***Agnes Helen McGregor Smith, known by all as Nessie**, was born 18th June 1907 in her grandparent's house, which is next door to Agnesville where she lived all her life until old age and ill health necessitated a remove to a nursing home nearer her relatives in Troon. She died 12th December 1994 and is buried in Kilconquhar. She never married. She was a piano teacher and organist for St Michael's Church and Woods Memorial Church the former for over 40 years. During the Second World War she was an Air Warden and helped in the Polish canteen and the local dramatic society entertaining the troops as a soloist. She was active in collecting for the RNLI and Red Cross. She also helped her mother raise funds for the Earlsferry Thistle GC by making and selling sandwiches. Her other interests were helping the local guides and brownies and she was a long-time member of the WRI. She was asked to give a talk to the Elie and Earlsferry Improvement Association in 1981. We don't have her finished version but the following reminiscences are compiled from her rough drafts. Some of her facts have nowadays been disproved but they are what she believed at the time.*

Carol Birrell (Nov 23)

ELIE AND EARLSFERRY.

Earlsferry and Elie W. R. I. is one of the larger Institutes of East Fife, having a membership of over 100. The branch was formed in October, 1919. *Sitting*—Mrs D. C. M. Thomson, secretary; Mrs Short, president; Miss J. Simpson, treasurer; Miss Affleck, assistant secretary. *Standing*—Mrs Prescott, Mrs Scott, vice-president; Miss Smith, Mrs Wright, Mrs Bromley.

Nessie Smith Reminiscences

A talk to the Elie and Earlsferry Improvements Association in1981.

I have chosen for the title of this talk Earlsferry and Elie Past and Present. I hope this evening in the time available, to take you back many, many years – first to the old villages – their industries housing etc. and their past history - the various changes which have taken place – then touching on present day. I am commencing my talk with some of the history of Earlsferry, which is described as the ancient and honoured Royal Burgh. My

reason being that I was born in Links Road Earlsferry, just next door to where I now live which was the home of my grandparents. We, I think must be one of the oldest Earlsferry families, our family tree going back many generations. Earlsferry is divided from Elie by the road at the links leading to Kilconquhar the part of the lane next to the sea called German's Wynd. Earlsferry's early name was *Pasagium Comites* – the passage of the Earl and was until the year 1891 entirely in the Parish of Kilconquhar. But by decree of the Commissioners appointed under the Boundaries Commission Act it was at that time with certain adjoining lands separated from Kilconquhar and added to the Parish of Elie. A detached part of Elie was at the same time included within the Parish of Kilconquhar.

MacDuff.

Earlsferry is said to date back to the 10th Century and has had a romantic history. Largely deriving its name and fame from its connection with McDuff, Earl of Fife who held large lands in Fife and who on escaping from Macbeth hid in MacDuff's Cave and from there he was safely ferried over to Dunbar. Legend has it that in the old cave there was a subterranean passage leading to Kilconquhar House. Traditionally it is said that after Macbeth's death MacDuff got Earlsferry as it had become by then, constituted as a Burgh by Malcolm Canmore and many privileges were granted to it. One strange privilege being, that in memory of MacDuff's escape in future no matter what crime a man might have committed if he set sail from Earlsferry no boat should pursue until he had reached half way across the Forth. One wonders if that might be the origin of the phrase 'half seas over'.

Old stone coffins have been found in the Ferry supposedly from Danish landings and fights. Many residents have Danish blood in their veins. Refugees after the '45 found shelter in the ferry and seamen from the whalers also intermarried.

Weaving

In Earlsferry in olden times the principal industry was weaving. The houses were very old, lots of them with outside stone stairs. The last remaining one is the Stair House. There were no villas or large mansions such as the present day ones, these all came much later. The title deeds of Nelson Cottage, which belonged to my grandfather and is now owned by my nephew, go back to the 17th Century. These revealed that eight weavers had resided there and each had one room only. When many of these houses were modernised traces of looms and bits and pieces of this craft were found. There was no lighting in the village in these days. Houses were lit by candles; there was no water or sanitation. Water had to be carried from the wells and some of these remain still as mementos. One is on the 4th fairway on the links, one at the 5th fairway and there was one on the way the Chapel Green near the pillar Box at Carrick House. There was no transport either in these early days as the Fife townlets were among the last bits of Scotland to have a railway. The first railway only reached as far as Crail in 1883. The weavers walked to Cupar carrying their bales of cloth to sell and collected the materials for their work at Upper Largo on their way back. 15 miles in all.

