

DM TAPE ONE SIDE ONE

Q. Well, what mine was it you worked in first of all?

DM The Roman Camps, Roman Camps mines in Broxburn. The Roman Camps is the name of the place, where the mines were of course, and there were shale mines in Broxburn too of course, I only worked in the Roman Camp mine.

Q. When did you start there?

DM Oh now, I would be only about 15, 16 years old. I was 16 when I went to them.

Q. So how long ago is that now, that will be - 50 years, something like that?

DM More than - oh, it will be 60 years. I'm 83 so I started in the mines, was working in the mines since I was 16, as a boy.

Q. And was that you just left school or had you been doing something else before?

DM Well I was a grocer before that, when I left school.

Q. Was it more money in the mines?

DM Aye, that's right.

Q. How did you get started? Was your father in it, or...

DM Yes, all our family. Father, brother David here, they were all miners.

Q. Were you all working together?

DM No, we worked with different men in different places.

Q. Well, you would start at the pit bottom, did you?

DM Well, that's where we went first, to the pit bottom. Then from the pit bottom there was roads running that way and that way. North, East, South and West.

Q. What did you finish up doing, were you at the drawing, or...

DM I was drawing, then I was a faceman, a faceman. I finished up a faceman.

Q. And was that more money for being a faceman?

DM Oh yes, the faceman, he had charge of your wages, the drawers that worked with him.

Q. You had your own place then?

DM They had their own place, that's right. And the seams would vary from about 5 and a half feet to about seven feet, the seams of shale like. You had five feet, you hadn't much room, you were bent most of the time, you know.

Q. What seam was it you were working, was it.....

DM Broxburn. The Broxburn seam of shale, down at the Roman camp, then they had different names for the seams. There was the "wee shale" which was about six feet, then they had the "big shale" it was seven feet, seven feet and a half, different types

of shale. There was curly shale. See where they used to make rings, shale rings, polish them up, at one time, put wee diamonds on them. Made out of shale.

Q. I've never heard of them before. Were any of the seams harder to work than the other ones?

DM Oh they were all, in the same system, the mining, the shale mining was always done in the same system. But there was some seams about five feet, and you'd get other seams 6 1/2' to 7'. Then there was a shale, what they called the Jubilee shale, it had a white seam running through it.

Q. Going up and down the way was it, or.....

DM Well, some mines it was running that way, your seam of shale, and other mines it was running flat. Different style...the seams of shale.

Q. Well what was the difference from when you were on the drawing to when you got your own place, I mean, how much money did that mean to you in the week?

DM Oh well, the faceman, the one who had the place, he'd a shilling more at least than the drawer, that was the one that was filling the hutches, the drawer was the one that filled the hutches, and take them out to the pit bottom and it went on a carriage then and went to the top. You just put the - you run your hutch of shale on to this trolley and it was taken to the pit head.

Q. And he would get a shilling more - was that a shilling more on the ton, or... that he got than the faceman?

DM No, no.

Q. A shilling more a week?

DM A shilling more a week. A shilling more a day. The faceman was - the faceman had from a shilling to two shillings more than the drawer. Because he was the man that was responsible for giving you the shale. He'd to bore holes, just like that - say that was a seam of shale, he'd bore holes in there and blast it, then the drawer - he comes in with his bogey.

Q. And the faceman had to buy his own explosives, had he?

DM Yes, he was responsible for the explosives, and also the hand drills.

Q. Was it hand drills when you started?

DM Yes, we had a machine and we put a drill into it you see. Then we put this drill into the seam of shale they were working and we'd bore about four feet to five feet holes, and blast it out, that was it.

Q. Did you just blast the bottom out and let the rest fall in?

DM Yes, you took the bottom out first, you'd bore a hole in here, you see, and you would run your drill at an angle where it would touch that for maybe four feet or five feet then you would put in your explosives, and damp it up.

Q. What kind of explosives did you use, was it just powder, or..

DM At first, away in the late days, away in the late times it was powder, but then we got it in a solid lump, a round - just a round lump and you put these in. Every lump you got was about half a pound, half a pound in it, you see. And your first hole was always the heaviest charged, because you had to burst that - right in the belly - you had to burst that before you could get your side shots outside. You see you bored - this is your shale that you are working on. You bore a hole to about 5' or 4' and you put your powder in there, and stem it up, that's

the first one, and that makes - when that's off, the side ones, you bore one at that side and one at that side, well when you take this one out, the centre one, it's easier for this and for this to blast the whole lot across.

