

*[Start of interview. Side A – 00:00:10]*

AM Well, you see, when I was a girl we had rather a big hay-time because my Grandfather, my Mother's Father, had the quarries at Burtersett.

WRM What was his name?

AM Metcalfe. He was Richard Metcalfe, and there were three Richard Metcalfes in the village, and he was known as 'Vocketer'. Now this came [about] one market day in 'The White Hart' and I suppose he'd got a little bit fresh and he got up, and instead of saying 'Here's to Victoria' he said 'Here's to Vocketer', you see, and it stuck. He always got 'Dickie Vocketer'.

WRM How would you spell that?

AM Well, I wouldn't know, I've never seen it written down, you see.

WRM Then it doesn't matter what sort of effort I make of it?

AM No, no, but you see he was always known as Dickie Vocketer.

WRM Where were you actually born?

AM I was born in Burtersett.

WRM You were?

AM Yes, and my Father was an auctioneer and also a cattle dealer. He went to Lanark Auction Mart for sixty unbroken years.

WRM What was his name then?

AM James Pratt and he founded the Auction Mart, this Auction Mart here, and then later of course it was floated. And he also, with the Ivesons, founded Hellifield Auction Mart.

WRM The Ivesons?

AM Yes, T.T. Iveson who lived at Hawes. My Father and he were in partnership. Then they dissolved the partnership and T.T. Iveson went into partnership with his brother, William Iveson, who lived at Hexham. And the Ivesons are still auctioneers in Hexham, you know?

WRM What was it like at Burterset in those days? The road, for instance.

AM Well, the road was just a rough road and you see lots of the village men broke stones and they got 'so much a rood for the breaking thereof', and then they were put on the road and steam-rollered with a little bit of perhaps sand or gravel. They were very, very dusty, you see the wagons used to come down the big pasture from the quarry and onto the road and there would be ruts perhaps a foot deep. And these horses, sometimes two, sometimes three horses pulled these big wagons, and they pulled them down to the station and then they had the stone dressers there. I heard my mother say that all the cobbles in Nelson and Colne and the Lancashire towns were all cobblestones supplied from Burterset quarry.

WRM What sort of a home was yours? Was it a house or a farm?

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AM Oh, it was a farm. Above our old farmhouse is 'JP 1732', but it's been a lot altered. I think the bathroom will be the same as it was when I was a child.

WRM What was it like?

AM Well, it was a small room taken off a bigger bedroom, and it has a bath and a washbasin in the corner and a flush toilet. We should be the first people I think to probably have one, certainly in the village.

WRM What size of farm was it?

AM Well, it was about 80 acres with a lot of moorland and Wether Fell tacked on; but Wether Fell belongs to the Lords of the Manor of Bainbridge and my Father would rent it, you see.

WRM He was an auctioneer, but he was also a routine farmer?

AM He was a keen farmer, yes, and he was a keen dealer. When we started hay-time we would have my Grandfather [helping us], who also had a farm. We didn't in those days have Irishmen, we had all the men from the quarry. Now the men liked to come from the quarry because you see a lot of it was quarrying down below, it was like going down a mine, you see. And they would come, and we used to take out in the morning when the men used to start... there used to be a jug, because my old Grandfather used to go round with the beer in the morning at about five o'clock. Then we'd go with breakfast at seven, and I've seen when you've got breakfast to take along there to a certain field where you probably had eight men mowing, or doing

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something in a field, and perhaps another eight somewhere else. And then we used to take out what they called 'drinkin', which would be at half past ten. And we used to take them coffee in a big can, and cheese and bread and probably a bit of pastry: a bit of bannock or something, just plain stuff. And then we took out a midday meal. Now my Father as long as he lived with him used to living in hotels, would never sit down without a change of plates. So we used to take out in a float... we used to take a clothes basket with probably a roast of beef, potatoes and gravy in a can, we would take another with vegetables, probably peas and carrots put together and always a pudding, and milk. You hadn't room for a can, so you put it in two or three gill bottles or something like that. And you took it all out with a change of plates and everything. And you would have tea. And then you had a 'drinkin' at about six o'clock. And always after they'd finished at night, my Mother always cooked a meal. It might be Welsh rarebit; but not a big, heavy meal, not potatoes and vegetables and things like that, but a meal. And of course quarrymen liked this because they got probably better meals than they could afford to have at home, you see, because a quarryman in those days only got 19s. and the dressers got a guinea a week, so they didn't have big... And always before hay time we would have a man come who killed... we would kill perhaps two sheep or something, you see, or we had a butcher and we would buy beef and things like that. But we always had our own pigs, and my Mother would cook perhaps half a ham.