The water supply was not installed into either of the villages until 1882, when it was brought from Kellie Law and the expense was shared by Elie, Earlsferry and St Monans at a cost of £11,000. I have a rough sketch of part of Earlsferry High Street which shows the Town Hall and some of the old houses. The house faintly showing the stone stairs belonged to my great great-grandmother and is now Mrs Obarskas' Shop.

The Cross
Like all other old Burghs Earlsferry has a cross, about which the privileges and the inscriptions it bore only the most vague traditions have come down. It disappeared centuries ago but is supposed to have stood near the site of the **Town Hall** as the lane leading from the gable of the Hall to the sea was always known as Cross Wynd. The steeple of the Town Hall is very old and very quaint. A drawing shows the old hall before the present hall was erected in 1872 when the steeple was repaired. The under part was a jail and the upper part council chambers. The Steeple contained two bells the mickle and the muckle. The muckle is still there but the other which had the date of 1091 was sold for old metal. The old custom of ringing the curfew bell at 8pm every evening existed in the Ferry until the war. This proves the age of the Burgh as this custom was instituted by William the Conqueror in 1060. It was rung as a warning that all householders had to put their fires and candles out. The bell was also rung at 10am on a Sunday Morning bidding the villagers to prepare for Kilconquhar Church. A caption to that was that when the bell ringer finished his task he called at every house and demanded 'A penny as reek money'. Over the doorway of there is a finely carved Hall stone to represent the Burgh Seal with a legend telling of its ancient burghal glories.

There is an old story that the Town were asked to send two representatives to Parliament but was said have lost the right because one was too poor to travel and the other too fat. And this rhyme was applied to the old management of the Burgh

‘ilk grocer in the burgh
was a Baille, or had been
but the provost was perpetual
and drove the hail machine’

Chapel Green.
It is very regrettable that the early records of the Burgh were all burnt and the connection with the ferry cannot be traced. Historians have attempted to cast doubts on the venerable tradition which associate with the Fife coast. But Shakespeare’s magic pen, the legends of the Ferry, the name given to it and its creation as a Royal Burgh will serve to hold the legends true. In 1177 a charter was granted to the nuns of North Berwick to provide hospitality to travellers and shipwrecked sailors at Earlsferry and Ardross. Chapel Green, or Chapel Point, is part of the Commonty Park on which stands the rebuilt ruins of MacDuff’s chapel. The Park is the property of the Burgh and to maintain their right to it several long and serious law pleas had to be faced. At the west end of the Park is Dome Park, but I think Doom Park is more appropriate. Doom Park – a piece of ground never touched by plough or spade. A dismal breadth of thorn and weeds – a portion of land set aside for the evil one. I expect you will have noticed it is very low lying and is enclosed by a blue stone wall. This was a gallery where people watched the hangings of murderers and malefactors and thereafter they were buried there. When the park was feued to the Balcarres family (Earl of Balcarres) the ground was trenched and immense quantities of human bones were found. All of large size showing that the dead had been adults. At this time the land is referred to in old almanacs as Earlsferry Abbey. The land was bought some time ago by Lady Harvie-Watt and has now been handed over to the National Trust for Scotland.

Lunder Law is a small knoll to the west of Doom Park and near it are the remains of a bathing house used by the Balcarres family. To the west of the law a ledge of rocks called

the Crooked Skelly stretch far out into the Voos. This place goes under the name of Coalbackie and is the spot where there is a bit of old history. The sea here has made vast inroads on the beach. Over 200 years ago the remains of a village, or Toft as they were called in the early days, was discovered and after a very high tide a great many number of stone coffins side by side were laid bare. No records of the people who lived there are known but it is assumed they were Pictish because a Picts house was found when a local builder was digging out for the foundations of Earlsneuk and Craigforth, two large houses built on the Commonty. Picts were not unknown on the coast as there is another one opened up at Ardross. These remains were found below the tenth hole on the golf course which was always known as the Coalbackie Hole. There is a small illustration of this in one of the old drawings by Mr T Currie Architect which shows this hole and the Crooked Skellies above it.

