

Interviewee: Mrs MM

Address: Aitkenorr Drive

Broxburn

Date; 21/2/85 Born; 1900

SR = Sara Randall

MM = Mrs MM

SR Were you born in Broxburn?

MM No, I was born in Paisley, many years - well 1900 I was born.

SR 1900. So you're 84?

MM I'm 84. I'm 85 if God spares me in August. The same year as our Queen Mother only she beat me by a few days!

SR When did you come to Broxburn?

MM Well, that's a long story because my father used to, could get a job anywhere, and he used to come home and say to my mother, "Eh, we're flitting tomorrow". So that actually she had 13 of a family but 8 were spared to her. Funnily enough I am the last of the family, of the direct family, there's nephews and nieces and that. I'm the last of the 8, 1 or 2 of them died pretty young. Well heart cases I think, well my oldest sister she did have a bad heart, she had quite a big family. Her family survived right enough, but she died quite a few years ago. And then my youngest sister she died with her second baby. Quite . A perfectly healthy person, I don't know what happened but she went into birth, she was in a private nursing home at, eh now, at the end, this end of Princes Street. My brother used to stand there, he was on the trams, or there was buses then anyway.

Grovenor Street was it, the corner yonder, och I couldn't mind.

SR So she just died with herself in child?

MM With herself in child.

SR Did the child die?

MM No she is still alive. But she is delicate, she had a something wrong with the spleen. She was under a great doctor, she used to go for treatment to the Western General. But when, I cannot remember his name just now but he was quite a famous doctor, but he said, he told my brother-in-law and that, because my sister died after the birth, so he told my brother-in-law that she wouldn't be - but she is still there you see. But she's a sort of delicate lass you know. She's married but she's had no family. Her sisters would like to have seen her - but I says "No", she's not, she's better without a family because she wasn't strong, and what she couldn't bring in to the world, children that weren't healthy. But she's not one that it preys on her, and she's working. She's working in that bank, you passed that, you go up that street (Re directions and family)

SR Anyway, you yourself, when did you come to Broxburn?

MM Eh, I think about - eh - the coronation, 1910 would it be? We came across from Fife, a place called Lochholloch, it was a few miles from Loch Gelly, I remember that much anyway. I think I would be 10 years of age when we came across, to Broxburn. But previous to that, my three older sisters had been born in Broxburn and then father had taken jobs elsewhere. You see what I mean we were all -

SR Did you father work in the shale industry?

MM He worked in the shale eventually. But he was down the coal pits as well.

SR In Fife?

MM In Fife. And the thing was, we couldn't understand why he was coming home so clean from the mining here. Cleaner work you see.

SR So he left Fife to come and work in the shale mines in Broxburn?

MM Well he got a job in the mines here. But he was more, I think he worked quite a lot up above, he was getting on then and he didn't - he was fit enough. But he had an accident down the mine, he had a fall and it upset him a bit. But he was hardy you know.

SR When you came to Broxburn where did you live?

MM In Shrine Place.

SR And what was the house like?

MM Well it was, we had two rooms. We had a big room and a wee room and what we call the living room now, but it was a kitchen, it was everything. You hadn't water inside. Your toilet was, you were up the stair and there was two on the landing.

SR What toilets?

MM No, tenants, one toilet but two tenants on the landing. And you took your turn at clearing down the -

SR So it was a proper flush toilet with water?

MM Oh yes, and it was latterly, it was years after that when they put the water on, took the water from - there was a sink on the outside with a tap on the landing. That was taken, they took the water inside then and put a sink inside you see. And I used to hear my mother saying, "Fancy I'm still going out to that tap for water that's no there".

SR So where did she do the washing? Did she bring water into the house?

MM No they had, we were lucky in Shrine we had two wash houses for at least two blocks of houses, that would be 8 people going in, and you took your turn in the wash house.

And at that time when we went to Shrine first it was, they were emptying all the rubbish into the — I think it would be the council men then, because weren't privately owned houses you know. And I think the boys stayed up Station Road. And they used to come and empty the muck and everything. At one time you know of course, they used to get all the dry lavatories, that was going back a wee bit farther, when we were in Fife I remember that. Everything was very backward then, yet we never thought anything about it.

