



The Way We Were



Foreword

Fiona Mitchell, Centre Manager

This book came about as part of the continuous reminiscence work we do with the people we care for, our members.

This was a tradition started by our late Chairperson, Jean Thomson B.E.M. who sat with many who have passed through our doors over the years and recorded their life stories for them and their families to look back on.

Reminiscence work, where we can understand someone's life experiences and help them to connect with their memories is essential for us as carers to deliver person centred care, particularly with those living with memory loss. Short term memory is often affected first whilst long term memories remain much longer.

Learning about someone's life experiences helps us as carers build stronger, more empathic relationships with them. It is also fun. Listening to memories of older people and sharing stories can be surprising, fascinating and educational.

To be able to recall and record memories for future generations is a wonderful thing to do as our members have access to so much living history that would otherwise be lost. They are not just an older person, who can often be ignored by society, but they have lived such rich, diverse, happy and sometimes hard lives, from which there are lessons to be learned by us all.

So, if you are a family member of those who have graciously participated then enjoy these stories, some you may know and some you may not, but they are your history.

If you are young, read their stories and perhaps you will learn something new and hopefully a few life lessons and they will give you a greater appreciation for those who have went before you.

If you are a bit older, sit down with a cup of tea in your favourite chair and enjoy these recollections which will hopefully stir a few memories of your own that you may want to share with your family.

Over the years we have created many individual life stories and songs, but this is the first time we have created a compilation of memories from several people, documenting their lives from childhood to where they are now.

This has been a fascinating glimpse into the past for us and a joy to do for everyone involved in the process. We hope you have as much joy reading it as we had making it.

Betty Merritt



Jim Berg



Jessie Denholm



Bunty Marriot



Jimmy Redpath



Molly Morgan



Ian Herkes



Elsie Leigh



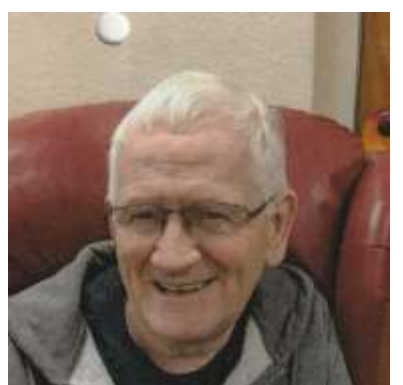
Davie Kiman



Helen Murray



George Scott



**MEET OUR
MEMBERS
WHO GRACIOUSLY
TOOK PART**

LIFE STORIES

Some people talk a lot about the lives they have led. Others do not share as much. But every story, long or short, offers a unique glimpse of the past. It is a great privilege to have been allowed to record the memories of some of the people who come to the Harlawhill Day Centre.

EARLY DAYS

Jim Berg

Back to the very beginning...

I'm a twin. Ma twin sister is 27 hours older than me. She was born on the 13th of the month and I was born the 14th of the month. Ma twin sister was the registrar in Prestonpans for a long time. Forrest was her married name.

Ah remember when ah wis young, goin in the bath wi ma twin sister - her at one end, me at the ither. Ah remember all that growin up. Ah remember gaun doon in the push chair wi ma sister, mibbe 3 year old, ah think. It wis 1939. We were going past Prestonlinks Pit and the siren went off.



Prestonlinks Colliery circa 1926

Ah always remember - that was my vivid youngster's memory - that siren going off as we went past. That was the start o the war. We were going past the Links Pit when the siren went off and ah remember being hurried up the road in the push chair, me and ma twin sister, up tae the house. Sam Burns stayed down the stair from us and there was a dug out shelter in the garden for us all. Ah remember being whisked down tae this shelter in the back garden at Wilson Avenue.

Helen Murray

Ma birth name was Helen Jenkins. Ah wis born in Edinburgh in 1937 but we lived in Prestonpans. We lived in one of the houses on the old shore road, right beside the water. Sometimes the waves were so high they came right down the chimney. Those old houses are gone now. We moved to North Grange Grove when ah wis wee. It was definitely before I started school, so it must have been during the war.



Helen with Isobel Ostler outside the prefabs in North Grange Avenue

Ian Herkes

Ah was born and brought up in Wallyford. Ah wis christened John, but folk call us Ian. It is gaelic for John. Ma grannie came fae Skye and ah wis called efter her husband, ma grandfather. She married an East Lothian man, but ah don't know how she came to be in East Lothian.

Jessie Denholm

I was the fifth of seven children. My father died of cancer. He was buried just before my last sister was born. My mother was left to take care of six girls and one boy. He was the fourth one born - a guid laddie. We lived on Gardner Road when I was small. We had good neighbours and family around us, but it was still a hard life for my mother. She worked any job, cleaning, anything she could, to keep us fed and clothed and a roof over our head. Like many women, she could take a drink but her children always came first before anything else.



Jessie and her family when she was young. Jessie is sitting at the front and the only girl with curls in her hair.

Molly Morgan

When I was born, we lived in North Grange Avenue, Prestonpans. My earliest memory is of my brother being born. He was born in the Elsie Inglis Maternity Hospital in Edinburgh. I'm not sure why because most people from Prestonpans went to the Musselburgh Hospital. I remember going to Holyrood Park and standing looking up at the hospital windows, waving to my mother.



Molly with her mother and little brother John

Davie Kiman

My family originally came from Kiev, but by the time I was born in 1938 we had been in Scotland for many many years. We lived in a flat in Craigmillar. It was a large family – I had five brothers and two sisters. I was born fifth. It was a big age range, with some youngsters at school or at home and others already out at work.



group photo of Davie and his family at their home in 1951 featuring his grandparents who looked after him as a youngster



Davies grandparents (2nd and 5th from the left) at their son's wedding. His grandmother spoke Russian and, as she looked after him, so Davie spoke Russian till he started primary school

SCHOOL DAYS

Molly Morgan

My most vivid memory of childhood is from 1939, when I was about 7 years old, at the start of the Second World War. It is still so very vivid in my mind that I can remember exactly where I was standing – where the school hall extended into the playground, near the rain shelter. It was playtime for the infants, about 2.30 in the afternoon, and we were out in the playground when we saw an aeroplane pass by, right above our heads. It was a German plane.

There were no playground supervisors in those days so we were all alone in the playground. I think maybe I remember the teachers looking out the windows and we were waving up to them. We didn't understand.

