

JP Tape One, Side one

Q. Where did you start?

JP Westwood

Q. So you were in Westwood all the time?

JP Aye

Q. When did you start?

JP I was 14 ½

Q. So how long is that ago now?

JP I'm 75 now

Q. So we're talking about – what – 60 years ago?

JP Aye

Q. What did you start off at? Just doing the odd jobs?

JP No. There was a boy got killed, unknown to me, but it didn't matter, I'd got a job. Will Reid was the gaffer then – he says, “can you come out today?” “on the backshift?” I said “Aye”. This was at ten o'clock in the morning. So I went home on the bike and I went to the store, got a wee lamp, an oil lamp with a wick. I said to my mother, “You'll need to make me up a piece, ma.” “What for?” “Because I'm starting in Westwood today.” “Nothing of the kind” she said, “you're not going to the pits.” she said. I said “I'm going to the pits.” She said “Your father will have something to say about this.” I said “Oh never mind my father, I'm starting in the pits, I'm not working with David Gray any longer.”

He wouldn't let me away to play football and that had sickened me. The first man I met on the pit head was with my father. "Where do you think you're going?" said he. "Down there." "No, you're not." "Aye," I said, "I'm going down. I'll see you when you come home." After a fortnight, I got notice not to go back. I stuck it, I enjoyed myself.

Q. Was your father working there?

JP Aye, he worked there all his days.

Q. What had you been doing before that?

JP With David Gray the baker

Q. Oh, you were in the bakers.

JP This was a funny thing. My oldest brother – there was a mine up there at Dedridge, and he was working up there on the pit head, and he got hurt, and after he got hurt, after he was better, he got a job with David Gray the baker. And then my youngest brother, he bides in East Calder, he started in Westwood, another one. He took a burst appendix, and they'd to wheech him away from the pit, brought him home with it and wheeched him to the Royal. Now we went back in. Gray came up for him with a job in the bakehouse. And yet I stuck to the pits.

Q. Were you getting more money when you went into the pit?

JP Aye

Q. What kind of wages were you getting?

JP Well, I'll tell you, about 35/- - £2 a week.

Q. Depending on how much you dug?

- JP Aye, that was..... it was only about 4 and odds a shift, ken, for laddies.
- Q. What changes did you see while you were working there? What new machinery came in?
- JP There were no ponies there when I started.
- Q. Were there not?
- JP No
- Q. Just a straight wage?
- JP The men used to draw the hutches to the bench, ken, for the chain runner to come and pick them up. They got the ponies then, a big black one and a brown one. Tammy Reid, who was a boy like myself, and Wally Thompson, "Bilky" they called that Tammy Reid "Capper", the big black horse and the wee brown one, and they just called them Capper and Bilky after themselves, you know. Oh, it was good fun, I enjoyed life in the pits.
- Q. What was your job down there, were you at the drawing or what?
- JP No, I was on the – taking off hutches at the foot of a brae, full ones, coupling them on to empty hutches going up and full ones coming down, 2 at a time.
- Q. So you were just working at the foot of a brae?
- JP Aye. That was a job I was never on. All the laddies when they started they got the job at the pit pulling the empty units off the cage. I never got that job. I got shoved on to where I was going to get killed. I know there was a boy from East Calder died. I never knew that for a while, but it didn't bother me. If you're going to die you're going to die, no matter where you are.
- Q. You might as well get his job!

JP Aye!

Q. Was that the only job you did or did you go on to something else after that?

JP You got shifted from job to job

Q. Oh, yes.

JP You were so long – if they needed someone in a hurry the one that started came down and took over your job and you got shifted on to another job.

