



CPLHS - Bringing History to the Local Community

Interview with John Dixon (#1 of 3)

John Dixon ('JD') of Borwicks Farm, born 29 April 1896

Interviewer : Denys Vaughan ('DV')

Date : probably January 1993 [before #2 on 10 Feb 1993]

Location : Boarbank Nursing Home

Recording duration : 36 mins 2 secs

Introduction to file, (except initial phrase), to preface the recording session.

DV [The following is an interview with John Dixon] the farmer from Borwicks Farm in Cartmel Valley, who is at the moment in Boarbank Nursing Home, being treated. I have made arrangements for [his son] Geoffrey Dixon to call this afternoon at two o'clock, and if all goes well, he'll be well and I'll be able to talk to him about farming in his early days in Cartmel. That's John Dixon of Borwicks Farm.

DV ... Don't know if I ever met his sister did I?

JD No, and then my younger brother, he didn't want to be on the farm so he went into the milling business.

DV Now is he the one that stayed in Australia?

JD Been all over.

DV I think we met him at Tom and Constance's one time.

JD You did, very big fellow. [DV : Very big fellow, yes.] Grand, jovial fellow. [DV : Very jovial, I remember him well.] Everybody seemed to get on well with him. [DV : Yes, yes] Oh, he was, although he was my brother, he was a grand fellow.

DV So [1 min] how many years were there between you and Tom?

JD Oh, I was born 29th. I was born 29th April 1894. [error – should be 1896] [DV : Gosh, that's, that's a good age] That makes me sixty-six doesn't it? [Tape jumps] [DV : oh don't ask me about arithmetic but it'll be, it'll make you over ninety-eight] No. [DV : That's too far is it ?] Ninety-six. [DV : Yes, yes.] Must have been ninety-six.

DV Yes, so Tom went into the army didn't he?

JD He did. [DV : In the first war ?] He joined the army. [DV : In 1914, if I remember] Yes, just after he'd done the harvest so he said we'll just get the harvest then I'm going to the army.

DV Yes, he was a very lucky man to come out of it wasn't he?

JD He was, he got wounded twice, pretty badly.

DV [2 mins] Yes, yes he did. Yes.

JD And he did very well in the army. He was rather of a commanding disposition hadn't he?

DV Yes, he liked ... he could see what needed to be done, he liked to get on with it, didn't he?

JD And he was a very hard worker. [DV : Oh, he was, he was] A good worker even when he was older.

DV Well he used to wait till Constance went to get her hair cut, and then he would come over for me and he said "We'll get a few jobs done whilst Constance is out of the way". [JD : Did he really ?] Yes. [JD : Aye] I have a film of him running after some cattle in Hampsfield ? [JD : Do you really ?] When he had had one heart attack, and he was well over seventy, he was getting close to eighty, and he was running round this field with these eight bullocks in front of him. [JD : Yes] We have that on video. [JD : Have you ? Well, well, well.] Yes, yes.

JD Aye [3 mins] things have changed haven't they, eh ? I'll tell you I was born then, ... [?] a little incident, not worth recording hardly but it's been on my mind all my life. I told a lie.

DV Well I think most of us have done that from time to time.

JD But you know I never forget that. In those days if you have had a ...[?] on the farm, you had to look after him at the house. [DV : Yes] You see they lived in then, and so that's three men living in at Ellerside. [DV : Yes] And doing the work. And ... and this ... the horseman, he'd been hurt, and he'd just got convalesced, then we used to like to go ... old, old Freddie we called him, and we used to like to go for a walk with him, Tom and I, we weren't at school ...[?] And one day they went without me. By Jove [4 mins] I was annoyed, and so I ran and I caught them up, and I said "Tom, Mother wants you". [DV : Oh dear. (laughs)] And so he off back as quick as he could. It weren't many minutes before he caught us up again. He said "John", he said, "Mother wants you". [DV laughs] I didn't know what she wanted me for. And do you know ... it's the one ... I can just imagine being thrashed, with a birch rod. [DV : Just for pulling Tom's leg ?] No, I told a lie. [DV : Yes, yes.] You see I shouldn't have said Mother wanted him to go to see her. She didn't want him, but I wanted to get me own back. [DV : Yes] And she got hold of me, and you know what a birch rod's like, [DV : Yes] Tom burnt our one but she soon got another. And she thrashed me and (tape jumps) then just came into the dining room and said "Now you stop there till you stop your crying". [DV : Yes. [5 mins] It stayed with you.] And I've tried to be truthful since.