Q. So that means you've got a foot on either side you're boring against?

DM From a foot to two foot. That was the way of working then, you had some seams - the seam's five feet, see the breadth of this fireplace, you'd seams of shale that, and you'd have about six or maybe eight feet a seam, what they call a seam of shale, you'd different measurements for your shale. Then of course you'd your roof, you see.

Q. Now you were saying that you had - there was some water in the mine. Was it deep?

DM Oh yes. I was in a lot of wet places. It was just running on the top of me when I was working.

Q. Were you standing in it, or was it just drained off, or....

DM Aye, it run off. We had what we called a gutter at the side, it run right out the road, the road that you were working.

Q. So you were never standing in water to work?

DM No, oh no. But I've had many a wet shirt, it's been dropping from the roof, working, aye, I've had many a wet shirt.

Q. What did you wear just a sort of -

DM A simmit we called it, a simmit. Just like that what you've got on, just like that, only it was darker.

Q. And what about trousers, was it moleskin trousers?

DM Moleskin trousers, yes. You couldn't work with the likes of that. God, you would get all torn to bits, it was moleskin.

Q. The moleskin would be waterproof as well, was it?

DM Aye.

Q. And what kind of piece did you have with you, what kind of piece would you take with you?

DM Oh, just butter and.....

Q. Jam or cheese?

DM Or cheese, jam. I always liked the jams, and cheese too. A nice sandwich. And our piecebox held about four slices, four to five slices of bread in your piecebox.

Q. What was the piecebox made of, would it be a metal one to keep the rats out?

DM Well, tin, you know.

Q. Were there many rats down the mines?

DM Rats? Oh aye, there were quite a few rats. That's where they made their home, the rats, in the mines.

Q. I mean, did they tend to go where the miners were working to get at their food that they took in with them or...

DM The rats? Oh you'd to watch where your piecebox was. Of course it was all those metal boxes we had then, it wasn't just paper.

It was metal boxes that we carried. They were safer anyway. And they kept your bread fresh too. You'd get about four or five slices of bread a day. And a flask of tea.

Q. Now, what were you using for lights, what kind of lamps did you have?

DM Well, I had carbide, but previous to the carbide lamps coming out, it was oil lamps we had, and we'd to - there was a spout on your oil tin that you put on your cap, you see, there was a leather on your cap, and you had holes plugged in and when you used your lamp, and it was oil, oil lamps we had then, till latterly the batteries came out, and it was batteries we were using then. We'd a waist belt, your battery here, and running from that battery you'd a tube with a torch on to your cap, so your lamp fitted on to your cap, you see. And you had this carbide, that was gas, carbide with water, you know, that's what we used at the finish up. But in older times to that it was oil, pit oil we used to call it. That was all we used. With a wee lamp, and we'd to make wick - we bought the wick out the shop.

Q. Was that out a company shop, or....

DM An ordinary shop, you know, the...so that was for your lamp, and you burred it up about the thickness of your finger and you put that into your oil lamps, you know, you just made it so you could put it into your oil lamp and you filled your oil lamp, that was just like a small teapot, sit it on your cap.

Q. Did you get much light off them?

DM Oh yes, you got good light. Some used the candle grease, you see, with their pit lamp, they put the candle grease into the lamp you see, and you would get - whenever you started to burn

your wick it melted the grease that was in your lamp you see, so that was supplying the wick that was in your lamp. It was melting it you see. Then of course pit oil was another thing, we used the pit oil. That was an oil that they used for the miner's lamps. Then if there was gas in your place we had safety lamps, safety lamps. This was a lamp -

Q. What were they like?

DM This was - it had a handle on it, that was the lamp that the fireman took to look for gas in your place, in the morning before you went down, to see there was no gas in your place, He'd be sitting there waiting on you before you went down in the cage. And you'd say "Right, aye right" and if there was any places that he had passed through that there was gas in, he would stop them and see you would have to wait, and he would come down with you with his safety lamp to see that the place was clear of gas before the miner.....