Q. So what else were you doing down there?

JP Chain running

Q. What's that?

JP That was away down the inclines for hutches, the empty ones, they went down on a rope on an electric engine. You weren't supposed to haul them right enough, you took that chance. Oh I'll tell you, I enjoyed myself in the pit. Then I came out them at the finish up. I was going with the wife at the time, and I was playing football, that's how I packed up with Davie Gray, he wouldn't let me away to play football. So this Saturday..... this Friday night, played – I was playing with Oakbank against Pumpherston in the final of a cup, Friday night, and the wife, she was working in the hotels in Edinburgh. Corner kick, mark on my split wrist yet, and my head – at the time there was no plasters in those days – big bandages – the wife's weekend off, go to Kirkcaldy to her sister's with this big bandage on and my arm in a sling. "Now," she said, "If you're still going to keep we're not going to Kirkcaldy now, not like that." "Aye", I said, "We're going to Kirkcaldy." She said "We're not going to kirkcaldy." So we stayed in Leith the week end. My brother came in on the Sunday. Before my brother came in she said, "If you're still going to keep playing football, you and me's finished today." Then my brother came in, he said "You'd better come out to Mid Calder, come

out, the manager of a first division team, Partick Thistle, wants to have talks with you.” I said “I'm finished with football.” I never kicked another ball to this day. I came home and I lifted my football boots out the press and put them on the fire. “Aye, that let's you ken I'm finished with football.” “Oh, but -” he said, “You would have – just the same, you'll get a new pair when you start work.” I never pulled another jersey on.

Q. Did each pit have a team?

JP No, there was none of that, no.

Q. I suppose all the villages would have them?

JP Aye, the villages round about had them.

Q. Was there much rivalry between the villages?

JP There was. East Calder, Oakbank, Mid Calder, oh, there was some carry on, I'll tell you.

Q. Ever end up in a fight?

JP No, when we were in Oakbank – by God, if you got on the wrong side of them by God they let you know what they thought of you! There was juvenile teams all round about here, one up in Pumpherston too.

Q. Any other sports that were played round about here?

JP That was all, just football.

Q. All just football?

I know over at Fauldhouse they had a cricket club, and everything. Was there any of that over here?

JP The cricket club was up in Pumpherston.

Q. That was up in Pumpherston was it?

JP Aye

Q. Have you always stayed in Mid Calder?

JP Aye

Q. Was there an institute here?

JP Aye, that's it up there

Q. Is it?

JP That crowd from Livingston have taken over it. I call them the Arabs!  
All those punks.

Q. Oh, them, yes.

JP If you go up there you think you've landed in Zululand or something!

Q. So what sort of thing went on in the institute?

JP Well, that hall originally belonged to Mid Calder, Mid Calder got that hall built, the folk in Mid Calder. And yet they took it over.

Q. What could you do at the institute?

JP Billiards.

Q. Billiards?

JP Aye. Dancing up there every Saturday night, and that – oh that was some carry on!

Q. When did that go on till?

JP 11 o'clock.

Q. 11 o'clock? Some of them went on later than that though?

JP Aye, there were some great laughs up there! Now there's a comical thing. And then they built the Masonic Hall, if you were drinking you couldn't go in to the Masonic Hall. So you went up to the auld hall. Aye, there were two dance halls seen going on the same Saturday night. So there were no pubs in Pumpherston at that time, and all the Pumpherston boys used to come down to Mid Calder.

Q. There used to be quite a lot of pubs in Mid Calder, didn't there, or was that before your time?

JP No, there would just be the three that I know of. But there were two licensed grocers. I'll tell you there were some great lads about here, around Mid Calder, Pumpherston Oakbank, they all used to come down here.

Q. This was where everybody came to, was it?

JP Aye. Down to Mid Calder.

Q. Was that because there wasn't pubs in other towns?

JP There was a pub in East Calder right enough, but most of them came down here.

Q. A busy wee place then.

JP Sing songs up in the room every Saturday night, I'll tell you, it was some laughs, very few battles, ken. Plenty arguments, but not what you'd say - come to blows.

