

DM TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

SB So if you tell me you know when you started, say when you very first started as a boy and just go on, details of wages, how much you earned, the conditions, the tools you had, the clothing, anything you really can remember.

DM Well, I started as a boy just leaving the school at 14 years of age. And I left the school in 1922 and I started - that was December 1922 - and I started in the beginning of 1923. And I started on a job, on a temporary job, then, where it was an old man was - had paraffin cancer through what they called the paraffin sheds in Addiewell Oil Works. And he was on - his job was to grease the wagons for the locomotives running into a breaker you see. So he was off then maybe for about six months then I was only on a temporary job on his then I was paid off but I was only three weeks off maybe about six weeks off when I was employed then as a sandboy. That was - you dried the sand at a big fire for the locomotives and changed what we called the points to put the - wherever they were going to, the different roads the locomotives were going to - you held up these different points to change the points to make them go it. They'd all sorts of different whistles, one, two, three and four - so that you - you learn that as a boy where they had to go to so when I was a little older then -

SB Sorry. What was your wage, how much were you earning then?

DM Oh, at that time I was getting 12/- a week. Then I went to labour for locomotive's engineers and I was there for a time then I went on to railway repairing, what they call a plate-layer, that was railway repair, repairing the rails. I went on there, and from there I went on to - well I would be getting about 30 - they rose me to about 25/- then when I went on to labouring with these engineers, then I went on to this plate-laying job, and I went from there on to the locomotives so to give you the wages on the Locomotives, then I was working seven

shifts for just somewhere in the region of £3. In the region of £3 I was bringing in, for doing seven shifts on the locomotives. So I worked then on locomotives on what they called the three shifts, I was dayshift, backshift and nightshift. I changed over on the different shifts, you know, I maybe done dayshift, I maybe done nightshift, I maybe done backshift, I maybe done nightshift.

SB Now whereabouts was that?

DM That was in Addiewell Oil Works.

SB Addiewell?

DM Yes, and we run to Burngrange, where the Burngrange disaster was. In fact that's the locomotive I was on the night the trouble was, on the day the trouble was in Burngrange. And we run then into what we called the Fraser pit, a shale pit, and 26, that was just over there, 26 mine, and I worked then on these tugs until the Burngrange disaster. Then that closed so much of it down. It closed it down all the time. But it closed so much that it never opened up again.

SB How long was it closed for after the accident?

DM Well, I couldn't say exactly how long it really was closed after the accident. Perhaps five or six months until they started to go down to to the other sections you see. Course the likes of - Jim can tell you these things - but then with that happening for that time, it took a locomotive off you see, so I was off then and only going sort of - maybe two days or three days on the locomotive then and the other two or three days on this plate-laying job. So then I got transferred to Westwood and I was on a breaker, what they called a breaker, I was on the wagons, running them in to the breaker where the man was and tipped them up with a machine. And I run them into him. So I was on that for quite a time, and then the company bought a steam locomotive. They were previous to that they were working with a diesel locomotive, so they bought

then a steam locomotive. So of course the manager knew that I had been working nearly all my days on the steam locomotive.

SB Who was the manager in Westwood?

DM He was Mr. Spittal at that time. He was the manager. So he asked the foreman then to see if I would take on the steam locomotive and he would learn me the diesel locomotive, so what they done then was they put me as a floating man, that was, I done a different job every day. I could start driving a steam locomotive the next day I would be driving a diesel locomotive, and the next day I would be doing shunter, on the diesel locomotive. The next day I was in a wee office where I was weighing. The next job then I went on to - the next day I would be on weighing shale and checking the amount of shale that was going up the belt. That was the wagons was emptied and the wagons that they were producing each day, you know, the amount of shale they were producing each day then you had your large ledgers you see, and you'd that to make up, count up all the shale that was - that they were producing in the different pits, you know. And sulphate ammonia, dispatching sulphate ammonia, and you had oil then, you know, we put the oil out then in tanks and you had to ticket your tanks, you see, and ticket your sulphate ammonia and all that, where it was going to, you see. They sent you a typed sheet to the office and it was my brother that was a foreman on that job, he organised it for putting the stuff out you know, with his men to load the wagons, see, so all he done then was chalk on the wagon how many - how much was going into the wagon, maybe 100 bags, you know what I mean, and initialled them, the party that it had to go to. So then I took a note of that and I went into my office then and took my own sheet and dialled it and I had to write out the tickets then and the way it had to go you see, and dispatched this, and that was it. The next one was

SB How much did you earn then?

DM How much was I earning then?

SB Yes.

DM I was earning - now, my memory's not just that great for that, I think I could ask the wife.....

SB So that was about £9 at Burngrange?

DM Aye, I would be getting about £9 working on the Burngrange one, and then when I went away to Westwood I'd be getting £14 then, anyway.

SB £14. That's top line?.

DM Aye, that's the top. Then your off-takes are after that (Mrs. McQ - When you went down to Westwood, left Addiewell, were transferred from Addiewell to Westwood, you'd an awful low wage, D). Aye, I know. That's what I was saying. I could only have about (£7) Oh my goodness, as far down as that? (Aye, once we got our coal and rent off..)

SB You'd nothing left? Can you remember what was taken off your wages?

DM The rent was taken off.

SB Can you remember how much?

DM Oh, 4/6d, and then coal was taken off.

SB You received coal?

