

WD SIDE ONE

WD Well, I started in Baads Colliery, on March 21st, 1935, and it was a funny feeling down the mine at first, you know, when you realised the darkness, and it was carbide lamps at that time, so when I got down to the mine bottom and it was lit up, it made a good bit of difference, you know, the electric lights, and I was on the oncost..... it was the clipping bogeys under....neath.....and I was bringing full hutches out this road to the mine bottom. Well, I was on that job for a year or two, and.....

Q. Now, when you started....what actually enticed you into the mines? Had you any relations that worked in there, in the mines?

WD Not at that time, but there was no other work in the area, it was either the pits or nothing else, you know, and.....

Q. And where did you live then?

WD Burngrange Cottages! We came from Hermand to Burngrange, and in fact, when I was fourteen, I was on a paper round up till I got a job, because there was no work around, and I used to go from West Calder, the top half of West Calder with the paper round over to Tenants March, and Brandy Braes over to Westwood House in Breich. I used to go to Westwood Pit, to see if I could get a job there, in the shale. And it was Wull Easton and Tam Brown was the under-manager. Wull Easton was the Manager of Westwood Pit, and Tam Brown was under-manager. And every time that I saw Tam Brown, Tam Brown would say, "Oh, you're too wee!" And I was bigger than him! Anyway it doesn't matter, and I went to Baads to try and get a job and the funny thing was, it was the same day that I had to go to Westmains, that I got word to go to Westwood in the afternoon. So I just went to Westmains, and I never bothered myself and I got the job there.

Q. And who was the Manager at Westmains?

WD It was Tam Borland at that time, but there had been quite a few Managers up there from Tam Borland was there, there was Duncan, and I can't remember them all, but that Robertson, he went away down to England and got killed, that man, on his way down to another job! In fact, he had a lawnmower in the back of his car, in the back seat, and he had stopped quick and got his neck broken with the handle of the lawnmower! Is there anything else that you want to know just now?

Q. Now, as a fifteen year old laddie, going down the mines, it must have been kind of awesome.....?

WD Aye.....and there was a dampness, you know, there was a dampness in the air and rubber steps down, you know, to wheel their bogies, it was mine you see, it wasn't a cage, and going down through the darkness, you know, it was kind of eerie at first, you know! So, as I say, when you got to the pit bottom, it seemed a bit different with the electric lights being on.

Q. And how long were you in that first job? At the coal?

WD Well, maybe about three years! Then I got a job on the main haulage, to hook the hutches up to the pithead.

Q. Still on oncost?

WD Aye! You either were lashing on the hutches or taking them off, some had to go in to the north side, and some had to go in to the south side. It was a dirty job, with oil on your hands.....you know, you didn't wear gloves, because with gloves you could get your fingers taken off, you know! So, I was on that and then I got a job on the drawing after that...

Q. And what age would you be then?

WD Nineteen! And I.....I got a job on the drawing and I was on that for quite a while and.....they brought in a pan run, they started a pan run

in Westmains.....

Q. Can you explain what that was?

WD A long.....one long face, maybe about twenty men working at it, it was shaking pans down to the road level and filling where the hutches filled.

Q. And so this face was quite a length.....? With all these men working and loading the coal that the facemen had.....?

WD Put on to the pans.....! There was a shaker, shaking pans like that, and the whole face got shaken down.....

Q. So, it would move from one end to the other to where it was uplifted byor go to the.....

WD You see, it was lying like that..... these pans.....well, that was after I was on the drawing, that it was two pans was in, but my.....the man that I was drawing off of, he got a job as a stripper, what they called a stripper on the pan run, and that was me without a faceman, so....they put me on to the packing, for to build the stone packs up every night and fill them with dirt to secure the roof, you know, for the pan run face, and take out advanced, take out trees and that so as the rest would collapse in between the packs.

Q. And how did you build this....this wall? What was the material that you used?

WD Stone!

