

FS                      SIDE ONE

GC    Start now.

FS    About when I started my work? Well I started when I was about 15 years old. I went to East Calder Secondary School and a year's day school at Ramsay Tech, then I started my training at 5 year's night school, Bellevue and back to Ramsay Tech again.

GC    Can you remember what years that was you started?

FS    Let's see now.

GC    1949, '8?

FS    That would be 1949. (Wife talking in background).

GC    49?

FS    '49 Aye. My father worked there in the cracking plant doing plant work, and my Grandfather was there doing the same thing. I'd four uncles doing the same work through the years and my brother worked there and nephew and more or less I started because there wasn't much work going about.

GC    Who was the manager at this time?

FS    Anderson was the main Manager's name and Sutherland was the Under-Manager, and they were quite good Managers.

GC    Who was your foreman?

FS    Wullie McDowell was my first foreman and then Drew Newall started up in the stores, then I was 15 until I left at the age of 16 and then I went to the engineering shop, and then two years there working with Michael Linn. I left there and done seven months in the drawing

office with Willie McNeill. I went from there to the boiler house.

GC What kind of work did you do as an apprentice in the power shop?

FS More or less stripping pumps, overhauling.....pumps, working on jobs regarding the pumps couplings and such like, big variety of work. There was an old saying in the Pumpherston Work, if you served your time there you could go anywhere, and later in life as I experienced it was a true saying, well if you got big variety in work you made that a way of life.

GC Can you remember much about your workmates, other than Michael Linn?

FS Well compared with nowadays there was more harmony then and more fun, and it was more enjoyable than what I have now.

GC You are now B.P. at Pumpherston?

FS Yes B.P. at Pumpherston, the Detergent Works.

GC And to make a comparison, when you started work and to compare with now, what differences do you find?

FS Well not the same variety of work now, we..... things started a lot more expensive now regarding pumps and such like, but most of the 'old heads would rather have the old days than what we have now. That's my opinion.

GC Even though you're earning more money?

FS Even though we're earning more money, aye!

GC And is the detergent plant you work in now that.....but you'd have a wider experience in the departments in the Pumpherston Refinery.

FS Oh, yes!

GC You said you worked in the power station?

- FS I worked in the power station in the boiler house about ten years. I was there during the time it changed from coal firing to oil firing, and saw a reduction of men there. Coal-wise it was a far dirtier job than what it was oil burning but it was interesting work.
- GC How many boilers did they have?
- FS About 7 boilers in all when I first started, but as they changed to oil they went back to about 3 boilers at one section, and three boilers into another bit of the work.
- GC So you reckon the oil was more efficient?
- FS Oh, it was more efficient it needed, it didn't need the same number of men as to run the boiler house. It cut out all of the men that we worked in, what we cried the gullet, where they emptied the ashes, it didnae need these men up the tip for emptying the wagons. It didnae need the men for emptying coal wagons, so it cut out a lot of the jobs.
- GC Is there a haulage going up the tip?
- FS There was a haulage to empty the ashes, yes!
- GC Can you remember who was on .....
- FS The man. Bob Byers was from East Calder, Jimmy Denniston from Broxburn and Alex Peppers from East Calder. Very dirty job.
- GC Did you find they were good at what they were doing?
- FS Oh yes, they had been at their job for a long time but it was a right dirty job, I don't know why they lasted there.
- GC Can you remember what.....when they changed from solid fuel to oil roughly?
- FS I couldn't, I couldn't tell you.

GC Don't matter, when they changed to oil did it make the fitter's job easier or not as easy?

FS Oh, it was far easier and far cleaner too. In the coal boilers you had to go into the furnaces inside the big drums where the water and that was but that was cut out when you got the oil firing. It was a lot better and a lot cleaner, it was more interesting.

GC And what was your biggest problems when you turned to oil?

FS Oh, I never had many problems with that, George, with the benefit of oil you had better control with oil than what you had with coal for it kept a steadier steam pressure than what you had with coal. We never had the same bother.

GC And did the boilers produce steam for the whole refinery?

FS Aye, produced steam, working the pumps and different parts of the refinery, the cracking plants and that ken, it also produced a super heated steam for use in the turbines for the power station which was a high pressure steam which could give you a severe burn if you got in its way.

