

Interviewee(s): David Spence (DS)	Interviewer(s): Unknown Female (UF)
Date of Interview: ?	Ref: EL2-32-1-3-T
REGION	East Lothian
TOWN	Tranent

0h 00m 00s

UF: Just- just check your voice.

DS: This is David, in very bad company this morning.

UF: *[laughter]* Cheek!

DS: *[laughter]*

UF: What d'you mean by that?

DS: And we'll go out by Newbigging this morning. I'll try and be polite.

Both: *[laughter]*

DS: No swear words *[laughter]*.

[pause in recording]

DS: -if I turnt right, I would be going tae the old bridge of Musselburgh, commonly called the Roman Bridge but actually it was built at the behest o Lady Seton, whose husband fell at Flodden wi James IV. If I turn left, that's the road tae Prestongrange, straight up the old road south from Edinburgh; part o the A1 now, of course. Now, we're... we're...

UF: We're gonna- right-

DS: Right again. Now, we're going up Newbigging. Just notice that fire station as we pass. That was the site o a coal pit and it was called the Water Wheel Pit because up the Brae here, I'll stop, ad there's a road down tae the Esk, and if ye consult your road maps, you'll see a big loop on that North Esk. And there was a tunnel driven there for water to drive that water wheel, before the days o steam.

UF: Ah.

DS: We're now on what's called Crookston Road nowadays but of course, that's a new name.

0h 02m 00s

Anybody who has a good road map, just have a look at it because I'm certain that this is part o an old roman road and ye can note frae Inveresk right through tae Gladsmuir, through Penston. We're starting again? ...Well, this is part o the auld roman road, as I've already said and it's almost straight. And... it's straight and joins what is now the A1 at Gladsmuir but it goes right on and ye'll notice that lying ahead is Traprain. Well, most folks now know of Traprain treasure and the Votadini [?]. So, I think there's substance in this, as a roman road but I'll leave that because there is opinions that the main roman road was through the Borders but I'm fairly convinced that wi its straightness, and the romans could drive straight roads, they woulda made good miners.

[pause in recording]

DS: We're now gonnae cross a main road here, called the Salter's Road and that road, the name itself tells you what it is. That came straight frae Prestongrange tae the monks of Newbattle and a don't need tae mention just what salt- because the making o salt was... far older than the discovery o coal, in fact, because they were short o timber. Pan-wood's the name that was used in later years for coal, so here we're crossing that on the road tae Fa'side. More about that up here.

0h 04m 10s

[incomprehensible due to poor sound quality outside]

-and we're looking north. What a panoramic view. Arthur's Seat on oor left, sweeping round Inchkeith right round *[incomprehensible]*. Musselburgh lying in the valley below us, history behind us. More tae say about that. And there's a lot o mining history about here, too.

[pause in recording]

UM: Aye, aye.

UF: Hope for the best.

UM: We always have done. Ken, it's... it'd been paired tae oor work aw the time for tae dae auld buildings like this.

UF: When did you start on this one?

UM: About three years ago.

UF: And what've you been doing?

UM: Practically everything. It's just hard tae imagine what it was like unless ye'd actually seen it before we started but this bit here, this was all open to the sky. There was absolutely nothing in here at aw. So, we started frae the bottom up.

UF: Can you go through the story from the bottom up?

UM: *[laughter]*

UF: Can you remember? *[laughter]*

UM: That takes- it takes quite a bit o remembering now, really. But what we had tae do first was put in the concrete arches tae support aw the original pieces o building that were here. There was pillars like this. They were just left and we had tae put massive concrete arches underneath, to support this, before we put the weight on tae the top. Aw the windows had tae be done, arches on tae the windows, outside and inside, new stone lintels, new stone rybats, windowsills, everything – on the way up tae the top flats.

UF: I see there's new turrets, as well.

0h 06m 00s

UM: Yes, completely new turrets. Aye. There was just the base o them when we started and then we built in the brickwork and the stone copings and then slates on tae the turrets. Aw the wa's, they're aw three and four feet thick and they're aw built wi solid brickwork. Aye, there's no hollow brickwork in it at aw. Absolutely nothing.

