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BOUNDARIES OF CHILDHOOD:

Growing up in Scotland 1930-1975

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ABSTRACT

Much has been written about the history of childhood: little has been written about the history of being a child. This gap is particularly acute in the debate about the loss of British children's 'freedom' to travel and play independently outside the home since the 1970s, as reflected in recent historiography such as Mathew Thomson's *Lost Freedom.* As Thomson acknowledges, there is some core information missing: we have little understanding of what it was actually like to be a child in mid-century Britain before this change occurred, or of nuances of region or geography.

This thesis aims to fill some of this gap by establishing a child-centred history of how twentieth-century Scottish children saw the world around them and understood their place in it. By re-focusing attention on rural and small-town childhoods, it contributes to a broader understanding of childhood, the study of which is often disproportionately concentrated on the city child. Structured around case studies of children growing up in rural, small town and larger urban communities, the research adopts an innovative methodology using children's own drawings as well as oral history to examine how children experienced independent movement and participated in the world outside home and school.

Through putting the experiences of children back into their own history, the thesis reveals how urban and small-town children, 'always outside,' felt keenly the boundaries of class, religion, poverty and expectation, and how some of these differences played out more viscerally amongst children than they did for adults. Furthermore, the study demonstrates children's continued role as contributors to their household economies: a finding particularly but not solely applicable to rural children. This challenges the accepted historical chronology, based on the work of Hugh Cunningham and others, as to when children shifted from being producers to being consumers and shows that in Scotland the boundaries of childhood were slower to change than they seem to have been in England or North America.

This thesis is dedicated with thanks and love to those with whom I have experienced childhood: my parents, Colin and Rose Bell, and my children, Lily and Angus Brodnax Bell.

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ILLUSTRATIONS

NOTE ON TIMECODES OF TRANSCRIPTS:

The interviews were recorded using two different types of time-coding. Some were interviewed using time-of-day time-code: that is if the question was answered at 13.15 the time-code will read 13.15.00. Others were recorded using time-code generated by the length of the interview: that is, if a question was answered fifteen minutes into the interview, the time-code will be 00.15.00; if the interview is a long one and the answer comes after an hour and a quarter of recording, the time-code will be 01.15.00.

The transcripts include time-code references according to which system was used on the day, so for ease of reference to the complete transcripts I have referenced them accordingly.

Two of the interviewees were interviewed on two different occasions. When reference is made to their second interview the timecode is preceded by ‘interview two’.

Figure 1: A group of boys playing leapfrog amongst the gravestones of the Corporation Burial Ground in Rutherglen Road, one of the few areas of greenery in the Gorbals, a slum district of Glasgow, 1948. The photograph was taken as part of a series that appeared in 'The Forgotten Gorbals', *Picture Post,* 31 January 1948 (Photo: Bert Hardy).

INTRODUCTION

> *He was free, infinitely free … free of that weight of human relationships which impedes movement, those tears, those farewells, those reproaches, those joys…. Those countless bonds which tie him to others and make him heavy.*[1]

It is no accident that some of the most significant writers on the history of children and childhood, such as Philippe Aries and Colin Ward, have been anarchists. The story of childhood is very often the story of suppressing resistance to 'the entire system of adult control of society.'[2] It is a resistance that is often played out in physical space, as the American historian David Nasaw acknowledged when he described the New York street-children he studied as 'autonomous and free but within limits not of their own choosing.'[3] No child is born knowing the limits, whether they are physical or societal; instead they are taught them as they progress through the stages of growing up. The rules change over the course of history but every boundary is an act of power and while many boundaries are considered necessary for the safety and survival of the child, others are imposed for the security, comfort and aspirations of adults, to train the child into becoming the kind of adult that their guardians or parents – and wider society – wish to see. A study of the boundaries experienced by children therefore not only gives insight into the history of children but also into the history of childhood, through examining how children were safeguarded, how they were valued and how the adult world defined what it was to be a child at that time.

The imposition of such boundaries is of course not a straightforwardly mechanical process. In the first place, children are not passive recipients of the strictures and rules they are taught, as Hester Barron and Claire Langhamer's recent study of children's emotional

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[1] Antoine de Saint-Exupery, *The Little Prince* (New York, 1943), quoted by Aries at the top of his conclusion in Philippe Aries, *Centuries of Childhood* (first published Paris, 1960, as *L'Enfant et la vie familiale sous l'ancien regime*; transl. Robert Baldick, London, 1962, this edition, London, 1986) [hereafter Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*], p. 395.

[2] Paul Thompson, 'The War with Adults'*, Oral History*, 3, no. 2 (1975), pp. 29-38 [hereafter Thompson 'War with Adults'], p. 37.

[3] David Nasaw, *Children of the City at Work and at Play* (New York, 1985), p. 7, quoted in Joseph Hawes and Ray Hiner, 'Hidden in Plain View: The History of Children (and Childhood) in the Twenty-First Century', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth*, 1, no. 1 (2008), pp. 43-49 [hereafter Hawes and Hiner, 'Hidden in Plain View'], p. 44.

lives in the 1930s makes clear.[4] Studies of children's play, such as Valerie Wright's recent examination of children growing up in high-rises in Glasgow in the 1960s and 70s, also demonstrate that the imposition of adult boundaries upon children is often not simple or even successful.[5] Secondly, since at least Rousseau, children's capacity to ignore or transcend adult restrictions has often been culturally treasured. Rousseau's instruction to hold 'childhood in reverence' and his emphasis on the value of children being allowed to play freely still resonate: 'Is it nothing to be happy? Nothing to jump, play and run all day? He will never be so busy again.'[6] The most potent images of British childhood in the twentieth century, like Bert Hardy's picture of boys in the Gorbals playing in the graveyard (see Figure 1), are photographs of children playing amidst urban squalor precisely because these images represent joy against the odds, a demonstration of the ability of children to leap-frog over the restrictions of poverty and bomb-sites.[7] The images retain their power long after their original audience has died. As the writer Wilhelm Genazino argued 'each photograph still contains some kind of amber … and pictures never cease to speak to us, if we look at them long enough.'[8] However, such photographs can only give us an adult's perspective on the experience of childhood. In order to put children back into the heart of their own history, we need to make the attempt to flip the photographs so that the point of view is that of the child looking out not the adult looking in.

It is the ambition of this thesis to establish a child-centred account of childhood boundaries, experiences and behaviour for Scottish children in the mid-twentieth century. In other words, what was it actually like to be a child in Scotland at this time? I have used a

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[4] Hester Barron and Claire Langhamer, 'Feeling through Practice: Subjectivity and Emotion in Children's Writing', *Journal of Social History,* 51, no. 1 (2017), pp. 101-123 [hereafter Barron and Langhamer, 'Feeling Through Practice']. They give the example of Billy aged eight who laughed his way through the two-minute silence on Armistice Day but knew enough to write down that he was thinking of the dead soldiers, p. 108.
[5] Valerie Wright, '"Making Their Own Fun": Children's Play in High-rise Estates in Glasgow in the 1960s and 1970s' in *Children's Experiences of Welfare in Modern Britain*, eds Sian Pooley and Jonathan Taylor (London, 2021), pp. 221-46 [hereafter Wright, 'Making Their Own Fun'].
[6] Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *Emile or On Education* (first published Paris, 1762, this edition transl. Christopher Kelly and Allan Bloom, Lebanon, New Hampshire, 2010) p. 51.
[7] Colin Ward, *The Child in the City* (London, 1978) [hereafter Ward, *Child in the City*], p. 210. See Mathew Thomson, *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* (Oxford, 2013) [hereafter Thomson, *Lost Freedom*], pp. 21-46 for fuller discussion of the meanings of these post-war images.
[8] W. Genazino, *Aus der Ferne. Auf der Kippe: Bilder und Texte* (Munich, 2012), cited in Julia Winkler, 'The Agency of Photographs', *From Streets to Playgrounds: Essays from the Catalogue for the 'From Streets to Playgrounds: Representing Children in early 20th century Toronto' Exhibition, 2016* (Toronto, 2016), <https://www.juliawinckler.com/from-streets-to-playgrounds/ > accessed 10 March, 2022.

two-pronged methodology in the attempt to do this, using both oral history and children's own drawings to give a sense of how children saw the world around them and their place in it, how they framed its edges and boundaries, even if only for a fleeting moment. Much writing on the history of childhood is broad in its geographical sweep but to pin down details one needs specificity rather than generality. The focus is on Scotland, partly because the study of the history of children in Scotland has been much neglected, but also because the boundaries of childhood are culturally specific. The education, child welfare and child justice systems of Scotland not only have a different history from other parts of Britain but remain different to this day: it seems likely therefore that the experience of childhood there may also vary from that of children in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. It also seems possible that if one is to understand the child in the landscape then different landscapes might bring different experiences, and so I have used a case-study methodology, examining the stories of children growing up in three different places and spaces: the remote rural region of Glen Esk, the small market town of Brechin and the crowded, deprived industrial city of Dundee. While the places are specific, these three settings are also generally representative of the Scottish experience where, in the mid-twentieth century, the small town remained a place of continued economic and cultural significance as the rural population declined in absolute numbers and the rate of population growth in the four big cities slowed.[9]

I have focussed on the mid-twentieth century because it is in the western world a time of particular if debated significance in the history of childhood: a time when not only were children the subjects of much interest as symbols of hope for the future, but also when the boundaries of what defined a child were shifting as the length of compulsory education increased and the expectation of children's contribution of labour, whether outside or within the home, was apparently reduced. In the last forty years or so, it has also come to seem a time of 'lost freedom' and to represent (however ahistorically) a lost golden age. The ability of children to travel and play independently outside the home is central to this present-day debate about children's loss of 'freedom', and furthermore reflects a shift

[9] Michael Anderson, *Scotland's Populations from the 1850s to Today* (Oxford, 2018) [hereafter Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*], p. 97.

in the power struggle between children and adults for space.[10] The concept that space is a social product and that 'the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action ... in addition to being a means of production it is also a means of control, and hence of domination, of power' has been influential in this area.[11] As the geographer David Sibley put it, 'the simple questions we should be asking are: who are places for, whom do they exclude and how are these prohibitions maintained in practice?'[12] This offers a welcome simplicity in the examination of the boundaries of childhood, as a concrete and sometimes even measurable experience, and part of what has been seen as a 'spacial turn' in a number of disciplines, including history.[13]

However what follows is not solely an examination of children's physical freedom within the landscape but also of other boundaries which may or may not have contained them. Notions of protection and control are at the heart of how childhood is defined so an examination of the tension between freedom and restraint across a broader arena – in the home and at work, of behaviour and expectation – offers a more nuanced insight into changing experiences of childhood. This broad use of the idea of boundaries beyond the physical fits in with the evidence given in the oral history interviews in which often the experiences felt to be most significant were engendered by boundaries more complicated or subtle than that of where children were allowed to play. As Aries' quotation from *The Little Prince* indicates, the ties that bind are often as much to do with restrictions on behaviour, and expectations of relationships, as they are to do with where a child can physically go. The oral history interviews conducted for this research also indicated an absence of boundaries where one might have expected to find them: in particular, a distinction between children and adults based on the idea that only adults do paid work. Rather some children, in some parts of Scotland, were often urged into a work place from which, based on the secondary literature, one might have assumed they were largely

[10] See for instance Louise A. Jackson and Angela Bartie, *Policing Youth: Britain 1945-1970* (Manchester, 2014) [hereafter Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*]; Thomson, *Lost Freedom*; Tim Gill, *No Fear: Growing Up in a Risk Averse Society* (London, 2007) [hereafter Gill, *No Fear*]; Al Aynsley-Green, *The British Betrayal of Childhood: Challenging Uncomfortable Truths and Bringing About Change* (London, 2018) [hereafter Aynsley-Green, *British Betrayal*]; and further discussion in the literature review.

[11] Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (first published Paris, 1974, this edition transl. Donald Nicholson-Smith, Oxford, 1991) [hereafter Lefebvre, *Production of Space*], p. 26.

[12] David Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion* (London, 1995) [hereafter Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*], p. x.

[13] Jo Guldi, 'Landscape and Place', in *Research Methods in History,* eds Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire (Edinburgh, 2011), pp. 66-80, p. 67.

excluded. For this reason, the study looks closely at children's experiences of both paid and unpaid work and the absence of a boundary that is often understood in the present-day to define a distinction between children and adults.

In 1971 the historian David Rothman described how 'many historians have experienced that middle-of-the-night panic when contemplating how thin a line sometimes separates their work from fiction. But on this score the study of childhood seems especially nerve-racking, threatening to turn us all into novelists.'[14] More dangerous still perhaps is the study of actual children, the attempt to scrutinise emotions and experiences felt long ago by people who are now adults, and to do so partly through drawings created with colouring pencils one afternoon in the distant past. Nonetheless by doing this much is revealed: not only about what it was like to be a child in a particular time and place but also how inaccurate many of the historical assumptions about childhood in the western world in this period have turned out to be when applied to Scotland. Hugh Cunningham has argued that the agenda for historians of children and childhood should be 'the relationship between public action and thought and private experience.'[15] In this research I have taken private experience as the starting-point: what it reveals is how complex the experience of children was in the era before Game-boys and a heightened fear of paedophiles, how children relished being able to spend much of their time outside and celebrated their ability to contribute to the family, but also how challenging they found what might now be seen as 'freedom,' as boundaries of poverty, class, territorialism and expectation came into play.

DEFINITIONS: WHAT IS A CHILD

Childhood is now generally acknowledged to be a social construct - 'always lived and defined in cultural and economic contexts' – which traps the historian immediately in a hall of mirrors in the attempt to define what one is examining. As Anna Davin pointed out of childhood, 'its properties are multiple and elusive; its limits elastic.'[16] Nonetheless,

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[14] D.J. Rothman, 'Documents in Search of a Historian: Toward a History of Children and Youth in America', *Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 2, (1971-2), pp. 367-377, p. 369, quoted in Hugh Cunningham, *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (London, 2005) [hereafter Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*], p. 201.

[15] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, p. 201.

[16] Anna Davin, 'What is a child?', in *Childhood in Question: Children, Parents and the State,* eds Anthony Fletcher and Stephen Hussey (Manchester, 1999), pp. 15-36, p. 15.

compulsory education provides a useful guide to modern society's recognition of childhood's distinctiveness, and so its age parameters form at least a starting-point to define who at that time was considered a child. In Scotland, the school-leaving age shifted over the twentieth century from twelve to fourteen in 1901, fifteen in 1947, and to sixteen in 1973.[17] Another possible measure of the distinction between child and adult is the age of criminal responsibility. This was raised from the age of seven to eight in 1932, and was only raised to twelve in 2021, although it had not been possible to prosecute a child under twelve for some time before that.[18] The law regarding child labour in Scotland also shifted in the period, with the most significant legislation occurring in 1937.[19] This restricted the amount and kind of work a child could do under the age of twelve, except by permission of local bye-laws which allowed children under that age to work in 'light horticultural or agricultural work' or some other specified forms of work for which the local authority wished to grant a bye-law.[20] Children of school age between twelve and fourteen could do no more than two hours work a day on any school-day or on Sunday.

These ages then have provided a rough guide for the examination which follows, which focuses on the experience of children up to the age of sixteen, and which allows scrutiny of their experiences as they left schooling and entered the workplace full-time. There is a significant amount of historiography on the experiences of youth in the post-war period, and 'youth' or 'young people' are also an elusive category of young person. Some of this research (most notably the work of Selina Todd and Angela McRobbie) has proved valuable when contextualising the oral history findings about experiences of children on the boundaries between school and full-time work, but I have not examined in depth the memories of the oral history participants once they were more than a year or so out of school.[21] In this I have followed the cue of the participants themselves. One of the questions I asked most of them was when they felt they ceased to be a child: while answers

[17] Lindsay Paterson, 'Schools and Schooling' in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History,* ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford, 2001), pp. 561-569 [hereafter Paterson, 'Schools and Schooling'].
[18] Age of Criminal Responsibility (Scotland) Act 2019, asp 7. See also Scottish Law Commission, Report on the Age of Criminal Responsibility, 2002, Scot Law Com 185, SE/2002/1.
[19] Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, Edw. 8 and Geo. 6, c. 37, part III.
[20] Children and Young Persons Act (Scotland) 1937, Edw. 8 and Geo. 6, c. 38, s. 28.
[21] In particular Selina Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents: Working-Class Young People in England, 1918-1955', *International Review of Social History*, 52 no. 1 (2007), pp. 57-87 [hereafter Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents']; Angela McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture: From Jackie to Just Seventeen* (London, 1991) [hereafter McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture*].

varied between leaving primary education at twelve to entering the workplace at fifteen or sixteen, none considered themselves to still be experiencing childhood once they were at full-time work – although for many the experience of being a child of their parents did of course continue long into adulthood.

LITERATURE REVIEW

From its start in 1960 the study of the history of childhood has been marked unusually by the pre-occupations of the historian's present, and his or her own observations and experiences of childhood. The effect of this is that some themes have been thoroughly explored, while others barely touched. Meanwhile, the voices of children themselves have often been marginalised, either through want of interest or due to the shortage of sources. By children's voices what is meant is 'what young people *actually* thought, felt and did rather than that what they were *expected* or *assumed* to think, feel and do.'[22] The difficulty of finding source material to reflect the voices of children has been a recurrent challenge in this field of history: almost all archival sources are adult-generated as is oral history.[23] As Lynn Abrams has pointed out, 'it is much easier to write about the policies affecting children and even ideas about childhood than about children themselves, their experiences and their emotions, their fears and anxieties and moments of pleasure.'[24] Historians and sociologists tackling the subject have often been acutely aware of this issue. Looking back on her seminal work, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, Viviana Zelizer explained that the lack of sources meant 'I could not reach far into how children's own experiences and interactions changed.'[25] It is a substantial gap in the literature and one increasingly acknowledged as such by historians and sociologists.

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[22] Nell Musgrove, Carla Pascoe Leahy and Kristina Moruzi, 'Hearing Children's Voices: Conceptual and Methodological Challenges', in *Children's Voices from the Past: New Historical and Interdisciplinary Perspectives,* eds Kristine Moruzi, Nell Musgrove and Carla Pascoe Leahy (Cham, 2019), pp. 1-25 [hereafter Musgrove et al., 'Hearing Children's Voices'], p. 12.

[23] Harry Hendrick, *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* (Cambridge, 1997) [hereafter Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society*], p. 3.

[24] Lynn Abrams, *The Orphan Country: Children of Scotland's Broken Homes from 1845 to the Present Day* (Edinburgh, 1998) [hereafter Abrams, *Orphan Country*], p. 30.

[25] Viviana A. Zelizer, 'The Priceless Child Turns 27', *Journal of the History of Childhood and Youth,* 5 (2012), pp. 449-56, p. 450, quoted in *Children's Experiences of Welfare in Modern Britain,* eds Sian Pooley and Jonathan Taylor (London, 2021) [hereafter Pooley and Taylor, *Children's Experiences of Welfare*], p. 1.

The issue that has pre-occupied historians and present-day commentators in the last few decades is an apparent change in the experience of childhood, in which children's independent mobility outside the home has significantly decreased. This perceived change has caused much concern: as Cunningham noted in 2005 'anxieties about childhood in the western world have risen from what was an already high level.'[26] The shift has been dated in Britain by Thomson to the late 1970s when an increase in private car ownership and an increased fear of paedophiles built on changes in attitudes brought about by the Second World War and led to restrictions on children's unsupervised play and travel outdoors.[27] This situation has subsequently been exacerbated by the rise of the internet and screen culture, making being indoors more appealing for children. However, despite this widely-acknowledged perception of change, there is an acute lack of understanding of what children's actual experiences were like before. It is the ambition of this thesis to fill this gap.

While the specific concern around children's lack of time outside is of relatively recent origin, questions around the boundaries of childhood have been integral to the history of childhood since its beginning. The book that effectively launched the field of study – and still the one most likely to be mentioned by non-historians - is Philippe Aries' *Centuries of Childhood*, first published in Paris in 1960, and re-issued many times since. Aries argued that early medieval children were seen as infants until they were around seven years of age, and then went straight from 'a tardy weaning' to enter the adult world.[28] For him this went hand in hand with the arrangement of society as a collective, the 'crowd', rather than being based on individual family units. By the seventeenth century, a concept of childhood as a prolonged period in which children needed protection, moral guidance and education had emerged, and this drove the creation of a society based on small family units.

Aries' argument that childhood was an idea which had been invented in the modern era aroused considerable antagonism and debate. The assertion that aroused the most ire amongst critics was that medieval and early modern parents did not have the same emotional commitment to their children that we expect from modern parents, partly because of the high rate of infant mortality. In the middle ages 'the idea of childhood did not exist,' Aries wrote, followed immediately by 'this is not to suggest that children were

[26] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, introduction to 2005 edition, p. viii.
[27] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, pp. 168-183.
[28] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 395.

neglected, forsaken or despised. The idea of childhood is not to be confused with affection for children' but the latter qualification was scarcely noticed.[29] The response to Aries' book was the creation of a sizeable historiographical strand, whose subject was the existence of the idea of childhood and the depth of emotion felt by parents for their children in a range of periods and cultures. However, as Cunningham pointed out in his brief historiographical essay, wherever anyone looked they found evidence of some parental fondness and a notion of childhood.[30] One suspects Aries would not have been the least bit surprised by this, and it is a debate that now seems redundant.

This debate aside, Aries' work remains significant for a number of reasons. It established the idea that childhood was a changing cultural construct and one that could be studied. He also laid out the groundwork for the key themes of the histories of childhood that would follow: family, education, play and work. However, the theme which arguably fuelled Aries' own passion for the subject was that of children's independence: a theme which finds echoes in the recent interest in children's autonomy of movement. Aries found mid-twentieth century French family life stifling and suffocating. Describing himself as an 'anarchist of the Right', Aries disliked the claustrophobic modern family structure with its emphasis on education as a special 'time of quarantine' rather than letting children beyond infancy loose in the adult world.[31] For him 'professional and family life have stifled that other activity which once invaded the whole of life: the activity of social relations.'[32] It seems likely that it was not so much Aries' assertion that medieval parents cared less intensely for their children than we do now, but his underlying argument that we care too much for them now that so annoyed his critics. In this too, Aries' work laid the foundations for the histories of childhood which followed: just as it is now generally understood that childhood is a social construct so too are the various histories of childhood frequently expressions of opinion about present-day childhood.

Aries was however unusual in that he sought to look, however imperfectly, across the whole range: the idea of childhood, the institutions of childhood and the actual

[29] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 126. As Cunningham pointed out, the translation turned the French *sentiment* into the English 'idea', and this is arguably a mis-translation of what Aries meant. Hugh Cunningham, 'Histories of Childhood', *The American Historical Review*, 103, no. 4 (1998), pp. 1195-1208 [hereafter Cunningham 'Histories of Childhood'], p. 1197.
[30] Cunningham, 'Histories of Childhood', p. 1199.
[31] Patrick H. Hutton, *Philippe Aries and the Politics of French Cultural History* (Manchester, 2004), p. 73.
[32] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 394.

experience of being a child. Those that followed him in the next few decades tended to take a more specific focus, looking, like Lawrence Stone, at family structure, or, like Linda Pollock, at parent-child relationships, with competing arguments about change versus continuity.[33] However, while individual works differed markedly in their emphasis and details, a broad historical consensus developed about the forming of an ideal of childhood (at some point but certainly by the late nineteenth century) as a special time marked out from adulthood: this ideal took two slightly different if often overlapping forms, one in which childhood was a time for education and discipline, and the other Romantic view, derived from Rousseau and expressed by Wordsworth, in which childhood was associated with innocence, the countryside and nature. These ideas of childhood were of course quite removed from the actual experiences of most working-class children in Britain, although the introduction of compulsory universal education and further legal restrictions on children's involvement in work reflected their growing application to real children. American sociologist Viviana Zelizer took this a step further when she identified the changing social value of children in the United States in the early part of the twentieth century as a move from being potential contributors to the family economy to being the new 'economically worthless, but emotionally priceless child.'[34] This transformation of the place of children within the family has also been identified as taking place in twentieth-century Great Britain, making its way from middle-class to working-class culture by the post-war period. In their influential work of social research, Michael Young and Peter Wilmott studied change in two working-class communities in London in the 1950s. Their findings about the place of children within the family has formed one of the evidential stepping-stones for historians looking to understand the changing role of children in post-war Britain. One anecdote given in their section entitled 'It's All for the Kiddies' is particularly telling, when a mother explained that when she was a child any extra food would go to the father, but that now a spare pork chop would go to the child because 'now it's the children who get the best of it.'[35]

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[33] Lawrence Stone, *The Family, Sex and Marriage in England 1500-1800* (London, 1977); Linda Pollock, *Forgotten Children: Parent-Child Relations from 1500 to 1900* (Cambridge, 1983).

[34] Viviana A. Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child: The Changing Social Value of Children* (New York, 1985) [hereafter Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*], p. 96.

[35] M. Young and P. Wilmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (Harmondsworth, 1968) [hereafter Young and Wilmott, *Family and Kinship*], p. 28, cited by Hugh Cunningham, 'The Decline of Child Labour: Labour Markets and Family Economies in Europe and North America Since 1830', *Economic History Review*, 53, no. 3 (2000), pp. 409-428 [hereafter Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour'], p. 425.

Hugh Cunningham's *Children and Childhood in Western Society since 1500* (originally written in 1995 and then revised ten years later) further charted the development of the Western idea of childhood as a time when the child should be protected and separated from adulthood, with the Romantic ideals of the Victorian era gradually extending out from the middle-classes and being applied to working-class children in the twentieth century. He identified the most significant change for children in the first half of the twentieth century as that they 'lost any productive role within the economy, and increasingly gained a new role as consumers.'[36] While he identified further change in the form of the rise of children's rights in the latter half of the century, for him, 'the Romantic ideal has faced, and largely withstood, many challenges. Up to the middle of the twentieth century it could be said that the actuality of childhood in Western society was coming closer to the ideal.'[37]

Cunningham is not alone in seeing the middle part of the twentieth century as a kind of high point of the Romantic ideal of childhood: in noting that this high point has been lost he echoes other, rather less convincing, analysts. Lamenter-in-chief was the American writer, Neil Postman, whose 1982 book set in train a trend which is with us still. Like Aries, Postman was not a historian: instead, he was a cultural critic and media analyst who saw the idea of childhood as driven by communication technology. For Postman, the concept of childhood (by which he, in broad agreement with Aries, meant a distinct phase of life between the ages of about 7 and 15) was created in response to the invention of the printing press. Where medieval children had been merely miniature adults, post-Guttenberg they were adults-in-training who needed to acquire the skills of literacy to pass up the scale into adulthood. That meant they needed formal education and a separate arena of childhood was established, with its own books and culture, sheltered from full understanding of the brutal adult world. He described 'a golden age' of childhood in the United States, but by implication in Western culture generally, from about 1850 to 1950 and defined this as a time when 'in a hundred laws children were classified as qualitatively different from adults; in a hundred customs assigned a preferred status and offered protection from the vagaries of adult life.'[38] Where Aries had bemoaned education for

[36] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, p. 185.
[37] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood,* pp. 204-5.
[38] Neil Postman, *The Disappearance of Childhood* (first published New York, 1982, this edition New York, 1994) [hereafter Postman, *Disappearance*], p. 67.

removing children into a kind of quarantine, taking away their freedom to participate in the adult world, Postman regretted the rise of a popular accessible culture, driven by television, which eroded the divisions between child and adult. For him, this culture was the slippery slope down which the divisions between child and adult hurtled, and this had an impact not just on children but on adults. As he lamented, 'in our present situation adulthood has lost much of its authority and aura, and the idea of deference to one who is older has become ridiculous.'[39] The lost boundary which Postman lamented was one between children and adult from which adults gained power.

Harry Hendrick was also pre-occupied with the power relationship between child and adult. In *Children, Childhood and English Society 1880-1990* he provided a succinct analytical study of the history of childhood in England (with some unremarked straying into Scotland) based on an examination of the existing literature. Hendrick analysed the history of childhood as a history of age relations between adults and children, and he was clear that the relative neglect of this subject is 'ideological: the consequence of a set of attitudes and power structures' and that to write a history of childhood involves confronting 'the politics of age relationships.' He argued that too often children are viewed from the perspective of 'becoming,' that is as people in the process of becoming adults, rather than of 'being', that is examined in their own right as children.[40] Furthermore, he pointed out that histories of childhood were generally missing the voices of children and while he agreed that significant changes in the meaning and experience of childhood had occurred since the 1960s, he argued that we did not have a clear enough idea of how childhood has actually been experienced to know if it is 'disappearing'.[41]

Postman's book was the first twentieth-century articulation of the sense that childhood had disappeared, that there had been a golden age of childhood which had just slipped out of our fingers. The idea that things were better before (often when the writer themself was a child) and that children no longer have a proper childhood has become almost pervasive in British and American culture since Postman. In another iteration of Postman's technology-driven argument, the rise of the home computer and the internet have added to present-day anxieties about childhood. The *Guardian's* review of a film on

[39] Postman, *Disappearance,* p. 133.
[40] Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society,* pp. 3-4.
[41] Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society,* p. 96.

the subject sums up the concerns, found in Scottish as well as British media: 'Today's young people stay indoors, unlike their parents and grandparents, who as children loved to roam free. A new generation is addicted to iPads and consoles, getting obese and insidiously depressed in the process, and parents are letting it happen.'[42] In the first decades of the twenty-first century, books and reports lamenting the changed shape of childhood tumbled over each other. Sue Palmer's *Toxic Childhood*, the Children's Society *Good Childhood Inquiry*, Tim Gill's *No Fear: Growing Up In a Risk Averse Society* and Al Aynsley-Green's *The British Betrayal of Childhood* all, with more or less clarity, expressed the idea that not only were there problems with the experience of present-day childhood but that it had been better in the recent past.[43] The argument might be briefly summed up as one of over-protective, risk-averse parents keeping their children too close to home because of fears about road traffic and paedophiles, a problem exacerbated by children's own loss of desire to play or roam outside when the TV, internet or gaming machine offer such compelling interest inside. Sexualisation, consumerism and the loss of boundaries between adult and child play larger or smaller roles in this parade of disaster, depending on the version.

The culmination of this crisis narrative might be considered the National Trust's 2012 campaign to reconnect children to Nature because, it argued, contemporary children were suffering from something called Nature Deficit Disorder, an issue first identified by Richard Louv in his 2005 best-seller, *Last Child in the Woods*.[44] The Trust based its campaign on a report it commissioned from the naturalist and broadcaster Stephen Moss which argued that there is 'widespread consensus that something needs to be done … to enable our children to reconnect with the natural world.'[45] The campaign it launched to rectify the

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[42] Peter Bradshaw, '*Project Wild Thing* review', *The Guardian*, 24 October 2013. For Scotland see for example 'Cotton wool kids must be taught how to take risks', *The Scotsman*, 7 June 2010, <https://www.scotsman.com/news/cotton-wool-kids-must-be-taught-how-take-risks-1716957> accessed 10 Nov, 2018.

[43] Sue Palmer, *Toxic Childhood: How the Modern World Is Damaging Our Children and What We Can Do About It* (London, 2006); Judy Dunn and Richard Layard, *A Good Childhood: Searching for Values in a Competitive Age* (London, 2009); Gill, *No Fear*; Aynsley-Green, *British Betrayal.* See also 2011 letter to the *Telegraph* with two hundred signatories: 'Erosion of childhood', *Daily Telegraph*, 23 September 2011 <https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/8784996/Erosion-of-childhood-letter-with-full-list-of-signatories.html,> accessed 23 July, 2022; Kay Tisdall, 'Lost childhood?' in Viviene Cree, Gary Clapton and Mark Smith (eds), *Revisiting Moral Panics* (Bristol, 2015), pp. 93-102.

[44] Richard Louv, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficiency Disorder* (Chapel Hill, 2005).

[45] Stephen Moss, 'Natural Childhood', report commissioned by the National Trust, 2012 [hereafter Moss, 'Natural Childhood']. https://www.nationaltrust.org.uk/features/connecting-kids-with-nature, accessed 27 October 2015.

situation included a list of fifty things every child should have done before they were eleven and three-quarters: climbing trees, making dens, going barefoot, and eating an apple fresh from the tree all make the list.[46] The Institute for Outdoor Learning came out in support of the Trust's campaign, arguing that while there may be no going back 'to the days when children roamed free' the aim was to create a new world where children could once again play outside without parental supervision.[47]

In 2013 Mathew Thomson published a historical analysis focused specifically on this debate. *Lost Freedom: The Landscape of the Child and the British Post-War Settlement* took as its starting point the contemporary anxiety that children were now constrained and contained in a way they had not been previously. In his search for the origins of this anxiety, Thomson examined the proliferation of photographs of the urban child from the 1930s to 1970s, and argued that they changed meaning and purpose across the period, from a form of social realism and argument for social intervention to ameliorate deprivation to a lament for lost freedom and a statement about children's own subversive power. For Thomson the 1970s were the turning point: a decade of rupture in which 'a rejection of the landscape of protection and a desire to push a vision of freedom further than ever before exploded tensions that had hitherto been contained within the post-war settlement.'[48] He made a convincing case for dating the heightened anxiety about paedophilia to the late 1970s and the furore aroused by the attempt to gain public support in the name of liberal-thinking by the Paedophilia Information Exchange; this fear allied to an understandable anxiety about road traffic was the beginning of the end of children's free movement.

In his emphasis on the 1970s as the turning-point, Thomson is not alone. Both Gill and Moss also pointed to the period before the rise of computer and video games.[49] While Gill also highlighted campaigns around playground safety in the 1970s and 1980s as evidence of a rising caution around children and risk, much of the evidence for this dating is based on a comparative study about the decrease of English children's independent mobility. Hillman, Adams and Whitelegg's comparative study of England and Germany,

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[46] National Trust, '50 Things to Do Before You're 11 ¾', https://www.50things.org.uk, accessed 27 October 2015.
[47] Institute for Outdoor Learning, 'Natural Childhood by Stephen Moss 2012 – National Trust Report' < https://www.outdoor-learning-research.org/Research/Research-Blog/ArtMID/560/ArticleID/24/Natural-Childhood-by-Stephen-Moss-2012-National-Trust-Report > accessed 6 March 2022.
[48] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 229.
[49] Gill, *No Fear,* p. 26*;* Moss, *Natural Childhood*, p. 12-13.

published in 1990, drew on surveys conducted in the same primarily urban and suburban schools in 1971 and 1990 and demonstrated a huge decline across the period in English children aged 7-8 walking on their own to school, from 80% to 9%.[50] The Hillman study showed how varied the motivations for this change were, from how close the school was to home to parental work patterns and car ownership, but argued that it was fear of traffic and increasingly congested roads that largely drove this dramatic change in behaviour.[51] Virtually every commentator barring Postman has followed this chronological logic, perceiving an initial reduction in children's independent mobility during the 1970s and 1980s as the key change, supported rather than initiated by the continuing development of a screen culture that made staying at home increasingly entertaining for children.

It is important to note that well before the 1970s, children at loose in the city were often viewed by adults as 'out-of-place and hence dangerous', as Jackson and Bartie point out in their study of children and youth in Dundee and Manchester in the post-war period.[52] However, this is rather different from being seen to be at danger and many writers have praised the apparent independence experienced by urban children before the decrease in independent mobility. Colin Ward's *The Child in the City* is foremost amongst this tradition. Published in 1978, his book was both a historical account and a polemical paeon to the freedom of the British city child. Full of detail, with wide-ranging references and an enthusiasm for the unquenchable spirit of children, Ward celebrated how much pleasure and life children could squeeze out of an impoverished urban setting. He included over 200 contemporary photographs showing children as independent figures in the urban landscape, a fascinating if charged set of sources which evoke a vivid picture of children at large in a shabby city, with bombsites for playgrounds. As Ward said: 'the words spell deprivation but the pictures spell joy.' [53] Always one to celebrate the counter-intuitive,

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[50] Mayer Hillman, John Adams and John Whitelegg, *One False Move: A Study of Children's Independent Mobility* (London, 1990) [hereafter Hillman et al., *One False Move*]. See also the Newsons' long-term study of a cohort of children born in Nottingham in the early 1960s. John Newson and Elizabeth Newson, *Seven Year Olds in the Home Environment* (London, 1976); John Newson and Elizabeth Newson, *From Childhood to Adolescence: Growing Up in the 1970s* (Abingdon, 2019). For Thomson's discussion of this evidence, see *Lost Freedom*, pp. 139-142.

[51] Hillman et al., *One False Move,* p. 106.

[52] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth,* p. 165.

[53] Ward, *Child in the City,* p. 210. In *Lost Freedom*, Thomson contextualised Ward's photographs in a brief history of the imagery of the urban child from the 1930s to 1970s, and argued that these photographs of street children changed meaning and purpose across the period, from a form of social realism and argument for change to a lament for lost freedom and a statement about children's own subversive power.

Ward's later book, *The Child in the Country*, was much less joyous, focusing rather more on the problems of rural life than on its potential for children.[54]

Policy researcher Becky Tunstall has also suggested in her research into the experiences of children growing up in the 1970s on some of Britain's roughest housing estates that – at least in retrospect – urban children thrived on their freedom.[55] Wright's recent research on 1960s and 1970s childhood in Glasgow's new high-rise housing schemes makes the same point, something of its flavour given by its title, 'Making their own fun.'[56] Much the same argument is made by the mountaineer Andy Kirkpatrick who recently campaigned for parents to allow children to take much greater risks:

> I grew up in a block of flats in Hull, and shiver to think of the dares and stunts we pulled - hanging from drops by our tiny fingers, climbing from balcony to balcony, shimmying up garbage chutes. We lived close to the derelict docks, where we would swim in the summer - their depths hiding many dangers. In the 1970's we didn't have paedophiles, we had 'strange men' and simple messages about not talking to strangers that kept us safe ... We rarely played alone, and through being in tribes of children we understood our place.[57]

Urban childhoods are no less subject to the warm glow of nostalgia than any others; nonetheless, this does not make these celebratory memories of childhood untrue. Thomson argued that it was not surprising that there should be a sense of lost freedom for writers of his own generation:

> Even those who grew up as recently as the 1970s will commonly look at what it is tempting to regard as the increasingly house-bound, screen-tied existence of their own children and feel this loss. No doubt, such feelings are partly a product of nostalgia. They run the danger of over-looking new freedoms. [58]

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[54] Colin Ward, *The Child in the Country* (London, 1988) [hereafter Ward, *Child in the Country*].
[55] Becky Tunstall, 'I miss those days': growing up in social housing in the 1970s' *The Guardian,* 29 June 2012.
[56] Wright, 'Making Their Own Fun', pp. 221-46.
[57] Andy Kirkpatrick, 'Risky Play', *Four Thought*, BBC Radio Four, 12 November 2014; text at < https://www.andy-kirkpatrick.com/blog/view/risky_play > accessed 6 March 2022.
[58] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 1

As Thomson pointed out, there have obviously been gains as well as losses, not least the freedom from physical punishment at school brought about by legislation in the 1970s and 1980s. Nonetheless he is confident that the perceived changes in children's experiences in the last few generations are more than just misplaced nostalgia: for him, like Kirkpatrick, the National Trust and a host of other commentators there has been a real as well as a perceived loss in the last forty or so years.

While these questions of freedom and loss of an ideal childhood have dominated the debate in the last twenty-five years, these were not the issues concerning a slightly earlier generation of writers, historians and social scientists who reflected on children's experiences in twentieth-century Britain. Instead, their attention was taken by two closely-related subjects. First, the single most dramatic event in the lives of twentieth-century British children: the Second World War and the mass evacuation of over a million children from their urban homes to stay with strangers in the countryside. While more than half of these children had returned home within a few months, this event was nonetheless of tremendous importance both in their individual lives and in the national life, precipitating as it did new revelations about the health, living conditions and manners of many of the country's poorest children. The event ranks with the Blitz and the Battle of Britain in the iconography of twentieth-century British history. No wonder then that a significant number of histories have been written about evacuation: many of them for once focusing on what the experience was actually like for children by drawing on the reminiscences of those who had been evacuees themselves. Outside evacuation, children's experiences of war remain a common theme in many examinations of the history of childhood.[59]

The second dominant narrative is that of the 'scholarship child' who through education left one class and arrived in another. There is a very particular genre of twentieth-century autobiography which tells this story, beginning with Richard Hoggart's fragments of autobiography in *The Uses of Literacy*, frequently fictionalised in novels like Kingsley Amis' *Lucky Jim* and added to by a generation of post-war feminists among others. While Hoggart's account is of a pre-war childhood, the 1944 Butler Education Act made the scholarship exam part of virtually every English childhood, and the impact of passing or

[59] They include John Welshman, *Churchill's Children: The Evacuee Experience in Wartime Britain* (Oxford, 2010) [hereafter Welshman, *Churchill's Children*]; B. S. Johnson ed., *The Evacuees* (London, 1968); Juliet Gardiner, *The Children's War: The Second World War Through the Eyes of Children* (London, 2005).

failing could be life-changing. As Julia Pascal in her autobiographical essay put it: 'It's as if someone has ripped the class in half, and those small children thrown out from the chance of a grammar school education know deep in their hearts that this is the crucial moment in their lives.'[60]

The impact of these reforms in Scotland was arguably less dramatic: here mass secondary education had been a principle since the Education Act (Scotland) of 1918, and the qualifying examination – or 'qualy' - which decided which type of secondary education a child would attend had already been part of childhoods for several decades. This meant that the Education (Scotland) Act of 1945 was more of a consolidation than its 1944 counter-part in England but the principle of the transforming effect of the exam was the same.[61] Liz Heron's *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in the Fifties*, a compilation of autobiographical essays, is typical of this genre: less a portrait of a generation than a portrait of a small subset of a generation, girls who passed their eleven-plus and grew up to be London-based writers and second-wave feminists. One can understand the focus on this transformational narrative, with the drama of passing the 11+ at its heart, and the fact that the same tropes are repeated again and again does not make them less true. What they are not is 'typical'. More children failed their eleven-plus or their 'qualy' than passed it, just as far more British children were not evacuated than were. But change, drama and event traditionally make more compelling historical studies than relative stasis, and in the case of the scholarship children, created adults for whom articulate self-expression was their stock-in-trade. No wonder there are so many published autobiographies on this theme.

Part of the purpose of Heron's *Truth, Dare or Promise* was to examine what it was about their experience of girlhood that created a generation of feminists: as Hendrick would say, looking at childhood as a process of becoming rather than of being. There are several other singular feminist autobiographies which take this notion of the examined life to more depth. Carolyn Steedman's *Landscape For a Good Woman* is much referenced because of the way it drew out generality from the particularity of one childhood, her own in the 1950s 'ordinary' South London of Streatham Hill.[62] She clearly articulated the sense of specialness

[60] Julia Pascal, 'Prima Ballerina Assulata' in *Truth, Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up In The Fifties,* ed. Liz Heron (London, 1985), pp. 30-42, p. 32.
[61] Paterson, 'Schools and Schooling', p. 567.
[62] Carolyn Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman* (London, 1986) [hereafter Steedman, *Landscape*].

of that generation, partly given by the welfare state: 'I think I would be a very different person now if orange juice, and milk and dinners at school hadn't told me, in a covert way, that I had a right to exist, was worth something.'[63]

Interestingly, despite the reference to 'landscape' in the title of the book, not much is made of Steedman's own childish independence and freedom of movement outside the home, presumably because it did not seem remarkable to her either at the time, or at the time of writing (1986). Where it is mentioned is in the context of the strictures and obligations imposed on her both within and without the home:

> At six I was old enough to go on errands, at seven to go further to pay the rent and the rates, go on the long dreary walk to the Co-op for the divi. By eight I was old enough to clean the house and do the weekend shopping. At eleven it was understood that I washed the breakfast things, lit the fire in the winter and scrubbed the kitchen floor before I started my homework. At fifteen, when I could legally go out to work, I got a Saturday job which paid for my clothes.[64]

The cultural critic Annette Kuhn also interrogated her own childhood with a view to drawing out the general from the particular. Like other feminist autobiographies of the same era, *Family Secrets* put an emphasis on the significance of both class and gender, the exclusion of the experiences of the 'scholarship girl' from the working-class-made-good narrative of Hoggart, and a tense relationship with her mother, exacerbated by the class transformation brought about by her grammar school education.[65] The theme underlying the works of Hoggart, Kuhn, Steedman et al is class, made vivid by the process of class transformation the writer has undergone. As Kuhn expressed it:

> Class is something beneath your clothes, under your skin, in your reflexes, in your psyche, at the very core of your being. … Working class children of my generation who, against the odds, got a selective grammar school education learned this lesson every time they put on their grammar-school uniforms.[66]

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[63] Steedman, *Landscape*, p. 60.
[64] Steedman, *Landscape*, p. 43.
[65] Annette Kuhn, *Family Secrets: Acts of Memory and Imagination* (London, 1995) [hereafter Kuhn, *Family Secrets*].
[66] Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, p. 98.

Class and its impact on childhood have also been tackled head-on by various writers, including Jeremy Seabrook in his oral history of working-class childhood.[67] Seabrook set out to write it in the shadow of the 1981 riots to explain 'why a generation which has been given the best of everything, nevertheless too often feels cheated, purposeless and confused.'[68] His argument was that the rise of consumerism which played a significant role in the accounts of Steedman and Kuhn had had a devastating effect on working-class children and the kinds of adults they grew up to be. The book was published in the same year as Postman's *Disappearance of Childhood* and shares similarities in its despairing tone. Seabrook argued that the rise of the market place was seized upon by working-class parents who wanted to give their children what they had not had and in so doing vindicate their own increasingly difficult lives. This led to the child's bedroom becoming a kind of shrine to consumerism and the children themselves losing a sense of purpose, achievement and work ethic which had culminated in a restless consumer-driven nihilism. 'Parents have thrown their children to the market place and hoped for the best; and when it is too late they see they might as well have thrown them to the wolves.'[69]

The child's bedroom – in particular the girl's bedroom – had come into further focus in the 1970s when Angela McRobbie and Jenny Garner went in search of the missing girls, who seemed to be only marginally present in the various examinations of youth sub-cultures. They discovered them in their bedrooms, 'experimenting with make-up, listening to records, reading the mags … even if the room was uneasily shared with an older sister.' [70] Since this uncovering of the 'culture of the bedroom', bedroom culture has become the focus of a considerable amount of sociological research and writing.[71] Important in itself as a place for the formation and demonstration of identity, often through consumption, the

[67] Jeremy Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood: An Oral History* (London, 1982) [hereafter Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood*]. See also Steve Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels: An Oral History of Working-Class Childhood* 1889-1939 (London, 1997) [hereafter Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels*]; Simon Gunn and Rachel Bell, *Middle Classes: Their Rise and Sprawl* (London, 2002).
[68] Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood*, foreword, no pagination.
[69] Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood,* p. 16.
[70] A. McRobbie and J. Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures' in *Resistance through Rituals: Youth Subcultures in Post-war Britain*, eds Stuart Hall and Tony Jefferson (London, 1975), pp. 209-223 [hereafter McRobbie and Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures'], p. 181.
[71] See Sian Lincoln, 'Bedroom Culture: A Review of Research', in *Space, Place and Environment: Space, Place and Young People, vol. 3*, eds Karen Nairn, Peter Kraftl, Tracey Skelton (Singapore, 2016). Text at https://doi.org/10.1007/978-981-4585-90-3_7-1.

child's bedroom has also become a useful benchmark for the changing place and role of the child within the home and family.

While a number of historians have looked at the experiences of children in a spacial context, much of the theoretical framework for understanding how children experience space and place comes from a considerable body of work by geographers and child development specialists. What has been generally established is that children naturally and consistently develop an understanding of route-finding and mapping: as one writer put it, 'the child is a geographer.'[72] Also well-established is that children rapidly develop a strong sense of place and an attachment to their home area, sometimes referred to as topophilia. M.H. Matthews summed up the cumulative argument of this work as showing that children 'have a strong affective sense of the world around them. Their views on place and space are coloured by emotions and feelings.'[73]

The influential geographer David Sibley added psychoanalytical theory to these concepts from geographers to study what he called 'children in social space' and the boundaries they encounter. For him, 'the way in which families structure space and time in the home are crucial issues.'[74] The boundaries are temporal as well as spacial, the delineation of playtime and mealtime as important as whether the living-room is a place for adults or children. Home is a place where children are subject to controls by parents over use of space and time and battles over this control may occur both inside and outside the home, for instance when walking to school with friends.

Despite this wealth of research by sociologists and geographers as well as historians, the study of childhood continues to present unusual methodological differences, as Joseph Hawes and Ray Hiner pointed out in their article in the inaugural edition of the first journal dedicated to this field of history.[75] Recently more attention has been paid to the 'central methodological problem' of this branch of history: 'how do we understand the perspective of children in the past and not just the adults who so often defined and constrained the

[72] S.J. Catling, 'The Child is a Geographer: Criteria for Geographical Content in the Primary School Curriculum', in *A Case for Geography,* eds Patrick Bailey and Tony Binns (Sheffield, 1987) quoted in M. H. Matthews, *Making Sense of Place: Children's Understanding of Large-Scale Environments* (Hemel Hempstead, 1992) [hereafter Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*], p. 236.
[73] Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*, p. 204.
[74] David Sibley, 'Families and Domestic Routines: Constructing the Boundaries of Childhood' in *Mapping the Subject: Geographies of Cultural Transformation,* eds Steve Pile and Nigel Thrift (London, 1995), pp. 123-137 [hereafter Sibley, 'Families and Domestic Routines'], p. 128.
[75] Hawes and Hiner, 'Hidden in Plain View'.

parameters of youthful lives.'[76] This focus has led to a re-interrogation of the possibilities of familiar archival and written source material to produce a more child-centred history by reading them 'against the grain', often by changing the question which the historian is seeking to answer.[77] A conference on childhood and emotions in 2012 elicited over 200 submissions of papers and resulted in a collection of essays which attempted to open up new ways of uncovering children's voices.[78] Jane Hamlett, for instance, used institutional records alongside written material generated by children, to study boarding-school life in Victorian England, and in particular to look at the relationship between the space of the dormitory and the emotional experiences of the children who slept there.[79] Claire Langhamer and Hester Baron have recently used a collection of over one thousand children's school essays, collected by Mass Observation in the late 1930s, to produce a study of children's emotional history and relationships in this period.[80] Historians and sociologists in the late twentieth-century, like Seabrook, Toynbee and Jamieson and Abrams among others, had already used either oral history or solicited written recollections to bring adult remembrances of childhood into their histories. Recently, however, the potential of oral history to uncover 'authentic experience' has once again come to the fore, sloughing off some of the theoretical post-modern concerns about the impossibility of finding 'truth' in the face of the ethical demand to recognise the reality of lived experience, particularly that of adult survivors of childhood trauma from the most marginalised communities.[81]

There has also been a renewed attempt to find ways of using less conventional sources through which to bring children's voices into their history. Gabriel Moshenska has recently made effective use of children's material culture to illuminate British children's experiences of the Second World War.[82] War has also provided the historical context for the use of children's drawings as a source material. Building on Nicholas Stargardt's work in the 1990s, Manon Pignot has used children's drawings to explore French, Russian and German

[76] Musgrove et al., 'Hearing Children's Voices', p. 2.
[77] Musgrove et al., 'Hearing Children's Voices', p. 13, quoting from Kristen Alexander, 'Can the Girl Guide Speak? The Perils and Pleasures of Looking for Children's Voices in Archival Research', in J*eunesse: Young People, Texts, Cultures* 4, no. 1 (2012), pp. 132-154.
[78] Stephanie Olsen, ed., *Childhood, Youth and Emotions in Modern History: National, Colonial and Global Perspectives* (London, 2015) [hereafter Olsen, *Childhood, Youth and Emotions*], p. 2.
[79] Jane Hamlett, 'Space and Emotional Experience in Victorian and Edwardian English Public School Dormitories' in Olsen, *Childhood, Youth and Emotions,* pp. 119-138.
[80] Baron and Langhamer, 'Feeling through Practice', pp. 101-123.
[81] Musgrove et al, 'Hearing Children's Voices', p. 10.
[82] Gabriel Moshenska, *Material Cultures of Children in Second World War Britain* (London, 2019).

children's experiences of war, while Carolyn Kay also explores the responses of German children in an article published in 2021.[83] There is, in short, increasing agreement that, despite the methodological challenges, bringing children's voices into their history is an 'ethical imperative'.[84]

However, the history of modern childhood in Scotland as a distinct experience is an uncluttered field: while the broader British histories and contemporary analyses provide context for it, those works draw on almost entirely English sources (with the exception of Jackson and Bartie who compare Dundee to Manchester).[85] Nonetheless, two studies, both written in the 1990s and using some form of oral history, tackled aspects of the experience of growing up in twentieth-century Scotland and both drew attention to the importance of the rural experience in understanding Scottish attitudes to childhood.

Lynn Abrams' powerful *Orphan Country* examined the experiences of children in care in Scotland from 1845 to the present day, and attempted to adopt a child-centred approach to the history. By incorporating oral history interviews with and reminiscences (written in response to her request) of adults who had been in care as children, alongside her analysis based on written institutional and other records, the history compellingly captured something of what the experience felt like for the child; and in particular, the sense of difference engendered by small details. Ian, who was boarded out on Tiree, recalled: 'I remember well you'd get long trousers that reached well down past your knees … they looked awful those trousers. The other boys in school had neat, short trousers and that was a pointer you know that these lads weren't the same as people's own sons.'[86]

Abrams argued that the Scottish experience of childhood differed from a wider British experience because the rapid rate of urbanisation in Scotland created more extreme poverty and overcrowding than were seen in England and elsewhere. The Scottish system of care for children from broken homes also differed from that in England because it reflected a distinct cultural attitude to the value of a country childhood. In Scotland, children of the urban poor in need of state help were boarded out to crofting families across the Highlands

[83] Manon Pignot, transl. David Pickering, 'Drawing the Great War: Children's Representations of War and Violence in France, Russia and Germany', in *War and Childhood in the Era of the Two World Wars,* eds Mischa Honeck and James Marten (Cambridge, 2019), pp. 170-188; Carolyn Kay, 'German Children's Art during World War I' in *Global Studies of Childhood,* 11, no. 2 (2021), pp. 195–212 [hereafter Kay, 'German Children's Art'].
[84] Musgrove et al., 'Hearing Children's Voices', p. 20.
[85] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth.*
[86] Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 56.

and Western Isles. As she stated, 'the image of the rural crofting or farming family – independent, hardworking, moral, sober and untainted by urban vice – dominated Scottish child welfare policy and practice right up until World War Two.'[87] Arguably this was public policy inspired by the Romantic ideal of childhood, filtered through Presbyterianism.

In *Country Bairns,* Lynn Jamieson and Claire Toynbee examined the experiences of children growing up in Scottish crofting or farming families from 1900 to 1930, interviewing forty-five people about their memories of childhood and youth, and presenting seven of the interviews as lengthy transcripts. The version of childhood thus revealed is surprisingly close to that envisioned by the local authorities who sent children to be boarded out in such homes, with hard-working children keeping silent at mealtimes, and respecting their parents who 'worked hard fir to keep us a' going.'[88] Jamieson and Toynbee argued that these children 'had no childhood in the sense that we use that word today – as a particular special time free from the responsibilities of adulthood, deserving tolerance and indulgence from adults, and allowing time to develop one's potential as an individual.'[89]

While these two histories of twentieth-century Scottish childhood are unusual in a British historiographical context in the attention paid to rural childhoods, this rural emphasis is not true of the rich collection of Scottish autobiography and memoir. The dominant stories in Scotland tend neither to be those of wartime evacuation nor of the scholarship child but rather of urban deprivation and hardship, often either overlaid with a warm glow of nostalgia or overshadowed by a violent father. While Glasgow has produced a significant number of such memoirs, Dundee has produced what would seem to be a disproportionate number – testament perhaps to the strong and distinct sense of identity found in the city.[90] These autobiographies offer clues as to some key themes of the remembered experience of Scottish childhood: poverty, playing in and outside the home,

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[87] Abrams, *Orphan Country,* p. 247.
[88] Lynn Jamieson and Claire Toynbee, *Country Bairns: Growing Up, 1900-1930* (Edinburgh, 1992) [hereafter Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*], p. 97.
[89] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. 166.
[90] Glasgow autobiographies include Ralph Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals* (London, 1986) [hereafter Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals]*; Meg Henderson, *Finding Peggy* (London, 1994); and Molly Weir, *Shoes Were for Sunday* (London, 1970) [hereafter Weir, *Shoes Were for Sunday*]. For Dundee-based autobiographies see Chapter Four. Examples of the 'warm glow' school include autobiographical series by Mae Stewart and Maureen Reynolds, while brutal fathers figure in Alan Cumming's account of a rural childhood near Dundee in *Not My Father's Son: A Family Memoir* (London, 2014) and in Charlie Mitchell's *The Nipper: The Heartbreaking True Story of a Little Boy and his Violent Childhood in Working-Class Dundee* (London, 2008) [hereafter Mitchell, *The Nipper*].

family, work, going to church and corporal punishment amongst them. Many of these themes are also reflected in a BBC television series on twentieth-century Scottish childhood that I produced during the course of researching this thesis, recording interviews with a wide range of contributors and drawing extensively on film and photographic archive.[91] The structure of the series reflected popular contemporary concerns around childhood, so that one episode examined welfare issues, a second looked at education and the third examined the changing boundaries of childhood, both inside and outside the home.

OBJECTIVES AND RESEARCH QUESTIONS

As we have seen, there is a pervasive contemporary debate about the experiences of children in twenty-first century Britain which revolves around a number of concerns, significant among which is the loss of children's 'freedom' to travel and play independently outside the home. This debate is as pervasive in the Scottish media as it is in the British press and is also reflected also in the historiography, in particular Thomson's *Lost Freedom*. This decline in children's independent mobility and presence in public space without supervising adults has been identified as occurring since the 1970s and there is much anxiety about the effect this loss may have upon children.

However, there is a core piece of information missing: we have very little understanding of what it was actually like to be a child in mid-twentieth century Britain, before this change occurred. While one could hardly claim that the experience of the scholarship child or the evacuee has not been heard, the experience of growing up in Scotland, the countryside or the suburbs has been little examined, and the impact of class upon these experiences is also little discussed except where class was subject to change over the life course. Thomson acknowledges that he concentrates on how academic disciplines, professions and administrators came to understand the child's view of the world rather than using narratives of children themselves to construct a history of how children viewed and experienced their landscape, and he emphasises that such an enterprise would be valuable if tricky.[92] He also points out that his focus is on the urban landscape, and that

[91] *Growing Up In Scotland: A Century of Childhood* [three-part TV series], produced by Rachel Bell, directed by Andy Twaddle, Laura Mitchell and Liam McArthy, BBC2 Scotland, 2017.
[92] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, pp. 9-10.

there is scope for 'more nuanced, comparative regional studies that highlight different types of urban, suburban or rural landscapes.'[93]

What follows is an attempt to fill this gap: to establish a child-centred history of how twentieth-century Scottish children saw the world around them and understood their place in it. The central conceptual framework is the understanding, drawn from the work of Lefebvre and others, that space is a social product, that it is a tool of control and power and that this control is closely linked with other temporal and behavioural boundaries.[94] The notion of boundaries is of particular relevance to children because it is through rules and boundaries that children learn to fit into the adult world, and it is clearly of especial relevance in a debate around how much children were allowed or expected to travel independently or play unsupervised outside. What were the boundaries as actually experienced by children? And what did this 'freedom' look and feel like?

The need is for specifics rather than generalities: an understanding of children's experiences that allows for nuances of place and differing environments. Were the boundaries experienced by rural children different from those in small towns, the suburbs or the inner-city? In what ways did different landscapes, families, or economic structures impact upon the rules and boundaries applied to children? There is also an intimate relationship between children's experiences within the home and those outside: it makes no sense to study one without the other because conditions within the home may well have a direct impact on much of the nature and purpose of time spent outside. As Sibley pointed out, home is a place where children are subject to controls by parents over use of space and time and battles over this control occur both inside and outside the home. Furthermore, it is possible that there is a link between the improvement in housing conditions in Scotland over this period and the change in the way children used – or were permitted to use – public space. I have therefore also examined children's domestic experiences in this context: what was the relationship between a child's domestic life and their experiences and boundaries outside?

Finally, if one is to produce a child-centred account of children's experiences, it is necessary to listen to the 'whispers and muted articulations' in the oral history that may deliver what the children themselves felt were the significant boundaries and restrictions

[93] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 5.
[94] Lefebvre, *Production of Space,* p. 26

placed upon them, even if these do not match what the adult analyst may think is important.[95] Children's own drawings offer a contemporaneous insight into how they saw and understood the world around them and the boundaries which applied. These also include the boundaries that distinguish what is to be a child as opposed to an adult: where did this crucial but always permeable divide lie? In other words, what was it actually like to be a child in Scotland at this time?

[95] Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society,* p. 3.

CHAPTER TWO: METHODOLOGY AND SOURCES

As Simon Gunn, drawing inspiration from E.P. Thompson, has explained, 'method is not just the technique, but "the way the whole problem is seen."'[96] In this case, the specific problem is how to retrieve and understand the experiences of children in mid-twentieth century Scotland from their own point of view, with particular regard to the question of the boundaries which applied to their independent mobility - that is, where they could go or play without adult supervision. As discussed, the question of methodology is particularly acute for the study of children's experiences in the past because of the challenges of recovering children's voices from archival and other sources. The methodology I have adopted is therefore multi-layered, using a number of different sources and drawing inspiration from the methodologies of other relevant disciplines, tempered by historical pragmatism.