Q. Like a dry stane dyke?

WD Aye! You see, there's maybe.....you can get anything from six inches maybe to a foot of dirt in the coal. There was maybe two feet of coal from maybe a.....six inches to a foot of dirt and there was maybe about four feet of coal in a seam, but that dirt was thrown to the side,

and that's what they used to build them with, plus some of the stuff that came away from the roof, and you filled it up with small stuff, you know, to keep it secure.

Q. So, you would.....as you built this wall, you took away the trees, the props?

WD You took away the trees....it was where your last wall was built! It was only a three cornered wall every day, after the first one was built three sides like that, and it was maybe about six feet or eight feet long, and maybe about three or four feet wide, you know. And you had to do this every day, and remove the.....of course, you had to..... what do you cry them.....oh, I forget what you call them..... for drawing the wood out, you know! Something that looked like a mash.....

Q. Who was paying you at this time?

WD The Scottish Oils!

Q. It wasn't the faceman, it was the.....

WD The faceman paid us when you were drawing.....

Q. But when you were building these walls, you were oncost?

WD Aye! Well, you weren't right oncost, but you were.....no, you had a higher wage than you had on the oncost, when you built-these! When I started in the pit first, I worked six days a week, and I got three shillings and a ha'penny a shift! I hadn't a pound a week! Eighteen and threepence.....

Q. Was that at fifteen years old?

WD Fifteen years old! Eighteen and threepence!

Q. And then, what would you be getting as a drawer?

WD Oh now, I think that it worked out at about.....thirty shillings, two pounds or something, there wasn't much difference anyway!

Q. Was it quite a good wage, do you think, at that time?

WD Well, I would say, not really! It could have been better!

Q. You felt that you weren't getting paid for the amount of work involved? You were turning out.....?

WD No, no! Not compared with what they have now!

Q. No!

WD You had to work harder then than they do now! Sometimes on these faces, you could be working in wet, and you were maybe only allowed about sixpence extra! And you were soaked to the skin! And there were no baths at Baads then! At that time! And you had to come home Summer and Winter, in your dirty clothes, you had dirt on them and they were soaking wet.....coming up to frosty weather and everything, you know! It was neither wonder that old men, when they retired out of the pit at sixty five.....maybe within less than six months, they were maybe dead, you know! At that time.....of course, they were the good old days !

Q. Supposed to be! And did you.....was there a lot of water in the Baads, were you often working in water?

WD No! No! There wasn't a lot of water, but there were places that you couldn't work in! When it wasn't.....but some people had to wear skins, you know!

Q. Now, what do you mean by skins?

WD Just oilskins, trousers and jackets, you could scald yourself.....

Q. Was this water coming from the roof?

WD From the roof, aye! Some type of.....(inaudible) up, to keep the water off, you, you know.....

Q. Directed at somewhere else.....?

WD Aye, away to the side.....out of your way when you were filling hutches or when you were cutting the coal, you know, for the pit.

Q. So, it would be up to yourself to make it a bit easier....with doing these sort of things! Putting the corrugated tin up.....and diverting the water away from where you were working....? But still, the conditions wouldn't be very nice?

WD No, it was still damp, you know! But it wasn't always like that! That was maybe just occasionally, that you got these conditions, you know! And then after that pan run finished, stopped.....they brought in duck bill loads.....

Q. And what were they?

WD It was shaped like a big duck bill, and it was a giant machine this size with handles.....

Q That was about four feet?

WD Aye! It was a giant machine with pans.....just like a pan run again!

And there was belts in too, and you worked a handle.....you cut coal with
.....you cut the face with a cutting machine.....

Q. And what was that powered by?

WD Electricity.....!

Q. And what.....how did that act to cut the coal?

WD Well, I was up a six foot jib, with cutting blades on it, and you had to have a hole at the top, and put an iron pin in, and you had to bore a hole maybe in about the middle of your faceline with another iron pin. Well, I've cut coal in these things, you know, with this machine, and it was an Anderson-Boyes machine,.....you would take it in gradually, you know, you got the jib in, six feet lengths, you know, the cutters going all the time, and then after you got it in that length, you had another hole bored at the bottom and you got a wheel, there were wheels on the edge of the cutter, and you had the rope around the wheel, and you took the middle pin out after you went in, and put your rope from the front wheel of the cutter and your rope off your machine right down to the other pin at the bottom of it, and you would cut right down under....that was on the floor!

