INTERVIEW WITH - MR. EDWARD REID,
2 PARK GROVE, BUCKIE.

INTERVIEW WITH EDWARD REID, 2 PARK GROVE, BUCKIE. 30/8/88.

Q. How old were ye when ye left the school?

A. I wis 13 years old when I left the school, and went doon tae start in McWilliams the coal-merchants.

Q. And what was yer job in McWilliams?

A. I wis fullin' the bags an' ay for the lorries goin' through the toon, an' then fullen' up for the drifters on a weekend, for the bags a' coal for the boats, comin' in gettin' coaled, an' then they took on a squad a' nine men for dein' a year work a' that. An' yer... the whole lorries an' then the coal, the Scotch coal came up ay, the sooth o' Scotland, by rail. Then it wis bagged in Buckie station an' on tae lorries there, then weighed it o'er at the station weighing machine. Then it wis tane doon there tae the hairbour side then they hid tae, three men in each lorry, 2 were dumpin' it in tae the boat an' that man wis doon in the bunker an' he wis dippin' it in tae the bunkers, an' he was throwin' it in. An' they did this for 3 days, coalin' a' the boats, bit ye hid.....

Q. An' fit aboot the hours ye worked?

A. Tae 8 o'clock in the mornin' tae 5 o'clock it night. An' that wis yer hours.

Q. I forgot ~~tae ask ye~~ the name o' the firm thit ye worked wae?

A. John McWilliams.

Q. Aye. Same as McWilliams the baker.

A. Aye.

Q. A relation tae them?

A. Twa brothers.

Q. An' hoo many men were employed a' the gither in.....?

A. Nine men for dein' the boats a' the gither.

Q. Now could you tell me how much coal a steam drifter would tick in a week?

A. Well runnin' steady they wed need aboot 12 to 14 ton, they wid use.

Q. Wis that fin' they went fishin' oot o' Buckie or?

A. Aye, fishin' oot a' Buckie or when they were goin' over tae Lerwick.

Q. They took in coal fin they were gan' tae Lerwick?

A. Mhum!

Q. Dependin' on the particular drifter like, mare than.....?

A. Oh aye. Some hid mare than the others ye see. Some o' them hid 3 bunkers in the front o' the wheelhoose.

Q. An' hoo much coal did a steam drifter tack on board fin they were settin' off for Yarmooth?

A. For Yarmooth, they wid need aboot 30 ton. 30 - 32 ton they would take. Deck cargae included.

Q. Did that tick them a' the wey tae Yarmooth? Or hid they tae port for coal?

A. Well, they hid tae go in tae Blyth, an' port in there tae get coal tae tick them doon tae Yarmooth.

Q. Ever go in tae Fife ~~ony~~ anyway, did they go in there in the wey doon or... usually Blyth?

A. Jist usually Blyth, they went in tell.

Q. Aye. Can ye remember how many drifters your firm supplied?

A. Well we hid 20 drifters in supply.

Q. Very busy for ye fin they were a'?

A. Aye.

Q. Aye. An' wis it.... can ye tell ma aboot the action in the hairbour, hoo much, wis it busy at the weekends?

A. Friday and Saturday - that wis yer twa busiest days.

Q. And now - can ye tell me aboot the different, ay, prices thit coal wis fin you started yer ~~first work life~~ working life first?

A. Fin I started, a ~~reeshill a~~' coal wis 11p ha'penny a' hun'er weight.

Q. Fin the boats took on their coal, how was this paid, how did McWilliam get their money for the coal fae the boat's wis it.....?

A. Well, that wis paid through the fish-salesman, they paid that, they paid it every week.

Q. Must have been an' awfa' lot a' smoke gan' oot o' Buckie fin' ye saw a' there.....funnels

A. There really wis a lot a' smoke. Aye!

Q. Been a sight for long ago? tae see a' drifters steamin' up an' the hairbour an' that?

A. Aye it really wis a view tae see the drifters gan' oot.

Q. Aye. Could you recognise the different drifters?

A. Oh ye cwed dae.

Q. Hoo could a coal-man, hoo could you recognise the drifters?

A. Fin iver ye saw them comin' through the Firth, see their badge, on the front, on their wheel-hoose ye ken ye them that wey.

