

Index: H

SUBJECT

Childbirth	16
Community	6, 8, 14 – 15
Cooking	11
Doctor	17
Drink	6
Electricity	11
Family Relationships	5
Family Size	14, 18
Garden	11 – 12
Holiday House	1
Housing	13
Illness	2, 3
Livestock	12
Marriage	2
Midwife	14
Migration	1, 18
Money	4, 13
Poaching	7 – 8
Pollution	9
Shale mining attitudes	16
Smoking	5
Still Birth	16
Wages	5
Washing	10 – 11
Water	10
Work Non-Shale	2, 7, 18
Working Conditions	2, 9 – 10
Women's Work	3 – 4
Domestic	7

PLACES

Aberdour	18
Carlowrie	1
Dalmeny	1, 2
Edinburgh	1
Inverkeithing	18
Kirkliston	18
Perthshire	1

SHALE MINES

Dalmeny	2
---------	---

Date: 15 Nov 1984

EL. Mrs L b.1898
SR. Sara Randall

EL. I belonged to Edinburgh. I came here when I was about 30. My mother had a miner's house. One of the miners' houses. She had a holiday house. She came here and stayed in the summer ... it was a miners' house she had. She came and she stayed all summer ... Every weekend we [her and mother and elder sister] came out to Dalmeny and stayed the weekend and went back to work on Monday. My mother was a widow. She'd always worked awfully hard and she needed that bit off. She liked the country ... Then I got married and came in here [current address] ... My husband was born in Carlowrie ... on the road to Kirkliston. My husband was born there. I don't know how long he lived down there but his parents must have got this house and came here so he was brought up here ... in this very house. And his parents died and left his sister with the house. His younger sister was left with house and when we got married she had to go to work. She found a place in Perthshire, she/ ...

went there to work and she handed the house to her brother, my husband, so that's how we came here.

SR. And you got married when you were about 30.

EL. Between 31 and 32 and I've been here ever since. My husband was a miner in Dalmeny shale mine. Down the mine he worked but for exactly many years I couldn't say. But he worked for a number of years ... until the mine closed.

SR. When the mine closed what did he do?

EL. He got a job in the Royal Elizabeth Yard across the road for a while. And then he had to give that up. He was years with sciatica and couldn't work. Of course that was the mine, working down below, getting wet. But he had sciatica for years and had to give up work.

SR. How old are you now?

EL. I'll be 87 next January ... I've actually been in here 54 years.

H3

SR. Do you have any children?

EL. No children, but I brought up a niece. My youngest sister she died and my niece was just a baby. That was the mother gone and there were more of a family and I had no family and I brought her here, brought her up until she was 42 ... She died in 1980. She never married, she stayed here.

Details of niece's work in store then post office in village. Got ill....

EL. She went to hospital and they told her it was cancer ... she died February 15th, 1980.

SR. Does this house belong to you?

EL. Yes. It's always been in the Laird's hands. It's been passed down.

SR. When you first came here did you have a job or did you just stay at home?

EL. I've never worked since I got married.

SR. Did you work before you got married?

EL. Yes. I was in the wholesale warehouse. But before I went there I was in the Distillers' Company ... I was charge hand there. Then I was in Mr. Donald Muir's in the docks - charge hand there.

SR. And when you got married you stopped working?

EL. Stopped working. Never worked since.

SR. Was that because you wanted to stop working, your husband wanted you to stop or because women just didn't work?

EL. Just didn't work. I don't think it would have been suitable for my husband, him being a miner and being down below. They needed me to be at home. I think it was my place to be in the house and not work. I must say I never ever needed to go to work, I never was that hard up.

SR. So he earned enough money did he, for you both to live comfortably?

EL. Yes. They were small wages, but we managed because he was a man,.. he smoked Woodbine he didn't like any other but he was a heavy smoker. He got his cigarettes but he never asked for more. And he was a man that came in and put his wage down. That's why I never had any bother with my husband.

SR. You decided what the wages were spent on.

EL. Yes. It was up to me and if we needed anything big - of course, when I started I started with furniture that was in the house. I didn't need furniture ... But he'd come in and put the money down and that was that. He never said 'do this, do that', it was up to me.

