

[Start of interview - 00:23:51]

WRM Now, this was Harry Hopeful was it?

BA Yes, I think that's Harry Hopeful. I wouldn't know where it was just taken, but I think it was probably at Leeds.

WRM You didn't usually get Susan dressed up like that, did you?

BA No-o, she always had t'apron on, working. I never seen 'er but she was allus workin'.

WRM It says there's Susan Peacock, Tom Hill and Harry Hopeful, so that would be up at Tan Hill would it?

BA Up at Tan Hill, I think.

WRM Oh no, it isn't Tom Hill, it's Tan Hill.

BA Tan Hill.

WRM That's right, Wilfred Pickles and Susan Peacock, Tan Hill, and Harry Hopeful. And that sitting down with a little child is Edna Parrington, and she was the daughter of the first marriage was she?

BA Yes.

WRM How many children were there?

BA There was three.

WRM What were they called?

BA Edna, Olive and Maggie.

WRM Ah, yes, and what happened to them?

BA One married into Wensleydale, a Thompson from Skell Gill. And the other married somebody down at Oxford.

WRM Oxford? And what happened to Edna?

BA Edna, she came back to live with her father-in-law and went to live with her Mother and Michael at Low Road there, and she died there two years since. Two years back.

WRM And who was the little child there?

BA Oh no, it's somebody else's. Because she was never married.

WRM And this old building was the old what...?

BA Well, I don't know what it used to be at Tan Hill, but I can tell o' one that had been lived in, an' a fella called Hanley Bill lived there.

WRM Handler?

BA Aye.

WRM Handler Bill.

BA It would be 'Hanley' Bill. Oh aye, he couldna read nor write.

WRM Oh, heck!

BA Mebbe Tan Hill Joe lived in't.

WRM Tan Hill Joe, what did he do?

BA He worked at t'pit.

WRM Oh yes?

BA An' I used to work at t'pit.

WRM And this place has been demolished?

BA An' Susan used to write... he started courtin' wi' an ol' woman fra Reeth.

WRM Who started courtin'?

BA This Tan Hill Joe.

WRM Tan Hill Joe, oh yes...

BA However, he couldna read nor write, and he used to go to Susan and ask 'er to write a love letter for 'im. An' Susan would write, an' time o' t'finish she'd say, 'Is there owt else tha wants to put, Joe?' 'Ah, well,' he says, 'just put a few o' them theear crosses.' *[Laughs]* Aye. But the most interesting was when th'reply came back, an' he couldn't read it and she 'ad it to read.

WRM Was it successful?

BA Oh, aye, yes.

WRM Did they get married?

BA Yes, they got wed.

WRM *[Looking at photograph]* Is that snow or lime?

BA Oh no, that's snow. Aye, that was...

WRM ...'36.

BA Aye, it would be. Aye, our Dad's 'as 'ad winders covered over a few times blown right up, aye. Aye, there was...

WRM And that's Edna and her bike?

BA That's Edna. She used to go down on her bike many-a-time.

WRM Did she?

BA Aye, she did. Yes, oh, she liked walking but she could ride a bike. She got a bit of practice with going up and down there. And the road was rough. It wasn't tarred.

WRM No, when was it tarred?

BA Oh, not long since but it isn't all, right up from moor bottom, ah can tell on it bein' tarred but it isn't.

WRM That's Susan and Michael, is it? Michael was a road man, was he?

BA Michael worked at t'pit. He got coals out from t'pit.

WRM At t'back o' the house?

BA Back o' t'house. An' then he kept road in repair right down to
Arkengarthdale, to Cocker Top and Godstones out and Brokeham and [unclear
00:28:35] Road, oh aye.

WRM When did he die?

BA Err...

WRM Not to worry. He carried on after Susan, didn't he?

BA Oh yes, he carried on a bit, and then Edna was there.

WRM They used to have a harmonium up there didn't they, according to Laurie
Rukin?

