

RM SIDE ONE

A. Up till they closed, I was worked.....I started in No. 5, and then
 No. 4 Mine, Deans

Q. Deans?

A. That's right! And then of course, they closed.....well after a
 certain point, they closed! And then I went to Westwood, and then
 ultimately landed in Breich as a fireman, and that's the only thing
 that I regret, when they finished up in Breich when the pit finished
 up! As long as.....I regret that I never brought my Glenny home with
 me, you know! My Glenny lamp!

Q. They say this.....

A. Now, it's a safety lamp they call it! But I mean, that was the lamp
 that you went about with! First of all, when a fireman was in the
 pit you had to go down two hours before the men, you see and check
 the places, but they had only a Glenny lamp, ultimately you had to
 have an electric lamp on your head, you know!

Q. Yes!

A. The Glenny lamp was to inspect for gas! And I regretted the day...
 I was the last man to step off the cage at Breich when it shut down!

Q. What year would that be?

A. Wait just now.....I was thirty seven years in the pit.....thirty
 seven years, about 1951 I would say!

Q. Yes, 1951, and you were the last man.....

- A. I was the last man to step off the cage! And they let the cage back down again, and cut the ropes! And that was it!
- Q. And that was it!
- A. It had to be filled in then, you see! And Westwood went another year after that, before they finished up! And that was the last of the pits! The shale pits!
- Q. Then, you started at No. 5 Deans, and you were a pony driver? What age would you be then?
- A. Fourteen! And there was another man. Barney Ryce, started the same time as me, he came from here too, he still stays here, but he was wee and I was tall, I was as tall then as what I am now, and I was taken in, and there was thirty five horses down the pit, you know, in No. 5 and great big white ones, sixteen hands high, and where I was going to work, it had to trail through water, and I had to wash it's feet, every day that I came up from the stables.
- Q. Was that your favourite?
- A. Oh God aye, and we had about a mile to walk, but I was just handed the horse after we got out on to the level road and say, 'In you go, till you come to the new dook head!' And I'd never been down a pit before!
- Q. Right! Had you a.....did you follow your father in the mines?
- A. He was always in the mines himself! That's right! In No. 5..... it was No. 5 that he was in when it came from Dedridge.....you see, he worked in Dedridge Pit, but it closed! He was in No. 5.....he was never in any other mine about here, and that's where he hurt him-

self, and then of course, I started in.....and as I say, he took tuberculosis and that was him finished!

Q. And when he hurt himself, was that some fall or was it.....did some machine.....?

A. No.....it was just.....what he minded.....you see, the boring machines they were hand.....you know, there was no electric stuff then, and the boring machines were true and there were nicks all round about you see, and he had to bore like this, and here it skited, he says, and it hit him here.....this is what he blamed for it all! That....

Q. Would it be some years later before it developed?

A. I think that it could have been some other thing, but maybe that would hurry it on, you know what I mean, but at that age, well, I was only fourteen, you know, and I didn't know.....

Q. At fourteen, can you remember what kind of wage you would earn? At that time?

A. Eh.....I think at that particular time, about four bob a day..... I think that I got about twenty four bob a week.....of course, tax is off of that, but you know.....

Q. Had you deductions for the Doctor and the nurse.....?

A. We had deductions for Doctors, nurses.....and of course, your insurance, you know.....oh, my goodness, aye.....well, the wages came down a wee bit after that again, but they were less, because when I started drawing, it was eight bob a day, and when we were married first, it was eight bob a day that I was getting on the drawing. Forty eight bob a week, and you were lucky if you got two pounds to come home with,

but the actual money taking your rent and everything off was one pound nineteen, and if you were working with a good faceman, then you got the two pounds, if you see what I mean. Other facemen would give you two pounds five or something like that, if you were working hard, you would get two pounds five, three pounds some of them! And then some of them would take the last penny off you! Although.....

Q. When you were drawing, was that at No. 5 or No. 4 Deans, or both?

A. It was No. 4, that I started drawing, because No. 5, it was double shifted when I went in there first, but it went single shifted, and the rest of us had to go to No. 4, and it went double shifted! That's when..... that's where I started drawing, I was about nineteen I think when I started! Some of them started a wee bit quicker than me.....

Q. Who would be the Manager and Under-Manager at that time?

A. Davy Reston was the Under-Manager, and old Johnny Johnstone was the Manager, and in the No. 5 District it was Isaac Tow was the Under-Manager and Jimmy Tripney was the Manager!

Q. And when you moved on to Westwood and that, fireman at Breich, who would be the Managers and Under-Managers at that time?

A. Tam Brown was the Under-Manager at Westwood, and.....I can't mind the names, the Manager stays up the top of the brae at Seafeld.....och, it'll come in.....

Q. Was it John Stein?

A. John Stein stayed here in Livingston! He was away above them again, you see. Jimmy Tripney, he stayed here, and John Stein stayed in the

next big house, and Stein was the man that went round about all the Companies, all the pits, you know.....all the pits, and old Johnny... Bob Frame, he was the Under-Manager at No. 4, Bob Frame, and at that time it was old Johnny Johnstone that was the Manager there. No. 4 and No. 7, you see but then ultimately. No. 7 shut down too, and then of course, they all closed!