We all stood and looked up. Then, after a moment, we lay down on the ground. The little plane passed by overhead heading out over the water. Behind it came another plane, a Spitfire. The Spitfire was using its guns, shooting at the German plane.

We heard later that the German plane had come down in the sea, off Cockenzie harbour and a fisherman in a boat picked the pilot out of the water. He was the very first pilot to be captured during the war.

East Lothian Courier, 1st November 2012

“On October 16, 1939, two Spitfire squadrons intercepted German aircraft on a mission to destroy a cruiser mistakenly believed to be docked in the Firth of Forth. In the ensuing fight, a Junkers 88 bomber, of the Luftwaffe's 'Elite', was initially attacked and damaged by Spitfires from the 602 City of Glasgow Squadron over Wallyford, and then by 603 City of Edinburgh Squadron over Prestonpans, causing it to crash into the sea off Port Seton. It was the first plane ever to have been brought down by the now iconic Spitfire.”

Unbeknown to the young Molly she had just witnessed a piece of what would become British history. The attack, personally orchestrated by Adolf Hitler, was to sink the British battle cruiser HMS Hood. Reich Marshal Goering had summoned Helmuth Pohle to Berlin to receive the orders and set him off on that fateful day from the German island of Sylt, off the Danish coast, leading his 15 Junkers 88's towards Rosyth Naval Yard using the Forth Rail Bridge as a marker.

During the ensuing battle a burst from a Spitfire's Browning machine guns hit the cockpit wounding radio operator August Schlicher and the rear gunner. He desperately heads for the open sea where a disguised waiting German trawler is waiting and could rescue them. There is no escape – George Pinkerton spots the plane emerging from the cloud and attacks. Flight Lieutenant Pinkerton, a quiet fruit farmer is joined by 27 year old plasterer's assistant Archie McKellar, in the chase along the Fife coast. The second engine is hit and Pohle ditches the plane into the sea off the village of Crail and hits his face off the control panel. It's 2.55pm.

Pohle was the only survivor and taken to the hospital in Edinburgh Castle, spending the rest of the war in a Prisoner of War camp in the Lake District.

His deceased crew were remarkably buried with full military honours, their coffins draped in swastikas, whilst pipers from the squadrons who shot them down played Over The Sea To Skye. The route of the funeral procession was lined by ten thousand people as they made their way to St. Phillip's Church, Portobello. The first enemy airmen of World War II shot down by the British.

The British Broadcasting Corporation

Head Office: Broadcasting House, London, W.1

Broadcasting House, 5 Queen Street, Edinburgh

Telephone and Telegrams: Edinburgh 30111

Reference: 11/MW

23rd July, 1947

Dear Molly & Betty,

I have not got separate addresses for you, so am sending this letter to 13th North Grange Avenue; if you could give me an address for each of you it would be a help.

I am recording some young artists on the morning of Saturday 16th August for a programme on the 26th, and I wondered if you would like to take part. If so, I should like Molly to sing 'Leezie Lindsay' and Betty 'I Lo'e Nae a Laddie but Ane'; that is two separate solos. The rehearsal is at 10 o'clock, and the recording from 11.30 - 12.30, and I should be grateful if you would let me know as soon as possible if you can come.

Yours sincerely,

Margaret R. M. Walker.

(Margaret R.M. Walker)

Children's Hour Assistant

The Misses Molly Cunningham & Betty
McArthur,

13 North Grange Avenue,
Preston Pans,
Midlothian.

MW/JD

Ian Herkes

Ah went to Wallyford Primary till I was eight, Crookston School, between Wallyford and Whitecraig till ah was twelve and then Musselburgh Grammar. Ah left school at 15. It wisnae ma cup of tea.



Ian's Crookston School class photo (Ian is far right on the 2nd back row next to his teacher)



The pupils at Crookston receive a visit from the Honest Lad and Lass in 1946

Helen Murray

I went to Prestonpans Primary. My teachers were Miss Ross, Miss Fowler and Miss Welch. I liked my teachers but it was strict. No talking. I remember another teacher, Miss Mackay, though I never had her. She was cruel to everybody.

When I got old enough for Secondary, I went to the Grey School on Ayres Wynd. I was good at maths, but not very good at other subjects.

Jimmy Redpath

I was born in 1937. We lived in Prestonpans, in Polwarth Terrace and I went to Prestonpans Primary on West Loan. There were three schools: the White School, the Red School (built of red sandstone) and the Grey School (which had grey harling). The White School was for the infants. The Red School and the Grey School were for the older children.

Ah remember one day, coming out the Red School swing doors wi ma pals Sam and Junior. They were both called Sam but we called one o' them Junior tae make it clear who wis who. Ah pushed Sam's head down and it broke the glass window. But we got away wi it!

Coming home from school we used tae walk past the store, where Harlawhill Day Centre is now, round about the time the Store van brought the bread hot from the bakery. It smelt wonderful and we used tae scrape together oor pennies and halfpennies, anything we could find and club together tae buy a half loaf tae share. And we would get our fingers rapped when we got home, because we couldn't eat oor dinner!

I got on well with Willie Gray, the teacher in the Red School but there was another teacher, Miss Mackay, who was quite a tyrant. Even in primary we were split into different abilities. Miss Law took the more academic pupils and Mr. Gray took the working class children – the Grey School was for people who were reckoned to have no chance of passing the school certificate. The rest of us went on to Preston Lodge Grammar School. It wis at Preston Lodge ah got tae know ma wife. She had long pigtails and ah used tae pull them. Ah thought it wis a good way tae let her know ah wis interested!



Jimmy with his brother and sister



a studious young man



the happy young couple

Jim Berg

When ah finished school, ma Grandad says tae me, 'Ah've got a job for ye'. But ye see, when ah went tae the railway tae pass ma test tae get work, ah discovered that ma sight wisnae any good. A wis very bad at seein, ah needed glasses plus ah couldnae detect some colours. Ah had a problem wi ma eyes and that was right through ma schooldays. They didnae know that, ye see. Ma sight wisnae any good. All that time and naebody noticed. If there were people across the road, ah couldnae recognise them. Ah thought everybody was the same as me – that's what ye think. After ah failed the medical for work on the railway ah landed in the coal mine. Ah started at work there when ah wis 15 and when ah wis 16 ah went down the pit.