DM Aye, that was about one and something a hundredweight. It was about 5/- taken off for coal. And the rent.

SB And what about the Institute, did you have an Institute here?

DM Oh well, it was always kept off his wages. You only paid about a penny

or tuppence. It was a penny or tuppence we paid for the Institute.

Your wages were very low when you left Addiewell to go to Westwood. I remember him coming in with his first week's pay, my first pay from Westwood and it was quite a good increase.

SB So it's amazing you say now, because miners in fact who worked in Westwood Pit said it was an atrocious payer, In fact John Crombie said he left Westwood to go to Hermand Pit, it was better paid. He said that down below it was far too overcrowded with men, and he couldn't make a good wage.

DM When you started in Westwood first you were going out in the morning, starting at six, and you weren't coming in till nine, eight or nine at night. Oh, that was in Westwood, that's right. I was working long shifts, you know (you were working long shifts for that £11) for the breaker's job, that's right.

SB So how much do you reckon your wage would have been if you had worked a normal shift?

DM Oh a normal shift? Maybe about - between eight and nine pounds it would have been.

SB Now for that overtime which you worked, because it was really overtime, were you paid overtime rate or just plain rate?

DM Overtime rates.

SB Overtime rates?

DM Aye, time and a half.

SB Time and a half.

DM Yes, that's right. Then after that I had an accident to my back,

and I'd to go to Bangour.

SB Can you give me more detail of your accident?

DM Well, I was driving - the last that I took with it - I was getting it back and forward - and going to Bangour, getting treatment and starting back on the old job again. Then I was driving a steam loco, and the steam locomotive had a bad throttle, so you'd a big lever, when you were reversing your engine, so it meant that you were reversing against steam, see what I mean? The throttle wasn't properly shutting, so the steam was hitting the face of the cylinder and you were - you had that to pull back. So we'd almost to run on to a big bridge you know, big high - a burn running below it - and you'd always to go away to the middle of that before you could turn to go back to weigh. And it was a terrible windy day and you were holding on for grim death in case you got blown off the footplate over into the burn and I could remember then- and I'd drawn it back and I just felt the jerk. I said, "There it goes, that's it" So when I went to Bangour then they just looked at me and they said, "Right, away to bed, get to bed", put me in a bed, so I lay in the bed then on the boards, for what - maybe two months, six weeks to two months, and then a doctor came from Edinburgh and he examined me and I wasn't getting any better, so they said, "Right, you'll have to go to Edinburgh". So I went away to Edinburgh Royal (Infirmary) then, and I had an operation.

SB Now whilst you were lying in bed, were you getting compensation?

DM Yes.

SB Can you remember how much it was-

DM Now, that is something, I can't mind what I was getting for compensation.

SB Does half a wage mean anything?

DM No, it wasn't half a wage. It was just really about £1 or 30/- more than

what his insurance was. Aye, you didn't get much right enough then.

SB Did you have something else coming in, some other means of income coming in?

DM Well, he had what they called the Friendly Society of the Forresters at that time.

SB And can you remember how much he received from them?

DM It would only be shillings...no, you had the National Health then, did you not? Did the National Health not come in in 1947?

SB 1947, 1948.

DM Aye, but you went on to compensation. You go on to compensation instead of National Health with that, but I can't mind exactly what I was getting for compensation.

SB Whilst you were receiving compensation and National Health, was your rent taken off your pay?

DM No, we were in a council house at that time, and I had to pay the full rent. We came from a small rent to here. And I was only six weeks in here when that happened. So we had to pay the council.

SB So that must have put you back a good deal financially?

DM Oh dear, it did. It was hard, hard times then, very hard. It was just after his accident I started going out working.

SB You found it necessary for you to go to work?

DM Oh, I had to go.

SB You had to go to work?

DM It was hard then.

SB So you had an accident and you went to the Infirmary, and then what happened?

DM He had the operation. Dr. Dott's ward. I had the operation to the disc in my back. Then I came back to convalesce then, and I came home then and went about for quite a time you know. Maybe six or seven weeks, and then I went on to - I went back to work, and I'd to see the manager, so I said to him, "I don't want the shunting part of it, because that's one away, I don't want any more, I've suffered enough with that one" So he said to me, "D, it's all right". But I said, "I could do part of the work, that I've been in the habit of doing, that was weighing, checking, and dispatching, or driving." "No" he said, "No." "Just forget about it," he said, "We'll put you on a light job just." So then I just went on to a light job. I was just doing things with engineers you know, with Jimmy Brash and such like. Sweeping up floors, cleaning machinery and things like that.

SB General labour work?

DM Just general work then. Anything at all, you know.

SB And how much were you earning then, say compared to what you had been earning?

DM Well I was getting on a make up system, I was getting nearly as much as what I was without working overtime. I was getting just much the same.

SB Seven or eight pounds?

DM Aye, seven or eight pounds. I was getting made up, see getting made up to the wage, that was the lowest wage that I was on, and I was made up to it with this compensation.

SB It was the same system as the miners had, you were made up?

DM Yes. Well, I carried on with that then for a time and then I was made the watchman, security man, the watchman, so I was on to that, doing three shifts, dayshift, backshift and nightshift until the place actually packed in. It closed, they all - it finished, Westwood finished. They all finished then.

SB Yes, 1962.

DM Yes.

SB And what was your wage then, how much were you earning then?

