



A voice for our village

Interview with Bob Copeland (#1 of 3)

Robert ("Bob") William Copeland ('BC'), born 3 Dec 1919

Interviewers : Irini Tzortzoglou ('IT') & John Batty ('JB')

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Location : Grange Hill

Recording duration : 49 mins 39 secs

JB OK, so it's the – what date did we say it was – the 18th of November 2014 and we're sitting with Mr Robert William Copeland who has very kindly agreed that we can call him "Bob" and we're going to ask you, Bob, a few questions about yourself and then anything interesting you've got to tell us about Cartmel. So first off, can I please ask you to tell us when you were born and where you were born?

BC I was born in Fleet – it's Holland or Lincolnshire – and it's a very agricultural place all around there. And then I was ... after that me mother left me dad because they were in the Air Force together , [1 min] I've got some photographs, and she couldn't get along with him or something or other but I never enquired at all, ever in my life, what went on between them because that was between them. Anyway, and so, what do you think she did? The next-door neighbours – I've got a photograph of the house next door, I went on me holidays about seven or eight years ago, to show me daughter the house and although I left there when I was about 3½ or 4 I would be when I left there, and when I got there the house next door - I've a photograph, she took a photograph in front of the house – but the house I lived in was next door and I always remember it had a, what I always call, a Father Christmas chimney, those big round chimneys, it had all gone. It was a brand new house built there.

JB So tell us when you were born, Bob. [2 mins]

BC The 3rd of December 1919.

JB The 3rd December 1919, so you're now ...

BC On the 3rd of December I shall be 54, 54 years ...

JB You'll be a little bit older than 54 ...

BC 55 is it? 55, yes that's right, I'll be 55. I'm losing track of time aren't I? Anyway,

JB And did you have brothers and sister?

BC No, so what she did, she went next door - and they were a coal merchants – she borrowed the barrow from next door, one of those with two handles on and just two wheels, and she got her case, well it wasn't a case it was a trunk it was round with a black top to it. You see in those days when girls and that went out to service their fathers, if they could do, would buy them a trunk to put all their things in you see because they would be away, and her dad, my granddad, [3 mins] he must have bought this for her. Anyway, she struggled and got this on this barrow and got me all dressed up and put a ticket on me and she took me to the local station which is all gone through Beeching of course, at Fleet, Fleet station is gone now, put

a ticket on me and then put me on the train with the guard – and this is how far she sent me, I mean imagine in this day and age – went all the way through to Gainsborough. I had to go from that station to ... Doncaster, I think it was, somewhere like that ... to be transferred to another train and then to go to Gainsborough. And at the same time she sent a telegram to her sisters, at Gainsborough, to say that she'd put me on a train. She must have enquired about the times and everything like that, and they'd be there waiting for me, see, so there I was going on this train all this journey on my own with this black trunk and when I got to Gainsborough – the station is still there – [4 mins] there was a horse and cab in those days with a driver on the top and me two aunties had got, me mam's sisters her younger sisters, were waiting there for me and they took me to No.3 Campbell Street in Gainsborough. And I've been back since and that's still there of course.

JB And how did you end up in Cartmel?

BC So then because I was with me Granddad for about three or four years, see, three years around about seven I think something like that you see and I kept saying to her "When's me mam coming?" you see, I can remember doing that. And then of course she eventually did come for me and of course she married, well she didn't marry, him then and there ... her cousin it was that she ... in other words, my step-father he was, eventually ... and to Cartmel of course and we lived in Priest Lane.

JB What was the connection with Cartmel that they had? [5 mins]

BC Well, because the whole family lived there you see, he lived there – me step-father lived there and his mother 'cos after a year I remember going to her funeral, I've got photographs of that, I've been down at Humphrey Head. Then of course we were in this little cottage and it was separated from the next cottage (there must have fell down, something like that) but when I actually arrived there he was out of work.

JB Sorry, Bob, are you in Cartmel now?

BC Yes, I'm in Cartmel now and on Aynsome Road. You know where those steps are that go over to Hampsfell ... what do you call the road there, Aynsome Road ... right opposite there was a little cottage, next to the house itself, that's called "Henry House". But the cottage isn't there any more because someone bought it, bought the cottage, and incorporated it in the house, there's a big garage there, a double garage. [6 mins]

JB How old would you have been when you moved to Cartmel?

BC Seven, about seven.

JB And you moved to the house in Priest Lane?

BC To Priest Lane, yes. Right opposite the Old Police Station. And then, later on, of course I went ... we moved round the corner. See, the people who owned these three houses were called "Pace" and they lived in Bradford so what happened was, of course this house we went and lived in, me great-aunt lived in it you see, I've got a photograph of her here I'll show you after, and of course we had somewhere to live of course and of course later on of

course his mother died in that little tiny cottage of course. And then later on some people who lived round the corner in Yew Tree Cottage, er, she wrote to them and asked them if we could move in there ... and they said it was OK for us to go there. So we moved into that one, [7 mins] you see it was the same landlords of course ...