DV Yes, yes.

JD And I, not to brag, but people have trusted me. I've sold ... I sold hundreds of cattle without people seeing 'em, you know. And if I said they cost some price they cost that. I got a bit of commission, you see, always but, you know, if you can be trusted it's worth a lot. [DV : Well that's true] Money, you've got to have money to live, but you haven't to live to have money. [DV : No, I think that's, that's good sense] But if you're well, you're rich. [DV : Well I think that's very good sense] I think that's the finest thing. If you're well you're rich. I've been very lucky see, to get to be ninety-six. I've had a few ailments, complaints and that, but still, we've been a kind of a lucky family really. [DV : Well you have worked, and you've worked

hard, and you've kept good standards always haven't you ?] We tried to work hard, and we [6 mins] have worked hard.

DV Did ... I remember Tom telling me of being at Ellerside. Now that was your father keeping Ellerside?

JD Yes. They were the first tenants at Ellerside and as you ... [DV : From the time Ellerside was built ?] What ? [DV : From the time it was built new ?] It was. They just walked in as the plasterers went out. And the buildings today, you know, everything's to carry into the shippon, [?] grand set of new buildings, in those days I suppose. Bit it's all to carry across the yard. And you probably had two or three thrashing days. Oh and I've got a bill, one or two bills I can show you, from about 18 ... 1894 or something like that. A big round of beef, fourteen pound round of beef, sixpence a pound, and that was [7 mins] bought off a man ... butcher called Crewdson. I think we must have been having a thrashing day. The thrasher, the thrasher used to come round.

DV That was the traction engine thrasher ?

JD Yes, that's right, and probably stayed two days.

DV Yes, you don't remember the name of the driver by any chance do you ? Because there was a driver from Flookburgh. [JD : Johnson] DV : Johnson. Joe Johnson, and he put himself down on the 1891 census as Traction Engine Driver. [JD : That's right] It's the only time I've ever seen it.

JD You haven't got that little red book about ... ? [DV : The Grange red book, No] Well I have it, and it puts down what everybody was. [DV : A Cartmel directory ? Well, I haven't seen that] Haven't you? [DV : No, I must look for one of those] Oh I'll let you have it. You can borrow it. [DV : That's very kind] Mi father was put down : [8 mins] William Dixon, Pit Farm, [DV : Yes] Farmer and Cattle Dealer. [DV : Yes] And an old chap was called Haddock, he was the ... he was the ... made a suit. You know, there, you see my memory go like that.

DV Well, it is a long time ago. The name Haddock rings a bell, but I can't think why I should remember Haddock.

JD No. There's only one Haddock that I ever remember living at Cartmel. And then there's old Mr Lancaster[?], he was the saddler. [DV : Yes] We had a saddler. Yes, he was a clothier, Mr Haddock, he made our suits. [DV : That's perhaps where I've seen it on the ... on the census] Oh yes, could have been, yes.

DV Yes, I'll bring it in and let you have a look at it. There'll be some names there that you'll probably recall, because they would live on, [9 mins] many of them would live on for fifty or sixty years after that.

JD Oh yes, they're all gone you know, these men that I knew.

DV Arthur Frearson's parents are on and I think his, Arthur Frearson, his father was down as a tailor, [JD : He was] in Cartmel. Yes. [JD : Yes] And his aunt was down as a tea dealer ... a tea merchant. [JD : His aunt, his aunt ?] I think it was his aunt. [JD : Really ?] It was one of