DM I was earning more then. Saturdays and Sundays. But it's just minding what the actual wage was then. I'll tell you, I was getting away near - I was getting away near £13. About £13 for doing the watchman, doing the three shifts, that was working at the week end.

SB So you worked really seven days a week?

DM Saturday afternoon, and Sundays too, but we had to - we had a day off, though. You got a day off, you see. You might be off a Monday one week, Tuesday the next week, Wednesday the next, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, then when it came to that you were off Sunday and Monday. Turn about, yes, and that's how you worked it then. So I was there then and when everybody was paid off we were then kept on as watchmen because there was as much stuff round about us, you know, brass, copper and stuff - machinery coming up from the pit. There were so many men kept on to bring this stuff up in the pit while we had to watch that stuff

wasn't stolen you see, so they bought dogs, two Alsatians, and we paraded the place with these two Alsatians, one man to each shift.

So that's how we worked then. At that time there were still three men on it, dayshift, nightshift, and backshift so you gave a wee bit hand if you were on the dayshift to anything, but backshift, you had to parade just.

SB It must have been a very lonely job at night?

DM Oh, very lonely. Nobody there but yourself.

SB No, and I mean you're away out as well, because I mean, it's quite a way from West Calder, isn't it?

DM Yes, very very lonely. We never seen - well, we didn't want to see anybody to tell you the truth!

SB No, that's what you were there for!

DM Although at times we did see them and we had to act, you know, we had to act at times, right enough. I remember er they came in and they had stole brass that had come up from the pit so the manager - when I went out then the manager sent for me. He said, "Did you not see them, were you on the night-shift last week, did you not see signs of anybody?" I said, "No, not a sign." So the sergeant in the police and the constable came up then and I said "By the way sergeant, when did this - " they had got on to it by this time, so I said, "When did this happen?" "Oh" he said, "about seven o'clock". I said, "That was the backshift, I was nightshift" So I went away to see the manager, I said, "Well, it would be hard for me to see it, because this happened about seven o'clock at night, so it's the backshift man you'll have to see". But they caught them,

SB They caught them?

DM Yes. The one was selling it to the other party and the police was on something else altogether investigating, and went into the house to - and they came on the brass. So that's when the brass was stolen from Westwood. So I was on that too - well, till it just about finished up then, and then the other company, W. & J.R. Watson that's in Westwood at the present time, the manager came up then and asked me if I would take on the job again, so I did take on the job, but that was reduced wages compared from the Scottish Oils, I was only getting then with that, oh I was bringing in I think about £9. It was just a job and no more. And then they brought in men and this chap was working with the firm, he belonged to Edinburgh so he said to me when he came in, he said, "D" he said, "See that there? Those pailings out there?" he said, "That's your job!" I said, "Oh, don't tell me that!" He said, "That's your job finished." And right enough, as soon as the pailing was up.....

D.McQueen TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO

SB I'm afraid we'll have to start again with the sanitation and the conditions of work! So as you were saying, the conditions were pretty good?

DM Aye, they were not bad, not bad the conditions.

SB You had to work hard for your job?

DM Certainly. We had to anyway, we never had any time to put off. No, no. The surface - you had the surface workers then you know that was labouring to engineers and things like that, they never chose to go on - if they needed a shunter, they never chose to go on as a shunter because they knew they were - they knew they would have to keep going. We were kept very busy.

SB What kind of tools did you use? Did you have your own tools?

DM No, no.

SB No tools at all?

DM No, we had nothing like that to work with, no.

SB Now what about your clothing?

DM Clothing, well on the locomotives you were supplied with raincoats, leggings and a coat. That's what you were supplied with.

SB And what did you wear underneath that, did you have your own clothes?

DM Your own clothes.

SB Did you wear moleskins like the miners? Dungarees?

DM Just dungarees.

SB And what about shoes?

DM Oh, you had tackety boots.

SB Tackety boots?

DM Yes, working boots.

SB Now, can you remember the price you paid?

DM For his working boots? His working boots before he stopped working there was running about £5.

SB £5?

DM Aye, but away back in those times they'd be maybe about 30/-, something like that.

SB And where did you buy/them?

DM The co-operative.

SB At the co-op?

DM Yes, everything came out the co-operative.

SB Have you ever worked in the oil works?

DM Oil Works?

SB Yes, have you worked in them?

DM Well, that's where I was working on that Oil Works.

SB Yes, but actually inside, inside the plant?

DM Oh, no, I was....

SB No, you haven't.

DM More locomotive, Railway and locomotive.

SB Yes.

DM Not attached to the retorts or nothing like that.

SB Yes. Now, the general strike of 1926, and also remember there was a strike a miner's strike of 1925, can you remember that?

DM Yes.

SB What can you tell me about it?

DM The strike? I can only mind that I was....

SB You would just have started work then.

DM I was on that job I tell you, drying sand for the locomotives in the miner's strike. Yes, that's all I can....

SB And what happened, were you locked out, or....?

DM No.

SB No?

DM No, no, we kept going then.

SB You kept working?

DM Yes, we kept going. We'd be - I suppose they'd be taken off bings, you know, what they called the stock, that's what they'd be taken off then to keep things going.

SB So it was only the mining section that was on strike would you say?

DM That's right, we weren't on strike.

SB That's fine, now what about the 1926 strike, the general strike? Were you working then?

DM No, I was working....I was working in the 1926 strike.

SB You were working as well?

