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OIL WORKS

Roman Camp

W1

Interviewee: Miss MA
Address: Almondell Court
Broxburn Born 1901
Date: 28/3/85

SR = Sara Randall

MA = MA

SR. Were you born in Broxburn?

MA. Yes, I was born in Broxburn on the 19th of June 1901. So I'm no young-.

SR. Where about did you live then?

MA. Eh, up the West End then, there wasn't many houses there. My mother said when we - you see my mother and father came from Ireland.

SR. Ah ha, you're one of those!

MA. Aye, the two of them came from Ireland and there was nothing here then. I think the oil works had just started then. So they were here - they were married here and we were all educated here at Broxburn High School. There were three daughters of us, and one son - that's the son ...

SR. So there were only four of you?

MA. Only four of us.

SR. That was quite small in those days wasn't it?

MA. That's what I was going to say. You see in those days everybody had great big families, 12 and 13 all crammed into small houses you know and there was very little houses with bathrooms, some without toilets. We were never - we always had a toilet you know, but crammed in and they did not have very much to live on. There was no children's allowance, people had to make do with what they had. I had a mother that was a well doing mother and a good manager, and she made all our clothes. She said that she had no idea of sewing until after she was married and she was sewing everything by hand my father says to her I don't know why you don't buy a machine. Seeing you're so interested in sewing. But she just never bothered so he came in this day and he says to her I bought you a machine and he bought it. It was new with all the instructions. He studied it up and he showed her how to work it. Well she was never away from it. She made

all our dresses, and you ken children then wore a lot of underclothing ken.
Petticoats and that and she made pinafores and that and did all the knitting.

SR. Did she ever make things and sell them?

MA. Oh no, she used to - we belonged to, did you notice a church when you were coming in?

SR. I noticed there are two or three churches aren't there?

MA. Well that's - it's on the Main Road. That's the church we belonged to, we were all members and my father and mother were married with that Dr Primrose. He went to Glasgow later on. Well they were married with him. Then the next one was a Mr Ferguson, he baptised us all. We all went to the Sunday School every Sunday and we went to the church, my mother was a great church woman. And that Mrs Ferguson, she was the minister's wife - an awful fine old lady. (Re the Ferguson's son) And she used - there were great sales of work - and she used to come down and ask my mother if she would do something. Of course, my mother was the old fashioned type, and she made - you know women wore big long aprons then, and she made aprons. And she was a good knitter, she used to knit socks and she used to put a price on them. (Re sale of work). Of course the church was burnt down, at least inside it was and you can see the inside of the church ... But it used to be - it was a nice church.

SR. But most of the Irish people who came here were Catholics weren't they?

MA. Oh I wouldn't say that.

SR. I thought most of them were Catholics.

MA. Oh no, my mother wasn't. The Irish people had a spite at - they wouldn't have buried them together, the Catholics and they had a different cemetery for them. And they, well my father was - well in these days in Ireland education wasn't compulsory. Didn't need to go to school unless they liked. And my mother said she'd had to walk several miles to school and she had to pay so much per week. Well it was peats that was burnt in Ireland at that time and they all had to take a peat with them for the fire - at the school. And she said - you put - the headmaster was standing watching you. And she said "woe betide" anyone who brought a small piece. You see this was put in the corner and she says "tyrants, oh masters both women and men, one is stood with a stick she says, and was just to give them what for". And she says a lot of boys were sent, you see it was all farming in Ireland and they were sent to school but they never went near. And they roamed the fields. You see there was nobody to go to look for them. Until it was time to

get out.

SR. Why did your parents come here?

MA. Well they just come. Well my mother, there was eight of them, there was five brothers and three sisters. The eldest brother was a detective with Tennant in Glasgow, great big tall man over six feet, and the people they all seemed to be interested in business and another brother had a big ironmongers shop where the Savings bank is. He was a great man for building, he built property. There is a big building in the Main Street of Broxburn called the Coronation Buildings, and he built it and he moved his shop from there to right over. When I was a girl it was a great big kind of slummy looking building I thought and there was like a landing in the front and the women used to come out and they could see we were going to school. Looking over the fence. Well of course he went later on - he went to Bathgate. And that brother he, that was the detective with Tenant

(Re his son)

SR. What did your father do?

