

JH/JI

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JH/JI SIDE ONE

Q. When you first started in the mines, which mine you started in, how much you earned, any detail that you can possibly remember?

A. Well, I started when I was fourteen, in 19.....1917, and I worked in it till I was sixty!

Q. So, you worked all your life.....?

A. Yes, Yes! Never saw daylight sometimes! On a Friday there used to be an extension hour, and you went out at half past five in the morning, and you didn't get in till about half past three, and it was dark again! You know, in the wintertime! So you never saw the sun!

Q. So, you started at fourteen as a pit head boy?

A. No, down the mine!

Q. Down the mine? Doing what?

A. Well, I started with my father! And I was learning how to be a miner! How to use a pick, and how to stamp holes and put up trees and what not! But.....at the beginning it was nearly all.....I had to fill hutches, and the seam was only four foot nine high! And I was six feet!

Q. That was a small seam! What seam was that?

A. Well, they called it the underseam! I couldn't tell you what they!..

Q. It's part of the Dunnet!

A. Eh?

Q. It's part of the Dunnet seam!

- A. The Dunnet? Oh, the Dunnet's about ten foot high!
- Q. Yes, but in the Dunnet you have the under, the mid, and the upper! You have three seams within one seam!
- A. She knows more about it than I do! (JI) Aye!
- Q. It's alright, go on! It was the under!
- A. Well that was the height of it, four foot nine! And then I went on to the drawing, drawing hutches, on what you call a cuddy, I suppose that you'll have heard of them too! If you've been around West Lothian! And I used to be skinned from there down to my tail, lifting it all... catching on the roof, there you are!
- Q. And how much did you earn for that?
- A. Oh well, wait the now! JI/I can't mind! Of course, I'm only going by what...../The wages.....oh, they weren't very big there! It was only about two pounds a week!
- Q. Two pounds a week? And you were living at home? At the time, with your family?
- A. Yes!
- Q. And your father was a faceman?
- A. Yes!
- Q. Can you remember how much he brought in? How much his wage was?
- A. Well, he skinned us! He skinned off the wages, so I didn't know what he was earning!

Q. Hmm! I see!

A. JI/The likes of those days, there was a.....wage, say it was three shillings a day, well, the man that you worked to, he drew the pay, and if he gave you three shillings a day, you couldn't say anything! That would maybe work about eighteen shillings a week! But he would maybe have two, three or four pounds and you couldn't say a word, you see, that was how it was worked/ I couldn't tell you really, what the wage was at that.....but round about thirty.....1930-31, it was two pounds eight!

Q. And what mine was that?

A. Duddingston! Number three!

Q. Number three?

A. You're not wanting the 'bl.....y numbers! JI/The old mine number one! I didn't know that/I'm telling you. JI/I worked in it too, /We're getting instructed after we've been in them all our life too!

Q. You know, the thing that puzzled me, was the Company aware that a drawer, as you say, only got about three bob a day, whilst the faceman got a lot more money?

A. Yes! JI/Yes! They were well aware of it!

Q. And they allowed it?

A. JI/In fact, they were in favour of it/ They didn't approve!
JI/.....Getting half wages! There was not such a thing, then, Andy! They didn't approve of the drawer being paid too much! If you got a dollar in a week, you were well off, compared to some, or ten bob, whatever it was, but there was very little likelihood of that happening!
JI/You see there was maybe one or two paid more than.....us,

we could be in the one lie, you know where you were drawing the hutches!
You might have five shillings, and you might have four and I would only
have three! (Inaudible) the same amount of hutches! That's how the
system was worked!

Q. Why is that? It depended on your faceman!

A. JI/Yes!

Q. How generous, or how good he was?

A. JI/Yes! /If he was greedy he gave you the fixed rate! And
it was benevolence he gave you two or three bob extra, and you thought
that you were well off! JI/But I'll tell you.....I'll tell
you what, J! What I found down the mines, the man that took a drink,
and he gambled.....you know, a shilling or two on the horses, was the
best worker! Because he had to...../he had to work a wee bit harder/
JI/he had to...../he had to work a wee bit harder to get the
price of a drink!

Q. This is it!

A. JI/But the skin he got, he called it the skin! The skin off
the wages!

Q. But..... talking about, you know, the facemen treating these drawers,
what would make a faceman treat his drawer better? His religion, his
politics?

