

NM - SIDE 1

NM And you want to go back to the very start? Well I applied, put my name in the works office in Pumpherstons and it was not that very long in till I got a letter for to start in the plumbers under Mr. William Brown. Pin, do you remember "pin" leg brown"

Q. And who was the manager then?

NM Oh, William Gray was the manager but old Brown was the head plumber and I worked there for 16 months.

Q. What age were you then?

NM Well I'd be 15 then. I was 14 when I started then we got a rise in August. I started in June and I was 15 in August, and I got a rise and then and then, oh roughly about, after about a year and that, Mr Gray sent for me and he asked me would I serve my time as a plumber. I said "No." "Why?" "Well", I says "I've already done three years". "and" I says, "you want me to do another six months and then start and serve my time." I says, "No, no way." Standing boring a pump, you know they used to pump up to get the air.

Q. Oh yes.

NM So he wasn't very pleased and that me, I think I was public enemy to start with. And then I got sent to heap the rubbish at the stills. You know the still repairers, to heap the rubbish there. And so he got his own back on me. He kept me there until I was almost 21 before he gave me a man's job. And you remember Alan Fossits, the engineer from .... well he used to come to me quite often and tell me ....

"Now", he says, "Look for another job here", he says, "Mr. Gray's not gonna let you away from here." And he kept me there until I was about near enough 21 before I got the man's wage before ye started then with Willy Banks. The first job I got was in a trimmer 250 ton of coke, ken that was shovelled into wagons. That was the first labouring job I got.

Q. Was it after it came out of the stills?

NM Aye.

Q. And you had to load it on to wagons, trail wagons?

NM Aye. I was 21 then and of course you had the still cleaners and then you'd a man that you know flung it into the bing and we got about 200, maybe 300 tons. We got regular orders from Bank's men sent down ... Oh it was some job, it was two days hard, hard work. And then Willy Banks sent me to the soda plant and we had to empty the soda and the lime ... Oh there was jobs that could be what ...I worked there with an old worthy from East Calder, Willy Campbell. He was a great man, old Willy. He stayed in lodgings in East Calder. I worked for him for a long, long time, till I got stomach trouble. I attended Dr. John McClardy and it finished up he gave me a line. I had to get off that job, it was burning the lining of my stomach.

Q. Was this the fumes?

NM No, the soda and the lime. You know the stour, you know the stour of the soda, the stour off the lime, and I was sent to Jock Roberts. Now

if you remember Jock Roberts, he was the retort foreman. The retorts were finished then and this was another labouring squad that was started over and Willie Banks left. When he retired Jock Roberts took over.

And I was sent to Jock Robert's squad.

Q. Can you remember when that was, can you remember what year?

NM It would be, only would be roughly about 21 ½ when I went to Jock Roberts.

Q. So it would be 1945?

NM No I was in the soda plant when, you remember Oakbank work shut down and some of them were sent to Pumpherston Works and I'm just trying to remember the man I was working with. Jimmy Campbell left. This Willy came, I just cannae, Donald Martin was one of them, I just can't remember all the names at all. Bill Martin was one of them and it finished up that Dr. McClardy gave me a line and I gave it to Jock Roberts and worked general labouring working inside the crane, you know the works crane?

Q. See when you were on the job loading the paraffin coke, can you remember much about the still cleaners?

NM Old Tom Dick and Andrew Chapman and Charlie Valance, they were the three still cleaners then.

Q. And what would you say their job was like? Was it a good job, dirty job,

dangerous job?

NM It could be. Only one of them looked after himself, that was Andrew Chapman. Andrew cleaned four stills and that was it, no more. At that time that was all required on one side. You see Tom Dick cleaned the one side and Andrew Chapman cleaned the other side and Charlie Mallen was on the green stills.

Q. And what was the difference?

NM They were on this, that bounces turns it the face the power station and the still house. Charlie Mallen was on that for many, many years and Charlie Dick was a man that could take the doors off the stills and you know the heat that was in these things and six hours after it Tom Dick would go in and clean the still. He was a marvellous man. Nobody knows how he done it, the intense heat that was in these stills. It was still heat treated.

Q. And what was the normal time to wait before you came in?

NM Oh it was usually way about maybe a still come off maybe the day before and it was cleaned the next morning. We had to wait, I would say roughly, it would be about 12 hours anyway at the very least. Tom Dick was cleaning them in less, half that, only one in half that time. Oh he was a marvellous man.

Q. And why do you think he was able to do that?

NM I don't know. He must have been superhuman. I can always remember you know when there was no heat in the village we used to watch him and he had a wee clay pipe, an old clay pipe. He used to give that old clay pipe to Jock King, wee Jock King, that's Irene King's dad. He was the still fireman and he used to give me his pipe at the end of the week and stuff then, we used to watch Tom going into the still neck and often take a black twist of baccy at the back of his locker. We used to nip up the ladder, nip a bit off and he caught us one day.