1. CASE STUDIES

In his recent comprehensive study of Scotland's demographic history, Michael Anderson argued that Scotland's history should be seen as one of 'many different Scotlands', with differences of demography, topography and economy intertwining to create distinct cultural and social variations across the country.[97] In particular, in order to investigate the boundaries of childhood, the variations in the kind of spaces in which children grew up – in terms of their homes and the outdoor space around them – are likely to be of significance, along with familial, social, cultural and economic differences. I have therefore chosen to look at three communities which reflect a distinct range of circumstances.

The map (see Figure 2) shows the locations of the three case studies along with their relative population levels in 1931. Glen Esk was then and is now a rural community whose only school was at the settlement of Tarfside, half-way up the Glen and less than twenty miles from Brechin. Much of Glen Esk is coloured white on the map and described by the Ordnance Survey as 'virtually uninhabited.' Brechin was a compact market and mill town

[96] Simon Gunn and Lucy Faire, *Research Methods for History* (Edinburgh, 2011) [hereafter Gunn and Faire, *Research Methods*], p. 4.
[97] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. V.

forty miles north of Dundee with a population of around 8,000, described as 'urban'; Dundee was then (as it also is now) Scotland's fourth largest city, with a population density of over 25,000 per square mile, described as 'dense urban' by the Ordnance Survey.[98] The contrasts between the three are significant but not absolute: Scotland is after all a small country. The communities shared a language, an education system and a degree of proximity: the population of Glen Esk and Brechin on occasion shopped in Dundee, and the people of Dundee and Brechin took day trips up the Glen. Nonetheless, the experiences of the children in each community were distinct and the differing nature of the communities, both physically and economically, was of great significance in forming the children's experiences.

These three communities also offer a rough representation of the shifting balance of the Scottish population during the twentieth century, a shift which Anderson argues can only be understood within a longer-term context. At a country-wide level, the parts of Scotland which were densely populated in 1801 had become even more so by 2001, while those which were thinly populated in 1801 had become even sparser. In 1801, around a quarter of the population lived in areas where there were only four households per square km, around 430,000 people. By 2001, about 325,000 people lived in areas of low-density: while that is a drop of only 100,000 people it represents a percentage drop in the proportion of the total population from over 25% to 6.4%.[99] Much of this proportional and absolute decline occurred in the nineteenth century due in part to rapid industrialisation and urbanisation: by 1851 Scotland was already one of the most industrialised countries in Europe. In that same year, a quarter of Scotland's workers were employed in agriculture, forestry or fishing; by 1931 only ten percent of the population was working in these rural industries. The decline continued so that in 1951 it was just 7.4%.[100] The history of Glen Esk reflects this national pattern.

A significant contrast with England lies in the relative height and type of Scotland's topography such that only around 11% of the land is suitable for intensive agrarian use,

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[98] For map descriptions see Ordnance Survey, *Ten Mile Planning Maps. Sheet 1 – Population Density* (1944), scale 1/ 625,000. https://maps.nls.uk/view/91544094, accessed 25 March, 2022. For Brechin population see F.A. Ferguson and R.S. Gordon, 'The Burgh and Parish of Brechin', in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977), pp. 264-283 [hereafter Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin'], p. 265.

[99] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations,* pp. 49-53.

[100] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations,* p. 28-29.

compared to England's 28%, but rather more – around 63% in Scotland compared to England's 13% - is suitable for less labour-intensive rough grazing and sporting estates, such as the terrain in Glen Esk. This less intensive style of farming or land management often brings with it a particular family and labour structure which impacts upon children.[101] Whilst the experiences of the children of Glen Esk therefore reflect that of a decreasing minority of the population, it was an experience shared by children growing up across a sizeable swathe of the country and furthermore reflects a type of childhood that was considered culturally important.

In contrast, by 1951 nearly two-fifths of the country's population lived in one of the four principal cities of Glasgow, Edinburgh, Aberdeen and Dundee. Furthermore, a study of the children of Dundee offers access not only to inner-city childhoods but also to one of the most significant demographic shifts in twentieth-century Scotland, the move from crowded central areas to new local authority housing schemes on the edge of the city.[102] Meanwhile, while small-town life has been much less studied than that of either the countryside or the city, it was experienced by a sizeable number of the country's children, with market towns like Brechin remaining a place of continued economic and cultural significance as the rural population contracted and the rate of population growth in the four big cities slowed. Anderson emphasises 'the important economic and cultural role of Scotland's many small towns' in this period and points out that in 1951 nearly 70% of the population lived in a burgh of more than 5,000 people, while a further 14% lived in communities of between one thousand and five thousand in size.[103]

[101] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, pp. 19-21.
[102] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, pp. 35-36.
[103] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, pp. 96-97. In 1951, 83% of the population lived in settlements larger than 1,000 people; and 69% of them in places greater than 5,000.

Figure 2: Ordnance Survey, *Ten Mile Planning Maps. Sheet 1 - Population Density* (1944). Scale 1/625,000. Population density based on the 1931 census. CC-BY, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland. Circles highlight the three locations, north to south: Glen Esk, Brechin and Dundee.

In order to make sense of the experiences of children in the case-study areas a significant number of local written and archival sources were needed, to support the oral history evidence and to cast light onto specific local situations. Some of these were found in national archives, such as the National Records of Scotland; others in local archives in Angus and Dundee. Some however had not found their way into official collections and were uncovered closer to home. Glen Esk is in the unusual position of having its own museum: however, many of the holdings are uncatalogued and much of the material relating to children and the school is not on display. I am indebted to the voluntary curatorial staff for uncovering some vital material for me, including a collection of children's drawings which has proved a fruitful source. Brechin too has a museum and a weekly local newspaper, historical copies of which are held at the local library. The school logbooks and material relating to the recent history of Brechin High School are also uncatalogued and held in the Head Teacher's office. Again, I am grateful to the school for their help in retrieving this valuable material. I also made much use of a private collection of childhood drawings and

diaries belonging to one of the oral history contributors, Colin McLeod, who grew up in Dundee. It is unusual for materials created by children to be preserved: I am grateful to Colin McLeod for preserving his and for sharing it with me.

The case-study approach would not have worked without this detailed local information and source material: the amount I was able to retrieve and use is testimony to an approach which allowed for the social scientist John Law's quest to 'imagine what research methods might be if they were adapted to a world that included and knew itself as tide, flux and general unpredictability.'[104]

2. ORAL HISTORY

Oral history offers the unique possibility to historians of creating their own primary sources, and is particularly valuable for subjects and people whose experiences are hard to retrieve in archival sources. I have undertaken extensive oral history interviews with twenty-five people who spent their childhoods in the three identified case-study areas. Given the dearth of research on Scottish childhoods generally the decision was made to focus on place, age cohort, gender, religion and social class as key variables for investigation. Within each case study, I have therefore balanced for gender and birth-date, with the proviso that the need for contributors born in the 1920s and 1930s has led to slightly more female interviewees than male. For Glen Esk I interviewed five contributors, three women and two men, with birth dates ranging from 1931 to 1961. For Brechin, I interviewed nine people, five women and four men, born between 1928 and 1959. For Dundee, I interviewed eleven contributors, born between 1925 and 1960, of whom five were men and six were women. The number of participants in each case study roughly reflects the relative population levels of the community in which they grew up, given the addition of a considerable amount of published autobiographical accounts of childhood from Dundee, while allowing for sufficient contributors from Glen Esk to give a picture of the rural experience.

Within each case-study group, I have also endeavoured to achieve an approximate representative reflection of class based on parental occupations: details of parents' occupations are included in the brief biographical list of contributors in Appendix One. The 1951 Census in Scotland was the first one to collate figures for social class, based on a five-

[104] John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (Oxford, 2004), p. 2 quoted in Gunn and Faire, *Research Methods*, p. 3.

fold division of male occupations, and for Angus we also have the advantage of an extra census in 1966.[105] These have allowed me to gauge a rough balance for each case-study area and the class and occupational breakdown of the contributors' parents in the context of their communities is discussed in each of the relevant chapters.

Furthermore, for the Dundee case study, because of the nature of the city's history and society, I have also balanced the contributors for Protestantism and Catholicism. In the 1950s around one-fifth of the city's population identified as Roman Catholic, while one in every three primary schools was an RC school: of the eleven Dundee contributors, three were raised Catholic, and a fourth had a Catholic mother but was raised as a Protestant.[106] In Glen Esk and Brechin, where the Catholic population was not sizeable enough to warrant an RC School, all the contributors came from Protestant backgrounds. In all three case-study areas, all the contributors were white Scottish. In order to discuss the variables of place, age cohort, gender, class and religion fully it was decided not to include children of colour or other minority backgrounds since this was likely to be both tokenistic and unrepresentative.[107] Their experiences would merit a separate, dedicated study.

I set out to identify the oral history contributors in each area using the 'snowball' technique: that is, using one interviewee to lead me however tenuously to others, precisely because I wanted accounts that partially overlapped and could therefore act as checks and balances on each other. This worked well in Glen Esk and Brechin, small communities where people remained in contact with others of varying ages and backgrounds from their childhood community. In Dundee, I had to take a number of different approaches in order to garner a wide enough range of contributors of different age cohorts, gender, faith and class background. Whilst some came using the snowball approach, I recruited others through the Abertay Historical Society and three of the oldest through contacting the warden of a sheltered housing complex. All the participants from each area share one self-

[105] J.A.V. Collett, 'Population and Employment', *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977), pp. 47-57 [hereafter Collett, 'Population and Employment'], p. 54.
[106] Hester Henderson, 'Religious Life' in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. Joseph M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 632- 677 [hereafter Henderson, 'Religious Life'], p. 647. In 1964 there were 16 Roman Catholic Infant and Primary schools, and 30 non-denominational schools. Ian Cowie, 'Education', in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee*, ed. Joseph M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 427-458 [hereafter Cowie, 'Education'], p. 433.
[107] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 148. The 1991 Census was the first to ask a question on ethnicity; before this date place of birth is the only guide, albeit clearly an unreliable one. The 1961 census reports 0.01% of the population born in Jamaica, 0.02% from Pakistan and 0.16% from India and some of these are likely to be themselves children of earlier white emigrants. This population was concentrated in the Central Belt.

selecting common factor: while some were no longer living in their original area, they have all either remained living in Scotland or have returned here to live in older age. (One had moved back from Canada, others from less far afield in England.) This may perhaps eliminate the most adventurous or the most de-racinated, but was nonetheless necessary for practical reasons as I wished to conduct my interviews face-to-face.

I made telephone or email contact with each contributor in advance, sending them a brief outline of the research which purposefully did not raise questions of boundaries, freedom or change. Any discussion before the interview was of a limited nature to avoid pre-setting an agenda and influencing answers. The interviews themselves were semi-structured: the questions followed a set pattern but were not rigid because I needed to be able to respond to the answers I received. (Appendix Two contains an outline of the questions asked). The interviews were in-depth, qualitative research: in all cases lasting over ninety minutes, with many running to over two hours. They were largely conducted at the contributor's home or in some other comfortable and private setting. In many cases, the interview was then followed up by further correspondence either because the contributor had remembered something they wished to tell me or because I wished to double-check the details of something we had discussed. In most cases, the contributor also shared family photographs or memorabilia with me.

Furthermore, I interviewed two of the participants twice in order to discuss other visual material with them. One of these contributors was Sandra Guthrie from Glen Esk who I interviewed once as straight oral history and again some months later while we looked together at the collection of children's drawings and scrapbooks which had been created during her time as a pupil at the primary school in the Glen. The other participant I interviewed twice was Colin McLeod from Dundee, once as straight oral history and once two months later while examining with him his drawings and diaries from primary school. (More details of these second interviews are given in Chapter Five). All the interviews were then transcribed and I largely worked from the transcripts, returning to listen to the original recordings when questions of interpretation or tone arose.

Oral history has a well-established if sometimes contested methodology. While after the Second World War, it began to re-emerge as a valid form of evidence-gathering by historians, for social investigators, anthropologists and folklorists it had never gone away. Although the Columbia Project (1948) which interviewed white, male elites was among the

first of this new generation of oral histories, the methodology was rapidly associated with a kind of 'recovery history.' It was eagerly embraced by some historians, many with an avowed left-wing bent, for its potential to uncover 'hidden history', to reveal events which could not be uncovered in conventional sources, and to tell the histories of groups of people whose stories were not recorded in mainstream accounts.[108] It could perhaps, in Michael Frisch's memorable words, 'swing the flashlight of history into a significant, much neglected and previously unknowable corner of the attic.'[109]

The rise of oral history was much resisted by many professional historians. AJP Taylor's view pithily encapsulated one reason why: 'In this matter I am an almost total sceptic …Old men drooling about their youth. No'.[110] Early critics were particularly anxious about the bias inherent in the form, but in some ways this proved a relatively easy criticism to bat away. As Thompson convincingly argued, there is of course bias – in the questions asked, in the choice of who is spoken to, in the self-interest of the subject of the interview - but no more than is inherent in any form of historical source. And, unlike almost any other form of historical evidence, if in doubt about a piece of testimony one can always ask another question. What is vital, as with all forms of evidence, is that the oral history accounts are checked both for internal consistency and against other sources if they are used to deduce factual information.

The unreliability of memory was for those first critics the other major problem with oral history. Oral historians' defence of this is two-pronged. For Thompson and others, a key point is that people's memory – including that of old people – is far better than is often assumed. Various studies have shown that there is a 'curve of forgetfulness': our memory of an event falls off sharply afterwards and from then on very gradually. The Hoffman experiment gives us an illuminating if small-scale example of this: the labour historian Alice Hoffman interviewed her husband Howard in 1978, 1982 and 1986 about his time as a mortar crewman in the Second World War. While his recollection of dates and weather conditions varied and were clearly unreliable, his narratives remained strikingly consistent

[108] The phrase 'hidden history' is associated with Sheila Rowbotham, *Hidden From History: Three Hundred Years of Women's Oppression and the Fight Against It* (London, 1973). Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (London, 2010) [hereafter Abrams, *Oral History Theory*], p. 5.
[109] Michael Frisch, 'Oral History and Hard Times: A Review Essay' in Robert Perks and Alastair Thomson, eds., *The Oral History Reader* (London, 2006), pp. 29-37 [hereafter Frisch, 'Oral History and Hard Times'], p. 32.
[110] Quoted in Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past* (Oxford, 1978) [hereafter Thompson, *Voice of the Past*], p. 62.

over the years. The Hoffmans concluded that 'certain memories can be so resistant to deterioration with time that they are best described as archival.'[111] In particular, studies have shown we remember that which is important to us, whether people or skills, and that which we did most often. Our memory for family and friends, for the routines of work and home, generally remains good up until senility. The findings of the oral history interviews for this study bear this out, including a tendency for female interviewees to remember far more about long-ago domestic arrangements than the men, presumably because they were more important to them.

There are however particular situations where our memories are likely to fail us, among which are events which triggered strong emotion. Abrams quotes the example of a woman talking about losing her mother at the age of eight, and being taken into care: 'I suppose you are unhappy but you just don't remember very much about it.' [112] As W. James has said: 'we can remember that we underwent grief or rapture but not just how the grief or rapture felt.'[113] Traumatic events are often barely remembered, or perhaps the memories are just inexpressible: this observation was born out in the findings of the oral history interviews for this study, in particular with regard to the death of a parent.

A second defence of the vital but potentially unreliable role of memory in oral history is that part of what one is studying is memory's very fluidity and partiality. As Thompson pointed out: 'Memory therefore is part of an active social process and part of the social historian's skill … is to understand and disentangle elements of that process.' [114] Frisch argued against the idea that oral history was 'history as it really was' and asserted that memory 'personal and historical, individual and generational' should become the focus of the study. He went on to elaborate:

> By studying how experience, memory and history become combined in and digested by people who are bearers of their own history and that of their culture, oral history opens up a powerful perspective: it encourages us to stand somewhat outside of cultural forms in order

[111] Alice M Hoffman and Howard S Hoffman, 'Reliability and validity in oral history: the case for memory', reproduced at http://www3.baylor.edu./Oral_History/Hoffmans.pdf, quoted in Corinna M. Penniston-Bird, 'Oral History: The Sound of Memory' in *History Beyond the Text: A Student's Guide to Approaching Alternative Sources,* eds. Sarah Barber and Corinna M. Penniston-Bird (London, 2009), pp. 105-121, p. 120.
[112] Abrams, *Oral History Theory* (Oxford, 2010), p. 88.
[113] W. James quoted in Abrams, *Oral History Theory,* p. 95.
[114] Thompson, *Voice of the Past*, p. 109.

to observe their workings.[115]

Luisa Passerini's work further added to the potential layers of meaning to be found in what is remembered – and what is not – by oral history interviewees. Her study of the life stories of Italian workers who lived through the Fascist period highlighted the role of subjectivity in history – the conscious and unconscious meanings of experience as lived and remembered – and showed how the influence of public culture on individuals might be reflected in silences, pauses, and oddities in individual testimony.[116] For her, 'the raw material of oral history consists not just in factual statements but is pre-eminently an expression and representation of culture, and therefore includes not only literal narrations but also the dimension of memory, ideology and subconscious desires.'[117]

Much of the work of subsequent theorists has been to look further at the way in which specific memories reflect a tangled web of cultural and social discourses, alongside a variety of needs by the subject to impress, to interest, and to tell the interviewer and oneself a coherent and bearable narrative of self. For such theorists, there is a sense in which it does not matter if a memory is true: provided the interviewee thinks it is true, and we have the analytical tools at hand to unpick the meaning of the memory, we can learn from it. As mentioned earlier, more recent work has often taken a less post-modern attitude to the memories uncovered by oral history interviews, particularly in the light of the revelations contained in testimony from survivors of child-welfare institutions. As Musgrove et al. pointed out, 'an emphasis on discourse can obscure the reality of human joy and suffering in the past.'[118] Nonetheless the issues for consideration identified by Abrams' remain of concern – orality, narrative, performance, subjectivity, memory, mutability, and collaboration.[119] Memory remains the central 'weak spot': its analysis thick with possibility and heavy with expectation.

Oral history has much to offer anyone seeking to investigate childhood experiences,

[115] Frisch, 'Oral History and Hard Times', p. 40.
[116] Robert Perks and Alastair Thomson, eds, *The Oral History Reader* (London, 2006) [hereafter Perks and Thomson, *Oral History Reader*], p. 3.
[117] Luisa Passerini, 'Work, Ideology and Concensus under Italian Fascism', extract from *History Workshop,* 8 (1979) pp. 84-92, in Perks and Thomson, *Oral History Reader,* pp. 53-62, p. 54.
[118] Musgrove, Pascoe Leahy and Moruzi, 'Hearing Children's Voices', p. 8.
[119] Abrams, *Oral History Theory*.

as the work of Thompson, Abrams and many others has demonstrated.[120] It may not be a perfect source but it is far better than no source at all. Hilary Young and Selina Todd's essay on the relationship between working-class teenagers and their parents in the 1950s is a case in point. They used oral history evidence, based on fifty archival interviews and twenty-two original 'life histories' to show that this relationship, which had generally been characterised as confrontational, was in fact often supportive, with working-class parents eager to see their children enjoy a freedom and prosperity they did not have themselves. They acknowledged problems with their oral history evidence – in particular the relatively small sample size – and because of this explicitly set out to offer only conclusions backed up by other evidence, and I have followed their example. However, the essay also highlighted the strengths of the oral history material, such as its ability to offer insights into intimate experiences like the details of family life and relationships between parents and children which one would struggle to find in any other sources. It was their oral history evidence which allowed them to challenge convincingly the standard historical argument.[121]

Frances Williams' PhD thesis on the experience of Jewish children brought by Kindertransport to Scotland, based on archival material, existing autobiographical accounts, a questionnaire and thirty oral history interviews, is another demonstration of how oral history can allow 'something of the child's authentic voice to reach us.'[122] Here, one feels something of the complex emotions the children experienced, as when one woman described the importance of the friendship groups she had as a girl: 'we nurtured ourselves, we comforted ourselves … we were a clique within ourselves, the girls who lived in that room.'[123] The rich detail Williams obtained of the Kindertransportees' experiences and the information about their life stories allowed her to argue for a much more complex understanding of the experience: no longer just a tale of gratitude to Britain or a story of Jewish victimhood, but a picture more akin to that of children in care, and a struggle for self-

[120] Other examples include Hilary Young, 'Representation and Reception: An Oral History of Gender in British Children's Story Papers, Comics and Magazines in the 1940s and 1950s' (PhD Dissertation, Strathclyde University, 2006); there are a number of oral histories of children in care including Planned Environment Therapeutic Trust, *Therapeutic Living With Other People's Children* (Cheltenham, 2011); Humphries, *Hooligans or Rebels.*

[121] Hilary Young and Selina Todd, 'Babyboomers to Beanstalkers: Making the Modern Teenager in Postwar Britain', *Cultural and Social History,* 9, no. 3 (2012), pp. 451-467.

[122] Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society,* p. 3.

[123] Frances Williams, 'A Kindertransport to Scotland: Reception, Care and Resettlement' (PhD Dissertation, Edinburgh, 2012), p. 288.

identity strongly influenced by the overall life story.

There are however numerous aspects which make the examination of childhood experiences particularly challenging for the oral historian. First and most fundamentally, while childhood is a phase of life defined by what it is not – adult – recollections of it 'suffer from the handicap that all these children have since acquired an adult perspective, a handicap which is not shared by an investigator of conflicts between the sexes or social classes.'[124] In other words, the person recounting the memory has changed sides in the interim and it is partly for this reason that I wished to use children's drawings as well as oral history. Secondly, during childhood one is constantly changing and it is thus a fragmented experience. As one contributor to a history of evacuation wrote: 'Recollected memories of childhood don't seem to be time related. They are not sequential, nor are they continuous. They seem to be more in the way of kaleidoscopic images, vivid images that leap unbidden into the mind's eye.'[125]

Furthermore, recollections of childhood are often particularly charged. In the words of Simone de Beauvoir 'the reason why the emotional memories that restore childhood are so treasured is that for a fleeting instant they give us back a boundless future.'[126] However the problems that await the oral historian are greater than those of nostalgia. Childhood experiences and memories are rarely only the property of the child: most families have a set of memories and anecdotes which are told repeatedly. These, along with family photographs, are likely to fix memories in place like a kind of official history, whether or not they ever happened.

Beyond these problems are those of identity-formation. Childhood and family are understood to give us a sense of who we are, and it is therefore important to the individual that we remember them – whether we remember them accurately or not is for the historian to discern and disentangle. As Mary Warnock observed: 'the sense of personal identity that each of us has is a sense of continuity through time. We could not have this without memory, in the full sense of recollection.'[127] A common procedure now with looked-after children is the creation of a life-story book: photographs and accounts of the people and

[124] Thompson, 'War with Adults', p. 30.
[125] Welshman, *Churchill's Children*, p. 10 quoting Eileen Wilkinson.
[126] Quoted in Mary Warnock, *Memory* (London, 1987) [hereafter Warnock, *Memory*], p. 137.
[127] Warnock, *Memory*, p. 75.

events in a child's life, however painful or sad, recorded so that the child, whoever they are living with, can retain a memory of their own past.[128] This is a demonstration both of the emotional significance accorded to childhood experiences and an example of how the memories are likely to be 'fixed'.

Adding to the complexity of how retrospective accounts of childhood in oral history should be read is the problem of inter-subjectivity – the dynamic set up between the interviewee and the interviewer. This is always an issue for oral historians but may have particular relevance here. In a post-Freudian world, few now are likely to escape the sense that they have been formed by their experiences of childhood, and that what they remember of it is therefore possibly of significance – that indeed they may be judged on these memories by the oral historian interviewing them. There is also the danger that the interviewee may also reflect contemporary debates about changing childhood, whether or not this was true of their own experience. As this thesis has foregrounded in the earlier discussion, it is now a commonplace of everyday observation that present-day children have less freedom and are more pampered than in the past. It might be tempting then for an interviewee to look back and see that narrative in their own experience, and to proffer this as an observation whether or not the reality was really thus.

Despite these many potential challenges, I found the oral history testimony a fertile field. Not everyone I approached agreed to give up their time and memories to me; those I interviewed were all in some way interested either in recalling their own childhood or in the project. Perhaps because what I was researching was not one of the great tropes of childhood history – no children bombed-out from their homes, no experiences of Kindertransport – few of the interviewees seemed to have formulated a historical analysis or grand narrative of their story. Instead, they seemed open to questioning and to a conversation about what they remembered. While some memories were clearly well-rehearsed, anecdotes long polished in the telling, much of what we discussed was fresh. The great and surprising joy of oral history is that it is the only source generated at the questioning of the historian: the specificity of some areas of my questioning – how far they could go, how they knew when to come home and so on – meant few interviews passed without the participant remarking that they had not thought about the subject before. I was

[128] 'What is Thereupetic Life Story Work?' BTG Consultancy, < https://www.lifestorywork.co.uk > accessed 17 July, 2022.

surprised by how little opportunity the participants took to ruminate on how childhood had changed: rather, they generally became absorbed in recalling their own experiences.

Memory of course was fallible. The ages at which things had occurred was often a struggle to pin down. Here again, questioning helped (was it before or after you moved school/house/your mother died?). I was grateful for the corroborating effect of multiple interviewees from the same area so that a remark made by one could be checked against others. (The sound of the bells in Brechin is a good example: one interviewee vividly recalled telling the time by the cathedral bells, none of the others recalled it. This does not mean that the memory is untrue but it does make it a less useful observation). I also interviewed two pairs of siblings, albeit with sizeable age gaps: again, this provided an opportunity for cross-checking memories and circumstances, and proved helpful in showing up changes caused by differing family circumstances across time.

Inter-subjectivity certainly played a role. In the course of my professional life as a documentary-maker, I have conducted many interviews, often for not dissimilar reasons to those of the oral historian. A sense of connection between the interviewer and the interviewee draws out the richest material and makes the experience more satisfying for the participants. It helped, I think, that I lived in the same county as the interviewees and knew the area; it was also helpful that I am not young and was unlikely to be shocked or surprised by what they might recall. I therefore encouraged this friendly feeling while privately warring against the dangers of collusion. In some cases, it was hard to keep participants on the subject of childhood experiences; they were keen rather to regale me with stories of what they perceived to be their more interesting adult lives. In other cases, uncomfortable memories were uncovered: shame about poverty or a parent's behaviour or resentment at remembered unfairness. Such memories were of course useful to the research – I hope that the participants felt I dealt with them sensitively.

The oral history interviews are evidence: like all evidence they are partial, biased, obscured by other purposes and intents, and open to interpretation. Ultimately, however, they are accounts, however distorted or mis-remembered, of real people's lives. As the philosopher Paul Ricoeur wrote 'As soon as the idea of a debt to the dead, to people of flesh and blood to whom something really happened in the past, stops giving … research its

highest end, history loses its meaning.'[129]

3. USING CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS

However useful oral history is, it is always a retrospective view. Historical material generated by children can offer us something immediate, an accidental time-capsule delivering a contemporaneous insight into a child's experiences and an expression of how the world looked to the child then. In Nicholas Stargardt's words, such sources are 'particularly precious because they embed experiences and emotions in the form they were expressed at the time – not just as they were remembered later.'[130] Such material if available is a valuable source for any history which attempts to understand the experience of the child as a historical subject, what it felt like to be a child, rather than of childhood as an historical concept. Children's drawings preserved from the past can offer an insight into their experiences and most specifically into how they saw and understood the world around them. While there is much debate as to how to interpret them, it is, as the psychologist C. Crook writes, 'widely recognized that the content of children's drawings may provide insight into their feelings and thoughts about the world.'[131]

However, while using visual imagery to help understand the world of children has been part of the historiography of childhood from the very beginning – Aries drew heavily on portraits and pictures of children and more recently photographs of children in the street formed a substantial part of Thomson's argument about the post-war period – using pictures children have created themselves is far rarer. Such drawings are rarely preserved because they are seen as ephemera, of interest only to the parents of the child and often rapidly discarded. Nonetheless, for this study I have been able to identify two such collections within the identified case study areas, as discussed earlier. I have also briefly

[129] Paul Ricoeur, trans. K. Blamey and D. Pellauer, *Time and Narrative Volume Three* (Chicago, 1988), p. 118, quoted in Gunn and Faire, *Research Methods*, p. 4.
[130] Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives Under the Nazis*, (London, 2005), p. 16.
[131] C. Crook, 'Knowledge and Appearance' in *Visual Order: The Nature and Development of Pictorial Representation,* eds N.H. Freeman and M.V. Cox (Cambridge, 1985) cited in Laura Barraza, 'Children's Drawings About the Environment', *Environmental Educational Research*, 5, no. 1 (1999), pp. 49-66 [hereafter Barraza, 'Children's Drawings About the Environment'], p. 49.

used a single drawing found in the Angus archive in a collection of letters from a child who grew up in Brechin.[132]

One advantage to the use of drawings as a source rather than diaries or letters is that children tend to draw before they write at any length: diaries and letters used as historical sources are most often generated by children over the age of ten or eleven.[133] Furthermore for a study looking at the boundaries of childhood, and in particular the child's place in the spacial world, drawings may offer a specific insight because they are a visual representation of how the child sees the world, or at least that bit of the world that happens to catch his or her fancy at that moment. Like Saul Steinberg's famous *New Yorker* cover, *View of the World From Ninth Avenue,* which satirises the provincial viewpoint of a New Yorker by showing the world telescoping out from Manhattan, a child's drawing may give insight into the child's viewpoint, and what they think is important.[134]

However, the use of children's drawings by the historian poses a specific problem because there is as yet no fully-established methodology by which to interpret them. Three models offered me some sign-posting along the way: first, the work of psychologists who have used drawings as a tool to understand child development and to analyse individual children; secondly, the work of geographers and educational environmentalists who have used children's drawings and maps to help them investigate how children see and experience their world; and thirdly, the work of historian Nicholas Stargardt who has written about two sets of drawings by Jewish children during the Second World War, and used drawings along with diaries and letters as source material for his fascinating account of children's lives under the Nazis.

The idea that children's drawings can tell us something about the child and their world is an old one. The first published study of the subject dates back to the 1880s and the Italian archaeologist and art historian Corrado Ricci, who was allegedly inspired to write his

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[132] Angus Archives, MS473/3/1, Jamieson family of Brechin papers including letters from Betty (Elizabeth) Jamieson to her parents, 1929-1940 [hereafter Jamieson Family Papers], letter from Betty Jamieson to Charles Jamieson, 19 September 1931.

[133] See Anthony Fletcher, *Growing Up in England: The Experience of Childhood, 1600-1914* (New Haven and London, 2010) for a history based on young diarists who were all ten or more before they started keeping their journals. It is worth noting that the youngest of them, Lucy Lyttleton, aged ten or eleven, often included drawings alongside her writing, p. 286, as did Colin McLeod (see Chapter Five).

[134] Saul Steinberg, 'View of the World from Ninth Avenue', *New Yorker*, 29 March 1976. For a critique of the image, see Robert Hughes, *Time*, 16 May, 1999 <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,24815,00.html >, accessed 20 February 2020.

Art of Little Children by noticing a child's drawings on a wall in a covered alleyway.[135] The book coincided with a growing interest in child development and by the early twentieth-century there were a number of studies looking at how children's drawings evolve alongside their general development.[136] The most influential of these was Georges-Henri Luquet's study of his daughter Simone's drawings, which he published in 1913.[137] Luquet argued that children's drawings were based on a common internal mental model and proposed five stages of development, from scribbling as an infant which develops hand-eye co-ordination; to 'failed realism' when the scribbles become more recognisable to others; to 'symbolic realism' generally around the ages of three or four when children start bringing elements of the drawing into relationship with one another, and often draw these elements using a simple formula or schemata; to 'intellectual realism' at about the ages of five to seven when children are drawing what they know, and therefore often include what cannot be seen, such as the other side of an object; and finally to 'visual realism', generally found from about the age of eight when children become increasingly concerned to try and draw what they can actually see.[138] It is then that they begin to battle with the implications of drawing from a single viewpoint, reflecting proportions, perspective and occlusion as an object in the foreground blocks the view of something else behind it. With many amendments and much debate, this developmental breakdown still broadly stands, and is of great use to anyone studying children's drawings.

As well as this loose schema of the developmental stages of a child's drawings, the work of child psychologists and educationalists has also established some key concepts which give some safe grounding when contemplating using children's drawing as a historical source. Central to this are two related ideas: first, that a drawing has meaning to the child, and secondly that it is important to the child that others understand it. The work of Maureen Cox and others shows that, from an early age, children are concerned that what they draw should 'look right' and be identifiable.[139] A recent study has shown that children as young as three can recognise their own drawings three months after creating them, and

[135] Corrado Ricci, *L'arte dei Bambini* (Bolgna, 1887) cited in Maureen Cox, *Children's Drawings* (London, 1992) [hereafter Cox, *Children's Drawings*], pp. 1-2.
[136] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, pp. 3-4; see for example Charles Darwin, 'A Biographical Sketch of an Infant', *Mind: A Quarterly Review of Psychology and Philosophy*, 2, no. 7 (1877), cited in Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 2.
[137] G-H Luquet, *Les Dessins D'Un Enfant: Etude Psychologique* (Paris, 1913).
[138] Summation of Luquet's stages drawn from Barraza, 'Children's Drawings About the Environment', p. 50.
[139] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 4.

can remember what the intended subject was, even when they seem to another eye to be mostly scribbles.[140] Even to the very young child then, his or her drawings are not careless nothings, but have meaning. Older children's drawings are often confusing to an adult eye, drawn from a mixture of viewpoints, sometimes both from the side and above, or with the sides of a house as if folded out. However, there is a clue to the intent behind the drawing in the multiple perspectives the adult struggles with. The phrase, attributed to Luquet, is that children at this stage of 'intellectual realism' are drawing 'what they know rather than what they see' – in other words, they are drawing a concept, not an actual thing.[141] Their quest is for communication, and to help the thing be recognisable they put in key facts they know about it. Norman Freeman's cup experiment in 1972 put this to the test: children under the age of about eight, asked to draw a cup from life, would consistently put a handle on it even when the handle was hidden from their view. They could not see the handle, but by including it they increased the chances that someone else would recognise their drawing for what it was. As Cox puts it, 'young children are more concerned with depicting what an object is rather than how it happens to look.'[142]

The shift to attempting visual realism, usually around the age of eight or nine, is apparently motivated by a dissatisfaction with their own efforts, and a desire to capture the likeness of real objects.[143] The move to a single viewpoint however throws up technical challenges of perspective and occlusion which often leaves children further dissatisfied with their own drawing abilities and leads many to give up drawing at this stage.[144] It is important to understand though that this is not a linear progression. The more sophisticated understanding of Luquet's stages of progression, developed by Lowenfield and others, argues that children do not abandon old techniques as they develop new ones. Wolf pointed out that this development must be understood 'not so much as a ladder of ascending stages, but as the development of a repertoire of choices'.[145] Those children who

[140] J. Gross and H. Hayne, Young Children's Recognition and Description of their Own and Others Drawings, *Developmental Science*, 2, no.4 (1999), pp. 476-489 [hereafter Gross and Hayne, 'Young Children's Recognition'], cited in Kathleen Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons: Understanding Their Worlds Through Their Drawings', *Childhood Education,* 84, no. 2 (2007/8), pp. 96-101 [hereafter Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons'], p. 99.
[141] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 88.
[142] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, pp. 88-92.
[143] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 107.
[144] Walker, 'Children and their Purple Crayons', p. 97.
[145] D.P. Wolf, 'Reimagining development: Possibilities from the study of children's art', *Human Development*, 40 (1997), pp. 189-194, cited in Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', p. 97.

persist with drawing often 'substitute rather detailed and fussy drawings for their formal bold and confident efforts.'[146] This may be a loss to the art appreciator, but the fiddly detail is of value to the historian.

What children chose to draw is much less studied than the way they draw, with the exception of one subject: the human figure. Cox observed of six to eight year-olds that 'children usually draw best what most interests them' but that they can generally be encouraged to be interested in a wide variety of subjects.[147] Nonetheless it is the human figure which tends to dominate their drawings until the age of ten or so, and is often among the first recognizable things that children draw.[148] This predominance of the human figure led Florence Goodenough in 1926 into devising a test for intellectual capacity based on a child's ability to draw a man.[149] Twenty years later, Karin Machover further developed this into the Draw A Person test which was claimed to give insight into emotional development, using psychoanalytic theory and clinical observations, and based on the analysis of specific features of the drawing. Machover argued that 'the drawing of a person represents the expression of self, or the body, in the environment', and drew conclusions about a child's character based on his or her DAP test, such as oversized ears indicating an oversensitivity to social opinion, and the omission of pupils in the eyes suggesting self-centredness.[150] This became a widely-used psychological test in clinics and hospitals but a plethora of others have subsequently argued that there is no evidence to support these complex assumptions about a child on the basis of the drawing of individual features in a single test.[151] What is generally agreed is that such drawing tests as a whole can indicate the general development level of a child; what is in dispute is the significance attached to individual features. It is important for our purposes to note that all these diagnostic tests are based on drawings made by a child in response to a specific request for a drawing of one or more figures; they are not drawings of scenes, events or figures in any way chosen or spontaneously drawn by the child.

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[146] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 205.
[147] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 211.
[148] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 31 drawing on the work of others such as S. A. McCarty, *Children's Drawings* (Baltimore, 1924).
[149] Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', p. 96.
[150] Karin Machover, 'Drawing of the Human Figure: A Method of Personality Investigation' in *An Introduction to Projective Techniques,* eds H.H. and G.I. Anderson (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1951), quoted in Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 77.
[151] Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', pp. 96-97.

One aspect of the research and thinking behind these drawing-based tests which does have relevance to more free-form pictures is the significance of scale, the objects or people which children draw larger or smaller in relation to each other. It seems almost a matter of common sense that size indicates importance but this assumption has rightly been examined closely. The idea that children draw heads disproportionately big because they are seen as important has been challenged by the argument that they may draw them big because there are a lot of features – eyes, nose, mouth – to fit in. Cox has also pointed out that scale in a child's drawing may in practice be defined by where on the page they started to draw – if they run out of space the last bit they draw may be compressed.[152] It is always worth bearing in mind that, as Freeman put it, 'children are not simply creatures expressing their essence through drawing, they are also novices who are learning how to draw.'[153]

There is however considerable research to support the idea that scale between different figures in the same scene does have meaning. Lev-Weisal and Al-Krenawi 's research into drawings by Israeli Bedouin-Arab children from polygamous families show that when they draw their families, they always depict their own mothers as larger than the other wives; Thomas and Jolley also showed that children often increase the size of figures who have socially defined importance, such as teachers.[154] Unlike the disparities between fine details in the drawing of a single anonymous figure, the differences seen in children's drawings of people and situations that they know may carry meaning. Context is all.

One piece of research suggests that drawing may help children focus if not their emotions, at least their narrative skills. Gross and Hayne asked children aged from three to six to draw a picture of a time when they were happy or sad. If the child did not spontaneously narrate the story of the picture as he or she drew, the researcher then asked them about it. A control group was asked simply to talk about a happy or sad experience.

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[152] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 82.

[153] Quoted in Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 212.

[154] R. Lev-Weisal and A. Al-Krenawi, 'Perception of Family among Bedouin-Arab Children of Polygamous Families as Reflected in their Family Drawings', *American Journal of Art Therapy*, 38, no. 4 (2000), pp. 98-109; G.P. Thomas and R.P. Jolley, 'Drawing Conclusions: A Re-examination of Empirical and Conceptual Bases for Psychological Evaluation of Children from Their Drawings', *British Journal of Clinical Psychology*, 37 (1998), pp. 127-139; both cited in Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', p. 97. For an understanding that the development of children's drawings holds across cultures, see G.W. Paget, 'Some Drawings of Men and Women Made by Children of Certain Non-European Races', *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute of Great Britain and Ireland*, 62 (1932), pp. 127-144.

The children given the chance to draw and talk, reported 'more than twice as much information as children asked to tell only.'[155] While historians will never have the opportunity to ask a child at the time about a drawing, they may be able on occasion to discuss it with them many years later, as I have been; in any case the finding implies that the act of drawing scenes of significance to the child aids in communication, and perhaps some of that communication may be found in the drawing alone.

The work of psychologists and child developmentalists contains much of value to the historian seeking to use children's drawings. First, there is an established understanding of how children's drawings develop as the child gets older; secondly, there is evidence that drawings matter to children, that they are a form of communication, and that the child is concerned for the drawing to be intelligible to others. However, their work also sounds a warning note: the idea that children's drawings give insight into the child's emotions and psychology has led researchers repeatedly into attempting to establish schema of meaning against details of drawing which have then been proved unfounded. Children's drawings may hold clues, but they are not a coded map of emotions or meaning; keys which claim that large ears mean concern for the opinions of others are not be trusted. Context is all: both of the overall scene conveyed in a drawing and the situation of the child who has drawn it. As Kathleen Walker put it in her essay giving an overview of the literature about children's drawings which uses the American children's picture-book classic *Harold and His Purple Crayon* as a motif, 'measuring the size of Harold's moon may be less helpful than identifying the themes that emerge from his drawings of that moon.'[156]

Another set of researchers have recently used children's drawings, this time to investigate how children see and experience the world. Again, these are drawings being created to order, rather than being spontaneously produced. In 1986 Robin Moore asked city children to draw their favourite place, as part of his research into children's response to different aspects of their physical environment. The results conveyed the children's close affinity to the natural world; they drew the space around their home but also streets, parks and trees wherever they could be found. Shops hardly appeared.[157] Other environmental

[155] J. Gross and H. Hayne, 'Young children's recognition', p. 163, cited in Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', p. 99.
[156] Walker, 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', p. 98.
[157] Robin Moore, *Childhood's Domain: Play and Place in Child Development* (Berkeley, 1986) [hereafter Moore, *Childhood's Domain*], cited in Matthews, *Making Sense of Place,* p. 198.

educationalists such as Laura Barraza have used drawings as a means of generating cross-cultural comparison: she asked children in schools in England and Mexico to draw three pictures, showing their view of the earth now and in the future, in an effort to understand children's perception of the environmental crisis.[158] These researchers, and a number of others in the same field, are using children's drawings in a refreshingly straight-forward way, tapping into children's pleasure in drawing and in particular in drawing places and things that symbolize or express their interests and experiences, in order to examine their understanding of specific concepts.[159] The drawings are interpreted, using the standard understanding of the development of children's drawing based on Luquet's work, in an uncomplicated way in which the choice of subject matter provides the main data, rather than any attempt to read below the surface.

Others working in a similar field have used a different technique to get at children's understanding or experience of their environment: mapping. Asking children to draw maps of their environment or their route to school has proved illuminating because it provides a direct child's-eye view of the world around them and reveals a striking contrast between the ways adults and children see the same world. As M. H. Matthews put it, it is one of the techniques which allow the creation of a less adult-centric view of the world and of childhood.[160] Jeff Bishop's research in Harwich showed how even when children and adults are asked to draw the same subject – in this case to map the town centre and harbour – the significant objects and places differ. All the adults drew the lighthouse: the children ignored it but marked the kiosks, hoardings, and a telephone connection box unmarked by any adult but which at a child's height was an object for climbing on or hiding behind.[161] The mapping work also reveals a common underlying assumption among the researchers, which is that as children get older they get 'better' at mapping space in an accurate way. As Downs and Siegel pointed out, they may simply be getting 'better' at absorbing adult values and modes of representation.[162]

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[158] Barraza, 'Children's Drawings of the Environment', pp. 49-66.
[159] Barraza, 'Children's Drawings of the Environment', pp. 69-70. See also P. Van-Summers, *Drawing and Cognition* (Cambridge, 1984); E. Koppitz, *Psychological Evaluation of Children's Human Figure Drawings* (London, 1968).
[160] Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*, p. 4.
[161] Cited in Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 28.
[162] A.M. Downs and R. W. Seigel, 'On Mapping Researchers Mapping Children Mapping Space', in *Spatial Representation and Behaviour across the Lifespan*, eds L.S. Liben, A. Paterson and N. Newcombe (New York, 1981), cited in Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*, p. 107.

The way that geographers and environmental researchers have used children's drawings provides a useful precedent. While the historian does not have the luxury of being able to ask children to draw subjects to order, this work shows how potentially revealing children's drawings can be of the way they see and experience their world. As Matthews argued, 'children's environmental imagery reflects not only their understanding of spacial relationships and locational characteristics, but also their feelings and attitudes to the world around them.'[163]

The first historian to attempt to use children's drawings as a source material was Nicholas Stargardt. In 1988 he published an article on 600 of the 4000 or so extant drawings and paintings produced by children during their time at the Theresienstadt work camp. It was a fascinating and pioneering piece, and there is much to learn from both its strengths and weaknesses. Stargardt established the basis of a methodology for historians to use children's drawings, but also inadvertently illustrated the flaws of some attitudes to children's 'artwork' in his struggle to reconcile what he expected to see in the drawings and what he actually saw. Not only are we on uncertain ground if we expect children's drawings to have psychological significance, but we also need to guard against expecting children to display a range of emotional responses in accordance with an adult view of the world.

Stargardt divided the Theresienstadt drawings into three types: paintings and collages which seem to be copies of other art works or are abstract designs; paintings and drawings from their past lives, which often seem quite stylised in their form and representation of topics such as 'Home'; and a third group of much less formal drawings, in pencil or crayon, often less centred on the page and which 'often focus on, or at least incorporate, elements of daily life'.[164] It is this third group on which he concentrated and out of which he was most able to draw useful insights, and I have drawn a lesson from this. If we seek to use children's drawings to gain insight into how a child saw the world, then pictures in which he or she is drawing the world around them offer by far the most sensible way in.

Significantly, Stargardt was able to use information about the specific circumstances in which the children created their various works from an account left by their art teacher,

[163] Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*, p. 193.
[164] Nicholas Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', *Past and Present*, 161 (1998), pp. 191-235 [hereafter Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust'].

and was also able to set them into a broader context of life in the camp by drawing on subsequent writing by survivor-historians and others. This contextual information meant he could use the drawings to acquire valuable insights into the preoccupations of children in the Theresienstadt Children's Homes, such as how the children 'turned hunger into a social drama' and how the 'gap between adults and children grew, with the children gradually separating into a social and imaginative world of their own.'[165] This knowledge also allowed him to establish what was not being drawn - in this case, children playing beside the starving and the dying – which in turn offered valuable clues as to how the children chose, whether consciously or unconsciously, to make their world manageable.

The weaknesses in Stargardt's methodology and article relate to the questions he set out to answer. Having drawn attention to the lack of 'methodological precedents', he identified a series of questions which the material posed, such as whether 'optimistic paintings' should be understood as a coping mechanism or the work of happy children, and whether children's drawings express fantasy or real life.[166] He was concerned with how 'to relate physical experience to emotional response' and in particular how to reconcile the apparent optimism of many of the drawings with the difficult circumstances which we know the children had experienced both before arriving in the camp, and while they were there.[167] Few of the drawings show apparent suffering, pain or fear and they rarely record the violence which 'constantly endangered daily life in the ghetto.'[168] Stargardt's wrestle with the disparity between what is seen in the drawings and what is presumed to have been the experience may in part be caused by an over-expectation as to what the children's drawings should deliver. He described the drawings as art, a term which sets up an unhelpful expectation of meaning, and in later articles also discussed the triggers for a child's 'artistic imagination.'[169] The notion of art here seems an unnecessary red herring which raises questions about the nature of art with which we do not need to engage. It implies a more complex motivation and meaning to the finished drawing than may ever been intended or indeed exist. Cox doubted many children are capable of setting out

[165] Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', p. 219.
[166] Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', p. 197.
[167] Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', p. 228.
[168] Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', p. 229.
[169] Nicholas Stargardt, 'Drawing the Holocaust in 1945', *Holocaust Studies*, 11, no. 2 (2005), pp. 25-37 [hereafter Stargradt, 'Drawing the Holocaust'].

deliberately to draw 'in such a way as to bring about a specific feeling or emotion in the observer.'[170] Just as we do not describe all writing as literature, all drawing need not be art, and a child's drawings may be designed to impart information, as illustration, or merely to entertain its creator for a while. This is not to denigrate the act of creation of the child in drawing a picture, but rather to suggest that in thinking of all such pictures as art we may seek more emotive or significant content than is actually there.

This is likely to be particularly true when looking at pictures created by children in such an emotive situation as those in Theresienstadt. Stargardt acknowledged this danger in his conclusion: 'If we are to regard the artefacts which the children produced as historical sources, then we too have to view them afresh and without the benefit of seeing where the railway tracks led next.'[171] Nonetheless, throughout the essay he struggled with the children's apparent resilience in the face of oncoming horror, reluctant not to find signs of inner conflict and stress being expressed through drawing. He is not alone in being taken aback by children's apparent ability to cope: as he acknowledged, Anna Freud battled to reconcile the behaviour of children in her clinic after the war with the experiences she knew they had gone through.[172] However the very reason we are trying to use drawings is for insight into how children experienced their world; it is no good if we have already decided what that experience must have been like.[173]

Stargardt's other writings about children's drawings build on this experience of wrestling to extract meaning from unfamiliar media without a well-trodden path to follow. In his essay about drawings by two teenage boys in 1945, each of whom had survived Auschwitz and Buchenwald, he had an easier task as both sequences of drawings tackled the boys' experiences head-on, with 'matter-of-fact horror.'[174] There is no need to look for extra meaning below the surface when one is confronted with a diagram of the workings of

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[170] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 180.
[171] Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', p. 233.
[172] Anna Freud, 'Child Observation and Prediction of Development: A memorial lecture in Honour of Ernst Kris' in Anna Freud, *Writings of Anna Freud: 1956-1965*, *vol 5* (New York, 1969), p. 133, cited in Stargardt, 'Children's Art of the Holocaust', p. 229.
[173] There is repeated evidence that children can be remarkably resilient, and what causes an individual child acute distress is not always that which adults presume. One example is John Bowlby's study into two hundred British children who had war-related psychological problems, which concluded that for one-third of them it was evacuation not bombing that was the cause. John Bowlby, *Child Care and the Growth of Love* (London, 1965) cited in Nicholas Stargardt, *Witnesses of War: Children's Lives Under the Nazis* (London, 2005) [hereafter Stargardt, *Witnesses of War]*, p. 445.
[174] Stargardt, 'Drawing the Holocaust in 1945', p. 35.

a gas chamber, with a ghostly skull sitting in the smoke from the chimney. Each set of drawings is concerned with a spacial or technical representation of what happened and how things worked, and has the overt purpose of recording events and places for an audience who had not been there. The context in which the drawings were created is well recorded and Stargardt also had the advantage of being able to interview one of the boys in old age.[175]

This second essay and analysis is also useful for our broader methodological purpose in showing common tropes of older children's drawings. The drawings are intricate and detailed, and the interest shown in how things worked and went together is a trait which is shown also in some of the Glen Esk drawings, as we will see later, and which is anticipated in Luquet's schema. Nonetheless each boy also drew things which they did not actually see because they were too important to leave out, in this case the gas chambers: a throwback to the intellectual realism of younger children, drawing what they know, not what they see. Thomas Geve, looking back on his drawings many years later, was frustrated by his own inaccuracy in drawing a lift to the crematorium inside the gas chamber itself, but also explained that he did not trust himself to draw the prisoners inside.[176] Once again, what is not drawn also has meaning. In different ways, each set of drawings also uses scale to illustrate power, so that the camp guards loom vastly over the tiny prisoners.

Other historians have used children's drawings to examine their responses to war, including Carolyn Kay who examines German children's reflection of wartime propaganda in the First World War, through a collection of drawings by children of ten to fourteen years of age from Wilhelmsburg, near Hamburg. They are of imagined scenes of war, such as the sinking of the *Lusitania*, rather than of their own lives, and Kay uses them to demonstrate how much the children had absorbed implicit ideas of German moral and cultural supremacy. She also queries assumptions (which Stargardt made) about gendered differences with regard to subject matter, by pointing to the equal detail and apparent relish with which girls drew battle scenes compared to boys.[177]

The use of children's drawings as a historical source depends on their survival down the years: the collection Kay draws upon was found in the attic of the old school building. In

[175] Stargardt, 'Drawing the Holocaust in 1945', pp. 34-35
[176] Stargardt, 'Drawing the Holocaust in 1945', p. 34.
[177] Kay, 'German Children's Art', p. 206.

his much broader work looking at children's lives under the Nazis, Stargardt was able to draw on a number of collections which had been deliberately created and preserved, representing as they did 'the raw material for morally uplifting parables of renewal.'[178] It is precisely because we are inclined to see significance, meaning and symbolism in a child's drawings that so many are preserved from Nazi-dominated Europe in this period; for historians of places and periods which contain less overt drama, far fewer drawings are likely to have been saved from the waste-paper basket.

While there is not yet an established methodology by which historians can use children's drawings as a primary source, there are a number of sign-posts along the way which I have drawn upon in my analysis of the drawings available to me. I have detailed some of the specifics of these lessons in Chapter Five, where I discuss the two collections of children's drawings which I have considered. Meanwhile, there are some encouraging generalities upon which I have rested my methodology. There is a generally agreed understanding of how children's drawings develop, and in particular the shifting sands between Luquet's intellectual realism and his visual realism. There are also a number of cautionary tales about the attempt to read too much into the drawings, and in particular into specific details or drawing techniques, or in looking for things that may not be there. But most significant of all, there is a large body of evidence which suggests that attempting to use children's drawings in this way is a worthwhile enterprise. While children may not be expressing their innermost secrets in every pencil line, we know that they themselves think their drawings carry meaning, that they are concerned that they be understood, that they are inclined to draw the things that they are most interested in or which they think are of importance, and that children's drawings have proved to be of particular use to geographers and environmentalists in showing how children see their world. As Walker contended, 'drawings have much to teach us if we care to learn.'[179]

4. OTHER SOURCES: SOCIOLOGISTS, ANTHROPOLOGISTS, AUTOBIOGRAPHY AND MEMOIR

In an era in which children and childhood have been of particular interest it is not surprising

[178] Collections Stargardt used include some drawn at the instigation of adults keen for children to find a way to express their experiences; others were collected and displayed soon after the war's end as a way of beginning to comprehend the experience of war; others generated by a competition in a Polish magazine in 1946 for which the prize was a kilo of sweets. Stargardt, *Witnesses of War*, p. 8.
[179] Walker, 'Children and their Purple Crayons', p. 98.

that it is not only historians who have tackled this subject. Since the 1940s anthropologists, folklorists, sociologists, epidemiologists and geographers have all looked in different ways at children's experiences and culture, forming a body of primary evidence and secondary analysis of value to the historian of twentieth-century childhood. What is particularly useful about much of this research is that it was undertaken with children: unlike historians, other researchers work directly with their subjects at the time of life in which they are interested.

Just a few years before Aries threw the spotlight on the history of childhood, anthropologists and folklorists Iona and Peter Opie illuminated the 'unself-conscious culture' of children at play, who they described as 'the greatest of savage tribes, and the only one which shows no signs of dying out.'[180] Their work observing children in playgrounds around Britain in the 1950s and later, collecting scraps of rhymes, games and riddles, revolutionised the way many people looked at childhood and was a powerful argument for continuity and the persistence of children's culture in the age of television. It is a rare example of what Hendrick was later to call for: an examination of childhood as a state of being, rather than a process of becoming. The Opies included some Scottish schools in their survey work but there is also a specifically Scottish resource. In Edinburgh, the teacher James Ritchie collected children's games and rhymes from the 1930s, and made a short film, *The Singing Street* (1951) recording some of them, as well as publishing two books based on a lifetime of collecting.[181]

Sociologists and social researchers also turned their attention to children's lives: Pearl Jephcott looked at *Girls Growing Up* in 1942, Margaret Stacey considered children in her examination of change in Banbury in the 1940s and Elizabeth and John Newson studied younger children and their parents extensively in their research on child-rearing in 700 families in Nottingham in the 1960s and 1970s.[182] Michael Young and Peter Wilmott's influential *Family and Kinship* has already been mentioned, and for Scotland there are also

[180] Iona and Peter Opie, *The Lore and Language of Schoolchildren* (Oxford, 1960) [hereafter Opie, *Lore and Language*], p. 2, quoting Douglas Newton.
[181] James Ritchie, *The Singing Street* (Edinburgh, 1964) [hereafter Ritchie, *Singing Street*]; James Ritchie, *Golden City: Scottish Children's Street Games and Songs* (first published 1965, this edition Edinburgh, 1999) [hereafter Ritchie, *Golden City*]; film *The Singing Street*, produced by Norton Park Group, 1951.
[182] A.P. Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up* (London, 1942) [hereafter Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up*]; Margaret Stacey, *Tradition and Change: A Study of Banbury* (Oxford, 1960) hereafter Stacey, *Banbury*]; John and Elizabeth Newson, *Seven Years Old in the Home Environment* (London, 1976).

the extensive if variable sources found in the *Third Statistical Survey*, including work undertaken by sociologists at the time.[183]

I have also made extensive use of published autobiography and a limited number of unpublished memoirs and family papers, a list of which are included in the bibliography. All these sources have much to offer, not least because they provide a litmus test as to the relative plausibility of the accounts given in the oral history, while themselves containing of course the dangers of any source material.

5. STRUCTURE

The purpose of the case studies is to illuminate the specifics of experiences in different kinds of community and space. The following three chapters therefore are each concerned with a single case-study area, drawing on oral history, drawings, and other primary and secondary sources, with some comparison made between them.

Chapter Two examines the experiences of children who grew up in the remote, rural space of Glen Esk. What it reveals is a remarkable continuity of experience with the rural childhoods examined by Jamieson and Toynbee for an earlier period. Not only were these children 'always outside' and far removed from consumerism, they also understood themselves to belong in a world of work alongside adults.

Chapter Three focuses on children growing up in the market-town of Brechin. The children here also took part in the working world around them, on a seasonal basis both for the potato-harvest, for which they were excused from school for two or more weeks a year, and during the summer holidays for fruit-picking. The children's experience of life on the streets of Brechin was fraught with class tension and an acute awareness of people's place in the social structure, made vivid by the division of the town into 'uptown' and 'downtown' and by an educational system in which some children went to a fee-paying primary school and wore an expensive blazer to prove it.

Chapter Four examines the experiences of children in Dundee, a city in the process of rebuilding and rehousing its inner-city inhabitants in new outer-city housing schemes. This process redrew the boundaries of the city, changed communities and ultimately

[183] For the purposes of this thesis I have extensively consulted two volumes of the survey: *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977) and *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. J.M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979).

redefined where children should play, taking them from the street to segregated playgrounds. These changes brought with them conflict and contest, overlaid onto existing fractures of class and faith. The Dundee children also played a role in the world of work and made some contributions to their household economies, which changed in nature over the period under consideration. It is in this chapter that the amount of evidence from oral history and autobiographies allows me to develop a more complex argument about how children's contributions to their households changed over time. The Dundee chapter is also significantly longer than the others because it deals with considerably more change in experiences than the other two case studies: it is in effect a tale of two cities.

Chapter Five moves on to make a more direct comparison between Glen Esk and suburban Dundee through examining children's drawings from each place. The drawings with their associated interviews suggest how very different the experiences and world-view of these children were, even though they lived just forty miles apart, spoke the same language and ostensibly shared the same culture. Both sets of children in retrospect described themselves as 'incredibly free' in terms of where they could go outside the home but this geographic freedom was not the defining factor in what they chose to draw. That was caused instead by a fundamental contrast in lifestyle between rural and suburban households, between different household economies and adult attitudes to the role of children, and a different emphasis on the role of family as opposed to community.

Finally, Chapter Six draws together a number of conclusions, in particular how the evidence revealed casts doubt on the generally understood chronology of change, suggesting that in Scotland the shift to the 'priceless child' occurred later and was more hard-won than much of the secondary literature suggests.

CHAPTER TWO: GROWING UP IN GLEN ESK

INTRODUCTION

The first of the three specific places chosen for study in this thesis is one of the Angus glens, Glen Esk, a remote rural community about forty miles from Dundee. Then as now, it was an area of sporting estates and tenant farmers, sparsely inhabited by a community of people who all knew each other. In the mid-twentieth century, it was only when the children who lived there went away to High School at the age of twelve that they began to live in the world of shops, cinemas and TV like most of their contemporaries; before that age most of their experiences of shopping were from the twice-weekly grocers van, much of their food was home-grown and home-cooked, and TV was a rarity in a place which only acquired mains electricity in the late 1950s and had poor reception in any case.

Although this rural childhood was no longer the norm in Scotland in the 1950s, it was not a freakish exception: Anderson's description of multiple Scotlands applies. Many other children, living in the Highlands and Islands, in Argyll, the Borders, Dumfries, Galloway and rural Aberdeenshire, would have been similarly remote from the bright lights of the cities and the more muted excitements of small towns. Within the county of Angus itself, over 15% of men were still employed in farming, forestry or fishing in 1966.[184] This was also a type of childhood that was culturally prized. As Abrams has demonstrated, the Scottish child welfare system up until well after the Clyde Report on Homeless Children of 1946 was based on the idea that the rural crofting family offered the best environment in which to place neglected urban children.[185] Furthermore, the experiences of children growing up in rural communities offers a potentially valuable continuity with that of earlier generations of Scots. As we have seen, while Scottish childhood has been relatively little studied, there is for rural childhood a previous study into which this dove-tails and which proffers the chance of useful comparison over time: Jamieson and Toynbee's *Country Bairns*, which uses oral history to examine rural childhoods in Scotland from 1900-1930.

[184] Collett, 'Population and Employment', p. 54.
[185] Abrams, *Orphan Country,* p. 247.

