

## Shale Community Study

PL = DL born 1900. Address: Albyn Cottages, Broxburn.

SR = Sara Randall

Date of Interview: 28th March, 1985

SR I want to talk about the early part of the century, were you born in Broxburn?

DL No, I was born in Edinburgh.

SR Aha, and when did you first come out this way?

DL Well, I would be about 4 years old. I have been here since.

SR When were you born?

DL 1900 - August, 1900. I will be 85 this August.

SR And why did your family come out here? Did your father get a job out here?

DL Yes, he worked in (Brenners?) Brewery. You'll no-mind that, it was just across from Tynecastle Football Ground. I was born in Gorgie - Wardlaw Street.

SR Yes, I know Gorgie a bit. And then when he came out here did he get a different job?

DL Well, I was still going to school, you see I was only four years old. I went to the school first here when I was 5 and I left school at 14, and

I was in the Candle House, I got a job there, and I was there until it closed down.

SR Oh, when was that?

DL I think it would be about 1955. Of course, I didn't get the sack or anything, I went out to the labouring. I finished up in Middleton.

SR Oh yes - still working for the Scottish Oils?

DL Oh yes, I was there for there for fifty-odd years.

SR What sort of work did you do in the Candle House?

DL I made the candles.

SR Oh, you yourself made the candles did you? And was that what you started doing when you were 14?

DL No, I was packing - putting them in boxes and that. what they call 'piano candles' they all went in boxes. Oh, it was a busy place at one time. And then we were very busy during the First world war.

SR That was just after you started work there wasn't it?

DL Aha, that'd be 1914/15.

SR when you first started, what sort of hours did you work?

DL Oh 6 in the morning till 5 at night.

SR That was quite long wasn't it? And you were just packing solidly for all that time?

DL No, I was making. (Tea is brought in here.) That's my daughter-in-law, my wife died last June. It took me a long while to get over it you know, I'm not so bad now, I'm getting kind of used to it. We were married for 54 years, it would have been 55 in April but she died in June.

SR Was she from Broxburn as well?

DL Aye.

SR So when you started work, were there many people working at the Candle House?

DL Oh yes, all the boys that left the school always started in there - boys. That was their first job.

SR And were there any women worked there?

DL During the First world war there were.

SR Were there, what sort of jobs were they doing?

DL They were making too, but they got a machine less than the men.

SR How do you mean?

DL Well, we had four machines, well a woman had just three.

SR Oh, so you were sort of supervising the machine were you?

DL Aha.

SR And how did it work, they sort of poured hot wax in the top and the machine ....

DL Well, the company made their own wax and you see, they took the wax out of the shale. The shale went into the retorts at the top - black and you see they bings, that's where they'd come out at the bottom, the things taken out: wax and sulphur, different things.

SR Mmmm, and then was the wax transported down to the Candle works?

DL Yes, the big works was down there. All the works was there. That's why it's all scarred round about.

SR Yes, and was the Candle works with the main Oil works or was it in a separate place?

DL Well they had a cooperage and my father worked in the cooperage, making barrels. Oh there were different things. Then there was the acid works, that came out of the shale too. No, that came out of the copper ore - they had to buy that in and then take the acid out. Oh it was a full works (3/4 words) and then they had the rest of the work out here. What they cried the East Yards - that's where they retorted all the shale.

SR Yes, and then once they'd retorted the shale, they then transported the wax to the Candle Works did they?

DL Well I cannae mind how they got the wax out, but they had it all over here. You see they had a railway to transport it to this works out here. You see it was all the same company and you see they were all small companies at that time.

There was Youngs - they had Niddrie and Winchburgh, ... and Broxburn works was here and then they had works up at the Camps, they were all small. Addiewell had a wee company, they were all small companies. This was the Broxburn Oil Co. at one time and then they all amalgamated together and called it the Scottish Oils and then the BP took over. I cannae mind the dates.

SR Oh it doesn't matter, I can get those easily enough.

DL Aye, if you're going up to Middleton you would get the whole thing.

SR Yes, but I want to hear about people's personal experience: what they did. The history I can get, but what I want to find out is what you did and your work and your life, and then I can put together a different sort of history. So tell me about your work - when you first started in the Candle Works what did you actually do during the day?