Earlsneuk was originally owned by Mrs Duff and her two daughters, Mrs Douglas and Mary Duff. The latter was a breeder of Pekingese dogs. Craigforth was the property of Mrs Outhwaite. She was a keen V.A.D. during the First World War and ran Craigforth as a hospital. For many years the little Episcopal Church stood at the end of the field near the main road and opposite the 5th Tee by the kind permission of Mrs Outhwaite, who was a devout churchwoman. The building was removed to its present location in Rotten Row when she sold Craigforth.

Links Road in the old days was very different from what it is now as you can see in a small old painting. None of the villas were built; there were only a few very small old houses. The houses on the High Street owned the ground up to near the links. Many of these owners kept a pig and the household ashes had to be dumped in the gardens called middens and vegetable were grown. In the old houses hooks were hung on the beams where the hams were hung. There was no Allan Place but a farm whose lands extended half way along Links Road. It was owned by the Allan family and it was they who built the houses in Allan Place. There was no golf course. Grange Farm used the land for grazing and sometimes it was ploughed as far as the ridge on the 4th fairway. Grange Farm and Grangehill Farm were largely dairy farms supplying the villages with milk. There was no main road. It was a farm track more or less. Lots of little wynds branched off and led to little cottages dotted here and there in the gardens. The most famous being Cat Row, always known as Up Cat Row.

The **Hearse House** stood on the corner where the new part of Mr Arneil's house is now built. The old horse drawn Hearse was very ornate with its gold plumes, tassels and handles. The horse was stabled in Links Road. All coffins were handmade in the old days by the undertakers in their workshops, not mass produced as now. A little old cottage stood next door to the building in which an old Ferry family lived. From these buildings were mostly gardens belonging to the Street houses.

Golf Professionals

In later years the shop and factory of Mr A H Scott was built facing the 4th fairway. Mr Scott served his apprenticeship with Mr George Forrester, a noted Club Maker. In 1896 he invented and patented what became the famous unbreakable neck clubs and his invincible cleek was then a new idea in iron clubs. In the course of years he developed an overseas business and had a large export trade to South Africa, America and the colonies. When the steel-shafted clubs became the rage he took that in his stride. By means of his skill he supplied clubs to King Edward the VII, then Prince of Wales, and was allowed to use the

Prince of Wales feathers on his signboard. To this was added the royal Coat of Arms and he had the honour of having this continued when King George the V came to the throne. He was also a very good teacher and during the Duchess of Connaught's five visits to Elie between 1905 and 1910 he was chosen as her professional and he also taught the late Miss Alexis Glover who was Scotland's first woman champion.

Where Georgeville now stands was Mr George Forrester's workshop and club factory. He was the oldest club maker and many of the local lads were taught the skills of the trade by him.

Going up Ferry road we come to part of the village now called **Grange Road.** Again none of the present houses were in existence this being the part where the old coal seams were worked and according to old records very successfully. Near the 17th Tee at the foot of the field where the present houses are now built was thought to be a little dangerous for house building in case of subsidence but one builder bought the ground and took the risk and the 4 houses he built are obviously surviving. On the 15th fairway of the golf course over the ridge there is a piece of ground which shows signs of subsidence particularly after rain, this is caused by the coal seams. The hill going over to the putting green was always known as Coal Hill.

On the horizon going up the hill over to Shell Bay there is an old ruin of the mansion house of the **Grange**. Originally owned by the nuns of North Berwick they sold it in 1650 to the Vicar of Largo. In 1708 the mansion estate was purchased by Sir James Malcolm, who was known as the Black Laird of Earlsferry, and for many years it remained in his family. When the Jacobites rose in 1715 the first active steps were taken in East Fife and in this mansion a good deal of the uprising was planned. The building is now ruined and roofless after a fire. Going further down the slope on the other side towards Shell Bay there was a well which supplied the house with water. The pump was driven by a windmill. Further on down a road leads up to Kincraig Mansion and Farm which was the home of a family called Gourlay. They came over with William the Conqueror from Haddingtonshire before settling in Fife. A henchman accompanied them called Cornfute. Pronounced in the Ferry as Confute, a name which is still known in the town and two houses in the High Street have the name Confute in the title. A field between the Ferry and Kincraig was always called Confute's field.