SR. What job did your father do?

MA. He worked at the camps. (Roman Camps)

SR. In the oil works?

MA. Aye, it belonged to the - of course my father died in 1946

SR. But he worked at the camps for all the time that you remember?

MA. Aye, that's where he retired from.

SR. What type of work did he do? Was he a

MA. I couldn't tell you, he was working - you know when you're younger you don't take any interest. And then my mother she lived till about 100 years.

SR. Did she?

MA. Aye, you'll no know Dr Wood.

SR. Well I met him once, because it was he who gave me your name.

MA. Oh aye. He said a lady called and he comes in here every few weeks and he said that, well, with what I was that maybe I could. He said he gave you 2 or 3 names.

SR. He gave me quite a lot, about 20 names. But not everybody wanted to talk to me, I think I've talked to about 10 or 15 people in Broxburn and you're the last one on my list.

MA. I'm the last! Have you done the rest?

SR. Yes, I've seen most people, so I know a bit about Broxburn but I'm still collecting new stories and new pictures.

MA. Oh aye, well my mother lived to about 100 years and she'd lovely black hair, and
(Re the hair)

SR. Well anyway, tell me about your life. As a child you lived in the house and there were four children and

MA. Four children, two adults.

SR. And how big was your house?

MA. We had, when we were younger the only thing that was here was, a "but and ben", but we had a toilet and water and everything. But oh, a lot of the houses they had to come out.

SR. And did you own your own house or was it rented?

MA. No, we paid rent. Latterly that big house that I left. We were in this big house - we bought it and then I had to sell it when I came down here because. It was a lovely house inside but I got it sold in no bother. (Re selling house)

SR. And when did you leave school? How old were you when you left school?

MA. You left when you were 14.

SR. And you never thought of staying on and doing highers or anything?

MA. Well my mother was always.. Well, after it wasn't easy getting a job in my young days. A lot of girls had to go into service you know. Of course my mother didn't want to see that. She didn't want to see any of us going into service or that.

SR. Why not? What was wrong with service?

MA. Och well, you didn't get out. It's not like now. Some girls just didn't out every fortnight or that, you know and they'd to go away to Edinburgh. So I got this job in the cooperative. I remember my mother asked the manager (Re getting the job) Well my first pay, I got it in an envelope, was 3/- . 6/- a week. The coop paid more money and higher wages, a lot of other shops just paid 4/- you see, so I was well off. So he said to me "If I see you're getting on it will be you're own fault if your not getting an increase". There were no trade unions in these days. In three weeks did I not get 2/-, that was a fortune in these days. Here later on I got another 3/-, that was 11/-. (Re the increase) I felt quite well off. And then of course I worked ..

SR. You retired when you were 60 did you?

MA. Yes, worked for 44 years, it was 1917 I started to work.

SR. When you first started work, what sort of hours did you first work?

MA. 8 to 6 at night, no tea breaks.

SR. Nothing? Were you allowed to eat a sandwich when you were working?

MA. You wouldn't let the manager see you eating a piece. No, no tea works. And the shops, the girls, well it was during the war and it was girls who were employed in the grocery, and you know with the rations - my, they had to work for their money and if they left the counter for a minute they were terrified (Re this situation) And no heating!

SR. Was it cold?

MA. Well the committee meeting was on a Friday night and the heating sort of went on, but you see I was young, and the other women they were older maybe, but I was younger and I didn't feel it the same. And you got 1 ¼ hours for your lunch, from 1 pm to 2.15 pm for your lunch. (Re this) I was there 44 years and if there was any promotion I got it and I worked up until I was accountant. I wasn't very anxious, I knew it was a big job, and my mother wasn't wanting me to take it and the manager was urging me I should take it. However I did take it. (Re work)

SR. Did you have to go on any courses, or did you just pick it up - the accounting?