Q. How far had it to travel?

WD Oh, about twelve to fourteen feet!

Q. This was in each stage.....you travelled.....?

WD Well, that was.....after you had cut the face about twelve to fourteen feet, you got your cutter back and left it at the side, and you had to (inaudible) with wood, the cutting machine and this rope was on to the handle of the duck bill loader. Well, you fired your shots.....!

Q. Now, that was what I was going to ask you.....?

WD You bored the holes.....!

Q. Now, were you a faceman at this time?

WD Oh, that was.....well, we done that before, when we worked on the face as a faceman, you know, but.....it used to be yon old rickety.....

Q. The hand.....

WD Hand (inaudible) and you had to take these drills up to the blacksmith every night and bring them back and that was some job that!

Q. They would be pretty heavy, these drills?

WD They weren't....they weren't that heavy! But.....it was hard work boring the holes with them.....so they eventually got the electric borers, and that made a big difference, well, we had these electric borers when we had this duck bill loader, and you know, we would bore three or four there, and three....no, three holes maybe in the middle, and three holes on the top.

Q. And what height was your face?

WD It would be about five feet!

Q. That was your total height?

WD Aye!

Q. And you would drill a series of holes, what height up?

WD Oh, maybe about three feet up! Or four and a half feet up!

Q. And how far between the holes?

WD Maybe..... I would say about four feet between the holes, that's (inaudible) you know, and three on the top, and you would fire your three bottom ones first, and the three top ones next, and then you used the duck bill loader and there was half an hour.....

Q. This was after you used the explosives?

WD Aye, well.....you put your explosives in the holes after you had bored them, and then the shot firer came in.....

Q. Ah.....there was somebody else came in to fire the shots.....you didn't actually fire them?

WD No!

Q. So, what had you to do.....did you just leave all the machinery that you had there, while he was firing the shots? Or had you to take them out of the way?

WD Oh, no, no! Well, you had the coal cutter away back out of the road, and the duck bill loader back out of the road, because you could advance it with a handle after the shots went off.

Q. And what did these travel on, were they rails....the duck bill loaders?

WD They were on slides.....!

Q. On slides?

WD But it got it fired, and then you used the duck bill loader, and your coal cutting machine, and you had your rope off your coal cutting machine

and well, you had it (inaudible) up, that the coal cutter couldn't move, you had to have it stilled up, and you had your rope on the end of theon to the duck bill loader and you took it up to the top endto clear the coal that you had fired! And take it down until it was all cleared up! And that went right out on pans on to a belt that you could.....

Q. A travelling belt?

WD A travelling belt that took it out to the lie, to take it to the surface. And they done away with these as well, you know. Now, you would go back on.....

Q. Now, what year would this be? When this all happened.

WD Oh, that would be about.....what.....?

Q. Was that the early fifties?

WD I would think so, aye! It would be the early fifties!

Q. So, that was the method that they used.....now....did you know about other coal mines, was the same system used that you were using?

WD I don't know, but I think that duck bill loaders were used in some other mines, there used to be a lot of pan runs in other coal mines, you know, mostly pan runs, and I went on to the hand drawing again, they done away with all that, and went on to the hand drawing again

Q. They did away with the travelling belt?

WD Aye.....and they went on to (inaudible) went on to hand drawing again and.....

Q. Why would that be?

WD I don't know! I really couldn't tell you!

Q. Wouldn't it be easier to use the travelling belt than hutches and.....?

WD It would have been! But it was maybe the expense because there was a lot of upkeep on these things, too, you know!

