

Interviewee(s): Mr Clark (MrC)	Interviewer(s): Unknown Female (UF)
Date of Interview: ?	Ref: EL2-6-1-1-T
REGION	East Lothian
TOWN	Musselburgh

0h 00m 00s

MrC: And what are the remedies?

UF: Trial and error [*laughter*].

MrC: Eh?

UF: Trial and error [*laughter*].

MrC: Well... for the sheep and one thing and another, the things you found out... for instance, that- you mentioned watery mouth in lambs. Well, I found out some years ago, a couple o Beecham's pills.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: You can put that right. If ye get it in time, shove a couple o Beecham's pills down his neck. Now, who the heck found that out first?

UF: Yeah.

MrC: [*laughter*] I don't know.

UF: [*laughter*]... what about, ye know, one of the things- another thing that's changed about having beasts is not having a market in Haddington. Can you tell us what it used to be like, going to the market in Haddington?

MrC: Oh yes, it's a... that is a tremendous change in the- your stock- the selling of your stock.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: From before the first wartime, especially, and even up till the second war, when both Haddington and East Linton markets- I graded all the sheep at East Linton and Haddington, every Monday. A tremendous lot, I think I had two thousand sheep to grade. But, eh, going further back, when ye walked yer cattle, ye would say have four cattle to go to the sale on Monday.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: And ye walked them from here to East Linton. And they were sold there and usually put on the train, at East Linton, to go to the... well, they went to the... just ye know, towns like Dunbar, North Berwick, Haddington, they all had their slaughterhouses in those days. Now, everything goes to Edinburgh, to a big slaughterhouse, ye see, but, eh... and then, there was an export slaughterhouse for sheep, in Haddington. Slaughtered a big lot o sheep for the London market.

0h 02m 00s

UF: Mm.

MrC: And, eh... well, if we'd mebbe fifty or sixty sheep to go in for slaughter... as before the first war, I'd be sent to walk them into Haddington, from here. Of course, the roads were quieter then, mind. If you went away wi a dog, and walked these sheep to Haddington and right up through the town,

went up past the station, up to the slaughterhouse. And if they werenae busy, they might come in wi a pony and trap and drive ye home; if they were busy, ye just walked back *[laughter]*. But ye know, six miles in, six miles back, ye thought, I don't know, ye didn't think anything about it then. Ye seemed to have time to do it.

UF: Yeah.

MrC: That's the thing now: ye've no time to do anything.

UF: Mm. D'you think that's- I mean, this idea of having no time to do anything, do ye think it's true or do ye think it's just...

MrC: What?

UF: When people always say they've got no time to do anything, and they've got to take the car or they nip along on the train...

MrC: Aye... that is true in a way because they... they want more leisure time. Ye see... long ago, ye just had the time to walk around the farm. A wee while, just walk around your fields. I've no time now to run out in the car, with the gate and see what- go up through the fields... eh, but then, ye see, ye didn't care whether it was nine or ten o'clock at night before ye sorta stopped going round.

UF: Mm.

MrC: Or often, at night, at six o'clock, ye'd put the gun below yer arm, and walk around, and ye'd mebbe get a rabbit as ye walked round, and ye walked around the field, although it was night when ye come home. Now, see they come in and they want away. There... to amusement in the town.

UF: Are you saying they want the working day to be over just when everyone else's working day is over?

0h 04m 05s

MrC: Eh?

UF: That- I mean, that younger people on the farm want their working day to be over in line with everyone else's?

MrC: Oh yes. And, eh... well, ye can understand it. If they see other folk getting stopped or getting this day off and that day off, they just wonder why can't we?

UF: Mm.

MrC: Oh, it's quite understandable.

UF: Mm. Yes, it's like Monday being the Queen's birthday, isn't it *[laughter]*? Mm.

MrC: And ye see, they can all... they've all transport now; they can get into the town... it's one thing, ye see... rural transport, ye just wonder which way it balances. We don't have the buses that we used to have, even round here. There's a post bus, right enough, but there used to be a bus came round, I don't know, one or two days a week.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: Round this area. A private bus, picking people up and bringing them down to Dunbar and then bringing them back at night. But, eh... they stopped it. I suppose it... wouldn't be paying, mebbe, I don't know, but eh... more folk have their own transport, ye see, they can get without waiting on the

bus. Oh, the... long ago, there was a private bus running round area and old Davy, who drove it, he never let anyone down. If he came round by Dunbar, Stenton, Whittingehame and Garvald at night, and bringing folk to Dunbar, if he couldn't get them all onto his bus, he went back for them.

UF: Good heavens.