A. No!

Q. Where he came from?

- A. No! The earnings! The earnings! You could be in a.....you could be in a good bit, or I could be in a good bit, and I could produce more than what Andy could, so therefore, you were maybe getting it easier to lie.....you maybe weren't using so much explosives! We had to buy our own explosives! And the Laird of Cockpen, down here at Hopetoun, he had ninepence a ton, and I had half a crown a ton, and I had to buy explosives, and tools! Boring machines and drills, shovels, picks...!
- Q. That's your graith?
- A. Aye! JI/Oh, she knows that too! I think that we should have went to her! /And I said tools! JI/And you were being polite! That's what we called it the graith! He had ninepence, which was a crime! He shouldn't have got anything!
- Q. And he got ninepence royalty?
- A. Yes, exactly! Now, he's getting a 'bl...y' fortune off this tip over here and also the tips in West Lothian that are under his land. James Irvine/He sold them over again! / You see he's..... JI/Ayeall the...../That, that should have gone.....he was paid for it as it was, you know, when it was bing produced, and.....well, he lost no sweat over it! And then, when they were building that new road, they started to take that steady metal, you know, big stones and what not, and those big huge machines and what not, and crushed it down, and crushed it down and made a better road, and there was this big one, it's away down here, it's about half a mile out of the village on the right hand side! That's sold now, somebody has bought it! And there's about, I believe there's about fourteen lorries running there every day!
- Q. That's the one.....the hutch.....has it not got an old bogey on it?
- A. JI/I couldn't tell you!/ A bogey.....where!
- Q. On the tip?

A. JI/Has it? I couldn't tell you!

Q. An old bogey! You know, a tip bogey! When they used to empty the spent shale!

A. Oh, I don't know! It's a long time since I've been up there, we could walk up there after we've finished! And for quite a long while, it was burning, you see! At the east end, that's where they tipped it up! That was burning for a long there for a long while! They had a pipe led from the Work, that the water.....came up yon pipes.....and that cooled it down!

Q. So it was sprayed?

A. Well, it sprayed.....well, it scooted out, like that, you see! The pump would start at the bottom and wheech it up! Do you understand that word?

Q. I do, yes!

A. There's one here, there's a wee Welsh woman here, she's married to Davie Johnston.....he was in the same pit, he was a cashier in the office! And she was coming.....she was coming home one day from Broxburn, and she says.....she's Welsh, and she says 'By God, it was wheeching along the road today!' So I said, 'Where did you get that language?' Wheeching! That was it! So I'm all against the Laird getting anything! But I can't, I'm stuck! That was disgrace right enough, and I mean, well, that should have reverted back to the B.P. or the Scottish Oils.....it was Oakbank Oil Company that burnt it, that over there, and then it was the Scottish Oils and then it was B.P., and he was already paid for that! And still he's getting.....he's selling it now, that's right! So many cubic feet! Or cubic yards!

Q. Out of the sweat of somebody else's labour!

A. Mine! His!

- Q. Aye! And yours and his.....and everybody's.....
- A. Everybody!
- Q. So, to go back inside the mines.....you were a drawer first, how long were you a drawer?
- A. Oh, I was on.....when I was about nineteen.....about five years!
- Q. And then you became a faceman? And you stayed a faceman.....all your days?
- A. No.....I had an accident, and I had to pack it up, I couldn't.....I was drawn into a wheel.....and my muscles were all ruptured! And then they came with these electric borers, what you called the ram's head and it's about forty pound weight! I could hold it there.....but it was the vibration and my arms used to cramp, so I had to pack it in!
- Q. So what did you do then?
- A. I done all the repair work! Down Duddingston, and then I was transferred to Whitequarries! Do you know where that is?
- Q. Yes!
- A. My! You've been around! And I was there for seven years! And I closed it down! That's where..... that's where I finished up, well, the mines was finished developing, you see! It was.....the shale was being sent then up to Westwood, you know, up by West Calder, and then it packed up after that! And then.....it was.....where now.....that place over at Whitequarries was.....it was open till about 1932. JI/
About '32 or '33. / Then it was flooded, you see, and they drained it again, oh there was a hell of a water in that!
- Q. Was this Whitequarries No. 1 or No. 6?