JB That's Yew Tree Cottage in Barngarth, is it?

BC So, yes, that one's in Barngarth. And right opposite was an old barn, a really, really old barn with no ... spouts or anything like that, the water, used to pour off, and just used to use it to put stuff for the Show and things like that in it. To store it, see?

JB Which Show would that have been?

BC The Cartmel Show. Cos they had various barns that they would put stuff in you see. And of course years later, that was long after we left, that was all pulled down, knocked down and then later on ... Actually, in that house a man called Dickinson. I don't know if he was a theology professor or something connected with either Cambridge or Oxford, it was one of them, but he wrote a book all on Cartmel as well and he eventually moved into that house years and years and years later of course. [8 mins] And then he had a piece built on the end of it I think for his library I think, but of course he's all dead and gone now of course. But then after that of course we moved into the corner house which is called Hazeldene which is a big house. I remember the rent for that house was £1 per week.

JB Who was the landlord of that house?

BC Pace, some people from Bradford. She used to go to the bank in the Square. Of course there were three, there was Martins' Bank and the Midland Bank I think it was or the District Bank, I can't remember which it was, and she used to go there once a month you see to pay the rent, that's how they got their money of course.

JB So when you moved, Bob, you were about seven ("Yes") and you must have been going to school ..

BC Oh, I was going to school, yes.

JB What can you remember about the school?

BC Well, the school was ... I remember quite a lot of things about the school. When I first went there, I know all the floor boards were all big knots sticking up out of the boards [9 mins] and you used to trip over them, that's how awkward they were, and then one ... it must have been the second summer we were there, when it was summer holidays they ripped the whole lot out and put all new floor boards in and that.

JB And just to be clear, where was the school in those days?

BC Just round the corner, where it is now.

JB So, the Primary School?

- BC The Primary School, yes. You see all I had to do was come along Barn Garth and up the lane to the school. Or down Aynsome Road.
- JB So what was the school day like for you?
- BC Well it was alright. And the playground of course didn't belong to the school, it was a Jubilee ... it says it on the post there, "Jubilee Playground", it was for some jubilee see, the village must have bought it for that see, and the only thing about it was it was all pinnel, and when you went in there, especially if it was a wet day, and of course we all wore clogs, and when you came back out it used to ... you know what it's like when it snows, and there's snow on the ground, how it sticks to the bottom of your shoes, [10 mins] well with clogs it sticks to the bottom, and this stuff used to stick to the bottom of our clogs, and it used to look as if some builders had ... when there ... all across the road it used to look as if some building site had been. And just outside, they're still there, the scrapers, the scrappers to scrape our boots, they are still by that door, they are.
- JB By the back door ?
- BC By the door where you go in the school
- IT What are clogs ?
- BC Clogs are ... you either buy them and the're all leather, or if you have had an old pair of boots, you can have 'em ... they are made of wood, they are made of wood, the soles, y' see, and of course the difference between ... when you bought them brand new, with leather tops as well, the only thing was they were very very hard, and they used to chaff you round your ankle, until they got soft, so if you had an old pair of boots, of ordinary leather, y' see they were soft, and if you took them to the cobblers, [11 mins] which was in Cavendish Street, a man called Wareing, they would put those soft tops onto a wooden clog sole, y' see, and they've got corks underneath, corks round the heel and all round the toe, y' see, and of course they were a lot nicer for your ankles, they were. Anyway, so ... that was at school, and I always remember things about school, the teacher, ... with being seven I didn't go in the infant class, I started school at Gainsborough, just one year, 'cos I remember coming home with a paper for mi Granny, and I said you've got to sign this paper Granny for, ... I said, I've got to take it back to school, for us to be inoculated, ... it was inoculated, ... it was for that cow business, you know where they scrap the skin, don't they, [JB : Yes] they call it cow pox I think, that they put on, and then it leaves a mark on yer arm. [12 mins] And I always remember she said "yer not having it done", she was quite adamant about this. And so I said, well, I said I've got to take this paper back ... she threw the paper away, I don't know if she put it on the fire or something, and I went up the wall about this, of course, 'cos I had to take it back to school, I mean, you used to think that people at school were like gods, weren't they, teachers at school ?
- JB So what happened when you couldn't produce the paper ?
- BC The reason why she didn't have me ... she'd had had half her family done with this inoculation, and the other half not, and the ones that had not been done didn't seem to get

as many colds as one another as the ones that did. That was what she was thinking, so that was why she didn't get me done.

JB So, were you in trouble at school ?

BC Oh I suppose so ... 'cos I suppose ... said well, couldn't help the ... Granny disposing of the paper.

JB So you didn't have it done ?

BC So I didn't have it done. Anyway.

JB [13 mins] Tell us a little bit about a day at school.

