

## JD - TAPE 1

SB You just start when you want and go right through, how much you earned, when you started and who the people were.

JD I started just after the strike which lasted for 13 weeks in 1925 and 26, I think the strike finished in February and I started the following month or so, I would be 15 or 16 when I started. I started as a greaser (with the green shale) greasing the wagons that came from the mines that the charger put on top of benches, they held about 2 tons of shale and when the rakes come up the mine with the electric locomotives there would be 30 hutches on each rake, well there was 20 at that time but gradually with bigger locomotives, they were greasing "plummet" boxes on them and if you did not do them right you got a row from the charger, for they had to push them, and then they chained them and sent them away up this scaffold with a bit of a chain going into the jig of a hutch and they went away up the top of the benches. Anyway they sent them down empty again and they made them up into rakes of maybe 40 or 50 and take them away up to the mines. The mines were a mile and a half up the road, they were up at Duddingston and there were 2 mines No. 1 and No. 2. Anyway I started then and I was greaser and then I graduated, you went greaser and then catcher, that meant somebody else started the greasing and you were promoted to catcher, maybe an extra tanner a day or something. You caught the hutches and made them up in a rake so that the locomotive would take them back down the mine and then you went to the snibbling that were after you greased them, this snibble held them together, snibbles that was the brakes, you stuck the brake through the holes in the wheels and jammed and let them come one at a time to the chainer that sent them up. I would be there until about 17 or 18 and then went up on top of the benches then and became the snibbler up there. The hutches came off

and we had to snibble them until the charger came up with his empty and let him away with another one, maybe six chargers.

SB So on top of the bench you would have two sets of rails!

JD Yes, and you had eh, four benches but they were divided into half benches, and you had four halves on one side, so you had a rail going into what we call - this was the top half and the bottom half, see the west side was the top half, and the east side was the bottom half - and anyway maybe three of the chargers would come up but anyhow the charger would come up, there was six of them on the day shift, three on the back shift and you let go of the hutches and as he took the hutch away you tapped the point just like a railway and as he went down the other chap was following him down, the other lad when he came to No. 3 they would be going to No. 4 the furthest away bench about 50 yards away and he tapped No. 3 rail and closed them just like a signalman and the other three came up then, they just worked that system all day, well I had to let them away, then after that when the empties went back the chain, you know there was an endless chain and when it came up to where I was going to snibble it came over the top of the pulley we called it a "Policeman" when it came up and it ran across high, then down through the wheels, underneath and came back up, well this policeman as it came up it lifted the chain out, you know it went over the pulley, so the chain came off and the boggle came running and I had to snibble them and I maybe holding 3 or 4 for them coming up. If they were slow in coming up, well you just stop the chain until there was room. Anyway I went down into the labouring squad when I was about 20 or something like that, I would be about 1 year to 2 in the labouring squad and that was doing any job at all, then I went on to to gas pipe cleaning, that was a three shift job. There was the three shifts and on your back shift and it came to the Saturday the back shift was the afternoon shift 2-10 well

you maybe finish 10.30 or 9, when it came to the Saturday and you went out at 2pm. on the Saturday afternoon and you worked to the Sunday morning (16 hrs.) a long shift, and that put you through your back shift to your night shift, see what I mean, that incorporated the two, it was a 7 day week you worked without a day off.

SB So how long would be your week when you were on that sort of shift?

JD 7 days, 8 hour shifts and a 16 hour shift every 3rd Saturday, I was out 7 days, 56 hours, you only got 6 days shift away back in the 60's or early 50's. We always had -on the three shift jobs, that's the men that work on the tips and the "gullers" when I worked in the gas pipes cleaning the droppers that was the men that took the shale from the bottom of the retort, the burnt shale coming out. It (the burnt shale) came down into this dropper and a bell "holding it in", you pulled the lever and the shale came down into the hutch, you see and then when it was empty that closed up again, they had to put it way out to send it up the bing.

SB It must have been hot.

JD Where I was yes, down below, in fact the sweat was running out of me when I was doing the gas pipes. First when you started in the room, either morning, afternoon or night you had 132 gas pipes to do, it was coal gas from the producers, coal gas producers, and they shut off (the gas) closed down the producer, when we were doing that job well it was about 3 feet in diameter with the gas main coming up and brick lined see, and going off that was about 8ft. pipe by 6" or something like that and what to do was solid burners something they called them you know caps and they were fire clayed on,

we tapped them off and the hammer knocks the fire clay off, pull them all off, right up to the bench, then came back and put a rod through them with a disc on it to clean the soot and if they were tary and we couldn't possibly clean them it was murder but anyway, I had a bag apron on and just a singlet and the sweat was running off us - unless it was a really good east wind coming through but in the summer time it was sheer murder, because there was the bench there, say 8ft away from the main and behind me was another bench, what we called the bench, the retorts. It was 8ft off the ground when - on a scaffold running along the side, I did this side and went down the other side and started cleaning up the burners and putting them back on again. You would be in there for an hour or an hour and half and the sweat was blinding me in the summer. Well you had anything from 900, 1000 or 1100 degrees in those retorts you know what I mean, from the top right down, red hot for you had to look through spy holes and it was sheer redness, red hot and I had to start it up again and then what I would do then I would take my singlet off and shout to a man to put the gas on again and hang the singlet to dry, it was dried in 5 minutes. Then I put other clothes on and then I went outside to the gas producers and I had to fill the coal, I went up to the gas producers fill in that shift 9 to 12 tons, filling a wagon, it was a little hutch you know, it held about 10 cwt and it was on a winch, well you sent up the coal bunkers which were about 20 feet up and the producers down below them, you set them up and once you filled it, you went into the Winchhouse and winch it up, you had a mark on your rope when you knew it was in and you stopped and when you lowered - a gate opened up and then a clamp came down, so it sat in it and the man in the producer tipped it in the bunker - it all depended on the type of coal they were using.

SB Where did they get their coal from?

JD Everywhere, Kinniel, Niddrie, Benhar and they got it from up around Bairds of Bathgate up around that area around Baad's Colliery, it used to come from there too and some coals were easy to handle, easy to truck! and that and other ones it was pure murder to try and get the shovel into them, they were brittle, likes of Kinniel coals, is a brittle coal and then the Baad's coal and the one that came from up the way when it was in the fires you know it seemed to swell up, you got more ashes off it. I also had to take the ashes away from it, the ashes were taken out to the side of this wall on the railway I had to get a steel barrow and pull it right across, maybe 30 yards and empty them, for trucks that were taking it away for road and so forth. The Niddry coal was brick hard, very few ashes from it, it just seemed to go away down the fire, it took you all your time to keep up, it took a couple of men to keep it up, very little ash with it, it was different ash off the different coal.

SB With the better coal?

JD Well I don't know if it was better or no, it was better for me in regards there would be less ash. Anyway you did that at 1 or 2 o'clock, I say, then I would have my tea about 4.30 or that and I would go back in to the heat of the retorts and do another 30 pipes at the top half, which was the furthest away when you go through, and then I would fill so much coal and take so many ashes away and go back and it was the same procedure for the second shift, so maybe you finished at 11.30 at night and you had double that to do on the 16 hour shift, it means you were filling in 18 to 20 tons of coal on your 24 hour shift/16 hrs. shift.

SB That is a lot of coal!

JD That means that you were on the wagon and once the box that the hutch was sitting up - on the top of the wagon,

but once you got the bottom of the wagon you were throwing it up about 10 cwt. in each hutch. So you were dead tired when you came home on a Sunday morning.

SB How much did you earn for that?

JD Approximately, I think I have got the figures, I am not sure, I left in 1937, I was 5 years in that, in 1937 I think the wage was 8/3 ½ d a shift, old money.

SB That was not much was it?

JD But I mean when you look at it I could go to Belfast for a £1 at that time, a monthly return, it balances. So it looks small, but anyway I was 5 years in that, but when you came in Sunday morning you were tired. I come home for my tea every day-shift, I got my breakfast, home for my tea in the backshift, afternoon shift - and in the nightshift I would carry a piece, you know what I mean.

SB Now was that the Winchburgh or the Hopetoun Works?

