**Website section:**

**VOICES FROM THE VILLAGES**

**Oral testimonies**

Here we will post some extracts from the project oral history interviews for you to listen to or read.

**Samuel Purdie**

The following are audio extracts from a recent oral history interview with ex-Glenbuck resident **Samuel Purdie**, who was speaking to Scottish Oral History Director Arthur McIvor. Sam generously shared his rich and vivid memories of his early years living in **Glenbuck** before its demolition. Sam was born in 1936 and spoke at length about what it was like to live in the miners’ rows in Glenbuck in the 1940s and early 1950s. He brilliantly reconstructs schooldays in the village, recreation, local characters (such as the Coop store manager), living conditions, growing up in wartime, football (the village is famous for being the birthplace of the famous Liverpool manager Bill Shankly) and the social and cultural history of the community during the twenty year demise of the village after the local pit (Grasshill) closed in 1932. When asked, *How did you feel moving out from Glenbuck?* Sam said: ‘I don’t think I’ve ever quite got over it to be honest. We were torn out by the roots. Those were formative years … it was all we ever knew … It was a complete community’.

*Transcriptions done by Veronica Whymant.*

**Sam Purdie interview extract 1 (3.44 min)**

*Here Sam provides his memories of Glenbuck, the miner’s rows and overcrowding, and reflects on the Shankly family and on football in Glenbuck.*

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**Sam Purdie interview clip 1 transcription**

Glenbuck *itself* was, being so small, it was a complete community. *Everybody* knew everybody else! First of all, Glenbuck was primitive – there was no electricity, there was no gas, so all cooking was done on the fire and this huge grate formed the mains hub of the living room because miners lived in rows, comprising two apartments and sometimes ten of a family in these two rooms. The Shankly’s’, for instance, er, there were ten of them and they were in *one* of, one of these houses, which was two apartments. Eventually, they managed to acquire the house next door, so they annexed another two rooms but you can imagine the living conditions. The other thing that was not, er, water wasn’t piped into any of these houses. These houses were built in the mid-19th century by the coal owners. There was no sanitation, there was no water. Sanitation was all outside. There were no flush toilets, toilets that were built were built over open middens and that was the sewage system, which existed until 1954 when we left. But the village itself had a tremendous history because it *had* generated a football team, called the Glenbuck Cherrypickers, which is rather a famous name in football history and even more famous is the fact that fifty-four of those miners, who worked in Glenbuck in the pits, went on to become professional football players, some of them professional *managers*, like, like Willie Shankly so, for a village of a few hundred people, the contribution that they made to football was tremendous. So, that was one of the sports that we, we had but, in addition to that, we had freedom to roam the hills. Absolute freedom in childhood and, of course, in the seventeen hours of winter darkness (no streetlights), we could do all kinds of things. But - we were never under any illusion that the adults knew what we were doing and who we were doing it with!

…That was well known! You could sneeze at one end of the village; the other end of the village knew about it. There was one general store, which was the Co-operative store. There was one Public House. There was one public telephone box; that was our links with civilisation because that, er, Co-operative store *literally* stocked everything and the bigger items like furniture, bicycles, er, you went to the local, er, Co-op manager and he gave you a line to come up here to Glasgow into the central Co-operative Depot and you could pick your furniture or your bicycle here and your dividend went back to Glenbuck. Now, the dividend, of course, was simply a form of deferred savings because you got a percentage back on every item, on every purchase that you made in the Co-operative store, as a loyalty.