

GL - SIDE ONE

GL I left the school in 1935, December 1935, and I started in Glendevon, when I was fourteen, and I just gave them a hand to carry wood across to the mouth of the mine, for the chain runner to take the pit props down, down the mine, and then I used to take.....I used to come up the Thirty Five Pit, and I've seen me out on a Tuesday morning, and get the time books, and walked to Broxburn with the time books and back again, and then as soon as I became sixteen I got transferred along to Thirty Five Pit, straight down below then, and I was catching the full hutches coming out and putting snibbles in them and sending the empty ones in for the men, and then I left the pit and I got put in a wee bit, and I was watching the empty hutches going in and the full hutches coming out, to make sure that they weren't going off the road, and then I got transferred into another bit, further in, and then after that I got put on the drawing with.....

Q. Were you oncost up till now?

GL When I started in Glendevon, the Manager at that time was Georgie Smillie, and when I got transferred along to Thirty Five Pit, the Manager there was Jock Sneddon, he stayed next door to.....he stayed next door to the Pit, and I was.....I worked with Peter White, in what they cried down the dook, and after I left him, I worked with Dally Finnigan, I went toI went to Tottlywells, and just after I left, Dally Finnigan got killed in Thirty Five Pit, there was an explosion.....he got burnt and that!

Q. What was the cause of that? Did he go in too quick? Was he a faceman?

GL Aye, he was a faceman! And there was another boy got killed in the time that I was there too, and he was on the oncost, when they put a new..... it was an endless rope that they had on the.....Thirty Five Pit, and see when they put an endless rope on.....it's.....they've got an awfy tight.....and when the hutches are going up.....up the wee sort of

incline like that.....you've got to hold on to it so that it wouldn't
.....the rope wouldn't spring out of the jiggers, well, see this Wullie
Cormack, he was doing that and he just let the one hutch to go back to
the next one and do the same thing, when he was going back, the rope had
sprung up, and jammed him in between the hutches and killed him. That
was Wullie Cormack in Thirty Five Pit.

Q. Can you remember what year that would be?

GL Oh.....I wouldn't be certain of the year, but the..... thirty six.....
thirty eight, I would say maybe about.....I wouldn't be certain.....
but I would say maybe about 1941 or 1942, something round about that
area. I went into Tottlywells, and it was Johnny Gibb that was the
gaffer at the time, and I worked with my brother-in-law and his brother
and his other brother. There were three of them, and me, we worked
together in the same bit, and then we were transferred up Whitequarries,
and it was Dick Neilson that was the.....Dick Neilson from Philpstoun
was the gaffer at that time, we were driving the same mine, you had to
drive so much stone, you know, to get rid of all the stone before you
could get through to a certain bit of shale.

Q. And did they use that stone that you were.....?

GL No, they just took it away!

Q. That was dumped!

GL Aye! I strained my back and.....when we were working there and I was
off for sixteen weeks with it, and I used to go up to Bangour about
twice a week and get stretched out, just lying sort of.....it wasn't
actually a bed, something like a bed, but there were chains on it, for
sort of stretching you out to try and sort your back out. They advised
me to get a light job, you know, I couldn't go back on the drawing again
because it was going to be too much, you know, after having this,

because, I could be wrong in my way of thinking but, after something happens to your back, it's never actually the same! So.....

Q. And what age were you then?

GL I'd be.....just over the forty mark at that time, when that happened, I had to finish up because according to them, there wasn't any such thing as a light job! What I was after was a job on the oncost, because it wasn't.....not being personal against oncost or anything like thatbut.....it was a lot lighter job than.....what I was doing! So, according to them, they hadn't a light job for me.....so, I had to finish up altogether!

Q. And that was about 1960?

GL That would be about 1960, 1961!

Q. Now, why would they not give you a light job?

GL They reckoned that there wasn't such a thing as a light job!

Q. And did you feel that there were light jobs?

GL Well.....I watched the oncost men working, and as I say, not being personal against them, they weren't working..... they weren't working near as hard as what the miners were doing! The actual men, you know the drawers and facemen and that! So, I might have been..... well, I might have been able to do their job whereas I wouldn't have been fit to do my own job!

Q. Did you get any compensation for that injury?

GL No! What happened.....was.....at that time, what happened at that time, it was a.....they had some scheme.....a sort of Provident schemeyou didn't pay into it, they paid into it, but you didn't pay into it.....and it.....if you just went into them one day.....you know,

you had maybe.....well, as I said they were putting money into it, but if you went out one day and you fell out with the gaffer, and you told him to stick his job up his jumper, you could maybe have two or three hundred pounds in that, and as soon as you told the gaffer to stick his job up his jumper.....and walked out..... that was you losing that money. You had no claim on it because.....you weren't paying into it! When I.....when I finished up, I had to finish up my own, and I had £601 I think that it was, that I had in it, and when I got mywhen I got my cheque and that, it was £495, so I lost over a hundred pounds with packing in myself, but I had to pack in myself, because I wasn't fit to do my job!

