

Eila's Life Story 1920 - 1930

My father John Robertson was Head Gardener on Panmure Estate before coming to Westmuir where he bought the property of Viewbank on Westbank in 1919. He was going to turn the land into a Market Garden. The folk in the



house behind belonged to Mr & Mrs George Watt and it was there he met their youngest daughter Elizabeth. She was employed as a maid in Dean House in the centre of Kirriemuir. They married in December 1920.

Woodside. Grannie (white apron): Grandad to right of door: Eila's Mum sitting on grass: also in photo - Uncle George and Auntie Lottie

I was born on 20th February 1925, 6lb in weight, a thin delicate child delivered by Doctor



Eila - School Photo in front of Westmuir School.

Sillers. Mum nearly died and was ill for a while so it was Granny that looked after me till mum recovered. I had double pneumonia when I was two and they feared I would die I was so ill but I made a good recovery. I spent a lot of time with my Granny, as mum worked out on the land with Dad trying to make a living and she taught me a lot. I could count and tell the time before I went to school up the hill when I was 5 years old. The teacher was Miss Berkley.

I was always delicate and couldn't take cow's milk so on Doctor's advice Dad bought a



billy goat and two nannies. This was added to the collection of animals. We already had hens, ducks, pigs, horse, cats and a dog. Sharp the dog, a collie cross was my constant companion and it was he that taught me to walk.

Eila with Sharp the dog.

I had no sisters or brothers but I was never lonely. I had so many pets to keep me happy and although there were few toys I never missed them. I loved all the nature around me – butterfly or caterpillar, frog or toad, I loved them all. The only toy a large Teddy Bear was 'loved' and given to me by my Granny when I was 5 years old. I wouldn't look or play with dolls.

At the age of 8 years I was sent to Webster's Seminary for a better education. Grant was Headmaster and I was with a Mrs Brown. I went to dancing classes around that age too with fiddler Jock Reid.

When I became 9 years old Dad bought a piano and I got music lessons with Norman C. Guild. I had four years there and really did well. I was asked to play a solo piece at his concerts.

I always loved to grow things and watched my Dad sow and plant and wanted to do it too. I got a small strip and I planted a tiny holly rooted cutting of 5 leaves in it. I watched it grow into a tree and it is still in the same strip to this day and gives a great show of berries.

I was only 5 years old when I planted it so it is now 82 years old. I remember meeting and talking to Sir J M Barrie – he was good with us kids.



Eila and Dad at Viewbank.



Eila and Mum at Viewbank.

1930 to 1940

I began to make friends at Webster's Seminary and was at Birthday parties of chums. I had chums out at Viewbank too and they loved to go on the swing that my Dad built for me here.

Dad ploughing the fields on east side of Westbank. There are 12 houses there now.

The full size shed attached to Viewbank is where Eila's Mum and Dad were married and the school can be seen at the top of the hill.

I liked school and I had good marks for composition, memorising passages and poems and I got top marks for music too. I loved science and doing sums but don't consider myself a top grade scholar. It was in this period I began writing poetry in earnest and I have a book of poems handwritten from 1939.



Eila with baby goats - one went to Carl Beaton (of Hill View, Main Road), Grandfather of Margaret Gray, Westmuir Village website's 'Australian correspondent')



At the end of 1939 (27th October), I left school and went into the Gairie Factory in Kirriemuir. I walked into Kirriemuir leaving at 5.30am for the start at 6.00 am, worked until 5.30pm (with 2 breaks for meals) and walked home again. Pay was 14 shillings (and 4 pence which went for insurance). This was my weeks pay. I gave mum 10 shillings and had 4 shillings for myself. When I had 2 looms I could make up to £1.10 shillings in a good week. I worked there for 13 years before leaving to get married.

I learned to knit and crochet from my Granny and she told me folklore and things she remembered when she was young. She died when I was 12 years old, how I missed her.

This was when Sir J M Barrie died too. Children lined the route to the Cemetery.

Dad and Donald the horse in front of Viewbank.