A. Well, it was Number 1 that I was in,/JI/The two of them was working right enough, when they finished up, but when the.....oh now, it wasn't, what did they start the three weeks working.....and the week idle, round about '32! /Oh aye, when I got married! Aye, that was a great week!

Q. When you got married?

A. Aye! Oh aye!

Q. And what happened?

A. The wife got a pound that week, that was two shifts we got, mind, out of the pay! We finished on a Wednesday, and we were on the dole/JI /you got.....you see, you worked three weeks and you were off for the fourth week. That was to give work to the Whitequarry men.... because the Whitequarries mines had shut down! And this was a new.... scheme that they brought out, for to give them work, you see! And that's what it was, three weeks working, and a week idle! And you had four shifts and your dole one week, and the week that you started after, you had only two shifts!

Q. So how did the dole money compare with your shift money?

A. JI/Oh, it was next to nothing/ Next to nothing! JI/ Well below...../Next to nothing! I just couldn't tell you...../JI /I think when I was on the dole.....of course I was young..... about seven and a tanner, I think it was that, seven and a tanner a week! Of course, my wages weren't big because I had on.....what they termed the oncost! I had/JI/a bencher you know, where the bencher came out and you hung them on a rope and away up!

Q. You mentioned, you know, twisting..... that was the endless haulage....?

- A. JI/Yes!/Yes! JI/The chain..... through it/You slung it round just like that, maybe three burls and then you hooked it on!
- Q. (Inaudible).
- A. JI/Or you had to go hell for leather, it all depends what bench you were at, if you were at twenty seven, of course, that was the main, and No. 9 was a busy bench too!
- Q. Now.....how did they become twenty seven bench, nine bench, how did they get those numbers?
- A. Well, that's what you called a level! They went down so far and that was number six level, and they went down to fifteen, and that was another level that they drove in for far enough, then they went down to eighteen, and from eighteen to twenty one, and down to twenty seven, and that was the bottom area/JI/Twenty four..... twenty four...../Oh, aye, I was in that/JI/Twenty four come between twenty one and twenty seven/That's right!/JI/And I mind that they went down..... right down to what did you call it..... twenty seven. Bob Secular worked in it.....all water mostly.....and it was just an incline/That's where the sump was/JI/Aye, where you took the...../Do you know what the sump is?
- Q. No!
- A. That's where they contained all the water that would run in the mines!
- Q. Oh, yes, I know what you mean!
- A. They filled up that area! And then.....was/JI/Thirty one, that was it, thirty one, you called it/And well.....sixty nine well, what you call a stoop length was sixty feet, and so that was hundred and eighty feet between the two lintels, all the time right down to the

pit bottom./JI/That place where the water was.....a man, he lived out at Glendevon.....he took dermatitis, oh.....it was all over his.....of/JI/Of course if he was over at the top of that water, in it all the time!

Q. Did you get the water money for that?

A. JI/No!/No! I had.....I got dermatitis in 1944.....

Q. And was that caused by the water.....?

A. Well...../JI/Oil particles/Oh.....it could have been caused by the shale but I lost my case, I went to the law about it, one Doctor says yes, and one Doctor says no! And it went to a tribunal, and I was turned down!/JI/But they wouldn't pay you for dermatitis though then...../I couldn't get compensation like, and that was what I was fighting for...../JI/But you know that trouble that the miners have, you know, coal miners.....

Q. Yes, pneumonionicosis.....

A. JI/Well, there was some of us had got that.....I've got it, and you didn't get compensation for that either, I used to go to Bangour, they would ask you where you worked and they asked if you got compensation, and you told them no, the coal miners got it but the shale miners never got it/Well, that crowd that was coming..... that crowd from Edinburgh you know.....

Q. Oh yes, the Americans..... the, the Royal Institute of.....

A. Well, they had been over like.....and they said it was seldom that any shale miner had the silicosis.

Q. Yes, I was going to say that to you! It is, it's very seldom!

A. They said well, they said that you should get some dust and what not,

but it was mostly nothing...../JI/Oh.....I'm bothered with my chest.....and my lungs! My lungs! In fact I went in/That's why he drinks so much! To keep them lubricated! /JI/I went through a big operation in '73, I went up to Bangour in '72 and I went through an operation in '73, and I'm still attending Bangour to this day, I go up about every year now! I go up on the 4th of June, I go up every year! For a checkup!

Q. Now, with you having that trouble with your lungs, what then..... obviously you haven't.....what were the conditions in which you worked? Down in the mines?

