

Thorne & Hatfield Moors Oral History Project

Interview with: Jim Dickinson (part 1)

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Interviewer: Lynne Fox

This is Lynne Fox for the Thorne and Moorends Oral History Project. It's the 15th November 2006 and I'm talking this morning to Jimmy Dickinson and Emily Dickinson. Jimmy used to live, good morning to you.

JD Yeah morning. I answer to Jim by the way.

Jim. It's, it's Josie Verhees who calls you Jimmy, that's where I got it from I'm sorry.

JD No problem, with having known me when I was a child you see.

Yes that's right. Now, before we get into, I know what is going to be a very interesting set of stories, can you tell me where and when you were born please?

JD Yeah, well if I tell you where we lived. My grandfather ran the mill that we're going to discuss, and mi' father and mother and myself, when I was eventually born lived at Moorends in Darlington Grove. And when mi' mother became expecting for whatever reason she went to a nursing home in Mexborough. Now we've never been able to find out why and why she didn't go to say Doncaster, it might have been full and couldn't accommodate her. She went on the bus would you believe with a suitcase up a damn great hill at Mexborough and this was in 1936. However, only about three months on from that date when I was born, mi' grandfather died, who'd been running the mill for many years. We're not quite sure how many and it was left on to mi' father's responsibility to go down there, move into the mill and do the operation as mi' granddad had been doing.

Can you tell me first of all what year you were born?

JD '36.

And can you tell me what mill we're talking about?

JD Moorends, the Thorne Peat Mill. And it was three mile out of Moorends so that was the length he had to bicycle to get there every morning. But once that situation developed with mi' grandfather dying, him and mi' mother and myself had to move in down there and I had an aunt and a cousin that were already living there, that'd lived with mi' grandfather and grandmother when she'd been alive, 'cause she died a good bit before him. Anyway they must have got the message because both of 'em got married within about twelve or eighteen month and left. Which was fair enough, it was a biggish house, well it is a big house or was, but not too convenient when there's two adults and me as a baby and two youngish ladies, you know, so all that side of it worked out quite well.

Can I just ask you, what did your dad do before you moved into the mill?

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JD Well he's, he worked there for fifty year, fifty, sixty year, I'm not sure which, he was the joiner originally.

Before, before he, when his dad died and he lived in Moorends, did he work for the peat company then?

JD Oh yeah, he worked for it all his life.

I'm sorry I'm interrupting.

JD No, you're alright and he never got any accolades for what he did, I mean you'd think that they maybe given him an alarm clock, for, you know, after all them years nothing, and he was on a low wage really.

Tell me about his job, what he actually did for the peat company?

JD Well, there was a blacksmith worked there as well as mi' father. Mi' father in the earlier days he was the joiner and he, he did more than any joiner would be expected to do, like making patterns for castings that had to go to a foundry like the axel boxes on all the wagons, 'cause he made all the wagons himself. And when mills had a problem, other mills, there were four round the moors, when there was a break down the van, the company van, because there was an office at our mill and one of the clerks would take it through to the mill that had a problem and mi' father would rectify it. So he was more in terms of an engineer as well as being a joiner.

Then the blacksmith died and mi' father got landed with the job of doing all the blacksmithing, so he was doing the joinering, the engineering, there was a lathe in the big blacksmith's shop and he had his own lathe in his own workshop and he was a damn good turner, and he was doing all the turning. There were grinding machines in there, the full engineering kit and a big, a big diesel engine that used to drive all this, [inaudible], in fact he'd installed it in earlier years. But, as I say, then he bought his own welding tackle and he used to do welding as well as all the rest of the engineering, extremely versatile person and he kept the other mills going as it were. I would have called him maintenance engineer, he went way beyond the joiner's job that he used to do when he was a lot younger. And everything seemed to work out pretty well. The blacksmith had to leave and ultimately died, Bill, and as I say, mi' father just picked the tab up for all the various issues.