MrC: Oh yes, he'd go back for them. He wouldn't... he wouldn't let them down.

UF: Wouldn't happen now, would it? No way.

[*pause in recording*]

0h 06m 00s

UF: Well, you've got that splendid collection out there.

MrC: Really?

UF: So.

MrC: Well, ye know, we're talking about the lairds. Now... there was an article in the evening paper about that collection on the wall there and long after – I have the letter lying there yet – I got a letter from Leeton in New South Wales and they're still there. He'd seen this article, or it had been sent out to him, in the evening paper. And this man's name was [Comb?] and he looked back and he had another friend, came from Edinburgh, out to see me about it and told me all about this. This chap in Australia was so interested because it was his great-grandfather who'd probably make a lot of that stuff. Because he was the blacksmith down at Luggate Burn, there.

UF: Oh.

MrC: This man who came from Edinburgh that they had so much to be thankful to A.J. Balfour, or the Balfour family, for because this Comb the blacksmith, his son had been a bright laddie and the Balfours sent him to the college and put him through as a vet entirely at their own expense. And he said 'we've'- that chap he sent me said 'we've a lot to thank the Balfours for'.

UF: Mm.

MrC: That they put the laddie through-

UF: Yes.

MrC: -the vet college.

UF: Mmhm. How many years has it taken you to get that collection together?

MrC: Oh, I don't know... not so... many years. Mebbe ten years it's been. There's bits o it hanging there. Ye see, it just started with one or two odd bits that were lying on the ground and I hung them up.

0h 08m 00s

And then there was another bit, and another bit came and... oh, some people, like one o the monks, it was Brother Oliver, he was up there, he gave me one wee piece he'd found away up there, ye know, and... sometimes people give ye and odd bit, they find something, lying about. It's not... o any sorta intrinsic value, it's just the age o the thing that's...

UF: Is that the three-toed pot?

MrC: Mm?

UF: I said is that the three-toed pot that's hanging there?

MrC: *[laughter]* The old pots? Oh aye. Well, there's the three-legged pots hanging there, which are I believe quite rare.

UF: Yeah.

MrC: The wee three-legged ones and...

UF: Yeah.

MrC: Ye see... I found a lot o that old stuff lying there because it had been kept for the bothy, for the Irishmen, because when they stayed in the bothy, they put a big pot over the fire – open fires in the bothy in those days – and that big pot was there wi the potatoes.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: And they practically lived on potatoes and milk, ye know.

UF: Mm.

MrC: And they kept their big pot o potatoes there all the time.

UF: Your daughter-in-law was saying that in the kitchen there's a shelf with a hole in it, that they-

MrC: A what?

UF: Your daughter-in-law was saying that in your kitchen there's a shelf with a hole in it that used to hold the spurtle for the porridge pot.

MrC: Oh yes. No, that's over in the washhouse.

UF: Ah.

MrC: There's a boiler in the corner, with its own wee fire, and up on the... a couple above it, there's a board wi a hole in. Now, that was so ye could put the long stick up into that hole and ye stirred the big copper of porridge.

UF: Right.

MrC: Ye see, that would be when you...

UF: Yes.

MrC: When you gave the people porridge and stuff in the harvest time and that sorta thing. And they... they cooked the porridge over that boiler. It was *[laughter]*...

0h 10m 05s

UF: How many people were they feeding to have to make a porridge?

MrC: *[laughter]* God only... God only knows, but that's why the big things are- so ye could stir with the big stick, ye see, to stir the porridge.

UF: Was it Irish squads that came to help out all the time? I mean, whether it was haymaking or... tattie time or...

MrC: That's- what?

UF: Was it- was it nearly always Irish squads that came to-?

MrC: Oh yeah, mostly. In potato lifting time, ye got all kinds. But, eh... there were Irishmen would come over and they walked the roads, mebbe in pairs, and they sorta knew the farms and they could always get lodging because they knew well, we've got- there's a bothy here where they'd get in with their pals, in here for tonight, and they walked on, just asking... 'are ye needing extra labour?'. But some o them came back to the same farm every year, for a certain time. I had a squad... well, one family. They came over for years, the same family came over, two brothers and that sorta thing. And then, in potato time, I don't know where they arrived from, they came from all directions. This is away before the First War. And ye put them up in all corners. Any-

UF: Mm.

MrC: The folk would live in any wee corner. And ye had to give them a certain amount of food, I don't know how they exactly did, but ye would get... we had mebbe twenty folk living round about the place, just for gathering potatoes for a fortnight or something like that or...

UF: And what about haymaking, was that-?