DL Well I started at 6 o'clock in the morning, and then you went for your breakfast at 9 o'clock and your dinner at 2 o'clock.

SR How long did you get for dinner?

DL Three quarters of an hour.

SR Mmmm, and was there a canteen or did you bring your own?

DL No, you went home. When I went on to the candle making, I went on when I was 16 or 17, and you had no meal hours - you worked from 6 o'clock to five at night without a stop making candles.

SR And that was with a machine?

DL Aye - we had 3 machines, they were big machines. Each machine had 30 lbs at a time.

SR Of wax?

DL Aye, each machine made 30 lbs of candles. We were paid 5d. per 100 lb. Big wages!

SR How many could you make in a day?

DL Well, you always made about a ton anyway. (10/- day).

SR What in a day or in a week?

DL No in a day. It took you that to get a proper wage. The wages wasnae very big then, if you had over £3 you had a good wage.

SR And if you were off sick, did you get paid?

DL No no, it was lost time.

SR So everything was piecework?

DL Aha - piecework.

SR And how many days a week did you work?

DL Six, and then when they were busy you got some overtime.

SR Did you get paid extra for overtime?

DL Oh yes, you got paid extra for it.

SR And was it physically hard work?

DL Well, you were always on the trot. You had your own wax to carry in what they called Jacks - they were just like pails - you had two and you carried your wax in them. And the wax was always boiled in what they called tubs - great big vats and then they ran into what they called pans. They were kept up and then you had a ladle for to fill your Jacks.

SR Oh I see, so it was hot wax that you carried?

DL Yes, it was all boiled. Oh, you were constantly on the trot.

SR And then, you poured the wax into the machine did you?

DL Aha. It was a 60 hour week.

SR And was it dangerous - did you ever spill hot wax over yourselves?

DL Oh aye, your trousers got it, it didnae burn you.

SR And did you have protective clothing?

DL No, just your ordinary working clothes. There were the two shifts, the day shift and the night shift. The night shift ..... it was a 60 hour week ..... the night shift was 5 o'clock at night to 5 in the morning - 12 hours, and you worked 5 nights, so that was 60 hours. The day shift was 11 hours a day, 6 in the morning till 5 at night. And of course on the day shift you worked on a Saturday.

SR Oh I see, and how many weeks would you do on the night shift and how many on the day shift?

DL Oh a week about. Well I worked a constant night shift when the women were working there because they were nae allowed to work night shifts at that time - the First World War. I was about a year on constant night shift!

SR That can't have been much fun!

DL No not for a young fellow.

SR Well when did the hours get reduced.

DL Well, gradually as time went on. We got a meal hour, three quarters of an hour for breakfast and three quarters of an hour for dinner, so that made a difference ... of course we didn't go home, we took it with us ....

SR Aha, but at least it was a break.

DL Oh aye, it was a break.

SR And did the hours get gradually less and less as time went on?

DL Aye, as time went on.

SR And when did you stop doing night shift.

DL Oh I cannae mind. When they shut down I expect.

SR And did you get any holidays?

DL Oh yes, you got your holidays.

SR How long did you get when you first started?

DL Two days! You didnae get very much then.

SR And were you paid for those two days?

DL No! You didnae get paid. You just got your two days. Two days at the Sports and two days at the New Year, but it was lost wages.

SR So when did you start getting paid holidays?

DL Oh well, I could nae just tell you .... I think I was out of the Candle Works by then, I was up in Middleton. We started getting paid there, 'cos I mind saying to myself "that's the first (1/2 words ) you've been paid for.".

SR And when you were a child and you lived in Broxburn, whereabouts did you live?

DL Church Street.

(Daughter-in-law intervenes here to say that this has now been pulled down.)

SR What sort of house was it?

DL Oh, just a room and kitchen.

(Pause for a look through old photographs. DL hands something to SR.)

DL That's when the BP took over.

SR And they gave this to all the workers did they?

DL Aye, we got one every month, but I don't know where they all are now. You get different wee 'uns looking at them and they get all wasted. This is Broxburn ..... oh years and years .... the aquaduct was frozen from top to bottom. Did you see the canal down there? Well it goes right into Edinburgh from Linlithgow to Edinburgh, and it was frozen. To keep the canal from overflowing (few words inaudible ) it rises too high you see? It's a nice place, we used to go there for walks often.