Anything that was required, Reg will do it, that was the attitude of the company in question. It was called the Peat Works, but the company was the British Moss Litter Company, that was the name of the company and then ultimately when they closed down, by the time mi' father left, Fisons bought the company and they continued to extract peat off the moors. But our mill had closed down. Our mill was open till 1924, when it got burnt down. They rebuilt it and then in 1936 it burnt down again, but they never saw fit to rebuild it again then. But mi' father then picked up on all this maintenance work which was expensive, to say the least, and the mill that we lived on, or at, hadn't got breakdowns in that context because it wasn't producing, processed peat. You know, there'd still be a wagon or two come down it was usually to bring things down or, the wagons would be repaired.

He used to make all the railway lines that they put round the moors and the moor edges and crossings and points. You know, you've seen points where you can shunt wagons up one route or another, he used to make all them from scratch and get the metal in and he'd produce all the points and everything

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of that nature. And they were really well made, you know. A gauge, I think it was about two foot, maybe about two foot six the gauge of the rails, smallish gauge but as kids there was an aqueduct over where the, the warping drain crossed the old canal that used to run to the mill. And that was another feat of engineering that aqueduct, it was, you know, to take the wagons over another, another waterway with the, what they call the warping drain, 'cause that warping drain was used to warp the land, it used to come right from the top road, the road between Thorne and Goole and beyond that right up to the top road, which it was on the Selby Road as we tended to call it. And there was, when the waters ran down they used to bring warp, as they called it, which was like a sandy substance and they could open a field and they used to flood the field and this warp used to settle on top of the ordinary soil and it was a light brown colour and it was a very favourable addition to the soil. Must have been very fertile because it would grow stuff very, very good. And we had a few gardens where there'd been warp, and warp land run on, by, not drainage, it was really spreading the, the warp onto areas that'd been black soil previously. 'Cause our garden was all black soil and that garden would grow anything, mainly weeds when you didn't want them.

So, it, I was there for twenty one year, I went when I were three month old and I was, I came away when I was twenty one.

Can you describe to me what it was like, what the house was like first of all?

Oh, it was a big house, beautiful house. You've got photographs to look at, and refer, including a painting that I did of it. And it was, I mean when I got more into, I served my time as an engineer not a joiner like mi' father, and I was interested in things like that by that time and I used to look at the brick work and all the, you know, the brick laying. It was immaculate and the bricks were so well made and they'd been made from extracts from the pond where Sharpe's and the other family, Bells and Sharpe's lived, which was two, three mile up the moor edges from us. Two of the daughters used to, and another house there called Verhees' and Smits', Dutch people, and the two girls, the youngest two girls used to come to the mill where I lived on a Friday night at about four or five o'clock time before the office closed and pick their father's wages up. And they always used to come into our house because mi' mother always gave 'em sweets. And we had a good relationship and they just live in, some of them now, just live in the village at Moorends near the pit.

Was it a single house or was there more than one family there?

No, there was two houses. It was like a semi-detached situation, but my aunt lived in the one next door to us. She moved up from Birmingham with her husband and then her husband died and she used to clean the office on a weekly or, I don't know about daily basis, but, she was like a cleaner she was nearly sixty five, sixty seven. And what they did, they boxed the front room off so that there was no access from her house. So all she had downstairs was the main living room, but upstairs she had there bedrooms. So they just had one big room for the office and there were only two clerks in there and that's how it prevailed. And across the big yard was the blacksmith's shop, the stable, well stables, the blacksmith's shop and the engine house where the big engine used to drive all the machines in the blacksmith's shop.

So it was a good arrangement. Mi' father installed them, used them, he had full control and he also bought his own welding tackle, so he'd got a good facility there. It was oxyacetylene, because none of the property had any electricity installed. It had years ago, we'd still traces of the plugs and sockets on

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the walls, but when it got burnt out they never replaced the electric situation and as I say, we'd no electricity, we'd no water laid on. Mi' father and I used to have to pump water out of the engine house from a pump that was, it, it was connected to an artesian well and there was a pipe went through to the back o' the old mill and we used to go and prime that pump first and once you'd got that working the pump in the engine house would then work. And we used to fill two and half gallon buckets with water, well mine, when I was eight or nine year old, I carried buckets the same as him. He'd carry two full buckets across the yard to the house, or the houses, and I'd, I'd have one that was about, just above half full, it was as much as I could carry for an eight year old laddie, you know. And we used to walk across. And we had two big rain butts that'd come from the brewery on the corner of our house. One had a lid, mi' father had made a perfectly fitting lid, so that when we put the water in the lid would go on for drinking water and you know, you couldn't get any muck going in it. And the other one was right on the corner of the building connected to a drain from the roof and that used to catch soft water, which we used to use for washing. Mi' mother used to use it for washing the clothes, we used to use it for washing ourselves and it was beautiful water, so was the drinking water.