WRM            What was your Mother's name?

AM My mother was a Metcalfe.

WRM What was her first name?

AM Rose Ann she was.

WRM Did she have help in the house?

AM Oh yes, we always had a maid that lived in, and then we always had a woman who came in out of the village, sometimes two; because we had a lot of milk and it all came into the house and we made cheese. And we used to have when I was a girl all the milk from the Auction Mart and we made cheese. I've seen us start in September, perhaps at half past three or four o'clock in the afternoon and make 100 gallons of milk into cheese, you see? It all used to be 'fridged' in a kitchen. We had a very big kitchen, well, it still is at Chapel House, a very big kitchen which had been a yard and was built with a sink and a set boiler and all the men had their meals in it.

WRM What type of cattle were they?

AM Well, he used to buy all kinds of cattle. We always had because he had gone to Scotland, my own Grandfather went to Scotland buying cattle, and we always had a few Scottish cattle. They never would pay anything, they would always be for sentimental reasons, you know, the ones with the big horns. But we also had the short horns and the Ayrshires, you know, he used to buy.

WRM What period was this?

AM This was from 1910 onwards and in the First World War.

WRM How many cows would you milk on average?

AM Oh, we would milk about thirty odd, which in those days was a lot, you see, and in summer we milked outside, and in the First World War I milked. I was only a girl but I could milk with the men. My eldest brother went of course into the war and my youngest brother went and was sent back, he'd had pneumonia three times and he was sent home. So my youngest brother and I did a lot of the [work]. We used to have what men we could get in those days: the men in the village or various people.

WRM What was the art in milking outside?

AM Well, you see cattle got used to it, and they would come, you could bring your cattle up to a certain place where they were all milked and they would stand about. And you went and milked one and then you went across to milk another one; and a favourite cow would come and stand against you and rub her head against your shoulders because she knew who you were, you see? When my brothers retired they had milked by hand for many years and then of course when the milking machines came in they had a milking machine. And when they had their sale they kept nothing but pedigree cattle. Farming had altered vastly from what it was in the First World War to what it was in the 1940s, and they brought two cows home and my eldest brother thought he'd sit down, you know, to milk these cows by hand. He hadn't milked for years. And of course he couldn't milk either of them. They wouldn't stand, they

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wouldn't be milked, you see? And he had to take them to a neighbour's farm to be milked. He said, 'I never thought this day would come', but you see cattle are used to something totally different now.

WRM So in the First World War you were a young girl.

AM Yes.

WRM What time did you get up to go and milk the cows?

AM Oh, five o'clock in the morning.

WRM And where were the cows?

AM Well, we used to milk... in the wintertime we had a shippon quite close to the house where we would milk, and then we would milk at sort of three barns about a quarter of a mile away, and you carried that on a back can.

WRM And in summer when you were milking out of doors the cows were presumably in the high pastures?

AM They were either in the high pastures or they went... we had three farms really together, so in the high pastures or we changed them and they went to the low pasture which is down against Sandy Wheel, the river you know where it goes below what used to be the iron bridge where it goes round there.

WRM That was presumably after hay-time was it?

AM Well no, it would be perhaps when the sheep had gone out, perhaps June, and we used to go then. I have carried milk up from there up the hill all the way to Burterset. I started with a lump on my neck which was tubercular and the Doctor who came... I was as thin as a latt and my Mother sent for the Doctor, and he turned round to my Father and he said, 'James, you should be ashamed of yourself to allow your only daughter to do this. This is carrying a back can.' It would stretch on a young person's...

WRM And so you would get up at what time?

AM We would get up at five o'clock.

WRM Yes, and did you come out without having anything to eat or drink?

AM Yes.

WRM And so you'd go out on a summer morning, you'd walk about a quarter of a mile, and where did you leave the three-legged stool? On the wall top was it?