DM Yes, I was working in the '26 strike.

SB Now what about the second world war, were you exempted?

DM I was exempted through the job I was on, the locomotives.

SB Now have you ever had any dealings with the Bevin boys?

DM Well, the Bevin boys - we came in contact with the Bevin boys because they were working some underground and some above ground on what we called the pit head. And maybe we would be waiting on shale with the locomotive, waiting on the wagons filling, they'd be standing there for a bit and they'd maybe go up the steps into the pit head and maybe talk away to you. Bevin boys.

SB Did you find they were accepted by the community as a whole?

DM Oh yes, very much.

SB Now what happened to them at the end of the war? What happened to those boys, did they just disappear?

DM Well, my mother had a Bevin boy staying here. When he got his relief he just went away home, he was a joiner to trade. Some of them, they went away, some of them married, they went away to other places, one that I could mind in particular went away to take a small farm, he married a farmer's daughter, that was one in particular. But I think that mostly they drifted away back to where they came from you know, they were maybe coming from Aberdeen or.. different places. So they mostly drifted away back to where they had come from.

SB Now what about displaced persons?

DM Was that the Poles?

SB Yes.

DM Well, a lot of them married here and settled down. I mind they used to run them in buses up to the Forth. There was a camp for them all in Forth and they got houses in Addiewell and Mossend, and - och, there's

a lot of them just married here and...there was lodging you know, in houses in the place, in Addiewell. So there were quite a lot of them remained here, remained in the pits, and remained here, quite a lot.

SB And what about Irish workers?

DM Oh the Irish workers. Well, an awful lot of the Irish workers came through before I started work, from Northern Ireland, mostly Northern Ireland, there'd be some from Southern, but mostly Northern Ireland I would say, and started in that Addiewell Oil works, because it was a large work then, there was a big lot of men employed then, so that's where an awful lot of the Irish people came at that time, over to Addiewell and got houses, digs and such like, if they were married they got houses and was employed in the Addiewell works, an awful lot of them.

SB So would you say they mostly worked on the surface or below?

DM Oh, they were both. An awful lot of the Irishmen who came over was working on the surface in Addiewell Oil works, because they were not.... like, that was the work, the pits was away through here, and.... the Polish people, them that was with the Polish displaced, they were all miners, some of them went into the shale, that's right. But the Irish people mostly went into the oil works.

SB In the oil works?

DM Addiewell Oil Works, yes. There were McQuairies, Monochans, Donnellys, all the Irish.....

SB Quite a few?

DM Quite a few, yes.

SB Did you find they tended to congregate together? Or did they mix with the community?

DM They mixed, very much.

SB They mixed well, did they?

DM They were very close, then. Yes, it was all the same what you were, they were very close then. It was very good at that time. Very, very... There is a man sometime, he always said to me, "Good old Addiewell, D, there was never nothing like Addiewell" he'd say. So we were just all mixed you know, Catholics and protestants and that, we were all just.. never no bother.

SB So religion did not come into it all, it was just ignored?

DM No.

SB What about politics?

DM Politics? Oh aye, well, we'd most - it was most a about - you could nearly always say it was mostly -

SB Socialists?

DM Aye, socialists more than Labour, you know.

SB Then what about the unions?

DM Well, we had the union too, we had the union then. I don't suppose it would be very long started, the union, maybe when I started. But the union was there and not like now, I could remember they were going to go on strike for more money and the man that came in who was doing our delegate then was a man the name of O'Rourke and he came in and he - ninepence. Now accept that ninepence he said, so they accepted the ninepence! They were a bit easier pleased then than they are

now, believe you me!

SB It wasn't much of a negotiation, was it?

DM No!

SB Can you remember the union fees?

DM Union fees? Oh maybe about threepence or that we paid away back. He came every fortnight to us and I gave him sixpence. Aye, about threepence to sixpence. And then it would go up a bit maybe as the years went on you know, maybe to about 1/6 or that, as the years went on. I gave the man Cully sixpence every time he came. Maybe threepence up to sixpence and then it advanced as time went on.

SB Now what about retirement pension, did you receive a pension, did you receive a pension from B.P.?

DM Yes, he has a pension from B.P, he has one from Harlow too.

SB B.P. Harlow, One is roughly about £25 is it? And the other one, £26 is it, something like that?

DM No, I don't get that. I said at the time - I don't think they done it very fair, my own opinion of it. What they done to start with was if you done over ten years you clicked for this pension if you were sixty - what sixty years of age when you left. But if you were sixty years of age when you left suppose you'd done just over ten years, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen years you had this pension but if you weren't sixty years of age when you left you were out. Now that mate of mine, D that I worked for me and myself, now I'm a bit older than him but I didn't click for it for the sixty. But he didn't get it at all. Now I mind of phoning a chap that had to do with it, and I said "That's not very fair, that. Now here I could refer to him that they'd done maybe about thirteen or fourteen years and they hare hitting this pension,

I've done forty years and I'm getting nothing." So then they lowered it a bit and they lowered it to 55. If you were 55. I was just on the touch and go then, on the 55, when I finished up, you see. That was me doing, well, that was me doing forty years. And some of them was getting more than me that was doing about 13 or 14 years. So they were getting up to about £27.

SB Yes, some of them say about £24, £25, £26.

DM Aye, that's right. Well, I was on £19.

SB You were on £19.