Kincraig Braes. This famous walk may be taken by way of the beach to the foot of Kincraig Braes or by ascending the path by the Croupie rock where crystals named Croupes were found at the top of the cliffs passing Buckhound and Fosters Hole. There was a road which is not now passable or safe owing to falling rocks, called Colliers Road it's difficult to follow whence you could climb down to the Beach. The field from the cliffs is beautiful on a sunny day. The links were always famous for its lovely show of cowslips, being a carpet of yellow flowers amongst the green grass. Some golfers would perhaps not agree, particularly when hunting for balls in the floral wilderness. Children loved them anyway and many posies were brought home for Mummy or Grandma.

MacDuffs Cave Is a short walk but can only be taken when the tide is low. It affords a pleasant scramble along the foot of the cliffs. There is some fine rock scenery and before turning if you look upwards towards the point you may notice the gable end of a cottage called 'the three steps on the cliff side' and a little seaward a sharply defined bit of rock resembling a figure sketching. This is called Charley's chair. Beyond this rock are the

seven steps, very difficult to pass on the shore. From there you come to a little harbour like entrance to the cave. This is a little disappointing. The roof has fallen in a good deal and in what was a large cavern debris has filled the original floor so it does not give much idea of what it was like in the days of the great Thane. Further west is the Hall cave and the Doos, or Deil's, cave. These were supposed to be smuggler's haunts. There is a way along the bottom known as the Flairs, long stretches of sandy beach but that is only safe when the tide is out. The cliff at their highest point rise nearly 200 feet above the sea. When the path turns north it passes to the little curving beach of Shell Bay so called for its abundance of John O Groats and other small and pretty shells.

The Beach
In olden times the beach was said to have been a good way further to sea than now because at one time the grass extended all the way from Earlsferry to Elie between the houses and the sea. The rocks in the middle of the bay are called the Cockstail or Cuckstool Rocks and were at one time a small harbour. It supposedly got its name for being the place for ducking scolds. It was used by small vessels when the Ferry coal seams were worked and fishermen also used it. **Cadgers Road** started from here. This was a right of was given to the fishermen of Earlsferry for their use in carrying fish to Falkland Palace. It fell into disuse and like a good many other rights of way it slipped away. It can still be traced from Cadgers Wynd, Allan Place and the gate is still there beside Davaar going over the Grange then passing Upper Largo and Kennoway. Mrs Scotland and I walked over to try to find the old way and eventually after going over ploughed field paths we found it very much overgrown and fenced in.

This is where I came to the changing patterns of life in the village. The old houses became renovated by families of the old folk and professional business people, mostly from Edinburgh, started building houses as there was a demand for building sites near the sea. Several elegant mansions were erected chiefly first at the west end of Earlsferry. **Earlsferry House** was built by an Admiral Duddingston who owned Sandford. It was then rebuilt by T C Glover who came home from business in India. They were a very elegant family driving around the village in their carriage with a coachman. They also had quite a number of mature servants. One of whom with his family became very well known in the village. His name was Kalie Banna. He married a much younger white woman and they lived in one of the little cottages on the old road to Chapel Green. They had four lovely children, two girls and twin boys called Oliver and Raymond. The children all went to Elie School. Kalie died but Mrs Banna stayed in the village for a number of years. Mr Glover became Provost of the Royal Burgh and this entitled him to a seat of the County Council. All the new houses gave quite an air of grandeur to the old Ferry.