AM Yes, well, we had a barn you see down there; we had a barn in both places, but we never hardly... when it was fine, summer weather you never bothered to take the cows in. You either took them into a yard or they stood in the paddock; you brought them out of the pasture into a smaller paddock and they stood there. It was natural for them to stand and be milked and then go away. Cows are creatures of habit and they do things by habit.

WRM And then you put it into the back can and you carried the back can...

AM On your back, yes.

WRM ...down to the kitchen, or up to the kitchen, and then how was the milk separated?

AM Well, you emptied it into a can and we had a contraption that stood on a large... a wood contraption that stood on a large stone sink. It's still there today: a very, big sink with two big stone slabs at either side. But this contraption stood in the middle, and you put your rubber onto your cold water tap and we had a stone there which you stepped onto, not quite as high as that, and then you stepped onto this slab against the sink and then you emptied it up into the... into a... you had your fridge stood in front of your wood contraption, and then you had your receiving can, and then you had the old-fashioned what we called 'briggs'. Do you know what I mean? The wood thing that had two things across there and then two uprights this way that held your 'sile'; you know what a sile is, don't you, this sieve that you go through? So you had it quite a long way to tip up, and pour it through and it went in, and in those days your cans of milk that went were usually 17 gallons. When I was a girl I wasn't always big enough to get into the bottom. I remember my youngest brother, I was washing a can and tipping down into the bottom, and he came and tipped my legs up, you see, and I couldn't get out.

WRM If you were separating milk for cheese, how did you do that?

AM Well you did that by... well, you don't separate milk for cheese.

WRM You don't?

AM No, no, you separate milk for butter.

WRM Oh, just for butter?

AM Yes. For cheese you put it into a big cheese vat. We had a copper one. Now I don't know what... I would think in the Second World War my Mother would give it to be sold for 'Wings for Victory' or something of that. But it would have been valuable now. It stood about this height and it was copper and you could make it... it shone, it was beautiful. And then we had another that was tin. And you put them onto a mat so that you kept them warm. We used to have a hessian stuffed with straw, and you stood it on this thing and if your milk... if you didn't have enough milk you were going to make, which you sometimes did in winter, you made your cheese in the morning. So you did your night's milk. You put it through the sieve into your cheese kettle and you left it there, you put a cloth over it and left it. Then you put your morning's milk... now if it wasn't warm enough, it should be blood heat, you got a brass preserving pan and you put that on the fire and you warmed, or not. And you tipped it in until you made it the proper heat, and then you put in your rennet and then you wrap it up. We used to have two oak boards that went over the top and then you wrapped it up with a rug and kept it warm. And then when it had 'come' which is when you can cut it with your finger, then you took your 'breaker' and you just broke it down rough to let the whey settle, and you took so much whey off. And then you broke it up again, and then later on. I think

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now the mistake they're making in cheese that's made now is you see the farmer's wife was taking her curd out at dinner time, at twelve o'clock. Now you see, they do it with a starter and it's all done quickly and this is why, to my mind, cheese isn't mature and as good as it used to be in the old days.

WRM Did you used to brew ale at home?

AM No, we never brewed ale; no, never.

WRM Because there was an old lady at Keasden yesterday, she allowed me to photograph a container and various other appliances for ale-making. Did you make oatcake at all?

AM Oh, yes.

WRM On a back stone?

AM Yes, before hay-time my Grandmother who lived down the village, my Mother's Mother, she used to have perhaps two days at baking oatcake and she'd put it... they had a very nice, oak chest of drawers, you know, with a glass cupboard above, and she used to fill these drawers with oatcake. And you see, for eleven o'clock you took out bread and cheese, you took oatcake and cheese.

WRM This oatcake was the long dishcloth variety, was it?

AM No, not like they made at Skipton, riddle bread; not like that. You put a little bit of flour to your oatmeal, and some carbonate of soda and a little bit of lard

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or bacon fat, not very much, and you stirred it up and made a stiff paste with water, and then you rolled it out and put it onto your back stone and over your fire and you baked it one side and then you turned it over. You probably cut it in half to turn over.

WRM What was the shape of it?