When I left there mi' dad still worked there for a month or two, well, a couple o' year, and I used to beg him, well I didn't need to beg him, just say 'Dad bring me some water', you know. I couldn't drink the water out of the tap in the village. I used to want to get the hard water that were in that barrel and I drank it for a few years before I finally succumbed to it and went onto the water that was from the mains in the village where we went to live.

How did you cope without electricity?

Well mi' father had, I'm just thinking now, we had paraffin incandescent lamps for lighting and that was it basically. Mi' father had, a workshop and he had a lathe in it and a machine for grinding lawn mowers, which he invented and made himself. And basically they were driven by petrol engines and in the, what we call the bike shed he had another circular saw, which again he'd made himself with a rise and fall table, perfectly made to, you know, to suite the nature of what he needed it to do. And we had a water-cooled, I think it were about a three to five horse Lister engine that drove that and it was an air-cooled Lister engine that drove this lathe in the big workshop on the big lawn at the top. So...

ED What did you use for lights, as Lynne's asked, what lighting had you in the workshops?

JD In the workshop, well we had Tilley lamps, but you relied mainly on the daylight in daylight hours and if you needed any light beyond that you had the paraffin Tilley lamps which you pumped up. But the incandescent lamps, you didn't pump them they had paraffin in and a mantle that was shaped about like that, and when it needed a new mantle if it got, if the mantle got broke, 'cause they were like gossamer these mantles, and when you bought them they were coated with like a, don't know what you'd call it, but you'd put one on and you'd strike a match and just touch it and it used to blaze up and it'd change from a sticky toffee type substance to a gossamer mantle that, when you lit the wick it would glow and there were a beautiful light. I wouldn't say they were quite as good as the electric lights, from the light you got from a bulb, but aye they were damn good lights and we could see all we needed to, you know.

How far away were you from your nearest neighbours?

Well, Verhees, two mile and the farm that we went through to get to the mill was just a mile from the

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main road. But we never, there was no interference from them or us. You know, we had a right of way, apparently, so there was no problem and there were only mi' father and mother and mi' self, oh, and some of the men going to the moors to work. And they took the lane through the mill and the farmyard onto the lane and then eventually onto the moors where our mill was stationed. And there was a little track about six or eight inches wide like a cinder track and they had to keep their bikes on this to ride across the moors and they went another two mile or so or more on the moors to get to where the peat was being extracted.

ED So there was only Aunt Bessie, next door.

JD Yeah and mi' Aunt Bessie she lived next door and fairly quiet sort of a life apart from a bit of cleaning that she did for the office, you know.

And did your, did your dad work in his workshop alone or did he have any assistance?

JD No, there was just him. He'd no assistance from anybody else. He was just a lone craftsman and he just coped with everything that they could throw at him basically.

It sound quite a lonely existence, a bit isolated.

JD Well it was, but as a child it was a wonderful playground for a kid my age when I was in the seven and eight region, because I used to get pals down, mi' school pals 'ud come down and we used to go all over the moors. And I was into shooting at a very early age. I found a gun in mi' dad's workshop when I was about six or seven year old, a Winchester rifle, short barrel two two rifle. And they found out that I'd found it and they didn't object because there were no bullets there and it were just an ideal gun for a kid to play cowboys with you know. And when other lads came down, you know, we'd got, well it were just like four of us, bit of a gang of four, and well they enjoyed the moors the same as me. I'd twenty five square mile for a back garden. What kids had facilities like that. It was wonderful, I loved it.