Q. Was this you actually taking a bit of his phial?

NM Aye, just nipping a bit off, ken how it was to keep the old pipe going; heating rubbish with an old clay pipe. Oh aye he was, an average man y'ken. The best laugh I got of him though, he had a.. backed a winner, he backed a couple of winners at the horses and he used to walk, you know from the top of the work go up and get his pay on a Friday and come walking down and Pete McArthur he was the still repairer. He was the bookie. The bookie's runner. And Tam had a couple of winners and he got a good pay, a good pay and he said to Peter he would get so much out his pay you see and says to Peter, "Mind you alter my line". So he took the money out and Peter forgot the line then of course when he went home his wife looked at the pay. "Hey you're £2.50 short so the pound he had took out of his pay, the £1.50 he got from Fossits, it turned out, he lost. It was the best laugh ever I had. He was a marvellous man. Did I ever tell you the time he worked in Oakbank cleaning stills? He walked from Currier to Oakbank every morning.

Q. Where was that about?

NM Come again.

Q. Aye Currie.

NM Currie.

Q. Oh from Currie.

NM Aye to Oakbank, every morning and then back again to his work. Andrew Jardine on the other hand he was, maybe clean the stills, come out and have a rest, back clean another one and then go and have his piece, he'd come back clean another one. Clean the smoke, clean the smoke one black, wash his face and his hands, back down. Well then they had to wheel the coke to the bing and old Bob McKee, I don't know if you remember old Bob or not. Old Bob was a lodger and he lived with Mick Mullen at the old maids, and bob used to shovel the coke you know. Fling it up. These still cleaners used to have to wheel all their own, well maybe six or seven stills they could fling over from the gully up on the bing an old donkey headed it off and many was on, many was on that morning as I say after the ( ) we had quite a good spell Jock Roberts and got sent to make a crane and oh it was long, long time finish up the .....

Q. Which crane was this?

NM That was the winch crane from Stenhouse.

Q. Rail crane?

NM No it was a hand crane. It was shunted back and forward by the locomotives and Tom Stenhouse and I don't know whether you remember Peter McIntosh he was killed. McIntosh is a stager at the ( ) houses well he was the crane driver and John Anderson was the man that you know he was the setter of the stills and there was an unfortunate accident when Peter McIntosh was killed.

Q. Was you there when it happened?

NM I wasnae on it then no. I wasnae on it then. I was still with the plumbers then and Tom Stenhouse took over then and Tom was on it for all they years. As I say when I got sent there they got me to learn you know the spare crane man, the spares top man and if the top man was off I took over and if the crane man was off I took over.

Q. And what was actually involved in that job?

NM The cranes? No you were lifting boilers, stills anything, oh it was a handy crane but I never seen us getting sent over to the Camps you know like the L.N.E.R. engine used to take the crane over the Camps. That was done at night, you went over there at night and done these jobs putting the men, machinery in to the breaker hole of something like that. And it was a very interesting job so I was on there quite a while and then a Mr Anderson came as manager, you know we had George Cant for a while and then we had John

Caldwell, John Caldwell was manager until he took over from Mr Crichton and Dougie Heany the number 1 man, the man I always blamed for closing Pumpherson Oil works soon as he could. Well you know at that time I was on the diesel pump as well, previous to that may be going on a wee bit too far forward. The senior man was operator and then you had a fireman and dippers. There used to be the three on one shift and they cut it to two.

Well, I was on with Johnny Allen. I don't know if you remember Johnny Allen, he stayed in the new rows and Johnny was operator and his health began to deteriorate and ..... I kept that man working for about a twelve months.

He used to start up the plant and shut it down you know he just had a certain ..... the man wasn't able. I never complained I was young and it no bothered me and I was always learning and er .....

Q. What had you actually to do, to start up the plant? What had you to do to start the plant?

NM To start up the plant, well first of all you'd to fill out oil and then you got to start circulating and then you light your fires, kindle the fires and keep your plants circulating until the temperatures built up and whenever you're able to start refluxing, that is putting spirit into it they cut off that part of it and you put the crude oil back on, the English oil whatever you were working with on that went through the plant and you just wait until your temperatures coming up and you started making these, long oh they'd to be done.

Q. So you were getting English oil at that time.

NM Oh yes we were doing about three .....

Q. As well as local?

NM Oh no the shale oil was practically finished then. The shale oil was finished when the Camps and Westwood when they finished that, that finished the shale oil. You remember that there was only at that they took 6d off. There were a 6d that the Company was granted an exemption that was taken off and that the best oil was the Scottish Oils. You know that, I stayed with Johnny Allen ..... was self deteriorating you know and he decided he'd have to finish and that is with the money talking the youngest man was refinery foreman then. And Geordie came down to me and er he says , "Is Bill and there", he said "You're next you're to take over from Johnny Allen". He said "It'll be one of the boys that's on". "Oh", I said "alright, fine".