Q. An' they say the fishermen eest tae tick coal hame fae Yarmooth, they wid tick coal hame on the wey up for their ane use? Far did they get this coal oot o'?

A. Oot ~~in~~ ~~tae~~ a Blyth, got it in Blyth an' took it hame.

Q. An' hoo did it come oot o' the boats? How did they - the fishermen, did they employ folk tae tick it oot the boats an' pit it tae their hooses?

A. They go tae the dockers tae tick it oot, for hame ye see.

Q. Aye aye. Took oot the same wey, put in bags or?

A. Put it in tae bags ye see.

Q. Aye.

A. It wis shared atween the crew. An' it wis puttin' in tae bags.

Q. Now ye were sayin' earlier on aboot the horse an' cairt, ay, far did McWilliam keep the horses?

A. They kept their horses up at the Post Office, ahen the P.O. lane. Up far Andy Donaldsons' garage used tae be. They had 4 larries then.

Q. Fa' looked aefter the horses, wis it the driver or the man thit wis in charge o' the cairt thit looked aefter his ane horse or the?

A. Aye, they a' looked aefter them.

Q. An' did they iver need their shoes deen the horses?

A. They did, aye. They'd tae be shoed ivery fortnight.

Q. Every fortnight?

A. Tane tae the blacksmith's, Willie Gray the blacksmiths.

Q. Aye, an' far wis the blacksmith's yard at?

A. Doon it the Commercial - doon across fae Commercial Road, they went doon there - him an' 'es father.

Q. Can you mine seein' the horses bein' shod?

A. Aye, can that. Aye.

Q. Did it tick a lang time tae shod a horse?

A. No, it didna' that. No.

Q. An' did they hae their shoes a' ready for them?

A. They had them a' ready for them. If they cwedna' get them ready in time they made them. An' they did it .....

Q. Did ye get it.... attached tae the horses? Friendly wae them?

A. Oh they did, they gaed the horses a piece, tae get it tae stan' ye ken, get it deen that wey. Aye that wis Willie Gray, him an' 'ees father - the blacksmiths'.

Q. Hid they a lot o' trade - the blacksmiths'?

A. They did - it that time they did - they did a' the horses in Buckie.

Q. A lot o' horse-drawn cairts in Buckie?

A. Aye there wis, aye. An' they hid the fairmers' farm. They came doon as well tae get their horses done.

Q. Dae ye mine in a' the folk thit hid horses an' cairts in Buckie?

A. Aye. Andy, an' there wis Geordie Milton.

Q. An' fit wis here, a coal-merchant or a general?

A. A fairmer. Bit he'd horses as well. An' there wis Willie Wilson, fae Rathven. And there wis Robbie Smith, Slough.

Q. An' Willie Wright?

A. Willie Wright.

Q. Aye.

A. Aye. He hid a larrie ye see, he'd 3 larries.

Q. He'd nae horse an' cairts?

A. Hid nae horse an' cairt in Buckie, an' then Weem Taylor he'd larries as well.

Q. Quite a busy place the hairbour wae then.....?

A. Really wis - aye. Wis a gye busy place.

Q. Ye canna imagine the horse an' cairts in Buckie?

A. Aye, aye.

Q. These days are gone, ~~an' the~~ and now .....?

A. Oh now.

Q. Aye.

A. Fin ye used tae see them walkin' that plank, goin' fae ~~aay~~ aye side o' the boat tae the ither, carryin' aboot ~~200~~ 2 cwt weight in a bag, ~~an' terment them wae the sugar.~~

Q. Wis this your workmen dein'.....?

A. Aye, we'd tae dae that as well.

Q. A plank, along the top o' the drifters?

A. Fae the pier, on tae the drifter, them walkin' them.

Q. Wae the bag a' coal?

A. On their backs, aye.

Q. Had the coal-mam a special harness that he wore?

A. No.

Q. Jist cairried it on his back?

A. Aye on ~~hes~~ his back.

Q. Must have been tirin'?

A. Oh, it really wis.

Q. Aye.

A. Well when ye wis coalin' the boats in the drifters, ye wis ~~only goin'~~ go on fae 5 in the mornin' - till 9 at nicht - coalin' them ye see. We wis dein' that.