BC Well there's only ... I can remember ... I can remember after I'd been there about maybe 18 months or more, a new teacher came called ... who was called Miss Weakly, she was only a young person, about 23 or 24, and she was a real smasher, 'cos she ... she really had us at heart, and she used to take us out for Nature Walks; that's why we liked her; and up the lanes, and going towards Wellknowe, and places like that, y' know, and pointing out hedgerows, and flowers that grow in the hedgerows, and trees, and things ... I mean it was all interesting, which was really good to us. We thought she was smashing, Miss Weakley. Because, I didn't like Miss Owen because she used to teach History, and there was a Mrs Simpson, no, a Miss Simpson, ... well, it seems her Dad had been the Schoolmaster there, and he taught ... I always called him Pop, me Stepfather, I couldn't bring myself to call him Dad, [14 mins] I used to call him Pop; he ... him and his sisters they'd all ... He had been the school master when they were there, and I believe he was a really strict man, he was. And so she was in the Standard 1 class, and I could always remember in the singing lessons ... you know how they do, ... her throat used to go, and her face used to go red, and y' know ... And then Miss Weakly of course came, we moved to the work class, and she was nice. But the only thing I remember about the actual going in to the top class was the Headmaster. He ... he used to come into school at 9 o'clock. And he used to be at his desk, and all the teachers used to tick the register for each of their class, and he would come through and hand him the things to him, all the registers for each class, and the he used to put them under his arm and he'd walk out. [15 mins] And who should walk in but his wife. He absolutely flatly refused to teach religious education, and I think it was because he had been in the 1914-18 war, and he must have thought that so ...well, if that is religion, I want nothing to do with it. I think that ... how he got the job I don't know, because it was a Church of England school. It was. So, how he got the job I don't know, they must have been desperate ! But there's only one thing I always remember about that school. Later on, as I got older, I was a sort of a monitor, I had ... , and we were living near the school, and I had to be there for 9 o'clock, before 9 o'clock, five to nine or ten to nine, to ring the bell. There was a bell, y' see, and you used to have to ring the bell at 9 o'clock, y' see, and of course ... I thought that was a real big do. There's only one thing I remember about that. I always remember when [16 mins] they were ... picking ... he was picking people out for sitting the exam for the Grammar School, and the Grammar School, which is gone now, was at ... it was a really impressive building as well, and almost ... a Victorian Grammar ... and what happened was, he picked different lads out, who their fathers were sort of semi well off, sort of business, y' see. And the reason for

that was that if they failed their exam, which they were sitting, they could still go with what you call an entrance exam, but they had to pay for their books, and different things like that, y' see. If you went in by your ability, and your brains of course, you got all that free. [JB : Yes] Y' see. So instead of giving say some lads whose Dad's ... Now I remember one lad whose Dad was a Bus Washer, he used to wash the buses, and you never ever saw him [17 mins] except at night time going to work, and coming back in the morning. Now he was really brainy, that lad, Martin Barnes, ... and different ones. Now some farmer's sons, they went, you see, because they were quite well. Now, five of us lads used to knock about together, and one of them called Philip Howarth, and his Dad was the local Rate Collector, and he had a car, and the only car in the village was his, ... was a little Morris Minor, and also Unsworth who had a taxi, so that was the only two cars in the village.

JB Which Unsworth would that have been ?

BC Unsworth's there now.

JB But which one ?

BC Oh, his ... uncle to all this lot, you know ? Granddad ?

JB Right.

BC And so, what happened was, his Dad had been in the 1914-18, and he'd been an Officer, y' see, and so of course he picked him. And I remember Rodney Burns. Now his dad was a Painter. But he didn't pick him, but he used to sit in the same desk as him, and half the time he was like this in the desk ... asleep. And I can remember him shouting at him : [18 mins] "Burns ! Waken Howarth up", he used to shout, y' see, and yet he went to Grammar School.

JB So where was the Grammar School ?

BC At Ulverston.

JB At Ulverston, OK. And after you'd finished at the Primary School, did you ...

BC Oh, you went out to work ... 14. If you went to the Grammar School, went till y're 16.

JB So, when you finished at the Primary School, you were 14 years old?

BC Yea.

JB So, after finishing at the Primary School, did most people go to work ?

BC Of course they did, yea.

JB So the Old Grammar School, that we call it now, that is opposite the Racecourse.

BC Oh no, not that Grammar School, that was nothing to do with it at all.

JB Was that a school then ?