- the Frearson family, and it was, I think it was a tea ... Well, anyway, I'll bring you the census in, you might enjoy having a look at it.
- JD Dixon Frearson was the tailor. He was full of fun. [DV : Yes ?] He was quite a good singer as well.
- DV Well Arthur has been a very good singer. [JD : Has he ?] Oh Arthur was singing. Arthur finished at the village choir last year. [JD : Oh !] After sixty years singing with Cartmel village choir. Sixty years in the choir. [JD : In which village ?] Cartmel. [10 mins] He started off as a choirboy at the Priory. [JD : Really ?] And then he joined ... last year was his last year. He said it was getting a bit much for him going out at night.
- JD I didn't know, I didn't know he was ...
- DV Yes, he was telling us about sixty years ago, in the Institute building, [JD : Oh yes] how they used to have activities in the Institute building. [JD : The old Institute, yes] Did you do anything there when you were a lad ? [JD : Only dance. We used to have dances in the top room] It wasn't very big was it ? [JD : It wasn't very big, no] Big enough.
- JD Do you remember the Howsons ? [DV : Yes] Well young Howson, his grandchildren, well there was James Howson and Holmes Howson. James Howson had two dancing classes. They were builders. [DV : Yes] They built quite a few walls and things. I know they built a [11 mins] big wall for us at Pit Farm, [DV : Yes] and they were an old family, and now then these Howsons will be the third generation.
- DV Yes, very sad to see the house and building business go at Aynsome wasn't it ?
- JD Yes, and they said it wasn't their fault, they said it was people that owed them money really.
- DV Well that's it. It cost a lot of people their businesses, hasn't it ?
- JD It's cost a lot of people. People have gone broke without it being their own fault. Mind you I do blame the banks for one thing. They encourage people to borrow, [DV : Yes] and once ... once you get into their clutches, it's a job getting out. [DV : That's right] Charging you interest[?]
- DV Did you ... you went from Pit Farm. Did you go from Pit Farm to Borwicks ? [JD : I did] Now did you do that on your own, or was it a family business ? [JD : No] A family move. It was your own move. [JD : Yes, yes] And when did you go to Borwicks, Mr Dixon ? [12 mins] [JD : 23] 1923 [JD : Yes] Did you ... did you buy it from the outset or did you ... [JD : No] rent it ?
- JD No. I'll tell you how it happened. 1918 my father bought it, [DV : Yes] from the Remington Family. [DV : Yes] [4 secs break in recording]
- DV It's stopped anyway. [another click in recording] Yes, seems to be working ... seems to be working all right now. It was a time of the ... just after the war when a lot of big estates were broken up. [JD : That's right] I understand a lot of farms did change hands at that time.

JD Yes, they did and another thing. People were saying at our sale, we had a sale at the back end of 1922, [DV : Yes] and they were saying "Why didn't you have a sale the year before ?". [13 mins] Well it didn't make any difference, because Tom and I were both starting that year. So what my father lost, with his prices, we gained with buying in at his old price.

DV Yes, it was still in the family.

JD It was still in the family so it made no difference to us.

DV So Tom actually started up at the same time ?

JD Tom started at the same time.

DV Now I imagined that Tom had stayed on in the army after that.

JD No, no, no we took Greenbank over at the same ... at the same time. [DV : I see] Yes, because we bought our ... bought horses and several things in the sale. [DV : Yes] And ... things were a bit thin mind you, [DV : Yes] but I tell you ... but they weren't as bad as people used to think you were. You reckoned if you could pay your rent, with your lambs, that you bred that year, you were all right. [DV : Yes] [14 mins] And lambs ... a good lamb then was about thirty shillings [30/-].

DV Thirty shillings [30/-] a lamb. What sort of a breed of lamb were you raising then ?

JD Oh, well we had halfbred ewes, grey-faced halfbred ewes and we had a fell flock. [DV : Yes, like Kendal Rough Fells crossed with ...] That's right. [DV : Suffolks or Leicesters or ?] No, no, no, no Suffolks or Leicesters.

DV What were you crossing them with in those days ?

JD We crossed them with blue-faced Wensleydale tup. [DV : Ah, yes, yes] And there was a big shed, a sheep yard on the top of the fell.

DV Now then, that's interesting.

JD Do you know where the cairn is ?

DV Yes, and I've seen some marks on the ground. I was up there at Christmas, and I thought I wonder what the dickens these marks ... there's a big tank, a big metal tank up there. Is it anything ?

JD Oh, there is now. Tom Cortliss[?] put that up.

DV Is that where there was a sheep yard ?

JD No, no. It isn't that. You know the cairns right up on the [15 mins] top ? [DV : Yes] Well, you walk ... d'you know ... and you come to the sheep yard. It's just a square yard.