1940 to 1950

My teenage years were spent in wartime. Memories of blackouts, gas masks, rations, clothing coupons, raids and evacuees and Polish and Germans appeared in our lives too. My life became much more challenging but rewarding too. I went to evening classes to further my education now that I had left school and went on other courses too such as China painting in Westmuir Hall and Floral Art in Kirriemuir. I also joined the G.A. (Girls Association) connected to St Ninians Church of which I became a member at 16 and could go to Communion now with my parents.

I joined the Westmuir WRI in September 1939 and that was when I found a friend in Mrs Evelyn Soutar. She took an interest in me and encouraged me to compete in the competitions and also join the concert party.

My Rural

**At fourteen I joined the Rural In our little village hall
Going to meetings there with Mum How I enjoyed it all
I felt very grown up then With badge on my lapel
When my entry won a prize It made my heart swell
'Twas there I learned many things Handcrafts, cooking, baking
I even managed 'votes of thanks' Without my body shaking.
Part of the concert party I became a stalwart trouper
Acting on stage with the group To me was really super
Through meetings I gained knowledge Useful for maid and wife
Over sixty years a member now And still part of my life
Where I find a warm welcome A chat and cup of tea
So My Rural here in Westmuir Is very dear to me.**



I wrote a lot of poetry too and helped the war effort and morale. I went back to Norman C Guild when I was 19 years old to learn to play the violin and had 3 years there before he died. I also began to compose and write music and got lots of support from my parents. I took up shell work, picking up the shells from Carnoustie Beach when visiting relatives. I also did embroidery and won prizes in competitions. I remember the terrible snow in 1947 when I couldn't get to work as the road was blocked for a week between Kirriemuir and Blairgowrie and we still had lying snow until mid-April from the January storm that year.

Eila aged 23 playing the fiddle.

1950 – 60

I went to the Saturday dance in the Masonic Hall in Kirriemuir and got to know Sandy Webster and his brother and sister. He said he would walk home with me and on Hogmanay I asked him up to the house to first foot Mum and Dad – at the end of '49. He stayed for a while as we had a house full and enjoying a party. We got engaged in 1951 and married in 1952 in the village hall.

Wedding photo – in the Village Hall with Sandy, Eila and Bridesmaid Nan Nicoll, and Best Man, Bill Webster



Mum made my wedding dress and the white speckled over-net was all done by hand and the diamante too to trim the neck and sleeves. The dress underneath was pink silk. My bouquet was pink carnations made up by Dad and the wedding cake made by 'Scot the Baker', Bank Street, Kirrie, was also pink and decorated by small pink carnations.



My father bought the house (behind Viewbank) that was attached to my grandparents home which was empty too as my Grandad died in 1951. Dad sorted up the property and finished it for us. We lived there until July 1980. I worked on the land here and selling the produce. I also learned to drive and my Dad bought a small van for me so I could take the fruit (strawberries and raspberries) to market.

Mum, Dad and Sandy with the Austin 16 car.

I also helped Mum to sell flowers, cutting and bunching.

Eila's Uncle and Aunt from Canada with lots of flowers cut ready for bunching and selling.

Sandy discovered he didn't like being a market gardener, so Mum and Dad and I just kept this going and Sandy took casual work on farms instead. We had hens, ducks and geese and at one time had 3 dogs and 2 cats, so I found life was very busy but I loved it. The land work gave me great pleasure. Sandy and I had a few trips with Melville's bus tours in the summer but I never went on holiday as such. Sandy had a week away going on his scooter to visit his Aunts and Uncles in Aberdeenshire but I was happy to stay here and keep things ticking.



I was involved with the concert party and there were lots of scripts, music and verse to write. Any spare time I had was taken up with this. I was now helping Mrs Soutar to get the yearly 2-night concert together and learning up the sketches as well as dance steps. I always had a large part in the sketches as I had a good memory for words and acting was a piece of cake for me. It was a good thing that memory was good as I was a bit deaf and wouldn't hear the prompts anyway! My 13 years in the factory amongst all the noise was perhaps partly to blame. I got used to it and carried on regardless. I also had to get glasses then too as the sewing in the cloth in the looms gave me headaches. I also nearly got hanged one night when the blind cord wound round my neck and swung me off my feet. If the cord hadn't snapped I was done for. Another time – running to get to work one snowy morning I slipped and my dentures fell out and bounced down the brae ahead of me but were okay. Yes! I needed dentures at 14 years of age as my teeth came in rotten because of ill health in my childhood. Still, the factory years were happy years, I still look back with a smile.

