

RM

RM His father's family were amongst the originators of the shale oil industry and his folks patented the Glenny lamp and what was the name of the other one, there was one before that with a thin gauze and just the light in it and the Glenny it had an oil base with a wick in it in a glass bowl, that is what they used for testing-
tor gas. It was work in these days alright.

Q. What mine were you in?

RM James Ross & Co. Philpstoun.

Q. When did you start?

RM The whole of this country depended on shale at that time, every village was a mining village. It was like the Agricultural workers now, everybody was tied to the industry at that time. Transport was not nearly as good as it is now, no buses at that time and it was a case of son following father until the industry became aerated at that time.

Q. How old were you when you started?

RM 14, my father had a contract in the mines at that time, my grand-
father on my mother's side he had a contract too at that time.
The older men who had been in the mine since they were boys, that
is even before they had haulage and they had woman in the mines

at that time who used to carry shale and coal in a basket like fisher-woman and they used to climb ladders. At that time everybody just followed their father until as I say the industry expanded and there were different ways of getting jobs at different times. I ended up as a mechanic and then I was in the mines for 7 years and I ended up as a mechanic.

Q. Had you been a mechanic in the mine like?

RM No, my father had a small garage and even when he finished working in the mines, we worked backshift, after finishing at 2 pm we started at 6.30 and finished at 2 pm, then we came home and got washed then we worked in the garage till bed time. My father was a slave driver.

Q. It was a long day?

RM It was a long day and in those days it was quite a life believe me, a solid shift, between one thing and another we had quite a varied existence.

Q. That was your job down the mine?

RM When I started as a boy my father had the contract, he was faceman, they took contracts at that time and two men sometimes four working as drawers. Now the faceman at that time he bought all the gelignite he needed to blast down the shale and when he got it down, normally it was three or four hundred tons in a day. You broke it up and sometime you had to blast it again, the roof came down in solid

blocks about the size of a house. At that time the faceman employed the men under him, he had a contract with the oil company James Ross & Co. that was who I was with. The original was P. Young and there was Oakbank. The oldest one around here was Champfleurie, that finished before the last war.

Q. The Bridgend one was shut down before the first war.

RM No, Bridgend only shut down in 1930, my brother was killed in the mine at that time, 15th September, 1930. His head was crushed between two trains of hutches, he was only a boy, he had just started to work on the Friday and was killed on the Monday. It was a case of he tried to do what he saw experienced men doing. At that time the faceman often supplied the pit ponies to haul the hutches to the bottom of the haulage and this is what he was doing. In fact he was supposed to start as an electrician but he was keen to get started to work when he left school, because all his pals were working, he was running loose and had no company and he wanted a job, so he got this job to fill in until he got this electricians job. So he was trying to do what the experienced men with the ponies did before. On a rake of about 15 hutches, there was about a ton on each and when they were coming down the slope and came near the haulage, they were all hooked together, you know with couplings, the same as in the railways, with the carriages all joined together. Nowadays they are all locked hydraulically, but at that time it was a length of chain with two hooks on it and a ram's horn that you hooked round the coupling and each hutch had a coupling on each end. You just hooked the on attached to the heavy engine for hauling the hutches up to the surface at that time. He tried to do what the experienced boys were doing, they were keeping their

head away back and reaching underneath the hutch and when they came up to the other ones that were at the bottom at what they called a lie, it was like a marshalling yard at the railways and they ran until they came down to them and then were hooked together again for the haulage to take them. He did not have the sense to keep his head back, he only started on the Saturday, did half a day and went out on the Monday and was killed at 7 am. He reached into put the clip on this coupling, when 15 hutches came down, they unhooked a horse at the top of the incline and the whole lot came whizzing down there with the horse running at the back. They had to take the horse off the front and let it stand at the back then they came down, if it was a very steep incline they used to put what they called snibbles which you push into the wheels and it locked on the chassis of the hutch and they slid down with the wheels locked, and he had his head in between the hutches and that was that.

Q. Were there many accidents when you were working, was it a dangerous place?

RM Quite a lot of men got broken legs, some got very badly crushed arms.

