

## TH SIDE ONE

A. Well, it was in either June or July, when I got a job from Mr. Gray, he was the Works Manager at the time. Of course, I could have went down the mine, pony driving, or things like that, but I wasn't very keen on it! I got a nice job in the office, and.....

Q. Was that just at the end of the war?

A. That was in.....the war was from 1914, till practically 1919, you see. The war was still going on that time in 1918, and we had connections with the Glasgow Office, you know, and I could phone up from Pumpherston office, and I used to phone the offices in Glasgow.....a regiment.... looking from Pumpherston to go to war, and things like that, on the phone. There was a lassie called Mary Lament, I don't know, but she'll be an old woman now, the same as myself. And Nan Glencorse was on the phones at that time, and Ellie Simpson, they were all in the office at the time. There was an awful lot of women worked down in the Works at that time too! The different departments, you know, the cooperage.....Jean McGuffie.....and my Auntie....my Auntie Jean, she worked down in the sulphate house and all different women. There were two lassies also driving the cars...at that time.....Lizzie Glencorse and Rhona Banks. They were the chauffeurs for the Works cars, which came a wee bit later on than that! No, they had them at that time, but they were learning to drive at that time, and they used to do....going to the bank, for money or things like that, well, they used to take one of the cars down, for to get the money for to pay the men, or things like that on a Friday, you see. I can mind of, at that time, when you used to go into the office, there was one side, as soon as you went in, you were in the Caldwells. What they cried the Caldwells! There were four Caldwells in that wee office! I think that there was Wullie Senior, Wullie Junior, John and Matty. Matty was the Mine Manager for No's. 4 and 5 Mines, and they had a wee drawing office, over near the Drumshoreland main road, just as you went past the entrance to the Works, it was just a wee bit past that. Of course, it's all demolished now! Everything's down now! but it was there at the time! And I can always mind of going over as a laddie and the two boys that worked in it, stripped

me and painted me all different colours of paint that they used for their maps! And they put my clothes back on, but my mother kicked up stoor at night when I went home! Covered in paint!

Q. When you started, at thirteen and a half, was that's a bit earlier than you should have done?

A. Well, fourteen! You weren't supposed to leave the school till you were fourteen, you see. But I got an exemption at that time, it was hardship, you see! You see, we had a big family, you know! And I got an exemption, we were needing the money, it was actually for to get a wee bit more money into the house at that time, and it made a big difference! It doesn't sound an awful lot, but it went an awful long way! Ten bob! At that time! You could go into Edinburgh for two or three bob at that time, and go to the pictures and everything! You can't even go to Uphall Station now for that kind of money! Never mind into Edinburgh! You used to get a shilling return on the train from Uphall Station to Edinburgh! The last train left Edinburgh about ten to eleven at night, and we used to go down there and meet big Jock Eaton and them all coming off the train, you know, half squiffed and that, you know! You got a laugh, you know.....Johnny dark and all them. You know, boys that I knew at that time!

Q. Were they all workers in the.....

A. Aye, they.....

Q. This was the Pumpherston Oil Company.....?

A. The Pumpherston Oil Company, that's right! Well, I was with the.....I worked, in Pumpherston Works actually for fifty one and a half years, and I was never outside the Work! I never worked anywhere else in my life, bar Pumpherston Work! And I thoroughly enjoyed it! I had some good times, I had a connection with the Union. I was on the Executive Council, for a long while, I was the Secretary of that, and Treasurer forbye, by the way, with the Scottish.... that was the Shaleminers and Oilworkers Union. In fact,

I've still got the desk ben there in the room that I.....that Joe Heaney went into Edinburgh and bought, and I've still got it ben there yet! And it's an old, old, desk but it's great....in great condition you know! It's not.. it's a right old one! I've seen older ones but that....as good as that one ben there, but it's still ben there yet! I used to go down when we had any dispute with the Company, which was very seldom really! Joe Heaney and McKelvie and maybe another boy from the Executive Council, and I went down there and on the other side of the desk would be Mr. Crichton and Mr. Caldwell and Jock Smith and also a.....clerk, you know, taking the notes of what was taking place, you see, but previous to that, though, George, there was an .....there was no Union here at all you see! And McKelvie and Caddie went round the doors getting people to join the Union, you see! Because the Company just used to put up a notice on the window, in the office, saying "As from such and such a date, your wages will be reduced by five...per cent". And I mean, that was that! There was nobody there to go and argue with them or anything! But latterly we got the Union started, and we used to go down and have a meeting with the.....and sometimes we..were successful, and of course, sometimes we weren't depending on how the Company thought, how they were placed financially! But you know, the funny thing about it was, when I .....when I retired in 1970, I got two thousand and odd pounds, and it wasn't actually.....it wasn't actually a years wages! About....six months after I was retiring..it wasn't even a years wages! But that's what I got, but since then, they've been pretty good to me, because I now get a monthly pension, which is quite decent, you know! In fact, it saved our blooming life, to tell you the truth, because we were really hard up! But nowadays, we're not so hard up as we were! Nothing like it! But I was going to tell you about.....in the Works at that time, all the stuff came in from the different Works, crude Works, you understand, they had no refineries, they were crude Works, they only made crude! They just had retorts and that, they couldn't make lubricating oil, or paraffin oil, or anything like that, or candles or wax! They just sent in the raw crude oil to us! And it came in, in tanks, and you had to put in a.....pipe into it, it was a bit.....a long rubber hose, and there was a pipe on the end of it with wee holes in it...perforated with holes, and you stuck this into the tank, and turned on the steam, you see, so's the..... Well, this wee...this wee laddie, he took the samples every morning for to go up to the office, and Mr. Grant, the head Chemist at the time.....George Grant....and this wee boy took up the...the