AM Well, it used to turn up at the corners, you know, and it was like that and you put it in. I've seen my Grandmother when they got very much turned up, break them in two and slot them down the sides, you see; stand them on the end.

WRM So they weren't the type that you hung up in the kitchen?

AM No, they make that at Skipton, don't they? Riddle bread? You see the other Pratts at Skipton, my Uncle who lived at Skibeden... I don't know if you know where that is?

WRM Oh, I remember them years ago.

AM Yes, and they used to have riddle bread, but they bought it from somebody and you hung it in strips to dry, didn't you? Yes, I've seen it there, but we didn't; no, we made the old-fashioned oatcake and it used to go out to the men.

WRM What sort of things did your Mother make actually in the kitchen? What types of Dales food?

AM Oh, well, we would make bannocks, which are a sort of sad cake which is pastry. If you baked your pastry you baked your apple pies and whatever you might be making, and then you put some more flour and a bit of sugar and some currants, you see, and rolled it out and made it. Now that went out into the field quite often, because it was fairly... you know, it's plain and if it had good butter on it the men are fond of it, you see? And people still are; I mean, these sorts of things are still used today. We had a lot of good, plain food. The Pratts are all meat eaters. My Mother would cook a great, big round of beef you know and we would have it, but as long as my brothers lived I don't think that either of them would eat bread and butter and cheese. I eat bread and butter and cheese, but we were always used to dry bread and cheese, you see?

WRM What type of cheese was it that you produced? Was it in fact the true Wensleydale?

AM It was a true Wensleydale cheese, and as I say our cows would be up in the high pasture and if you didn't know that the men had moved them to the lower pasture you would be able to tell by the cheese kettle because the cream was different. It was a different colour, it was a different texture, and it was heavier altogether.

WRM What, from the lower pasture?

AM Yes, from the lower land, you could tell that.

WRM Because in those days the grass was all 'herby', wasn't it?

AM Yes, it was all 'herby'.

WRM It wasn't this same colour...?

AM No, I was only talking to this farmer who came in yesterday. There was something on BBC Four, a recording of Stalling Busk, and the band at Hawes, and the Auction Mart. And I watched the conservationist; I was keen to watch this. And he came in and he said, 'Oh, haven't you heard it?' 'Oh,' I said, 'I forgot about it, I was more interested in the conservationist.' Because you see there are two kinds of thought there. I mean, I don't know whether you saw that programme last night, but the things that David Bellamy was going on about the farmers call weeds. You see when I was a girl we used to talk about what good land it was, it was yellow with buttercups. Well, you see, now it's proved that cattle don't like buttercups, they are bitter to eat, and buttercups are weeds; but in the old days before they knew this they thought this was good land.

WRM They did think buttercups were weeds?

AM Oh yes, I've heard old people say, 'Well, look at it, it's yellow with buttercups.' Well, you see, now the modern farmer tries to do away with the buttercups.

WRM But there are a lot of other little herbs in the grass, apart from buttercups.

AM Oh yes, we used to have the 'sure' land, the high land we used to keep for sheep, and it was always put in a special barn because that was sheep hay, it was 'herby' and it was good, you see? And we didn't give that to the cattle, we gave it to the sheep.

WRM I think I've asked you some of this before, but if you don't mind me asking again, I'm interested particularly in the woman's world. I mean, we've heard such a lot about the men's world it's getting rather boring now. But for instance, wash day would be a pretty traumatic experience, would it?

AM Yes, I've known my Mother get up... Because we had a very big set boiler in this big kitchen, and you see we used to have on a Monday morning cattle were being made ready. Perhaps they had been brought down from Scotland or had been brought from Ireland. They were newly calved. So then in those days they believed in giving warm gruel, you see, which made a cow what they call 'bloom', bring her to good condition. And my Mother would get up early and pop down in just her dressing gown and nightdress before anybody got up to light the boiler fire and put a packet of Borax in. Because if you didn't, if that water was hot my father would say to the men, 'Well, there's plenty of hot water there, give that so-and-so cow warm gruel', and by the time you came to wash... we had probably a washer woman coming in, you see, and there was no hot water for her. And my Mother would go down and put the soap [out] or whatever it was you see.

WRM What day was it that you did wash?

AM We always washed on a Monday.