Ah wis very athletic and ah could dae things other laddies my age couldnae do because they wirnae as strong as me so ah worked the cage that goes up and down the shaft. Ah worked behind the cage. There were four barrows, two comin off at the same time, Ah hud tae take thae four and put them in a line tae go on a single rail. They were empty coming off the cage. Ah had tae make sure they wirnae turned or anything plus ah had tae make sure that the coal that wis coming intae the cage wis secure so ah had tae dae this with the hutches off the cage and push the full ones back on. Ah did this job till ah wis about 19 and ah remember one time ah wis behind the cage and here there wis four men came up wi a stretcher. Ah wis attached tae the Salvation Army at that time but ah went tae Tranent. This lassie used tae come tae the house wi the War Cry fae Prestonpans Salvation Army. Ah knew the lassie, no very well, but ah knew her. When ah seen these four men comin wi a stretcher ah recognised one o them as this lassie's brother. The word came back tae me through the cage – they shouted whae it wis and it wis Bertie Fraser coming, wi his dad. His dad had died in the mine. The four men were bringin the body up tae the surface. And ah remember prayin at the back o that cage for that lassie. Later she became ma wife.

When ah wis first married, ah worked for the Forestry Commission and we had a Forestry Commission house. We lived in really isolated places in the north, between Pitlochry and Blairgowrie. It was very primitive – paraffin lamps, no inside water.

Ian Herkes

After school ah worked for a year at Scarlett's market garden in Inveresk then when ah wis 16 ah went as a surface worker at Dalkeith Colliery. The outdoor work at the market garden wis ok but ah moved on for bigger money. Dalkeith Colliery was a mine, not a pit. Mines go below ground on a slope, whereas a pit goes straight down. Sometimes ah got the bus there but usually I cycled. The miners could sometimes ride the bogies [rail trucks] going down, but otherwise the underground workers had tae walk about half a mile tae the seams.

When I joined the pit workforce I went tae Eskbank College out towards Newtongrange where the mining museum is now. I enjoyed college better than school. I trained for five months then went underground. I was an oncost worker [paid by the hour] till I was 18.

Then ah had face training wi' a senior member o' the workforce tae become a face worker. It wis underground safety training, tae make sure ye secured yer roof and made yerself safe, plus making things safe for other workers.

When they used tae as we called it 'fire the rods' wi explosives, we had tae stay well away. We were supposed tae be 600 feet away. And we'd put our shirt ower our face so as not tae breathe in the smoke. Nae masks in thae days. And no ear protectors either.

At that time Mr. Buchanan, who lived in the big house at Harlaw Hill, had two sons and they used to go to the pictures too, but they sat upstairs, where the posh folk sat. They used to throw orange peel and other stuff at the children below. They thought they were better than them.

Later on I worked in the paper shop on the High Street. I had to get up very early to open up at 6.30am. The papers were left outside the shop by a delivery van and we had to take them in and make up the rounds for the paper boys. We would spread them out on the floor and pile up so many of The Express, Sporting Life and other papers, however many of each newspaper each boy had on their list. Then we had a cup of tea and opened the shop for the working men who came in to get their paper on their way to work. Winter or summer, rain, hail, sleet or snow, I had to open the paper shop at 6.30. When I first started work there, the owner lived above the shop, but then Mr. Dodds took over. He lived in Tranent.

George Scott

As a teenager, ah worked in Musselburgh 7 days a week. It wis a very early start. Ah used tae walk there but later on ah got a bike.

Ah left the Pans in 73 and went tae Dunfermline tae take up a baker's job. It wis a good job financially and work wise too. Ah ended up running the night shift. Ah wis 26 years in Fife but then we got tae know the Edinburgh City Fellowship, became Christians and moved back tae the Lothians where ah worked in the care field helping people with learning difficulties. Ah wis a key worker at Redwood house in Newtongrange until 2003.

Ah remember ah took the person ah wis caring for on holiday to Dublin, He wanted coffee on the aeroplane and they said it wis £1.50, so ah said 'jist leave it, he's no that thirsty!' He finally got his coffee when we got off.

After that ah went full-time as a minister with Wellspring Church until it closed down in 2007. We went to Bradford, where I spent 6 or 7 years doing transport for people with learning disabilities. I retired at 65 but then the Lord called me to Thailand, where I went to work passing on the true message of Christianity.

The country had mostly recovered in the cities from Pol Pot and the refugee camps, but the countryside has still not quite recovered. The cities seem affluent and yet in the countryside there is terrible poverty.

Helen Murray

Before ah got married ah worked in Inveresk Paper Mill in Musselburgh. It was up the road from where Tesco is now. There was a lot of industry there: the Paper Mill, the Wireworks. I was an overhauler in the mill but had tae give up that work when ah got married. If ye got married, ye had tae go. Ah think they thought ye might just leave when ye had children.

SPORT AND LEISURE

Jim Berg

When it came time for secondary school and ah wis put intae the Grey School when ma twin sister went tae Preston Lodge, ah became ostracised from other youngsters.

Ah had a paper round and ma mother and dad got me a push bike. That push bike became ma haven. Ah used tae go cycling everywhere. Ah used tae cycle long distances. Ah remember once when ah wis resting in a barn ah had a tin o' beans. Ah didnae ken there wis a collie in there wi six pups. When ah opened the tin the six pups wis at ma beans. Ah didnae get very much beans!

Ah used tae huv tae send postcards tae make sure that the folk knew where ah'd went tae. Ah used tae be able to go on a cycle run doon tae Kelso, go fae Kelso tae Berwick on Tweed, then come back up, 'a within six hours. The roads were very quiet. There wisnae much traffic. Ah could go doon tae North Berwick in half an hour. Dunbar, jist about three quarters of an hour. This wis on a push bike.

When ah wis 17, ah took two laddies with me on a run - how it worked oot wis, ma older sister married a man fae Pencaitland. The old grannie of the house come fae Skye. Ah remember talking one time tae ma brother-in-law and he says that his old grannie come from Skeabost, Dunvegan, Skye. That wis the address ah got. Her married name wis Cruikshank but her own name was Macleod.

When ah took the two laddies fae the pit a run on the bike they went as far as Fort William but they couldnae go any further. Ah left them at Fort William and set off maself for Skye. Ah cycled across tae Mallaig and fae Mallaig went right round Skye, ower tae this place where ah remember going intae a Post Office cum grocer's shop. They were all talking Gaelic. Ah stood and ah waited and then finally ah wis asked who ah wis and what ah wis wantin.