samples to the office, you see, and Mr. Grant says to him this day...they cried him "Tober", "Tober" Hewittson, that was his nickname, I think that his own name was James or Peter...James, but they cried him "Tober" anyway, so this day, Mr. Grant says to him, "Now, do you swear that you took those samples this morning!" He said, "Oh yes, Mr. Grant, I took those samples this morning!" "Are you sure now?" "Oh aye!", he says, I'm sure!" He said, "Well, just you come along with me then, and we'll empty them out and see what they are like!" So they emptied them out and all the cans were full of water! Now, these cans would hold about a pint and a half of water, and there was a handle on them, they were pretty heavy, there was a handle... just like a milk.....you know, you've seen a milk jug, just like one of yon.. .....only it was...a smaller neck on it, for taking the wee samples! So, Mr. Grant turned round to the laddie, and said "Are you still sure now, that you took these samples this morning!" "Well!", he said, "Make sure you take them tomorrow morning and every other morning after that, and I want fresh samples every morning!" He said, "We've been trying the same samples for the last four or five days, but we know when we test them!" "They're the same samples from the day before, and the day before, and the day before!" "So mind and get your fresh samples!" So, he got that squared up, and Mr. Grant and I used to have a kind of row now and again....an argument, you know, he was an awful man, he was a right Tory! Of course, I was a great Socialist! Well, it was something about the Tate Lyle shares had went up, I was reading in the paper that they had...went up, and there had been a leak in the Government, and of course, all the boys that had plenty of money were buying Tate and Lyle shares! They went up a good bit too! I went up to Mr. Grant the next morning and I was telling him all about it, and he got me by the back of the neck and he ran me out of the office, and he says, "Don't you come back in here, we're not wanting you back in here!" He says, "Stay out and don't come back again!" I said, "You won't get any samples!" He said, "Well, it won't matter, stay out!", he says. Oh well, he came round the Work that same day and he says, "Listen, you come back as usual with your samples, but we don't want to hear any more about politics up in that office, from you!" He says, "Mind that!" But he was nice about it, you know, he was quite nice about it! Oh aye, aye! Many's the happy....I had some happy days up there, and we used....we had some good Managers...we had

some really good Managers! I...think there were about....eight or nine Managers, maybe ten Managers, during my fifty one and a half years there! But I can always mind, George, I just read it, and I saw a photograph in the B.P. Shield, there about a month ago! They had a trip for us, for all the staff, likes of Pumpherston, Oakbank, Seafield, Deans, Tarbrax, Philpstoun, and we all went in to Edinburgh, and we got a special train through to Glasgow, and we got on the boat at the Broomielaw, and they took us up to Tarbert and Loch Fyne....we got all our meals on the boat...and Scottish music, oh, it was really lovely! Coming back the way, the boat was a wee bit late in getting to the Broomielaw again, and they hired a special train for us, to take us through to Edinburgh. They hired buses from Edinburgh to take us to Deans, and Seafield and Tarbrax and that, but, oh, we had a happy day, it was really a marvellous day!

Q. Can you remember when that happened?

A. Oh, I can remember it fine, I can mind just as well as if it were yesterday!

Q. What year would that be!

A. It would be about 1919, I think it was! About 1919, I couldn't be certain of the date, but that's when it would be, early days too, about 1919, we had a rare day....but we had some great worthies over in the Work too, and och, aye, we had one.....you'll not mind of him, George,.....wee Jockie Lowther he was a patternmaker, and he was a great man for Pumpherston Rangers..... Jockie went anywhere for Pumpherston Rangers! Of course, Pumpherston Rangers was a good team at that time! You know, they weren't like Pumpherston teams, nowadays, they won all the cups, they won everything like that, and Billy Dornan, him that played for the Hibs, we had Johnny Wilkie, that was in goals, that played with Partick Thistle, och, we had different men that went to the Hearts and different places all round about! They made a great team in those days!

Q. That was juvenile football?

A. No....junior!

Q. Junior football?

A. Yes, Pumpherston Juniors! Aye! My father was on the committee, and old Davie Splatt, Jimmy Newton, oh ken....Jinky Malloy, and all that, and old Davie Splatt was a great...he was...he was the man that looked after the team, and they had, it was an old tow rope that used to take the cages up and down in No.4.Mine, and they had poles and this tow rope went in a hole on top of the pole (inaudible) them out, you see, (inaudible) them out, and it was one of the best football fields in the district at that time! Old Davie Splatt used to come down and we would be sitting swinging on the rope, and he would say "Get to hell out of there!", he says, "If I see you swinging on that again, I'll put a new ".....hole" on you!", he says!