WRM And there was your Mother and presumably the servant girl, and also a woman who came in?

AM A woman came in and washed, yes.

WRM And she was the chief person, was she?

AM Yes, she was the chief person. My Mother wouldn't be washing, she would be cooking. But you see we always had... you know, we could sit down perhaps ten of us, you see, and we always had a cooked meal.

WRM This woman who came in then, she was a woman from the village?

AM A woman from the village, yes.

WRM And what time would she turn up?

AM She would come about eight o'clock, and the first thing she would have would be her breakfast, and she would sit down to bacon and eggs, porridge probably and bacon and eggs, and then she started with her washing.

WRM And what was the routine in those days?

AM In those days, well, the maid in the house would get up and light the fire and the mistress of the house would be up in good time.

WRM I mean the wash day routine.

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AM Oh yes, well, you started and you had a dolly stick and you washed the best white things first: pillow cases and sheets and tablecloths. You see, we always had a tablecloth even for the men. My Father used to say, ‘I won’t sit down without a tablecloth and I won’t ask anybody else to.’ I don’t know if everybody’s house did this, but we always had a tablecloth.

WRM What was used? I mean, that was the day before soap powders, wasn’t it?

AM Yes, well we had Borax, Borax was the first. You bought them by the half dozen wrapped up in a big sort of brown paper container.

WRM Did you use carbolic soap?

AM Yes, not a great deal but we always used Lever’s. My Mother used to buy it by the box, I don’t know how many dozen there would be: long bars...

WRM Of soap?

AM Yes, long bars of white Sunlight soap. We used to have a traveller. Well, he was a local man actually from Askrigg, and he was a friend of my Mother’s and he was a traveller for Lever Brothers in Liverpool and we always got soap and all kinds of things came from them. And we used to cut up this soap, take it out of the boxes and out of the wrappers and you cut it up and we put it in the bathroom cupboard to dry. I still do this, I always have. Now you can buy Sunlight soap in the two pieces but I always take it out of the wrappers and put it in my cylinder cupboard.

WRM Why is that, so that it will last longer?

AM Oh yes, it dries and lasts longer. If I buy soap from Boots I always do that, I always take it out of its wrapper and dry it out for a couple of months.

WRM And then of course, on a lovely March day with the breeze blowing it must have been nice to hear the washing slapping on the line was it?

AM Oh yes, you see we had a biggish paddock in which the lines went out.

WRM And when it came down to ironing, what on earth did you use for an iron?

AM Well, we used to use a box iron, you know, with the heaters? And we also had a charcoal iron with a chimney, and I had it to this day until I got a man to clean out my outbuilding and I've lost it. It had a chimney on and I would think that it was quite a relic now. And we used to heat the bit of charcoal in the fire and then put it inside, and a bit more, and then blow it with the bellows until you got the fire going, and it was a marvellous contraption.

WRM Because it hadn't been a good wash day unless everybody was absolutely jiggered at the end of it!

AM Yes, that's right.

WRM The success of a wash day seemed to be related to how badly you felt, you know?

AM Yes, exactly.

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WRM If somebody had come through wash day feeling fresh, well then they hadn't done it properly. *[Laughs]*

AM No, that's right, and usually [with] the woman who washed, probably Isabella the maid we had in the house would start an iron, you see? And of course she'd done very well if you got them all and then you had the latts above the kitchen, you see, and you hung them all up to air over the lines.

WRM And there would be times in the spring of the year when you had lambs in the kitchen?

AM Oh yes, we used to often have lambs in the kitchen, and we used to take up... if we had matting or whatever we had, because we had this big kitchen that had been a yard but we also had an outer kitchen to that, and then we had what we called 'the little living kitchen' which had a fireplace and an oven and a boiler. But of course we had a back boiler in those days so we didn't use that boiler. And always my Father, Mother and the family had their meal in the little kitchen and whoever else we had you see had... unless it was in hay-time then we all sat down [together]. We had a great, long table, a great, long, wood table that would nearly be as long as this room, you know, and a dozen or more could sit down at it, you see.

WRM What do you remember about lambing time?

AM Oh, I remember lambing time!

WRM Did farmers sit up all night?