Ah didnae ken but the English, of course, and right away they spoke English back at me and ah says 'Ah'm looking for a Miss Macleod and the address is Skeabost, Dunvegan, Skye. It's a woman that stays wi her two brothers.'

The lassie in the shop says tae me. 'Ye know ye've got a job.'

Ah says, 'What dae ye mean ah've got a job?'

She says, 'Well, see that glen up thonder?'

Ah says, 'Aye.'

'There's 30 odd crofts up that and they're all Macleods.' So she says, 'Can ye elaborate a bit more?'

So ah says 'It's a sister who stays wi two brothers and her other sister married a Cruickshanks at Pencaitland in Scotland.'

That narrowed it down a bit. So finally, ah managed tae find oot where the house wis. It wis a croft. There wis sheep in the house, there wis hens in the house. There wis dried fish hangin fae the rafters and it wis a thatched roof. Everything. It was a right croft.

Ah remember, just as ah wis starting back fae there, ah got a puncture. As ah said, ah had tae send postcards hame wherever ah wis. Ah had sent a postcard and ah had a haepenny stamp left in ma pocket. Ah took the tube off the push bike, put the stamp on the tube, put it back on the bike and blew it back up. Ah cycled all the way back tae Prestonpans wi a stamp on for the puncture! Ah came back through the Kyle of Lochalsh, across tae Fort William, picked thae laddies up and took them back down tae Prestonpans again.

Traffic wis quiet. It wis 1956, when it was very very hot. The tar wis that hot on the roads it used to come in between the brake blocks o' ma bike and the wheel and it almost stopped the bike. Ah hud tae stop the bike tae peel the tar out.

Davie Kiman

Sport was always a huge part of my life and my greatest pleasure as a teenager was football. I belonged to the junior Edinburgh Maccabi team, a Jewish football team which played with other Jewish teams on a Sunday because we could not play on Saturday, which was the Sabbath. I was a goalkeeper for the team and there were a few times we came close to winning the league.

Teams from all over Scotland played in the league, but now there are far fewer Jews in Scotland than there used to be. Many of them moved away, mainly because of discrimination. I carried on playing football until I reached my forties. As a goalkeeper you do a bit of damage to your body jumping for the ball, so it was time to stop.



Davie continued with his sports after giving up football and took part in many races throughout his life

Betty Merritt

I was married for 63 years and we had many happy times in Prestonpans. Country dancing at Billy's Bar socials, plus the Labour Club and Castle Park Bowling Club where John was the bar manager for 10 years. We also had many holidays overseas, including a wonderful 20 day cruise on the QE2 sailing the Atlantic from New York to Canada to celebrate our golden wedding.



Presenting a cheque to Dr Pat Gracie and Dr John Reeks of Prestonpans surgery is Mrs Betty Merritt, a member of Castlepark Bowling club Ladies Section. Mrs Merritt was a member of the club's cabaret concert party.

Betty presenting a cheque for £300, raised by Castlepark Bowling Club, to local G.P.'s Dr John Reeks and Dr Pat Gracie.

Dr Gracie was the driving force behind the creation of Harlawhill Day Care Centre and did so much for our community with the support of locals like Betty and many, many others.

Jimmy Redpath

Ah never learned tae swim when ah wis young. We used tae go down tae a rock on the shore behind Boat Stone House and fling stones at it. Ah fell in the water and near enough drowned before George Kerr pulled me out. He was about four years older than me and lived down the road at Polwarth. He had a sister, Nessie and his dad wis a miner. Ah never went back in the water till ah wis 50. Ma wife could swim and they were all going swimming, at Port Seton Pool, including some other adults that couldn't swim. Ah learned tae overcome ma fear but it wis an ordeal. Ah never went swimming very often.



A rare picture of a young Jimmy beside water on a trip to Lauder

Davie Kiman

I used to go out dancing at the Cavendish in Edinburgh on Wednesdays and Fridays. I had a few girlfriends, but then I met my future wife, Nessie Fraser. That was 59 years ago.



Newlyweds Davie (on the right) and Nessie on holiday in Italy with friends and family in the mid 60's



And as they were whilst enjoying another holiday many years later

Elsie Leigh

My husband came from Cardiff. When I met him, he was in the army, guarding the prisoners of war who were held at Gosford.

We saw each other on the bus when both of us were going to the dancing at the Labour Hall in Musselburgh and then we were on the same bus coming back.



Elsie and her late husband enjoying a dance

We gradually got to know each other at the dancing and we would go to the bus stop and wait together for the bus going back. I would get off at the top of Polwarth and he would stay on the bus to Gosford. Eventually we went other places together and got to know each other better. On Sunday, I would get a bus to Gosford and went into Gosford House. There was a canteen there and the prisoners would serve afternoon tea. Sometimes they showed films.



Jessie Denholm

I was in my 20s when I met my husband at the Wallyford dancing. He came from Niddrie Mill in Edinburgh.

Wallyford Miner's Institute where many a lasting relationship formed at the regular dances held there

FAMILY LIFE

Ian Herkes

Ma wife wis a Port Seton, Cockenzie girl. We married on 1 October 1965 and got a room and kitchen in New Street, Prestonpans. We lived there for two years before ah went back tae Dalkeith Colliery. We got a pit house in Tranent, then another one in Pinkie Walk. We had one son and two grandchildren.

Jim Berg

When ah left the Salvation Army in 1964 and came back home again ah started tae go wi the girl, Eleanor Fraser, from Thorntree Crescent, that same lassie that ah prayed for when her father died in the mine all that time ago. We got married and ah joined the Forestry Commission. When ah wis first married, we lived in a Forestry house in Kirkudbrightshire, then in the north, between Pitlochry and Blairgowrie. We lived in really isolated places and it was very primitive – paraffin lamps, no inside water.

I had three children. Two boys and a daughter. My daughter lives in Dunfermline, fairly close to where we lived in Cowdenbeath. She has a carpet business providing carpets for new built houses. She has quite a big family.

When we went back in tae the Salvation Army later in the 1960s, we went to live in Portsoy in the north of Scotland. After a few years, ma wife wanted tae qualify as an officer, so we went tae London. We had our 3 children by this time. and when ma wife qualified, they sent us tae Easterhouse in Glasgow, tae live among the gangs.

We just had tae adjust. With the Salvation Army ye cannae say no. It wis hard though. One time ma wife wis bathin the baby in a bath in front of the fire. There wis a bang and a .22 bullet went through the window. Some of the glass landed in the baby's bath. The gangs were everywhere. We were in the Young Den-Toi gang area. They were bitter enemies wi the Drummie gang. We helped support people who weren't part of the gangs, and the mothers of gang members. There were many nice people in that horrible environment.