DM So they were getting that for doing about 14, 15 years. I was getting that for doing forty years, (You were there forty two years) I'm counting it at the lowest, 40 years. Or maybe it was 41, but I would say at least 40, anyway.

SB It would be just about 39 years if you started in 1924?

DM I started in 1923.

SB 1923?

DM Yes, I started at the beginning of 1923.

SB That's 39 years.

DM He was on more than a year after everything closed up.

SB Ah well, it was forty years then.

DM I was kept on, you see, for maybe a year and a half, after they were all paid off, after the actual work closed down. It closed down in May - oh, was it the 6th of May, and I done a year and a half after

that.

SB Did you- have you ever heard of a Provident scheme? Ever heard of that?

DM Well, he got his provident money. We were in the provident scheme.

SB You were in the provident scheme? Can you remember how much you received?

DM Well, I was on - being a long service man - I can't just remember the amount of years you had to work, but me being a long service man I got ten per cent of my wages you see. So I received somewhere about - between £700 and £800. That's what I received.

SB That's what you received, that wasn't bad.

DM Yes, that's what I got. Somewhere about that anyway. Between 7 - it was over £700 anyway I got, aye, it was over seven hundred pounds. I got for it anyway.

SB Did you also receive a gold watch?

DM I got a gold watch, yes. I've got the gold watch there. It's a nice watch, dated and everything you see. I thought that they were a year out when they dated that, but that's it. That was it, 35. And it tells you how many years I've done, 35 at that time.

SB Ah, 35 there of course, that was 1959, wasn't it, but you stopped in 1963.

DM Aye, that's right. Well, they didn't make a fool of us, I'll say that. They were good watches.

SB That's a good watch.

DM They were really good watches, there's no doubt.

SB Now would you say that the Scottish Oils really was a good company to work for?

DM Well, I don't know. I think that whilst you would say it was a good company I think people were easier pleased, I think that's all you could account. I mean it was hard work, you never got great pay, that's all, but you couldn't do nothing else and you were - you had to be more contented at that time. that's all, I mean, as young men, we made our own entertainment, young men and young women, you know, we made our own entertainment. We went to the church you know, and the church hall you know, maybe two nights a week or that, and choirs and such like that, you know. Male voice and mixed voice in the church so that's - we made our own entertainment.

SB Now the Institute was supplied by who? Was it the company?

DM Yes, the company, Addiewell, Young's paraffin Light and Mineral Oil,

SB Now what did the Institute comprise of? What did it supply? Library, or...

DM No, there was nothing like that. Billiards, carpet bowls, dominoes and cards, and maybe...I think that was the most of it. The bowling green came in with it as well.

SB Now you mentioned billiards. The billiard table, did you have to pay for the table? Did you pay to play on the table?

DM Yes, you paid to play.

SB Can you remember how much?

DM Oh, we maybe paid twopence.

SB Twopence for what? Half an hour?

DM Maybe half an hour, yes.

SB Now what about social clubs, other social clubs. Was there such a thing?

DM Social clubs?

SB Yes.

DM No, I couldn't say there was....no, no social, clubs.

SB So what about sports. What kind of sports, you know...what kind of entertainment would miners have? What would you do as hobbies?

DM Well, my hobbies were pigeons, pigeon flying and cricket and singing in choirs, and singing at concerts. So that's how I...that's my hobbies.

SB What about quoits?

DM No, it was a great goer of course at that time, but I never played that, no.

SB And whippets?

DM No. My brother had whippets. And I used to go to the whippets right enough. With my brother, that was all. But I was only a young lad then, only a bit laddie at that time.

SB How much time did men spend on their hobby?

DM Oh when he had the pigeons he spent all his time there! He lifted that many prizes! That was his hobby! I was never away from the foot of that garden. We couldn't get a holiday for pigeons. It's a tying sport, there's no doubt about it. And then always when it came to holidays - at the holiday time there was always what we called the National, that was the big race from France. Big race was then. That's when you made more money, you know, that's always at the holiday time, so I was always tied

up at the holiday time!

SB (to wife) So you were left at home?

DM I'd just to stay at home! That was like - With the Scottish Oils you always got your holiday pay on the first Friday in May. When you had it spent that was you.

SB That was you finished!

DM That was you finished!

SB Now this is really the women's section, but you can answer too. Now you say you started work, that was...when did you start work?

DM I went away to service when I was 14 years old. I was in service till the war broke out and then I was in the R.A.F.

SB Can you remember how much you earned?

DM 25/- a month.

SB A month?

DM A month! I was up at five o'clock in the morning, I was a kitchen maid. 25/- a month I started on and I'd a uniform to.....

END OF TAPE ONE, SIDE TWO.

DM

TAPE TWO SIDE ONE. (Mrs. M)

SB So then you went to the R.A.F.?

DM Aye, I was in the R.A.F., during the war, I got married during the war, 1942.

SB 1942, fine. So what kind of house - you know, as a married couple, what kind of a house did you live in, do you say?

DM Room and kitchen, in Addiewell, room and kitchen.

SB Yes. What about lighting?

DM There was electric light, the toilet was at the top of the stair, and the wash house was outside.

SB Can you remember how much you paid for electricity?

DM Oh, I think it was about 12/6d, don't know about - it wasn't much, it didn't come to a £1, when we had our meters read.

SB Oh, you had a meter?