ED Tell the tale about, about when the home guard was down during the war.

JD Aye, the home guard, during the start of the war used to come down on a Sunday and do manoeuvres. Well there were all the swamps just behind the mill and going onto the moors and if you went into one o' them you'd never come out alive. Well I knew exactly where all of em were 'cause I were tramping round em every weekend and during the week. So they got me on taking 'em to show them where not to go and they used to come down with three o' three rifles, that's the big adult type rifles. And I remember one Sunday they'd come back to the mill and if you look on that picture there's a window at the end and they were all leaning their guns on this windowsill and pretending to fire. They were firing blanks, which they tied a piece of string to the bolt and, you know, they could make a bang with the gun. Now in the meantime I'd been routing round mi' dad's shed and found a box with some bullets in for the two two, and I'd got mi' pocket full of these about ten or a dozen. And there'd been some poachers in the mill who'd hung a frying pan up on one of these pillars that'd originally supported the middle floor and they were pretending to fire at this. Anyway, I'd half a dozen of these bullets in mi' pocket so I stuck one up the spout, put mi' gun down at the end of this row of squaddies, there were six of em, six or seven, and I let one go and blew a hole through this frying pan. And this squaddie stood next to me, it were first time I'd heard bad language, you know, and I don't think it's

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too bad, and he said 'Bloody Hell,' he said, 'the bairn's firing real bullets!' And then I had to start begging 'em all not to tell mi' dad, cause I knew I'd be in trouble if he knew I were. He'd say 'You could've killed one o' them home guards', you know.

But he told me what to do if there'd been bullets when I first found the gun, he drilled it into me, and I had a lot of respect for mi' dad and I listened carefully to everything he said, and we never had an incident in all the years that I had that gun. And when I got to be twelve or thirteen year old he bought me a double barrow twelve bore, cause I used to go out shooting stuff on the moors that we could eat. And we lived like kings during the war, king and queen and a son, you know, it was brilliant. I used to shoot about five or six rabbits a week, sell 'em to the kids at school and when mi' cousins came down scrounging stuff off mi' dad from the garden, they paid me five bob for a rabbit, they dint see fit to rob me but they used to rob mi' dad blind and scrounge what they could. However, in that respect I used to go shooting partridges, pheasants, pigeons, as I say rabbits and hares, the whole cabouche, and mi' mother used to cook everything. She even once cooked the brains out of a rabbit to see if I liked um but I didn't, so we never bothered wi' them again. But I could skin a rabbit in two or three minutes, even at about six or seven year old you know. She'd say 'Go and take that and see to it' and I used to take the guts out and skin it, you know, and as I say it were a wonderful life from that point of view.

ED But your pals, when you got older your pals used to go shooting, a few with you didn't they.

JD Oh aye, I know what you're gonna bring up.

ED About the whistle.

JD Aye, mi' mother, we had a guard's whistle, 'cause mi' aunt, her husband had been a guard on the railway at Birmingham and she had a whistle belonging him. And when I went on the moors, it were three or four mile you know, and I'd said to her if anybody comes and wants me, or if it's relations that's come from Beverly or Hull, I said, we'd got a signalling system with this whistle, you know. And she used to blow it, you know, twice for an uncle, three times for an aunt.

[Laughter]

JD Pals, you know, there'd be another signal, I can't remember what they were now. But I knew exactly what she was telling me using this whistle and I'd turn round and head off back because it were a twenty minute walk back. And I tell you I could walk anybody into the ground really as a kid. And then when I got to be twelve year old, eleven and twelve, I got rheumatic fever. I went to grammar school and got wet through running cross country and I contracted rheumatic fever and it just about brought me to, well it did bring me to mi' knees. I couldn't hardly walk for a year, eighteen month. And the kids were cruel. I used to have to walk through town at Thorne to the new grammar school, from, we were in the old grammar school and when I got walked from one grammar school to the other, the kids had all been and had their dinners and I was still toddling through Thorne, up Church Lane, which was a, quite a climb, you know. Mind, I got better by about sixteen, fifteen or sixteen and I got clear of it and I got back to mi' previous prowess for what it's worth, not that I was, any sort of a prowess to any extent.