Q. So, did they believe you that you were unfit?

GL No!

Q. So, when this happened actually, did you get a job somewhere else?

GL Well, where was it that I started after that.....?

Q. Anyway.....go back to when you started as a laddie, when you went to work at Glendevon?

GL Aye!

Q. And what job did you do there?

GL Well, I used to fill.....I used to fill..... there used to be wee basins.....or maybe a wooden box, like with grease, and carry it up the stairs to the pithead for the men that were on.....the men that were emptying the hutches and that, they were greasing.....greasing hutches and then.....you know, greasing axles and then sending them back down at certain times and that and then they used to give them a hand, Jock Foster from Uphall.....at that time, he was the man that looked after all the woods, or bringing.....you know, he would get

the orders.....maybe..... from the chain runner, "I'm wanting so many of these and so many of that, and so many of the next thing!" And he would go away down the mine.,. Well, by the time that he came back up again there was another load of hutches, this boy would have all the wood over in his place, just ready to put on to the hutches, and I used to give him a hand on that, and as I say, I used to go to Glendevon on a Tuesday..... leave Glendevon on a Tuesday morning, go along to Thirty Five Pit, and get their time books along with..... the thingummies from Glendevon, walk down to Broxburn, to the office at Broxburn, andhand in the time books, and by the time that I done that and walked back.....walked back from Broxburn to Glendevon again, it was about three quarters of a day wasted. Well, I won't say.....wastedbut that was what I was doing then!

Q. And how often had you to do that in a week?

GL Just once a week.....on a Tuesday! And that's well.....your week maybe finished on a Monday or something like that, or either that they were getting their time books sorted out and I had to take them down to Broxburn, and that's where they made the wages up at that time, down at the Canal Bridge, at the offices, they were down at the Canal Bridge in Broxburn. You had to go down there.....you had to go down there on a Friday and get your wages..... then.....but they built offices over here, so when you came up from Buddings ton, instead of going down to instead of going down to Broxburn for the wages, you just collected them there, either that or you got them in the mine at the time, too.

Q. And where were you staying when you started work?

GL I was staying in Millgate. Forty Four Millgate with my Mum and Dad, and my big brother and sister! I'm the bairn!

Q. Were they Company houses?

GL No, they were Council houses..... they were council houses.....and

.....when we came up and.....we flitted to.....my mother's.....

I came home from my work one day and went up the stair, you know, not the new house.....but you had to walk up the stairs..... to get to your living room and that, and when I went in that day, my mother was lying on the floor, she had an abscess on her ankle, and instead of going out, it was going in, and she had to go up to Bangour and get an operation, and the time that she was up in Bangour getting this operation, my father took a heart attack and the two of them were up in Bangour at the same time. So after they came out, and we had to try and get a house down the stairs, either that or the two of them were stuck up there for the rest of their days. So we flitted over to Midhope Place, the..... that's Midhope Place there too, the next row, well, away at the far end of it, and my brother was in the Army and my father was stopped, well, my father couldn't work after that anyway, because of the heart attack. I was.....I worked the mines at the time, and I went over to.....I went over to the office to get the.....the rent kept off my wages, you know instead of bu.....ing about with my father and that, I said I would get the rent kept off my pay. A wee while after this, I started going with the person that I was married to there, and they used to tell you when you got engaged and that, you just put your name down for a house and you got one. Well, I done that, I went to see about a house for myself, they told me that I already had a house and that I couldn't get another one! With me getting the rent kept off, just to save my father from paying it.....I just got it kept off my wages, they told me that I already had a house, and they couldn't give me another one, so I went up to Middleton, to see Bert Keddie. Bert Keddie was one of the gaffers at that time, one of the head ones at that time, and I explained my case to Bert, and Bert said "Look, you've not got a house!" and I explained what I was doing like! He said "You've not got a house!" So after I went along to Whitequarries, I was at Dick Neilson, two or three times, to see if Dick could get me a house, and he couldn't get me a house, and at the finish up, he did get me one, he says, "The only thing that I can do for you, is get you one in Broxburn, in Greendykes Road, so I got one there, and I stayed there for.....oh.....about a couple of years, then I got a house along.....at the very end of.....

not that corner house there, but the very opposite end.....I stayed there.....