Q. It would be cheaper? To use hutches than rails?

WD You had to.....after you got in so far, you had to advance the big machine that drew.....drove the pans, you had to advance the belt, and I've seen us out on weekends doing that, and och, it was maybe about three or four o'clock in the morning before you got home, ken to prepare it for a Monday, it was terrible, you know.....

Q. And what kind of tonnage were you asked for, or expected to get out in a day?

WD Oh, I don't know.....when you were hand drawing, you were...maybe had to have twenty hutches or twenty four hutches a day, to get a decent wage. You know, when it was hand drawing.....

Q. How much would be in each hutch?

WD There would be about.....! think there would be about half a ton.....!

Q. And were you ever in a situation were you were paid by the ton?

WD Oh aye, when you were hand drawing! At first, on the hand drawing, it used to be three and fivepence a ton.....now, that was true (inaudible) by the way! For a ton of coal. Two hutches of coal (inaudible) they (inaudible) they were only giving you three and fivepence between the two of you! Aye, it was terrible.....so.....

Q. And were you in a position when you were a faceman were you had to pay your drawer or was it all done through the Scottish Oils?

WD It used to be done....no, it used to be that,.....when the Scottish Oils had.....that the faceman drew the wages and paid the drawer, butthe time that I was on the face, or before I was on the face, the faceman and the drawer were splitting the pay.....

Q. Fifty-fifty?

WD Fifty-fifty! And that was what it should have been all along! Because years ago there..... it happened in the shale and in the coal, their contracts, you know, the contractors would go away for a weeks holiday and come back and lift the wages and pay the men! But the men couldn't go holidays!

Q. And how many men would be working for him?

WD Aye, I don't know, really, but that happened in the likes of the Dykes coal, and I think that it happened in the shale.....aye, he went away for a weeks holidays and then came back! Got the wages and paid the men, and they had money and they were never there!

Q. And how would they qualify for a job like that?

WD I don't know! I think that they must have been well in with the Managers! I think that's what it was! Oh, they were good facemen too.....

Q. They would know their job!

WD Oh, aye, they knew their job!

Q. And did they ever come and advise you on what you were doing or anything like that?

WD Oh no.....not in my time! You know, that never happened in my time!

Q. You were saying there, that you didn't fire any shots! What was the man that fired the shots, what was he called?

WD The shotfirer!

Q. He was a shotfirer?

WD Aye! And he had a certificate! He had a fireman's certificate!

Q. A fireman's certificate?

WD He had a fireman's certificate and he had a first aid certificate! You had to be qualified! I had these things, but I never even bothered going for a shot firers job, or a fireman's job either! Aye, because usually the.....in the shale anyway, the faceman fired his own shots and sometimes the drawer assisted him.

Q. But this didn't happen in the coal?

WD No! There were quite a few killed doing that!

Q. Taking a chance?

WD Well, I know.....well, I've heard about it, you know, they had the strum as they cried it in to their shot and they had to go and light this strum and they would listen for the shots going off! And if there were some of them went back..... if there was one that had not been lit right, they would maybe just be (inaudible) and killed, you know, that happened in the shale years ago!

Q. So, this was the fault of wrong judgement or wrong counting?

WD Aye, wrong judgement, counting, and to think that they had maybe waited

long enough, they must have thought that they had waited long enough for this.....or one to go off and maybe hadn't been burning right you know and maybe went out.

Q. Was there any stipulation on how long you had to wait before a shot didn't go off?

WD Oh, I couldn't say, because I wasn't in that position.....!

Q. You weren't a shotfirer?

WD No, I wasn't in the shale! Well.....

Q. Well, in the coal?

WD In the coal..... it wasn't that when I was there, in the coal! You had your gelignite and a cap to put in, and there was about six feet of wire,

Q. This was the strum, the fuse?

WD No, no!.....The strum was what they used to use years ago when they used to have to light it themselves! When the shotfirer was there you had the gelignite, and you put the cap in, you maybe put about two sticks of gelignite, and you put it in the stemmer, that was just like the handle of a brush with bits of clay and put it in with bits of clay, bits of clay at the back of it, just to firm it up, and you could connect the wires and get a (inaudible) in each box with a long cable and you got away out of the road.