When he wis about 8 year old, ma son came hame fae school. Ah wis trying tae fix the car because it had been damaged. He wis standing on the pavement opposite tae me and a says tae him 'Come on in'. And he wouldnae move. Ah told him again and he still wouldnae move. Finally ah noticed three boys behind the wall. They had dared him that if he obeyed me he would get beaten up. He went tae school the following day and he came home wi his face all cut. That was how they worked. Either ye obeyed the gang or ye got beaten up.

We were there for about a year, until an officer came tae dedicate [christen] oor son. When she seen the situation she got us moved. She didnae think it wis right for a young family tae be there so she got us moved to Strathaven.

Betty Merritt

When my John was demobbed, we got a brand new house at 14 Rigley Terrace in Prestonpans and lived there till 1966. After that we moved to Bankton Terrace and I have been there ever since. I had 3 children, Keith (1959) David (1962) and Alison (1965). I have 9 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. All my children still live in the area.

Bunty Marriot

I have three daughters and six grandchildren. Two of my daughters went on from school to study science. The other one was clever enough, but she wanted to join the circus. And sure enough she did! She joined a wee circus that came through Prestonpans and travelled with them learning lighting, sound etc. Then she got a job at the Aberdeen Music Hall doing backstage work during performances at night. She loved it – and she was very well paid!

Davie Kiman

Nessie Fraser, my wife, came from Prestonpans and so I moved here with her when we got married, to a place in Rope Walk. That was 59 years ago. Prestonpans people can be very clannish and it took a while, but eventually I was accepted as 'yin o' oo'. We have one daughter and a grandson who also plays football, just like his grandfather.



Davie and his wife Nessie on their wedding day in 1964

Elsie Leigh

I am 93 years old. I grew up in Prestonpans, went to school here and lived with my family till I got married. My husband came from Cardiff. When we married, I went to live in Cardiff with his mother. He was her only son. She was very welcoming and gave us two rooms to ourselves. My four children were born in Cardiff but eventually we decided to come back to Prestonpans. We had no place to stay until the co-op advertised two flats available for rent in Camperdown, a building on the main street. I applied for one the minute I heard about it but another woman got there ahead of me, so she got the downstairs flat and I got the one upstairs.



new mum Elsie holding first child Diane

George Scott

We had two children when ah left the Pans in 73 and went tae Dunfermline. We had three children altogether. Ah wis 26 years in Fife. The kids loved it. We had a house overlooking Dunfermline Abbey. After that, we moved around the UK.

In 2016, we went over to Thailand to have a look at a house we had been offered for our work as Christians. Ma wife felt it wasn't habitable but once we got rid of the rats and spruced it up she got used tae it. The owners were amazed and grateful. We got the house rent-free.

Generally the cost of living in Thailand was cheap. If you went out for a meal in a restaurant it would cost £4 for 4 people. I loved Cambodia and Thailand because of the way people treated you with respect and were always willing to help. They are lovely people. Ah remember once, we were at a place called Siemreep near Angkor Wat and I decided to have my feet done. The young guy who was doing my feet spoke in Khmer and the Australian sitting next to me started to laugh. He told me the young guy who was doing my feet wanted to know what colour he should paint my toenails! We came back nearly four years ago and stayed in Midlothian with ma daughter until we got a house in Gorebridge. That was when ah had ma first stroke.

We went through covid in Gorebridge and then we applied to Bield Housing Association who offered us a house at the Johnny Moat in Prestonpans. We never meant tae come back, but here we are!

Helen Murray

After living in Musselburgh I came back to Prestonpans, to Northfield Gardens. The houses were just built and the first block was filled with people. I had five daughters all together, Lorraine, Jacqueline, Gillian, Michelle and Nicola. By this time, my fourth daughter had just been born. I have one who lives in London now, but the others all came back to Prestonpans and we keep in touch all the time.



Helen and her daughters whilst on holiday together

After my divorce, I had to go back to work. I needed to support my daughters. Divorce wasn't all that common then but folk thought ah wis right to do it. There were financial reasons. It was about having enough money to look after my children. It took a lot of determination but ah got through it. Ye cannae turn bitter and twisted. The bairns always came first. The girls were terrific and now they all have successful lives, own their own homes, are financially secure.

I live with my daughter Nicky now – she bought the family house. I moved into the Johnnie Moat for a while and I wis happy there at first but things got tough when there were service reductions so I moved back into my old house with Nicky, my youngest.



Helen and three generations of her family

Jessie Denholm

We lived on Gardner Road before we moved to a bigger house on Schaw Road. I lived there until I got married. Apart from me and my younger sister, the family are all gone now.

I was in my 20s when I met my husband. We had two sons together and a daughter. Guid sons and a guid daughter. Their Dad brought the kids up more than me. He had a heart condition, so he looked after the kids – and then the grandkids – and I went out tae work. One of ma sons lives along the road from me now. Ma daughter lives next door. Ma other son is a chef, in Ballymeena in Ireland. He has even cooked for Princess Anne!

After my sons were born we moved to Edinburgh. At this time we were living in Niddrie Mill but ah wanted home tae Prestonpans so we did a house exchange. Later on we moved to Polwarth and lived there together until my husband died of motor neurone disease 10 years ago. My family are great. I have lots of grandchildren and they all come tae visit.

Jessie and Jimmy met with dancing shoes on

■ **JESSIE and Jimmy Denholm will celebrate their golden wedding anniversary tomorrow.**

Mrs Denholm, nee Thomson, met Mr Denholm at one of the regular dances held at the Wallyford Miners Hall in 1958, and recalls: "He wasn't a good dancer, but I was!"

The couple were engaged the following year and married in 1960 at Prestonpans Parish Church.

Mrs Denholm, now 69, was born and raised in Prestonpans. After her mother was widowed with seven children to care for, she went to work in the cotton mill in Musselburgh. From there she moved on to work in fruit and grocery shops in Edinburgh.

Mr Denholm, 74, who was originally from Niddrie, worked first at the Niddrie brick works.

He was then called up to do his national service with the army, and served with the Royal Signals first in Rippon and then in Germany.

After national service he moved to work with Peter Illand haulage, initially working as a tipper driver and later changing roles to become a furniture mover.