1960 – 70



**Studio photo of Eila's Mum,
Lizzie Watt.**

Eila's Mum, Lizzie Watt, was about 6 years old (1906) when this photo was taken. About this time Lizzie had Diphtheria. She had to have her head shaved – and though she recovered she lost her fair hair as the new hair grew in jet black and remained so throughout her life.

My Mum died in June 1960 and life changed for me overnight. My Dad, who was 13 years older than Mum, was now in his seventies and he was devastated. The light went out of his life. Being an only child I felt lost trying to help and spending a lot of time with him. It wasn't easy for me trying to be there for both Sandy and Dad. Dad wanted to live alone, yet I would do the meals and have them at his table. This meant cooking at Woodside and eating at Viewbank. Sandy and I never had the same cosy meals at home any more. I was torn between 2 homes and this went on for 19 years. Dad was too set in his ways to change, he was just lost without Mum and my heart went out to him but it was hard for Sandy too. I managed as best I could and Dad still worked with me on the land and was a great help (financially as well as manually) as Sandy's wage was poor with just odd jobs. He decided to go into the factory and that meant he

had a proper pay packet at last but there was his scooter to keep up as well as my van so we were sometimes struggling.

There were good times too. I still had the Concert Party to lose myself in and Sandy had his bowling Club and we went to Scottish Country Dancing and to Burns Suppers. I was taking part and he came as a guest. Some years I had two or more invitations and that was a night out together and a meal. Dad was always happy to hear all about it when we came back. Later in the sixties Dad began to be happier and join in things again. He went to the Men's Club in the Village Hall along with Sandy who was Hall-keeper at that time. I had a big party for Dad in 1968 when he was 80 and he got a set of snooker balls from us to use on his billiard table. This made him so happy and he had many happy times playing with friends. Viewbank became a place of parties and laughter again.

**Eila, wearing a dress she made herself, with
the WRI cup (1968 approx) at Viewbank.**



Around this time too I became better known for my performing skills and my personalised verses and my diary filled up quickly. I was writing a lot of verses for Weddings, Retirements, Birthdays, Milestone's etc. I kept some copies but many, many more I failed to do as my popularity grew.

Dad began to go out more again in the car visiting and it was on one occasion at Dundee Flower Show that I saw a brooch made of feathers and Dad bought it for me. When it got broken, after a time I took it apart and got an idea how it was done and a new hobby began for me.



Feather craft demonstration with cousin Kay from Canada.

1970 – 80

I went to potato gathering at Reddie Farm during the 1960s and up to 1972. I made up poems on the field of our tattie picking skills for fun and did this every year. It was fun in the midst of hard work for us all and the money came in very handy – it was hard times.

In 1972 this ended for me when we were all involved in a car accident that put Sandy and I in hospital for 6 weeks and 5 weeks. Dad should have been in hospital too as he had a broken nose and facial injuries but he refused to stay as there were all the animals to attend to and he had the keys in his pocket so was desperate to get home to them. Sandy had a broken hip bone and I had neck and spine damage. For a month I was unable to move and lay on my back with sandbags each side of my head – lying flat with no pillow and had to be fed through a straw. I couldn't move my right hand and very little with my left. I had to learn to walk again and had 4 months therapy at Kemback Street after leaving hospital. Dad was so good – keeping the work here going, making the meals for me and lighting my fire to keep me warm. He made all the jam from our fruit and stored it and did the shopping and would see me on to the ambulance twice weekly for therapy. He was a gem and was so upset as he was driving the car that day. It was just an accident and I had no cause to blame him. Sandy stayed with his Mum and Dad at that time.