MA. I just learnt it, there was no computers or that and there were big long ledgers and that and counting was nothing to me. And you had to count up these ledgers and every three months the society paid the dividend. And it was some work. You were just getting red up from one when there was another, and big long queues, you see everybody was in the cooperative, and the dividend then, you see they were all paying rents and that helped them to pay them. It maybe wasn't very much, but they could get credit. You had a book you knew how much they had purchased and you could calculate this quarterly, it was 2/6 in the £1, and you could give them and at dividend time they had no option. It was kept. Every six months they gave, well latterly, a penny of the 1/- discount of anything you bought in the dried goods department. Oh that brought in an awful lot of money (Re this). And then with the cooperative you got well served with vans, there are no vans now.

SR. What, the cooperative used to send vans out did they?

MA. Och, you got a baker every other day, and a lovely baker's - lovely stuff, lovely pies and all that, no like now. You could even put in an order, they would come, and

even they used to send a traveller round. But you see that was all stopped.

SR. But was that stopped while you were still working there, or after you'd finished?

MA. Oh just the latter years, it was the last manager. I wasn't very fond of him. His appearance would have got him a job anywhere but eh, but he wasn't like ... we had some good managers. I say we'd some good managers - knew what they were doing and very good. They got a house for the manager up the Station Road, Balmacarr. And then my mother always wanted me to leave after I started to work. She liked me to go to, I don't think there is a Skerry's .now. You know shorthand and typing in Edinburgh?

SR. I don't know I've not lived in Edinburgh very long

MA. Oh have you not?

SR. No, I've only been there a few months.

MA. Oh you're English - I thought that. Well she always wanted me to leave. I didn't mind too much, it wouldn't be an awful lot of money, and go there. But however ..

SR. That was a sort of training college was it?

MA. Yes, a sort of - for a job you see. I wasn't very anxious after getting a job you see, and starting to make money you see. However, I never left. But my brother he is educated, that's him. He's graduated in first class honours in mathematics and that philosophy. So he done quite well and he rose to be director of Brechin Academy, you'll know it, it's away near Montrose. It was quite a big school, he got on quite well - he was quite clever. And that's his son - he graduated, he went to Edinburgh too, and he graduated first class honours in mathematical science. He does actuarial work, it seems quite a good job, eh I think? Well he's with Standard Life, if you know them. And that's the daughter she's married now, she got honours in chemistry. She stays in Ashford (Re her family)

SR. But of the four of you you're brother was the only one who stayed on at school was he?

MA. Yes ha ha. He never asked to leave, he just sort of. Of course it was in him He was educated at Broxburn High School, of course there is now an academy away up at Cardross. And eh, what was I going to say? My memory! Eh then he went to the varsity, and then of course it took four years for a honours degree, he passed

he'd no bother. There was three that got that. We'd a big picture of them in all the clart and all the professors. Well the professors sent for him (Re this advice). And even when he came through there was a lot of chaps with degrees who couldn't get jobs, but you see ..

SR. That was in the depression was it?

MA. Yes, I think the works had all closed down here. But he had no bother there were two or three places asked for him to come and see them.

SR. But none of your sisters stayed on at school and went to university?

MA. Well no. My eldest sister she died eh 1973 she'll be 12 years dead on the 9 March. She worked in a drapers, an old established drapers. He's up the street, called John Smith. And the business belonged to his people, well she worked in there. The fact is they came for her when she was a girl and she was the buyer. And she used to go to Glasgow every fortnight and buy all the stuff. She was only 77 when she died.

SR. Did she marry?

MA. No. No she wasn't married.

SR. So she worked all her life as well.

MA. What? Yes aye, she worked till she was 63 years. And the Smith family, well Mr Smith was the superintendent of the Sunday School and she knew all the family and the family always kept touch. There was two of them ... (Re the Smith family)

SR. Your sister worked here all the time did she?

MA. Yes. Oh she worked, I'm no like her, very handy with her hands. Oh she could sew, knit and oh she was good (Re her sister's skills)

SR. And how about your sister through here what did she do?

MA. Well she did work a wee while in Edinburgh, but you see my mother was getting old, and my mother although she was quite fit she was just at home.

SR. So the three of you, all three sisters stayed at home did you?

MA. Yes three sisters and the brother..

SR. Yes, and you stayed at home all the time because you never got married?

MA. Oh no,

SR. But you stayed at home with your mother?