Q. Dae ye mine if ony o' them got accidents it the hairbour, mine on ony?

A. ~~None~~. Only one.

Q. Thit ye can mine?

A. Aye. It wis carrien't o'er the boat.

Q. Aye.

A. An' he catched a rope - gan' through. An' it tore the bag off 'ees back. An' he fell on tae the deck o' the boat, an' they thocht he'd broken 'ees back, but they discovered he'd broken 'ees leg. Aye, that wis the only one.

Q. An' hid they tae wait till it wis high water afore they could...?coal?

A. High water an' low water.

Q. An' how did they manage fae the hairbour doon if it wis low water wae the planks?

A. Planks?

Q. Slid them doon the planks?

A. Cairriet them doon the planks aye.

Q. An' hoo much wis in a bag again?

A. Twa' hun'er weight in a bag.

Q. Some weight ay?

A. Aye.

Q. Whit type o' coal did a drifter use? Cheapest coal or?

A. Cheapest, what the cawd the steam coal.

Q. An' that coal, far did they get that coal fae?

A. Fae Scotland, fae the sooth o' Scotland.

Q. ~~Mhum!~~ and it ~~It wis~~ ..... ~~that~~ came up by rail?

A. By rail, ~~mhum~~.

Q. An' hoo often did it come up by rail?

A. It came up every week.

Q. Every week?

A. Aye.

Q. An' wis it a special train or? Ken carraiges on tae a train?

A. No no a special train came up.

Q. Oh there wis coal trains?

A. Aye, oh that wis the busiest time for British Rail - fan they were pittin' up the coal.

Q. An' that's hoo yer yard wis in that side o' the road? Did they tip the coal fae the station in tae the yard, hoo did it get in tae the yard?

A. Opened the door doon ye see, the railway wagon door came doon an' then they shuffled it in tae the bags.

Q. ~~Oh a' the bags.....~~? Into bags?

A. Aye right in tae the bags ye see, then they put it on tae the lorry.

Q. An' can ye mine fa supplied the bags? Wis it ~~dute~~ jute bags thit ye nae...?

A. Harn bags, aye. Ye hid a' yer ane names on the coal bags.

Q. Printed on the bag? An' were they returnable that bags - did ye get them back ~~fae the~~....?

A. Aye.

Q. Can ye mine far ye got them fae? Far the bags came fae?

A. The bags come fae Dundee.

Q. Aye that wis the place o' ~~dute~~ jute lang ago? ~~Dutry, mhum~~! Dundee Stitched an' everythin' afore ye got them, an' stamped wae yer name?

A. Oh aye, yes. Made o' ~~gerss~~! hessian.

Q. Hoo many coal-firms were there in Buckie lang ago besides McWilliams?

A. Five a' the gither. There wis Murray an' Cowie's; Sandy Reid's; Jimmy Smith's an' the ~~Laing~~ Lime Company, five a' the gither.

Q. A' kept busy?

A. Aye.

Q. An' also there wis aboot, before this days a' central heatin', every hoose in Buckie hid a coal fire. The coal-man used tae come roon, wis it weekly he came roon...every? Wis it a steady job?

A. Steady job, every week they came roon an' they delivered the coal tae the hooses. An' that wis you kept goin'!

Q. I can mine the coal-man wae 'ees money bag. Folk wid buy a bag o' coal fae 'em. Bit I can also mine my mither gettin' half a ton a' coal an' countin' the bags till they ~~went roon.~~ ? Ana' ken hoo many, wis it 10 bags?

A. Ten bags, aye. That's right, aye.

Q. I dinna ken hoo they paid it like, ~~I'na~~ Ana ken if it wis it the end o' the month maybe fin they... could every so often they got paid?

A. Well, that wis paid every month. They gave a bill ye see an' they paid it that wey. The end o' the month.

Q. Now that wisna' the same coal thit the drifters used?

A. No. That wis ~~loose home~~ household coal they got for the hooses, ye see, that came fae, fae Blyth, and around there - that wis the hoose-hold coal.