I made a good recovery under George Patterson at Kemback Street with his help and encouragement and surprised the Doctors who thought I would never be able to live a normal life again. I battled on with my exercises every day and

in 2 years I was back to normal. There were blessings in all of this for George and his wife Ann became close friends and we visited each other often. George told me to try and do feather craft and play music and I struggled to do this and when I gave Ann a brooch she asked me to give a demonstration at the Church Guild. This I did and it snowballed when news got around and I had invitations all over Angus. Having the poultry I had loads of feathers at hand so I washed and dried and dyed the white ones. Friends gave me peacock and budgie feathers and I got the odd pheasant and pigeon ones, so I was able to do more than brooches. I was self taught and did flowers, wedding bouquets, earrings, necklaces and butterflies etc. George and Ann's friendship has lasted for over 40 years. He died 10 years ago but Ann and I still keep in touch. Dad died in 1979 at the age of 92 having good health until a massive stroke took him in 5 days. I am glad he was able to celebrate our Silver Wedding in the Ogilvy Arms Hotel in 1977.

1980 - 90

My father's funeral was on Christmas Eve 1979 and there was a meal after the burial in Kirrie Cemetery. Quite a lot of relatives came for the meal and all went well. They all shook our hands and made for home and we set off walking back home. We saw to the animals and were just in when the phone rang. My friends Ted and Elizabeth Stevens asked what plans we had for tomorrow and I said "Nothing really". She said "Come down and join us for Christmas Dinner we wanted you with us but thought some of your relatives might have asked you when at the meal". I was touched by their kindness. I had been so tied up with all the death matters that I had forgotten about Christmas and it failed to register till Elizabeth phoned me.

1980 began on a sombre note. There were quite a few deaths on both sides in the first three months. There was a big change in my life too. How I missed Dad's help and advice. I was on my own with the market garden side of things. Sandy still had his job but I had all the worry of the land here. A big gap was the death of George Smith who had done the ploughing of the potato ground, drilling and covering. I had to get someone else soon. I did get Walter Taylor to come to my aid. Sandy wasn't well either. He had a bad cough and was breathless. He was told to stop smoking but he just couldn't. I was worried sick and tried everything but it was hopeless. He tried for a job again in the factory as it would be easier than working on the land and he was better for a while.

On a lighter note I was happily working with the Concert Party and doing all the scripts and composing funny 'Pantomimes' that caused lots of laughter. Our concerts were well attended. I was enjoying competing in the WRI too and have won the cup two or three times. I also helped Sandy do his Dad's garden as he wasn't keeping well. I was still going out with three others in a group entertaining. I recited and played the violin along with my friends Polly and Linda and I did a dialogue. I also demonstrated feather craft and sold some of it. After my expenses were taken off I gave the rest to the Guide Dogs in Forfar.

Sandy's Dad died in 1985 after having a spell in hospital. Again this changed life for me. His Mum was a handful. She was scared to live alone but liked her little house, so Sandy spent a lot of his time at the Maryton. She wanted him to stay there but Sandy put his foot down on that. When she was ill however I had her staying with us. His other two brothers said they had no room. Nothing I did for her was appreciated, she said it was good for me to have her stay. I had to laugh when she told folk that. She was killed in a car accident in October 1987. This floored Sandy who had been ill for most of the year – having X-rays on his lungs. Cancer was found and he had a lung removed in February 1988. He was in hospital in Aberdeen and then had radium in Ninewells but he died in June 1988. I cared for him at home and for a week never got to bed and became thin and weak. The Doctor got a Marie Curie nurse to take nights to let me get some rest. Sandy wanted to be at home and I wanted to make this possible. We both knew he was dying and it was a comfort to know I was here to talk and hold his hand. He died 6 days later on 28th June 1988. It was a very sad time in my life and I had two very dear friends to help me through, Elizabeth Stevens and Vida Cooper. They were always there for me at the end of the phone. Around this period I had trouble with my ears and was very deaf for months and that is when I thought of having hearing aids but didn't want 'over the ears' ones on NHS. Money was the problem so I didn't get them right away – I tried several ones through magazines but didn't really feel much benefit. The year before he died Sandy and I had a holiday of 3 days in a Hotel in Strathpeffer with bus trips daily. It was the only time in our lives we had been in a hotel to stay and I reckon I will never do this again.