Q. Was that with the hutches or rock falling?

RM It depended on the seam you were in, each seam had different grades of shale, Broxburn seam Stewartfield seam, some of them were like the coal. Actually shale was trees to start with the same as the coal, that was forrests of trees which had rotted and sunk into the surface and gradually changed through thousands of years into coalfields and shalefields. The difference between shale and coal

was the trees that were under the surface had dropped much later than the ones for the coal, that is why coal is so soft now, compared to the shale, shale is like whin and often you had to put another charge of Gelignite in it to break it up if it was too big and in other cases if it was not too big. The shale was in layers like slate all compressed together and if it was just a piece about half the size of this room we would break it up with wedges and four hammers till we got them to split apart and they would come off in flakes, pieces suitable for putting into the hutches, some maybe 1 cwt or 1 ½ cwt, some much smaller. When you got them the size for lifting you just threw them into the hutch until the hutch was up almost to the level maybe 4" before the level. Then you put in what they call setters, this was to let the miners get more stuff in the hutch, they built them up on slabs just sunk in at the edge of the hutch and then they put in other bits just to keep them upright and filled them in with shovels. It usually ran about 16 - 18 cwts to a hutch at that time.

Q. Were there good seams and bad seams to work in?

RM ... The finest seams round here that I know about, it was not a very big mine up at Addiewell. Addiewell was a refinery and had retorts for getting the oil out of the shale, Burnbank was just a small mine about seven miles away from Addiewell and at that time the amount of oil you could get out of a ton of shale it was record breaking up there, you could get 5 gallons to the ten, whereas in the rest of the shalefields the average was only 3 gallons.

Q. Was there good and bad seams for the miners to work in.

RM Some of them were lying on edge, slopes you could hardly walk up and other ones were level. I suppose it depended on the terrain where the trees were collapsing, if they fell on a flat bit, they were crushed down and formed the shale dead level. Other ones were so steep you could hardly walk down them. In the first war a drawers wages at that time, well the faceman blasted the stuff, broke it up and the drawer went out about $\frac{1}{2}$ of a mile to a lie as you called it at that time where there were trains of hutches standing empty. The drawers went out with loaded ones and the horses took them away by mechanical haulage. When they got them out there they took an empty one back into where the faceman was working, blasting the stuff down and refilled it again until they had it cleaned up. The faceman just kept boring holes all the time and blasting it. The wages at that time, at the beginning of the first war, I was not in it until 1920 and the men at that time working in it were averaging a wage of about £2.10 at the end of the first war. But for the last two years of the first war, I remember that quite easily the Government had a man in the cabinet who ministered the mines called Lord Sankey and he developed the idea that men who were capable of a good output, they took the average of the whole shalefield and if there were certain men that were slave drivers, if they were going to open a new seam until they saw what they were going to put out daily they picked the best miners at that time and asked then would you care to open a new seam in a different part of this mine and naturally greed got the better of them and they would say yes. At that time wages were 1/2d a ton and the foreman of the mine would probably come and say right your wages are 1/2d a ton we

will give you 1/8d and the men thought this great, we will lay into this and get money so they did and they thought it was great for about two months, their wages were trebled, then the crunch came, The manager used to come round every second week to see how the places were going. You had to blast a certain one from a certain height all the time to keep the channels parallel, that was for drawing cut the pit props and letting the whole lot collapse. At that time the manager of the oil company would come in inspecting the mines and say I am sorry you are making too much money and they cut it down from 1/8d a ton to 1/4d and if they still thought they were making more than others in that same mine they cut it down, until they were all getting the same and the men instead of working reasonably and not knocking your guts out, it was a case of you were so tired you could hardly walk. I have seen me go home not able to take my dinner and would lie down and sleep for ½ an hour, it was murder. An average for miners now is supposed to be 4 ½ - 5 cwts a cay. In the 1920's - 1928 shale is much heavier than coal of course but output at that time was anything from 200 - 250 tons a week for a faceman and two drawers, and I was working as a drawer at that time.

Q. And that was just to make an ordinary wage?

RM Yes, in 1917 when the Sankey bonus came out and if you were making a good output you got a bonus for a higher output. They were desperate for the oil at that time, it was not coming from Abadan or Saudi Arabia it was coming out of the guts of this earth, but there is millions of tons under this ground yet never been touched.

Q. Did you have much bother when you left the pits to get another job.

No, because we had the garage then. It was a safe way of making money then, you could always buy a car, at that time cars were few and far between. It was a case of make some money and go and buy a car, tune them up a bit and selling them again to build up a fair business.

Q. You were lucky that way that you had a choice, you could come out of the pit. Most of your friends they were stuck in the mines?