Q. Can ye mine ony prices thit the coal wis, ken the house-hold coal, for the bag?

A. House-hold coal, that wis one and tu'pence.

Q. For a bag?

A. For a hun'er weight aye, for a bag a' coal.

Q. Did ye get it cheaper if ye paid it by half a ton or a discount off for that?

A. They did.

Q. For a bag?

A. For a hun'er weight aye, for a bag a' coal.

Q. Did ye get it cheaper if ye paid it by half a ton or a discount off for that?

A. They did. An' ye paid it by half ton an' they got a good discount for that ye see.

Q. An' ivery hoose in Buckie hid coal fires?

A. They did that, aye.

Q. They kept the sweep busy didn't they, in Buckie didn't they? There wis a few sweeps in Buckie.

A. There really wis, in Buckie an' they were really busy - keepin' them a' goin' ye ken. Especially fin ye hid yer five coal-merchants supplyin' a' the hooses ye ken.

Q. These days are a' gone noo. There'd be a cry for pollution nooadays ~~if it~~ wis smoke, fae the fires an' the boats.

A. It's a shame tae see the wey thit it's goin' noo. Aye. The aulden days fin ye saw a' the boats bein' coaled an' the drifters goin' oot, it wis really nice tae see ~~it~~ them goin' oot ye ken.

Q. Fin the boats were awa' at Yarmooth, fit kept you busy ~~it~~ at hame, local deliveries ~~or~~?

A. Jist the deliveries, local deliveries ye see, ye were fullin' up for the hoose larries.

Q. Aye, did ony other firm need coal in Buckie other than the drifters ~~or the~~.....can ye mine in ony bulk supplies?

A. Well, ye hid yer ~~distillery's~~ distilleries.

Q. Oh ye supplied the distiller~~y's~~ies?

A. Supplied them ye see.

Q. Did they use coal for boilers ~~or~~?

A. Aye they used it for makin' the whisky. Keepin' the boilers goin' 7 days a week. Then ye hid yer ~~Mill's~~ mills at Keith.

Q. Oh! You supplied them?

A. We supplied them as well ye see. Again that wis for yer boilers.

Q. Did Keith coal - did coal for Keith come in tae Buckie?

A. Mhum, aye.

Q. I didna' realise that. An' fairms, did fairms iver tick coal? Farms, did they.....?

A. Oh they did, oh ye supplied them as well. You supplied them wae aboot onythin' they got six ton a month, tae keep them goin', for a' their boilers ye see, for the cattle an' things like that.

Q. An' if the roads were bad, hoo did the horses, ~~did they~~ manage tae cope, dae ye iver mine in bad snow storms an' nae gettin' ~~up?~~ out.

A. Oh I've worked in a few o' them. Really wis. Then again, ye hid yer sharps tae pit in tae the horse shoes. Fit they cawd 'sharps', they were fine, an' that stopped the horses fae slidin' in the snow. In the snow an' the ice, got a better grip. In ivery one o' them, ye hid tae, the driver hid tae cairry this bags a' whit they cawd 'clips' wae them, tae pit them in tae the horses shoes, fin they started slidin' in the snow an' the ice.

Q. An' can ye mine the war-time, wis it scarce the coal? Wis the coal scarce tae get durin' the war?

A. Awfa' scarce durin' the war. Really wis, a hun'er weight wis for each hoose.

Q. Rationed?

A. Aye.

Q. It wis fin the drifters stopped it wis end o'...really the coal business ~~as for~~ employin' a lot o' men?

A. Really wis. Well again ye wis busy wae the Admirality drifters.

Q. Did they re-fuel in Buckie? Aye?

A. Oh they did, they coaled in Buckie an' each one hid a coal-merchant in Buckie - they hid their turn a' the Admirality Drifters. An' again, they were tickin' a good lot a' coal gan' oot tae Scappa Flo' an' roon there, afore they went oot.

Q. I can mine the early years o' the war, there wis a coal-boat sunk off of Buckie, an' the coal wis comin' in ~~to~~ the beach an' we wis gan doon the beach gettin' bucket fae's a' coal, an' fullin' up the coal shed. Bit... I dinna' cane far the coal came fae or onythin' like, bit ye canna' mine the name o' that boat or onything. Wis it sunk off o' Buckie ~~or...~~?