DM Yes, you know when you got the meters read, about every three months, it just ran about £1. You just had the two, for you were cooking with paraffin oil or the open range.

SB The open range on the fire. You said the toilet was outside. Was it a dry toilet?

DM No, they were flush toilets, at the top of your stair.

SB Did you have a bath?

DM No, no bath, just cold water.

SB Just cold water? And what about the washing?

- DM It had to be done outside, there was a wash-house outside and I'd to go and light a boiler and do the washing outside.
- SB So when you - say for instance when you came home from work and you wanted a bath, what did you do?
- DM Often bathed in a tub. I used to sometimes - maybe the washing day and keep the boiler going, plenty hot water, and bring the hot water up in a pail, a kettle to start off!
- SB Be hot at the fire!
- DM So that's how we done it. We moved to Mossend then, that's not so far away from here, from Addiewell to Mossend, and I had the tub - they were all out and I said, "I'll have a bath." So I put the tub in the wee kitchenette place there, what they called the scullery, and I put the tub there. I was in the tub, stripped in the tub, and the letter box opened up. "In the name of God, what's this?" Here there was a man putting papers in!
- SB It could have been embarrassing!
- DM Oh, I don't know, everybody was happier I think.
- SB Yes, you were probably more easier going as well.
- DM Much easier going, yes, that's right. Earlier than that of course, there was no such thing as toilets or that up the stair, you know. It was all dry toilets outside. Round the back of your street you know, that was then. That was earlier on. I was quite a good age, I was quite a young man like when they started to build the toilets and that.
- SB What happened - I mean, those dry toilets had to be cleaned, from time to time did they not?

DM Yes, the dry toilets had to be cleaned. There was a man - he delivered the coal, and he was maybe two or three days on the delivering of the coal, and he was labouring about lifting dirt heaps, and cleaning these toilets. A man. And there was another man employed for going round the toilets, sweeping them and emptying them out, to the back of the toilet you know, and mixing them up with ashes, you see, and then the cart came then and they loaded into it and took it away to where they dumped it.

SB To the dump.

DM Yes, they were rough times then.

SB Oh, I bet they were.

DM Oh, they were, no doubt.

SB Now the local shops, you say you did most of the shopping at the co-op?

DM Oh, yes we did, co-operative, yes.

SB Now did you have a van calling round?

DM Yes, we had various vans, yes, baker's vans, yes.

SB Butcher?

DM Bakers, that's right, and we had private butchers as well. They're still in West Calder, that come round when I was young. Their people like, before them, came round with vans, yes.

SB Now can you remember the prices of, say for example, milk, bread, butter? Your wife will probably.....

DM Yes, I Just can't really mind what we had - what we paid for them then, you know, because in those days you went out with a jelly can, an

empty jelly jar, you know, and you got a "porley(?) what they called - a big biscuit thing what they called a porley (?) for this jelly jar.

SB Oh, I see, yes.

DM It may have cost a penny you know, or maybe just a half pence, you know,

SB Now did you find that with the wage you were bringing in, did you find that you were able to save from it?

DM No, we couldn't save much. You got - was it ten shillings taken off your wages every week for a year, and that's how we saved, to go a holiday.

SB Oh, from the yearly society?

DM No, the company.

SB Oh, the company?

DM Addiewell Oil Works, paraffin...they took so much off your pay, 5/- or - off your pay, and you got that at the end of the year.

SB Now was that a compulsory thing or were you asked.....

DM No, no it wasn't compulsory. That was to try and give you maybe – because when you got a holiday you didn't get paid for it. It wasn't a holiday like now, a holiday with pay. We had no holiday with pay then. But I used always to be in the Yearly, and it was Jim McArthur, him you're going to see tomorrow, it was him that run it.

SB Oh, he ran it, did he?

DM He ran it with his brother. It was always so much, and if you were off sick you got so much off it. You got so many shillings,.

SB Oh, I see, yes, depending on how much you had paid in. Now, diet and food. What kind of food did you have, what kind of meal would you serve?

DM Oh, we always had a good meal, I've always made good meals, we've just had to do without.... the table was always...porridge for breakfast...

SB Porridge for breakfast, yes, and what about dinner time, what would you have?

DM We'd always stew and mince, or chops, or sausages, vegetables, potatoes, milk....

SB Yes. And what about tea time?

DM Tea time? Well, we'd always maybe fish or...we could always manage. There was not much to spare, but we could always manage.

SB You always had food on the table?

DM Yes, I suppose it would be harder earlier than my time. I was the youngest of a big family so that by the time I came on conditions were a bit better. And then as far as my house was concerned, they were bringing in money, I was just the youngest, like, so there was always a fair - and when I got married there was always - we could always get a fair....We always - I always bought butter, more than what I do now,...

SB Yes. Can you remember the price of butter, tea, milk,?

DM Oh, the tea was 9d a quarter.

SB Now what years are we talking about?

DM That was after the war.

SB After the war.

DM The butter was cheap too. I came off the forces when - 1944? I came off just before the finish, the war finished.

SB And what about milk? Can you remember milk, the price of milk?

DM Oh, the milk. I used to go through an awful lot of milk, oh you didn't pay very much for milk, I can't remember what it was we paid for milk. I was about tuppence a pint. I used to go through about six pints a day. You know, it was cheap then. Two of them used to drink milk...

SB So say, off your weekly wage, how much of it would be spent on food?
Say, out of your £11 wage?

