Reminiscences by William Makinson

1st draft (as dictated 1993 to Miss Margaret Pilkington)

[Bold sub-headings in square brackets added by MCC when this text re-formed into a PDF file]

[Marg. P: It's 23rd August 1993 and we're sitting in Old Manor Farmhouse and Mr. Makinson is going to talk to us.]

Yes, well I'll just tell you that we - the Makinsons - have been here for four generations: my grandfather bought Old Manor but unfortunately he was killed in an accident before they came to Casterton - and so my grandmother farmed with her three sons for several years until two of the sons left home and got other farms and my father farmed on – and I farmed a few years and then John, my son, is now farming Old Manor – but we live in the back part of the house because Old Manor was a pretty big farmhouse, as most old farmhouses were, and now we just live in the back part of the house.

Well, I've been told of course that Old Manor is very old – in fact I don't think anybody really knows the date of when it was built. I think the old records are in the archives at Chester Cathedral, because at one time this part of the country was the Chester diocese and so the oldest records are there – but there is only a record of it existing, not when it was built.
We were told that the old part of the house was an old pele tower and then was designed as a fortified farmhouse when the Scots were doing the raids in this part of the country, and the farmer used to take his family, servants and animals all into the house and to keep the Scots from taking the animals - they also took the women as well as the animals! – and so that's why the fortified farmhouses were designed.

[The church]

Well, I thought first of all I would tell you about the church – what I know about the church – because, well, I've always been really much involved with the church – and first I'll tell you about the vicars – the vicars I remember. The first vicar was Canon Burton, I remember, and then Mr. Meiklejohn, Mr. Harris, Mr. Potts, Mr. Ewbank and Mr. Evans.
I'll tell you just a little bit about each of these vicars. Well, Canon Burton I remember as, er, very stately – almost a bishop. He used to walk down the aisle. I remember being taken to church when I was a very small boy, and I had seen Canon Burton but of course never in his surplice, and so as he walked down the aisle in a loud voice I said "Why is he wearing a sheet?" I'd not seen him dressed up like that before and my mother was a bit embarrassed! Canon Burton was, I would say, a vicar of the old school. He didn't allow any activities other than church affairs in the church room. The church room is now the public hall. It was given by the Bickersteth family especially for the men of the village – I think the wording was "to keep the men off the streets" - and there they met, twice a week – Tuesday nights and Thursday nights – and other activities were very much the church. The Mothers' Union and the Sunday School were always held, and church meetings, but nothing like whist drives, or dances, or concerts. I'll mention a little bit more about that later, but then on to Mr. Meiklejohn.

Well, Mr. Meiklejohn had been a prison chaplain, and he was the vicar here most of the time when I was at the village school. He took confirmation classes and he was very strict. We had a tremendous lot of classes - it seemed to last the whole winter. We had to know the catechism and several – oh, I don't know, all sorts of things off by heart - before he would consider us being fit to be confirmed. I remember there were seven of us boys being confirmed that year, but unfortunately one of the boys didn't go to one lesson – he went to a circus - there was a circus in Kirkby – and Mr. Meiklejohn found out - but it wasn't a real excuse and so he was not allowed to be confirmed and wasn't confirmed till the year later, so there was only six of us of us boys to be confirmed. This was as well as the girls from school.

Now Mr. Harris – after Mr. Meiklejohn was Mr. Harris – and Mr. Harris was before the war and during the war. He started a church youth group, the AYPA, which ran for about 15 years. He was a very popular vicar and he did a tremendous lot of visiting in the parish. There's one peculiar story I'm going to tell you about. There was a Mr. Dunn staying in the village at that time. He had been an old – he was in the Indian Army and he was very much what I would call the big game hunter type, and he went to church very regularly, but one morning after listening to the sermon the collection plate came round, he dropped a penny on the collection plate and said "There: that's what the sermon's worth!"
[I have to put these funny bits in; or else it's a bit boring!]

Then came Mr. Potts. Well, Mr. Potts was very good with youth and continued the AYPA. The AYPA was the Anglican Young People's Association. But Mr. Potts had a short stay really – only a few years. Mrs. Potts started up the Mothers' Union again in Casterton the time she was here.

Then came Mr. Ewbank He continued with the AYPA. He re-formed the men's club, he was chairman of the village football team, he arranged two pageants in church and an historical pageant at Casterton School. He started the children's morning service and was here for quite a number of years.

And then came Mr. Evans. Mr. Evans re-started the carol service/carol singers round the village. He was a hard worker and a very good hospital visitor.

Going back, well, really as far as I can remember, some 70 years ago the church workers, well - John Roper and Wilkie Thompson were the churchwardens, the verger was Mrs. Dennison, the organist Miss Martindale. Canon Burton had got a - collected subscriptions for a full peal of bells for Casterton Church, but the church tower was never strong enough and so the bells were either – some not bought and some – none of them were ever rung because the tower was considered not to be strong enough. Jack Batty was the first bellringer I remember, and then Cecil Briggs. The clock was always wound by Mr. Billy Briggs and then later by Harry Wright. The church cleaner was Mrs. Rutter, and Billy Robinson seemed to be in charge of the choir.

Casterton Church was always lit by gaslight and gas supplied by Kirkby Lonsdale Gas Company, and the gas supply got worse and worse till eventually almost all the houses in Casterton had electricity but not the church or the church room. I remember gaslight was so bad that several people in the evening service took flashlights so that they could read the hymns. There was a Miss Owen who was housekeeper at Casterton Hall, and when you went to collect she always shone a flashlight right in your face till you couldn't see anything!

When the church lights were very bad I remember one Harvest Festival one of the sidesmen, Jack Hird, who was "hind" (farm manager) at Chapel House, collected up his side and when he got to the back row all the collectors (there were three collectors) but we had to wait for him because he'd seen on the back row cabbages and marrows and he thought they were people, so he went to collect them! We were a bit worried because the hymn was almost finishing. That was when the light was very bad.

Before the war there was a gaslight at each gate and I remember on one occasion – it was a windy night – and Billy Robinson had used up all his matches without getting the lights lit, and had to run back home to get some more matches. The church was never blacked out during wartime – the evening service was at 3.0 in the afternoon – and then really it was after the war when the gas became so bad.

Other things about this time – well – there was a girl at the next door farm to us was getting married and this was about a couple of months – or six weeks or so before I was married, and I'd never been to a wedding, and I was really wondering – we weren't really a marrying family – and so, er, I got an invitation to the wedding so I was really pleased to go and see what happened at a wedding, but when I got to the church door Billy Robinson said "Just the fellow I wanted – will you blow the organ?" – because the organ was operated in those days by water, but during the summer when the water supply was very bad the pump didn't work the organ. This was of course long before we had the supply of water we have now; we just had the local supply, and so in a dry time the water was of a very low pressure, and so I had to go and blow the organ so I didn't see anything of the wedding at all!

About this time it was the usual thing for the vicar to take the children up to the top of the tower when they got to a certain age, and I remember, well, certainly Mr. Potts and Mr. Ewbank took children up to the top. It was a sort of a thing when you got to a certain age you were allowed to go up to the top of the tower – and it's really quite a wonderful view.

Going back to Canon Burton's time a Mr. Pigot who was vicar of Whittington came to take the Sunday morning service. Now I wasn't actually at church this time because I was only a very small boy I think, but two of my uncles were at church and greatly to their amusement this is what happened. He was a very small man, and at Whittington church he always preached his sermon on a stool, but of course at Casterton church there was no stool provided for him, so when he arrived in the pulpit all that you could see was his bald head,

and of course his text was: "It is I: be not afraid". Now this was great amusement to my uncles! Both my uncles told me the same story at different times so it must have been absolutely true, I think.