RM Yes, they were stuck in the mines.

Q. What did you do in the evenings, did you go to the Institute at Philpstoun?

RM Most of the shale oil companies used to provide reading rooms. The houses at that time were all built by the shale oil companies. The men were permanently in their houses the same as agricultural worker were until a couple of years ago and it was a case of, if you had a quiet spell in the garage some nights you were not doing much because cars were few and far between. A lot of motor bikes at the end of the first war but until then it was a case of you read books or you went to the reading room. The company provided books, if you were interested in something you wanted to study you went and asked for it and they got it for you the same as the local libraries do now.

Q. Was the money for that taken off your pay.

RM No, they supplied that for you, although you had maybe a couple of miles to get to the nearest reading room and sometimes they had older men there that could not read. It was a case that maybe a

lot of them would sit down at a long table and play dominoes and other ones later on had small billiard tables made. If you were wanting to be studious you could go to the quiet room and take whatever book you wanted.

Q. In things like the billiards and dominoes was there matches between the villages?

RM Now and again.

Q. Was there a lot of rivalry?

RM Likes of Philpstoun, Kingscavil and Winchburgh we used to have maybe a group who were the best of the domino players who went and challenged each other, it was all very friendly.

Q. What about outdoor games, was there football teams in the village.

RM There was one, maybe you have not heard of it. About one of the most popular games with the miners at that time was quoits, you used to have them in every village and each village would challenge each other for prizes and cups.

Q. There was a bit of gambling went on at the quoits.

RM Oh yes.

Q. Were you ever at the Scottish Championships?

RM No, the old man kept me too busy in the garage.

Q. Was it not an old man's game, quoits?

RM Yes, but some of the young boys that were well developed, played it, it was quite a heavy thing to throw, you had to throw it 25 yards and hit the pin which was sunk in, they put a white piece of paper behind it to help you aim and if you could ring it that was the highest points you could get, if you could not you were out of the team.

Q. How heavy were the quoits?

RM 4 1/2 or 5 lbs, they were loaded to keep them going straight, instead of spinning. If you did not throw them right they used to spin and they would not dig into the clay. They (the men) dug holes in a field and had a fence all around it at the Pavilion where you could go and sit with the men that were not playing. The holes were about 2 1/2 ft. deep and fill them with clay. The clay round the pin was kept damp so it was soft when you threw the quoit, it fumed on its head just as it got to the heading and dug into the clay. But if you got it to keep flat and it came down and landed on the pin you were a champion. I think the last quoiting green used to be down at Fawns Park, just at the end of the canal bridge.

Q. When was that?

RM 1926 I think, that quoiting green shut down, that was the last one, at that time. The last of them all was up at West Calder, but in the shalefields down here it was about 1926 that the last

one shut down. That from say about 1922 or 3 right on you got an odd bus coming from Edinburgh to Linlithgow that would turn there and go back and at the other side Alexanders was running from Stirling to Linlithgow Cross and you always time it so that you could, get a change of buses. The Scottish General buses they used to come from Dunfermline, round by Stirling and come to Linlithgow too. They were all the old type, solid tyres, it was like sitting in an ox cart, they were great right enough.

Q. Talking about drinking, there would not be a pub in Philpstoun.

RM No, there wasn't a pub in Philpstoun but there was one in Kingscavil.

Q. Where is Kingscavil?

RM Its demolished, but Kingscavil Church that was the local point for the miners at that time and they had a store a General Store, one man owning the business and at the miners houses were all around that and the Church was on the main road. The houses were up that side road to Ochiltree Castle on each side. There would be about 300 to 350 houses in Kingscavil at that time, but that was the original village for Champfleurie that was when the first refinery was going here before James Ross, or Paraffin Young had the one in Winchburgh and Broxburn.

Q. So when was Kingscavil knocked down, did it all go at once?

RM It was when they built new houses, Bridgend used to be miners rows and they demolished them and they put the Council houses,

the same as they have in most villages now, two storey, better conditions, bathrooms which the miners did not have before. It must have been murder for the woman cleaning up when they went home, mud, oh gee whizz it was awful. I have seen me sometime working in the shale if it was a wet place you were in, the water would be up to your knees and we were shovelling under the water to get the shale that was blasted out.