Q. How would he clear the place, how would he get the gas out?

DM Air, air from the surface and there were fans putting the air down through the mine. There was screencloth down the middle to divert the draught, gave you fresh air.

Q. How did the safety lamps work, did they just burn brighter if there was gas there, or....

DM Well...they turned a different colour, didn't they? The safety lamps was just like these lamps what you see them with at the fire brigade. They were a long lamp, long like that with a thing..... we called that a "Glennie" lamp.

Q. Oh, the Glennie lamp, aye.

DM All the firemen used these lamps when they looked at your place, before you went down in the morning. You'd just ask him, "Right, Tom" "Aye, you're all right". If there was any place that had gas in them, the Glennie lamp used to turn down.

Q. Oh so it used to go down if there was gas.

DM Aye, see that was a signal that it was in the gas with this glennie lamp, this glennie lamp could tell them if there was gas in the place.

Q. So, I mean, you wouldn't get to work till it was clear?

DM Till it was clear. And that was - that screencloth the brother was telling you about the now, that was the air, led the air into the place, see that door's open, feel the draught coming in that door? Well, it's travelling, but this side here there's not air going in here, well this screencloth was to direct the air into the place where you were working. Of course the fans on the top was giving you the air you see.

Q. Was it a dangerous job, were there many folks hurt?

DM Oh aye, there was a lot of serious accidents, you know.

Q. Was that mainly with the blasting, or.....

DM No, not with the blasting, but the weight coming on the roof at night you know, and that's where we used to use props 6' - 8' props to keep the roof up for us going in in the morning. We'd to do that to every bit of the shale we took out, we followed up putting these timber to roof.

Q. And did that fall in sometimes?

DM Oh yes, I've seen it, the weight would be too much, your strap across the roof that you had put up to keep the roof up, I've seen it breaking.

Q. Were you ever hurt in the mine, or....

DM Och, occasionally, injuries.

Q. But nothing serious?

DM Nothing serious, no.

Q. And were you off work at all, or.....

DM Well, I would be off work sometimes, for instance, my father, he lost an eye, and he was in the Infirmary twice, with his eye, and his knee. Donald lost an eye. See I was only five years old when they were all working. But I can mind, it was exactly the same. You never know, apparently shale was very dangerous, because it doubled its weight down there. For all it was the size of a shilling, but if it fell from the roof, it was like a razor blade, it could - see - and then of course it was a - 14 lb in weight and it fell, it doubled its weight or trebled its weight because there's no air to hold it up. There was no gravity, it just came down and this is what used to hit many of us, pieces of shale.. We used to put the beams in. Say you were down in the shale mine, that's your roof up there and we had to put beams across, and put uprights to the beams to keep the roof up, we went on, as we marched on and took the shale out we'd to keep putting these beams for the roof, you see.

Q. Was that when you were opening up a new place, was it, or was that just part of the job all the time?

DM That was part of the job all the time.

Q. You were saying that your father was injured. Did you get money off the company when you were off work?

DM Compensation.

Q. You got compensation?

DM Oh yes, if you got hurt you had to fight for it. But an eye cost £50. You know, if you took £5, they wouldn't - there was no value on anything. If you accepted what they would give you they would give you very little. Your Union - that was when the unions were beginning to take a grip of the thing and help the miners to get compensation for..... Money in these times was very scarce and of course I suppose £50 in that time was a lot of money. And I suppose that the mining will be very interesting to you to hear about what..

Q. Aye. Was it a company doctor you had, and did you have to pay so much for a doctor a week?

DM We paid - 6d we paid - everybody in the family paid 2d. My father paid - I think my father paid - he paid 6d for the whole family, that was - we were at school you see, so we were paid for by the doctor, and they took 2d a week off every miner. Dr. Kelso was the doctor then, at least as far as I mind Dr. Kelso was the doctor for the mines. But if any doctor was called out he got paid separately. He was paid to - they didn't always get their own doctor, you know. Dr. Scott that came was the doctor.

Q. Was he paid for by the miner?

DM He was paid by the company .

Q. By the company.

DM On call, more or less.