Q. When you worked at Nos. 4 and 5, Deans, and at Westwood and then.....

A. And I worked.....I worked for a wee while at Thirty Five Pit!

Q. At Threemiletown?

A. At Threemiletown! I worked my old Uncle Rab there, Rab Tait, and the conditions there were terrible! I wouldn't.....I just wouldn't stick it!

Q. Would you say that Thirty Five Pit, of all the mines and pits, was the worst as far as conditions was concerned?

A. It was far the worst! Thirty Five Pit! It was heavy, heavy work! Oh... the conditions were nothing like what we had in Breich and Westwood.... and even.....in the Deans here! Oh no.....well.....Thirty Five was a sore, sore Pit! You had to be a hardy one to work there!

Q. Working at Threemiletown.....Thirty Five Pit..... from here, how did you travel? On the bike or.....?

A. No! I walked to the road end there to get a bus to Uphall, and then you were lucky if you got a bus to Thirty Five Pit! But, in these days, you were walking all the time, you know, you never thought anything about it! But, it wasn't handy to get to either, you know, I mean, it was..... I only worked about.....I must have been there about two or three months or something like, but oh my God.....but no, the conditions beat me!

Q. Yes.....so would you say that Westwood would be the most modern or the best of the mines that you worked in or.....?

A. Oh, Westwood was really good! And.....so was Breich.....oh aye, Breich was good too, you know, good conditions and all the rest of it there, and as I say, that's where I started, as I say, fireman in there, Breich! Over twenty years! I was there!

Q. As fireman?

A. As fireman!

Q. Fireman was a very, very responsible job! And there used to be a lot of training involved, in fact, you were amongst the elite of shalemining if you became a fireman, had you some study to do, before you got that job?

A. Oh, yes, you had to get your certificate, you know, you had to study and get your certificate, and then of course, I was in the Rescue Brigade also, we had to go into the Grassmarket, there, that's where the centre was for the Rescue Brigade, and ultimately, you had to sit tests for the deputies and so on, to see how your eyes were, every second year, you know! It used to be five years.....every fifth year, and at theyou had to go every two years.....the head man in the Grassmarket he used to take us in and test us for our eyesight. He took them individually, you know, four or five firemen.....and took them all individually..... took their test!

Q. You said that it was a fireman's job to be there a couple of hours or so beforehand, to make sure that everything was.....

A. Yes, you had to be there.....we started at five o'clock in the morning, we started, and seven o'clock the men started, but we had to be down the pit at twenty minutes to five, and you had to go up a wee bit to

your own section, to see.....till it was five o'clock, that gave you two hours to inspect the places, some places.....some of those sections you had quite a lot of places in there, do you know what I mean, other bits of the sections you hadn't so very many places but.....it took you the two hours! You went round about the whole place, you know!

Q. In the course of all these years, you would come on a lot of different qualities of shale, was it a poor quality that was available at the endhad the best quality been mined?

A. The poorest quality as far as oil was concerned, was No. 5 Mine, it was only ten gallons to the ton, it was sulphate that was coming out of the shale there, but.....during the war time, this was a big thing, the sulphate, but at No. 4 then, it was the tonnage.....where you were getting twenty odd gallons to the ton. If you went into a Broxburn seam, you were getting thirty five gallons to the ton, do you know what I mean, all these seams, the Dunnet.....well there was about twenty odds in the Dunnet, but the Broxburn seam was the richest. For the oil you know.....

Q. You'll have seen a lot of accidents down the mines, throughout the years, was there any time that you had a real fright yourself.....you know, a real.....?

A. Well, I've had frights myself, you know, what I mean! But I never had a fatal accident in my twenty years.....but I've had some of them quite bad accidents you know! We had what you called the pan runs in Breich, the same as what they had in the coal, if you know what I mean, it shook.....you had.....you had maybe about twelve or fourteen men all taking a stent each, as they talked about, about fifteen or sixteen feet, and you had to clear it, and these pans were going up and down all the time, you know.....and they were just shovelling it on there and the pans were going down, and of course, the shale was going down and there was a boy at the bottom putting it in to hutches and.....haulage, you know, and och aye.....it was.....but.....I had one accident in the

pan runs there, where they were on the backshift, these were the men that cleaned up after the shale was all cleaned up. I told this man when he was going down, I said, 'There's a great big flake yonder, ready to come down', I says, 'Before you start to work, get it down'. You know, it was fifteen feet broad, and it was sitting ready just to drop in. Sharp, sharp stuff it was too, you know! So, it was about an hour after it before I was to go round the sections, you see, and.....seen the Glenny lamp coming.....he had walked in and hit this.....there was a bit smashed you see, and this bit.....it was just ready to swing down, and it jammed him against the pans, you know, and he was stuck there. Of course, when I went up, he had got his foot like this and I knew it was.....you know, but it was the worst accident that I ever had to deal with, you know then! But I knew his foot was off! That was an old boy Reid from Seafield.