Q. No real fighting?

- JP Well, some of them had a bit go, but that was it. They were just pals the next day.
- Q. Was there any place else you could work around here if you weren't in the shale?
- JP Well, there was the Pumpherston works.
- Q. There was the oil works?
- JP There was oil working at Oakbank.
- Q. But if you weren't involved with the mining or the oil was it just farms or things?
- JP Aye, you had to get a job at something you knew.
- Q. Was there many folks moved into the area to get jobs here?
- JP No. They were all boys like myself, young boys like myself, East Calder, Oakbank, three buses used to – two or three buses – just depends on how many travelled on shifts. We used to sing songs coming home at night, if you were backshift, sitting on the bus.
- Q. What time did the shifts run to? When did you start the dayshift?
- JP It was seven o'clock to two. You left here at six o'clock and you'd be in the pit about seven. And you'd be back up about three, the back of two. And the backshift was going down. When the war broke out they done away with the two o'clock shift.
- Q. Did they just have one dayshift?
- JP Dayshift and nightshift. For the sake of the – no, they did away with the nightshift, it was dayshift and backshift, so you'd be home at night in case of air raids, and in the house.
- Q. Was the nightshift an ordinary working shift or was that just.....

JP Aye, an ordinary working shift.

Q. What was that, ten til seven, or....

JP Aye, ten – you were home by seven.

Q. Was it company buses that took you to the pit?

JP Aye, it didn't cost you anything.

Q. That was free, was it?

JP Aye.

Q. What deductions did you have from your pay?

JP Just your insurance.

Q. Insurance?

JP Aye, you paid your union yourself. The boy collected your union money.

Q. Did your insurance cover your doctor and everything?

JP Aye.

Q. He could come out and see the rest of the family and not just you?

JP Aye.

Q. How much was that?

JP It wasn't very much, coppers I think. That's what I'm saying, I forget all about it, you know?

Q. Were you ever hurt down the pit?

JP Hurt? I was about the unluckiest boy there was in the pit.

Q. What happened to you?

JP Everything. Cut heads, back hurt, toes broken.....

Q. How long were you off work for, what was the longest you were off work?

JP About four months.

Q. What was that for?

JP I broke my big toe.

Q. Did you get anything off the company?

JP Aye, the "compie", compensation.

Q. How much?

JP Oh, it was only about £2 – odds a week, but that was supposed – a lot of money at that time you know.

Q. How much were you making then?

JP Well, I'll tell you – when I got married – wait a minute till I get this for you – Livingston Station had pits too – Well they put men up in different pits round about, they put a lot of them into Westwood and we used to work three weeks working and one off, like you were on the dole that week and it was all right when you were on the dole you see, your wages came in plus the dole money. Then the next week started – Tuesday finished the pay you see. You'd only two shifts in for the following Friday. £2.15/- I had when

I got married, a week.

Q. When did you get married?

JP 1935.

Q. 1935? So that's 48 years.

JP Mind the first week I got married – when I was working I paid my mother my dig money, and I got to keep the two shifts, on the two shifts week I never paid any dig money, because I'd squared her all up, you know. I got married in the idle week, and the following week back to my work. The two shifts. And you ken, I gave her the two shifts, and I looked at her and said to her, “and you know, Jane, I aye got to keep that when I was single”. She said, “You can't keep it now, then”. She was some kid.

Q. That idle week would be the only way you would get time off for a honeymoon was it?

JP Aye, oh you could have – supposing I'd have got married during the three weeks, I'd have just stayed off.

Q. You wouldn't get any money for it though?

JP No, no, it was a dead loss.

Q. Were you working at the time of the strike in 1926?

JP Aye.

Q. So you'd be in that, what can you mind about that?

JP I'll tell you where I went, away through to Gorebridge to the coal. I'd an uncle a gaffer there.

Q.

JP Aye. There was a good two or three miners went through to Newtongrange way to the end of the strike, and I went to Gorebridge with my father, where my uncle was. Some of them never came back, they just stayed through there, at Newtongrange. It was constant nightshift – Saturday morning it was as quick as you could get home and washed and the first bus home, and away on the Sunday night again.