Q. Is that Midhope Place?

GL Aye, Midhope Place! My mother and father only stayed about two doors along from me, so it was handy for me that way.

Q. And have these houses been altered in any way, since you lived in them before?

GL Well, they have altered..... them..... they've altered them..... they've altered some of them, but they've not altered this house any. They've altered some of them doing different things. Before I got this one, I stayed in Glendevon Park there like. They were taking people out of their houses and putting them into another house, they would do so much work to this house, and then they would put the people that were out, they would put them back into it, again, you know, just sort of put them out to do these certain things.

Q. And do you have a bathroom in this house?

GL Aye, there's only the kitchenette, the living room here..... the bedroom through here, and the bathroom. It's big enough for me like, because I'm just staying myself like!

Q. When you went to Thirty Five Pit, you were a drawer there right away, were you?

GL No, I was on the oncost there! I was on the oncost for a wee while and then I got put on the.....I went down to do my job on the oncost this morning, this Monday morning.....and there was a phone message for me. I said "Who is it that's wanting me, you know, at this time in the morning?" I thought that there was maybe something wrong at home like. This was the gaffer, I was to start on the drawing with Peter White from Bridgend, that was me started on the drawing then.

Q. And how did you get on with that job, did you.....?

GL It wasn't too bad, at one.....you had good jobs and bad jobs, you know, I worked with Dally Finnigan, and I don't know if you understand what a cuddy is.....?

Q. Yes!

GL Well, I used to be up three cuddies, drawing off this, I used to be up three cuddies, the same as this other boy, the two of us were working on the same three cuddies.....and then this boy went into the left, and I went up another cuddy, and then into the left after that, you know, up to the top side of him, and when you see what's happening now, you wonder how you stuck the mines for as long! As I always said, well, what happened round about this area, there was nothing, there was only either the mines or the Oilwork here and that was it!

Q. And they couldn't even give you a light job in the Oilworks?

GL Well, I got the.....no.....they never said anything about the Oilworks or anything..... that was alright, so don't worry about that!

Q. So, how long were you a drawer at Thirty Five?

GL I was in Thirty Five for ten years! I was.....roughly, I would say, anything about eight.....anything from seven to eight years, till I was with Dally Finnigan and I was with Peter White.....

Q. Were these the only two facemen that you worked with?

GL Aye! In Thirty Five Pit! Well, I had an uncle from Philpstoun, an Uncle Jim from Philpstoun, he was in.....he was in Duddingston, and he wanted me to go to Duddingston, and draw off of him, but they wouldn't let me go from Thirty Five Pit. I don't understand it yet, but they wouldn't let me go from Thirty Five Pit to Duddingston! And it's the same sort of firm, isn't it, Scottish Oils? So, they wouldn't let me

go! And I was at them two or three times, and there was a boy.....
there was a boy that wanted to swop me, and he wanted to go to Thirty Five Pit, and I wanted to go to Duddingston, but they still wouldn't let us go! So, I was working in dirty water one time, in Thirty Five Pit, and every time that you shovelled, you know, it was catching your arm, and the dirty water was beginning to fester on my arms and that, so I said, well, there was only one thing to do, I couldn't go on the way I was, because I could maybe go for three weeks with this, and as soon as I went back, I would just work a fortnight and the same thing would happen again. So I just packed it in! And I was down on the building sites at Broxburn, and you know where Parsons Peebles is in Broxburn, I went down there for six weeks, they were only building, you know, they were only doing the founds and everything like that at that time, and there was a boy said to me "Come over to Whitequarries and get a job with me!" So I went over to Whitequarries to see the gaffer at Whitequarries and he told me to go along to Tottly.....and I went along to Tottly and saw Johnny Gibb and he told me, he says "Aye, come out on Monday and start with Wullie and Dick and John". That was their friends, so I started with them, and I was with them till I finished up in the mines.

Q. And what kind of work were you doing there?

GL Where?

Q. Tottlywells?

GL Just driving shale and that! You know, they were howking shale and they were filling it!

Q. See, when you worked as a drawer, how were you paid? Were you paid by the faceman or did you get paid by the Company?

GL Oh now.....it all depends who you were drawing to! When I worked in Thirty Five Pit, I worked with Peter White, well, you got your wages, and the same with..... the faceman paid you.....you could get.....well,

you were in Companies' time, what they called Companies' time, well, that was a set wage, well, it all depended on how many hutches you filled and when I was with Dally Finnigan, I maybe.....it all depends on the job that you had, but when I was working with him, I maybe filled two or three hutches extra every day, and when I got my wages on a Friday off of him, they used to hand you your pay in an envelope like, and he would maybe hand you another couple of pounds in your hand, or just a wee bit over, but when I worked with Wullie Gibb and them, it didn't matter how many hutches that we put out supposing it was six or sixty, you still got the same wages. But it wasn't Companies' time, they had a higher rate than the Companies' time, they were doing most of the..... they were driving all the roads in, and you know, then the boys would come at the back and maybe branch off in different places.