Q. Did you get water money for that?

RM If it was a very bad seam you got maybe 2d a ton extra. This was to encourage them to open it up so they could get into better stuff further on. They always took advantage of the miners and the miners were stupid enough that they were not able to see through the idea for all they were getting their tonnage broken. After a place was opened up they start away in the solid and then they took tunnels through it in every direction and it was a case of the miners just accepted them cutting your tonnage rate right away. After, as I told you after about two months, making too much money they would cut you down, well the miners just accepted that as though that was their right.

Q. I take it that the Union was not very strong then?

RM No, the miners representatives at that time in the shale oil was a Walter Nellies in Bathgate that was where their offices were. Walter Nellies was the President of the shale miners union and Michael O'Haggan an a big Irishman, came across from Ireland in the first war and he climbed on the wagon and he was the agent around all the shale-fields, going and trying to get the men into the Union

and then you are united and force them, the same idea as they have now. Nellies was not so bad but I used to wonder at this man Michael O'Haggan, he was about the most illiterate man ever you heard, really, I will give you an instance. The 1926 strike we had been out on strike for about 12 weeks and they were supposed to be negotiating, at that time each company was separate. It was not Scottish Oils the way it was, they all amalgamated and each oil company getting the best they could and they were negotiating with the company for better conditions, and better wages and of course the miners wanted them to push to get better wages and less working hours. At one time you could go down the mines just when it was breaking daylight and stay until dark, depending on the man you worked for, you did not have fixed hours ..

Q. So it was up to the contractor how long you worked?

RM Yes. but I remember at that time they always held the meeting for the James Ross Refinery, Philpstoun at the local school and Bridgend School was the centre for Kingscavil, Bridgend and Philpstoun they all met the union leader's there. That Michael O'Haggan he came, motorbike, sidecar, an old Royal Enfield about 8 horsepower, he had a stiff leg what a job he had getting on that bike. I'll never forget that night I was only in my twenties at that time, he came down and told them, sorry men, and this is how he put it, I can remember his voice yet, he said "you are up against a stone wall, you can say you are finished, you might as well go back on the terms you had because your 'arse' is out the window. Honest you would not have believed it that was the type of agent they had in the Union at that time.

Q. During the strike was there many men went to the coalfields instead?

RM Quite a lot went away to the coal at Bonnybridge, sometimes across to Fife. The Fife coal it was only beginning to expand at that time and some went, there and never went back to the shale.

Q. Did you do that.

RM No, I never needed to.

Q. I know that some of the villages had a soup kitchen while the strike was on was there one in Philpstoun.

RM The poorer miners, maybe the drawers that were on strike, of course their wages had been a lot lower than a faceman and if they had two or three children they just could not feed them, this is when they started the soup kitchens. The local woman they got vegetables and made soups and dinners and they made three meals a day. When I think back on it now they don't know they are living nowadays. The shalefields shut down in 1931 and it didn't open again until well into the 1940's.

Q. Why was that?

RM They closed it down altogether, a lot of them like White quarries that's on the road to the ferry, White quarries just closed so did Duddingston. A lot of the shalefields where they had good shale, they let them lie vacant until they decided that they could still make some profit out of the shale. It was after the second

war that they opened some of them up again and a lot of the Polish forces that were de-mobed stayed here and became British citizens. They opened up the mines and a lot of these fellows got jobs there. When they came I used to laugh, I had a pal of mine, I used to build caravans and trailers for the farmers around there in the garage and sell them when you were quiet. One fellow that used to be pals with me, he was quite a good joiner, he used to come up if I was busy in the garage with a good light and a good fire on a winter's night, they thought it was great to come in and get a heat. I was amazed when he said "I have started in the mines again, since it opened up "and I said what is it like now?" he said "it is like a picnic, you would not believe it we are getting 5/- a ton." They were only putting out ten hutches, whereas we were putting out about 16 to 18, but he is retired now too. It was a picnic compared to what it used to be, the facemen they had what they called the off-taxes, they had to pay at that time, they cabled their equipment their graith, that was the faceman who bought boring machines, sets of drills and drills to drill the hole 8 feet into the shale and then stemmed it with gelignite and put in cartridges in the borings that came out of the hole to hold the gelignite until it exploded. So they had to pay for drills, boring machines you needed one for cutting holes to the left and one for holes to the right. You had maybe two different sets of drills and there would be about six drills in each group and they were different lengths, starting about a foot long and then you put a key in the end and screwed it until you got it back again. They supplied, all that and they had special cleaners, it was an offence under the law to used anything but a copper cleaner for scraping out the borings when the drills were pulled out, to clean them out properly. A stemmer was a long wooden shaft about 9 feet long with a copper head on it so there was no sparks, because some of the places were gassy