Q. So how long were you through at Gorebridge for?

JP 12 weeks, the best of it was, they came out for bigger wages, they'd to go back on a break. There was a couple of b..... heroes, the 2 union boys, M. O'haggan, what was the other boy's name. They went about on a big motor bike, a B.S.A. Motor bike, one in the sidecar and one of them driving it. Crikey, what..... I mind being at a meeting, in East Calder, - Nellies was the other boys name -

Q. Wattie Nellies?

JP Aye. Did I tell you about him? There was a meeting in East Calder. He's standing shouting on the platform. He said, "Boys, we're out this time, till themselves grass grows on Addiewell bing!" We'd have been out yet! Mind I got that finger smashed, and I'd to go to meet him, and he sent me word to come along at eleven o'clock on the Sunday morning. I went out to Bathgate and I went to his door – just outside – they built him a bungalow, the union, and ken what they did? They gave him the title deeds of the bungalow, and he could have sold it. I went to his door. There was a wee farm – and there was nobody answering. I gave a half burl, here's this woman at the window, and I gave it another ring and she came out. She said "Are you looking for somebody". And I said "Aye, I'm looking for Mr. Nellies, I'd an appointment here today at 11 o'clock". "Oh," she said, "you won't see him to the back of 12". I said "Why?" she said, "he's away to chapel". That's it! I told him what I thought of him when he came back.

Q. Where was this house that got built for him then?

JP It was just out of Bathgate, I forget the name of that place.

Q. Is it still standing?

JP Maybe it could be down by this, what a tiny bungalow it was, there was a wee farm place right across from it.

Q. Can you mind what road it was on?

JP No. That's where they built Wattie Nellie's houses, and handed him the title deeds when he flitted in. He could have sold it. They were a pair of comedians.

Q. Was the union fairly strong in the pits or not?

JP In a way it was and in another way it wasn't. There was some of them not in the union, you could join if you liked, you know.

Q. How much were they taking off you?

JP A tenner a week.

Q. Tenner a week?

JP 3d when you were a laddie, when you started working in the shale, it was 6d.

Q. Can you remember any other trouble with the union, other than the 1926 strike?

JP No.

Q. During the second World War, was there not a strike amongst the young laddies in Westwood for about three days?

JP

Q. They brought men in and they were doing the same job as the laddies and they were getting paid more?

JP I remember one nightshift. They were sorry though. Auld Jimmy Reynolds, that's Johnny Reynolds,..... his father was nightshift. I don't know what happened, but they'd a row with auld Jimmy before they went down the pit. Auld Jimmy said, "Come on, you'd better get down the pit". And they walked away home! Well, you see, they'd to get men to do their jobs, well, those men had to get paid the wage they were getting when they were

Q. You were saying that they built a Masonic Hall up the road. Were there many folks in the Masons about here?

JP Aye, a good lodge.

Q. Did that get you a better job?

JP It never got me anywhere else.

Q. Were you in it?

JP No. My brother was hall keeper there for about 40 years. I've another brother, he's retired too. He was the Mastric in there for and his son followed him. He was the Mastric in there too.

Q. What about things like the Orange Lodge or anything like that?

JP No, there's no Orange Lodge around here, son.

Q. Nothing Like that?

JP No. I used to be a regular attender round there myself. I got bothered with my waterworks and this Davie Marshall, poor soul, he's dead now too, he was in the chair at the time, he come to me and he said, "You haven't been to the

meetings for a long while, Jim". Said I, "No, because I've got to – I'd be sitting too long, I'd need to get out". So he asked me what was up with me and I told him. He said, "I'll tell you, come to the meetings, sit down at the door and I'll tell the boy that's on the door if you want out just to let you out". If you get up in the middle of the meeting, you've to go up into the middle of the floor, and you've to go through Hallelujah before you get out. I went all the time he was on there. Then the next boy, big Hay, never asked me so I never went back. My brother died in the Masonic Hall, I always said that he would die in that hall.