Q. And you would be working with the Scottish Oils during the War?

GL Aye, I was working with the Scottish Oils before the War!

Q. Yes! Were you involved in any strikes, or anything like that?

GL No!

Q. Were you a member of the Union?

GL Aye! When the Union burst up, I paid Union money for twenty four and a half years, and when it burst up.....when the mines burst up, the..... I was up at Pumpherstons, I think, when the Unions were burst up, and they were getting so much, you know, everybody was getting so much, I applied for it, you know, I had paid as much, but they said that I wasn't entitled to it, because I wasn't working when they finished up!

Q. And did the Union not do any good for you, did they not take your case up, when you had that injury?

GL I never even approached the Union about that! Maybe I was wrong in my

way, but.....

Q. And do you think, that, if you had approached them, they would have done anything about that?

GL Well, if the Management tell you that there are no light jobs for you, what's the Union going to do? The Union would just go and ask them why I couldn't get a light job, and they would just say there were no light jobs to give him and that would be it settled then!

Q. So, did you feel that you did get a raw deal then?

GL Aye, well, after being twenty four and a half years in.....serving them for twenty four and a half years, I thought that I would be entitled to through no fault of my own, I hurt my back, strained my back, surely they could have given me a lighter job!

Q. And did you have anything from a Doctor or from the hospital saying that.....?

GL No, it was only a case of word to words.....just like me talking to you, and saying that I advise you to get a lighter job, there were no letters, there were no written letters or anything!

Q. So, that wasn't very nice, finishing up like that! What did you do as a in your spare time, when you were working with the Scottish Oils?

GL Oh well.....

Q. Had you any.....sport, hobbies, anything like that?

GL Well, lets..... there used to be tennis courts, there used to be Council tennis courts across the road there, just opposite the chapel, and I never even thought about tennis, the time that I worked in Tottlywells, I went to.....Butlins Camp in the Heads of Ayr way, with another five boys, you know, from the mines and that like, and there.....you know,

you could do anything, play bowls or you know, anything that you liked. And that's when I started taking up tennis, and every time that I hit a ball, it wasn't going to.....it was going over the net, but it was also going over the outside net! I was only.....we were only having a carry on, but after I came back and started playing over there, I quite enjoyed it, I worked in.....the time that I worked in Tottlywells, I used to come home.....I used to come home and go up to the baths up there, it was the baths up there at the time, and you would go in there to have a spray, go home and have my dinner, and after I had my dinner I would lift the tennis racket and half a dozen balls, over to the tennis court play for two hours or maybe two and a half hours, and go back over to the house again, and have my tea, and go back over for another two and a half hours, to two hours, I used to have at least four, about four and a half hours every day, at tennis, I've seen.....it was that busy, at that time, I've seen.....you had to put your name down, for a half..... for half an hour, it was that busy I could play.....I could play for half an hour with another three.....we could go off, put our name down for another game, we could jump on to the bus for Broxburn, have half an hour in Broxburn, and come back and still have to wait.....still have to wait for half an hour! So, you'll know how good it was then, and I'll tell you, I thoroughly enjoyed it, it was good then!

Q. Can you remember who actually built these tennis courts?

GL It was the Council that built them! In fact, it's the Council that's got them yet! But I don't know if the Council is doing anything with them, not now, but.....at one time it was red ash that was on them, then the Council put tarmac on them, and they've never been the same since. Well, I don't think that there is the same interest in them now, as what there used to be, because I played a.....I played a semi-final tie across there, it was the semi-final of the championships, there were so many seats round about, just like the bowling green, maybe one here, and maybe one ken, different bits and the crowd were right round it, so there must have been anything from about two or three hundred watching it! It was awfy good then! The people were playing, they seemed to be awfy good!

Q. Did you win any trophies or anything like that?

GL Aye, well.....I won.....I actually only won one.....was.....the Mixed Doubles Cup with the person that I was married to after that, but I got beat in the final of the Men's Singles, I got beat in the final of the Men's Doubles, and I got beat in the final of another one.....I've got two cups and a shield there and my sister got a cup bowl, you know, a... ..the first cup that I got, I gave to my sister.