Q. Oh, I see .

DM But they paid for the doctor for the family. There was so much kept off your pay for the doctor, that was for the family doctor, kept off your pay. That was before the insurance stamp came out. There was no insurance stamp then. The workman's train used to come here at six o'clock in the morning with three carriages on it, you know where the bridge went over the west end of Broxburn. Well it used to come from the big yard away along - you know where Stewartfield is now, well, that was the big yard, that was all Young's Paraffin Lamp, right along there. Well, you know where the Greendykes Industrial Estate is, that was all works. There was the candle works there, and the and the retorts. Well, some of the retorts there too. The train used to come from away - see what you've missed? This pug used to come with three carriages in the morning from as far away as - you know where - a couple of miles anyway. You know where Broxburn Industrial Estate is? Well, away at the back there, well, that was all mines, that was all refinery works, power stations and they were all linked up with the main road down to the Arches. Well this thing with three carriages, three old carriages, it would be on the main line at one time, but they came up, and they came right round the arches over the west end of Broxburn straight up to the Camps. They collected miners all the way up.

Q. And that was coming round at six in the morning?

DM Oh aye. I think it was at our place at about six. We used to

hear it.

Q. When did the morning shift start then?

DM six to two .

Q. Six til two .

DM An eight hour shift.

Q. And there was a two till ten one as well, was there?

DM Yes, the backshift,. we called it the backshift.

Q. Did anybody work overnight?

DM Ah well, if there were necessary cases you know, or sometimes if you had to get men, what we called roadmen, that was the men that looked after your roads, put the rails down and put wood up for your safety, what we called roadmen, they done that, as we worked in, got in and made roads they put the rails down and - to keep us going.

Q. So that was done overnight was it?

DM No, through the day.

Q. Oh, that was done during the day.

DM Ah, but they came in at night as well. Oh, there was night-shift men on for special work. You see, maybe getting the place ready for you coming out in the morning, to start away a fresh part of the shale you know, make roads for somebody else.

Q. What kind of thing was there for the miners to do in Broxburn at night. It would be different from the villages, there was pubs here of course.

DM Oh, the place was full of pubs. There was just pubs, or there was the Institute, I played billiards, at nights, snooker, and whatnot. You know where the Post Office in Broxburn is now? Well, that used to be the Institute. Robert, you must remember that, the steeple up there and the clock, the clock tower and all that, mind of that, well, that was - the company put that up. Public hall and all that sort of thing. But there was very little entertainment, in the place, except the cinema which was only a wooden hut, down the..... , a corrugated wooden hut we used to go down and watch the pictures down there. It used to be all shale miners.

Q. Was there much gambling went on with the miners, was there card schools?

DM Oh, they had the nap schools, and the tossing. You could if you won! If you'd a good Sunday at the tossing!

Q. A lot of money changing hands, was there?

DM Yes, of course, they weren't all miners, but you got that everywhere, even at Seafield, Fauldhouse, and all that, and then Pumpherston, well, up the tip was a renowned place, and then up at Greendykes Road, they'd all meet at..... You've seen a few tips here, haven't you?

Q. Aye.

DM Well, it was all over, shale brought up from underneath. It was a very, very sad end. Oakbank Oil Company, Young's

Oil Company, Broxburn Oil Company, these were all the different.....

Q. What one was it that had the Camps mine?

DM Paraffin Young? That was the Broxburn Oil Company.

Q. That was the Broxburn Oil Company.

DM I worked in the Camps for years. B.P. took it all over....

Q. Were you at the Camps till it shut down?

DM Till it shut down. Then I went to 35, that's Whitequarries.  
(Then you went to Kirkland. We were in Kirkland for -  
and then you went to - You know where the Redrow? George  
was out there)

Q. Where was that?

DM No. 35 pit. That was Ecclesmachan, the Redroad area, you  
know where these houses are after you go over the Watterston  
brae, you come down into where - you have rows of red houses  
there, they're all private now, well at the end of there  
there's a farm, that was the mine there. It was a big  
mine too, a lot of men worked in that.