JD No, Niddry Castle Works, Winchburgh, then I went up in the charging, (I was studying for a charger's paper) they were 80 feet high, they are actually all open, you were soaking all the time - you went out even down in that place. Come rain, snow or sleet you were soaked through - Wet nights you were sometime trying to put an oilskin on, you know it was red hot without it, when you were down in the bottom bit cleaning the gas pipes. Then on the charging, the charging hutches, the last man who used to repair them and old hutches they were - on them, solid, you know, maybe it was 6" square - then you had the body of the hutch, plus the plummet box, plus the wheels and he reckoned it were about 10 cwt. you know empty so what you did was when the snibbler was away with the hutch, you went down into your bench and then you "slew them" - In that half bench there were 16 retorts, there were 4 on each set, that is right 8 sets and 4 in each set, which is 32, 16 each rail, you had a double rail, you may be

away at the far end, well that was about 15 yards along or 20 yards, you lifted a bell off, it was on a hinge about 3 feet in dia, with an iron on it and you put your cleek in with a hand and there was a right angle at the bottom for wheeling the shale out - there was a lever come to the ride of the hutch - the door was in the bottom and slots in the door, then you shoved this down, it opened the door up and the shale went into the retort and when you got that retort filled, you closed it up and we called it sanding, you get all the loose shale round about it to sand it to keep the air from getting in. Well you started that one you kept coming along filling them and bringing the hutch up. When I went up first, there was no darg that was 57 then we got a darg to 72, then we got a darg latterly to 66, you had to take them down, empty them and push them back up. No. 1 bench it would only be 20 yards down, then you had the No 2 bench, maybe six yards between that. Anyway we had to get about 40 yards to the far away one and we had to push them up, there was an incline coming up, because they needed a slight incline so the full one would go down. In the winter, it was terrible, murder in winter, when the snows were on and you always had two men with you, maybe three of us on the hutches Instead of one and then of course they were frozen up - we had to hammer away.

SB I suppose with you being so high as well.

JD You got everything, especially the winds, say it was an awful wind from the west and you were in the bottom half of the retorts, or either half when you emptied it and you were trying to come out against that wind it was sheer murder trying to get out. There was 6 day shift men and 3 back shift men and I think the wage then was 9/7d, approximately - No holidays with pay and at the

weekend all you got was for your Sunday shift, was an extra ½ shift, so you had 7 ½ shifts coming in. Nobody got paid holidays till after the war, coal miners were the first to get a week's paid holidays. So we got ½ shift for that and that was 10 ½ shifts a week. At New Year time you worked right through Xmas and New Year, at that time before you got holidays, until you got the 6 day week when you were off every 7th in the cycle. You got an extra half shift for the 1st and 2nd January, the miners got nothing they were off and they did not get paid for it. We stored the shale - as I say that chain brought them up and on to a scaffold - well beneath that scaffold - the scaffold itself would be about 20 feet off ground level, they cut a big pit into the rock at ground level and taken away down below and they would hold about 1200 hutches in that. That is when they took the storage out on Sunday, instead of the empties going down to the mine, they switched the road and it went back in below this storage place and the men went in and it was eliding doors again, and they pulled the door out till the hutch was filled and they closed it, then they came out. Well, say the chargers were running 66 hutches the chutes men that were in on Sunday and during the holidays, they had double that to run - they had not as far to run you see, he run 132. But it was in the 50's that we got the 6 day week job. He had the 6 day week all the time in the mines, but we had the 6 day week only from the 50's and when we were off you see, we were what do you call it, we were off Sunday and Monday one week and then you went the cycle Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, Saturday, Sunday, Monday again to give you the day off. You see the Saturday was included in the one week and the Sunday and - that, they changed the pays. The pays used to be on a - start on the Wednesday, so therefore you were paid on the Friday, so the Thursday and Friday was going into the following weeks pay you

see. Did anybody ever tell you about the 3 weeks work and one week off?

SB Yes, I have heard that.

JD Well you see they started in the 1932 or 33.

SB Yes, 1932, I think.

JD It went into about 1939, 1940 and when we were off, the likes of us, the pay started on a Wednesday, the week we were on the dole they employed another 1000 men, there were 3000 working and 1000 idle, miners and that. There were not many oil workers idle, so to absorb that they (Scottish Oil) asked us if we would take a 12% rise in wages and one week on the dole. Well on your dole week they had 7 ½ shifts coming in, 9 miners had 6 shifts plus the dole 15/3d, that's what it was. The following week you had only 2 shifts came in, you started on the Monday, so you had only Monday and Tuesday, if you started on the Monday you only had Monday and Tuesday, so that is what you had for a week and that was you from your dole week plus your full pay to a fortnight to the full pay again.

SB Did you not resent it?

JD No, we did it or we would not get paid, they asked us and we did it.

SB So it was voluntary?

JD Well, they asked us if we would take a 12 ½ % rise in wages to re-employ these men and we did it. Philpstoun, Broxburn men, Tarbrax, Mid Calder men.

SB What was the result of that strike again, that shut all that down.

JD When they shut Tarbrax, Broxburn it was the recession, you see when I think when the cheap oil started flowing from Persia, Persia at that time became Iran and Iraq was Messopotamia but when it started coming from them it meant the end of this place, because it was far too costly to produce here. The miners, John and his brother they dug it and there were men to take it away up to the top and the machinery and men to put it through the breaker, machinery and men to take it from the work up to the mine with the locomotives and all the chargers and all the men down the bottom and all the tipmen.

SB The man power cost was prohibitive!

JD That's right, so there fore it was really uneconomical and you had a tax rebate about 2/6d or something on every gallon and they tried to get another one but they did not get it. I remember I was in Broxburn school and was coming up the road when the refinery was working Broxburn too that was in, you know where that scrapyard is with all the cars, well it was opposite side of the road, the refinery, where there are fields and all that, factories are there now.

SB There is still the gas tank at the back there.

JD Well where the old scrapyard is now with the cars, that used to be the Broxburn Gas Co. the Gas Works were there then that was the tip of the bing from - go further east along the canal bank and you came to where the

oil works were, the crude oil the same as us. So that was the crude oil which was about 1/4 mile along and the refinery was on the roadside there and the candle works on the canal bank, so that when the recession came I think they were about the first to close round about Broxburn and Philpstoun and it must have been in the 20's.

SB They closed just after the strike?

JD 1925, 26, I don't know if the strike was the cause of it and I think it was just - because Pumpherston Refinery too, so 1925 that would be about the time they started to close, then Tarbrax closed and there was as many closed, Uphall Station and all these places, we were the second last to close, Niddry closed before us and the Camps closed before us and then we closed in 1961, February 16th. I remember it, I remember putting on the hutch, the date, everything - and the last hutch going up the hill, I just put it on with chalk, and I went to the Refinery - in Grangemouth - and I was there for about 15 years.

SB How did the work differ in the Refinery, how - it, what was the difference?

JD It was different entirely, the Refinery really, it worked itself, there were no men putting shale in or nothing else it was just the oils coming up and through the furnaces and reduced to a gas and then put through the cracking plant and different ones but I was not in the process so I don't know much about that, but I was in the labouring squad down there and then I went onto the L.P.G. Gas Plant, you know bottle gas (calor) a year or two with that and one on the labouring squad, my brother and I, then I went back to the labouring

squad 1961 - 62 - but anyway that was 63 - but anyway I went back to the labouring squad for a year or two and I was put into it as a fitters mate with the engineers, and then the last 8 years worked in the workshops as a fitter's mate for I retired in 1975.

SB So how did your wages compare say with Scottish Oils and Grangemouth?

JD There was a difference in wages I found out I had more in my 5 days down there - than the 6 days here. Oh, they were higher wages. Then there was quite a lot of overtime then at that time too, but when Grangemouth started first, one person told me he had 1 penny or 2 pence, something more, he had more anyway here than when he first went to Grangemouth, but he went because it was building up and that as you know became one of the biggest in Britain, it is I think really, the biggest in Britain.

SB It is now.

JD But I enjoyed it fine especially in the workshops after being out so long and never being inside you know, I enjoyed being in the workshops then because getting that we bit older you like to get in, in the bad weather, the weather gets on top of you, but see like when we were on the gas retorts and that, the charging even in the snow and that once we started we were never cold, we were sweating because it was that heavy, it was heavy work and were never really cold once we started, although your boots used to be full of water, you know in the heavy rain when you are kicking the points you know what I mean it sprung your boots, every tap was always springing and you never got your boots, you had to pay

for your boots too and well the water was, but luckily as I say I got in and changed into drier clothing to go out. I wasn't out in all hours, unless on the night shift and I was - but I was never inside from 1926-1965, and I had 6 years in the locomotives. In 1964 I went into the locomotives.

SB Did you enjoy that?