Q. And can you remember when you started in the mines, which Company that it was, was it then Scottish Oils?

GL Well, Niddry Works, it was Young's Paraffin at that time.....Young's Paraffin Oil, no, the Scottish Oils had taken over from them, but that's what it was.....my father used to work up there in the Work, you know, he was a.....he was the.....the engine driver, he used to go to..... he used to take his engine to Glendevon, take the empty wagons to Glendevon, and bring the full ones back. And he would take the empty wagons to Thirty Five Pit, and bring the full ones back, and my brother was a joiner in the Niddry Work too!

Q. Was he?

GL Aye! I lost him, seven years in September!

Q. Can you remember what you earned when you started work at first?

GL The first wage that I had was thirteen and fourpence! That was the first wage that I had, and I'll tell you, there was a man off his work, he stayed at the side of the Roman Camps, he was Geordie Smillie's..... oh, wait just now.....Bobby Sneddon.....Bobby Sneddon.....Bobby Sneddon stayed in.....Bobby Sneddon was a labourer at Glendevon, and Geordie Smillie asked me to go to the Roman Camps this.....when I was finished my work like, to go to the Roman Camps and ask him to come out the next day, and I got a shift for it, so I don't know what a shift would be....

but.....my full week's wages were thirteen and fourpence. Of course, thirteen and fourpence.....maybe it's.....it maybe doesn't seem a lot, but it was money at that time, and I always mind when I started in Thirty Five Pit first, I didn't smoke and I didn't drink at that time, and I used to.....I was nightshift, I used to play football.....well, there's a house built across there now, I'm not talking about this football field, but across there on the other side of the canal, there used to be a football field there, and we used to have a game of football there, before I went to work, and I used to go into the sweetie shop, and I used to get six cakes of chocolate and a half pound of caramels, and still get change from half a crown. You'll know how far I'm going back!

Q. Did you have an Institute Hall here in Winchburgh?

GL There was a.....when it started first, it used to be.....what they called the reading room, up in the middle of the Rows there, and they used to have a couple of billiard tables there, and then after that, they got the Village hall built there, and they used to have billiards and then a card room, and maybe anybody that wanted to read the papers or ken, different things like that.....

Q. Was that the Company that built the.....?

GL Aye! You had to pay.....it was the very same with the Bowling Green, at that time, they took a penny.....well, that's what it used to be.... a penny, they took a penny off your wages every week, for this, the sort of upkeep of it, but as I always say the best fourpence that I ever spent with the Scottish Oils was up there getting a spray. When I worked in Tottly..... there were sometimes when you were working in water, and you were coming home soaking and what you used to do, was take your wet clothes off, hang them up, have a spray, go along to the other end of the baths, put maybe your shirt.....well, maybe good clothes, ken, maybe your old shifting clothes, put them on and then just go home, and that was you! I've seen me even going out to work, but if I was playing football, I used to go out to the mine, come home, just have a good shower,

on with the shifting clothes and away to the football then. That's the best fourpence worth that ever I spent! It was good!

Q. And where were these baths situated about?

GL I would say that they were just up there, they are working at them just now, I don't know what they were doing, but they were taken over by..... is it.....Marlborough.....you know, a big machine thing.....but I don't know what they are doing now! You can see it when you go out there, the big building on the other side of the railway!

Q. And were they built for the Oilworkers?

GL Aye, well.....

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GL - SIDE TWO

GL Well, when they were built first, it was for the Oilworkers, but after.. when they were.....when there were lockers left, the men that were getting preference were the miners that were working in water. And they were badly needing their clothes dried out and everything, because you hadn't the facilities to dry clothes out or anything like that in your house, not unless they were pinned up against the fire or that! It was the best fourpence worth that I ever spent!

Q. Did you know of any mines or pits that had their own baths?

GL No!

Q. They were only built for the Oilworks?

GL The Scottish Oils like! And they built an opencast..... there was an opencast up there at Niddry at one time, just at the side, when you go past that place that I was talking about, something like a garage, it's not a garage now, it's where they were hiring machines and everything like that out of it for a while there was an opencast there, just next to the field.

Q. But you never worked there?

GL No! I never worked at the opencast! No, I just worked underground..... well.....except the time that I started in Glendevon, I was on the pit-head at that time!

Q. And what kind of machinery did they use in the opencast mine?

GL Oh now, you're going back! I can't mind just now!

Q. This was a long time ago!

GL Oh, this was a long, long time ago!