GC Did you find anybody or know anybody that got a burn from that?

FS Oh, just occasionally, boys putting their hands on bare pipes and that, but apart from that it was alright.

GC Was that putting their hands on pipes that weren't lagged.

FS Weren't lagged. There's a thing coming out now about the asbestos trouble too, that way back in the boiler days there was.....you just used the lagging asbestos and that, with no safeguards whatsoever, which seems is different nowadays.

- GC I believe they are very strict now.
- FS Oh yes, any pipes that is in the work now that can't be brought down have got to be covered with plastic sheeting to safeguard them.
- GC If you are dismantling any pipework that has lagging asbestos base, do you bring in a special firm to do that?
- FS They're supposed to come in but recently our own men have been doing that, just wrapping them in plastic bags before they bring them down.
- GC And do you know where that is disposed off?
- FS In a rubbish heap.
- GC A special tip for (inaudible).
- FS They must have, aye!
- GC And when you go back to when you served your time, was there any real workmates that stick out in your mind, any sort of thing that they did or maybe shouldna done?
- FS Well there was one boy, a man cried David Scoular, was using a tape which was reckoned to be about a foot short. Who was the fitter's name? Alex Morrison, had told him, he says "If you put that wrong I'll kick your backside". He says "If I put that wrong you can kick my backside, Alex". So he says, he got his backside kicked, that was the story away back. He put up the wrong size of pipe, oh, it was just things that happened.
- GC And why was this tape a foot short?
- FS Oh, I don't know about that, I think there was one in the workshop now that is a foot short and they still haven't changed any.....

GC Have you used it?

FS No, no, we don't do much pipework up there now bar the plastic pipes which is changed thing nowadays. It's all glued sockets and that, you know, that.....

GC There was a big difference in the technique, pipework-wise.

FS Nowadays there is. Well the biggest for engineers..... is stainless steel and plastic pipes for the acids and avenues in the Pumpherston work.

GC In the detergent plant?

FS In the detergent plant.

GC And if you had to do pipework now, in plastic, it must be a lot easier is it?

FS Well, it was a lot lighter than Whitelaws, its far easier to put in your fittings and all you.....you just add an adhesive, far handier to use.

GC Does this actually almost weld the plastic to the plastic joint and that?

FS Och well, the adhesive you put on is supposed to be allowed 24 hours drying time before pressure is put on the joint. It's changed days from whenever.....very little plastic way back in our apprenticeship days.

GC Was there any plastic at all used in your apprenticeship days?

FS They just started coming in, and there was a bit of a disagreement then between the fitters and the plumbers, that the plumbers said it was the fitters' job and the fitters said it was the plumbers' job to put the pipes up, and it came to a head with a meeting with Mr. Cook, the Manager, who finally decided it was the fitters' job.

GC So this was a demarcation problem?

FS It was a demarcation problem, aye!

GC And Cook was then the Manager?

FS Cook was the Manager then!

GC Was Anderson away then?

FS Mr. Anderson was away, and Mr. Sutherland was away too, Mr. Cook took over.

GC And was your time out when this happened or.....?

FS Oh, my time was out, yes!

GC You'd finished your apprenticeship?

FS Ah ha, I spent another two or three years of my time looking after the power station after the man I did my time with died, it was Jackie Leslie, and the ammonia compressors too, they used the ammonia compressors for a cooling system on the paraffin sheds, but they're all dismantled now and scrapped.

GC So the paraffin sheds were still working when you were a tradesman, and what were you involved with in that job?

FS Stripping down the ammonia compressors which provided cooling for the paraffin sheds, and these days the place was..... the men in the compressor house were looked upon as being good housekeepers, the place was spotless and you dare nae tread on the carpet when they polished it!

GC They were very strict then, in these places that you worked, and they must have kept their working area very clean, polished, highly polished.

FS Oh, yes, the floor was cardinal polished and the black rubber mat was polished all the brass, the brasses was done about every day.

GC So that was good housekeeping?

FS Oh, yes, they took a pride, a pride in their job in these days.

GC Can you remember any of those who was working there at the time?

FS Well, in the ammonia compressor house was a Bob Alien and in the power station there was a man. Sandy McLean.

GC Where did they come from?

FS Sandy McLean was from East Calder and Bob Alien was from Pumpherston. They're gone now.