JD Sometimes they were terrible days, you were out, you did not know what was going to happen - but anyway the reason I took it I mean I couldn't drive a car or nothing but this chap was wanting a swap and I said I would do it on the spur of the moment, it was to get off the heavy job because I had been 17 ½ year in it and I was getting a bit old, so it went on for 6 years and I had my moments but it worked out alright.

SB It was just driving the locos?

JD You went between the locos and the mine, you took empties away down to the new mine. No. 1 mine was finished at that time, that was nearest the Forth, you know, away up near the Ferry Road, Kirknewton. And then Whitequarries opened so you had to take them to Whitequarries too, but the Whitequarry mine was away along you know on the Bo'ness road and when all the rakes were made up the hutches to take up to the work - They came along an endless rope, see there was a clamp on them (come across it, like a lever) and it went down to a clamp at the bottom like a vice and closed on to the rope. Actually it went up the tip too, the endless rope and the trams came out for the hutches and this lever (and you have got a cross and there was a tail came over the clamp) so when they went to the top of the tip there was a slide that went

up like this, to about 11/2ft, level with trams, so it went up there the lever just slid up it and knocked itself off, released itself and then went forward on to crates, but I was never in the tip, my father was in the tip though for about 30 years, but that was my life in the works. During the strike, to keep the boilers going in the works, they put oil pipes in to pump the oil in.

END OF SIDE ONE

## SIDE TWO

SB So your brother was saying that during the strike they used oil.

JD That was for safety, to keep the pumps going for the mines so that is why they had to do that for safety. That's why the safety men would be in the mines, in any strike they must keep men on. It needed the power, the power station was in the work and it supplied the power for the mines. Any strike, they must have safety men on.

SB So how did the conditions compare Grangemouth versus Scottish Oils?

JD The work you mean, it wasn't comparable really. I mean the process down there most of it is worked from the control room as long as everything is working properly, a lot of danger attached to it, more: danger I think than there was over here, but as long as the men knew their job, as long as everything went alright, there were times when some went all wrong and then it was maybe a furnace, burst pipes in a furnace, it had to close down. There was always a danger though and then regard to smoking, you could smoke over here, anywhere barring the Naphtha plant but up in the benches and that we could have smoked anywhere at all, but down here - the smokers to do it. Then we had a canteen, it makes all the difference, that was worth about £300 a year to you, 10p for your meal, the likes of pension men, retired you would not get the butchers van for that.

SB No this is it.

JD Your dinner then would cost you 50 pence for a 3-course meal. Well another time William Patton and I went down to see the boys and went to the canteen for our dinner, so I never thought, I say's to him, it was his car, I will pay the dinners Willie, as if I was going to pay £2 for them, never thinking. I went forward to the woman and she said about 20p or something or 27p and I went, oh dearie, dear, a gallon of petrol nearly £1. never thinking, the amazing way I said it was really funny. I've often thought about that, so we used to go down, in fact when he was giving up his car, he said come on John we're going, see the boys, but there were big changes you know when we retired, different personnel in it, two or three of them that I knew and then there was new ones coming in, old blood going out, you see. They started that pension scheme in 1972 and retired at 65, then the other one came out and your retired at 60, some would come out at 55 or 57, early retirement. In a way it was a good thing, for the amount of money they get, after they retire.

SB Well, they can enjoy themselves for longer.

JD It made a difference to me even 60 we could never do that, it made all the difference in the world after working 7 days. Since 1926 you had to be 17 or 18 before you were working on the Sundays, we're doing this, 7 days working but then from then, 1930, that was a 7 day week. It was murder on a Saturday night you came home from the long turn, black as a ████████ filthy, down in the Gulleys - you know in the gas pipe there was black soot from there to your ankle and there were no pit baths at that time.

SB Did it never affect your lungs somehow?

JD No, it is funny how even sometimes they used to scrape up the gullets, the soot used to be about that depth say an inch on it and the labourers would come in and clock it up and put it in hutches and send it up the tip, put so much in and the shale on the top of it and away up the tip and even every time you touched it the dust was coming up round you and I was swallowing it and excuse me, but when you were bringing up phlegm it was black even your eyes were black, it is difficult, what I hated was Saturday night, coming home and seeing my sister and them getting ready to go to the dancing and me going back in again - The baths was the best thing that ever was.

SB When did the baths come into the works?

JD It was just before the war, it could only be in the 30's and say, just a minute, 1937 or 38 round about then, just before the war, because the night of the Glasgow raid I was standing under the gas - when they started to go over, could not get out quick enough it would be about 38. Before that I was in that dirty job, dear oh dear, the mess, when you got in you would say, mother wash my back and then you went into the room and washed your legs, nothing else to do.

SB What was the baths like inside?

JD They were lovely, you went in one door dead tired and came out ready for another shift at the other end. You know what I mean it made all the difference in the world, especially when you were tired, the miner's didn't use the baths. We were dead beat at times, tired but once you get underneath these sprays.

SB Were they showers not baths?

JD They were showers with cubicles, the baths were for the gaffers. It was baths at one end for the gaffers and either a shower or a bath, oh you must have that. At any rate it was terrific.

SB How much did you pay for that?

JD Nothing at all, no nothing, but then during war time they had pieces for you, you know sandwiches and you paid 4d a week for that, no 4d a day for that and there was women that went across and made up sandwiches and I think the jam was painted on, well I mean in those days that was a help to the house too, you know what I mean there was that wee bit saving in all the houses, you got butter or whatever it was.

SB What did they put in the sandwich?

JD Maybe boiled ham, cheese or jam, you maybe got two of the boiled ham and two jam + butter, but there was always something in war time, when you think how we eat now in luxury, you used to get about an egg a week, or something like that, so you wonder if you're eating too much - och well. I'll tell you one thing the difference between Grangemouth and our work, ours was a family works. Grangemouth's was vast you know the people in your own area and you knew them by sight and in other areas there was not the same contact, where as here even in the benches in the bad weather it was a laugh most of the time because you always had some clown on the shift, one fellow who especially was great but he could not tell you the truth for a laugh - sometime we

got a "split". So we went into the bothie and sit there and talk about football or greyhound racing, or something else, it way always that but then, there were one day when it was snowing and this chap was wanting to get to Powderhall Dogs, the afternoon meeting, and we let him get beds in front, we called it. The last shift would come up and tell him 10 beds in front, that was to let him away early, so when he was going away, this lad said to him you're not going to Powderhall Dogs on a day like that, he said you never said anything to me about working on a day like this, you are saying nothing about that, - he was a character. Bishop, he was an awful fellow. Even in the Institute at night he was a scream, there were always characters and you were more of a family, everybody knew everybody else, especially during the six day week, before that you had to work a doubler if you wanted away, say for a funeral or something else, or a Wedding, you did a double shift, charging maybe - and you maybe had to go a doubler for the chap that was letting you off and you do a doubler for him, but then when it came to the six day week you'd say to the fellow I am working with - will you work with me on Wednesday and I will work on with you on Thursday, so we used to do that regular, exchanging shifts, so nobody ever lost time and the Company was flexible every way. I will tell you I took it ill out with the Foreman I was never used to a Foreman over here, you were on tasks jobs here, you never lifted a cheque, you know what I mean, you did in the labouring squad through the time office and down in the ? you had to do that. What I mean in regard to foreman he was there when you went on the charging in the morning at 6 o'clock, then it became 6.30 and then 7, the foreman would come up and say everybody out and they say such a person is not out, I'll away and chap them up. He came and chapped us up. The night shift foreman used to

come round and knock you up on the Sunday morning for the day shift, he came round and knocked you up, the same on the Holidays, New Year and all the rest of it.

SB Not many bosses would do that.

JD I, they did that, we were not far away, most of the workers were in the rows, so they came along and knocked you up, but anyway he would just come and say everybody out. A well we just went down the pit - so if we got our stuff out and finished early. As I say on the day shift when you were running the benches you filled up one road, 16, then you went back at the far end and filled up six and singled the next ten. On each bench (half) that was eight half benches, that was 8 singles - anyway the back shift came out and they went over the wall the one that we filled they maybe just get a hutch then when they came along to the other 10 they maybe get two on each but when we got finished, we maybe finish about 1 o'clock or that and they started just a wee bit after that. Well sometimes on the back shift, it all depends on how the retorts were but there wasn't so much shale going out you know what I mean getting burnt - you were finished early, you maybe finished at 6 o'clock - and especially Saturday afternoon we took men off the back shift and put them on to the day shift, and they were sometimes finished at 4 and there was maybe only three on, so it was that getting away a bit earlier at nights made a difference too. The other nights maybe there was a day you were an hour later, and you were swallowing the gas coming out of the retorts but you were out in the fresh air so it didn't harm you too badly.