UF: You've had to do a lot of actual sort of stonemason's work, in the true sense of the word, haven't you?

UM: Oh aye, aye. Aw the stonework that, eh... round about the fireplaces and doors and windows, they had tae be retained, and aw the pieces that were sadly worn away, we had tae make new parts and put them in. New thistles, new roses... practically everything.

UF: Did you work from sort of old prints of what the building looked like?

UM: Yes. Oh aye, aye. There's some o them still in existence yet, some o the old prints. So, we just had tae work from them. And some o the old pieces o stone in the windows, they were still there. So, we just took the mouldings off o them and remoulded them again.

UF: What's the bit you've liked best?

UM: Everything. [*laughter*] Absolutely everything, frae the start tae the finish, a liked. It's aw a great interest. There's no one bit any better than another, really, cause everything ye do here, it's... that there's something special. I mean, there's... it's no like building a house, where ye just keep building brickwork every day; it's entirely different.

UF: What other sort of jobs have you done?

UM: Eh, Haddington House was our last job. That was a complete rebuild too. So...

UF: And-

UM: We're looking for another castle like this [*laughter*].

UF: Were you originally sort of monumental sculptors or...?

UM: Yes, aye. I done- spent thirty years with, eh, a monumental sculpture and builder in Haddington, Mr [?]. And I have ma own business now, so... we just carried on frae there when he retired.

0h 08m 02s

UF: And have you had any problems with the weather and things here?

UM: No really. The- the- the... sometimes we'll come up here in the morning and ye get a terrible west wind and then, that'll change probably by dinnertime. So, the building's big enough tae move round frae one corner ontae another each day. This is the problem that we're finding the day: the wind's coming frae the west and we're working on the east side. And this happens aw through the building.

UF: How many of you have been working on it?

UM: Eh, six. Six men aw the time. One apprentice.

UF: And was this originally- what room would this be in the castle?

UM: This would be the main hall in here, this sortae sitting room, or banquet hall, I suppose this would be.

UF: And it's going to be a living room?

UM: Well, this is what they're gonna call the cathedral, believe it or no because Mr Craig, he repairs and restores organs. Old organs, he collects them from all over the world and he has quite a

collection in his house and he's gonna bring the organs intae this room – and this is why he calls this the cathedral [*laughter*].

UF: And is it going to be open to the public when it's all done?

UM: Yes, a part o it'll be open tae the public. The older part o the building on that side and the kitchens down below and probably this room will be open tae the public; and then, frae there onwards, frae that door, that'll be all his private quarters up there.

UF: It's quite an undertaking, really.

UM: Oh aye. Have you been up the stairs?

UF: No.

UM: Mm. I'll take you up and let you see it and see the [?].

[*pause in recording*]

UM: -the sky, and we designed and built this staircase, aye, and this was up six stories.

0h 10m 00s

Now, as ye come up each flight o steps, we'll go intae the smaller rooms in what we call 'C Block'. There's six rooms like this on this side o the building. Six rooms here. The joists'll be... left open like that, for people tae see.

UF: Uhuh.

UM: These ceilings'll no be covered wi plasterboard or anything. They'll be kept open like that.

UF: And this is Oregon pine, still?

UM: And Douglas fir joists and Oregon pine in the... in the deafening boards and Oregon pine on the floors. The- aw these fireplaces are aw designed for coal fires. Every one. They aw have chimneys in them, right up tae the top.

DS: They'd better look four outcrops here.

UM: And they'll have [?] fires in them and they'll all be coalfired, aye. Absolutely.

[*pause in recording*]

UM: -got a protection on them, just for the sake o the dust and dirt-

UF: Yes.

UM: -and everybody walking on them. And, eh... this'll be a bathroom, eventually.

DS: How many bedrooms or rooms ye gonna have?

UM: There'll be six rooms on the one side and there'll be two bedrooms, two living rooms, two kitchens, two bathrooms and the main hall, in this section.

[*pause in recording*]

UM: -and the funny thing was that-

DS: Oh sure.

UM: -that was the only wee bit o pillar that's here.