SR When you were children?

DL Well, when the boys were small.

SR How many children do you have.

DL There were five. One was killed in Canada, there's four living. There's one in the house still, he's not married.

SR That's you is it? And that was your long service award?

DL Aye, my long service award: I was there all my working life.

SR It's quite something isn't it? And did you enjoy it, even when you were working so hard at the beginning?

DL Oh yes, it did nae bother you any because you were just doing what the rest was doing.

SR Was it a better job than the people who worked in the oil works or in the mines?

DL Well, you made your own wages sort of, the harder you worked the more you had. When I got married first, that was 1950, I was still in the Candle House, it didn't close til '35, I think it was, £5 was top wages then, well I always had maybe about £3.6s. and that was ....you lived in the company's house when you got married first ...

SR Where was that?

DL Down in Bridge Place, the houses is down now.

SR What sort of house was it?

DL Oh, just a room and kitchen.

SR And did it have water?

DL Yes.

SR And electricity?

DL No, there was no electricity. We never had electricity till they put the cable up here.

SR When was that?

DL That would be about 1940.

SR Aha, so you moved from that house up to here?

DL Up to here.

SR So how long have you been here?

DL Well .... we were married when we came up here right enough ....  
it would be about 1940 or thereabout.

SR And these were company houses too were they?

DL Aha, of course I've bought it since. You got the chance to buy them when the companies packed in. It's all gone down to Grangemouth now.

SR Yes, I've been down there.

DL Yes, that's the main place now.

SR And the house that you lived in when you were a child, what was that like - did that have water?

DL Yes it had a well, but it was lamplight - paraffin lamps.

SR And candles?

DL Oh well, we always had 2 hours supply of candles there! And then they put the gas in, it was gas when we came up here, and we thought that was alright, better than the oil lamps - you were making headway. There's nothing to beat the electric - just a switch - paraffin lamps, you had always to clean the globes and fill them with paraffin and that carry on.

SR Mmm, when you were a child, how many brothers and sisters were you living in this house?

DL In Church Street? Well there were some of them married then.

SR How many of you altogether were there?

DL Now let me count, five sons and three daughters.

SR And were you the youngest?

DL I was the youngest son, but there was two sisters younger than me.  
There were always big families then.

SR Aha, so how did you all fit in to your room and kitchen?

DL Well, we'd a room and kitchen, and of course there were two beds in  
the kitchen - fixed in beds, and then we'd a wee room, well my  
brother slept in there. The rest of them was married but he was the  
only single one in the house and he slept in there in the wee room  
and my brother and I slept in the big room. Och we got on fine.

SR And did you have a toilet inside the house.

DL No it was out the door - outside.

SR And it was a flush toilet?

DL Yes, yes, and it did three families. A woman at the front and my  
mother and a woman next door. A toilet for three families.

SR Did that mean there was a lot of queuing?

DL Aye! You could nae just go in when you wanted. And then there were  
no baths.

SR So what did you do about washing?

DL Bathing? Oh well you went up to the washhouse maybe on the washing day - you see there was a boiler there for boiling the clothes and everything. Of course you had to light that fire too, they were coal fired. Maybe on the washing night you'd go down there and shut the door and have a bath in the tub.

SR Hmm, so you only had a bath once a week?

DL Aye, once a week.

SR Were there any baths up at the Candle Works?

DL Yes, but they were showers. They put these in lately, before they shut down. It was handy too, because you could go up and have a shower whenever you thought you wanted to. There were ..... I cannae mind how many showers there were .... I think there were about six in a row. They were always handy.

SR Was the work there dirty?

DL No it was nae dirty at the Candle House, but there was dirty work round about. Eventually over here was very dirty.

SR In the Oil Works?

DL Aye, where they burnt the shale - that was dirty. You see the oil at

first when it came in was thick, & they put it in tanks and they had to be cleaned out very often. Well that's a job I got.

SR Did you - how did you do it?

DL Well, you just went inside the tank and cleaned them out.