Q. When you were a drawer, at Thirty Five, what did you use as a pin? For your identity to the weighman?

GL Oh, well, that was different.....I can't just mind what I had, but they had different things, some of them.....some of them maybe just had..... the lid of a bottle or something like that, or maybe just a nail bent in two, just out through the string or that, and as soon as you put that pin.....you put that pin on, before you started filling the hutch, and when the hutch went up to.....the pithead, the checkweighman just took that off, and he knew whose hutch it was then! And after you went up to.....if you liked, when you went up at lousing time, you could go up and ask the checkweighman how much.....it wasn't a case of how many hutches you put up, what the weight was inside them, you see, how much shale that you sent up.

Q. Can you remember who your checkweighman was?

GL Aye! Jock Lanes, he died years ago! His son, they used to stay in Niddry too.....and Jimmy McMaster.....Jimmy McMaster.....from Broxburn was the pithead man at that time.

Q. But the checkweighman, he would be paid by the miners?

GL Aye!

Q. Had you ever any dispute with them?

GL They were right square!

Q. You always got paid for what you sent up?

GL Aye! What you sent up! Aye!

Q. And was there ever any dispute about not being all shale? Would there be blaes or dirt or anything like that?

GL Aye, well, I don't know how they worked that out..... there's.....it was maybe up to the gaffer, or Manager or whatever you liked, to tell the pitheadman to watch..... to watch what they were sending up, because.... the Manager was down every day.....he was maybe not down at the same section every day, well at Glendevon, there were a few mines at Glendevon, it was just the one sort of big mine, but it was what they cried six, seven and eight. There were men working down No. 6, there were men working down No. 7, and there were men working down No. 8, so he would go down and he would see the circumstances of the place that you were working in, and he would know what you were filling, and if he thought that you were filling maybe dirt or stones or that, he would just tell the pitheadman to check it, and what they would do, they would maybe take a hutch of yours off, and maybe a hutch of somebody else's off, it doesn't matter anyway! He would take them off and take them out, there

was a road out, where they used to have a bing, there used to be.....
you could take them out and either runnel it or maybe just coup it and
see what was in it, and it.....if there was dirt in it or that, well,
you were called to question then!

Q. Was this like a random check?

GL Aye, there was stuff that you weren't supposed to fill, that if you
thought that you were getting away with it, maybe making your hutch a
bit heavier, and that was giving you an extra two or three shillings at
that time.....you know, you were just taking a chance and well, it could
have cost you your job just the same.

Q. Would it have been as serious as that?

GL Well.....I'm not saying it would have cost you your job.....but..... you know,
you wouldn't have got away with it, they would have done something with it!

Q. So, you would have to deduct that off, whatever was due to you?

GL Aye! I'll tell you, I never felt as fit! I was only fit when I worked
in the mines, I.....up till I strained my back that time.

Q. So, it was heavy work?

GL Oh, it was heavy work.....definitely.....definitely!

Q. But you might say good exercise?

GL Well, you had to be fit, and as I say, I worked in Tottlywells,.....
I was working in Tottly.....I was working in water and everything I
could come up out of Tottlywell, and when I was dayshift, I could play
four and a half hours tennis every day! So, you'll know how fit I was
then! I'm not saying that I was good, but I've been told that I was
good, but I just let them carry on, I didn't agree with them, and I

didn't disagree with them! And I'm not being big headed about it!

Q. And what kind of lamps did you use when you were underground?

GL Well, when I worked in.....when I worked in Thirty Five Pit, it was batteries that you wore, and you had to watch the batteries too, you strapped it on your back, on your back here, stuck on with your belt, and if you didn't watch what you were doing, there was sometimes that it was running out, it would maybe run out, and it would burn your back, I had it two or three times, so you had to watch what you were doing! Aye!

Q. That was the batteries leaking?

GL Aye! Ken, just at your back there! It was burning you!

Q. So, that must have gone through your clothes as well, did it?

GL Aye, and when I worked at Duddingston at first, it was.....it was just the carbide lamp.

Q. And did you find that the batteries were better than the carbide for light?

GL Well, not really! Well, you see, a carbide lamp, do you know what I'm talking about?

Q. Yes!

GL It was only a wee thing on the top of your head! When you were using the batteries, you were carrying this about with you, and.....now, what is it, I could be wrong in my way, I could be wrong here.....but I think it was about thirteen and a half pound that they weighed, and you were, that was extra that you were carrying all day, and you still had this bit on your light..... like, you still had that on your head, with the carbide lamp and that it was only a case of, when your carbide was finished, you just took the top off and filled it up again, a wee drop water and that was you away again.