DS: Mmhm.

UM: It's aw new brickwork, even lower than that floor.

UF: Uhuh.

UM: And there was nothing left there, just this wee pillar. So, we had tae keep that and put new stonework roond about there. And that's a coal burning fire, too. It's aw vented.

UF: And is this going to be a private living room?

UM: Yes, uhuh. And plenty light. Ye get the sunlight early in the morning frae there, through the wee windows here. This is a wee cupboard dressing room type o place that they-

UF: Is this a gardyloo originally?

UM: A gardyloo, uhuh. Aye. There's one on each o the main rooms; always within the wall, that ye find one o these wee gardyloos.

0h 12m 05s

UF: Mmhm.

DS: Aye. [?]

UM: Oh aye, aye. Ye'll see it quite clear the day, up in the roof.

DS: Well, look- look down tae the Tranmare for us.

UM: Oh aye. Well, you're good tae yoursel, eh [*laughter*]? You'd just as well.

DS: Oh yes. [?] ye ken, wi the two o them.

UF: So, who is it who owns this?

UM: Sir Tom Craig.

UF: Uhuh.

DS: It has great woodwork, too.

UM: That's your stonework-

[*pause in recording*]

DS: Right.

UF: Are you ok?

DS: Well, here this morning, we've just come frae Fa'side Castle, which is another story in itself, but we're sitting in the Tranmare Hotel tonight. But a can tell everybody that that word 'Tranmare', it had been coined since [?] were there because this was the site o the Mare pit or the Muir pit, it was called. And Tranent Muir was just on the other side o the road in the old, old days which is now filled wi nice dwelling houses. But a can remember, and am going back tae ma school days, in Tranent, around 1907, 1908... and tae simplify things, I'll talk about ma researches and ma knowledge o

history since, because that was the year in which the Edinburgh Collieries Company, who'd only been founded in 1900, they took over from the Waldies all the Tranent pits.

0h 14m 00s

They took over from the Duries the Fleets and Howden pits. They took over from John Grieve Prestonlinks and Bankton pits. So, that's history. But the occasion, am talking about here, because am sitting in comfort and wi a dram in ma hand and a couple o ladies beside me who's got taping me and keeping me [*laughter*]... because on that certain night, in and around 1907, 1908, ma father had tae hunt for me and he found me sound asleep at a glowing coal fire brazier, at the [Mair?] pit. Because that night, they were dismantling the pit because Edinburgh Collieries had closed the Mair pit, the Smiddy pit and concentrated on the development o the Fleets. Northwards. I've learnt all that, of course, in ma adult years. So, the dairyman- and a used tae never leave the dairy and a could harness and drive Daisy, the wee pony, and the milk carts and all the rest of it. He apparently had a contract and he was working overnight wi a horse, driving and dismantling machinery o some kinds. And it was being taken tae the goods station in Tranent.

0h 16m 00s

And if a can pause a moment there, there was a goods station frae Prestonpans Station tae Tranent but in Tranent's long history, the whole population had the lethal walk tae Prestonpans Station because right up, there never was a railway station in Tranent for passengers. And it was the SMT around 1922 before Tranent folk got rid of that lethal walk down Birsley Brae tae Prestonpans Station. So, there's another wee digression. So, this... Tranmare Hotel is- was, in historically, and it's well outlined in the late George Dodd's book on the Tranent tramroads. This was the terminus of the 170022 Tramroad taking the coal tae the Fleets, frae the Waldies pits, and other ancient pits, tae Cokenny Harbour. That's history. It's part o East Lothian's history. And just on the word Kilkenny, I knew an old gentleman, and he's still alive in Haddington, his father was a minister in Prestonpans. I just forget- MacPhail, Mr MacPhail. He discussed wi me once, when he came down tae Prestongrange, on these words and he instanced... because Cokenny wi all ma records was C-O-K-E-N-N-Y. And after 1707 – and I think all schoolchildren out there should know that date – gradually, a lot o these words were altered in Scotland's language and there were a Z, so it's now Cockenzie.