A. Oh well...../JI/Some places that you were in, you were in where there was water coming from the roof...../And you were paddling through it.....paddling through it and everything!/JI/And you were put into another place that was maybe as.....as that! Well, as soon as you went in there, your boots used to all crack and.....with them being the wet.....and if you came into a dry condition, your boots used to all..... We were just talking about.....when we were down at the Blue Gates.....in Hopetoun Park, do you know where that is?

Q. Yes!

A. JI/Well, we were all.....we were down there to work, in eighty eight places..... there were six of us away inside, and we used to fire the place we used to fire all at the one time! You had to go awayoh, sit away out, oh.....I don't know, for how long! Because you couldn't see! You could see for.....reek and...../And then pretty often you had to go in, and it was just the wee tallow lamps then, or the sweet oil, you know.....and you could, a wee peep about that.... well, you couldn't afford for to sit too long, you had to go in there coughing and spluttering all over the ship! Och it was.....cruel... cruel! Working!

Q. And what about gas? Was it bad for gas?

A. No! No! Duddingston wasn't...../JI/I was only.....I was only once working with gas, but that was at.....Tottlywells/Aye!/JI /But when Duddingston No. 3 shut down, there were some sent over to Tottlywells, and some were sent to Whitequarries, well I was working with a chap up there...../Higden/Well, I worked with big George Higden and he come from Nova Scotia or Newfoundland or somewhere...../Newfoundland/ and we were trying to get into Duddingston No. 1 Old Mine and we got/ so far and we struck gas, and that was it finished, there was nothing but water and gas! And then I was in a bit where they tried to burn it, in Tottly..... it, oh, it was murder/It was a failure/JI/ but you know the black lead my mother used to use, well that's how you came out, it was warm, and the/JI/heat, it was that hot, you were coming up to the surface, where we had a canary, in a cage all the time, and the poor canary used to get cawed off, you know, you forgot all about it! And then when we did come through to the surface there was snow on the ground, but we couldn't stand the cold! We had to go up on to the surface to get a cup of tea! Up, well, you just walked it through and went up and got a cup of tea!

Q. And what were they trying to do?

A. They were burning it! And instead of retorting it.....

Q. Oh.....burning it on the site?

A. Yes, yes, exactly! They tried it, but it wasn't a success!

Q. That's a thing that they Americans are trying to do now! Burn it on the site!

A. JI/They had a lot...../Here, this affair of the Americans and their territory, is it a mountain? Or is it.....

Q. It's opencast! They're trying to get opencast shale mining!

A. Aye, yes! Yes!

Q. Yes!

A. I just thought that because.....well, the opencast coal you see, when they.....as much as humanly possible!/JI/There was an open-cast over in Duddingston, it was all.....I mind it working.....I mean I was at school/That went for years!/JI/Like a big huge big hole, just down from the Neuk, do you know where the Neuk is? well just down the back of the...../you know just at the back doors, well right over in the.....

Q. There were three opencasts!

A. Was there.....?

Q. Opencasts, all told!

A. There was one in.....

Q. There was one in Niddry, there was this one in Bridgend where your... is, Bridgend, and there was the other one in Livingston! You know, Gavieside, you know, quite near to Gavieside! Kirkton Campus! That was the deepest one, that was two hundred feet deep!

A. Was it? At Livingston?

Q. At Livingston! That was the deepest one ever! I think that Niddry one went as far down as sixty feet, and.....

A. JI/Oh.....the Mother of Newton?.....would go down quite far, J, because it was a huge.....of course, I was only at the school and I used to go up there and you wondered what it was, but they weren't working then.....it was stopped!/We..... there's a lad who was seventeen years old at the time, when we, what you call, we blew through on the surface, from No. 6, and it was the dead of 'bl.....y' winter, and I'm sure that I'd asked my father where the opencast stood.....but still