BA Oh yes; oh by gum, aye.

WRM And it wasn't always hymns, was it?

BA Pardon?

WRM It wasn't always hymns they played?

BA No-o. *[Laughs]*

WRM Sacred and profane; yeah.

BA Oh, by gum, aye.

WRM Do you remember when t'sheep went in at Tan Hill? Didn't somebody put a ram in at one time as a joke?

BA Aye, well, mebbe just to go round; but there were a lot of things went on there, by gum aye. Aye, she used to mek teas too in that li'l room an' all. She allus used to bake stuff. Aye, it was alright. But they always had some hens.

WRM Did they?

BA Aye.

WRM They didn't get blown away?! *[Laughs]*

BA No, she kept 'em laying. *[Laughs]* Aye, she could look after hens. She found out a bit about hens, an' chickens an' all. I had a few hens and chickens now and again, 'cos there used to be a song: *All the little hens and chickens in the garden*'. Aye, it was Billy who used to sing that many-a-time, at Tan Hill.

WRM Where did she come from, Susan? Was she a local lass?

BA I think she came down from about Starbottom, and she 'ad some relatives down there.

WRM In Wharfedale?

BA Aye, an' in Coverdale she used to live once. She was a servant, I think. But there was somebody at t'funeral came from, not Starbottom, what's that below? Kettlewell, aye, that's it.

WRM And who was Parrington? What was his job?

BA Parrington was her first husband when she lived at Kettlewell. Aye, she had t'pub with Dickie. Aye, 'e 'ad one of the fastest trotting horses there was. An' they trotted it on Leeming Lane for £100 a side. An' 'e was a horse... I forget what they called t'other but he was from t'Peak District, and Dickie 'ad this, and a man from Wensleydale, Little Sunter, rode it on Leeming Lane.

WRM Where's Leeming Lane?

BA Leeming Lane, it runs on from Catterick, reet on there to Leeming Bar.

WRM Oh, yes.

BA And they had this... They were trotting for I think £50 a side, but anyway they were fined for trotting on the highway; they were fined about £100 for trotting on the highway.

WRM Who won?

BA Dickie.

WRM Did he?

BA Aye, Dickie won. 'Lady Derby' they called it.

WRM His horse?

BA Aye. Lady Derby. I wonder where's photograph?

WRM So he was Dickie Parrington?

BA Aye.

WRM He was a Swaledale man, was he?

BA Yes, oh aye. Oh by gum I've 'eard 'em say, 'That Parrington, by gum; that horse of Parrington's she could trot.' Lady Derby, aye. They were from just t'pit country was this t'other. I know there was a lot of money on.

WRM Yeah.

BA But anyway; an' Little Sunter hadn't any money, he was jus' ridin' on it, an' he borrowed a pound to put on it. *[Laughs]* It won.

WRM What was Mr Parrington like, was he a nice chap?

BA Oh aye; of course I didn't ken much on 'im.

WRM And he died did he?

BA Aye, it were just when they got to Tan Hill.

WRM Was it?

BA Aye. 'e 'adn't been at Tan Hill long before he popped his clogs, and she was left wi' 'erself.

WRM And three kids?

BA Aye.

WRM Did she have any children to Michael?

BA No. No. Ee by gum.

WRM And what was she like, was she a busy little lady? You know, always rushing about?

BA Susan? Oh, she was frettened o' nay body, because I'll tell 'ee what she 'ad, she 'ad t'revolver allus loaded.

WRM Had she?

BA An' I'll tell ye what, she's turned people out wi' t'revolver. There was a knockabout called Brocklebank from Kirkby used to go, he was a knockabout man an' he used to call there from Kirkby Stephen an' he would get a bit unruly. Once went in an' demandin' something from Susan, I forget what it was, something to eat and demandin' and wantin' to stop. However, Susan turned 'im out wi' t'pointed revolver. However, he went out but he pinched one of her hens, an' he 'ploated' it from Tan Hill down to t'pit.