Q. Then mines have produced many, many characters and worthies, who sticks in your mind as being some of the great characters?

A. Oh, well.....there were different characteristics, you know what I mean, some of them, it was all work, a lot of them.....and then you got the crabbit ones and you got the cheery ones and och.....well.....not that I can think on any just now.....

Q. Most communities had a fair share of hobbies, that they were particularly good at and Livingston Station is remembered for football players and... pigeon flyers, and there were bowlers.....

A. Bowlers..... That's right, Jinky McPherson.....he was a great football player, and he went to Hearts.....no, to Rangers, and Tommy Walker, he was a Hearts man, you see.....and Tommy Walker's brother, also, was quite a good player, and the talk about here, was that Tommy was the outstanding player.....he was really a great player, Tommy Walker!

Q. I remember Wullie McCutcheon telling me that there was a whole senior team, could be produced out of Livingston Station!

A. That's.....oh, you know Cutchie.....?

Q. I know Cutchie..... in that team.....that McPherson, you said, was certainly one of them, and I think that he had a brother.....

A. Joe McPherson!

Q.Who was also a.....

A. Oh aye.....there were good football players about here! That..... Cutchie's right, you could get a senior team out of Livingston Station! Aye, my God, there were some great players! And.....again.....bowlerswas the greatest green.....old Tam Stark.....was the greenkeeper! He was the greatest greenkeeper that ever was, and that was.....but it's still a lovely green yet! But Tammy had it.....with just the scythe, he didn't have any of these machines, you know, just the scythe and got on with it! A perfect man.....he had, oh that was a great green there!

Q. And of course, you had the Restons and all these people.....

A. I'd big Jimmy.....Jimmy Reston.....he was in the police force for a couple of years or something down in Liverpool.....and then, of course, Jessie next door.....but she's away, her old man, he was the policeman here, old Jimmy Galbraith, a big stoutish kind of man, you know. But he was a quiet, quiet man..... that chap next door here, that's that Jessie's brother, that was the son, he's the same size as Jim.....as his old man, but he never had any notion to go into the force.....Jock Galbraith done.....co-incidental, I stay in the middle here, and Jessie stays here and Jock stays there, you know, and I went about their house for donkey's years, and he was my best man fifty years ago!

Q. That's amazing! You miss the village bobby now?

A. Aye.....definitely.....and by jove, he was a good one.....there was
.....nobody could take a rise out of him.....

Q. Sure?

A. No.....

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RM

TAPE TWO SIDE ONE

Q. You started work with the Scottish Oils, in.....?

A. 1924, in No.5.Mine, and it went.....well, I started pony driving, you know, and I got a great big white horse, and I had to go through water, regularly, and I had to wash its feet every day, when I came in, do you know what I mean! Old Wattle Gibb was the head horseman, do you know what I mean, and you used to wash its feet, dry it and all the rest of it! So, No.5.....it didn't go too long, double shifted you see, and it went constant dayshift, so we were transferred to No.4. Mine. Well, when I went to No.4. Mine, so I got a different job, braking a cousie, do you see what I mean, these were big long slopes down, and you had to stand at the top and you were braking the hutches down, do you know what I mean, and..... it was very hard work, you had to swing them on plates, you know what I mean, but.....anyway we managed the way they did it.....

Q. Can you tell me who the Manager was at No.5?

A. It was Jimmy Tripney, was the Manager, and the under-manager was Isaac Tow, and then when I went to No.4., Bob Frame was the under-manager, and old Johnny Johnstone from Starlaw Road End, he was the Manager! He was the Manager of No.4. and No.7, so I started there, then of course, it come to be when I got a bit older, when I started drawing, and that was hard graft.....anyway, some of the men paid you very well, and some of the men paid you very well, and some of them didn't pay you very well, you know, I could tell you some stories about that, but that wouldn't do, right enough, you know, but Davy-Davy Reston, he was the under-manager, and the way we called him Davy-Davy, he spoke very quick, you know, and this is why we called him Davy-Davy Reston, everything that he said was twice over. Anyway, I got to there and then when I got married, I was only eight bob a day then, when we got married first, that was forty eight bob, and you were lucky if you got two pounds, your rent