Q. So, in that way, it was a benefit, the carbide lamp?

GL Well, I would say, it was better, well, you hadn't much to carry with you, and..... the thing was, see when you got a new lamp, a new carbide lamp, I never knew of it going out, maybe I was going out with a hutch, and there was somebody coming in, I was dazzling them! So, at the finish you got a great light off it! But nine times out of ten, you had to blacken it! You had to blacken your reflector, to save you from causing any bother with anybody else's.

Q. Was this quite common?

GL Aye!

Q. Was that especially with a new carbide lamp?

GL Aye, with a new lamp, your reflector, it was just like looking into a mirror, you know, just like having a mirror, and you got the light, and you could see for far enough with it. As I said, you were maybe blinding somebody that was coming out the pit road! So I'm not saying that I had to blacken it all, but you had to blacken some, so much, ken, so that you put the light down a bit.....

Q. And would they object about this if it was too bright?

GL Well, it was dazzling them, and it could have caused.....well.....it could have caused trouble maybe, in ways.

Q. And were you ever dazzled yourself?

GL Oh, aye, often, but you just.....och, you never thought much about it, ken, only unless.....you weren't going out, if you were going down a slope or that, well, I won't say a big slope, but if you were going down a slope, you maybe had to put a snibble on the hutch, into the wheel, to slow it down a wee bit. If there was somebody coming in,

with their reflector glaring at you, you couldn't see what you were doing, ken!

Q. But this never happened with the electric, did it?

GL No.....it wasn't..... there wasn't the same.....well, the.....
electric..... it was more or less a sort of dull, sort of dull.....
I wouldn't say actually a dull mirror.....but it wasn't near as clear
as what it was with the carbide.....

Q. Were there ever any ponies worked in any places that you worked?

GL Eh.....Duddingston, not Duddingston.....eh, Tottlywells.....aye....
there were ponies in Tottlywells too, but..... there were ponies in
Glendevon, at one time. And there were ponies in Tottlywells, and
there were ponies in Duddingston. The ones in Tottlywells and
Duddingston..... the only time that they saw daylight, was on a Saturday after-
noon, to maybe the Monday morning, when they went back down again, they
never saw daylight from the one week's end to the other! They were
down there all the time, I don't know how they got fed, if they maybe
sent the stuff down to them or what!

Q. But they would have stables?

GL Aye!

Q. And did you ever work with the ponies?

GL No!

END OF TAPE

Transcript

GL

Industrial
Information

I left school in December 1935, and I started in Glendevon when I was fourteen. I gave them a hand to carry wood across the mouth of the mine for the chain runner to take the pit props down the mine. I also used to fill wee basins with grease and carry it up the stairs to the pithead for the men that were emptying the hutches, and that were greasing the hutches and then sending them back down at certain times. I would get orders from the chain runner, that he was wanting so many of that and so many of the next thing and he would go away down the mine. By the time he came back again there was another load of hutches.

Thirty Five Pit
Time Books

I used to go to Glendevon on Tuesday, then go along to Thirty Five Pit and get their time books, and by the time that I had done that and walked back from Broxburn, to Glendevon again, it was about three quarters of a day wasted. I then had to take them back to Broxburn, that was where the wages were made up at that time, It was called the Canal Bridge in Broxburn.

My Job at Thirty Five

I was on oncast for a wee while at Thirty Five Pit.

- Drawing Cuddies I went down to my job on the oncast this Monday morning and there was a phone message, it was the gaffer, I was to start drawing with Peter White from Bridgend. It used to be up to three cuddies, there was two of us working on the same three cuddies, and then this boy left, and I was sent up another cuddy. As I always said I wondered how I stuck the mines for so long.
- Tottlywells At Tottlywells I was just howking shale and they were filling it.
- Niddry Works When my father worked at Niddry Works, it was owned by Young's Paraffin, and later Scottish Oils took over. My father was the engine driver, he used to take his engine to Glendevon with the empty wagons and bring the full ones back.
- Open Cast Mine – Pin You're going back a long time now. I just can't mind what I had, but they had different things, some of us just had the lid of a bottle, or maybe just a nail bent in two, just out through the string or something like that, and as soon as you put that pin on before you started filling the hutch. When the hutch went up to the pithead, the checkweighman just took the pin off, and he knew whose hutch it was then. And after we went up at lousing time we could ask the checkweighman how much. It wasn't

a case of how many hutches you put up, but the weight inside them, that was how much shale you sent up.

Checks on the Shale

There were men working down No. 6 and No. 7 who were filling dirt or stones so the gaffer or the Manager would tell the pit-headman to check it, or maybe they would take a hutch of yours off. They had a bing, and you could take them out and either runnel it or maybe just coup it and see what was in it, and if there was dirt in it, well you were called into question. There was stuff you weren't supposed to fill, and if you thought you were getting away with it, maybe making your hutch a bit heavier you were just taking a chance.