Oh 12m 00s

MrC: No, that... well, that never was such a big job. Ye could almost always sorta handle that wi your own folk or... ye might have a couple Irishmen in but ye could... ye could sorta handle that, the haymaking, aye. No, talking about these folk who came round for the tattie lifting, ye know. I can remember them, ye had wee chappie [?]. He used to come every year and he came in with a good suit on, and when he out tae work he'd an old one on but he just put the other one on below. He just put the [*laughter*]... it depends what he was doing.

Both: [*laughter*]

UF: What about sheepshearing, things like that? Was that... I mean, how many regular staff would you have had say at Eastfield?

MrC: Oh well, eh-

UF: Or how many people would've been working here, ye know, for your parents at the same time?

MrC: Oh, mebbe- regular staff?

UF: Mmhm, as opposed to the squads that would come in.

MrC: Oh, we'd have mebbe, let's see, three ploughmen and an odd boy, another horse, a grieve, a cattleman... an mebbe an orra man, ye know. Oh, about six men, aye. The Irishmen were often quite good for the draining and the dykeing – building dykes, these drystone dykes, and that sorta thing... men who were just experts at that and they just sorta did... were kept at it all the year. There's a man over in Stenton there, [?].

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: A very well-known... well-known dyker and he did all the sorta drystone dykes. He built the one out there and a was sent along to help him when he built it.

[*pause in recording*]

MrC: This was before the First War, once a week we met...

UF: Mhm.

0h 14m 00s

MrC: Over in Stenton. And, oh, the schoolmaster here and the schoolmaster in Stenton, and different people, they read papers and one thing or another. And there was one night, the schoolmaster here, he was an able chap, but uh, well, staid. The Stenton schoolmaster was also an able chap but he had a bit o fun about him, ye see. And there was one night we had to- each had to do something and pass it down, two places, to be read out, and I can remember *[laughter]*... the Stenton schoolmaster's effusion was passed down too and it fell to the local schoolmaster to read it out. And he said that he couldn't write an essay but he thought he was something of a poet, so he'd written a short poem. And he wrote 'to aw chaps frae Stenton calm, / Fed every morning on eggs and ham / Says I, are ye frae Stenton calm? / Says they, we am'.

Both: *[laughter]*

MrC: *[laughter]* That was it. This one here, the staid one, was so affronted at having to read out this nonsense *[laughter]*...

UF: *[laughter]* Aw, lovely.

MrC: [?] in Stenton, he was a great liberal and that's in a time when... eh, [Haldon?] was a great liberal candidate member in this county. And there was a meeting over in Stenton one night and Mick, of course, was in the chair and he got up and he said 'ladies and gentlemen, there's no need for me to introduce Mr Haldon to a Stenton audience. There's a great wave of political insanity sweeping across the county just now and I want you to return Mr Haldon on the crest o the wave'.

Both: *[laughter]*

MrC: He was a great chap for getting all the long words, ye know.

0h 16m 02s

UF: Yeah. Yes.

MrC: When the De Groot came down, to East Fortune, the great violinist, and Mick was a bit o a fiddler too, ye see, well, he was everything! ...and De Groot came down to East Fortune to give a concert to the Air Force or whatever down there and of course, Mick was at it. He came back 'oh', he says, 'Sean, it was marvellous', he says. 'De Groot', he says, 'he just [?] about it [?]'. He always got a hold o long words. But he was a grand old chap, ye know... he was one o- ye know, ye miss these old chaps. There were... these old worthies, there were some in every village.

UF: Do you think they've all gone now? There's no new ones coming up?

MrC: *[laughter]* Well, I don't know them.

UF: What would they've said to you when you were young?

MrC: Mm?

UF: I mean, did they give you a lot of advice when you were young about 'well, in my day, you wouldn't have done this' or...? Did they sort of feel the younger generation was getting-?

MrC: Ah, I... I can't remember. Ye were told very much what ye had to do, when I was young, and ye didnae dare speak back to it. Right- from us on the farms, it was very much, for your entertainment amongst yourselves, ye went, one night to a neighbouring farmhouse.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: And another night, ye go to another farmhouse and ye had a meal. And ye stood round the piano.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: And each one, they all had their own songs; ye knew which one ye were gonna get [*laughter*]...

0h 18m 00s

UF: What about barn dances? Or harvest dances?

MrC: There was- just at the end o harvest, often there was a barn dance. Aye. But I don't mind much about them except... och, that we used to give one over at another place. It was the- had been the state farm, there was a big barn and they... they had a dance at the end o harvest time. All I mind about it was that I had to provide a bottle o beer for it.

UF: [*laughter*] So what keeps people together round about now or...?

MrC: Nothing.

UF: Nothing.

MrC: Eh...