was kept off, you see, and if you got two pounds for your week's work.....that was a shilling over, you didn't want to burst your second pound, you know what I mean, but anyway, after I was drawing there a while, I got the chance to go to Thirty Five, with an old uncle, but it was the hardest graft, that ever I was in, and I stayed there about.....three, four months at the very most, and here there was something happened one night.....actually, they had a screen to go up this end, and they'd only a screen up, and the place was full of reek right down to the roadhead you know, so I just went down and I had a look, and I said to the uncle "No, I wouldn't work in that!" So, I just turned on my heel and walked back to the pit bottom, up the pit and I just looked back, and I said that I would never be back down that pit again, and neither I was! So therefore I got a job in Westwood, and ultimately in Westwood, I was having my fireman's ticket, you see! So I got a job as a fireman in Breich Pit, so I was there for nineteen years, when Breich Pit was shut down, and I was the last man to step off the cage at Breich Pit! When I went up, I was last..... there were four or five of us in the cage, you know, but I says, right I was last to come off and we just dropped the cage, cut the ropes and that was it finished! So.....well, after that.....(Wife talking)"The family's arrived!" "Carrie's going at one o'clock, she goes on duty at one!"/"Aye, it's okay!". No when.....when I worked at Thirty Five Pit, and I look back on that, I would never have worked in yon again! But anyway, ultimately, I got the job as deputy, you know, what they called the fireman at that time, and when Breich Pit shut down, I was supposedI was asked to go to Westwood, to take over control of the Broxburn Section, and I said "No, I'm not going!" So, the following week, the Manager asked me again, and can I say this?.....He said "It's your uncle that is under-manager!" I said "That's the way that I'm not going!"

Q. What was his name?

A. Tam McVicar! And I said, "That's the way that I'm not going!" So, that was it finished! So..... I just got a job with Crudens after that, when

they were building at Blackburn there, building, there were people coming from Glasgow, you know, and I was there with Crudens until I was sixty six and it shut down after that, I was transferred to Pumpherston, where they were making these big houses, you know, making them concrete, and taking them away, building concrete houses, you know, so.....if I had och well.....I didn't go and that was it.

Q. Now.....at Westwood, you did work at Westwood?

A. I worked at Westwood, drawing with old Mick Carty.

Q. And how did you get on with that job?

A. Well, it was hard work right enough, but I got on fine with it, but I just said, I'm going to sit for my fireman's certificate, you see, you had to go in to.....I was in the Rescue Brigade also, I was captain of the team in the Rescue Brigade, and we had it in Edinburgh, we had to go to Edinburgh for the Rescue Brigade, down.....

Q. The Grassmarket?

A. The Grassmarket! That's right! And first you had to go down there at different times, to get examined, you know what I mean, and well.....can I tell you this story?

Q. Yes?

A. When we went there, I as the last roan to go in, you see! And Mr..... I can't mind the name just how.....Davidson.... that was it, he was the head man there....."Right, come in and we'll have a wee blether!" I was in there for about half an hour talking, you know, and it wasn't an examination, as far as I was concerned, and one of the boys that was out in the team, "My God", he says, "He didn't half give you some examination!" So I just said, "Well, That's how it goes, right enough!", you see, I was Captain of the Rescue Brigade, so he had to ask me, but you don't bother

about these things, you know! But no, I had a great time, when I was deputy in the pits, and.....

Q. Was that the job that you liked best in the pits?

A. Yes, yes.....and I remember that I had my son down, and I think that will be him that's driven them through, maybe not, he's a schoolteacher in Braco, he's the head Christian teacher....he's a Christian man,.... so I took my son down and I took him right round the pit, this time and "Dad", he says, "I never heard you swear once!" Well, that was one thing that I never did, with any man, if I had something to say to him, I said it plain, but I never swore! And when I was drawing, I could swear as well as the next man, you know what I came off the cage, and I looked back, and they started to fill it in, and I said, "Well, I won't be down any of the pits again! And neither I was! But I had great experience in the pit, I did every job! You know, I wasn't long pony driving right enough!

Q. Can you say anything about your ponies, did you.....were they a bit frisky, say on a Monday, or.....?

A. No, well....the majority, they were lovely and.....every time, when you came back at lousing time, you had to clean them, and well, when I was driving the one going through the water, I had to wash his feet...big white one, you know! I had to wash it's feet, and dry them every day, before I could get up the pit, but I had a great experience in the pits!

Q. How many hutches would they be drawing? The ponies!

A. Well, this pony that I had, it would only take one at a time, up, what we called a dook, do you know what I mean, it could only take one at a time up here, but the ponies at No.4., I was at the bottom of the cousie first, and the ponies in No.4. were drawing ten hutch rakes, you see! And when you go out to the bench.....when the pony got to the bench,