DV And that's right at the end of the pavement. That's where your allotment is it ?

JD No, no, no, no it's still on Pit Farm. It's on that same piece of Pit Farm.

DV Ah, yes. It's what I would call Beacon Fell perhaps, or Fell End ? [JD : That's right] Fell End.

JD On Fell End. [DV : Yes] It's just on Fell End. And it used to be known as the Big Fell. They were in two portions was fell in those days, the Big Fell and the Fell End. [DV : Yes] Well I used to gather this big portion, go up one side and right round, and gather them into the yard, and then go round the Fell End, and gather them into the yard. And you see, in those days, there wasn't the same dipping as there is today, you know. You could dip then, and they'd be dipped again in a fortnight. [DV : Yes] [16 mins] You can dip now and it can ...

DV Can last for months.

JD It can last two months, and you know it does make a difference. But now, do you know, the daft government are doing ? We've nearly got rid of the sheep scab, [DV : Yes] very nearly, there is isn't much of it left, and they've told people they needn't bother to dip their sheep if they don't want. [DV : Have they ?] Now can you believe a thing like that ? [DV : Oh I can't understand what the government are up to] You can't understand. [DV : You can't] Just when you've about cleaned the job up, they can say well you needn't bother to dip. [DV : Hard to follow isn't it. But they're going to ... they're dipping in a new way now. [DV : Yes] They are just going to pour a little [DV : Spraying] sheep's fat. I haven't heard [knock on door] anyone who has done it yet but ... [break in recording]

JD Well I was just one sheep short, and so we thought it would be down the clinks. And do you know I went [17 mins] back and forward across the clinks, and there's all sorts of cracks and that, little pot holes in the clink, and, then I saw me little dog, just standing away. It had found it. [DV : Pointing at it] And he stood there watching, till I went to get it out. [DV : Yes, what was that one called? What was that dog called ?] Now then ... [click for break in recording]

DV Did you often lose a sheep down the clinks? [JD : Odd times we did. Odd times we did] So you had to regularly look when you were one short ? [JD : Oh yes, yes, it's be cross there. You went right across. Oh we saved several but ...] I've never seen any down there. I've never heard of anybody losing them lately.

JD Oh yes, yes, we had one once dead down there, down the clinks. You see, sometimes there's water, sometimes there's shrubs, [18 mins] there's even a briar or two. [inaudible comment from DV] They get on there, they can soon slip down.

DV Yes, yes. I've seen them down the mineshafts at Coniston. [JD : Yes. Oh you used to ...] I called out Alan Wilson from Coniston Hall. I don't know if you know the Wilsons from Coniston Hall. [JD : I know him but ...] Well, I called in one night about six o'clock to tell him there's a sheep and a lamb down a mineshaft way up on Wetherland, about three miles away, and a good hour's drive with a Land Rover and a four-wheel drive. "Oh dear, dear, dear" he said, so, he said "I'll attend to it when I've had some tea". So I saw him a few days later, I said " Did you get your ewe back ? " Oh yes" he said " we got the ewe and the lamb, [JD : Yes] It was after midnight when we got home". After midnight, [JD : Yes] so he must have put in two or three hours, to get this ewe and this lamb up. [19 mins] [JD : Yes, yes] The ewe wouldn't move, and I didn't want to go down, I could have gone down and got it, but I

thought, if I go down, the ewe doesn't know me, it'll run away and get over the edge. But they went with a rope, and they got the ewe, and the lamb followed.

JD Yes, yes, yes.

DV Yes. What sort of cattle did you keep when you started off ?

JD Oh I, well ... I did quite a bit of cattle dealing, when I started farming. I was ... I had one ... I had the best man I ever had ... did employ. He was called Fred Inman, and he ... [tape jumps] ... our farm in those days, what we have on our farm, [DV : Yes] now it's ... [?], but it was [20 mins] our farm then, and he was ... [tape jumps] ... he lived in the house, you see, and I ... well my parents lived up at Longlands for a while, and then it got far too ... well it was far too big. We didn't want a big house, and that's when we sold it to Mr Hickson[?].

DV So did you have a mixture of breeds, when you first started ? [JD : Oh yes] Whatever was going in the market ? Whatever was good ?