WRM What did he do with it?

BA He 'ploated' it on t'roadway down, like pluckin' it.

WRM Oh, yes.

BA Feathers off, an' feathers was on t'road all the way down.

WRM Was it still alive?

BA No, 'e'd killed it, 'e'd wring t'neck. An' he ploated it, an' then he went down to t'pit, at li'l pit, you know where at Tan Hill...?

WRM Yes.

BA An' they allus left a good fire there, an' he borrowed an' ol' tin and then 'ad it there, ate it. Aye, that was ol' Brocklebank.

WRM What was his first name?

BA I don't know.

WRM Where did he live?

BA Brocklebank?

WRM Yeah.

BA Oh, he was a knockabout, he would sleep outside rough.

WRM Oh, would he, yes.

BA But 'e 'ad a brother at Kirkby Stephen who was a builder.

WRM There wouldn't be many hikers in those old days, would there?

BA Oh, there was a few.

WRM Were there?

BA There was a few, because I've 'eard 'em tell. Not a lot; no, not a lot. But

there was one, when owd Hanley Bill used to go in the nex' village they'd be in t' cottage, and Hanley Bill...

WRM How do you spell 'Hanley'?

BA H-A-N-D-L-E-Y, I should think.

WRM Oh, yes.

BA Hanley Bill was in, an' there was a man, a visitor stoppin', an' he was recitin', an' he was doin' some like makin' manoeuvres, like actions. Doin' some actions when he was recitin'. A very clever man, good at his job. An' owd Hanley Bill jumped up an' he says, 'Turn t'bugger out, turn t'bugger out.' He says, 'It's not reet.' Aye. *[Laughs]*

WRM Amazing.

BA Aye, oh aye.

WRM Did she wear clogs, Susan?

BA Allus wore clogs did Susan, by gum aye.

WRM And home-made dresses and things?

BA Aye. Always had a brooch in 'ere.

WRM A brooch?

BA Aye. She was alreet if she took t'yer. I was terrible pally wiv 'er. Oh, I was there one night when it terrible wild, when it blew t'chimney off,

an' it rained in and rained in, an' I went upstairs... well, I set off to my dance
an' I couldn't get on to Stainmore an' it came on wild... oh. Michael came
round on his 'ands and knees for us, he couldn't stand. An' I had a man with
me, a pillion rider, an' he got off behind me an' it rolled him right away in
t'moor. Skinned all 'is face and 'is arm. 'e was like a big, tall, lanky lad.
Aye, he used to be seven down from there, jus' next door to me.

WRM You went over there on a motor bike, did you?

BA Aye, on a motorbike. Never got to t'dance that night it was that wild.

WRM What was it, rain or snow?

BA Rain and wind.

WRM It blew the chimney pot off, did it?

BA Aye, it blew t'chimney pot off an' she was frightened. She took some
frightening but that frightened her, an' it was blowin' in through them winders,
they should 'ave 'ad what's is name: 'Everest now, the best!'

WRM She didn't get snowed up in bed, did she?

BA No. *[Laughs]* No, I was once.

WRM Yes, I know. *[Laughs]* By the way, I was at a dance the other night and there
was Tom and Ida there. Alderson.

BA Were there? How're they goin' on?

WRM I'll tell them tonight I've seen you.

BA Aye.

WRM What was Susan's funeral like?

BA Oh, there was people from all over. I think it was like the mostest funeral there's ever been. Oh, aye.

WRM Was it at the Church Hall?

BA Aye, it was.

WRM How did they get the coffin down?

BA Bagshaw; he was the undertaker from Low Road.

WRM Bagshaw? Did he have a horse?

BA No, I think 'e would 'ave a motor.

WRM A motor hearse?

BA Aye. By gum.

WRM It would be a wonderful sight seeing it come down off t'moor, wouldn't it, with all the people behind?