- BC It was a school. It was called the Grammar School because it had been a Grammar School years and years ago, and they'd split it in half, and half was for girls to go for domestic science, ... how to wash a thing, how to iron a thing, and all the rest of it, and the other half was for boys, where you learnt joinery in the afternoon, and in the morning we had gardening, [19 mins] 'cos there was a field by it, and we all had little plots. And so we had gardening in the morning and joinery in the afternoon.
- JB So you did go to that school ?
- BC Yes.
- JB And how often would you have been ?
- BC You had to be ... I think it was either 10 or 11 when you went there, y' see. And of course Allithwaite and Lindale and Grange, ... they all went there, they all had to go there on different days. They all had their different days.
- JB How many boys and girls were in the school ?
- BC Oh, I could tell you with one of that book in there. I'll tell you later on about that, how many that was.
- JB OK
- BC It gives ... in that book it gives the number of people in each school. It even tells you how many cockles had been in ... caught in the bay, and everything there in that book in there.
- IT Bob, you said the Headmaster picked the children who were to go on to Grammar School.
- BC 'Cos their parents, y' see, ... it was a sort of a standard [20 mins] that they were living up to, y' see. Now when they met, especially on Sports Days. All the schools used to meet on Sports Days, some at Cartmel on the Park, some in Holker Park, and in Lindale they didn't have anywhere to go. And that where they've just built all that new place at Grange, the Car Park which is now a what's it centre now for the doctors, well that was a field then, and that's where they, for Grange, had their Sports. All the Sports, see, for each school, combined schools, y' see, had their Sports, and they used to talk, they was ... Of course, little pigs have big ears, and I remember standing near them one day, I don't know whether it was at Cartmel, whether it was at Grange, and they were discussing all the different things, was the Headmaster from Lindale, and the one from Cartmel, and the one from Grange, his name was [Cass/Cash ?], and one from Holker, he was ... he used to wear a gown at school, he did. Oo, he was a horrible thing, he was, that fella. [21 mins] But they were discussing how many pupils that had gone to Grammar School, it was a sort of a standard, y' see, Oh I had six go, oh I had seven go. But they hadn't got there by their ability, they got there on the entrance exam, but they'd gone. And it was a standard for each school, how many had gone there, y' see. That was their way of thinking, y' see.
- JB What age were the pupils when they finished education at the Grammar School ?
- BC 16

JB 16. [BC : Yea] So were you 16 when you left ... ?

BC No, no, no, 14.

JB So you left from the ...

BC I never went to the Grammar School. My Dad was only a ... Y' see, like I said, when he ... he was out of work when I first came to Cartmel, and what happened was, the ... a big firm from London came up, and they got the contract to bring electricity, ... electric line across from Ulverston, across the Ulverston Viaduct, right across that there, [22 mins] over that hill there, across the moss, over Howbarrow, down Cartmel Valley, up over Hampsfell, right through to Meathop. Well, that was a TB home for men and women, y' see, and they had their own plant there, of course, but they wanted power, more power, y' see. And so, that's why Cartmel actually got electricity; that was when Cartmel got elec' ... We used to have oil lamps when I first ... everything was in darkness,

JB How old were you then Bob ?

BC Oh, 7. [JB : 7?] Yea.

JB And you said you were born in 1919 ?

BC Yea.

JB So that would have been in 1926 [BC : Yea] when electricity came to the village for the first time ?

BC I remember it. Coming o'er ... Y' see now, if you look in that valley there isn't any ... there isn't any because there's people that do for the Countryside and welfare, ... they managed to get them buried, the lines, lots of it, all around, tell yer ... There's no posts [23 mins] going over Hampsfell or anywhere there, because they buried it all, y' see, 'cos y' can see in the skyline - they done all those things since. But ... as I was saying ... and so he got a job with this firm. And believe it or not, do you know what kinds of lorries they had, I still remember ? They had ... You've heard of Henry Ford and his Ford T Cars, well, there were Ford T lorries.

JB The old Ford T ?

BC Ford T lorries, and they would just carry two poles. But they must have been strong little lorries, those, d'y know, 'cos all down Cartmel Valley, of course, they went ... But I remember where that road goes up to the ... to the ... Hampsfell from here, this ... they went up that road, and up the fell, and they even went up the fell, on the fell side some of those ... and all they had on was two ... mind you, they were massive things those ... they were all bigger than telephone poles, they were ... I think it was ... [24 mins] what's it ... 3000 or 6000 volts, or something like that; tremendous amount of power was going thru them at the time.

JB OK

BC But they weren't like these 'ere metal ones y' see now ... the big ones, y' know.