On **Links Road** the new villas were built, as were the row of houses in Allan Place and at Chapel Green. All along Earlsferry High Street alterations were being done and visitors were steadily arriving. The large houses on Grange Road were built and occupied for most of the summer. Business began to boom for the shops and we had 18 in all. Fish shop, Baker, Tailor, 2 greengrocers, 3 grocers. You name them, we had them. We also had families who came as residents one of whom was Mrs Morris, whose family were the Orr-Patersons. The grandfather owned St Helens West and all his families came to live here in the holidays. He later bought The Blue House in Elie.

One query I should reply to is about the **Old Bake House**. This belonged to Morris the Baker who had a big shop in Elie and branch shop in Earlsferry next to Mrs Obarska's

shop. His brother Andrew and sisters Cecilia and Maggie lived in Earlscross for many years. Andrew was in the bakery side of the business. Mrs Rose's house was built on the site which was bought by a family in London. Waldorf, Mrs Cowan's house, was built on the site of Issac Mackie's home. Old Mr Mackie had been the provost of Earlsferry. One very much liked person who came to the village was Mrs Swankie from Arbroath. She came by train every week to sell the famous Arbroath smokies and kippers.

Golf of course has always been associated with Earlsferry and many of the local ferry lads rose to fame in the sport. James Braid was born and brought up and served his time as a joiner in Earlsferry. His parents resided in a very small old cottage in the High Street and were very old friends of my family. His mother was a great character and known as Mary Arrish to the old folks. Her name was really Harris. Apart from his prowess at golf he was a famous designer of golf courses. The Kings Course at Gleneagles being one of his masterpieces. Dugald Rolland, who was a professional at Malvern, was said to be the longest hitter of the ball in the game. In later years my brother became a famous amateur golfer. He won the Eden tournament three times. Six times he played for Scotland against England, six times against Ireland and four times against Wales. He captained the Scottish team on one occasion. As I have mentioned earlier, the charters of the Burgh were destroyed by fire and as were those of the Grange Estate. A new charter was obtained by the Burgh in 1589 confirming the old privileges. However a long litigation took place between the Laird of Grange and the burgh which was settled in 1882. Then there was trouble with a tenant and life was very difficult for the Provost and Magistrates at that time.

Elie or The Ailie as it was known in the old days was a Barony and at various times owned by the Dishingtons, Anstruthers and Bairds. Elie was divided from Earlsferry by the road at the links leading to Kilconquhar and the part of the land next to the sea – this being called German's Wynd. This lane gets its name from an old house near Rotten Row built by a German – apparently for defence – It had a deep covered well in what had been the kitchen. In the lower storey clay was used as mortar. The upper storey erected later, was of lime. A well at the corner was called German's Well. This house was later rebuilt and is now known as Airlie. Liberty Place, Williamsburgh and Rotten Row these three formed the Police Burgh, part being Parish of Elie and part Kilconquhar in later days along with Earlsferry transferred to Elie Parish. It may be of interest to mention that the census returned to Elie Parish on 15th May 1891 showed a population of 1172 made up of the Police Burgh old Elie, Liberty and Williamsburgh 723. Burgh of Earlsferry 304. Landward 145. The population of Elie in 1881 was 670.

Where **Williamsburgh** now stands was a links of sand and rough grass. To the north of Rotten Row, which was the only road between Earlsferry and Elie. The old gas works was on this old road leading to **Liberty** and the two gasometers and the Gas Manager's house were facing the golf-course at the back of Liberty Garage. St Ford House was owned by Misses Erringtons' Grandmother and Major and Mrs Errington, their parents resided there for many years.

The library was the **Earlsferry School** and the Headmaster Mr Davidson resided next door in the Old School House. Palmyra was not built then nor Greystones. Ruddon Grange was a stables and the little farm was owned by the Dunsire family as was Salisbury Cottage and a little Dairy was wedged in near White House. Towards Elie was the Old Marine Hotel which was erected by a Limited Company in the English Cottage

Style. The original building was burnt and a new larger hotel was rebuilt. Wedged besides the new building was a little old cottage which was called The Pincushion. The Post Office and Telegraph [Office] were situated where they are now and were under the efficient charge of a Mr Birrell.