DM Oh I think that most of it was spent on food, for how I got things, shoes and clothes, I always had a club in the co-operative, and I always paid the co-operative, paid maybe about 10/- a club a week to the co-operative, and if you got a £10 club - and I always had a club for buying boots and underwear. So that really most of it went on food. You got everything on the co-operative book, and when you got your dividend you could square up.....

SB So you found that even with running the club you would be able to make ends meet?

DM Yes.

SB Again, we're coming on to the men, the cost of clothing. Were they expensive, were clothes expensive for men?

DM Well, it would maybe make you laugh, to think I could remember the time I went away into Edinburgh and I wanted a suit of clothes and (Ah but that was long before you were married) - that was before I was married, yes. I was in Leith, it was called Jackson's of Leith Street, that was the name of the shop, so when the man seen me coming in, he said, "Oh aye", he said, "You're a country boy, but you're always coming in here buying." So he said, "Right, it's going a wee bit cheaper the now, sale" he said, "You should take the chance" he said, "because the townies can show you how to do it" he said. So he said, "Come on, what are you wanting?" So I said, "I want a suit." "Right, come on, we'll see about a suit,

a ready made suit". So I got a ready made suit, and he said, "Right, come on now, a raincoat, a heavy coat?" "Och," I said, "I don't know, I've not really got the money for that". "Come on and have a look anyway." So I had a look, and he brought me a lovely nap coat, half belt, lovely nap coat. Well I got the suit and I got the nap coat, and got change back off my £5.

SB Well, that wasn't bad!

DM So you were asking the prices, so that's what I got anyway. I got a suit of clothes and a lovely nap coat, blue nap coat, half belt, and I never paid a fiver for it. Ken, years ago I had to depend on my dividend, I purchased everything in the co-operative, I never went past the co-operative, and then they paid dividend twice a year.

SB Can you remember the.....

DM Well, we were getting 3/6 in the pound. I've seen me lifting about £14. I've seen me lifting about £16 of a dividend and taking the two of them to Edinburgh and getting their summer rig out or winter coats or whatever they needed. They had these nap coats for the school, and all that. That's where my dividend went, I purchased everything in the co-op.

SB Yes, but it was a good thing because you knew you had something to come back.

DM Yes, and there's none of that now, what we could do with.

SB Now we could go back to it again! It's true enough. Now, what about medical facilities? i.e. doctors,....

DM Oh, we have always had the doctors, It would be a funny one that did, but I don't think we could ever complain about our medical.....always good enough, no doubt about that, some of them just went on the bicycle.

SB Can you remember your doctor?

DM The doctor? We had Doctor Young, and Dr. Flint, and Dr. Seymour, and Dr. Jordan.

SB Now what about medicines? Can you.. did the doctor supply you with the medicine?

DM I've seen the doctor making up the medicines.

SB Yes, and did you have to pay for them?

DM No, no, we never paid. He just made it up himself.

SB Now what about friendly societies and insurances?

DM Oh, well, he was always in the Foresters, the Ancient Order of Forresters. And I was always in the Reckovites.

SB Can you remember how much you paid in premiums?

DM It wasn't very much, you didn't pay very much, I just can't mind what we actually paid. You got the last one out after the National Health came, we didn't take anything out after the National Health, 1947, we were just at Mossend after that. 1950. It was the last payments we received from the Foresters, it was £40. and we were paying - what was it - about 11- a fortnight, and we got £40, that was for about 10 years. Aye, it would be that, anyway.

SB Now, entertainment, women's entertainment. What did you do, how did you entertain yourself?

DM Well, I was never around here very much. I was brought up here certainly, but I was always away in service. I was away in London for a long while.

SB Now the women's position, you know with the company, i.e. with Scottish Oils, what was the situation there, were you accepted, or were you just

plain ignored, or.....

DM Oh, you were accepted, oh yes, oh you were accepted right enough.

SB So you were well treated, were you?

DM Oh, we were accepted right enough, they were very good people. Addiewell was - I took up house in Addiewell, it was a good community. Irish people, Scottish people, they were all.....they were very good.

Transcript

DM

Industrial
Information

I left school in December 1922, and I started on a temporary job at the beginning of 1923.

This old man had paraffin cancer from the paraffin sheds in Addiewell Oil Works.

Greasing Wagons

The job that I took over from him was to grease the wagons for the locomotives running into a breaker. I was paid off this job after six months.

Sandboy

I then got another job as a sandboy. I had to dry the sand at a big fire for the locomotives and changed what we called the points to put the locomotives on to the different roads.

You held up these different points, and they had all different whistles, one, two and three.

Wages

At that time I was getting twelve shillings a week.

Labourer for Locomotives
Engineer

I then went on to labour for the locomotives' engineers, and I was there for some time, then I went on to railway repairing, what they called a plate-layer. I went from there on to the locomotives. I worked on the locomotives at Addiewell Works. We ran to Locomotives Burngrange where the disaster was. I was on the night the disaster took place. We ran then into what we called the Fraser shale pit and number twenty-six pit. I worked on these two until the Burngrange disaster. Then it closed down. Closure of Burngrange I couldn't say how long Burngrange was closed after the disaster. Perhaps it was five or six months until they went down other parts of the mine.

Wages and Shifts

I was bringing in somewhere in the region of £3 for doing seven hours on the locomotives, I was dayshift, backshift and nightshift, and I changed over on the different shifts.