Q. And did he?

JP He'd have been just as well because he died on the road going to Bangour. They got him lying at the back of the door one Sunday. You want to have seen the funeral, the big Masonic funeral. He was buried up in Mid Calder there. I met all the head ones from the Grand Lodges of Scotland.

Q. But the funerals were always quite big in this area, weren't they?

JP Aye. That was one thing about this place, no matter who it was, Scottish or English or Irish or Welsh, they all turned out.

Q. They did that in Livingston Village as well. All the men used to go out and go down to the Village.

JP That son of mine, he's a founder member of the Young Livingston. He's in St. Andrew's Kirk. He's a member round there right enough but you ken when they were forming the Lodges, you put so much into it. His name's on the book as being a founder member. All them that put so much to it get it going.

Q. Tell you what you'll be able to help me with. Was there ever a fatal – well there would be a fatal accident when you were in Westwood. No I heard that when that happened the men just left the pit for the day. They just stopped working.

JP That was it. They all loused.

Q. And did the word just get round the pit to get out?

JP Aye. And see the following shift coming out, they went straight home too. I once went to Lithgae (Linlithgow) to a fatal accident (enquiry) Ken, I think I see that woman's face yet. When I told her about the position the boy was in and where this hutch was – so after that – the Judge said to the jury. “Any questions you would like to ask the witness?” Well, this woman got up – a woman in the jury for a kick off – she said, “I'd like to ask a question”. So she said, “What is a hutch?” “Mr. Preston, will you answer the question?” “I certainly will.” I stood opened mouthed at her. He said, “Do you understand what the lady in the jury is saying?” I said “Aye.” But you ken it was the way she said – imagine – on the jury and didn't know what the pit hutch was. I said “Did you ever see a railway wagon in your life?” “Yes”. She said. “It's just like that on a smaller scale.” That finished it.

Q. Had the boy been hit by a runaway hutch?

JP No, it was a stone came off the side of the wall and killed him. Smashed him to bits. That was Willie Cairie from Starlaw pit. It's away now, just used to be about half a dozen houses.

Q. That's all knocked down.

JP Just him and his brother stayed together. I mind when we went to the house. The brother wasn't in, he was away to Bathgate and the woman next door, she came, she opened the door for us to get in. She went to uncover him, for we had him covered up. Well, this woman, by God, she dived forward to see him, shoved her on her – shoved her back out and then after that when they got killed in Westwood, you just didn't bring the body home, you had to get the undertaker to come to the pit. Aye, the poor b..... didn't know what hit him.

Q. Would there be a whip round for the widows and things among the miners?

JP Yes, we always do that.

Q. Did they get anything from the company, or.....

JP Aye, the company aye paid all the expenses. I mean the widow got so much, if it was proved.....

Q. Do you know how much that was?

JP No. For any of the ones that I knew round about here, the money never did them any good. They all went to hell with it, some of them. They used to say blood money never does anybody any good. Unlucky saying, that.

Q. Was that a local saying?

JP Aye.

Q. So what made your mind up – you were saying that it was because you were ill you left the pit eventually?

JP Aye

Q. Did you have much bother getting another job once you came out?

JP No. I got the job before I packed in.

Q. Oh, you got the job before you packed in.

JP And I'll tell you, there was a boy Fleming in church, he was the head cashier in Pitman Street, and I told him that I was packing in, now that day I went through to get my money he said, "Away and see Jock Stein again, he'll maybe change his mind." I went to see him. "No" he said, "You're not getting to Pumpherston." And ken, I was a mug, I should have packed in. When I packed in, instead of starting in the paper mill, I should have went back up to Pumpherston and got a job then because I was finished with the pits.

Q. So you wouldn't have needed a transfer?

JP No, two or three of them did that. I was too late then. After they retired out of Pumpherston – the pit money we paid in when they were in the pit, it all counted for their pension.