1990 - 2000

At this time life was also very exciting. I joined the weekly Tea Dance Group in Kirriemuir and it was at their Party Celebrations at Dykehead that I was “Discovered”. I was reciting one of my poems in the interval and on hearing it I was contacted by Jim Paull of Bluebell Publications. He asked me to write verses for him which I was pleased to do. My work appeared on Calendars, Cards, Framed verses and Tea Towels.



**Eila with her framed poems etc by
Bluebell Publications.**

I also wrote for Dennis Print, Printing House Square, Melrose Street, Scarborough, North Yorkshire, who sent Calendars overseas with my verses on each month. Jim Paull ‘semi’ retired in 1996 and Alistair White of Whiteholm Publications took over. This carried on for a few years and we became close friends. He helped me to get a book of my poems published before he retired and I sold 300 copies, giving some proceeds to St Andrews Church.



**Eila with the book ‘Special Occasions’ –
an anthology of Verse.**



**Eila with the Winners
Shield – Floral Art Kirrie.**



**Eila with Winning Floral
Art at Cortachy Show.**

I wrote a verse “My Saviour” for St Andrews Church Guild that had a special milestone and copies were available for donations to church. I was very ill in May 1997 and was in hospital for a month. I lost the lining of my bowels with the sickness. Bert and Vida, Reta and Robbie saw to my dog and greenhouse. Again sadness came into my life when Vida died in 1998 and Bert died in 2000 both in their 50s, far too young and left me in deep shock. I wrote a poem covering the changes over 100 years and it was put in the time capsule buried in 2000.

I was knocked down by a motorcycle in 1994. He hit me on the grass bank and he landed in the ditch. I had a very sore leg but nothing was broken. This was just a week before Morag’s wedding and I was helping to do the flowers for that (with her Mum) in the church. I managed but took a pill for pain and I couldn’t dance at the reception.

I turned 70 years in 1995 on February 20th and had a party in Westmuir Hall with friends and family members. I got a lot of help to make it a great success. Vida got the cake which was shaped like a basket of flowers as a gift surprise. And Bert and Neil were on the bar. Robbie Adam did the vote of thanks on behalf of the company. My oldest guest there was Gladys Phillips, a long time friend and near neighbour.

Eila at her 70th Party – with the cake from friend Vida.



2000 - 2010 - and onwards

There were a great many deaths amongst my friends and relatives. Seven in the first 3 months, it was unbelievable and a sad start to a new chapter.



I wrote a poem for the Queen’s Golden Jubilee held at Glamis Castle in August 2002. There were a lot of copies of it printed. I got a copy signed by Sophie (Duchess of Wessex) when I gave her a book of my poems that I had there for sale, printed earlier that year.

August 2002. Sophie, Countess of Wessex, signing Eila’s Poem for the Golden Jubilee.

I had a press photo at the signing at Westmuir Shop and a write up in the paper in July 2002.

I was 80 in 2005 and again had a party in the village hall with a buffet and music from Jim Smith with his tapes. Again it went well and good fun. This time I bought a birthday cake but got lots of goodies handed in for the buffet. This was also the year I learned the Computer. I had 5 lessons in our Hall here then I joined Airlie Silver Surfers and got lots of help there. I got a computer and printer at P.C. World. Jonathan Brown was with Fairley House then and came to Airlie most weeks and he took me to get them and fitted them up for me. I sent my first email in June 2005 to Canada. Airlie Silver Surfers had given me great pleasure and lots of tips and friendship. It opened up a new life for me. I do Birthday cards and put in my own verses to all my friends, also sympathy cards with my own message which is personal. I now print my poems and save them and getting better all the time. I have also visited the Queen's building in Dundee several times and had a good time and lovely food. I wrote a special retirement poem for Norman Alm, in a computer designed card and he was delighted. Through the Airlie Silver Surfers I also got an invitation to the Garden Party at Holyrood and saw the Queen. This is something I never dreamed I would ever do. What a great day that was!