- JB Bob, tell us a bit about ...
- BC And that's where he got the job, of course. And then of course ... he managed to ... I have a photo of him, still in his ordinary civies, and he's with the other Postman, about to go out on a round, and he's stood there, he hadn't even got his uniform. And he got a job at the Post Office, and was on that until he finished.
- JB Tell us a bit about what happened after you'd finished at school. You were 14, so what did you do then ?
- BC I got a job. I went to ... went up to Beckside, to a man called Hornby, a Farmer, and ... no, no, I didn't. The first job I got at Aynsome Labs, behind where you are. There was Aynsome Labs there, laboratories. [25 mins] Now then, ... what we did there, we boiled oil with this ... , it was so ... and candle ... there was big flakes of candle wax, and we had to put this in this 'ere big cauldron, which was on wheels, and with a big fire lit underneath, of course, and white spirit, and then, ... and also big barrels of ... Vaseline, what you call petroleum jelly, y' know. And there was so many ... it was all weighed ... and you had to weigh it all and put it in, and then you rolled it over this fire, and there was a thermometer going in it, and it had to be brought to a boil for so many hours, y' see. And it was all liquefied. But if you ever sneezed anywhere near it, which you found out, it used to go woo woo woo woo – scared yerself stiff, it did, y' know. And then after it cooled down, ... 'cos we used to do it ... then light the fire next day ... [26 mins] maybe 48 hours ... I don't know. We used to ... It was all cooled down. It used to be putting it into ... into ... 44 gallon drums, and it was going to the Admiralty at Liverpool, and it was for oil ... doing oil-skins. That's what it was for. Now then, some of the jobs they did was ... I always remember one of the jobs, they give... and there was always wheat from ... came from all over the world, the wheat used to come there in small bags, and it was all tested and one another. And then later on it was made into a bread. And then of course it was sent back to the people who'd sent the wheat y' see. [Don't know what] process was all about. Man's name was Horton. He lived at the pub, the Kings Arms in Cartmel later on.
- JB I'm not clear why they did that. They sent the wheat
- BC They sent the wheat to be tested, y' see, and all the different processes it went through y' see, and then it was made into a bread. And at that, of course, the local ... [27 mins] the people who in charge used to take the bread home, of course y' see. But another job they did was ... the top lab was testing ... we used to make our own ... when ... Every morning when we got there, a man came from Lancaster, he was an engineer, and it was a big Lister engine, in the shed there, and I used to have to be there, there was another lad, there was two of us doing this oil job. I used to have to help him to wind this Lister engine up 'cos the compression on it was tremendous. And then that used to make the power for the whole of the place, y' see. And then also, there was another thing we had to do. They used to make their own gas. It was on the outside, it went right up above the roof, this ... all boxed in, and we used to have to wind these weights up, like a clock in other words, and then as they came down of course ... gradually ... it must have made something to make gas for the Bunsen burners in the top lab, as we called it. But one of the jobs, I always remember ... was ... Anyway, [28 mins] what happened was ... there was ... they had little copper ovens, little

copper ovens, [JB : Yea] And they gave me this copper oven, and they said, right, go round in the sand pit, and take this copper oven, ... and also, there was some caustic soda, ... caustic soda that used to get in this small barrel, (and they used to make their own), and it was so ... so... potentially ... well so sort of ... strong, that it used to make a white crust round the ... , round the ... when water was added to it, y' see. And so they made me get a stick and put some string round it, a piece of cloth, and dip the sand, dip it in this caustic, and rub this copper oven to get it really all bright. And I always remember ... and they didn't give you any gloves or anything like that, [29 mins] when you think about it in this day and age, and when I went home once, ... I remember when I went home, ... and me finger nails were all going yellow they were, d'y know, and I thought, I'm going to lose me damn nails in this job, y' know. Anyway, ... But one of the jobs I always remember ... that's why I got to hell out of it. There was ... was ... not caustic soda ... what d'y call that stuff ... its black stuff, and will burn any mortal thing on this earth bar water and glass.

JB It's black ?

BC It's black. And its in great big buoys, those big buoys. Well, I'll tell yer what happened was ... it's like ... a caustic stuff, it is. Anyway, it'll even burn metal; put it on anything and it'll burn it. This particular day, the top lab wanted a dozen bottles of this, and the bottles were about that high ... with a glass funnel, and the engineer & I, ... [30 mins] we got this buoy, put on ... it was on like a cradle, but there was a handle as well, and it was sort of on a rocking system y' see, and of course ... And yer had a bucket of water there at the side of us, in case in it should splash on yer. And of course, he would do it y' see, 'cos ... And I was at this side, holding this glass funnel, and into this glass jar. And we'd done about five or six bottles of the bl... And then all of a sudden it slipped. And some went on the ground, and it bubbled and bubbled all the ground went ... worse y' know. And some of splashed onto me, all on to me overalls and me boots. I didn't stop for that bucket of water; d'y know what I did ? I went running across that yard and jumped straight in that bloody beck ! Behind you, there's a beck, isn't there ?

JB There is

BC That's where I jumped into, and threw the water all over m'self. A damn good job I did.

JB Did it do any damage ?

BC When I went home, [31 mins] and had me lunch, or me dinner, in Cartmel. All where it has splashed on me went brown, and it just fell away like powder. And me boots as well, all was ruined.

JB How long did you work there for ?

BC I soon got to hell out of that job, I'll tell yer. I wasn't there very long.

JB Do you remember how much you were being paid ?

BC Ten shillings a week ... yea ... 50p !

JB How many people worked there ?

BC Oh, a lot of people worked there, a lot of people worked there, yea, a lot of people.

IT Who owned the Lab ?

BC A man called Ward. And he had a mistress. One of his lady friends was in there. And we were told never ever to go to his office, unless we knocked, and were told to come in, 'cos he was ... canoodling with his lady friend, he was. And that lady friend, believe it or not, he set her up in business. He went to Northern Ireland and set up laboratories in Northern Ireland, and he set her up as the boss there. [32 mins] Never ever saw her again.

JB Whilst we're out at Aynsome, were the laboratories the only business that was there ?

BC Yes.

JB So all those buildings ...

BC Oh, all those buildings have gone ... have gone. There's nothing at all there now. Just the main building itself. There was buildings galore, all the way round. There was even an orchard, there was, over towards the wall.