Q. And this was all round, this was like a fence round the running track?

A. Aye, just a tow rope! Just a .....

Q. And then the football park inside?

A. That's right! That's right! Inside it...that's right! It was well looked after in those days! And I suppose it's a good track, the likes of now, too, because the juveniles have got it, the under-age teams and that..... they got it now too! But I mind of working with old Toby Nathaniel, and I mind of your father being there, and I mind of your uncle being there as well! Old Adam Porteous was the head Engineer, old Adam! Old Adam Scott, there, he was the head joiner, old Adam, and old Wull Brown, he was the head foreman, old Wullie Banks, he was the head labouring man, old Wullie Banks! Old Jock Roberts, he, of course, was the head of the retorts, and Bob Banks was the Storekeeper! That was Bob....he lost an arm in the war, and he was the Storekeeper! Oh, they were really nice people! Nice people!

Q. Now, you worked....you worked in the office first.....

A. That's right, for about a year and a half, I think!

Q. About a year and a half?

A. Then I got a chance of going down to the cooperage, where I got two or three bob more, you know, we had a big family, you see! To get the money, you see! So I went down to the cooperage, and then when I was about eighteen, old Duncan McIntyre wanted me to go over to the Refinery. Well, the Flemings were actually Managers of the Refinery, but at this time, a lot of the personnel at Pumpherston had flitted down to Grangemouth, to work in Grangemouth, you see! The Flemings went along with them too, the families of the Flemings went down to Grangemouth too!

Q. And what year would that be?

A. Oh now, wait the now.....Twenty two or Twenty three, about that time, I think! About Twenty three or Twenty four even! It would be about that time, when they were starting down in Grangemouth, really in earnest at that time!

Q. And what kind of work did you do in the cooperage?

A. Oh.....painting barrels! They used to have a big pail....you know, those whitewash brushes, and there were maybe three or four of us maybe painting barrels, and we had more paint on ourselves than what we had on the barrels, but it was blue paint, and then there was white paint on the end of them, and big Pat Smith, he cut out the stencils, oh, they would be going to Buenos Aries, and all over the world, you know! And old Wull Brown, at the finish up, we made that.....metal stencils, you see, and he got a wee brush for the lamp black, and a big pot of lamp black, and he got the pot of lamp black and he used to put it over the stencils like that, and lift it off, and here, it was lovely painted on the end of the barrel, where it was going to, and this and that and the next thing! Well, these barrels would go out of here, hundreds and hundreds every week, forbye tanks and.....

Q. And what was in the barrels?

A. Oh well it depends..... it was mostly paraffin, paraffin and..... lube oil, lubricating oil, and at one time they used to have five gallon tins, George, too! And we had to solder the caps on the top of them, and they went away abroad too! All over the world really! And blacks too.....sulphate of ammonia too! Sulphate of ammonia at that time was costing a colossal sum! Away in about sixty or seventy pounds a ton! Sulphate of ammonia! They were getting a hundred and odd pounds a ton for it in the latter end there, too, forbye that!

Q. And at that time, did they put sulphate of ammonia in the barrels?

A. No! No! The sulphate of ammonia was put in bags, it was dried! It goes into the same kind of system as a washing machine, you know, the spins. It went into spinners..... it went into spinners, you see, and the spinners spun the water out of them, and then they were taken away to a conveyor and it went into a big box.....and the boy at the bottom of the box used to get..... there were two hundredweight bags of sulphate came out, and they made an awful lot of that, and then of course, they made all the different kinds of oil, and gundy.....you know what gundy is, well they used to make gundy, as well, and they used to have a market for it, but latterly..... the latter years they couldn't get a market for it, they would just coup it out!

Q. That went for making certain plastics?

A. That's right! Plastics, and things like that, oh aye! And then, they made miners wax, there were special machines for it! There was about.....four or five machines,.....wee Mary Rennie.....oh, I'll need to tell you about Mary Rennie, she was an awful nice soul! She used to clean the offices, you know! She came from East Calder! But every morning, when Mary came up from East Calder, she used to walk up the line, and she always had two duck eggs, every morning for her breakfast! She'd be about.....she'd be about four foot ten or something like that, and dumpy! (Wife talking) I can mind of Mary Rennie. Can you mind of Mary Rennie? Can you? Well, what a nice old soul she was! And there was Tam Dick, he used to come up from East Calder too, and Tam, you know. Tam cleaned the stills, along with Andrew Chapman and a few more of those boys, and Tam, you know, was like a wild man, all he had on was a

pair of trousers with holes in them.....holes all over them in fact....and a blooming old torn jacket, and how they used to get bathed at that time, George, was, they had.....a steam thing at the top, and they had it open a wee bit, it leaked a wee bit.....it dripped, it came down a wee bit of the..... rhone pipe into a barrel! And it came down from there into another barrel, and that's where the still cleaners washed themselves until they put lip stills baths for them down near one of the roundalls, next to the crude stills..... that's where (inaudible) because I mind of one of the Managers saying to Duncan McIntyre one day, he says....."What in goodness is that?" A wild beast?" "Och", he says, "It's only Tam Dick!", he says, "He's just getting himself down.....going away to get washed!" Tam used to go in and fill coal for the Co-operative in the morning, after he was finished down there cleaning his stills!

Q. They finished early?

A. Aye! They used to finish early and start early! And I've seen them going into the stills, George, and I'm not exaggerating any, I've seen them going into those stills, and coming out with their clogs on fire, it was....that hot! How they did it, I don't know! But that's what they used to do!