SR Was that at the same time in Broxburn then that there were dry toilets?

MM I think there was but we were pretty lucky. We were. When we came across from Fife to Shrine Place we did have the toilet inside. It was between the two houses but we still had a toilet, and a flush toilet.

SR And that time, how many children were you living at home?

MM Eh, well. I was the third youngest, there was my brother and my youngest sister. There was six years between my sister and I and there's my brother who is younger than that. That was 5 of us in the house at that time.

SR So you weren't too crowded?

MM The rest were either married or working you know. Most of them married I think. Yet we'd quite a good life, we never thought anything about hardships, we didn't know any better I suppose. My son told me that once (Re this). We were more content. We were definitely more content because we didn't cry for the moon because you knew you couldn't get it.

SR On the other hand you had enough food for meals and your mother wasn't struggling?

MM Oh, oh, yes. Well she maybe had struggles but I never never heard my mother say she was hard up or anything. She was one of those kind who could manage you know, and she was a good cook. She'd make a big pot of soup and a big dumpling on a Sunday for our tea. It costs something to make a dumpling now! It was all plain food but good food, that is one thing we never starved.

SR Did your father give his wage to your mum every week, always?

MM Oh yes, oh yes, mostly. I don't know if he had any fly, don't usually know, but she tried to watch him you know. She was canny but she got her own way in lots of things you know, she had a canny nature.

SR But was your father, did he help her in the house at all?

MM On no, no, no. She never needed him because she just got on with it. And I mean my married sister lived in Church Street in Broxburn at that time. And of course these sisters are all away now. That's life. And she used to come over and do the washing for my mother when she wasn't so able. Of course by this time I was out working and away on service of course. There was nothing else for you.

But it never did us any harm.

SR So how old were you when you left school?

MM Fourteen, that was the age then.

SR And you never thought of staying on?

MM No, I didn't think I was clever enough. They asked me if - but I said no, I didn't I wasn't brainy enough really. Not really. I didn't have a very good opinion about myself.

SR Would your parents have let you stay on if you had wanted?

MM Well I. think so, I think they would ..

SR But they didn't need you to go away and work, to get money?

MM Well no, oh well, it all helped towards the housekeeping.

SR So what did you do once you had left school?

MM Em, my first place was in Broxburn funnily enough. Weekly, I used to get a weekly wage of 5/-. I was the only maid in the house. There was grocers in Broxburn, Brand, William Brand. And I was there 18 months, but I was in a few jobs before I settled or anything. I went up to Bangour and Aid a bit of mental training you know.

SR Up in the village hospital?

MM Aye, I did a couple of years and 3 Months there but then I remember the doctor

said, I was a great one for "Margaret you won't like it".

SR Did you?

MM Well, it had its compensations and it was interesting you know.

SR Were you up there when the war was on? When it became a war hospital?

MM First world war, yes.

SR And were there a lot of soldiers coming.

MM Oh yes, they used to come out the train then you see. A lot of shell shock, an awful lot of shell shock. Poor chaps.

SR And at that time did they move all the other patients out of the hospital?

MM Well they still had the Old Bangour, and they made this other bit, I think for the soldiers coming in. They put a place up on the hill I remember. But it was a sad time during the war, it was, when you saw the soldiers walking about poor souls. Walking about, some of them nearly doubled up in two with. Gassed. And then they used to send them, when they were out getting a check up about something I would happen to be in the kitchen place where there was Sister Anderson who had the place up the stair, and I wasn't fond of her, she was an old bitch. Anyway, and I'm saying that in here. Anyway you had to help the boys. Some of them hadn't their limbs and that and you had to help them cut up their meat and that, in the dining room. Of course some of them offered me a tip and that, but I wouldn't - it was an insult. And the two priests prayed. You didn't need anything like that, no matter how hard up you were. You had your independence you know.

SR At that time you were still living at home with your parents and you just went to Bangour each day?

MM Yes, no I was sleeping in.

SR And did you keep your wages to yourself or did you give them to your parents?