and a spark would have set the whole lot off. In fact I have seen us putting on a few occasion, it was not very often you got it, gas in the shale, but I have seen us getting it and if you just put, you started away when I was first with, the lamp you had on your head it was only tallow, paraffin wax and then you threaded the wick down into the body of the lamp, then you took the cake of paraffin wax cut it down the edge of the lamp til it filled it up in slithers, put a match to the wick and hold it upside down so that it melted, the paraffin wax in the lamp and when it melted it became oil and kept feeding it, you could hardly see it was black smoke that blinded you all the time and then they came out with the carbide lamp later on for the shale, they were good. I have seen us pulling a paraffin lamp on the face of what they call a stoop at that time and if there was a fissure where the gas was coming out you used to put your light to it, it was a risky thing to do, you could see the gas taking it and it went whoosh right up through you know how it was broken, as I told you the shale lies in slabs like tiles laid on top of each other, it used to run blue flames going up there until it burned itself out. The Carbide lamp was a great help for the miners at that time. You see they went down to the face in the morning, the very first thing you did you had a safety lamp that you collected at the surface before you went down, ... Glenny lamp at that time. In fact there is a shop down in Linlithgow just now that has one. The first I have seen for years, all polished up for sale in an Antique room down there and it looked like brand new, I did not see what price was on it but gee whizz I have not seen one for about 60 years, and right enough you took your Glenny lamp and got it checked in at the surface office and each face worker got a lamp each and then you went down to the place with that lamp only, not a naked flame and you tested it for gas. If there was gas in it it did not go out but the flame rose from the wick up to the top

of the lamp, when you saw that happening you knew there was quite a body of gas. They used to get the pumps, the fans started and the huge fans put a volume of air right down that whole mine, actually when they blasted it it was about 12 feet wide and seven feet high and in the middle of that tunnel you put in just single pit props and to keep the air going the one way and getting rid of gas or any dangerous residue you used to say "oh gosh it is getting that you can hardly breath in here" well if you had driven in maybe 25 to 30 yards in at the face the air was thick and it was hard to breath.

Q. Was that the gas or the dust?

RM It was off the residue of the blast and the gelignite it always lasted a while and when you got what you had to send for what they call oncostmen, that was just labourers that were kept and paid by the company and they worked usually on the night shift, if the mine they were in was working day shift these men came out on the night shift and they had huge rolls that were always tying where you went to collect the empty hutches for filling, and they used to have rolls and rolls it was like hessian but we called it, screen cloth, it was heavy, heavy stuff and this line of props that were up the middle, your hutch was on a railway at one side of it and the other side was left clear and when the fans were started up to could feel that cold air going right through you, it was really cold. It blew everything away and kept the air clear and they had to do this on the nightshift. It was about 4 feet broad this roll and with it being 7 ft they put the bottom bit on first and then hung it from the top of these props, overlapping the one below and kept the air on the one side and it did a circle right through each place that was working and took away any fumes.

Q. Were you staying in a company house.

RM No, we had our own house, about 14 years ago we had a garage and a stable when we used to have the ponies for pulling the hutches. At that time my Grandfather was in it he built it and he had a stable and kept the wagon in it for taking his family out when they were having a picnic or something. It was all these old buildings, a shed and stables for the two horses they were all made and that is what we had as a garage at the finish.

Q. Was it your Grandfather you said that patented the Glenny lamp.

RM No, that was Bert Rae's Grandfather, that's my cousin, my Grandfather on my father's side he was general manager of the Pumpherston Oil Co.