MA. Laughter

SR. Why didn't any of you get married?

MA. Well, I think again it could have been but I never met anybody that I'd any fancy for. Although I could - I wouldn't. No, no I hadn't any. I was quite happy. I was just quite happy and we were well looked after. You know we got everything done for us and I was quite happy.

SR. When you started work did you give your mother all your wages or were you allowed to keep some of it?

MA. Eh, well when I started. Oh I can mind of getting a, I can see her yet sitting in the chair and we got paid on the Saturday then. I handed her the envelope with the 3/-, I cannae tell you what. But when we got on a wee bit she wouldn't take what we were paid. We just kind of gave her so much. She wasn't hard on us. So much and

SR. You kept the rest?

MA. We kept the rest. Saved up. Oh there wasn't so much money going then. There wasn't so much, no.

SR. Presumably you weren't so hard up because there weren't so many children?

MA. Oh aye, we were better off. I was speaking to a girl one day, my she says, and they were 12 or 13 of them, she says my, she says you were well off you were, we. Portobello was a great place for holidays then, ken, of course the folk wouldn't look at it. It was lovely, the sands and that, and my mother was a great believer in going a holiday, so she took us every year to Portobello, you see. And that's what we spent our holidays. And the prom on a Sunday and people dressed, beautifully dressed, beautifully dressed.

SR. What did she do did she used to hire a house or something, or hire a room for you?

MA. Eh you got a .., well there was somebody she knew for several years. I don't know how much it cost. It cost so much, there wasn't so much staying in hotels then. No, there wasn't so much. No we weren't so hard up.

SR. But were there a lot of families who were very poor? I mean friends of yours at School, were there a lot...

MA. Oh I can remember, eh I'd be about 12. There was this boy. They wouldn't do it now. The boy came to school, and the girl who sat beside me, I can remember her name was Mary Ann. She was an awful nice girl but she was an awful comic, and

here this lad came to the school, and he had a jacket on, you know boys wore short trousers then, it wasn't long trousers, the jacket was about down to his feet, the sleeves were turned away up, and you saw the lining (Re making fun of him). It wasn't a bad jacket to come to the school and then the father would get it when he went home. Aye. And I can mind of another teacher or a boy, they say his mother and father were terrible drunkards and he came to school. He was in rags, and the teacher said "If any of you children has any old clothes that you don't need could you bring them?" Well some of them that were better off brought them. Well I couldn't bring any as I had no brothers at the time, my brother was later in coming you see. And she put him out into the wee corridor to put on these old clothes, these clothes that were brought. Children wouldn't do that now. There was as many. We wore boots. (Re description of boots). And then when I think of the people and how they went to church, ken how they were dressed going to the church. My mother used to get a hat made, that Smith I told you - had a milliner (Re discussion on clothes).

SR. Were there a lot of women who couldn't afford as many clothes as your mother?

MA. They weren't all dressed like mother. Oh no. Some of them never went to the church, they couldn't afford ..

SR. Why were you better off? Was it just because there was less children or was your father better paid?

MA. Well, just the four of us and my mother wasn't wasteful, she was a good managing woman. You see...

SR. And your father didn't drink?

MA. No, he didn't. We were brought up in a Christian home you know, we weren't.. Of course a lot of men took drink, it was cheap. The only, my mother used to say, there wasn't any dentists. (Re a visit to the dentist and the use of whiskey to dull the pain)

SR. Were there dentists in Broxburn when you were a girl?

MA. No eh, if you wanted, it was a good, no, because my father said that eh, where's that - Dr Scott, his photo, he had to do with. And he (father) came home and he was about mad with toothache. And he said to my mother not to bother with supper and he went down to Dr Scott (Re this visit and other doctors in Broxburn)

SR. What did people do about doctors then? Did you have to pay for a doctor then or did you

MA. Well, the works had this scheme that every man got a penny a week deducted and and that insured that if anybody were ill, or their family, that the doctor was free. And they'd an ambulance when they wanted anything. You see there were an awful lot of men killed in the mines, and many a man died - if they had been nearer? You see there wasn't a Bangour in these days. They had to take them to the Infirmary in Edinburgh, and well, the miners, they started and supplied the ambulance themselves. They got so much off their pay every week and that meant if they needed to go into the Infirmary, or their family, they got it free. And the Scottish oils, they agreed to supply, for a man in the works who could drive, and they supplied him to take the ambulance in to the Infirmary. Of course it's different now, it's all Bangour and that.