After the couple were married, they moved together to a cottage in Danderhall, Midlothian, which was tied to Me Denholm's haulage job. Two years later they moved to Niddrie Mill, and in 1965 returned to Mrs Denholm's hometown of Prestonpans.

The couple have three children – James, now 48, Ian, 47, and Pearl, 45. After the children were born, Mrs



HAPPY MARRIAGE: Jessie and Jimmy on their wedding day in 1960, main, and pictured 12 years ago, left



Denholm trained as a nurse at the Western General, completing her studies in 1972.

From there she went to work on the men's surgery wards at the Eastern General. She remained at the hospital until retirement, covering night shifts in different departments.

After undergoing gastric surgery, Mr Denholm left his haulage job and followed his

wife to a job at the Eastern General, working as a porter in the operating theatre, but later returned to Peter Illand.

Both retired early due to ill health, with Mr Denholm suffering from Motor Neurone disease which would eventually mean he had to move to the East Fortune House palliative care unit at Roodlands Hospital in Haddington.

Mrs Denholm said the couple would celebrate their anniversary together there

on Friday. "We're going to have a quiet tea up at the ward with family," she said.

Since retirement, the couple have both enjoyed the company of their seven grandchildren and eight great grandchildren.

She said: "Jimmy's very family-oriented and would do anything for anybody – he really is one of life's gentlemen."

"We've had a happy married life and now we just take each day as it comes."

Do you have an anniversary or special occasion you want to share with us? Or an interesting story to tell? Write to: News article about Jessie and Jimmy's Golden Wedding anniversary

Jimmy Redpath

Ma wife wis a Fifer. She came to Prestonpans age three in 1936. Her dad, Ecky (Alec) Miller, worked the winding engine at the Grange Pit. He first went intae a house at Morison's Haven but later the family lived at Hawthorn Road.



Jim and his wife on their wedding day

My mother knew ma wife's mother because they both went to the Grange Church. Ah got on well with the whole family, though folk tried to scare me, saying 'once Ecky Miller gets hold o ye, he'll chase ye!'

Me and my wife lived in Prestongrange Terrace when we first married, then we flitted up tae 55 Polwarth Terrace. We were happy there but our family grew so we moved from there to 48 Gardner Road and I've been there for 60 years. We moved in on a Saturday and on the Sunday, ah came back from the Elsie Inglis Memorial Hospital with ma daughter! Our first baby was born in Simpson's but the next three were born in the Elsie. We had four – boy, girl, boy girl.

FAITH AND CHARITY

George Scott

When ah wis a key worker at Redwood House in Newtongrange and we lived in Bonnyrigg, We belonged to Wellspring Church. We used tae hold our meetings in the Mining Museum. Ah finished work at Redwoods in 2003 and went full time as a minister with Wellspring Church. In 2007 the church was closed down and we went to Bradford, where Paul Scanlon ran a church, the Life Church. He was a well-known evangelist. He does a tv channel in America now.

A year before I retired, I felt the lord calling me from Bradford to Thailand. My daughter-in-law is Thai. They live in Saudi Arabia but there were people I knew in Bangkok who had a house in a town called Aranyaprathet, 4 km from the Cambodian border, close to Angkor Wat.

We went over in 2016. Members of the church came from Cambodia to us and vice versa. People went back and forward frequently between Thailand and Cambodia but you had to have a visa.

People there accepted that we would fund things. I remember we organised a conference in Aranyaprathet and about 40 or 50 people came from Cambodia and the hotel bill came to me and another guy! It was a fantastic conference and after that, I went freelance to talk to people about God and pass on the true message of Christianity. The way ah see it, me and the wife receive God's love and we pass it on to the next person we meet. And my experience was that people reacted to how sincere you were, not how much you know. We were worshipping God by being with people, having church meetings round a Thai barbecue.

Betty Merritt

I married my husband John in Prestonpans Church in January 1956. The minister was Mr. Asmith. He was a lovely man.



Newlyweds Betty and her husband John about get into Jock Samuel's Taxi outside Prestongrange Church on their wedding day.



Good friends Elsie Leigh and Betty Merritt showing they were always up for a laugh as they take part in a charity fund raising cabaret

Jim Berg

When ah wis 19 and a half ah went tae college at London for the Salvation Army, tae become an officer. What ah didnae know was at that time there was no guarantee of wages.

Ah wis put intae a corps wi another lad who wis a sergeant - somebody who wis put in charge o' a group. He wis booked for Gorbals. Ah wis booked under Govanhill. Ah wis a junior minister, only 20 year old and ah was doin the War Cry in the Gorbals. One time ah had a collecting can and the War Cries and the string broke on the can in the pub. The money scattered across the floor. Half o' it wis put in the can but ah lost the rest. Ah thought 'that's me lost that money'. Ah went back a week later tae the same pub and they gave me all the money. That was the Gorbals.

One day, the laddie, who wis in charge o me told me ah could go home for the weekend. On Monday morning ah went back tae the Gorbals tae be told the divisional commander in charge o' Glasgow wanted tae see me.

Ah went in tae Glasgow tae the headquarters. The man in charge wis a Colonel. He says tae me, 'Ye're getting told off'. Ah asked what for. He said the lassie in the next Salvation Army Corps had a fire. She tried tae contact us and the man in charge of me said ah didn't have permission tae go home. He wis covering himself up.

That wis a big thing. It went tae territorial headquarters, head o' Scotland and ah wis put there tae see higher ups again and ah wis told ah wis getting put tae the Shetland Isles.

So ah wis put up tae Shetland because ah had a complaint. 300 names went forward for me tae stay but that wis overlooked and ah wis put up tae Shetland for two years.

When ah went down tae the Salvation Army Corps at Maybole, ah had people frae headquarters in tae see me one Sunday afternoon. One o them said me, 'How much salary have ye had this weekend lieutenant?' Ah says 'Ah've got 6/8 old money and ye've just eaten it, cos it cost 6/8 tae pay for yer dinner'. They overlooked that and never let on but because ah wis getting nae money ah decided tae leave the Salvation Army and ah came back home in 1964.

When ah wis with the Forestry Commission, a religious programme came over the wireless one day. They sang a chorus 'Take up thy cross and follow me.' When ah heard that chorus ah wis convinced ah should be in the Salvation Army full time. Ah went and asked ma wife aboot wanting tae go back in and she said. 'Ah wanted tae do that a long time ago but never let on'. So ah applied tae go back in tae the Salvation Army. Ma wife went wi me and we went tae Portsoy, near Buckie on the Moray Firth.