Q. Was there not a Pender Rae, are you related to him?

RM Yes, but I don't know how, Bert might could tell you that he is older than me, he is over 80. There was quite a few of the family that were in some of the inventions that fairly helped them. As I say hard work never killed a man, it didn't but it damn near did. I'll tell you one thing, though they complained about mining and there is no doubt about it it was murderous work, as far as being physically exhausted at the end of a shift, but it had one great advantage you were never out in the weather. It could be wet places, heavy rain seeping down through the seams into the working places and maybe gathering in some ditches, then the pumps pumped it away. At that time I used to think that we were lucky compared to some of the young boys working in farms, for they started in the breaking of daylight as well and they worked until it was getting dark as well, they were out in all weathers, whereas

we were in and right enough it was sometimes filthy because if you had a surface fault and there were heavy rain such as last Spring, you had ponds of watering on the surface and when they had worked out the direction that they wanted to drive into the shale, when it came time to draw the props that were holding up the surface you had to send for two oncostmen that were known as axemen and you just phoned up to the surface and told them you were waiting on the axes to get that section closed, down solid. I have seen whenever the axes came the two men started away at the inside near where they had finished blasting it and they used to send for the axes and there were two men that used to put up what we call breakers that was more pit props lying at an angle to keep anything that came down from coming out at you, but you left a space probably about 2 feet between the rows of props and they thinned them out with the axes, they went in and cut half way through the log. The props that were holding up the roof and it got to be a fine art you know just now far you could go and then you could hear the weight coming on them, you heard them starting to creak like matches before you break the matchstick. When you heard it they were making their way out and out when the weight came on away at the back and it started the whole lot coming and you heard the props bursting, going every way and it was time to run and into safety. Some of it came through the breakers and was lying in a heap behind you but if it had a pile of water on the surface it was coming, down in mud, water, all the muck of the day you were up to your knees in it. You are bringing, back a lot of memories son.

Q. What kind of clothes were you wearing to work down the pit.

RM You had a singlet and a heavy woolen shirt on top to keep you from freezing on the road over. You wore a singlet at that time, no

sleeves and a pair of heavy moleskins (trousers) they were tough, on the way home you had to hang your shirt on a nail on some of the props when you went out to eat your piece and you sat away in the safety bit, on a dry bit and have your food. When you were finished you were soaking wet you would feel clammy, it was cold when you sort of dried up and you put on this heavy woolen shirt on top of the singlet until you got home. But you believe me the miners wives at that time were like slaves, it must have been awful for a woman, say she had maybe three sons working in the same mine and went home soaked to the skin and mud and water running off the moleskins. Getting them dried and clean for the next morning again, the woman had a hell of a time, they really did. I don't know I think that some of them were happier in these days than they are now, you wouldn't believe it. At that time the industry not being so well diversified as it is now they all considered that they were very lucky to have constant work. I don't know there was no unemployment such as we have now and a man that was a good worker could tell the foreman or Manager to go to hell and get a job in another mine. They were desperate to get the men that would really work and that was the reason, get them into a place that they were just driving for the first time give them a good wage and when they saw what they could make, cut them down to what they were giving the rest. It was slave labour really.

Q. So how easy was it to get to be a Contractor, did you have to know the bosses quite well before you could get your own place.

RM No, at that time most of the mines they knew I think they contracted each other and they knew if a man was a good workman and he had enough money to buy the tools for the job, he would get a job anywhere. It was a case of they got a horse drawn lorry and shifted all their graith

each other and they knew if a man was a good workman and he had enough money to buy the tools for the job, he would get a job anywhere. It was a case of they got a horse drawn lorry and shifted all their graith (that was their tools) and shifted to a different mine there was no bother, as long as you were a good worker.

Q. Anything else you can think of?

RM Not at the moment.

Q. Is there still quite a few former miners living about Linlithgow?

RM No, I don't think that there are any miners left. A miners life generally they were lucky if they reached 65, some of them lived longer but the average age was 70 or 72 at the most. I don't think that there is a shale mine working now at all. The whole district used to be mine after mine all around the whole country and part of Midlothian as well, out when you crossed the Forth you were going into the coal. The last miner that I remember was some of the polish boys that got jobs when they opened up again and then when they discovered that they were getting the Arabian, Sauda Arabia and Iran oil so cheap it was a case of it was not worth while keeping the mines open, so they closed them and got the cheap foreign oil, but I expect they will keep this in reserve for when they run out of the raw materials. When the foreign oil came across here first they were getting it for 6d a barrel, 50 gallons in a barrel and the shale could not compete with that. The petrol you got at that time was much cleaner and more powerful than the stuff they are getting nowadays and they reckon that the James Ross concern had the best petrol. We got a heck of a lot of by-products from the shale, they got soap,

sulphur, ammonia, paraffin. Paraffin was better refined and became petrol at the works really it was a very clean burning petrol compared to the ones you have now.