Turning down the lane to the beach is **South Street,** which was at one time the most important street in the town being the original and only in Elie. On both sides their formerly stood old mansions the town houses of families who made Elie a place of no small importance. The remains of some of the old carved stonework which adorned the mansion of the Gillespies situated on the north of the street is still seen forming the doorway of the modern Gillespie House. This building was known as the Muckle Yett or the Turret, these names being derived from its architectural features. The projecting tower or staircase extended half way across the street. There is a sketch drawn by the late Thomas Currie who took down the house in order to widen the street. There is also a sketch of the **Castle** which was at the end of the street, a fine old domestic architecture. This building must be about 800 years old. No record seems to exist of its early history though at one time it was in the heritage of the Gourlay's of Kincraig. It was purchased as a jointure house for the widow of Dr John Scott of Ardross in 1765 from her relatives the Gourlays. Her last remaining daughter died in 1859 bequeathing it to her nephew Mr William Scott Moncrieff, grandfather of the old representatives whose property it is and is still occupied by members of the family Miss Edith and Miss Ann Scott Moncrieff.

The Terrace contains the Free Church Manse, gifted to the congregation by the late Reid Walter Wood after whom the Wood Memorial Church was named. **Wynd House** was the home of the Woods, another neat old Scots dwelling modernised.

Rankeillor Street was so named from a family of the first feurs who lived there. The house with the projecting staircase on the opposite side of the road was the Old Paisley's Inn – the Elie hostelry. Archbald House was at one time named Wade House being called after General Wade who occupied if during his survey.

On the other side of **Stenton Row** is Elie Lodge which was built on the site of an old manor house anciently called Croft-en-nigh or High Croft. The Arturs, a Jacobite family were at one time the owners of this house and in 1679 there was some connection between them and the Archbishop Sharp of St Andrews. In May of that year Archbishop Sharp's daughter Mary, afterwards Lady Salton was staying with the Arthurs when news reached her of her father's murder at Magnus Muir. In her grief and anxiety she set out expecting to get a conveyance at Colinsburgh for St Andrews. She cast off her high heeled shoes at the White Yett the old entrance to Elie House and performed the rest of the journey in her stocking soles.

At the **Toft** an old building stood which was at one time used as a jail for the burgh of barony. This was before the cottages were built but in taking down this old edifice vestiges of a wheel stair were found. The mill of Elie was then the harbour masters house and was very much modernised. Past its gable runs the burn from Kilconquhar Loch known as the Loch Run which turned the wheel before discharging into the sea. First noted in 1584 it was used as a lint mill within living memory. The fishing industry at the Toft was very limited with fishermen only numbering about 12 men in all. The mode of fishing which they followed did not require venturing out very much to sea and they supplied the local community.

The **harbour** was the property of Mr Baird of Elie and many vessels of considerable size came in at Ruby Bay formerly known as Wades Haven and which supposedly had the deepest water of any harbour. At one stage a swarf dyke and a large field were all washed away as was the causeway. A Royal Warrant was granted to the port in 1601. It was then owned by Sir William Scott of Ardross but its revenues scarcely paid for its upkeep. When the harbour came into the hands of Mr Baird he set about its restoration and a new landing stage was erected for the Galloway Saloon Steamers which in the summer ran to and fro from Leith to Elie. The steamers also gave frequent sailings to North Berwick, Bass Rock and Isle of May. The **granary** on the pier was used as a grain store to be ready for shipment when the railways were unknown and potatoes were also stored there for the same purpose. Every year the boys from the Mars Training Ship near Dundee came for the summer to the granary. They had a marvellous band which was often heard throughout the village and they also played at church fetes. Boys from Quarriers Homes, Bridge of Weir also came to the granary with their band and very often played on the Toll Green where they held services on Sunday evenings.

Ruby Bay has long been famed for its rubies. There are not so many to be found now but were mostly found in the sand and gravel near **Lady's Tower**. In older days an old relative of ours known as Ruby Nell, almost claimed Ruby Bay as her territory. She sold the rubies she found as a living. She was a rather frightening character but I do not remember her very vividly. I have a ring made from Elie rubies and I also had a brooch which unfortunately I lost. The Lady's Tower is now a picturesque ruin. It was erected by Lady Anstruther to be used as a bathing house. A bathing pool was excavated in the adjoining rocks, fitted with a sluice to retain sea water at all times and a nook in the rock was arched over to serve as a dressing room. According to tradition when intending to bathe she instructed a bellman to go round the village warning that no one was to approach the place.