Q. Were you in the provident scheme at all?

JP It was just started, just not all that long started when I packed in. I got £40 out of it. And see if I'd went to Pumpherston after I packed in, I'd have stayed off about a week instead of starting at the paper mill, and gone up to Pumpherston and got a job there I'd have finished my days in Pumpherston Oil. I was too late in finding that out though. Oh, I enjoyed myself in the paper mill too.

Q. Are there still a lot of the old mining families – are they still mostly in Mid Calder?

JP Aye, two or three of them still here.

Q. Did a lot of them leave after it all shut down?

JP No, there were a lot of them got jobs up in the works after it shut down.

Q. Did many of them go to the coal mining?

JP No, there was just those boys at the time of the strike that never came back – the Robertson's. They used to bide in that wee row of houses up by Dedridge.

Q. That's still standing.

JP Aye. My grandfather, he was a pit head gaffer in that Dedridge mine.

Q. So did you never think of going there to work?

JP No, it was finished by the time I..... they were all transferred to Westwood. Instead of the gaffer sacking anybody, he gave them a kick up the .....

Q. Who was that?

JP My grandfather.

Q. Oh your grandfather!

JP The laddies. If they gave him any impudence or wouldn't do something he said, "There's no good in sending you home, your mother and father would just need to keep you." Oh, he just used to hit them a kick in the ..... and that was it. I'd two uncles gaffers in the shale pits, one in Livingston Station and one in Dedridge, and the one that used to be in Livingston Station, they shut down then he got a gaffer's job in the one up the West Calder road, 26 they called it. He finished up in Westwood then it shut down.

Q. Were you in a company house?

JP No, I wasn't.

Q. You weren't?

JP No. I took that house, ken where the vet's place is up there – on the corner - that's where I took that house. It was a big single end. If you were at the one side of the house and the wife was at the other end, we had to shout if you wanted anything, we had some good scenes up there. Out to the pub on a Saturday night and up to the house, 2 or 3 boys in, sing song in the house.

Q. How much were you paying for that every week?

JP 6/- a week. But that wife of mine, she was some kid. She originally

belonged Kirkcaldy. Her father was a - now this as a funny thing. Her father was at the building of the Forth Bridge, the Iron (railway) bridge, and his son was at the building of the road bridge, and they were going to get their photo's taken when the Queen opened it. Auld McGuigan died that morning. He was a seafaring man all his days.

Q. So how did you meet your wife? Was she over here or were you over in Fife or...

JP I was coming home - I'll tell you when I met her. I was about 16 years old and there was 3 or 4 of us used to go away into Edinburgh to the Waverley Market or the pictures or something and into the Waverley, Waverley Market, to the roller skating, well those boys that I was hanging about with, they'd been at the roller skating. I got the roller skates on and they took my hand, they let me go and I hit one of the pillars. I said, "That's me finished today." I came to the side and sat down. Jock Ramsay said, "Come on, get them on again". Said, I, "No, I'm not going on again". So there was dancing on in the other half of the hall at the Waverley and I said, "Come on, we'll go into the dance". There was this couple, 2 young women dancing together. I said, "We'll split up those two, you take the wee stout one, I'll take the thin one". We had a couple of dances and she said, "Is this your first time here?" I said, "Aye, the first time in here." She said "Where do you belong?" I said, "Mid Calder", I said. " You'll no ken where that is, 12 ½ miles on the other side of Edinburgh". She said, "I belong Leith, but I originally belong Kirkcaldy." Now I never seen her till I was 20-odds from I was only 16, and I met her on the bus. She was waitressing in the big house up at Calder Hall. I was sitting - she was sitting in the back seat and I was sitting

down the side. The more I looked at her the more I knew her. So she jumped off at the middle of East Calder and when she went out she said, "Well, good night." I said, "Aye, good night." So I jumped off at the other end of East Calder. I said, "Aye, I've seen that woman before, I think she'll be a maid up at the big house." So I was standing at the corner at the lodge, and here she's coming walking along. Funny, never seen her from that! She was only about 14 ½ and I was 16. The best of it was she was coming home that night to pack in, going to give a months notice. She decided to go to Europe and she left. She went away to Moffatt, to start with Bell of Moffatt. We were on idle weeks at the time, you signed the dole on the Monday and you didn't need to go back to the Friday. I signed the dole. Back to the old wife, my mother, "Away on the bike, son". I landed in Moffatt on the pushbike! Then she worked – she left there and she went to Aviemore. We got married after that.