SB That gas would have been poisonous?

JD Oh, if the yellow gas had been contained it was poisonous, because it was just that yellow gas came up it, see, as the shale started stewing the fans slipped it along these - going into the retort. You get 4 ½ hutches into this tank at the top and then it went into a pipe cylinder going down cast iron about 2 ½ inches thick walls.

SB How wide was it?

JD About 2ft. or something like that, 2 or 2 ½ ft, aye 2 ½ ft anyway but the main heat was in that cast, you know and the walls of the retorts had wee spy holes for the foreman and - that went and looked in. If it was too hot and it went down and they altered the ratchet at the bottom, so he took it down a bit quicker, or it might stick, when it stuck, it was murder you know when it dandered up, the labourers had to get big rods about 30 feet and poke away at it until they got it away - If it was too dark, no wait a minute, too dark they slowed it up a bit so they would get more heat out of it. Well, away up at the bottom of that tank there was a neck, if the neck came out at the main, extraction main, going to the fan-house and the neck went into each retort, so it just started stewing in the heat that is where the gases were coming out and it was sucked along with the fans and through this tubular condenser.

SB Now those were Atmospheric condensers?

JD Aye, just pipes, just atmospheric - just outside, you see you went up and then you got the ammonia water off it too. And then the Ammonia water went to the Sulphate house and was made into Sulphate, we made Sulphate over there but laterly they centralised it and

it was made at Pumpherston and we had a pipeline from Winchburgh up into Pumpherston and a pipeline right up through Niddrie then way up to Pumpherston.

SB What has happened to that pipeline, is it still there or has it been removed?

JD It'll be there yet, because it goes down below the ground, so that's when they centralised it, quite a few years before they shut down, then they reconstructed the retorts to take on double output, and they put air into them that they didn't do before.

SB When was that?

JD Was that after the war or during, I don't know, they reconstructed the tapered metal and put a ? into it too and everything else and then they put this air in to boost up the heat and put a bigger oh, I've seen it a time when they were putting anything up to maybe years ago about 800 tons - 1200 after that, you then had more dangerous stickers after that, because of the air, and then sometime there was too many handling there different shifts, and also they had their own method of handling. You know how they worked the retorts too, they brought the shale down (drawing being made for interviewer) The retort, the half benches like, that was the half bench like, just at the side, well there waif I say eight sets, well I'll just show you the tank eh, the tank was like this, this went into your, you can follow it can't you? and your bell was up here in the center, see, there was a hinge and the arm there was a bolt through it in the center of the bell and you just put your cleek into it and lifted it back, and then this is where the gas main, there was scaffold where the gas

cleaner went, the main ram along here that was about 2 ft in diameter. Well off that main there was, it went into the bottom here the neck, you see - you have about 8 to 10 ton of shale in there, green shale, before it started burning, then all comes down here inside the retort, but this is your first part, your steel, your cast iron about 13 ft long or something, where the shale was burning inside it, you could see it red hot. Then the brickies had built the surrounding - below that, fire brick all the way down here, then at the bottom there is a hopper like this and before reconstructing, this is a hopper, there were a table here and the shale could come down the side and into this hopper. There was, up a bit a ratchet went in there, there was all the way up to the tip, up to the end there was a donkey engine at the end you had all the benches at each four benches the top the four halves - that had gone right down and there was a travelling rod that went down like that, there was a chain came across from the pump to here to round a wheel and onto this straight rod that went right away down, there was a flat piece of steel right down and then at the end of the retorts it went round and then there were chains that went round the wheel, along and round the wheel again and then away up the other side. On the two rails, you see you had this one on this side and the other side you'd a tank on the other rail, then the two were coming down into the one hopper, this is where the droppers take it out, well there were a ratchet went across from here an arm went across and bits of a ratchet on here that worked an arm, inside and swept it down you see onto the table and went down one side, it was working the other side you know how the pole is on a ratchet wheel, it went down the one side, so it was pulling on one side - and the pole caught the ratchet and moved it round, then as it was coming back

an arm went out on the pump and once it went up as that was went around - and as it went round it fell the other way and it reversed the pump, so you were clearing your ratchet coming up the side it was working up the other side of the bench, it is doubling the action it was bringing down this side of the retorts as I say, with two lines up here, it was bringing the shale down gently whatever speed you wanted, you altered it on the snug here and worked it, the arm that could maybe bring it down two teeth at a time when you wanted it through quicker it was maybe beginning to dander and that was you were getting more green shale in and then it was working up the other side. Then this man came up to here this was the tip and that bing, and the men came up in the hutch here and adjusted a lever and dropped that lever, there was a bell up inside, there was a bell in here - to a bell shape and an arm going up and then coming out to you and he dropped that he dropped the bell and the shale spread down right - the chute then it closed up the bell went up and sealed it again, the bell was about that depth and cast iron too. But then when they reconstructed them they put different hoppers down below and water in them to cool the shale and instead of men taking out they put rubber belts, conveyor belts right up the whole length of the retorts, in the water and then they had a wheel then instead of a lever and a man camp up and stacked it on the belts and the belt took it out to the bottom of the bing and there was a great big tank, the conveyors took it right up into the tank, then just as the hutches came down on to the empty side of the endless rope, the back shunt just running up to the may and then he followed it and sent it away up again that was when they reconstructed and done away with the hutches up the top they did not go up through the course into the tank.

- SB The retort itself, the tube was it self feeding or a man had to feed it, because I mean when you had, where is it, that is your hopper full of shale and is that self feeding.
- JD Aye, well you see it is worked with the ratchet, you see that arm at the bottom as I said there is a table, that was your hopper at the bottom the bell opened like that and they were all going up to the bell, well there was a table like that, you see so therefore this ratchet on the outside working the arm onto this arm inside, and it swept it down, it was the monkey engine at the end that was doing all that.
- SB So the same amount of shale came down out of the bottom would come off the top.
- JD They just take its time - just gradually coming down all the time.
- SB I see.
- JD That is why it is like an endless filling. From there, you see but then it was where the people were, the people that used to fill - day shift and back shift, there was no night shift.
- SB You were the charger who had to fill?
- JD That was just green shale to there but once it went into the - left there and into the heat that cast iron metal that's when it started stewing with the heat and gradually red hot all the way down, it was red hot at the top, the bings used to be red, red hot, my father worked

in them, you went for your boots and the tacks used to fall out of them. (Talking about the bings during the war) Sometime went on fire. Two men on at nights to dampen down fires that came up you could see it miles away and that was how the system was you know, the hopper and it went in like this too you see and in to the metal, then into the - instead of metal it was firebricks, all shaped so they finished up round and then it went down into here you see.

SB Now was the dia. at the top was it the same as the bottom or did it kind of go out?

JD No, it was the same all the way down.

SB It was a vertical tube.

JD Aye, all the way down, you had about 13ft of this and then you had, whatever it was down to the table, I am trying to think how they fixed it at the bottom, so - I can't remember, but as I say the tube was shaped you know like this, it went in a wee bit there and then it came away down there and here, goes on this bit here this neck, an aperture you know came out about 1 foot and it joined into the one that came out of the tank, you see they joined the neck, what we called the neck the neck was, there was a valve there you see, this was where the gas main was, you see the gas main extracted it and this was your neck, we called it the necks. Well this came out here and it joined onto there, there is your tank above that, and this one neck joins into this one here and then the fan house was away along here and this bit was sucking. What they did was there were neck cleaners and it would be opened here and he would lift this up, no, he would drop it and it closed it here and he opened this and he had a clot - and he clotted -

away in here any shale that was lying about it that was choking it up you know going in here and cleaning it right out to here and then he would lift it up again and then the suction started again, and then it came up to the end here again and as I say your multi-tubular condensers and it just went circulating round about and round until it came out next to the fan house in the pure crude oil and the ammonia water. The water went into separators and we made Naphtha there, that's the only one thing we made, Naphtha.

SB Now were the condensers, the pipes of the condensers were they all the same width, the same thickness I mean, the metal?

JD Aye, they were.

SB Because I know that some condensers sometimes start and begin very thick and as they arrive at the end they are very thin, so there is more coolness, no they were just right, say the conductor pipes inside your building just about that dia. too .