it stopped and you took the pony out, and there was a bloke there to stop the rakes, and then you took the pony out and put him to the back, and run down this slope, just with snibbles, you know what I mean! Just to put in the snibbles and draw them when it was necessary to land the rake out on the bench to get lifted with the chain runner too, you see! I was also a chain runner....that was.....you had all the benches, right up the dook, do you know what I mean, and you had to go and put trees up to stop the hutches, and draw away the full hutches and wait till the empties came back and lifted them off, and then when you were going back down the way again, you had to run down in the front of the rake, and lift all these trees out, out of the road, it was only two benches that you could....the empties in there and put your hook in there! And take away the full ones, you didn't need to put a tree up, you know what I mean. It was a long, long dook. No.4. oh my goodness aye! Still!! Benches.....the last bench was No.53, so you'll know how many benches there were on the road down, of course there were some of them stopped, worked out, you see, you had only to come to two stoop lengths off the main brae and then stop the places, or else it went.....it did damage to the brae side, you see, the dook as we called it. No, my experience was.....when I think back on itabout being in all these different pits, you know, it was a great experience, which I can look back on now, and....no trouble at all, you know! There was one day.....old Sanny Morrison was a....he was a pugman....,he was in No.4., and when you were firing shots across you had to come across here and tell these men, not to be coming out, do you know what I mean, they weren't far in, and here the next thing that I minded, I was lying up on the surface, and I had to get my head all split.....there was a great big.....a great big stone fell.....if it had fell direct, then old Sanny and I....but it went to the side like that.....oh, I had a great big cut right across here you know! We had to get the Doctor..... so that was one experience that I always remember getting this if you see what I mean,.....how the dickens we weren't killed right out, you know! I was just a young man at the time....well I was.....I was married at the time.....and I got a run home in a car do you know what I mean. Of course, the Doctor had to come to the pit

.....to No.4.....No.4. Mine..... So, anyway, the experience that I've had was very good when I look back, but there were some right bad accidents, you know! And this accident with the wife's cousin...as I say, he was just lighting too many shots at the one time.

Q. What was his name?

A. Joe McKelvie! And.....if he had lit the one first and let it go, but he was trying to get too many at the one time, and this one got him, it just, right.....and lit them, it was a "yankee" shot, what we called a "yankee" you know, and you had "yankees" "brairders", "bibs" and "tops" and some of your seams were.....some of your seams were eight feet, but most of them were about ten feet we did, and that was high enough to put trees up to you know, ten feet! But when you think back on these days, it was hard graft! It was heavy stuff to use, you know! Heavy stuff to lift, emptying the hutches, if you were lifting big bits, in, you had to.....when you think back on these things, it was graft right enough! But however.....

Q. Can you remember when this man McKelvie was killed, was there any compensation paid?

A. Oh aye, there would be, there would be.....but I mean, as I say, there was a cousin of the wife, but we never went into compensation or any thing like that. Never asked any questions...oh, no, definitely, there had to be compensation you know! It was a very bad accident! Accidents in the pits, we tell him, it should never have happened! Never should have happened at all! However these things happen and they.....

Q. You would say that was a bit careless?

A. Trying to do his things too quick.....you see, he should have (inaudible) his shot first and after he had waited, then went back in and did the rest of the shots, but you were only supposed to fire two shots at a time! If you had a drawer along with you, you could

do four, do you know what I mean! But two shots at a time was the general.....(Talking to wife)/Yes dear! (Wife talking) That's Carrie going away, she's going away on duty! After her holidays!

Q. Were there any more accidents that you would like to say anything about?

A. No.....not when I was working! Do you know what I mean, there had been accidents in No.5. there had been one accident in No.5. anyway, two firemen were killed. But.....

Q. And did you know much about that?

A. No, I didn't know much about that! But two firemen were killed, and that would be them in the pits themselves, and I mean.... there had been gas that had been gas that had been lighted too, you see, when they got.....however..... that.....no, now.....what had happened right enough, it is only due to my experience that I know what had happened!

Q. And what did you feel had happened?

A. I feel that their Glenny lamp had been blown out, you see, I mean, if you got ten or eleven per cent of gas, methane, it blew out your lamp, and in these days, I'm talking about before I was a fireman or anything in these days, you hadn't a sparkler inside your Glenny lamp, and you had to take it off and light it with a match, you see, so that's what had happened there! But it was a tragic accident right enough! The two widows got their houses made into a shop....they got..... they gave them a wee shop.....of course it was only the old Livingston Station Rows at the time, in fact, the Row that we stayed in, that was the Main Street, but the part that we stayed in, was called Fisher Row. There were twenty four houses in that block, you see, but they started the Main Street.....started at No.1. and went right up down the Glen Road.....that was a big long street, and then came back to our street, which was still Main Street, but it was called Fisher Row, and there was a hundred and eighteen houses were in that, up and along and back to Fisher Row, a hundred and eighteen houses, it was the old miners rows.....

Q. And was it the Company that turned the houses into shops? For the widows?

A. Yes! Yes! That's right!

Q. They actually converted them?

A. They converted..... that's right..... just a nice wee shop for them, you know, and it was the Company that did that for them!

Q. And were there many shops in Livingston Station at that time?

A. Well, you had.....at the Corner there, you had the Post Office, and then old Mrs. Reid's, up next to the Post Office, where the Post Office is just now, you know! And then you had a shop down where the Church is, but very little, you know what I mean, a very little shop!