JB OK. So you didn't stay there too long; what was the next ...

BC Then I went ... I got a job ... a man used to come round Cartmel called Hornby. And he used to come round with his horse and cart on Saturday morning, selling potatoes and carrots, and boiling fowls ... boiling fowls, and chickens, y' see. And so seeing I'd made myself redundant ... or not redundant ... made myself out of work, sort of thing, mi Mam said to him, have you any ... is there any chance of getting a job at the farm. And he said aye. I'll have 'im he said. He can come, come and wag with me, 'e said.

JB Which farm was it, Bob ? [33 mins]

BC That's up Beckside way. The farm where ... that farm that goes right through the farm yard, before you go up that little steep hill.

JB Yea, OK

BC I think somebody called Wilson lives there now. Anyway ... so I went ... and they used to grow sprouts, and potatoes, and all the rest of it. And I always remember the sprouts 'cos ... when the sprouts all grow, y' see, they would sort of hold the water, with the rain, and that, y' see, so you had to put sacks around 'ere, ... from 'ere ... 'ere ... with string, binder twine as they call it, and paper, and anything like that, 'cos as y're going through kicking these sprouts, y' see, of course, y'd get all wet, y' see, if y' didn't have that on. Then I always rem...

IT To protect your legs ?

BC To protect yer legs. And so ... And then, of course, it was time to get the potatoes up, of course, y' see, well all the tops 'ad all broke off, or died away, so they 'ad what yer call a plough, which goes down the centre of the furrow, [34 mins] and it opens it up like that, y' see. And of course they didn't have tractors in those days, it was just horse and cart, and they had what yer call swills, they ... yer know what a swill is don't yer ? And we all had swills,

and just started pickin' those potatoes, and throwing them in swills, and horse and cart was there, and you walked to 'em and put it in. And then the horse and cart moved further on, like that. And of course it's a really back-breaking job is picking potatoes. I was only just turned 14, as I say. And I was living there, 'cos mi wage was only ten shillings a week again. I wasn't improving mi wages.

JB You were living on the farm ?

BC On the farm, yea.

JB So even though you lived ... ?

BC At Cartmel. I was living in the farm. 'Cos you used to get up in the morning, and of course, there wasn't milking machines, it was all done by hand. Well, he hadn't got round to the business of learning to milk, all my job was shovelling all the S.H.I.T. into a barrow, barrowing outside, y' see, and of course that were a ... At that time 'is [35 mins] wife had got up at seven o'clock, 'cos we used to get up a half past five, or something like that, and ... doing the milking.

JB So you were doing the milking by hand ?

BC Yes, the boss and his son, y' see, two sons there was. And so, what happened was ... And I always remember, when yer went in for yer breakfast, you didn't sit with the boss, he sat at the little round table near the fire, with his wife, the two sons sat over by the window, y' see, and I sat there with them. And we got porridge, of course, and of course I hadn't been used to eating porridge, 'cos it was that red hot, y' know; and the bacon of course was all bacon they'd ... it was a pig they'd killed, then cured it, of course, and it was all hanging on the ceiling, and they could take it down and just slice it off as they wanted. Well, it was ... maybe ... it was all fat, with maybe a thin steak of lean going thru' the middle, but the rest of it was fat, and of course that was that. And well, [36 mins] by the time I'd got thru' mi porridge, these lads had already got thru' theirs, they're that used to it, the sons, and they were on with the bacon, y' see. And he said : Nay, thou must eat a lot quicker than that; thou'll never get outside in time, he said. Get thee sel ... get thee sel ... get the porridge down thee, he said. And anyway, things happened like that. So anyway ... I always remember going out to the field and pickin' spuds, I don't know if it were second day or third day we were doing it, ... and ... I know ... that was that ... But in stead of pickin' like this with two hands, the potatoes, I went with one like that, just pickin' with one hand, and he was ahead of me, and he turned round and saw me, and he said : Nay, thou's not turning this bloody grub, he said, dig 'em with yer hand, he said, one hand y' see. And I was so chock a block, [37 mins] right up to 'ere I was. And so I just stood up and said, well, for what your grub is Mr Hornby, y' can ruddy well stick it. And I just walked off the field, and walked out. Got mi bike and went home. I thought, right you've had that mate, [laughs]

JB How long had you been there ?

BC Only about three or four weeks.