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AM Yes, farmers sat up all night. I used to sit up with my youngest brother; it was alright when he was awake but he used to say, ‘Nance, I can’t keep awake.’ I used to sit up to keep him awake many-a-time, and then we both went out and we’d have a lantern, you see, and you would go round. If it was a bad night then you went round about eleven o’clock, and we always had what we called a lambing field and they brought all the sheep, the first-weekers, into that lambing field and there they lambed. And we had a barn, which before lambing time we did all off in boxes where you bring a sheep and probably two little lambs that probably wouldn’t live if it was a snowy night. You brought them in there, and at least they were warm and you could look after them. And my Father was a great believer... I remember one winter, about 1917 when it was a very bad winter and there was a lot of snow, and we gave all our sheep milk. He said, ‘Well, alright, we’ll give our milk to the sheep, it’ll be cheaper than giving them feed and it’s better for them.’ And they got... I used to go with a bucket of milk and a bit of basin and they’d all come, and you would give her and her and her, and they’d drink. You see, they got used to it. And I know that our sheep were fast in during the... We used to put boxes round the wall, a rail and do them off as best we could, and then the main sheep were in the bare patch, forty in there, and another forty in another barn, and we kept them like that and of course they were alright. We had a lot of snow.

WRM What were the particular tricks that you adopted with the lambs to bring them round? Did you used to plunge them into basins of hot water?

AM No, I never remember us doing that. If you had a lamb die you skinned it, and rubbed the lamb that you were going to adopt onto the mother all over with the inside of the skin to make the face and the shoulders and the legs smell, and then you put the skin on and she would take it alright. But if you had a lamb that... I've seen us sometimes give a drop of milk with a drop of gin into it or something like that, or a drop of whisky or port or a drop of brandy, whatever we had to help a lamb to live. But you brought them into the house and put them in front of the fire for an hour or two, and it's amazing how quickly they came round. Of course, nowadays you see they don't bring their sheep in to lamb at all.

WRM Do you remember 'sarving', sheep sarving?

AM Just, because I remember we had sheep scab once and we had to go round white-washing all the wall round the pasture where we had these sheep that had it.

WRM Was it your Father who was sarving them?

AM Well, we would have a man or two. That again was another thing. You got a man from Appersett who used to come and sarve sheep, and then after that we dipped in a sort of sarve we put into the dip and our sheep used to come out and they used to look quite, almost black with the oil that was on but it helped. They don't do this now. But my Father was a great believer in it, it kept their coats down and the wind never blew in at them, you see; however bad the weather was it kept their coats down.

WRM Do you remember sheep washing?

AM Oh yes, we used to wash. Up at the Roman Road that goes up from Bainbridge over Wether Fell there's a beck runs down there, and they used to go and make a dam across the water and all the farmers in the village took their sheep up there; and we used to go with a horse and float and take all the meals. It was a gala day because the women all went, and it was mostly a fine day and you went and had a meal, a picnic out, and the women sat about and gossiped and the men did the sheep washing. Like clipping days, you see. Farmers all went and helped to clip for each other, and perhaps the women went and wound the wool, you see?

WRM And this washing, did that start fairly early?

AM Yes, that started usually before hay-time, perhaps May when you had a fine day and the lambs had grown up.

WRM What time in the morning would you begin to wash?

AM Oh, they'd begin to wash about eleven o'clock.

WRM They would gather them in first?

AM They would gather them; you see, we had Wether Fell. Well, whoever went you see, perhaps two or three people would go and we would gather all the sheep from Wether Fell. Then there might be a certain [number] that had come from Raydale side, from off Bardale Moor, but we gathered all those and washed them. We always at dipping time gathered everybody's

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sheep and dipped everybody's sheep, and if we had from Outhwaite, or Coates's or whoever they were at Marsett, we kept them in a paddock, you see, and we would let them know and they would come and get them. And we always did that at clipping time. If we brought everybody's sheep in we clipped their sheep, and then their sheep and the wool stayed by themselves and we let them know that we had whatever number we had, you see? I find there isn't that comradeship now, it's gone; because modern farmers don't do that now.

WRM Hawes would be your market place, wouldn't it?

AM Hawes was the market, yes.

WRM And you'd be very familiar of course with the horse and trap, would you?