Jumping many many years now – in fact it was in the time of Mr. Evans.
The bulb over the chancelry had fused and so we had to replace the bulb. I don't know whether you know where the bulb is but it's very bad to get to, and of course the ladder – the church ladder – is not long enough, not at full extension, and so Mr. Evans, the vicar, and Billy Blaylock, churchwarden, would hold the ladder on top of the choir stalls and I climbed up the ladder to replace the bulb. The trouble was they're a big bulb, and I had to go up the ladder twice, and you can imagine how the vicar and Billy Blaylock had great difficulty in supporting me up the ladder. I think nowadays they get an electrician to replace the bulbs, but we did it in those days.

Now continuing about the church. All the pictures in the church were provided by the Bickersteth family. They were done by two different artists I believe and when the church was decorated unfortunately some of the pictures of the angels on the walls were painted out, which is really a great pity. Long since, different families sat in the same pews in church. I remember just in front of the Makinson pew was the Collinson pew and behind was the Martindale – no, not the Martindale pew; it was the Greenbanks pew. These were not official, but you just naturally went and sat in your own pews. That was at the village side, of course; there was certainly in those days there was the "school side" and the "village side". All families used to go to church, so some of these pews were quite full. All the school scholars and teaching staff went to morning service, but the domestic staff went in the evening. Also at this time there were a number of young men from Kirkby had a walk up on a Sunday evening and came to church – they would be well into their teens, these young men, took a very active part in the service, and there was an added bonus because perhaps you were lucky and could walk one of the school maids back to the school!

In those days I think everybody dressed up in their best clothes, certainly they had churchgoing clothes, their best suits. I think this was sort of in respect of the Sabbath day – not now, people go to church in sports jackets - they don't even wear ties some of them.

Before the war and just after the war each farm decorated a window at Harvest Festival. There were the same number of farms as windows in the church and so each farm decorated a window. This was in Mr. Ewbank's time.

I'm jumping about from one time to another.

I'm going to tell you about one confirmation. I can't remember – I don't think I was in any official capacity but I was at this communion service anyway, and just as the bishop went up the church a tramp – a real man of the road – came in and watched the whole communion service standing in front of the font. We sort of wondered what would happen when the

bishop walked down the church after the communion service was over, but just before that he just went out - just disappeared - and it was really, well I thought it was quite a thing, really – he just stood and watched the whole service.

During Mr. Ewbank's time Mr. Rich formed a choir, and they did several works in church. He formed a male voice choir and also a mixed choir that gave concerts as well as church music.

[The pageants]

I'm going to tell you a little bit now about the pageants that were in Mr. Ewbank's time. The pageants near almost involved the whole village really: actors, and of course a lot of backstage people: dressers and the likes. I'll tell you one rather funny – well, it wasn't funny at all – it involved poor Rob Major who was playing the part of Judas – and of course after the betrayal of Christ, he had to run down church, head bowed, and out into the night, but it was rather a windy, stormy night (this was only at a rehearsal, thank goodness) and somebody had closed the outer door, and so as he burst through the doors he went bang into the outside door which was, well, you probably know it's a hard, solid door. It wasn't very funny at the time – but fortunately we're better with the real things. We did these pageants on two or three occasions. People from Kirkby and Barbon – the church was full. It was really not surprising it was full because there were a lot of artists [artistes?]really – Mr. Ewbank seemed to get everybody in the village to take part: people who never went to church even were part of the pageants. One of the pageants – the first one was up to the birth of Christ (all the old prophets and things in the Old Testament) and the second one was from the New Testament which was up to the Crucifixion - not actually the Crucifixion but up to that time. After this pageant the BBC seemingly heard about it and so we did a broadcast. It was broadcast in a programme - I think it was called "Calendar", a religious programme that was on the wireless in those days. I don't know whether there's such a programme as that now, but we all did our little bits, and it took us about an hour I think, but when it was broadcast it was very cleverly edited and it only lasted twenty minutes – but it was quite an occasion. All the schools came: some boys from Sedbergh School and Cressbrook School, and of course the girls from Casterton School. I really – I would say they were quite a success, although I remember in the first place I didn't really think it was the thing (I didn't think we were good enough actors to be acting in church, and I was brought up that church was church, it wasn't a stage) but anyway I think really it was a success.

I must tell you that before the pageants Mr. Ewbank - which I thought was very amusing – he put an advert in the parish leaflet for a cock to crow! I was St. Peter so the cock… I was greatly involved with the cock, you see. Anyway Mr. Ewbank got two applications for a cock, and at rehearsals I sometimes had one cock, sometimes the other cock, but Joan Jackson who worked at school was the cock in the real programmes - she did very well - she was in behind the organ I think, crowing. I must tell you that after we did the broadcast the BBC insisted on paying us, and I think we – all the artists - the people who took part

(perhaps I shouldn't say artists – I don't think we were really artists – the people who took part) were paid 5 guineas, and of course everybody gave their money to the church, so I think it was really quite a boost to Casterton Church because there were quite a few £5 [notes?].

Now a bit about the village.

Well, I've been told that Casterton was really two separate hamlets, both in the parish of Kirkby Lonsdale – but there was High and Low Casterton. There was no road connecting the two hamlets - not the road that we know it now, by North Heads, Laneside and suchlike. The only connections were you went up Bee Nest and along the old Roman road and down past the school, or down Colliers Lane and up to Town End. All the houses on the road between are all comparatively new.

Now then, a little bit about the Toll Bar. Well, Toll Bar was nothing to do with the main road that came through, because there was no road went from Toll Bar to the Devil's Bridge – the road went along the bottom of which is now the golf course – and came out at the top of Broken Brow and went down to the Devil's Bridge. Colliers Lane is called Colliers Lane because that's where the colliers brought their carts of coal all the way down – there was open-cast mining behind Brownthwaite. This is why Smithy House (which is a farm the other side of the fell) is called Smithy House because the miners used to get the shoes on their horses up there.

Bee Nest Farm was a pub – that's why there are still remains of wells all the way up from Kirkby Lonsdale to where the coal was got behind the fell – water troughs so that the horses could drink every so often. In Casterton of course there were a lot of cottages that have gone – I think there's probably just about the same population now as there was 100 years ago. There's certainly not as many houses, and be most houses built mostly since the last war – but of course there were much larger families long since. About 100 years ago there were 29 farms in Casterton, and up to the last war there were 19 farms in Casterton. I believe there are 7 now. The farms were of course much smaller, and some farms have gone altogether.

I must tell you a little bit about the carters. Every village had carters who took goods from Casterton to Lancaster and brought back goods from Lancaster to the village. They went twice a week. They collected the stuff up one day and went to Lancaster and then the next day they delivered the stuff out round the village. I've been told that most of the things they brought from Lancaster was paraffin and salt. This was because all lighting was by paraffin lamps and a lot of salt was used for curing meat. Long since of course almost everybody who lived in the village worked in the village; in fact I think it was quite strange if people went to Kirkby to work. There was a lot more work for people – of course the railway – there was always three or four men worked on the railway – plate-layers, suchlike - there were road workers, a lot of farm workers. Several men worked at Casterton School: gardeners, and a lot of private houses had a gardener. A lot of houses had maids, and the local girls

were maids to the houses, and as I said before I don't think the population has increased or decreased much since those days.