Q. That was the coking stills?

A. The coking stills, aye! The coking stills.....oh aye!

Q. And what kind of jobs did you do in the Refinery, yourself?

A. Well I was on the making of paraffin for a while, you see, and you got the raw paraffin, and you gave it a treatment of so much acid, and then you settled it for a few hours, and then you ran the tar off it, the acid, it was a strong, strong smell on the acid tar, and then after you settled it for a while, you dropped it into containers down below that again! And you treated it with soda then! Caustic soda! And you kept putting the soda in it, well, once you were used to it, you know, you had to measure it, but.....once you got used to it like..... like I was, I could tell by the smell of it, the lovely smell it had, the sweet smell of it! And you settled it down, and then

you pumped it away for maybe.....,into storage tanks, you see! They took it out of there! Of course, they treated the naphtha and that different. They treated that with lead and some of these things! I just can't mind all what else they put into it, but old.....

Q. And what was the naphtha used for?

A. Oh.....it was..... there were some people used that....they could put it in engines too, you know! It was that light, you see! Petrol.....and naphtha! You could put both into engines, and there were some.....old Bob Bell used to run his old motor bike on naphtha! Aye, he used to run his motor bike on naphtha! (Wife talking) Couldn't they use.....use it for car engines? Aye, they could use it for car engines! But it was mostly for cleaning! I think, for a lighter....you know, a cleaning job! You know, a cleaning job, it made a lovely job of cleaning anything!

Q. And did you do any other jobs in the refinery part?

A. Oh aye, I treated the lube oil, lubricating oil too! And I was on the wax for a long while, treating the wax, and wax was a very special thing, you.... you know!

Q. And that was the wax extraction plant?

A. No, it was the wax treatments plant!

Q. The wax treatment plant?

A. The wax extraction plant was across the other side of the road, and you.... when I got the wax..it...came actually from the Paraffin sheds, you know, they made the paraffin, and you'll know what like....you'll have seen it, it was just like....chewing gum..... Aye well, it was thicker and slobby and well, they put it into presses you see! What they done was they put down a square maybe about three feet square and they put in a big sheet..on the top, on the top of that square, you see! Then they filled up the wax onto that

sheet, and then they folded the sheet across, so that it was all closed in, and then they put it into the presses. Well, the presses pressed all the oil out of it, you see, all the stuff that the Company was really wanting, all the valuable oil that was coming out of it! And what was left, the boys had to go up there and knock them out, they were just like cakes of wax...knock them out with their scrapers, and they went into melters down below, well, that was the stuff that I got, you see, to treat! I had two huge stacks! We had what they called hard wax and soft wax! And I never knew the difference.....even yet! What they were, but I was told that one was hard, and one was soft wax, and I had to treat them accordingly!

Q. Would that be different.... like...melting points?

A. Aye, it would likely be...a flashpoint, maybe, of some kind! It flashed it, you know, when you've seen up in the lab there, you are trying something and the wee thing and you flick it out and it flashes! Well, that was what they called the flashpoint, and I know I was very good at knowing these mechanical things..... Well, we treated the wax the very same, with acid, and then soda, and the soda that came off it, at the bottom, it was....oh, it was used for some other purpose after that again! It was used in the tar boxes! For neutralising the tar! That's what it was used...it was used in the tar boxes, and Old Jimmy Bell from Kirknewton used to work on the tar boxes, he was one of the boys that came down from Oakbank Work, Pumpherston, and what they done..... Now, when Oakbank Works shut down...now... don't ask...the year....because I don't know, but when the Oakbank Works shut down...they brought a lot of the personnel from Oakbank down to Pumpherston, and what they done was....they put the Pumpherston men working three weeks on and a week off, so that they could employ these men from Oakbank, you see! And it was alright, you had a week off every three weeks, man, you used to go away a walk round the country or something, playing football (inaudible) or anything like that, it was alright, it was quite alright! I enjoyed it fine, aye! The week off was a good thing, aye! But we.....I think..... there won't be many of us, I think I'll.... there'll maybe only be about three or four of us, I think I'm about the only one that worked all my days at Pumpherston Work, for fifty one and a half years!

There were some of them down there for a while, but they came maybe from Oakbank, or some other place, but they didn't stay in Pumpherston! I think I'm.....I don't know if there's anybody else forbye myself, in fact in the .....I can't mind of it, but I'll tell you what I can mind of though, I can mind of the....when the two mines were going. No.4.and No.5., were connected with haulage, hutch rails, the hutches came off the top of the mine, and were sent along to the breaker. Now, the breaker was just down that there....not far off the office that I was telling you about, the drawing office, for the miners..... that drawing office, well, it wasn't far past that! And I can mind of one famous man that worked in there, was P.R.Barratt, the bookie! He used to take the shale off after it was crushed and send it up to the retorts. That was P.R., Eddie Fleming and all that, I can mind of all of them! But the Denholms ran that place, Jim Denholm, Bob Denholm, Angus Denholm was there....all that crowd were all there....all the Denholm Family! They worked.... they didn't retire when they were sixty five...not at that time! You used to work until you got fed up, and then you couldn't work any longer, you had to stop! Aye! But these two lines were connected with hutch rails... ....and mind you, George, one of them ran right across to the Work, right across to the joiners shop, right across!