JB OK

BC So then I got a job as a butcher's boy, at Proctors at Grange. Well, of course, every Monday morning, the lad who used to do the slaughtering, called Shepherd, he had a motor bike, and I used to get on the back, and we used to share a slaughterhouse at Allithwaite. Well, it was a right carry on that was. And of course, they used to get the cattle in the sh...[?], where the cattle was for slaughtering was at the end of the house. He used to go in and put the rope round the cow's head, y' see, [38 mins] and I'd have hold of the end of the rope, and he used to sort of come along this road, then there was the end of a wall. And so, after he'd got it out there, he'd sort of run up the wall, up the yard, and he would get the end of it round there, 'cos he was a really strong lad, he was, the butcher, big fat lad he was, but really strong, and then I used to get the end, and thread ... go into the slaughter house and thread it through a ring in the floor. Y' see. And then of course, he gradually used to pull it round and get it in. Of course, you get its head right the way down there, on the floor, and all it can do is this, y' see. Well of course in days gone by, they used to use ... used to use what y' call a pole axe. Well, that was an axe's head on one side, and on the other side, it was just a point, like that. Y' see. Well imagine apprentices and that trying to kill things with swinging round and going ... I mean, when you think of the way that animals were being treated in those days was terrible. [39 mins] Well of course, Georgie was ... And so, on the way the way there sometimes, on the back of the motor bike, he sometimes used to see a man walking down the road. It was somebody he knew, who had a hound dogs. And of course, he used to shout to him : is the guy down to kill ? Aye, he said. I'll be down then, he said. So George would say : give us 15 minutes, and be down. And so when he knew this lad was going ... this fella, was going to come down, it was to get the head of it, y' see. So, I only saw him do it once, or else twice, I think it was only once, he got the pole axe, and of course, as I said, he was a really good man at his job – straight in the middle of its ruddy head, and that was it, y' know - dead. But, of course, the idea was, y' see, if an inspector had come round, he'd have been up the wall about that. Y' see. 'Cos he'd have looked straight away, how it had been killed. [40 mins] Y' see. And he'd 'ave been in dead trouble. And he knew this fella was coming down for the head, 'cos what he used to do was cut it off, cut all the cheeks off it, and cut the tongue out of it, then put it in a bag, and of course this bloke would come down and take it away.

JB So what was the correct method of killing ?

BC Well, I'm telling yer ... getting round that. Then they brought out what you call a cash captive pistol. And it was like a ... quite a hairy thing it was ...

JB Cash Captive Pistol ?

BC Cash Captive Pistol. Now then, you broke it in the top, like that, and yer put a cap in it, just a small cap just like that. And they had different ones for different animals ... different power ... as regards ... the ... to make it go. And there was bolt inside of it, y' see. And all yer did was yer put it there, snapped it to, and yer put it by the cow's head, and yer pulled the trigger, and that bolt just shot into in it's head. I mean, you couldn't miss, could yer, lets face it. See, even when yer went like that, y' see. Oh no ... no ... before that ... [41 mins] I'm getting' away ... I'm getting in front of things ... before that, after the pole axe, was called ... what you call the Bell Gun. It was like a ... it was a round thing like that, and it was made of copper, and then a stem like that, and yer screwed the top off, and yer put a bullet in it, a

proper bullet. And on the bottom of the thing itself, there was a hole, of course, and yer put ... the bottom of it was sl..., not flat, it was sloping, sloping like that, and yer put that on its head, like that, and yer just tapped the top of it, with the back end of a knife or anything, and the bullet shot straight out into its head. Well, the only thing about that was, that just as yer did that, supposing yer had apprentices, and just as yer did it, the cow moved its head, where's the bullet goin' to go ? Its going to hit the floor and go all over the place, isn't it ? Y' see. So it was very dangerous when yer think about it. So that's when they brought out the Cash Captive Pistol. Nothing came out of it, only it just drove a bolt, that's all. [42 mins] And yer did that, and they still use that today.

JB And that was approved by the Ministry of Agriculture ?

BC Absolutely. Well, the Bell Gun was, if it comes to that. It was just an improvement on it, y' see.

JB Right

BC But what was the annoying thing about it all was, after yer'd killed ... yer had to stand away from it 'cos ... all the nerves of that animal ... its like that for about five minutes yer know, Yer'l get kicked to death if yer don't. Even though it's dead ... its nerves are going like that y' see ... its back legs and its front legs. But what the most annoying part about it was ... Down there they had, y' see, ... all bungalows and houses where there isn't sewerage, they have what yer call a cess pool, don't they, for stuff to go in, and maybe once a year, or something like that , they have to have these 'ere wagons come and suck it all out, don't they ? Well it was a cess pool there, so therefore, we couldn't allow the blood to go into the cess pool. So what we had to do was bung the hole up [43 mins] with an old cloth, and then ... of course as yer slit its throat, y' see, when its dead, of course, all the blood, all over the floor, yer had to let it all congeal, and then shovel it all up into buckets, and carry it out and put it in the ruddy field. I mean, what a carry on that was ! [laughs] Y' see.

JB That was done to avoid the blood going in to the cess pool ?

BC Yea. Oh, you couldn't let it go into the cess pool, no, no way.

JB Why not ?

BC Well, I mean, it's goin' to cause ... I mean ... well, look at the work it would cause, I mean. It would go ... the smell from it and God knows what would be terrific, wouldn't it. I mean ... It's not going to be emptied for maybe ages, is it ? And y' see ...

JB But cess pools didn't smell very nice anyway ?

BC No, no. But y' see now some butchers, Asplin's [?] here at Grange, they ... 'cos they were by the mains. The had a little field next to it, they could bring them out, then of course when they'd killed them, they just had the hose pipe on, y' see, and it all went away sort of diluted with the water and that, didn't it. [44 mins] They didn't have all that bother with us.