Q. What was James Ross & Co. like to work for?

RM In my case my father had the contract and I was working to him, the bosses outside had nothing to do with it, they only dealt with the faceman the men that were blasting it.

Q. If you got hurt did you get sick money?

RM Well, you paid into a fund and if I remember right in some cases in the early days it used to be 2d a week was kept of your wages and later on it was 6d a week. You were put on a Doctor's rota and these Doctor's were at your beck and call if you got hurt, they came and attended to you. Normally that was all there was but in a very bad case, maybe a man walking in on a shot and it had gone off, he would be blasted and burned they used to get them to the Infirmary quick as they could and in the earlier days it was horse ambulances so you know the time it would take to get to Edinburgh.

Q. If you could not get into work because you were hurt did you get anything off the firm then.

RM If you were only off sick, say you were damaged but not too badly and you were maybe off your work say six weeks at that time the Forresters and the Reckobites and all these friendly societies they ran clubs and you paid so much. At that time in the 20's

you got maybe 16/- a week if you were off ill and that had to do you until you were fit to work again. If a man was badly damaged, maybe slightly crippled he got compensation then but he had to sue for it and take them to court, At the finish up the Unions began to step in and fight for that they employed lawyers that went and put your case.

Q. When men retired did they get any pension.

RM No, if you were on strike you got nothing; at all.

Q. Did the Union give anybody money when the strike was on?

RM Not at that time, they did not have the funds, you were only paying maybe 3d a week to the Unions, but it went on the wages of these blighters that came and told you a pack of lies.

Q. Were most of the men in the Union?

RM Eventually they were but not until after 1924 that the Unions began to build up the strength.

PLACE INDEX

Abadan - 5

Addiewell - 4

Bathgate - 8

Bonnybridge - 9

Bridgend - 2,7,8

Broxburn - 3,7

Burnbank - 4

Champfleurie - 2,7

Duddingston - 9

Edinburgh - 7,15

Fawns park - 7

Iran - 4

Kingscavil 6,8

Linlithgow - 10,11,14

Oakbank - 2

Ochiltree - 7

Philpstoun - 1,5,6,7,8,9

Saudi Arabia – 5,14

Stewartfield - 3

Stirling - 7

West Calder - 7

Whitequarries - 9

Winchburgh - 6,7.

CONTENTS

Ambulances 14.
Ammonia 13
Billiard Tables 5.
Boring Machine 9.
Boy 2,11.
Carbide Lamps 9.
Cleaner (tool) 9
Clothing 12.
Coal 2,3,4.
Company houses 5,10.
Compensation 4.
Contract 1,2,7, 12,13.
Doctor 13.
Dominoes 5.
Drawers 1,3,4,8.
Drills 9-
Face 10.
Faceman 1,2 ,3,4,8,9,13.
Foreman 4,12.
Football 5.
Forresters (Society of) 14.
Friendly (society) 14.
Gases 1,9,10.
Gelignite 1,3,9,10.
Glenny (Lamp) 1,10,11.
Graith 9,13.
Hammers 3.
Haulage 2.
Horse 2.
Hutches 1,2,3,9,10
institute 5.
Labourers 10.
Rockfall 3.
Roof 1,12.
Ross James & Go. 1,2,6,8,13.
Safety Lamps 10.
Sankey Bonus 4.
Scottish Oils 7.
Seams 3,4,7.
Setters 3.
Sickness 13,14.
Shifts 1,10
Shot 13.
Snibbles 2.
Soap 13.
Sour Kitchens 8.
Stemmers (Tool) 9.
Strike 7,8,14.
Sulphur 13.
Tallow Lamp 9.
Tonnage 4,7.
Unemployment 12.
Union 7,14.
Ventilation 10.
Wages 4,8.
Water 7,11,12.
Wedges 3.
Woman 1, 7,8,12.
Young (paraffin) 2.6.

Lamp 1,9,10,11.

Lie

Manager (Line) 2,4,12.

bellies falter 7.

O'Haggan Michael 7,8.

Oil 3,1,9,13.

Oil Companies 5,7,11.

Oncostmen 10,11.

Paraffin 13.

Paraffin wax 9.

Paraffin Young 2.

Pensions 14.

Petrol 13.

Pit Ponies 2.

Pit Props 4,10,11,12.

Polish (Poles) 8,13.

Pubs 6.

Quoits 5,6.

Reading Room 5.

Reckobites (Society) 14.