Q. So did you just get moved about from one to another after  
they were shut down?

DM That's right. After the war you see, after the first world  
war, they brought the money, they brought the pay, because  
they needed the oil for petrol, we didn't call it petrol,  
it was naphtha we used to call it, oh the first war, it  
was a booming place in the first war, it was the only place

they could get oil, out of the shale, dig it down below!  
That was the only source they had. This was a booming place in the first world war, and when the war finished, they struck oil in Saudi Arabia. That was when they were getting Saudi Arabia oil, B.P. was on that, there was also Anglo Persian Oil Co., they came in about - I think it would be about 1919, 1920, when the war finished. Then they reduced all the wages. And that was when they came out on strike.

Q. That was about 1925, wasn't it, the strike?

DM Well, the first strike was in 1921. Then they got them out again. Then the 25/26 one was when they closed most of it up. That was - as far as I heard that was the Union gave them an ultimatum - if they didn't give them a rise they would down what they call the boilers. I mind McKelvie was the man's name at that time.....

Q. What were the boilers?

DM That was where they kept the fans, and all the heating apparatus, you know, everything that worked the men - the pulleys and everything you see, was all under the miners they were kept, well they said that - this is only what I heard, I - apparently the meeting was in Glasgow, and they were going to have an ultimatum, that was, if they didn't get this fourpence a ton or something like that, there was a dispute, they were reducing them down and they said they would down the boilers, well, they got word from Glasgow that the meeting had refused the extra money, they had refused to give them it, and they drew the boilers. Well, you can't light a                      with because they just crack, and that was when most of the mines got shut.

Q. How long did the strike go on for?

DM It was a good while, wasn't it? Six weeks, that was when everybody started going into Edinburgh to work. They never opened - they didn't open Stewartfields, the Dunnet never opened, Carldubs never opened, the Camps opened, but Pumpherston there was a lot of mines in Pumpherston Oil never opened. A lot of men never got back to - just had to go and look for jobs elsewhere.

Q. Did you never think of going and working in the coal when the strike was on?

DM No. There was one or two got a job in the coal. Donald worked in the rubber works for a while, Bruce worked with the painters down the Forth Bridge, but they all came back to the mines when they opened up. They were all in the Camps. The Camps opened, so they got back. But there was an awful lot of mines didn't open, that's when it started - because by that time, Anglo Persian, B.P. and the other places - in America they were striking oil. They were getting oil without digging anything. They were only just having to dig a hole in the ground and it was bubbling up and they were - the only thing that they were getting from us was - I think this is true - that Young had the only patent for purifying the oil. Retorting the oil. It was his patent. And America - they came over here to buy Young's patent. And Young got a royalty off them. Every gallon that they purified, because it was his patent. They tried and tried to get another patent, but they couldn't. They could only use his patent for purifying the oil. So that's something maybe you didn't know. It was Young's patent and they had to use it in America for the oil, to retort their oil. And of course that started - I think

Churchill was the one.....of course, it was too dear to produce the shale oil. See they were getting it flowing out the ground with the result that - it's better oil, I mean, the shale oil is - it's stronger, clearer, better oil, and I think you get more By prox out the shale than it wasn't worthwhile. Too dear to bring it to the top.

Q. So when did you eventually stop working in the mines then?

DM 1961 do you think?

Q. I mean, were you there till they shut down altogether, or..

DM Oh aye, Aye, they offered a lot of them jobs in Grangemouth. I was born in 1899, so I was 60 then.

Q. So you wouldn't try and get another job then, you would just..

DM Oh aye, I worked for the School Education Authority, worked with them. The High School, janitor.

Q. I mean, there would be a lot of men in Broxburn looking for work at that time?

DM Oh aye, well they started after the war, the second world war, they started the industrial estate here, and that took away - but between the wars, Broxburn, the main road there, in fact Bathgate was - you could hardly get across the road for buses carrying the workers into Edinburgh. A 15 minute service, sometimes two buses every fifteen minutes. They called them duplicates. They could only run one, because it was only one that was on the timetable. Know what I mean? But they could run as many buses at the same time. But you couldn't put another one on ten

minutes later, you had to run all of them at the same time, so they used to call them duplicates. The bus would come down, if it was at a slack time, you only had one bus. But if it was a busy time like seven o'clock in the morning, buses were permanently running.

