

## AM - SIDE ONE

AM I started when I was fifteen with.....Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company.....in the office at Broxburn. It was the office that looked after Hopetoun Works, and also four shale mines! They were Kirkland, No. 5 Mine, Faucheldean, No. 6 Mine, Glendevon and No. 35 Pit, and that office was mainly the wages and costing office, with all the returns, the monthly returns, and reports being sent to the Head Office at 53 Bothwell Street, Glasgow. The miners would..... the Oilworkers would come to the Broxburn Office on a Friday to collect their pay.....the Works were situated about two miles away on the road between Broxburn and Winchburgh, and wages would be taken there as well, to pay the men their shifts, and then in the afternoon.....a Friday afternoon, the wages would be taken to the various shale mines, where the miners would finish their shifts and come up and collect their wages at the pay office. My first job in the office was to calculate the amount of oil that was got from a ton of shale, and when I started, probably the average would be about, maybe, twenty five gallons of crude oil and three gallons of naphtha, but that would be in the year, the beginning of about 1941, but by that time..... that I left there to go to the Roman Camps.....Works in 1946, that yield had dropped to some fifteen gallons a ton, and that was the start of the closure of the mines in that particular district!

SB Have you any idea as to why the yield failed drastically like this?

AM Well, just because the good quality shale had been mined..... they used to take tests and bores and know what was good shale and what was bad shale, and these were the bits of that mine that were developed! Well, the good shale had by now, been got out, and they were left with this much poorer oil yield in the shale. So much so, really, that it became really not economical to go any further, and these mines on the Hopetoun side gradually closed down! I was transferred to Roman Camps works, which is near Broxburn and which was owned by the Broxburn Oil Company, rather than Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company,

where it had been at the Hopetoun Works, but there again it was a case of just wages and costing, and again all the reports were sent to Middleton Hall and to Glasgow, where the whole financial side of the Company was compiled. Then again, just the very same pattern, the mines there became uneconomic, and Roman Camps closed about the mid nineteen fifties, and I was transferred to Pumpherston. Now, Pumpherston was a different works, that was Pumpherston Oil Company in these days, and it was different from crude and shale mining, in that it was a refinery! That was where the crude oil was taken from the crude works where it was made into..... the shale would be mined (inaudible) shale now of course, and then taken to the crude works where it was made into .....retorted and treated, heated, made into a crude oil, and the crude oil came to Pumpherston, to be refined, so I'm now in Pumpherston Works, at the refining side! So.....

SB Did the crude oil come by tank or pipeline?

AM Well, the crude oil moved around these shale mines, by rail! There was an internal railway, so all of the crude oil ended up at Pumpherston to be refined, and by the time that I got to Pumpherston in 1955, there was very few mines left, so.....some worked in the Roman Camps, but they were almost finished, but mainly the mines were from the Westwood side, that were still working! And I went there about 1955 and the last shale oil to be refined at Pumpherston was in 1962. To boost up the refining in the last few years, oil had been brought from oil wells in Nottinghamshire, and that was not from a shale mine, but just an oil well, and it was refined at Pumpherston as well, so when it came to 1962, the last of the shale was refined, and Pumpherston continued as a refinery for another two years, till 1964, and it closed.....or it ceased as.....as a refinery on the 31st December 1964. Those last two years, it had only refined the oil from the oil wells in Nottinghamshire! That was a.....that was really quite a very, very sad day, it marked quite an era, and at the 31st December 1964, there was a big pay off, and it's appropriate at this time to say that one of the salvations .....was the fact that the B.M.C. or British Leyland as it is known,