I didn't do so much during 2008/09 as I was ill a lot of the time getting my body to accept the pills I was put on. I still worked in the garden but didn't travel far during this time. Another special day for me was a trip in September 2012 to the Dundee Flower Show with my cousin and family. It took me back in memory to going there with my father in the 1970s and my cousin John who was much younger then (like me), we are both in our 80s now.

A month later in October 2012 the Westmuir WRI celebrated their 90th Birthday in the Hall and I was guest of honour having served in the Westmuir Rural for 73 years and was in their concert party for 63 years when it ended. I am still active in the rural yet and planning to compete with entries to the Federation Show in March 2013.

A Moment in Time

Grasp the moment – Savour it,

Don't ever let it pass by;

We cannot turn back the clock

no matter how we try.

The past's behind, the future's veiled,

the present's ours alone;

Don't sigh (if only) with regret,

for all those hours now flown.

Let us use our time wisely,

this priceless gift from Heaven

Treasure the hours and never waste

the new day we are given.

Memories from the Past

As I think back
over the years
I remember



.. **Going with Mum to a Sunday School picnic** by train to Barnhill from Kirrie Station. I was quite young but I have vivid memories of playing in the sand and the bun bag of eats but the highlight for me was seeing the bright streamers and balloons flying past the train windows all the way there and back. It was magical.

.. **Going with Dad to the Royal Highland Agricultural Show** in Inverness (it moved from place to place before being stationed in Edinburgh) in the later 30s. We left very early from Kirrie Station, had the day in Inverness and came home late in the evening, full of all I had done and seen to tell Mum, who was looking after the livestock that day.

.. **Going with Mum and Dad to the Glasgow Empire Exhibition**, twice from Kirrie Station. A full day trip, where we saw quite a lot of things but couldn't cover it all. I had a wonderful time and the cone of ice cream crowned it all. We went back for a half day trip and saw it all lit up before coming home very late. What a happy period in my young life.

.. **Going with Mum to Dundee, again by train** for our summer day out every year and she took me on the 'Fifie', the steamer that held trips from Dundee to Fife and back again. I loved sailing on the river, a passion that has stayed with me ever since.

.. **The Muckley** – held on the last Friday in May every year when farm workers yearly 'term' or contract came to an end and a new one taken and agreed on by Farmer and Worker when a small sum of money sealed the bargain. This was a fun day for me. I walked to Kirriemuir with My Granny and Grandad, as Mum and Dad were too busy to go. There were stalls selling things in the town centre and I got sixpence to spend and there were loads to choose from, it was heavenly.

.. **King George Vth and Queen Mary's Jubilee – May 6th 1935.** Mum and Dad took me to see them when they came to Scotland for a walk about and "Oh – the thrill" to see a King and Queen in person and not a photo (for me).

.. **I first visited the Camera Obscura** in the Pavilion on Kirriemuir Hill when I was 11 years of age and it was the caretaker who gave me a free view. I have been several times with friends since but that first view was a red letter day for me.

.. **Train Journeys delighted me** and I have a lot of very happy memories of trips from Kirriemuir taken during the 30s and was sorry when it closed.

.. **Telling 'Fortunes' by cards at Fete's for church funds** was popular. I put a lot through in an afternoon. It was a lot of fun but mentally exhausting for me as I did every card from memory of their meanings.

.. **When I cut out and machined my first dress** and wore it to show Mum. I can still see her face full of joy that her daughter had inherited her dressmaking talent. I still make and alter clothes too and I also make hats. I made a dress for a wedding I was invited to and made a hat of the left over material. I have some fancy headgear but I like being different!!

.. **Factory Days 1939 – 1952.** The War Years going to the factory and being stopped at the top of Herdhill Brae by soldiers and asked where we were going and had to go single file through a blockade before 6.00am on a dark

morning. Another time I was on my own when I came upon a man – he never spoke but walked along with me till we came to the Cross Roads at the edge of town and then vanished in the dark. (I later heard he was a spy)!

We workers tried to go together but couldn't always calling "Yoo Hoo" and getting a reply and then catching up. We got used to the dark for no light was allowed.

The high windows at the factory had to have blinds that were pulled up by cords. That was what got round my neck and nearly hanged me when I was running down a passage and my head got caught in the cord as I turned to see who shouted to me and failed to see it.