UF: You see, when-

MrC: They're not kept together. See, there's nothing really... I don't know, some o the ladies mebbe, they have some o their hens' meetings, I don't know what they do at them all but, eh... I think they mebbe have some meetings but there's... all the younger generation, it's away to the nearest town.

UF: Mm. I think that's maybe tied in with the fact... if, ye know, for instance, your grandsons, they're just working together on the farm themselves...

MrC: Mm. Mm.

UF: They feel the need of other young company that once upon a time, you might've had on the farm, when there were a lot of people working there.

MrC: Well, they... of course, they... they've a lot of sport now... and they've been both playing rugby in Haddington and playing all these other... I don't know what they are, squash and I think... oh, they go away hitting that wee ba around the golf course. Eh... but they've to sorta go away to the nearest town for that.

UF: They're not going to be sort of future bowlers or curlers, are they?

MrC: Mm? Oh well, ye know... this wee parish... although, it was very scattered, they had their bowling green up there and their name'll be on the county cup, perhaps oftener than any other.

0h 20m 14s

And yet, it's practically... we still keep it as a bowling green but it's practically defunct. Just, these are ten members, I think.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: But we still try to keep it as a bowling green but, eh... well, we're... also on the curling cup, the county curling cup, Whittinghame's name will be on it, probably, oftener than any other. Just... it was a strong club, at one time.

UF: Have there been any new clubs come to take their place or is it just a question...?

MrC: No, I don't think so.

UF: Mm. Have tourists made a difference? I mean, d'you find a lot of tourists come up round here?

MrC: Any what?

UF: Tour- [*coughing*].

MrC: Tourists?

UF: Tourists, yeah.

MrC: Oh... I don't- ye wouldn't say many.

UF: Mm.

MrC: The odd- ye see the odd bus come along, ye see an odd car come along, wi tourists. But what we do see a lot of... are climbers, on the face of Traprain Law, now.

UF: Oh.

MrC: They are... a bit of an... I allow them to go up through my fields, the nearest way to get to it. It's not a right of way in any way but provided they leave no rubbish, keep the gate shut and everything, I allow them to go up there. And the honest to goodness climbers are pretty good, they... but then, ye always get the other crowd that think they can do what they like and make what kinda mess they like and [?]. But, eh... I must say, the... the honest to goodness climbing fraternity are pretty good at, eh... doing as ye say, keeping gates shut and one thing or another.

0h 22m 06s

UF: What's happened to Whittinghame now? Did the Arab buy it, at the end of the day?

MrC: I believe it's bought, by the Arabs. And, eh... we'll all be going about in turbans in a wee while.

UF: [*laughter*]

MrC: Aw well, it's a good thing it's being used for something. Because ye can see the house up there; it's a magnificent house on the outside but... it's just my opinion but it doesn't lend itself to be converted into flats or anything like that. Grey, big rooms and one thing or another... and the roof will mebbe not be perfect. I think they had some trouble with it, one way or another but, eh... I think it's a good thing that somebody's got it, just... I've been told that the... Arabs, in other areas in England where they have bought up property, have been quite good to the local village. Of course, as I just said they'll be probably trying to buy popularity. But nevertheless, och, well... we'll sort them oot if they're no right [*laughter*].

UF: I'm sure you couldn't've imagined that happening when you were a boy, though, or when you first started working.

MrC: Oh no, you couldn't've thought of anything like that happening. The Balfours up there, eh... well... they just- ye had tae be very careful what ye did when ye went up there. Ye see, A.J. Balfour, he didn't come about much but there was... a lot o people stayed there. The family, his brother's family, Mr Gerald's family. That was a big family. And then, the late Lord Balfour, the heir, he was Mr Gerald's son. And this one, the present one, is the... eh, the son again. But, eh... there were a lot o people in the house, always, ye know, big companies, and they used to go skelting round the estate on their horses, the young ladies.

0h 24m 06s

And the grounds, ye had tae watch what ye were doing when ye went up there and... there was a walk along there. Just up at Lady Eleanor's Cottage, there, about- what we called 'the Green Walk'.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: It was grass. It led from Lady Eleanor's Cottage up to the gardens, oh for what, eight hundred yards or more, and it was cut grass, that's why it's called the Green Walk. If ye were seen walking on that wi tackety boots ye were up for a high jump.

Both: *[laughter]*

MrC: But, oh, the gardens were beautifully kept and inside the grounds in those days were paths and bridges over the burn and... it was beautifully kept in those days.

UF: Mm. Mm.

MrC: Of course, I don't know, there'd be... there'd be seven or eight gardeners there.

UF: Mmhm.

MrC: And old Mr Gavitt.