

Group Family Holidays in Scotland

Sheila Cochrane was born in 1923 and interviewed in 1992

My father always believed in holidays, and he believed very wisely that a holiday should be three weeks so that there was a week in the middle that you were neither coming nor going. So we actually had a month's holiday every year, and when we were very small they used to take rooms and we always went to the Clyde because my parents.... Dad was Ayrshire, but had lived in Glasgow, Mother was Glaswegian.... and they had always gone down the Clyde for their holidays. I think my parents, my mother's family.... had taken a house maybe for a couple of months and her father had travelled up to Glasgow from Inellan. My father went to Rothesay so we really followed suit. We went to the Clyde even if we'd toured round part of Scotland before, we always landed at the Clyde. And one time at Inellan which is a very tiny place just along the coast from Dunoon, it rained all the time and we played snakes and ladders till my father was demented, so we moved to the metropolis of Rothesay the next few years. But when I was eight we started to go cruising, because at that time a lot of liners were laid up and they put on cruises that were really fairly inexpensive, and when I was 8 we had a trial one that was to Oslo and Christiansen, and it was just I think about a week. And we found we all liked it; Dad could relax, Mother could lie back in the deck chairs and talk to people, I liked mixing and playing deck games and my brother could look at the sea and the engines. So we did cruise each year, always landing back on the Clyde for the end of the holiday. And we had really smashing holidays, so although my parents hadn't any time for us to do any expeditions from Kendal, we had smashing holidays; and also had a week in the Spring. And, yes, I went away with my parents as well right until they died and we returned to the Clyde with it and each year after my father died my mother and I went to the Clyde in May and September still - so we kept that up. And she was able to sail on the Clyde steamers until she was 80, till her last holiday there. So I certainly have childhood memories. I didn't feel I was deprived by not having my father there to go out with because you knew that really the family mattered terrifically to him. It wasn't a question you would be deprived and not of use or anything.

I can remember our Christmas tree - we had a big tree in the drawing room upstairs and my uncle and my grandma used to come down in the afternoon. I don't think they came for Christmas dinner and we didn't open the presents till afterwards when they came in the afternoon. I can remember particularly getting this lovely pot baby doll - there it was in one parcel, another parcel with the clothes. Oh, and one thing I remember about Christmas is real magic; Sister Neale and Sister Hendrick who had Kentdale Nursing Home used to go to the Bon Marche in Liverpool and they used to order some of these fantastic cracker things, one for the Cochrances, one for the Craigs (the doctor's children), one for their own nephews (the Goldstraws), and we used to wait for the bell to ring on Christmas Eve and then this huge box would come. And one year it was Cinderella's coach with a lovely doll in it and footmen behind and a light and beautiful crackers round; one year it was a hunting scene with celluloid horses and riders and tree lights round. And then when we were more grown up there were absolutely beautiful crackers.

As doctors it was three surgeries every day and two on Sundays and then my father got Sundays to be by appointment only. When I came into the practice it was still three surgeries on Saturday but we found that people were going to the cinema and then came to the doctor or the other way round. We started appointments in Kendal as a trial and we started because,

when you went at 2.00 for the two o'clock surgery there were about 36 people in the waiting room if three were going to be on duty; or 24 if two were going to be on duty, because we had 12 chairs round each table and they were always full. You knew No.1 had come at about one o'clock and you knew that you wouldn't see No. 12 for an hour anyhow. Or even longer. So we thought we would try appointments and we had a great system. There were three of us, our side. Each doctor who retired was replaced and when Dr Holmes was retiring, instead of replacing two doctors, Dr Birkett and Dr Gill moved over to our practice from the other side of Maude Street that was five and we enlarged the surgery. So we each had a consulting room and we gave great thought about how patients would know when the buzzer went, who was wanting them, and how would they know their order; so, we had, for instance, a doctor who was red numbers. It was a red light that flashed (the patients had been given a red numbered disc for their order) and they sat on a red seated chair and the doctor's name was in red plastic. And we had blue and we had green numbers, we didn't have yellow and white chairs just the numbers and the flashes. And people said at first, "We knew we were just numbers", which was a bit unkind because it was really being done to for their ease, so that's why they were given this number. And then we kept losing these plastic numbers, so it was back to a question of "Who was next, who was here, and who was that?" But we arranged it so they were sitting in their little groups. But in my father's day if he was called out and was he was on duty if it was urgent he had to go. Father also did work at the hospital and that was for nothing - that was an honorary thing. Dr Craig and Dr Edgecombe also did that as honorary physicians and surgeons; and so you were on call for surgery there I suppose they would maybe have a rota for out of town people, but he loved his work there and he didn't receive a penny for that. And he didn't like it after the National Health Service came in at all. Then we got a new lady doctor and we thought when she came "She's not engaged or anything. If she marries it will be to somebody local" ... so she married a Canadian and off she went. Now there are six partners and a trainee doctor very often.

Interview No R028

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