AM Oh yes, my Father when he went to Scotland he used to go and catch a train at Garsdale at six o'clock. I've gone in my nightdress with two coats on many-a-time to drive. We used to have a horse... well, before that, when he used to be auctioneering we had a horse, Tim Whiffler we called him, he was a racehorse but he didn't stand up to racing and my Father bought him. He was very friendly with old Dobson Peacock, the Peacocks of Middleham, you know? And we had this horse and it could go like the wind, and we also had a chestnut mare that was a thoroughbred and she could go like the wind. We used to go to Garsdale to catch this train at six o'clock in the morning.

WRM What time of year would this be Mrs Mason?

AM Oh, from... [WRM views photograph] That's my Father; that's Hawes, can you see him there?

WRM Oh, yes.

AM And he used to sell up by the Pennygarth, you know? You won't remember, the chains have gone, but there were chains where they fastened the bulls, and we used to have... When my father died we burned I would say nearly hundreds of penny memorandum books that which had either valuations of sales, or what they paid drovers when they shod cattle to bring them. We used to have an old drover who came for years, and he used to come over the fells you know, and just have oatmeal in his plaid; tied in the end of his plaid.

WRM And he'd brought the cattle down from Scotland?

AM And he would bring down the cattle, yes.

WRM This was in your Father's day?

AM In my Father's day, yes.

WRM So they didn't come down by train at first?

AM No, they didn't come by train at first, and then they used to come to Ingleton and we used to walk them from Ingleton.

WRM Where did your Father go to buy cattle?

AM Oh, he used to go to Stirling and to Lanark and then up onto the Islands to buy sheep, you know.

WRM He'd get up there, would he?

AM Oh, yes.

WRM Which islands?

AM Well, he used to go to Arran and all these places to buy Scotland sheep.

WRM Was this the black faced sheep?

AM Yes, the black faced sheep.

WRM Before the Swaledale became popular?

AM Yes, before the Swaledale became popular. And he used to go to all the fairs, you see. There was Ingleton Fair, and they'd all come, there was Hawes Fair and East Witton Fair and Middleham, and Leyburn Fair and Askrigg Hill: all the various ones that ran one after another.

WRM Your Father then, you would take him off to catch the six o'clock train?

AM Yes.

WRM How long would he be away from home?

AM Well, I've known him go perhaps sometimes early Wednesday morning and he would be back Saturday morning, you see, or we would meet him Friday

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night, it varied. He was always at home on a Tuesday to sell. And the men, we had various people, we used to have families that had... you know, as the lads left school they came and worked for us and stayed for so many years and we had lots of girls that stayed, you know, until they were married and then went elsewhere.

WRM What was the lot then of the servant girl? She would leave school at roughly what age?

AM Fourteen. Thirteen or fourteen.

WRM And did she go to the hiring?

AM Well, it isn't oft we had anybody from the hiring because we always had somebody from the village, and they seemed... you see, I mean, lots of people in the village wouldn't have you know, a very good meal, or the sorts of meal that we had. So we always had somebody who was asking, 'Will you have our so-and-so, she's going to leave school at so-and-so?' 'Aye, well, she can come for a bit.' I mean, we had whole families. I can think of the Taylor families and who we call the Metcalfes here, the contractors, their grandfather. The whole family would one after another come and live. And I remember when the old Mother, which is this generation's Granny... she was burned to death. She used to sit and knit by the fire and I used to take... As a schoolgirl I used to take her knitting to the covered wagon that came from Kendal to pick up the knitters, you know?

WRM Good heavens.

AM And I used to take this before I went to school for old Jenny, old Mrs Taylor. And the two were an old couple, they were in their eighties, and they lived just in a cottage further along from our farm, and I think you see she would wear an old black, patched skirt and you see their underskirts were material in those days and I suppose a cinder had dropped out and got her clothes on fire. And you see it burnt, and burnt round her and the old man was trying to knock it out. He used to get our *Yorkshire Post*. My Father got the *Yorkshire Post* every morning by post, and he used to come in perhaps of an evening and he'd have the day before's *Yorkshire Post*, and he was batting her with this. Well, of course, he fanned the flames and when somebody got in, you see, the poor old lady, and she died. And I remember the funeral. You see there was a lot of them and they were all married, and there was about twelve of them. And my Mother said that we would have it and she prepared a meal, because we had a big dining room. One of my treasured possessions is a jam dish which the family bought *me*. They knew my Mother wouldn't have anything, and they gave me this silver jam dish. Only the other day when I was doing out me cabinet in the other room I thought, 'Well, nobody else would think...' It's not valuable now but to me it has great value.