We used tae get a book wi a' the names o the people that attended the Salvation Army. One o' them said 'Mrs Smith, the Shore, Portsoy'. Ah took the visiting book and ah went down tae the village in Portsoy, near the harbour and ah knocked the door o' this house. Ah says 'ah want tae see Mrs Smith'. She says "Ye've seen her'. And bang! The door wis shut. Ah went back again efter ah aquired her right name. Knocked the door again. Once again her face came in the doorway, and she says, 'What are ye wanting?' 'Ah want tae see Maggie Elsie Smith'. She says 'Ye've seen her,' and bang! The door shuts again.

Ah made enquiries and discovered that naebody had been in that house for about six years. So ah went down again. But when she says 'Ye've seen her' and she went tae shut the door, she couldnae because ah had ma foot stuck in the door.

Ah got in and she locked the door so ah couldnae get out again. The house wis very damp. The ceiling was sagging. When ah sat down, ah could feel the damp through ma trousers. Ah sat talking tae the woman. She wis very small, no more than about 5 feet, A black frock down tae the ground. Dark clothes. The old style. Her hair wis a bit matted. She wis a poor wee soul. Ah saw a picture on the wall and it wis two ladies in ball dresses wi tiaras on their heads - this is a' true, mind. She says 'See that picture?'

Ah says, 'Aye'. She says, 'That's me and ma sister gaun tae a ball.'

Ah looked at the well dressed, beautiful lady in the picture and then ah looked at this wee, wizened auld wifie...

Then she says tae me 'Dae ye want tae see Tommy?' Ah says 'Whose Tommy?'

She says, 'Tommy's ma nephew. Ma sister there, when she died she made me promise tae look after Tommy.' Ah says 'All right, where is he?' She says 'He's in his bed.'

Ah went away through tae this bedroom. Damp everything, and here's a man lying on his bed, a beard oot tae here, and all ah got wis,

'Ah'm going tae die, ah'm goin tae die. ah'm goin tae die.'

Outside toilet, cold water. Ah couldnae see any fire and she wis workin hand and foot, dooin her best tae keep him goin.

Ah says 'Whit can a day for these folk?'

Ah made enquiries. Folk wouldnae believe that ah had managed tae get in. Efter that, ah discovered that if they were friends o' mine she would let them in, if ah wis with them.

Ah took ma wife doon, in a nice summer dress. The old dear says, 'Ma quinie, ma quinie ma quinie, ye'll get yer death ae cold.' She thought it wis cold, it wis so damp.

Two women friends from the Salvation Army also visited her and ah got two other folk who came wi brushes and shovels and they were allowed in if they left their stuff ootside.

Ah got in touch wi social work and a council officer came fae Banff, the nearest town. Ah told him 'For goodness sake, don't tell them them who ye are'. So he came in and we all sat and Tommy lay in his bed. Ah wee while later he says tae her, 'Ye know, ahm the social worker fae Banff and ah'm here tae make sure that you move out, under my authority.'

The wee wifie wis playin an organ that wisnae workin, singing 'Onward Christian Soldiers'. She looked at him and she says, 'Ma son, yere big enough and ye're strong enough, but ah'm no going.' Folk would see Maggie out very occasionally when she went tae the grocery van, but Tommy never went oot at all. Time went by. Winter wis comin. Ah says tae her, 'Ye know Maggie, it's getting dark and winter cauld. Ye cannae stay here.' And she says tae me, 'Ah'll dae whatever ye want me tae dae.'

There wis a new home jist opened in Portsoy and ah went up and told them aboot Maggie Elsie and Tommy. They said they would take Maggie but Tommy wisnae old enough. But they couldnae get Maggie oot without Tommy, so finally they decided tae take Tommy. And so the two o them went up tae the new place.

Ah went tae see them and the two o' them were sittin all bathed, hair done, nails done, everything done. They looked like new people.

Maggie says tae me, 'The sister in charge says that you are a very good man and ah says ah know he's a good man. There's jist one thing wrong wi him.'

The sister says, 'what's that?'

'He's got far too many girlfriends,' says Maggie.

It wis because she was thinking about all the women ah brought tae help her!

Later, some o the family went intae the house when ah wis there. tae clear it up. There wis a grandfather clock against the wall and the case wis full o rolls and rolls o' pound notes and five pound notes. Maggie had been a fishwife. She used tae go tae the guttin o' the fish. She travelled all over, right doon tae Grimsby and a' thae places. Her and her sister both used tae go, guttin the fish. When Maggie came home, she would throw the money in the clock.

We put all that money in brown paper sacks and let the bank take it. Ah dinnae ken how much wis there but it wis a lot o' money. That wis the 1970s and she must hae bin about 80 years old by this time.

We went fae there down tae Arbroath wi the Salvation Army. We used tae go wi the War Cry tae the pubs. And one time ah wis at one o ma workers' houses tae get one o' ma money boxes when a heavy knock came tae the door. The lassie said 'oh it's big Jim' and shut the door quick.

Big Jim wis the local bully. Ah said, 'Let's see him,' so she opened the door and here wis this man, well over six feet, a big bruiser o a man. His face wis a' cut. He says, 'Ah've been in a fight. Who are you?' Ah says, 'Ah'm the army man. The Salvation Army man.'

He says, very abrupt, 'Ah wish ah could stop drinking.' Ah says 'well Jim there's only way ye can stop drinking. That is if ye kneel down and ye say yer sorry tae God and ask God, through Jesus, tae help ye.'

This big bruiser knelt doon in front o' me and he prayed wi me. Then he got up tae go back tae his house. He says, 'Come tomorrow morning and ah'll go tae the hall wi ye.'

Ah went home and told ma wife aboot it and she says, 'He's having ye on. He'll no come.'

Sunday morning, ah went in ma wee car doon tae his house. Ah knocked his door, and Big Jim wis standing wi his face beamin, his face washed, his new suit on, ready tae go tae the hall.

When it comes tae an alcoholic, ye've got tae be a' one tae one. Ye cannae leave them. Ah had him wi me practically a week. It came tae the Friday when ah dae the War Cry. And ah thought, ah cannae very well take him intae pubs or nothing, but I could leave him in the car.