So I was on with Charlie Robertson was operator then and I was on my own with Charlie and the phone rang and he said, "That Mr cooper wants to see you". "So", he said "That man will tell you when to take over so in a way Allen, Cook and Geordie was the men in the office. "And", he said, "Pleased that you could come up as quick", he said "We are giving you another job and its nothing that you would expect". "Oh", he said, "No", he said, "We'll take you to the diesel plant". I said "the Diesel plant?". "Aye", he said, "I don't know the first thing about the diesel plant, I know where it is but that is all I know about it", "And", he said "I'm only here on ability", he said, "You won't be long in picking it up". So I didn't ask him why, who was coming it wasn't going to do me any good because I might have said something that was that might have been detrimental in fact I know there was a widow said something so ..... so the big plant was down for cleaning at that time and Jimmy Tampson was one of the shift foreman and couple of

mornings later, "And", he said "Right you've to go over to the diesel". So I went over to the diesel and it was only Tommy Young and it was days after it it must have been wee Jock McCallum and Geordie Smirrell came down. "Tam", he said "How are you getting on". "Oh", he said, "He can take over now". "Well", he said, "He only been here three days". He said, "He can run the plant as well as I can". He said, "So surely he can be left on his own". "Oh", Allen said, "That's too quick", "Now", he said, "That's not too quick". He said, "The man can can do the job so", he said, "Put him on". And when I said to Smirrell, I said "Steve it was discovered before that it was Hugie Tampson. It was him that went up to Cook and told Cook that he was longer than me. I said, "Don't ( ) don't ( )" He said, "Geordie you don't know what you are talking about" I said, "I started work in this work in 1925". I said "B----- sure Tampson wasn't born then". "Oh", I said, "I'm beat", so I carried on-at the diesel plant and it was a lonely job, you ken. It was alright when the spirit plant was on, the spirit plant was off you were hours there yourself, you'd nobody to talk to oh, and now y'ken we got through and there's, there was some more changes come on. Geordie Smirrell come back and he said, "Can put you back to the C.O.D. I said, "Come off it Geordie". I said, "What are you playing at?" I said, "No one plant was shut down".' by this time and the operators in no. 1 plant was getting sent to no. 2, ken? They didn't know very much about no. 1 and they knew a dam sight less about no. 2. so they said, "You've got to go in I've put you on the level. He said "No if you keep it right. I said, "You're not that tough" "but", I said "I've to go on with these boys there are operators". I said, "I'm still a fireman and", I said, "I've to keep these boys right". "No", he said. "Its not me", he said. "Well", I said, "Ken how it is come on", I said, "If you want me to go back to the C.O.D. I'll go back". So I went back to

the C.O.D. 'Aye", he says "I'll go back next week and", he said "The plant, the plants due for cleaning now", and I sent each of them getting an extra shift and that's ( ) He says, "You're turning it down that". "I don't want an extra shift", I said, "I'm quite happy I'm getting the shifts here that'll do me." "Then the plant was starting up then. He said, "Go back on Monday, there's a fellow starting on Monday". He said, "So", he', said, "You'll go on backshift I'll help". So that was it. I went to the plant about ten minutes to two. Well the day shift had always the plant started on stream with the backshift men coming out. You know the plant was working fine on stream was making oil, making diesel, making spirit you mention it and we walked in the doors, he said, "Where did you get these?". Honestly the sweats running off coming down his nose. Jimmy Gilmour, wee Jimmy Gilmour was fine the sweat was running down. He said, "What are you playing at?. Is this plant no as safe? Look away and get the b —— overalls off and get up the road as quick as you can..., Geordie Smirrell will get you y'know". Ken Geordie came back about dinner time of course it was (voice trails) He said, "You've been here all morning" I said, "Give the shift,( ) you're the fireman from the refinery". I said "That is a b----- disgrace. They get a plant like that". I said, "It was 'always on stream when the backshift men came out". I said, "Now about coming on two". I said, "We're needing more water so", I said to the two of them "Get out of the ... go hoppit". And Alex tore him off a strip and I said, "Dinnae talk like that". So I said to Alex, "I'll go and put more heat on and you put a wee bit more fuel on". Three o' clock the plant was streaming, the smell of ammonia wee Jock McCallum, he was the head chemist there, "Look at that", he said. "Aye". "Oh", I said "Oh", I said "don't talk or I'll be telling you something

to". He said, "The plants been streaming". I said, "Its never been known in history in time whenever this plant started it never was in stream for the factory men coming out". So I just showed him what the ( )

I was telling the truth, George I wasn't giving a damn for anybody and that went on till the first ..... Tom Hall was the union man and he come down it was the backshift with Alex. He come down and said, "where are you boys being kept on". We knew the work was shutting down. He said, "All the longest serving men are being kept on". I said, "There was a meeting that's the position".

