forward to. Your homework or that, or become part of a gang. I would say a gang was like a group of friends.	21.48-22.28
22.29	<i>What are your favourite memories being a teenager?</i>	
	Being a teenager from here was definitely was going to the dancing and when I was staying up here in the summer you'd get a bus and go to the dancing and everybody coming back at night, it was a riot, great fun, I loved that then. I went to The Clouds, that is the big Virgin place now, on the top floor, or the Apollo, it was fabulous. I got free tickets to see everybody except Roxy Music which I really wanted to see but I was away that day, but I saw all the greats. I saw Elton John, Rod Stewart, I can't remember them all, those are the two that just stuck in my mind, but just everybody. I used to help my Dad with his horses that took up a lot of my time. Sometime he would have a lot and my Grandfather bought and sold them as well and he had a contract with a company in America to supply Shetland ponies because they didn't have any over there at the time. I remember going into a field and counting over 100 Shetland ponies waiting to be shipped. It was just behind Bothwell Castle. He was some man really, he lost all his family, they all died, he must've suffered so much and he kind of threw everything into me, everything, and the fact that my Dad was out the picture here and I suppose he preferred me over my Father that causes problems, that causes jealousy and problems and of course my Mother wasn't well made me very unhappy. The only happy times I had was with my Grandparents here. Back home with my Mum and Dad was hell. She had three kids and I had to do the shopping and change their nappies and all that crap and I got no thanks for it and these people I looked after stole from me, well not all of them but two of them did. So that's the thanks you get so I would advise people to be very careful who they give their kindness to, it's not always rewarded. The most valuable thing you've got is your time.	22.32-26.06
26.12	<i>Can you tell me what you did in your early 20s?</i>	
	I got married young. I met a girl and she kept horses and her Dad was in the scrap business and we had a scrap business as well, so we got on really well, plus the fact she was the most beautiful girl I'd ever seen. I got married at 20. I wanted out the house really, that was the main reason to get out the house. So I got married at 20 and we lived happily for about thirty years I think, then I got fed up with her, gave her her P45. Cost me a fortune. We had 3 boys. They grew up in the area, they're as tough as can be. I lived in a street next to Ruchazie, they're as tough as could be, so was I. There was no doubt about it, you had to be tough. They've done alright for themselves, but they take after their Mother, it's as simple as that, but I've got another family and they take after me, which is amazing. My daughter is 16 and she's been going to those open mic days and I've been trying to stop her because she goes with her guitar and she's not home to 7 or 8 at night and	26.15-29.54

	<p>she's only 16. So I said this has got to stop or I'm going to pick you up or I'm going to get somebody to pick you up. She jumps on a bus and goes, goes anywhere and she'll say, Dad I'm having a wee concert with two other people and we're putting on a show in Glasgow so I'll play you some songs that I wrote. She stood there and we nearly fainted, we couldn't believe our ears. The way she stood and played that guitar, her voice was incredible, even her Mother was a bit shocked. We were absolutely flabbergasted. Next thing you see all the people with their phones videoing her singing. So I think she will go somewhere and I told her, don't you ever tell anybody they're your songs, those three songs you sang last night I want you to copy-write them, do not give them to somebody. The songs were great. Her name is Rena. My Mother's name was Catherine but everybody called her Rena.</p>	
29.55	<i>What's good about the area now?</i>	
	<p>Education. Education has improved. The way they respect children is the main thing I would say. The kids are doing well, the kids are performing better. The Teachers are human. My girls have a few Teachers they're not happy about, they don't talk to them right, they don't speak to them right, and I say that's not your problem that's their problem they're not going to be very good Teachers so you need to study yourself regardless of how they're treating you. So the schools are better, the kids are marvellous. My kids went to the local school, they get good marks and it is wonderful, the Teachers are wonderful, you couldn't ask for better and that's here now, so how good is that? Things have changed.</p>	29.56-31.01
31.04	<i>Are there things in the area for kids to do?</i>	
	<p>Yes, they just pick up their phones and play with them. No matter if you built the biggest swing park in the whole world, they would still sit there and play with their phones. Let's face it in the whole of Glasgow hasn't got much, unless you've got money for football etc, there's nothing to do.</p>	31.05-31.31
31.32	<i>Has the area changed in appearance?</i>	
	<p>Yes. Well the houses were thrown up after the war in the 50s, and they were just cheaply made and quickly made. They've gone now in Cranhill, so you've got these new houses in Cranhill and Ruchazie and they're really nice, but there is actually a nice sense of community, especially when you work in The Pantry here, we all know each other and this place helps people to get to know each other. I walk down the street now and people are saying hello, how are you, how's things? So unless they'd came in here, how would I ever have met them? I really love it, I love it.</p>	31.35-32.11
32.12	<i>Can you tell me what The Pantry does?</i>	
	<p>It gives people a chance to work, they can be on the till, they stack the shelves, sort the stock out, check the dates, fill the freezers, they can clean the place, they can help disabled people and guide them round, plus Tina is good at helping people with problems which I find is just amazing because everybody doesn't know everything. The staff in here are just excellent, they really area. They're all here, they're not getting paid, they're here because they really want to be here.</p>	32.16-33.14
33.45	<i>What are your hopes for the future in Ruchazie and Cranhill?</i>	

	<p>Well it's going in the right direction. It's definitely going in the right direction because nowadays it's getting closer to the centre of Glasgow than it was. Transport's better. Everything's better. Look at the Fort up there, a big shopping centre built in Easterhouse. You would never have dreamt of that would you?</p> <p>It's a lovely place to stay, I really mean that, I think it's a great place to stay considering there are all different types of people here, infirm people, unemployed people and there have been a few difficulties but it's doing well.</p>	33.47-34.41
	<p><i>Thank you Swaley.</i></p>	
		
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