What follows is an exploration of the experiences and memories of a small group of children who grew up in Glen Esk. It is based on in-depth oral history interviews with five people, born between 1931 and 1961, who spent their childhoods there, and draws also on some of their childhood drawings and writing, preserved in school scrapbooks, which are examined in more detail in Chapter Five. All five of the interviewees were born and bred within the glen; the two oldest still lived there when interviewed. As children, the interviewees were educated at the same school though not all at the same time, attended the same church and social events, and were familiar with each other's houses and land. It is a small community so they all knew each other though they are of different generations, from Angus Davidson, born in 1931, to Glenda Hale, born in 1961. Their backgrounds reflect the relatively flat social make-up of the community then living in the glen. Two of them – Sandra Guthrie (b. 1946) and Albert Taylor (b. 1949) had fathers who were hill shepherds, working for tenant farmers.[186] Kay Law (b. 1956) was the daughter of the Head Keeper at Invermark Lodge, the main sporting estate in the glen; Glenda Hale was the grand-daughter of one of the estate's tenant farmers. Angus Davidson's father was one of the few local tradesmen; he had to close his joinery business during the war and then afterwards made a living doing odd jobs for the estate and working as a beater.

Overall, the picture is one of remarkable continuity of experience, formed by the structure of an agricultural way of life. This is in contrast to the experiences of their urban contemporaries, as Toynbee and Jamieson also found when studying an earlier generation: 'Compared with their urban counterparts, many of the family and crofting families … experienced minimal separation of home and work, and in general, were deeply embedded in close-knit local networks.'[187] This remained true for the families in Glen Esk well into the 1970s. Their children lived in houses intimately bound up with the work the family did, ate food at least in part produced by the family, or given as payment in kind, and participated in work themselves. It is not surprising then that the hard work of parents, and the contributions the children themselves made, is a strong theme running throughout the

[186] Being a hill shepherd was a skilled job which traditionally carried some status and better compensation, partly in kind, than other skilled farm workers. Fenton gives an example of shepherds in the Borders who still had significant numbers of sheep as part of their wages in the 1960s. Alexander Fenton, *Country Life in Scotland: Our Rural Past* (Edinburgh, 1987), p. 42

[187] Claire Toynbee and Lynn Jamieson, 'Some responses to economic change in Scottish farming and crofting family life', *Sociological Review* 37, no. 4 (1989) pp. 706-732, p. 707.

interviews and, allied to the remote and rural nature of the glen, forms the defining characteristics of these experiences of childhood. While the division between adult and child was clearly in place – nowhere more so than in the defining boundary of bedtime – the family functioned as an economic unit, with a hierarchical structure in which the boundaries of behaviour and expectation were absorbed by children at a young age. The children's own drawing and writing can be seen to reflect a largely un-sentimentalised understanding of the world around them, in which the important events are largely agricultural and take place outside.

It is in this record of continuity that the significance of this part of the study can be found, evidence of a continuing experience of childhood well into the 1960s which has far more in common with childhoods in Edwardian rural Scotland than it does with the idea of the 'priceless child' said to have taken hold much earlier in the Western world more generally.

GLEN ESK: HISTORY AND ECONOMY

Glen Esk is the longest of the Angus glens, running eastwards in a long thin line up between high hills just beyond the Victorian holiday town of Edzell. The road runs for fifteen miles along the North Esk river and ends just beyond Loch Lee at the top of the glen. While there are footpaths and ancient drove roads over the hills there is no other vehicular access, so by car there is only one way in or out. Even now the glen feels remote, although from the village of Tarfside to the city of Dundee is only forty miles. It is an area of tenanted hill farms and sporting estates, all over 500 feet above sea level. In 1967, 52,000 acres of it was rough grazing, with just a few hundred acres down to grass or tillage. The livestock figures for the same date give a further glimpse of what kind of farming was carried out there, with 13,000 sheep and five hundred or so beef cattle. Also enumerated on the livestock list were 489 hens, fifteen dairy cattle and two pigs which were kept for domestic purposes.[188] Most families in the glen got their milk fresh from their own Jersey cow, grew many of their own vegetables and ate not just home-baked cakes but home-made

[188] 'Parish Statistics', in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977) [hereafter 'Parish Statistics'], p. 162.

bannocks, oatcakes and puddings. One mother at least also churned her own butter.[189] All of the land was owned by the Dalhousie Estate, with the exception of one of the shootings which the Earl of Dalhousie sold to the Duke of Roxburgh in 1963.[190]

The story of the glen, like that of much of rural Scotland, was a tale of continually declining population, caused by a constant pattern of outward migration.[191] In 1851 there were over 650 people living in Glen Esk. By 1951 this was down to 155 and numbers continued to fall: by 1961 there were 146 residents, of whom just 27 were children.[192] This decreasing population was due in large part to changing farming methods and profitability, to 'the call of adventure, want of opportunity, lack of amenities' and to the shrinking numbers of staff needed to run a sporting estate.[193]

The demands of secondary education also played a role, discouraging some families from staying in the glen.[194] Throughout the period all the children had to finish their education in the nearby towns of Brechin or Edzell. Before the introduction of a school bus service in the 1950s, they were compelled to spend the week in lodgings, only returning home at weekends. For many, this was a miserable experience, especially given the difficulty of finding regular lodging. Angus Davidson (b. 1931) is unsparing in his recollection of it: 'Ouch it was hell. I didnae think it helped me at doing the school work, you got so damn fed up with it because it was all the moving about and it wisnae very nice.'[195] The introduction of the bus service took away the need to stay in lodgings and replaced it with an exhausting daily journey but did not solve a further perceived problem: that the whole experience would break the children away from 'their native attachments.'[196] The fear that once you had educated rural children in the town they would leave the country way of life for good is expressed repeatedly in the Angus *Statistical Account.* As the editor put it: 'The [country] child travelling to school in a neighbouring town has there the cloak of anonymity: at worst his behaviour may deteriorate; inevitably he is orientated away from his own

[189] Albert Taylor recalls his mother milking their cow twice a day and making their butter in churn with a hand crank, 00.04.30
[190] Margaret F. Michie, 'The Parish of Lochlee', *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977), pp. 163-173 [hereafter Michie, 'Parish of Lochlee'], pp. 164-5. Entry written in 1949, revised 1953, 1967.
[191] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, pp. 34, 53.
[192] 'Parish Statistics', p. 162.
[193] Michie, 'Parish of Lochlee', p. 164.
[194] Michie, 'Parish of Lochlee', p. 164.
[195] Angus Davidson, 00.15.23.
[196] Michie, 'Parish of Lochlee', p. 164.

community.'[197] The sense of the moral superiority of a country childhood was still firmly embedded in the culture.[198]

The fifty years covered by the recollections of the interviewees was therefore a time of declining population and gradual exodus, in particular of the younger generations. In such a place, children had particular importance, as a school and the presence of children held hope for the continuity of a community that seemed palpably under threat. The loss not just of overall population but specifically of children was the subject of lamentation for the local teacher at Tarfside, Margaret (Greta) Michie, writing in 1967. With mains electricity and private cars helping access in and out, life was now easier in the glen than ever before, 'Yet the people go. The exodus is reflected in church and school.'[199] In 1930 the school by Loch Lee had been closed, leaving the primary school at the village of Tarfside, half-way up the glen, to cover an area of 90 square miles. It was this school with its single teacher that was attended by all the children interviewed for this study, until the age of about 12.

Glen Esk was not however a backwater, a place closed off from outside influences. While the people who lived there did not go out much into the world, the world came to them. The two sporting estates brought in seasonal guests and workers – upwards of forty beaters would arrive for weeks of grouse shooting from August each year, as well as the guests come to shoot, the Dalhousie family and the household staff including valets and cooks needed to look after them. There were less grand summer visitors as well, holiday-makers who would come and stay for a week or longer in the summer, renting one of the houses while the family moved out into back quarters, or an older house.[200] These visitors were a source of income and also of friendship: for the children in this isolated place they provided new people with whom to play. Glenda Hale (b. 1961) remembers them with enthusiasm: 'summers were better because in the summers … there were visitors and visitors brought kids. And that was much more fun because there was quite often kids that were around your age so that was better.'[201] From 1955 there was a new attraction for the day-trippers who already came in on occasional coach trips to see the spectacular scenery.

[197] William Illsley, 'Introduction', in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977), pp. 17-21 [hereafter, Illsley, 'Introduction'], p. 19.
[198] Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 42 and passim.
[199] Michie, 'Parish of Lochlee', p. 164.
[200] Sandra Guthrie, 00.23.00; Angus Davidson, 14.24.03.
[201] Glenda Hale, 01.23.00.

'The Retreat' had been a shooting lodge and summer retreat for the Dalhousie family; it now became home to the new Glenesk Folk Museum, founded by Greta Michie and funded by Lord and Lady Dalhousie. In 1967 there were more than 16,000 visitors to this combination museum, tea room and shop selling Highland crafts: all of the girls interviewed in this study worked there during their summer holidays, from the age of about ten or so.[202]

Outside the summer, the glen was a quieter place. Nonetheless all year, except in cases of extreme snow, there were regular visiting tradesmen – vans from the grocer, the baker and the fishmonger came up the long road at least once a week and feature distinctly in the memories of those who grew up here. There was also at times a small shop in Tarfside where sweets could be bought, and regular social meetings among the community, whether at a meeting of the Women's Rural Institute (WRI) or at one of the weekly church services. The Maule Memorial Church in Tarfside and the Loch Lee Church shared a Church of Scotland minister; attendance was by no means obligatory and fathers in particular seem often not to have attended. School-age children of course also saw each other at school, though prior to that a first-born or only child could go a long time without seeing other children.[203]

HOME AND FAMILY: SPACE, BELONGING AND BEHAVIOUR

Where children spent their time is central to the historical discussion of changing experiences of childhood in the twentieth century. Rising standards of living and improved housing are among the factors which led to a shift for working-class children from 'a life focused on the street to one focused on the home' and is argued to have been accompanied by a change in the social organization of the family as fathers became less authoritarian.[204] In particular Seabrook identifies a new importance accorded to the child's bedroom and its décor by the 1960s: 'The child's bedroom – where the old working-class had huddled six or eight to a room – became a gilded cell; giant posters of fantasy figures, pop stars and footballers took the place of real people as significant influences'.[205]

[202] Michie, 'Parish of Lochlee', p. 165. Interviews Sandra Guthrie, Glenda Hale and Kay Law.
[203] Sandra Guthrie, 00.06.30.
[204] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, p. 186.
[205] Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood,* p. 44.

Such change in all its forms is barely perceptible in these memories of childhood in Glen Esk, for reasons both cultural and pragmatic. Housing conditions had certainly improved since the First World War, as the estate gradually rebuilt much of its housing stock, leaving the 'auld hooses' with their single rooms and un-curtained box beds to act as summer houses. [206] As a result, over-crowding was not an issue and all of the children had at times a bedroom apart from their parents, though generally shared with a sibling. However, for none of them, barring Sandra Guthrie who cared deeply because she did not have a consistent room, was the bedroom a place of importance. Albert Taylor (b. 1949) thinks he must have shared a room with his brother but cannot really remember; Kay Law (b. 1956) shared hers, and indeed a double bed, with her sister throughout her childhood but spent little time there: 'It was just there to sleep, you know … there was no flowery wallpaper and girly posters…. it was kind of your clothes and that was it.'[207] Glenda Hale's (b. 1961) experiences in the 1960s show a shift in attitude. She acquired her own room in the house they moved into in 1967, and chose for herself the green and blue wallpaper: 'it was probably at that time when you know decorating your house was quite the thing to do so we got to choose … I remember that quite specifically.' [208]

However, Glenda spent very little time in there, beyond sleeping. 'I don't really remember spending huge amounts of time playing in my bedroom. At all. They were just too cold.' [209] In this she echoes the experience of Angus Davidson (b. 1931) thirty years earlier. He grew up a house with four bedrooms, but shared a bed with his father after his mother's death when he was about 10: 'I slept with my dad, it was warmer you see.'[210] Mains electricity did not arrive in Glen Esk until 1957, and some of the houses did not have running water until well into the 1960s. As a small child, Glenda Hale (b. 1961) recalls having being bathed in a tin bath in front of the fire, the water drawn from the little well on the other side of the road which supplied all the family's water. 'I remember the tin bath because the side that was beside the fire used to get quite hot, so you had to be quite

[206] Like most rural areas the housing stock in Glen Esk had been gradually improved by the estate and the 'auld hooses' abandoned. By 1970 in Angus 'practically all farm cottages have hot and cold running water, bathrooms and electric light', Norman Turner, 'Agriculture, Forestry and Sea Fisheries', *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977), pp. 58-81, p. 74.
[207] Kay Law, 00.33.30.
[208] Glenda Hale, 00.22.30.
[209] Glenda Hale, 0.23.00.
[210] Angus Davidson, 14.33.00.

careful.'[211] By the 1960s the new or refurbished houses in Glen Esk might have running water and electric light, but they did not have central heating: in a place where the average minimum temperature is below freezing for four months of the year, few would chose to spend time in an unheated room.

Of the interviewees only Sandra Guthrie (b. 1946), deprived of her own room or even a consistent shared room because of the frequent domestic rearrangements demanded by her mother's guesthouse business, retained any enthusiasm or interest in the idea of her own bedroom. She only had a bedroom of her own in the winter; in the summer she shared whatever room was left empty with both siblings and sometimes also her parents. Discussing possessions, she remarked, 'Because we had nothing when you think about it, we didn't have … we didn't even have a bedroom.' And, when asked if there was a particular day that she remembered, exclaimed 'The day when I got a bedroom!! [*laughs*] That would be a good one. I'd have been about twenty-five by that time.'[212]

The children used other interior places for occasional play – the Guthrie children made a 'den' in the loft above the stable, Kay Law played dressing-up in the loft of the family house – but domestic life was largely lived in the shared spaces, in the kitchen or living room if there was one, propelled partly at least by the same demand for warmth.[213] Homework was done in the kitchen or in the living room; it was here too that puzzles and board games would be played before being promptly tidied away. All the households ran on a regular routine, driven by the demands of work. The day was marked out by meals at regular times: breakfast, lunch and tea with bedtime for younger children at around 8 o'clock. For Kay Law, 'Half past twelve lunch was on the table, five o'clock tea was on the table. Much more structured than probably family life is now. But it was around the work programme that dad had.'[214] Each household ate their meals together at the kitchen table, and in all the families the father had a set place to sit and was served first. In most, the children also had their own set places:

[211] Glenda Hale, 01.45.30. This house was Ivy Cottage where her older cousin Sandra Guthrie had also lived as a small child.
[212] Sandra Guthrie, 01.04.50.
[213] Sandra Guthrie, 00.26.30; Kay Law, 00.23.50.
[214] Kay Law, 00.19.39; 00.59.50.

> Mum would sit in one seat, dad would sit in another seat and me and Fiona had, she had her seat and I had my seat. There was a definite pattern. It was a bit the same in the sitting room as well. Cause there was dad's chair. You'd sit in his chair if he wasn't there but if he came in you had to get out the chair that was his chair. So yeah but definitely at the table there was a specific place you sat.[215]

Glenda Hale's description fits neatly into Sibley's definition of the 'positional' or more authoritarian family in which the father has power by virtue of his role as father, and phrases like 'do this … because I say so' might be used.[216] This 'traditional authority' is also what Jamieson and Toynbee described as the norm for Scottish families for their earlier period, which they characterise by the dictum that children should be seen and not heard.[217] Families varied in how much conversation there was at the table but Kay Law's experience is typical:

> It wasn't like a long, chatty drawn-out thing I don't think. Probably 'cause there was other stuff to do, get on with. And often after tea time you had jobs to do like whether it was the cows or whatever…. I think it was the purpose, you were sitting down for your food and that was it.[218]

In Sandra Guthrie's family, while her father had his own place at the meal table, the idea of her parents having their own places in the sitting room made her laugh. 'They didn't sit down a lot! No honestly, there wasn't hours that we sat and talked because everything was being done. If they did sit down it was very, very briefly. Really, honestly.' [219]

For the Glen Esk children, bedtime was a defining boundary: 'You'd never come downstairs once you were in bed. That was something you were not allowed to do. Once you went to bed, you were in bed. That was a rule.'[220] Albert recalls the demarcation of the evening as the parents' time: 'we were put to our beds same time every night just also give mother and father a bit of peace.'[221] For Kay Law also, these 'strict bedtimes' were part of

[215] Glenda Hale, 00.15.42.
[216] Sibley, 'Families and Domestic Routines', p. 130.
[217] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. 167.
[218] Kay Law, 00.33.22.
[219] Sandra Guthrie, 1.08.30.
[220] Glenda Hale, 01.41.00.
[221] Albert Taylor, 00.13.12.

what she described as a strict upbringing.[222] There was another significant boundary in a school day – the moment shared by them all when you came home and changed out of your school clothes into home clothes. 'When we got home we changed. So you'd get home, that was one of the, part of the routine, you'd change before your supper sort of thing, it was a defined point.'[223] There was no school uniform but there was a convention of smarter clothing, and changing out of your kilt or dark skirt into 'something scruffier' marked home time.[224] Once in your home clothes no one remembers any anxiety about how mucky they might become: there seem to have been no tellings-off for muddy trousers or a torn jumper.

This relative lack of chastisement is found across the board in their recollections. It was not that the children were never told off but rather that it was a rare occurrence. For Albert Taylor (b. 1949), there was a specific incident:

> I used to, you used to see the keepers round about burning heather you know and I thought oh that looks great fun. I once, I once had a, a bit of grass glowing away and of course my father he caught me and I got a bit of a, a rumbling up for that. And, no, no we did, we did get disciplined if, if we did something wrong there's no doubt about that.[225]

Getting into trouble for arguing with siblings was a feature of both Glenda Hale (b. 1961) and Kay Law's (b. 1956) childhoods but while all are clear – as Albert is above – that they were disciplined if they did something wrong, physical chastisement did not happen often. When it did, it seems not to have been that severe. Angus Davidson (b. 1931) was at pains to make this clear: 'we were never beaten, we were smacked.'[226] Rather, as Sandra Guthrie (b. 1946) describes it:

> We were a pretty good bunch I think … I think we had great respect for our parents, in that we didn't want to cause any grief to them, and we could see from an early age that they worked all the hours God sent, you know, to keep us, or make this sort of pay itself.[227]

[222] Kay Law, 00.05.08.
[223] Kay Law, 00.46.17.
[224] Angus Davidson, 14.15.43.
[225] Albert Taylor, 00.14.38.
[226] Angus Davidson, 14.40.11.
[227] Sandra Guthrie, 00.42.15.

Angus Davidson supports this idea that the children felt an obligation to behave well for their parents: 'They were very strict, they were very strict with us but very good to us but we had to do what we were told and when we were told and we, you knew you just grew up that way and you did it.' [228] The boundaries of behaviour seem to have been inculcated successfully and early, as Glenda Hale expressed:

> I'm struggling to remember having rules because you kind of probably from when you were very little, you know you were told not to be cheeky and that's cheeky, don't do that, or stop fighting with your sister, don't do that kinda thing. So you probably did internalise it but not think of it as actual rules, it was just that's, that's how things were and that's how you had to behave.[229]

These experiences are directly in line with those recorded by Jamieson and Toynbee, for early twentieth-century rural Scotland. The home was a place of work, there was little time for leisure, and while the family would eat together, seated according to hierarchy and habit, it was not a time for much chat or long accounts of what you did at school that day.[230] The sense of obligation to behave for hard-working parents is also part of this line of continuity: Jamieson and Toynbee observed that there 'was little in the way of physical punishment because everyone knew what was expected – and did it.'[231] The words of Alison Allison, a ploughman's daughter from Midlothian who was born in 1900 ring true for the Glen Esk children, two generations later. 'We thought a lot o' our mother and fathers in those days. They worked very hard, ye know, they didnae have much money. And they worked hard fir to keep us a goin'.'[232]

This continuity of experience well into the mid-twentieth century is interesting but not perhaps surprising. While the numbers of people living in the countryside and working on the land was diminishing, for those who remained the way of life was not much altered.

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[228] Angus Davidson, 14.40.11.
[229] Glenda Hale, 01.32.29.
[230] As one of Jamieson and Toynbee's interviewees, Mrs Doughtie (b. 1912), put it: 'We werenae allowed to make too much noise … Dad didnae like nonsense when you were eating.' Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. 123.
[231] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. 96.
[232] Jamieson and Toynbee**,** *Country Bairns*, p. 96.

Like the crofting children studied by Toynbee and Jamieson, the children of Glen Esk were growing up in a community where they had family roots and knew everyone around them. Furthermore, the work that put food on the table was directly evident to them. The homes themselves were part of a family business, and where they saw both their parents work and work hard. As Kay Law (b. 1956), daughter of the Head-Keeper on the Invermark Estate, observed of her parents, 'whether it was … bringing the family up … the estate and the garden and the animals … There was always something to be done.'[233] Six under-keepers came for coffee every morning in the family kitchen, and Kay's mother provided food for dozens of beaters every summer. Sandra Guthrie's mother ran their home as a guest-house, providing three meals a day to the guests in the summer, while Angus Davidson's family let their home every summer to visitors, and spent the summer in the 'auld hoose' nearby, sleeping in box beds and cooking over the fire. Albert Taylor grew up in the tied cottage of Dalbrack, surrounded by the land on which his father tended the sheep. Only Glenda Hale's early childhood was not spent in a house quite so intimately connected with her parents' work. Her father was away in the RAF but the family lived in first one, then another cottage on the farm farmed by her mother's family, so nonetheless not far removed from the work of the adults around her. When she was twelve, her mother became the postmistress and the family moved in to the house attached to the post office. Once again, home and work were intimately tied.

This close link between home and work for rural children at this time is in vivid contrast to the urban or suburban upbringing of their contemporaries. For most in Scotland, work and home had been geographically separated since the late nineteenth century, one of the many consequences of industrialisation.[234] The increasing depopulation of rural Scotland was of course part of this process, and went hand in hand with the technical innovations in agriculture which meant 'three men [can] now do the work for which ten were once needed.'[235] Within the agricultural family, to varying degrees, the children continued to be part of the joint enterprise, and were expected to contribute to the working

[233] Kay Law, 01.19.00.
[234] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns,* p. 2.
[235] T.C. Smout, *A Century of the Scottish People, 1830-1950* (London, 1986) p. 61, cited in *Country Bairns*, p. 2; Illsley, 'Introduction', p. 19.

life going on around them. As younger children – below the age of about ten – they all, with the exception of Glenda, had household chores to do, often involving the hens.

> We all had our own bits to do, like feed the hens, and the hens just weren't in your back garden, the hens could be half a mile away up the top of the fields. So that was our job to feed the hens, weed the paths, and do all of that sort of stuff as well, dishes …[236]

For the Guthrie household the guesthouse workload in the summer was relentless, not just for Mrs Guthrie but also for Sandra and her younger sister Lorna.

> The weekends were really quite hectic because that was changeover, so Lorna did bedrooms, and at that time it was a vinyl floor, well linoleum flooring, so everything had to be cleaned. I did washing and ironing (*makes face*) I hated ironing, especially napkins (*emphatic voice*) which were linen and had to be done properly. So yes, and mother was a perfectionist. You could set the dining room table for a meal and you would be told, that it would need to be, that wasn't right.[237]

As they got older, the amount of work the children did increased. From the age of about ten, Albert Taylor started to help his father more, on the tractor and 'with moving lambs and things like this during the lambing time and … with like the chores and help my mother.'[238] It was quite natural for Angus Davidson and his sister to help their father and uncle clean the windows up at Invermark Lodge,[239] and by the age of 12, Kay Law was helping her father quite substantially with the livestock he cared for as part of his role as Head Keeper, and provider of milk for the estate workers:

> One of my main memories with my dad was taking in the cows and out the cows for milking initially and then ultimately I was able to milk the cows, you know with a machine. But that was a huge work that I took off my dad then. I remember thinking and I remember him saying that during the season time when the grouse beating was on, and he was working all

[236] Sandra Guthrie, 00.05.40.
[237] Sandra Guthrie, 00.06.20.
[238] Albert Taylor, 00.11.23.
[239] Angus Davidson, 14.29.08.

> hours, and for me to be able to do that in the morning or that at night or both was you know a huge ...[240]

This broader sense of being all in it together is reflected also in the lack of interest or awareness expressed by the interviewees of differences in status and class. These children were educated at the same school, attended the same church and social events, and were familiar with each other's houses and land: they saw similarity not difference between them and expressed neither resentment nor admiration for the aristocratic family and guests who spent August shooting in the glen.[241] This echoes the findings of sociologist James Littlejohn describing the parish of Westrigg in the Borders before the First World War – also a remote area of tenanted sheep-farmers. While he saw differences in the standard of living between farmers, tradesmen and farm servants, he perceived a remarkable 'cultural uniformity' among them: 'This perhaps resulted from the majority of the persons in these classes receiving the same education from the same two agencies, the parish school and the Kirk. Probably too the fact that the whole population worked provided a basic culture for everyone.'[242] In Westrigg this situation had changed by the 1950s, partly because the estate had been broken up and sold off in parts. However, in Glen Esk where the land ownership stayed stable throughout the period, the impression gained is that - for the children at least - an unusually flat social structure, a community of relative equals, still applied.

OUT AND ABOUT: 'ALWAYS OUTSIDE'

It is not inside the home though that features most strongly in the memories of the Glen Esk children, but outdoors, whatever the weather. While the women recall their domestic experiences much more clearly than the men, both men and women have equally vivid recall of a life spent, in memory at least, largely outside.[243]

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[240] Kay Law, 00.05.08.

[241] The Dalhousies were not classic absentee landlords – their permanent residence at Brechin Castle was only a few miles away, and they spent a portion of their summer at Invermark Lodge at the top of the Glen. Only Angus Davidson showed any interest in them or in association with them, though no animosity was shown either.

[242] James Littlejohn, *Westrigg: The Sociology of a Cheviot Parish* (London, 1963), p. 58.

[243] 'Generally people, and women in particular, remember their childhood kitchens more clearly than any other spaces in their lives' Joan Greenbaum, 'Kitchen Culture/ Kitchen Dialectic'*, Heresies,* 11, no.3 (1981), quoted in Jennifer Craik, 'The Making of Mother: the Role of the Kitchen in the Home' in *Home and Family: Creating the Domestic Sphere,* eds Graham Allan and Graham Crow (London, 1989), pp. 48-65 [hereafter Craik, 'The Making of Mother'], p. 61.

> I was always outside. I was always out with dogs. I used to, there was a huge big wood outside the, at the back of the hill behind the house and I remember walking round that wood probably not every day but it felt just about every day … But always outside, bringing snakes into mum saying, look what I found. That's what I remember … being out in summer days and you were coming in for your tea and then you were going out again and then back in again for bed. So, it was always outside.[244]

That is Kay Law's (b.1956) memory but it is echoed again and again by the other interviewees, like Albert Taylor (b. 1949) who said he was out of the house all the time, 'getting up to mischief. Aye, I was just building huts and things like that. And fishing, did a lot of fishing, a lot of fishing.'[245] As Glenda Hale (b. 1961) pointed out: 'there wasn't really much else to do apart from go outside and play, and that was just the normal thing to do, that you were constantly outside to play.'[246]

The memories of being 'always outside' were quick to surface in all the interviews, and were central to the way they remembered their childhood. It took specific and repeated questions to discover memories of restrictions on this outdoor play. It was what they could do, not what they could not, that was important. Sandra Guthrie's (b. 1946) response to being asked if there were any 'rules' about where she could go is revealing:

> Oh there weren't any! [*laughs*] Yes, there were. We weren't allowed on the hill unless we told mum we were going. We usually got to go, if it was a nice day we could take a picnic. ….. We weren't allowed on the main hill but within reason, within the bounds of the house and the farm and the river to the roth [?] of the larch, well the swimming hole was higher up so we could go up there if we told her we were going, we spent best days up there building rafts, and god knows what [whispering] But I mean no … we didn't really venture to the village, it was more on our own sort of territory. Because Grandad had the hill you see, he had the hill as a farm so it really was all his, and we got up to the big pond but we had to say we were going … but I mean after that we were on our own.[247]

[244] Kay Law, 00.03.37.
[245] Albert Taylor, 00.08.52.
[246] Glenda Hale, 00.03.42.
[247] Sandra Guthrie, 01.10.30.

Most, like Sandra Guthrie, when pressed did recall rules or strictures about where they could go, with restrictions applied to the hill or the river, but what they remembered spontaneously and with enthusiasm was the pleasure of being outdoors, expressed here by Albert Taylor (b. 1949). 'We just amused ourselves, you know, climbing trees and things like that. Always outside, always outside.'[248] Underneath this perhaps was a reality that on the whole they had not gone very far, had stayed 'on our own sort of territory'. Albert recalled being summoned in for tea or bedtime by 'the dreaded shout'.[249] He recognised that the fact he could be called in meant that he was probably only ever a few hundred yards from the house. Glenda Hale (b. 1961), the youngest of the group and the one with the fewest chores, seems to have had the most freedom to roam but also recognises that she probably did not really go that far:

> There was no boundary, I don't remember any rules like that. Erm no, we could go up the hill, we well mostly we didn't go hugely far from home, but no there weren't any boundaries. People didn't worry about the roads, you know you didn't worry about cars on the road and things like that, nobody really worried about things like that so no. I don't remember any rules erm I always went home with wet feet. But there wasn't even a rule about that, us getting wet.[250]

This would seem to be the 'free-range childhood' today's commentators look back on with nostalgia, although none of the interviewees used the word or concept of 'freedom' spontaneously when discussing their outdoor play: perhaps because as Glenda Hale recalled 'I never ever thought [about it] until you asked the question about, did you have any restrictions placed on you. God no, we had no restrictions.'[251] In practice, these were children who generally did have some restrictions about ranging to particular places but had no sense of being penned in: how much further would a child want to go when the wilderness was just outside the house? As Kay Law recalled on being asked if she remembered feeling free: 'I think we had a reasonable freedom, you know I don't remember having to ask to do a lot of things cause obviously everything was on our

[248] Albert Taylor, 00.11.15.
[249] Albert Taylor, 00.13.12.
[250] Glenda Hale, 00. 06.21.
[251] Glenda Hale, 01.23.00.

doorstep. No I think I would've felt pretty free. Free and easy really.'[252] Importantly, this was freedom not just to roam within limits but also to make their own decisions about how they used some of their time. None had watches or can remember curfews, and say now they must have been brought in by their stomachs or by their mother calling, 'Coo-eee Coo-ee … to get us to go home to our beds.'[253]

This outdoor living did not mean that their parents lacked concern for their children's safety. Albert Taylor (b. 1949), growing up right at the top of the glen, one of five with a mother who baked all their food and churned her own butter, remembers that she would not let them go to the burn without her, and took them up there for picnics. She always wanted to know where they were: 'she was there all the time, aye. She was busy, she was busy but she was always, she was always there or thereabouts you know. Always got an ear open for us, you know.' [254] The only time Sandra Guthrie (b. 1946) can remember getting into trouble as a child was when she broke one of these few rules. Aged 5, one day she did not walk home alone straight after school as she was supposed to but instead went with older children to a forbidden nearby pond, covered with green weed.

> I was quite new at school and … there's a pond up the back of school which we weren't allowed to go and I can understand why now, but didn't then and … some of us, instead of going home which I walked down to the cottage, I went up the back and of course I didn't turn up at my usual time so I got a severe row and a hot bum. I remember that because I didn't, I didn't often do anything that was, I was too chicken I think really, but that was bad and that was dad and that was, that was the only time he ever laid a hand on me but I wasn't, it was not needed again. But I just remember being, he was very disappointed.[255]

While the children had open countryside on their doorstep to explore within limits, they very rarely went anywhere else. None went on holidays outside the glen, except Kay Law who visited her mother's family in Stonehaven, about thirty miles away, every summer. Occasional shopping trips to Edzell or Brechin, perhaps to buy shoes or clothes for school, were a rare highlight:

[252] Kay Law, 00.59.50.
[253] Angus Davidson, 15.03.24.
[254] Albert Taylor, 00.18.14.
[255] Sandra Guthrie, 00.09.15.

> Getting a trip down to Edzell was something unbelievable. It was unbelievable a huge place like Edzell, you know. And erm that was just once in a blue moon we got down there and we were never ever, we were never ever away on holiday. But err that's the way it was, just didn't go on holiday.[256]

It was not only the children who lived such contained lives but also most of the adults around them. While most mothers went to buy groceries 'in town' once a week or so none of their parents, barring Glenda's father in the RAF, travelled away much or at all, nor did they seem to want to. Work needed to be done every day of the week so any extended time off was just not part of way they lived – this was true also for Glenda's family even when her father had left the services and was working for the Hydro Board. 'We didn't do holidays' she said, before recalling their only trip away, an abortive camping expedition to Loch Linnhe that had resulted in them being driven home by the midges after only a night away.[257]

No wonder then that for all five interviewees, leaving the glen five days a week to go to secondary school in Brechin or Edzell was a momentous event. Sibley raises the idea that a child's boundaries 'are elements of a geography which is partly experienced and defined by sensations – fear, anxiety, excitement, desire – which shape the developing child's relationship to people and places.'[258] The interviewees responses to being 'always outside' were all positive so that such boundaries as existed were not a matter of concern. Leaving to go to secondary school aroused very different emotions. Sandra Guthrie's (b.1946) response was almost visceral: 'I think the only sense of panic I ever had was when I went to secondary school in Brechin because I was the only one going up, but that's obviously when I was eleven, twelve. And that was horrendous, I hated it [*emphatic*].'[259]

Sandra's was the strongest reaction but for all of them it was, as Albert Taylor (b.1949) described it, 'a shock to the system.' He looks back and sees the isolation of his childhood as having created a problem of shyness for him and all his siblings which had to

[256] Albert Taylor, 00.11.23.
[257] Glenda Hale, 00.38.40.
[258] Sibley, 'Families and Domestic Routines', p. 124.
[259] Sandra Guthrie, 00.12.00

be overcome.[260] In 1967 Brechin High School had nearly 600 pupils, with over 200 primary school pupils also on the same site.[261] For children coming from a school with at most a dozen pupils, 'the sheer noise of all these kids like at break time,' was intimidating.[262] Furthermore, the Glen Esk children were used to knowing everybody around them, but at High School recognised no-one which meant 'you're like this complete outsider' and 'you get bullied.'[263] Sandra Guthrie experienced an overt form of discrimination between herself and pupils from less isolated communities from one particular teacher: 'he referred to us as country bumpkins, I mean you know quite openly, and you were made to feel an absolute idiot if you queried or questioned anything.'[264] Research cited by Colin Ward identified some considerable stereotypical assumptions made by teachers about the rural child so it is not unprecedented that Sandra and the others experienced this prejudice.[265] Later on, after school she re-encountered the same teacher again and 'and he was absolutely lovely. (*Laughs*). So I began seriously to wonder what my attitude was like, whether it was me that was wrong … but I have very vivid memories of being made to look an absolute fool.'[266]

The journey itself added to the difficulties of attending high school. As primary school children, all of them made their own way to school and back to the school in Tarfside by walking, cycling or the school bus. Now there was another twelve miles to travel to the secondary school in Edzell, and further still to the one in Brechin. For Angus Davidson, attending first one secondary school and then another before the school bus service made daily commuting possible, that meant a substantial weekly journey which he still resents seventy years later: 'about thirteen miles to Edzell, and another six miles if I had to go to Brechin, every Sunday night and I had to bike all that.'[267] Even once the school bus service had been introduced, the journey was not easy, particularly for those like Kay who lived at the top of the glen.

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[260] Albert Taylor, 01.08.46.
[261] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 278.
[262] Glenda Hale, 00.35.39.
[263] Glenda Hale, 00.34.30, 00.36.00.
[264] Sandra Guthrie, 00.58.10.
[265] Roy Whittaker and Alan Sigsworth, 'Rural isolation: a cautionary research comment,' in *Educational Disadvantage in Rural Areas* (Centre for Information and Advice on Educational Disadvantage, 1980) cited in Ward, *Child in the Country,* p. 65.
[266] Sandra Guthrie, 00.59.00.
[267] Angus Davidson, 14.22.40.

> The trip to school was a mile on a bike down a sort of dirt track road down to the gardener's cottage. We used to leave our bikes behind their sheds ... And we picked up the minibus to take us to Edzell. And then we caught the service bus that took us to Brechin.

She would leave the house at 7.15am and not be home again until 5.30 pm, and says that the sheer effort of the journey was one of the things that led her to leave school after her fifth year. 'I'd just had enough going up and down that road.'[268]

David Sibley focuses on time boundaries and on control of the children's time and timetables as a mechanism of power and a cause of children's anxiety – 'the internalised whip'. He quotes from an account of a Scottish childhood in support of this:

> My brother and I used to race to the bus stop for the 1 o'clock bus back home to travel the mile and a quarter to a too hot dinner, followed by a sprint down the drive to catch the 1.30 p.m. bus back to school. I remember on one of these racings to and from the bus stop falling onto a newly tarred and stoned road but, dead or alive, I had to get to school. Bells, of course, rang between periods (45 minutes or so) to end play time. [269]

While the children in Glen Esk lived within a formalised time routine with very clear boundaries, their accounts reveal little of this 'internalised whip'. Unlike town children, coming home for lunch was not an option so they were spared that frenetic to-ing and fro-ing. The long journey to secondary school was much disliked but nobody recalled acute anxiety about being late. Getting to primary school on time was also not an issue: children either lived near enough to walk or cycle, or caught the same school bus which in such a small community may simply have waited for them. Albert Taylor recalls dawdling on his way to where he waited for the school bus but not dallying at all on the way home because 'coming back we wanted to go and play, you know.'[270] However he does not seem to have

[268] Kay Law, 00.13.40.
[269] Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, p. 92, quoting from Mass Observation, summer 1988, 'Time', woman correspondent (Mass Observation Archive, University of Sussex). Frustratingly, no time period for the woman's childhood or place in Scotland is given.
[270] Albert Taylor, 00.22.30

been fearful of the consequences of being late, and this was a boy who was once belted for chewing gum in school.[271]

The children seem rather to have lived in a world in which the daily routine was set but not the cause of anxiety, and in which the weekly and seasonal highlights were fairly modest. Every Monday the grocer's van would come up the glen, bringing comics and sweets, along with more useful items like paraffin and food. For Kay Law, Sandra Guthrie and Angus Davidson, Sundays were distinguished by regular attendance at Church but what stands out in their memories are dressing up in their Sunday best and the Sunday meal: 'you always had a roast or something, traditional sort of Sunday. Sunday dinner was chicken or roast beef.'[272] Birthdays were celebrated though not to any lavish extent – the youngest, Glenda Hale, remembers presents from family and blowing out candles but no 'fancy birthday cakes' or parties: 'There was no kids, how could you have a birthday party?'[273] Christmas was more of an event – the Rural always laid on a party in the village hall, and all the children recall presents and stockings on the day itself.[274] However, in Sandra Guthrie's words, 'we didn't have a great deal of carrying-on about anything.'[275]

Attending secondary school however opened their eyes to how different life was for children living less than 20 miles away. Living in the glen, Glenda Hale recalled, 'you're not seeing what other kids have and thinking oh I want that, or I want that …. once you get to high school and you're seeing other people … then of course as a girl you get interested in clothes and you want the nicest, latest things.'[276] It was a revelation echoed by Kay Law:

> the … thing that you felt at the time that you're missing out on were all the things that other kids did, were, you know, they'd go to the swimming pool, they'd go to the pictures, and I'd never been to pictures in my life, I'd never been at a swimming pool in my life. … you know you felt you were missing out.[277]

[271] Albert Taylor, 00.35.00
[272] Kay Law, 00.50.07
[273] Glenda Hale, 01.12.08
[274] The 'Rural' was the name by which the Women's Rural Institute was often known, the organisation known as the Women's Institute in England.
[275] Sandra Guthrie, 50.50
[276] Glenda Hale, 01.03.44
[277] Kay Law, 00.43.30

It was in recalling memories of staying as a teenager for weekends with a friend in Edzell that Kay did spontaneously use the idea of freedom. 'That was a taste of getting a wee bit of freedom … You know sorta oh I can stay away and all that sort of thing. And you kind of rebelled against it a wee bit, I do remember going through all that.'[278] Freedom then was a concept more readily used by her in relation to behaviour and to being away from the restrictions of family and a way of life – or close to the amenities of the town even one as small as Edzell – than to a right to roam over land that was on her doorstep. Growing up in rural isolation did not confer immunity from teenage rebellion.

OUT AND ABOUT: WORK, PLAY AND TATTIES

The farming and sporting calendar formed a steady backdrop to their year, and provided most of its highlights. These events provided a time when everyone got together, when children participated in adult activities, and when new people might come in. Sandra Guthrie's (b. 1946) enthusiasm is typical:

> I suppose the landmark times were times on the farm, like lambing, and everybody looked forward to that. Well the kids did, adults didn't but the kids did. And we looked forward to that and the harvest, and things like that, when everybody was together, that was good fun … We objected to going to school when it was the thrashing day, when the thrashing mill came, because that meant a lot of other people were coming to the farm to help and we had to go to school, so it was always 'oh mum I don't want to school' [*laughs*].[279]

Glenda Hale (b. 1961) also remembers summer for this reason:

> Summer was always good because you always had the bales and I can remember, I was never, I could never lift bales cause I was too little erm but you were always running round the fields when they were baling and bringing in bales, and we always used to climb up on top of all the bales, on top of the trailer.[280]

[278] Kay Law, 00.43.33
[279] Sandra Guthrie, 00.59.29
[280] Glenda Hale, 00.09.10

This was not a community in which children were segregated into their own activities, but one in which children participated alongside adults, sharing some of their preoccupations and activities, and separated only from the adult world by school or bedtime. The summer visitors were eagerly looked forward to, but it was the adult visitors who seemed to make the most impact, perhaps because, unlike their own parents, these were adults who had leisure time to spend.[281] For Kay, growing up in the Head Keepers cottage at Invermark, the summer not only marked the busiest time in her parents' working lives but also the company of the staff – 'the girls' - brought up to cook for the guests at the Lodge.

> Swimming, that was another thing, a memory I have with the girls from the Lodge ... On a really nice summer's night we used to go down to this pool at the bridge … And eh go to swimming, had such fun, cause none of us could swim really, we learnt in the river with a tractor tyre and a football. That's how we learnt to swim. I'm still not a strong swimmer, but I can swim. But you know there was no pool, no lessons, nothing … Many a sunny summer night we'd be with the girls going for a swim.[282]

After the age of eleven or so, all the children also started to work for money outside the home and farm, at various seasonal jobs. The money earned went either directly to the household or initially to pay for the costs of their school clothing, with any surplus left over theirs to keep as pocket money although, given the lack of shops, no one had vivid memories of what they spent it on. Some of these jobs were gendered: only the girls worked at the Retreat in the summer, washing up, serving teas or selling sweets at a little stall outside. Kay Law (b. 1956) vividly recalls how tiring this work was, biking six miles down the road, serving hundreds of teas, and then biking uphill six miles home.[283] Kay's wages went first to pay for the costs of school bags or shoes; the surplus she could keep. Beating for the grouse-shooting was more commonly done by the boys, and this too was demanding physically. Albert Taylor (b.1949), for all that he later became a game-keeper, found it quite tough:

[281] See also Angus Davidson 15.03.24 on playing with trainee pilots billeted there in 1940.
[282] Kay Law, 01.16.21
[283] Kay Law, 00.17.54

> That was hard going, hard going, aye. And we saw other people struggling and so that wasn't quite so bad but our biggest problem was we never had enough to eat with us. We should've had just a, a rucksack full of food you know that would've gone on for miles if we'd had that, you know. But erm...we'd always, always run short you know."[284]

Like Kay Law, Albert Taylor kept only a portion of his earnings: 'The dough went home and a lot of it went down to mum's purse.'[285] This expectation of contribution is directly in line with Jamieson and Toynbee's findings for an earlier generation.[286]

Gender clearly played a role in differing expectations of what kind of work the children did but it was not felt keenly by the interviewees. Work after all was something that was done by both parents; it was the kind of work that differed. Again, this chimes with the experiences and analysis recorded by Jamieson and Toynbee who describe how 'the responsibility for providing was not exclusively that of the husband/father or men of the household; women and children contributed their labour.'[287] The only child who chafed against gender expectations was Kay Law who described herself as a tomboy, and recalled not being allowed to take part in the shoot by her father who felt that guns were not for girls.[288] Both girls and boys took part in tattie-picking, part of the seasonal routine for young people, with a two or three-week school holiday in October to allow for children to take part in the potato harvest. There was no commercial growing within the glen so as teenagers the Glen Esk children would go further afield to tattie-pick. Angus Davidson (b.1931) would cycle to the farm from his digs in Brechin and any money earned would go to the household. 'Even my sister, she was married to a game keeper you see down outside Edzell and … she had three children and they all went too …it was all to make extra money.'[289] Kay Law (b. 1956) and her sister also went tattie-picking from the age of about twelve:

[284] Albert Taylor, 00.48.02.
[285] Albert Taylor, 00.48.20.
[286] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. 34.
[287] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. xvii, p. 78.
[288] Kay Law, 01.17.35.
[289] Angus Davidson, 15.25.13.

> I remember it was back-breaking stuff. God. And some of the young lads were in the tractors taking the tatties away and they would make sure that your bit was complete, and they would be getting the whip out sort of thing. Come on. Oh my back's sore.[290]

Most of the tattie-picking the Glen Esk children was unpaid and closer to home. They helped from an early age to harvest the smaller crops of potatoes grown in the glen for local consumption, either for members of the extended family or as part of a payment in kind for agricultural workers. For this there was no pay 'because we got them to eat, so that was your reward.'[291] The children helped at other harvests too, with the hay and neaps being grown as cattle fodder, as well as the work already discussed, such as lambing, milking, cleaning out the hens and changeovers at the guesthouse. This work was expected of them, and is not recalled with much resentment, even when it prevented other activities at the weekend.[292] The experience of other children living in rural Scotland at this time supports this active role. As one child who grew up in Tiree said: 'Oh we all worked, yes… It was part and parcel of life, and you were helping, you were needed.'[293]

In the mid 1950s the children then attending Tarfside School created a collection of drawings and writings which are preserved in a set of scrapbooks. The content, interpretation and meaning of these drawings is considered at length in Chapter Five but even at a surface level they provide a vivid insight into how the children saw their world, portraying a working agricultural community in which children took part as a matter of course. As Matthews puts it: 'By studying children's images of place and space adults are offered peepholes into the private geographies of childhood.'[294] None of the pictures that made it into the scrapbooks are of domestic interiors and most record the outdoor world of agricultural activity or of play in all weathers. Albert Taylor's drawing which he created aged seven, of 'Playing in the Broom' while the rain lashes down gives a flavour of their stoical charm, while the title of a sketch by an even younger child gives a sense of the realities of the rural world the children experienced: 'Brian once took a hedgehog out of a snare. It was caught round the neck.' These pictures give a contemporaneous glimpse of the children's

[290] Kay Law, 00.53.27.
[291] Sandra Guthrie, 00.21.00.
[292] Sandra Guthrie, 00. 50.19 discussing why she never went to the cinema. 'Saturday we were working. *laughs.* You know by the time you were 11 or 12, you know we were occupied at the weekends.'
[293] 'Betty', quoted by Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 49.
[294] Matthews, *Making Sense of Place,* p. 205.

view of their world: part of a working community with an understanding of the work going on around them in which they themselves willingly take part, whether by driving the tractor or by picking potatoes. As Jamieson and Toynbee put it for an earlier generation of crofting children: 'Children did not necessarily have to be told what to do; they could see their help was needed and wanted to participate in the adult world.'[295]

CONCLUSION

Obviously, one needs to be cautious in extracting generalities from just five accounts of childhood, each from families with their own personalities and idiosyncrasies. As Jamieson and Toynbee identify: 'there is a danger of becoming lost in the unique details of individual lives and losing sight of the pressures and constraints people shared with their neighbours.'[296] Nonetheless the accounts are in accord in a number of significant ways. None of these children had a warm space inside the home which was specifically theirs. Instead, they lived their domestic lives in the shared spaces of the kitchen and living room. In memory, the important thing for all of them is that they were 'always outdoors', a situation which they did not instinctively describe in terms of freedom and in which the limited boundaries and restrictions were not chafed against. The open space on the doorstep was important, the restriction against going up the hill was not. They all, barring Glenda Hale, 'helped' their parents as young children, more or less effectively, and from the age of about ten started to take on more significant tasks and chores. From the age of around twelve they variously started to earn money at work outside their family set-up and some or all of the money earned from this went either for things or clothes needed at school, or straight to the household.

The partial exception to this unanimity of experience is Glenda Hale (b.1961), the youngest of them and from a household with fewer direct links to farming. While she enjoyed helping at harvest on her grandfather's farm and worked at the Retreat during her summers from the age of ten, her work was not entangled in a web of family obligation and economics in the same way as the other children. She was not expected to help with chores at home, not even doing the dishes. In other ways though her experiences chime with the more subtle similarities between the interviewees' accounts. Among them is a sense that

[295] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. 34
[296] Jamieson and Toynbee, *Country Bairns*, p. xii

there was a kind of contract between parent and child, that the child owed the parents good behaviour because of the parents' hard work to look after the family. This applied to Glenda Hale too, for all her lack of household chores: 'We weren't expected to do anything really, other than behave.' [297]

Boundaries of all kinds relating to how children behaved and where they went seem to have been very clear and not only well understood by the children but remarkably little challenged or resisted by them. It is perhaps testimony to the strength of this well-understood structure of behaviour and expectations that even retrospectively none of these interviewees framed their memories by parallels or contrasts with children's 'freedom' today, although they did contrast other parts of their experience against what they see of contemporary children and childhood, such as the number of toys present-day children have, how little time they spend outdoors, and how bad they are at going to bed.

These rural children were experiencing something rather different from their urban contemporaries. These were childhoods well removed from objects of desire, detached from the excitement of cinemas and toyshops and seeing other children with different possessions; childhoods where a very small town like Edzell with at most half a dozen shops could seem 'unbelievable.'[298] It was not only consumerism that they were largely removed from but also difference, other children or families with different expectations of ways of life. They lived in a remarkably homogenous community with a distinct sense of its own purpose. Colin Ward writing in the 1980s claims that:

> The children of small holders are notorious among teachers for their attitude that school is something to be got through quietly while the real business of life is somewhere else. Their dilemma is that they are the kind of child people call an 'old-fashioned' boy or girl. Their family lives are built around production, while the whole culture around them stresses consumption.[299]

This then is a story of continuity not change, of how a way of life 'built around production' continued to affect family structure and ethos.

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[297] Glenda Hale, 00.12.10
[298] Albert Taylor, 00.18.14.
[299] Ward, *Child in the Country*, p. 173.

CHAPTER THREE: GROWING UP IN BRECHIN 1930-1970

INTRODUCTION

While the experiences of children growing up in Glen Esk may chime with those of only a small number of others across Scotland, accounts of childhood in Brechin give insight into a much more common experience. Brechin was a small but densely-populated market and mill town which had a population of around 7,000 across the twentieth century.[300] Anderson describes such towns as a 'spacial feature which was in some ways even more important' than that of Scotland's four large cities. In 1901 there were 75 burghs with a population of over 5,000: places which often had important manufacturing roles (as Brechin did) and which also had wider functions as centres for trade, services, fishing and agriculture.[301] By 1931 around 70% of Scotland's children were living in burghs with over 5000 people living in them which, once those in metropolitan areas are discounted, means around a third of Scottish children were growing up in smaller urban areas.[302] The small town experience is a key part of Scottish culture yet, despite this, no other studies have been made of small-town Scottish childhood, or indeed of small-town Scottish life. In many ways the most useful point of comparison has proved to be the sociologist Margaret Stacey's research into social change in Banbury, Oxfordshire, in the 1940s.[303]

This chapter is based on oral history interviews with nine people who grew up in Brechin and were born between 1928 and 1959: five women and four men of varying backgrounds, chosen to reflect approximately the economic, housing and household make-up of the town.[304] As befits a town whose staple industry in the mid-twentieth century was still textiles, two of the interviewees had fathers who worked at the jute mills; two had fathers who worked at the newer Coventry Gauge and Tool manufacturers; and other

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[300] Figures for Burgh of Brechin 1921-1971, GB Historical GIS/University of Portsmouth, 'Brechin Burgh Through Time/Census Tables with Data for the Scottish Burgh/District', *A Vision of Britain Through Time* < http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10358190>. Accessed 16 Feb, 2022. Population figures used in the *Statistical Account* and elsewhere are often drawn from those for the Parish of Brechin, a larger entity than the burgh as it included some of the surrounding farms and settlements.

[301] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 35.

[302] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 97-99.

[303] Stacey, *Banbury.*

[304] See Collett, 'Population and Employment', p. 54 for breakdown of male occupations in Angus as a whole in 1966, of whom 6.7% were textile workers and 8.6% worked in engineering and allied trades. See Ferguson and Gordon 'Brechin' for a description of occupations in Brechin, pp. 273-275.

paternal occupations included a postman, a school janitor, a shop-keeper, a dentist and a farm grieve. All of their mothers' occupations changed with the birth of children: four of them had left the jute mills after having children, two of them who been in domestic service, and one – the dentist's wife – had been a school-teacher. A number of closely-related themes emerge from the interviews, some of which correlate to those found in Glen Esk or Dundee. Like Glen Esk, the parent's (generally the father's) occupation was key to the kind of home life the children had: not just in terms of income but also because it determined the nature of their housing and their domestic timetable, although in the case of Brechin the timetable was driven by the demands of shift-work or shop-opening hours rather than an agricultural day. Like Dundee some of the children experienced hardship and hunger, in one case at least exacerbated by the death of the parent. The interviewee with the most strikingly tough childhood across the whole study was Brian Mitchell from Brechin whose father died when he was six, leaving his mother to cope alone with two children on a cleaner's income.

Again, like both Glen Esk and Dundee to varying extents, children's own work was an important part of their experience and in some cases of the household economy. Close links with the rural community meant that it was expected that by the age of twelve (and often younger) a child would take part in the potato harvest, and very often the berry harvest as well in the summer. Unlike Glen Esk, all such work was paid and the money earned for what was often three or more weeks work made a contribution to the child's upkeep. As one interviewee put it: 'The berry money was for the uniform in the summer. And then … the money from the tatties was for your winter clothes, your boots and … your coat.'[305] Unpaid work was also a feature, whether it was running messages or caring for elderly relatives. Once again, these were children who took part in the running of the household. Other overlapping themes, such as tenement life, street-play, corporal punishment and suburbanisation, are discussed briefly here to draw out the distinctive Brechin elements but will be dealt with at greater length in the Dundee chapter.

However, a theme which emerged more unexpectedly and far more strongly than in either of the other two places was class and, in particular, an acute consciousness of class distinction which formed a constant undercurrent in the interviews. There seems to have

[305] Anne Shand, 00.07.37.

been a strong sense of division within the town, between up-town and down-town, which was defined for children by the different status of the primary school you attended, which in turn impacted upon subsequent education. At one level this is a version of the clashing territoriality found in Dundee and explored in the next chapter but the language used to describe it in Brechin takes a class form in the way that it does not in the recollections of those who grew up in Dundee: words like 'posh' and 'snobby' were frequently and spontaneously used. This class distinction was also reflected in different geographical boundaries for the children, so that the only interviewee who was not allowed to go out and about by herself in the town was Pamela Thomson because she was 'the dentist's daughter.'[306] Arguably, much of this strong sense of class awareness and division may have been caused by Brechin's position as the nexus of both a rural hierarchy and an industrial centre: this was a place where a number of status and class differentials collided and this was acutely felt by the town's children.

BRECHIN: HISTORY AND ECONOMY

Situated on the sloping north banks of the South Esk river, Brechin is one of the oldest recorded towns in Scotland, referred to in the tenth-century Pictish chronicle as 'the great community – or monastery – of Brechin.'[307] This long history is evident in the streets of the old town, surrounding the fourteenth-century cathedral built on the foundations of a much older church, and in the castle at the edge of the town which is still at the time of writing the seat of the Earl of Dalhousie. Brechin acquired Royal Burgh status in 1641, and by virtue of the cathedral many modern institutions in the town, like the football club, claim the title of city.[308] One of a number of small agricultural and manufacturing towns in Angus, like Forfar, Kirriemuir, Montrose, Arbroath and others, Brechin was however notable for its lack of political radicalism compared to the others in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.[309] On the route between Dundee and Aberdeen, the town maintained a modest prosperity well into the twentieth century as a small textile manufacturing town at the heart of an agricultural community for which it functioned as a market centre. The population of the

[306] Pamela Thomson, 00.56.56.
[307] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 268.
[308] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 269.
[309] Bob Harris, *The Scottish People and the French Revolution* (Abingdon, 2016), p. 81.

Burgh of Brechin was just over 5,000 in 1871 but had increased to 6,840 by 1931 and by 1961 stood at 7,115.[310]

The map at Figure 3, surveyed in 1938 and published around 1950, gives a good sense of the size and lay-out of the town in the mid-twentieth century, with its dense housing, the mills down by the river and the castle with its substantial grounds nestled into the south west edge of the town, and surrounded by productive farmland.

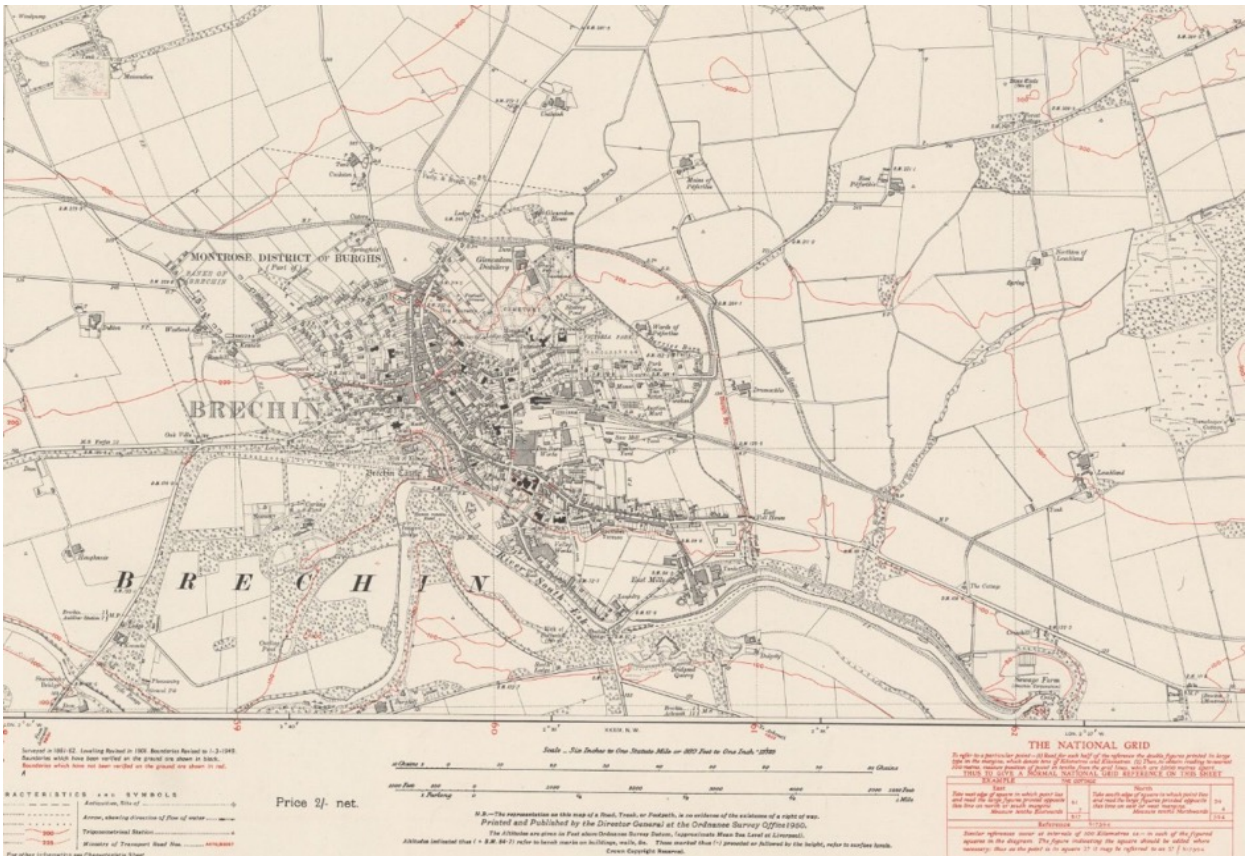

Figure 3, Ordnance Survey, *Six Inch to the Mile. Forfarshire Sheet XXVII.SW.* Surveyed 1938; published c.1950. CC-BY, reproduced with the permission of the National Library of Scotland.