I said, "Tell us what happened" Well the C.O.D. plant at that time, they cut the Saturday and Sunday off that and gave them a five day week, which was a big loss in wages but, they gave us X amount per hours extra to make up. It didnae make up but they erred. They gave us that on an hourly rate for five days which meant that we still weren't working all the time. The cracking plant was working at that time. Plants that were making money were working through the week end well, these plants were cooled down from the Saturday morning, ken the next shift on the Friday night he started shutting the plant whenever it went out on the Friday night, and when he came out on the Sunday morning, and when on the Monday morning day shift he had the job of starting it up and sometimes the furnace wall collapsed, here it cost them thousands of pounds for repairs they couldn't never have happened, never. Now the problem I was that see up at the cracking plants and the stills couldn't have taken all there is due that was coming off the English oil there was 30% was used in the English oil which was pretty high percentage and you'd three or four cracking plants and when they were getting looked after properly they could keep it under control but there was always some move made for to shut them down and it was all extra money for the boys you know cleaning

the plant and stats. It was all in the game, and you know Cook and I just had a day off but we're making the money, there are canalised. There were three shifts at that time and on a job like that we come home with £14. These boys were maybe 20. They weren't making nothing what were they doing ( ) these jobs come first so there were three million, we were doing about three million a month ( ) the English oil, three million a month. Mr Cook he got transferred to Grangemouth ..... And I blamed that man, I believe he's dead now for closing the pumps down. The pumps in the oil works could come on again, but he thought he could take the English Oil and get more out of it. They were near close down the grains, they didnae close down the grains until the finish up they'd to stop using it. The oil wells were nearly closed off. We were doing three to four mornings I seen much as doing four mornings. Money for old boots George. These old contrary with the C.O.D. and all they'd to do was have a wee plant over the old shooting houses where you well .... In fact he was gaffer then all that time was left and it was just a couple of old diesels you know it was just add something to its colour the diesels and put it in and that closed down. Pumpherston works should never have been closed as long as the company needs it they could built a new plant. Number 2 C.O.D. plant was by this time ( ) because all they need to do was close down number 1, It was take the tower down and built one the same size as number 2 was. Stuff producing up there, take the one at, at number 2 and rebuild it again (tape noisy) 1st May it closed down.

Q. Were you involved in three weeks on, one week off?

NM Oh aye I was on the crane at the time.

Q. And how did it affect you?

NM Well, we weren't so bad. As you know Alan Forssis was the engineer foreman for many, many years and Alan retired and Jock Anderson took over. You remember wee Geordie, stayed across there and he took over and used to work our idle week and then work three days the next one to keep us right with the dole. We only, it didn't affect us that very much because at that time there was a lot of stills coming out and ken it was pretty busy and here your other working er ( ) you'd know your other big was tanks and etc. etc. The other parts that were refinery attended the result was that we used to work one week and then three days the next week, and you'd three days off. That kept you right with the dole. Actually the week off didn't affect us too much we got it you know, sometimes we got the idle week and other times you know you worked and then you worked three days of your next one but .....

Q. The finances?

NM We weren't concerned it was false.

Q. Financially it didn't affect you too much?

NM Oh no it didn't affect us in anyway very, very, little I mean as I say some weeks that you had to go on the dole and ken you got your dole money. I can, och two of us three times got dole money I think. You know they used to get the three weeks, the three days dole every sixth week but er ..... At that time you know there was an awful lot of boilers coming out etc. etc and then they started to dismantle the stills and there was a lot of contracts flying about. On the crane at that time was Tom Stennings and he, old Jenkie Malloy,

mind old Jenkie? Hugh Loud. Hugie stayed in the ( ) and it worked that .... Anderson was the man we called him the tiger. I got on quite well with him. Previous to that I was, I went up to him one day to see him and he said, "What can we do you for? "Well", I said "Look Mr Anderson I'm married I got a family", I said "I got three children". "So", he said, "Don't you want to leave the Camps?" I said, "I'll need to finish". I said, "Three shift job and", I said, "and you've to work for your money here" I said, "I've got three of a family", give him his due he gave me a job on the stills, and we'd an awful trouble getting that, oh we couldn't any ( ) that's too a lot of actions, oh you .... nothing seriously happened you know we were discussing quite a lot of money and he came and I can't remember who was on the job that was left, I think it was the fellow from East Calder, Whitelaw, Jimmy Whitelaw from East Calder. And Jimmy packed it in and Anderson asked me, he said .... This time I was on the plant. Jim Spittal came down and he said, "The day shift". Smirrell come in and he said, "The manager wants you to put a still on". I said, "Where's he going to pay me?" "Oh", he said, "You won't get any more money than it takes to do the job". I said, "You no get any more from me Jim it takes thirteen hours to do that and I could do it in four.

END OF SIDE ONE

- Q. See when you were on the job loading the paraffin coke, can you remember much about the still cleaners?  
And how did you end up with the job on the streaming range?

