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INTERVIEW WITH - MRS. ANN LOBBAN,
41 HARBOUR STREET, BUCKIE.

Interview with Mrs. A. Lobban, 41 Harbour Street, Buckie on 22nd August, 1988.

Q. Well Mrs. Lobban how old were you when you left school?

A. Round about 15½.

Q. After that you went to work where did you work at?

A. I didna work.

Q. Well what did you do?

A. I stayed in the house with my granny and my grandfather.

Q. What happened after that?

A. When they died I went to live with my father and stepmother.

Q. Where about was that?

A. In James Street, no.10.

Q. What time did you go out tae work, after that you looked after them and what happened tae them?

A. To who?

Q. To your granny and granda?

A. They died and I went tae live with my father and stepmother.

Q. Where did you work after that?

A. Went out to work at the gutten tae learn with my two uncles. It was the winter time. I was very cold and got two neighbours to go with and we learnt gutten and packen.

Q. What was the name of your uncles' firm?

A. Reid Brothers.

Q. Can you tell me where about that place was?

A. Down in Baron Street.

Q. Did they employ a lot of folk?

A. Well they hidna a lot o room. They hid a few but mostly they were older people.

Q. What kind of job did they dae?

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A. Gutten and packen.

Q. Did you go kipperin after that?

A. Well after that finsihed in summer, fin the summer stared an the spring I went tae the kippers kipperin learnt there doon at Merson & Gerries aside the Blue Brig, we ca'd it.

Q. When you were employed at Merson & Gerries did that take you to different places? Or were you employed in Buckie?

A. No, no steady there.

Q. Did you go to the gutten after that? What happened after you left Merson & Gerry.

A. The summer time when there was nithing else tae dae after you learnt you went to the gutten if you got a job at Lerwick.

Q. Fa wis your employers in Lerwick, was it local?

A. Reid Brothers.

Q. Reid Brothers again. And Yarmouth, ye went tae Yarmouth?

A. After the summer fishin was finished you went tae Yarmouth and you were there for the season. It wis hard work there because you were oot in the cold in the Denes. There wis no shelter.

Q. Did you stay in lodgings when you were in Yarmouth?

A. Stayed in lodgings yes.

Q. Tell me about the lodgings the type o lodgings?

A. The places where you got digs were the Rose they called it there. I think it's still there yet some of them not sure. But we loved it. They didna cook the same way as we did because they werena up tae oor kind of cookin. But ye jist pit it up wi it. You took in what you wanted cooked and the landlady did it. You stayed wi another crew.

Q. How much did you pay to the landlady for your meals?

A. We paid nearly half of what we got tae keep us because we got 15/- a week and that was for your board and lodgings. We took in our own food and paid the landlady 6/- each for our room. We had a room where we dined and took our dinners an that and suppers and such like but we had a bedroom upstairs.

Q. What was your hours of work when you were in Yarmouth?

A. Well you were early in the mornin and you were doing overhauling the barrels like jist seein' them, filling them up and then after ye hid a cup of tea ye started ye're gutten at the Farlanes when the boats com in and the herrin came up.

Q. And did you get hame at denner time?

A. You got home at dinner time in the lorry for your dinner and then you were away back again till the evening. You werena finished till maybe six o'clock in the evening. That was you finished for the day.

Q. What did you do in the evenings?

A. You see it got dark and you had to use lights.

Q. Probably you were tired?

A. No. We were never tired. Ye jist tirmed off the dirty clothes, the oilskins an such like and your clothes you were wearin there.

Q. Did you leave your oilskins at your place of work?

A. No we took them home and put them in a back entrance outside the house everybody did that.

Q. Can you describe the clothes you wore at Yarmouth?
What did you wear?

A. What you wore was just orindinary clothes underneath but old kinda skirts you know and jumpers. Sometimes you had a scarf to put on because it was cold. When you were workin and a muffler round your hair to keep your hair away from your eyes and such like.