The town had a mixed economy with jute mills, an engineering factory, a weekly livestock mart and slaughterhouse, a grain-drying plant, a distillery and numerous small shops, all independently owned.[311] Ferguson and Gordon described it with pride as an important shopping centre, 'surrounded by a large agricultural district and with … busy textile factories and engineering works.'[312] This bringing together of industry, agriculture and commerce in

[310] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin' p. 265, population figures for the Burgh of Brechin.
[311] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', pp. 265-276.
[312] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 276.

one place was typical of life in Angus, as described by R. K. Denholm in the *Statistical Account:* 'Small town life and a considerable degree of integration between town and country, are characteristic features of the county.'[313] Or as one of the interviewees, Nan Cook (b.1928), put it more simply, 'it was either factory or farmers you know... and then the shops to serve the folk.'[314]

The weekly livestock marts made evident the close ties between the town and the rural economy around it: on those occasions in the streets of Brechin 'you met sheep and 'cattle-beasts' … at every turn!'[315] Sometimes the encounters would be even closer, with cattle escaping into the gardens of near-by houses, 'leaving huge footprints.'[316] Here people with very different working lives came together: factory shift-workers, independent shop-keepers, tradespeople, professionals like the doctor and dentist, and farmers and agricultural workers who came in to town to buy and sell. The boundaries between factory worker and small shop-keeper, or between farm-worker and factory-worker were porous as is evident in the childhood accounts. Many of the children whose fathers worked in the factory had grandmothers or aunts who kept small shops, and family friends or close relatives who worked in the countryside. This close connection between town and country is seen in the readiness and ability of factory-workers to snare rabbits or keep goats and hens.[317] Nonetheless, there was a strong sense of distinction within the town between those who lived and worked in and around the mills, and the people 'up-town' whose livelihoods were more dependent on the broader community. Clothing, habit, accent and housing served to distinguish people and this was understood by children, as for the ten-year old Betty Jamieson (b.1921) who sent her absent father a sequence of carefully drawn images of men, each wearing a distinctive form of hat, from tweed cap to bowler hat.[318] Like Stacey's description of Banbury, Brechin was a place where while you could not actually 'know' everybody you could place everybody 'in a well-defined social structure which had a recognized status system.'[319]

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[313] R.K. Denholm, 'Way of Life' in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The County of Angus,* ed. William Illsley (Arbroath, 1977), pp. 158-159, p. 158.
[314] Nan Cook, 01.07.19.
[315] Jamieson Family Papers, letter from Betty Jamieson to Charles Jamieson, 21 October 1939.
[316] Alan Finlayson, 00.08.15.
[317] For instance, Enid Finlayson's father snared rabbits, Brian Mitchell's father kept goats and horses. Enid Finlayson, 00.10.16; Brian Mitchell, 00.03.55.
[318] Jamieson Family Papers, letter from Betty Jamieson to Charles Jamieson, 19 October 1931.
[319] Stacey, *Banbury*, p. 11.

The twentieth century was a time of change for the town, as a consequence of changes in farming, manufacturing and transport. In agriculture, while the Edwardian world of hiring fairs and an annual three-day market had been replaced by the small livestock mart and mostly mechanized production, the wars brought a demand for food security which meant not only prosperity for the farming community but also that labour to bring in the harvest became a matter of state concern.[320] Weaving, however, which had long been the staple industry of Brechin, became increasingly precarious throughout the period. At the turn of the century there were three substantial companies running power-looms in Brechin; one closed in 1920 and the other two had both become subsidiaries of other local companies by the 1960s, part of an interlinked weaving economy, weaving jute and linen spun in Dundee and cotton and synthetic fibres from England and India. In the 1950s the number of looms in each mill decreased, as the market demand for longer rolls of cloth led to fewer and larger looms, which in turn meant that to maintain productivity shift-work had to increase dramatically. By 1967 there was a system of single, double and treble day shifts operating, although most mills were quiet at the weekends and overnight. In 1967 the mills were still the biggest employer in town, with nearly 450 employees between them, evenly split between men and women, and this shift-work had a direct and obvious impact on the domestic lives of the mill-workers and their children. [321]

There was also a new business in town, stimulated by the approach of war: the Engineering Division of the Coventry Gauge and Tool Company, which took over one of the disused mill buildings in 1939. In the 1960s the company employed about 400 workers, most of them skilled and male, and some of whom had been trained at the Apprentice Training School on site. Once again most of these workers worked shifts, in this case including a night-shift.[322] The Coventry Gauge and Tool works brought more than just a welcome diversification: with its opening came the arrival of skilled workers from elsewhere, in particular England. This, allied to the significant numbers of troops in the area, including the American base at Edzell just ten miles away, meant that the distinctive speech of the area was becoming diluted. As Ferguson and Gordon put it, the influence of

[320] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 267; Brechin High School papers, Brechin High School, uncatalogued school log books, 1923-1942, 1942-1964, 1964-1987 [hereafter Brechin High School log book plus date].
[321] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 274.
[322] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 275.

education, war, radio and the Englishmen employed in new industries 'have all tended to draw Brechiners from their native tongue. Most are found to be bilingual, employing the Doric with their close friends and relatives and speaking good English in their business dealings and conversation with strangers.'[323] This influx of newcomers helped support a lively social scene in and around the town, with dances every Friday and Saturday in the wider area, making work for dance bands and barmen and much fun for keen dancers like Enid Finlayson, who from the age of 14 would tell her mother she was going to the cinema and actually be going dancing.[324]

The rise of the motor-car had a significant impact on Brechin's transport links. For many years it was possible to catch a train in Brechin and change at nearby Forfar onto the London train but the Brechin passenger station closed in 1952, due to increasing competition from local bus and coach services.[325] In 1976 the new dual A90 road between Dundee and Aberdeen bypassed the town, allowing it 'to recover something of the peace which ought to grace a cathedral city' but making it feel more of a backwater than at any time in its recent past.[326] The biggest change in the town itself in the pre and post-war era was the steady building of new houses, not so much because of an expanding population but as an improvement to the often poor housing stock. Houses were often linked to employment, whether privately – the Coventry Gauge company for instance built its own – or publicly. In 1967 half the houses in the burgh were factored by the Town Council, some of which were reserved for key workers such as teachers.[327]

All of these circumstances impacted strongly on the experience of childhood in Brechin. This was a busy compact town, with a population density similar to that of Edinburgh. Housing occupancy rates were high across the period – there were few empty flats - and despite a continuous building programme, housing density figures also remained high (if well below those of Dundee or Glasgow) so that in 1961 over a quarter of households in Brechin still had more than 1.5 people per room.[328] It was not an

[323] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin,' p. 282.
[324] Enid Finlayson, 00.45.00.
[325] Jamieson Family Papers, Betty Jamieson letter to her father, 6 September 1933; Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 270.
[326] David Graham-Campbell, *Portrait of Perth, Angus and Fife* (London, 1979), p. 149.
[327] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 271.
[328] GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Brechin Burgh through time | Historical Statistics on Population for the Scottish Burgh/District | Rate: Population Density (Persons per Acre), *A Vision of Britain*

exceptionally young place: the percentage of the population in the town aged 14 and under remained at around 22% across the period, against a Scottish national average of around 25%.[329] Nonetheless, there were plenty of children to attend the three primary schools, each with over two hundred pupils, feeding into Brechin High School where the Brechiners were then joined by pupils from the countryside around, including Glen Esk. Until the introduction of comprehensive education in 1970, those who failed the qualifying examination for the High School went to Bank Street School. The number of pupils at primary and secondary school in Brechin in 1966 was 1,386; a figure which includes High School pupils from the rural catchment area and older pupils studying for Highers but which excludes children below the age of 5.[330]

Something of the flavour of the town is given in its weekly newspaper, the *Brechin Advertiser*, founded in 1848. In the 1950s its pages were dominated by reports of whist and beetle drives, prices of cattle at the mart, and a whole raft of classifieds by regular advertisers such as Hendry's, the stationers in the High Street, whose weekly advertisements moved seasonally from the promotion of Book Tokens in January to the selling of Sellotape in December. While coverage of fund-raisers for schools was frequent, the *Advertiser* reflects a society which happened to have children rather than one which was child-focused or in which the children were important consumers. There were no comic strips or puzzles; no advertising aimed at children; and little aimed at parents to purchase on their behalf. In the 1950s neither of Brechin's two cinemas advertised children's matinees and although we know from the oral history that the cinema played a large part in many of the children's lives, the films on show were not specifically aimed at them.[331] This was a busy small town whose children were part of the life of the place, not a priority.

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through Time http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10358190/rate/POP_DENS_A accessed 22 February 2022.

[329] The population statistics for the Burgh of Brechin in 1931 show 1460 14-and-under year-olds against a total pop of 6840; for 1951, there are 1600 in a town population of 7264; and for 1961, there are again 1600 14-and-under year olds in a pop of 7115. There are discrepancies in the figures given depending on whether the infant age group is accounted for separately so I have used the lower figures. GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Brechin Burgh through time | Population Statistics/Age and Sex Structure in Five Year Bands to age 85 (under 1s separate), *A Vision of Britain Through Time*, <|http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10358190/cube/AGESEX_85UP_U1> accessed 23 February 2022.

[330] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 279.

[331] *Brechin Advertiser*, Jan 1954 – Dec 1954.

HOME AND FAMILY: SPACE, BELONGING AND BEHAVIOUR

Most of the children in Brechin grew up in considerably more cramped housing than that of their schoolmates up the road in Glen Esk. Well into the 1960s, most mill-workers families lived in the tenement buildings close to the mills, in one- or two-room flats with an outdoor privy shared with others. The town had had a gas supply since 1864, running water since 1875 and electricity since 1899: despite this, few of the tenements had an indoor toilet or any heating other than open fires.[332] For the children in such families bathing was once a week, either in front of the fire in a hip-bath or, for small children, in the wash-house tub once the weekly laundry had been done. Beds were shared and privacy was hard to find.

It is easy now to lapse into an assumption about the difficulty of such living arrangements: however, that is not necessarily what is recalled by those who grew up in them. Nan Cook was born in 1928: her father worked in the jute mill and her mother who had worked in the mill before marriage was now a cleaner. When Nan was born the family lived in a one-room apartment in River Street down by the mill. They moved several times and by the time she was seven they were living in a two-room tenement flat in Southesk Street. Here, one room acted as kitchen, living room, and her parents' bedroom. In the other, Nan and her sister shared a bed:

> Our bed was there but it was big enough that you had a sort of a ... sitting area but that was more for visitors coming in and having, it was always kept very nice. Your bed just happened to be there and a wardrobe but apart from that it was a little sitting room.[333]

There was no sense of private space, or the specialness of having your own room, no area demarcated for either children or parents except for 'dad's chair … at the side of the fire.'[334] Space to play indoors was at a premium: Enid Finlayson (b.1932) recalls tap-dancing on the kitchen table, for which she and her sister got into trouble, and having to tidy up quickly after playing board games or jigsaw puzzles.[335] Outside though there was plenty of space to play: drying greens, the street, and an area known as 'the muddie', down by the river. Enid Finlayson recalls such play as involving adults as well:

[332] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', pp. 270-2.
[333] Nan Cook, 00.37.55.
[334] Nan Cook, 00.42.18.
[335] Enid Finlayson, 00.05.34.

> At nights the mothers used to come out and play with us, they used to play rounders, ken? And hoist the flag, and used to run and hide and then everybody would come and look for ye. But them the mothers they did come out and sit on the stairs and play with us as well.[336]

Abrams and Fleming point out that while there was much to condemn in tenement life, for women there were also positives: shared childcare, gossip on the stairwell and co-operative work over the washing. For women, they argue 'the tenement seems to have been both friend and foe.'[337] For children too, this may have also been true. The cramped accommodation, shared beds and lack of demarcation between sleeping and living areas were common to all the families in the tenements and, in memory at least, were just accepted by the children, who spent much of their time outside. Even given the power of nostalgia and a loyalty to parents, it seems likely that street life with 'the Union Street crowd' was genuinely felt to be a positive by children at the time.[338] There were generally also friends and relatives nearby to visit and spend time with: Nan Cook 'probably spent as much time with my granny Cross as I did in the evenings because … my mother and father was always doing something.'[339]

Within the confines of the shared indoor space there was a hierarchy, most clearly seen at meal-times which were generally eaten together. Enid Finlayson's family was typical. Her father was prioritised as the wage-earner: 'me dad he got the egg, and one night I got the top, and the next night my sister got the top of the egg.'[340] This prioritising of the father's food chimes with that of experiences in nearby Glen Esk and is found in most of the Brechin interviewees, including the middle-class Pamela Thomson, as it is in accounts of pre-war working-class life in England.[341] While some of the Brechin interviewees who grew up in the 1950s and 1960s were less certain that their father would be served first or get the

[336] Enid Finlayson, 00.36.18.
[337] Lynn Abrams and Linda Fleming, 'From the Scullery to the Conservatory: Everyday Life in the Scottish Home' in *The History of Everyday Life in Scotland*, eds Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 48-75 [hereafter Abrams and Fleming, 'Everyday Life'], p. 50.
[338] Nan Cook, 00.26.44.
[339] Nan Cook, 01.14.02.
[340] Enid Finlayson, 00.10.16.
[341] Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood,* p. 55. Pamela Thomson, 'of course father was always served first', 00.12.58.

better food than the generation before were, there is no indication that this was replaced by any favourable treatment given to children.[342]

Nan Cook's (b. 1928) family provides a contrast to this and were unusual in a number of ways. On top of his day job at the mill, Nan's father ran a dance-band which played at parties and dances in the surrounding area on Friday and Saturday nights. There was a piano in the room which served also as kitchen and her parents' bedroom, on which Nan learned to play and when she was older she would sometimes play in the band. The family owned a car and on Saturdays in the summer her father, who was also the wicket-keeper for the cricket club, would take his fellow players to away matches and charge them for the ride. Nan recalled a sense of her family being unusually free and open:

> I couldn't understand when I went to pick up one of my pals, they were having their tea and there was two tea bread and two cakes and the tea bread was for the two daughters and the cakes were for the parents and I couldn't understand that because [at our house] anything that was on the table was for anybody.[343]

Nan Cook's story nicely illustrates two points: that tenement life was not necessarily experienced as either poverty or poor housing, and that individual lives and families do not always fall neatly into historical patterns.

What was put on the table for dinner depended both on whether the mother was working and had time to cook, and on the relative affluence of the family: mince and tatties if that could be afforded; otherwise, potato soup or a soup made from boiling beef or ham hough. Pudding generally featured on both menus, a milk pudding or cremola being the standards. At times, it seems some families struggled to provide enough food: in Enid Finlayson's (b. 1932) family, 'mostly it was just soup every day and we didnae really have much to eat, we didnae have much to eat.' The proximity to the countryside however proffered a solution:

[342] Alan Finlayson, 01.27.15.
[343] Nan Cook, 00.42.25.

> Washing days we had skirlie, that was meal and onions mixed with fat, but we got mince, but mostly it was rabbit, my dad used to go up this hill, hill wood, it's this big wood, and he used to trap rabbits. [344]

Enid's father 'was a bit of a gambler' and money was tight.[345] Shoes were a struggle to afford: Enid recalls that 'we used to have holes in the soles of the shoes, and mum used to cut out bits of cardboard and put it in your shoe.'[346] It seems unlikely that in the tenement of thirty-six, two-room flats they lived in, Enid's was the only family which struggled in this way, but pride and respectability meant that her mother was keen for the neighbours not to know:

> We were short of money. Cos one day my, I can remember, that it was just gaslights in these days, and the gas had went oot, and my mum didnae have a penny for the gas, and she says "now be quiet" cos you didnae want people to ken you were in, cos the light was out. And we were to wait til my dad come back to get a penny for the meter.[347]

The day operated to a steady timetable, with children coming home for dinner in the middle of the day and there is accord about what time meals occurred at: 12 or 12.30 for dinner, 5 o'clock for tea. The school dinner hour was marked by school bells, easily heard from home in the crowded centre of Brechin, and was actually an hour and a half to allow time to get home and back and eat dinner.[348] Fathers often came home for dinner too, depending on their shift, although there were also canteens available at the jute mills and the Coventry Gauge and Tool company.[349]

Much of the timing of the family's day was driven by the father's shift work, made apparent in the sound of the factory siren which started and ended each shift and which could easily be heard from the tenements.[350] Examining life in the small English town of Banbury in 1960, Stacey found that shift-work had a detrimental effect on family life

[344] Enid Finlayson, 00.09.55.
[345] Enid Finlayson, 00.14.16.
[346] Enid Finlayson, 00.28.00.
[347] Enid Finlayson, 00.14.16.
[348] Pamela Thomson, 00.45.19.
[349] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', pp. 274-5.
[350] Enid Finlayson, 00.18.08.

because 'working life is out of time with home life, with wives' cooking and shopping and sleeping.'[351] Not surprisingly, it seems the nature of the shifts themselves made a difference. In Brechin, family life largely accommodated itself around the shift pattern rather than vice versa, helped by the relatively benign shift arrangements, with no weekend work and few night shifts. Marcia Shearer's memories of growing up above the family chip shop in the 1960s shows the same accommodation of family life to working life, with the family eating 'proper' meals together around the table but delaying their evening meal until the tea-time rush in the chip shop was over.[352] It seems only to have been the introduction of night-shifts in the 1960s that caused a resented impact on family life. Alan Finlayson's (b. 1953) father's work at the engineering company involved night-shifts 'so we had to creep about in the day time and avoid noise. I think he was more bad-tempered when he was on night shift.'[353]

The end was gradually coming for the one and two-roomed tenement flats, as it was for the jute-mills themselves. The Second World War and its aftermath added urgency to a public building programme which had begun in the 1930s, meaning that by 1967 over a thousand new houses had been built in Brechin, changing housing conditions in the town and shifting communities.[354] Alan Finlayson (b. 1953) grew up in housing provided by the Coventry Gauge company: 'Flat-roofed, grey, hard concrete, cold houses, four main blocks of four with an upper floor.' The houses had flat roofs and a condensation problem but nonetheless represented a transformation in living conditions from the old tenements to a more suburban model. Here he had a bedroom of his own to do his homework in, albeit one that was not decorated in such a way as to feel individual. For Alan, the room was never 'sort of this is me, my den … I mean it was never a stamping my identity on a room.'[355] There were no bookcases, 'just books piling up in the bottom of the wardrobe', but it did have an un-heard of luxury, a small gas fire which he was allowed to light himself from an early age.[356]

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[351] Stacey, *Banbury,* p. 9.
[352] Marcia Shearer, 00.46.16 'we always had our tea about half past 6-ish because it was dependent on the shop … the tea time rush started at quarter to 5, thereabouts, and lasted until about 6 o'clock so until tea time was over we didn't have tea.'
[353] Alan Finlayson, 01.25.31.
[354] Ferguson and Gordon, 'Brechin', p. 271.
[355] Alan Finlayson, 01.00.37.
[356] Alan Finlayson, 01.24.19.

Alan was alone in this small comfort. The post-war children growing up in larger and often newer houses often had a specified bedroom, albeit generally shared with a sibling, but it was rarely felt to be 'a special room at all.'[357] Marcia Shearer (b. 1959) shared a bedroom with both her sisters but does not recall doing anything else but sleeping in there.[358] Pamela Thomson (b. 1943) shared a room with her sister: it was chilly, up in the attic and not decorated in any particular way. She recalls the ice on the inside of the windows in the winter and it seems likely that the lack of central heating and cold, damp Scottish winters might have played some role in the slowness of Scottish children to adopt the 'bedroom culture' identified by historians and sociologists more generally. Far from being 'containers of meaning' these rooms were just places to sleep.[359]

There is one interviewee for whom this was different. Fred Coutts (b. 1947) was an only child. His father was the janitor for the High School and the family lived in a flat above the school gym, a building which had started life as a church. His bedroom was a little room off his parents' bedroom and was 'my space you know. I had Airfix aeroplanes hanging from strings across the wall and it was … very much my space and my things there.' Nonetheless as he pointed out, 'the whole house was, was my domain you see, being the privileged only child.'[360] There are hints here towards Jeremy Seabrook's 'gilded cell', a child's bedroom becoming an embodiment of a more cossetting or consumerist attitude to children, filled with things, rewards and prizes.[361]

The experiences of two of the interviewees stand out in contrast to the others and reveal the range of domestic conditions and boundaries in which children lived in Brechin in the post-war period. Pamela Thomson (b. 1943) was the middle-class child of the local dentist. She too lived in accommodation intimately tied up with her father's job, but in her case it was a substantial stone-built house, with the dental surgery on part of the ground floor. Her father's work was inescapable; entrance to the living quarters was actually through the reception area, and the children needed to be quiet in case they were heard. As

[357] Pamela Thomson, 00.6.41.
[358] Marcia Shearer, 00.12.54.
[359] The phrase 'bedroom culture' was coined by McRobbie and Garber and has been subsequently explored by a number of others. McRobbie and Garber, 'Girls and Subcultures'; see for example Sian Lincoln, "I've Stamped My Personality All Over It": The Meaning of Objects in Teenage Bedroom Space, *Space and Culture*, 17, no. 3 (2014), pp. 266-279.
[360] Fred Coutts, 12.20.55.
[361] Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood,* p. 44.

her father often worked until eight o'clock at night, on Sundays and on Christmas Day, this was a constant restriction.[362] Her father's job affected more than the need to be quiet; for her parents it created a sense of status or class position which had to be maintained by their children. Pamela grew up feeling 'you had to behave because you were the dentist's daughter.'[363] Her childhood was one of tight regulations and unexplained rules, and within the home there were clearly demarcated boundaries. Play was in a designated playroom in which there was a rocking horse and other toys, but the children were not allowed to play elsewhere in the house, 'presumably because it would make the place untidy.'[364] Homework would be done in the dining-room, not in the much warmer kitchen, because she would have got in the way.[365] The daily three-course lunch (soup, meat and pudding) was in the kitchen, while high tea was in the dining-room.

These rigid boundaries extended to outside space as well. All the other interviewees recalled a lack of restriction about where they went outside, playing not just in the street outside the home but often roaming some considerable distance from it. Enid Finlayson's experience was typical in this regard, with descriptions of how she used to go 'a way up the hill, and play in the wood there … And we used to go away for the whole day and stay there for the whole afternoon, it was lovely. … we didnae have a watch or anything, must have just been there long enough and just decided to come home.'[366] Pamela Thomson by contrast was not allowed outside to play at all, except in their sizeable private garden, and, as she grew older, recalled envying the freedom of other children to go about the place, when she was only allowed to go out for organised activities like Brownies, Girl Guides or orchestra.[367]

The question is how much this more regulated experience, compared to her peers in Brechin, was typical of her class, and how much it was due to the specifics of her own family dynamics. Certainly, she was frightened of her father, but said there was never any need for physical chastisement 'because my father had a very commanding voice … you would never

[362] Pamela Thomson, 00.56.20.
[363] Pamela Thomson, 00.56.56.
[364] Pamela Thomson, 07.48.
[365] Pamela Thomson, 00.10.57.
[366] Enid Finlayson, 00.02.52.
[367] Pamela Thomson, 00. 47.28.

contradict him.'[368] Her own sense is that for girls of her class 'possibly it was usual, but I think more so with my father.'[369]

Brian Mitchell's (b.1940) story offers a direct contrast to this experience of tightly controlled boundaries. His father was a clerk at the Coventry Gauge Company but died in 1945, leaving his mother on her own to care for Brian and his older brother. The family lived in one of the new houses built for the key workers of the Coventry Gauge Company, and were 'fortunate enough to live in a house that had three bedrooms, a living room and a front and back garden.'[370] The family stayed there after his father's death and his mother got a job working as a cleaner for the company, with the rent deducted directly from her pay. Once, when she was ill, all that was left of her weekly pay-packet after deductions was 5d.[371] However the extra space in the house meant his mother was able to take in lodgers as an extra source of income. Whilst his brother shared a bedroom with his cousin, Brian continued to share a bedroom and bed with his mother until he was about 14. This was not that unusual at the time but for Brian, who already felt marked out by his lack of a father, it was another factor which made him anxious about the views of other children: 'The older you get the more worried, concerned about it, you didnae want other laddies to know.'[372]

It was a hard life, both for the two boys and for her, in which the children were often left to fend for themselves.

> She worked as a cleaner starting at six in the morning, five days a week, until about 9 o'clock. Which meant from the age of five I got up and dressed myself, not always accurately I would hasten to say, you know with jerseys on inside out and so on and have my own breakfast usually cornflakes. My mother used to make up the makings of cocoa, you just had to add the boiling water but I invariably just sucked the chocolate, as it were, by this time with the milk. And, you know it was difficult, it wasn't strictly legal even at that time.[373]

The children often arrived early at school and were let into the school boiler-room by the janitor so they could keep warm. They were also left to their own devices on Friday evenings

[368] Pamela Thomson, 00.13.49.
[369] Pamela Thomson, 00.21.11.
[370] Brian Mitchell,00. 03.55.
[371] Brian Mitchell, 00.09.58.
[372] Abrams and Fleming, 'Everyday Life', p. 50; Brian Mitchell, 00.50.40.
[373] Brian Mitchell, 00.09.10

when his mother was again working, cleaning offices at the end of the week. Brian and his brother would hang around outside the cinema where they would wait for an adult to agree to take them in so they could get a half-price ticket. One old lady in particular would often oblige, taking in a stream of stray children.[374] The boys would then go and wait for their mother.

> I can remember squatting underneath a hedge outside the Coventry waiting for my mother coming out at 10 o'clock. If we were lucky sometimes if it was one of the, they had gatekeepers at that time and a big burning fire if he, there were two or three of them, if they saw us they would take us in and we were nice and warm you know until my mother came out, that was after the pictures.[375]

This is a step on from the self-sufficient travel and play out in the street of his working-class peers and was experienced as distressing by Brian. What is striking is that what would now be considered as neglect was then considered acceptable to the family, neighbours and the school who must have been aware of the boys' situation. It was not legal, as since the 1860s children found outwith the domestic sphere and unattended late at night or during school hours 'were deemed to be at risk and requiring rescue'.[376] There was a family network in place - when his mother was ill in hospital, the two boys went to stay with an aunt, and conversely his mother also took in his orphaned cousin, who lived with them for much of Brian's childhood – so it would seem that the extended family regarded this situation every Friday night as acceptable. One explanation for the limited amount of daily family help may lie in geography: the family lived just over a quarter of a mile from the River St tenements where both grandmothers and his aunt lived. The more suburban housing arrangements of the new housing, in which families relished the relative privacy they now had from each other, in turn may account for the lack of neighbourly help, although it would be naïve to think that such help would always be forthcoming in a tenement.[377] Brian only recalls the

[374] Brian Mitchell, 00.17.10. In Scotland the rules regarding admission of children to cinemas were set by local authorities. The Burgh of Brechin was unusual in requiring children to be accompanied by a parent or guardian. See Trevor Griffiths, *The Cinema and Cinema-Going in Scotland, 1896-c.1950* (Edinburgh, 2012), pp. 72-85.
[375] Brian Mitchell, 36.07.
[376] Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 25.
[377] See for instance the experience of Josie Robertson, discussed in the Dundee chapter, whose widowed father was not helped by neighbours either. Josie Robertson, 00.03.13.

neighbours intervening when a fight between him and his brother, home alone when his mother was out, spilled out into the garden, with blood streaming from both noses.[378] His mother attempted to encourage 'good' behaviour by threatening him with being sent away to an Approved School if he misbehaved 'which made me a timid little boy, I can tell you.'[379] Altogether it was a difficult childhood which, in its exceptionalism among the interviews, nonetheless is illuminating about what children were expected to be able to cope with.

OUT AND ABOUT: BOUNDARIES OF CLASS AND GEOGRAPHY

The very geography of Brechin leant itself to an expression of class. The town is built on the north bank of the South Esk, with at times a steep incline down to the river. The mills and the tenements housing the mill-workers were down by the river, whereas the more middle-class area was uphill around Park Street and above. All the interviewees refer to up-town and down-town as a way of describing where things were in the town, but also to refer to who people were - literally to place them - as when Nan Cook is describing who her mother worked for as a cleaner. 'It was all the up-towners because we lived in Southesk Street which was near enough the bottom of the town and it was all the people at the up-town that had house keepers and that, at that time.' In Nan's case this story is a source of satisfaction because of her family's unusual car-ownership and so her mother's employer 'was the only one that could bum [boast] to them all that her house keeper came in her own car. Because nobody else's housekeepers [did].'[380]

It is not surprising that an adult looking back would interpret this sense of division as a class-based one, because it reflected both parental work and housing and impacted directly on access to education, beginning at primary school. However, it would seem from the language used by most interviewees that even as children, the Brechiners sensed that this was a class distinction. Until 1971 Brechin had three primary schools. Damacre and Andover were both situated down-town and while there was rivalry between them with jokes about 'Andover doggies and Damacre dish-cloots' they were neither of them perceived as 'posh' by their ex-pupils.[381] The junior department at the High School, based

[378] Brian Mitchell, 00.33.44.
[379] Brian Mitchell, 00.38.20.
[380] Nan Cook, interview 00.14.32.
[381] Enid Finlayson, 1.01.45.

up-town, was different. The High School has a history going back to the founding of a chantry for the cathedral in 1429. Although the school came under the jurisdiction of the School Board in 1872, and was recognized as the district centre for secondary education in the 1890s, it still retained some of the feel and status of an old institution, charging fees until the early 1920s.[382] The primary school attached to it continued to charge fees up until 1970 and attending it carried significance: it was considered to be 'posh'.[383] Known as Townhead after the house it was in, it seems to have been used by the 'local gentry' as a prep school and a number of the pupils attending it would then go on to boarding school rather than the High School.[384] Anne Shand, whose father was a postman, attended Townhead in the 1960s and found herself making friends with children from very different backgrounds, children who lived in castles and went on to boarding school, which seemed to her to echo a fictional world: 'The childhood I had, not with my own family, but with other families, was a bit like Enid Blyton. Because I moved in circles that my family wouldn't have moved in.'[385]

The promise of a better education and the status of the school attracted other parents to send their children there. Lindsay Clark's (b. 1943) father was the grieve on a farm just outside Brechin and he attended the High School primary because 'my mother decided that, in her wisdom, that I'd get a better start there.'[386] Part of this better start might have been the background of the other children at the school, another part the school's reputation for improving a child's chances at the 'qualy' and thereby securing entry to the High School. Anne Shand's (b. 1958) older sister had attended Damacre where, because of the size of the year group, they had apparently pre-selected which children they prepared for the examination, leaving the rest with little chance of passing. Her parents were therefore determined that Anne should have a better chance and sent her to Townhead where, allegedly, they 'kept you back until you passed the qualy.'[387]

The sense of difference between Townhead and the other schools was made visible by the need to wear a uniform, which none of the other primary schools required, in

[382] Brechin High School papers, Brechin High School prospectus, 1921-2.
[383] Fred Coutts, 11.29.31.
[384] Anne Shand, 00.05.37.
[385] Anne Shand, 00.05.49.
[386] Lindsay Clark, 00.22.29.
[387] Anne Shand, 00.04.24.

particular a distinctive maroon blazer with a white trim which was also worn by the pupils at the High School up until 1970. The blazer with its school badge on the pocket was a signifier, but it was also a source of struggle if you could not afford it. In January 1954, W. Earnest Wait of Swan Street, Brechin was eagerly claiming 'Now is the time! To Secure Your School Blazers' at a cost from 55' to 85' 6d.'[388] At a time when the average weekly wage for those in manufacturing industries was less than £10 it is scarcely surprising that the uniform acted as a further barrier to Townhead.[389] Because his father was the janitor at the High School, Fred Coutts attended the junior school but the uniform 'was quite difficult sometimes financially you know for the family … I would seem to remember you know my mother acquiring a navy-blue blazer from somewhere but putting the school, the badge on it.'[390] Many children who passed the examination to enter the senior High School could not afford one. Brian Mitchell just simply went without, while for others money earned at the tatties would often be put towards the blazer or other school clothes. The significance of the blazer as both status symbol and barrier was understood, so that when the High School became a Comprehensive in 1970 a new simpler blazer was adopted and the school badge redesigned.[391] At the same time, the private junior school was closed and reinvented as a third state primary school.

The significance attached to which primary school a child had attended continued to resonate as he or she progressed into secondary education. The secondary educational system was based on making distinctions between people: not only whether or not you passed the qualifying exam and therefore attended either the High School or the Junior Secondary at Bank Street, but also which stream you entered at the High School, with A, B and C streams, intended for different career paths and distinguished by whether you learnt Latin, French or no language at all. Even with the introduction of comprehensive education, this rigid streaming continued with the addition of D and E streams to accommodate the children who would have gone to the Junior Secondary, taught by the teachers who had

[388] *Brechin Advertiser,* 9 February 1954.
[389] Based on answer given by Harold Watkinson, Ministry of Labour, 14 Dec, 1954 in House of Commons. House of Commons Debates, 14 Dec 1954, c1570; from < https://www.theyworkforyou.com/debates/?id=1954-12-14a.1570.4 > accessed 1 March 2022.
[390] Fred Coutts, 12.38.50.
[391] Brechin High School papers, correspondence with Lord Lyon. See also 'School Uniform, The Facts', *Brechin Advertiser,* 8 August 1969.

previously taught at the Junior Secondary.[392] Some children felt that this streaming followed class or primary school lines. Anne Shand was in the first year of comprehensive education and, despite her Townhead primary education, found herself in the E stream, 'snobbery came in more there than it had all the time I was at primary… All the ones who had professional parents were in A, B or C. … I was resentful.'[393]

There was also inverted snobbery. Brian Mitchell went to Andover and then into the A-stream at the High School:

> There was snobbery as well you know because you came from the wrong end of the town [yes] but there was also inverted snobbery …. I mean I used to, the, many of the pupils who were in A attended Brechin High School Primary which they had to pay for.[394]

Marcia Shearer (b.1959), twenty years younger than Brian Mitchell, also reported the same persistent inverted snobbery, based on geography, class and the primary school:

> It's kind of on its head, I think, in Brechin a little bit because there were the people at the top of the town and there was definitely, you know, the Andover bottom of the town thing. But the Andover bottom of the town had a pride in being 'the bottom of the town' and actually didn't want to be with these snobby people that were up at the top of the town. [395]

It is a sense of distinction that lingers even in retrospect. Discussing the use of the belt, Lindsay Clark (b. 1943) recalled that the belt was never necessary at the private primary school but 'once you go into the secondary school you were bringing in all the people that come from the other schools you know so there was kind of a different mix of people.' His implication is that the different mix of people, from 'Damacre school and Andover School', led to poor behaviour and the use of the belt becoming more commonplace.[396]
Brian Mitchell (b.1940) remembers one more overt incident which made him furious:

[392] Anne Shand, 00.11.28.
[393] Anne Shand, 00.10.53.
[394] Brian Mitchell, 01.13.59.
[395] Marcia Shearer, 01.55.48.
[396] Lindsay Clark, 00.44.11.

> I used to go with this chap who was a former FP [Former Pupil] of the primary High School and his father had a furnishing business in Brechin and he was a nice guy … and we used to go to the pictures together. And I remember on this occasion … he met some of these older girls in his brother's class who had also been at the primary and they [were] sort of phew! Who, what, and one of them said 'why are you going with that?' … and I was blazing you know. [397]

It is scarcely surprising to find class and education allied. What is striking is how intensely it seems to have been felt even at an early age and how vividly it is recalled by people looking back, often with fifty or sixty years of life experience between them and their primary school. It was an attitude of difference which exacerbated another boundary between child and school, that of language. What many children spoke at home was often not considered acceptable at school. Even simple Scots words were not allowed: 'you were brought up to use terms that were not acceptable. You weren't allowed to say aye.'[398] For the first few years of High School Brian Mitchell was a school refuser, pretending to be ill so he could stay at home. Part of that may have been anxiety about losing another parent, but an inhibition about communication did not help.

> Kids of my generation, from my background, you know working-class, when they went to primary school they spoke Scots. They used terms like pow and mashacker [?] and every time they used such a term they were warned not to, you had to speak English. By the time you got to high school you were supposed to speak French or, you know, learn French and I was too inhibited and I know that now, that's why.[399]

Betty Jamieson (b.1921), whose grandfather was the local bank manager and who spent part of her childhood in London and part in Brechin, made frequent observations about language and accent in her letters to her father, describing one girl's voice as 'awfully Scotch' and conversely, disapproving of the way the Countess of Dalhousie spoke when heard opening an event of some kind: **'**She's a rotten speaker with a lisp and a cockney

[397] Brian Mitchell, 01.15.03.
[398] Brian Mitchell, 01.51.45.
[399] Brian Mitchell 01.49.00.

accent. We couldn't hear a word she said.' [400] The judgements and the snobbery could go either way, but the process of judgement seems to have been constant. Anne Shand (b. 1958) recalled having to change her accent between her private primary school and the High School, 'because …we were all quite proper, you know. And when you started to mix with the others, you know, you had to start and be a bit more slang.'[401]

Even beyond the distinction of language, geography and primary school, in a small town like Brechin, with a complex network of family and other relationships, it was hard to escape people knowing who you were. At one level, for children this simply meant that you could be easily identified whatever you got up to, as for Anne Shand whose father was a postman: 'everybody knew him so they knew who I was.'[402] It also meant you could be 'placed' within the social structure. For Pamela Thomson (b. 1943) this acted as a more explicit form of control: because she was the dentist's daughter not only would everyone know who she was, they would apparently also expect a certain level of behaviour from her. Marcia Shearer's (b. 1959) family lived at the bottom end of town, above their chip shop but her father also owned a sport and gun shop at the top end of town and was a local councillor, putting them in an anomalous position.

> For people at the top end of the town he was a businessman. For people at the bottom end of the town he was Bob, 'Chippy Bob' that he got called most of the time ... So, we were accepted in both areas and then he became a councillor a local councillor … So, it used to annoy me greatly that when I used to go to people's houses after I went to secondary school, that sometimes I was introduced as Councillor McKenzie's daughter, and I used to go oh 'Chippy Bob's' daughter and I was happier being called 'Chippy Bob's' daughter somehow.[403]

These boundaries not only affected how children were supposed to behave and were defined by others, but also to whom they owed particular deference. Nan Cook (b. 1928) was from the start a girl who had little respect for boundaries. As a small child she would take the shortcut to the outside privy by going out through the window rather than out and

[400] Jamieson Family Papers, Betty Jamieson to Charles Jamieson, 20 April 1935; 30 August 1935.
[401] Anne Shand, 00.07.09
[402] Anne Shand, 00.02.34.
[403] Marcia Shearer, 00.20.46.

down and round the house. So she was perhaps unusually observant and resentful of the class restrictions that were put in her way, as when she went to work at age 14 for a newsagent and was asked to deliver newspapers to the castle.

> We had to walk round and deliver them ... and [I] was told very much to go to the back door and I was very much not happy about serving anybody. I was as good as anybody, I'd been brought up to think that I was as good as anybody else so I felt that I should've been allowed to deliver the papers to the front door if I wanted to do that.[404]

It was a system of deference that not only annoyed her but she felt was wrong. One of her subsequent jobs was as a clerk when she was about seventeen in Symes, an agricultural suppliers', which she did not like because of 'the head scraping off the ground when it was someone, the big farmers that came in.' This kind of hierarchical attitude was repeated within the Symes office at tea-time:

> Every afternoon there'd be a tray brought down with a pot of tea, a scone and a cake. And it was taken into Mr Symes' office and if he didn't eat the both of them [it would be] brought down and the head of the office, Miss Christie, she would get to eat that and if there was anything left we could get it. So, the next day I went up with my mother's home baking and had my own food from then on.[405]

Geography, poverty, language and class all combined to create boundaries in expectations and behaviour for the children of Brechin, boundaries which could be traversed but which marked the ways in which children understood the society around them, and their place in it. There were markers of difference in school uniforms and an inverted snobbery through which the downtown children saw themselves as members of a club in which they could stick together. As Brian Mitchell said, 'there was a bit of them and us and it wasn't all just their fault.'[406] The situation was made more complex by Brechin's role as a market town at the heart of a rural economy where Nan Cook's determination that 'I was as good as anybody' butted up against the deference demanded by titles and landownership.

[404] Nan Cook, 00.09.54.
[405] Nan Cook, 00.22.26.
[406] Brian Mitchell, 01.15.03.

OUT AND ABOUT: WORK, MONEY AND BICYLCES

For Hugh Cunningham and others, the withdrawal from the workplace is one of the defining characteristics of the experiences of children in Western society in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century. Cunningham identified the major change for children in this period as that 'they lost any productive role within the economy, and increasingly gained a new role as consumers.'[407] He further pointed out as a significant detail in this shift that by the mid-twentieth century 'if they did earn any money in a part-time job they kept it for themselves.'[408]

However, work outside the home and for pay which went into the household economy or at least to pay for necessities for the child was a central part of childhood experiences in Brechin in the post-war period, certainly up until the early 1970s. Primarily this was a matter of seasonal agricultural labour, such as picking berries in the summer and harvesting potatoes in the autumn, but there was also other work in which some of the children participated. More than this, it seems, they were seen as useful members of the household, people who could expected to help and carry out specific tasks.

The first of these was of course running messages. Fred Coutts' (b. 1947) experience was typical: he would run to the shops for his mother and grandmother, including buying cigarettes. One of his regular tasks was to take the heavy radio acid battery into the shop for its weekly charge; another of his jobs was to chop the kindling.[409] Others would run messages not just for their own family but also for neighbours, for which Enid Finlayson (b. 1932) remembers getting the occasional ha'penny.[410] The significance of these jobs lies in the sense that children were expected to play an active role in the work that needed to be done, an attitude which is reflected in the way they would also be used to carry out caring tasks for elderly relatives. Enid Finlayson would take care of her bed-ridden grandmother when her grandfather was out; at the age of twelve Nan Cook (b. 1928) was sent to live with

[407] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood,* p. 185.
[408] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, pp. 185-6.
[409] Fred Coutts, 11.55.00-11.58.00. Taking the heavy wet radio batteries to be charged seems to have been a common errand for boys. Brian Mitchell, 00.21.07.
[410] Enid Finlayson, 00.16.00.

an aunt when the aunt's mother died in order to keep her company and to help run the shop.[411]

Brian Mitchell (b.1940) did rather more than this. By the age of eleven he had a regular job, after school five days a week and then a full day on the Saturday, 'working as a message boy for my grandfather's cousin who had a licensed grocer's shop in Union Street in Brechin. And even at that age again it was not strictly legal … and I had to ... you know pretend that I didn't work which was very difficult to do.' [412] Marcia Shearer (b. 1959) grew up above the family's chip shop, and helped in the kitchen from the age of five or so. By the time she was at High School she too 'would be working in the shop at four o'clock or half past four or whenever you managed to get down the road … and you were expected to work in the shop for tea times and you were maybe finished at half past six so from four o'clock to half past six.'[413] Marcia however – born twenty years later and from a family where there was plenty of cash about - got paid for this work the same as anyone else and kept her own money, whilst in Brian's case 'my mother got it all'.[414]

Not working, whether paid or unpaid, running errands or working after school, seems to have been a mark of class or aspiration. Pamela Thomson (b. 1943) was not asked to run errands and 'never had a job at all ... that was another thing that was frowned upon.'[415] Lindsay Clark's (b. 1943) mother, keen to give him the best start in life, also did not ask him to help until he was well into High School: 'my mother decided that you know there wouldn't be any work done until you were of an age to do it.'[416]

However, all the children took part in both the berry-picking and, most importantly, the potato harvest known as tattie-picking. This contribution of children to the harvest had been part of agricultural life for a long time but it was formalised as part of the school calendar in 1939 'to enable post primary pupils to assist with potato crops at neighbouring farms.'[417] From this year on, the Brechin High School log books record the dates each autumn of the 'potato holiday' – dates which differed according to the age of the child, reflecting the amount of labour expected of them, and which soon came to include primary

[411] Enid Finlayson, 00.29.29; Nan Cook, 00.17.27.
[412] Brian Mitchell, 00.22.03.
[413] Marcia Shearer, 10.00; 52.23.
[414] Marcia Shearer, 00. 53.56, Brian Mitchell, 01.18.56.
[415] Pamela Thomson, 00.39.08.
[416] Lindsay Clark, 00.40.47.
[417] Brechin High School log book 1923-1942, 28 September 1939.

school children as well. In most years after the war, the primary school was given a week to pick potatoes and the senior school (pupils over the age of fifteen who had stayed on at school to do their Highers) were sent off for two weeks. The junior school, aged from twelve to fourteen or fifteen, were the main workforce and were generally off for three weeks. On one occasion in 1960, they were off school for a fourth week when 'exemption was secured for five further school days off in order to gather the remainder of the Potato Harvest.'[418]

The children were paid for this work and it was never compulsory: however, few resisted. As Nan Cook (b. 1928) put it:

> It was never a case of are you going, do you want to go it was just a case of it was taken for granted you were gonna go to the berries and the tatties and you saved your wages … the money was always handed back into the house… And she would tell you, you know you would know how much you'd made and that was put aside for where you were gonna go shopping [for school clothes].[419]

Tattie-picking was muddy, hard, and often cold work, collecting the potatoes from the ground where they had been turned up by a mechanical spinner and putting them in baskets. The stretch of ground was divided into 'bits', with children working their way up from picking a 'quarter bit' to a half and finally to a whole, all under the loose supervision of the farm grieve, although there are also hair-raising stories of the tractor being left to run itself along the furrows. It was not easy work and as Fred Coutts (b. 1947) remembered: 'if you weren't quite fast enough you were encouraged by … the grieve to … get working harder.'[420]

Nonetheless tattie-picking is remembered with great enthusiasm by almost all the interviewees, as a 'significant rite of passage' and as a kind of adventure. [421] It was a break from the routine of school and a chance to spend time with a gang of other children and young teenagers, almost without adult supervision, a time to 'run wild' with others.[422] Alan Finlayson also recalled a dangerous edge to this wild unruliness – 'what would be seen as

[418] Brechin High School log book 1942-1964, 24 October 1960.
[419] Nan Cook, 00.29.31
[420] Fred Coutts 12.10.24.
[421] Fred Coutts 12.09.41.
[422] Alan Finlayson, 01.13.05; Fred Coutts, 12.10.24.

quite misogynistic behaviour as well you know, getting girls knickers off and that kind of thing' – along with building bonfires to bake potatoes in, and watching the older lads throw the boxes of potatoes into the trailer.[423]

There was a whole ritual associated with tattie-picking in which some of the pleasure lay, from having to find the work yourself and work out which farm was paying the best money to being picked up by the tractor and trailer on the edge of town early in the morning. Alan Finlayson went to the tatties from the age of nine:

> It was a whole culture really that tattie picking thing … because you'd go out in the street, be up at 6 and my mother … putting soup in a flask and sandwiches and chocolate biscuits and so on, apple, in a canvas gas mask but you know army surplus canvas bag. And everybody had this bag that you got from the army surplus stores, you know [for] your piece … [and on the way home] the rival farms would be driving around dropping people off as well so there'd be this thing of throwing potatoes and shouting abuse at them, you know, trying to hit the other trailer, phew![424]

The chief attraction of the tattie-picking seems to have been the time spent with a gang of friends, on a collaborative purpose, part of the development of a local youth culture. Marcia Shearer (b. 1959) was organising her own picking gang by the time she was 14, in 1973.

> I mean you knew it was hard work but it was enjoyable hard work … everybody liked going you know ... there was maybe half a dozen of us that were all really friendly and you used to have your best friend and they'd mark out the bits with these, you know the guy would stride it out and stick these posts in, and you used to put the transistor radio in the middle one on a basket and then you'd start at opposite ends and pick towards the music you know kind of thing so you could hear it properly. And of course you were always running out of batteries and it was always getting bad reception and, and the dirt was getting into your transistor and things like that but … that's what you did and it was great.[425]

[423] Alan Finlayson, 01.13.05.
[424] Alan Finlayson, 01.09.17.
[425] Marcia Shearer, 01.12.19.

The only interviewee whose memories of the tattie-picking were less enthusiastic was Brian Mitchell (b.1940), who had to continue with his normal after-school job as well, so that when he got home from the tatties at about 5 pm he 'had to rush up and get your messages about five days a week and then Saturday and carry heavy baskets here and there. So sometimes I didn't have anything to eat until about 7 o'clock at night.'[426]

Brian's contribution to the household economy was presumably vital; for most of the others their berry and tattie money was, at the very least, helpful, paying for blazers, boots, Sunday best clothes and winter coats. This seems to have been as true for Alan Finlayson (b. 1953) as it was for Nan Cook and Enid Finlayson from an earlier generation. He recalls rather bitterly having to spend his tattie money on 'smart clothes and some smart shoes … the sort of thing you go to Sunday school and church in.'[427]

The child as consumer – the other side of Cunningham's seesaw of change – seems to have been slow in coming to Brechin. Few of the children had access to any money of their own, barring the odd deposit for a returned lemonade bottle or a ha'penny for running messages, until they started working in the adult world. Pocket money does not feature in many memories: only the two cousins, both only children, Fred Coutts and Lindsay Clark recall receiving any, and even then it seems not to have been very much. Lindsay Clark recalled rather vaguely, 'I had some, not a lot, not a lot … there wisnae much money to go around anyway.'[428] This is at odds with findings from *Our Town,* a survey of English towns in 1943, that 'school children in the poorer districts had far more pocket-money than those of the better class,' though it is true that the most affluent of the interviewees, Pamela Thomson, received no pocket money at all.[429] 'Sweets, ice-cream and comics' were the trio of desirables identified by the authors of *Our Town*: both sweets and comics feature occasionally in the memories of the Brechin interviewees, but seem to have been gifts rather than purchases made by the children. In the case of Marcia Shearer whose granny owned a newsagent's, the comics were read 'very carefully flat on the table because they got sold after we'd read them.'[430]

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[426] Brian Mitchell, 00.25.25.
[427] Alan Finlayson, 01.14.23.
[428] Lindsay Clark, 00.40.23.
[429] Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Towns* (Oxford, 1943), p. 22 cited in Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, p. 191. Pamela Thomson, 00.41.08; Alan Finlayson, 01.06.35.
[430] Marcia Shearer, 01.18.22

It was not that the children of Brechin did not relish the odd possession but on the whole the interviewees remember the relatively modest things they had, rather than recalling a desire for objects they could not have. Birthdays were marked by a clootie dumpling with silver coins in it: 'that was what the birthday was … the dumpling. We didn't have parties.' [431] There were presents for all of the children at Christmas, usually from the extended family, including Enid Finlayson (b. 1932) who recalled with enthusiasm a tray of toffee with a little hammer for cracking it: 'I just thought that was the bees knees, the hammer and I was going about chapping things.'[432] Brian Mitchell (b. 1940) would get comic-book annuals from his aunts, and an apple and orange from his mother; more exciting was 'a clockwork car and it was fantastic, it would vroom!', given to him by a charity.[433] The value of the gifts increased across the period: Alan Finlayson received roller skates and a fishing rod at separate birthdays during the late 1950s.[434] Sixties child Marcia Shearer (b. 1959) was given a Scalextric when she was about ten, and remembered the whole family playing with it on Christmas Day, a nod to the child-driven consumer boom of the period which was said to be happening, as this was a gift she had actually requested – albeit at the previous Christmas.[435]

It would seem the children simply did not have the access to the money to buy toys or comics themselves: the direct relationship between toy manufacturer and child consumer, as exemplified by Barbie dolls and Action men, and which Cunningham identifies as developing in the early 1960s in the United States had not yet reached Brechin.[436] However, one object of desire did feature strongly in many memories, often with a bitter resentment about not having one: the bicycle. Getting a ride on the front or crossbar of your father's bike features in the early memories of several of the interviewees and for some it was the first thing they bought once they had access to wages. Enid Finlayson (b. 1932) was typical:

[431] Alan Finlayson, 01.21.55.
[432] Enid Finlayson, 00.50.16.
[433] Brian Mitchell, 01.42.21. The car was second-hand and the charity was the local Toc H.
[434] Alan Finlayson, 01.21.55.
[435] Marcia Shearer, 01.23.43.
[436] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, p. 192.

> I always wanted a bike, and I never got a bike, and the first time I got my wages from the factory I went up to this bicycle shop and I gave them sixpence every week and I got my new bike, and I joined the cycling club and it was great … so that's what I did with my first wages.[437]

Enid had learnt to ride on her aunt's bike, at a time when not many of the children she remembers in the neighbourhood had bikes of their own. Bicycle ownership and usage among children seems to have increased as time went on. Lindsay Clark, who lived a little way out of town, took himself to school on a bike and recalled that you were only eligible for transport to school 'if you could prove that your family could not afford to buy you a bike.'[438] By the early 1960s bicycle ownership was widespread enough among the children of Brechin for the primary school to run cycling proficiency tests which 'everybody was doing.'[439] Alan Finlayson however was a boy without a bike and had to do the test on a borrowed girls' machine. Matters were made worse when his parents gave his younger brother a bicycle of his own:

> I had a growing sense of resentment because things were more relaxed around him [his younger brother]. There weren't so many restrictions it seemed to me. And ... that sort of culminated in him, his being given a bicycle and I never had been.[440]

No wonder when Alan was 17 and 'earning a bit more because you got paid more for throwing the boxes and stuff' at the tatties, that he bought himself a bicycle from a friend who was upgrading his own.[441] Alan is not alone in the question of bicycle ownership being tangled up with sibling relationships: Pamela Thomson, also an oldest child, 'never had a new cycle, bicycle. My next sister she got a new one but I always had my mother's.'[442] Fifty years later, the memory of longing for a bicycle and the resentment of unfairness still lingers.

[437] Enid Finlayson, 00.38.00.
[438] Lindsay Clark, 00.11.50.
[439] Alan Finlayson, 01.15.27.
[440] Alan Finlayson, 00.48.26.
[441] Alan Finlayson, 01.14.23.
[442] Pamela Thomson, 21.43.

CONCLUSION

In many ways, although to a lesser extent than the childhoods in Glen Esk, these interviewees describe an experience of childhood which lags behind the changes to childhood identified by much of the literature. Almost all of them made some financial contribution to their own upkeep, however minor, and none (with the possible exceptions of the two only children) could ever have been described as the centre of the household, likely to be offered the last pork chop before anyone else, or as avid consumers. In short, a shift in the balance of power between parent and child had yet to occur in Brechin even by the end of the 1960s.

In its most literal sense these children were remarkably free of boundaries, able (with one exception) to go wherever they liked in town and in the surrounding countryside. The day had a timetable of meals, taken together at home, marked out by factory sirens and school bells. At home, which was often tight for space, there was little demarcation of special space – certainly not space set aside for children apart from a shared bed or bedroom for children, but perhaps a chair in front of the fire for the father.

However, as we have seen, boundaries of all kinds constrained them. For children, these constraints include emotional ones, such as shame, resentment or anger, whether for parents who did not understand how important a bicycle was or a mother who neglected you, and it is these emotions that often remain the most important for the adult looking back on their childhood. Overall though, it is the deeply-felt boundaries of social class and position which are most striking. Unlike Glen Esk where the whole community was engaged in related pursuits, in something that from the point of view of the children felt like a joint enterprise, in Brechin shift-workers and shop-keepers, land-owners and labourers jostled together. The kind of deferential 'head scraping off the ground' that happened in the agricultural suppliers when the rich farmers came in did not sit well with the children of skilled textile-workers (and part-time band leaders), like Nan Cook, just as the desire to describe her father as a councillor and business-owner annoyed Marcia Shearer, who saw herself as the daughter of 'Chippy Bob'. David McCrone has identified two different sets of national myths about Scottish attitudes to class, one which sees class conflict as endemic to Scotland, the other a pride in Scotland's perceived egalitarianism, often expressed in the

phrase, 'we're a' Jock Tamson's bairns.'[443] In Brechin, both these ideas came into play, further exacerbated by the presence of a hierarchy based on land ownership, physically expressed in the castle and its resident aristocrats on the edge of town. It is not surprising that these tensions were felt by the children of the town, and in particular not surprising that they came most vividly to life in emotions around access to education, the arena in which 'Jock Tamson's bairns' could show themselves equal.

Above all though, this was a place where everybody knew everybody and family histories were inescapable. While inverted snobbery was common, the desire to change class position was looked on with suspicion. Lindsay Clark (b. 1953) described his mother as having 'ideas above her station … she had aspirations for me and for herself.' [444] She had worked in the jute mill, but was determined that her son would not do the same or be a 'good son of the soil' like his father. As well as sending him to the fee-paying Townhead primary school, she was concerned with table manners and other codes of behaviour: 'Fork and knife and no eating with a knife and all of that stuff. Oh yeah, she was very conscious of all things of that nature you know. How you looked.'[445] Her sense of aspiration successfully fed down to her son, such that when he spent his tattie money on a blazer it was 'something a wee bit better than the normal.'[446] However such aspirational behaviour did not go unnoticed and family history was not quickly forgotten. Lindsay remembers going with his mother many years later to visit some friends of hers, now in an old people's home:

> I went in with her and we were visiting them and we could hear them muttering in the background 'oh what does she think she is, you know, we know where you came from. You know, we know you were the illegitimate child of Maggie Coutts'.[447]

It would seem that in Brechin, with its compact size and acute awareness of position, it was hard to ever quite leave behind the boundaries of class and status that had existed in childhood.

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[443] David McCrone, 'Social Class' in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History,* ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford, 2001), pp. 583-586, p. 583.
[444] Lindsay Clark, 01.16.57.
[445] Lindsay Clark, 01.26.08.
[446] Lindsay Clark, 00.42.17.
[447] Lindsay Clark, 01.17.10.

CHAPTER FOUR: GROWING UP IN DUNDEE

INTRODUCTION

Twentieth-century British urban childhood has been far more intensely studied than either rural or small-town childhoods. This is partly because for most of the century the urban experience was that of the majority of children but also because the contemporary debate about the conditions of childhood was framed around a particular urban landscape. In Thomson's words 'the street was central in thinking about the outside world.'[448] Indeed, the urban child was often, if subliminally, considered to be the 'normal' child, with children in rural or small-town communities understood as exceptions, to be celebrated in children's literature as a kind of contrasting ideal. Despite this there is a paucity of specific urban case-studies and, in particular, of Scottish ones.

What follows is an attempt to unpick and understand the changing boundaries of urban childhood from the point of view of eleven children in one particular city, Dundee, based on original oral history interviews (five male, six female), and supported by accounts from half-a-dozen published autobiographies (four male, two female) and two private hand-written memoirs (one male, one female).[449] The figures from the 1951 Census indicate that around a third of Dundee's wage-earners were in partly-skilled or unskilled jobs, around a half in skilled work, and only twelve percent in intermediate or professional work.[450] The oral history interviewees roughly reflect these proportions, with their fathers' occupations including docker, house-painter, regular soldier, lorry-driver, plasterer and a jute mill overseer, and their mothers having worked in the jute mills, as cleaners or as school cooks, although it is important to note that this classification by occupation disguises time spent

[448] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 5.

[449] The autobiographies I have drawn on specifically for Dundee are George Burton, *Wee Georgie*: *Growing Up in Dundee in the 50s and 60s* (Kelso, 2014)[hereafter Burton, *Wee Georgie*]; Mitchell, *The Nipper*; Maureen Reynolds, *Teatime Tales From Dundee: New Journeys Down Memory Lane* (London, 2009) [hereafter Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*]; Gary Robertson, *Skeem Life: Growing Up in the Seventies* (Edinburgh, 2010) [hereafter Robertson, *Skeem Life*]; Willie Robertson, *On The Milk*, (London, 2009) [hereafter Robertson, *On the Milk*]; Mae Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind Thon Time?: Tales From the Dundee Tenements* (London, 2009) [hereafter Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind*]. The unpublished memoirs are Dundee City Archive, GD/X1288, Mark Dolan, 'Memoirs of Mark Dolan of time at St Mathews Primary School 1969-1972', [hereafter Dolan, 'Memoirs'] and from Colin McLeod's private and uncatalogued collection, Belle Gray, 'Reading From Scratch'.

[450] D.S. Riddell, 'Social Structure and Relations' in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland: The City of Dundee,* ed. J.M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 459-514 [hereafter Riddell, 'Social Structure'], p. 476.

unemployed which was a significant experience for at least two of these fathers and their families. Of the other fathers, two worked for D. C. Thomson's, one as a journalist for *The Courier* and the other as editor of a number of children's comics; one of their wives before marriage had worked as a school-teacher, the other as a journalist. The remaining father was a mechanical engineer for National Cash Registers, whose wife had also worked as a school-teacher. I interviewed two pairs of siblings in Dundee, in each case siblings of different gender separated by ten or more years in age, which slightly skews the class balance as one pair of siblings were from a middle-class family. However, the material drawn from the autobiographies of primarily working-class children help readdress this balance.

Throughout this period the children of Dundee were caught in the midst of changing expectations about where children belonged and what it was to be a child. A prolonged process of slum clearance from the 1920s to the 1980s redrew the boundaries of the city, changed communities and ultimately redefined where children should play, taking them from the street to segregated playgrounds. Changing attitudes to children's labour turned them from wage-earners to the recipients of pocket-money; improved housing created new domestic relationships; dramatic changes in mortality rates and the support of the welfare state created longer-lasting family units. All of these changes redefined the boundaries of childhood itself, and all brought with them conflict and contest, overlaid onto existing fractures of class and faith.

The evidence revealed casts doubt on the generally understood chronology of change, suggesting that in Scotland the shift to the 'priceless child' occurred later and was more hard-won than much of the secondary literature, derived from more prosperous and English or North American sources, suggests.[451] It was only by the late 1960s that the working-class children of Dundee can in any sense have felt themselves to be privileged over adults, and even so they were still far removed from the lucky recipients of the spare pork-chop of Bethnal Green fame.

[451] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child;* Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour'; Young and Wilmott, *Family and Kinship*.