draw it down the pit, we were on the.....we were on the pit rates for it, and oh God, well, sometimes you would get the clay, four feet... six feet deep and here this wheel works it enough there, but I don't know if we were fortunate enough, but the cold would have killed you! You know, the current of air, when it.....the likes of that coming down the pits.....and you're sweating and you're running down this cuddy and you're walking here and away down another one, and over to the bench and och...../Jl/When we were on that place where they were trying to burn it, we got a bigger rate, Jl/Did you?/Jl/ Aye, we got a bigger rate! But as soon as we come through,.....coal, we couldn't...../Very.....very poor payers!/Jl/Aye, I'll say that, I'll say that much! There are some that say that they wish that they were still going, but not me! When the mine finished, well, we used to all say to one another, you know, when they were shutting them down! We wondered what we were going to do, because all that we were using was a pick and a shovel, but when you went into Civvy Street, and seen how they worked and lived, we were too late in going in, because we were all buggered by that time you know! With our injuries and everything! But mind you, I had another job after that and I thought that it was worse than the mines! In a foundry! In Corstorphine! And I thought that it was worse than the mines! Because I used to lift the hot metal through and put it on a gantry and you had to shut all the doors and the windows, and there was supposed to be a big draught..... instead of going up through, it wasn't the/Jl/.....enough and in the summertime, it was.....a glass roof. They couldn't shunt enough..... there were seven, eight gas fires at one end, and there were one, two, three, four, five big gas ovens at the other end!/And...../ And that.....you were maybe about from there.....I would say maybe about fifty metres from one side to the other, and we were casting on this side, you couldn't see these boys over there! And they couldn't see us!/And you didn't know what one another were doing!/Jl/ I thought that it was worse than the.....

Q. The mines?

A. Jl/I thought that it was, and I was five years there! But

of course, as soon as you stop casting the sliding doors and all the windows were getting opened and, you went and took a drink of water, and when you took a drink of water, you just flew back into the toilet again! It just went right through you! Just went right through you! Ach,...../That's about the worst job, then I got a job in the whisky!

Q. Did you like that?

A. JI/Oh, aye, aye!

Q. Oh aye! I can see that!

A. JI/VAT 69...../it was great!/I'm telling you though.....

Q. Look at the smile on his face.....

A. JI/I was better treated in VAT 69 than what I was with the Scottish Oils, and I did eighteen years out there, and I did twenty seven and a half with the Scottish Oils, but I was better off with the VAT 69, so there!

Q. So would you say that Scottish Oils was the.....sorry, not a bad firm, but a mean firm to work for?

A. Well.....if you weren't making it at one time, you didn't get it! If you didn't make the wages, what you would call the expression is, 'they wouldn't make you up', and we didn't get a fixed rate to round about 1944, a fixed.....a standard rate, till about 1944! Then if you happened to strike it bad, you got this minimum wage, and it was minimum! JI/The likes of.....the likes of J.....when you were there, there was no such a thing as a Union!/Oh aye! Oh aye!/ JI/When I left the Union was.....just Crichton and Grant coming..... J, ken/Oh Aye!/I was in the Union when I started....

Q. Was it strong?

- A. No, not at all/JI/That's what I mean...../Then we were out on strike in 1925 from November to February and old Mick O'Hagan.... you'll hardly remember him/JI/I don't know him, no!/You were only a boy then!/JI/I wish that I hadn't know the mine either, never mind Mick O'Hagan!/They were streeching the 'a.....' of the barrel!
- Q. Oh!
- A. The Company.....no, no...../JI/They always told you that before you went for a rise, that was always their saying, they were scraping the 'a.....' of the barrel!/Well, we were idle for what was it about..... twelve weeks.....
- Q. Twelve weeks?
- A. Fourteen weeks.....
- Q. And what was the idea behind.....what was the original idea behind the strike?
- A. Oh.....the conditions, you know, better conditions and stuff like that! And we even went down, I was amongst the pickets down there at Grange-mouth, and that was in 1925, but they went back about a month later!
- Q. I've heard somewhere that there is a story going about somewhere that you went on strike because the Company were going to cut your wages, by nearly ten per cent or twenty per cent!
- A. Well...../JI/Was that not after the war? Was that not all the Yanks.....or something?
- Q. That was the First World War that.....1921..... that came out!
- A. Well there again, I was doing a man's work then! And I only got half

of it! It doesn't matter if I was under twenty one or under eighteen or whatever, I just can't remember but the.....I think it was about six pounds that we had, or seven pounds of a bonus there, and..... like that.....

Q. Just disappeared?

A. Yes, knocked it off!

Q. And why is that?

A. They just couldn't pay it, that was the excuse.....just the same as Mrs. 'Snatcher' she can't afford anything! Except for her silk...../JI/Was that the twenty first that bonus? the twenty first... 1921,/...../JI/I can mind of.....I can mind a wee bit of the next one, when was it?/What?/JI/The next strike!