Q. What about your hands. Were they sare hurtet wi the salt.

A. Not all the time. The hands were hurt all the time. It wis jist now and again if you hid cuts or things like that and I'll tell you what though we were workin wi German salt at the time and it was very bad. It was rough and it went for your hands and your eyes. Now I hivna said een.

Q. How did you manage to get your hands cured. Fit did ye do wi ye're hands?

A. Oh well we hid to make the best of it. You hid tae keep them clean and wash them and maybe put on a piece of plaster if you had it or bandages underneath ye're other cloot but you never stopped workin with sore hands. Very seldom.

Q. Did they go to the doctor a lot?

A. Didn't go to the doctors. It was a rest room. I don't know what you call the ladies that were, they were like nurses they know, mercy kind a people. They did things for you. They were very good and kind.

Q. How much did it cost, was it paid by your boss?

A. No you never paid them. It was all done voluntary work I think, just went there.

Q. Did you ever have time off when you were in Yarmouth?

A. Sunday you always had Sunday. You went to the High Church as they called it. It was always packed. There was so many went there that they hid to pit chairs and seats up the aisle bits where you went in.

Q. Did religion play a big part in the gutter girls life when they were off?

A. No they jist liked going to church and they had nowhere else to go.

Q. When you were workin did you sing hymns during your workin hours?

A. Sometimes ye did.

Q. When you went tae Lerwick was it the same routine again?

A. Wi the fishing, yes. Oh yes the very same. It was all outside. But then ye see we were warm. The summer time you got burned wi the sun.

Q. The days were langer up there in Lerwick?

A. Well you worked till late at night. Nothing else to do anyway.

Q. Was there never any dances or things?

A. If you hid to make dances it was amongst yourselves. There was no such things as going to halls to dance.

Q. Did you like Lerwick better than Yarmouth?

A. Loved Lerwick. We all liked Lerwick everybody did.

Q. Can you tell me how you got to Lerwick fae Buckie?

A. In the steamer and across the (Minch?) Sometimes it was rough the sea depended on the weather but you didna think anything about it. Some were very sick and some werena. I was

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never sick. I was one of the lucky ones. My neighbour was very sick.

Q. Had you the same neighbours?

A. Same neighbours for five years.

Q. Did they belong tae Buckie?

A. Findochty.

Q. When you went tae Yarmouth how did you get there?

A. By train.

Q. Had you to take your trunk with you in the train?

A. Oh yes the trunks went in the train. The trunks went intae the luggage department of some kind.

Q. Was it a special train?

A. A special train.

Q. Fae Buckie right tae Yarmouth?

A. Yes right to Yarmouth. They collected some from Aberdeen. A lot of Aberdeen ones went to Yarmouth .

Q. The same when you were going tae Lerwick?

A. The same. You went tae Aberdeen and collected people on route.

Q. In Lerwick you stayed in huts. Can you describe the huts?

A. Well ye had to cook and do everything for yourselve. You took your bedding with you an after that you had to clean the huts when you arrived there. Whether you were able or not you had to. It was a case of everybody muckin in.

Q. What were the huts used for between the seasons?

A. I don't know I think they were jist left.

Q. Did you decorate it yoursell?

A. Yes. You took curtain material with you and all that kind of things and dishes etc. kettles an pans.

Q. Was there a fire in the hut?

A. A fireplace. We got the coal from the hulks.

Q. Did you cook on the fireplace?

A. Ye hid to cook on the fireplace there was no such things as cookers.

Q. Did you light the fire every day or was it kept on?

A. You had to light the fire every day clean it out and light it.

Q. Turn about to the cleanin?

A. Yes three went on one day or maybe for a whole week and the other crowd took the next week, cookin an that and the time you made your tea in between when you were out doing the filling up of the herrin in the barrels in the mornin.