DUNDEE: HISTORY AND ECONOMY

Early twentieth-century Dundee was distinguished by a number of factors, few of them enviable. Abrams has described Scotland at this time as a country in which 'the social consequences of industrialisation, urbanisation, rural depopulation and poverty were of unparalleled intensity … a low-wage and seasonal economy, high mortality rates, and intense over-crowding.'[452] In this bleak litany of problems, Dundee was in many ways pre-eminent. Like the other three cities of Scotland, Dundee had expanded rapidly since 1801, from a population of just 26,000 to one of 176,000 in 1911, an expansion fuelled by immigration into the city from rural Scotland and from Ireland.[453] At the beginning of the twentieth century Dundee was the most working-class of all the Scottish cities, with the fewest domestic servants and the lowest rate of male employment in professional occupations, more densely populated than either Aberdeen or Edinburgh, and its workers and their families lived in the most squalid housing conditions in Scotland.[454]

Dundee was also distinguished by its high rate of female employment, with 52% of the women who lived in the city in 1901 working outside the home, a rate higher than anywhere else in Scotland, including other textile towns like Hawick.[455] There were more women than men living in Dundee, and these two closely-related facts have led often to the characterisation of the city as a 'woman's town.'[456] This popular characterisation has been further embellished by the notion of Dundee as home to 'kettle-bilers': unemployed men who stayed at home to do the housework and child-care while their wives went to work.[457] These well-known ideas about Dundee might lead one to think that the children in the city grew up in homes with working mothers and stay-at-home fathers. However, this was not the case. While to have just over half of all women in the city in employment in 1901 was a high proportion compared to the other Scottish cities – Edinburgh was the next highest with

[452] Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 2.
[453] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations,* p. 101.
[454] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 104 for the class make-up of Dundee in 1901 and for statistics on population density. For housing see J. Butt, 'Working-Class Housing in Scottish Cities' in *Scottish Urban History,* eds George Gordon and Brian Dicks (Aberdeen, 1982) pp. 233-267 [hereafter Butt, 'Working-Class Housing'], p. 248.
[455] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 104.
[456] Christopher A. Whatley, David B. Swinfen, Annette M. Smith, eds, *The Life and Times of Dundee* (Edinburgh, 1993), [hereafter Whatley et al., *Life and Times*], pp. 111-113; see also Valerie Wright, 'Juteopolis and After: Women and Work in Twentieth Century Dundee' in *Jute No More: Transforming Dundee*, eds Jim Tomlinson and Christopher Whatley (Edinburgh, 2011), pp. 132-162 [hereafter Wright, 'Juteopolis'], pp. 132-133.
[457] Wright, 'Juteopolis', p. 137.

38%, and Glasgow close behind – this nonetheless meant that almost half of all women in Dundee were not employed.[458] Furthermore the majority of households in Dundee at that time were headed by a single male bread-winner rather than being dual-income.[459] Even during the particularly tough times of high male unemployment in the inter-war period, while more married women in Dundee did go out to work – from 1921 to 1931 the proportion of married women so placed increased from 24% to 33% - this was only rarely the mothers of small children, even from the poorest families.[460]

The interviewees experiences provide vivid examples of this. In the early 1930s Mary Barlow's (b. 1931) mother, who gave birth to eight children of whom four survived, stayed at home because 'she had the children' even when her husband was unemployed.[461] A generation later Frank Leighton's (b. 1950) mother was the same; while money was tight and frugality was the order of the day, 'she was too busy having kids and looking after them' to go back to work, until she was forced to do so when her husband died, leaving her with five children of whom the youngest was five years old.[462] By 1951, when the rate of married women in waged work had increased across Scotland, Dundee continued to lead the field with over 30% of married women in employment compared to 24% in Paisley and 19% in Glasgow.[463] Nonetheless, the majority of married women were still not earning outside the home. The experience of the interviewees is therefore not unusual: only one of them had a mother who returned to work when her child was a baby, putting the child at the age of four weeks into one of the workplace nurseries provided by the jute mills.[464] The remainder did not work while their children were still at primary school, except for the mother who had been widowed.[465]

Nor did fathers play an unusually domestic role in their children's lives. The 'kettle-bilers' were far and few between: one report in 1905 found many examples of women at

[458] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 104.
[459] S. Browne and J. Tomlinson, 'Dundee: A Woman's Town?'. Paper presented at the Twentieth Century Conference, 26 March, 2009, University of Dundee. Cited in Annmarie Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities in Scotland, 1919-1939* (Edinburgh, 2010) [hereafter Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities*] p. 130.
[460] Wright, 'Juteopolis', p. 142.
[461] Mary Barlow, 00.00.23.
[462] Frank Leighton, 00.27.00.
[463] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 34.
[464] Anne Maxwell, 15.27.07.
[465] Frank Leighton, 00.27.00.

work, their children with neighbours, and the unemployed husband home alone.[466] Valerie Wright has convincingly argued that twentieth-century Dundee was as patriarchal a society as any in Scotland and that housework and childcare remained a woman's job even when she was working.[467] This did not change across the period.[468]

Any assumption therefore that the identification of Dundee as a 'woman's town' defined the experience of their children is not an accurate one. What had a far greater impact on most of the children were the low rates of pay for both men and women, whether the household was single- or dual-income. Todd has argued that insecurity was one of the defining experiences of twentieth-century working-class life: nowhere more so than in Dundee, where the threat of unemployment breathed down the neck of every working-class family for much of the century.[469] Male unemployment rates in Dundee were much higher than the national average – in 1931 they were around 25% compared to 14% for Britain as a whole - and this higher than average rate continues until the present day.[470] The cliché about Dundee is that it was a city built on jute, jam and journalism and while the jute industry painfully declined, both Keiller's Marmalade and D.C. Thomson's remained in business. During the twentieth century other manufacturing businesses were established: significant among them National Cash Registers and Timex, so that even in 1970 about 40% of workers were working in manufacturing.[471] By the 1960s, sociologist D. S. Riddell attempted to strike an optimistic note: 'Dundee is a city in the process of change – change which is taking it out of an unhappy past into a more prosperous future.'[472] Nonetheless the

[466] Dundee Social Union Report 1905, cited in Eleanor Gordon, *Women and the Labour Movement in Scotland* 1850-1914 (Oxford, 1991), p. 165.
[467] Wright, 'Juteopolis', p. 137.
[468] In the 1960s D. S. Riddell pointed out, 'more often than not the high rate of female employment merely increased the burden on the shoulders of the housewife, whose household work and cooking were transferred to the evening.' D.S. Riddell, 'Leisure', in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. J.M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 515-531 [hereafter, Riddell, 'Leisure'], p. 526.
[469] Selina Todd, 'Class, Experience and Britain's Twentieth Century', *Social History*, 39, no. 4 (2014), pp. 489-508, p. 503.
[470] GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Dundee City through time | Historical Statistics on Work and Poverty for the District/Unitary Authority | Rate: Male Unemployment, *A Vision of Britain through Time* <http://www.visionofbritainthroughtime.org.uk/unit/10150553/rate/CENSUS_MALE_UNEM> accessed 22 March 2022.
[471] GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Dundee City through time | Historical Statistics on Industry for the District/Unitary Authority/ Rate: Manufacturing, *A Vision of Britain through Time* <http://www.visionofbritainthroughtime.org.uk/unit/10150553/rate/IND_MAN> accessed 22 March 2022.
[472] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 459.

same author was forced to admit that at the time the average family income in Dundee was less than the British national average for adult males alone.[473]

This consistent pattern of low wages had consequences also for the health of the population and in turn for the stability of the family unit and the experiences of children. The 1921 Census showed that almost one-third of all children in Scotland were living in one-parent households.[474] In Dundee, the situation was exacerbated by particularly high adult mortality rates, and this is reflected in the life experiences of the interviewees, such that three of the six interviewees born before 1940 lost a parent during their early childhood.[475] Each instance of parental death led to a significant shift in the shape of the family and the living circumstances of the children. The loss of a sibling was also a common experience for pre-war children. At the beginning of the twentieth century Dundee had consistently the highest infant mortality rates of the six major towns in Scotland, with a grim peak in 1915 when one in five babies born in Dundee did not live to see their first birthday.[476] While the numbers began to fall thereafter, rates nonetheless remained high. By 1931 more than one in ten babies died before they were one.[477] War also added to the potential for family dislocation as Dundee was one of the areas from which children in Scotland were evacuated, with over 10,000 children leaving Dundee for billets in the countryside in September 1939.[478] Three of the interviewees were evacuated, resulting again in a change in where and with whom they lived.

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[473] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 474. Riddell gives the average income in Dundee for families with working male earners over 21 as £14 11s. 5d, compared to national average for males alone of £14 17s. 0d (citing Ministry of Labour *Gazette*, June 1961, p. 245).

[474] Annmarie Hughes and Jeff Meek, 'State regulation, family breakdown, and lone motherhood: the hidden costs of World War I in Scotland', *Journal of Family History*, 39, no. 4 (2014), pp. 364-387 [hereafter Hughes and Meek, 'State Regulation'], p. 365.

[475] Dundee's adult death rate in 1930 was 20% higher than the British average. GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Dundee City through time/ Historical Statistics on Life and Death for the District/Unitary Authority/Rate: Standardised Mortality Ration, *A Vision of Britain through Time* < http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10150553/rate/STD_MORT_RATIO> accessed 18 March 2021. Josie Robertson's mother died when she was 13 months, leaving nine children including a new-born baby. Mary Barlow's mother died when she was about six, leaving four surviving children. Frank Leighton's father died when he was five, leaving four children.

[476] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations,* pp. 384-385.

[477] GB Historical GIS / University of Portsmouth, Dundee City through time/ Life and Death Statistics/ Infant Deaths, *A Vision of Britain through Time* < http://www.visionofbritain.org.uk/unit/10150553/cube/INF_DEATHS > accessed 10 Jan, 2022.

[478] Scottish Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Scottish Towns: Evacuation and the Social Future*, (Edinburgh, 1944), p. 5.

Plagued then by low pay, ill-health and unemployment, the story of twentieth-century Dundee was also in large part the struggle to rehouse the city. Its Victorian transformation from port town to industrial city had led to a heaving huddle of tenement buildings crowded around the old medieval town. As one observer put it just before the First World War: 'Overcrowding was rampant. Many of the buildings in the denser parts of town were simply rotten, whilst there were between 200 and 300 underground cellars used as dwelling houses.'[479]

A significant public re-housing programme began in the 1920s and continued into the 1980s, focussing on moving people out of high-density multi-occupation tenement housing in the old part of the city and into new less dense housing.[480] While the city's population of around 170,000 people actually only grew by about 6% across the period, this was the biggest expansion of geographical growth in the history of Dundee, driven by the spread of council housing schemes on the perimeter of city – a 'flight to the periphery' which brought its own share of problems.[481] This also had the effect of making it an almost entirely 'suburban' city, with few people left living in the old city centre and the population instead spread amongst a number of sprawling villages or suburbs, some with their own distinct character.[482] A re-drawing of the city's boundaries in 1946 pushed the city further north and east, away from the river.[483] Because of the nature of the rehousing which prioritised families suffering from over-crowding, it was a rare (for which read middle-class) child born in Dundee between 1920 and 1970 who did not experience moving house and changing community during their childhood. Running alongside the constant theme of poverty, it was the process of re-housing and the change in the nature of the communities in which they lived that was arguably the most defining experience of children in Dundee.

Despite these hardships, the city of Dundee was dearly loved by those who lived there, although it drew unflattering comments from visiting writers. The poet Hugh MacDiarmid described it in 1934 as a 'grim monument to man's inhumanity to man' while the journalist

[479] Handbook for the 1912 British Association meeting in Dundee, cited in Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 460.
[480] S.J. Jones, 'The Site and Its Development' in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. J.M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 19-35 [hereafter Jones, 'Site'], p. 31.
[481] W.H.K. Turner, 'The Dundee Conurbation' in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. J.M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 50-68 [hereafter Turner, 'Conurbation'], p. 59.
[482] Turner, 'Conurbation', p. 60.
[483] Jones, 'Site', p. 30.

James Cameron described its 'brutal melancholy' and 'singular desolation'.[484] It is built on a steep south-facing hill looking out onto the wide Tay estuary: one child who grew up there said, 'the wind is enough to take you off your feet' although the views and sunshine provide some recompense.[485] Before the opening of the Tay Road Bridge in 1966 the city was geographically rather isolated, 'a socially self-contained unit' despite its once lively port and close connections with India, a situation exacerbated by its economic focus on just a few industries.[486] This insularity was illustrated by the significant number of local papers published there, morning, evening and weekly, all read far more widely than any national papers.[487] Even now Dundee is distinguished by its sense of self-identity, its distinctive form of Scots and its politics.

HOME AND FAMILY: SPACE, BELONGING AND BEHAVIOUR

There is considerable secondary literature on the urban and suburban family and home in the twentieth century, although much of it focusses on broad considerations about the family, changing gender relationships and the rise of consumerism.[488] Research which concentrates on how life at home was experienced by children is rare, except when the children were in exceptional circumstances such as evacuation. Fewer still have looked at the Scottish experience, with Abrams' study of children in care an honourable exception.[489] Those who have tackled the subject of the urban child at home have tended to examine it through the prism of rising consumerism and prosperity so that the child's experience is seen as part of the privatisation of family life, and children largely understood as people in the process of becoming consumers. As we have seen from the work of Seabrook, McRobbie and others, the child's bedroom is an emblem of this narrative.[490] There is also

[484] Cited in Whatley et al., *Life and Times,* p. 160.
[485] Mitchell, *The Nipper,* p. 67.
[486] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 464.
[487] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 464.
[488] Examples include Graham Allan and Graham Crow, eds., *Home and Family: Creating the Domestic Sphere*, (London, 1989) [hereafter Allan and Crow, *Home and Family*]; Tony Chapman and Jenny Hockey, eds., *Ideal Homes? Social change and domestic life* (London, 1999) [hereafter Chapman and Hockey, *Ideal Homes*]; Claire Langhamer, 'The Meanings of Home in Postwar Britain', *Journal of Contemporary History*, 40, no. 2 (2005), pp. 341-362 [hereafter Langhamer, 'Meanings of Home'].
[489] Abrams, *Orphan Country.* On evacuation, John Stewart and John Welshman, 'The Evacuation of Children in Scotland: Culture, Behaviour and Poverty', *Journal of Scottish Historical Studies*, 26 (2006), pp. 100-120 [hereafter Stewart and Welshman, 'Evacuation'].
[490] Seabrook, *Working-Class Childhood,* p. 44; McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture,* p. 6.

valuable work by geographers such as Sibley, which attempts to understand power structures within the domestic scene.[491]

The examination of the experiences of Dundee children against this framework reveals a kind of time slippage. While much of what they recall seems to fit into a well-trodden narrative, the change in conditions and attitudes comes later than much of the secondary literature suggests and that the much-examined primary sources for England, like Richard Hoggart, imply.[492] The sheer poverty of the housing meant that for many children there was simply no space or money for private bedrooms and child-defined space within the home before the 1970s. This is not to say that boundaries of space, expectation and behaviour at home were not extremely important to these children but rather that the secondary literature is focussed on children from more prosperous families in bigger houses. As Langhamer has pointed out, even by the end of the 1950s much of Britain 'remained excluded from the home-centred society.'[493]

For most children in Dundee born before the Second World War and for many after, home conditions were poor, with families of five or more children, both parents and sometimes an elderly parent or aunt crammed into two rooms in a tenement flat. They shared an outside lavatory with other families and baths for children would usually be taken in the shared wash-house. Beds too were shared, one room serving as living space, kitchen and bedroom. Children at least would generally have a permanent bed – three of them to the boxbed in the kitchen say, as in the case of Mary Barlow (b. 1931), whose foster mother would sleep on a fold-out settee in the same room; or for Stan McColl (b.1925), a bed he shared with his brothers, while his grandfather slept in the same room, also on a collapsible settee.[494] The lack of privacy seems extraordinary to present-day sensibilities, with children sharing beds not only with siblings and older relations but also on occasion with people to whom they were only tangentially connected, as in the case of Moira Bolt (b. 1940) who shared a fold-out settee bed for many years with her step-father's sister. Space to keep private possessions was also in short supply: Moira Bolt remembers having half a drawer for

[491] Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion.*
[492] Richard Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy: Aspects of working-class life, with special reference to entertainments and publications* (London, 1957) [hereafter Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*].
[493] Langhamer, 'Meanings of Home', p. 343.
[494] Mary Barlow, 00.07.21; Stan McColl, 00.04.42.

her clothes and an orange box for her other things, recalling the struggle to prevent the younger children from destroying a book her grandmother had given her.[495]

These crowded domestic environments could be found in Scotland's cities and towns across the period, as we have already seen in Brechin. In 1931 44% of Scotland's population lived in dwellings of one or two rooms; 25% still did so in 1951; and one in ten in 1971.[496] Within these tight confines, there was little room for demarcation of individual space, even for adults, of whom Brian Jackson observed that 'the only place which is private in the way that a professional worker's "study" might be, is the lavatory.'[497] It is doubtful in Dundee how many people felt privacy even there: in 1951 43% of all families in Dundee were still sharing lavatories with other households.[498] Sebba and Churchman argue that where there is no room for a separate adult space within a home this is often a source of 'conflict and tension.'[499] In most tenement homes the only space marked for adults were the two chairs by the fire: nonetheless in the recollections of the children who grew up there, such tension does not much feature. Rather, in Moira Bolt's words, one 'just got used to it … I wasn't in the house any more than I had to be, so, no it didnae feel too bad, too crushed.'[500]

This apparent lack of conflict may be because, for all but the smallest children, the world outside the family's home functioned as another room, the place for play and the place you would be sent when the adults wanted privacy.[501] Moira Bolt recalls one such evening when she was about seven and she was sent off to the cinema while her parents and the baby stayed at home:

> There was one night, there were three cinemas just within walking distance of the house, and the first two I went to, they were full up, I couldn't get in. So I went home and mum and dad were in bed and I thought oh gosh, have I been out too late? No, no, we're just having a rest cos we're tired. Now there's another picture house and here's how to get to it. So I

[495] Moira Bolt, 00.42.00.
[496] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations*, p. 38.
[497] Brian Jackson, *Working Class Community* (London, 1968) quoted in Allan and Crow, *Home and Family*, p. 5
[498] Butt, 'Working Class Housing', p. 254.
[499] Rachel Sebba and Arza Churchman, 'Territories and Territoriality Within the Home', *Environment and Behaviour*, 15, no. 2 (1983), pp. 191-210, cited in Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, p. 97.
[500] Moira Bolt, 00.22.24.
[501] As Anderson puts it: 'no wonder that many working-class children and their mothers spent much of their day in the street'. *Scotland's Populations*, p. 38.

> went off to the other picture house. There was never any question about what was showing.[502]

What throws the experience of housing into particular prominence is the continual process of slum clearance and the creation of new housing schemes. The family would only be able to get one of the new houses when more children came along and they qualified on the basis of over-crowding.[503] This meant that even children born in the 1960s were likely to be born into the old style of tenement housing with few rooms and no indoor sanitation, unless they were the youngest in a family.

The move in itself was significant. For the children and their families, not only did their domestic circumstances change but so too did their school, community and surroundings. As Mark Dolan wrote, looking back at his family's move in 1969:

> Our 2 apartment plus scullery and toilet (no bath) in Lorimer Street would be no great loss compared to the 3-bedroomed, Living Room, Dining Area and modern kitchen and bathroom on the brand-new and quickly sprawling estate. On the downside however I knew only about 60 people in the whole world and 32 of them were classmates at St Peter and St Pauls Primary. Moving school aged 9 was a daunting prospect …[504]

There was nothing new in working-class children experiencing house moves. Molly Weir's reminiscences of Glasgow in the 1910s and 1920s describe with enthusiasm the many 'flits' of her childhood, often just to a neighbouring street. Each move was significant to her as a child because 'we knew our houses so intimately' but there are a number of reasons why this kind of slum clearance move was particularly significant.[505] First, they were generally an upgrade in space and sanitation; secondly, particularly by the 1950s and the new housing estates on the edge of the city, they were a move to a different kind of place and community; and thirdly, the move itself often reduced the autonomy of the adults by making them council tenants. Once you had council accommodation you could not do a flit because if you did so you would not get on the council list again.

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[502] Moira Bolt, 00.23.24.
[503] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 462
[504] Mark Dolan, 'Memoirs' (no pagination).
[505] Weir, *Shoes Were for Sunday,* quoted in Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 38.

Annie Bartie's experience was typical. She was born in 1928, the sixth of eight children, and her first home was a 'hovel' – a single-room basement in Princes St, in the old city of Dundee, with the only water from a standpipe in the street outside.[506] Her family was rehoused in the early 1930s into the newly-built Fleming Gardens about a mile away. Here they had a 'wonderful' flat with two bedrooms, a bathroom, a kitchenette and a living room. The extra space allowed for more demarcation. On occasion, if there were visitors the children might be cleared away so the grown-ups could talk: 'it was – "you lot, in the bedroom!"'[507] Even so, with a family of ten in just three rooms, there was little scope for personal space. Beds were shared and it was only the armchairs by the fire that were labelled as belonging to individual adults: 'We just sat where there was a seat. But … father had his own seat by the fire and mother had her seat at the other side.'[508] When Annie and her three siblings were evacuated to a family in Montrose during the war, the wonder was 'we all had a bed each.'[509] Nonetheless, at the first thunderstorm, all four children clambered into the same bed, only to be separated back to their own beds. They were all home again within the month at their own request because 'we couldn't settle.'[510] Over-crowding and lack of privacy may make a house uncomfortable to live in but they do not take away its ability to be a home, 'a place of certainty within doubt, a familiar place in a strange world, a sacred place in a profane world.'[511] Not one of Annie or her siblings 'ever left the house until the day that we were getting married' and aged 90 she expressed bafflement about 'young un's … wanting houses' of their own before marriage.[512]

This process of transformation is repeated throughout the period. Stan McColl (b. 1925) and his family of parents, grandfather and two brothers went from a two-room flat to a two-bedroomed flat with a living room and indoor bathroom in about 1936.[513] This was a great improvement but even so Stan and his brothers still shared a bed, and slept in the same room as their grandfather. Thirty years later Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) went through a similar experience. She too spent her first few years in a two-room tenement flat, with no

[506] Annie Bartie, 00.00.35.
[507] Annie Bartie, 00.10.06.
[508] Annie Bartie, 00.09.38.
[509] Annie Bartie, 00.28.08.
[510] Annie Bartie, 00.30.18.
[511] K. Dovey, 'Homes and Homelessness' in *Home Environments,* eds Irwin Altman and Carol Werner (New York, 1985), pp. 33-61, cited in Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, p. 93.
[512] Annie Bartie, 00.39.24.
[513] Stan McColl, 00.03.34.

indoor toilet. When she was about four the family moved to a semi-detached house with two bedrooms and an indoor bathroom in a brand-new housing scheme on the edge of Lochee. It was a 'massive improvement' and because it was a house rather than a flat, and one with its own garden and front and back door, it gave the whole family a sense of not just good fortune but superiority.[514] Nonetheless, with just two bedrooms, Anne and her brother shared a bedroom until she was 17 and left home. Looking back on it she is acutely aware of the lack of privacy. At the time however, 'it was just what you did.'[515]

This lack of private space for children even in new houses built in the 1950s and 60s shows the limited acceptance of the ideas of the respective Housing Committee Reports of 1944 and 1945 which had urged the designers of new houses to pay attention to the need for space and the convenient organisation of the home for the bringing-up of children.[516] The home conditions of working-class children in Dundee were a far cry from what has been described as the ideal by the 1950s, with each child having 'her/his own bedroom, decorated to denote his/her interest, passions and temperament.'[517] The shared bedrooms and lack of privacy made the more indoor or bedroom culture described by McRobbie as developing in the late 1960s unlikely for the vast majority of Dundee girls in this period.[518] This not to say there was no indoor culture but that it largely took place in shared social space with the rest of the household. By the 1960s nine out of ten children in Dundee lived in homes with televisions, most of which were on all evening. As one boy said 'One seems to do everything while T.V. is on.'[519] This included reading: as befitting a city which was home to the publisher D.C. Thomson, children on average read more than three comics a week, with significant overlap between sex and age as to which they read, with the *Dandy* and *Beano* read by all.[520] It would be some decades before the 'ideal' of individual bedrooms for children was commonplace in Scottish cities. Once it was, it would be lamented by some parents as it meant children, especially teenagers, spent hardly any time with the rest of

[514] Anne Maxwell, 15.24.59; 'as a child, it made you feel superior,' 15.33.30.
[515] Anne Maxwell, 15.26.34.
[516] Graham Crow, 'The Post War Development of the Modern Domestic Ideal', in Allan and Crow, *Home and Family,* pp. 14-32, p. 16. For England and Wales, *Design of Dwellings: Report of Design of Dwellings Sub-committee of the Central Housing Advisory Committee* (London, 1944); for Scotland, *Planning Our New Homes: Report by the Scottish Housing Advisory Committee on the Design, Planning and Furnishing of New Houses* (Edinburgh, 1945).
[517] Craik, 'The Making of Mother', p. 60.
[518] McRobbie, *Feminism and Youth Culture,* pp. 5-6.
[519] Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 533.
[520] Riddell, 'Leisure', pp. 535-536.

their families. 'Their rooms are their own wee houses, which I don't know is a good thing' said one mother living in the 'cheaper end of suburban family housing' in Glasgow, interviewed in the 1990s.[521]

The only children in Dundee who did not experience either over-crowding or moving were the children of middle-class families: with beds of their own and room to play indoors they had a very different experience. The Blain family lived in a bungalow with a large garden and the loft space converted to make bedrooms for the children. Bill Blain (b. 1932) shared a bedroom with his brother but they each had their own bed, and would play in the bedroom, making balsa wood airplanes on the cork floor which allowed them to pin parts of the plane into place as they constructed it. Unlike the children of Glen Esk, their home had central heating so the bedrooms were warm enough for play. His sister Jenny was much younger, born in 1949. Their parents converted a box-room into a bedroom for her when she was about three or four, 'and I remember insisting that it had to have a gold-coloured carpet in it.'[522] Of the 26 oral history interviews conducted for this research, it is only Jenny and Glenda Hale (b. 1961) from Glen Esk who recall their bedroom being decorated to their taste.

In such a house there was room too for adult space. Bill and Jenny's father worked for D.C. Thomson as an editor, responsible for the weekly boys' adventure papers such as *Wizard*, *Rover* and *Hotspur*.[523] He worked from home sometimes but this was easy for the family to manage without conflict. If he was writing in the drawing-room, 'there wasn't a sort of do not disturb notice on the door or anything but equally, you know, you would tend to not go in and disturb him cause you knew he was busy.'[524] There was demarcated space too in the dining-room where the table was large enough for everyone to sit around, each with their own designated seat.

Such stone-built bungalows as the Blains lived in, set back from the road, were the twentieth-century Scottish heirs to the idealised Victorian home, 'a controlled private realm'

[521] Ruth Madigan and Moira Munro, 'The More We Are Together: Domestic Space, Gender and Privacy' in Chapman and Hockey, *Ideal Homes,* pp. 58-70, p. 66.
[522] Jenny Blain, 00.02.12.
[523] Bill Blain, 00.2.00.
[524] Jenny Blain, 00.44.48.

for the creation of a family life.[525] (See the next chapter for an insight into how this intense domesticity was experienced by children, using the drawings of Colin McLeod, who grew up in such a home in the 1960s, up the road from the Blain household). It has been argued that the physical boundaries of fences, walls, and gateways represented 'the lines of a moral boundary between respectability and social deviance.'[526] The Blains house had such boundaries in the form of a low stone garden wall between the front garden and the street, and a fence at the back, between the garden and the school playing fields beyond. However, the Blain parents actively made these boundaries ones that could be crossed. When the fence was replaced with a wall 'they carefully had places that were bricks out so that it was possible to climb' so that the Blain children could easily climb out and 'the rugby boys' from the High School could come into the garden more easily to fetch their ball if necessary.[527] The phrase 'the rugby boys' is a clue to the other boundaries at work here to regulate the type and nature of the children who might climb in: the playing fields at the back of the house were private and the property of the fee-paying High School. Nonetheless, as Sibley points out, 'with less competition for space there may be less interest in boundary maintenance.'[528] The extra space within the home may have encouraged the Blain parents to be relaxed about the space without.

This is a strikingly different attitude from the more rigid rules about the immediate outside domestic space enforced by the less self-confident and the less well-off, once they had any such private space to regulate. In the 1960s Anne Maxwell's mother had strict rules about who could enter their semi-detached house and garden: her children were not allowed to bring friends into the house and were sent out to play in the street rather than bring friends in to play in their own garden. Anne attributed her mother's behaviour not so much to a fear that the children's friends would make the home untidy, but because 'the house was their house and private. And it wasn't for other people.'[529]

This careful guarding of the privacy of the family home was common amongst working-class families throughout the period, whether they were tenement dwellers or in

[525] Mike Hepworth, 'Privacy, Security and Respectability: The Ideal Victorian Home', in Chapman and Hockey, *Ideal Homes,* pp. 17-30 [hereafter Hepworth, 'Victorian Home'], p. 29. See Charles McKean, *The Scottish Thirties: An Architectural Introduction* (Edinburgh, 1987) for the development of the bungalow in Scotland.
[526] Hepworth, 'Victorian Home', p. 21.
[527] Jenny Blain, 00.06.33.
[528] Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, p. 97.
[529] Anne Maxwell, 16.17.00.

the newer style of housing. A good neighbour was considered to be someone who 'keeps themselves to themselves', and as one Dundonian said, 'I don't approve of running in and out of one another's homes all day.'[530] In a world where money was tight and the family situation precarious such exertions of control over what could be regulated are understandable.[531]

It is hard to exaggerate just how fragile working-class family life in Dundee was, particularly before the introduction of the National Health Service and social insurance in the years after the Second World War: higher than average rates of both unemployment and adult mortality meant many children's families and home lives were built on shifting sands. Families in crisis were not ignored by outside authorities but often these authorities were seen as threats rather than helpers. Josie Robertson (b. 1934) was only 13 months old when her mother died aged 35 of having 'too many bairns', leaving her father on his own with nine children to raise, and living in a one-roomed flat.[532] They were rehoused in 1937 into a three-bedroomed tenement in a new scheme in Craigie; far from the community rallying around the widower with his many children, Josie recalls that 'nobody helped him.'[533] Abrams' work shows how common it was in Scotland for children to end up in orphanages or in care after the death of their mother.[534] Josie remembers the 'Cruelty coming and putting the beds back, and looking in the cupboard' and her father's anger at what he saw as attempts by 'the Catholics' to have them put in an orphanage 'cause they would get paid for it'.[535] Nonetheless, in September 1939 he took up the offer of evacuation and one of Josie's earliest memories is of being in the railway station, wearing a label and clutching 'a paper bag with chocolate and everything in it.'[536] Josie and her younger brother were lucky in their host family: two 'old ladies' of farming stock who lived in Luthermuir, a small village thirty miles north of Dundee. While her older siblings, housed elsewhere, were quick to return back home as many did, Josie and Dominic spent the whole war with the 'old ladies', with occasional visits back to Dundee. Their father said they 'were looking better

[530] D.S.Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 500
[531] See also Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, p. 34 cited in Langhamer, 'Meaning of Home', p. 346. 'Where almost everything else is ruled from outside, is chancy and likely to knock you down when you least expect it, the home is yours and real.'
[532] Josie Robertson, 00.03.13.
[533] Josie Robertson, 00.01.24.
[534] Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 85.
[535] Josie Robertson, 00.15.20-00.15.55.
[536] Josie Robertson, 00.04.26.

looked after than he could' and Josie's memories are happy, settled in the rural community, enjoying good food and the treat of a party frock at Christmas and visited occasionally by their father.[537] After the war, they returned to Dundee but spent their holidays back in Luthermuir. 'We used to say could we no come back and live with you but they would say no, the war's over but when you get to 16 if you still feel like that you can, but when you get to 16 … you don't.' Moving between two households involved considerable adaptation back and forth by Josie and Dominic. The old ladies were strict about table manners, 'minding your p's and q's' and remembering to say 'Please may I leave the table'. Back at home in Dundee her father had no time for such niceties - his attitude was 'if it's there, it's there to be eaten.'[538] It was an experience that marked Josie and her brother out as different from her siblings because they had been 'mollycoddled'.[539]

Josie's experience of shifting families after her mother's death was not exceptional. Mary Barlow's (b. 1931) mother also died when she was young, and she and her sister were informally adopted by their child-minder, after a doctor recommended that they should be put in an orphanage.[540] In her case, the family problems were exacerbated by her father's drinking, a common problem and one particularly felt in Dundee, where 'the liquor problem had long loomed large' and which was the only constituency in Britain ever to have elected a Prohibitionist MP.[541] The impact of parental drinking on children was the subject of vigorous campaigning by the British Women's Temperance Association who maintained that the effects of alcohol were 'cruellest on the children of the country'.[542] A parent who drank had serious consequences for the family's finances. Mary and her siblings would queue at a bakers 'for what we called the olders … yesterday's baking', given out for free because otherwise it would be thrown away.[543] Annie Bartie's (b. 1928) family struggled for the

[537] Josie Robertson, 00.05.36.
[538] Josie Robertson, 00.07.15; 00.12.04.
[539] Josie Robertson, 00.03.40.
[540] Mary Barlow, 00.22.47.
[541] D.G. Southgate, 'Politics and Representation in Dundee' in *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. J.M. Jackson, (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 287-328, pp. 308-309.
[542] Mary Barlow, 00.17.16 on her father: 'he was one of the men that just drank, they didn't really know what was going on. He was hopeless. Anyway, I think it was just that time of life that that's the way the men were, cause there was no work.' British Women's Temperance Association, Greenock Branch, 'Manuscript Minutes', 8 Oct. 1925 cited in Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities,* p. 154. See also Joanna Bourke, *Working Class Cultures in Britain 1890-1960* (London, 1993), p. 61 for figures showing higher rates of convictions for drunken behaviour in Scotland than in England and Wales. See Hughes and Meek 'State Regulation,' pp. 366-8 for discussion of mothers' drinking.
[543] Mary Barlow, 00.19.32.

same reason, and it was her older married sister up the road who made sure 'we weren't hungry'.[544] Anne Maxwell in the 1960s recalls trailing around the streets after dark with her mother, looking for someone from whom to borrow money for the electricity meter 'because my dad quite liked to drink.'[545]

These precarious family situations often had the effect of making the role of older siblings particularly significant. If parents were absent, dead or drunk an older sibling could be a protector; if you had moved families then a sibling who came with you could offer vital continuity. Evacuation in Scotland was organised in sibling groups, rather than by school class groups as in England and Wales, making evacuation a family experience.[546] Mary Barlow's older brother John fought hard to protect his younger siblings when they were all evacuated to a farming family. He ensured his two younger sisters were safe going to and from the unfamiliar school and then when Mary's curly hair was cut off by the woman they were staying with 'wrote to tell my mum he wanted to come home. He said that woman isn't good to Mary and Annie and I'm not staying there any longer … so we got put home.'[547] Annie Bartie's (b.1928) older sister was some sixteen years older than her and was the one who fetched her from the isolation ward when she had scarlet fever.[548] Older siblings also functioned as childminders and substitute parents. Moira Bolt (b. 1940), the oldest of five, was regularly sent off with the baby in the pram under instruction not to come back for some hours, so that her mother could get the washing done.[549]

This responsibility to help rolled down the sibling group as children grew older. For Annie Bartie, 'what used to happen, when the older one that may start at work, then the next took over, going for the rolls and that in the morning.'[550] There was a gender distinction in the tasks allocated: while boys would run messages, domestic tasks and childcare would often fall to girls alone. Moira Bolt felt her mother 'always saw the boys as more important than the girls. Whereas Hazel and I would have to do household chores and

[544] Annie Bartie, 00.37.12.
[545] Anne Maxwell, 15.46.17.
[546] Stewart and Welshman, 'Evacuation', p. 108.
[547] Mary Barlow, 00.13.16.
[548] Annie Bartie, 00.37.12.
[549] Moira Bolt, 01.02.00.
[550] Annie Bartie, 00.22.45.

stuff like that, the boys were exempted.'[551] One contributor to the Dundee Oral History Project, recorded in the 1980s, recalled of her own childhood:

> Everybody took thir week o' the dishes, an' then everybody took thir week o' the scrubbin' the kitchen or scrubbing the lobby or, daein' the room or polishin' the flair an' that, everybody hid joabs, an' never the laddies.[552]

Older children in the tenemented areas were also a community resource. It was expected that they would run messages, not just for their own mother but also for elderly neighbours, and do it for free.

> And then they'd often shout … Annie, come on, go a message… I'd run round the house I'd say, ma, that old wifie wants me to go a message and [she'd say] you get ower and go and message, and if she offers you a penny, you're not to take it because she's an old woman. She gives you a piece [sandwich], fair enough, but don't you take any money.[553]

Mary Barlow was expected to help struggling neighbours with their children.[554] Her foster-mother also laid out what was expected if they went to visit someone for tea:

> When we go the table will be set, the adults will sit down first and you look after the wee ones, and that's what we did. We went and they had the kitchen getting their meal, we went in there wi the bairns and played with them. And then after that she says, you go in and you wait until you're given permission to sit down. Get, take a bairn beside you and make sure they get a biscuit. And we all did it.[555]

These accounts of being expected to help neighbours diminish across the period, showing perhaps the disruption to an understanding of community caused by the change in housing. The expectation of unpaid work inside the home however rolled on seamlessly, although there is a suggestion by the 1960s and 1970s that boys were no longer exempt from

[551] Moira Bolt, 01.43.36.
[552] Dundee Oral History Project, Transcript 13, quoted in Wright, 'Juteopolis', p. 137.
[553] Annie Bartie, 00.35.49.
[554] 'My mum would say, take Maisie's bairns to the pictures, give her a break Mary.' Mary Barlow, 01.04.23.
[555] Mary Barlow, 00.58.24.

domestic cleaning. David Dick (b. 1959) was an only child and had his own allocated household tasks, including dusting and hoovering the lounge on a Saturday morning.[556] The Dundee Social Survey in the 1960s recorded that almost all the girls and three-quarters of the boys 'gave some kind of help in the house, while quite a number helped in several ways ... this help was very necessary to maintain the household as a going concern.'[557]

This obligation for children to contribute both at home and with neighbours was not only because it was helpful but also because it reflected well upon the family as a whole, part of the struggle to maintain respectability. Hughes has argued that this aspiration was particularly internalised by women in working-class communities in Scotland and, as children were the mother's responsibility, the children were the focus of both maternal pride and pressure.[558] An ill-behaved or ill-dressed child does not reflect well on the parent. In the phrase often used, they 'show them up'. Annie Bartie (b. 1928) recalls her mother saying of them:

> Well see you kids, I could tak you any place and you would never show me up. And we would often on a Sunday went to, maybe an old neighbour's house and you more or less sat, and then when the cup of tea came out if you went and snatched the first cake, my mother would go, as much as don't you dare, wait until everybody's had a cake.[559]

Acceptable behaviour was enforced by physical punishment. Stan McColl (b. 1925) recalled how strict his father was: 'If you fell out of line … you suffered' whether by a clap around the ears, or a boot up the backside.[560] In other families it was the mother who dished out the punishment. Moira Bolt (b. 1940) for instance describes physical punishment as so much part of daily life it hardly merited attention:

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[556] David Dick, 00.56.50.

[557] Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 537-8. See also Anne Maxwell 'Sunday was cleaning day. And, you know, my mother absolutely turned into really awful … Because from maybe eight o'clock Sunday morning, and it didn't matter how old you were or what you'd done the night before, you had to get up and help her clean. ... Everything had to be cleaned, you know. Nothing was ever cleaned good enough. And she lost her temper constantly all day because the house had to be clean and then she had her work on Monday.'

[558] Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities*, p. 60; this respectability applied also to the space just outside the household. Mary Barlow, 00.55.00, described the importance of keeping house and door step clean, 'the half-moon circle where they'd been scrubbing the plattie …everybody did it.'

[559] Annie Bartie, 00.16.41.

[560] Stan McColl, 00.07.39.

> There's hardly a day went past when I wasn't slapped and if I did anything particularly out of line it was the slipper or there was a carpet beater made out of cane ... it didn't seem particularly out of the way because everybody was physically punished at that time.[561]

As Thom has shown, this persistence of corporal punishment was not unique to Dundee, despite a gradually growing consensus of disapproval in public discourse.[562] Corporal punishment was also used in school and it is often that punishment which is most resented and recalled, perhaps because it took place in front of others. Josie Robertson's (b.1934) father would use a strop on her hand when he wished to punish her, but it is getting the belt at school that she remembers now with more resentment because it seemed unfair.[563] Children would also face punishment at home for having got into trouble at school: if Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) for instance was belted at school, at home she would get a hard slap because she 'must have deserved it'. In her family, teachers 'knew best', the punishment was for having misbehaved in front of an authority figure.[564]

For all that physical punishment, in school and at home, is now illegal, for some it has become part of the mythology of old-fashioned childhood, a school of hard knocks in which ultimately the child thrived. Gary Robertson (b. 1967) for instance lists four kinds of physical blow, from the cuff to the skelp, and describes it as 'the good old days when a good tanking from being a pain in the arse was accepted as the norm'.[565] Childcare manuals made a gender distinction, often suggesting that girls should not be beaten because it would violate their 'deeply rooted instinct of physical privacy.'[566] This distinction is not much apparent in the oral histories, where instead the difference was between one household or another: that is, if a parent used physical punishment, they did so to both girls and boys. The middle-class Blain children did not get smacked but neither did Mary Barlow whose foster mother felt there was 'no need to hit your children, you talk to them.'[567] The

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[561] Moira Bolt, 01.22.18.
[562] Deborah Thom, '"Beating Children is Wrong": Domestic Life, Psychological Thinking and the Permissive Turn,' in Lucy Delap, Ben Griffin and Abigail Wills (eds.) *The Politics of Domestic Authority in Britain Since 1800* (Basingstoke, 2009), pp. 261-283 [hereafter Thom, 'Beating Children'], p. 269.
[563] Josie Robertson, 00.01.17; See Thom, 'Beating Children', p. 275 on children resisting school but not parental physical discipline.
[564] Anne Maxwell, 16.05.50
[565] Gary Robertson, *Skeem Life*, pp. 16-19.
[566] Mrs Sidney Frankenburg, *Common Sense in the Nursery* (London, 1922) quoted in Thom, 'Beating Children,' p. 263
[567] Mary Barlow, 00.55.20.

Newsons research in Nottingham in the 1960s also showed wide variation within social groups, and that no one class had a monopoly on beating.[568] While class and culture can account for many things, there will always be variations for personality, and in a family much is set by the character of the parents. Sibley draws attention to two types of parent as defined by the psychoanalyst Basil Bernstein, the positional (more authoritarian) and the personalising (with domestic space not so rigidly defined) and this kind of character difference may account for some of the variations between households.[569]

Children's appearance was also important but for many families it was a constant struggle, a push and pull between what they could afford and how they desired their children to appear. One of Mary Barlow's (b. 1931) few memories of life with her birth family is how important it was that she was dressed well for Church on Sunday: her dress would go back in to the pawnshop on the Monday and be redeemed once again the following Friday.[570] This emphasis on Sunday best is found across the country, with children recalling that they had to polish shoes, and for girls to press dresses and do their hair the night before.[571] It was not only girls who would be well turned out; Stan McCall (b.1925) was known as 'the Duke' to his friends because he was 'always spotless' and he and his brothers 'were always smart turned out', not allowed to leave the house unless they had polished their boots.[572] Boots or shoes were the single most expensive item of clothing for any child and a source of financial stress. This cost was acknowledged by authorities to the extent that there were regular grants for footwear made to help poorer families. Annie Bartie (b.1928) recalls not being eligible for 'school board boots' because her father worked but as he often did not hand over all his money to her mother 'we had to do without a wee bit'.[573] For host families during evacuation the discovery that many children were sent out to a new life in the countryside with only a pair of the cheapest plimsolls or sandshoes on their feet

[568] John and Elizabeth Newson, *Four Years Old in an Urban Community* (London, 1968), cited in Thom, 'Beating Children', p. 276.
[569] Sibley, 'Families and Domestic Routines', pp. 130-131.
[570] Mary Barlow, 00.19.53.
[571] Callum M. Brown, 'Spectacle, Restraint and the Sabbath Wars: The Everyday Scottish Sunday' in *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-century Scotland,* eds Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (Edinburgh, 2010), pp.153-180, p. 160.
[572] Stan McCall, 00.13.54.
[573] Annie Bartie, 00.44.25.

was one of the most telling revelations about the poverty from which the children had come.[574]

This clothing poverty persisted into the post-war period, despite the increasing affluence felt even in Dundee although it remained the most resolutely working-class of Scotland's cities.[575] Whereas the unemployment figures in Dundee in the 1920s had been around 12%, and had hovered around the 20% mark in the 1930s, the figures for the 1950s and 60s told a different story, with unemployment around 3%.[576] Nonetheless, the Education Committee in Dundee was still supplying clothing and footwear for hundreds of children every year, their names put forward by the headteacher who had spotted their need.[577]

The desire for outward show did not lessen in the post-war period: if anything, despite or because of the support of increased employment and the welfare state, it seems to have become greater in the struggle for gentility in the new housing schemes. The process of re-housing had exacerbated the tension between affordability and respectability for a number of reasons. The policy of re-housing those with the largest families and the worst over-crowding meant that precisely those who could least afford more expense on housing were those who were most likely to be re-housed. The rent was often double that of the old housing, the indoor plumbing brought with it a new set of bills, and there were other expenses such as home decoration, furnishing and commuting costs.[578] Meanwhile others who could not afford to buy their own home but who did not live in a 'slum' were denied access to the new housing being provided by the council. As the Dundee Housing Corporation acknowledged in 1938, faced with 6,600 applicants on the waiting list for new housing, houses were not available for 'respectable applicants, people about to be married, married couples residing with parents or in lodgings.'[579] The selection process also enhanced a resentment of religious difference as Catholic families were often the largest

[574] Welshman, *Churchill's Children,* p. 49: 'it was shoes that were the main problem.'
[575] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 476.
[576] Riddell, 'Social Structure,' p. 461. By the early 1960s there is also evidence of a growing white-collar class in Dundee, as family firms were swallowed by larger corporations with increased administrative staff and the numbers of people employed by the public sector increased significantly. The building of new private housing schemes in Broughty Ferry and behind Balgay Hill provide some concrete evidence of this. Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 482.
[577] Ian Cowie, 'Education', p. 439.
[578] Riddell, 'Social Structure', pp. 503-4.
[579] Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities,* p. 69.

and thus more likely to qualify for new housing. The competition for the new housing therefore exaggerated existing divisions and arguably fractured a sense of class solidarity.[580]

Furthermore, the constant process of rehousing disrupted old communities and replaced them with new ones, making difference more likely to be perceived. Those who grew up in the old slums near the city centre recall a sense that 'we were all in the same boat' or as Moira Bolt put it, 'rich people were just not involved in our life in any way. So it … just wasn't considered.'[581] With the newer housing, fine distinctions of tenement flat to semi-detached house could be found, and small differences in class and prosperity could be identified at school by who got school meals or not.[582] As Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) observed of her 1960s childhood, 'even in a working-class environment … between the semi and the tenement, the school meals, free school meals, it was a have and have not'.[583] The geographer W. F. K. Turner described Dundee as a city in which the changes in housing had created a clearer 'territorial segregation of classes'. By the mid-1960s the city was divided up into categories, from 'the modern council estates' to the 'professional suburbs' and the result was 'clear and distinct, disengaged sections of urban society'.[584] In the re-organised city, difference was more visible.

What made this particularly stressful for some was the struggle to afford the new housing. Anne Maxwell's (b. 1954) family were simultaneously proud of their new semi-detached house and anxious about being able to pay for it.[585] Money was carefully watched so that on Fridays when they had fish and chips, Anne and her brother would have the cheaper fishcakes while her parents would have fish, a far cry from the spare pork chop going to the children of Bethnal Green fame.[586] However Sundays provided the stage for a display of the family's ability to cope, despite the strain it put on family resources. Anne's mother 'liked the fact that she could dress you up on a Sunday … a sort of showing off'. Anne's brother got dressed in a kilt, with 'tartan pips and beige hose tops' while Anne in winter would have a proper winter coat with 'muffs and buttons and fur collar'.[587] Despite

[580] Hughes, *Gender and Political Identities,* p. 69.
[581] Mary Barlow, 00.53.20; Moira Bolt, 01.43.36
[582] Mary Barlow, 00.53.20
[583] Anne Maxwell, 15.40.27
[584] Turner, 'Conurbation', p. 62
[585] Anne Maxwell, 15.33.30
[586] Anne Maxwell, 15.51.22
[587] Anne Maxwell, 15.42.30-15.44.15

the effort Mrs Maxwell made, she sent the children to church on their own, rather than accompanying them to bask in the reflected glory of their outfits. The purpose of the dress and display was however not for her children but for her, and Anne was anxious that this should be understood during the interview. 'You might think it was all for us, but it wasn't. What I'm trying to get over is, it was all for her.'[588]

There are echoes here of Annette Kuhn's post-war childhood in the suburbs of London. There the consensus among mothers was that it was better to have a girl because you could dress them up; in the kilt and all the trimmings, Anne Maxwell's mother had found a way of doing that for a boy as well.[589] The children were being dressed up not only so they would be a 'credit to their mother' but perhaps also to give the mother herself a different imagined future or to compensate for the hardships of her own past.[590] Special clothing offered the possibility of transformation. Writing of her own 1950s South London childhood, Steedman recalled her mother's conviction that 'the cut and fall of a skirt and good leather shoes can take you across the river and to the other side'.[591] While the Maxwell children's special clothing was only for Sunday, it seems to demonstrate a longing on the part of their mother for something more or better.

A similar kind of aspirational anxiety was also expressed through accent and table-manners. David Dick (b. 1959) was an only child, whose mother sent him to elocution lessons at the age of five because 'she didn't want me growing up with the Dundee accent'.[592] She wanted him to 'better himself' but he seems to have often been a disappointment, in trouble for coming home from school dirty, and with his 'polished shoes … muddy, I remember that was a big complaint'.[593] He would be punished by being sent early to bed 'after a bit of shouting and smacking'.[594] To prepare him for his imagined future, she took great care with his table manners, with lessons in how to hold a knife and fork properly.[595]

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[588] Anne Maxwell, 16.56.45
[589] Kuhn, *Family Secrets,* p. 54.
[590] Kuhn, *Family Secrets*, suggests that her own mother's behaviour was an attempt to compensate for the hardships of her own childhood and this compensation might then lead to resentment and tension, p. 58.
[591] Steedman, *Landscape*, p. 16.
[592] David Dick, 00.16.00.
[593] David Dick, 00.12.30.
[594] David Dick, 00.12.50.
[595] David Dick, 00.19.43.

Boundaries within the home and domestic scene were therefore deeply felt by children in Dundee but given the constraints of space, even in the newer improved housing, this rarely took the form of physical boundaries. There was a shift in attitude across the period from inter-war to post-war but given the process of re-housing it is possible that these changes are as much to do with the change in community as with the turn of the decades. As families moved out to the new housing schemes, children became less of a community resource and were less likely to be sent to help neighbours with childcare or running errands, indicating a move to a more privatised family model. Within the home children remained a family resource, called on to run errands and help with cleaning. They were also significant as emblems of the family's status or respectability, with parental anxieties played out in the way they controlled or dressed their children. This also shifted with the change in housing so that status anxieties, played out in a child's dress or accent, seem to have become more acute over the period.

OUT AND ABOUT: 'WHERE CAN THEY PLAY? WHERE CAN CHILDREN GO IN A CITY?'

As we have seen, the subject of city children working, playing and travelling with autonomy outside in the streets is emblematic of many of the present-day and historical debates about the changing nature and experiences of childhood. Photographic images of street life, with a particular emphasis on 'street children' in 'slum' areas, have been part of British visual culture since the invention of photography, with a distinct Scottish tradition from John Thomson and Thomas Annan on.[596] This reached a peak in wartime and post-war Britain when black-and-white images of the urban child, out and about, by photographers such as Bert Hardy, Roger Mayne, and Bill Brandt became a significant genre, boosted by commissioning by photographic reportage magazines such as *Picture Post*. Tellingly, many of these images were of children playing, a reflection of a vision of childhood as a special time distinct from work. Improvements in lens and film-stock speed made capturing moving images possible in a way it had not been for the Victorian photographers. Nonetheless, the contrast in subject between John Thomson's 1876 image of the independent shoe-black

[596] A. Blaikie, 'Photography, Childhood and Urban Poverty: Remembering 'The Forgotten Gorbals', *British Journal of Visual Culture* 7, no.2 (2006), pp. 47-53.

boy, at work in the street, and Bert Hardy's Gorbals lads playing in a graveyard taken in 1947, tells us something about the change in how children were perceived.[597]

Thomson has convincingly argued that for the immediate wartime and post-war audience these photographs of children, whether playing on a bomb-site or leapfrogging a gravestone, stood for a set of aspirations about the mission of the welfare state to relieve the conditions of poverty in which many children were growing up. However, the meaning of such images rapidly expanded to represent a kind of lost freedom, bathed in a nostalgic glow, so that by 1950 'there was already nostalgia for a time when poverty meant that children could more easily colonise the street.' [598] By the 1980s images that had been intended to document or reveal a way of life in poverty-stricken surroundings seemed instead like postcards 'from a golden age for kids.' [599] It is no accident that the images which retain the strongest hold on the public's affection – such as Bert Hardy's 'Gorbals Boys' - are those which can be seen to express a kind of joy: a child's pleasure in street life rather than a child suffering from the effects of poverty.[600] Furthermore, as Cowman has argued, pictures from a recent past of children out in the street also represented the loss of the street as a wider community, a place in which women socialised and children played.[601] Present-day campaigns for temporary street closures to enable children to play out include as one of the benefits that children's street-play 'increases community cohesion' and 'brings neighbours of all ages together.'[602] The subject and the images therefore carry a weight of meaning, and one that has changed significantly since the immediate post-war years.

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[597] John Thomson, < https://digital.library.lse.ac.uk/collections/streetlifeinlondon>. For Bert Hardy, see Colin Wilkinson, *Bert Hardy's Britain* (Liverpool, 2013), p. 54.
[598] Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, pp. 23-26.
[599] Ray Gosling, 'Introduction', *Roger Mayne: Photographs* (London, 2001), p. 7, quoted in Stephen Brooke, 'Revisiting Southam St', *Journal of British Studies*, 53, no. 2 (2014), pp. 453-496, p. 475.
[600] Hardy's 'Gorbals Boys' did not make it in to the *Picture Post* spread on 'The Forgotten Gorbals' for which it was commissioned, either by a chance of layout or because it 'looks too optimistic.' See Colin Wilkinson, *Bert Hardy's Britain* (Liverpool, 2013), p. 48. However, it is now the most famous of Hardy's images. See Stephen Stewart, 'Exclusive hidden heartache of the Gorbals boy', *Daily Record*, 16 October 2008.
[601] Krista Cowman, 'Play Streets: Women, Children and the Problem of Urban Traffic, 1930-1970', *Social History*, 42, no. 2 (2017), pp. 233-256 [hereafter Cowman, 'Play Streets'], p. 235. Edinburgh Council introduced 'children's play areas' in the 1950s by marking off some streets during the day but I can find no record of this having happened in Dundee. See also Ross McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures: England 1918-1951* (Oxford, 1998) [hereafter McKibbin, *Classes and Culture*], p. 203 for a sceptical view on the gap between how the sociability of 'traditional' working-class street-based neighbourhoods was remembered and how it actually was.
[602] Playing Out, 'Ten Good Reasons for Street Play',< https://playingout.net/why/10-good-reasons >accessed 11 January 2022.

In post-war Scotland it was mainly the children of Glasgow who were the focus of the camera's attention, whether the pictures were captured by visiting photographers like Bert Hardy, or later by locals like Oscar Marzaroli and Joseph Mackenzie. Dundee's children were however also recorded for public visual consumption, first in a 1944 Ministry of Information film, with some accompanying stills taken by the cameraman Wolfgang Suschitzky, and then again in 1959 by photographer Iain Macmillan. The ostensible subject of *Children of the City: a Study of Child Delinquency* was to illustrate the workings of the new Juvenile Court but its fundamental concern was with the need to improve facilities and organised activities for urban children, both to improve their quality of life and to prevent them falling into crime.[603] Written, directed and edited by Budge Cooper, the film was scripted and dramatised, with documentary elements and conveyed 'an optimistic belief in "penal welfarism"'.[604] No one in the film is heard, save the narrator, and the script is highly directional. The drama gives the children a kind of impish agency, capable of putting out look-outs and whistling to alert each other to the presence of passing policemen, and the old concepts of the deserving and undeserving poor are at play – unemployed fathers who drink too much and 'apathetic and feckless' mothers come in for opprobrium. However, this judgementalism is set within the context of a wider argument about poor housing, poverty and the lack of places to play making a slide into offending almost inevitable. As the narrator asks rhetorically: 'Children weren't considered when these towns were built. They are shut in by factories, warehouses and tenements ... Where can they play? Where can children go in a city?'

The underlying assumption was that the streets were an unsuitable place for children to play, and in this thought, Cooper was far from unique. For some decades reformers and politicians had been arguing that the street was neither a physically nor morally safe place for children at leisure, and wartime concerns over rising juvenile delinquency and absent fathers had fuelled this anxiety further.[605] For Cooper, the children

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[603] *Children of the City: A Study of Child Delinquency*, d. Budge Cooper, production company Paul Rotha Productions, Ministry of Information for the Scottish Education Department and Scottish Home Office, 1944 [hereafter *Children of the City*, Cooper]. Film available through the National Library of Scotland, < https://movingimage.nls.uk/film/0291> accessed Feb 15, 2021. Cameraman Wolf Suschitzky had taken a series of photographs of city children in the East End of London in the mid 1930s and was to do so again in the mid 1950s, having also written a 'how-to' guide on photographing children. See Amanda Hopkinson 'Wolf Suschitzky Obituary', *The Guardian*, 7 October 2016.

[604] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth,* p. 2.

[605] See Cowman, 'Play Streets', pp. 234-237.

lacked boundaries: 'in this careless world of adults, who is to tell children where to draw the line, where excitement ends and crime begins?' [606] For her, and the commissioners at the Scottish Office who 'took considerable pride' in the film, part of the solution to child delinquency lay in state intervention, in the form of probation officers, Approved Schools, child psychiatrists and a health service.[607] Above all though, the film argued that children should be removed out of public space and into places and organisations designed to control or help the child, such as youth groups and play centres, where they can 'let loose all the energy and imagination which so often boils over in the streets and back alleys.'[608] (See Figure 4 for a still from the film).

Fifteen years later Macmillan's photographs give a less overtly editorialised glimpse of the children of Dundee. The son of an accountant, Macmillan is now best known for taking the famous Abbey Road cover photograph of the Beatles but in 1959 he took a series of images of Dundee tenement life, including a number of pictures of children, which he then used as a calling-card for work in London. His most powerful image is of boys playing in a back-court of a tenement. The surroundings are shabby and bleak, the boys kicking a can not a football, but Macmillan has captured a moment in which one boy has leapt high in the air to kick a can (see Figure 5). It is an expression of youthful vigour and energy, all three boys engrossed in their game. One can speculate that the middle-class Macmillan had set out to take tenement photographs because that was a fashionable topic of the time for photographers, and certainly this image fits neatly into the genre.[609] To post-war eyes it may well have seemed another photographic argument for the urgent need to improve living conditions for children but within twenty years Ward would be writing of images such as these in other terms: 'the words spell deprivation but the pictures spell joy'.[610]

[606] Voice-over script 'When something which begins as mischief turns into crime, it has got to be stopped'. *Children of the City*, Cooper.
[607] For Scottish Office reactions see Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 5
[608] All quotations from voice-over script, *Children of the City,* Cooper.
[609] See June Scott, 'Iain Macmillan Obituary', *The Guardian*, 21 June, 2006.
[610] Quoted in Thomson, *Lost Freedom*, p. 25

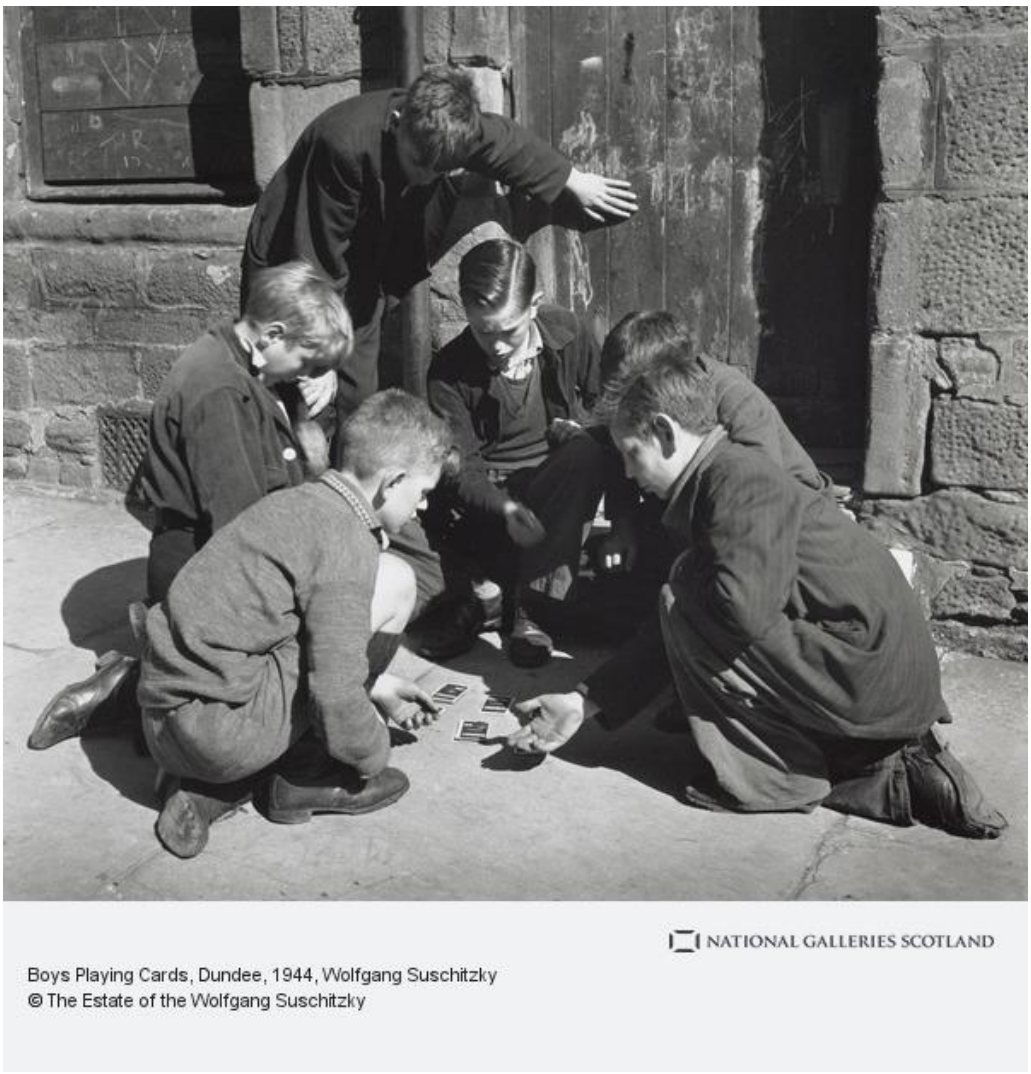

Figure 4: Boys Playing Cards, Dundee, 1944. (Photo: Wolfgang Suschitzky). Copyright Estate of Wolfgang Suschitzky.