WRM These serving girls, how long would they stay at a farm then? Until they got married?

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AM Yes, quite often. We had two people, but they were both Nellies. Nellie Wilber came from Northallerton as a girl of fourteen and lived with my Mother 'til she was married before the First World War. She had two children, and then her husband went to the First World War. She had a cottage in Hawes, and of course she came back, and Nellie used to say, 'Well, I'll come back. I'll darn all the stockings and do the mending.' And she would stay perhaps a month with her children. And I've known her come for hay-time when her husband was in France and she would stay maybe three to six months, you see. And after her husband came home, I was only telling her son who lives at the top of Hawes, William, because somebody said to me at the 'Over 60s' club, 'What's the matter with you two? You sitting there with your heads together, you're having a very long talk.' And this lady who is a widow she said, 'You don't talk to Bill like that, he's my boyfriend.' He has a wife, this is all just talk. 'Oh,' I said, 'Lizzie, you don't know the half of it.' I said, 'I've slept with Bill many a time. I used to cuddle him up.' He said, 'Yes, when my toothache was bad you cuddled me up.' These children we used to have, you see, and Nellie used to say, 'Put him to bed because your Mother...' After her husband came back, you see, my mother would say, 'No, Nellie, you don't stay, you have a home and a husband, you go home', you see? And she used to say *[whispers]*, 'Put him to bed and then we'll stop all night.'

WRM These girls then, I mean, they left school without a great deal of education?

AM They left school with practically no education and they had a lot of loyalty to

the people they went to live with. I mean, they never thought of leaving.

WRM They had a hard life while they were there.

AM Oh, yes.

WRM But I mean, everybody had a hard life on the farm.

AM Yes, well everybody worked, you see.

WRM What sort of pay did they get? This would include keep, of course?

AM Oh, yes. It would include keep.

WRM They were paid by the six months, were they?

AM Oh yes. I don't know what... perhaps eleven pounds for the six months, something like that, no more. But you see they got so many other things. I remember when the Agricultural Workers' Union started coming round. I don't know whether you know Mr Jack Brocklebank, but I know him. Now my brothers always had a man for years, and I mean they had a farm man, Charlie Allen would go from school, he was married... then he got married and lived in the village, and anything Charlie wanted he got. We always got coal, you know a wagon of coal, so many tonnes of coal, and Charlie would get so much. You know, 'Well, you might as well have that load,' and that all came in for nothing. But I mean Charlie had lived... and the man came to make him a member and my brother went nearly mad. He said, 'I don't need an Agricultural Workers' Union to do right to me man.' You have a good man

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and a good master and they are both satisfied, but it doesn't always work out. We had two different girls called Nellie. Nellie Brown, she would be Joss Atkinson's half sister, I think. She would come when she was thirteen or fourteen and she was with our family and one of our family until she died. Billy Moore's Mother was the same. She was one 'til she died. They'd always come back. And I mean, if they don't come back as a maid into your house they are then one of your family, and you look upon them as one of your family. I mean, when my mother died I said to Nellie Brown, 'Well,' I said, 'Nellie, you take what you want.' 'Well, I've always wanted so-and-so and so-and-so.' Well, I felt that she had as much right to it as I had, you see?

WRM What was your name by-the-way before you were married?

AM My name was Pratt.

WRM Your first name?

AM Oh, I'm Annie Margaret.

WRM Annie Margaret, that's right, and your husband was a farmer presumably was he?

AM Yes.

WRM I see.

AM Well, you see I've been married twice. My first husband had pneumonia and died and left me with three little children: a baby that was six months old and

two elder children. *[Shows WRM photograph]* This is my boy who was killed in Burma.

WRM Oh, gosh...

AM Yes, he was twenty one.

WRM It's sad, isn't it?

AM Yes, he had a university scholarship.

*[End of Side A – 00:45:37]*