GC Both dead?

FS Both dead.

GC And any other sections of the refinery you worked in.....?

FS Oh, I just went back to the boiler house and then as the boilers were closing down, at the close of the work I just got moved out to another job you see!

GC So, you worked there until 1954?

FS Aye!

GC And that was near enough the end of the Pumpherston refinery?

FS Refinery, aye.

GC And what was left of the refinery at that time?

FS Oh, the cracking plant and all these places were still standing, but I think there was just a gradual close down. Just about by chance when they were made redundant, they got a chance of a job, you just had to take it you see, to save loss of time and all that.

GC This is outwith the shale oil industry?

FS Ah ha!

GC And the cracking plant was there, you said, and of course the detergent plant would be there? In fact that flourished.

FS That's right, aye, that was the start of it.....

GC That's where you are working now?

FS That's where I'm working now.

GC And it wasn't operational, the cracking plant or any of these other plants, were they? Can you mind, were they still working? )

FS I just don't mind that, George, no!

GC The wax, the plant, was working?

FS Oh, the wax place was still going, the floridine plant was still going when I went back there and that as I say, that gradually got wound down too, there's nothing there now at all.

GC Can you remember much about what happened with the floridine plant, how it was.....?

FS I don't know much about that side. I never mind that at all, George.

GC All right.

FS I wasn't on that side at all.

GC But you were at, you did some work in that?

FS Oh, we had to go over and repair broken belts and bearings that got smashed up and such like, but usually in these departments you had a maintenance fitter, it was, well it was his department. It was at that time, a man, Willie Whitecross from Pumpherstons was doing all that type of work. You just had your own departments.

GC Yes, and these sorta fitters that, were they like specialists in each of their separate departments?

FS Well, they had their own departments there, just had a wee workshop there, and through the years they got to gain more experience than the average person, ken, and any breakdowns, they were more or less sent, more or less before somebody else was sent in, ken, but for advice, you had your cracking plant fitter on shifts there, and you had your distillation man, and just spread them about.

GC And could you be called on to work at any of these?

FS Oh, aye, you had just to go where your foreman sent you.

GC And your foreman would still be Willie McDowell, was it?

FS Oh, Willie McDowell was the workshop foreman, and there was an Alex Morrison in charge of the plant fitters.

GC Was that like the outside squad?

FS The outside squad, aye!

GC Outwith the workshop?

FS That's right, aye!

GC And how did you get on, did you work with both?

FS Oh, with both of them, aye, I got on fine, but the comparisons now to way back there when the work was more or less self-contained regards their workshop, the joiners and the blacksmiths, boilermakers and that, now they're getting outside contractors to do all this type of work and that's been a big change too, regards price and cost.

GC Were you ever involved in any contract work within the Company's own workers through the Management?

FS No, I never got involved in that.

GC Did you know anybody that was in.....?

FS Now, I think at one time there was a sorta contract that came up for lead burning down in the sulphate house, but I think that was on the plumbing side, on the boilermakers side, but I was never involved in that side.

GC The engineers didn't get a chance.....?

FS No, no!

GC And what was your facilities at Pumpherstons in these days? They had the baths, did they have a canteen?

FS They had a canteen, yes, and baths where you changed at night, changed at morning and went home, clean and that. That was an advantage for someone doing a very dirty job. The canteen was well patronised too, it was all the women who did the canteen, they had no degree or anything like that, they were just what we say, housewives doing their job.

GC Can you remember any of their names, at work at the time?

FS Oh, there was a Mary Findlay from Pumpherston was one of the workers and I think a Mrs. Sangster from Broxburn, and now they all come in with caterers, come in now with all their degrees and that, and this is how they work.

GC Do you still use the canteen?

FS Oh, I don't use the canteen, no, I just take a snack.

GC Do you carry a piece?

FS Carry a piece, aye, every day, but the canteen now is subsidised by about 80 I think, you get varying reports about it.

GC By B.P.?

FS By B.P.

GC subsidised?

FS Subsidised!

GC So meals should be quite reasonable?

FS Well they reckon they get about a three course meal for round about 30p, 40p.

GC That's good.

FS Yes, they seem quite happy with that.

GC And do you have any feelings why you don't use the canteen?