When I was very young I can remember there were only four cars in the village: the Bickersteths had a car and the Stackhouses had a car: the Bickersteths at Casterton Hall and the Stackhouses at Casterton Grange. They each had a car and a chauffeur. Canon Burton had a car (Canon Burton was the vicar) and I believe there were, oh, and the Bownass family had a taxi. There were one or two motorbikes and I think John Collinson who was at Town End, who was a one-time blacksmith - and he was clerk to the Parish Council, a poet and a farmer - in fact he did all sorts of things, and I think he had great foresight when he put up the first petrol pump at the smiddy. Casterton smiddy had been quite a place really, because both Crofts and Gibsons, who both became agricultural engineers (Crofts at Kendal and Gibsons at Melling) both started at Casterton smithy.

I forgot to tell you – I said that the carters brought salt and paraffin back from Lancaster – and I forgot to tell you that they took farm produce from Casterton the village – they collected it in the various farms and took butter, cheese, eggs and poultry - and potatoes, I believe, so they'd a load going to Lancaster and a load coming back

[The Post Office]

Now I'll tell you about Casterton Post Office. Well Casterton Post Office was where – Mill Gill – well, Peter Bradley lives there now – that's where the Post Office was - and Mrs. Hardacre kept the Post Office and Mr. Hardacre and her son were postmen and shoe repairers – they were kept very busy repairing shoes because they repaired all the shoes for the school, and I think the girls used to wear a lot of shoes out in those days, so I was told. They were kept very busy delivering letters in the morning, and they delivered letters on foot; later the letters were delivered by postmen on bicycles. Mr. Hardacre used to take his leather down into the beck to get the leather soft: this was a great amusement to us children in the village school, and especially one day when it had came a flood and it had washed his leather away, and Ronnie (Hardacre) spent a good lot of time looking down the woods for the leather, but I think he got it back in the end. Mrs. Hardacre as well as keeping the Post Office sold all sorts of stationery, ink and pens and all that sort of stuff. The public telephone in Casterton was in the Post Office, and if you wanted to make a telephone call you had to go there. She always got your number, put you through, and you did the speaking - because I think there were only telephones at the school. Bownasses had the telephone because I think they did a lot of work for the school and so they had to have a telephone. I believe there was a telephone at Casterton Hotel, but no other telephones and so you used to go to the Post Office.

I'll tell you a little bit now about the public hall. The public hall was – oh yes, I've just been reminded: telegrams were delivered by Mr. Hardacre – on foot of course – and I thought he must be the oldest telegraph boy in England! because he used to take his apron off when he'd been mending shoes, and got his walking stick and his little dog and delivered telegrams.

[The public hall]

Now I'll tell you about the public hall, which no longer exists. This was built by public subscription after the first world war because the village hall, which was a church room then, was not allowed – you hadn't to have whist drives or dances or any sort of entertainment and so Canon Burton was very strict about this and so the public hall was built. The public hall was built next to the village school - but of course you don't know where the village school was, because the village school no longer exists – but it was, er – the village school was next to the Post Office, which no longer exists – but each side of the beck – the Post Office one side of the beck, and the village school the other side of the beck and the public hall was built next, in the little field just below Folly Barn, and that's where all the whist drives, dances and that sort of entertainment was held. This was taken down several years after – I don't know how many years since – but it served Casterton for perhaps about 30 years. The public hall of course was a wooden building, and was taken down, bought by Carr & Bleasdales, the joiners at Barbon and was used for a workshop there.

[Casterton Hotel]

Now a bit about Casterton Hotel. Casterton Hotel of course was the George and Dragon, and Mr. Knowles who kept the hotel was a farmer, a joiner, a wheelwright and an undertaker. He had three daughters: the Miss Knowleses. One of the Miss Knowleses became headmistress at Casterton village school. There's rather an amusing story about three men in the pub talking about their daughters. They were quite sure that their daughters would all get married very well, and Mr. Knowles the landlord said "Well, I've got three daughters, and they're all spoken for", but unfortunately none of the Miss Knowleses ever got married, which rather amused me.

One of the cottages pulled down opposite the hotel was a shop – a Miss Blamire kept the shop. This was before the shop was by Church Lane (I think they call it Church Lane – I'm not sure). Mrs. Robinson had the shop down the Church Lane. She sold all groceries and everything really, that the village needed. I don't know whether the two shops were going at the same time – I'm not quite sure. Mrs. Robinson also made teas. Teas were also made by Mrs. Parker at Tollbar, because in those days a lot of people seemed to walk up from Kirkby and had a cup of tea and of course both of them – people visiting the school used them as well. There's a lot of cottages have disappeared in Casterton – there were cottages behind the vicarage, and of course part of the vicarage was taken down – the vicarage was a much bigger house than it is now.

[Miss P: What about the houses down what we call "Nobs' Row? Some of those are quite old, aren't they?]

Yes, but they're not very old, not compared to most of the houses in Casterton. I think North Heads is the oldest house, and the other houses: Lime Craggs, Woodlands, were built after – I think towards 150 years since – perhaps not quite as long as that. Laneside and the other houses were much later – I knew quite a few of the men who built those houses, anyway, and they told me all about that and then some were built just before the war and some just after, so it's not an old road, because as I've said there was no way through there – it was an outcrop of rock. I believe about where Lime Craggs is there was quite a quarry there – you can see where the stone's been got out – and getting stone out of the quarry would make the way through for the road.

[Farm names]

[Miss P: Are there many buildings in the village that have changed their use over the last 50 years, say?]

Well, there are quite a number of farms – farm buildings that have been changed into private dwelling houses – because, well, originally there were 29 farms in Casterton and I'm going to try and tell you where all the farms were – I don't suppose anybody's really interested! but it's a knowledge I've got. Well of course there was Kirfitt Hall and Chapel House, Norwood Farm and Cragg House Farm, and those two farms have both - all the farm buildings have been made into cottages. There was Town End Farm at High Casterton. Also Caton House was a farm, with the buildings on Wanderers' Lane. Bindloss was a farm, and Gowrey – not the Gowrey we know now – the original Gowrey was in Casterton and it's gone – it was taken down and the new Gowrey built, which of course isn't in Casterton, but that's a farm Casterton lost. There were three farms behind the fell, all separate farms, and then of course there was Old Manor, Bee Nest, Fellgate and Galegarth, and there was Hole House, Langthwaite, Bellgate, GALEGARTH (repeated?) and Broomfield Bank which is now called the White House and isn't a farm at all, of course. In Low Casterton there was Hollybush Farm, Beckside Farm and Town End Farm – these don't exist as farms nowadays. How are we doing? We must be getting somewhere near the 29 by now!

[Marg. P: Right, come on, we've missed a few – we've got to add them in!]

Yes, well, we missed out Elm Tree, which was a farm, and we missed out the hotel, which was the George & Dragon, which was also a farm – and I don't know whatever Oswald will think but we missed out Fellyeat. Now we must be getting somewhere near…

[Marg. P: Getting near – we've got about 24 or 25 there.]

Well, I probably might remember some more, but there were 29.

[Marg. P: But they must have been quite small, some of them?]

They were – they were only about 30 or 40 acres, except I think the big farm in Casterton was Kirfitt Hall and it was a bit bigger than all the rest. All the farms originally had an allotment on Casterton Fell, which made them a bit bigger – they kept sheep up there – but now of course most farms haven't got an allotment on Casterton Fell. It's all changed.