SR What, with soap and water?

DL No - a shovel. Of course there were always two, one inside and another took the pails of dirt out. Oh there was a lot of dirty work around there.

SR So you did that for a while as well?

DL Yes, the Candle House got slack in the summer time and we were sent over there as labourers. You got a lot of dirty jobs over there, there was a sulphur house out there too. Well, you were always working, there was nobody idle.

SR What about in the strikes in 1921 and 1926: were you involved in those?

DL No, no. Work just carried on. We were out for a wee while, but och it did nae last long, because the people were short of money and we were on bad wages at that time so the strikes did nae last long.

SR Was there a lot of poverty?

DL Yes.

SR Really bad poverty with people hungry?

DL Well everybody that was labouring - they'd only 36/- a week and you'd rent to pay and all that out of 36/-. That's all we got when we were out labouring, well in the Candle House we'd twice that.

SR So you didn't used to enjoy the summer very much? How about your father in the Cooperage, was he well paid or not?

DL Well, I don't know what he had, he would have maybe more than a labourer right enough because he served his time in (Brenner's?) Brewery.

SR But you don't remember any times of real poverty when you were a child.

DL No, no. Money was scarce right enough, you had to be very careful. You got a penny on a Saturday and that was you ...

SR When you started work, did you carry on living at home with your parents?

DL Yes, I'd only 6/- a week when I started first.

SR What, for eleven hours a day?

DL Aha.

SR And did you give all the money to your mother?

DL Yes, you only got threepence back or something. Yes and then there was threepence taken for the doctor, you'd come home with five and ninepence..... and I don't know, maybe I got ninepence.

SR Did your mother work at all?

DL No, there were nae women worked then, none of the older women anyway. When the First World War started, then they took women in. That was 1915 I think, aye 1915, they took on women, but they were nae allowed to work night shift or anything. I was shifted with the women on the machines you see, she did day shift I did night shift. I think I put a year in anyway, constant night shift, before the women were allowed to work night shift. But they took their meal hours, they had to take their meal hours in those days, but we did nae get meal hours.

SR Did you get more pay than the women?

DL Yes because we had an extra machine you see, we were paid more. Each machine managed 30 lb and then they started getting bigger they made about 60 lb. - big machines.

SR And this was the machine that put the wick in the centre of the candle was it?

DL You'd to put the wicks on yourself.

SR How did you do that?

DL Well the machines was all wire and the wicks was on a reel and you

put the reel on the bottom of the machine, there were 360 (1 word ?  
?needles? ) to go in, and then you drew them up what they cried the  
piston, and up through the top of the candle, and of course the first  
lot of candles you made had to get melted over again because the wax  
was nae straight, the candles when they were made - you turned them  
with a handle and of course they'd a top on them and then you had  
what you cried a top-mesh(?) and then there were clamps on the top  
of the machine and then you rolled the candles up when they were  
ready and then you shut your clamp and that locked them in and you  
let your machine down again till it touched the bottom, and then  
you filled them up with the wax. There was a sort of spout about  
that breadth when you lifted your jack up - your pail - and then  
you poured it in and then when that all set you cut off your  
candles at the top and you lifted .... there'd be 160 candles ...  
and you lifted them over and you had what you cried trays - big  
wooden boxes - and you opened your ..... well you took your clamp  
off and you laid it on your knees and then your wooden trays  
were on a stool and you had to throw them all in at once.

SR I see, and how long did it take you to learn how to do that?

DL Oh, I learnt when I was a boy just started, I was always going about  
throwing them and helping the maker like.

SR Did your father get you the job in the Candle House or did you get it?

DL No, I got it myself. You see that's where all the boys went to when  
they left school - the Candle House. They took on a lot of boys because  
every packer always had a laddie for tae learn to pack. There'd be  
about a dozen packers and they put them into 31b. packets and then

they tied them with tape at that time, and that's what the laddie did: he tied them with tape and then the packer rolled them in the paper and the laddie stacked them up and the lad would put the labels on them just with paste - stuck the label on, and then they went into wooden boxes. They made all their own boxes down there too, at the box shop.

SR Did you? You made absolutely everything.

DL Aye, and of course the boys was making the boxes. That's where they started maybe - making wooden boxes in the box shop.