Q. Was this an electric cable?

WD aye, well, it was a wee battery, you know,.....you just turned it and fired the shots.....

Q. So, he would go.....he would retire to a safe distance.....

WD Oh aye!

Q. (Inaudible) this, he would check this cap off that would ignite the....

WD Explosives!

Q. Explosives! And were you ever a member of a Union? In the coal mines?

WD Well, there was a Union formed.....! could maybe roughly guess maybe about twelve years maybe after they started, in the coal.....

Q. Now, which Union, because the shale, the Shaleminers and Oilworkers,... they had a Union of their own.....

WD The Coalminers Union we were in!

Q. So, you were not a member of the Shale Union?

WD No, no, I was in the Coalminers Union!

Q. The Coalminers Union? You were a member of it? And did you feel that there was a difference between one and the other or were they both much the same or similar?

WD Aye, they would be similar! I think! Although the Coalminers Union would be a stronger Union, I think, because there would be more than..the Shaleworkers, the shale was confined to.....the Shaleworkers Union was confined to just, I would say the West Lothian area, mainly, you know, and (inaudible) England and Wales and Scotland.....

Q. Countrywide? Did you ever have a comparison, say at the time, that you were doing certain jobs, for the Scottish Oils in the coal mine, compared to other coal mines, that worked for say, the Coal Board? Were you getting.....did you feel that you were getting paid the same

or maybe less?

WD Oh, I think less! I would think that anyway.....

Q. But if you were a member of the Coal Miners Union, you should have been getting the same?

WD I know.....I think that they worked harder in that mine than they did in others.

Q. In other coal mines?

WD Aye! And I'll tell you why I think that, is Loganlea Colliery shut down, was closed.....was closed and the miners.....some of the miners from Loganlea were sent to Baads and they didn't want to work the same as what we were working!

Q. And why was that?

WD Because they had it easier working in Loganlea at that time! It was easier working on a pan run than on hand drawing you know, but it was hard work in Westmains! You had that.....dug that mine at Cuthill down, and then (inaudible) daft, you know, in Baads Mine, but anyway, after, after they drove a road in Westmains and they were driving this one at Cuthill, and after they drove that one at Westmains through to meet Cuthill, it was closed. Sixty two.....May, Sixty two it was closed.....

Q. But then.....did the Scottish Oils.....did they still own.....?

WD No, no, the Coal Board!

Q. When did the Coal Board take it over?

WD Oh, I don't know the exact date, but I would say that it was about ten years ago that they shut it down.

Q. Now, when the coal was coming from Baads, was it used by all the Scottish

Oils?

WD It was used by the retorts at Addiewell. Then after they made the Refinery down at Westwood it was.....went there! But it was good enough coal, it was....it would have burned the ribs out of the grate! You know, it was good quality!

Q. It was good quality?

WD Aye, but it was full of sulphur! And we used to send bags of that coal from Breich there, down to London, they were trying to find out ways to extract the sulphur out of it, because there was supposed to be a world shortage of sulphur, but it mustn't have worked!

Q. Was that one of the few coal mines, that had this large content of sulphur?

WD In the coal, aye!

Q. In that are, at Baads?

WD You had also to wear white boots at Baads for the acid! And you were...

Q. That was leather boots?

WD Aye, they were white boots, pigskin.....pigskin....white pigskin.

Q. They were skin?

WD They were twelve and six at the time, when we.....

Q. Did you get them locally?

WD We used to get them out of Forrest's in West Calder!

Q. And what did they cost you?

WD Twelve and six!

Q. Aye, that was what you said! Sorry! And how long would they last you?

WD Oh, well, they would maybe last about five or six months! It was just the soles that would maybe go, you know!

Q. Was this the acid?

WD And the water!

Q. And the water?

WD And you'll see..... that yellow burn, have you ever seen that, that's where the water came in, in Baads mine.