Q. Had you an early start?

A. Oh yes very early in the mornin.

Q. Who got you up in the mornin? Had you alarm clocks in that time?

A. Well you hid an alarm if you wanted tae get up before the coopers came up or the foreman tae bicker you up.

Q. Did they bicker on the door?

A. The door sometimes. They used their feet and sometimes they used something else.

Q. Was there any sleepyheads that didna get up for their work?

A. Some were but everybody got up and did their work.

Q. What about the cookin when you were in Lerwick did you buy your ane provisions?

A. Oh yes ye hid to buy ye're ane. There wis a shop not far from the huts up the back on the hill. They kept everything. They hid bread fresh every mornin and anything you wanted you could go and that.

Q. Could you describe an ordinary days cookin. Could you describe what you got to eat?

A. Well mostly in the mornings when you were out you could hae your breakfast afore the herring came in tae the Farlanes. In the early mornin you werena gutten you were doing the fillen up business of the barrels. But jist maybe porridge plenty cookin and everybody jist took what they wanted and then you washed up the dishes them that was doing the work and went out again.

Q. What about dinner time had you soup?

A. Yes prepared something for the dinner.

Q. Did you buy beef?

A. Very seldom. Jist now and again. Some used bones such like or mostly fish.

Q. Did you take home a lot of fish fae the yards?

A. Oh yes you got fish or herrin or anything of that. Do what you wanted.

Q. Had ye to work ~~mornins~~[?] or as long as there was fish?

A. Oh yes ye worked long hours. Till late.

Q. How were ye paid in Lerwick?

A. At the end of the fishing that was the end of the season.

Q. If it was a big fishin ye hid more pay?

A. Yes. If they hid plenty herrin. They were never scarce in Lerwick. There was always something.

Q. Was there different types of herrin, different sizes?

A. Yes ye had to select them and if they werena richt ~~selected~~ you jist got them thrown back at ye. Ye hid tae die them again.

Q. Did somebody come roon and inspect?

A. Yes the coopers were always round the tubs. Ye put your herrin in when you were gutten them.

Q. Far did the herrin go after you were finished wi them in the barrels? Did they ship them tae different places in ~~Lerwick~~^{From} Lerwick?

A. Ye see every selection hid a different barrel. Ye hid barrels at the side and that was for maybe large herrin or fools or whatever it was. Ye had mediums and then ye hid smaller. Well small wis very small.

Q. How did ye pack them in the barrels?

A. Ye jist packed them in the barrels.

Q. But hid ye a certain ~~why~~^{wy} tae pack them?

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A. Yes ye^{h.g} a certain way to pack them and you hid to put in a bottom tier first and then they inspected it. If it wisna right done they thumped it oot and told ye to do it again.

Q. A layer of salt between every layer?

A. Yes then you started doing the rest. We were fly sometimes we did the first half a dozen rows up the barrel very very nicely and then after that we sometimes jist put them in without care.

Q. Was it the cooper that put the lid on the barrel when you finished?

A. Yes.

Q. Did they stamp them?

A. Yes your barrels were all marked. Different crews barrels were marked and ye knew the ones that slopped up and didna do them right and things like that when it came to the filling up.

Q. Can you tell me how you were employed before you went away every season? Did ye sign up?

A. Yes we went tae the Brew. I think it's in the same place as it is now but everybody didna get everything. Some got 7/6 a week but only if they hidna a father a skipper. If your father hid a boat and wis a skipper ye got nothing because they were supposed to be able to keep ye. We aye thoct that wisna fair.

Q. Was your father a skipper?

A. Yes he was a skipper and a boat owner. He had the Bon Ami at the time.

Q. That wisna really fair you couldna help yere^h father being skipper.

A. No so we jist stayed in the house and helped in the house as my stepomother used to do all the mendin of the nets.

Q. Had she a lot of nets to mend?

A. Yes she had a lot and she was a very good mender. My father did all his own ousling and things like that.

Q. Did she employ folk to come in and mend?

A. Yes she hid a sister she always employed with her and gave her something for doing it. She maybe wisna sae well off as her.

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Q. What was your job?

A. I did all the work in the house cleaning and looked after the rest of the family, they were young children at the school. I hid to clean their shoes every night before bed and rowed them up for the morning. I got up every morning early I was always first up cleaned out the fire and put on the fire and made the breakfast.