Q. Overhead?

A. Overhead, aye! The other one came up from the other side, you see, it had a ....there was always a man at the middle of it, he turned the hutches up nearer to the Work, and that went at the main Harrysmuir Road, and there was a bit into the breaker, but you just used to shove it onto the breaker, and you know, the hutches, there were awful strong axles on them, on the wheels and that! Well, the things on the breaker were shaped like that, you see, you know, a kind of...what would you say that was now!.....

Q. Was that spikes?

A. Aye!

Q. Hooked spikes?

A. Aye, it was kind of hooked in....hooked in, well, you see, they couldn't shove the hutch in you see! These hooks caught the axles you see, and the hutch automatically just tipped up, you see, and then it went in to the breakers. Well, they were raked, oh, huge rollers, and there were huge spikes about the size of your fist all over them, you see, and when the shale went in to these, it broke up, for taking to the retorts. The men on the bottom took it up, up to the retorts after that, and it was sorted out there, and then it was sent over to the Refinery after that. It was a black mass, just pure black, but...then of course, they had the gas off that forbye, which they used for different purposes, and then they had the tar that they took off the bottom of the washers, which they used for, in fact, firing the stills, and things like that, you see, and then there was a more modern....invention, the cracker.... the cracking plant, you see, well, with the cracking plant, you had two drums and connections on each side of it for circulation, so that you could get the oil out of it, well, in between the two drums there were twelve dozen tubes, they would be about three inches in diameter, I think, and on the side ones, oh well, they would be about three feet or something like that, in diameter, but you had to have them joined in the middle because.... for expansion you see, and of course, in the middle, there was only a much smaller hole. Well, we had a man, he was in the Pipe Band with me for years wee Matt Moir, well, wee Matt was the only boy that could go down through this wee hole, you see, because you had to go down, because the blades for the circulating pumps, they had to be cleaned, you see. And Matt had to go down through this hole, and chip all the ways, and chip all the inside of it, and we had to go into the bottom drum with that (inaudible) and pull the stuff all out, that he was bringing out, and we had to pull that stuff out you see, and take it out! And put it away! But that's who cleaned the headers, they cried them the headers! Aye, in the cracking plant, wee Matt Moir, and of course, there were distillation plants there, and more modern ways of making their petrol and their diesel oil and everything! You see, the cracker itself, what came off the bottom of the cracker.....

END OF TAPE

## TH SIDE TWO

A. We sent down to the coking stills, but when they fed..when they fed the cracking plants, they put lime in to save the tubes from coking, and the plants went a lot longer if they put lime in, so I was up there, when that stuff went down to..the coking stills, the coke that they got off it wasn't very good because it was full of lime forbye, you see, and it wasn't in comparison with the other stuff, because the other stuff, it never lay very long, because there was always huge orders for it. Well, that stuff..... that....when it went down to the coking stills, and they had a boiler.... you see, and it was always kept at a certain temperature, and when they fed their stills, they just drew it off this boiler, you see, and put it through their stills, and I think there was two still cleaners, (inaudible) four or five stills apiece a day! Well....the cracking plants had to be cleaned pretty regularly too! There were five boys had the contract for turbines and the tubes then. It was a dirty filthy job, but it had to be done anyway! And old Tam Lightbody and Charlie Atkinson, and Hugh Modells, Jimmy and Wullie Modells, and wee Johnny Martin. There were two Johnny Martins! There was one that we called the "Crow" and the other one, Johnny, they were the contractors for cleaning the stills.

Q. And were they employed by the Company to do this.....did they get a price...  
....a set price?

A. A set price for doing the job, you see! In fact, when I worked on the cracking plants at normal times, you see, the two Modells were cleaners, and the two Johnny Martins were boremen, and Tam Lightbody and Charlie, well, they were....they were the gaffers really! They used to do that....you could see them sweeping yonder.....and after they were finished sweeping..all they were doing was spreading the dirt! They weren't sweeping it at all! They were enjoying themselves!

Q. And how did they go about cleaning the crackers?

A. It was high pressed.....high pressed air, with a turbine on the end of it,

and there were three.....four..... three sharp parts on the turbine, and it came to a point, it would maybe be.....it came to a point maybe to about that thickness at the back, and it screwed into....you just screwed this turbine into the tube, you see! And there was a rudder on the top of that, to drive it, and when you wanted to shut it off, you had a wee cock at the side, an air cock, and you just shut the cock when you wanted to shut it off, you see!

Q. And this was cleaning tubes?

A. Cleaning tubes! You see.....you had.....it was my job to go in after they were cleaned and examine them, you see! Well, what you done was, you got a man to go into the bottom drum, with a flex, you see! As I said, there were twelve dozen tubes, well, he had to put the flex into each hole....into each tube, you see, and you examined it, and you could see.....

Q. This was a light.....?

A. Aye, with a light in the tube, and when you examined it, you could see it shining all the way down, and the funny thing was that you would maybe see a bit maybe about six or eight inches where it hadn't struck! You know, you could see the black band in it, and you would say, "Aye, put a cross on that one, that's got to be done over again!", and if you condemned too many of them, they would say "Oh, Tam, what the hell are you doing here, they're clean enough!" I said, ""They're not clean enough, they've got to be done right, or they can't go out!" After that, I was..... they were done over again! Wax extraction, what I was doing was....I was only cleaning up, washing up, and any wax that got spilled, you see, you washed it, and it went down to the ponds and it was recovered at the ponds and sent back up to the refinery, you see. Just a continual process! But then, I got kind of fed up with that, and I went and saw the Manager, Mr. Cook, and said that I was kind of fed up with that job.....