SB And they were up and down, up and down.

JD And you know you had your base pipe and it would be about 1 ft. in dia. and the way they are coming off it and going up.

END OF TAPE ONE.

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## JD – TAPE 2

JD As I said you had 16 of them, you had 8 of these (half benches) no, 16 on each half - 32 retorts to make a bench - 128 retorts altogether - no, 256 - 4 x 32's - 8 half benches - what we used to call top half of 1,2,3,4. Bottom half of 1,2,3,4. There was a scaffold went down here (showing photograph) 60 or 80 feet above ground, below that (showing photograph) if you had fallen through!..... You had the two sets of rails going down, and going into each half bench like that (showing photograph). And these were your half - benches. As I said you had 32 retorts there, 32, 32, 32, same there, on a double line, 16 each line.

SB How were the benches situated, were they in one long row?

JD Yes, just like that (showing drawing). As I said you had two sets of rails went down there, like that (referring to drawing). Right down, going in here, going up there, going in there, same down here, the rail going down and there is some up here, come up here, when you come across here (refer to drawing) you come over this way, and then over on to this shelf, to come to the empty side for the empties to go down.

SB So what was the connection between benches?

JD None at all, just the scaffold we ran on. Just a scaffold, we had a scaffold ran across from there to there, well what we call scaffold, wooden scaffold, the rails were laid on it all the way down. When we came up we had fishplates every yard so we get a cleek in it to push up. It was just like a railway station.

SB It's difficult to visualise if you haven't seen it?

JD These were long steel, like railway rails. They came down in pairs, along the side of the bench, this is the bing there, see like that, maybe 8 of them right along, between the retorts, and then there was a bar, you know with nuts in it that went through. And the same on other sides. And that was binding the two walls together, so there was no contraction or expansion. That was buttresses brick walls on the outside. Where we were working we had a slatted palling to keep us from falling over. It was about four feet high and when they dropped the bomb on the work I was on No. 4 bench and my palling was completely away, yet I was running along a ledge doing my work. The palling was blown away that night. A land mine was dropped on the work. Nobody hurt. God was with us. But it blew every window out in the old rows, the far away rows, where Sam Taggart lives - in the Main Street and across in our rows, and Abercorn Place, where James Hanlon stays. Well, the wee window at the end was the only one that was blown in his house, you know the end house ..... When it came for the works, it was a land-mine, it must have gone down into the railway and thrown over the top of our rows, it must have, for we were never touched, glass everywhere, works never touched. The main was damaged, gas main for extraction, it blew at the bottom of the big chimney, 200 ft. high, it made a hole in the flue, going into them, but we carried on all the time, next morning some of us went up there and were sanding bells, some of the bells were on fire, and the Gerrys were among us! Well, height of the benches seen from the side, these are brick pillars that they stood on and here was where the men extracted the shale where the (?) came down, where he worked his levers and so forth. He went into this pillar and the pillars, buck holding up the whole building like along there and that was the side of the retorts and as I said the wee holes, that we know as the peepholes were all

in the side. You'd need to see it. In fact if you get the photograph from James Brown and get it magnified someone could point out different things, where the fanhouse was, you'll see that on them. I think they were taken from a wee bit of a distance, but you'll understand.

SB You'll be able to see?

JD More so than me. I'm just giving you a wee crude idea.

SB So how many scaffold were there on the side?

JD Necks cleaning scaffold, where the gases come out, where the men cleaned the necks, as I said, those necks that I showed you (referring to drawing). That was the necks, there were 16 of the, on every retort, 16 on each side, 16 on the other side of the bench too, and that was the valve that put it down and closed the gas, there would have been an explosion that went through there, closed it, open, spat it out and closed it up again. Well, they'd a scaffold there, and then you'd another two scaffolds I think it was for the heats. You had them there, there and there, looking into these spyholes, into the retorts to see the heat that was on them. You judged it yourself, there was no thermometer or nothing else, you judged it, and as I said, you had temperatures of 700° - 1000° in different retorts. Then you'd the other scaffold, with peepholes again, and then down here you'd a scaffold that you had the gas main at the side here but hanging along the side here a what do you call it, between the two benches - gas main coming up there going round to the producers, and these pipes branching off, going in at the bottom of each retort, into each housing and 16 retorts, one in each of them. The same at your back here, going into this one here, you know they're just at the side of each other, like that, along that way and back down the next one.

So that's what there was, a scaffold for me standing on there and just at the bottom of the retorts there too you'd another hard gas pipe, a small 2" going in but there was a terrific heat going up, that was gas, that was caught in it couldn't reduce to oil, it was permanent gas. We call it hard gas. So you've an idea, if you had your photograph and blew it up, you might be able to see what retorts were like, you know what I mean?

SB When you look at a picture of a retort, it looks all metal?

JD Brick, all brick. The outside, Dougal's bricks, made in Winchburgh, you know the houses over there? The same brick, it wasn't a firebrick, it was a pure brick, the same as the Winchburgh houses. They'll last for thousands or hundreds of years, that is the best brick ever made in Dougal's, you know the other side, you'll see the dayhole - see when you're up the main street I'll tell you what to do - go round the back of the Tally Ho, and go right through, past it, and you'll see the big hole that goes to the railway, it's about 100 yards diameter - no, it's more - depth 80', water in it about the same, well that was the blue clay, and they brought it up in wee hutches into the brickworks, and they used to send it away in the canal boats, the bricks, to Edinburgh and Falkirk, and we used to bring the coal in the canal boats from Falkirk, the Callander Coal Company, into where the wall is, right, but that's the best brick, that matures with age. Our retorts were built with that but inside was the firebrick, you know what I mean, special brick, but Winchburgh Brick made that of course, made all the houses .

SB But what about the metal, the Cast-iron? Where did you get that from?

JD Oh, wherever.....

SB Was it Bathgate?

JD Bathgate, or Bo'ness maybe, some of them. Don't know where the metals came from.....Carron Iron Works? But it was nice to see the canal boats going along right into the gunn'ls with bricks going up to Edinburgh. You know where the Hopetoun was, where the A.B.C. cinema is now, that was the end of the canal.

SB Did Scottish Oil ever use the canal?

JD Aye, for water for the boilers.

SB And not for oil or anything?

JD No. no, just for the boiler. They had a pipe just at the bottom of the cemetery there, went across, at the other side of the rail there was the pumphouse, pumping and pumping it up to the work. Then it went through the cleansers you see - there's so much of the River Almond runs into the canal all the time and there's various places along the route, overflows, the water out the Almond..... through the cleansers you know.

SB Was the water softened?

JD Aye, they had a softener plant, for otherwise you'd have clogged up all the boiler tubes. They made a new one. They had about six boilers over there. Or eight. Broxburn Works, Winchburgh Works, Pumpherston Works, Paper Mills, they all took their water off that canal. I think that's why - mind people were talking about wanting it closed - I think they said that was one of the reasons, there works depending on it. That's how we used to go our trips, our school trip, we went along to Linlithgow, canal boat, lovely trip, my father and

the other men of the parish used to get the school piano on the coalman's lorry and take it down in the boat, and weeks before it your teacher was teaching you the song, "Saturday morning we set sail and were not far from land", and went along into Linlithgow and into the field. And that was our trip. And then latterly after that we went to Burntisland almost every year and two pipers came down to the school and they played you up to the train, you know at the station, then away to Burntisland and back at night, and the train was packed every time. That was our day.

SB And what did you do when you went on a trip like that?

JD Oh, well you'd races, and you'd sports. And you got milk and buns. I mean at the end of the prom at Burntisland there was a wee shop and a green (?) and we'd sit there, and my father and all the Committee men and teachers, gave you your buns - well, they were made up by the Burntisland Co-operative, and you maybe got a pie and buns and milk, and then at 4 o'clock you'd the same again, then you went on to the links between times, and you'd the same again, then you went on to the links between times, and you'd run the races, and you went into the sea, or something like that. The fathers and mothers were there, and it lets you see the difference now. My father and other members of the Committee used to go round for weeks, round every house in the district, and get a sixpence one week, and maybe a shilling the next. Oh aye, that's fact, I mean it was a struggle you know. 29th June, that was your holiday, a special train, sometimes it shunted back to Winchburgh Junction, then over the Forth Bridge, other times it went to Ratho and then up through Kirkliston and all those places.

SB It took a different route?