SR Then they gradually went into the oil works did they?

DL That was in the oil works.

SR Yes, but I mean they went and worked on the retorts when they got older did they?

DL Well, some of them did, some of them went in to the Candle making, others as they grew older would maybe get on as a packer. Oh there was no idle times then.

SR Were there any periods of unemployment at that time in Broxburn.

DL No not at that time.

SR And in the 30's as well it was OK was it.

DL Aye - well in the 30's it maybe got slacker a bit, and other things came up. Oh they were lean times in the 30's.

SR Did a lot of people emigrate from here to America or to Australia?

DL I believe there was. I know I was thinking of going myself but however, I got married instead!

SR And your wife was from Broxburn - born and bred?

DL Aye.

SR Did she work before you got married?

DL Well, she was in service in Edinburgh.

SR And she stopped that as soon as you got married?

DL Oh aye, the women did nae work then. Not in the way they do now.

SR But they worked quite a lot in the house didn't they?

DL Aye because everything had to be hand made and the likes of your dinner and all that - there was no tinned food then.

SR And when you had this washhouse - did your mother have to go and fetch water for the washhouse or was there a tap in there?

DL There was a tap in there.

SR It wasn't too heavy - the work?

DL No, of course you had to pail it into the boiler. Oh I've seen her in there about 5 o'clock in the morning putting the boiler fire on and getting the washing done.

SR Did the children have to help her much?

DL Well my sisters, as they grew older .... well my older sister, when she got married, she just stayed two or three doors up from us and she used to do the washing. Aye, she'd be up at 5 o'clock too. Her man worked in the pit you see, the shale miners started at 6 o'clock in the morning and a lot of them had to walk to the pit, and some of them was way down Linlithgow Road. My brother, when he worked in the pits, he had to walk to Niddrie and then get the pug.

SR What' s the pug?

DL The pug? It's a wee engine - they just called 'em pugs. They were just a steam engine but smaller than railway ....

SR Aha, they were the ones that were used for carting the shale around were they?

DL That's right. They used to go to the Camps for the shale to be retorted up there. Oh it was a busy place at one time.

SR When it was all going, was there a lot of smoke and pollution - was it very dirty out here?

DL Aye, there was smoke coming out of the big lums right enough but you see, they were all steam boilers and they were man fired and coal turned in with a shovel. That's what we used to get when the candle House was slack in the summer time: filling waggons of coal with a shovel. Och, it did nae used to harm you.

SR And what about the Sulphur Works - did that produce a lot of smoke and smell or the Acid Works.

DL No ... the Acid Works did, it made you cough right enough! It burnt you if you got acid on you. I worked in there too.

SR What were you doing there?

DL Well just shovelling (1/2 words ) that's before they take the acid out, and then maybe after the acid was taken out you had to put it into wagons and it went somewhere else to get the copper out.

SR Did you do that in the slack season as well?

DL Aye.

SR They gave you all the really rotten jobs then didn't they?

DL Aye, you were never idle. Och I enjoyed it just the same.

SR What did you do in your leisure time?

DL Go for walks - that was all there was.

SR What about when you were kids, where did you go and play? On the bings?

DL We'd go just about the doors. We'd go up the bings too, sliding down on a shovel. We used to go out the Camps and see if there were any old shovels and take them up there and slide down.

SR You talked about the Sports - -what were they like?

DL Oh well they .... it was a Doctor that ran them, Dr. Kelsey - Kelsey Sports they cried 'em. Just racing and everything, and football

SR But was it a holiday for the whole village?

DL Yes, the Works got two days - the Sports and a day extra. You never got Christmas Day then, you were always working on Christmas day, then you got New Year's Day and the day after - but no wages! Two idle days.

SR Mmmm. And in the house that you were in when you were a child, did you have a garden?

DL No.

SR You couldn't grow any vegetables or anything?

DL No, no. No there were storey's do ye ken? Well when we come from

Edinburgh first we were up in what we cried the attic: up two stairs: a stone stair, and along a balcony and then up a wooden stair and you got a good view.

SR And did you have any water in that house?

DL Yes ... well, the water was down on the balcony, you'd to carry it up the wooden stair.