Q. Your mother was kept busy doing all the nets?

A. Yes she was gotten up and ready for her cup of tea.

Q. Can you describe how they ment how they started at the windae and worked back or whatever they did?

A. Oh they used to cleek up their nets and started mendin. When I hid a spare minute I used to try the nets and then I leaved to do it but I can remember my father when he came in once and he says, "Good gracious the hoose will be on fire afore lang." an I says, "there's nae fire on". "No no" he says "I dinna mean that". So he went away laughin and I asked my stepmother what he was at she says "Dinna bather wi him he's only kiddin ye. It's you he'S gettin at cause he thinks ye're gotten ovr weel on at the nets." "Okay" I says he can mend his ane nets noo. I put away the needle and the twine and I didn't do anymore. So I never mended nets after that. I thought he wis taken the rag of me, the mickey as you wid say.

Q. Can ye mine Buckie lang ago? What school ye went tae?

A. We went tae the Catholic school.

Q. Why did you go to the Catholic even though.....

A. Granny lived in Main Street and it was near hame. We jist went up Gibb's Brae, the old Gibb's Brae, it's still there.

Q. How far back can ye mine aboot your lessons?

A. Well we jist learned.

Q. Was it a jotter or a slate?

A. A jotter and a slate ye're pencils and chalk. Things like that. Like a spongy thing attached to your slate for rubbing out. They dinna hae that noo. It's a grand jotters.

Q. You got a good education in the basics, the reading, writing and arithmetic?

A. You had to buy all your own school books. Nowadays they are fortunate in getting them. But we had to buy everything.

Q. Were you good when you were at the school?

A. Yes that was one thing I was. I was always clever at doing the lessons and things like that. I'll tell you why my grandfather wouldn't let me out at night. I had to do my lessons every night before I went tae my bed and he checked them. So that was that.

Q. A lot of fisher folk long ago took it for granted that their daughters would follow the fishing industry and some did get educated. Did you wish you had been educated at a college?

A. Not at that time no because twice I hid rheumatic fever when I was young. I guess I took that off my own mother cause she died with that.

Q. What sort of clothes did you wear during the week and Sunday?

A. When I went tae the school and such like there wisna such things as gymnastics like what they have nowadays. Ye had all nice clothes and ye hid tae take care of them. I was sometimes rough tearing things.

Q. Shoes you had or boots?

A. Shoes and boots the winter time. It was always knitted stockings.

Q. Fa knitted ye're stockings?

A. Ye hid tae learn yersell at the school and learned sewing at the school.

Q. They wouldna go wi knitted stockings now?

A. No I guess they widna. It's all fancy wear nowadays.

Q. What sort of entertainment did you have when you were young?

A. There wis nae Lycum. Ye paid a penny for the picture hoose.

Q. How did you pass your time in the evenings?

A. We went tae the dancin tae learn dancin, ballroom dancin. Some went tae the Gospell Hall and they called it the Clubbie and Mr. Cormack learned them there. I went tae the Townhouse and it wis Coull we called him.

Q. Is that far the boys and girls met each other?

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A. Yes ye met boys there and a lot of them at the Clubbie met their boyfriends there. All went tae the dancin.

Q. What happened in Sundays?

A. Well on Sundays there wis no such things as going to the theatre and such like as is now. We went tae the Church in the mornin. I did I had to. Sunday school after dinner time and then when I got out of Sunday School we went tae the Church hallie on Main Street. There wis nae such thing as wandering the streets. Then when that came out ye hid ye're supper and you were away to the Church again in the evening. So it was a case of living out of the Church all day Sunday.

Q. You had Sunday clothes?

A. Yes you were decked up in your best Sunday wear hats and you couldn't go to Church without a hat.

Q. Can you mine back on the poor times when fishing was poor?

A. There wis a lot of poor folk in Buckie at the time when the fishing failed. Some went tae the cod net fishin in the winter time. They maybe made a good living but it wis jist a bare livin. There wis one thing they all kept together and everybody helped. They don't do that now.