0h 18m 20s

See? But the old word, and it's a nice word... so, there's a wee bit, as we're sitting here, after waiting on a nice lunch [*laughter*]. There's a wee anecdote aboot the site we're sitting at: the Mair pit and it's the Tranmare Hotel. And that site just outside there, after that tramline from- cause in later years, it was laid wi full width railway tracks and a big coal washer was built at Meadowmill, now a sports centre. But that big bing was washery red, washed out the coal. And that was 1912, I think.

[*pause in recording*]

DS: -in Tranent.

UF: [?]

DS: It was the third, third day o June.

UF: Right.

DS: It was Tranent Fair. And by the way, in our later years when a was in the pit, the only two days off were our two days holidays, it was called, was Tranent Fair and the day after. I'm talking about

before the First World War. Eh... and from the [rouping?] stairs, there was the parade every year, and the rousing stairs is on the burgh boundary, and I don't know their age but obviously, it's been sales o some kind and rousing stuff.

0h 20m 02s

And these are the steep stairs leading down tae the auld line from Fa'side... tae the main road south, that's Preston. But the fair was a great- the horses dressed up and all the rest, The Heugh, the playgrounds, full o shows and all the rest of it, and Tranent band was playing. Tranent had a band – or Penston band, mebbe.

[pause in recording]

DS: *[murmuring]* Now, what are you wanting?

UF: The house.

DS: Well, here I am at the end o the new row and this is the old, old part o Tranent and am looking at Innes Buildings. Innes had a dairy there and he had these eight houses built. And the date must be about 1908, when we flitted frae New Winton tae Tranent. And I see the wee room; I can see the top o the windae and I see the front room. And a forget just how many years... when did we flit from there? It was the 1920s. We was a long, long time in there, and went up tae our house, Lammermuir Terrace. This house: outside lavatory, no bathrooms and we were in the upstairs.

0h 22m 00s

A could tell ye a lot about that place but that was ma schooldays and it was frae there that I first put on pit clothes, at the age o fourteen and walked tae St Germain's pit, wi ma father. I had left Broughton Secondary the previous day and that was the most awful thing, the first couple o months. I don't know how I survived. ...Well, Tranent was the biggest population o East Lothian and I've just turned about and am looking at the site. Am looking at the site, which was Tranent's railway station. But it was only a goods station, a line down tae Prestonpans Station. And for all these generations... and the main line frae Edinburgh tae Berwick went through an 1846... and frae that time, the Tranent folk had that lethal walk doon Birsley Brae tae Prestonpans Station, despite, in 1849, that mineral railway [?] for a goods station. And this railway here, am just looking at it... it handled tremendous industrial stuff. And why, why, why couldn't there have been passenger coaches, a just don't know and it can only be because o the social standing o miners, because it was a miners' place.

0h 24m 04s

And Tranent suffered till the SMT came out o Tranent and I think it was 1922, the first time they got transport from the town tae Edinburgh and other places. And that's a part o miners' social history.

[pause in recording]

[incomprehensible due to poor sound quality outside]

DS: A hundred yards down the road, ye can see the pits. That's the A1... and that's the bridge, the Brig Inn, and that pub, and that's the road down from the coal heugh, at Tranent, but that's the line o the mineral railway down tae Prestonpans Station and joined the main line, the Edinburgh-Berwick line, as it was. And on this side, that went right up and could service the farms.

UF: Uhuh.

DS: In fact, one of the biggest quarries I ever saw was up there and the Edinburgh Corporation- and I'm talking now of ma schooldays. For two or three years, the refuse o Edinburgh came and filled up that tremendous, big quarry up there. And that was a stone- a free stone quarry. I could talk for weeks on this history. Right.

[incomprehensible due to poor sound quality outside]

All this [?] at the Tranent foundry and for the demolition o the Mair pit, was brought by carts and popped ontae wagons here and a lived so near it that I saw it all happening and a can recall it now, about a hundred years later.