Q. Did you have any kids?

JP If you ever met an idiot it was my oldest son. He joined the Royal Navy, boy's service, went to the Ganges when he was 14 ½, you left school at 14 then in those days, and you know what he done? He came out the Royal Navy after doing 18 years in it, if he'd stuck it another 3 years he'd a pension for life out the Royal Navy, and he came out of it. And that son, him that's the lorry driver.....

Transcript	James Preston
Industrial Information	I started in the pits when I was fourteen and a half.
Ponies	<p>It was only after I started in the pit that the ponies came into the mines.</p> <p>The ponies used to come and pick up the hutches and take them to the benches before the men had to draw them themselves.</p> <p>There was a big black pony and another brown one.</p>
Brae	<p>From the ponies I went to what they called the brae, where I was employed taking off the hutches at the foot of the brae,</p> <p>I was employed taking off the empty hutches from the cage.</p>
Odd Jobs	<p>From there I was shifted from job to job and if they needed someone in a hurry, another man came to take over my job, then I was shifted to where I was needed.</p>
Chain Running	<p>From the brae I went to the chain, this was an incline to lower the hutches.</p> <p>The empty hutches went down on a rope on an electric engine. You weren't supposed to haul them right enough, but you took the chance.</p>
Wages	<p>My wages in the pit was about thirty five shillings to two pounds.</p>

Shifts As laddies we only worked four odd shifts in those days.

Pumpherstons From the chain running I went to Pumpherstons but I wasn't long there when I packed in as well.

My Grandfather My grandfather was a pit gaffer in the Dedridge Mine but once that closed down, they were all transferred to Westwood.

Strikes I can't remember any other strikes other than the 1926 one.  
I can also remember one nightshift but I don't know what really happened, but they had a row before they went down the pit. They had got other men to do their jobs and these men had to get paid the same wage as the men were getting.

Unions In one way the unions in the pit were strong and in another way they were not. There were some men who didn't belong to a Union.

Union Fees The Union fees were a tanner a week. When I started as a laddie in the shale mines, the fees to belong to a Union was sixpence. A boy came round to collect your Union fees.

Provident Scheme	The provident scheme was not long started when I packed in my job and I just got £40 out of it.
Accidents	There was one fatal accident at Westwood. A stone came off the side of the wall and killed him. It smashed him to bits.
Funeral	The company paid all the funeral expenses.
Domestic Life	My wife was some kid. She originally came from Kirkcaldy. Her father was employed on the building of the Forth Rail Bridge. I met her at Roller skating at the Waverley Market.
Marriage	We got married in 1955 during an idle week.
Honeymoon	During an idle week was the only time I got off for our honeymoon.
Children	My eldest son joined the Royal Navy Boys Services. Then he went to the when he was fourteen and a half.
Housing	I took a house up at the Vets place. It was a big single end and if I was at the one side of the house and the wife was at the other side, we had to shout at each other if we wanted anything.
Social Life Institute Hall	The original hall belonged to Mid Calder because they got it built.

Billiards

There was billiards at the Institute Hall,  
which I used to play.

Dancing

We had dancing as well at the Institute  
Hall every Saturday night. It was some  
carry on and it used to go on until eleven  
o'clock. Aye we had some great laughs  
up there.

Masonic Hall

There was a Masonic Hall but if you drank  
you couldn't go in.  
My brother was hall keeper there for about  
forty years.

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