JD Aye, a different route. But we enjoyed it, we look forward

to it. Same with the Gala day, heavens, no wean would miss it, you said to your mother "Hurry up and get us a tinny, they'll be sold out!" Gala days are for the grown ups now. Well they were always for the grown ups -

SB What did you do for the gala? Did all the women get together and bake?

JD No, they have a Committee and run different functions to make money. And then they come maybe once a month from now until Gala day with a tin, and you put it in the tin (for the Queen). You stand at the window and see her getting crowned, at the back of the school. But when we were at school we used to have it in a football park, but now its at the school. But when we were at school we used to hold it in a field, up there you know when you come off the bus, that field on the left hand side, and away down at the Doctor's house we called it the Nights (?) hole, but it was in different fields at different times, where fore years now it has always been in the football park. But last year it was over here, and they ran races for the children, Round the Burgh races, and they've a civic week, you know, they have a different thing every night. ( IRRELEVANT PASSAGE)  
8 ½ d for insurance covered everything in the chemist's shop. Whatever he had. It wasn't much. You didn't have the costly staff you have now. A brown bottle for a cough, a white bottle for a sore stomach!

SB And what was inside it, probably the same product?

JD No. There was stuff called "chilli paste", we called it Hell's Fire grease. The doctor used to give it to you for a sore, and it's like "chilli paste". It would burn the arm off you. Oh, it was hot, if ever you'd an ache or pain that's what you got. Also mind Mrs Turnball? mustard-poultice, it was

murder. I did this, it made it worse. I was climbing the wall. But that was from your doctor. This covered you for the hospital too, you had to go to the Royal (Infirmary Edinburgh). There was no Bangour then, there was big waiting lists then. We paid a copper or two a week. But the Doctor, Dr. Orr, there was only one doctor, he had a seven day week, surgery at ten in the morning and six at night, and on Sundays one o'clock. It was in one of the houses next to the shops at the end of Duntarvie View, and it was a - one man stayed in the house, but the room was for the Doctor, and the lobby, it was about this big, and they were all sitting knee to knee, right up, and if you didn't have flu when you went in, you'd the flu when you came out! You'd struggle up and struggle down, and most of the men would stay outside waiting, till it was their turn. They'd look inside and say "I'm next". Ah, but he was there every day, and one o'clock on the Sunday.

SB And did he ever visit you in the house?

JD Oh yes, every baby was born in the houses then. You'd two midwives, Mrs. Reid and Mrs. Thomson. They'd no experience, only natural instinct!

SB You mean to say, they weren't qualified?

JD Well, I don't know, I don't think so, not at all, how could they qualify? They were just the wife or sister of the men working in the mines. They were terrific, they used to take the washing away, wash and iron, they did nappies and everything. Old Granny Thompson, she was granny to everybody. Even when you grew up you talked about Granny Thomson and Granny Reid.

SB So who took over from them when they died?

JD District Nurses, they came in..... But even the Nurse, she's still living in Winchburgh, she stayed up in Duntarvie View, and I remember, my niece (May) being born in my mother's house, I went up at two o'clock on a winter's morning - well, it was dark anyway - and she says "Right, I'll be down", and she came down through the rows in the dark, and the Doctor used to sit in the house. They're frightened now to come out. They reckon Dr. Orr never lost a baby.

SB Was he a nice Doctor?

JD Oh, he was a real lady's man, he was nice. You went to the minister, priest or doctor for advice in those days. You didn't know what a lawyer was! But anyway it's funny to hear people talking nowadays, they're not even working and you'll hear them say "I saw my lawyer about that!" He had a right dry humour, and he'd always a flower in his breast, and one day I was dayshift and I'd an awful sore head, something awful. And I swithered whether to go up ( ? ) nightshift, ( ? ) get something for it - It was the Bowling Green Social and dance in the Legion Hall that night, and he always went to it too, he was presenting the prizes for the Bowling Green and Institute, and he was going too, so I went up at six o'clock at night, and I told him, "Doctor, I've an awful pain, I thought about coming up to see you from my work". He say's "Why didn't you?". "Where is there a greater hobby than work!" and I've always said that since! I'll say to the boys, "Where is there a greater hobby than work?" and they'll say, "You and your work!" He was a right card, he was always spotless. Latterly he was coming in to see the people, he was worse than them. He smoked Pasha cigarettes, Turkish cigarettes, as soon as you opened the surgery door - Mrs D - I used to love the smell of them, so much so that my sister and I were going to the theatre this night, we bought a packet of Dr. Orr's cigarettes. Oh, we were rich - they were horrible.

SB Was he a company Doctor?

JD Oh aye, he'd been a surgeon too, years before. He was competent. I mean, in regard to maybe a poisoned finger, and there were quite a lot of poisoned fingers, and you weren't getting fed the same then, and regard to things, well, if you got a poisoned finger, maybe on the Tuesday you'd go up to him, and it was wicked. He'd look at it, and say "Come back on Thursday morning" and you'd be climbing the wall for two nights, and you went back up and he just lanced it, and you went back up in about a fortnight - he could time a thing. I'd a boil on my arm, a wee pimple, and I knocked it going up the stairs and it got septic and a big boil came up. He was always immaculate and he came round to this side of the desk, and looked at it, and got his scissors and just touched it, I never thought so much pressure then. It went right up the top of my shoulder. He was a good doctor, he was good to workmen when they were ill. An old friend of my sisters' had boils in her ears and she was subject to them for quite a long time. She was doing her apprenticeship and she hadn't a doctor, so she went up to Dr. Thomson, but Orr was our Doctor. She was so bad she went to Dr. Orr. He had a look and said "Oh they're nasty". Then he says to her (he had two roses) "which colour of rose would you like"? She took the-red one. He says "Now, you wear that, and when you meet anybody, they'll be so busy looking at the rose in your button hole, that they won't see the agony in your face". He was the type people could love or hate. My mother took ill and this friend of hers went round to the Camps. She was that ill, she she stayed the night - she sent for Dr. Orr and he came at the back of 12 o'clock. He'd a big fur coat on and when he came up the lobby they didn't know who was worse, him or my mother. He carried on almost to the end.

SB What was wrong with him?

JD Just age, he kept going all the time. During the backshift, we used to go - we would 'louse' about 11.30, 12 o'clock and we see him going to people. His wife was an elocution teacher in Edinburgh. She was a Liberal candidate in an election.

SB Did he ever go down the mines if a man was injured?

JD If he was needed, but they were usually brought up. They would have you out of the mine. He came across and told us when your father had an accident. Well no, he went to Father Kenny first, I was down at Father Kenny.

SB In a case like that, when a miner died in the mine as a result of an accident, how did they handle the situation? What happened to the body?

JD They brought him home to the house, just on stretchers, not in a coffin. We couldn't go in the room that night.

SB So he was brought home just as dirty as he had been?

JD Just the same, just the same, because they lay on the floor and we took him into the room, my father and us, and found somebody else to clean him up. There was hardly a mark on him.

SB How was he killed?

JD A big bit came out the side the roof. The son went out with the hutch, a full hutch, and when he came back he was dead.

SB So you were lucky in a sense, as you say there was hardly a mark on him? But what in a case if a man has really been hurt?

JD Just the same, sometimes they'd clean him up at the mine and close the coffin.

Mrs. D talking - Uncle Tom got a job in the pit. Came from Ireland and stayed with a widow lady and her family. Half of the people lived at Lodgings in the old days, and there when he was killed, instead of taking him home to Mrs. Burn, they brought him home to -

JD But he was brought home in the same way, but latterly they'd be brought home in a coffin, after the war, not before it.

SB In the case where your father was killed, who informed your mother?

JD One of the men from the work came. My mother was in bed and I answered the door and he said, "It's just to let you know your father's had an accident". It was a shock, and I never asked, then I thought, "I wonder how bad he is", and I ran after him, and he said, "I don't really know, I've just been told to come and tell you".

SB So was it a miner?

JD It was 6 or 7 at night, Jim Tarvitt came. He was only a workman. The office was closed. I ran from the house to Father Kenny first, from the church to my brother James, then I ran from there to the bowling green and said, "Will you tell big Johnny to come up?" Johnny said, "What's wrong?" and I told him. At that age I didn't know what to do for the better, you know normally you'd run to the next door neighbour for some help, but the first thing that was on my mind was to get the Priest for him, and to get my brothers, so I was just running from one spot to the other not knowing what I was doing.

SB So in a case like that where his brother was on the same shift, was he brought up? from the mine? John's brother -

JD Yes, he was brought up.