0h 26m 00s

[incomprehensible due to poor sound quality outside]

Ye see? *[incomprehensible]* Ye see that round there? That was a close through to the back. *[incomprehensible]* -and ye walked through there, that close. *[incomprehensible]*

[pause in recording]

DS: -at times ye could hear the rattle, ye ken, because o aw the [?]. They cycled *[laughter]*. Have ye got this damn thing on? You've got this damn thing on. Well, I'll just tell ye. We could hear the noises, ye ken, and we knew what was happening. But they came doon frae Arthur's Seat, some o them, wi bikes without tires, ye ken, *[laughter?]*...

UF: What a sight!

DS: They'd had only metal, ye ken. So, it was either walking frae Elphinstone and it was cried [?] at Elphinstone, ye ken. So, I'll tell ye more about the Fleets.

[pause in recording]

DS: We've come in tae the site o the Fleets pit and I can hardly recognise it. There's a brand-new road been put intae it. It's gonnae be the site o an industrial estate. And I'm just trying tae pick out where the old number one shaft was, the old pit. And that pit had a beam engine and I've got a relic of it down at Prestongrange, a [?] engine, similar to the big one at St Germain's. But this one here was bought new for the [?] pit at Prestongrange, but when the company in these days, 1895, went bankrupt, the Duries, who owned Fleets, bought it and it pumped here at Fleets.

0h 28m 14s

I knew it as a collier, I knew it as a junior official and I knew it as undermanager. And I've got the air pump and a bit o the pit's pine beam, relics of it, down at Prestongrange, which'll be set up as part o the story. No. 2 pit, tae the left. I just can imagine where it was. That was sunk in the 1920s, as the second means of egress, because the old pit, as we called it, here, the second means o egress was the Howden pit, nearer up by Ormiston. And this No. 2 pit was sunk double the depths down tae the diamond seams, brick line, ninety fathom. And I spent some years in there and I strapped up some water because there was hardly a dry shift. That was the wettest pit ever I saw. In fact, so wet that the company put in pithead baths off their own account and the only second set, I'm certain, in Scotland because the wells o the colliery o Wemyss in Fife had a similar set, long before Fleets, which a had seen as a student. And the Fleets had them and ye just had wires and ye drew your pit clothes up and they dried up there, overnight, then your home clothes were drawn up when ye went away down the pit but by heavens, that was a boon.

0h 30m 00s

That was a boon tae the miners of Fleets, wi the mud, and it was a boon tae our mothers and wives too. So, this is a nostalgic, just come in and seeing what modern things... and there'll be industry in here now because the size o the... and there's landscaping in- just in front o us too, going on. So, this is a future site for industry.

UF: When did the Fleets number one pit start?

DS: The Fleets pits sunk, I think – I'd have tae check – but it was around 1961, round about that time. It'd be '59 or '60 or '61. That's when... because... when sections close, seams close or pits close, since 1850, the minister must be notified and a set of accurate plans signed as correct and deposited wi the minister. So, I have copies o some o the old pictures, that's if I get copies, I can get photocopies for certain things and I had some o Fleets, and two o ma best ones were stolen frae the drill hall in Tranent. That's modern. That's modern life.

UF: Were the Duries- did they have a lot of pits in East Lothian?

DS: The Duries- eh... the Duries were always stuck tae here and the Ormiston pits. And they- at [Stair Park House?], this is a story o the Duries... Stair Park, big house on that main road, beautiful red house. I can remember when I was going tae school, a coachman coming down wi [?] leggings, driving the Durie up tae Fleets because we lived down there.

0h 32m 00s

Well... this was still ma schooldays; it was 1912, it would be and I think that's the day. It was the era o the suffragettes. And a remember the excitement in Tranent... that Stair Park – as the house was called, because it was near the [rouping?] stairs – Stair Park was on fire. And the same night and the same source was Whitekirk, the ancient place where Aeneas Silvius, the Pope – later to become the Pope – landed. Whitekirk was burnt the same night. So, there's a wee bit o [laughter]... political [laughter]. These awful women [laughter]! What was John Knox called them, again [laughter]?

UF: [laughter]

[pause in recording]

UF: Yes.

DS: -that's a straight line ahead. And that's the continuation o it; ye can get straight tae Gladsmuir.

UF: Mm.