Figure 5: Untitled photograph of boys playing kick-the-can behind a tenement in Dundee, 1959. (Photo: Iain Macmillan). I have been unable to track down the copyright holder.

These two examples tell us something about the pre-occupations of mid-century middle-class adults with regard to children outside in Dundee's public spaces. It was not so much poverty to which they were drawing attention, as that these were children who were in the wrong place, who ought to have somewhere better to play. However, the children themselves experienced their lives outside on the streets and in public places in a more complex way, as a place where they both belonged and in which they experienced threats, as a place which they knew intimately and in which they quite often pushed against those who were 'drawing the line'. It was for all of them, regardless of class, where they spent much of their time. For the middle-class Jenny Blain (b. 1949) 'what I remember most is playing outside.'[611] This is a sentiment echoed repeatedly across the interviews, from Stan

[611] Jenny Blain, 00.04.24.

McColl (b. 1925) to Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) for whom, as for many children, 'all our growing up was probably in the street, just outside.'[612]

There are however a number of questions which emerge from the children's experience outside the home and domestic space. First, in practical terms: how did they get to school, where and what did they play and how far did they go from home? Secondly, how did they feel about it, and how did this change in the new outer-city housing schemes? And thirdly, how did the experiences, expectations and boundaries of children's paid work change across the period?

The aspect of children's independent travel that has been most examined in the last fifty years is how they get to school. It has become a touchstone of twenty-first century concerns about childhood, partly because it is measurable and makes a useful barometer of the state of children's independence and physical activity. The answer in Dundee for this period was simple: children walked without an adult unless it was too far in which case they bicycled or got the bus. For most children, in the densely populated tenement areas, the school was nearby. Stan McColl (b.1925) recalled that 'We only had about 200 yards, 300 yards at the most to walk'.[613] Attendance at a Catholic School, rather than the nearby non-denominational school might extend the walk further, as it did for Mary Barlow (b. 1931).[614] This pattern of children taking themselves to school had not changed by the 1960s, when Colin McLeod (b. 1960) walked by himself every day from the age of five.

This journey was not only undertaken there and back each day, but also often at lunch time as well. David Dick (b. 1959) would walk at first with older boys but by the time he was seven he would go by himself and 'come home and back for lunch on my own'. Later he would cycle to secondary school: 'I had that timed, took seven minutes I remember, from leaving the house'.[615] Others, such as the middle-class Bill Blain (b. 1932) who attended the fee-paying High School, had several miles to travel and would catch the bus. For Bill lunch time meant a frenetic hour of travel:

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[612] Anne Maxwell, 15.29.45.
[613] Stan McColl, 00.13.33.
[614] Mary Barlow, 00.40.05 'We came out the door, went up the way, down and we walked a good bit until we got to our school, which was on the Hill Town.' In the 1950s Frank Leighton (b. 1950) walked about a mile to school and vividly remembers the 'day my finger got jammed in the door … at school and I had to run all the way home. I didnae go to one of the teachers, I just thought right I better get home so I remember that.' Frank Leighton, 00.11.03.
[615] David Dick, 00.25.55.

> So immediately when the bell for the 12 o clock went, we sort of run along, to the Albert Square area and along to where we'd get the number 5 or 7 bus which would take us up to the High School grounds and then walked round, ran round up the [hill], then we had to run down the bottom to get the bus back to school in time.[616]

These children not only travelled independently but were also responsible for their own arrival on time from a young age. Within the confines of school and bus timetables, they were exerting autonomy.

The findings from the oral history interviewees suggest that Dundee children had at least as much independence of movement as surveys of their English contemporaries would indicate. The Mayer Hillman survey, conducted in 1971 and 1990, surveyed children aged 7-11 and their parents from five junior schools in England, asking about six different actions that parents might or might not expect their children to do alone such as cross roads, use buses, go to school and elsewhere on their own, cycle on public highway and go out after dark.[617] The thrust of the findings was the dramatic drop in English children's independent travel over the course of twenty years: for example, where nearly 80% of those aged seven to eight had made their own way to school unaccompanied by an adult in 1971, by 1990 it was less than 10%.[618] The anecdotal evidence from the oral history survey suggests that almost all of the Dundee children were allowed to do all these things in the earlier period, creating a figure closer to 100%. Colin McLeod for instance (born in 1960 and so within the age range and date of the survey) went to school by himself and would walk home alone from Cubs even on a dark winter's night from the age of eight. The only exception was the middle-class Jenny Blain, who unlike her older brothers did not make her own way to school, instead getting the bus with her father on his way to work.[619] Unfortunately the comparison with 1990 is beyond the scope of this thesis: it seems likely that in Dundee and the rest of Scotland the figures also declined but I have not been able to find any comparable study.

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[616] Bill Blain, 00.35.18.
[617] Hillman et al., *One False Move,* p. 20.
[618] Hillman et al., *One False Move*, p. 53.
[619] Jenny Blain, 00.15.47.

However, much of the time the children were outdoors was not spent progressing to and from school, but playing, on the street or on any patch of ground they could find. Where you played varied, according to the design of your tenement or street. Annie Bartie (b. 1928) would 'always be out playing' on large back greens or down to the allotments.[620] Mary Barlow (b. 1931) could clearly remember playing in the courtyard of the tenements: 'We called it the cootie… Everybody played down there, all the childrens [sic].'[621] For many others, the street was the main place of play. Josie Robertson's (b. 1934) memory is vivid: 'you just played out in the street. I can remember sitting in the bottom of my pram and getting hurled down the Kingsway.'[622]

In most parts of town traffic was not an issue, with very few cars and perhaps only 'the horse, the cart with the man going to the jute mill, with the big bales of jute on it'.[623] Where the main road was busy, the side streets would be quiet enough for play.[624] Children are resourceful and, like water finding a level, will find a space in which to play. However, this play was not entirely unsupervised, or without boundaries, usually set and managed by the mother, an active form of what McKibbin describes as 'matrilocality.'[625] Stan McColl (b. 1925) recalls that when he was little, he played in the street but that he was 'always under observation' from his mother, glancing out of the window.[626] Annie Bartie (b. 1928) corroborates this sense of some restriction. 'Oh no, we couldn't go where we liked. We had to be in at a certain time … we didn't get to go wandering around willy-nilly.'[627] It was not because she felt her mother was actually worrying but that boundaries had been set: 'Oh she didn't care much, but that was it.'[628] Mae Stewart (b. 1940) recalled the one instruction she tried to obey was the one to stay close enough to hear their mother if she shouted for them, 'because if she did shout on you and you'd just roamed out of earshot then that was big no-no'. Her mother had a loud voice but once they had moved to the new housing

[620] Annie Bartie, 00.05.38.
[621] Mary Barlow, 00.29.24.
[622] Josie Robertson, 00.04.26.
[623] Mary Barlow, 00.30.18.
[624] Moira Bolt, 00.46.00, 'Dura Street was busy with traffic, but there was another street, quite a wide big street … it was a relatively quiet street and that's where children played.'
[625] McKibbin, *Classes and Cultures*, pp. 170-175.
[626] Stan McColl, 00.07.16.
[627] Annie Bartie, 00.10.39.
[628] Annie Bartie, 00.11.31.

scheme in Fintry and the 'arena got much bigger', Mae remembered being on permanent alert for her mother's call and that this was true for the children she played with as well.[629]

As the child got older, the boundaries widened in incremental stages, and began to include the green spaces in the city. Pearl Jephcott observed of urban children in England that 'many elementary school children never play games on grass' but this was not true of children in Dundee, although playing on grass may have been a treat rather than a daily event.[630] While the city centre of Dundee was ill-served for parks, there were plenty to the East and West of the city, with Dundee Law prominent among them, and being allowed to go to the park on your own was another loosening of the boundaries.[631] As Mary Barlow (b. 1931) put it:

> When it come to the seven-week holiday off from school, we were getting bigger so we were allowed to walk from where we lived up to the Law Hill. A lot of the kids played up there. And then you went to the nearest park, by that time your mum trusted you to go, cross the road on your own you know.[632]

Thirty years later, David Dick describes much the same progression: 'Once I got to about eight or nine, I was out a lot, or nine or ten I was out a lot more, going up to the park in the evening or there was a field at Balgay Hill I used to go to.'[633] Being accompanied by an adult to play somewhere at any stage was rare. Colin McLeod (b. 1960) was allowed to go up to the Law to play with other boys at the age of 9 or 10, and 'we'd have been mortified if an adult did come along.'[634]

Many of the games they played would have been familiar to Dundee children fifty years earlier, and some still fifty years later. Since the Victorians first examined children's play, it has been a frequent observation that 'children are forgetting how to play' where the truth is that very often it is the observing adult who struggles to see the game being played in a group of children apparently aimlessly running about.[635] The Dundee Social Survey in

[629] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind*, p. 139.
[630] Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up,* p. 45.
[631] For details of parks in Dundee see Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 516.
[632] Mary Barlow, 00.29.24.
[633] David Dick, 00.02.41.
[634] Colin McLeod, 00.13.32.
[635] *The Leisure Hour* (London, 1903), cited in Steve Roud, *The Lore of the Playground: One hundred years of children's games, rhymes and traditions* (London, 2010) [hereafter Roud, *Lore of the Playground*], xi.

the early 1960s identified 63 different street games mentioned by the younger children, most of them variants of skipping games or hide and seek, but others including 'prank' games like Chicky Melly or 'Chap door and Run away'.[636] Many of the games were gendered: as Mary Barlow (b. 1931) put it, 'boys played football, we played skipping'.[637] Football looms large, cricket is mentioned, and girls also recall playing with scraps (such as you might stick in a scrap-book) and imaginative games such as using pebbles to 'pretend we had a sweetie shop for selling sweeties'.[638] The Opies, who collected rhymes at a dozen schools in Scotland including Dens Road Primary in Dundee, observed of Scottish children that they were particularly fortunate because they had all the rhymes of the English children plus 'their own hamely clinky rarely known to children outside Scotland'.[639] The Opies' work showed how much children shared an oral culture from place to place in Scotland, and how closely linked it was to rhymes and games in England, Ireland and America.[640] Certainly many of the games and rhymes recalled by the interviewees have counterparts elsewhere. One such game is recalled by Mary Barlow as 'putting the ball in the sock and up and down with the ball'.[641] James Ritchie describes this being played by girls in Edinburgh, with a ball in a stocking 'which is banged against the wall and through your legs' to the accompaniment of a rhyme about Mary Queen of Scots, 'who got her head chopped off'.[642] In Dundee, at least one of the rhymes used for this game was more distinctive, and indicates how clearly female specific the game was:

> Stot, stot, ba', ba'
> Twenty lasses at the wa'
> No a lad among them a'
> Stot, stot, ba' ba' [643]

This difference in words is not unusual. As Ritchie observed of the singing games of Edinburgh children, the tunes remained the same but 'even neighbouring streets seemed to

[636] Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 537
[637] Mary Barlow, 00.29.24.
[638] Mary Barlow, 00. 30.18. Gary Robertson also reports girls still playing with scraps in the 1970s, *Skeem Life,* p. 124. Ritchie, *Golden City,* has a good description of it also, p. 32
[639] Opie, *Lore and Language,* p. 26.
[640] Opie, *Lore and Language*, pp. 115, 348.
[641] Mary Barlow, 00.29.24.
[642] Ritchie, *Golden City,* p. 29.
[643] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales,* p. 2.

prefer their own brands of words.'[644] Because she moved several times, Moira Bolt had the opportunity both to observe games in different places and to learn how she, as a stranger, could come to join in, another demonstration of the way in which children's culture was closely linked from place to place, the same but different.

> My Aunt Jean at that time lived in Perth … and I was there for a couple of weeks holiday once... I just went and stood at the edge of where the children were playing and the same thing happened, they'd come over – who are you, why are you here? Come and play with us kind of thing and the games they were playing were very similar, they had subtle differences and differences in name but they were very close to what the games we played in Dundee.[645]

In an environment largely without grass or trees, chalk games were ubiquitous, with wickets for cricket chalked upon the walls and versions of hop-scotch, known as Boxies, Peevers or Beds, marked on the pavement.[646] Under whatever name it was played, the object thrown or moved from chalk square to square was often an old boot-polish tin, testimony to the children's talent for improvising as well as to how often shoes were polished.[647] Other empty tins were also pressed into service: two large containers for babies powdered milk made a fine pair of stilts, with the help of some punched holes and long pieces of string, while ordinary-sized tins were perfect for playing Kick the Can, as seen in Iain Macmillan's photograph, a game which depends on now old-fashioned heavy tins rather than the aluminium cans which would blow away.[648]

Some games were more Dundee-specific, and required elaborate home-made equipment. One such was catty-batty, a game common in post-war Dundee but not mentioned by the Opies, and only briefly referred to by Ritchie as being played in a simplified form in Edinburgh.[649] The game involved striking a four-sided pencil-shaped stick

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[644] Ritchie, *Golden City*, p. 147.
[645] Moira Bolt, 00.46.00. She describes the most common game in both places as Relay, or Reliefo, which had different names in Dundee and Perth but was the 'same thing. You'd tig someone and they'd have to come and stand in the space but somebody else could put their foot in that space and you'd be released.' In Edinburgh the same game was called A-leevoy or Relievoy or Relievers and James Ritchie says it has been played for hundreds of years. Ritchie, *Golden City*, pp. 26-27.
[646] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, pp. 1-3.
[647] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, p. 3; Ritchie, *Golden City*, p. 96.
[648] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, pp. 3-4.
[649] Moira Bolt, 00.46.45; Angus Davidson, 00.14.38; also collected by Calum Maclean in Newtonmore in 1952 <http://calumimaclean.blogspot.com/2013/02/catty-batty-childrens-game.html > accessed 17 January 2020. See also correspondence in the Dundee *Evening Telegraph*, https://www.pressreader.com/uk/evening-

of wood around 4 inches long, with numbers carved on each side (the catty), with a bat. The number of times you could strike it depended on which number side had landed upwards on an initial spin. The equipment was homemade and the rules elaborate but in essence it was a game based on measuring, and best played in a street empty of traffic or other obstacles. Moira's younger brother Frank Leighton remembers it well:

> You'd make a bat out of an old box or something. The Catty was a bit of kindling, it was sharpened at the ends. You got a hot poker (laughs) red hot poker and you marked on it 1 2 3 4 on the different sides. You had a base, which would be a cundy or a drain in the middle of the road and you used to have to spin the Catty and whatever it landed, that was the amount of hits you could make. So you hit the catty with yer batty on the end so that it spun up into the air then you got to hit it your number of times away from the base. Once you got there you would estimate how far it was back to the base and it would be lengths of the bat, you see. You'd say that's about 20, if they didnae believe you they wouldnae give you 20 and you'd actually have to measure it back to the base.[650]

The cundy or drain-cover plays a key role in this game, a vital landmark in the landscape of the street. As Ritchie pointed out, based on his lifetime's examination of the games, rhymes and culture of Edinburgh children, 'the kerbs and the flagstones, the lamp-posts, the shop-windows, all play their parts when the imagination of children is stirred, and games are invented.'[651] Norman McCaig described this as children's 'indefatigable inventiveness … one is staggered to find how many things they can do with a length of rope … or with nothing more than the massive lump of the buildings themselves.'[652] In the streets of Dundee, the useful distinction of the cundies was also vital for a game called Pinner, which again depended on home-made equipment.[653] Maureen Reynolds described Pinner as a boys' game and Bill Blain remembered it with enthusiasm:

> You had a wee square of metal [which was the pinner] ... you had to throw your Pinner and get it on top of the drain covers in the street. The cundies we called it, a cundy. The big square ones, there

telegraph-first-edition/20180116/281968903095322, accessed 17 January 2020, where it is identified by correspondents as a street game frequently played in Dundee in the 1950s. Briefly mentioned by Ritchie in a less complicated form (without the numbers) as cat and bat, *Golden City*, p. 23.

[650] Frank Leighton, 00.40.01.

[651] Ritchie, *Singing Street,* p. 70.

[652] Norman McCaig, 'Poems and Peevers', *New Statesman*, 12 November 1965, p. 756.

[653] Maureen Reynolds talks also about home-made toys made by the joiners and other workers at the shipyard, 'done as "homers"'. *Teatime Tales,* p. 42.

> were the smaller ones for drainage with the grill sort of on the top of them on the side .. they would have just gone down. So you had to throw … 15 yards away from the one that you were going for and you had to land your Pinner on the drain cover and once you'd landed on the drain cover you became a killer … you had to hit the other people's Pinners, and they were be out of the game at that point.[654]

Pinner is a game that has come directly out of its urban environment. The small squares of metal were scraps from industry, and although a steel washer would do at a pinch, one source has it that the preferred type was cut from a metal file.[655] It relied on large drain covers for its playing field, and while it bears a resemblance to any game where you need to get one object near others (like curling or bowls), in this form it is a game which can only be played in a street. Other play also depended on small features in the landscape of the street, steps turned into a palace or a theatre, or the pavement kerb made into a bouncing-off point for a game of 'curbie'.[656]

The street then was itself a playground; its hard surface perfect for chalking on and its features incorporated into play. Paul Shephard, thinking of 'the idyllic and practical age of ten' argues that 'space in juvenile life is structured differently than at later ages; it is much more critically defined. It is intensely concerned with paths and boundaries, with hiding places and other special places for particular things.' [657] This might perhaps be even more true for children who had little space at home, with only an orange box in which to keep their special things. While some adults may have felt children were out of place on the street, this is not how those who were children then recall it. This outside space was their own home territory: as Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) put it, 'You felt you belonged ... This was your hunting ground, your place.'[658] If the outside space was effectively functioning as another home, a place a child could feel they belonged, then such details of the environment might carry even more meaning, leading to the kind of intimate territoriality discussed later in this chapter.

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[654] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, p. 1; Bill Blain, 00.13.48; a number of other Dundee memoirists recall the game in much the same way < http://www.streetgames.co.uk/games/coin/pinner > accessed 17 January 2020.
[655] Bill Whyte, 'Each player possessed a 'pinner', a flat piece of metal, about 2-3cm squarish. Perhaps the most valued version (a 'filie') was a piece cut from a metal file.'< http://www.streetgames.co.uk/games/coin/pinner>
[656] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 124.
[657] Paul Shephard, 'Play and Human Development', Address to the Symposium on Children, Nature and the Urban Environment, Washington, March 1975, quoted in Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 23.
[658] Anne Maxwell, 15.53.49.

It is significant though that little of this outdoor activity involved going very far. Stan McColl's experience of growing up in the 1930s on the edge of the Hilltown area was that school, shops and cinema were all within a few hundred yards.[659] Dundee – like many cities – was for its children a tight collection of 'small worlds', with neighbourhoods similar to those described by Richard Hoggart in Hunslet at much the same time 'as homogeneous and well-defined as a village'.[660] Mae Stewart grew up in Dundee's West End, in a two-roomed ground floor tenement flat, clustered around the mill.

> Everything in my world was right on the doorstep: bakers; butchers; wee general stores (called Johnnie-a-things); fruit shops; chip shops; ice cream shops; schools; churches and Church halls … And … we knew everybody and everybody knew us.[661]

Children's affection for what McKibbin describes as 'the rhythms of the neighbourhood' is well-recorded, exemplified by one evacuee from London who lamented that he missed 'the buses and the heavy lorries that go passed [sic] my house at home.'[662] Like the children of Glen Esk who, with a wilderness on their doorsteps, would roam freely within earshot of home, the younger working-class children of Dundee would be out and about but rarely far from their home patch. The exception would be the occasional trip with a parent to the Central Library in the city centre on a Saturday or to go swimming where afterwards they would have a 'shivery bite'.[663] The city centre itself seemed to hold little allure. While in *Children of the City* the narrator describes children wandering past department stores, gazing longingly at tempting consumer goods, none of the interviewees recalled such solo expeditions to the city centre, and the juvenile crime figures confirm that this kind of shop-lifting was unusual in Dundee.[664] As Stan McColl put it, the only thing you went down for 'was a special occasion … to see some certain film'.[665]

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[659] Stan McCall, 00.13.46; 00.20.47.
[660] Hoggart, *Uses of Literacy*, p. 42.
[661] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind,* pp. 4-5.
[662] Susan Isaacs ed., *The Cambridge Evacuation Survey* (London, 1941), pp. 66–87, quoted in McKibbin, *Classes and Culture*, 187-188.
[663] Anne Maxwell, 16.39.25.
[664] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 65.
[665] Stan McCall, 00.31.13.

However, as children (in particular, boys) grew older and acquired bikes, they would venture further, drawn by the possibility of exploration and adventure off their home turf. They did not go to the city centre but to the outskirts of the city: George Burton for instance would regularly cycle two miles to swim in the quarry at Invergowrie, while Stan McColl would cycle to the seaside at Broughty Ferry.[666] Frank Leighton and his brother went further still, cycling a dozen miles each way out to the old aerodrome site at Errol 'to pinch apples … that would probably have been the furthest we went'. They would cycle back home up the Kingsway where their mother made the apples into crumble.[667]

Frank and Stan were teenagers by the time they were exploring outside the city and well away from their homes on their bikes. The middle-class Bill Blain had a much wider sweep of the city at his disposal and would go further from a young age. His longer commute to and from school may have accustomed him to travelling confidently further from home.[668] Most importantly, he owned a bike from a younger age. At weekends, he and his brother would cycle as far afield as six miles to the coast at Monifieth, a destination too distant for Stan McColl who said 'we didn't venture as far as that'.[669] Once, memorably, when he was about nine, Bill and his brother went to Monifieth and, after swimming out to some fishing boats, struggled to make it ashore.[670] This wider territory was characteristic of middle-class children: Ward suggested that they made far more use of the facilities in a city and that any child who travelled the city for whatever reason then also went on to use the city more, because he or she had gained confidence and knowledge in how to get about it.[671] This same observation was also made in Diane Reay's much more recent study of children in inner-city London, suggesting that this confident sense of wider horizons persists as a marker of class.[672]

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[666] Burton, *Wee Georgie,* p. 138; Stan McCall, 00.31.40.
[667] Frank Leighton, 01.27.20.
[668] John and Elizabeth Newson, *Seven Years Old in the Home Environment* (London, 1976) cited in Ward, *Child in the City*, 33. There is likely to be a link between the distance travelled to go to school and other journeys. As the Newsons, in their pioneering study of 700 Nottingham children in the 1960s, argued of 7-year-olds who walk themselves to school, 'the fact that they go to and from school each day familiarises them with short journeys, and widens the circle of children they know by sight, who in turn act as lures away from their home territory'. The Mayer Hillman survey also shows that the more children did independently, the more they did altogether eg activities at weekends or in the evening.
[669] Stan McColl, 00.31.40.
[670] Bill Blain, 00.26.00.
[671] Ward, *Child in the City*, pp. 106-108
[672] Diane Reay, 'Children's Urban landscapes: Configurations of Class and Place' in *Cultural Studies and the Working Class: Subject to Change,* ed. Sally Munt (London, 2000), pp. 151-164, p. 153.

Conversely though, the most restricted among the interviewees was Bill's younger sister, Jenny, the baby of the family after three boys. Not only did she not travel by herself to school, she was also forbidden to go to the nearby park on her own. On one occasion she and a friend went to the forbidden park and encountered a man who succeeded in luring her friend into the shrubbery. Having extricated her from the situation, Jenny returned home slightly shaken and 'got a row for going up to the park on my own'.[673] For Jenny, the park had an aura of risk: in discussing how she got to school, she argued that one of the reasons she was sent to the fee-paying High School was that getting to the other school would mean walking through Baxter Park 'and you don't necessarily want that for young ones'.[674] The intersection of class and gender is likely to be playing a part here, although perhaps as important was Jenny's status as the baby of the family.

In the 1970s, Ward suggested that girls made less use of the possibilities of the city than boys, held back by conditioning, anxious parents and domestic chores. He claimed that if you stood in a city street and counted the passing children, 'the majority of children you observe will be boys.'[675] This assertion does not fully stand up to closer examination. In Dundee all the interviewees, of whichever gender, gave similar accounts of playing out in the street. The alleged absence of girls on the street elsewhere is also not backed up by the photographic evidence of, for example, Roger Mayne's photographs of Southam Street in London. Where there may have been a gender difference is in how much time was spent in these activities, and in the distances covered. Girls had more responsibility for domestic chores and for minding other children so they may have spent less time overall out and about, although a fair amount of child-minding was in itself out on the street. The evidence also suggests that many girls travelled less far from home, and that the key factor here was access to a bicycle, in itself often affected by gender. Mary Barlow (b. 1931) for instance never learnt to ride a bicycle although the boys of the family did, because 'they went with the messages'.[676] Some of those girls who did have access to a bike engaged in the kind of long-range exploration in the way that the boys did.[677] One particularly enterprising thirteen-year-old girl, Mae Stalker, wrote an account of a trip she and some friends took by

[673] Jenny Blain, 00.24.19.
[674] Jenny Blain, 00.21.19.
[675] Ward, *Child in the City*, pp. 152-4.
[676] Mary Barlow, 01.02.56.
[677] Moira Bolt, 1.15.10.

bicycle in 1952, from Dundee to Blair Atholl and over to Braemar before returning home – a journey of over a hundred miles. The trip was full of incident yet 'fired with youthful enthusiasm we never for one minute gave thought to failure.'[678] This gender difference both in access to bicycles overall and in distances travelled independently seems to have persisted, and possibly grown stronger. In the early 1960s the Dundee Social Survey records rather more boys than girls listing cycling as one of their favourite leisure pursuits, and the Mayer Hillman survey shows that in England by 1990 boys were twice as likely to go to school on their own, more likely to own bicycles, and more likely to be allowed to use them on main roads.[679] Robin Moore's research into children's areas of play in 1980's England also indicates that boys were likely to go further on their bicycles than girls, but also suggests that for many children where they went was restricted by parents 'who tended to rigidly control bike-riding' because of the danger of busy roads.[680]

OUT AND ABOUT: 'FEAR AND AVOIDANCE'

None of this is to say that children experienced life out and about on the street as safe or uncomplicated. They had an intimate knowledge of the nuances of the territory around them, which for most rapidly edged into areas of possible danger. As Stan McColl (b. 1925) put it:

> You got into trouble for running about people's closes. There were always six in a block … So you liked to be beside your own block because there was some, no hooligans, but some worthies in those days as well. And they were fairly rough.[681]

This sense of territorial boundaries can be found well into the post-war period. Anne Maxwell recalls playing outside in the street, and occasionally 'venturing' around the corner where the semis turned into tenements:

[678] Dundee City Archive, GD/X1333, Mae Stalker, Class II c G, 'Mountain Adventure', Morgan Academy Magazine, June 1952.
[679] Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 537; Hillman et al., *One False Move*, pp. 31-33.
[680] Moore, *Childhood's Domain*, pp. 62-67.
[681] Stan McColl, 00.19.47.

> There was always a slightly more adventurous crowd there, you know. A slightly rougher crowd. Usually maybe bigger families in three-bedroomed tenements. And if we felt bold, we would go to that area, which was just round the corner, but a world apart really if you lived in a semi or a tenement.[682]

The issue of religious differences exacerbated the existing risk of going off your own turf. Moira Bolt (b.1940) recalled steering clear of a street around the corner from where she lived because it was a 'Catholic street'.

> There was a lot of talk and a bit of apprehension, you know never walk down that street on your own type of thing, don't go down there - but I don't remember there being ever any violence. There was just fear and avoidance.[683]

Moira Bolt was far from alone in experiencing a sense of sectarian tension: for most of the children of Dundee it was a vivid part of their lived experience out on the streets and at school. Stan McColl (b. 1925) was Protestant but his family lived in a largely Catholic district and he recalls trouble on the street in the 1930s between the 'Catholic and the Proddies … There was the occasional bust up, you know? ... Fisticuffs.'[684] Thirty years after Stan McColl's childhood experiences, Anne Maxwell recalls much the same thing in her secondary school where 'the Protestants would always pick fights with the Catholics, and the Catholics with the Protestants maybe as well.'[685]

It is unexpected to find such visceral experiences of religious antagonism in these childhood accounts of Dundee. The last few decades have seen much historical attention given to 'Scotland's shame' with the result that it is no longer seen as only a West Coast phenomenon.[686] Dundee has however largely escaped the accusatory finger because of a perception, as expressed by Tom Gallagher, of the 'relative absence of deep-seated

[682] Anne Maxwell, 15.31.19.
[683] Moira Bolt, 00.49.55.
[684] Stan McColl, 00.20.23.
[685] Anne Maxwell, 15.53.54.
[686] Ritchie, D. '"They do not become Good Scotsmen": A Political History of the Anti-Irish Campaign in Scotland 1919-1939.' (PhD Dissertation, Edinburgh, 2013) [hereafter Ritchie, 'They Do Not Become Good Scotsmen'], p. 6.

sectarian tensions' within the city.[687] Certainly Dundonians took care to dissociate themselves from the religious tensions seen elsewhere. In football, often perceived as the arena in which sectarian feeling in Scotland is most visible, the two Dundee clubs have deliberately set out to tell a strikingly different story to that of their Glasgow counter-parts.[688] Dundee United plays in an orange strip although it has its origin in a club called the Dundee Hibernians, which itself was renamed in 1922, seeking to broaden its appeal and 'signalling the change from being a religiously-based club.'[689] By the 1960s, writers on Dundee were taking great pains to put any tension and distinction between adherents of the two faiths into the past tense. Hester Henderson asserted firmly that 'partly because rates of pay have recently tended to level out, and partly because of rehousing, they [the Catholics] no longer form a markedly poor or socially separated section of the community.'[690] D.S. Riddell concurred: 'In Dundee it is fortunately not necessary to dwell on major religious or racial conflicts … there is now little overt religious hostility.'[691]

The usual explanation for this apparent relative lack of tension is found in the history of Irish immigration to Dundee. While the city's Victorian industrial growth was fuelled in part by Irish immigration, there was a difference of scale compared to that of Glasgow. In 1851 8% of Dundee's population was Irish-born; in Glasgow the figure was closer to 20%. By the turn of the twentieth century Irish immigration to Dundee had virtually ceased, whereas in Glasgow in 1911 8% of the population was still first-generation Irish.[692] Many of these Victorian immigrants were women, drawn to Dundee for the textile trade, and Gallagher argued that as women lacked the vote they were less likely to hang onto 'the political and cultural preoccupations with "the oul country" which could antagonise part of the host society.'[693]

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[687] Tom Gallagher, 'The Catholic Irish in Scotland: in search of Identity', in *Irish Immigrants and Scottish Society in the 19th and 20th centuries: Proceedings of the Scottish Historical Studies Seminar*, *University of Strathclyde, 1989-90*, ed. Tom Devine (Edinburgh, 1991), pp. 19-43 [hereafter Gallagher, 'Catholic Irish'], p. 27.
[688] Rosie argues that football is a 'distorting mirror' for society, one which much attention has been paid to because there is so little evidence of sectarianism elsewhere, and that Rangers and Celtic supporters may use the religious divide to express partisanship for their team, rather than vice versa. Michael Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland' (PhD Dissertation, University of Edinburgh, 2001) [hereafter Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism], p. 3.
[689] Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 525.
[690] Henderson, 'Religious Life', p. 646.
[691] Riddell, 'Leisure', p. 459.
[692] Anderson, *Scotland's Populations,* p. 166.
[693] Tom Gallagher, 'Catholic Irish', p. 27.

Nonetheless the twentieth-century experiences of the children of the city do not support this benign view. The sense of difference between those of Irish heritage and the rest of Dundee's population was an unquestioned part of the city's social structure for the first half of the twentieth century at least, as implied by Henderson and Riddell. It was marked by surname and by religion, with the Roman Catholic Irish immigrants adding to the scanty few Catholic Highland immigrants so that by 1921 just under 17% of the city's population was Catholic.[694] The proportion of Catholics continued to increase so that by 1959 around 21% of the city identified themselves as Roman Catholic, and a further nine Catholic churches had to be built as the city sprawled out.[695] There was also some geographical distinction in where Catholics and Protestants lived, so that Lochee for instance was known as a Catholic area.

Children were vividly aware of these differences and played out this perception at school and on the street. For some of the interviewees, particularly the Protestant ones like Frank Leighton (b. 1950), the divide 'wasn't a big thing at all', placing the fights he describes with children from Catholic schools involving 'a bit of stone throwing or a bit of fisticuffs' as part of a wider picture of casual aggression amongst children on the streets.[696] For others it was more defining. Anne Maxwell attended a mixed secondary school where she was made fun of for being seen with the Palm Sunday cross on her forehead: 'you fiercely defend your religion … I think you defend it because it's part of what you belong to. It's like a sect almost.' [697]

Across Dundee, as in most of the rest of Scotland, separate schooling had been provided with one school for Catholics and another for everyone else from 1918, both at primary and at secondary level. The proportion of Catholics amongst school-age children was higher than it was in the population as a whole so that in the 1960s roughly a third of children in Dundee attended Catholic schools. The remainder attended non-denominational schools which were Presbyterian in all but name, as to each of them was 'attached a chaplain belonging to one of the local Presbyterian churches.'[698] As school uniforms

[694] Henderson, 'Religious Life', p. 647
[695] Henderson, 'Religious Life', p. 647
[696] Frank Leighton, 01.37.59; 01.34.50
[697] Anne Maxwell, 15.53.54
[698] In 1964 there were 16 Roman Catholic Infant and Primary schools, and 30 non-denominational schools. Cowie, 'Education', p. 433.

became more common for primary school children in the 1960s, so too did the badging of difference they provided.[699] By the time David Dick (b. 1959) was at primary school, he was wearing shorts and a cap identifying him as attending a non-denominational school. He recalls considerable tension and violent encounters between Protestant and Catholic children 'when you were in your school uniform.'[700] In particular, he remembers being bullied by some Catholic children on the bus journey to school to the point where he eventually stopped taking that bus. The story however is more complicated than that:

> I think what happened was that I punched one of them and got off the bus one day. I'd had enough of it, I just punched one of them. And then I was scared to go back because I thought that there was going to be a lot of them so I changed my route.[701]

While separate schools were standard across Scotland, the importance of them as an indicator of identity varied across the country, and according to how closely religion was associated with Irishness. In Aberdeen, where Irish immigration had been non-existent, Catholics were more likely to be from recusant families who had never converted to Protestantism.[702] Scott Styles, who grew up in Aberdeen in the 1960s, recalled that the first time he encountered religious prejudice was when he visited a friend in Airdrie, and 'practically the first, and certainly the most important, question asked of me, namely the name of my school, was designed to establish my religion. I felt I was being unwillingly conscripted into a war I'd never heard of.'[703]

The working-class children of Dundee were undoubtedly conscripts in that war, little as they may have understood it. David Dick describes his encounters with this kind of religious antagonism as 'a shock' because there was nothing at home that had prepared him for it.[704] Nonetheless it was unavoidable at school:

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[699] Moira Bolt (b. 1940) for instance had no school uniform at primary school, and wore 'what you could get, and that was it.' 00.56.53. See also Josie Robertson, 'there wasn't any uniforms in our days' 00.24.20. See also Richard Finlay, *Modern Scotland 1914-2000* (London, 2004), 'apart from private schools, school uniforms only began to be introduced in Scotland in the sixties', caption to illustration 15, no pagination.
[700] David Dick, 00.30.30.
[701] David Dick, 00.29.00.
[702] Anderson, *Scotland's Population*, p. 166.
[703] Scott Styles, 'Non-Sectarian Culture of North-East Scotland' in *Scotland's Shame: Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, ed. Tom Devine (Edinburgh, 2000), p. 115 [hereafter Styles, 'Non-Sectarian Culture'].
[704] David Dick, 00.32.00.

> We used to go to the church services at Easter or Christmas. And the other school St Mary's Lochee were at their gate as we were marching past and it was like World War 3. They'd all be at the gate shouting at us, people shouting. Our teacher was just telling us to walk, walk, walk. But yes there was quite a bit of animosity, I don't think people understood really what they were shouting at. We used to shout at them because we were on the other side.[705]

This lack of understanding by children of a conflict they themselves enacted was not uncommon. Ralph Glasser, writing of his childhood in the Gorbals in the 1920s, recalls how common fighting was and that 'fights often had themes, each with its own season. In spring, mysteriously, the constant obsession with Catholic and Protestant feuding erupted in battles between two factions – the Billies and the Dans.'[706] He gives an account of how a gang of boys had rushed at him and his pal in the playground, shouting 'Wha' are yese – Billy or a Dan? Billy or Dan!'. However, when challenged none of the children were able to provide an explanation of what it was to be a Billy or a Dan; 'they had never enquired into it, sanctified by battle as it was.'[707]

The origins of the 'spring fighting season' in the Gorbals was almost certainly the marking of St Patrick's Day, on 17 March. Certainly, in Dundee, this was the day on which the problem came to a head for children, although the question asked of them was less opaque: they were asked whether you were Scots or Irish.[708] Ritchie recorded children asking each other this question on St Patrick's Day in Edinburgh before 1914, and described it as the only day when 'fighting on a real and grand scale occurred.'[709] In Dundee the question, the day and the fighting persisted much longer. As George Burton (b. 1953) put it, there was a tradition 'of happy religious bigotry between Protestant and Catholic kids that manifested itself only for a few hours each year on 17th March, the feast of St Patrick.'[710] As you made your way to school that day, the 'dreaded question "Scots or Irish"' was asked

[705] David Dick, 00.29.55
[706] Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals*, p. 2.
[707] Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals,* p. 3
[708] Stan McColl referred to it as 'Scots and Irish day' 00.02.08; Frank Leighton agreed, 'that's what we used to ask people, if you were Scotch or Irish' 01.34.55.
[709] Ritchie, *Singing Street*, pp. 14-15. The Opies record the question being asked in Liverpool, Dundee and Glasgow 'when Orange boy and girl fall upon Catholic, and strangers are challenged, "Are you Scots or Irish?"' but get the timing – certainly for Dundee - wrong by placing it in marching season in July, *Lore and Language*, p. 343.
[710] Burton, *Wee Georgie,* p. 9.

and if you gave the wrong answer some form of violence or trouble could ensue.[711] The potential for trouble was certainly enough for children, their parents or siblings to take avoiding action. Mary Barlow (b. 1931) and her sister were Catholics and attended the nearest RC primary school. Every St Patrick's Day the oldest boy of the family would escort them to and from school as their 'bodyguard … he wasn't a big lad but boy could he fight.'[712] This annual ritual persisted into life in the post-war housing schemes. George Burton (b. 1953) who lived in Charleston describes how he was so frightened as a six-year-old running the gamut of questions to get to school that day that he soiled himself. He also recalls attempts by parents to subvert and confuse these indicators, by putting a green ribbon in the hair of non-Catholic girls in order to help them get through St Patrick's Day without trouble.[713] For Gary Robertson (b. 1967) growing up in Fintry in the 1970s, St Patrick's Day continued to be the day when 'pupils from Catholic and Protestant schools had a go at one another.'[714]

Historians have wrestled with the question of nomenclature to describe the tensions and conflicts of this religious divide. The 1920s and 1930s were a time of strife and in some cases animosity between Catholic and Protestant, enflamed by Church leaders on both sides.[715] Ritchie suggested that the Church of Scotland anti-Irish campaign of the inter-war years was deliberately framed by Church leaders as a racial issue, with Irish immigration in some way diminishing the purity of the Scots church and character.[716] Outwith this specific period and language of the Church, Rosie has argued that what was at play across twentieth-century Scotland was not sectarianism because it was not systemic discrimination; for Rosie, 'Scottish "sectarianism" comprises religious bigotry and prejudice at the level of ideas, more rarely in the realm of action, and not in terms of the social structure.'[717] For twentieth-century Scotland, Rosie and McCrone provided a description of 'street-level bigotry' as the form in which this religious prejudice was generally expressed.[718]

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[711] Burton, *Wee Georgie*, p. 10.
[712] Mary Barlow, 00.52.08.
[713] Burton, *Wee Georgie,* p. 10.
[714] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 79.
[715] Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism', p. 152.
[716] Ritchie, 'They Do Not Become Good Scotsmen'.
[717] Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism', p. 8
[718] From definition of sectarianism provided by Michael Rosie and David McCrone, 'The Past is History: Catholics in Modern Scotland', in *Scotland's Shame: Bigotry and Sectarianism in Modern Scotland*, ed. Tom Devine (Edinburgh, 2000), pp. 199-217, p. 200.

However, for the children who expressed it and experienced it, racism or racial prejudice seems closer to truth: it was a prejudice expressed specifically in ethnic terms as Scots or Irish. The St Patrick's Day ritual was a test and a threat, a delineation of an identity and an 'othering' of other children. It was also experienced more viscerally than any of these commentators acknowledge: in beatings and bullying, well into 'the realm of action' and often across the year, not just on one particular day. It is this kind of revelation that shows how much the experience of children is neglected in the study of culture and society, how deeply-felt prejudice can express itself in a physical way in the world of children. What to adults might seem prejudice, to children may be experienced as actual violence.

Even without the separate schooling, few children could have been unclear about which side of the religious divide they belonged to. In Dundee, as elsewhere, most Protestant children attended Sunday School, at any rate for a few years, 'whether or not their parents had any formal church connection.'[719] Church of Scotland Sunday school attendance stayed steady well into the 1960s, with about a third of all the children in Dundee attending it every Sunday.[720] It was the same in Catholic families like Anne Maxwell's whose parents 'didn't go to church … but they made us go.'[721] Positioned somewhere between a free childcare arrangement and a necessary part of a child's religious life, it was a rare child in Dundee on both sides of the divide who did not attend Sunday School at some point in their lives, however lapsed their parents were.[722]

The nature of the question, 'Scots or Irish?' illustrates neatly the 'Scottish equation' outlined by James Handley, in which to be Protestant was to be Scottish, while to be Catholic was to be Irish and therefore alien.[723] Not all children will have understood this implied parallel between faith and national identity but for a considerable number this was an issue wrestled with in their own families. 'Mixed' marriages had become the subject of 'suspicion and intolerance on both sides of the ecclesiastical divide' since the Catholic

[719] Henderson, 'Religious Life', p. 640.
[720] Henderson, 'Religious Life', p. 640. Moira Bolt's experience was not uncommon: 'Mum and dad never went to church, they just sent us but we had to go to Sunday school,' 00.55.20.
[721] Anne Maxwell, 15.42.30.
[722] The only exception to this among the interviewees were the middle-class Blain children, whose parents were not church-goers and who themselves not attend Sunday school. They were also educated at the fee-paying High School and were the only two interviewees not to have encountered any form of division between Protestant and Catholic, something of which Jenny Blain said she was only 'vaguely aware' of as a child. Jenny Blain, 00.56.40.
[723] J. E. Handley, *The Irish in Scotland 1798-1845* (Cork, 1947), quoted by Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism', p. 20; see also Styles, 'Non-Sectarian Culture', pp. 116-117.

Church's Decree Ne Temere in 1907 had increased the prohibition on Catholics marrying outside the faith and made the children of such unions illegitimate in the eyes of the Church.[724] Despite this, such marriages were quite common in Dundee, often Catholic women marrying Protestant men. Annie Bartie's (b. 1928) mother was convent-educated while her father's family were staunchly Protestant Dundonians: 'they never liked my mother and that was because she was a Catholic ... she's Irish.'[725] Annie and her siblings were baptised Catholic and went to Catholic schools, her mother's 'way of getting her own back.'[726] Other families took the opposite route. Stan McColl's (b. 1925) mother was also Catholic, of Irish descent. Nonetheless, Stan and his two brothers were all raised 'Proddy', attending the non-denominational primary school and the Church of Scotland Sunday School, although neither of his parents went to church at all. On Scots and Irish day he had no hesitation in answering Scots.[727]

By the 1970s however both the division between the faiths and its paralleling with a distinction between Scots and Irish was beginning to slip.[728] Writing of his own childhood in Dundee in the 1970s, Gary Robertson (b. 1967) describes the 'annual tear-up on St Patrick's Day' in such a way as to imply that the question Scots or Irish was itself no longer part of the ritual.

> For as long as anyone can remember, every 17th of March pupils from Catholic and Protestant schools have had a go at one another. It was Cathies against Proddies and it was ludicrous! In my old man's day it was Scots and Irish day with the same war being waged against people who were mates for the other 364 days of the year. None of us understood it but you joined the pack with a 'mob mentality' and safety in mind.[729]

These accounts also throw into relief the level of violence – or anticipation of violence – felt by children in the schools and streets of Dundee, not all of which was associated with religious differences. Often these were threats rather than actual events but

[724] Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism', p. 152.
[725] Annie Bartie, 00.20.06.
[726] Annie Bartie, 00. 21.03.
[727] Stan McColl, 00. 19.07.
[728] One survey in the 1970s showed that across Scotland, most Catholics of Irish heritage defined themselves as Scottish. Cited in Rosie, 'Religion and Sectarianism', p. 115.
[729] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, pp. 79-80.

on occasion physical blows were exchanged. At school in Lochee in the 1960s, Anne Maxwell recalls 'people would say, I'm going to batter you, which was hit you' and there would be trouble at the school gates between girls as well as boys.[730] For her these threats were part of a generally tough environment.

> People would try and take your chips out your bag … [you] … constantly had to fight for what you had as well, you know, or to keep it, you know. There were people that were quite really tough where I lived, you know. They would just punch you ... You know, very physical.[731]

When Frank Leighton was asked when he felt his childhood had ended, his answer was specific:

> When you had to go to the big school and you saw the way the real world, when you saw fights up there. I'd only fought with my fists before. When you got up to Kirkton High they were taking hold of people's hair and kicking them in the face. It was a wild place Kirkton High School so you had to grow up fast. (laughs)[732]

Much of what has been discussed so far is violence and threats between children, the internecine world of child on child and conflicting children's territories. However, the move to the new housing schemes on the edge of the city opened up new territory, and created new boundaries and tensions, bringing children slap bang up against adults. The outside space there was more contested than it had been in the inner-city and the relationship between children, the outdoors and the adults around them changed significantly. This change is well-documented by Jackson and Bartie and others, as well as by contemporary commentators: what the evidence from the oral history interviews uncovers is how this was experienced by the children themselves, the relish and pleasure they gained from the extra open spaces and the insouciance and adaptability they showed in opposition to the constrictions of the adult-imposed boundaries around them.[733]

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[730] Anne Maxwell, 16.01.38.
[731] Anne Maxwell, 16.02.49.
[732] Frank Leighton, 01.43.36.
[733] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth* compares Manchester and Dundee. For England see McKibbin, *Classes and Culture.* For Glasgow high-rises, see Wright, 'Making Their Own Fun'.

In the old residential areas, whether tenements or bungalows, children playing outside were part of the urban landscape. While there was a growing sense that children needed a 'better' place to play (as expressed in *Children of the City*) nonetheless their presence on the street was both expected and accepted; they fitted in to what Sibley calls the 'images of place'.[734] It is not that children had never caused trouble in the old neighbourhoods. In Edinburgh, for instance, Ritchie described how a street football team was often jokingly called 'the Back Green Windie Breckers [window-breakers].'[735] Under local bye-laws the police had the power to break up unruly games, and about 15% of juvenile crime convictions in Dundee in 1947 were for street crimes such as street football, throwing snowballs, letting off fireworks and throwing stones, showing a willingness on occasion by the police to move beyond informal reprimands.[736] However, while at times children might tip from nuisances to criminals, they still belonged. In the outer-city schemes children playing outside became seen as a threat to adults, as shown in the language used about them by their neighbours as well as by outsiders, and in the development and mythology around the infamous Dundee 'gangs'. For families who had moved to the new schemes 'the biggest disillusionment of all was in regard to children' and for the children the experience was a mixture of a relish for the new adventure and encounters with angry adults for whom the children were 'out of place.'[737] They were othered, no longer an accepted part of communal outdoor life. (See Figure 6 for a map of Dundee's housing Schemes).

[734] Sibley, *Geographies of Exclusion*, p. 99.
[735] Ritchie, *Golden City*, p. 22; Dundee example: aged 13 or so, Stan McColl got into trouble with the police for playing football in the street and breaking a lamp-post. Stan McCall, 00.48.08.
[736] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 73. The figures were unusually high that year, probably because of the harsh winter. A warning scheme had been used in Dundee during the war to deal with juveniles causing 'malicious mischief', Louise Jackson and Angela Bartie '"Children of the City": Juvenile Justice, Property, and Place in England and Scotland, 1945–60,' *The Economic History Review* 64, no.1 (2011), pp. 88-113. Cowman cites an example in Liverpool where, in 1950, 163 children were convicted of street play offences. Cowman, 'Play Streets', p. 238.
[737] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 510.

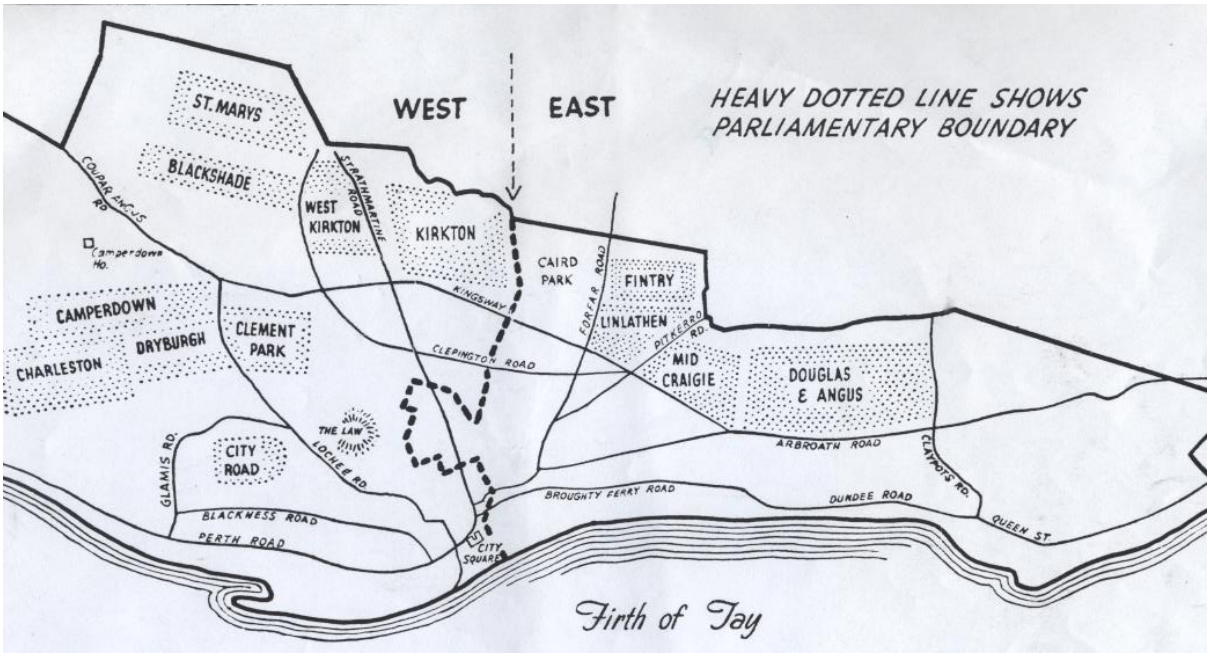

Figure 6: Dundee's Housing Schemes, *The Courier*, 1 October 1959, p. 5.

This shift was examined in the early 1960s by sociologist D.S. Riddell who set out to discover what life was like in one of the new housing schemes compared to life in one of the old tenement areas by conducting a social survey. The idea was to discover 'the way Dundee people go about their lives.' What the survey revealed was how much the rehousing programme had changed the lives, community and attitudes both of those who lived in the new schemes and those who still lived in the old residential areas.[738] By prioritising the re-housing of families with two or more children, the city fathers had changed the demographic balance of the old parts of town, making them disproportionately full of old people, and creating new communities on the outskirts with exceptionally high numbers of children. The consequences were significant.

The two areas compared by Riddell and his colleagues were Hilltown, a large area of traditional working-class tenement housing in which in 1951 three-quarters of families still shared lavatories with their neighbours, and Fintry, one of the new schemes on the edge of the city.[739] Of every six families re-housed by the council, one would go to Fintry where the housing varied from two-storey semi-detached houses to three-storey tenements, and every family had indoor plumbing and hot water. Three miles out of the city centre, on a

[738] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 483.
[739] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 485. As an older residential area Hilltown is unmarked on the *Courier* map, but is just to the south of Dundee Law.

south-facing slope and surrounded by farm land, the first tenants had moved in in 1948 and the last houses were still being built in 1960. The site may have been promising but the architecture was not. As Riddell put it, the scheme was 'not remarkable for its aesthetic qualities' and bore a strong relationship to a barracks.[740] The streets were badly laid out, too narrow and designed so that it was a long way round to walk to such shops as there were, and the buildings stranded in the midst of farmland. There were poor transport links, unfinished pedestrian routes so that walking areas were quickly reduced to mud, and no 'play areas, football pitches, boxing clubs, dance clubs … There was absolutely nothing in the way of entertainment locally.'[741]

Because of the housing policy, Fintry, like the other new schemes, had an exceptionally high number of children: at the time of the survey, 42% of the residents were under fifteen, and only 10% were over fifty. In the old residential areas like Hilltown, mothers, grandmothers and neighbours had created a network of formal or infomal surveillance, looking down from the plattie, along with men and women going to and from shifts and local shop keepers, all conspiring to create 'the million and one eyes that lived in our street.'[742] There was a form of neighbourhood social control which helped to 'assimilate children into reasonably responsible and tolerant city life.'[743] In Fintry however there were far fewer non-working older people to keep an eye on children, and a slightly higher proportion of working women, because the higher rents, running costs of the new houses and the expense of commuting into work meant extra income was desperately needed.[744] The number of watching eyes was further reduced by the extra time working men and women were absent from the home, due to the lengthier commute to and from work, and because the shops were further away. Meanwhile, Hilltown now had disproportionate numbers of old people and fewer young families. As the demographics and facilities of the areas diverged, they made for an interesting comparison. In Hilltown, what people continued to complain about were the shared lavatories and inadequate washing provision;

[740] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 487.
[741] Gary Robertson, *Gangs of Dundee* (Edinburgh, 2007) [hereafter Robertson, *Gangs*], pp. 9-10.
[742] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind*, p. 2.
[743] J. Jacobs, *The Death and Life of Great American Cities* (first published 1961, this edition New York, 1993), p. 6, quoted in Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 158.
[744] Riddell, 'Social Structure', pp. 503-4. For every nine women who worked in Hilltown, a tenth one worked in Fintry.

in Fintry it was the numbers of children and the lack of facilities for them.[745] D.S. Riddell described the issue in terms which disparaged the children:

> Only the unwary would drive through Fintry if they could avoid it. Every parked car could be a death trap, for behind might lurk swarms of youngsters, who would always choose the approach of a car or van as the appropriate moment to charge across the road ... A wife who was often late from work and 'messages' in the town, and had to do the housework and prepare supper for her man, could find the 'kids' too much of a handful to watch continuously and 'Gran', whose job this traditionally was, would be far away in a squalid room on the third floor of a slum tenement.[746]

Riddell's language echoed that of nineteenth-century reformers lamenting the inner-city juvenile mob, as well as reflecting the class conflict inherent in largely middle-class drivers at risk of striking working-class children.[747] The accustomed ratio between adults and children had been upset, so that children, whose freedom to play in the street and go to the park, had been an everyday matter in places like Hilltown, now seemed overwhelming in number and out of control. Like Riddell, many blamed the children themselves for this, an attitude which would be followed by road safety campaigns to follow.[748] The increasing numbers of motor-cars were clearly a factor in this, although Scotland lagged behind England considerably in private car ownership, so that even by 1981 only 51% of households owned a car, compared to 61% in the UK as whole.[749]

The problem was however more than just one of numbers of children and rising car ownership: it was also that use of the outdoor spaces was more contested. While there were few facilities labelled for children in the streets and closes around the old tenements, there was also very little space marked as private. Instead, there was communal space in which it was broadly accepted that children and adults co-existed. In post-war schemes like Fintry more space was now defined as private. Many families had moved out to the new

[745] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 510.
[746] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 493.
[747] Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 66; Sean O'Connell, *The Car in British Society: Class, Gender and Motoring* (Manchester, 1998), pp. 120-22, cited in Cowman, 'Play Streets', p. 240.
[748] See Hillman et al., *One False Move*, p. 107 for an argument about how government campaigns have always focussed on changing children's behaviour around traffic rather than vice versa.
[749] Callum G. Brown, 'Charting Everyday Experience' in *The History of Everyday Life in Scotland*, eds Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown (Edinburgh, 2010), pp. 19-47, p. 42.

schemes because of the possibility of having their own garden, and now they had one they did not want it 'trashed with kids'.[750] Children in turn were not respecters of these gardens and a common complaint of Fintry residents was that the children 'throw rubbish in all the time and "they're always in after their fitba."'[751] Games were played which must have driven the neighbours mad, like backie-hopping, which 'involved picking a row of back gardens and trying to run through them from one end to another.'[752] It was now no longer only well-meaning outsiders who felt that children should not be playing out on the streets, but their own families and neighbours. Almost half of all respondents to the Fintry survey complained about the lack of designated children's playgrounds, something which had barely existed in the older residential areas either.[753] This same pattern of complaint was also expressed by adult residents of the new high-rise housing schemes in Glasgow. There, there were no private gardens to defend: instead, there were children cluttering up the communal entrance and causing damage to the buildings.[754] In turn, the local authority began to look at the provision of designated and supervised play parks, the function of which would be 'to keep children off the streets'.[755] The pressing need for children's playgrounds in new schemes across Scotland was acknowledged by officials in the Scottish Office.[756] The desire behind the proposed creation of such 'segregated, sanitised and supervised' areas was to exclude children from public space, where they had increasingly come to seem a chaotic nuisance.[757]

However, the children who actually experienced the move to the new housing schemes were far more positive; to them, the space felt like liberation. Frank Leighton was delighted by his family's move in 1955 from Kirk St, Lochee out to West March, part of the Kirkton scheme. Not only was there more space in the house, there was more space outside as well.

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[750] Anne Maxwell, 15.29.45.
[751] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 493.
[752] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 119 and *passim*.
[753] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 493. For limited number of children's playgrounds, see R. Lyle, 'Local Administration', *The Third Statistical Account of Scotland. The City of Dundee,* ed. Joseph M. Jackson (Arbroath, 1979), pp. 338-339.
[754] Wright, 'Making Their Own Fun', p. 231.
[755] Dundee Corporation Parks Superintendent 1953, cited in Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 157.
[756] Callum G. Brown, 'Sport and the Scottish Office in the Twentieth Century: The Promotion of a Social and Gender Policy' in *Sport in Europe: Politics, Class and Gender* (London, 1999), ed. J. A. Mangan, pp. 183-202, p. 191, quoting SRO ED27/372.
[757] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth,* p. 158.

> When we moved to West March I just remember it being like heaven because of the size of the house and the size of the garden. The fact that we had a garden ... When we moved to Kirkton we had the woods, we had everything. We used to go all the way up to the Sidlaws, sometimes. You'd … take a piece [sandwich] with you, it was a long way (laughs).[758]

Mae Stewart (b. 1940) 'loved Fintry from the get-go.' Her family had moved out from a tenement in the West End and 'what's not to love for a kid that used to walk for twenty minutes to see a bit grass, and then suddenly it's just outside the door?'[759] Living right on the outskirts of Dundee, there was a burn, woods, hills and fields to explore so it was 'just great when we moved there.'[760] Gary Robertson, who grew up in Fintry in the 1970s, describes it as a time when 'freedom, adventure and exploration knew no bounds no matter how young you were.'[761] Ward, who was generally enthusiastic about the possibilities of suburbia for children, described the post-war council estates on the edge of the city as the 'least environmentally rewarding of suburban types' but for the children who lived there, particularly when they were new, replete with building sites and still next to farm land and woods, they were, in Frank Leighton's words, 'heaven'.[762] The journalist Deborah Orr grew up in Motherwell, a large industrial town in North Lanarkshire. When her family were moved from their two-room Victorian tenement to a new scheme called Muirhouse on the edge of the city, she remembered her process of gradual exploration:

> Whatever its shortcomings the truly wonderful thing about Muirhouse was that it was on the edge of lush, rich and varied countryside. I gathered my territories slowly, moving further away from the flat as I grew to know this copse, that stream, a hedgerow, a field, a wood. The marsh was an early passion because it was right by the scheme, only about eighty yards from our building. I was probably about nine when I went marsh-crazy. [763]

[758] Frank Leighton, 1.41.27.
[759] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind,* p. 131.
[760] Frank Leighton, 00.07.31.
[761] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 193.
[762] Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 71; Frank Leighton, 01.41.27.
[763] Deborah Orr, *Motherwell: A Girlhood* (London, 2020), p. 66.