[Marg. P: When you say "an allotment" do you mean they paid rent on a piece of land up there?]

Oh no, it belonged to them, but they were called allotments. The green lanes that are on the fell, to the various allotments, are called occupation roads, and they belonged to the people who had the allotments – they're not council roads at all – any maintaining had to be done by people who had land up there. If a new gate was wanted or anything, the people had to provide them.

I should tell you a bit about the old history of Casterton, because Casterton is obviously an old Roman name, with a name like Casterton, and of course we've got Wanderers' Lane (which local people call Wandales) is an old Roman road. We've got all sorts of history, that you can look up, such as the well at Chapel House; also Kirfitt Hall, and of course the Devil's Bridge, half of which is in Casterton. I always think Kirkby claim it all, but they wouldn't manage without our bit in Casterton, would they? And as well as that there are lots of remains of very ancient things such as the circle at the bottom of the fell might or might not have been a druid's circle – and suchlike - but I think you can find out about all these things without me telling you. I want to tell you bits about things that have never been recorded and I don't think ever will be, and so we'll go on to Casterton as I know it.

[The railway]

Now I'm going to tell you a bit about the railway, because I think the railway was really part of Casterton, although we didn't have a station in Casterton – and there had been a place left to build a railway station just behind the school, between the railway bridge there and Dent Bridge - that's why there's been some railway land till quite recently there. But there was no railway station in Casterton: our railway station was Kirkby Lonsdale, and after all, Kirkby station was a great deal nearer Casterton than it was Kirkby Lonsdale although Kirkby station was in a different parish, a different county, a different diocese! But nevertheless it was our station, and at one time it was a very busy station: there were passenger trains; the passenger trains that went down were at twenty past the hour and the passenger trains that came up were five minutes to the hour. They kept very regular times: you could certainly set your clock by the five minutes to seven at night – it was never late. There were also goods trains – there was a local goods train that stopped at every station; there were express goods trains that went through that didn't stop at any of the stations. I think there would be five passenger trains in each direction during the day. Of course you must remember that most people went by train, even when I was young.

[Marg. P. Where were they going to?]

They were going either to Carlisle in the north or to Bradford or Leeds, or even Manchester/ Liverpool. They all went from Kirkby Station. It was a long way to Oxenholme. You didn't go to Oxenholme; you set off at Kirkby. There were always several men in the village worked on the railway, lived in cottages in Casterton.
One thing I can remember very much about the families of the railway workers was that they either got free railway fares to Lancaster or Kendal or else they got cheap fares, but they always went – most to Lancaster I think - to do their shopping. Shopping was cheaper in Lancaster of course and it didn't cost them anything to go by train. I don't know how many times they went a year but the wives seemed to keep going to do their shopping.

Now I said that several men worked on the railway. There would be at least three plate-layers and probably a porter. They lived in the villages all the way up the line.
I must tell you about the milk that went from Kirkby station. Milk from this area mostly went to Bradford or Leeds and the milk went on the twenty past six train at night and all the milk was taken to the station by milk floats, not perhaps a lot of farmers in Casterton but two anyway - but all the way from round about Cowan Bridge, Leck, Burrow and I think there were about seventeen milk floats at Kirkby Station waiting for the twenty past six train. Then you'd to cross the line; get across before the five minutes to seven train came with the empty kits.

Now odd times the dairies in Leeds or Bradford had missed the train and so the milk kits came on the five to one train at dinner time and the guards used to throw the kits out down the railway banks so that you had milk to put in the evening milk. This was quite some feat, but I don't think it ever failed, I think you got your milk kit ready. You were on very good terms, of course, with the guards on the railway. For many years up till the time I was a small boy the guard on the 7.0 train threw the evening paper out, and he did this at several farms all the way up the railway line. I think the guards were treated at Christmas. I remember there were two guards: they were both called George: "fat George" and "thin George" we called them. You must remember that you were on very good terms with the plate-layers (the railway workers) because most of them haytimed in the evenings. They finished work at 5.0 and worked on the farms. They did several things for the farmers; no doubt the farmers gave them all sorts of things back as well, such as when it was thrashing day they were given some grain for the hens, and they all kept a pig and they were helped out that way. I remember on one occasion – this was the early part of the war – and we had a field by the railway that was a field of oats which was very badly laid and wasn't able to be cut with a self binder (there was no combine harvesters in those days, of course) and it had to be cut by scythe. My father and I went up about 11.0 in the morning to start cutting this with a scythe (it was about 3 or 4 acres was the field) and you couldn't start cutting before then because the dew didn't get off (this would be late September I suppose) and we came down for our dinner about 12.0 and when we went back there were four men off the railway cutting the corn for us – they'd got such a lot cut while we'd been away, it took us all afternoon to tie

it up. But those were the sort of things you'd do. I know that a farmer just across from us used to put his manure out – the manure was put out of the horse and cart in little heaps then, and I don't think really he ever spread any of it himself: one or two men off the railway did it in their dinner hour – they had an hour for dinner and, well, they'd eat their dinner in about 10 minutes so they had a bit of spare time and that was on such good terms that you were on with the railway people.

One dinnertime we were sat having our dinner and just up above from our house the five minutes to one train stopped, and the fireman got out and ran across the fields and he said: "I think your bull's on the railway line!" and so we went, but anyway as it happened it wasn't our bull, it was next door farm's bull, but you couldn't imagine things like that happening on the railways nowadays, and altogether the railways, well, we knew them all so well - they all lived locally and - I must tell you about different times – it's quite a steep slope from Kirkby Station to about our house, and the goods train having just started from Kirkby Station used to have a tremendous job to get up the railway line; it kept slipping when the metals were icy and lots of occasions the fireman and the guard were out putting sand so that the train could get a grip, and I remember on one occasion they started to go and the fireman got on and the guard who had to wait for his guard's van coming in a bit missed getting on so the train had to stop, and the guard running after the train and unfortunately the train stopping the process started all over again, slipping on the metals – but they got it going but this seemed to take them the best part of the afternoon and I don't know where the plate-layers were because they used to help on such occasions – but they weren't around but anyway the guard finally got on his train and off they went. I thought that was rather amusing.

There was a time when there was a big freeze-up – I don't know, I think we were frozen up for about six weeks, and this wasn't really too long before the railway was closed down, and the job that the plate-layers were doing were putting up a new fence with concrete posts the other side of the railway, and that was the job they were supposed to be doing, but the ground was so hard frost they had to chop the ground out with an axe – they only got about three concrete posts in a day, whereas if they had waited till it thawed they could have got a lot of posts up in a day, but that was the job they were supposed to be doing and that's what they were doing.

I remember on one occasion the seven o'clock train got snowed up in the cutting just above us - such a heavy snow – and there were the engine driver, fireman and guard, and only two passengers on the train, had to leave the train and walk across to Casterton Hotel and stay the night there, and about midday next day the army - soldiers - came: quite a lot of them, I don't know, 30 or 40 – no, more than that: 40 or 50 I should think – soldiers came and dug the train out – so those were quite exciting things on the railway line. Oh yes, in the afternoon each two or three soldiers went to each house and had their tea brewed – they had tea – yes, I'm laughing! but I remember there was two young men who came here, you know, in full battle kit – tin helmet, gas mask, all the rest - and they sat and had their food in front of the fire, and it was so warm they went to sleep in front of the fire, having put their heavy equipment – their

packs, and greatcoats – hung them on the back of the chair, and there was such a weight on the back of the chair one of the soldiers went backwards way over the chair, and there was quite a performance; anyway it was a good job because it was time they were back on the job digging the train out. These sort of things you remember…

All the farmers cut - after they had finished hay, between hay and harvest, they cut the railway banks for hay. You paid a very little – well, it wasn't really paying for them, it was an insurance – a railway insurance, so that if you were injured on the railway banks you got compensation, so you paid just a little bit, which was only about – I think about ten pence for about half a mile of railway cutting. And, you see, here again, you'd got to be on very good terms with the foreman on the railway, because it was useful grass you see, and they let it to the farmers they wanted to do, and that was quite a performance because the horse and cart never went on the railway, you see: you'd got to rake all the hay to the side and then fork it over on to the horse and cart. This was quite something, but all the farmers all the way up did – not at Bee Nest, because Bee Nest was through the railway cutting; there was no real grass there - but we were a bit lucky.