Westwood Pit

I got transferred to the breaker at Westwood. This was running the wagons into the breaker, where another man tipped them up with a machine. I was on this for quite some time.

Steam Locomotives

The company had been working

with diesel locomotives, but then they decided to buy steam locomotives. The Manager, Mr. Spittal, asked me if I would like to learn steam locomotives

Floating Man on Steam Diesel Locomotives

So what they did was to put me driving steam locomotives, and then he would teach me the diesel locomotives. One day I was driving a steam locomotive and the next day I was driving a diesel locomotive. The next day I could be a shunter on the diesel locomotives.

Weighing Shale

The next day I could be in a wee office weighing the amount of shale that was going up the belt. The wagons full of shale were emptied each day. I had these big ledgers that the amount of shale from each pit had to be entered into.

Wages

On this job at Westwood I was getting £14. That was the top line. Then there was your rent and coal taken off the wages.

Closure of Westwood

Westwood closed down in 1962.

Watchman

When Westwood closed down I was kept on as a watchman, because there was so much machinery, and brass and copper coming up from the pit that we had to watch that it wasn't stolen. they brought in two Alsatians, and we paraded the place.

Shifts	There was one man to each shift that's how we worked. Dayshift, nightshift and backshift. It was a lonely job on nightshift.
W & J R Watson	After all the equipment was moved from the mine, and my job finished I got a job at W. & J. R. Watsons' in Westwood putting up pailings. But as soon as it was put up that that was my job finished.
Conditions in the Mines	They were not bad conditions in the mines. We had to work hard, and we had never any time to put off. There were the surface workers that were labouring to the engineers. If they needed a shunter, they never chose to go on as a shunter because they knew they would have to keep going.
Tools	We had no tools to work with.
Clothing	On the locomotives you were supplied with raincoats leggings and a coat. We just wore our own clothes underneath that, which was dungarees. We wore tackety boots which cost about 30/- or something like that. We bought them at the co-operative.
Accident	I had an accident to my back when I was driving a steam locomotive. If you had a bad throttle when you were reversing against the steam and you had to hold on for grim death in case you got blown off the footplate.

Accident Compensation	<p>On this occasion I just felt this jerk, and I said, 'there it goes.' So I just went to Bangour and they put me into bed. I lay on boards for six weeks to two months. Then a doctor came from Edinburgh and examined me. I then had to go to the Infirmary for an operation. I can't mind what I got for compensation, it was about 30/- or £1, but this was more than the insurance was. There was the National Health, but you went on to compensation instead of the National Health.</p>
After the Operation	<p>After the operation to the disc in my back I went home to convalesce.</p>
Unions	<p>We paid maybe threepence or that away back to belong to the Union. Then it would go up a bit as the years went on. In the end I paid about 1/6. I gave the man called Cully sixpence every time he came. Maybe threepence up to sixpence and then it advanced as time went on.</p>
Strike	<p>I can remember when I started they were going on strike for more money. Our delegate there was a man by the name of O'Rourke. He said we should accept ninepence that had been offered. I was working when the 1926 general strike took place.</p>

Second World War

I was exempted from military service during the second World War because I was on the locomotives .

The 'Bevin Boys' came in to work in the mines during the war. They weren't good workers, because I would be waiting ;on shale with the locomotive and they would be standing there instead of filling the wagons. After the war had finished most of the 'Bevin Boys' just drifted back to where they had come from.

Retirement Pension

When I retired from B.P. I got a pension of £25, and I also got a pension of roughly £26 from B.P. Harlow.

Domestic Life/Housing

We had a room and a kitchen in Addiewell.

Lighting

We also had electric light in those days, and I think we paid about 12/6 when we had our meters read every three months.

Water

In those days we had just cold water, and there were no baths. I sometimes bathed in the wash; tub.

Washing

The washing had to be done outside in the wash-house. The boiler had to be lit for hot water which had to be brought up in a pail to start with.

Toilets

There was a flush toilet at the top of the stair.
When we had the dry toilets

they had to be cleaned and there was another man employed for going round and sweeping them out and emptying them out.

Co-operative

We had various vans that called round from the co-operative. Bread, milk and butter cost just half a penny in those days. Tea was 9d. a quarter.

Teatime

We would have fish or stew, chops or sausages, vegetables and potatoes.

Clothing

Clothing could be expensive. I can remember the time I went to Edinburgh for a suit of clothes from Jackson's of Leith Street and got change from my £5. This was long before we were married.

Doctor

We had a Dr. Young, Dr. Flint Dr. Seymour and Dr. Jordan. They made up the medicines themselves.

Friendly/Society & Insurance

We were always in the Foresters, The Ancient Order of Forresters. We didn't pay much in premiums. We got the last out when the National Health came in 1947. The last payment we received from Foresters was £40. This was after paying 2/- a fortnight for about ten years.

Social Life

I spent a lot of time with my pigeons, and I was never away from the bottom of the garden, and I never went on holiday because of my pigeons. It was

a trying sport, and I used to take part in the big race from France.

Quoits

I never played this game but my brother did.

Whippets

I used to go to the whippets with my brother. But I was only a bit of a laddie at that time.

Institute Hall

The Institute Hall belonged to Young's Paraffin Light and Mineral Oil Company. It held billiards, carpet bowls, dominoes, cards and bowling green with it as well. We had to pay twopence a half hour for the billiard table.