JD I dealt in anything. [DV : Yes] Hens or ducks or anything, you know. [DV : Yes] Well you see, I hadn't much money. I only had two or three hundred pounds, [DV : Yes] and it ... mind it bought quite a bit of stock ... did that. But, I can tell you I borrowed a lot of the money from my father. [DV : Yes] He loaned me the money at four and a half per cent. [DV : Yes] And I had it ... I had it all down, [DV : Yes] when I'd paid it back and everything. [21 mins] [DV : Yes] And then I took ... I took the farm on at proper rent, you know, the rent Fred Scott had been paying ,and ... I don't know I think I was fairly lucky at first and ... [DV : Yes] ... [tape jumps] ... Well you know I'd learnt a bit about cattle. But I'll tell you one thing I got done with the first beast I ever bought. Now then ...

DV What was that?

JD I was just ... I hadn't left school very long, and I was sowing a field of corn by the roadside, oats, going up the Hags, [DV : Yes, yes] going up past the Police Station. There was a neighbouring farmer coming down, and ... I just spoke to him as I got to the end, and he had a beast in a halter, and ... [tape jumps] ... [DV : is it on ?] [22 mins] Anyway, I hadn't known what my father would be bidding for cattle and that, I hadn't bought any, [DV : Yes] and then he said "Now mi lad, can I sell him a nice heifer?" [DV : Yes] He was taking it down to Cark station to take to Ulverston market, you see. And so I just said " Oh well", I said, I thought it looks nice ... [tape jumps] ... "How much do you want for it?" and he told me. I thought that looks very reasonable, so I said " Well", I said, "Mr So and So, if you take it and put it ...", I told him where to put it into a certain shippon "I'll pay you for it, like you know, when I see you again", because I had no money or anything "I'll give you a cheque for it". And so, of course, the first thing I did when I went home for mi dinner was to go and look at me heifer, and see what it looked like. And you know ... how he'd done me ? He had it in a halter, [23 mins] and where he was holding it, it had a lump on it. It had a big lump on it's jaw. [DV : Oh dear] I thought then, you know, if he'd done a man like that it wouldn't have mattered, but I know ... I know mi father was annoyed about it. [DV : Yes] He said if that heifer doesn't do right you'll have to stand the loss, he told us. Well, aye, but you know the heifer did well. [DV : Did it ?] It did do well. [DV : It just, it just carried this injury with it.] Just ... that didn't

make much difference to it. [DV : No] But what a thing to do, [DV : Yes] just holding a heifer where the lump was. [DV : Sharp] Well it was a sharp trick, but anyway, it didn't do me any harm. It did me ... [DV : No. I suppose] It did me a bit of good. [DV : Let the buyer beware] Yes, it did me a bit of good.

DV So how did you ... how did you make money from your produce on the farm in those days ? Did you have to take all your [24 mins] stuff to Ulverston or Kendal ?

JD I had a little milk round in the village. [DV : In Cartmel ?] In Cartmel and we used to sell potatoes and such like. [DV : Your own potatoes then ?] And yes, this Fred Inman, he was a very honest man, and he did that job, that was his job. [DV : So he'd milk in the morning, and then do the milk delivery ?] Yes, that's right. [DV : Did he deliver once a day or twice a day ?] Just once a day. [DV : Just once a day.] He used to like to get away about eight ... eight and back by ten. [DV : Yes] Yes. And I often used to set off ... out into country ... Rusland, Satterthwaite and round there. I went on a pushbike for a start, and then I bought a motorbike.

DV Really ? [JD : Yes] And what were you doing out there ?

JD Buying cattle. [DV : Oh, buying] Buying bullocks. [DV : Yes] I used to buy for different people. I used to send a lot of bullocks down to Ipswich. [25 mins] [DV : That's a long way off, bullocks to be fattened ?] Yes, yearling bullocks, yes, to a certain, he was a big buyer called Girling. A Mr Girling, there were two brothers. [DV : Yes] And oh ... I sent him ... do you know, I sold him sixty one morning, in about two minutes. He rang me up the night before. He said "Oh Mr Dixon", he said, "Will you have two cattle wagons ordered at Cark station ?" Because he knew, he knew I'd ... he'd buy my cattle. [DV : Yes] And he said "I want two cattle ... two wagons of cattle sending in to a certain man".