SR And who did that - you, or your mother?

DL Oh it was nae me anyway, it would be too heavy for me at that stage. It would be my mother or my father.

SR Did your father work in the Cooperage until he retired?

DL Yes. But they didn't retire as early as what they do now. They retire at 65 now. I've worked with men that's been over 70 when they were still working.

SR Is that because they got no pension when they retired?

DL That' s right.

SR So what happened to old people - who looked after them?

DL Well, you had to save up. You had a wee pension but not very much - old age pension, very little. I don't know what it was.

SR But did people earn enough money to be able to save up?

(Side 1 of tape ends here.)

DL No you couldn't save much.

SR So when you say that in your leisure time you just went out for walks, was that because you couldn't afford to do anything else or because there wasn't anything else to do?

DL That's right, you had nae much to do.

SR Was there a cinema here?

DL Yes, there was Picture House, but you see Liptons is on the ground that the Picture House was on. And then there's one down at the foot of the Road - the Regal, that was built later on. Och, you were just used to it that was all.

SR What about illness, was there a lot when you were a child?

DL No I don't mind too much.

SR How did the contributions system and doctors work? Did the doctor come whenever you called him?

DL Oh yes, they had to walk it.

SR What, the doctor had to walk it?

DL Yes, and you had to go for him. Nobody had a phone then, and you had to go up to the doctor and maybe go to his house and tell him that your mother or your father was wanting him. Some of them came on a bicycle. Well, I had an old book but my son took it away for to let somebody see it and he never brought it back - I was looking for it today. There's photo's of old Broxburn.

SR Oh, I would have loved to have seen that.

DL Oh it's a very nice book. I have your address here, if he brings it back I could ....

SR If you'd let me know then I could come and see it.

DL It's a book I would nae like to lose. You can see the doctor with his wee (? ) with his pony as he passes through Broxburn - Dr. Kelsey, he sometimes got a help from his brother who came from Arran, and then there was a Dr. Scott - he went on his bicycle.

SR But were there a lot of illnesses like consumption and ...?

DL Hot so much as there are now.

SR Really? Why do you think people were better off then?

DL They were taking things easier, we had to work harder but there was nae gallavating about the same.

SR What about community life, did people used to help each other out a lot?

DL Yes, more than they do now.

SR Yes - in what sort of ways?

DL Well, if you were ill, there was always a neighbour that would maybe come in and look after you. Do ye ken, and then if your mother was ill and then they would do the same to their neighbour. Oh aye.

SR And when did that sort of start changing?

DL Oh as time went on it got less. Well you did nae need doctors so much .. well, there were no doctors and different things you know. A lot of things now that we never had in them days.

SR How about your children, were they born at home or in hospital?

DL They were born at home.

SR And the doctor came along ... and was there a midwife?

DL Aye a midwife. Well, she maybe just picked it up, but she was a mid-wife.

SR And your wife never had any problems?

DL No, nae bother at all.

SR And where do your children live now, what do they do?

DL Well there's one who's been in the Merchant Navy since he left school. He's a captain and he's been all over the world. He's 50 odd now, that's the eldest one and he's been there since he left the school. That's his first job and he's still in it. He's married of course, he lives down in England. Jim was killed in Canada.

SR He went to live in Canada did he?

DL Aye, he got married. He was working down in England - he was an engineer and then he got married and his wife had a sister out in Canada and she wanted him to go out there, she was always at him to move to Canada so he went.

(DL describes how son was killed in an accident at work where he was overcome with gas fumes, another son is in Computers in Edinburgh and still lives at home. Fourth son is a plumber and lives at, or near, Uphall. Fifth son also lives nearby, in a house he built himself.)

SR When you lived in the Scottish Oils' houses, were they good landlords?

DL Yes, your rent was taken off your wages before you got it.

SR And did they do all sorts of repairs?

DL Oh yes, they were very attentive. You just needed to go to the office and tell them you'd a window broken or something, and they would send a joiner down right away.

SR And what was the management like? Did the workers get on well with the management?

DL Oh yes, there was never any trouble at all.

SR There was never any feeling that the wages were very low or that they could pay more out of the profits?