NM My terms was to do the job that they give me, they paid me to do a shift and a half. I said, "You go back up and see Mr Anderson, my terms and come back with a memo "cos", I said, "Its not, if I'm not given a shift and a half I'm home at 2 o'clock. Finished at 2 o'clock and that was my shift at the plant. "So away you go Jimmy". And he come back about 1 o'clock, 1 o' clock". He came down and he said, "You'll get your shift and a half", he said. Fair enough. You know I was going home at 4 o'clock. The still was on. We'd the three men that belong up there. I said, "Now look", I said, "You're here till 10 o'clock tonight. Don't move off this job before 9 o'clock". I was leaving them to put the joints in they know the feed pipe, the gas pipe streaming and square up the hill. I said, "Don't leave the place before 9 o'clock. I was going down to the gate at 4 o'clock. I was seen then. "Where are you going?" I said, "I'm going home". I said, "I've left three men to finish the job". I said, "It will take them to 10 o' clock anyway to finish the job". I said, "Your still will be ready for jointing in the morning. You said that you would maybe help" So I just popped away and the next day I come down. "That was daylight robbery". I said, "Daylight robbery", I said "You got the job didn't you?". I said "You're still jointed and", I said, "Its going on this afternoon. You're getting use of it. The jobs done". Oh a couple of days after he came back down again he said, "You want another still in but", he said "You'll no be getting time and a half". "Oh", I said "You're not get a still", I said "It'll suit me then please yourself". I said, "That's my terms". "Fair enough then", he said "Just come back and do this job". So I stayed a wee bit longer the next time.

Q. Is this Anderson that was .....

NM No, no we'd nae bother with Anderson.

Q. Ah that's what I thought, it was .....

NM Oh no this would be Geordie Spence.

Q. Oh it was Smirrell you were dealing with.

NM Oh it was Smirrell I was dealing with and nae bother with Anderson. So the crux came when I was on night shift and er ..... I never went to bed before the youngsters went to school it was only a waste of time. It was always you wouldn't get to bed till about a quarter to nine in the morning. I couldn't been long in bed , I hear the wife saying to the boy at the door, "I'm not going to waken him, I ken what I'll get from him". Ken I was just dosing. And she said, "He's no long in his bed". It was Joe Whilley. You remember Joe? Wee, Joe, he was driving the works motor. And Joe came in and he said, "The manager wants to see you". I said, "He wants to see me?" I said, "I'm not long in my bed". "Oh", he said, "something about a still". He said, He said, "He wants to see you, if you like". He said , "I'll wait and run you over" "No away you go", I said. "I'll get the wife to make me a cup of tea and I'll get fed and go over to see him". So she made me a cup of tea and I'll get fed and go over and see him. So she made me a cup of tea and I went over and I said, "Where's the stills?". It was over the what they call the C.P. badges, you remember the C.P. badges? I said, "Whats the story, whats going on?" Mind of Harry McKeller, Harry was the still leader. "Oh he said "I've tried to

strip it, started to strip it. I said, "What man gets down here at this time"  
I said "Gets wakened at this time in the morning to come down here" So I went  
away up, met Smirrell. I said, "What again, I get wakened out of my bed", I  
said "To come in here and put a still on". I said "the b----- things not even  
stripped" I said "I'm going up to see the manager I've had enough" So I  
went away up. Anderson said, "Whats the trouble?" I said, "I get barely an  
hour in bed" "Oh", he said, "You get in at 6 o'clock in the morning" I said,  
"Look Mr Anderson", I said "I'm not here to argue with you" I said, "I don't  
go to my bed before 9 o' clock" I said "Til the children are away to school,  
its only a waste of time" I said "Trying to get any sleep and", I said, "Are  
you aware that the stills are not even ready for me? I said, "The men haven't  
started stripping it". I said, That still will no be ready for me before 5  
o'clock anyway, that's before that still will be ready for work". "Oh but",  
he said, "I was told it would be all ready". "Oh", I said "That man that  
told you it was all ready was the refinery foreman, so", I said "you can  
bring him up up right now while I'm here". I said, "The men are working  
with that". "Quite right", he said. "Will you go back home, you're on  
time and a half from 6 o'clock this morning until the stills in". I said,  
"Its no possible". He said, "Why?" "Because", I said "I'm night shift and,"  
I said, "I'm in no fit state for to come to my work tonight". I said "And  
do that job, and then" I said "It will be, it'll take me up to about, at  
least between 9 and 10 o'clock" I said "Before I've that job finished so",  
I said "I'm only one that I can oblige you and" I said "Its not paying me.  
paying me in the sense that you're good enough to give me time and a half  
from 6 o'clock this morning so", I said "I'll forgo my nightshift". "Well"  
he said, "If you're wanting to do that do it if you can get a man". "Oh"  
I said "I'll get a man to do that shift", so I went up and got the late