JB OK. So come back to the butchers now. Your job was a Butcher's Boy, wasn't it ?

- BC Going out with meat.
- JB So were you taking ... were you delivering the meat ?
- BC Delivering meat. And he was so miserable and tight, he wouldn't even wrap things up. He used to have a big roll ... big lot of paper, ... grease-proof paper on the counter, and he would tear it up into sections, and that. Instead of putting the thing on and wrapping it up, and saying right, y' know, ... I mean ... well he did do for customers that came in for things, like a pound of sausages or anything like that, but y' see with delivering stuff, he just used to get a piece of paper like that, about that size, and he would clap it on there and write the person's name on the corner, and it went into my basket like that, maybe about four or five or six things. Well, sometimes with blood and God knows what, yer could hardly make out what it was, y' see ... it had gone over it. But I always remember one lady, a Mrs Robinson, used to ring down, and her husband used to drive a Daimler for [45 mins] Grange Motors. I think he used to keep it purposely for them. And he used to say, oh Sharps, y' know, yer've heard of Sharps' toffee, haven't yer, Well, they lived at Kents Bank, and they had a .. they had a permanent ... what is it with Proctors, ... order y' see, and they never paid, never paid at all, not maybe, maybe for 12 months, or even longer than that. Course, I remember 'im drummin' I wish those so and sos would pay their ruddy bills, he used to say, y' know, the're there, y' know, but he got his money in the end. Let's face it, it was always guaranteed. I mean, it wasn't as if they were bankrupt, Sharps toffee.
- JB So would the customers have given the order the day before ?
- BC No, no. They used to ring up, y' see.
- JB Oh, they used to ring up ?
- BC Yea. I always rem... And so, he used to say, Sharps have rung up, and so he used to take his overalls, boiler suit off, put 'is , what is it, cap on, [46 mins] and go out and drive them around Grange. I can remember they had one daughter, and she was dressed like some old Victorian lass, she was, with a pale blue what's it on, and a round hat on, and a veil on – this was a young lass of about 12, y' know ! And this 'ere big Daimler car, I can remember seeing her around, big soft bitch, y' know. Oh, dear.
- JB Well, where was the butchers in Grange ?
- BC Don't matter about that ... I'm on about this Mrs Robinson, she used to ring up, y' see he used to go home for his lunch, she used to ring up maybe about ten to twelve, and he used to go home for his meal, and she used to ring up and say : George ! Especially on a Wednesday when he used to go around with a van travelling, did Proctor himself, and she'd say ... will yer send us up a couple of ... half a pound of sliced liver, she said, and a couple of kidneys. She said : Can you get up here for 12, she said. She lived right at the top of the Grange Fell. Oh, flippin' heck, I mean, that was really a ... , to get up there, then she had to cook 'is ... by the time he got home just after 12. [47 mins] Those kinds of customers used to make me mad, they did. And one day, I got mi bike, and it was on this particular errand, and Proctor was off, away, and I was just with George, the butcher, and me in the ship, and she rung up, and so I said, George, wrap it up, so he did do, to please me, and they put it in the

basket, and away I went up Laundry Hill. Then I just stood on the pedal, 'cos ..., down Fearnley Road, and then there's another road going up, that's called ... that's going up on to High View Road, that road. Well, that road was all rough cobbles, it hadn't been ... it hadn't been done with tarmac and everything. It was really rough that road, ... and I, so, instead of sort of cocking me leg over on the shop bike, I just stood on the pedal, and I went round that corner, just like that, put the brakes on of course, and what d'y think happened ? [48 mins] I just got round that corner, and a firm from Lindale called Birchs, had just got the contract to do that road up, tarmac it all. And of course they were levelling up. And they had the wagon going up there ... lorry ... dragging one ton ten hand roller, with a chain round the handle, fastened to the back, and it had broke loose. And they'd got half way up, and it was coming careering down that hill, and I'd just come round that corner ... what d'y think it did ? It just caught the corner of mi bike, as I dropped off, caught the carrier part of it, bent it like that, straight across the road, through the wall, hit the house, all the pictures in the house dropped off the wall ! Y' can tell what if it had hit me, I'd have been a dead man. Yea, I always remember that.

JB That was a narrow escape.

BC Absolutely. [49 mins] Not kiddin', it was. And when he used to go travelling, y' se, he used to pick up rabbits at Meathop, [JB : Yea], and he also used to pick up live hens, in a sack, so that when he came back, of course, he maybe ... 'cos he used to ... in those days they could hang stuff outside, y' see. Y'r not allowed to do anything like that in this day and age. I even ... Game merchants and that, they were allowed to hang pheasants and everything outside, hares and God knows what. Where Grange Now is, that used to be a game shop there.

JB Bob, we've been going for the best part of an hour. Can we just have a little break.

BC Course yer can.

JB We'll just stop it, and I think ... [49 mins 39 secs]