SR. And for buying him clothes, did you give him money back?

EL. No, when I felt that he needed, we both went. I'd give him the money to pay and took it off the wages. It was just a case, if we needed we had to buy it off the wages.

SR. Did he drink?

EL. No it's one thing neither he nor I, although I keep it in the house... No, I never had any bother with my husband from drinking.

SR. When you first married and came here ... did you mix with the village people?

EL. No, I never have, and not to this day. I don't go out - of course I can't go out now.

SR. When you were younger - were you part of the community in the village? Did you see much of the other women?

EL. No. I don't know how it is. I think if I had been here and brought up beside them, I would know them better. In fact I don't know all the people in the village.

SR. So when you were first married what did you do all day?

H7

EL. Well I used to put my time well, cleaning the house. I used to bake quite a lot, I used to bake cakes, ice them and everything.

SR. When your husband left the mines, did he get any payment?

EL. No, nothing ... I don't think any of them got anything. These days they'll get their handshake now, but not in these days.

SR. Did he start working in the mines as soon as he left school?

EL. Well I think for a wee while that he was working on the farms until he got into the mine.

SR. Was he the same age as you?

EL. 2 year younger.

SR. Mr. Livingston told me that he and your husband went poaching together.

EL. That is right - my husband was a right poacher. Yes Hendry Livingston, my husband and him were friendly. And another one up there was very friendly - Willie Watson. The three of them, my husband was the poacher. And they used to come for my husband and say 'Jim, come on'. Rabbits, well we didn't take rabbits, we never liked rabbit ... Rabbits, hares and pheasants.

SR. You ate them?

EL. Pheasants, but that was all.

SR. And did he go poaching because you didn't have enough money, or just for fun?

EL. No, fun! just fun! They'd go about watching the keeper. They were making sure the keeper wasn't around about ... They were saying, 'Oh the keeper's such and such a place, and we'll go'. They used to go round that wood and way along the road into woods. Often

... Details of why she no longer speaks to Hendry Livingston ...

SR. When the shale mines were working and there was the oil works was there a lot of dust?

EL. Well, I couldna not say, really.

SR. It didn't worry you?

EL. No.

SR. It wasn't as though you hung up your washing and it got dirty?

EL. Oh no, it was nae bother.

SR. And was there any smoke?

EL. No.

[I now realise that the oil works had closed down before she came to Dalmeny - SR]

SR. When your husband was working in the mines, did you think it was unhealthy?
Or was it only afterwards when he got sick that you thought it was damp and unhealthy?

H10

EL Well I would say, while he was working in the mine I just thought to myself, I didn't think it was unhealthy, but I thought, if he could have got out of it, he would have been better, he wouldn't have had all this sciatica. You see they were coming in with damp shirts. They wore these navy blue flannel shirts and they were damp. Sometimes their trousers were wet. I would say it wasna too healthy a job.

SR Did you have to wash his clothes everyday?

EL Well I don't say everyday but I certainly always had to keep washing. I've always done. I always washed everything; boiled sheets.

SR Did you have a boiler house or did you do it in your kitchen?

EL Where the toilet stands now - in there I had a boiler and a fire under it, and we washed them, boiled them and hung them out in a row. We didn't have hot water, always cold, but you kindled a fire under the boiler to get hot water to start. When we had the hot water,

H11

then we boiled our clothes. Then we had 2 big sinks and a boiler and wash tubs.

SR. Did you have electricity?

EL. No.

SR. When did you get electricity?

EL. Well I couldna really tell you ... Oil lamps were all the light we had - or candles in candlesticks.

SR. And what did you cook on?

EL. Coal fire. We had the old fashioned Sweeney. It was a steel bar and it hung with chains from it and you had your pot with the handle over the top swinging into the fire.

SR. Did you grow vegetables in your garden or did you buy all your vegetables.

EL. No. We grew them. Now I don't. But we grew our own.

H12

My husband used to. We had two fields - you see. That field belongs to Cameron and me. My husband planted one bit and Cameron's planted the other.