Q. And that would turn the water yellow?

WD That's it!

Q. And where was that yellow burn, where would it eventually end up?

WD I don' t know!

Q. It would come out somewhere?

WD don't know! I don't know where it ended up! I never ever found out anything about that! I think that, as I say, when.....the same water would come out of Harwoods mine when it was (inaudible) but that's what that water came from! It used to corrode the (inaudible) pipes maybe about that width you know, coming right up, and we used to pump the water (inaudible) and some of these pipes just burst and burst, it was all corroded with that yellow studd, you know! That's why they all burst!

Q. Now, you were working at Baads when.....?

END OF TAPE

WD SIDE TWO

Q. As I was saying Wullie, you were working at Baads, when the changeover came from ownership, from the Scottish Oils to the Coal Board?

WD Yes, aye!

Q. And what was the reason for that, have you any idea?

WD Well, the only idea that I had, was just because it.....maybe because we were in the Coalminers Union and the Coal Board were taking on all the coal miners you know! I don't know why the Scottish Oils gave it up!

Q. They decided to let go of....let go of the.....that would be the only coal mine that they would have?

WD Yes! That's the only coal they had!

Q. And would they be changing to another fuel, say, in the Refineries, and Crude Oil works and things like that? At that time?

WD I don't think so!

Q. Or would they then just buy their coal from the Gas Board?

WD I think that they were going to maybe stop making crude oil at Westwood at that time. I think that!

Q. What year do you think....what year did that happen? The changeover? Can you remember what year roughly?

WD Oh, I think that it would be about fifty two! I think.....because... I can't remember.....! just can't remember, but I think that it would be about fifty two.....

Q. Round about the early fifties?

WD Aye, I think so!

Q. Now, was there any difference in your conditions of employment....going from Scottish Oils?

WD Not really! Not really!

Q. If anything did happen, you didn't notice it?

WD No! No!

Q. So everything just went on the same?

WD Everything was just the same!

Q. You were working in the Scottish Oils, and you moved.....did the wages stay the same?

WD Aye! Aye! They just stayed the same! Although after we had the Union we could negotiate.... if you got the rises that the rest of the Coal Miners Union got!

Q. And didn't you get that when you were working in the coal mines? With the Scottish Oils?

WD No! I think that you had a bit less working with the Scottish Oils, than you had with the Coal Board!

Q. And did you feel that the Unions came into it more when the Coal Board took them over?

WD Aye! (inaudible).

Q. Now, your housing conditions.....when you started work, you stayed at... Burngrange?

WD Burngrange!

Q. Now, was it a Company's house that you stayed in there?

WD No, a council house!

Q. A council house? And did you have hot and cold water then?

WD Yes! Aye, but I moved into.....when I got married in '43, we were ten months in a room, and after that, I got a house in King Street, in West Calder, and there was no hot and cold water then, and there was still not baths at the pit, then, and I used to come home and we had one of these big child's baths.

Q. Was it a zinc bath?

WD It was a.....

Q. A metal one.....?

WD Well, it was a

Q. It wasn't a wooden tub?

WD No! But the stools that the wooden tubs used to sit on, the bath was on that, and I had to wash in that, when I came home, every day! It was an old house that we had, you know!

Q. Did you have a wash house attached?

WD No!

Q. You had no boiler?

WD No boiler! We had to boil kettles!

Q. You had to boil kettles.....?

WD To get water to wash when you came home!

Q. For hot water?

WD That house has got.....there was even an outside toilet between four of you, in King Street.

Q. Did that house belong to the Company?

WD No!

Q. That was a private house as well?

WD The only people that were in.....houses belonging to the Scottish Oils were shale.....shale workers, they were nearly all shale workers, there were very very few.....there were some coal miners, but they were nearly all shale miners.

Q. But if you were working for the same firm, the Scottish Oils, why didn't you get a Scottish Oils house?

WD Well, I don't know, you had to put in your name for one, but.....