Q. He was the Manager then?

A. Mr. Cook was the Manager at the time, and I thought that he was a gentleman,

Mr. Cook, I did really, I thought that he was alright! I got on awful well with Mr. Cook, I really thought that he was a gentleman! Well, he got me a wee job in the soap work, but unfortunately, I didn't like it either! The gaffer didn't like me either! He wasn't very fond of me, so I got a shift again, and I went over to the power station, and I was looking after the turbines in the power station for a number of years, and I worked beside.... a great wee pal, he's dead now! Wee Mick Meek, Mick was in the boilers, and I was in the power station. Well, I was down there for a couple of years, I think, Mary, (talking to wife) wasn't it? Was it longer? It couldn't have been any longer than two years, then I got on to the time box, on shifts you see, on the time box! And you were actually a watchman, on the nightshift, and you were walking about round the Works, and that, and seeing that every thing was alright, and then you had to go in and clean the baths you see. Well, the man on the backshift....the dayshift and backshift had the baths all cleaned and everything like that, and then you were in the time box, and watching the boys checking out and in and things like that! You know, you had to watch all these kind of things! Och, it was quite nice, it was quite nice! (Wife talking) That's where you finished up! No, no, I didn't! I finished up.....no, I got my presentation down in the power station, I can mind that it was Jimmy Jamieson that gave me it, that's right! (Wife talking) Aye, but you actually finished up in the time box! Aye, that's right, I finished up on the time box, on the 24th of January, 1970, I finished up on the time box. (Wife talking) It wasn't January.....The 24th Of November, 1970, aye! Then I went.....I went to....I got a pension, a very poor one it was! A Grangemouth pension, it was! But ten years after that, they discovered that I should have got more money, and they were really good to me the next time, and I got a good sum of money and a good monthly pension, which goes up every year, of course! It goes up every year! So we're comfortable, quite happy! I think that they were a great firm to work with, I hope B.P. means better prospects for the future coming.... there you are!

Q. Now, what were your main pastimes and hobbies during your working life?

A. Oh, fly fishing....I liked to go to the fishing! You see, Mary's father was a fisher, he got a medal for it, there were thirty two spaces on the

medal...for this competition and.....(Wife talking).....an annual.....!  
and he won it sixteen times out of thirty two! He got his name on it,  
sixteen times, James Kirk, and they sometimes gave them three pound of a  
start! Well, old Jimmy was a shale miner all his days, he worked down in  
Westwood Pit for.....he was a miner all his days! He used to.....go up  
there, and you used to get a bus from Dedridge, up to Westwood, and now,  
what did they cry the boy that drove the bus.....Jock.....and Roy, and there  
were three or four of them, and Jock Sim and Roy....drove us up to Westwood  
and old Jimmy was always....he was always down half an hour before the bus  
came! Having a smoke, before he went away! And another thing, about him  
was, that he was awful fond of his rum, and the funny thing about it was,  
that when he retired, he practically stopped drinking! And you know, every  
Saturday night, you know, he had a good bucketful, every Saturday night! Him  
and Con Boyle and Davie Wilson and them used to go to the Black Bull and...  
have their rum and old Jim used to come up and sing two or three songs, and  
he would have his supper and fall asleep and he would wake up after that,  
and shout "Come on, Margaret, get the fish on, get the fish on!" "You've  
had your supper!" "Get the fish on!" "I'm needing more now then!", he  
says. That's the kind of man that he was!

Q. And you also had an interest in the local pipe....Pumpherstons Pipe Band?

A. Oh aye, I was in the Pumpherstons Pipe Band, and I played in it for years  
with old Ian McIntyre, and old Grahamsy Brown and all them! Oh aye! Wee  
Matt Moir, in fact, when I was at Matt Moir's funeral, the boy that is the  
Pipe Major of Shotts and Dykehead, was there that day! I can't mind his  
name, now! Well.....anyway.... the Pipe Major was there that day, and so  
so I had a day with the Pipe Major of Shotts and Dykehead! I've got a son,  
and I've got a grandson, the now, he's playing in a Pipe Band too! With some  
band in West Calder.....he's the only one that's like his grandfather.....  
for the pipes anyway! But oh, I had many, many happy years with the Pipe  
Band and we used to go out, you know, George, during the 1926 Strike, cadging  
you know, we used to take the tins with us, and we used to down to Wallyford,  
and we went to Musselburgh, and we went up West and kept collecting money  
for the soup kitchens! The soup kitchen was in the old bakery up there at  
Pumpherstons, you know! Aye! Old Harry McKerragher, and Bob Denholm and

them, they used to go out with the tins, and we were playing with the Pipe Band, Bud Howieson,.....and oh, we had great times! Then, after that, a while after that, I went into the Committee after I stopped playing and I was a while on the Committee too, and then Ian McIntyre, he....him, my pal, he went and got married and then, of course, up until that time, I hadn't been in a pub in my "bl.....y" life, you know! And when Ian got married, I went and started to go with the boys.....Hughie Fry and them, down to Mid Calder and started taking a drink or two!