ED Used to collect holly for the church for Christmas.

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JD We used to go to Sharpe's and there's a, if it's still there, there's a big holly bush there. It was, when you went inside it, it were like being in a massive shed, garden shed. And I used to climb up this, and I had a slasher, as I called it, mi' dad used to make us these, and I used to slash branches off and throw em down, cause we used to put holly behind the pictures in the living room in the house and the front room. 'Cause one of the lads, he were a beggar, and I'd be up this tree cutting holly down and he went and picked, he went to the pond and on his way back from pond to this holly tree, it weren't prickly holly this mind, it were just the, berries, but, not prickly leaves, and he picked a big branch up, it was a log, like this diameter. I'm up this tree and he, we were always doing things to one another, and he got this big log and swung it and let it go and it hit me and I've, just about knocked me out of the tree and I made a grab, I was going through branches and I eventually managed to grab hold o' one and hang onto it you know, or I'd have, I wunt have done myself a lot of harm, but..

Where did you go to school when you first started school?

JD Moorends Infant School, West Grove School. And then I went from there to the junior school which was a bit further up the village. There was the senior girls school on this side of the road and then there was the, the other infant school, that used to take, whey the rough kids I'd have called em, compared to the ones that were at our school, ours were a little bit more infantile at the West Grove School. You know, it were just how the village fell, because they were all, the fathers and that were all miners who, rough tough guys and...

ED You're aunt was there wasn't she.

JD Mi' aunt, she used to teach at the West Grove School and then I did an eleven plus and I got accepted to go to the Thorne Grammar School. And I went there for the normal term, you know, normal extent of time and I was never, well I would say this quite categorically, I was never into school much. I were only looking through windows and upstairs in the grammar school I could see right across where to the moors was and I was just waiting and dieing to get out of the gates and back down to the middle of the moors, 'cause I loved it. I remember when we were leaving and I remember it was one night and I got mi' gun and I went down right into the middle, I must have walked three mile and I were looking at the ponds and all the land between them, covered in lovely heather, you know, it were at it's best, I've no doubt you've seen the colour of heather, and I was looking at this and I were almost feeling poetic, and I was nearly talking to myself to boot, you know. And I was saying, more or less under mi' breath to mi' self, I wonder if I'll ever see this again and I never have. It were very sad to me, you know, then we left, other things took mi' fancy though, like girls!

[Laughter]

JD I mean I were just at that age then when I were beginning to take notice of things like that. So, you know, I survived but I didn't, I didn't make very big strides at the grammar school from a qualification point of view. But I then got, when I left there, I got an apprenticeship. I got one with an engineering company in Thorne and I, we'd heard that this guy was not the best of reputations, and then mi' Uncle Bill who was mi' Aunt Ellie's husband, one of these two who got married when we moved to the mill, he worked at the colliery and he was a big friend of the engineer. And the engineer had also been in the choir with mi' granddad and he must have a word with Parkinson, this engineer, and between 'em they'd said, you know, 'Reg's son's looking for an apprenticeship can we fix him up here?' And Parkinson said 'If he's anything like his dad certainly', and they gid me a apprentice job,

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you know. And at that time the Coal Board had just, were just starting a brand new apprenticeship scheme and I followed later in training business for forty years and I can vouch for the fact that that apprenticeship scheme was the best in this country, because there was two or three guys at the staff college in Newcastle that generated all the material that was used to train instructors, and my it was a marvellous scheme. And I never look back really and I, I got, well I'll show you in there, there's a few certificates on the wall, about a dozen. I've got two or three Nationals and took Higher National, took City and Guilds on Subject Matter and I'm membership of several, what they call em, anyway it's on the certificate there.

ED To me it all stems from, his apprenticeship, as a child at the mill because he, he often tells me stories about when, as he was growing up from an infant, going into the workshops where the bellows were and he could just reach the handle and his weight brought the bellows down you know and things like that.

[Laughter]

What was your trade, what were you an apprentice...?