Jimmy Mooney and asked Jimmy if he'd come out and do the night shift. "Aye", he said "I'll come out and do it I've time and a half" So I'm coming round the work pond coming home at ten to ten when Jimmy, he's coming out from doing my shift, the night shift. Oh .... then he come and ..... he sent me up one day and he said, "Look Neil" he said "What about taking the crane over the crane job again?" I said "Nah". I said "Mr Anderson, you're good enough to give me a three shift job" I said "I'm a married man with a family, I need the money" "But", he said I'll give you a big rise". I said "It still wouldn't, it still, you're asking me to work for less money". I said, "You were good enough to give me a three shift job to give me the money so I'm very thankful for that so", I said ... He said "Take over the crane". He said "Get a man". I said, "Eh well, if you get a man for the job I'll guarantee you", I said "I'll make him a crane-man in a week, one week", I said, "and he'll be able to take over" "Well", he said "Look" he said "Just come down", I said "Huh". "Come on in ", he said "What about the weekend?" I said, "I'm not going to work the Sunday" I said "I'm not going to do the Sunday shift". I said "To do the crane I'm wanting good money" "Oh" he said, "You'll got your Sunday shift". He said "You can dig up something that you can carry on. "Oh", I said "I can find work for myself and I can find work for the three men". I was there concerned about the men that was on with me. That was Hugie worm and Jim Anderson and old Dougie. Ah but one week Smirrell put the foot down they say you come into the plant, you do your job in the, get somebody in the plant and he said, "The crane will sit there". So that went on until they got this boy Kelly, a chap from Broxburn and Anderson said to me, "You go with him for a week, you better go in after a fortnight he said. The very first job he got to do on his own he landed the

crane on the tally pond, you remember the tally pond at the bottom?

Q. What happened there?

NM "I moved into him", I said "If you ask Jim, Jim Denholm was the court gaffer then and he worked with these old acid tanks. "Come off that", I said "When you're asked to go to do a job with these ones ask them what the weight is. If he said to you 51b, 5 ton", I said "you set your crane for 7 ton. Always keep 2 ton on high". So he was lifting these tow acid tanks that had been lying for years and years and he was swinging them round you know just all over the ( )

Q. So he hadn't set the crane right.

NM No it wasn't near high enough. And then he done something else and he finished up. Now give Anderson his due, Anderson was very, very fair.

Q. I take it you had a good relationship with Anderson, the manager.

NM Oh aye, oh aye.

Q. Was he the greatest manager you worked .....

NM No Jim Caldwell was the best manager. Jim Caldwell was a great manager. No doubt in it and James Grant was quite good. Willy Grey in his self of course it was all shale, crude you know when Grey was manager. Entirely different

from the English oil when the English oil come up. It was a bigger through grade of course it was different eh, they were different produce no the shale oil, the shale oil could sulphate ammonia and oh get everything out out of the shale. I can remember one night working in the diesel plant and this driver come in, English spoken fellow and said, "have you got any hot water pal?". I said, "aye". I said, "Its boiling high pressure and that I'll put it in for you it'll boil in no time now", I said "It's boiling" And he was nice this chap and he was going on about the ..... He said "What do you make in here?". I said, "Diesel". He said, "How do you make that?". I went to the feed pump that formed this. I said, "That's whats come through the pump, that's what they call the feed". I was outside folding the dash and said, "that's your diesel". Interesting the way he said, "It come out that" I said, "That your feed and that's your diesel". I said, "Whats your idea of diesel?" "Oh", he said "the best diesel in the world is shale". He said, "They could never supply it". Neither they could. They could have opened about another 100 shale mines and still couldn't have supplied the diesel that was required. You know the shale diesel. Wee Jim McCallum, the head chemist used to come down and the, by this time the shale was finished and I said, "And the diesel was only coming. "Well whats worrying you today?" "The diesels too good" He said, "change it" I said, "What?". "Oh no" he said "We cannae put that in the bucket its far too good". After your plant. You had your plant going like that.

Q. Why was the diesel too good?

NM Oh that's what he said it was too good. so they talk of gravity then you upset all your plant, you had a plant all set for, it was upsetting all the plant.

You are only working at 8.42 gravity and he wanted that at 8.40. Maybe had it at 8.42 and he wanted it at 8.44 it was no, been told to carry your plant. And they used to make that detergent. You know the soap one. It was a .... The biggest fault as far as I'm... the biggest fault in the Scottish Oils was bad luck. Bad, bad luck. "That's to me" I said "That was the problem" Geordie Smirrell used to run these, run for miles and miles of a story, it was far better even though, when Geordie retired he only got half the pension he was expecting. Only half of it. He was never long enough from the start of it. I said, "Geordie they didn't hit you hard enough for all you done for them", so he listened to too many. You know when he was foreman first he had an old .... You know Dukie Stenny, you know Ken Dukie Stenhouse's father and old Bishop and somebody Donnach. they were his shift foreman. These boys knew what they were doing and they could keep y'ken the job there on the right side. As time went on these fellows retired and left and younger man come on, Ernie R Rogers, Charlie Manderson. They weren't in the same class and the place just deteriorated. These were better the men on the work could have taken these jobs but they never got offered them never even got a chance.