DS: So, we've been at both sides but this end of- frae Fa'side Castle tae here's- ye can't- ye can get walking through it.

UF: Oh, that... that's Gladsmuir, just on the hill, is it?

DS: That's Penston pit. That's part o the road that this goes to.

UF: Yeah, I see. Yes.

DS: That's Penston pit.

UF: Yeah.

DS: Yes. We can see it in the distance.

UF: Uhuh.

DS: And this is the ancient line I was talking about earlier.

UF: Yeah.

DS: Eh... which I reckon is part o what was a roman road.

UF: Mmhm.

DS: Right wi Traprain and beyond it. And there's so many legions came up frae England over the centuries, doin all their dark deeds [*laughter*].

UF: [*laughter*]

0h 34m 00s

[*incomprehensible due to poor sound quality outside*]

DS: [*incomprehensible*] -Fleets. Their coal [*incomprehensible*]. The Fleets never had an outlet tae the main line. Their outlets tae- [*incomprehensible*] -down, tae Ormiston. The [?] line. So, here's the line here and we're standing at the old [?] pit, [?] weighing the wagons o coal. We're just standing beside- [*incomprehensible*]. In there- [*incomprehensible?*]- and these wagons are in here. I don't suppose the old wagon bridge is away, anyway. Looks like a storehouse now. I just got a wee bit o pit nostalgia. And this was where the miners' pays were paid. In the earliest days manning the pits, it was eleven days a fortnight, every second Friday. [*incomprehensible*] -Saturday. Couldn't be a working day. [*incomprehensible*] It was eleven-day fortnights when I went but after the First War, the week [*incomprehensible?*]. So, the pays were made up and they came up frae [*incomprehensible*] tae Wallyford [*incomprehensible*]... the timekeepers and all the rest [*incomprehensible*] -all went on from this wee office here. And it was the manager's office too, of course... yes, this is the department [*incomprehensible*]. Sunday mornings a was in there, making up the men's wages and giving them their allowances.

0h 36m 04s

Up here was all the screening plant. No. 2 shaft tae the right, the auld pit, or No. 1, away in the left side distance. Red bing. Once saw it on fire and oh dear, it was a devil putting oot a red bing. And, and, I've already mentioned the 1922... pithead baths. They'd be just tae the right here, in there, they're still being used, the site of them... the modern baths, lockers. So, there, part o the story o mining but it's an old, old story frae Fleets because it's- [*incomprehensible*] centuries before then. Although, they- [*incomprehensible*] there were successive families working 150 years here and the East Lothian field is part of it. Storehouse, up the road intae the [?].

[*sound of footsteps*]

...And looking back, I actually see hoo nice all they're painted up and everything. No sign o tackety boots, no sound, even a clack o tackety boots.

[*pause in recording*]

DS: There were cinder burners here I'm just remembering. And that was known as Cinder Hall. And Pearlstane was just over there, too, Pearlstane.

UF: What- tell me about Pearlstane?

DS: Eh?

UF: Tell me about Pearlstane.

0h 38m 00s

DS: And these, these were just old, eh... [?] I don't know much about it, it was just part o the old colliery. I'd need tae refresh masel up on it. Pearlstane was in the... I'll talk aboot that later down here. But this was [?], then, built for the mines.

UF: When was that built?

DS: Ah well, it was built... [*car ignition switching on*] in ma schooldays, the [Burkes?] live in it and he was killed... he was a lieutenant, in the Territorial 8th Royal Scots, in the First World War. I've been obliged to his daughter, Dr Catherine [Burke?], for a lot o ma... documents that she had kept from the family, a tremendous lot o stuff, I've been very grateful. Had these long pits at the field.

UF: Yes.

DS: The crops. Well, near Macmerry... and there was a lot o good miners in Macmerry. And they had a bit o initiative but I remember the one, long... stretch o tattie pits. The Macmerry men... did very well there. It was a masterpiece, almost. But when the farmer came tae empty that, there wasnae a tattie in it [*laughter*].

UF: [*laughter*]

DS: Because they propped up, ye see, as they went. They were tidy workers... [*laughter*] and they emptied the whole o that tattie pit, so the resource o miners is infinite [*laughter*].