FS Well the reason I don't use the canteen is I get my meal when I come

home, and through experience, when I was taking my meal at my work and meal at home I was putting on weight, so I just cut it out. That's the way, it's personal.

GC And did you have a weight problem?

FS Oh, well, when I was at the Yale I was using the.....when I was away from the work at the Yale factory I was putting on weight, but plenty of times in my life, I've just carried a piece.

GC You prefer that?

FS Aye!

GC Were you a member of any Union when you worked at Scottish Oils?

FS Well, I was in the Shale Miner's Union. I think that was the only union in there at that time.

GC Can you remember any of the officials or collectors?

FS Oh, Joe Heaney, Joe Heaney was, I think, was the union man at Pumpherston when I first started, but from there on I don't know any of the rest, we were just in a well kept file I think.

GC And are you still a member of a union?

FS Oh, I'm in the engineering union now, A.E.W. I first joined that when I was at.....moved away from the work, when I was working at the Laings factory.

GC Of course the shale oil workers union wouldn't have been recognised anywhere else?

FS Oh no, when I went to the..... I left that and went to another factory. In Yales it was the locksmiths union we had to join.

GC Because they made locks?

FS That's them, aye, but when I returned to Pumpherston work and joined the engineering union.....

GC Can you remember what you paid weekly when you started first with Scottish Oils?

FS Wages?

GC No, what you paid for the union.

FS Oh, I cannae mind that George, no.

GC It would be something like 6d. a week.

FS I cannae just..... Was it in the.....?

GC Was it on your old pay line? Was it a condition of your employment when you worked for Scottish Oils to be in the union?

FS Oh, I think it was, if I mind right you had to join the union to stay there, and.....

GC And was there any pressures brought to bear on you to join the union?

FS Not that I mind of, not that I mind of!

GC Just did it as a matter of course?

FS A matter of course, that's correct.

GC And was it also a condition to further your education when you started

your apprenticeship?

FS Well we'd to go to the nightschool three times a week.

GC Which one was that?

FS I went to Bellevue for three years in Edinburgh, and then two years at the Ramsay Tech. College at Portobello, and I went to Portobello and one of the courses was workshop practice and the other two boys that I went with didn't think this was very good so we used to go out in the signal box at Portobello Station where we knew the local signalman and spent our time there, but our Manager at the work found out about it and we got reprimanded, so we'd to do our three nights at the nightschool.

GC You got a warning?

FS Got a warning, that was a.....

GC And how do you think he found out?

FS Well they must have reported us back from the nightschool to Middleton Hall, which is the headquarters, and they sent word from Middleton Hall up to Pumpherston works, so we were called to the office and got a warning.

GC And who was the Manager then, was it Anderson?

FS It was Andersen's warning but it was Mr. Sutherland that gave us a talking to.

GC The Under-Manager?

FS The Under-Manager.

GC And how severe was he?

- FS Oh, he was quite a fair man. I was in the drawing office at the time when I knew him, anyway, we got on okay.
- GC He didn't give you any ultimatum, if you didn't go then you might lose your job, anything like that?
- FS Well, he more or less said that he couldn't care less but it was the hierarchy from Middleton said, if you didn't go you're out, so we had to go to night school.
- GC Did anyone else put any pressure on you to go to night school, like any family or anything like that?
- FS Oh no, no, and these days you hear young people complain nowadays about having to go a full day, to get off their work to go to the education. And yet we were away from in the morning three days a week, from when we left the house about half seven to five at night to your work and you came home, had your dinner, then you left. That was you to 10 o'clock, three nights a week for.....for your education.
- GC And didn't you get a chance to go on day release?
- FS Not in these days, no, it's three nights at night school doing that.
- GC That would cramp your activities as far as social life was concerned?
- FS Oh, well it was usually, it was never on a Friday, usually something like a Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday or Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday when we'd night school.
- GC And what did you actually do when you were not at work, for social evening, or what was your pastimes, hobbies, anything?
- FS Well, football was my main hobby, we got trained at football on a Saturday. It was in fact when I was at the Ramsay Tech, I was playing

two games every Saturday, for the Tech. and for the local football team.

GC And who run the local football team?

FS Mattie Gordon from Pumpherston and a science teacher from the school, a Mr. Orr and we played there in the 'under-18 amateurs'.

GC And did you win any honours or anything, any cups, medals or anything to do with playing football?