Q. At that time that was because of all the mines that were shutting?

DM Because of the mines shutting. In fact, I did that for eleven years, at that time in the mines we had oil lamps, and we used to buy, you know, the pit oil, you'd a wee lamp with a wick, we made wick, then we got the carbide lamp which was lighter. The miners used to come down and bring carbide and water with them, when you ... eventually out of water, with your thing at the top, and you got too much water you got drowned. It used to run down and it would go out then you'd have to take the other bottle up and the smell would knock you down. You'd a cap with a piece of leather.

Q. Was it just a wee loop, or ...

DM And you made a hole for ... It sat on your bonnet. An ordinary cap. The miner's wife would sew or stitch or do something for a bit of the leather on the front with a slot in it just like the leather of your boot.  
An old boot that was finished. Take the leather and put it on the front. And you hung your lamp on that. Nothing special about that.

Q. When did they start using helmets?

DM The helmets came out later on. That was a safety helmet. After the war you needed it. There was no security or anything, you could go down the mine naked if you liked, as

long as you were sending up the shale or coal. The manager didn't worry on how you got down as long as you were sending the stuff up. Many a sore head, and blood running down till these helmets came out, till we got the helmets. It must have been because you were stooping all the time and the work down the mine and pits. They worked down the mines stripped to the waist. In other places you were soaking wet, boots like sponges working in water. It was dropping off the roof. You've no idea, nobody knows. I don't suppose they could have taken films of it at that time because it would have been hard to record it. And it was all the moleskin trousers we had - moleskins if they got wet..... Have you heard of the "Bow Yank"?

Q. No.

DM Well, that's when they used to put a..... they used to draw them up like that put a tape round about them, a thong just below the knee, and then they came like that and that was to keep that out, the water. Some of them used to come down the road without taking their bow yanks out. You could take them out when you were coming out. That was to keep your legs out the water.

They always had their thongs drying, and their trousers drying. The house was like a .... what was it like ... it was like a tannery. Because the Bow Yanks were just leather. Aye, that was the good old days, you see, Klondyke! You were working in the water all day and your simmit as we called it, your pit simmit, they had to get put on a rope to dry for you the next morning, or sitting at the fire over a chair to dry your simmit for the morning. Och, we thought nothing of it.

Transcript	DM
Industrial Information	I started at Roman Camps mines in Broxburn when I was fifteen or sixteen years old. My father and brother David were all miners.
Pit Bottom	I went first to the pit bottom where there were roads running North, South, East and West.
Drawing	From the pit bottom I went on to the drawing for a while, then I went on to be a faceman.
Faceman	As a faceman I had my own place. The seams of shale would vary from about five and a half feet to seven feet. In a five foot seam there wasn't much room, and you were bent most of the time.
Types of Shale	The Broxburn seam of shale at Roman Camp they had different names for the seams of shale. There was the 'wee shale', it was seven feet. There was 'curly shale', they used to make rings, (shale rings), and polish them up at one time and put diamonds on them. Then there was what they called 'Jubilee shale', it had a white seam running through it. The mining of shale was always done on the same system.
Mining Shale	Some mines the shale run that

way, and in other mines it ran flat. The faceman had to bore the holes at an angle with a ratchet drill. The holes went in for maybe four or five feet and then you would put the explosives in. We used powder to prime the holes. You got a solid lump of shale out after blasting. Every lump was about half a pound.

#### Charging

The first hole was always charged heaviest because you had to burst that right in the belly before you could get your shots outside. You bored a hole about four and a half to five feet and put your powder in, and stem it up. The side ones you bored one at each side, so that when you blasted it was much easier to blast the whole lot across. This gave you a foot to two foot either side. It was then the drawers job to fill the hutches up.

#### Conditions

It was a deep mine, and I was in a lot of wet places. The water just ran off me. We had what we called a gutter at the side, it ran right out to the road that I was working in. I've had many a wet shirt.

#### Clothing

I wore what they called a simmit, and moleskin trousers, which were waterproof.