Q. Did you know the woman that started up the shop? What their names were?

A. Mrs. Wilson and Mrs. Donnachie.....that was the two shops that started!
Due to the accident aye!

Q. Did they do very well after that?

A. Pardon!

Q. Did they do very well? Shop wise, business wise?

A. Oh yes! Oh yes, they did very well, because there weren't many shops here.....in fact.....we had to rely on vans coming round, butchers vans.....you name it.....bakers vans, you had to rely on them coming round. It was either that or you had to go away to Bathgate! And it wasn't very suitable to go into Bathgate in these days....well, in

actual fact, when.....when the likes of me that was deputy in the pit, you had to cycle out to work, you know, you started two hours before the men, at five o'clock in the morning, and I had to cycle out from here to Breich. The old man next door to me, old Sanny Brown, he was a fireman in Breich at that time, and he says to me "Bob, you'll find that when you're going up there any morning, and it's uphill, all the road and he says, you'll find that the wind is in the West, and when you come back up the pit eight hours after it, you'll find that the wind is in the East. You have to pedal both ways! But, oh my goodness, nineteen years I cycled up there! Well, for the last few years I didn't, because I was starting along with the men in the morning, you know as deputy, and it didn't worry me then but....of course at that time, I was fit, a young man, you see, and cycling didn't trouble me! At times, you know, when you were going up the hill, and heavy, heavy winds blowing you know, it would just about blow you off at times!

- Q. When you worked as deputy, had you any trouble with any of the miners going down, like trying to take cigarettes, matches....when they shouldn't have been doing?
- A. No.....well, at the pits that we were in, that wasn't included, you know, and the Deans pits here, you could take your fags and matches... it was all carbide lamps that they worked with, you know, it was only when a man went into a sort of gassy place, they had to get these electric lamps, this is when the electric lamps started, you know what I mean, and if it was a sort of gassy section, they had to wear these electric lamps, and there were notices going in the level road "No smoking beyond this point", that's it, notices in every road, you couldn't go near the face.....well, near the waste, it was more or less the waste that had the gas in it, you see! When you were stooping..... you see, first of all you were driving roads....ten....twelve feet wide, and then when you got in to the place where the shale stopped, you had to start and come down again and you had to stoop out the place you done, you had a great big bit at the time, and.....when you went

a certain length, you had to withdraw out of there, and ultimately all the places all closed, you know, you had some places went off.....a hundred, two hundred...three hundred feet....square....where...already to drop, you know, but it took....it took the weight off the road outside, but that was one of the things that happened anyway..... however...all these things are all past, you know, as far as the shale miners are concerned, you know, but.....well, they were very good, the Management....they were very good.....

Q. Were you ever a member of the Union?

A. Well, I was just....just a member, but when you went to deputy, or fireman, you had to be in another Union, it was a different Union altogether! A different Union!

Q. Can you remember the name of the Union?

A. Och, we just knew it as the Fireman's Union! You know!

Q. Did you know anybody that was an official or anything in the Union?

A. No really, I couldn't.....I couldn't tell you, I can't mind names, do you know what I mean, because...some of them.....we had men that collected, you know what I mean, but the head men of these....were away in different places, you know what I mean...No.....

Q. Now, when you were a drawer at Westwood, and working to your faceman, how did he pay you?

A. Some of them not very good, some of them not very good! Other ones..... oh my goodness,.....well, I remember I was drawing across here...in the Deans..... and I had been away a holiday, the wife and I....and here when I came back, I got my pay from this man, old Tammy Wallace was his name, and I went down to the house and I looked at it, and instead of being about three pounds..... four and a half pounds, you see, so I

went right back up to him again, and I said "Have you not made a mistake here. Tammy!" He says, "What way, Bob, do you not....did you not get enough?" I said, "No, but I thought that I had made a mistake and you had paid me too much here". "Put it in your pocket", he said, "You... worked for it!" That was one of the men, he was a great man! So I was quite pleased that day! Coming back my holidays, and got an extra couple of quid! Mind you, you'd to graft for it! But, in those days, well, grafting was no trouble to us in those days! It's a bit of trouble, you know!

Q. So, you must have earned it?

A. Oh yes! Oh, instead of filling the eighteen hutches what was the darg, twenty four, twenty six, aye, if you were getting a hand, even as much as thirty hutches, do you know what I mean! And of course, in some of the roads, the roof would come down that low, that you couldn't put setters on the hutches.....it was just dead level.....well, these days when you think back on them, you know what I mean, it was hard graft! But och, we were young.....graft was no trouble!

Q. And when you were a faceman yourself, how did you pay your drawer?

A. I was only a faceman.....the faceman and drawer.....the faceman was on the other shift, you see.....the faceman, he made us, whether he paid you good or bad, it was a different story, do you know what I mean!

Q. Was he like a contractor?

A. He was a contractor, but in actual fact, he was the faceman too! He wasn't going out to do nothing, he had to bore all the holes, fire the shots and he had a drawer with him, you see, but he was the contractor, the faceman, in all these places, where it was double shifted, you got a faceman and a drawer. Sometimes if there was three men, just working you got two of them on the dayshift, faceman and drawer and the drawer on the nightshift.....sometimes they had to bore a hole and fire shots,

you know what I mean, but that was the system that....four men in a place, two on each shift! No.....that was it!