JD I was an Engineer, Mining Engineer at that stage but I've branched into all the other areas. I worked for the construction industry for twenty years or more. But, my father, when I used to go in his workshop, that was his own personal, he had his own lathe in there and he had me working that lathe as soon as I could reach the handles. But when I got this apprenticeship with the Coal Board and there were other apprentices being started about the same time or had been doing it for a year, I could leave em all standing. I used to know how to set up for gear wheels for screw cutting, that'll not mean anything to you, but there's not many fitters these days can set a lathe up to cut threads. I used to know a number of threads per inch for all sizes, three quarters of an inch, ten threads for an inch, I still remember em, I could relate em off now, nearly by heart again. So it were extremely, extremely interesting development for me and I began to understand what this development really meant to people and the satisfaction that people could get from it. Cos I were getting that satisfaction and when I went into the training business I had to operate from a psychological point of view so that I could give satisfaction to the people I were training. Because I was training instructors, I ended up, I think, well it was the last job I did, was training university lecturers on training techniques and I found them to be the worst communicators that I've ever dealt with and they admitted it to me mind. You know, it was unbelievable that.

ED The last twenty years of Jim's working life, it wasn't a job, it was his hobby, he loved it.

JD She's allus...

ED If he had a course, if he was planning a course he would plan it and when he had his own company and he'd come home and I'd help him get everything ready and I used to say to him, Sunday afternoon, Sunday lunch time we have to have our lunch dead on time, he had to be away by twenty past two to get to Aberdeen. He had his stopping places, there was a place he used to stop for petrol and it was a snack bar which sold beautiful apple pie, and he had to get to Aberdeen and I used to say to him, 'You would think you were going on your holidays'. He wasn't going to work, he just loved every moment of it and he...

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JD These guys....

ED He would come back and he would say 'I've had a good week', and this was it, he was training maybe ten men, lads coming straight off a rig, coming in on a Sunday night and they would get blotto'd, you know they'd been dry for a week or a fortnight and Jim nursed them. And he used to put them through a test and he rang me on Monday night, I would say 'How did it go?', 'Oh there was only seven', 'eight turned up instead of ten', you know, but, 'they're good lads they're okay, they need a bit of coaxing.' And he would say, oh, you know, the results were poor at first but they did the same exam at the end of the week and if they didn't get ninety percent he...

JD Written objective tests and they used to clock about fifteen or twenty percent at the start of the course and I could nearly guarantee there'd be the odd one clock a hundred after the four day course and the majority were in the nineties. There were occasionally one or two in the eighties. Now that's where I've said before as we were talking about, well, satisfaction, the satisfaction that they got from that course and they were standing up and giving instruction and I had a forty point objective assessment on that. They were checked on knowledge and they were checked on their ability to communicate and teach people, you know, because I always used to say there were a questionnaire, there were one question on it and it was 'what's the most, what's the worst mode of communications', and it was talking at them. You get no sort of result talking at them. Talk with them not talk at them. What were the other one? Well they used to do tests, they were either written tests or practical tests or oral. They were the three modes of assessing them, analysing whether they'd scored. Anyway we were talking about the...

Well I was going to, I was just going to finish off that little sort of section of what we've been talking about by saying we are actually in Newcastle today and perhaps you'd just tell me how we came to be here?

JD Well I got headhunted by these headquarter staff people.

Headquarters of?

ED The Coal Board.

JD The Coal Board. I don't know whether you remember a guy called Lord Rowlands, he was chairman of the Coal Board and he was in London, Hobart House. We had this sub, like a subsection up here, it was the college for training instructors.

ED Can I just interrupt there. Go back to where you were, at, at the pit and how you got moved on from...