Q. There wis no luxury with food?

A. When they went tae the cod fishin there wives did baken. They baked oatmeal cakes an bread and scones. An they packed it in boxes to their men. They took that away every evenin.

Q. An eh how did your mother manage for a hale fishin? The boat went awa for a hale fishin an they never got like a weekly pay?

A. There wis no such thing as weekly pay that time a day. When the men were. They had to do without all the times. Their wives hid to save up what they had off the fishin afore. They maybe bought in a stock but the grocers that used to be in Buckie that time, Jimmy Robertson in Main Street, and eh I don't know who the rest were, I can't remember about that, but I knew about that ones they used to give all the people when they went for groceries an they waited till the end of the fishin for their money. They hid to pay it then.

Q. The same wi the butcher an a?

A. The same.

Q. McWilliam the baker was awfa good tae fowk as well?

A. McWilliam wis in High Street and everybody who hid kids, the lads mostly, were popped away wi a bag an a 6d. and told to make up the 6d. You got a lot of bread wi that 6d. Sometimes they hid 2 loaves and they hid softies and all the bread. He wis a very good man to the poor people.

Q. How did you get your milk delivered? Was there a milkman came?

A. Well there wis a milk cart cam round about and you went out wi a jug or a milk pailie wi a lid on it. An you got maybe a penny worth o' milk or maybe tuppence. An it used to run oot o' one of the urns. A tap like a tap in your sinks nowadays.

Q. What about tatties did they come roon selling tatties?

A. No you went tae the tattie land. Ye hid tae plant your own potatoes in dreels and they paid for that dreel and you hoed them then took them hame and dried them.

Q. Can you mine about spring cleanin in Buckie?

A. Spring cleanin time ye hid to lift up the oilcloth in the loft floor where they did they mendin. It wis taken doon to the back green and you scrubbed the floor till it was white. When it was dry you put back the oilcloth and cleaned it. Then ye cleaned the windows. Where we lived everybody hid cement at the back. You were down on your knees scrubbing wi bleach. They took a pride in their hooses. Lace curtains were washed and when they were dry you took them an stretched them.

Q. Fishermen painted their hooses?

A. They were always paintin and varnishin. They painted the spoots wi white paint. If you didn't have water in the house you hid to carry it from the street wallie.

Q. Far wis the wallie?

A. They were parked over all the streets. Ye fullt the rooser. Ye boiled the water. You used to have a cleek thing up the chimney an they would put on a pan tae bile for soup. Plenty het water. All plain foods. Of course the fire places hid ranges, big ovens and if they wanted puddings there wis always rice puddings and loaf puddings.

Q. What about cleanin the range?

A. Cleanin the range hid to be done very well wi black lead. Ye hid sand paper that you cleaned all the steel rims round about the range.

Q. Work in different nowadays its jist switch, switch. Are the folk happier now wi their modern gadgets?

A. No I don't think they are. They were all happy even though they hid big families and they all clubbed together.

Q. The family was a unit. You said your husband wis a cooper? Far did he work?

A. Merson & Gerry. His father was in the services. He wis taken hame on Armistice Day to be buried. Something happened to the boat, torpedoed.

Q. Can you remember the boat?

A. I canna mine. Some of the crew were killed and he happened to be saved but he was damaged inwardly.

Q. Was it a Buckie drifter?

A. Yes it was a Buckie boat.

Q. Was there mare Buckie folk on the boat wi him?

A. Yes there wis Buckie and some killed. I canna mine the names but I know he mastered the Germans a bit and captured them cause he got the D.S.O. for it.

Q. Was he a cooper during the war?

A. My husband wis one of theelder ones were up and away and he wis jist gettin on for 13. He went and got a job and he worked at Merson & Gerry. It wis after that. He learned barrel makin with the Gunns. Alex Gunn. He liked it. He served his time for 4 years at the barrel making. He worked wi fish in atween whe they werena doing barrels.