0h 40m 00s

[*pause in recording*]

DS: -half a mile frae New Winton, but we're on the line o that same road that we came from Inveresk, and we're continuing now on the road tae New Winton.

[*pause in recording*]

DS: Now, we've stopped on this road at the Whiteloch Bridge and there it's that, surely, and I havenae got a camera tae take its photo because there it's... that's worth sharing. But that Whiteloch Bridge, that was the road intae New Winton – and New Winton, I should... just remark, there was a pit sunk, just three or four hundred yards up the pit road there. And Lady Ruthven of Winton Castle and the pits, of course, the coal all belonged tae lairds and landlords, in these days, and deans and more... entrepreneurs and [?], they'd the pits, but Lady Ruthven had that village of New Winton built for miners. And it's a model.

UF: Mm.

DS: And attached to it, although it's a garage now, in my young days, it was the reading room. Reading room. And there was bits of little functions occasionally, maybe a wedding or... occasionally a Sunday, mebbe a preacher or something. But that built as Lady Ruthven- as a schoolhouse, when there was no education, ach, in the country at that time.

0h 42m 00s

And while it's a garage, I'd just like tae put on record that someday that should return and have wee bookshelves for that small village and restore it tae its original purpose. But I knew it well as the reading room and I've since done my researches. In fact, from the evidence given, in the 1842... commission that finally got women and bairns oot o pits, she's mentioned in that. No, I think I'm wrong. Am twenty years early. I think it was the late 1860s or so. Anyway, she was quoted in the evidence o that royal commission that I'm talking about and am not certain o the date exactly. She was quoted for what she had did here as something unique in Scotland because there was nothing in Scotland, although France, at that time, had pithead baths.

[pause in recording]

[incomprehensible due to poor audio quality outside]

Both: *[laughter]*

DS: Well, we're at the Whiteloch Bridge and there's still some water going through but all the time the Fleets pit was gone, ye can depend that was- *[incomprehensible]*. So, we're just leaning on the coping o this old Whiteloch Bridge that I knew as a boy.

0h 44m 04s

And the water made its way ultimately tae the sea from here. And we're going up now... straight across the other side o the road there, before we enter the village. This road's part o the road that I've been mentioning all the time but this section from here up tae Penston, in ma days as a boy, we knew as 'the London Road'; it was always 'the London Road'. And all these things I can recall; it builds up as am still existing, it's part of what was once the roman road.

UF: Did you play here when you were a boy?

DS: Oh yes. *[incomprehensible]* -and it was the first time ever I saw a girl wi bare legs was when I *[incomprehensible?]*. I was only about five or six.

Both: *[laughter]*

DS: *[incomprehensible]*...ye know? *[incomprehensible]*

Both: *[laughter]*

[pause in recording]

DS: There. What nights we have seen there [?] in the summer. Isn't that grass nice?

UF: Mm, very nice.

DS: Well, here we are, right in the middle o New Winton green. And the green's cut, lush and the village looking smart. But ma boyhood days, there's the house I was in, that green painted door.

UF: Mmhm.

DS: And that's the house I left at four year old and that old mother o mine chased me or got me away tae the school, walked tae Tranent.

0h 46m 10s

That's the house. And we lived there tae roughly 1908, nineteen... about 1908, four, I went tae Tranent. See the double-storied house across. There's one in the middle of each of the three sides of

the village. This was built... and it was Lady Ruthven o Winton Castle that had it built, tae house the miners o this pit, three hundred yards up the road, when it was sunk. The records show it was called Pencaitland Colliery but all the other pits there had a similar title. But it was built for miners and in ma time here, a had four uncles and a granny, and ma granny, ma mother's mother, lived in this corner here. And a should mention that ma father was a miner, ma mother had six brothers, all miners but that old granny's husband, ma grandfather, their father, he died o the black spit, at the age o thirty-five. Just behind us in this corner, ma uncle Tom, Tom Gordon, he had a wee shop there. He had had three wives... and he had big families o sons and they all worked in there, too. And I took [?], these big, thick, old [?] I could remember.