SB Did he stay off for the rest of the shift?

JD Oh yes, he was a bag of nerves. He never went back to the mine, he went away to London for a while. Then he started in a mine along here, but his heart wasn't in it.

SB What I'm trying to get at is the Company's attitude in such a situation?

JD We don't know about that, that was just the procedure in those days. They were more worried about losing a pony or engine or something, they had to buy them to replace them, they didn't have to buy a human being. I'm not joking, that's the truth.

SB Did a member of the Company attend the funeral?

JD Oh yes, the Manager of the Oil Works. They were very nice, top hats and swallow tail - there were about half a dozen men in Winchburgh had these outfits, in those days they were married in them and then used for funerals - what you did then, you went up to the house, and met the cortege, and went right to the Cemetery. Nowadays most people wait at the Cemetery gates, and come to the house in the cars, but then everybody walked and they carried the corpse. At that time they had the horse hearse, but most carried them.

SB Had some of the miners wanted a day off to go to the funeral, was it allowed?

JD No, but it was always after. It was a Sunday that one - you wouldn't have got paid. But anyway the funerals were almost always held after the miners came home. All funerals used to be about three or four in the afternoon. Now they're in the mornings, and everything, but in those days about 4 o'clock. My father was killed on the Thursday and was buried on the Sunday. (Mrs Docherty) - I've got all the equipment up here, that they used, he was well known with going to the Powderhall

racing and everything.

SB You're mentioning sport again, you mentioned whippets before!

JD Whippets, there were so few in Winchburgh who had them, they had greyhounds latterly, but their whippets in Winchburgh, they ran at Powderhall in different races. And then you'd your annual sports day. Broxburn sports used to be on a Friday (Professional) and ours were on the Saturday, and we got all the runners across on the football park, there.

SB You know the coal miners had a special day, Gala Day, May Day, they also brought the pit ponies up!

JD They used to do that at Linlithgow Agricultural Show, but that died out. They walked them from the mines along to Linlithgow and showed them there.

SB Were the shale mines involved too?

JD Shale mine ponies they were taken along too - Walked them from the mines at Duddingston and Newton right along and walked them home again. But the sports day, that was one of the events. Things improved financially. They took the ponies - it's a good five miles from here to Linlithgow. They had to walk it, but eventually they got horseboxes, transport. See the laddies that drove the ponies, they'd come up on the Friday. If they worked the Friday the pony that was going to the show the next day, didn't work that day and the poor devil had to work the two shifts, that was on the dayshift work. The backshift ones got the night off to get ready. The laddies that were driving the day shift ponies would go home and get their dinner, and go back down the mine again to wash and brush them and then they were away out to the mine at 5 o'clock in the morning - they had to walk it - and then tidy they ponies up. They took a real interest in them.

SB Do they cover their eyes up when they come up from the mines?

JD No, no. Eventually they had a big paddock at the mine, and they used to bring them up on a Friday, and kept them there till the Sunday night, and then took them back down the mine when they wanted them. Latterly they were done away with in the mines, there has been none for years. I'll tell you, a great sport was quoiting at one time. There was one down at the back of the Tally Ho, and there was one down at the back of the bowling green at one time, and you'd one at Broxburn, where the shows are now, you used to have one there, they used to have competitions and used to play for money at the back of the Tally Ho, on sports day, you'd also the running, quoiting and the motion pictures - That was great days - great quoiters from all over came, it was wonderful to see, the quoiting. A wee bit paper about that size 18 yards away, the boy used to sit with the paper to the last minute and get away from it. They used to gamble like. Tell you another thing, normally we used to start gambling at pontoon and budge maybe on a Friday to Saturday night, somebody had the cards and they got 6d for every clean (?) board (?) for the banking and at night when it came dark, somebody had a pit lamp and he got 6d. Played all weekend, there wasn't much money, and yet you could win pounds at it. People never left the village bar football matches. We used to go to Glasgow and away to Edinburgh and that. In fact to go to Glasgow it was 8d return to Linlithgow and 2/4d on the train, 3/- took us there, 1/- into the match and then home again. That's us skint for the week again!

SB What about pitch and toss?

JD Pitch and Toss? Oh, that was played, aye.

SB That was strictly against the law?

JD Oh heavens, the police used to hunt us!

SB So what did you do, hide?

JD Aye, well you just put your money in your pockets and stood. It's just like the vandals today, the police knew who was doing it but they couldn't catch them. The police chased us one time - The police wasn't too bad, it was people - One woman lived just opposite the bowling green, she was a nosey old so and so and she was always complaining to the police and sometimes she would write a letter, she never put her name on it, the policeman says to me one day, "We've got an anonymous letter from Mrs. Nicoll!" But there was one Sunday night when we had just started playing and the Police came around, and the ambulance followed close after that, but ultimately they went away round the old work, the green shale, and they played there and nobody bothered them, as long as you were away out of the road, know what I mean? Ach, you could win a few pounds, it died a natural death as other things more interesting came along. Greyhounds, and then as things got better these clubs started up, that's the main downfall of football and things, young ones are going to the pubs and clubs now, instead of going where we went. We went to football, the grounds in Edinburgh, we went up the street to the match at Easter Road or Tynecastle, we were almost fighting to get on the buses, packed. (?) going to the grounds were packed, but nowadays there's hardly a soul going to anything. We used to have two Junior clubs in Winchburgh, Winchburgh Albion and Winchburgh Thistle, years ago when I was a boy but we'd another one up to war time, and maybe on a Tuesday or Wednesday night we might play Stoneyburn. I've seen 2,000 or 2,500 down at the game. My mother and my ( ? ) used to go down too. Village life then was village life. But then social lives changed.

SB Was there much rivalry between villages?

JD Heavens, Aye. Niddry and Winchburgh - you know Niddry up there, they would fight and die for each other at that time. They were a great community up there. There was Niddry - Some characters. They used to think that us in Winchburgh were snobbish, but they had works up there you see and just where the tips start, the work was opposite the first tip, you ken, the left hand side by the garage, the row started right hand side, just at the foot of the wee hill, and it went right along the site in front of that tip, right along, a single row, and then they went right down to the farm at the far end, same again on the left side of the brae, Niddry Brae - there was a back row - it was a right community, it was great, in fact when we were at school we were afraid to go round, we were the Niddry Boys and there was a team called Niddry Celtic and Winchburgh Albion. In fact Winchburgh Albion, the junior team the now who celebrated their Golden Jubilee about three or four years ago, never been down, and that was - and they were called the - just Winchburgh Laddies. They're still not all Winchburgh play for it now, maybe 10 from each side. Used to be great rivalry and at the bottom of where Millgate is, there now - that was Niddry's football field, now see when they met, there was skin and hair flying. They got pulled apart - oh aye, oh dear, I remember one time, Winchburgh Albion, they were playing..... Willie Thornton was playing for them at that time, he played for Rangers for years after that..... in fact he was born in farm, his father was under manager in the mine, he played with them and was pretty local at the time. They went through to Eastfield, they played Eastfield at Cambuslang. They drew 5-5 In the Scottish Cup so they came here the following Saturday, big crowd, only one local policeman when it started, it finished up with five policemen, two doctors and an ambulance!

It was in the Post headlines the next day! A fight started between some of the Winchburgh boys and some Eastfield boys, and if anyone got hurt they were just taken across to this house in (                    ?                    ) where the doctor looked at them. One boy got taken away in an ambulance, a Glasgow boy. They thought he'd a broken leg, took him up to Bangour. He nipped out at night and got home... aye, there was skin and hair flying that day! The local rivalry was great, but it was never bad, it never lasted.

SB    What about between the works? Was there rivalry between the works ?

JD    No, nothing like that. It was rivalry, not hatred. There were characters in those days. As I said to one boy, "There are no characters now". He says, "John, but there are no corners now". See what we call "corners". Up at the Tally Ho there where Beresford Terrace is now, there was (?) up there, used to be tennis courts, it was in ruins, and at the corner just opposite the Tally Ho, it used to come up the road and then go like this round it and then down, well the men used to meet there at nights after the backshifts, anything from 6 o'clock onwards, and there was always some humourists there - talking about comedians - no comedians now would stand in that corner. The same at Niddry. At the end of Niddry at the top of the brae they all met at the end house, they maybe played pontoon, they talked, some great characters! Old Jock Murray..... There's no corners to hear them at now, know what I mean? If you'd still the same meeting there now, you'd still get - as John says, you'd meet the miners after the backshift went walking down the rows till maybe 2-3 o'clock in the morning. Maybe done a bit of poaching - away down the water on Lord Hopetoun's estate. Many a hare my father got off that tip there, come home from school and it was hanging at the back of the door, that was your butcher meat for that day. I used to love the

hares.