This relish for life on the edge of the city is found repeatedly in memoirs and from the interviewees. Ralph Glasser growing up in Glasgow's Gorbals in the 1920s vividly describes a yearning for a countryside he never saw, encapsulated in his admiration for the decoration on a packet of Woodbines: 'Oh that magical tracery of wild honeysuckle on those packets of green and gold! Child of this industrial city I had never set eyes on a honeysuckle, and yet the image on the packet wove a powerful spell.'[764] Glasgow children forty years later, re-housed in high-rise estates on the edge of the city, were enthusiastic about the possibilities of the woods, braes and banks that were now within reach, with one boy recalling as an adult the fun he had had using lurchers or ferrets to hunt rabbits and going fishing.[765] Few of the children of Dundee were ever so remote from green spaces but for those who had moved to the new schemes on the edge of the city, the countryside world which opened up to them was a place of adventure.

These adventures however brought them directly into conflict with their new neighbours for whom the children were an unwelcome presence. Riddell described the fears of the farmers whose land was next to the new estates, and the 'formidable fencing' they had erected to prevent 'depredations of the swarms of children which were the most notable feature of this, as of other, estates.'[766] This rural distrust of urban children has deep roots in British culture, most recently experienced a generation earlier during evacuation, when the evacuees behaviour was felt to lead to 'outbreaks of hooliganism and conduct alien to the countryside but not necessarily to the 'burgh.'[767] Nonetheless the farmers may have been justified in their fears. Frank Leighton recalled stealing turnips and berries from the fields and thought little of going over the high fences. Once, when he was still at primary school, he went over a fence to retrieve a ball. The farmer set a dog on him and Frank was bitten, ending up in hospital to be stitched up, and not surprisingly described the experience as 'traumatic'.[768] Mae Stewart described rolling around in a field and flattening the crop, then, having approached one of the big fences surrounding a farm, being chased off by 'a hound of the Baskervilles.'[769] Several decades later, Gary Robertson was at least as

[764] Glasser, *Growing Up in the Gorbals*, p. 4.
[765] Wright, 'Making Their Own Fun', p. 242.
[766] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 487.
[767] Scottish Women's Group on Public Welfare, *Our Scottish Towns: Evacuation and the Social Future*, (Edinburgh, 1944), p. 17.
[768] Frank Leighton, 1.41.27
[769] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind,* p. 143.

annoying, throwing stones at the roof of some cottages for the sheer pleasure of the sound they made. He too was chased by Alsatians and, having surmounted a fourteen-foot-high fence in sheer panic 'as bodies and limbs fought desperately to get over the wobbling mass of wire,' he and his friends 'ran for our lives down a pathway and into the scheme.'[770]

It was not only the farmland around the schemes that was both alluring and potentially risky. The constant process of building created a wonderland of building sites to explore, places in a constant state of change and transformation. Once he had a bicycle, at around the age of 13, Stan McColl (b. 1925) would cycle around Dundee, 'because they were building new housing all over … And you were nosy.'[771] For Mae Stewart, the building sites were 'a whole new ball game as far as playing went.'[772] There were foundations to clamber around and piles of bricks to rearrange into houses of your own: what Ward describes as the 'child's bounty in heaps of sand and gravel, the stacks of bricks and timber, the scaffold poles and drain pipes of innumerable building contractors.'[773] Yet again, what was fun for the children was exasperating for the adults, in particular the 'Watchie' whose job it was to guard the building-site.[774]

The street-level territoriality described by children in the old tenement areas was replicated on a larger scale in the new housing schemes. George Burton recalls playing in the 1950s on the vast field opposite the new housing scheme in Charleston to which he and his family had moved. However, the field was soon built over, and once that happened George and his friends were no longer welcomed. It was now a rival housing scheme called Menzieshill, and he and his brother were ' "Charlies" from Charleston in the territory of the "Meenies" from Menzieshill.'[775] It was a rivalry marked 'by bouts of stone-throwing and name-calling' and by raids on each other's piles of sticks, collected in preparation for Guy Fawkes bonfires, an account which demonstrates how quickly territorial loyalties consolidated.[776] Many of the schemes to the north of the city abutted each other and shared the rough ground around the Dighty Burn as an arena for play and for territorial rivalry. In May 1953 two thirteen-year-olds from the Mid Craigie scheme were admonished

[770] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 119.
[771] Stan McColl, 00.31.48.
[772] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind,* p. 137.
[773] Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 70.
[774] Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind,* p. 138.
[775] Burton, *Wee Georgie*, p. 140.
[776] Burton, *Wee Georgie,* p. 140.

for attacking a boy from the neighbouring Fintry scheme 'by seizing him by the arms, dragging him, pushing him into two feet of water, seizing him by the shoulders and attempting to submerge him in the water' while three other Fintry boys looked on.[777] By the 1960s for some older teenagers this territoriality took the form of gangs, with colourful names like the Kirkton Huns and the Fintry Shams, whose activities were a mixture of the childish and the social, mixed in with real violence and occasional criminality. This 'territorial tribalism' was a focus of both pride and fear in the younger children in the area, and omnipresent, because of the graffiti markings the gangs used to badge territory.[778] Frank recalls his local gang, the Kirkton Huns as 'the worst gang in Dundee' and watched them marching in the park in a group of 'about 20, 30 or 40 of them.'[779] While the gangs started in the new housing schemes it was not long before rivals emerged in the older parts of town, like Lochee and Hilltown.[780] When the local authority started building another scheme in the late 1960s, Whitfield, not only did they replicate many of the problems of Fintry in design with 'quagmires of mud, insufficient local transport, sparse amenities, lack of leisure facilities [and] no community centre,' but gang culture was there from the start.[781] As the *Evening Telegraph* reported in 1969:

> The new scheme is already suffering problems common to other local authority developments. Although its children are not old enough in the main to form gangs, many of Whitfield's gables are defaced with slogans. Rival mobs from Fintry and Douglas are blamed for this.[782]

The figures for juvenile crime in Dundee show that what was going on was more than a population shift. As the Hilltown families were re-housed, the proportion of juvenile male property offences committed in the area fell sharply from around 11% in 1947 to just 1.5% in 1965. Meanwhile, the proportion in the Linlathen district, which included Fintry, rose dramatically, reaching just over 21% in 1959, and an astonishing 32.6% in 1965. This was more than displacement; it seemed that life in the new schemes, with Fintry notable

[777] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 99.
[778] Robertson, *Gangs*, p. 39.
[779] Frank Leighton, 1.07.27.
[780] Stan McColl, 01.32.00.
[781] Robertson, *Gangs*, p. 119.
[782] Quoted in Robertson, *Gangs*, p. 120.

amongst them, was causing an increase in reported juvenile offences and is a measure of the greater tension between children and adults mentioned earlier. By the 1960s, Fintry 'had become notorious as the "black spot" in the city "in respect of crime, vandalism and general social conditions."'[783] What is hard to discern is how this labelling of Fintry as a black spot in itself exacerbated the crime figures. Increased police surveillance, an encouragement caused by the label to report offences that might otherwise have gone unmentioned, and an internalisation of the idea by some youth giving them a desire to live up to the bad reputation, may well all have added to the figures.

By 1968 the situation had become so bad in Fintry that several streets were re-named to try and shake off the stigma that now attached to them, off-street parking was provided to try and make the streets safer, a community centre specifically aimed at youth was built and a Residents Planning Committee established to try to foster a sense of community responsibility.[784] Dundee was far from alone in its struggles: housing estates across Britain were grappling with the same problem 'where the war between children and adults for control of the environment has been lost by the adults.'[785]

In the descriptions of the difficulties of life on many of the housing schemes in the 1960s and 1970s, the recollections of the children who grew up in them act as a salutary reminder that most of the children who lived there did so with relish and lived life to the full. Indeed, many of the problems for the adults were caused by the fact that children will find a place and a way to play wherever they are, however dangerous it is for them and annoying for others. Ritchie argued that the schemes were a disaster as places for children to play in, unlike the old tenement neighbourhoods because they were 'dead from the start. The houses in modern schemes are so dull and unmysterious. They have no unknown corners.'[786] While in practice, children found plenty of places and ways to play there, the lack of unknown corners was part of the trouble for the adults. It was all so visible. Instead of being tucked out of the way on back greens, the children were all out on the street; instead of playing up Dundee Law, they were in a farmer's field. There was nothing so remarkable about how the children played but, whether it was old-fashioned chickenelly,

[783] Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, 71, quoting NAS, HH55/1681 Inspection, 1972.
[784] Robertson, *Gangs*, 60; Jackson and Bartie, *Policing Youth*, p. 160.
[785] Ward, *Child in the City*, pp. 102-3.
[786] Ritchie, *Golden City*, p. 2.

'backie-hopping,' hitching rides on the bumpers of cars, stealing or simply throwing snowballs, the issue was 'our fun was someone else's misery.'[787]

OUT AND ABOUT: THE 'GREAT COMMUNITY OF MEN' – CHILDREN AND WORK

The post-war discourse about children in the street centred around play, and in so doing ignored a significant if changing aspect of children's lives: work. For Aries, the medieval world lacked a prolonged transition between the world of children and that of adults; instead at seven the child uncut his mother's apron strings and went out in the city, free to take part in 'the great community of men, sharing in the work and play of their companions, old and young alike.'[788] The process of the next few centuries can be seen as a steady progress towards eliminating children as part of this great community of the street, so that by the 1970s Colin Ward lamented on seeing a group of boys in Glasgow, collecting scrap from the old tenement houses as they fell to the demolition ball and chain:

> They were between twelve and fourteen years old. They knew how to get hold of, and manipulate in dense traffic, a horse-drawn vehicle, and how to pilot it through the city to some entrepreneur who had a market for the last of the old metallic rubbish of the old inner city … Were they the final generation of children who actually had a function in the inner city?[789]

As Ward's observations indicated, this was a change that related not only to children's activity out in the wider community, but also to what it was to be a child. Not one but two new distinctions emerged across the twentieth century: first, between school-age children and older children of the household, earning but still living at home; and secondly, between those young earners and the adults, often the parents, of the household. Both distinctions were to do with economic function and the shifts are most clearly seen in the examination of what happened to earnings.

The significance in where the money earned by children went lies both in the actual value of the money to the household economy and in what it tells us about how the role of a child was understood. Is a child one of several members of the family who contributes to

[787] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 177.
[788] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 395.
[789] Ward, *Child in The City*, p. 21.

the household economy, or is a child a special case, with the right to be paid for and not to contribute? A phrase from Riddell's Dundee Social Survey in the 1960s implies a continuing notion of a household as some kind of business in which children played their part by referring to the help children gave as 'necessary to maintain the household as a going concern.'[790] This idea however is at variance with the change delineated by Zelizer as taking place much earlier, in which children become increasingly precious. Some elements of these shifting grounds can be seen in the varying experiences of the Dundee interviewees. However, the timing and nature of the observable changes do not entirely accord with the commonly established narrative and raise questions about our understanding of the changing definition of childhood in the twentieth century, certainly as it applies to Scotland.

This shift in the definition of childhood was driven by the legal changes in the compulsory school leaving age and in the type of work that children could do, as discussed in the introductory chapter. As a textile manufacturing town, Dundee was amongst the places slowest to make these changes in the earlier period. In 1900 the Chief Inspector of Factories estimated that in Dundee there were 2000 children as young as ten years old still working in jute factories as 'half-timers', only attending school every other day, or for half a day each day.[791] The presence of child workers caused confusion about the boundary between children and adults. As school teachers who gave evidence to a 1909 Parliamentary Committee on children's partial exemption from school to allow them to work explained 'the child does not know whether he is a child at school or a man.'[792] By 1912 Dundee was the only city in Scotland to still allow half-timers although the estimated number of children involved had diminished to an approximate 250, and the practice was finally abolished in 1918.[793] As discussed earlier, the legislation on child labour was consolidated in 1937 which decreed that no school-age child could be employed for more than two hours on any school-day or on Sunday and no child could be employed at all under the age of twelve, except by permission of local bye-laws.[794] By making a distinction between children under twelve and older school age children between twelve and fourteen

[790] Riddell, 'Leisure', pp. 537-8.
[791] 'The Plight of the Half-Timer', Dundee *Evening Telegraph*, 4 July, 1900.
[792] Thompson, 'War with Adults', p. 34.
[793] 'Half-timers in Dundee', *The Courier*, April 27, 1912; for abolition,< https://www.verdantworks.co.uk/the-plight-of-the-half-timer,> accessed June 20, 2022.
[794]Children and Young Persons Act (Scotland) 1937, Edw. 8 and Geo. 6, c. 38, s. 28.

the Act reflected the continuing cultural blurred line between the age of education and the age of work. Nonetheless, the named authority was the local Education Authority, and this tying together of the relationship between compulsory education and restrictions on a child's ability to work recognised competing demands on children's time and a prioritisation of education over labour. It was also pragmatic. Once a society has decided to restrict child labour for moral, cultural or economic reasons it is much easier to do so through enforcement of school attendance rather than through inspection of every possible workplace.[795]

This link between increasing education and decreasing work occurred in broadly the same way across Britain and northern Europe and represented a significant change both in the economic role children played in their household economies and the move to what Cunningham has called the 'adulting' of the workplace which continued throughout the twentieth century.[796] At the beginning of the century many working-class children in Scotland were in part-time paid employment while attending school. The money they earned was part of the household economy and 'any money earned was handed over to "the house."'[797] The specific figures are not available for Dundee but because of its role as a textile town, with an economy more akin to the Lancashire cotton towns than other Scottish cities, it is likely to have been similar to them in that in the late nineteenth-century at some stages in the family life cycle 'children were responsible for earning over one-third of household income.'[798] At this point then, not only were children contributing to the household economy but there was no distinction being drawn between the wages of children who were still attending school and the children of the house who were old enough to enter the labour market full-time.

The generally understood chronology of change for Britain shows a distinction emerging across the following decades such that 'by the middle decades of the [twentieth] century' schoolchildren had become recipients rather than contributors and were given

[795] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 416 citing Myron Weiner, *The Child and the State in India* (Trenton, 1991).
[796] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 410.
[797] Lynn Jamieson, 'Children', in *The Oxford Companion to Scottish History*, ed. Michael Lynch (Oxford, 2001), pp. 76-78, p. 77.
[798] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 474; Sara Horrell and Deborah Oxley, 'Crust or Crumb?: Intrahousehold resource allocation and male breadwinning in late Victorian Britain', *Economic History Review*, 52, no. 3 (1999), pp. 494-522, p. 502.

pocket money. Any money they earned from odd jobs or baby-sitting they also kept for themselves. As Cunningham pointed out 'this tendency indicates a marked shift in expectations on the part of both parents and children.'[799] Meanwhile contributions to the household from children who had left school but remained at home continued. Todd's work has established that for England in the inter-war years and into the early 1950s, with variations according to different economies, households and social situations, many working-class households relied on the earnings of juveniles, defined as young people from school-leaving age to eighteen-year-olds. She argues that by the 1950s 'part of their status as being different from and senior to school-children rested upon this responsibility.'[800] She also suggested that by the late 1950s this pattern was changing.[801] In the decades following, the contributions of juvenile earners to the household economy further diminished in significance, such that by the 1990s, sixteen-year-olds in full-time work who still lived at home contributed only 30% of their median earnings to the household.[802]

There is then a rough suggested chronology in which a distinction emerges between school-age children and older children in terms of what they were expected to contribute to the household, followed later by a decline in payments made by older children. However, as Cunningham states 'the study of the role of children's contributions to the family economy … has hardly begun to be examined for the mid- to late twentieth century, and may not be constant within that period. It is that role which most urgently needs to be explored.'[803] What follows is a brief exploration of how that change seems to have unfolded in Dundee with a focus on how it impacted on the children themselves and what it tells us about the changing boundary of what it was to be a child.

For children born in the inter-war period in Dundee an obligation to contribute to the family income on leaving school seems to have been thoroughly internalised. Annie Bartie (b. 1928) started paid work in the jute mill the day she turned fourteen and the money went to her mother. She continued to send her mother an allowance even when she

[799] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 423.
[800] Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents' suggests that youth defined as school leavers to eighteen years of age in the interwar period would have paid about 70-95% of their earnings into the household, p. 67.
[801] Todd, 'Breadwinnners and Dependents', pp. 82-84 based on the increasing amount of money young wage-earners were able to save.
[802] G. Jones, 'The Cost of Living in the Parental Home', *Youth and Policy*, 32 (1991), pp. 19-28, cited in Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 423.
[803] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 426.

was in her twenties and working abroad in the army.[804] Stan McColl (b.1925), whose father had secure employment and who considered his family to be better off than many of their neighbours, automatically handed his wages to his mother from his first full-time job, aged 14 as a van boy for the Co-Op. He earned 14/ of which he gave her 10/, keeping the remainder for himself.[805] Josie Robertson (b. 1934) was the generation caught out by the change in the school-leaving age from fourteen to fifteen. The summer before her last year at school she and a friend got themselves jobs in the mill and did two weeks work in the summer holidays, before their lack of National Insurance papers betrayed their real age. They were keen to do this because 'we weren't happy getting kept on to fifteen.'[806] She gave all the money she earned through this work to her father who then gave her some 'pocket money' back, and this pattern continued once she was working full-time and until she left home to get married.[807]

For the 1930s and 1940s this pattern seems to have been common across Britain in working-class families, as reflected in research largely based on English records. Pearl Jephcott records the results of a questionnaire completed by about 150 girls in England and Wales (although there are a couple of unremarked Scottish contributors) in 1941, many of whom seem to have been keen to get to work so they could help the family. As one girl wrote, 'you can hardly wait for the future when you leave school, so that you can bring your wages in to Mother.'[808] Some children at school-leaving age, whose wage-earning capacity was particularly needed, may have been both eager to help and aware that they were trapped by circumstance. This was perhaps particularly true of those who needed to work to help feed their younger brothers and sisters. One such was Moira Bolt (b. 1940), who started a Saturday job while she was still at school and gave all the money from it to her mother, keeping back only what she needed for bus fares and a visit to the ice-rink. By 1955, when she left school and started full-time work, she continued to give almost all her money to her mother, keeping on the Saturday job as well so that she now worked six days a week. But she resented it on occasion: 'it bugged me at times because, you know I would have

[804] Annie Bartie, 00.38.18.
[805] Stan McColl, 00.00.52.
[806] Josie Robertson, 00.20.00.
[807] Josie Robertson, 00.20.15.
[808] Jephcott, *Girls Growing Up,* p. 69. See Selina Todd, *Young Women, Work and Family in England*, 1918-1950 (Oxford, 2005) for a fuller discussion.

holes in my stockings and I had no money to buy new ones. Unless I did without my ice rink or something like that, which I didnae like to do.'[809] As Todd put it, discussing a similar story, here there is a hint of understanding that without the younger siblings and the family's financial struggles, her life might have been better, 'a moment when the knowledge that poverty limited their choices became acute.' [810]

Information from elsewhere in the western world suggests that in other countries the period after the war marked a turning point in such payments. In Canada for instance 'whatever the family circumstances, until after the Second World War, most working-class children turned their earnings over to their parents.'[811] In Britain, the evidence suggests that school-leavers in Dundee like Moira Bolt were not alone in continuing to hand over their income to the household in the late 1950s. Madeline Kerr's research into families in one of the poorest parts of Merseyside, published in 1958, showed the same pattern.[812] However by the 1960s Diana Leonard studying working-class families in Swansea was of the opinion that 'young people exploit their parents' because of the paucity of the contribution they made to the household income.[813]

Given Dundee's continuing low household incomes, it is not surprising that here the assumption that school-leavers who had entered the workplace fulltime would hand over their money, and be given back a small portion as 'pocket money' would not change quickly. Old habits die hard. By the late 1960s however there is evidence of this beginning to shift into the notion of paying for board and lodging. When Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) left school at 15 in 1969 and started working full-time she paid board, handing over less than half her income to her mother. Anne saw this as normal – 'that's what everyone did' – and felt that she was paying rather less than she cost to keep.[814] She counted herself lucky because unlike some of her peers she did at least have a bed of her own and was well-fed, whereas some of her contemporaries paid board and were 'not being fed … and sharing a bed.'[815]

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[809] Moira Bolt, 1.19.00
[810] Lifetimes History Group, *Something in Common* (Manchester, 1976), p. 27, quoted in Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents', p. 62.
[811] Neil Sutherland, *Growing Up*: *Childhood in English Canada from the Great War to the Age of Television* (Toronto, 1977) pp. 131-2, cited in Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 423.
[812] M. Kerr, *The People of Ship Street* (1958), pp. 46-8, p. 61, cited in Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 423.
[813] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 424.
[814] Anne Maxwell, 16.24.04.
[815] Anne Maxwell, 16.24.54.

The pattern in Dundee therefore was that in working-class homes the earnings of children of the household of school-leaving age continued to be understood as household income rather than individual income throughout the 1950s. By the late 1960s it had moved across into the idea of paying for board and lodging, signalling a shift into a more individualistic attitude towards the money being earned: no longer part of the household income but rather money belonging to the child, being used to pay for accommodation as might a lodger. There is a suggestion in these findings that in Dundee this shift occurred slightly later than it did apparently elsewhere in Britain, although much of this is based on anecdotal evidence. Cunningham used the Bethnal Green pork-chop example as part of his argument that by the late 1950s 'the deep-rooted pressure on children to contribute to the family economy had been sharply eroded; they were now the beneficiaries of adult earnings.'[816] The explanation for this decade-later shift in Dundee may lie simply in relative lack of prosperity or in a more complicated idea of the experience of poverty and family fragility. Individuals do not necessarily unlearn attitudes which are ingrained in them. Given Dundonian families' bitter historical experience of the struggle for family survival why would they let go of their understanding that the earnings of all members of the family went into a household pot just because it was now the 'affluent' 1950s and 60s?

An examination of the destination of the earnings of school-age children in Dundee reveals more about the shift from the child as member of the household into an individual, and the establishment of a distinction between school-age child and contributing youth. The earnings of school-age children has been subject to even less research than those of full-time working children because, as Cunningham observes, 'the assumption that parents will be the sole economic providers has become so deeply entrenched that researchers have failed to build into their questionnaires any possibility that children will contribute either by way of wages or through household work.'[817] The evidence from Dundee however indicates that school-age children continued to contribute both household work and wages well into the 1960s, with the ample pool of labour provided by the urban child called upon by the State not just during the war but for several decades after.

The ability of a child to contribute money to the household depends on being able to get work. Chief among the jobs for school-age children for which the 1937 Act allowed

[816] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 425.
[817] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 422.

authorities to make bye-laws was that traditional work of the child in the street as 'van boy, errand boy or messenger.'[818] As the wording indicates, this was gender-specific and it is work which shows how accepted boys still were as part of the 'great community of men' at this time.[819] Stan McColl (b. 1925) went 'on the milk' when he was about ten, as a milk delivery boy working off the back of one of Dundee Pasteurised Milk's horse-drawn carts. This was a regular job, from 6am to 8am every morning except Sundays, and the pay was well worth having. Stan's family was 'well-off;' nonetheless he gave the 3/6 a week he earned straight to his mother and she handed him back one shilling as pocket money.[820] If the money was not vital for the family it was nonetheless 'always going for something. And it was always something for the good.' And if he needed something special, 'it was there for you.'[821]

Twenty-seven years later, Willie Robertson (b. 1948) became a 'milk laddie' at the age of fourteen after watching another boy do it and thinking he was 'doing real man's work and probably ending up with more disposable income than his dad.'[822] Willie's family was also financially secure, nonetheless Willie gave half his income every week straight to his mother and she expected him to save the rest.[823] For one of his fellow laddies, the money was vital. 'Si didn't work on the milk so he could buy more things for himself like the rest of us; he needed the job to help support his mum and little sister.'[824] The similarities and differences between Stan and Willie show the shift that had started to take place between 1935 and 1962, the respective dates at which each had started to deliver milk. Stan was 10 when he started on the milk, Willie was 14, the age by which Stan had left school and was working fulltime. Neither family seems to have needed the money earned by the child but while in both cases some of the money went to the family, Willie kept more of the money he earned for himself. Nonetheless his earnings were still family money, not Willie's alone,

[818]Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, Edw. 8 and Geo. 6, c. 37, part III, general provisions as to employment.
[819] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 395.
[820] Stan McColl, 00.23.01.
[821] Stan McColl, 00.35.52.
[822] Robertson, *On the Milk*, p. 304.
[823] Robertson, *On the Milk*, p. 140.
[824] Robertson, *On the Milk*, p. 66.

and his reference to his friend Si shows the continuum of the idea that a child's wages could still be a vital part of a household's income for working-class families.[825]

The other kind of work picked out by the 1937 Act as potentially permissible for children, this time including the under-twelves, was light agricultural work. The most common forms of work for city children were short-term harvesting jobs on farms near the city, picking berries in the summer or potatoes in the autumn. For farms near Dundee these jobs were generally done by local labour, both adults and children, coming out from the city, but in war-time conditions the government saw children as the official labour resource. From 1939 the use of Scottish school-children to pick potatoes was formally co-ordinated by the Department of Agriculture in liaison with local Education boards and while taking part was always voluntary, school holidays and term times were organised around the harvest and, if the rest of the class was off picking tatties, few children wanted to be left out. Dundee school-children from the last two years of Primary School upwards played a considerable role in the potato harvest in Angus and Perthshire, staying in special hostels or being bussed out daily. This was not specific to Dundee; thousands of children were also transported from Glasgow, Edinburgh and elsewhere in the Central Belt to take part in the harvest, while children in Fife and Angus also participated in their local harvest. School records show that in case of late or rainy harvests the two-week 'tattie holiday' would be extended to three or more weeks, according to need, with the weeks off in September or October docked off the following summer's holiday allocation.[826]

This use of school children as a co-ordinated labour force continued long after the war, with an annual negotiation between each education authority, the National Farmers' Union (NFU) and the Ministry of Agriculture as to how many children of which age and for how long would be released from school. In 1955 around 1800 children a day from Dundee went tattie-picking in Angus as part of the official Ministry of Agriculture workforce; others went with 'pirate' organisers, private operators who supplied children directly to farms and often either paid more than the official rate of 1s/3d. an hour, or provided a better lunch.[827] It was a considerable bureaucratic exercise: hostels were inspected, thousands of lunches a

[825] Bill Blain, 00.48.30. In the 1940s the middle-class Bill Blain did not do a paper-round because 'being a paperboy meant you were a really poor boy, you were outside the system. So none of my friends ever did paper rounds.'
[826] Brechin High School log book, 1942-64.
[827] NRS, AF59/71, Letter from Dundee branch, DOAS to W. Watt, Edinburgh, 1 Nov. 1955.

day provided in makeshift dining halls across the countryside, and, in an attempt to regulate school absences, each child needed an official permit to show they were allowed to miss school only for the purpose of tattie-picking.

The work was tough, hard physical labour and often in cold and wet conditions. As Maureen Reynolds recalls, 'howking the tatties out of the cold earth always left your fingers numb with cold.'[828] Nonetheless many of the children who did it went voluntarily and enjoyed it. Moira Bolt went with the school and felt that 'all in all it was good fun. Good cheery crowd. You had a sing song on the bus and stuff like that. I quite enjoyed it.'[829] It was an adventure with your peers, a change of scene and weeks off school. The meals offered were of great importance to the children, and better lunches seemed to have formed a large part of the allure of the 'pirate' picking organisers. Originally it was the responsibility of the individual farmers to provide a hot midday meal for the children working on their farm: the variation in the quality of this meal led to 'some unrest among the children who have very definite ideas regarding the type of meal available and consequently on the farms on which they prefer to work.'[830] This troublesome display of agency on the part of children led organisers in most areas to produce standardised meals, using the school meals service. This standardisation seems to have succeeded. All Maureen Reynolds (b.1938) can recall of these hot dinners was that 'it always seemed to be mince and tatties, but no one was complaining as we were all starving.'[831]

For all of the children the majority of the money earned tattie-picking went into the household, and many enjoyed this chance to be able to contribute. Mae Stewart (b.1940) went tattie-picking in her first year at secondary school and remembers the jam jar of money filling up, as every day a 10s. note went into it from her earnings while she kept the remaining 1/3d. At the end of the three weeks the money saved went towards paying for school clothing for her and her brother. The money was also very welcome in Maureen Reynolds' (b. 1938) household, whose mother 'was ecstatic with the wages of eleven and thruppence a day. It was almost a fortune in our house.'[832] Mary Barlow (b. 1931) was

[828] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales,* p. 110
[829] Moira Bolt, 1.05.20.
[830] NRS, AF59/71, Letter from WJS Marchant, Secretary of Ross-shire Seed Potato Growers Association to The Secretary, Labour Branch, DOAS, 13 Oct. 1949.
[831] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, p. 110.
[832] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, p. 111.

poorly as a child and was 'broken hearted' not to be able to go to the tatties with her adopted siblings. They got to keep about a shilling and the rest went to her mother who 'needed the money … to keep us going.'[833]

The correspondence between the NFU, the Ministry of Agriculture and the Dundee Education Authority (DEA) shows the tension between the farmers' attitude to child labour and the desire by the Education Authority to protect the education of the children in their care. There was also a debate about whether children should be used to undercut the wages that would need to be paid if adults did the job – a debate which had been part of the original campaign to abolish child 'half-timers' in the jute mills forty years earlier.[834] Mae Stewart (b.1940) had to persuade her parents to allow her to go to the potato harvest, as her father felt that if work needed to be done it should be given to an adult being paid proper wages, arguing that 'Thir'll be nae cheap labour oot o' this hoose.'[835] In 1950 one indignant mother, Mrs E L Crow from Duns, wrote to the Department of Agriculture in terms which indicate that she not only saw her son's earnings as contributing to the household economy, but also felt he should be paid fairly for it. She complained that her son was being paid less than women doing the same job, although he was still being paid more than the minimum laid down for school-children let off school for this purpose.[836]

> I think we mothers and the Education Committee are doing very good work, allowing our children to harvest potatoes in the nation's interest. After all *it is not all gain* when one considers the wear and tear to clothes, and the really hard work the boys do and when one finds a rick [rich] and influential farmer acting as in this case, it makes one wonder if it is worthwhile [emphasis added]. [837]

By the mid 1950s the DEA started to resist the arrangement, objecting to the amount of time off school and the poor conditions children experienced, particularly, it was said, with 'pirate' organisers. The NFU and the Ministry of Agriculture argued that the harvest could

[833] Mary Barlow, 00.39.25.
[834] Bruce Lenman, Charlotte Lythe and Enid Gauldie, *Dundee and Its Textile Industry, 1850-1914 (*Dundee, 1969) [hereafter Lenman et al., *Dundee and Its Textile Industry*], pp. 59-61.
[835] Mae Stewart, *Dae Yeh Mind*, p. 147.
[836] NRS, AF59/71. Minimum wage rates for children under 16 exempted from school to do the work were set at 1s.1d per hour in 1950, by The Temporary Workers in Agriculture Order (Minimum Wages) (Scotland) Order 1950.
[837] NRS, AF59/71, Letter from Mrs E L Crow, Duns, 21 Oct 1950.

not be brought in without them. *The Courier* in 1956 quoted one farmer's blunt explanation as to why child labour was so vital: it was absurd to think 'that Scottish farmers could find 30,000 adults willing to break their backs on piece-work.'[838] While the DEA continued to allow children to go tattie-picking in official groups, by 1958 their resistance to 'pirate' organisers led them to threaten to bring in the police 'to take such action as may be practicable to prevent parties of children leaving the city.'[839] The formal practice in Dundee came to an end in the early 1960s, though it continued in Angus until the 1970s.[840]

Soft-fruit picking was never formalised in the way potato-picking was but nonetheless it was a rare Dundee child who had not at least once picked berries, with buses arriving at all the big housing schemes early on summer mornings to ferry adults and children to the rival farms. Unlike the potato harvest, the berry-picking season largely coincided with existing school holidays. Children as young as ten would elbow themselves a space on one of the buses and go off for the day to pick berries in Blairgowrie or Forfar, taking their lunch with them. Unlike the potatoes, pay was by the pound picked rather than by the time taken, and even by the 1970s could be as low as 2p a pound.[841] Frank Leighton (b. 1950) would pick berries with his family and 'my mum used to say to everybody "right you've got to pick until you've picked enough to pay for your school uniform"' just as the children in Brechin would.[842] Notably however he is the only one of the Dundee interviewees who recalls this direct link between berry-picking and his school clothes: it may partly have been an attitude brought by his mother who came from Kirriemuir, a small mill-town in Angus similar to Brechin. Otherwise, most children did not spend their summers berry-picking but only went occasionally, even if the family was struggling financially. The low pay offered by berry-picking may account for this: even for the very poor it did not offer an income worth pursuing with great vigour. Instead, the berries offered a bit of a laugh and a change of scene. As Stan McColl puts it, 'you had your freedom … you were out and about.'[843] By the 1970s children like David Dick (b. 1959) would go with their friends 'for a

[838] *The Courier*, 6 November 1956, quoting Mr Wester, Campsie, Glenalmond.
[839] NRS, AF59/76, Letter from Depute Town Clerk to The Secretary, Scottish Education Dept., 25 August 1958.
[840] NRS, AF59/76, Eastern Harvest Labour covering Perth (East) Angus Fife and Kinross.
[841] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 133
[842] Frank Leighton, 00.46.50.
[843] Stan McColl, 00.34.35

bit of fun … We weren't desperate to earn the money it was just, we could earn a bit of pocket money and have a good time.'[844]

The shift for school-age children from contributing to the family income to earning yourself pocket-money seems to have occurred in Dundee in the mid to late 1960s, after the end of organised potato-picking, and again roughly a decade later than the timing suggested by Cunningham. Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) started work aged about 11 for a newsagent on Saturdays, and then aged 13 progressed to working evenings in a fish and chip shop. All that money was hers to keep, in contrast to Willie Robertson, who had started earning just a few years earlier than Anne but who handed half of his milk-round earnings into the household. It is dangerous to extrapolate precise timings of change from such limited examples but this, together with other evidence, strongly suggests that the shift in thinking took place no earlier. Josie Robertson (b.1934) had herself given all her wages barring pocket money to her father. When her own children went berry-picking in the 1960s the money 'went into a pot and everybody got so much off from the ice cream van coming round.'[845] So in her family in the mid-1960s any money earned by children was still handed in to the mother but then distributed, for everyone's benefit but all for pleasure. By the early 1970s, the change was unquestioned. When David Dick (b.1959) started his paper round aged twelve, he kept the money for himself but his parents stopped giving him pocket money which 'seemed fair enough.'[846] By the time Gary Robertson (b. 1967) was going to the berries, his father covered his newspaper round for him to allow him to do so, and the money from both the paper round and the berries was his to keep.[847]

The question is what precipitated this change and why did it happen in Dundee when it did? There are a number of related explanations. First, children can only contribute to a family economy if they are able to work. As Cunningham has pointed out, 'contexts are vital' and the official sponsoring of child labour for the potato harvest may have perpetuated in this part of Scotland a context in which school-age children could contribute money to their household's income, if only for a short period of time each year.[848] Secondly, increasing prosperity was undoubtedly central to this shift, so that as

[844] David Dick, 00.46.30
[845] Josie Robertson, 00.22.26.
[846] David Dick, 00.09.30.
[847] Robertson, *Skeem Life*, p. 131.
[848] Cunningham, 'Child Labour', p. 495.

opportunities such as the potato harvest petered out there was no urgent need to replace the income. The growing affluence of the 1950s had already had an impact on recruiting children to go potato picking. In 1956 one Glasgow councillor who toured the hostels where the children were housed to do the harvesting observed how difficult it was becoming to get children to do it as their parents needed the money less than before, remarking that 'there was not the same money incentive for boys to go potato lifting' and giving the example of one boy 'who had £1 sent to him by his parents to spend at the camp.'[849]

Even if, for some families in the 1950s and 60s, prosperity was more of possibility than an actuality, as Todd suggests, the idea of it may have gradually led to change in attitudes and behaviour.[850] There was a difference between the need to make-do-and-mend of families like the Maxwells and the Robertsons and the extreme hardship experienced by previous generations, and this in itself may have shifted attitudes. Many families were still poor but it is likely they felt less intensely anxious about money than they had a generation earlier, with higher employment levels, the introduction of family allowance in 1946 and its extension to provide support for all children in education in 1956.[851]

Nonetheless the switch from a situation where the earnings of children belong to the household to one in which their money was their own to keep suggests not just an improvement in financial security but a change in attitude to the role of children. After all, in the 1930s Stan McColl, whose family was not in great need of his earnings, still assumed the money belonged to the household. This changing attitude can be both seen in, and partially explained by, the increased emphasis on the importance of children's education as an investment in the future. Compulsory secondary education and the rise in the school-leaving age acted as a barrier to employment and delayed the point at which children could bring in a full wage, marking out the idea of childhood as a time of difference and preparation for adulthood. This is an idea that has roots in Aries' description of the idea of childhood as being defined by the 'quarantine' of education.[852] Much of the autobiographical writing of the time comes from adults who had benefitted from the post-

[849] NRS, AF59/76, Report of DOAS Official on Tour of Camps, 11 and 12 October 1956.
[850] Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents', p. 82.
[851] Hilary Land, 'Tha Family Wage', *Feminist Review*, 6 (1980), pp. 55-77.
[852] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 396.

war meritocracy. Liz Heron, born in Govan in 1947, wrote of her generation as growing up in 'a fever of optimism … in a post-war vision of prosperity and limitless possibilities.'[853] There is an argument here that as the idea that their children could live easier lives took hold, it led to a change in attitude by parents about the differences between children and adults, ultimately leading to the sanctification of childhood identified by Zelizer as occurring in the United States for children generations earlier.[854] Once parents could afford to maintain their household more comfortably, and in the expectation that their children's lives would be more prosperous the better their education, then children could become a luxury to be given money rather than be expected to contribute.

However, this does not sit comfortably as a complete explanation for the change as it actually took place in Dundee. It is interesting that it is in Anne Maxwell's story that the first evidence from Dundee of the child's money belonging to the child not the family comes. Both her parents worked, her mother going back to work in the mill when Anne was just four weeks old. While her mother invested much effort in her children's clothing, neither of her parents were aspirational about their children's education or employment futures. Anne recalls that they barely noticed the 'qualy' and that her mother was much more concerned with 'how you spoke, how you looked and your manners' than in how she did at school.[855] Far from being offered the spare pork chop, Anne Maxwell was a child who had a fishcake with her chips to save money, while her parents ate the more expensive fish.[856] This family history does not chime with the explanation that it was the meritocratic discourse of the time which by offering children 'the bright future of the new housing estates, where by our abilities and aptitudes we would be chosen to take our place in the land of opportunity' changed the attitudes of those children's parents.[857] Nor does it fit one of the other pieces of evidence offered for this change. Todd and others have argued that elsewhere in Britain in the post-war period the emphasis on education led to 'the substitution of married women for juveniles in the labour force' so that children could stay

[853] Liz Heron, *Truth Dare or Promise: Girls Growing Up in The Fifties* (London, 1985) [hereafter Heron, *Truth, Dare or Promise*], p. 2.
[854] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child.*
[855] Anne Maxwell, 16.04.50.
[856] Anne Maxwell, 15.51.22.
[857] Valerie Walkerdine, 'Dreams from an Ordinary Childhood' in Heron, *Truth, Dare and Promise*, p. 75, quoted by Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents', p. 81.

on at school while their mothers worked instead.[858] This did not happen in Dundee where the already high proportion of women working did not increase significantly in the same years.[859] It is also the case that a rising school leaving age does not necessarily change attitudes to the money earned by children still at school.

It seems possible that the missing piece of the puzzle lies not in changing attitudes to children but in changing attitudes to work. As work becomes more remote from the home, it becomes more clearly the province of the adult who leaves the home to do it. The more removed from home that work is, the more adults have to travel to go to work, the more separate it becomes from family life and – arguably – the less it seems to have to do with children. The wholesale suburbanisation of Dundee, and many other cities, during the twentieth century removed families further and further from the place of work. By the time of the big new housing schemes of the 1950s, most workers in Dundee were travelling over two and a half miles to their place of work, and could no longer come home for lunch.[860] None of the Dundee children interviewed recall going to a parent's workplace. Unlike the children of Glen Esk, the family home was not a place of work. There were no lodgers or paying guests in the summer, no hens to feed or eggs to collect in the garden.[861]

When families lived within the sound of the factory hooter, when shopkeepers lived above the shop, when agricultural workers lived in tied accommodation surrounded by the fields in which they labour, the notion that work was a family business and the household a 'going concern' in which all can take part and all contribute was logical. There is a clear distinction in the evidence from Dundee, contrasted with that of the children of Glen Esk, in the amount of work expected between rural and urban children. One of the reasons that Mary Barlow's brothers came back after a few months from evacuation in the country was because the two boys, aged 12 and 10, were being put to work 'night and day' at the farm where they were living and this was felt to be wrong.[862] This difference in attitude to children's work between urban and rural communities was reflected in the restrictions of the 1937 Act, which made only one kind of work legal for children under 12 without a

[858] Todd, 'Breadwinners and Dependents', p. 82.
[859] Wright, 'Juteopolis', p. 149.
[860] Riddell, 'Social Structure', p. 503.
[861] Moira Bolt lived in Kirriemuir until she was about 5 and recalls her grandmother renting a room to an 'old gentlemen from London' in the summer, 00.02.45.
[862] Mary Barlow, 00.11.31.

special bye-law: seasonal agricultural labour.[863] It was a distinction found also in the United States where in the long battle over child labour legislation (which occurred at much the same time as in Britain) agricultural work was consistently exempted from restriction, although by the 1920s the Americans were drawing a distinction between work on a family farm and work away from home.[864] Agricultural work remains by far the most common place for child labour to be found across Europe.[865] As the farmer interviewed by *The Courier* pointed out, it is hard to find 'adults willing to break their backs on piece-work.'[866]

In the city, space and place became increasingly demarcated throughout the century. Just as children in the post-war period ideally played in official playgrounds segregated from the 'great community' of the street, so too did parents go to work outside the home, segregated from their children. Work became something which defined the condition of adulthood, and which therefore came to mark a new boundary between the child and the next stage in life. This next stage was that of a youth or young person, a child of the household who has left school and is now earning full-time. These young people also gradually became distinct from the adults of the house, as they went from contributing almost all their wages to giving increasingly token amounts of money to the household. The boundaries of childhood were being redefined in such a way as to extend an idea of the specialness of children upwards so that it still applied to people who were children only insomuch as they were children of the household.

CONCLUSION

The experiences of working-class children in Dundee changed considerably more than they did for the children of Glen Esk or Brechin over the same period, although it is hard to distangle these changes from the consequences of the wholesale re-housing programme in the city which was disproportionately experienced by families with children. Over the course of fifty years, the children of Dundee went from living in one or two-roomed dwellings, cheek by jowl with the rest of their family, to living in flats or houses where many

[863] Children and Young Persons (Scotland) Act 1937, Edw. 8 and Geo. 6, c. 37, part III.
[864] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child*, pp. 77-79.
[865] Marjatta Rahikainen, *Centuries of Child Labour: European Experiences from the Seventeenth to the Twentieth Century* (Aldershot, 2004) [hereafter Rahikainen, *Centuries of Child Labour*], pp. 200-208.
[866] *The Courier*, 6 Nov 1956, quoting Mr Wester, Campsie, Glenalmond. Rahikainen agrees, pointing out that children are most commonly used to do work that adults are not prepared to do. Rahikainen, *Centuries of Child Labour*, p. 218.

of them had a demarcated bedroom, albeit one shared with siblings, and access to a family living area which was separate from their parents' bedroom. This re-housing programme also changed the communities in which they lived, creating areas where forty percent of the population were children and in which the adults were away from home longer during the day. Unsupervised children, at large in the streets, building sites and fields of the new housing schemes, were no longer regarded as the norm – or even the normal nuisance – they had been in communities where the age range was more balanced. Instead, their numbers meant they became seen as perilously close to an enemy, a swarm. The effects of this added to an already growing sense by the authorities that children did not belong on the streets and this ultimately redefined where children should play, taking them from the street to segregated playgrounds.

It is tempting in the anarchist tradition of Colin Ward to lament the beginnings of this loss of 'freedom' – a freedom to play and travel in their neighbourhood which for the most part was experienced as much, if not more, by middle-class children as it was by working-class ones. Many of the experiences recounted here of children out and about at play demonstrate the capacity of children to find ways to amuse and challenge themselves, and the relish and pleasure with which they embraced both old and new surroundings. Small landmarks in the street, like 'cundies' or drain-covers, became battle-grounds for games, and children spent much of their free time outside, albeit often not that far from home.

What these accounts also reveal however is that life out on the street was for many children also a fraught experience, marked out by boundaries of 'fear and avoidance'. As in Brechin, the presence of difference indicated by school uniforms meant that children often enacted existing conflict and tension which was experienced less viscerally by adults. However, unlike Brechin where the tensions took a class form, in Dundee they often reflected a form of bigotry which adult commentators were keen to say no longer existed. The curious history of 'Scots and Irish day' is a demonstration of how vividly historical change can play out in children's culture, and why children's games and traditions are worthy objects of study, not just for their own sake although that is important, but also for what they reveal about wider society.

Some of the focus in the chapter has however been on children and work partly because of what it tells us about changing definitions of what it is to be a child, and how

children fit into, or are distinguished from, the adult world. Despite the fact that in Dundee children of school age had continued to work half-time in factories up into the first two decades of the twentieth-century, the attitude to child labour in the following decades changed more rapidly in the city than it did in the surrounding rural areas, because of a different cultural attitude to children doing farm work. As one set of local historians expressed it, when comparing children working half-time in the countryside to those in factories: 'their time out of school was at least healthily occupied.'[867] When factory work was not acceptable, agricultural labour still was.

The end of officially organised potato-picking by school-children in Dundee reduced their capacity to earn money and the near-universality of children earning something (albeit on a seasonal basis) in the city. The evidence suggests that by the late 1960s in Dundee, the small earnings which a school-age child could make had shifted over to become 'pocket money' which belonged to the child, not the household. This change was driven by a number of factors including a growing confidence in at least the prospect of prosperity, an enhanced distinction between home and work and an increased understanding of work as the province of adults. It matters because it suggests a shift in the understanding of what it was to be a child, from a potential contributor to a recipient. This change is part of a generally understood chronology of the changing boundaries of childhood but it seems to have happened later in Dundee, by at least a decade or so, than is suggested by historians drawing largely on evidence from England. By the late 1960s in Dundee the 'priceless' child was still some way off for working-class families: children like Anne Maxwell might keep their own earnings from a Saturday job but they still ate fishcakes not fish. The situation for middle-class children was somewhat different: Colin McLeod's drawings and diaries considered in the next chapter provide some insight into this.

[867] Lenman et al., *Dundee and Its Textile Industry*, p. 60.

CHAPTER FIVE
CHILDREN'S DRAWINGS: SOMETHING OF THE CHILD'S AUTHENTIC VIEW

INTRODUCTION

The chapters so far have largely drawn on the primary evidence from the collection of oral histories: a rich source but one which is filtered through memory. Through examining drawings made by children at the time it might be possible to discern an 'authentic view', a glimpse into how they saw and understood the world and their place in it before they acquired the perspective of adulthood. The preservation of the drawings and writing of children in unexceptional circumstances is a rarity, so I am fortunate to have uncovered two caches of drawings from children in two of the three case-study areas: one a collection of drawings from children aged five to twelve at Tarfside school in rural Glen Esk in the 1950s, the other drawings and diaries from a single child, Colin McLeod, at the ages of six and then nine in suburban Dundee in the 1960s. For Brechin sadly I was only able to find a single sketch: I have made brief use of this drawing by Betty Jamieson held in the Angus Archives in the Brechin chapter.

The approach I have used is based on the methodology and assumptions outlined in Chapter One, drawn from the work of child psychologists, geographers and a limited number of other historians. It is clear from that work that the type of drawings most likely to prove a useful source material are those in which the child is representing his or her own world and experience, as shown by the work of mappers and geographers and by the pictures with which Stargardt was able to work most successfully. These offer primary source information on a surface level, as well as potential insight into the child's specific viewpoint.

It is also clear that context is vital. The pictures which offer the most are those which form scenes, so that elements within them can be seen in context, and techniques such as scale and viewpoint can be used most effectively. Even more important though is the context within which the child is drawing, both in a narrow way (have they been asked to draw this by a teacher? Was there another purpose to the drawing?) and in a broad sense:

who is the child, and what is their age, situation, gender and culture? It would however be unwise to read too much into choice of colour, as Stargardt found when he looked at the Theresienstadt drawings, and realised how easy it would be to mistake the 'particular colours available to children in a Jewish ghetto for those they had chosen to express particular emotions.'[868]

There are a number of specific visual tropes which children may use, such as X ray drawings, or a fascination with technical detail. There are also likely to be specific visual references that the child has learnt from the visual culture around them, such as the cigarette cards which inspired Thomas Geve, or the sophisticated drawing styles shown in the work of Japanese children which seem to be inspired by manga.[869] This is a useful observation which I have drawn upon in my comparison of the Glen Esk drawings to those of Colin McLeod.

Stargardt's work with Thomas Geve also shows the value of being able to interview as an adult the creator of childhood drawings. It is on this basis that I interviewed Sandra Guthrie (b. 1946) and Colin McLeod (b.1960) twice, first as straight oral history interviews and secondly with their respective drawings in front of them as a prompt and an aide memoire. This added significantly to my understanding of the meaning that could be taken from the images. While Colin McLeod was the sole creator of the drawings and diary entries he was discussing, Sandra was just one of the pupils who had created the work she was looking at. She later became a teacher at the same school herself and so I was able to ask her not only about her memories of creating the images but also her observations as a teacher about the children's work.

Above all, of course, I have kept in mind the understanding that children's drawings are a primary source, and subject to the same possibilities and problems as any primary source. Why and when was it created, who was the intended audience and with what possible agenda? In what follows, I have first examined each set of drawings separately, locating each in their own context, and I have then contrasted one with the other.

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[868] Stardgardt, *Witnesses of War*, p. xi.

[869] B. Wilson, 'Becoming Japanese: Manga, Children's Drawings and the Construction of National Character', *Visual Arts Research*, pp. 48-60 (2000) [hereafter Wilson, 'Becoming Japanese'], cited in Walker, 'Children and their Purple Crayons', p. 98.

THE GLEN ESK DRAWINGS

The discovery of five scrapbooks of drawings in a cardboard box in the Glenesk Folk Museum was a potential treasure trove. Created between 1955 and 1957, they offer a remarkable insight into how the pupils of Tarfside school saw their world at the time. Tarfside was the only school in the glen – just one teacher and for most of the period around a dozen pupils from five to twelve years old. The scrapbooks contain some short pieces of writing, photographs of the pupils, some pieces of collage and cut-out images and around thirty drawings and paintings, on sugar paper and drawn with crayons, pencils and the occasional splash of paint, all carefully labelled by the teacher. Two of the five people interviewed for the case study attended Tarfside school at the same time these scrapbooks were made: Albert Taylor and Sandra Guthrie, who both contributed drawings.

The thirty drawings are of a variety of subjects but fall into four broad categories: drawings of their homes; pictures of farming and agricultural activity; pictures of their own lives and experiences; and Christmas pictures. There are no princesses, superheroes or fantasy scenes apart from Santa Claus; no drawings done as a comic strip, except for a charming cartoon of all the children at the school. Rather the pictures have a documentary quality, a sense of reportage, and add up to something of a portrait of glen life. This is less surprising when one realises that the scrapbooks were actively curated, the pictures chosen and put together by the teacher, Greta Michie, who herself had grown up in the glen. Michie was a determined character, who founded the Folk Museum where the box of scrapbooks was preserved and who was committed to supporting life in the glen. She was also the author of the chapter which covered the northern half of Glen Esk in the *Third Statistical Account*, and through this one can glean something of her love of the place and her desire that it not become an historical backwater. In a lyrical description of walking in the high and hilly glen, where nowhere is less than 500 feet above sea-level, she speaks of stumbling 'on rickles of stones remaining from the dwellings of sub tenants or cotters, lost to memory … in addition to the decreasing number of farms. Yet here is a lively community, making its contribution to the problems of the present time.'[870]

[870] Michie, 'Lochlee', p. 164.

This then was a teacher who was proud of the children she taught, who she described as being in 'splendid condition,' but was perhaps even prouder of the old way of life in the glen, with its virtues of 'hardihood, independence and craftsmanship' which she felt were disappearing.[871] Not surprising then that the children's pictures which she chose to include in the scrapbooks are so redolent of a sense of place and that so many of them record daily life from the children's point of view. Nonetheless, Michie was keen to emphasise that she had not pushed the children into the work they had done, writing in one scrapbook that 'The remarks in this book have been printed by the teacher, but are the words of the children.'[872] The scrapbooks themselves seem to have been designed as a way of collating the children's work, either to keep or to show to friends of the school, with four of the five apparently compiled around Christmas time. Sandra Guthrie recalls them also being used as a teaching aid for the younger children.[873] Looking at them now, with forty years' teaching experience of her own, Sandra Guthrie surmises that Michie might have suggested a theme such as farming activities, but recalls no specific instructions about what to draw and thinks that the drawings were 'as it happened' with no other pictures shown as examples or to copy.[874] Certainly, the way of life shown in these scrapbooks does not seem over-prettified. One image records that 'Brian once took a hedgehog out of a snare. It was caught round the neck' and another lists Lorna's dolls: 'Lorna has five dolls … Poor Nankie has no legs. David has one arm and one leg but the other three are pretty dolls.' A couple of other scenes - a drawing of an aeroplane over Gleneffock for instance, and 'Nancy's pram' – lend further credence to the idea that the children had some choice in the subject matter. It seems possible that just as the scrapbooks may have formed part of Michie's message to the wider world about the virtues of life in the glen, they may also have been a message to the children themselves to value the world they were growing up in, and not to forget it when they went away to town for school.

What then can we learn from these drawings? On a simple level they support much of what the interviews with those brought up in Glen Esk recall of their childhoods. The pictures reinforce the sense of a world where the children spend most of their time outside,

[871] Michie, 'Lochlee', pp.167, 173.
[872] Glenesk Folk Museum [hereafter GEFM], uncatalogued and untitled scrapbook, dated August 1956.
[873] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.37.10.
[874] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.40.52.

whatever the weather, and where they were chiefly pre-occupied with the life that surrounded them. They show a sense of place and an eye for the weather, to be expected in such outdoor children, and where welfare and livelihood is dependent on weather patterns. Sandra's 'Glen in Winter' drawn when she was eleven, is one example, with the snow faintly dusting the hills, and Albert Taylor's 'Playing in the Broom', drawn when he was about seven, where the children are playing out in the rain or sleet, another.

There are however more specific themes than simply outdoor life which appear. The first is the idea of home, based on the drawings and paintings which the children did of where they lived, described in the Christmas 1957 scrapbook which contains many of them under the headline 'As we had no photographs of our homes, we drew them'.[875] The interviews show that for all these children home was not a place detached from the working world; rather it was intimately linked with it. Whether their parents were farmers, shepherds, gamekeepers or had paying guests in the summer, the family home was both tied to work and a place of work. The extent to which children had understood this idea is vividly demonstrated in their drawings. Figure 7 shows Sandra's drawing of her house, The Parsonage, drawn in 1957 when she was about eleven. The house features strongly in her memories because while her father was a shepherd, during the summer her mother ran it as a boarding house with weekly visitors.

[875] GEFM, uncatalogued, *A Merry Xmas 1957* scrapbook.

Figure 7: 'Drawing of the Parsonage' by Sandra Guthrie, *A Merry Xmas 1957* scrapbook.

In her first interview, Sandra talked forcefully about how much work she and her sister did to help her mother (see page 74). The path in particular featured in her memory because weeding it had been such a huge task every summer, and one which her younger brother had regularly 'skived', choosing to play with his toy tractors instead. When she saw her own drawing of the house, some fifty years later, it was the path, dominating the foreground, which immediately caught her attention: 'That blinking path, we had to weed every summer. Yes. Oh yes'.[876] The drawing echoes and supports her remembered experience, the dominance of the path confirming her memory of the work it entailed.

However, what is perhaps more interesting is how much this drawing, like those of others, is not of her house alone, but of a number of houses in the landscape, connected to other buildings and activity. The small house on the left belongs to her grandmother, the building on the right is the small byre and the hills are ever present. This is not an isolated home, but a home in a landscape.

This quality is found also in an unsigned drawing of Albert Taylor's house at Gleneffock, possibly drawn by his older brother, Fred (see Figure 8). Like Sandra, their father was a shepherd and when Albert was about six and Fred eight, they moved from one house

[876] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.34.20.

up in the hills to another on Gleneffock Farm, slightly less distant from the rest of the glen's inhabitants. Again, what is striking here is the quality of detail of the world around the house, such that the outside viewer cannot tell which is the house they lived in because none is given central importance. Instead, it is the cluster of buildings, the hay-stooks, a small paddock and trees which draw the viewer's attention.

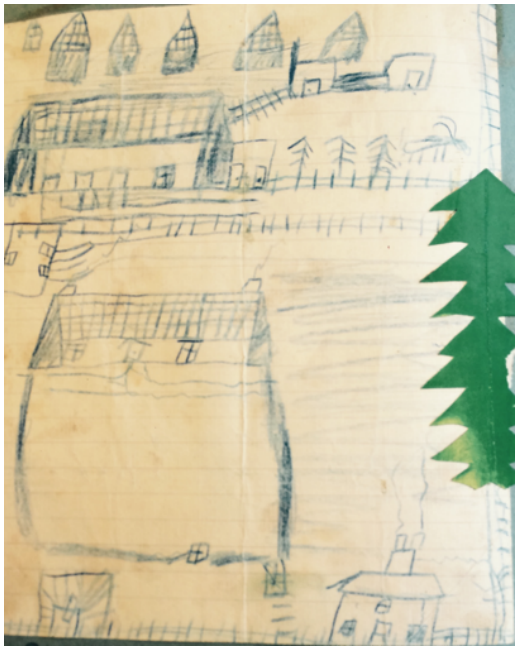

Figure 8: 'Gleneffock, where the Taylors live now', unsigned drawing, *A Merry Xmas 1957* scrapbook.

A further drawing by one of the other children, Andrew Scott, again shows a house within a detailed working landscape (Figure 9). The text, written by Michie, identifies the drawing as a 'Plan of Cairncross' and names the house in the top left-hand corner as the one where the Scotts lived. For Sandra Guthrie, looking at the drawing sixty years later, the most notable feature was the TV aerial on the roof of the house in the front. The family at Cairncross had been the first to get a television in the glen, and everyone had gathered to watch the Coronation there.[877] The aerial was clearly a significant feature for Andrew himself as, in those circumstances, it is likely to have been for anyone in the community. It may be that Andrew set out to create a map showing his home within the broader farm structure, nonetheless it is striking that he has drawn the house where he lives tucked away in the corner while the other farm buildings, houses, paddocks, fences, and the byre take the foreground. This is in contrast to research on children's mapping work of the area around

[877] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.36.27.

their home, where the child's home is often placed centrally.[878] Furthermore, unlike the mapping work carried out by Bishop, this drawing does not seem to demonstrate a child's eye view - or rather, if it does, the child's-eye view seems no different from an adult's view as it shows a working world, placed as an adult might draw it, albeit with a marginally poorer grasp of the tricks of drawing perspective.[879]

Figure 9: 'Plan of Cairncross' by Andrew Scott*, A Merry Xmas 1957* scrapbook.

In the Christmas 1957 scrapbook there are thirteen drawings marked as being of the children's homes. Five of them have the level of detail of the three drawings discussed above, eight of them are less complex, but all at the very least include elements of landscape, fencing and trees. They also all show a level of skill in the drawing, with a single viewpoint. Cox identifies the struggle to draw a chimney so that it rises in a convincingly perpendicular fashion up out of the roof as one of the classic challenges facing children as they develop their drawing ability; here, even five-year-old Sheila Taylor has mastered it.[880] While the drawings vary in skill and detail, they share this sense of homes, and by implication families, set into a wider world. There is nothing nuclear about them. As Sandra Guthrie commented, looking back many decades later:

[878] Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*, p. 91.
[879] Cited in Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 28.
[880] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p. 133.

> That was our world, you know. You didn't have [go] all the way to Dundee to see the pictures and all of that, that they do now at the drop of a hat … That was our base for however many years … So you knew every bit that, that you played in and that you, that you walked in, that you worked in.[881]

'Home' is a common theme of children's drawings, found aplenty among the 600 drawings Stargardt looked at created by the children in Theresienstadt. Those tended to show an idealised house, nestling among the hills, and unlikely to bear much resemblance to where the children had actually lived before coming to the camp. As the art teacher who worked in the camp with the children observed, 'everything is reorganised according to sentimentality and convention.' They were drawings redolent of home-sickness not real life.[882] The children of Glen Esk by contrast had never moved far; their images of home carry a different kind of meaning. Like children around the world, a common form of their imaginative play was to play 'housies', outdoors with rooms marked out with boundary stones and an old kettle to pretend to boil, but when it came to drawing their actual houses, their focus was far less domestic, setting them instead in context as part of a wider world.[883]

The second dominant theme in the children's drawings is that of farming activity: scenes of hay-making, tattie-picking, and the tractor returning having ploughed a specific field. There are a number of observations which can be made. The first is the specificity of people, place and activity. One would expect country children to draw a tractor. What they actually drew, according to the captions of their teacher, was more detailed: 'Mr Douglas coming home with a load of hay' and 'Mr Scott driving the tractor at Cairncross' with the extra information that 'Mr Scott has been ploughing the hill near the Mines'. To the children and their teacher it mattered who, where and what was being recorded, although it is important to note that the 'who' was very often the child's father, labelled in this formal fashion by Michie. Secondly, the pictures show an eye for detail: field boundaries and fences are drawn in, the tractor and trailer are shown waiting on the other side of the fence to avoid compressing the ground, the baler is carefully outlined. This is detail based on real

[881] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.34.54
[882] Stargardt, 'Art of the Holocaust', pp. 195-6.
[883] On playing 'housies', Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.44.00

knowledge. Figure 10 shows one of the pictures, drawn by Andrew Scott, and entitled 'Driving The Tractor'.