Each gang – each lengthmen – had a pride in their length of railway – you used to keep it – try to keep it tidier and better than the other lengths – I'm sure they did the length that was down Ingleton way or the length that was Barbon and Middleton way – there was certainly great rivalry and pride. On our section of line one of the men, Bert Howarth – he was on as plate-layer for several years, and over a period of time he'd collected all white stones to mark each side of the path, and so you had sort of a blue stone in the ballast, and then a white limestone on each side of the path – it was really kept very tidy.

The stationmaster was really a very important person: he was not only in charge of the railway, but he was in charge of his length of line – he was sort of the big boss – you always had to take – well actually, yes – he was so important he had gold braid around his hat. When we were taking milk to Kirkby station you had – as well as labels on - you put labels on the kits to the dairy they were going to do. Actually there were no labels on the kits that came back because each kit had a brass plate on with the name of the farmer and the farm. But as well as labels you had to give your – they were called consignment notes (I remember when I was a little boy I couldn't say consignment – I can hardly say it now! – I used to call them "signamites") and you used to have to take the signamites to the stationmaster. If the stationmaster wasn't there, the booking clerk, Claude Brown, was acting stationmaster. In fact I don't know why, but the porters never took the signamites – it had to go to the stationmaster.

What else can I tell you about the railways? Of course you used to always go to Kirkby Station to get your coal – the coal came by train and then the coal agency were at Kirkby Station, and the Bownasses should have delivered two bags of coke for Casterton church, and I went to Kirkby Station for a load of coal on the Thursday before Good Friday and Alf Bradshaw, the coal merchant, had suddenly remembered he should have sent two bags of

coke to Casterton church, so he asked would I bring it, and of course I brought it on top of a load of coal, came home, unloaded the coal and then took two bags of coke down to Casterton church. Well, I think I would be about 16 years old at this time, and I had to take the horse and cart in one gate of the church and you carried the bags of coke just round the corner to the store hole, and the horse stood very well the first bag I took, but when I was taking the second bag he'd seen a lovely row of crocuses which were growing all along the side of the church path and when I came back round the corner imagine to my horror he'd nearly eaten the lot! I felt awful about that.

[The roads]

Well, I think that's enough about the railways: I'll now tell you about the roads in Casterton. The roads in Casterton have altered a tremendous lot in my lifetime. I can remember when the only road that was tarmac was the main road from the Devil's Bridge to the Barbon boundary, and the approaches to the Devil's Bridge. Of course, Stanley Bridge wasn't built, and so all the roads went to the Devil's Bridge. None of the roads – well, they were just stone, and they were patched up and they'd originally been made by what we called sammel. Now, sammel is a real Westmorland word and is used for a lot of things, and sammel means rough, such as, well, if you were ploughing and it was going to rain and you hadn't time to harrow it twice when you'd been sowing corn, you harrowed it just once; you just sammelled it, and just left it in a rough condition - and sammel was also used – you'd bring your own oats, and you went to the mill, and for cattle food you got it back as sammelgrund, and sammelgrund meant sammel: rough; and grund of course was grind, and so we use the word sammel – we used to do - a good lot, and it just meant rough.

Now then, the roads were made – they were patched up – and of course you must remember that the middle of all the roads in Casterton were just green – grass grew in the middle of the road, and the tracks where the carts went – and later the cars went – were a stone put into the clay, really, that was sammel - and they were sammelled – they were just left in a rough condition, although I think the men did sort of bang it down with a posser sort of a thing when it was mended, and the sammel came from a quarry at the bottom of Casterton Fell, and the stones, well the road men brought the stone up in their spare time. All the farmers picked the stones off the ploughing fields, and tipped it at convenient points, and then the roadmen broke it up with a hammer, and this stone was used to patch up …. (?) roads had been made this way.

The middle of the road was kept pretty grassy and loose because it was better for the horses when they sort of tarred their roads – well, I remember Wanderers Lane which was tarred pretty soon, that was from Kirkby Station down on Wanderers Lane ("Wandales" as we call it), down Flosh and on to the main road – that was tarred pretty soon – and it was all right to begin with but it soon got (now I'm going to use another Westmorland word here) it soon got very "slape" (slippery – "slape" means slippery) it was a bit what we called "snod" (another Westmorland word) and the horses had to have sharps in their feet because they used to slip -

they used to have three sharps in each shoe and a blunt – they had to have a blunt for the inside because occasionally they damaged their feet with the inside sharp, so to keep the horseshoe level you had three sharps and a blunt. This was because the roads got slippery after they had been tarred – but most of the lanes it wasn't necessary because the middle of the roads grew grass.

Now I've told you that the men in their spare time chopped up the stones that the farmers had carted off after ploughing – the council of course got this free – the farmers were pleased to get rid of the stones - and the road men chopped them up – I think they chopped them into two sizes – the easy stones were chopped smaller – and the stones that were a bit hard and not so good to break were left a bit bigger and a hole in the road they put the bigger stones in and then they put the clay and then the smaller stones on top. Of course this was all done with a horse and cart: there were no council lorries in those days – the council used to hire horse and cart and man from the farmers – different farmers supplied them as they wanted them – and as I've said before that is known as they were "sammelled" – the roads were sammelled.

Now, there were no passing places on any of the roads as there are now: well, there were no need for passing places because horses and traps or carts were quite narrow and you could pass in most places, and in those days the roads were well spaded out each side – most of the roads came right up to the walls, not like they are nowadays. There was a regular - each village had a regular road man but for big jobs like repairing the roads and that there were other road men came and helped. Well all the lanes had grass in the middle of the lanes – I remember Colliers Lane in particular. John Collinson who farmed at Town End: after he'd finished hay he used to let his cows out on to the road and Mrs. Collinson used to sit at the top of Colliers Lane doing her knitting and John Collinson sat at the bottom of the Colliers Lane reading his newspaper, the Westmorland Gazette, so that the cows could graze Colliers Lane. It was a really grassy lane, not like we know it nowadays.

Now then, what else can I tell you about the roads?
Every village had a road man – he spent all his time keeping the roads very tidy – and he did keep them very tidy, just like the railway, and there was quite a bit of competition between, say Barbon and Casterton, each man trying to keep his road just a bit tidier than the other He worked on all the lanes except the main road and there was a different man kept the main road in order. Each village had these men living in the village and - what can I say - he was very proud – Saturday mornings he swept up round by the church and the school – each Saturday morning - and the sweeping up was quite a job because you must remember all the transport was horses and there was a lot of horse dirt to clean up and he really kept it very tidy.