SR. What about the ... was there a lot of ill health then? Were people much iller then than they are now?

MA. Oh there were a lot of children die. That Dr Wood was saying the other day, that my mother's family, there were 8 of them, "Did any of them die in infancy?", I says "No", and there were never a doctor in the house, my mother was the doctor. When I was young it was quite a common thing to see a cab, you know it was cabs then, and four men sitting in the cab with a wee coffin on their knee. There was one time my mother said, my sister was just a baby, and there was an outbreak of German Measles, and, I think it was pneumonia. And she says, my sister, well my mother had a good idea of nursing. My mother says there were more children went Uphall, that's where the cemetery was, she says my sister was the only one that got better. But in these days for pneumonia you see there was nothing but poulticing, and you know it is a very weakening thing, and she says she sat up all night and a neighbour came in and sat with her to be with her, and she says when the doctor came in the next morning, he says to her "You've got it lifted". She says there were people beside her and they lost two lovely boys with the same thing and she says when they - at Uphall cemetery burying one, the other one died. It was terrible you know. Oh she says, the children that died. The children don't die the same now. No. I had pneumonia myself. It was silent, it is the worst kind you can take because there wasn't any cure. So the doctor told me after I got better, well he says if that had happened less than 20 year ago we couldn't have saved your life. No matter what we gave you he says, it wouldn't have - you see I got penicillin. You see it's a thing you get awful weak (Re pneumonia)

SR. Were there children, or adults for that matter, with consumption? TB?

MA. Och, there were a lot of TB, there is no that now you know.

SR. But what did people do? Were they isolated or did they carry on living until they died or what?

MA. They went to, oh I can mind when I was young, some young folk there is a - did you come down Melbourne Road? Well there was a house at the foot there and eh the woman in it, of course I thought she was old but she couldn't have been old, she be maybe in her 30s, and in the cot she lay at the window, the window was out and netting wire and her bed was at the window. And there she lay waiting on her end. And of course the family usually inherit it. And there was 2 or 3 of a family, a girl of 14 - she died of it you see - there was no cure. But now it seems different.

SR. Did people ostracise them? Would people not visit them in case they caught it or?

MA. Well I don't know. They were lying in the house, I don't know what happened. But they couldn't do anything for them. Would you take a cup of tea?

SR. What did you do in your leisure time when you were working? When you first started to work what type of things did you do in your time off? Were there cinemas and ..

MA. Oh aye. And then we had the Wednesday half day. I used to go to Edinburgh every Wednesday and get your tea and finish up at the pictures. You see it was only about a 1/- or 1/6d, and you got a grand seat and there were good pictures. The likes of - and there were two picture houses here. (Re the cup of tea)

MA. There was no radio. I don't mind when it was we got a radio. We thought it was wonderful.

SR. When you were children what did you do? Where did you go and play?

MA. Oh we enjoyed ourselves, but we weren't spending money, we enjoyed ourselves you know, the crowd of us. And I can mind if there was snow, we (Re playing) And then we'd skipping ropes and we played, I'd a big bag of marbles and we played a lot of it. And on a Sunday you didn't, oh you didn't dare play on a Sunday. Nobody played on a Sunday. Oh oh..

SR. So what did you do on a Sunday then?

MA. Oh well I'll tell you. You got up in the morning and you were dressed in your Sunday best. The Sunday School went in at 11 am, and we went to it. The church went in at 12 noon, well it didn't, you didn't need to go to the school unless you liked you see. So maybe we'd just come home. Well you wouldn't have taken a ball in your hand there was even, there was no newspapers, and you wouldn't dare lift a newspaper. Nobody lifted a newspaper on a Sunday, not like now. You see the war started all that. The folk wanted news of the war. Then in the afternoon we were all dressed up, maybe a great big silk hat and you had elastic in below your chin to keep - lovely hats. Just to keep the hats on! Well you'll never guess where we all went?