DV Now how ... how did you order a cattle wagon at Cark ? How did you go about that ?

JD Well, you just went down to Cark station, saw Mr Brown, [DV : Yes] the Stationmaster, and said "Can I have two cattle wagons saved for Ipswich in the morning ?" And ... [DV : So they just arranged it like that] "Yes" he said [26 mins] "All right" he said "We'll have two ready for you. Be here at eleven o'clock, and then they'll get there the following day".

DV Yes, so did you ... how did you pay for the cattle going from say from Cark to Ipswich ? Was that an all-in price for the job ? Or ...

JD Oh, he paid the ... he paid the carriage. I sold them ... I sold them to him at home, [DV : at the ...] and in those days ... [DV : Yes] he took one shillings per head for luck, [DV : Yes] and now then, they want two pounds for luck today. [DV : Yes] And they want a lot more than that for dairy cattle. [DV : Oh yes] It's got ... oh it's got out of hand. [DV : Got a bit out of hand] But he used to just take one shilling, [DV : Yes] one shilling a head. [DV : Yes] But I think he bought sixty ... sixty ... he got sixty that day. [DV : Yes] And do you know, he said "Have you cattle ready [27 mins] to show me ?" And we'd got them all in, and put them into two or three different lots, different sizes, you know. And I can tell you exactly the price I got for the first lot. [DV : Yes] There were thirty of them, [DV : Yes] and those thirty, he added to this order he had for them, [DV : Yes] and "Now then Mr Dixon" he said "now how much are

they ?” I said “I want thirty-one a piece, Mr Girling”. “Oh, no, no” he said “no that's too much, too much”. He said “I'll give you twenty-nine”. Now I said “I can hardly afford them at that”. “Well” he said “you know what they are don't you ?”. We didn't say thirty a piece, but he just said to me, he said ... [DV : Half the difference] He said “you know what they are don't you ?” and they were thirty pound a piece. [DV : Yes] And so [28 mins] by the time we'd had the deal, the men were there waiting, ready to take them to the station. They went to the station right away, to catch the eleven train, and Mr Girling had come, he came about nine o'clock. At Grange station I met him. And ... and then we went and had a meal, in the house, and I sold him the other thirty cattle, to go another day or two later, you see. And ... by the time we had our meal, and he'd paid me for the cattle, [someone comes in with inaudible comment] and d'you know, by the time as I saved, he'd paid me in the house, and we had a meal, went down to Cark station, the men had just landed at the station with these cattle. And he got ... got them [29 mins] right away. And from then he caught ... there was a train about eleven o'clock, and he caught that, and went up to Penrith.

- DV So he was in the same business as you, but doing it in a bigger scale ?
- JD Oh, he was in a big scale. He was dealing in thousands not hundreds. [DV : Yes. Yes] No, no, if I could buy fifty or sixty cattle I was doing well, you know.
- DV Yes. But he would be depending on people like you to make his time worthwhile.
- JD Oh, yes, yes. I was ... I was the only man he used to come and see out in the country. [DV : Yes] And he used to go to Lancaster, and then up to Penrith. He used to buy a lot of cattle in Penrith, [DV : Yes] and he liked ... he wouldn't buy a black and white one in those days . [DV : No] He wouldn't have one, he wouldn't have a black and white beast. He said they've got to be shorthorns. [DV : Very popular breed in the [30 mins] early part of the century] It was then, and now you can't sell a shorthorn today. [DV : Is that right ?] They think they've got too much fat on them. A beast's no good without a bit of fat.
- DV Yes, yes, yes. I'm interested how you found the time to do all this travelling for dealing. Did you ...
- JD Well, we've got up at five o'clock in the morning. [DV : Yes] And we got up away, and I used to ... before Thomas Dixon started with his haulage wagon, we used to truck them at Grange station at eight o'clock, to go to Lancaster. You see, I used to take cattle from round the country, and gather them up and take them to Lancaster auction mart. And I had ... I had good customers for good cattle.
- DV Yes, how many days a week did you do that ? One day, two days ? [JD : Oh, well] Whenever you found the time or ...
- JD Well, just you see ... probably ... I used to attend Ulverston market every week, [DV : Yes] without it was [31 mins] hay time or harvest, or something special. [DV : Yes] And then I stayed at home for lambing time, you know, any particular time, [DV : Yes] and then I used to go when I had time.
- DV Yes, so how many were you milking?