A. It wis sunk off o' Buckie right enough, bit that cargae wis goin' tae Inverness.

Q. It wisna' a Buckie cargo that? The beach wis black wae coal. A bonanza for abody, a' the bairns wis doon wae buckets an' loadin' up the coal.

A. Aye, that's right. Aye that wis comin' up fae Blyth.

Q. Up tae Inverness?

A. Inverness.

Q. Can ye mine any funny stories in Buckie lang ago, thit ye can mine on fin ye were it the.....?

A. Well, I can mine when Davie Taylor's, when he first started here, he'd 3 steam wagons. An' he used tae use coal for them. That wis fit we cawd the 'Puffin' Billie's', the steam wagons.

Q. Fit did they use the steam wagons for, fit wis their purpose?

A. Jist for the lorries, jist for larries thit come oot.

Q. An' they worked wae coal?

A. Aye. They'd a boiler in the inside o' them, wae a fireman along wae them, an' the driver. Taylor's father, he hid the first 3 in Finichty.

Q. I can mine in steam-rollers for the road, they used coal as well didn't they?

A. Aye, the steam-roller did, aye. Oh aye, I mine in ~~the loon~~ weem Taylor, he'd three 'Puffin' Billie's', the steam wagon thit they cawd them in them days.

Q. That's been a great invention fin ye first saw them aefter ha'in' the horse an' cairt.

A. It really wis, aye. Oh aye.

Q. It's very interestin' tellin' me aboot Willie Gray the blacksmith's ye ken, that wis somethin' we've never heard here ~~ye ken~~.

A. He'd 'ees blacksmith's business doon it the end o' Commercial Road an' he....an' he did a' the horses.

Q. Wis he kept busy a' the time wae that?

A. He wis kept busy every day o' the week for six days a' week.

Q. Did ye ever watch him dein' the jobs?

A. Definately did! Aye, ye'd tae tick yer horses doon an' put them in an' he tell't ye when tae come back in an hour an' a half, an' got the horses oot.

Q. Wisna' really lang, gettin' that job deen ye ken?

A. No. They niver took lang tae dae.

Q. That's a' by-gone days an' yer sayin' its a pity it's gone, bit I suppose we've got to move ~~an~~ wi progress.

A. Oh it really ~~his~~ wis, it really ~~his~~ progressed right enough.

Q. Can ye mine the hairbour in its 'hey-day' a' the different, fit's yer memories o' a' the boats fittin' oot for Yarmooth?

A. I can dae. They were fitted oot for Yarmouth, they hid their nets changed an' were barked in Willie Smith's Barkin' Works, up it the Railway Station. They were barked in there. An' they were tane oot o' the barkin' pan an' left tae dry oot on the fields aroon' Buckie. ~~An'~~ they were gaithered in an put on tae the boats ready for Yarmooth.

Q. Onything else, fit aboot a' the different businesses, things thit were it the hairbour, there wis ~~salesmen~~ salesmew an' a' the shops roon aboot McWilliam's, there wis ship-chandlers?

A. Aye, then ye hid ~~Jamie~~ Jenny Campbell's, an' ~~Ed~~ Kate Skinner the butcher.

Q. A' far.... ~~roon~~ on the benefit? the boats an' that?

A. Aye they hid a' tae dae wae the boats, gae busy time fin they were dein' the boats.

Q. Did ye iver fancy gan' tae the sea fin ye were young, hid ye ony fishin' connections, through yer mither's ~~or~~ side?

A. My grandfather, he wis a fisherman.

Q. Aye.

A. On my father's side?

Q. Aye. Now can ye tell me aboot the Buckie Toon Council Power Station which wis ~~it~~ at the fit a' the square brae, did hit need coal?

A. Mhum.

Q. Fa supplied their coal?

A. Well they got it through the British Railways thit came up fae sooth o' Scotland again, tae keep their boiler goin' seven

days a week. Geordie Milton hid that contract for drivin' their coal.