SR. Where?

MA. Up to the cemetery. Ha, ha. Well that's at Uphall. Well the cemetery was packed with people and the seats, you couldn't get a seat. The people were all there all dressed up.

SR. And were they going to visit graves or were they just going up because that was where you went?

MA. Well they maybe had somebody in the cemetery you see. Well at that time, we had I think it was my grandmother, we went up and looked at - and took flowers or something. But that's where we went on a Sunday afternoon. And we went for long walks and used to go a lot to Almondell and we walked it and we'd a basket with us with food. We had lemonade and that and there were crowds of children and we were quite safe. And it was lovely. And then we'd to trek all that road home again. Oh we enjoyed ourselves, we all put our halfpennies and pennies together you see, and there was an awful nice girl in Low's, and we went in there and we bought a halfpenny's worth of broken biscuits, and you were lucky if you got a sweet one in it. And I remember we had a bottle of lemonade and that was up to Almondell. Oh and we went for long walks sometimes on a Sunday. That Arches road on a Sunday it was packed with people walking in it. Nobody walks now.

SR. Sunday was the only day that you dressed up and..?

MA. Oh, I was dressed - oh I always had plenty of nice dresses because my mother made them. But it was a white dress in the summertime she always put on me, on a Sunday.

SR. And did you always have a big bath on Saturday nights ready for Sunday or did you used to have a bath every night?

- MA. Eh, was it Saturday night or was it Friday night? My mother - we all got washed, I can't mind if it was Friday night or Saturday.
- SR. But it was just once a week though?
- MA. Oh aye, but she would come and learn you to wash your own face, and she would come and give you a good rub on the back of the ears.
- SR. And was it the same for your mother and father that they only used to bath once a week?
- MA. Aye they would bath too.
- SR. Did you have a bath in the house or did you have to fill a tub?
- MA. Oh there wasn't - hardly any house had a bath. Even big houses had no baths. Of course we've had the bath for years and years now.
- SR. So what was it? A big tub was it?
- MA. Aye, a great big thing. There was plenty of room in it.
- SR. And did you heat the water on the fire?
- MA. Aye, we'd a lovely big range, know but there was an awful lot of work in them. And my mother baked on it, made pies and tarts and she'd a great woman for giving to helping to people. Many a scone she'd put in a bag "Take that to old Mrs ...", and hand it in you see. She knew that maybe they hadn't very much. She was a great one, she never turned a tramp away from the door. Used to be a lot of tramps ..
- SR. Did there?
- MA. Oh aye, a lot of tramps. You see now they are getting social security, they don't need. And then there was a model lodging house just across, down at Stewartville there.
- SR. What's a model lodging house? That was just for tramps was it?
- MA. Well some say. It was supposed to be. I think it was a shilling a night for a bed and you see they went round the doors trying to make up their shilling for the night. No, no, she used to say .. it's a pity these folk that have such hard bad luck in front of them. She'd say that I feel I'm not telling the truth to say that I can't help them, so she always gave them when she was baking something in in bag. She never turned them away.
- SR. Were the tramps always drunk in these days like they are now?
- MA. Oh no I wouldn't say that.

SR. Because the only tramps you tend to see are very drunk.

MA. Och no, it wasn't the same. A man maybe took a drink on a Saturday night but he went home there was no breaking wind is there?

SR. Ah ah

MA. And then Robert Muir at the corner of Greendykes Road, that was all, at the right hand side, that was all his property and he also paid a dividend

SR. And what was it?

MA. Groceries, drapery, boots and he had fleshing and everything. And there two brothers, there were none of the two of them married, and they started this business. And sometimes we were sent at night. There was no queueing then. No queueing then and you took your stamp. And the shop was packed, all children for the messages.

SR. So was he in competition with the cooperative?

MA. There was no animosity between the Muir's and the store. No. Well the store took it over when Adam Muir died, Robert had died earlier, and when Adam died of course there was nobody to carry on the business. They had no family you see, and I think the lawyers wrote and asked the store to take it, and I can remember fine writing out the cheque for the whole place. We got a bargain of it. So that was Muir's. (Re the Muir family) No, no animosity.