DL Oh no, there were no strikes, or not many strikes till '21 and the General Strike in '26, that was the only time there were strikes.

SR What were things like in Broxburn then, when the strikes were on?

DL Och well, just like any other place: fairly quiet and that, but men knocking about.

SR Really?

DL Well the only thing they could do was hang about the street.

SR But there was no violence or anything?

DL No, no! They'd nae money, the wages were small. Life was very quiet then.

SR Aha, do you reckon it was harder then or harder now?

DL Oh well it all depends how you make it. I get a good pension from the BP - I get that every month.

SR Are you in the Provident Fund?

DL No, just a pension. Oh I did nae go into the Provident Fund.

SR Why not?

DL ..... Oh was it ..... we cried that the Provident - your pension.  
You get a rise every year of about I think it's £65 a month.

SR As well as your State Pension.

DL Oh aye, the State Pension is nothing to do with it. This is a company pension. Then you got your Provident whenever you finished - you got this lump - I forgot about that.

SR What happened to people earlier when you first started working, if someone was ill and couldn't work and didn't get paid, where did they get their money from, how did they survive?

DL Well you got 2 or 3 shillings of the insurance ye ken?

SR That wasn't enough to live on was it?

DL No no, it just kept the wolf from the door, but that's about all.

SR So what did people do?

DL Just made the best of it.

SR But did other men help out?

DL No, no. Everybody had to look after themselves.

SR And were there any Friendly Societies or things like that?

DL Aye there was a Friendly Society, you got your insurance when you were off ill through the society.

SR And did everybody belong to a society?

DL Well you had to be in one.

SR Aha - the works made sure that you were in them?

DL Aha

SR Which one were you in?

DL Och, I cannae remember the name of it ..... Prudential.

SR And you used to pay 1d. or 2d. or so a week?

DL Aye, so much a week. The wife's uncle used to come round for the Prudential. He called at your door every week.

SR Oh I see, it wasn't taken off your wages?

DL No.

SR Well do you think there is anything else I should know about what life was like?

DL Well it was very quiet. I'll send you that book on Broxburn if he gets it back.

SR Yes I'd love to see it. I've really enjoyed talking to you.

(.A few sentences omitted here - irrelevant material)

Tape switched off and switched on again mid-sentence:

DL My father and I went down the pit just to see ( 1/2- words ? )

It was a mine that had finished working and it was still left open, but whether somebody had seen us going down I don't know, but the next time we went the mouth of the mine was blocked up.

SR Aha. When you were a child did you do holiday jobs working on the farms or..?

DL No, no. When you were at the school you never thought about working in your holidays. Well I don't remember any of them going to the farms or anything like that, they just had their school holidays and went back to the school.

SR Anyway, I'd better go.

Transcript	DL
Birth Place	I was born in 1900 at 20 Albyn Cottages, Broxburn.
Schooling	I left school when I was fourteen years old.
Industrial Life	After school I got a job in the Candle house. All the boys who left school at the same time as I did got jobs in the Candle house as well.
Candle Making	<p>The wax was extracted from the shale and then it was transported down to the candle works but I cannae mind how this was done.</p> <p>In the candle works we had three big machines and each of these could take thirty pounds of wax at a time.</p> <p>We had to carry the wax into what we called 'Jacks' which were just pails. There were two of these 'Jacks' which we had to carry at one time.</p> <p>The wax was then boiled in what we called tubs which were great big vats. This</p>

then ran into pans and there  
was a laddie to fill your  
'Jacks'.

From there the wax was poured  
into machines that made the  
candles.

## Candle Wicks

The machines that put the wicks  
in the candles were all wire  
and the wick was on a reel  
and you put the reel on the  
bottom of the machine. Then  
you drew them up with what we  
called piston up through the  
top of the candle.

The first lot of candles that  
were made had to be melted over  
again because the wax wasnae  
straight. Then there were  
clamps on top of the machine  
and then you rolled the candles  
up when they were ready and then  
you shut the clamps and that  
locked them in. The machine  
was let down again until it  
touched the bottom and then  
it was refilled with wax  
again. There were clamps  
on the top of the machine and

then you rolled the candles up when they were ready and then you shut your clamp and that locked them in and you let the machine down again till it touched the bottom and then you filled them up with the wax. There was a sort of spout when you lifted your 'Jack' up. This was then poured and when it had set you cut of the candles at the top. There would be about one hundred and sixty candles that were lifted in what we cried trays which were really big wooden boxes.