[Names of the lanes]

Now, I don't know whether I ought to tell you the names of some of the lanes. Well, starting at the north of the parish there was Flosh. Flosh went down from the old Roman road on to the main road. Next, coming further down we came to Greenber, which came from the Dents

bridge down to the main road, and then the next one coming past the school was called Marthwaite (thanks for that help!) and then coming further on this way of course the main lane from Low Casterton to High Casterton, well, I don't know that it ever had a name, except that people in Low Casterton called it the High Casterton Lane and the people in High Casterton called it the Low Casterton Lane. Other than that I don't know any name it had. And now we had - going up the fell of course – from after – I think I've mentioned Colliers Lane, well joining on going up towards the fell was Bee Nest Hill and then after the crossroads was the Fell Road. Coming along the end of the Casterton Lane was Well Lane, which was also (went on to Wandales) – of course all these old lanes went on to the Roman road – that of course must have been the first road. The road down from here to Kirkby Lonsdale was Chapel House Lane and the lane in between Colliers Lane and Chapel House Lane was Laitha Lane. I think perhaps I've mentioned most of the lanes. The one from the main road down to Casterton wood was Mill Gill. Of course that was called Mill Gill as there used to be the mill down there. Actually there were several cottages down there. Just had my brother today and he reminded me there were six cottages which no longer exist down Mill Gill.

Now then more about the roads – I've mentioned the passing places – what else can I tell you about the roads? After they'd finished using sammel – making it a rough road – of course they started with tar. Now, there was a tar barrel put off, and the road men had a little tar boiler, and it was quite a performance because they used to put a red flag at the end of the lane – each end of the lane, and then they boiled up the tar, and one man put the tar on the road – he had it in a bucket and tipped it out of the bucket into a watering can, and then spread it on the road, and the other chap with the wheelbarrow had the chippings which he sprinkled on. I always thought it was quite an amusement because they put the red flags up and blocked the lanes – it was a very important job, was patching the roads – and they did that until most of the roads – they got more or less all the tracks where the wheels went became tarred, and it remained like that until well, I think, after the war, or perhaps the Casterton Lane might have been done before the war – yes, I think it was – but all the other lanes weren't tarred till after the war. Now I think that's the end of the roads.

[The Underley catamaran, and lime kilns]

I think after talking about the roads I ought to mention down Casterton Wood was a catamaran. Now this was used because down Casterton Wood was Underley wild gardens, and the people from the house – and of course the gardeners as well – used to come across on the boat instead of going right round by the Devils Bridge – and I believe the catamaran was even older than Underley Bridge, which is built on the Casterton/Barbon boundary isn't it, somewhere there. I can remember in my days there was at Underley Hall they had a big garden party – it was a tremendous affair, they used to have the prize-winning brass band played in the afternoon and people from Casterton went across on the catamaran to the garden parties – these were big occasions. Down Casterton Wood (which of course was all Underley property) there was the last of the lime kilns, which would be used, well, till perhaps about the

1920's, I think, because a lot of lime used to be used in those days for building, and also the farmers used a lot of lime on the land – this was before the bagged fertiliser – and, talking about Casterton Wood – I forgot to mention that a lot of lime was used for whitewashing – this was before whitening and paints and things were used for decorating. All the farmhouses used whitewash and all the farm buildings were whitewashed, and I said that that was the last lime kiln that was in Casterton, although there were at least three other ones: one at the bottom of Langthwaite road end and one down this end of Casterton and I think – oh yes, there was one behind Bee Nest farm – this was because such a lot of lime was used.

Thinking of Casterton Wood I remember being taken down there when I was a very little boy to see pine martens. Now pine martens – they're not a bird as some people think they are – they're a little animal, rather like a squirrel – I don't think there are any in England now – some in parts of Scotland I believe – but it was quite an occasion to see a pine marten.

[People]

I think I mentioned that almost everybody who lived in the village worked in the village, and I'm going to tell you a little bit about some of the people I remember. Nearly all the people kept a pig, and hens; they all grew vegetables, had gardens, and I think I'll mention at this time that quite a lot of the working people had a row of potatoes in different farmers' fields. The people used to come and help to set the potatoes helped to get the potatoes up in the back end, and for doing that they were allowed to grow a row of potatoes in the fields – you can't imagine anything happening like that nowadays. Of course in those days all farms ploughed and so everybody had a potato and grew perhaps half an acre or an acre of potatoes and so for the help they got with the setting them various people were allowed to grow a row of potatoes.

I think I ought to tell you about some of the characters I remember in Casterton, and really there were quite a lot of characters. I remember especially John Collinson that I've mentioned before because when I was a small boy he used to come along here and he used to tell me all sorts of stories as things used to be. This was when I was about – I don't know – 7 or 8, and really to tell you the truth I wasn't so interested – well, you're not at that age, are you? I thought he was a bit of a funny old stick – but I wish I'd listened to him a bit more, because – in fact some of this information I'm telling you now I got from John Collinson, as well as from my grandfather – but anyway, I'm going to tell you a few stories – I think they're funny stories.

The Blamires used to live at the Low Lodge and they were, well they were market gardeners, although I think one of the Blamires had served his time to be a joiner – probably serving his time at Brierleys in Kirkby – but of that I'm not sure - but as I remember them they were both gardeners, and they used to have a handcart – one pulled in front and one pushed behind – and they had a garden up here in High Casterton – this was a garden near Cragg House – in fact Duncan Hamlett has the piece of land now – and they used to grow their rougher sort of

vegetables up here, you know – potatoes and cabbage and things – and they used to really go up from Tollbar and on Laitha Lane up to the garden up here – but on this particular occasion (perhaps it was muddy down Laitha Lane – I don't know) they came round past our house and our farm lad was picking damsons at the bottom of our garden – we used to have quite a lot of damson trees – well, six or seven anyway then – and picking damsons was quite a performance – and I was quite a small boy holding the ladder at the bottom – and the two Mr. Blamires came along (I think they were Jim and Joe). None of them – neither Jim, Joe or sister – had been married – and they stood - I remember them standing for quite a while and watching Ernest who was up the ladder picking damsons into a bucket - of course he had his bucket in one hand and he was picking damsons with the other hand - and one of the Mr. Blamires (I think it was Joe Blamire) said: "What tha wants is a geb on thi clem; then tha can po' wi' both naves". That takes a bit of explaining! Well, they were very – well, they spoke with a Westmorland dialect, and I remember after they'd gone Ernest wanted to know what they'd said. Well, I think I'm going to tell you. They said "What tha wants is a geb" – well, a geb is a hook, and a clem is a ladder – and so what they wanted was a hook on his ladder, so that he could (the po' of course is pull) pull the damsons with both hands – not both naves. I remember that always because, well, every word in the sentence – it worried Ernest no end and I remember my father had to explain what it meant. And after they'd said it, that was the last words ever spoken - they just picked up their cart and off they went – wonderful characters…

I remember once going up - we'd been up Casterton Fell – it was a spring time of year and we'd taken the hoggs back on to the fell (the hoggs – young sheep – using these words I'll have to explain them a bit) and William Taylor, who was farming at Bee Nest, was laying a hedge up Bee Nest hill – it's on quite a steep bank, and every time he was trying to chop up the hedge he kept sliding down – and I remember him saying to my father "Thee just put thi' geb to my backside and then I can nick this hezzel". Well, that takes a bit of explaining. That was – you see he kept slipping down the bank, and he just wanted a bit of support with my father's walking stick so that he could lay the hazel (hezzel's the hazel, of course) and nick of course is chop it. These are things you remember.