Q. 1925!

A. '25...../JI/I would be seven but I can mind of going up for the thingummy of soup and that and...../That was the only time that we went on strike, in all that time!/JI/Oh, I thought that you had went on strike in 1921 too!/No, Niddry was shut out! And they were closed down, that was when I worked up there at Niddry, and the mines were quite advanced.....part.....Thirty Five and Glendevon, they were all operating then!

Q. And Faucheldean! Was that open?

A. Yes! Yes!/JI/Aye/That was another one!/JI/Aye, Faucheldean!/God, you do your homework.....

END OF TAPE

JH/JI SIDE TWO

Q. What about Glendevon? Did you work in Glendevon?

A. No!

Q. What about you?

A. JI/Oh I just...../Oh it was a good pit to work in, regards the Management. The pit belonged to Young.....it was Young's..... you know. Paraffin, that's what your operating on just now isn't it?

Q. Nowadays, B.P. (Inaudible) Now, when you started, what years did you say that you started?

A. 1917!

Q. 1917! So, you would start under individual companies? And then it became Scottish Oils!

A. It was Oakbank and then it was Scottish Oils and then B.P.

Q. Did you find any difference?

A. No, no.....not at all. No! No, you wouldn't get a (inaudible), you went.....when you went to.....that was about anything.....I was looking for a house at the time and I was staying up in Niddry, and it was the dry lavatories you know, outside, I mean we'd always the flush here in these houses, and oh God, it was terrible! Oh.....I had to.....I had to appeal to Mr. Crichton at the finish! And I walked down from here to Philpstoun to the big house as they cried it, so he saw me, interviewed me and everything else, and apparently I had been a wee bit rumbustious when I was talking to him, and he says, 'Keep calm, keep calm!' I said, 'I am calm!' He said, 'There you go, he says, 'You're ready to bite!' I said, 'No wonder, if you had went to

that office as often as I did, and I'm always falling at the last hurdle!
So.....he took my particulars and everything, and said 'Leave it to
me!' And I got a house two days after that!

Q. So, he was good?

A. Oh aye! Oh aye, he would listen to you! But these.....I'll not say
.....I'll not say what I was going to say.....what I did say then!
JI/Baton (inaudible) was (inaudible) and them/Aye, Sandy
Martin and Geordie Dewar/JI/And then there was Dewar after
that...../Aye, it would have made you sick!/JI/My father
and mother got married, and they lived in a corner house up there, but
there was another couple in it! That was when Jock Tierney had it...
Jock...../Tierney?/JI/Aye.....Tierney/Oh.....up in the
Rows/JI/That's where Peggy was born...../Was it?/JI/
Aye, she (inaudible). And I came across an old Doctors.....you know
.....card that we got, old man.....83 Midhope and then.....it went
from there.....it must have got flung out from there, and it went to
Silver.....where you used to live, I think it was Canon that lived
there but I can't mind of them! And there were two or three young ones
and they were in there too! And then they got that house in 81, so
it just shows you how they lived long ago too!/Well, these are reckoned
to be the best in the country, the houses then.....

Q. Yes, the shale miners houses were quite good compared.....?

A. Only they made a mess of them, when it came to renovating them, why
didn't they lower the roofs?

Q. It's very.....when you look outside.....it looks very grim[And here
when you come inside it's nice and bright and really.....were they
always like that? As roomy as this?

- A. Och, aye, aye! The living room that we have through here, is fifteen by fifteen.....what's the...../JI/Well, I couldn't tell you/(inaudible)/JI/But there used to be a thingummy there there used to be a partition...../Two beds...../JI/ Two beds.....see, there's the mark there!
- Q. Oh yes, aye!
- A. That's the mark that came down, and there was a bed..... there was a bed here and a bed there.....and they've knocked them down now altogether/ They knocked the partition down and.....it was the Company that did that, you know, and then but.....when the Council took over..... theywhen the Company packed up, they renovated them, so called, I have a room ten feet by six, and I had four of a family! And we could get two beds in one room, and there were two beds in the living-room, and a bed in the other room, so there was plenty of bed room, now, the bed that we had in that ten foot by six.....well, all the family is away..... there's one in Germany and two in.....two in England, and one up here in the Millgate, that's why I keep a room, and that is the space from the wall to the bed!
- Q. That's about a foot?
- A. Ten by six.....well...../JI/Come on and I'll show you, I've got one the very same as that.....
- Q. Was his name Harry Worth?
- A. No.....but I called him Harry Worth!/JI/Aye.....Munro... thon was his name!
- Q. Was he a comic?
- A. What!! Aye, he was a comedian! Right enough! Unconsciously.....