Slack Period

When the candle house was slack in the summertime we were sent over to clean out the tanks that stored the shale oil.

Cleaning The Shale Oil Tanks

When the shale oil was burnt the oil that was extracted was dirty, so the tanks for storing this oil had to be cleaned out very of ten.

There were always two of us cleaning the tanks out, one went inside the tank and the other one took the pails of dirt out.

Sulphur House

We got all the dirty jobs, as there was also the sulphur house as well, so nobody was idle.

Labouring Wages

Everybody that was labouring got 36/- a week and we had rent to pay off this as well. That's all we got when we were labouring. In the candle house we'd twice that.

Retorts

As we got older we went to work on the retorts.

America and Australia

A lot of people emigrated to America or to Australia. I was thinking of going, but I got married instead.

Wages

When I started first I got six shillings a week. That was for an eleven hour day. We got more money than the woman doing the same job because we had to operate an extra machine.

## Strikes

We were all out for a wee while in 1921 and 1926 but it didn't last long because the people were short of money and we were on bad wages all the time.

## Shifts

There were two shifts, the day shift and the night shift. The night shift was five o'clock at night to five o'clock in the morning, so that was sixty hours.

The day shift was eleven hours a day, six in the morning until five at night. The day shift also worked on a Saturday.

We usually worked week about, but I worked constant night shift when the women were working there because they were not allowed to work night shift at that time.

## Clothing

We just wore ordinary working clothes to do your work.

## Unemployment

There wasn't any unemployment at that time in Broxburn.

## Domestic Life

We had just a room and a kitchen in Bridge Place.

## Housing

Water	We had water in the house.
Lights	When we were children we had paraffin lamps.
Candles	We also had a two hour supply of candles as well.
Gas	They then put gas into the houses which was better than oil lamps.
Sleeping arrangements	We had only a room and kitchen and we had two fixed beds in the kitchen and then we had a wee room where my brother slept. The rest of them were married.
Flush Toilet	We had a flush toilet and it did three families.
Baths	We used to bath once a week.
Showers	There were showers at the candle house but these were only put in lately before the candle house shut down. It was handy because you could go up and have a shower whenever you wanted to. I think there were about six showers in a row.
Poverty	There was a lot of poverty in

those days as they only got 36/-  
a week and you had to pay rent  
out of that.

I had to give my pay to my mother  
and I only got threepence back  
for myself.

#### Women Working

My mother didn't work but when  
the First World War started, then  
they took women in. The women  
were not allowed to work night  
shift or anything.

#### Machines

I was shifted with the woman on  
the machines.

#### Night Shifts

I was on nightshift for a year  
before the other women were  
allowed to work nightshift.

#### Marriage

My wife worked in service in  
Edinburgh before we got married.

#### Pollution

There was a lot of pollution in  
those days. There was smoke  
coming out the big lums from the  
boilers which were fired with  
coal but it didn't used to harm  
you.

The fumes and smoke from the acid

works used to make you cough  
right enough.

Doctor

If you needed the doctor in those  
days you had to go up to him and  
maybe at his house. Some of the  
doctors used to come round on a  
bicycle.

Birth of Children

All my children were born at home  
and the doctor and midwife came along.

Pension

I get a good pension from B.P.,  
which I get every month.

Provident Fund

I didn't go into the Provident Fund .

Leisure Activities

When we were kids we used to go  
for walks. That was all there was.

Walks

Sliding Down

We used to go up the bings as

Bings

well and slide down on a shovel.

We used to go up to Camps to see  
if there was an old shovel to use  
for sliding down the bings.

Sports Day

Dr. Kelsey ran the sports day.

It was just racing and football.

The Works got two days holiday  
for the Sports Day.

Holidays

You never got Christmas Day as  
you were always working then.

You got New Years Day and the  
day after but with no wages.

Picture House

There was a picture house but  
that has now been knocked down  
and Lipton's is on the ground now.

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Youngs Oil Co