FS Well, we used to, we won the Scottish Cup in the final year, when the 'Under 18' beat a Kilmarnock team at Broxburn, so.....

GC Can you remember what year that was?

FS About 1953-54 I think. I think Mattie Gordon run that team for a good number of years.

GC He was a very keen man for the boys football team. What age were you then, when you were playing football?

FS Oh, I was playing right up to well, under-18 amateur, then I moved up to juvenile.....

GC Now, can you say anything about the..... where did you actually stay, where did you live when you first started work with Scottish Oils?

FS I started in.....nearest Pumpherston, when I first started work.... 15 years old, now, we had to move to East Calder for to get a bigger house, it was a mixed family and there weren't many.....in the houses built in these days.

GC And how many apartments, how many rooms did you have in Pumpherston?

FS Just one bedroom and a kitchen recess, no bath, and a kitchen sink.

GC No hot water?

FS No hot water, there were eight houses to the block and they were divided into four and each mother had their special day for their wash day.

GC It was going to the wash-house?

FS A wash-house at the end of the block with a wooden mangle and a big tub.

GC Were you ever asked to give assistance for mother on wash day?

FS Well, my job was to light the fire and in these days the local manager was..... had a habit of walking at least once a week up and down the rows to check the gardens and if your garden wasn't up to scratch the man of the house was sent for at the work and brought to question about his garden, and nowadays its just a wilderness.

GC So the company then took an interest in gardens and all that sort of thing? Was there, did you know of any disputes between housewives, like mothers on washdays, of which day was what or anything like that?

FS No, we never had any of this bother like that, no, we just seemed to get on fine with the neighbours.

GC Did they just have their set day, and they stuck to that?

FS Uh huh.

GC Now what did you do, before you started work, for say bathing facilities?

FS It was just a bath, a zinc bath in front of the fire like everybody else I think.

GC And the water would be heated, where, in the wash-house?

- FS Oh, the water was heated up in the big boiler in the wash-house and that was that, that was your facilities. For the.....
- GC Carried from there to your zinc bath?
- FS The zinc bath, aye.
- GC In from of the fire?
- FS The old hob black leaded and all the rest of it.
- GC That was a range you had?
- FS That was a range, aye.
- GC And was it hard to keep, do you think, the old range with the black lead? Do you think your wife would put up with that now?
- FS I don't think the modern woman would put up with that now, no with all the modern gadgets, no.
- GC Can you remember much about your range, had it an oven?
- FS Oh, there was an oven there, and there was a wee tap on it that you could draw a wee drop hot water from it, but, it was actually when we stayed in Pumpherston that it was a..... we had the old range took out and the modern sort of, it would be modern then, fire put in behind the bricks was the..... Jack Hall from Uphall Station I think his name was..... and that was one of the modern things we got.
- GC Can you remember much about chimney sweeps, when you were at Pumpherston staying?
- FS I don't mind getting the chimney sweeps, but the local man there was

a man cried Willie Smith, I think his name was.....stayed in the middle row. I was just talking to a relation of his the other day, and his connection stays there, up to your sisters.....

GC And these days did the company organise the chimney sweeps?

FS They must have, yes, aye they.....they arranged everything for you up there at that time, you know the local company.

GC And was there, you won't know if there was a charge made for that?

FS No, I couldn't tell you that, no I don't mind of these things, I was about 15 years old or something then.

GC And do you reckon all the gardens were kept well?

FS Oh they were kept, they had to be kept for mind you when the managers come down and he found things weren't right, he'd let you know about it. I think people had, well the only pastime they had in those days, there was no television and that sort of..... One of the pastimes way back then during the war, was my father played the accordion and one of the highlights of the day was having what we cried a back green concert where the local people take their seats round to the back green and my father had the accordion and they arranged the concert among themselves, and that was their entertainment then.

GC Now, did this happen during the war or after the war?

FS I think it was during the war at that time, because after that, we moved to Stranraer. One of the memories of that time, they used to get these street entertainers come round, they used to be men come with their musical saws, and I mind two men came in, one playing a saxophone and one playing a clarinet, just after the war, my father asked them into the house for their tea and that, and they sat and had a sorta session there.....

GC So your father was really into this in music?