Rats	There were quite a few rats down the mine, that's where they made their home. They would tend to go where the miners were working to get their food. You had to watch your piece box, which were metal. It was safe anyway, and it kept your bread fresh.
Oil Lamps	At first we had oil lamps. There was a spout on the oil tin that you put your cap on. There was a leather on your cap, and you had the holes plugged in when you used the lamp.
Battery Lamps	Latterly battery lamps came out. We had a waist belt, and running from the battery there was a tube with a torch on to your cap, so your lamp fitted on to your cap.
Carbide Lamps	After the battery lamps we had carbide lamps. That was gas called carbide with water, that is what we used to finish up with.
Gas	The fireman took a safety lamp down to your work place before you started work. If there was any places he passed through that had gas he would stop us from going any further. Then air from the surface was pushed down with large fans, and there was a screen cloth down the middle to divert the draught, and that gave you fresh air.

## Safety Lamps

The safety lamps turned a different colour if there was gas present. They were long Glennie Lamps.

## Workmans' Train

The workmans' train used to come here at six o'clock in the morning with three carriages on it. It used to come from a big yard at Stewartfield, that was all Young's Paraffin Lamp right along there. The 'pug', as it was called used to come from the Broxburn Industrial Estate, that was all mines, and the refinery works and power stations and they were all linked up with the main road down to the arches. Well this thing with the three old carriages would be on the main line at the one time, and as they came up they came right round the arches and over the west end of Broxburn straight up to the Camps. They collected miners all the way up.

## Shifts

The morning shift started at six until two, an eight hour shift. There was a backshift that worked from two until ten. If there were necessary cases, was a backshift as well. Sometimes if you had to get men, what we called the 'roadmen' to put rails down and put wood up for safety, they had to do that to be ready for the men coming out in the morning to start at

a fresh part of shale.

Wages

When I was a drawer the faceman paid my wages. When I went as a faceman I had to pay the drawers that worked with me.

Accidents

There were a lot of serious accidents, not with blasting but the weight of shale on the roof which broke the strap. My father lost an eye, and he was in the Infirmary twice with his eye and also his knee.

Doctor

Dr. Kelso was the doctor for the mines, but if any doctor was called out he got paid separately. They took 2d a week off every miner for the doctor. That was before the Insurance stamp came out.

Compensation

If you got hurt in the mines you had to fight for compensation. An eye cost fifty pounds. If you accepted what they gave you then you would get very little. I suppose fifty pounds was a lot of money in those days.

Union

That was when the Unions had to take a grip of the thing and help miners get compensation.

Strike

The first strike was in 1921. Then they got them out again. In 1925-56 was when they closed most of the shale mines up. I heard the Unions gave them an ultimatum that if they didn't

give them a rise they would  
down what they called the  
boilers'. That was where  
they kept the fans and all the  
heating apparatus. Apparently  
there was a meeting in Glasgow  
and if they didn't get four- r  
pence a ton or something like  
that there was a dispute. They  
said that they would down the  
boilers. The strike lasted a  
long time and that was when  
everybody started going to  
Edinburgh to work. The shale  
mines never opened again,  
Stewartfield, Dunnet, Carduds  
closed. Camps opened, but  
there were also a lot of mines  
in Pumpherston that never  
opened.

After the first World War they  
needed the oil for petrol, but  
we didn't call it petrol, it  
was called naphtha and this area  
was booming then. That was  
when they struck oil in Saudi  
Arabic. There was also the  
Anglo-Persian Oil Company.  
They were sent over from America  
to buy Young's patent, and Young  
got the royalties from them.  
Every gallon that they purified  
with his patent they had to pay  
for. They tried and tried to  
get another patent, but they  
couldn't.

End of Shale Oil

So of course it was too dear  
to produce shale, because they  
were getting it flowing out of  
the ground and it was better.  
The shale mines were shut down

in 1961. A lot of the men from the shale mines were offered jobs in Grangemouth. As I was sixty I didn't go to Grangemouth. I got a job as a janitor in the High School run by the Educational Authority.

Domestic Life  
Housing

The houses were miners rows which were red. They are all privately owned now.

Social Life  
Pubs

Broxburn was full of pubs, and the shale miners used to go there quite often.

Billiards & Snooker

I played billiards and snooker at night. We played in the Institute Hall in Broxburn, that is the Post Office now.

Pictures

There was little entertainment in the place except the cinema. This was only a corrugated wooden hut. It was only for the shale miners.

Gambling

They had the nap schools, and the tossing. There was a lot of money changed hands, and it wasn't just miners that gambled.

That was the social life we had in Broxburn in those days.

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