Living two miles from Kirriemuir I had to carry 'piecies' for the two breaks and boiled water on the fire (in a pot) in the office at the front door. No canteen in these days.

.. **In the 1940s when Peter Pan was beside the Angus Mill** and when Kirrie Square was where the buses lined up for arriving and departing and was otherwise a free area – nothing to bar your way crossing to shops.

.. **The Cinema** and enjoyed many great shows there. I even recall going as a kid before 'The Talkies' though silent films were still good fun.

Low the Boot mender had a shop here. I went to school with his daughter. We were chums - she had a lovely head of curly hair.

The ice cream shop – how we all missed it when it was closed during the war and the rejoicing when it could open again, when PEACE came.

.. **1950s and The Queen's Coronation** and the display of fireworks on Kirrie Hill. It was really spectacular but the weather was so cold. I had on my fur coat, woolly hat and gloves and knee high (wool lined) boots – in June ! It was so wet for the bonfires and a job to get them lit.

.. **1949 – 1952. I remember sending Mail** to Sandy and if I posted it at 6.00am on the way to work, he got it that afternoon and the stamp only cost 3 halfpennies. (In those days the mail was quick and cheap).

.. **1927 plus. James Clark, the Jeweller from Kelso**, who was a friend of Grannie's and whose forebears had been neighbours of her parents in Westmuir. They had two houses on land at the top of Westbank in the 1800s. He gifted Kirrie Steeple Clock and put in the chimes around 1930. Mum and Granny were invited to the ceremony and when he came back with them to the Westmuir he gave me a half- crown and some star rock. He made Mum's wedding ring in 1920 from a gold sovereign that Dad gave him (as gold was scarce after 1914 – 18 war and rings were only 9 carat). However, Mum's ring was 18 carat and I still wear it to this day.

.. **1930s plus. I recall David Lawson** who had a farm on east side of Eastbank, at "Cloisterbank". He had cattle and grew fields of corn and rasps, cabbage plants and flowers. He sold milk and until we had goats we bought milk from him. I liked his daughter Annie. She was a good bit older than me and I got her toys when 'she grew tired of them'. They moved to Northmuir after fire destroyed the farm in the 1930s. His son was a farmer there after his Dad and his son was Richard who went into the Motor Trade.

In one of the cottages at the Westmuir was a man who had a horse and trap and he was always on the road yodelling as he went along (Yodellin' Pete) and he was quite good at it!

.. **1927 plus. On west side of Eastbank was Rossiebank** and I can faintly remember Mrs Greig. She would give me a sweetie or biscuit when both Mum and she were picking rasps on our neighbouring fields. There was only a fence between our properties so I saw her a lot in the berry picking season. I remember Mr and Mrs Dunbar better as they were neighbours for a long time and their daughters were around my age as I was growing up.

.. **Westbank: Electricity came to Westmuir approx. 1951.** It came on in the Village Hall in the middle of a Whist Drive. Oh the thrill when the light filled the Hall and the dim lamps were put out. It was quite some time later

before there were street lights but our house was wired up for power. Dad got a TV in 1952/53, one of only 4 in the village at that time.

.. **Westbank: They came to put in the sewer at the end of 1967.** The road up to us was completely torn up – not even a footpath. We had to go down the fields to get to the shops for food and this went on for months. They ran into snags that left the road without a strong bottom and when filling in the mud just disappeared taking their machinery with it. The Co-op van came weekly but it couldn't get to us now. Dad had a car but we didn't get out for three months. I composed a poem about the fun and games it caused and I think it was put in the local paper.

.. **1960 plus: There weren't any houses east side of Westbank on the brae.** It was rasp fields right to the top. Dad had the land then but after Mum died in 1960 and as Sandy wasn't interested in this kind of work, Dad sold the land (for very little) but knew it was too much for me to cope with and he was getting old himself.

Below this on the lower bit was land belonging to Jim Petrie who lived there with his wife and family in the house attached for a number of years. He played the fiddle and had a band that went out entertaining and I occasionally played piano and recited too in between.