I think I told you that every – yes, perhaps that's enough about that.

Of course way back in these days there was a lot of practical jokes played on people – I mean this was part of their entertainment in life. I remember one local farmer who used to go around his stock with a pony and trap, and he tied his horse to the gate, and two farm lads, seeing it there, took the horse out of the trap and put it the other side of the gate and then yocked (yoked) it back into the trap, and when the farmer came back there he was stood scratching his head and wondering how Blossom had got into such a state, and lots of practical jokes like that were played.

[Thrashing]

There were lots of men in the village who worked – well I would say were casual workers who worked at different farms at different times such as hedging and walling, and ditching, and of course all these men went out to do harvest /haytime thrashing. Thrashing was really quite a performance. Farmers in Casterton always done a bit of farming – a bit of well – they did a lot of farming – I didn't mean that ! they'd always done a bit of ploughing – so thrashing had been going on for a long time – and in those days of course it was a thrashing engine – a steam engine – not thrashing with a tractor like it eventually became – and it was a big job, was thrashing – and all farmers used to help one another – you went round to perhaps, oh , I don't know, a dozen farms – because you needed well into the teens of men to do a thrashing – there was the pitching of the sheaves, and feeding the thrasher, which was an important job; cutting the bands on the sheaves, carting the throw-away, and straw in the beginning was loose and so it had to be forked by hand – you had to have about three men forking the straw out of the way and then there were the corn bags – well you always had - it always seemed to be an oldish man who looked after the corn bags, and he perhaps had a couple of young men to carry the bags – because they filled the bags, oh there would be 10 or 12 stone in each bag – they weren't hundredweight bags – you tried to get as much corn in a bag as you could. And then of course after that along came the war, and all farmers had to produce food, and so thrashing became an even more important business. Each farm had to do more ploughing – in fact quite a lot – I think a small farm like ours had up to 20 or 25 acres of ploughed land at the height of wartime – and so, well you had two days' thrashing in those days – you had one thrashing day in October – because everybody was wanting the thrashing machine and so each farm had one day and then if they had more than one day - in fact the bigger farms had about three days' thrashing, and that was done perhaps in January. I think this was some sort of a Government rule that everybody got a chance of the thrasher early on, because they were wanting the grain. Now these men I've mentioned about were engaged by the farmers to go to different farms thrashing. Nobody of course was paid because you helped each other, and they were really big occasions – I think the men used to arrive about 9.0 in the morning and some of them had their drinking – their drinking was, what shall we say? Lunch: elevenses – which was about 9.0 before they started and sometimes you perhaps did half an hour/an hour's work before. Then dinner – you all marched into the farmhouse for dinner. The drinking in the morning and tea in the afternoon was taken out to the men, but dinner of course everybody came in – and there might be about, oh, it would be up to about 20 men, and they were all fed, and I think they were fed exceedingly well: I think every farmer tried to do it better than the last – big occasions, anyway – but I think happy times.

There's a bit more I ought to tell you about the thrashing, I think. Every man knew what his job was going to be – he did the same job at each farm for as long as the thrashing lasted – ten days or so. I remember on one occasion a new farmer had come into the village, and when the men arrived in the morning he started to give them their jobs – well, of course that wasn't accepted at all, but each man went to the job he was told to do, but within a very little time all the men had swapped on to their own jobs, and I think that was - the farmer soon realised that it wasn't his job to tell each person what to do.

During the war, when all food was rationed, farmers got special rations for harvest and for thrashing: you got tea, sugar, butter, cheese, and a meat ration, which was very useful – well you couldn't feed all the men without, really. I was just going to say that the thrashers, each man – have I said about the jobs? – well, each man had their special jobs – these jobs were, well, pitching sheaves and carrying the corn bags. Carrying the corn bags was quite a hard job because there were 10 or 12 stone they put in each bag and all the grain areas were up steps; it was a strong young man's job.

[Sports]

Now, I think that's enough about the thrashing. I'm now going on to tell you a little bit about the sport and recreations in the village.

Now when I was a very small boy the sheepdog trials – the local sheepdog trials – were held at Casterton – this is a long time before they moved to Barbon. They were held in a field on Wanderer's Lane – the Mires?? it's called. John Metcalfe farms it nowadays.
And as well as the sheepdog trials there were a couple of hound trails up Casterton Fell. Over the years Casterton had a rifle club, and the rifle club existed for a few years and then finished, and then was begun again and then over the years it's been going on and off. The rifle range was down Casterton Wood. Casterton has also had a cricket team at one time; also a football team (that's a soccer team), and as well as this Casterton has always supplied quite a lot of players of Kirkby's cricket team, football team and rugby team. And then as well as that sporting sort of affairs there was a lot of social activities in the village: dances, whist drives, concerts and entertainments – well really of all sorts – latterly held in the village hall, which was then the church room – but earlier in the public hall as well.

[Whist drives]

I'm going to recall one big – well, then we (??) used to have big Christmas whist drives every year, but on one particular occasion I remember - I don't know how many whist players there were, how many tables there were – but the village hall was full, Casterton Village School was full, and also Croft House, so there were an awful lot people playing whist on that night. They were playing for very good prizes: turkeys, bottles of whisky – and a tremendous lot of people came from all over - it was quite a performance changing tables, say, from the village school to the church room and back to Croft House. Tom Logan was at Croft House at that time.

Now there were always a lot of bus trips – of course there was the village school trip to Morecambe every year; the village school also had a Christmas party; there were parties at the church room, the Women's Institute children's party and also a party which was for guests. Each member of the Women's Institute had tickets to invite two guests, and they were very sought after, were these invitation tickets, because it really was a good do – they

had a really good feed and dancing and games. It was very popular. There was all sorts of activities going on, such as different organisations doing different things: there was a sale of work, and an evening's entertainment – money for the village school (the school managers organised that) and several people got things up for, oh, Doctor Barnardo's – all sorts of organisations - Save the Children – goodness knows what – anybody that had a pet favour (??) got up a whist drive too – often a whist drive and dance – and at all these dos food was always provided, and there was no shortage of food – I don't think much food was bought at all - different people brought different things. I remember during wartime we had a good lot of fish paste, because things got a bit scarce – but anyway there was food provided always and in plenteous supply.

[Buses and taxis]

Now then a little bit about the buses. The buses that came through Casterton – I don't know whether I've told you this or not – but it was a penny – did I tell you this or not? Now from Kirkby to Tollbar was a penny, but from Kirkby to Casterton Church was twopence, and I know that quite a few people used to get out at Tollbar and walk up to the Church to save a penny, because a penny was a penny in those days. There was always the taxis – Bownasses at Hollybush had taxis and later Anne Hird. They did a lot of work for Casterton School, of course, but ordinary village people could have taxis.

[Celebrations]

Now then, celebrations. Now I've had two Coronations, two Jubilees and the Victory Celebration, and these were celebrated by everybody in the village, I should think. There was always a bonfire on Brownthwaite and sports which were always on the school field, and tea was provided for everybody and people who couldn't get out tea was sent to them, and well, I remember one time there was always fancy dress parades, and a maypole, sports for children and sports for adults, and then in the evening there was a do at the church room - a barbecue as well perhaps, and at the last – the Queen's Jubilee – I think almost, well – there'd never been such a turnout – I think very nearly everybody in the village turned out in the evening to the social.