FS Oh, he had a wee accordion band, with a wee band going about, he played at local dances at Pumpherston and Oakbank and the local halls.

GC Can you remember anything about the Institute Hall?

FS Well, at the time the Institute Hall had their billiard rooms in the library and the billiard rooms there, and when you were wanting a game at night you had to more or less jump off the bus from the school and run in and get your name up on the slate, so you could get your name at night it was that busy.

GC So they encouraged schoolboys to play in the hall?

FS Aye.

GC Can you remember who was running the hall?

FS It was John Kilpatrick, it was the hallkeeper in these days. I think the man lost a son during the war, did he not? I think he did, aye. That was another memory, because one of his sons used to come across in a big aeroplane and drop a sauce bottle with a message in it and that, and paper hankie parachutes. He used to drop it in the heather wood, but I think he got warned off that too.

GC So this was for his mother?

FS This was for his mother who stayed in Pumpherston, aye.

GC She would stay as caretaker.....?

FS She would stay as caretaker, in the house at the hall, aye. Everything was kept there in these days.

GC It sounds, when you talk about the manager walking round inspecting

the gardens, it was like an officer inspecting the barracks, so to speak?

FS Uh huh, the manager actually walked the gardens.

END OF TAPE

FS SIDE TWO

FS Well it was during the war when things were short, we kept two allotments down the old rows at Pumpherstons, and my father and Frank Cochrane were doing that for a long time.

GC And you were encouraged to do this, who would you get this bit of ground from, did it belong to the company?

FS It must have belonged to the company at that time. You had to get permission for this. There was one at what they called the heather wood and one across at the magazine that belonged to the company.

GC The magazine was just outwith the works fence, now?

FS That's correct, aye.

GC Near where the cricket pavilion.....?

FS that's correct, aye.

GC And was there anything else you can say about the gardens of the....

FS No.

GC Did your father ask you to help with the gardens?

FS Oh yes, we had to go down there and do our stuff too, before we went and got a game of football, and way back in these days too when Tam

Curran was living at the bog, there was just a rough cast road around the houses and the refuse collection in there was done by two men with a horse-drawn cart. Horse was stabled at the works during the week and then taken to the local farm because it was hired at the weekend.

GC So they actually had stables in the work?

FS They had stables at the work and that's where the horse was kept during the week then taken to the local farm weekends. All the place is knocked down now.

GC And can you remember the roads and the paths being laid down for those?

FS Oh yes, there was a..... the road was just a sorta cobblestones and roughcast, it was in these times.

GC Just like a dirt road?

FS Just like a dirt road, but in later years now, eight houses been knocked down into four and the road conditions have improved and I don't think, .....it's just privately owned houses now at Pumpherston.

GC Is there anything else you'd like to.....that you.....can you remember when you were working for Scottish Oils, any worthies, or characters that you would like to say something about?

FS I just cannae recollect them now.....

GC You can't, no, well that's fine, O.K., thanks.

END OF TAPE

Transcript	FS
Education.	I went to East Calder Secondary School, and then a years day school at Ramsay Tech. Then I started my training at night school at Bellevue and then I went back to Ramsay Tech. again. This was in 1949.
Industrial	I started up in the stores and Willie McDowell was my first foreman. I started when I was fifteen and I left at the age of sixteen.
Engineering Shop	I then went to the engineering shop where I had two years working with Michael Linn.
Drawing Office	I left the engineering shop and went drawing office with Willie McNeill, where I spent seven months.
Boiler House	I went from there to the boiler house, where I spent a few months,
Power shop	From there I went to the power shop, where I did my apprenticeship. I was more or less stripping and overhauling pumps, and working on jobs regarding pump couplings and such like. There was an old saying in Pumpherston Works, that if you served your time there you could go anywhere, and in later life I experienced that it was

a true saying. Things were a lot more expensive now regarding pumps and such like.

#### Boiler House

I worked in the power station boiler house for about ten years. I was there during the time it changed from coal firing to oil firing. Coal-wise it was a far dirtier job, than what was burning oil, but it was more interesting work.

#### Number of Boilers

There was about seven boilers in all when I started first, but as they changed to oil they went back to about three boilers at one section. The boilers produced steam for different parts of the refinery and the cracking plant. It also produced a super-heated steam for use in the turbines for the power station which was high pressure steam which could give you a severe burn. After I finished my apprenticeship I spent another three years of my time looking after the power station after the man that I served my time under died.