MM Oh I gave them to me mother. I got more back than I gave her. It's true to say that. I don't know how she did it, but she did it. I mean she had quite a lot of girls, six girls and two boys. Fair to her like. But you never heard them grumbling. And they were pretty healthy. In fact I think she was healthier than some of her family. Because my oldest sister,(inaudible)and my second sister she had quite a big family in the East End. She had a child that SVA was very very ill, and they used to tell her that if she didn't stop having a family, of course it was the kind of man she had then, they didna bother. She was an awful nice person too, and they said if she didn't stop having a family it would finish her. Well, it finished her and all. She lost a baby, the second one, the last second one she had. And then she died in the City Hospital in Edinburgh with the last one she had. Oh there has been a lot of sad things, but we had our happy times as well.

SR So what did you do after you left Bangour?

MM I was 19. I was with the doctor, I was in a place in Leith, Claremont Park. I stayed there a couple of year and then I went to Dr Johnson, that was before I went to Bangour of course. After I left Bangour I think I went to Carluke, a big house there, they were relations of people I had been with previously. I was quite happy there but I was always a one for home and then I went with the same people, Mrs Morgan asked me if I wanted to go to London. So I was in London for about 18 months. But I got home for a holiday. (Re wanting home)

SR So then you got a job in Broxburn did you?

MM No, I never worked actually in Broxburn. Except for the first job I was in. I went back to Bangour again, that's when I did a bit of mental work. And I left there to get married. 1927.

SR where's your husband from?

MM No my husband died 9 years come June. I was very lucky, I'd a very good husband.

SR Was he from Broxburn?

MM Oh yes, he was born in Northern Ireland, they came from Northern Ireland right enough. But he was born in Stewartfield here. In the older type houses up there, he says, "That's where I was born up there".

SR Are those houses still there or are they gone now?

MM No they have gone. Old fashioned houses, a room and kitchen . And many big families in all but a room and kitchen".

SR I can't work out where all these people slept in some of these houses.

MM I know, I know.

SR Was he from a big family?

MM Yes, he was from a big family. Of course they were getting on quite a bit when he was married. And the older ones had left the nest and had got married and that. But they liked Broxburn. And that - you can't see so much of the tip now you

see. but his father emptied shale in there for many many years. My husband was in the mine as well.

SR He was a miner as well?

MM He was down the mines.

SR All his working life?

MM Well, not quite. Pretty well. He left the mine to go up above, up to the top of the tip. And I always remember him saying that, the men said to William, surely enough there is a lot of dust up there, but he says there is a lot more down below. And the chaff you used. to get. But he was a happy made chap, very humorous. He could tell you a big long story and no a word of truth in it. Never a smile off his face. Very, very cheery.

SR And when you got married where did you live? Did you get a house of your own or ..?

MM Um, we stayed with my mother for just a short time, then we got a house in down the old town. In fact we got Willie's mother's house for she had died, and we were there for a few years. Not too many years. Then we went up to Greendykes Road. Where we spent the rest of our married, life practically. We were in one house, it was a wee house, a room and a kitchen and then we got a bigger house.

SR When you were up there, the house had water and electricity had it?

MM Oh yes, we had these in. That was getting on then you see. We had the electric. Actually they put the electric in up Greendykes Road not so very long before we came down here. But we had already got it in for ourselves. We got the boy from the Scottish Oils to come and put it in for us.

SR It was a Scottish Oils house was it?

MM Yes, it was a Scottish Oils.

SR Were they good landlords?

MM Oh yes, very good, and very good with the houses. They just had the room and kitchen to start with, but then there were five of us. And we had the two beds in the kitchen, and one in the room you see.

SR How many children did you have?

MM My oldest is a girl, a daughter, and a son John and my son Willie. Willie is with me now, he never married. (Re Willie and prices)

SR When you first got married did you have problems in making ends meet or ...?

MM Not bad because I had an awful good husband.

SR Miners wages, were they sufficient were they?

MM We managed, we managed. We always managed. I've seen us pretty hard up at the end of the week and maybe getting another shilling from my mother ..

SR A shilling?

MM And giving her it back the next day. We could never take anything without repaying it. Never, we were brought up that way. But I mean, when you think about it now, you used to get so much for a shilling then.

SR You didn't have any luxuries then?