Everything, and we'd even have hens. We kept hens and we kept pigs. We were quite busy.

SR. Who looked after the hens and pigs?

EL. Me. He did the planning and the breeding. He'd seen to the breeding. The hens we used to set the eggs and bring up the chicks. But for pigs we had to get a boar to mate. And then when the pigs were born we just had to feed them. They'd come a certain size and then the butcher used to come and buy them.

SR. So you had money from your husband's salary and also from your pigs and from your chickens.

EL. Yes.

SR. So you were more well off than some of the other people in the village?

EL. Oh, I dare say.

SR. Particularly as you didn't have any children.

EL. That's right, we always had the money for big things. But at times we bought meat, paid bills for meal and sometimes you didn't have very much left. Because meals were dear to buy and we had to buy a bag of meal at a time. Big packets at the time for the pigs, and then we'd to buy different things for the hens. And then we had all the upkeep for we'd to keep repairing our hen runs, and our piggeries and things, we'd all that to look after.

SR. Were you unusual in that you owned your own house? Because most people paid rent didn't they?

EL. Yes ... I don't know how other people would do.

.... Bit about people owning houses

SR. When your mother had her holiday cottage in Dalmeny did she pay rent for it?

EL. Yes.

SR. And during the week it was completely empty?

EL. Yes, if she wasn't there the house was shut up. It was only 2 apartments, room and kitchen.

SR. And how many children were you?

EL. I am the last of 12. When my mother had that house I was the only one at home not married.

SR. When you came to Dalmeny did you get to know the village people or did you just stay on your own?

EL. I always stayed alone. We never were in contact. My mother was a quiet woman. She maybe friendly with the woman next door but she wasn't one that grouped.

SR. How did you meet your husband?

EL. That's how I met him - just coming here. Must have just met.

..... Bit about walking to the village trying to ignore the teasing youth....

EL. I don't know how it is. I've never fitted (in the

village). Till I think it's myself. I think I feel awkward. I'll pass the time of day - but to stand and speak to them....

SR. So even now. Even after living here 50 years you still feel an outsider.

EL. That's right.

SR. So apart from you is there a very close community? Are people close here who were brought up together?

EL. I don't know. There are some - but others who are standoffish. I'm not standoffish, but it seems you cannae make yourself friendsome. It's not that you'd be standoffish. It's just you feel that some folk can barge in and... but no me. I cannae do that.

SR. When your husband was alive was he much more part of the village community because he was born here?

EL. No. He didnae, no, no.

SR. Did you choose not to have children or were you just not able to have them?

EL. No. I did have one, dead born, a boy. I think I was too old, because I must have been 33 or 34.

SR. If you had had children would you have let your son go down the mines?

EL. I don't think so. No, no. I think I saw enough with Jim, all the dirt on him and the wet clothes and things. It was all work. You'd to keep working to keep clean. No I don't think I would have let him go down.

SR. When you had your child did you have him at home?

EL. Yes, at home.

SR. Was there a midwife in the village?

EL. Yes. I cannae tell you her name now. It's that long.

SR. Do you know if she was trained?

EL. Oh yes, She was a trained midwife.

SR. And did the doctor come as well when you gave birth?

EL. Yes.

... A bit about Doctors. Dr Stewart followed by Dr Wilson....

SR. Did you used to have to pay for the Doctor?

EL. Yes I think about 3/6.

SR. When your husband was working in the mines, did he not pay contributions so you got the doctor free?

EL. Yes, that's right.

SR. So when did you pay the 3/6.

EL. That would be before I was married (in Edinburgh).

...

Bit about husband and work. No detail.

H18

Shale industry in general - mainly SR.

...

SR. Was your husband's father a shale miner?

EL. No. Railway worker.

SR. Did your husband have many brothers and sisters?

EL. Andrey - he bought a place over at Inverkeithing – a big house ... That was his oldest brother. Then his younger brother was the joiner up in Kirkliston. In the distillery in Kirkliston. And another brother was the blacksmith in Aberdour.

... and then he had, I think, 7 sisters.

They were all brought up here.

[4 apartment house]