Figure 10: 'Driving the Tractor' signed AGS, untitled scrapbook dated August 1956.

When I discussed this picture with Sandra, she picked me up on my assumptions.

13:55:18	RACHEL It's properly ... It is drawn ... You, you look at it and you think, well that's drawn by someone who's really watched people do it.
13:55:26	SANDRA Yeah, he's done it.
13:55:27	RACHEL He's done it. [Yes.] He's connected the trailer [Yeah.] to the tractor.
13:55:30	SANDRA No, no, he has. He's driven the tractor as well, probably.

This is a detailed drawing of a tractor and trailer drawn by a child who had coupled them together and was probably driving them, as the title indicates. In itself there is nothing particularly unusual in children drawing such detail: the American researchers Robert Maurer and James C Baxter identified 'impressive differences' between children's environmental imagery and that of adults, with the children's drawings having ' a quality of intricacy and attention to detail.'[884] However, like the images of the houses set amongst the

[884] Cited in Ward, *Child in the City*, p. 27.

working landscape, this drawing and the others of agricultural activity do not have a childlike quality to them in terms of subject matter or viewpoint: instead they have drawn what an adult might draw observing the same scene. This might be because they were drawing to the command of Michie – or that they were interested in the same things as the adults around them and took part in many of the same activities. Unlike the German children studied by Carolyn Kay, their drawings are not versions of illustrations they have seen in books, instead they are drawing from life and from direct experience.[885]

Three of the drawings are of 'tattie-picking', work which, as we have seen, children in Scotland from the age of ten or so often took part in during this period. Unlike the commercial tattie-picking elsewhere, in Glen Esk potatoes were only grown on a small scale. Farmers would grow a field's worth for their own consumption and that of their extended family and farm workers, and these potatoes would be picked by the extended family, including younger children. Sandra and her younger cousin both recall picking potatoes on their uncle's farm in this way when they were under twelve: a scene recorded by two of the other children in drawings identified as being 'At Lowden's Farm'. Here again the pictures, though simple, show accurate detail. The third tattie-picking picture, shown in Figure 11, is similar. It was drawn by Albert Taylor when he was seven, and marked as happening at the farm where he lived. The baskets are the traditional tattie sculls used for this work and the way the figures are distributed reflects the way picking was organised. The tractor waiting on the other side of the fence is pulling a spinner – the machine used to turn the potatoes out of the ground ready to be harvested by hand. Albert when interviewed could not remember tattie-picking or drawing the picture but it seems clear that it did happen and that he at the very least watched it – although it is likely he took part.

[885] Kay, 'German Children's Art', pp. 195–212.

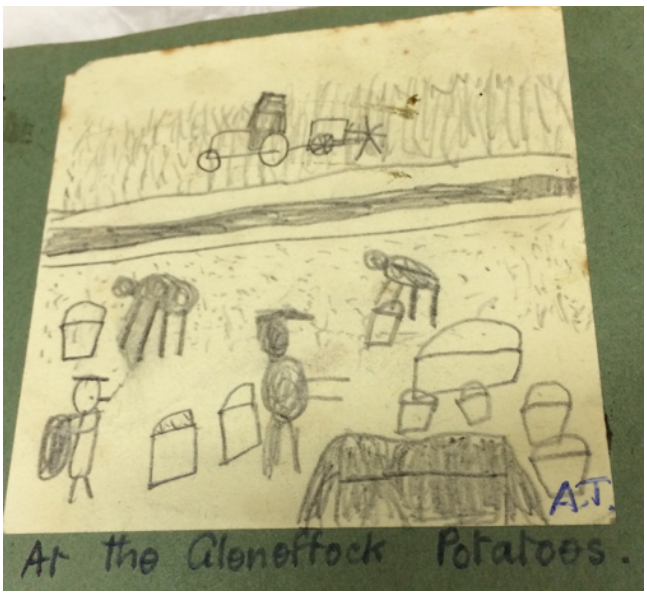

Figure 11*:* 'At the Gleneffock Potatoes' by Albert Taylor, *A Merry Xmas 1957* scrapbook

All three of the tattie-picking drawings are by boys, as are all of the agricultural drawings. This may reflect the love of technical drawing, identified by Stargardt as a male trope. It may also reflect the reality that much of this agricultural work was done by men, and that boys were more likely to help in this, although we know that girls also picked potatoes. However, before leaping to a gender-based conclusion, a word of caution. Of the fourteen children at the school when several of the scrapbooks were created, eight were boys and a disproportionate number of these were among the older children, so this gender difference in subject matter may in part be a product of a particular cohort.

Most intriguingly perhaps, in none of the three tattie-picking pictures is there any discernible distinction made between the figures in the group, to indicate that some are children and others adults, although it is highly unlikely that there were not children taking part. As Sandra observed when shown these pictures: 'If the tatties were going on, there would have been a crowd of bairns.'[886] As we have established, scale is one of the techniques which seems to carry meaning in children's drawings. Here the lack of clear difference in size of the figures might indicate that it was of little importance whether they were adults or children, although for Albert the shape of the spinner was of interest. In other words, the child drawing the image saw no distinction being made between children and adults at work.

[886] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.22.35.

What the children did not draw also gives an insight into what they were most interested in. As we have established, the single most common thing for children to draw up to the age of about ten is the human figure: while many of the Glen Esk drawings contain people, it is often the building, the machinery or the work that is the real subject of the image. There are no pictures at all of the quintessential family group, of mother, father and child. This absence seems unlikely to be explained by Michie not choosing to preserve such drawings because she took pains to photograph the children in sibling groups. Sandra's response to this lack of family groups was that the family unit was just accepted and therefore not considered of enough interest to draw.[887] Only one drawing out of the thirty shows a child with a parent, drawn by Albert's brother. In Figure 12, 'Freddy Helps His Daddy with the Sheep', Fred Taylor has drawn himself much smaller than his father, as one would typically find of a child's image of himself and a parent. The only other drawing which uses differing sizes of figure is by Albert's younger sister, and her image of 'Three Taylors Outside Their House At Dalbrack' may be of three siblings rather than children with parents. It would seem then that it was not that the children could not distinguish between people by the size of figures they drew, but that on most occasions this simply was not of interest.

Figure 12: 'Freddy helps his Daddy with the sheep', by Fred Taylor, untitled scrapbook, dated August 1956.

The quality of the drawings is worth a moment's consideration. The Glen Esk drawings are not exceptionally well-drawn: while the houses stand up steadily and the older children use simple techniques of perspective, including occlusion, the images are not

[887] Sandra Guthrie, interview two, 13.31.06.

complex. They do however share a quality of clear-eyed observation and visual realism, found even in the drawings of the youngest children. Some studies of cultural differences between children's drawings are of interest here. A study published in 2000 shows that Japanese children demonstrate considerably more drawing skill than British children, and this has been explained by the rich visual Manga culture which is a key part of Japanese life.[888] The Glen Esk children were exposed to a less rich visual culture than most of their peers. While they had weekly comics and illustrated books, and a teacher who was interested in a range of craft and artistic pursuits, they had very little television, film or advertising in their lives. This may have contributed to the quality of direct observation in their images. Another cross-cultural study, comparing the drawings of rural Egyptian children to those of urban Japanese children, shows a contrast not only in skill level but also in subject matter: the Egyptian children from a farming background (although exposed to much TV viewing) drew scenes of everyday life, the Japanese children a complex array of different narratives.[889] It is not only the visual culture that is at play here but also the kind of world the children live in.

There are two particular visual motifs which occur from drawing to drawing by different children in Glen Esk. This is a common phenomenon among children in the same class or school, as children copy each other's techniques or schema.[890] The first is the hills: ever-present in the children's lives, they all seem to have mastered how to draw one folding before another, as seen in Freddy Taylor's drawing (Figure 12) or in Sandra Guthrie's The Glen in Winter. The other is fencing – again seen in Freddy Taylor's drawing. Fences are also a common feature of the drawings created for Moore's 1986 study of children's favourite places. He suggested that this reflected their positive function, as an enclosing element, 'affording privacy and a sense of security' rather than the negative association of them as a barrier to access.[891] For the Glen Esk children the fences will have been notable landmarks, needed for stock but also as barriers that on occasion needed to be crossed. Furthermore, fences are relatively easy to draw and for the viewer to recognise. In the child's quest for their drawing to be understood, a fence may be both a barrier but also a simple aid to

[888] B. Wilson, 'Becoming Japanese', cited in Walker 'Children and Their Purple Crayons', p. 98.
[889] B. Wilson and M. Wilson, 'Pictorial Composition and Narrative Structure: Themes and the Creation of Meaning in the Drawings of Egyptian and Japanese Children', *Visual Arts Research*, 13, no. 2 (1987), pp. 10-21.
[890] Cox, *Children's Drawings*, p.56.
[891] Moore, *Childhood's Domain,* cited in Matthews, *Making Sense of Place*, p. 198.

communication, a way of giving the drawing a recognisable feature which makes the other elements easier to understand.[892]

Overall, the drawings give insight into the children's view of their world, a world in which they saw themselves as part of a working community, with an understanding of the work going on around them in which they themselves took part at times. This would seem to have been a place and time in which, for the children, being a child as distinct from being an adult was not particularly important. This sense of an almost pre-industrial world was present in their retrospective oral history interviews: its conveyance more clearly in the contemporaneous pictures demonstrates that this interpretation has not sprung out of hindsight. As children, their drawings show that the interior and the domestic were of far less interest to them than the process of hay-making or ploughing, sheep were more likely to be drawn than the family group.

COLIN MCLEOD: A DUNDEE CHILD, HIS DRAWINGS AND DIARIES

The drawings and writings of Colin McLeod, a child living in suburban Dundee a decade later, give a sharp contrast and comparison to the Glen Esk drawings, allowing one to distinguish something of what is common to children's drawings of roughly that era and culture and what reflects more particular experiences and world-views. There is an obvious risk of extrapolating too much from a single child's drawings and diary but such records are rare: these offer a glimpse into the world of one suburban child as he experienced it then, rather than retrospectively, and as such are of value. I interviewed Colin twice, once as a straight oral history interview, the second time while looking at his diaries.

Colin was born in Dundee in June 1960, the only child of middle-class parents. His mother had been a teacher but gave it up on marriage, his father was a journalist, the night editor of *The Courier*, which meant that he was at home during the day and out at work five or six nights a week. His parents were both local, with family living nearby, and while his father was older than his mother, they were both 'relatively old' when they married.[893] The family lived in Johnston Avenue, a quiet respectable road, built in the 1920s and their house was 'semi-detached, two bedrooms with two rooms, living rooms, downstairs and a kitchen

[892] See also Matthews citing Martha Muchow on fences as a place of play, to be 'climbed and perched on', *Making Sense of Place*, p. 200.
[893] Colin McLeod, 00.53.14.

and a reasonable garden.'[894] Such modest stone-built houses, set back from the road, were the twentieth-century Scottish heirs to the idealised Victorian home, 'a controlled private realm' for the creation of a family life.[895] There were not many other children living in the street – just one girl living over the road with whom Colin walked to school – and it seems to have been a somewhat solitary childhood. He describes it as 'slightly lonely at times, but … fairly happy generally'.[896] He attended the local primary school, Rockwell, which had pupils from a range of backgrounds. Colin's family were unusual because they had a car, but while he recalls schoolfriends from 'very deprived' backgrounds, there were also others who lived in more substantial houses.[897]

He comes from a family of diary keepers: his father's diaries span many decades and Colin himself has kept a diary since he was a teenager. From his earlier years he has preserved three jotters, small illustrated diaries created as part of his daily school-work, intended to be read by the teacher. His intricate, detailed drawings and carefully written journal entries give a record of trips and leisure time and bring a vivid picture of domestic life in themselves, but on interrogation and with the help of the interviews they also offer insight into what was important to Colin then, partly by looking at the gaps between the details of his daily life he recalled as an adult and what he chose to record as a child.

Jotter One begins when Colin was six years old, in October 1966 with 'we have been reading a story of Red Riding Hood' and ends just after Christmas with 'just on Christmas Eve we saw the first snowdrops in our garden.' The second jotter picks up at the beginning of the next term with a bold introduction: 'My name is Colin. I am six years old. Here is a drawing of me at school.' This drawing (Figure 13) is revealing of both his drawing style and his sense of solitariness. It is a detailed image of a classroom of desks, with a teacher and just one child, presumably Colin, sitting at a desk near the back.

[894] Colin McLeod, 00.01.01.
[895] Mike Hepworth, 'Victorian home', p. 29.
[896] Colin McLeod, 01.21.20.
[897] Colin McLeod, 00.37.14.

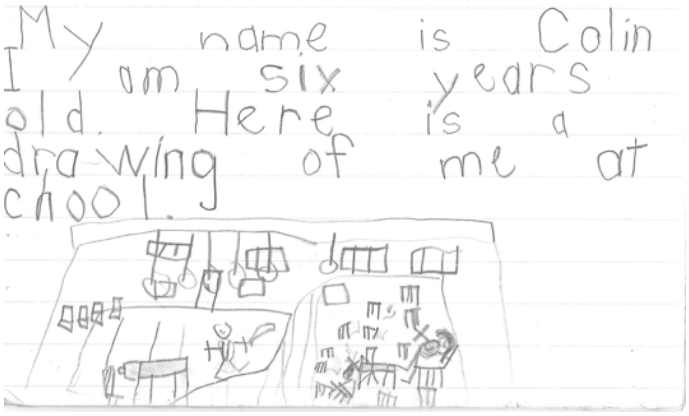

Figure 13: 'My name is Colin. I am six years old. Here is a drawing of me at school,' Jotter Two.

This second diary runs until June 1967, and the two jotters together comprise seventy-seven entries, although some pages are of other schoolwork such as vocabulary lists. The third jotter is from some three years later, beginning in March 1970 when Colin was nine, with the account of a typical family outing at the weekend: 'On Saturday we went to see the shell-house at Leven but it was closed so we went to Robison Crosoe's [sic] house at Largo'.[898] It peters out in May that year, with some undated entries afterwards. It also includes some school work but there are forty-eight pages written on in total. Throughout the jotters there are occasional spelling corrections by that year's teacher, but little in the way of comment, and no evidence of coaching or reaction to subject matter.

One of the most striking things about the drawings and diary entries is what he did not draw. From his interview we know that Colin was typical of his generation in that he was often in the street on his own. His parents were older and stricter than those of his friends but even so 'by modern standards it seems incredibly free … from age six, and I think age five, I always went to and from school either alone or in the company of other children, and that's what we all did.'[899] He also walked to and from Cubs in the dark of the evening from the age of eight. While he rarely played out in the street, in his interview he recalled often going to Saturday matinees by himself, to the nearby playing fields with friends to kick a ball about and also playing up Dundee Law with friends and no adult present.

However, his drawings and diary entries record nothing of this independent experience of the world outside the home, family and school: instead, they are striking in

[898] Colin McLeod private collection [hereafter CMPC], uncatalogued, Jotter Three.
[899] Colin McLeod, 01.25.15.

the interiority and domesticity of their focus. Only one entry refers to him being outside alone, aged six, when he and his mother were in town and he was sent by his mother to get a rag from a shop because the dog had cut his leg on an old can. There are entries about events at school, but they are all interior rather than in the playground. His focus is on the family, so that even events that take place outdoors are in the company of his mother, or both parents. The world he records is that of the interior of his house and the destinations of their family outings; there is no local street or city life at all, no exterior of their house, and only one drawing of their garden. What is not drawn gives insight into how he saw his world.

Within that domesticity the drawings and text show an observation of detail and the echo of his mother's words, as when, aged six, Colin records, in his own mis-spellings, 'At Chritmas we have a reel tree but it takes days for Mummey to clear all thoes pineneedls.'[900] He has an intricate drawing style, laying the topography of house, school or walks and trips out in silhouette as if the exterior panel of a dolls-house had been slid off to reveal the world within. Much detail is lavished on the domestic interior, with pictures, furniture, knick-knacks and lampshades lovingly recorded, showing the tropes of 'intellectual realism' as he displays everything he knows about the place he is drawing. Each entry requires an event to create a narrative and he has an eye for the small dramas of domestic life – the day his mother cleared out the cupboard above the stairs, the evening spent watching a slide-show of some family friends with pictures of their trip to 'Austrelia' or the night the light went out and his mother had to change the light-bulb. On one occasion (Figure 14) he drew himself just sitting and reading a book beside the gas fire.

[900] CMPC, uncatalogued, Jotter One.

Figure 14: 'Yesterday I watched the T.V. and read a book that I got from the library', 6 March 1970, Jotter Three.

This domestic focus may partly be a reflection of the capacity of the domestic space: the McLeod's two-bedroom home had enough room for Colin to build a Big Wheel from Meccano and leave it up overnight so he could finish it the next day. However, it seems likely that the prominence and detail of home life in Colin's drawings reflects something more than mere space: the sense of pride in the home 'as a fulcrum of identity' as identified by Abrams and Fleming and learnt already by Colin from his parents.[901] There is care taken with Colin's own possessions and bedroom too: a joiner installs book shelves in his bedroom with sliding glass doors, lovingly recorded in one of his drawings. While his room retained the old-lady wallpaper of its previous owners, his father had covered his walls with posters from National Geographic and Airfix models hang from the ceiling. Despite this, his bedroom was not the main place he played or drew: he recalls that he mainly played in the garden and then the living-room, but it is the living-room which features as the main theatre of family life in his drawings, as when his father did conjuring tricks to an appreciative audience of Colin, his mother and a visiting aunt (see Figure 15).[902]

[901] Abrams and Fleming, 'Everyday Life', p. 72.
[902] Colin McLeod, interview two, 02.54.

Figure 15: 'On Saturday we went up to Dunkeld. After that daddy did counding [conjuring] tricks.' 10 May 1970, Jotter Three.

The family had an active social life with regular visits to and from extended family and his mother's friends, who he referred to as 'aunts'. This social life revolved around tea-time visits; some days Colin recorded not only visiting his grandmother for tea, but then receiving someone back for tea at their own house. However, this sociability was carefully guarded by his mother. Only once does Colin mention having a friend of his own visit, and neighbours and the local community are not reflected in the diaries. The house was private and uninvited guests not welcome. At Halloween, rather than go guising, Colin recalls, 'we would sit in the kitchen and put the lights out, and not answer the door until they went away ... she didn't want to encourage it, and I certainly never did it.'[903] There are strong shades here of the transatlantic Victorian notion that by definition the domestic sphere should be closed off, 'hermetically sealed from the poisonous air of the world outside.'[904]

The life Colin recorded is not all indoors: there are family trips and walks with the dog in the nearby countryside or in Edinburgh where they would go for a holiday in both the spring and autumn. There is also a sense of the passing of seasons and of nature, with observations about snowdrops and fox-holes. His father had a voluntary role as a warden at

[903] Colin McLeod, interview two, 00.08.30.
[904] K. Halttunen, *Confidence Men and Painted Women: A Study of Middle-Class Culture in America, 1830 -1870* (New Haven, 1982), quoted in Hepworth, 'Victorian Home', p. 23.

Douglas Wood, an area of scrub and heath land which had been a radar station during the war and was then taken on by the Scouts. Colin drew lively pictures of himself and his mother helping his father clear the brush, burn the grass, and building bonfires, and of himself learning to ride his bicycle through falling off, as seen in Figure 16. There is a powerful sense of 'We' in these pictures – the three figures and the dog, all carefully delineated and distinguished, with Colin slightly smaller than his parents, and his mother with curly hair and a skirt.

Figure 16: 'On Saturday we went up Douglas Wood and I learned to ride my bike', 23 March 1970, Jotter Three.

It is in these drawings of the family at Douglas Wood where Colin's drawings and world come closest to that of the Glen Esk children. Even the fence is carefully drawn in, just as it was by Freddie Taylor in his drawing of himself helping his father with the sheep. But the differences are more significant than the similarities: Colin's father is not working but volunteering, this is fun not labour, and Colin himself is playing rather than helping. The journals do not record a working world around him, apart from the occasional domestic task of his mother and his father's voluntary labours at Douglas Wood. Colin himself runs no errands and as an older boy had no paper-round because he did not need the money. Rather there is an atmosphere of modest prosperity and security. He was a child of quiet consumerism, receiving gifts such as a Disney jigsaw and a train set at Christmas, with pocket money to spend on books and Airfix kits, and taken to town by his grandmother where he could 'buy things I want' in sharp contrast to children in Dundee of an only slightly earlier generation who handed in money they earned themselves to their mothers.

While the drawing style becomes more sophisticated as he gets older, there is otherwise not a large shift between the world view of the two sets of jotters, drawn when he was aged six and then nine. The most significant is that Colin becomes more of a protagonist. In the first two jotters, despite all the recorded activity very little actually happened to Colin himself: he was an observer rather than a do-er. In the quest for events to report much of what he says is other people's anecdotes or the dog's adventures (Glen the dog falling in the water is a recurring theme). It is another child who saw the Queen Mother drive past in car, his mother who saw a fox, his father who has a funny story about a snow plough. It is hard to tell if this is an individual quirk, a result perhaps of being the son of a journalist who has already learnt to report by taking out the personal, or a reflection of something more substantial about suburban culture at this time. By the time of the later journal, when he is nine, he becomes a more active player – popping a balloon and startling the dog, building Meccano models and buying himself books. By now, he, like the dog, has become on occasion a comical figure, seen falling off his bike, a tone which has perhaps been learnt from his parents. The diaries and drawings show him to be a child who is valued but from whom what is expected is that he provides a quiet third wheel in his parents' marriage, sitting in the dark in the kitchen so that the guisers will not know the family are at home, in a quintessentially privatised lifestyle.

There are points of similarity between Colin's drawings and those of the Glen Esk children, drawn a decade earlier and forty miles away. They all have the quality of detailed observation, and they are also all drawn for school purposes, intended to be seen by a teacher. For that reason, the subject-matter may have been influenced by what she might have asked or wished for, although it seems unlikely that Colin's teachers exercised anything like the editorial or curatorial role that Greta Michie assumed in Glen Esk.

However, the points of difference are far greater than the similarities. In style Colin's drawings are more detailed, more narrative and more varied than most of the Glen Esk drawings. The cutaway walls of the house, the transparent sideways view he offers of the action in a swimming pool with figures clearly visible below the water or of people sitting in a cinema with a balcony poised above them, show a wider range of experience and the greater demands upon his drawing abilities, as well as his exposure to a broader visual culture. More significant than this though is the difference in subject matter. Well over half of Colin McLeod's drawings feature his family, many of them with the familiar depiction of

father, mother and child differentiated by costume and size. Family life is his central subject, to which he repeatedly returns, and by virtue of his distinction between child and adult in size shows a sense of his own role within that family. By contrast, as we have seen, only two of the thirty or so Glen Esk drawings show family, and only one of those shows a child with a parent. This indicates a significant difference in world view: while Colin saw himself as existing largely in the context of his own family, the Glen Esk children situated themselves in a working community.

Hand in hand with this is a contrast in place, indoors versus outdoors. Over half of Colin's drawings are interiors, whether at home or less often at school or the dentist. This stands in sharp contrast to the scrapbooks created by the Glen Esk children, where the only interior scene is that of a Christmas Party in the church hall, and none of the drawings are of the children inside at home. The Glen Esk drawings which show children at play are of groups of children outside in the landscape, whereas Colin draws himself alone and indoors, building a Meccano Big Wheel. This domestic focus is not simply a reflection of the capacity of the domestic space: most of the Glen Esk children like Colin lived in homes with room enough for them to have their own bedrooms. The Glen Esk children did draw their homes, but they did so from the outside, positioned in a landscape, whereas Colin's jotters contain no exterior image of his home.

Each set of pictures is also telling a different kind of story. Colin excels at the narrative of mishap, he falls off the bike, the dog falls in the water. These are not catastrophic events, but amusing incidents, suitable for teatime tales, with more than an touch of Pooter, the comic hero of the classic novel of Victorian suburbia, *Diary of a Nobody,* although unlike Pooter, Colin is aware of the humour.[905] Without the diary element, the Glen Esk pictures naturally contain less narrative but where they tell a story it is one of agricultural endeavour. The tractor is being driven, the field has been ploughed. Where the children of Glen Esk drew pictures of people working around them, and sometimes of themselves working, Colin drew pictures of family walks and weekend activities, albeit ones which involved taking care of the land. This is a more significant distinction than that simply, as a suburban child, Colin did not see people working around him in the way the Glen children did. He was just not concerned with the world of work, and

[905] George and Weedon Grossmith, *The Diary of a Nobody* (first published London, 1892; this edition, London, 1969).

so did not draw the busy world around him: no buses, no street-cleaners, no cars or traffic lights. Rather he drew what interested him: the experiences of his family. Together his journals add up to a picture of a very different world view than that of the children in Glen Esk, ten years earlier. In Colin's world the family unit was the central factor, the home the theatre of events, he himself mostly significant only as part of the family. Work is removed from his ken and much of life happened indoors in the family living-room. The contrast between the two sets of drawings is startling in scale.

The two sets of drawings with their associated interviews suggest how very different the experiences and world-view of these children were, even though they lived just forty miles apart, spoke the same language and ostensibly shared the same culture. Both sets of children in retrospect described themselves, in Colin's words, as 'incredibly free' in terms of where they could go outside the home but this geographic freedom was not the defining factor in what they chose to draw. That was caused instead by a fundamental contrast in lifestyle between rural and suburban households, between different household economies and adult attitudes to the role of children, and a different emphasis on the role of family as opposed to community.

In their vivid distinction in subject matter and outlook, the two case studies also show the value of children's drawings as a conduit into an understanding of how children saw their world. The difference between comparable adults – a shepherd and a journalist – would be expected; the drawings show how thoroughly internalised and felt these differences were for their children. The style and skill of the drawings themselves gives clues as to the richness of the visual culture which surrounded them, the subject matter indicates the activities which interested them, the varying treatment of the human figures reveals something about how they saw their own place in the world, and that which is not drawn gives insight into their preoccupations. Harry Hendrick argued that oral history allows 'something of the child's authentic voice [to] reach us via whispers and muted articulations.'[906] In comparable fashion, studying the drawings allows something of the child's authentic experiences and viewpoint to reach us like messages in a bottle, drawn long ago.

[906] Hendrick, *Childhood and English Society,* p. 3.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION

While this research has been based on three case studies, it may fairly lay claim to representing a broader experience of childhood in Scotland in its reflection of the experiences of rural, small town and city children. Tattie-harvesting which has played a significant role in these accounts was undertaken in the same way by children across the country, as was the experience of the creation of new housing schemes on the edge of every city or large town in Scotland. All childhoods are different, dependent on the alchemy of character, class, environment and historical circumstance of the family into which a child is born but, across the variations caused by individual circumstances and by the different settings, there are strong similarities in the experiences of childhood examined here. Whether in the countryside, town or city, these children were 'always outside' unaccompanied by adults; they felt at home in the outdoors no matter if it was the street, the fields or the muddy patch down by the river. They had their territory, or as Anne Maxwell (b. 1954) put it, 'You felt you belonged ... This was your hunting ground, your place.'[907]

While the contrast with today's anxieties about children's lives is clear, the notion of 'freedom' whether lost or otherwise is not helpful, not least because it is not how the children experienced it at the time. As one of the contributors said, 'I never ever thought [about it] until you asked the question about, did you have any restrictions placed on you. God no, we had no restrictions.'[908] Freedom is something perhaps most clearly perceived once it is lost, and while this study indicates that most children in Scotland at this time were at liberty to move independently outside and to make their own decisions about how they used some of their time, this was not understood as freedom but as the norm. Furthermore, there were for most of them restrictions: boundaries beyond which they did not go, or not without getting into trouble, whether these were imposed by parents or by the difficulties from other children they might encounter.

Aries' history of childhood was in part a response to what he understood as the stifling upbringing of middle-class mid-century French children, an experience he compared

[907] Anne Maxwell, 15.53.49
[908] Glenda Hale, 01.23.00

unfavourably to that of the medieval child who, at the age of 7, was able to go out into the city to take part in 'the great community of men.'[909] As this study shows, most children in Scotland at this time were, in contrast, very much part of Aries' 'great community'. They took themselves to and from school, ran errands on their own for family and neighbours, played out in the street and took part in paid work. For the most part, this independence was unquestioned: the 1946 Clyde Committee had after all approved the foster parent system because a family setting was the best one in which to develop a child's 'independence and initiative.'[910] If these qualities were to be desired, how better to nurture them than by letting children's exercise them?

This independent movement was not, however, an unproblematic experience for the children themselves. Out in the hurly-burly of the wider world, they felt keenly the boundaries of class, religion, poverty and expectation, with some of these differences playing out more viscerally amongst children than they did in the adult world. Playing and travelling independently outside the home brought with it an awareness of danger: 'fear and avoidance' of the streets where it did not feel safe to go, a frightening experience in the park or a dangerous, unsupervised swim out to sea, a clash with children from a different school or faith. It is in this kind of detailed revelation that the value of attempting a child-centred history is most clearly seen, and it seems likely that this sort of experience would have been shared by urban and small-town children elsewhere in Britain. Differences in society which to adults might seem like an expression of class or prejudice, to children may be experienced as an actual pummelling. This visceral experience of the risks of the outside world may of course still be part of children's lives: just as there is a tendency for adults to assume children's games are disappearing whilst what is really happening is that they are not perceived by adults, so too might well be true for the rivalries and territoriality of children in the street.[911] Nonetheless – as for Roud's observations of children's play - the significance of the tensions of street-life are likely to have diminished as children spend less time outside in this way.

[909] Aries, *Centuries of Childhood*, p. 395.
[910] 1946 Clyde Committee report, cited in Abrams, *Orphan Country*, p. 36.
[911] Steve Roud, *Lore of the Playground*, p. xi. His conclusion was that children at the turn of the 21st century still played all the games that the Opie's had identified but they now ceased to play them by the age of ten or eleven, rather than up to fourteen.

These experiences varied according to the community or place in which you grew up, and they changed over time. There was a close relationship between a child's domestic life and their experiences and boundaries outside but this was not correlated to the amount of domestic space. In part this was because of the relative lack of comfort in the house: those children who had their own bedrooms rarely spent much time in them because they were chilly and uncomfortable. Rather, the connection between a child's home and the nature of the time spent outside derived from what kind of work the parents did. The scrutiny of children's drawings has revealed from their point of view how very differently rural and suburban children saw their world and their place in it. Where the family home was part and parcel of the family's work, as it was for the children in Glen Esk, the children understood their home as a place within a wider working landscape and themselves as workers within it. By contrast, in the privatised suburban dwellings of the comfortably-off in Dundee, a child like Colin McLeod might spend much of his time outside but his focus of attention was on the small domestic dramas which took place within the family's living-room and within the family unit.

Nonetheless, the improvement in housing conditions which many children and families in this period in Scotland experienced, would ultimately contribute significantly to a change in children's boundaries. The wholesale re-housing of families from inner-city tenements to housing schemes on the edge of the city changed the kind of community in which many urban children lived. Perversely, giving priority for the new housing to families with more than two children led to the creation of housing schemes where the balance between children and adults was awry and children began to be seen as a kind of enemy: chaotic and in need of control. No longer was their presence on the street unremarked by adults, instead they had become a nuisance, a dangerous swarm. However, the children themselves did not experience it in this way: to them the new housing schemes were 'like heaven because of the size of the house and the size of the garden ... we had the woods, we had everything.'[912] Nonetheless this clash between the needs of children and that of the adults would lead to an escalation of the campaigns to create spaces designated for children: playgrounds, youth clubs and afterschool clubs, all intended to keep children off the street, in another version of Aries' 'quarantine.'

[912] Frank Leighton, 01.41.27

There was, then, change over the period, but far less than the secondary literature would imply. Across the twentieth century, historians broadly agree, British children became better educated and better fed, more protected and less likely to work either outside or inside the home, more precious and more important as consumers, more likely to get the last pork chop and to have their own lovingly-decorated bedroom. In particular, for Cunningham and others, the withdrawal from the workplace is one of the defining characteristics of the experiences of children in Western society in the late nineteenth century and first half of the twentieth century, as children shifted from being contributors to consumers. For Cunningham this shift 'was probably the most important to have occurred in the history of childhood', with an unmistakable trend so that by the mid-twentieth century 'children were ceasing to have any economic value, and if they did earn any money in a part-time job they kept it for themselves.'[913]

For Scotland, however, this evidence suggests these changes occurred somewhat later. Far from becoming 'emotionally priceless' many of them came low in the family pecking order at the dinner table.[914] Far from being removed from the world of work, many children made some contribution to their household economies and indeed to the country's food supplies. Furthermore, it is only in the mid to late 1960s that a shift starts to occur in the destination of children's earnings, from going largely into the household to being kept by the child, to be spent not on necessities such as school uniform or shoes, but on whatever they chose.

The attention given here to children's role in the workplace was not part of the initial research questions but instead emerged from the evidence as being of significance, precipitated by the exploration of the drawings by the children growing up in Glen Esk and then by the almost universal experiences of potato-picking recounted in the oral histories from Brechin and Dundee. The study of children's continued role in the workplace, whether formally or otherwise, has been much neglected partly because even the thought of 'child labour' has become a cultural taboo. In her study of children's work in the United States in the 1990s, the sociologist Victoria Chapman points to 'an existing cultural value in keeping childhood a period free from economic responsibility' which prevents researchers from

[913] Cunningham, *Children and Childhood*, pp. 185-6.
[914] Zelizer, *Pricing the Priceless Child.*

investigating the many tasks that she identified children as continuing to do.[915] She argues that many of the tasks she describes, such as bringing in wood, or fetching glasses or books for parents, have been de-classified as work precisely because children do them: done by anyone else they would at least be described as housework.[916] Cunningham also draws attention to this pervasive reluctance by contemporary researchers to consider 'the possibility that children will contribute either by way of wages or by household work' because of the assumption that parents will be the sole economic providers.[917] That the subject emerged from the oral history testimony of children's experiences and drawings shows the value in attempting a child-centred history: what they actually experienced is different from what may be assumed to have happened because children's own experiences have been 'pushed aside' in top-down histories of childhood.[918]

Whilst children from all three communities worked, the subtle differences between the three case study areas arguably reflect a slow societal shift from a much older, pre-industrial way of life. In Glen Esk, children participated in agricultural work alongside adults. This work was unpaid: their labour itself was a direct contribution to the household economy, whether it involved collecting eggs, helping with the harvest or coupling the tractor to the trailer. Evidence from across Europe would suggest that this still remains true for children in agricultural families.[919] When the opportunity for paid work presented itself, the money earned went either straight to the mother with some held back for pocket money, or was all spent on school bags or shoes – and this continued into the 1970s.[920]

Children in Brechin also contributed labour to the household and the community but in most cases this consisted of running messages or helping with family obligations. In part, this may well be because for most there was not a family business in the sense that there is for farming children: no hens to be fed or eggs collected, no harvest to be brought in. When seasonal agricultural work was available – both berry-picking and tattie-picking – almost all

[915] Victoria Chapman, 'Working Hard or Hardly Working: An Examination of Children's Household Contributions in the 1990s' (PhD Dissertation, Princeton University, 1994) [hereafter Chapman, 'Working Hard or Hardly Working'], p. 250.
[916] Chapman, 'Working Hard or Hardly Working', p. 13.
[917] Cunningham, 'Decline of Child Labour', p. 422. See also Philip Mizen, Angela Bolton and Christopher Pole, 'School Age Workers: The Paid Employment of Children in Britain', *Work, Employment and Society*, 13, no.3 (1999), pp. 423-438.
[918] Chapman, 'Working Hard or Hardly Working', p. 23.
[919] Rahikainen, *Centuries of Child Labour,* pp. 200-208.
[920] Kay Law (b. 1956) earned money at the Retreat from the age of about 10 until she was 15. Her wages went first to pay for the costs of school bags or shoes; the surplus she could keep. Kay Law, 00.17.54

the children took part: here again, most of the money earned went to the household and was understood to be a contribution to cover the child's expenses and 'absolutely crucial for the welfare of many families.'[921] Underlying this then, was still a presumption that children could be contributors rather than solely consumers. In a family where money was tight, a child's contribution could be a great help. Brian Mitchell (b.1940) worked as a delivery boy for a licensed grocers after school every day from the age of eleven, with all his earnings going to his mother. Such work by a child of this age was illegal but not only did his mother and his employer ignore this, so too did a wider community, perhaps because everyone understood it to be needed by the family.

Notably, when there was a family business as in Marcia Shearer's (b. 1959) case where the family lived above the chip-shop, all the children worked as a matter of course, doing shifts after school, indicating a continued acceptance of the idea that children were part of the household economy. However, in a household where counting up the pennies from the till was part of daily life, Marcia got paid, making up her own pay packet, so while she and her sisters were workers they were also renumerated as such.[922] While this is clearly very different from the financially unrewarded labour of rural children, it is a distinction that may be driven by the different nature of the two forms of work: one a cash-based industry, the other one where payment in kind was still part and parcel of arrangements.

The situation as we have seen was slightly different in Dundee, further removed from an agricultural economy. Some children had paid part-time jobs, and until the late 1960s gave most if not all of the money earned to their mothers. However, here berry-picking was treated as an occasional day-out, not a summer occupation, and while time off school for tattie-picking was very much part of the norm, the local education authority finally ended it in the 1960s, whereas in Angus it persisted into the 1970s. The difference in the amount of work children were expected to do seems to have rested on how agricultural the community was: it is interesting that in Dundee, where children could still work part-time in factories until 1918, the expectation of children contributing labour faded more quickly than it did in communities which depended on agriculture. This sense that farm work was acceptable for children when other work was not was pervasive in the culture;

[921] Brian Mitchell, 00.22.03
[922] Marcia Shearer, 00.53.46.

recognised by the government both in the 1937 Act and in the official wartime deployment of children for tattie-picking. By 1973, when the 1937 Act was amended to raise the age at which children could work from twelve to thirteen, the exception singled out remained 'the employment of children under thirteen in light agricultural or horticultural work.'[923]

In any case, the similarity between the three communities is easily as striking as this difference: in all three case-study areas children continued to be seen as potential contributors to the household economy. When they earned money it belonged to the family, not to them as individuals and this continued well into the 1960s, later than it is said to have occurred elsewhere. This also tells us something about the boundaries between children and adults: not only was work not solely the province of adults, the obligation to contribute to the family was not solely the responsibility of parents.

Not surprisingly then, that there is little indication of the other side of Cunningham's see-saw of change from children as contributors to children as consumers until the late 1960s. The evidence from both the oral history and children's drawings shows a remarkable lack of consumer items and interest in consumption, hand in hand with a lack of access to money with which children could buy things. It is notable, for instance, that while *Children of the City* (1944) identified 'the shopping centres with miles of inviting windows' as one of the temptations towards crime for the city child, not a single Dundee child recalled window-shopping, or even going into the city centre for any purpose other than the swimming-pool or library, even when pressed.[924] It would seem this was a presumption about children's behaviour on the part of adults, rather than actual observed behaviour. The main item of longing, the object mentioned repeatedly particularly by those who did not have one, was a bicycle: in itself a means to more independent mobility. It is only right at the end of the period under survey that both the oral history and, in Colin McLeod's case, the drawings give some indication of a growing access to consumerism. When Colin (b. 1960) goes to the dentist he is rewarded with some money and presents, lovingly recorded in a drawing, complete with a brass-rubbing of the coins.

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[923] Employment of Children Act 1973, Eliz. 2, c. 24, Schedule 1, Amendments of Acts of 1933 and 1937. See also NRS ED54/239, Employment of Children, Regulations, 1973. For current guidance see <https://www.gov.scot/publications/employment-children-guide-children/pages/2/ > (accessed 17 July 2022) for an outline of restrictions in 2022 governing the work children 14 or over in most local authority areas in Scotland can do.

[924] *Children of the City,* Cooper, voice-over script.

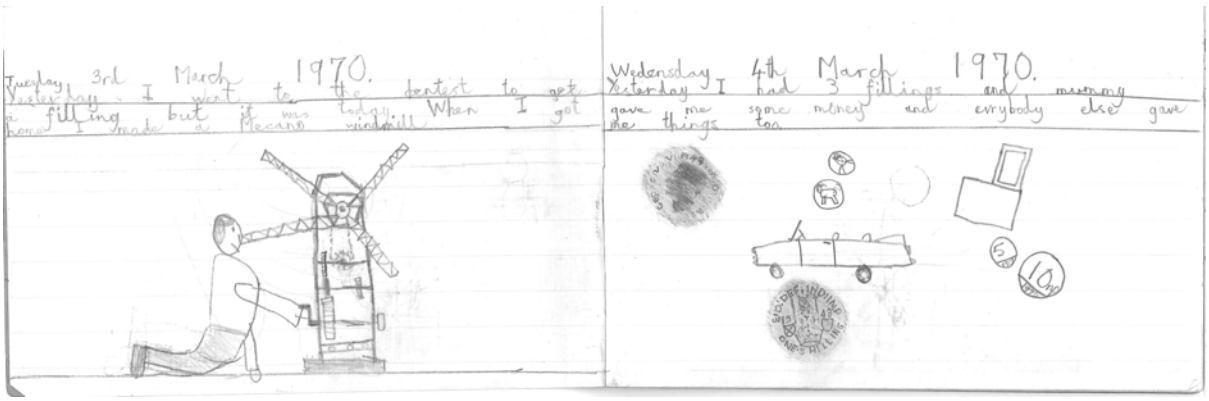

Figure 17: 'Yesterday I had three fillings and mummy gave me some money and everybody else gave me things too', Colin McLeod, 4 March 1970, Jotter Three.

At much the same time, Glenda Hale (b. 1961) learnt what she was missing by growing up in the glen only when she went to school in Brechin:

> You're not seeing what other kids have and thinking oh I want that, or I want that …. once you get to high school and you're seeing other people and things like that, and then of course as a girl you get interested in clothes and you want the nicest, latest things.[925]

This is in contrast to the experience of Kay Law (b. 1956), born just five years earlier to whom the revelation brought by going from the school in Glen Esk to High School in Brechin was not that other children had better possessions but that they had more exciting experiences: 'they'd go to the swimming pool, they'd go to the pictures, and I'd never been to pictures in my life, I'd never been at a swimming pool in my life. … you know you felt you were missing out'.[926]

It was not of course that the children born earlier did not care for things, rather that the things they remembered caring about were modest in scale, small possessions, whose value often lay in the emotion they embodied: the thermometer and watch with a second hand on it 'so I could take everybody's temperature' which Mary Barlow's adopted mother bought her for her ninth birthday, after she had spent a year in hospital;[927] the loss of a doll called Rosie, left sitting on a step when Moira Bolt went to play, and never seen again except once maybe, in another little girl's arms at the bus stop with her dad getting on the

[925] Glenda Hale, 01.03.44
[926] Kay Law, 00.43.30
[927] Mary Barlow, 00.48.25

bus 'and I'm sure it was Rosie that she was carrying'; [928] the toothbrushes that Stan McColl's mother would give to his pals when they came to play, because they had none. As Stan said, 'Those little things stick, stick in your mind.'[929] Even in the most difficult of childhoods there were also sunnier emotions or moments - a love of dancing, sweets left under a pillow or as for Brian Mitchell, the sun on his face: 'One of my greatest memories as a wee kid was in my father's trap pulled by a pony going for corn, you know, coming along in the sun.'[930]

These details are not so much the stuff of historical theses as of people's lives, the source of A.J.P. Taylor's grumpy remark that oral history consisted of 'old men drooling about their youth.'[931] In this they reflect the inevitable disjunction between individual lives and grand historical themes. To quote from the child protagonist in a comic strip, *Calvin and Hobbes*: 'History is the fiction we create to persuade ourselves that events are knowable and that life has order and direction.'[932] Much of what was experienced by the people interviewed for this research showed neither order nor direction, rather it was just what happened. Some of the information that has been unpicked here still matters very much to the adults who once were children, and came spilling out at interview; much however seemed of no consequence to them and was recalled almost incidentally or after probing. The difficulty of exploring only what is identified as the historical themes that come from the interviews and source material is that one is in danger of leaving out what mattered most to them as children and continues to resonate for individuals into old age. Samuel and Thompson warned against the dangers of confusing oral history with therapy, but without wishing to solve the private puzzles of people's lives one needs to listen to what they are actually saying or one risks using oral history merely as supporting evidence for existing theories.[933] Beneath the nostalgia for 'long summer days in dusty streets … the echo of our voices and pavements covered in chalk' are memories of difficult relationships with parents, the humiliation of sharing a bed with your mother as a teenager or the resentment for not being given a bicycle when your sibling was, alongside experiences of poverty and dislocation, of street-level bigotry and 'fear and avoidance', of being strapped at school and

[928] Moira Bolt, 00.19.16.
[929] Stan McColl, 00.11.53.
[930] Brian Mitchell, 01.57.03.
[931] Quoted in Thompson, *Voice of the Past,* p. 62.
[932] Quoted in David Gange, *The Frayed Atlantic Edge: A Historian's Journey from Shetland to the Channel* (London, 2019), p. 189.
[933] Raphael Samuel and Paul Thompson eds, *The Myths We Live By* (London, 1990), p. 6.

at home.[934] The urban world as remembered through these children's eyes is not half as cosy or endearing as Richard Hoggart made his corner of Leeds sound, or as vivid and colourful as the picture of life in the Gorbals conjured up by Ralph Glasser.

The boundaries that defined their experiences were often barely perceived by the children at the time. Even the significant hurdle of the 'qualy' carries much less emotional weight in the lives examined here than it does in the autobiographical accounts from children who passed the eleven-plus. Nonetheless boundaries of expectation and behaviour framed their experiences even when the physical boundaries of where children could go, play and explore seem to modern eyes both wide and often undefined. The cumulative experience here goes some way to showing us how things were for children in Scotland before the boom in car ownership reduced children's play territory, how they were when the government thought it reasonable enough to employ child labour, and what it was like when a child's bedroom was just a place to sleep in rather than a sanctum dedicated to individuality, privacy and consumerism. It is a picture both more complex and subtle than that which can be achieved by studies of children across a larger arena, but also one which shows a significant lag and a cultural distinction. The boundaries of childhood in Scotland were slower to shift and change than they are said to have been in England or North America: the experiences of twentieth-century Scottish children retained a connection to an older understanding of children as contributors and workers some decades at least after this seems to have disappeared elsewhere.

[934] Reynolds, *Teatime Tales*, p. 5; Moira Bolt, 00.49.55.

APPENDIX ONE: ORAL HISTORY CONTRIBUTORS AND INTERVIEW DATES.

GLEN ESK:

Angus Davidson, born 1931, is the son of the local joiner/undertaker and grew up just above the village of Tarfside. The youngest of three, his mother died when he was ten. He still lives in the glen: having farmed the hill farm right at the top of the glen, he now lives just a few hundred yards away from where he was born.

Interviewed at his home in Glen Esk, 16 June 2016.

Sandra Guthrie was born in 1946. Her father was a shepherd and her mother ran their house in Tarfside as a Bed and Breakfast. She was one of the children whose drawings are preserved in the scrapbooks at the Glen Esk Folk Museum. Sandra became a primary school teacher and still lives in the same house, having returned to the glen to teach in Tarfside school. She is the oldest of three.

Interviewed twice: once at her house in Tarfside, Glen Esk, 18 March 2016; second interview at Glen Esk Folk Museum with the scrapbooks, 2 May 2017.

Albert Taylor, born in 1949, was the second child in a family of five, and his father was a hill shepherd. He grew up at Dalbrack near Invermark, five miles up the glen from Tarfside, and was one of the children whose drawings are preserved in the scrapbooks. He became a gamekeeper and has recently retired as head keeper at the Glen Muick Estate, a long way by road but not so far as the crow flies over the hills from Glen Esk.

Interviewed at his home in Glen Muick, 4 September 2016.

Kay (Kathleen) Law, nee Osler was born in 1956, the middle child of three of the Head Keeper at Invermark. She works in the oil business and lives just outside Aberdeen.

Interviewed at her home near Inverurie, 10 June 2016.

Glenda Hale was born in 1961. Her mother and Sandra Guthrie's mother were sisters. Her father was in the RAF but the family stayed near her mother's family in Tarfside and when her father left the services, he came back there also. She has an older sister and now works as a student advisor for Aberdeen University.

Interviewed at her home in Aberdeen, 11 April 2016.

BRECHIN:

Nan (Agnes) Cook nee Cross was born in 1928, the youngest of two girls. Her father worked in a jute mill as a mechanic, her mother worked there on the looms before marriage. Her mother subsequently worked as a cleaner. The family lived in a one-room tenement until she was four and then moved to a two-room tenement flat in Union St. She went to Damacre Primary School, then Brechin High School. She and her husband took over the newsagents' business in Brechin which her parents had had in their latter years.
Interviewed at home in Brechin, 17 October 2017

Enid Finlayson nee Miller was born in 1932, the oldest of four children. Her father worked in Duke's Jute Mill, her mother had worked in the mill but did not work outside the home after she got married. They lived in a two-room tenement flat in Kinnear Place. Enid went to Andover Primary School, then Bank St Junior Secondary.
Interviewed at home in Brechin, 25 October 2017.

Brian Mitchell was born in 1940, the youngest of two boys. His father was a clerk at Coventry Gauge and Tool; before marriage his mother had worked at Keillor's Factory in Dundee. His father died in 1945 and his mother worked as a cleaner for Coventry Gauge and Tool. The family lived in housing built for the Coventry company key workers in Guthrie Park. He attended Andover School then Brechin High School. After joining the London Metropolitan Police Force, he re-trained as a history teacher.
Interviewed at home in Brechin, 17 August 2017.

Pamela Thomson nee Macdonald was born in 1943, the oldest of four children. Her father was a dentist and they lived in a substantial stone-built house at 1, Castle St, Brechin, with the dental surgery forming part of the ground floor. Her mother had been a primary school teacher but gave up work on marriage. Pamela went to Townhead (the private primary attached to High School) then Brechin High. She became a dentist and moved back to Brechin to take over the family business.
Interviewed at home in Brechin, 9 January 2018

Lindsay Clark was born in 1943 and was an only child. His father was a farm grieve. The family moved from Dalgety Farm just on the outskirts of Brechin to Muirside of Albar (a little further away) when he was nine and then to near Perth when he was fifteen. Dalgety farmhouse was sizeable but without electricity or any heating other than open fires. His

mother had worked in a jute factory before marriage. He went to Townhead, then to Brechin High School, followed by Perth Academy. He became a bank manager.

Interviewed at home in Callander, 4 August 2017.

Fred Coutts was born in 1947. His father had been in the army and then a p.o.w; after the war he then became janitor to Brechin High School. His mother had been in service but did not work after marriage. The family lived in accommodation provided by the school, in a two-bedroomed flat over the school gym. He went to Townhead, then to Brechin High School. First cousin to Lindsay Clark, he was also an only child. He became a Church of Scotland minister.

Interviewed at home in Hatton, Aberdeenshire, 18 July 2017.

Alan Finlayson was born in 1953. His father worked at the Coventry Gauge and Tool Company and they lived in housing built for Coventry Gauge key workers at Strachan Park: 'flat roofed, grey, hard concrete, cold houses, four main blocks of four with an upper floor.' His father was a skilled tool-maker, who eventually became a foreman. His mother went back to work as a store clerk when he was in secondary school. He attended Andover School, then Brechin High School. He was the oldest of two boys and as an adult worked in theatre.

Interviewed at his home in Glen Esk, 4 August, 2017.

Anne Shand nee Barclay: born 1958. Her father was a postman and her mother, who had worked in service in London for Lady Airlie, later worked as a cleaner. The family lived in a council house in Dove Wells Drive, a new estate 'up town' built in the 1950s. Went to Townhead School and then Brechin High. The youngest of two girls, she became a Home Economics teacher at Brechin High.

Interviewed at Brechin High School, 8 December 2017

Marcia Shearer nee McKenzie: born 1959. Her father owned and ran first one then two chip shops, and a sports store in Brechin. Her mother had worked in the jute mills, and then after marriage worked in the chip shop on occasion. The family lived above the chip shop in Montrose St until she was eleven. She attended Andover Primary School then Brechin High School. She was the youngest of three girls and has a career in Computing Science.

Interviewed at home in Brechin, 11 September 2017.

DUNDEE:

Stan (Stanley) McColl was born in 1925. He was the oldest of two boys. His Protestant father had been a regular soldier in the Gordon Highlanders and then worked for the local authority. The family originally lived in a tenement in Lochee and moved to a new council flat in Marryat St, Dundee when Stan was ten. His mother was Catholic but Stan and his brother were brought up Protestant. Stan worked as a car mechanic and then became a school janitor.

Interviewed at home in Dundee, 24 September 2018.

Annie (Ann) Bartie nee Reekie was born in 1928. Her father was a docker. The sixth child of eight, she and her siblings were briefly evacuated to Montrose during the war. When she was a baby, the family lived in a one-room flat in Princes St and then moved to a council flat in Fleming Gardens. She went to work in the mills after leaving school but eventually joined the army.

Interviewed at Community Centre, Fleming Gardens Sheltered Housing, Dundee, 26 September 2018.

Mary Barlow nee McHale was born in 1931. She was one of eight, from a Catholic family. Her father was a house-painter and often unemployed. Her mother died early in the war (date uncertain in Mary's recollection). Mary and her siblings were evacuated to a farm near Aberdeen but came home within a few months. She was ill as a child and spent a year in hospital with scarlet fever. She and her younger sister were eventually adopted by her child-minder.

Interviewed at home in Dundee, 19 October 2018.

Bill (William) Blain was born in 1932 to a middle-class family. His father was the editor of a number of D.C. Thomson's children's papers, including Wizard, Rover, Hotspur and Skipper. They lived in a bungalow in Nesbitt Road, just above the High School's playing fields. He was the third of three boys, with a much younger sister, Jenny (see below). He died in November 2018.

Interviewed at home in Edinburgh with his wife Margaret present, 29 May 2018.

Josie (Josephine) Robertson nee McFarlane was born in 1934, the eighth of nine surviving children. Her Catholic mother died when Josie was thirteen months old and her father was an overseer in the jute mill. The family lived in a one-room flat in Blackness Road, and then

moved to a three-bedroomed council flat on the Kingsway. Josie and her youngest brother were evacuated during the war to a household of two unmarried women living in Luthermuir, a village outside Montrose, where they stayed for the duration of the war.
Interviewed at Community Centre, Fleming Gardens Sheltered Housing, Dundee, 26 September 2018.

Moira Bolt was born in Kirriemuir in 1940, while her mother was unmarried, and spent her early childhood with her mother who was a part-time cleaner living with her grandmother and aunts (who worked in the textile mill) in Kirriemuir. When she was five, her mother married Jim Leighton, a lorry-driver and they moved to Dundee, living first with extended family in a tenement flat in Dury Street, then in a tenement flat they bought in Kirk Street in Lochee and then moving to a council house in West March. Her mother had four more children, of whom one was Frank Leighton (see below). Moira became a youth worker.
Interviewed at her home near Kirriemuir, 25 July, 2018.

Jenny Blain was born in 1949, the youngest of four children, one of whom was Bill Blain (see above). Their father worked as an editor at D.C. Thomson and their mother had also been a journalist, but stopped work when the children were born. The family lived in a bungalow in Nesbitt Road.
Interviewed at home in Dundee, where she retired after living in Canada, 11 May 2018.

Frank Leighton was born in 1950, the fourth of five children, the oldest of whom was his half-sister Moira Bolt (see above). His mother became a school cook after the death of his father, a lorry driver, who died when Frank was five. Frank became a P.E. teacher and played volleyball for Scotland.
Interviewed at home in Dundee on 18 July 2018.

Anne Maxwell was born in 1954, the older child of two to a Catholic family. Her mother worked in the jute mill (Tay Textiles) and her father was a plasterer. When she was born the family lived in Lochee in a privately-rented flat and then moved to a new semi-detached council house on a scheme called Buttars Loan in the Charleston and Lochee end of Dundee.
Interviewed at home in Broughty Ferry, 30 March 2018.

David Dick was born in 1959, an only child. His father was a mechanical engineer with National Cash Registers, his mother had been in the WRENs and then became a housewife. The family were Protestant and lived in a two-bedroom flat in Lochee until David was about eleven, when they moved to a house on the Kingsway.

Interviewed at home in St. Andrews, 4 May, 2018.

Colin Macleod was born in 1960, an only child. His mother had been a primary school teacher but did not work after Colin was born; his father was a journalist on *The Courier*. The family was Protestant. He has kept a diary throughout his life and still has some of his school jotters and drawings which are discussed in Chapter Five. He went on to work for Scottish National Heritage as an environmental scientist.

Interviewed at SNH offices in Battleby, Perth, 11 May 2018; and then again with his drawings at Battleby, 1 August 2018.

APPENDIX TWO: QUESTION AREAS FOR ORAL HISTORY

This was the set of questions I set out with at the beginning of each interview, having done a trial interview with an acquaintance who grew up in Glasgow in the same time period to establish what sort of questions seemed most fruitful. While the interviews all began with the same initial questions, they would then vary as different answers led in different directions; furthermore, it often took extensive questioning to arrive at a clearer understanding of when an event occurred or why something was the way it was. As my research continued, I would sometimes add or vary questions in order to cover or clarify subjects which had come up in other interviews in the same case-study area.

Some people were keen to speak at length and the interview could take two hours; others were briefer. Nonetheless most interviews covered, or attempted to cover, most of the below subjects.

QUESTIONS:

Tell me your name, and when you were born?

Parents? Siblings? Parents jobs?

Where did you grow up? Up until age of twelve or so.

Was the house or flat rented /owned / connected to father/mother's job?

We'll start by talking a bit about going outside, whether to play or whatever.

Can you remember when you were really little, before school or when first at school – did you play outside?

Where did you go?

Did you go out without grown-ups? At what age?

Who did you go with? Other children?

Where did you go? How far did you go? How did that change over time? Use map if necessary/ appropriate.

What did you play or do?

Did you go out on foot or on bicycle? (or by bus, pony etc?)

How long did you go out for? When did you have to be at home?

Whereabouts did you play? Did you go home for lunch?

Did you have a watch? How did you tell the time?

Do you remember feeling restricted? Or anxious about how far you had gone?

Did you enjoy being out by yourself?

Did you ever get into trouble – for being late? For going too far? For anything you did? Or get lost?

(Did anything alarming ever happen, even in retrospect?)

Did you run errands? On your own?

How did you get to school?

Was it different being outside in your school uniform if you had one – did you behave in a different way?

How did that change as you got older?

At school, where did you play outside?

Were the games you played at school different from the ones you played outside school?

So now we are going to talk about what it was like when you were indoors, especially at home.

Tell me a bit about the house/flat you grew up in – how much space? How many rooms? Who lived there?

Did you have a bedroom of your own? On your own /did that change as you got older?

How much did that feel like your space? How many restrictions, rules? How important to you was that?

And where else in the flat or house did you play? Were there areas or places that were restricted (A room? A chair? When someone was sleeping)

What sorts of games did you play inside? Who with? When?

And when you did homework, where did you do that?

Let's talk a bit about time – did you have regulated bedtime? How did that change? Bedtime ritual or pattern? What were the rules about bedtime? Eg lights out/no talking etc?

Morning pattern and times on a school day? And when you got home from school?

And on a non-school day - when did you get up? Who decided what you did? Fixed points in the day?

Sunday different from Saturday?

Mealtimes – were they at fixed times?

Did you all eat together? Who sat where?

Draw me a plan of the table? Why was it like that do you think?

Behaviour at meal times – how regulated? Who spoke? Were manners important?

And what did you have to eat? Was there a pattern to the meals? Eg particular food on the same day each week?

Rules about eating? (no second helpings/always clear your plate etc) table manners?

Who was served first or last? Size of portion? When could you start eating?

Not just at mealtimes – rules about language and words? Who spoke to whom and when? Rules of conversation?

Other manners or rules that were important? (holding doors, standing up, making way for older person?) Where did you feel your importance was in the family hierarchy?

What sort of things did you get into trouble for?

And what were the punishments? Same for you and your siblings or different (gender, age)?

Did you feel free at home? Or restricted, regulated ... anxious?

Are there rules or rituals at home I have forgotten to ask about?

Were there distinct ages or times that marked a landmark – when you go to big school? An age when you could do something?

When were you considered not to be a child? Did you get more freedom step by step?

Seasons – how important were changes in the year to you? Seasons when you did something, when things changed? Did games that you played change - where you went - what you did?

Special days? Rituals around birthdays or Christmas?

Just a couple more areas to talk about it – doing really well. (NB The clothes section in particular was often truncated: some interviewees were little interested in discussing it)

Clothes – can you remember what sort of clothes you had and wore?
Who decided what you wore? How many clothes did you have? Can you remember any in particular?
The feel of them?
Different to adult clothes or just mini adult?
Hand me downs?
How did they change as you got older?
Did they matter to you? Did they restrict you? (don't get them dirty, can't move well in them?)

Work and money?

We talked a bit about running errands … did you also help in the house? What did you do? How regularly? How responsible? At what age? Did you like doing it?

And did you do any work outside the home? At what age? Did you keep the money you earned or give to parents? Did you like doing it?

Pocket money – did you get it? How much? What and where did you spend it on?

How aware were you of money? Did you worry about it? Eg from parents' conversations?

Friends and siblings

We've talked a bit about friends at school – how important were friends to you?
Siblings? Being an only child?

Town and country – did you go to the other? How different was your experience there to one at home?

Would you say you had a happy childhood?

When you look back now, do you think of yourself then as free or restricted? How important has your childhood been in your overall life?

When would you say your childhood ended?

Anything I have forgotten to ask about or you'd like to tell me?

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