Q. Oh!

A. Oh dear, oh dear!

Q. That's a wind.....

A. JI/Aye, that back door isn't right shut!/The door's not even shut (inaudible) the house! When you sit here at night.....if that door is open and this one.....oh, the howls!/It's like the banshee/JI/(inaudible) the front door as we call it, ken there's a door (inaudible).

Q. Aye, these houses are all upside down, is this your front or your back door?

A. JI/The back door, that's the front door!/Back door...../
JI/That's the front door!/You see..... They came running one time when I lived in 82, I lived down there for thirty eight years, and this joint.....came in with his book you know and paper and pencil, 'What would I like, what would you like to be done?' And I said, 'Nothing!' But that was how I spoke! I mean.....I said 'Aye, you can get the roofs lowered!' Says I, 'Put the bathroom at the front door, and you can take a foot off of one room or off of each room, and add it at the back, and that will.....!' But it didn't materialise! They put the bathroom in to the middle of the lobby! Into the hallthe hall.....you see, we're well off now, we call it the hall!

Q. It was a lobby in the old days!

A. Aye, a lobby...../JI/Aye a lobby...../A living room..... we called it a kitchen..... That was the scullery...../JI/ And that was the scullery...../And this was the kitchen.....

Q. And what was the room, the other one.....the back room?

- A. Well, just a room..... they were rooms!/JI/But we got.....
we all got a sheet to fill in like J was talking about, to know what
you wanted and I think that about ninety per cent put down to lower
the roofs! But they didn't do it!/No.....
- Q. It was too big a job!
- A. Not at all, that's not a big job!! They could have done it!! And I'm
not.....I'm not a joiner!!
- Q. You're a miner!
- A. I'm a miner!! But that was my job when I was a repairer...../JI
/there were one or two of them...../You could put a strap round
there, right round, and you would make it! It could have a centre for
strength! That's all that's about it! They could have done it two
And then, that's not a new one there, we haven't got new windows, and
they decided then that they would put in.....in the front..... the
rooms.....when you pull the bell, when you pull a rope, and wait till
it.....put them up on to a swivel and I watched the joiner doing it,
(inaudible) and here this day I.....you can clean each side of them,
you see, and he had forgot to put them on that, and the 'bl...y' window
fell on the top of me! So, he was working along the Row, and I said
to him 'Come here, come up here!' I said 'How do I get this back into
place?' (inaudible) so he says, 'You didn't put it on the clip!' I says,
'How, the hell, can a wee woman reach the likes of that even? Gripes',
says I, 'I'm six feet, and it takes me all my time!' Says I, 'Put it
on!' and says I 'Nail it down!' But he didn't.....he didn't nail it
down! I never open it!/JI/Aye, I never touch mine!/The tap
.....the top is down all the time! But not the bottom!
- Q. Yes, I see!
- A. Och, I would forget again and I would be.....
- Q. Bang!

- A. Bang! Oh.....well, I very near set fire to the house when I got the clout in the mutt!
- Q. It was a (inaudible), a nasty crack!
- A. Oh.....by heck, they were heavy! But oh, they made.....or even when they were doing the windows like that, they put it on a swivel, you know!
- Q. That's right, just turn over!
- A. Yes, turn it over, right round about! They were just.....they weren't they were all on bonus, and that is the biggest bugbear to any industry! Bonus! It's.....you do so much, if you do so much more, you get paid more! And they were battering through their work, like.....is that right?/JI/These houses down Niddry Road, they're Scottish Special, I think, and they were working down there, and they started in the morning, and they worked till four o'clock (inaudible) and from half past four, was overtime! (inaudible) one night there was a high wind and they all got blown down! Do you mind of that?/Aye!/JI/ All the high wind down there and they all got blown down! (inaudible) put them up anyway I/Now what more can we interest you, with regards to your museum?
- Q. Well, really, more details of inside the mine, like accidents and bits and pieces that are more.....you know.....were there many accidents or you know, that sort of thing? In the mines?
- A. Well, do you want my life story? I had twelve ribs broken!
- Q. What?
- A. Twelve ribs!
- Q. How did you do that?
- A. I didn't do it!! It happened!