MM Oh no

SR Lots of clothes or

MM Oh well we kept ourselves. I kept the kids nice, I like to see my kids nice. And we always had good dinners, they maybe weren't high filuting, plain but like I'd seen my mother doing, We were quite happy like.

SR When your children were born, did you have them in the hospital or did you have them at home?

MM At home.

SR And was there a midwife or a doctor came?

MM Em, latterly you had to have the doctor when Willie was born. I don't know if you (inaudible) but when Willie was born we were living at Greendykes Road. And eh, Dr Scott's wife, had had an accident that night (Re this incident) and she couldn't get hold of the doctor, because I had to get stitched you see. She said (MM's sister) that she could do it, but she daren't. It's a doctors work. But we got him eventually.

SR But the first two you didn't have a doctor?

MM No just the midwife..

SR A trained midwife?

MM Oh yes. What, a Mrs Hunter. I'm trying to remember. Of course, Rabina was born in Shrine Place too. We didn't have the doctor then it was just Mrs Hunter. And when I had John we were staying up at Dechmont with my sisters. She took me up. There was a year and nine months between John and Rabina, but there was only six year gap between Willie and John. Och we got on fine. But we didn't have, I mean we took care of ourselves. You had to stay in bed up until the 9th day, there wasn't so much getting up then. Now I mean they get up the next day and everything. See we had to have that rest.

SR But what happened about women who had a whole family, did they have to get someone in.... I mean you were OK because you only had 2 or 3 children, but women who had 5 or 6?

MM Well the funny thing is that you usually had pretty good neighbours. The neighbours were very good at helping one another. You know. They'd come in and in fact when I had Willie my neighbour was very good. She came in and tidied up that old fashioned fireplace with all yon steel and everything - well she used to clean it. (Re cleaning) But for the love of doing it, it wasn't done for any gain or that. You helped one another.

SR If you had problems like if you ran out of money or you ran out of food or something, would you go first to your neighbour or to your mother or your family?

MM Well I was never that hard up that I ever had to ask anyone for anything. The only thing like I say when it came the weekend then the only time that you, if you were short of a shilling or something then I would get it from my mother. And give her it back the next day. So we didn't really, well there were hard times, but we never thought nowt about them. We never, we considered we had our health and that. We never managed many holidays and that. We used to have a daily, no a yearly picnic. We used to go with the Sunday School, I used to go with my Dad.

I tell you what we did have though. We had, nine years, now don't ask me when, but the youngest one wasn't born then, so that must be getting on for 50 years ago now, because Rabina and John were at school, and I remember Dad had won, I remember this was a great thing, Dad had won a, I think it was (Re this) ,£4 or £5. But do you know we had a fortnight's holiday off that. I went and stayed with my sister in Portobello, for a fortnight. Dad had to come back meantime because that was when we had three weeks on and a week off spread, if they did something like that nowadays they would - our country's in a terrible state - but the working man is his own worst enemy. I think It's terrible the way the miners have carried on because any miners that we lived beside, they were all hard working men, really, and out to help one another. But there's an awful lot of this, och I don't know, Leftists what do you call it? But we had 9 years of this 3 weeks on and 1 week off, and we thought it was going to be terrible but we got on all right. But Dad used to go down to this, there was a cheap Johnny used to come down to the Town Hall, it wasn't the Town Hall it was the Band Hall I think, and then Dad used to go and listen to his crack, and take the kids with him. When the two of them were there, and she used to come home with sweets and things, oh she thought she was the big...

SR And the 3weeks on and 1 week off, there was

MM On the dole, and what we got for the children was 1/6 a week then and then they raised it to 2/-. That's what you got to keep your kids.

SR And could you manage?

MM We managed, oh, we managed.

SR And when they started ..

MM And you couldn't save much, you couldn't save much because you had to feed and clad your children, and keep your husband in clothes for his work, heavy boots and that. You just had to get things as you could afford it, I always had a club in

the cooperative so as I could get things as I wanted them. And I paid in weekly.

SR You never went out to work after you were married?

MM No, no, never.

SR Was that because you weren't, you didn't feel you wanted the money or because you ..