JD Oh, not many. [DV : In those days] Oh. [DV : Two dozen ? Three dozen ?] Oh, no, no, [DV : Not as many as that ?] No, no, no probably be about fifteen.

DV Well that was a goodish herd in the early days, wasn't it ?

JD We had many milk cows then. I ... I depended more on buying and selling. [DV : Yes] And I had a very good customer up at Darlington. Took all my ... a lot of my better clean cattle, heifers and that, [?], yes. And I sold ... oh I sold many a hundred. Like you know, ... see, like Mr Girling. He'd ring me up and say "Can you find me a wagon of good bullocks and send them".

DV And did he stay with you for a long time ?

JD [32 mins] Oh yes, till he gave up. [DV : Yes, when was that ?] Mr Girling, he was a buyer. Oh me, I couldn't tell you that.

DV Before the war or after the war ? Before 1939 or after 1939 ? [tape jumps] What I was thinking about was the thirties when times weren't so good for farmers, when prices went down. Would you, did you keep this connection, this business connection when ... [JD : Yes] when times were bad as well ?

JD Yes. And do you know, you can make money when times are bad ? And it ... [DV : Well I guess you can buy cheaper] What ? [DV : I guess you can buy cheaper, can you ?] People know things are bad, and they've changed the price. [DV : Yes] When prices are rising, you don't know what ... you don't know the price of animals today to a hundred pound. [DV : No] Well you could, you could argue then to half a crown. [DV : Yes] I don't think [?] cattle for [33 mins] half a crown. Beef two-year-old bullocks. I remember a man came to buy some big two-year-old bullocks, and he bid me twelve pounds ten each for them. [DV : Yes] And, I couldn't tell you I was cutting him down, he was a new man, and I thought I'd make ... [?], and d'you know, he left me and he said "I'll see you in Ulverston". And I only wanted another half crown a piece. Now then, what do you think of that ?

DV Eeh, very small margins compared with today isn't it ?

JD Small margins? It's out ... they're out of reason all together ... [?]. [DV : Yes] You see, when you can ... [?] same, we did a couple of years ago, about twenty pound a sheep. You know that's ... [?] [DV : Oh it's a lot] That's not [?] [DV : It's a lot] It is really. [DV : Yes] I [?] old times. Yes. [tape jumps]

DV How did you find things ?

JD I was going to say to you [34 mins] before. Switch this off if you like.

DV It's switched itself off.

JD But this here ... this little dog finding the sheep [probable break in recording] ... he bought our potatoes at three pounds a ton, delivered at Cark station. [DV : Yes] We'd to cart them to Cark station, and you got three pound a ton for them. [DV : Yes] And I was saying to Alan, I said, "things weren't so good then you know Alan". "Hey, but John", he said, "Just a minute", he

said, "We're getting eighty for ours now, [DV : Yes] eighty pound a ton, and you got three pound a ton " but he said "You were then ... they'd only be getting about a pound a week", he said, "You were making more money then than we are now".

DV Well I suppose it could be if you look at it.

JD It was, it was right.

DV Yes, it would be right.

JD And you know the old man that was being the manager for Mr Nash at Pit Farm, [35 mins] he was called John Nelson.

DV I haven't read that name, [JD : No, no] I haven't come across it yet, but he was his manager.

JD And he'd been the man there ... they said he'd been there fifty years. [DV : Yes] And, eeh, a grand old lad he was. [DV : Yes] But he was on pension. It was five shillings a week pension, five shillings a week. [DV : Well it was half the old age pension that, was it ?] He could earn five shillings on the farm, and he could earn five shillings pension, you see, [DV : Yes, yes] so that's how we worked it. And he looked after the pigs. and he gathered the ...[?]

DV Yes, I've come to ask you about growing things like oats and barley. [JD : Yes] You hardly ever see it now do you ? There's not a lot about now, but you must have grown oats and barley ?

JD Oh, oh different altogether. You see they fed ... they fed a lot more oats (Knock) for your cattle [DV : Yes] and sheep.

Hello (from someone who had just come in).

DV Hello.

[recoding finishes at 36 mins 2 secs]