Q. Were you connected with the starting up of the Pipe Band?

A. No! No! It started up long before my time! But I can always mind of..... though.....of having a social up there at one time or another, there was a Mr. Fraser from Glasgow, actually, a William Fraser, Lord Strathalmond, that's who he is now, Lord Strathalmond! Well, he....he, I think he was the person that paid for most of the first dress. It was a Fraser dress tartan that we wore at the time! And I can tell you...by the time, by the time....that I was finished with them, it was in tatters, it was in ribbons. We started a sweepstake and Will Watt.....Jim Jack, Tarn Gavin, and all the Pipe Band boys we started this sweepstake and we gathered over a thousand pounds, and Will Watt, and I went, and Mary.....you went with us in the taxi that day to Glasgow and we got a new dress, and that was a bit of a feat for a village like Pumpherston! Getting that dress! Still, it was the same tartan, that, the Fraser tartan!

Q. And why do you think that Fraser donated the.....?

A. Well, you see, he had connections with Mr. Bryson, you see, in Pumpherston, he used to come through to Mr. Bryson regularly when I worked in the office, as a laddie, you know! Oh, a fine looking big fella, a kind of sandy....a wee sandy moustache, a military looking man! A fine looking fella! I mind of one day, he gave me a telegram, to send to his girlfriend, and I had to go up to the old Store, you know, the Post Office, you see! I was standing reading the telegram, and I looked up, and you ought to have seen the stern face that he had, because I was reading the telegram! I never thought any

thing about it you know, I was just reading the telegram! (Inaudible). That was all I was doing.... that was Lord Strathalmond! Oh, aye, aye, he always had an interest in the band, Mr. Fraser! And then we had.....

Q. Did you have any competitions?

A. Quite a few! We won the Harry Lauder Shield at Cowal, mind you, that was our best...our biggest feat! But we used to win.....

Q. Can you remember when that was?

A. No.....! When was that now, Mary? When did we win the Harry Lauder Shield at Cowal?.....Now, George, I couldn't tell you! I couldn't tell you, really! We won competitions at Newtongrange and all those places, you know! We used to go to Cowal every year, you know! It was always a trip! A day out!

Q. And how much practice had you to put in?

A. Oh, we had quite a lot of practice! You see, at that time, the Pumpherston Pipe Band was local, all our players were local, and then.....the local youngsters seemed to lose interest, and then we got hold a a couple of boys from Bathgate....Strathearn, Tam Strathearn and his brother, they were a couple of gentlemen! They've businesses of their own in Bathgate! They were a couple of gentlemen, the Strathearns! They were nice fellas! They were a big boost to the band too! But och, we had a good time, too! We never won an awful lot of money at it, but we did enjoy ourselves! Aye, we used to come down to play at the Gala-days and things like that! You know.. nowadays, you see, pipers....pipers, you understand, George, like to hear... like to hear the Highland Wedding and the Inverness Gathering and all these kind of....all these big posh tunes, you see! I used to like....I used to like tunes that we knew! What tunes did we play, Mary? Oh, dee daroom dee (singing part of tune). Things like that, you know! Things with a swing in them, man! That you could see....kind of....a Gala-day! You could see the people round about....well, they knew what you were playing! If you played

the Highland Wedding and that, they wouldn't know what you were playing, but if you played something of a Scottish tune, the words to it, they would stand around about and sing to it, when you were playing. You don't get that nowadays!

Q. When you remember the Gala-days, now, where did the Parade start off some years ago when you were in the Pipe Band?

A. Oh, at the school!

Q. At the school?

A. We assembled at the school, and what we used to do, George, was, we used to go round the new Rows, you see, down the front Row and up the back Row, and we went down to where Mr. Bryson stayed, Ballengeich, you know, and well, that was a big estate, you see! It was a big house! And he had a huge garden, and he had two drives, one at each end of the building, you know, off the main road. Well, we went...up the one drive, and would pass by the side of the house, and out the other drive! And then we came back up to Pumpherston again, and then, where old....where Mr. Wullie Caldwell stayed, in the Bungalow, up there, we went in one side of it, and marched round about it, and came out of there, and then we used to go down the Work Rows, what we used to call the Works Rows, that's Drumshoreland Road way, and back up, and of course, there were no prefabs in those days! They weren't there! There was a big wood up there, where all the houses are now! Nothing like that, just a big wood! But it's all occupied with houses now! We used to.....if it was a good day, man, it was a grand day! We used to play cricket, every body was out, you know, some people coming and visiting, hadn't been up here in Pumpherston for a year or two, and you met them and then (inaudible) with them, and it was nice!

Q. Do you know why you went round by Ballengeich and the Bungalow and that?

A. Well, you see, the Committee decided that! Where it would go, you see! You see, these people really, the likes of Mr. Bryson.... they were very good

at contributing if you were needing anything! You know, they weren't bad in giving you a donation or anything like that! They would never have seen you stuck...for a bit bob or two, you know!