Q. And whose fault was that do you think?

NM Recommendations made by the refinery foreman. The management that's the only person whose fault it could be. There was a move on the plant, I was the dipper. There were three men on the shift, then I was the dipper. I mind there was somebody leaving, don't know who it was, Charlie ..... I was on the night shift there was Andrew Nicholson was the operator and Archie Ernie was the

fireman and I was the dipper on that shift, the night shift. I just can't remember who was the, was it I think it was the one who, Jimmy Sampson I think was getting put on the shift foreman's job and Jimmy Moonie, well Jimmy Moonie by this time was away, Charlie Robb out on as an operator and Gregor sent for the fireman and every night Charlie Manderson came in and "Whose got the job" "Oh not settled yet, not settled yet and I, and I got the tip off I wasn't getting the job but this Jackie Kerr from Broxburn, Geordie Smirrell has told him that he was coming onto the job, so I mind Charlie Manderson come into the control room and he's sitting. I said, "Wait a minute Charlie". "What?". I said "This is the first night". I said, "You've no come in about that job. He said, "Whose got it?". "Don't tell me because I already know". "Oh", he said "Jackie Kerr". I said, "that'll be until tomorrow morning". He said "I'll see Mr Smirrell in the morning". He said, "I'll no go to bed tomorrow I'll be standing at the top of the road waiting on him", and he come out, seen me from the window where he stayed. He seen me standing and oh he kept it, blacked it. I had to come out to finish up and I never moved. You know he had a great habit, he was aye scratching at his bottom he's coming in and I'll be standing at the corner. I said, "Good morning", he said "Good morning". He walked on. I said "Just a minute". He said "May I have a word with you. "What about?". I said "You should know" "I want to know", I said "Why Jackie Kerr got the job in front of me". "Oh er... er..er.. he was there before you". I said, "Look son I was in this bloody work before Jackie Kerr was born" I said "I've been in this Jackie Kerr was born" I said, "I've been in this work since 1923". I said, "I'm gonna tell you something son unless there's a change made I'm going down to see Mr Caldwell, tomorrow morning". Now Jim Caldwell was managing secretary then. I said, I don't say it will make any difference". I said, "I'll put it out to him.

I'll explain to him what's going on in here between you, Charlie Manderson and Ernie Rogers". I said, "Geordie, you're not a mason I know". I said, "The other two are". I said, "Jackie Kerr's one so," I said "Unless if you don't make the change", I said "I'll go down and see Mr Caldwell tomorrow morning. Don't say it will do me any good". I said, "I'll put an end to this up here". So I just walked out and left him and .... (voice trails) wife said "Well how did you get on?" I said, "Oh what do you want, I've got a lot to think about". And I had a cup of tea and went away to my bed. The next night the ( ) Kerr coming up and tells me the job, "Oh by the way", he said "You're not fired", he said "It's straightened up". That was it. Smirrell never told me yet. Geordie Smirrell never told me yet. Manderson came out that night ken you know. Andrew Nicholson and Archie was standing Andrew said, "What's happened". "Oh", I said I've been on the fires. He said, "What happened I told him straight off I was going to see John Gould. Tell him what was going on between Andy Rogers and Charlie Manderson and Jackie Kerr. And it was then I recommended for to that Kerr go. He denied it. I said "Dinnae bother denying it" I said "However I'm going up the fires that's it" I said "Oh nae problem to get them settled up."

Q. When the selection of a job came up did the head chemist ever come into it?

NM Oh actually that was one of the reasons why Mr A got that job at that time it was common talk and Mr B was having a carry on with Mr A's wife. Of course that was unofficial. So wee Geordie Smirrell was due as far as he was concerned I was operator, but Geordie Smirrell hadn't a foot to stand up to me. Geordie should have said no, no, this is the best man for the job that come up and there wouldn't have been any

argument. That I wasn't in the diesel plant and I was, I don't know whether you remember Gus Wilson. He was the chemist. Eventually he was manager when we were over there. He come in from the diesel plant one morning. He said, "What are you doing in here?" I said, "I'm working here". "You're no working here." He said, "You got the operators job in the C.O.D." "Aye," I said "I got it for a wee while." He said "Whose over there?" I said, "Where Ian Thompson?" "Hell" he said " they couldn't make bloody water in here never mind diesel oil" he said "You never see Jock McCallum" I said "He's a fox" I said "Ian Fraser could be manager". Course he walked away, he said, "He couldn't make bloody water in here", he said "Never mind diesel" he said, "All the time he was in here. Dust up in the bet you'll no get nothing", I said "I'm maybe too outspoken." I couldn't care less in fact I'm that way yet what's on my mind George I tell them and that's fine.

Q. Had you any involvement with the unions at that time?

NM I was President, I was President of the local branch for a wee while. I was delegate on the executive council, but the secretary he done all the negotiations with the company.

Q. Who was he?

NM At that time Joe Heaney was secretary of the branch side if you like. Eventually he got the general Secretary's job when McKelvie retired. Joe got the .... and Tom Hallon got the Branch Secretary's job.