Q. And when you started off work in the Scottish Oils, what type of housing did you stay in?

A. Oh well, that was what I said, the Fisher Row, it was a three apartment house. There was only my father and my mother and me, and it was a three apartment house where we stayed. Some of the houses on the Main Street, on the opposite side were only two apartment houses, but we had the three apartment!

Q. Did you have running water?

A. Pardon?

Q. Did you have running water?

A. Oh yes! Aye.....well, we didn't have to go looking for water, you know what I mean!

Q. Was that in the house?

A. In the house! Yes!

Q. And did you have a flush toilet?

A. No....you had.....the toilets were outside! When we came to Mid Calder first, the toilets were outside, and it was divided between two, two families which was us and the other one round the other side, the toilet was outside. Ultimately they put toilets in for us, in all these houses, and you had an outside toilet until they got all this work done! That was when they made it a scullery and a toilet just off the scullery! Of course, everything's different now, when you talk about your bathrooms and everything now, but oh no.....mind you, they did very well! The

Scottish Oils, when they converted these houses, when they converted the houses you know, they did very well! Up to a point, they couldn't go any further than that, but then of course, ultimately, they built all these new rows, you know. South Street, right up. South Street, and Mid Street, and North Street, the whole lot! Deans Street, and then we all moved in to these houses and the old Rows were all knocked down!

Q. And how do you think that Livingston New Town, has affected you?

A. Well, as far as the majority of us in.....that have been here all the time, the New Town, we don't like it.....we don't really! Because.... ..there's an awful lot of people attacked, you know, and.....shops on the run, you know.....a man, I know one person, she used to come round here with fish, and it's not that very long ago, and she went into this place to get a cup of tea and she came out and her van had..all been riddled. ..her money all taken and the rest of it....so us that have been here all our days, we don't like that!

Q. You wouldn't have trouble like that in the old days?

A. Never a bit of trouble! The only thing that we used to do when we were young was to go and tie two doors together, you know what I mean...we would rap at each door.....

END OF TAPE

Q. And you were saying that you tied the two doors together?

A.Tied the two doors together, aye! And we ran down the green, and watched them when they did get out, do you know what I mean! Some of them had to get out of the back window to cut the ropes, do you know what I mean! Och, it was only just devilment, there was no badness, I don't think that we knew a bit of badness in those days, at all!

Q. I'm sure the occupants of these houses wouldn't be pleased with you?

A. Och, well, they all got used to it, you know, and they just took it as it come!

Q. Were there any other pranks that you got up to?

A. These days.....you.....pranks were just like that, there was no..... never any badness, och, you got these occasional fight with a couple of boys, do you know what I mean, not just getting on together! But.....no that was one of the main pranks.....no.....when I think back on these days, it was simple things that you did, you know, it was just.....

Q. What did you do in your spare time? Away back when you started and when you were working a wee while with the Scottish Oils?

A. Oh well..... there used to be a Duval cinema came here, do you know what I mean, up at the big hall there, the Institute, and of course, you had to go there, if you wanted to go to the picture house, because sometimes you hadn't the money to go to Bathgate and pay a penny to get into the matinee! Well, in actual fact, in these days, we used to walk over, it was no trouble! You were lucky if you had a couple of pennies in your pocket in those days, you know, because wages were very small.

Q. Did you have an Institute Hall there?

A. Yes! Oh aye! It's still there yet, but it's been all altered you know! There used to be an Institute with just the one billiard table in it, and Tammy Stark was the greenkeeper and a bowling green, and that bowling green was reckoned to be one of the best ever there was, from Tammy Stark had it, you had to see it to believe it. Everybody that came here, I mean, they used to come here from the Winchburgh Green, Broxburn Green to play certain competitions, you know! You were meeting other strangers to play on a different green, but really, that's always been a lovely green down there! But the Institute is still there, but extended now, and then of course, you have the bowling green...just the bowling green, they had a new licensed place, and it gets a big crowd.....well.....because you get everything cheaper there!

Q. Was it the Company that built the bowling green?

A. It was the Company first of all, that had the bowling green....and the hall where the billiard table was in, and then there was an adjacent hall to it, the bigger hall that they held weddings in, and these things have all been extended!

Q. So, you would have a hall-keeper?

A. Oh, you had a hall-keeper.....oh, well, at that time. Tammy Stark was hall keeper and greenkeeper. Ultimately they got a couple of men on the green with them, so that he could attend to other things, you know, because he was made head man. Tammy Stark, of the whole of the Scottish Oils Greens! He managed to go round to Pumpherston, Winchburgh, Middleton.....every place that the Scottish Oils.....Philpstoun...greens, and he was made the head man of all the Scottish Oils greens!

Q. So, he was like a supervisor?

A. He was a supervisor, ultimately! And he was one of the best! He was

a quiet, quiet wee man! A quiet wee man! Och aye, when you think back on these days right enough, everything was simple, when you were working as a pony driver and you had a couple of coppers in your pocket and you used to go up and have a game at billiards....there used to be a line up to put your name down.....for twenty minutes....that was all you were allowed on at a time, you know. There were that many waiting to play billiards at that time, but twenty minutes was all that you were allowed! The last game that was allowed was half an hour, because that was the nine o'clock till half past nine, you see, it was twenty minutes the other times, but whoever was on the last game got half an hour playing! So the first one was up and put their name on the last game! On, no, it was really good!