Q. Now....can you remember much about your early life? Have you always stayed in Pumpherston?

A. Well....when I got married first, that was in 1934, I was in Pumpherston, working on shifts at the time, on the cracking plants, and we stayed with Mary's mother for a few weeks...it wasn't very long anyway, and then I went and saw Mr. Gray and he told me to go and see the Manager up in Oakbank, because the houses actually belonged to Oakbank Oil. Company, you see! Mr. Spittal it was, Jimmy Spittal, so I went up and saw Mr. Spittal and I told him what I was wanting, and I says, "I've got a letter here from Mr. Gray". "Well", he says, "You'd better give me it over then!" So he looked at it, and did he make up his mind at that time, Mary, or did he send me a letter saying that I was getting the house. I think....I think that he sent me a letter saying that we were getting the house, and we really were quite surprised, because the woman next door to Mary, she told Mrs.Kirk, Mary's mother, "No", she says, "They'll never get that house, because I know who's getting that house!".....

Q. And where was this about?

A. That was in Mid Calder, right opposite the Masonic Hall yonder! Right opposite the Mid Calder Inn, you know....the Torpichen Inn! Just right opposite yon....aye! It was a nice wee house, we had some worthies staying beside us, Dickie Preston and some of them, wee Dickie Preston from Mid Calder, he was a.....

Q. And what kind of conditions did you have? In the house....how many rooms?

A. Well, we had a room and a pantry and a kitchen. And there was a sink at the window, and the coalhouse and washhouse were down the stairs. But, och, it was alright! I mean, it was alright.....but you see, we were expanding, you

see, we had to get another house, there were too many of us, coming, we had to get another house, and we got one in Pumpherston! Back to the old home town again, up in Pumpherston! And Mary likes Pumpherston fine! Och, it's a grand place.....

Q. And had you the built in beds and things like that? The big ranges and that, at that time? In Pumpherston?

A. Aye, in Pumpherston! And we had the same up in Dedridge too, at that time, too! The big range, it was always spotlessly clean, you know, it's difficult for women nowadays... they don't realise that, when they go and wash their washing in the washing machine, and an hour after it the..machine...and then they'll say that the washing's done, and you see....Mary's father and mother couldn't do that, and neither could my mother and father, I've seen them coming home from the No.4.Mine, the Splatts and all them, and the last Splatt died there in Pumpherston just about three or four weeks ago...Eckie.. that was the last Splatt, there was a big family of them! Sons! Tam and Johnny and Wullie and.....

Q. Now, how was the washing done then?

A. They used to put bricks, maybe about half a dozen bricks out and you put a tin bath on them, and you filled it....you filled it with water, you see!

Q. Was this outside?

A. Aye! Oh aye! Outside! Aye outside! And then.....you see, when the boys came home....when the boys came home from the pit, they boys came home from the pit, you see, and I can always mind of...I can mind of a family, I'd better not mention any names, I can always mind of a family, and if the... old boy came in and the water was ready, and he fell asleep, there was nobody to get washed before him..... they daren't get washed before him! He had to get the first of the water, and I've seen the water kind of half cold before old Jock got into it! After he got washed, anybody could get into it,

after that! He didn't care who it was!

Q. How did they heat the water?

A. They had a wee coal fire in below it!

Q. Oh! Outside!

A. Aye! Outside!

Q. So, they had their bath outside?

A. No. No. They hadn't their bath.....!

Q. So the bath was brought in.....?

A. No. No. They had their bath in the washhouse, you see, they had thon two big sinks, you know, in the washhouse. (Wife talking) But at that time, that you're talking about, they had no washhouse! Oh, they hadn't a washhouse at that time, first of all! It was a big tin bath! I can always mind when, I was telling you about Pumpherston Rangers playing down there, you know, you used to get all the local teams, at that time, there were dozens of local teams round about here, now there's only about half a dozen now! There used to be two junior teams in Queensferry, there were two in Broxburn, two in Winchburgh,..... there's hardly any now! Well, they had big tubs, you see, outside the stripping box, and you know what like they are on the football field, when it's been raining, and you know....they had two big tubs, you know, one for visitors, and one for themselves, and they were only filled with cold water. It was practically ice that you were washing yourselves with, it was that blooming cold! You used to come out and wash yourself, I even washed myself among the snow in a big tub!

Q. It must have been tough in these days?

A. Oh, they were tough boys, aye! And then....in the local track down there, we had an awful lot of good runners in Pumpherston, you know, during the war, .....Menteith from Edinburgh, he won the (inaudible), Jock Bain, and all them were....oh, they used to come from all over! I held the watch down there one day, for Duffy of Broxburn, and he broke that half mile record! Now, wee Benny Grant....wee Benny Grant, he joined in the same quarter and (inaudible). He went and broke the half mile record at one of the big games in Glasgow, and they measured the track after it, the track was either a yard or a yard and a half short, and they didn't get the record! That was....Duffy, Rodden was his own name, but it was Duffy that they called him for the running name! That was his running name! And then we had cycle racing there too! They came from Uphall.....

Q. Was this the Pumpherston track?

A. Aye, there were three brothers and they came from Uphall, gosh, I (inaudible) I've seen.....at the verge....the cinder track would maybe be four or five inches down off....off the verge, you see! And I saw one of them, one day, he was fleeing round the bend and his pedal hit the verge and he landed halfway across the track, like....he was going that blooming hard! What is it that they called these boys again!.....There were three brothers anyway!

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