started about that time! The Company was very fair to the people paid off in '64, because there are still some parts of Pumpherstons remain, there's still a brickwork going, there's still a detergent plant, which had started in the late nineteen fifties, it was coming to the fore and .....there was still a wax refinery..... that sludge wax being brought up from Llandarcy and Kent refineries to be refined into wax products at Pumpherstons. So these three bits of Pumpherstons Refinery still remain, but the shale and oil refining for petroleum products ceased. And when that pay off came in 1964, I'm sure it was for nine months that men were paid.....at half pay for coming off, unless they got a job beforehand! So that it softened the blow. Some were transferred to Grangemouth, some remained in the little bit of the refinery left, and some finished up, but most got jobs and most jobs were with the B.M.C., so that was an appropriate time of course, the Government had a hand in that, because the shale oil industry ceased when the subsidy that..... the Government subsidy ceased, and I think that the Government felt that..... times maybe..... they should do something with the .....going to stop that to give the.....maybe.....and that was one of the.....the closure of the shale and the coal mines, was one of the reasons that Bathgate was chosen for the building for the B.M.C. The people who were..... left at Pumpherstons.....worked in these three places, and at the Detergent part, which had really derived from a (inaudible) of the Refinery, had built up by now, and the chemicals were brought in instead of the (inaudible) that the refining plant had produced, and of course, it started to make many, many detergent products. Everything that you could name.....from the washing up liquid which had been it's original product..... to shampoos and bubble baths, hair rinses and industrial products.....products for cleaning beaches, and oil slicks and in fact, Pumpherstons was to become famous for it's (inaudible) especially at the time of the Torrey Canyon.....and another time when it was the floods in Florence, and all of the antiquities and statues were cleaned and freshened up by Pumpherstons.....products. So the Detergent Plant really grew and grew until.....and it still survives to this day! The brickworks were sold in 1970, and probably one reason is that it was difficult for the Companies to pay.....B.P.

conditions and all that..... like the holidays and sick pay, and pension provisions and things like that and compete in that kind of market because it was paying for the.....the Refinery, British Petroleum conditions in those early days to workers and.....really in that kind of industry, you can compete refinery against refinery, but not against an ordinary brickworks, so it became a liability and it was sold in 1970, to a private company who still exist and seem to do well! So that finished in 1970, and that was the brickwork gone, and then in 1979, the wax refinery ceased, that was no longer felt practical to .....sludge wax from Llandarcy and Kent, and as a matter of fact Kent refinery itself was by now closed and so, they went, leaving only now the Detergent Plant at Pumpherston. And hopefully that will survive for a long time! Is that good enough for you!

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Transcript	AM
Industrial Information	<p>I started when I was fifteen at Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company in the office at Broxburn. This was the office that looked after hopetown Works and also four shale mines. They were Kirkland, No. 5 Mine, Faucheldean No. 6 Mine and Glendevon and No. 35 Pit. This office was mainly the wages and costing office, with the returns being sent to the Head Office at 53 Bothwell Street, Glasgow.</p>
Miners & Oilworkers	<p>The miners and the oilworkers would come to the Broxburn Office on a Friday to collect their pay. The works were situated about two miles away on the road between Broxburn and Winchburgh .</p>
Wages	<p>The wages would be taken to the various shale mines, where the miners would finish their shifts and then come up and collect their wages at the pay office.</p>
Amount of Oil	<p>My first job in this office was to calculate the amount of oil that was extracted from a ton of shale. When I started the average would be twenty five gallons of crude oil and three gallons of naptha in a year beginning at about 1941. In 1946</p>

that yield had dropped to some fifteen gallons a ton because all the good quality of shale had been mined.

#### Test and Bores

They used to take test and bores to see what was good and bad shale. The good shale was extracted which left the poor shale which did not yield so much oil. This made it uneconomical to go any further and the mines were gradually closed down.

#### Roman Camps

I then moved to Roman Camps Works which was near Broxburn and which was owned by the Broxburn Oil Company rather than Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company where I was on wages and costing, and again all the reports were sent to Middleton Hall and to Glasgow where the whole financial side of the Company was compiled.

This again was the same pattern when the mines became uneconomical and Roman Camps closed down about the mid nineteen fifties.

#### Pumpherstons

I was then transferred to Pumpherstons which was a different works from crude and shale mining, because this was a refinery. This was where the crude oil was taken to be refined from the shale that came from the mines.

#### Crude Oil

The crude oil moved around the shale mines by internal railway, so all of the crude oil ended up at Pumpherstons to be refined.

By the time I got to Pumpherstons in

1955 there were very few mines left.

- Oil from Nottinghamshire To boost up the refininf in the last few years, oil was brought in from the oil wells in Nottinghamshire. The last two years the Pumpherston only refined oil from the oil wells in Nottinghamshire.
- Closure of Pumpherston Refinery Pumpherston Oil Refinery finally closed down on 31st December 1964. There was a big pay off. The Company was very fair to the people who were paid off in 1964, because there were still some parts of the Pumpherston Works that remained.
- Detergent Plant There was still the detergent plant which was started in the late nineteen fifties. The detergent plant used the wax brought up from Llandarcy and Kent refineries to be refined into wax products at Pumpherston.
- Grangemouth The men that didn't stay at Pumpherston transferred to Grangemouth and the others finished up. The Government had a hand in that because when the Government subsidy ceased the shale industry ceased in being.

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