#### Paraffin Sheds

I then moved to the paraffin sheds, where I was stripping down the ammonia compressors which provided the cooling for

the paraffin sheds.

The men in the compressor house were looked upon as being good housekeepers, and the place was spotless, and you daren't tread on the carpet when they polished it. Because they kept their working area very clean and highly polished.

Closure of Oil Works

At this time it was near enough the end of the oil works.

Wax Plant

The wax plant was still going and I went over there to work. We had to go over and repair broken belts and bearings that got smashed up, but usually in these departments you had a maintenance fitter.

They had their own departments there, we had a wee workshop there, and through the years they got to gain more experience than the average person. Any breakdowns they were more or less sent in to fix it.

The Foreman

Willie McDowell was the workshop foreman and Alex Morrison was in charge of the plant fitters.

The Work

I got on fine, but the comparisons now to away back when the work was more or less self-contained regards their workshops. The joiners and blacksmiths, boilermakers and that, now they are getting outside contractors

to do all this style of work.  
This made a big change too, as regards price and cost.  
I was never involved with any of the contract work.

Lead Burning

I think at one time there was a sort of contract that came up for lead burning down in the sulphate house, and I think that was on the plumbing side, but I wasn't involved in this.

Unions

I was a member of the Shale Miners Union. I think that was the only union in there at that time.

Officials

Joe Heaney was the union man at Pumpherston when I started first, but I don't know any of the rest of the officials.

Union Fees

The union fees would be something like sixpence a week.

Nightschool

I had to go to nightschool at Bellevue for three years in Edinburgh and then two years at Ramsay Technical college at Portobello, and one of the courses was workshop practice. I went, but I didn't think that it was much good, so we used to go out in the signal box at Portobello Station where we knew the local signalmen

and we spent our time there,  
but our Manager at the works  
found out about it and we were  
reprimanded, so we had to do  
our three nights at the nightschool.  
Well they must have reported  
us back to Middleton Hall  
which is the headquarters,  
and they sent word to Middleton  
Hall up to the Pumpherson works  
where we got a warning.

Domestic Life-Housing	There were eight houses to a block and they divided into four. We had just one bedroom and a kitchen recess.
Bath	There was no baths in the houses.
Hot Water	We had no hot water in the houses at first, and we had to carry water in from the fire if we wanted to bathe in the tin bath we used.
Wash House	We had a wash-house at the end of the block with a big tub and a wooden mangle.
Wash Day	My job on washday was to light the fire in the boiler to heat the water for washing.
Fire Range	The fire range had to be black leaded and all the rest of it. On the range there was a wee tap on it that you could draw

a wee drop of hot water from it.  
When we stayed at Pumpherston  
we had the old range taken  
out and a modern fire put  
behind the bricks.

#### Chimney Sweeps

I don't mind getting a chimney  
sweep, there was a local man  
cried Willie Smith who swept  
our chimney.  
The company arranged everything  
in that line, and I can't mind  
if we were charged for this  
because I was only about fifteen  
years old at that time.

#### Gardens

All the gardens were kept neat  
and tidy in those days, because  
if they were not kept neat and  
tidy the managers would soon  
let you know about if if they  
came down.

#### Leisure Activities Accordian

I think the only pastimes we  
had in those days were when my  
father played the accordian and  
one of the highlights of the  
day was having what we cried  
a back green concert where  
the local people took their  
seats round at the back green  
and my father used to entertain us.

#### Institute Hall Billiards

We had an Institute Hall, where  
there was a billiard room, and  
when you were wanting a game  
at night you had to more less

jump off the school bus and get your name put up on the slate, so that you could get a game at night.

#### Hall Keeper

John Kilpatrick was the hall keeper in those days. His mother was the caretaker in the house at the hall. Everything was kept there in those days.

#### Allotments During The War

It was during the war when things were short that we kept two allotments down at the old rows at Pumpherstons.

The ground belonged to the Company at that time and you had to get permission for this.

We all had to go down there and do our stuff before we went and got a game of football.

#### The Paths

The roads and paths in those days were a sort of cobblestone roughcast, just like a dirt road, but in later years eight houses were knocked down into four and the road conditions have improved.

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