BA Oh, I'll tell yer what there was just about the mostest that ever had been to a funeral; there was that.

WRM What did she die of, just old age?

BA Aye.

WRM Because she was only sixty-one, wasn't she?

BA I forget what her ailment was, but I think she didn't lig long like, she went fairly sharp at t'finish. But she worked hard, and by she could, anybody she didn't like, oh, she could tell 'em off.

WRM This chappie I met, this cyclist, he said that he were there and a woman had some fruit cake and a bit of tea and she said, 'Could I have the recipe?' And she said, 'No,' and when this woman had gone out he said, 'Why didn't you give her t'recipe?' and she said 'Because she wouldn't know how to bake anyway.'

BA Yeah.

WRM She said, 'I bet she's never baked in her life' or something.

BA *[Laughs]*

WRM And he said, this cyclist said, that after Susan had died he realised an old ambition and he spent the night at Tan Hill in an old bed. And when he got up in the morning there was no sign of Edna Parrington, and when he went outside she was coming back with a yoke and a couple of buckets, and they were getting water from a spring!

BA Oh, aye, they had to go down there in winter many-a-time an' dig it out. Oh, by gum, aye.

WRM What was the coal like they were getting out from behind the...?

BA Well, some was not so bad, but they allus had a good fire.

WRM It was small, was it, small coal?

BA A bit small, some of it, but they used to pick it for thisselves. Aye, some o' t'winter they used to supply blacksmith's shops for t'pump an' bellows.

WRM Well, did he used to leave the stuff out and heap it up outside and people came and got it?

BA Oh aye, yes. He'd come and calculate a load. Oh, he didn't weigh it, there was no need to. He could guess what a cartload was. Aye.

WRM He didn't weight it at all?

BA No. But it wasn't bad coal. We used to always gang now an' again for a cartload of that. It 'elped t'other coal to take.

WRM What was it like when Susan was in the bar at nights? I mean, did she say much?

BA Oh aye, she come an' sat wi' us, yer see, theear was neya bar. It was down in a bit of a cellar, jus' through in a room.

WRM There wasn't a bar?

BA No, yer could see the barrels when yer went down.

WRM So you didn't sit at a bar at all when you went for a drink?

BA No, she come an' sat wi' yer an' talked, an' had a bit o' craic with yer. That's
[unclear 00:42:30], there were a couple o' us fightin', he was relation to
Dickie. Aye. His father was a cobbler. [Unclear 00:42:44] He was Dickie's
brother. Aye.

WRM Oh, she was a wonderful woman, wasn't she? Why is it that she was
remembered like that? I mean, she was just an indomitable character was she?

BA Oh, she was a character. If she took that way, if she didn't like anybody, she
could tell 'em off and tell 'em off in a nice manner.

WRM How did they get the beer up there in her day? Was it horse drawn dray?

BA Oh, horse drawn. I think they would get a lot on fra Kirkby Stephen, and then
at the finish they got it, some, from Appleby.

WRM And how did they get it up? Was it horse and cart?

BA Aye, it'd be horse an' cart.

WRM She'd get snowed up many-a-time in winter, would she?

BA I've heard 'em say, I think it was one year there wasn't a customer for thirteen
week.

WRM Thirteen weeks? Good heavens.

BA Aye, thirteen week. And I've heard it said that in 1895, that somebody went fer peat on that moor in t'middle o' June and frost were still in t'ground.

WRM What, in the middle of June?

BA Aye.

WRM And what year was that?

BA 1895. Aye, that was a hard winter.

WRM And they went to peat in the middle of June...

BA ...and frost was still in t'ground.

WRM Good Lord. Did they burn peat on the fires round here?

BA Oh, nearly every farm up t'dale went to peat on t'Mirk Fell.

WRM And did they have grouse and chips? *[Laughs]*

BA By gum, ah used to like goin' onto Mirk Fell, right on t'top an' you could see what everybody else was doin'. An' you could see all, theear's so-and-so paintin', there's Stonehouse paintin' there, they're on the Black Moor, they're on up Stonesdale, up at Tan Moss or...