Q. It happened? How did it happen?

A. Trees shooting! The weight..... the weight, they were crushing, and you're going away to prepare to make it safe.....and you turned your back, or you turned anything, it's all the same which way, and it shoots! And there was one day that I was coming down with.....it was steep workings than this, and I stood on, you know, a big bit of shale, and here it gave way! And I was carrying three drills and a boring machine and a bit and a key! And I tell you, I broke two of them at that time! Aye, I've had about a dozen broken! And then I got this, I was pulled into an Oldham wheel, have you any.....have you heard of that?

Q. No!

A. It's a big wheel! On a cuddy brae, what you call on a cuddy brae! And you brake it! And my brother and I worked together, you know, and he says, 'Right!' Instead of me going to the outgoing part of the rope, I just.....I rose from where I was 'Aye, right!' Braking away, and the loose material ran about my feet and my feet slipped and I landed on my (inaudible).

Q. Aye, on your (inaudible).

A. Aye, on a wheel.....on the rope, and I went down like that and the thing just (inaudible) over/JI/And they were (inaudible) working with those wheels for.....I'd another cuddy/Well the Union.....I gave it in to the Union, because they were supposed to have had a guard up, and what you would call a cousy brae, they have a guard rail up, and it comes down so far! Better than (inaudible) cousy, maybe running two hutches or three hutches on it at once, well he safeguarded..... the likes of this, and it's a wooden contraption, that covers the rope but in the developing areas where I was.....well you were taking too long I expect, and it would have taken maybe about half a shift to do up (inaudible) that time.

Q. Now the cousy brae has a handle? As a brake! And had a cuddy also a handle?

A. No, the cuddy itself hadn't! But when you were working with the Oldham the Oldham wheel, the Oldham brake, that's what (inaudible)/JI / (inaudible) tree to keep it there too! Well, that area you were up about three hundred feet well.....and you were looking down, and you would mark the rope...../JI/You would mark the rope when you came near the end!/To give you an idea what speed to land them at the bottom of it. It came off and you wouldn't know (inaudible)/JI /You knew...../Across the road and it all smashed in...../JI /If you put the brake on, well, the hutch..... too quick.....

Q. Oh..... turned over.....

A. If I was on the.....if I was on the back of the.....if the drawer took the back of it, the faceman, he braked it. Well I was.....it was my last hutch on the backshift, wee Archie Gilbert..... there was a lot of them had just been put on, and here (inaudible) the last hutch, the rope broke and I heard the cuddy hutch coming out (inaudible) it was a gas lamp, but I couldn't see, I just had to hope for the best! I had (inaudible) and big thingummies up my arm, and I had the Glenny on the back of the hutch, all Archie was bothering about was the Glenny lamp, he was shouting to me, and I was lying.....and I think that it was your John or somebody that came and picked me up! I was lying.....I was lying across the road!/Aye! It was just the same, they paid more attention to the horses, than they did to the men!

Q. They were more valuable!

A. Aye, the horses, aye! You could get men for nothing!

Q. You don't have to feed them, they feed themselves!

A. Yes! Och aye, I've had nails torn off my fingers, and I worked in... you've heard me talking about the under seam, the small.....instead

of taking the rings, you know, you would slew the hutch round the turns,
and you would catch it up here and down there and oh it was what....
there was only about that of a clearance at times! If your hutch was
a wee bit...../JI/That was funny, that though, as you were
saying there, the rings on the hutches (inaudible) I don't think that
anybody ever used them! I think that they were used to (inaudible) slew
round!

Q. Shove it round?

A. JI/Aye!/Turn them round!

Q. Now, you had pins as drawers, what was your.....what things did you
use?

A. Pins? JI/Pins! Oh aye...../Oh aye, you stuck that on the
hutch, that was.....

Q. And what was your pin?

A. JI/Oh, you're asking me something now that I couldn't tell/
you!

Q. Can you remember yours?

A. Yes!

Q. What was it?

A. Seven!

Q. Number seven!

A. JI/I can't even mind the shape of mine's!/
END OF TAPE