On the Friday he says ah wis tae go doon tae a pub down by the harbour. Ah says, 'Ah dinnae dae a pub at the harbour.' He says 'Go down tae the harbour.' When we went down tae the harbour, he says 'Ah wis flat on ma back in this pub last Saturday. Ah want tae go in.'

'Aye?' ah says. 'Ye're no allowed.' But he says 'Ah want tae go in.' Ah said 'Well, you go in wi the papers in yer hand and hand the papers oot while ah handle the money.'

We went intae that pub where he's been flat on his back the week before efter fightin. The landlord shouted tae me he wis barred for life and that ah was responsible for any damage. Ah had tae make sure it wis paid for. Big Jim wis barred for life from almost every pub in Arbroath.

He went roond every pub in Arbroath wi me that Saturday and Sunday. We even had the police van at the door sometimes when we came oot, tae make sure everything wis all right. And he never looked back. Big Jim wis back on his feet and he wis still there when we went doon tae college in Clapham in London for ma wife tae become an officer.



Jim and his wife Eleanor in their Salvation Army uniforms

When we were in London a bus inspector at Victoria Station started tae come tae the army wi me. One time he went tae the dentist and his mother came tae me the following day tae tell me he never came home.

Ah said. 'After the Sunday morning meeting we'll go and get him'. She looked at me as though ah wis daft. Ah didnae know where he wis but ah said we'll go and get him.

She says 'Ma husband wis a sergeant wi the CID till he retired and a' the police in London know he's missing. What are you gonnae do?'

So ah went tae the dentist, up a stair, and stood outside the dentist's surgery and she stood wi me then ah said 'We'll go tae the police station'. She said, 'But they all know about him'. When we got to the police station and she went in the door she heard a voice and she says. 'That's ma son!' She passed behind the desk through the back and here he wis sitting in this room. Bob wis his name. It turned oot that he had lost his memory through the drug at the dentist. There was an asylum near at hand and they were gonnae commit him tae the asylum before she brought him back home again. And that wis how ah found Bob.

Jessie Denholm

A big part of my life is the Order of the Eastern Star, a masonic group for both women and men. I travelled everywhere through the order, including going abroad helping people and telling them what the Eastern Star was about. I also joined a Masonic Lodge in Edinburgh. I moved around and was promoted until eventually I became a District Grand Matron. I am still part of the Eastern Star today and I help with decisions about charitable donations. The Star has donated to the Western General Hospital and other medical places. I recently put forward Harlawhill Day Centre and a donation was made to them.



Jessie proudly sitting (far left) with other Eastern Star members

THEN AND NOW

Jim Berg

The World Wars changed a lot of things. Some soldiers never came back. And others, when they went away, they were introduced to a world that was much bigger than the one they knew. It was a bigger vision. And it's bigger still now, wi' TV and the internet. All they had known before was their own wee town. When ah wis young, goin tae Woolworths on Princes Street was a really big thing, but now people travel the world. Things are very different now.

Betty Merritt

Sadly, John, my beloved husband died on 20 June 2019 after 63 years of marriage. Then came covid and isolation. I had never lived on my own before and all of a sudden I was completely on my own. I was in a very sad place for two years, until Fiona, the Harlawhill Day Centre manager gave me a day at the centre. It was wonderful. Lovely people, lovely meals and entertainment as well. It brought back joy and laughter into my life and I am so very grateful.



Betty and her late husband John celebrating their Golden wedding anniversary with their children Keith, David and Alison at the Open Arms in Aberlady.

Jessie Denholm

I love coming to the Day Centre. Everyone is so kind. It has made a huge difference to me. I was resistant about coming for a while because I was busy with other things but coming to the Day Centre is the best thing I've done for a very long time. We have good laughs – and sometimes tears too.

WHO WE ARE AND WHAT WE DO

Harlawhill Day Care Centre is a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation No SC020282 and was established in 1992 following an identified need for a service for older people by local G.P. Doctor Pat Gracie.

We are based in the old Co-Operative building which was at the heart of the local community where we have developed and adapted the premises and our services over the last 31 years.

Harlawhill's main function is to provide a day care service for the elderly within our community, enabling them to reside within their own homes for as long as possible, thereby reducing the stress placed upon family, carers and other health professionals and services.

We cater predominantly for those with complex needs, suffering from social isolation, mobility issues and those living with dementia who are unable to leave home without assistance or supervision. We offer them mental and physical stimulation in a safe and welcoming environment where they can interact with others and rekindle old friendships and establish new ones.

Our mission is to enable people to live the best lives they can, with a focus on improving health, wellbeing, and independence for the elderly.

The charity is overseen by a board of volunteer trustees, with the day to day running of the Centre and staffing supervised by a highly qualified manager who has been in place for 30 years.

The Manager, with the support of trustees over the years, has established the Centre as the go to place within the community for advice and assistance in relation to elderly care, receiving national recognition on several occasions for our work in the care sector.

We have cultivated partnership working with other community groups and professional services in relation to early intervention and prevention, signposting and dementia support.

We continue to strive to provide the highest quality of care for our service users and the community by using best practice, listening to what our service users and the community needs and providing them with a choice and control over how this is delivered.

If you wish any further information, please do not hesitate to contact us, follow us on Facebook or check out our website where you can see for yourself what we do.



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NOW FOR SOME FUN

Let's find out who has been paying attention. Can you identify who the following pictures belong to?

Answers on the last page.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This book was only made possible due to the many Day Centre members who kindly agreed to take part and share their personal memories and photographs with us and for that we are eternally grateful to them.

We thank the family of Jimmy Redpath, who sadly passed away before the book could be published, for kindly allowing us to still use his words and photos.

We would also like to thank the Salt of the Earth Heritage Society for providing us with the necessary funding to produce this collected work.

We wish to give thanks to the many people whose additional location photos were used throughout the book to provide us and our readers with a glimpse into the past.

Finally, a special thanks to local author Annemarie Allan for her many hours of dedication in interviewing our members and putting their words into print for us.

Annemarie Allan has strong local associations. Her mother grew up in Morrison's Haven and many of her family still live in Prestonpans.

She writes for both adults and children and her published work covers a variety of genres and themes. She is the author of a number of novels for ages 9-14 including 'Hox', the winner of the Kelpies Prize 2007.

Her short fiction for adults has won or been shortlisted in many competitions. She also writes on historical topics, including the Scottish witch hunts, especially in relation to the area around Prestonpans.

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Betty Merritt



Bunty Marriot



Davie Kiman



Elsie Leigh



Helen Murray



Jim Berg