Elie House was built by Lord William Anstruther who acquired the estate in 1697. The Anstruthers were Laird of Elie for many years. There is one curious story told about Lady Janet Anstruther who was the wife of Sir John Anstruther and always spoken off as Jenny Faa. In the vicinity of Elie House there was a little village called Balcevie. The residents were reported to have been very religious and gathered outside their houses morning and evening for worship. Jenny Faa had a strong aversion to this and persuaded her husband to evict the villagers. One of the old inhabitants 'a wise woman' put a curse on the Anstruthers which apparently had effect. The estates of Elie were acquired by Mr Baird in 1852 who redeemed the house and policies from decay. He also made improvements to the school. He was succeeded by his eldest son James Baird. In passing I have come across a record of a similar little hamlet called Catch A Penny. Coming down from Balbuthie Loan, an old road joined the road to Ardross and this little hamlet was there.

Coming back to the **High Street** a very old village street in the early days and like Earlsferry there were very few large houses. The Victoria Hotel was the only Hotel in Elie and on the opposite corner was Mr Doris Shoe-Shop. The piece of ground at the Toll Green was in the olden days un-turfed and treeless. The resting place of rubbish and ash heaps and ornamented by an occasional titled cart. When the larger houses were built the ground was enclosed and planted round and today we now have a nice little village green.

Chapman's Place was named after people of that name and the houses there built by Mr

Currie. The garage at the top was built by Mr Greig who carried on a successful business there for many years. It was he who introduced the first bicycles to the village and the first motor car. He also started up the first buses, transporting visitors to and from the steamers and trains. His first bus was red with Macduff written across the back and driven by his eldest son. He also had a garage in Earlsferry.

The stables in **Kirkpark Road** were owned by Mr Ralph Haig a well-known local character. **Woodside Road** and **Crescent** was a field which the local butcher used for grazing his sheep and cattle before slaughter. His slaughterhouse being next door to his shop. There were a few farms in the High Street and two old residents I visited, told me about the cows wandering along the street. If you look at old shop advertisements you could even hire a piano in those days.

The **Library** in those days was in Elie near the Royal Bank and the librarian was a Miss Doyle. Further past the Royal Bank was the site of the old **Free Church**. The first church was described as one of the neatest little houses of prayer in Fife but progress and renovation were the order of the day so the pretty church had to hide its lovely head behind the grand new building erected to the memory of the late Rev Walter Wood the first Free Church minister of Elie. He of course was the author of *The East Neuk of Fife*. These churches were built on the ground of the Golf Hotel car park now is. They were demolished when the Union of the Churches took place in Elie. On the high ground adjoining the churches a very fine mansion was erected by Professor Greenfield from designs by Mr Currie. This is of course the present **Golf Hotel**. A little further west the new villas were built by Mr T C Glover. There was in this area a Brewery and a Soap Works, I think where George Bruce now has his garage. Please correct me if I'm wrong as this was told to me by a very old resident that **Fountain Road** was called Soap Lane.

The old characters of Elie have long since died out. George and Sophie Jamson who had a wee shop beside Mr Fraser's where the schoolchildren spent their pennies. Old Sarah who had the newsagents' shop and who was the greatest tellers of stories in the village. Mr Andrew Mackie and Miss Brice whose is still with us but whose wee shop we all sadly missed. When Miss Bruce was there we seldom had to go to Leven for ironmongery and all the household goods which she stocked.

I am closing this with a little tribute paid to our village.

> *If the day has been stormy, there are white horses of foam on the ribbed sea.*
> *If the day has been fine, we watch the sun as he sinks. Tipping the distant hills with a golden light giving the cloudlets a ruddy glory and surrounding us with a lustrous atmosphere.*
> *It is hard to leave such a scene but go at last you must and if you are not destitute of gratitude, before you sleep you will thank the Providence that brought you to this beautiful little town in Fife.*