Q. And were the Scottish Oils, were the Oil Company's houses better than private ones, like, than you were staying in?

WD Not really! They were built before that, before the Council houses. It was latterly, the likes of Mossend there, they put an extra toilet in, better facilities in the back kitchen and that, and added another couple on, at Mossend. They had them..... they had houses at Mossend and they had houses at Addiewell, you know, the Scottish Oils!

Q. And how did you travel to your work?

WD Well, at first, we used to walk it! And then we used to..... I

Q. And how far would that be?

WD Oh, now.....three quarters of a mile to a mile, say a mile! And I remember in 1947, you could get a Bevin shift, and you had some of them walked to their work, and you could be wading deep in snow, but there was a path there and when one could get there, everybody could do it. Most of them had bikes, and then the Scottish Oils buses used to run and they had a bus that went there, and then eventually they put the buses off, and I think.....no, the buses didn't go off, after the Coal Board took over, it was Prentice that was running us back and forward.

Q. So, they got a private bus company to run you back and forward?

WD Aye! And it made a big difference when they put the baths there? You had.....I spoke to a man last week, on Monday.....he could have told you when the baths went, because he was working there, and that was about the only time that he worked, labouring on a job!

Q. So, they eventually built baths?

WD Baths, aye!

Q. At.....?

WD Baads! And that made a difference!

Q. That would make a difference?

WD A big difference! You could take off your dirty clothes and leave them there, and bring them home at the weekend for to be washed, you know!
But.....

Q. Were you ever affected with the three weeks working and the one week off?

WD No! No!

Q. That would be before your time?

WD Aye! (inaudible).

Q. Would you father be involved in that?

WD Aye! Aye! He was involved! And was there not a (inaudible).

Q. Can you remember much about that?

WD No, not really!

Q. And what did you do in your spare time? A pastime or anything like that! Had you any hobbies or sport that you were interested in?

WD No, just watching football! I was the part time groundsman in West Calder Juniors.....when I was in Baads mine, through one of the men... the kind of gaffer over the oncost workers. He was the groundsman, and he asked me to be his assistant, part time. We had to sawdust the field, and walk round about, and sawdust all the field, and put up the nets and everything, and take them down after a game, a home game, you know!

Q. And that football team would have no association with the Scottish Oils?

WD No! No!

Q. It wasn't a Scottish Oils park?

WD No! It was Burngrange Park! No, they had no association with it!

Q. They had quite a good football team at one time, didn't they?

WD Aye!

Q. Good juniors?

WD They had a good team at that time!

Q. Now, when you worked in the mines, were they very strict on safety? Was there ever any accidents that you can remember?

WD Oh, there were accidents? But they were strict too, oh.....they were strict about safety! The worst accident that.....I knew there was an accident when I was on the oncost. There were men got burned, and there was another accident were men got burned (inaudible), and then there was a man got killed about maybe the January or the February before the pit shut down, and the pit shut down in the May!

Q. What year was that?

WD That would be about sixty two! A man from West Calder was killed!

Q. But then it wouldn't belong to the Scottish Oils?

WD No!

Q. No? That was coal? That was about the only bad accident. And there was a big accident in '47 in Burngrange, but you would know about that?

WD Yes! That was the shale!

Q. Now, I think that we have covered most things! Is there anything else, when you look back, did you quite enjoy working in the mines?

WD Well, there's nobody can say that they enjoyed it!

Q. What about the comradeship? What about.....?

WD Oh, well.....I'll tell you a lot.....

Q. Your fellow workers.....

WD I could tell you one thing, you got more of a laugh from the men in the pit, than you got from going anywhere else to work! A good comradeship! There was a lot of these boys who could tell a joke off the cuff, you know anything like that! It had it's good moments for comradeship (inaudible)!