Underground Lamps

It was batteries you wore, and you had to watch because they were strapped to your back with a belt, and if you didn't watch what you were doing it would sometimes run out and burn your back. I had it three times, so you had to watch what you were doing. The lamps were only wee things on top of your head. I think it was about thirteen and a half pounds that they weighed, and that was extra that you were carrying all day, and you still had this bit on your head with the carbide lamp. It was only a case when your carbide was

finished, you took the top off and filled it up again with a wee drop of water and that was you away again.

New Carbide Lamps

When we got the new lamps it was just like looking into a mirror, and you got the light, and you could see far enough with it. You would maybe blind somebody that was coming out ' the pit road. If you were going down a slope, you maybe had to put a snibble on the hutch into the wheel to slow it down a wee bit, and if someone else was coming in with their reflector glaring at you, you couldn't see what you were doing.

Electric Lamps

It wasn't the same with electric lamps. It was more or less dull, I wouldn't say it was dull mirror, but it wasn't near as clear as what it was with carbide.

Pit Ponies

I never worked with pit ponies, but there were ponies, at Tottlywells and Duddingston which only saw the daylight on a Saturday afternoon to maybe the Monday morning, when they went back down again. They never saw daylight from one week end to the other. They were down there all the time, I don't know how they got fed. Maybe they sent the-'stuff down to them.

Stables - Injury to my Back

They had stables for the pit ponies. I injured my back

while I was driving underground,
and I had to leave to get a
lighter job.

Compensation

At the time of my injury they
had a sort of Provident scheme,
but you didn't pay into it,
the Company paid. I finished
up on my own, and I think I
got £601 in it, but when I
got my cheque it was for £495,
so I lost over a hundred pounds
in packing in myself, because I
wasn't fit to do my job. The
Company didn't think a was
unfit. I didn't even get a
letter from the Doctor.

Wages

When I was drawing it all depend-
ed who you were drawing to. The
faceman paid you. You could get
what they called Companies'
time, that was a set wage,
depending on the number of hutches
you filled, and the job you had.
I got my wages on a Friday from
Dally Finnegan. He used to
hand you your pay in 'an envelope,
and he would hand you another
couple of pounds in your hand,
or just a wee bit over. But
when I worked with another
drawer, it didn't matter how
many hutches you put out you
still got the same wage.

Baths

When I worked at Tottlywells,
I used to come home and go
up to the baths there, and
have a good spray.

Strikes

I was not involved in any

strikes.

Domestic Information
Housing

I was staying in Forty Four Millgate with my mum and Dad, and my big brother and sister. I was the bairn. It was a Council house. We then flitted over to Midhope Place, the far end of the next row.

Rent

The rent for the house was kept from my wages.

Marriage

I started going with this person, and we got engaged then we were married.

Our Own House

After we were married we put our name down for our own house, but they told me we already had a house, and they couldn't give me another one, so I went to Middleton Hall to see Bert Keddie, who was one of the head gaffers and explained that to Bert, but all he said was I had a house.

House at Whitequarries

After that I went to Whitequarries to see Dick Neilson, to see if he could get me a house, but first he said he couldn't.

House at Broxburn

He said the only thing he ' could do for me was get me a house in Greendykes Road in Broxburn, where I stayed for a couple of years, then I got a house at Midhope Place, my Mother and Father

stayed about two doors away from me.

Type of House

The house consisted of a kitchenette, a living room, a bedroom and a bathroom.

Health

My Mother had an abscess on her ankle, and she had to go to Bangour for an operation. My father took a heart attack and the two of them were in Bangour at the same time. That was why we had to get another house with no upstairs when I stayed with my mother and father. I was working in dirty water at one time in Thirty Five Pit, and every time I shovelled it was catching my arm which was beginning to fester, so I had to pack it in.

Leisure Activities

Tennis

The Council built tennis courts. At one time it was red ash, then the Council put tarmac on them and they have never been the same since. I played a semi-final tie. There was so many seats around just like a bowling green, and maybe different bits and the crowd was round it, so there must have been about two or three hundred watching it.

Trophies

I actually won one, that was the Mixed Doubles Cup with the person that I married after that.

Men's Singles

I got beat in the final of the

Men's Doubles, but I got two cups and a shield.

Football

When I was on nightshift I used to play football. There was a football pitch across the other side of the canal, but they have built houses there now.

Institute Hall

When it started first they cried it the reading room. They used to have a couple of billiard tables there. After we got the village hall built we used to have billiards and then a card room, and maybe some people wanted to read newspapers.

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