MM Oh we managed and there wasn't so much talk about people going out to work then it was just thought that it had to be. Maybe sacrificing for some of the family or that, but we certainly, I never thought, I once had a letter from a lady I knew in London and she wondered, of course she didn't know I was married, (Re this letter) Well we didn't really - we talk about the old times as hard times but they weren't really too bad. We managed, you know, you didn't have a lot of luxuries or anything.

SR Was the sort of day to day living hard work? Like the washing and ...

MM Well it was all the hard way then, the washhouse. But I had nothing against my husband, he had three different shifts. And we always used to fill up the boiler in the morning with cold water and set the fire, and if he was going out he would light the fire in the morning and it would be hot when we rose. The big boiler. So really we didn't have it as hard as some of them, because some of them didn't even have washhouses you see.

SR Was it really difficult to get all your husband's shale working clothes all clean?

MM No, they weren't too bad.

SR And where did you dry them? Did you have a pulley over the fire or ..?

MM They were always put outside right enough, if it was reasonable. But, actually when they were in working, working conditions, they used to come home all damp. And these used to be dry for the next morning, for they hadn't the - that was when I was at home. I've seen three suits of clothes round about the hearth, of course they had the big fires then. And we didn't get the coal for nothing then, we had to pay for it, for everything we got. But we, I think the folk before us had harder times but, as I say I never, ever heard my mother grumbling. She always said she was thankful to God for her help.

SR Did your brothers go down the shale mines?

MM My oldest brother did, but my youngest brother didn't. He went on the buses, the (Re bus companies). My older brother went down the mine, but eventually he went into the town and onto the trams, and then the buses.

SR About that time in Broxburn, did the vast majority of people work in the shale mines? Or the oil works? Was that the main work when a boy left school?

MM Yes, they never thought about anything else but going through with what their father did. Of course some folks tried to better themselves by sending their kids, giving their kids a better chance you know. But I don't think it ever did the miners any harm you know, because they were hard working men you know, but we got the foolish ones, but you get that yet and your on drugs and one another. But I think it's a terrible world we're living in now, I always think I'm glad I'm on the way out. You think with all this vandalism (Re vandalism)

SR And there was no vandalism or problems?

MM Well I wouldn't say there was, we weren't, you didn't get the vandalism that we get now. And you used to get a couple of policemen, a cuff on the ear with his glove and that frightened them. But no now

SR But when, so when your brothers left school they had no problems in getting a job.

MM Oh there was plenty of work, there was plenty of work. You see this is what is killing the country now. The young folk, some of them have stayed at the school and taken their highers and they can't get jobs. It's pathetic you know. It really is a shame and who can you blame?

SR During the first world war did any women go to work in the shale mines? Or just men?

MM I don't think there was any women that went down the shale mines. You talk about them going to different things but not the ammunition's and that but I don't think there was any - I don't remember.

SR You don't remember?

MM I remember I got word from Edinburgh, the West End, because I was at Bangour they wanted me to go to take temporary work. But I didn't do it because I have really got very bad nerves, varicose veins. And I had three of a family and I didn't want to go out to work and leave my family. My place was at home. So they left me in peace. They asked me once or twice, but I just kept on saying that I really couldn't go. I couldn't have stood the wards, because I do have varicose veins right up my legs.

SR When you were a child at school, were there sort of problems of TB, consumption and so on? Were your friends ..

MM But we weren't affected that way, I told you.

SR Not you, but did you know of other people? Was there a great fear of it?

- MM You heard of it you know. And of course, they called it consumption then. But when you were younger you weren't really interested the same. When you've a family they all seem to, big families, there is quite a lot of love. Only when the family starts to get married there is a wee bit of jealousy, you know, it's always that way. Especially when there is girls I think.
- SR So when you played, you played with your family rather than friends at school?
- MM Oh we had our pals, and we had them that used to pull your hair for you, when your hair was long then.
- SR Where did you go? Did you go and play on the bings or anything like that?
- MM Oh no, no we didn't play on the bings. It was just round about the doors and that. We maybe had a comer or that. We didn't really have too bad a life
- SR Was there a big difference, or can you remember, if there was a big difference between here and Fife, where you were beforehand? Did it seem wealthier here or poorer or dirtier or what?
- MM No, well I don't, the miners came in dirtier because the coal was dirtier, you know what like it is when you're putting on a fire, you have to put on a pair of gloves. Well I had a coal fire when I came over here and I never had been used to this, and there are flues in it and Dad and I used to have a, right struggle cleaning it out. (Re the flue) (Re gas fires).
- SR When you were a child do you remember often being cold, was the heating very poor?
- MM Oh no, no, the were big fires. We'd big coal fires. Father was great for he kept the dross, and he put it at the back of the fire and it burnt for hours that way. To keep the heat in, to let it out in the kitchen . And there wasn't great