Q. You were saying earlier that the worst place that you worked in, was No.35. Threemiletown?

A. It was the worst place ever I was in! That's candid too!

Q. And where was the best place ever you worked?

A. Well, I would say, Breich Pit! Breich Pit, when I was deputy!

Q. And what was good about Breich?

A. Oh well, in actual fact, you got on very well with every one of the men, you know! If you had anything to say to any of them, you said it, and that was it finished! But I was vexed when Breich Pit shut down! Anyway, it got me out of the pits, and I started with Cruden then, and I was there until I was sixty six!

Q. You feel as if you were relieved to get away from the pits?

A. Ultimately, yes! Ultimately, I was thirty seven years.... that was quite a long time!

Q. Fine!

END OF TAPE

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| Transcript | RM |
| Industrial Information | <p>I started work in No. 4 and No. 5 mines Deans when I was fourteen years old as a pony driver.</p> |
| Pony Driver | <p>There were thirty five ponies down No.5 mine. We had great big white ponies which were sixteen hands.</p> <p>I had to walk about a mile and then I was handed the pony when we got out to the level road.</p> <p>This pony I had would only take one hutch at a time up what we called the dook.</p> <p>I was at the bottom of the cousie brae first and the ponies in No. 4 were drawing ten hutch rakes. When the pony got to the bench it stopped and it was taken out. The pony was then made to run down this slope with snibbles.</p> |
| Chain Runner | <p>I was also a chain runner and I had to go and put trees up to stop the hutches. I also had to draw away the full hutches and then wait until the empties came back and lifted them off.</p> <p>I had to run in the front of the rake and lift the trees out of the road and the empties were put to one side with your hook. It was a long hook so there were quite a lot of benches on the road down. We only had to come to two stoop lengths of the main brae.</p> |

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| Drawing | I started drawing in No. 4 and No. 5 Deans but it was really in No. 5 mine that I started when I was nineteen years old. |
| Wages | When I started on the drawing I got eight bob a day. That worked out to forty eight bob a week and, if I was lucky, I had two pounds to come home with after all the deductions were taken off. |
| Closure of Deans | When the Deans mines closed I moved to Westwood and then ultimately I landed in Breich as a fireman. |
| Fireman's Certificate | I had to study for a certificate to be a fireman. I was also in the Rescue Brigade and for these duties I had to go to the Grassmarket. That was where the centre was for the Rescue Brigade. |
| Eyesight Tests | I also had to go to the Grassmarket every two years and the head man there used to test my eyesight. |
| Fireman's Duties | As a fireman I had to go down the pit two hours before the miners to check all the places in my section for gas. |
| Glenny Lamps | The miners had Glenny Lamps to start with and this was also used to inspect the places for gas. |
| Carbide Lamps | Later we went on to use carbide lamps instead of the Glenny Lamps. |
| Electric Lamps | We finally switched to electric lamps. |
| Westwood Pit | When Breich was closed down I was asked |

to go to Westwood to take over the control of the Broxburn Section.

Broxburn Seam

At the Broxburn seam they were getting thirty five gallons of oil per ton of shale as against twenty five gallons per ton from No. 4 mine. The Broxburn seams were the richest because it was all Dunnet shale.

Number of Miners

There would be about twelve to fourteen men all taking a stint each. They had to clear about fifteen or sixteen feet of shale that had to be cleared, by shovelling it into pans which went down to the bottom where a boy loaded it into hutches which were then taken to the haulage.

Accidents

I have never had a bad accident myself in my twenty years in the mines but I have seen quite bad accidents. I told this man when he was going down that there was a great big flake ready to come down, but he still went in and he was hit on the foot and it was severed.

Unions

I was a member of the Fireman's Union. I cannot remember any of the officials names that were the head ones in the Union.

Domestic Life Housing

We stayed in a three apartment house in Fishers Row. It was only my Father, Mother and me in the house. Some of the houses in the Main Street were only two apartment houses.

Running Water

We had running water in the house.

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| Toilets | The toilets were outside at Mid Calder and it was divided in two so that two families used the same block. Ultimately they put toilets in all the houses just off the scullery. |
| Converted Housing | Scottish Oils converted these houses up to a point and then they couldn't do anymore. |
| New Houses | They built new houses in South, Mid and North Street and then we all moved into the new houses, and the old rows were knocked down. |
| House Rent | Once the house rent and all the other things had been added together, I had one pound nineteen taken off. |
| Leisure Activities- Bowls | There were some great bowlers and we had great greens. Old Tam Stark was the greenkeeper and he was the greatest greenkeeper that ever was. |
| Football Players | Livingston Station was great for its football players. |
| Pigeon Flyers | There was also some great pigeon flyers in Livingston Station as well. |

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