Q. A cooper a his life?

A. Yes and fish worker. Only once unemployed and that wis after we got married.

Q. Can you remember your pay?

A. Round aboot. Very few men workin that time round about 1928. We married 1927. His pay at the dole was £1.0s.3d. That hid to pay your rent and keep you.

Q. Far did ye bide when you were first married?

A. We stayed in Main Street back where I was brought up at. Stayed in my aunt's house.

Q. Can you tell me about your weddin?

A. We married in 1927. I didn't go to Church to marry. I wis married in the Fishermen's Hall.

Q. The minister came to the Hall?

A. The minister and his wife both came to the Hall. We had a large wedding.

Q. Did you walk to the wedding?

A. No we took a car. It wis Andrew Donaldson's cars.

Q. Did ye're father gie ye awa like modern times?

A. Yes. He wis there at the Fishermen's Hall waitin for me.

Q. What kind of wedding was it? Who did the caterin?

A. The wedding was made by people of our own class. Women stayed in Gordon Street. She was very good at makin weddins and cooken, Mary Reaich, was her maiden name. She got helpers. They made all the food.

Q. Can ye mine on the meal?

A. They hid a special meal. They hid roast meat, potatoes and the trimmings. Soup - they hid broth. They hid chickens. For after they hid home made rice puddings and dumplings. The dumplings were made in the wash hoose biler. Fine dumplings made with currants and raisins. The cake was made in Fowler the bakers. We had round about 140.

Q. What type of presents did you get?

A. Everything that could go to the house for your benefit that you would not have to buy. I wis lucky in having my own furniture. I got money left by my grandmother. That helped with the wedding and the furniture. The rest of the things bedding and such like ye got from your relations.

Q. Long ago folk hid a bottom drawer?

A. We hid that an and we used to save up. When we were at the fishin and buy things. Tea sets and dinner sets.

Q. Did you buy anything in Yarmouth?

A. No I didn't buy anything of that kind in YArmouth but my father used to take them home as presents to us. I used to get from a lot of my own relations when they came home from Yarmouth.

Q. What if ye didna need them?

A. Well ye jist kept them.

Q. Did most of ye're fisher pals marry fishermen or coopers? Did any marry intae the trades?

A. No there were none of them married coopers. A lot married fishermen.

Q. You've hid a long life associated wi the cooper and the fishers?

A. Well it wis 1958 when my husband took ill. He took a coronary heart attack and lived 5 years and died suddenly. 1964 he died.

Q. Long ago they hid nithing provided for them. The pension wis poor. Families helped.

A. Families helped a lot. I was fortunate cause my husband was never idle before he took ill. Had a good boss. He worked hard.

Q. Can ye mine any shops in Buckie? Was Main Street the main street or was it East and West Church Street when you were young?

A. Well there wisna very many shops doon in Main Street. There wis jist a butchers shop. Fowlers and it was Taylor's. There wis anither butcher shop further down across from a grocer, Paterson.

Q. There was nae house furnishers shops?

A. No there was no furniture shops or house hold shops.

Q. Did folk get there furniture made lang ago?

A. Some made and some bought them.

Q. What about East and West Church Street? Was it McKays and Shearers?

A. Alex. Hay the tailors and Munro. Munro was far Cruickshanks is noo. Young the bakers. Esson was in the Square.

DATE OF INT:

14th Oct 1905

10th Nov 1905

ADDRESS:

LOBBAN

41 HARBOUR STREET,

PLACE OF INT:

Home

ANN

BUCKIE

RELIGION:

POLITICS:

C.O.S.

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE

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13 1/2

BROTHERS: 1 STEP BROTHER

FATHERS JOB(S):

SISTERS: 2 + 2 STEP SISTERS

FISHERMAN

BIRTH POSITION: SECOND

INFO. JOB(S):

SPOUSES JOB(S):

COOPER

MOTHERS JOB(S)

OWN MOTHER DIED

WHEN SHE WAS TWO

YEARS OLD

NAME: *Palencia Murray*

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