SR. When the oil works were going was it very dirty and smokey here in Broxburn? And around the camps?

MA. No half. Many a time my mother had the washing to take in again if it was blowing out of the east you got all the black, ken, spots of it. And we got gas with the oil works, that's where we got our gas. Well was it a strike, or had they to shut down and of course we had no gas and we had to turn to oil lamps which we didn't like. The officer of the oil works they sent a man round to collect, to read the meter and that.

SR. And that the houses that were very close to the oil works and that, would they have had a lot more problems with smuts and this?

MA. Oh aye. We were - we never - they called them the company's houses, up Greendykes see that is all new houses in Greendykes Road. Well that was all rows. There is a window up there just before you come to the cooperative, you been through the street? And there is a photo. This old time you see. Dr Kelso he had a pipe band and was a batchelor and he came from Arran and his house was just in about somewhere just across there. Of course they were done the houses, I

say they were done.

SR. Were a lot of them very sort of squallid and cramped?

MA. Yes, they knocked them done, I say they were all knocked down.

SR. Were there a lot of houses with no toilets and no water? Were there a lot of houses with no toilet and so on?

MA. Oh well eh, when the company built there they wouldn't have any water in them. You see the folk just had a tap outside. In fact in the old town I can just mind there was a outside pump. You see folk didn't have these luxuries, I say they didn't have the luxuries.

SR. Did your parents have to pay a much higher rent for your house that had water and?

MA. Oh the rents weren't very much in these days. T say the rents weren't very much in these days, the company would keep it of the men's pay. You had to be in the work before you, before they got one of these houses you see, and then there were houses up in Stewartfield, that was all company's houses.

SR. So the company owned most of Broxburn?

MA. Oh aye, Scottish Oil and the West End my mother said there weren't any houses, know they have all been built since. And of course they have had to close, they closed the church. I don't know if you noticed it, it's a undertaker's now, a rest room now. Then a lot of folk they just left the church because of that, they wouldn't go to another church. But our church is no the same. You used to, you know, had your seat and you knew everybody that was coming in and you knew where they sat. But see no now you just go into any seat. I usually, I'm not there very often now, but I just go into the back seat. (Re the minister)

SR. Have there been a lot of new people move into Broxburn?

MA. Oh, you used to be able to know everybody in every house in the West End and that, I don't know anybody now ...

SR. Is that because people poured in from all over Scotland to live here?

MA. Aye well there are all these factories, you see they said that when the works closed down, would it be 1925? That Broxburn would be grown over with grass but you see all these factories came in and the men have all got jobs you see. And then

you see there always was an awful lot of folk who travelled to Edinburgh. You see you used to get into Edinburgh for 1/- return and a worker he got a weekly ticket for 3/6, you see things are dear now. I'm never on the buses now really, never on them. I miss not going to Edinburgh because as far as clothes are concerned I can do without because I know you have to go to look for them. (Re clothes) (Re the coop) Oh things are ...

SR. Better or worse?

MA. Oh well, I just says sometimes I think we were better when we had less money. Look at the pension - whoever thought the pension would ever go up to that? I say whoever thought the pension would go up to that. Well we never got social security of course. I think it is about £36 a week. Of course this rent it cost us over £150 a month. It covers the heating but not the lighting or that or the cooker. And then we've no responsibility. Our other house if it needed repairs it was getting such a job to get in tradesmen. (Re house repairs)

SR. But most of the people who live in the Sheltered Housing were people who were born in Broxburn were they? People who you knew when you were a child.

MA. There's one woman there she came, she came, I don't think they are all from - most of them I think.

SR. So the older people have moved much less than the younger people?

MA. Aye well Dr Thomson, his mother-in-law stays down there. You see if you are alone you only have the one, and you need the two places. You see there is a recess and the bed is in there. Of course there is plenty but they nearly all got, I haven't a home help, they have nearly all got there home helps. But of course if I was getting a home help I would have to pay over £2 an hour for her and I just, and I feel well it's no had to keep and I'll just try and carry on as long as I can. You see they clean the outside of the windows for you, not the (Re the home, work)