WRM There were red grouse a hundred yards from the house today. I suppose that one or two grouse found their way into the kitchen did they at times? Whose moors are those? Are they Lord Peel's?

BA Aye, they'll belong Lord Peel. I would say there were bits of odd grouse. Aye, everybody liked grouse. There wasn't any Grouse whisky in them days.

[Laughs] I think that's another bright today, isn't it? Aye.

WRM This chap, by the way, this cyclist told me that he went up there and he and his pal had been up on a tandem and they went in and old Michael was there, Susan had died. And he said, 'Can I have a drink?' And he said, 'Aye.' And he said, 'What if the Police come in?' He said, 'Well he'll be comin' up on his bike an' he'll need one as well.'

BA *[Laughs]* Aye, I've 'eard Michael say that I've 'eard owd, what d'you call 'er, Susan saying she 'ad [unclear 00:45:58 – Jan Stoker?]. It was Gretna Green, how they come under Gretna Green Police Station, she didn't come under Richmond; an' Police took her. An' when they got there the Chairman o' t'Magistrates said to her, 'Did you serve this gentleman after hours?' An' she says, 'Yes, sir.' An' he said, 'Well, you did perfectly right.' An' she says, 'They never took my name off me.'

WRM What sort of a voice had she got?

BA Oh, not a bad voice, she could mek 'erself heard. Yes, she could mek 'erself heard. An' of a Saturday mornin', you wanted to keep away on a Saturday because that was cleanin' up day. Aye, scourin' round by t'fireside and this fancy scrubbin' stone, donkey stone, all round thear, and black-leaded on t'bars.

WRM Did she do it herself?

BA Aye, she was on 'er knees. Oh aye, and wi' fire on like an' she was as red as rud, aye! *[Laughs]* Oh aye, an' scrubbin' an' cleanin', an' she 'ad this shiny ol' fender. By gum you could 'ave shaved yourself through t'fender, it were bright as a bobbin. By gum, aye. Aye, she could put a shine on t'fender, she could that. An' she could put a shine on 'er face when she took that way, or she could put a scowl, aye she could. By gum, she could tell folk off.

WRM These goats, did they come into the place now and again?

BA Not much into the house although they would jus' come in, but no, not much. But they allus 'ad a goat. Aye, but it was outside.

WRM They wouldn't keep a pig up there, would they?

BA No, I never seen 'em wi' un, unless it was one year, but they allus got half a pig. They'd allus get a pig.

WRM And they didn't have a cellar, did they, for the beer?

BA No, not really. It was cowl enough anyway up thear. The cellar went jus' down a bit two or three steps an' you could see into it.

WRM Now they have a place at the back, I think.

BA Aye. Oh, ah used to like goin'. She were a good cook, like. You could have a good craic wi' 'er, an' she always 'ad somebody thear and she could tell yer summat, what they said and whear they were goin'.

WRM What was she talking about when she went to Leeds on this broadcast?

BA Eh, I forget.

WRM It would be quite an adventure. Oh, but that was up at Tan Hill though, wasn't it?

BA Yes, I think there was a cuttin'. I've not seen it, but it was about when she was at Tan Hill. Oh, there used... long asen before she went it was Jan Slewes you know, was Tan Hill. There was cock fightin' at Tan Hill once.

WRM When was that?

BA Oh, a long while since.

WRM Aye, it'd be grand in summer but...

BA But Dickie was a big horse-trottin' man. Her first 'usband. Oh, 'e was a great 'orseman, 'e was that; 'e were known all o'er. Them were the sort of days we used to... like we'd use it daily, together with some action.

WRM Ee, wonderful, thanks very much. I'll just copy these down, how about your dinner? It'll be going cold won't it?

[End of interview - 00:50:52]