big rooms then you see. Not so big. They are making smaller bedrooms now right enough, but, this was a big room then. Of course this is your living room, at one time we'd have called that your kitchen. Now whereas we've the kitchenette through there which is very handy.

SR So when you were living in the house with the room and kitchen, the room would be about the same size as this would it?

MM Oh no.

SR Smaller?

MM Yes, smaller. The houses then, the Scottish Oils houses weren't very big then your know. They had two set-in alcoves, two alcoves sort of for your beds. But they were put in, there were boards in the front, and latterly you hadn't these straw mattresses that you started with, you started getting a new mattress. I was lucky because my brother-in-law worked in the asylum and you got nice mattresses. They were hung you see the beds and arm springs, of course that was all the more for your comfort again.

SR What did you have before that then?

MM These mattresses, you know they were straw mattress and then there was flock mattresses. And you couldn't (inaudible) and you'd to toss it up.

SR Were they comfortable to sleep on?

MM Oh they were comfortable and that, oh yes you'd to toss them up right enough. You see you got all these comforts as time went on. You got the difference. You never thought of buying new furniture.

SR Where did you used to get your furniture from then?

MM We used to buy second hand furniture, if you saw the chance of a good thing going you used to take it you know. You didn't really buy a lot of new furniture, when the family started to work you could afford to buy everything then you know.

SR But when you first started got married you had very little ?

MM We had love and that was the main thing.

SR Did you have to wait until you could get married, a while? Or until you had enough-money to get furniture or did you just get married and live with nothing for a while?

MM We took pot luck.

SR Can you remember was there from the oil works and all the oil works that burnt were they very smokey and dusty?

MM Actually no really. I tell what we used to get. In fact there was a factory that started up, what do you call it? You know it makes washing machines, Otrit. I'm sure that was the name. And the only time we had to complain was then, they had built the chimney and it was far too short and if you put your clothes out. And the soot once in to them you couldn't get it out.

SR And that was in Broxburn, was it?

MM Aye, that was in Broxburn.

SR When was that?

MM That was, em they came from Paisley to Broxburn at that time. Eventually they

did something about the chimney I think, but it was terrible when you put your clothes out.

SR But the oil works weren't like that?

MM On no, no and I remember when the sanitary inspector came to me, he says "That's a nasty old fellow" and I says "I tell you this much that nasty old fellow never upsets us. The reek goes up where it's meant to go up" Because it was a tall chimney, it was one of the works chimneys. And we never got any. It was when the factory was built and they put the chimney, they hadn't, and one of the clerks daughters, a man who knew what he was talking about, he said the chimney wasn't made tall enough. It wasn't made high enough and that's the way you pet... Oh, it was terrible, and it was yon thick dirty smoke that came out of it. I remember I washed a pair of thick flannelette sheets for the first time and I never, ever, got that thick soot out of my sheets. Never. They always yon grey dirty, look about them. And you know at that time you were very proud of your washing.

SR And did the oil works smell at all? Was there any smell came out of the?

MM Well you used to get, if you used to get the smell from the oil works you were going to get rain. You know when you think of Broxburn then, in these days of prosperity, men came flocking down by our door in great numbers. Of course they were working up there at the oil works and everything was going then. But it all stopped gradually. I remember when Dad got word about it, they were going to close the mine up there, at the camps, he came home and he says "They are going to shut the mines" Well, things had happened before and we'd survived "Don't worry". I says, "You'll get a job elsewhere". If there was nothing you got sent to Grangemouth. Just as a labourer, but he said it was the best job he ever had.