Q. And did you get involved in any disputes?

NM No, no I didn't get involved in any disputes that was left to the secretary, any complaints and that, and oh it must have been, I remember there was two bad disputes. You can say that again. They could have been a lot worse. It wasnae just too bad with disputes.

Q. What would you say the strength of the unions were in these days?

NM Very poor. And so they were

Q. Why did you say that?

NM Nobody strong enough and now they're too powerful. Make no mistake about it I still maintain that the strength of the trade union movement is ruining this country, there is no doubt about it.

Q. But these days the union, did they negotiate with the management?

NM Oh yes for increase in wages, money oh aye these meetings were held in well that company would just say you're getting 5%, 6%, 7% that's it. You went down and you held a meeting and then negotiate there and then, but they had their minds made up what they were going to offer you and there was nothing you could do about it. Cos at that time you know as well as I do there was only the oil works here, nothing else. By this time the mines were all shut down so I mean the oil works was the only thing that was going in Pumpherston there was no other source of employment, import, stuff. Unfortunately at that time, there was a man in here you heard about him

Willy crane. He was representing the pensioners with the B.P. First day he came in, first day he came up here to see me, him and I fell out. Just about he'd be here before he come back, so I told him he hadn't got time, I said, "Look great", they got started with the money that he was robbed off Scottish Oils. I said, "That money come from the start of ( ) off the slave labour from the Scottish Oils. "No, not at all", he said "Could tell me where you got it from" He would say nothing else. "Because I said "You haven't thanks for the managing director". "Oh" I said "he was the manager of Pumpherston." He started, "he was the manager of Pumpherston" I said "Till it was all formed from Scottish Oils Ltd and then started up Grangemouth, you started up at Grangemouth, the money came off was robbed off the workers from Pumpherston and round about. I said, "What was at Grangemouth and that's true, that is what happened. That's where the money come from. If your father was spared today he could tell you the very same. Scab wages. 36 bob a week when you started labouring. I can remember after the strike I was the only one working on the house heating gullies. My brothers were idle, Johnny, my brother Gregor and I went up to the office and asked them to take the rent off me, I remember, 3/9d a week. That's what we paid for the house at that time. 3/9d and I was taking home 8/- after the rent was paid. My father got 18/- off the dole and my brother was 18 bob from the dole so you can't award, paid a ( ). I worked 5 days, maybe 6, got home with 8 bob. It was, people will no believe you, George, if you start and tell, tell my lassies that. They wouldn't believe you, sit and laugh at you. I said "I've come through all that. With no bother, yes. I can remember the day when I didn't know when the next hard work was coming from, mind you there was a lot in Pumpherston was the same,

as I say you back on the houses at the time they altered, started altering the houses they made started giving you, they made three houses into two. As I say I was born in 176 and the doctor 2174 he had an extra room ( ) in there. You never seen the likes of it in your life. Snails all over the place. Oh it was nasty day, why don't you come up and see the house that's ..... in fact you want to come up, come up at 6 o'clock in the morning and I said, "And see his snails all across the carpet," I said "You got to clean every blinking morning. They discovered then that Bill Waddle had built the operation and with all the old bricks that went up and down instead of flinging them out they put them in packs on board the pillar box and all of these floor boards was got to be lifted here and all got flung out, than I drew up the goods first. Mind you they got a bargain. The price they got those houses for as long as they were prepared to spend some money on them. But by that time I was away, I didnae, the first boy I met was from the party, the laddie Willy Macintosh, you mind of Willy? Willy came in off the Calder road he was out for a walk and he come up and said, "What's the smile Willy?" Oh he just come from the bank manager there getting a loan of £350." He said "and we got offered the house come to see us for £350". "Nae bother getting 350 from the Clydesdale Bank", he said Ken the Provident funds to come up and Willy said, "there's the cheque," he said "£350". He said, "I'll take that out of ( ) he said, "The house is mine." Aye, oh it was a good buy, they had to spend an awful lot of money on it. Aye, oh he could tell a lot of tales about Scottish Oils from Pumpherson Oil Company. Old Willy Banks, old Willy come up to the sulphur house when he came in ( ) you ken that was Swalls.

Q. It was what?

NM Swalls. Willy dug a hankie out of his pocket. Willy was an awful man.

Davy Seddons and he was severe with smoking and he caught Davy smoking in the sulphur house, got a hold of him, he had the butt in his pocket ( )  
our Davy said "I cannae read, we had a notice up no smoking allowed and Davy says "I cannae read" Aye he was a great lad.

Q. Did you have anything with the sulphur house?

NM No bad lot the sulphate. Johnny, my brother, he worked with Gillespie.

Well he worked with Banks for a while then he was in the sulphate house from night to the top of the morning and he cannae struck with the steel pliers but er ..... no the smokehouse shut down and he got a job in the refinery and eventually applied for the ..... he went back to the tale with Charlie Manderson. I was on the still fires at this time and er .....

END OF SIDE 2