.. **1920s plus - West side of Westbank.** There were no houses at the bottom – it was a field and part belonged first to Dad and Mr and Mrs Shaw but it was taken over for houses which is now known as Old School Road.

Top of this side of Westbank did have houses and the school is now a house. The school house belonged to James Hood and his wife, who was the teacher in the school before I was born. I never knew her but I do remember her husband and family, two boys and a girl. Dora was near age to Mum and I knew John but the other son worked away so I didn't see him. James lived for a number of years (after losing his wife and daughter) and he was 93 years old when he died in 1957. His son John lived there until he died in 1984 at the age of 87 years.

.. **Westbank continued 1930 – 40.** Others who lived there were a family of Stewart's and a Mr and Mrs Kilgour. He died after an accident but she lived on with daughter Lena. She also had a son from a previous marriage, Duncan Cameron but he was killed in action in the War. Duncan was in the territorials and was in action overseas when killed, still in his teens. The Davidsons came later and I went to school with Agnes who was my age group.

.. **Westbank 1960s plus.** Below Viewbank lived Martha Grant and daughter Nellie. After her mum died Nellie lived in the cottage until she died in 1960. When the place was up for sale it was bought by Sandy McBain, Ena and family. News travels fast and word got around "there would be trouble". This wasn't the case. The only trouble Dad had was when sheep broke into our garden and ate the hearts out of our cauliflowers that were getting ready for sale. They proved to be good neighbours and Ena and her daughters picked fruit for us. They had a shop in Forfar and bought some of our rasps to sell there. I once opened their shop and served there when they were indisposed. We stayed good friends and Sandy McBain and Dad had quite a few games of 'Draughts'. Tea and chat later with my Sandy and me. We still keep up by cards at Christmas but don't see either of them much now we are all growing old but when we do meet we enjoy a good chat and recall the past, having happy memories of our long friendship.

.. **Mum and Dad, (30s, 40s, 50s) and 60s and later by me.** Birthday, Hogmanay and New Year Celebrations and Party Games at Viewbank.

Dad usually got a pig killed for New Year so there were roasts that Mum baked in the fire range oven. There was also dumpling, trifle and jellies for the party and mincemeat pies by Mum's special recipe. Uncles, Aunts and cousins came and there were between 20 and 25 each year. Old and young all took part in the games and caused lots of laughter and fun. There was the Minister's Cat, I spy, Consequences, Forfeits, and 'Pussy and putting the tail on the donkey – blindfolded. The ring game was special and had everyone singing in time to passing the ring on a cord from hand to hand and the one in the middle had to guess who had the ring. If caught they took a turn in the middle.

.. **As far back as I can remember** - Dad always had motor transport. They didn't at first, they only had a horse and laurie but when I was a child they had a motor bike and sidecar and were able to travel further afield to visit relatives. I was a big school girl when he bought a 'swift' car, a two seater and a dickie, it never went fast, just around 10 miles

per hour and 5 miles on the hills but it was great sitting out at the back in summer. Colder in the winter (big scarves and coats to keep warm).

.. **1986 I won first prize for my Valentine Verse** on Radio Tay in 1986 and got a record sent to me and compliments. I also got a large bouquet for an earlier poem on Radio Tay as well – (no date recalled).

.. **1980 onwards.** For a number of years I did 2 Church Windows for special occasions – Christmas, Mothers Day, Anniversaries etc. A special window for the 100 years from the old to the new.



**Year 2000: Eila's
Millenium Window
Display at St Andrews
Church, Kirriemuir.**

.. **1990s Entered a World Competition** run by Harry Edwards of the Spiritual Healing Sanctuary for a poem and won 4th prize of a 'leather book mark'. **The extra mile** (Poem based on healing and not more than 86 words).

The Extra Mile

When love and compassion go hand in hand
With an ear to listen and understand
An eye to see, hidden behind lines
The cry from a lonely heart that pines
The holding of hands in a silent prayer
Giving comfort and hope by showing you care
It costs nothing to travel that extra mile
But great the reward just to see that smile
The pleasure this brings to the human race
Will be making this world a happier place.