SR And did the bus come and take him each day?

MM It used to take him there and back again afterwards. He was lucky with Grangemouth really. And then of course when he retired he got a wee pension. It was a very small pension, I think it was about £1 a week, or no even that, and then he was retiring. And I said "What are you worried about Dad? Everybody has to retire sometime". "After all", I says "You're lucky, you're 67 ½", and you know. And he got on fine, he never looked back. In fact I used to say to him "You know what Dad, we're better off now than when we were working". Of course my pension, and his and we managed lovely. Never grumbled because we were quite happy the way we were. And after Dad died, at first they didn't give the widows a pension, they carried on ... but we all get it now. The pension that our husbands used to get. And I wouldn't call the king my cousin because I always used to say the wee P gave us a good pension, been a very good friend to hundreds and thousands of people in Scotland. Because there's an awful lot on their books. Widows you know. Of course, the thing that happens to widows is that they are cut off you know, you know that is understood. But I'm quite happy with my wee P.

SR Did you father get any pension?

MM No.

SR So how did - when he retired?

MM He got the state pension, but, it was very little. I think it was .. 10/-

SR Was it enough for them to live off?

MM Oh I don't think so. No.

SR So did you have to support him at all or ?

MM No, we didn't really. They never asked you for anything. Of course we used to

share. We used to share. Especially when my mother was getting older. When you made a pot of soup you took a can over to you own folks. And she'd say "But you've no had your own dinner", and I'd say, "No, I came over with yours first then I'll get mine when I go back mother". But I mean, but you always thought of the kindness of you own mother, for she didn't have very much but she always had something to spare for others you know.

SR Did you husband or your father ever complain about the conditions down the mines? Did they say they were good or they were bad?

MM No, I never heard them saying much really and especially my husband because he was a hard worker right enough. My father used to have, what they used to call a place others worked to him, you know. But I never heard them saying much you know, unless they were talking on matters that I didnae understand. But, maybe it was hard time but you never heard them crying about them. They greet now if there is tuppence or thruppence put on anything. And if you say anything they say "Och, you're old fashioned". (Re this) They are going out now and getting all the fancy stuff they are needing for their house and some of them have no intention of paying it. There is an awful lot of bad payers. We were never brought up that way. And that's what I often say, even if you have a bit extra, you never throw it away. You keep a bit, you've got to keep it - you've got to get buried. (Re a joke)
You are going to see a lady today and she awful interesting and she is going on 94, Mrs Hamilton up the Station Road, she is a marvelous person. She is a friend of mine. She really is.

SR Is she from Broxburn?

MM Actually she has been in Broxburn a number of years, but she was what you call from Westerton, a wee village outside Broxburn. Do you know where the arches are, across the road, she used to live quite near there. Oh she has such a memory. You know I was getting quite worried about you coming because I didn't know if I'd be able to answer your questions. And Willie he said "What are you worrying

about Mum?" (Re this)

SR For me, you see it is just interesting. I'm trying to get a picture of what life was like and I've talked to a lot of people up in West Calder and Addiewell. Where obviously life was really difficult in terms of the sanitary conditions and housing was atrocious and a lot of people were extremely poor. And a lot of kids went to school barefoot, and it was very difficult although there was industry there, there were jobs, but it was hardly paid enough to live off. So I didn't just want to get a picture from there so I wanted to talk to people in Broxburn, and to people in other places. But I just want to get a general idea of what life was like, and what happened - how poor people were and how they coped and how difficult it was.

MM It's amazing you know how you cope. It really is how amazing it is how you cope. If you didn't have money for a certain thing you were wanting you waited until you did have it.

SR In your opinion, not in your family in particular, but were there other families that were much more hard up than your family?

MM Oh yes, of course there was a lot of hard up, I think there was an awful lot of bad managers. Because I've known people that have had three and four times the amount of money coming in that we had, and they couldn't manage. They were letting their money fritter away on different things. But why after all when you got married, you followed your mother's footsteps, really you used to watch what she did, and you had a good idea how far money would go. In fact I used to say to my mother (Re. how she wondered how her mother used to cope when her father liked a drink, but her husband didn't drink). I was very lucky. (Re son)

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