Q. An' fit sort a coal did they use?

A. They used the boiler coal for that.

Q. Did the gas hoose use coal?

A. Aye. They ay used coal as weill - the gas hoose did. They wid ging through 20 ton a day.

Q. An' were they supplied wae the railway as well?

A. Oh they were supplied wae their ane railways.

Q. They used tae sell coke doon there as weill didn't they?

A. Aye that's right. Aye they sellt it tae the hooses like.

Q. Then from that fishermen got the tar for their different jobs thit they did, tarrin' the ropes. Did they iver dae the gas hoose as well?

A. Went doon tae the gas hoose as well. Used tae see them ~~it~~ on the open beach.

Q. Tarrin' the ropes?

A. Tarrin' the ropes, aye. Layin' them on the beach.

Q. That days are a' gone. There's still some tarry stanes doon at Buckpool yet, ye'll see the remains o' the hard black stanes, eest tae tar the ropes an' lay them oot on the beach there, bit it jist shows ye a' the different things ye can get thit wis of use tae the fishin' industry, now the coal minin' his geen doon. I think it'll come back again.

A. It will come back, aye. It's a shame tae see that days, fin ye saw the fishermen - the hard struggle thit they hid, gettin' their ropes tarred by their han's. They used butter tae get the tar off their hands. They spread their nets oot aefter they got them barked an' Willie Smith barked them.

Q. Bit their wives hid as much work they hid the nets tae dae it hame ~~an' .....~~?

A. They hid tae repair the nets it hame ye see. That wis a hard job for them as well, their men wis helpin' them tae repair them as well.

Q. Another thing when you were deliverin', ye aiy got a housewife in afore, if she wisna' in her ane hoose she wis

probably in her mither's hoose or somethin', there wis nae housewives oot workin' wis there?

A. No no. That wis a thing thit wis niver thocht on in them days, for a wife tae be workin' at a'.

Q. They did a' their knittin', they knitted ~~a' their - aiy sat~~ - busy sittin' knittin'.

A. I mine that fin they used tae stan' at the gale a' the hoose an' news wae ane anither an' dae their knittin ye ken.

Q. Aye, 'run the coal-man's comin' an' get 'ees money ready'.

A. Aye that wis anither ane an' a', oh it certainly wis.

Q. I mine on the baker wae 'ees horse an' cairt. Davie McIntosh an' comin' through wae their biscuits, an' the coal, they'd a' the horses an' cairts, came in tae the street. It wis jist a part o' way o' life.

A. It really wis it that time ye ken. Ye got them a' supplyin' a' through it that time, that kept the toon goin'.

Q. If onybody wis oot o' coal they would ging awa' an' gae them their coal, they'd hear fae somebody else so and so's needin' coal. They widna' hae tae wait a week for an order?

A. No they widna've hid tae wait that length a' time for that ye see, that wis delivered on the spot. Oh aye.

Q. Far did they get their sticks for the coal for their fires an' that fae?

A. Tulloch, the fairm up at Tulloch.

Q. Fit did ye dae aefter ye come oot a' school, fit kin' o' games did ye play, an'?

A. Oot playin' fitba', rounders an' things like that.

Q. Can ye mine, wis it the public school ye went tae?

A. Catholic School.

Q. Oh oh. Why did ye go tae the Catholic School fin ye werena'?.....?

A. Well, we gaed tae the Catholic School 'cause it wis nearest hame. The rest o' the faimily they went tae the High School.

Q. Aye aye a' well then. A lot a' folk went tae the Catholic School though they werena' catholics? They went tae the Catholic School because it didna' maitter.

A. Oh no, in them days it wis it that time ye see thit abody went tae it. Bit the catholics aiy were tane oot an' they were learnt prayers an' the anes thit wisna' catholics deen the lessons.

Q. Oh I see, aye.

DATE OF INT:

REID

E. EDDIE

(EDWARD)

ADDRESS: 2 Park Grove, BUCKIE.

PLACE OF INT

RELIGION:

POLITICS:

SCHOOL LEAVING AGE:

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BROTHERS:

SISTERS:

BIRTH POSITION:

FATHERS JOB(S): Retired coalman.

INFO. JOB(S):

MOTHERS JOB(S)

SPOUSES JOB(S):