JD Yeah, well I started, I worked at the colliery for a year or two, about six or eight year and then I went, I applied for an instructor's job at the training centre, the area training centre, not headquarters, at Carcroft near Doncaster and I went there and I was there for about seven year. That's where you really learn your trade. I were training engineers, foreman, supervisors and all them and some kids, apprentices as well. And then while I was there, there was like a little delegation came from the staff college up here at Long Benton in Newcastle. Jim Mitchell was the head of the department up here, he was like an offshoot from Hobart House in London. And I'd been on a course with him two year ago

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prior and he must have like what he saw, 'cause I were using visual aids, magnetic aids, flower board aids, overhead projectors, 35mm projectors, 16mm projectors, I were using the whole range because I knew all about them and how to make the best use of them. And he came back within about a week or ten day and said 'Jim', he said 'Could you fancy moving to Newcastle and working from our department?' I says 'How do you mean?' He says 'Well we train instructors and I think you'd do an ideal job for us if you fancy it' and I was living with mi' first wife then.

Well she didn't want to go and I said, well you know, I asked what the salary was and it were about twice what I were on as an instructor. I mean you cannot turn them chances down. So I went, I was going on another course wi' Jim Mitchell mi' self, just a week or so to go and I went on it. But in the meantime I went to London for an interview with Jack Caduggan and I had this interview, he were the top man in the training side and to cut a long story short they offered me the job. So I had to go then looking for a house and I got this big semi-detached, but unfortunately mi' marriage went down the pan. While I was up there establishing myself, she got herself a fancy man down Thorne, South Yorkshire and, more than one actually by the end of the ear, and it all went down the pan you know and it was a good while after that before I met Emily. I lived on my own looked after myself and, in fact Dianne mi' daughter used to come down and do a bit of cleaning for me when we got further into the relationship. So...

ED Then he was headhunted.

JD Aye, I was headhunted then.

ED No.

JD You saw the job in the paper.

ED Jumping the gun. I saw it, I was working in Durham University at Newcastle and for all, not just the department I was in but in, we had a lot of students in lectures in that department and listening to Jim, Jim helping my son, practise getting ready for going to college and I could see that there was a lot of, in Jim that, watching our lot in the university, difference and I said to him 'Why don't you apply, come to the university', and he [inaudible] and then I saw this job advertised in the local Sunday paper for Alcan, smelter being built, it was in the process of being built.

JD At Linemouth.

ED To work at Linemouth, further up Northumberland and I just showed it him, I said 'Apply to that'.

JD It were a Canadian company.

ED It was Canadian, obviously, Alcan and he applied and got the, the only thing was he got the job, well he had to do three months, finishing, what's it called?

JD I should have gone over to Canada.

ED He should have gone to Canada but the Coal Board had had to sit their month's final notice.

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JD I had three months notice because I was on Headquarters staff then you see.

ED He couldn't go.

JD And I didn't, they let me off after two month actually and then Alcan sent me down to Rogerstone, they couldn't afford time for me to go to Canada, cause normally anybody like me would have gone to Canada for about three weeks or a month.

ED Three month.

JD Three month probably, I mean there was a safety training officer there that'd just been and he were full of it, everybody that went to Canada they used to come back, they used to come back talking American style, oh these silly sods you know. Anyway I went and did that job for about seven years dint I?

ED Five or seven year and then he was headhunted again.

JD Aye I was. I then looked at starting mi' own company and me and another guy started the company, training company, Training Services International. He was a safety man though. We got on very well you know, and then we started, we started a second company. That were a training company and we started UK Safety Services and he was director of that company and I were managing director of the training company and then eventually we hit a slum, which happens you know, and we had to close the operation down and I went on my own and he went on his own. He took the safety company totally on his own and I took the training company on my own but Emily said 'You've got wrong name'. We'd called it Training Services International, she says 'It's at end of alphabet' [inaudible], she says 'We need to think of a different name', and we went through it and it took us nearly two days to come up with Accredited Training Services, A, and I tell you I've never looked back and I was just really...

ED And then his health went down.

JD You what?

ED Your health went down.

JD Aye, doctor stopped me, I were riding, I were, I've been to Brunei, I were international you know as well as local and all England and UK. And then doctor he pulled plug out on me and this funny old guy, doctor, he said, you know, 'You're a liability on road', I couldn't see I had cataracts on both eyes. So anyway, I'm sorry to say we've not been seemingly getting much into the peat industry.

We'll come back to that when we've had a rest.

JD What we can maybe, right love, thank you.

Okay thank you.

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[Recording Ends]