SB Was there much poaching going on?

JD Oh aye, quite a lot, at one time. When it came to harvest time, there were hundreds in the harvest fields when they were cutting, rabbits. They hit them with sticks..... I got one hare. They use combines now, they hunt all the game out. There's nobody interested now. Long ago when it was the horsedrawn one, there wasn't much noise and some of the rabbits and hares stayed out till the last gasp. In those days you had the seasons and the works, and different things that were going to happen, at Hogmany time, long before it they were saying "Hey, you, got your bottle in yet?" But now..... Every Saturday's Hogmany now. Things have changed completely. Hogmany's a thing of the past. You have it in your own house, you buy it in the store, have your friends round. In those days you were going from house to house with your bottle. 'First Footing' they call it.

SB Christmas in a small or mining village, how did you spend it?

JD They didn't hold Christmas, it was New Year. Christmas day was always worked up to latterly. Some men who had families took Christmas off, worked without pay. They lost a shift - others worked, and they would have New Year off. But they got no wages for it. But we oil workers got ½ shift.

SB What about the women, was first footing for men only?

JD They never went, women then were under the thumb. They didn't have money to do anything like that. I remember when I was a boy my father used to be nightshift, a cycle of seven year, maybe on Hogmany night, him and the other two men at the top of the pit but they would come down at 12 o'clock, and they

would come into my mother's and they'd have a half each, and then they'd go along to the other man's house, the same again, then go to the other man's house, the same again, then they'd go back up the pit to do their shift, and they were well on! On the top of those bings, and they'd go right to the end one to lift the hutch up to empty them! They'd to get their heads against the hutch, lift it up like that, let the shale slide out and put it back on the rails again.

SB And they never had an accident?

JD Oh no, they were well fortified, a drunk man will never fall and hurt himself. Once when we were young, these fellows, the McLuskys, they were miners too, there was Hugh Davidson, Bob McQueen, they're all gone now, but anyway, they used to start at McLuskys two doors down from our house, and they'd a refreshment there, then they'd come up and my mother would let us sit up, and we're all sitting burnished like new pins round the fender stool. They'd get nearer and nearer and you'd hear them starting to sing, and then they'd come into our house, and it would be halves again, and my father was up at the tip that night. Three of them, him and Bob Prentice, I can't remember the other one, old Bob used to sing the song about the butcher boy killing the sheep and carrying the basin..... everyone sang and we were sitting there enthralled. And then they went out round some other houses, they were all good lads, there was no fighting or anything. But nowadays that's all gone, people go up to the store, there's more go to the clubs, of course the women are drinking now.

SB What about the women in those days, what did they do?

JD One or two older women used to go out, and they were looked down on. People thought it was terrible, to see them going in and coming out of the pub. Nowadays it's wrong if you don't go to the pub!

SB How did you entertain yourselves as women?

JD Just sitting reading, or we used to make rugs in those days. John's mother used to be very good at it. We'd just sit blethering.

SB Did you have 'hen parties'?

JD No, never in time! When anyone was getting married in those days they used to put a flag up their lum, they were supposed to get a bottle of whisky for it, but it was beginning to be a business with some of them. They were going round you know, the same ones doing it... just to get the whisky. So people stop . No, you'd just the events of the year at that time. Christmas day..... they've all died out, the Gala day, the Sports day, you'd the football on Saturdays, but it's all died out. Very few go to football now. But that was our life. Even Christmas and New Year, if you gave presents, which was rarely, because you couldn't afford it, it was only within your own house, but nowadays everyone round about you... you're giving presents to all the nephews and nieces, it mounts up and mounts up. You never kept Easter, you know with the chocolate eggs and things, you dyed your eggs and rolled them up at Niddry Castle. Nowadays they're coming out with massive eggs!

SB Now as a child, what kind of Christmas present did you receive?

JD Nothing - a threepenny bit, an orange or apple, and a hankie. You hung your stocking up, you hung it at the end of the bed, and that's what was in it, nothing, one of these, that's what we got. You didn't expect any more.

SB And what would a man give his wife?

JD Nothing, she got his pay on a Friday!

SB What about birthdays and things like that?

JD Oh they passed..... you didn't have the money, we never bothered.

SB And what about anniversaries?

JD No, and there were no mother's day or father's day or any day!  
25th wedding anniversaries passed, the weddings were all in  
the houses, and the person had to pay for everything.

SB That must have been quite an interesting day, a wedding?

JD Oh great, great days, but they were all in the house. Very  
occasionally, somebody who had a few bob would maybe hire a  
hall, but everybody said the ones in the houses were the best  
weddings.

SB So who would you invite? People from the village?

JD No, intimate friends and relations. And it was always at  
breakfast. We were married at 9 o'clock in the morning, at  
9 o'clock mass, and then we had a celebration. A lot of them  
used to get married at 6 o'clock at night, in their own church,  
and have their celebrations at night. Ours went on till night,  
we were in Ireland and it was still going on! And that was us  
sailing! They were good. 'Poor-Oots' were great, there was a  
lot of money scattered then, you know what I mean? Saving all  
the coppers for weeks and weeks. They would throw them out -  
You'd skint knees trying to get them! They were great events,  
weddings! My big brother got married at Linlithgow, so we were  
up in his house, it was in the house too, you know, we'd the  
breakfast in a restaurant and then you came up to the house, and  
I'd a wee bit thing and I dropped in with it and I went out to  
the gate and I made a scatter, and I went back into the house,  
and Margaret, Nell's wife, said "They're saying out there that's

the best scatter there was ever in Lithgae"! They were getting half-crowns and two bob bits. I put my hand in my pocket and said " I know who's made your wedding, son, it's me". I'd coppers in one pocket and silver in the other and I'd throw the silver!

SB So that was you bankrupt for the week?

JD Oh, bankrupt for more than a week! Things weren't so hard then. A bit earlier then. But they were the old days, a tanner.....

SB What about the birth of a child, was that celebrated in the village at all?

JD Oh no, not really. People were pleased to see it, but there were never presents or nothing else. I mean they're getting engaged now, and the room they're showing their engagement presents in, they're like wedding presents. You've got wedding presents on top of that. They were great days, I mean, there was something about them. Looking back - but living through them thank god they're away. We'd never wish them back for young ones to go through it. They think they're bad now, what they are going through, unemployment without any prospect of a job, but they're at least getting something to live on. I mean when you were on the dole years ago it was only 15/3d, you'd no Social Security, nothing at all, you lived on that, even a pensioner, it came to 7/6d to 10 bob. They'd their rent to pay and their paraffin, light and their coal off that.

SB When an old oil worker or miner retired from the firm, did he stay in his house?

JD Oh, yes, but if once you'd stopped working for the firm before that, you'd to get out, for they were tied houses, and there were so many people waiting for a house. They'd to live in rooms, sometimes for years. Most people stayed in rooms in the

'20's, because there were no houses being built then, but latterly the Councils got in. But the councils we had in those days were farmers and so forth, and they didn't provide for that, they wanted to keep the rates down for their own sake, so they built nothing. It was after the war, when the Labour Government came in, that things improved for the people. No matter what the Labour Governments do now, we've a lot to thank them for, the Unions, they did thank the Unions for things, although to a certain extent some people but latterly they've destroyed them to a great extent, they're going beyond the limit now, but in those days the men coped well on nothing, they didn't get big salaries to help.

SB The Union man that dealt with the oil worker was O'Hagar!

JD That's right, and now it's Walter Nellies. He was General Secretary. There was also Jim McKelvy. Those men weren't getting big salaries, but they were working, and coming to see the people, have meetings at the mines, but there was more dialogue between Company and Union than before anything was done than is done in some cases now, although there's been a lot more dialogue now, but this one now, they're not the same. Dick Nelson had an uncle who was the originator of that. Old "Boyle". The men would go round and collect the dues every Friday, maybe 1/-, but they really fought to make conditions a bit better than what they were. They were true Trade Union men, and there's no getting away from it, they brought the working class well forward. The working class was lucky to have a bike, you could pay up a bike at half a crown a week, the only two cars at that time would be the doctor's and the manager's.

END OF TAPE TWO.

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