END OF TAPE

Transcript	Mr WD
Industrial Information	I started in Baads Colliery on 21st March, 1935, and it was a funny feeling down the mine at first. It was carbide lamps at that time.
Oncast	I was on the oncast. This was clipping bogies underneath and I was bringing full hutches out this road to the mine bottom. I was on that job for a year or two.
Main Haulage	Then I got a job on the main haulage to hook up the hutches to the pithead, but this was still oncast. I was either lashing on hutches or taking them off, some had to go to the north side and some had to go to the south side. It was a dirty job, with oil on your hands. You didn't wear gloves, because with them you could get your fingers taken off.
Drawing	I then got a job drawing, and I was on that for a while.
Pan Run	Then they started a pan run at West mains. This was a long face, maybe about twenty men working at it, it was shaking pans down to road level, and filling where the hutches got filled. There was a shaker for shaking pans and the whole face got shaken

down. The man who was drawing off, he got a job as a stripper, what they call a stripper on the pan run, and that was without me as a faceman.

Packing

They put me on packing. This was to build the stone packs up every night and fill them with dirt to secure the roof, for the pan run face, and take out trees and that so as the rest would collapse in between the packs.

How Packs Were Built

It was built like a dry stone dyke. You then took away the trees, when your last wall was built. It was only a three cornered wall every day, after the first one was built, and it was maybe six or eight feet high, and maybe about three or feet wide. You had do this every day. They had them to draw the wood out. (Something that looked like a Mash.)

Wages

Scottish Oils was paying us, but the faceman paid us when we were drawing. When you were building walls, you weren't right oncast, because you had a higher wage than oncast, when you built these.

When I started in the pit first I worked six days a week, and got three shillings and a ha'penny a shift. I hadn't a pound a week. I got eighteen

and threepence, when I was fifteen years old.

Drawers Wages I think a drawers wages worked out at two pounds, or thirty shillings. There wasn't much difference anyway. You weren't getting paid for the amount of work you were doing.

Working Conditions You had to work harder than they do now. Sometimes on these faces, you could be working in wet, and you would be allowed about a sixpence extra. You were soaked to the skin. You had to come home summer or winter in your dirty clothes. There wasn't a lot of water in Baads, but there was some places you couldn't work in.

Miners Clothes The miners wore oilskins, trousers and jackets.

Coal From Baads Coal from Baads was used by the retorts at Addiewell, then after they made the refinery at Westwood it went there.

Accidents There were quite a few killed. They had the strum as they cried it, into their shot and they had to go and light this strum and they would listen for the shots going off. And if there was some of them went back to see if one had not been lit right. If they had the wrong judgement in thinking they had waited long enough for this, or one hadn't been burning right,

or maybe went out. I couldn't say if there was a stipulation of how long you had to wait before a shot didn't go off because I wasn't in that position.

Unions I was in the Coal Miners Union. It was similar to the shale miners union, but it was stronger.

Domestic Life Housing I moved into a Council house when I was married in 1943. For the months before we lived in a room.

Hot And Cold Water Before I was married there was no hot and cold water. But when we got the house in Kings Street, West Calder, there was no hot and cold water in that house as well.

Bathing I used to come home and we had one of these big child's zinc baths, and this used to sit on were wooden.

Wash House and Boiler There was no wash house or boiler. You had to boil kettles. They were all private houses.

Travel to Work At first we used to walk it. It was about three quarters of a mile to a mile. I remember in 1947, you could get a Bevin Shift, and some of them walked to their work and you could be wading in deep snow, but there was a path when you could get there.

Most of them had bikes, and then Scottish Oils buses used to run. After the Coal Board took over it was Prentice that was running us back and forward.

Baths at Baads They eventually built baths at Baads. What a difference that made. You could take off your dirty clothes and leave them there and bring them home at the weekend to be washed.

Social Life I just watched football. I
Part-Time was also the part-time grounds-
Groundsman man in West Calder Juniors.
When I was in Baads, one of the men was the groundsman, and he asked me to be his assistant, part-time. We had to sawdust the field, and put the nets up, and take them down after. This was at Burngrange Park.

Burngrange Park
Shut Down The pit was shut down in May.

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