Now then, I'm going to go on to, well, things we did. The Vale of Lune Point to Point races were held at Middleton – that was long before they were at Whittington – and I remember going down to Tollbar to count the cars that went past, and on one occasion one year there were 240 cars went past. Now, fancy 240 cars going through Casterton when there were only about 4 or 5 people in Casterton had cars: that was a really big occasion.

[Farm workers]

Now then, a little bit back – I think I mentioned that almost everybody who lived in Casterton worked in Casterton. Now, as well as this there were a lot of farm workers and maids on

farms – a lot of them seemed to come from Barrow – I think times in Barrow weren't very good – and so they came, and these lads came out at 14 and they were hired for six months – paid for six months' work: a week's holiday from Whitsuntide to Martinmas – and then if they were re-engaged they stayed for the next six months – but there was often quite a shuffle around – but all these men - and maids - were very loyal to the people they worked for – I mean quite a rivalry between one farm and another. I think they were paid (the boys were paid) about £10 for the half year, and when you got a bit older, and some of the better ones would get £12 – of course they were fed and looked after all the time.

Then haytime. Well, a couple of Irishmen came over from Ireland for the hay – most of them came from - is it Donegal? (It's that bit of Southern Ireland that's further north than Northern Ireland – I <u>think</u> it's Donegal anyway.) Anyway they used to come over to Heysham Harbour and then by train to Bentham, and the hiring was at Bentham on the third Wednesday in June, and the farmers used to go to Bentham to hire the men for a month's haytime - and the very best of the Irishmen they could get ten pounds for the month, and I've even heard of people getting £12 – they were much better paid than the ordinary farm workers, but they worked all hours of day and night – they were very good workers. Of course they were all Catholics and didn't work on Sunday: they either went to mass on Sunday or they went to the pub – no work was done on Sundays, but nevertheless they were good men.

My father had an Irishman for a few years – his name was Paddy Monderrick (??) – and we had him for perhaps three or four years. About Maytime of the year his daughter used to write to my father to ask if they needed her father for the hay – it was always an amusing sort of letter – she wrote on behalf of her father – of course he would not be able to read or write – and you had to reply back if he was not needed to help with the hay – and it was such a very simple letter, and we had him for two or three years, and the idea was that if he was coming here we just met him at Bentham, and he wouldn't try to be hired by any other farmer, you see. Quite a number of the farms round about had the same Irishman for a number of years. He used to arrive at Heysham and then come by train to Bentham, and they all carried a paper – they had their clothes in a paper parcel, with a pair of boots tied round their neck. Longer since, they used to bring their own scythes – but I can never remember them bringing their scythes… You see they were very good workers (??) with scythes – I mean that was how they cut the grass in Ireland. They could do anything in the hayfield, but they were not really so keen on milking cows, because they were only used to milking one or two cows, and it was a bit too big a job for them – they'd rather haytime all the time. When they'd done the hay month they would never stop longer, although some people tried to keep them another week or so if the hay hadn't been finished.

But they always moved further up, to Hawes and that area and got another month's haytiming in. They always wanted to go in a crowd – they didn't want to be one left - because they all worked in the same district. After being a month in the Dales they went into Yorkshire area and did a month's harvesting, and after the harvesting they did a month's potato picking, and

then went back to Ireland just before Christmas – so they were here for at least four months – and you really got to know the Irishmen.

I'm sure that's enough about the Irishmen!

[Wartime]

I think I must tell you a bit about Casterton in wartime. Well, of course, in the Second World War quite a number of men and women went into the services. Men went from the village into the army, navy and air force, and young women went into the ATS or the WAAFs. Of course a larger number of men had gone from Casterton in the First World War but I really don't know much about that, but there were a good number of people from the village served in the First World War. What I can really tell you about is Casterton village in wartime. Well, of course we had ARP wardens, special constables, firefighters and then later the Local Defence Volunteers were formed: the Local Defence Volunteers later became the Home Guard. My father was a firefighter with two other men in the village, and neither my father nor one of the other men – dare climb a ladder – so I think it was pretty lucky that we didn't have a fire during the war. We have had quite considerable farm fires at other times, which I'll tell you about just a little bit later.

I'm going to tell you: there's a weathervane on Casterton Church, and when it was taken down recently the churchwarden noticed that there were bullet holes through the weathervane, and it reminded me that I knew how they got there: they were put there by a much too enthusiastic Local Defence Volunteer who did a bit of target practice – I think he was a pretty good shot really because he had five rounds of ammunition and he hit the target three times, so that wasn't bad going – but no names mentioned!

Anyway Casterton during wartime had a great number of evacuees came into the village: children from Newcastle and from South Shields and from Barrow; they were official evacuees, and then there were all sorts of private evacuees - families came from other parts - from Liverpool, Manchester, Norwich – in fact anywhere that had a blitz several people seemed to come out. Now Casterton Girls' School had a great number of scholars because of the war, and also the village school – well, I think the child population of Casterton must have more than doubled during wartime. They gradually seemed to move away as time went on, but nevertheless there are a few evacuees who still stayed in the district. During the war we also had Land Army girls working on the farm (in fact most farms had a Land Army girl – some more than one). The School also had Land Army girls worked in the gardens, and even some of these are still around – some of them of course married local boys. We didn't have actually any enemy action in Casterton village – we had planes down just over the Casterton/ Barbon border (I think it was a Wellington bomber crashed there) and there were several crashes on the fells – in fact all the planes that crashed were British – I don't know however we managed to win the war, but anyway, they did.

Now that's Casterton in wartime.

I think I told you when I was talking about the church that the church was never blacked out - the evening services were in mid-afternoon – I think I told you that.

[Footpaths]

Now then I think perhaps I ought to go on now to footpaths – footpaths and rights of way. Well, in Casterton there are many footpaths, but I think there are only three that were really official footpaths: all the other footpaths were just for local convenience from one farm to another, or from one man's field to a field that he had the other side of the village, and instead of going round by the road he took a short cut. Now most farmers paid their neighbour or another farmer a right to use these footpaths, and it always seemed as if it was a shilling a year – everybody seemed to pay each other a shilling a year for the use of footpaths. Also the rights of way on the fell, on the occupation roads – there you paid a shilling a year to the Parish Council; the Clerk of the Parish Council used to come around each year to collect the shillings. This money was usually spent on buying a gate, because there were gates at the end of all the occupation roads in those days. Now I'm afraid nobody pays a shilling so you never get a new gate. I think that's a job that the Parish Council – perhaps they're glad they don't have to do it any more! – but it seemed to be one of the most important things that the Parish Council did. The footpaths: well, the footpaths were used for people to go from one farm to another, or to the well in the fields. They were never footpaths for the general public: they were just for local people to use. Nowadays people come from all over, from… Knutsford in Cheshire and… walk the footpaths, and some of them of course aren't real footpaths at all. There <u>are</u> the official ones – but they see them on the maps and they've made them all official now. That's about all I have to say about the footpaths.

[Farm fires]

Well, in my lifetime in Casterton we've had quite a number of fires, but three major farm fires I remember. Many years since Kirfitt Hall was burnt down; the farm buildings were completely burned down in the fire – the buildings that exist there are comparatively new. When they were put up they were very modern – all the farmers from round about went to see such modern buildings – but that's a long time since. Then we had a big fire at Chapel House; this was caused by the thrashing engine. I was actually at this thrashing, and a spark from the engine lit the straw and although there were twenty men there with buckets of water they could no way put the fire out – and all their harvest crop was burnt – the Dutch barns and several buildings. So that was a massive fire. That was very early in wartime – I remember everybody thinking that German aeroplanes would use it as a sort of a signal and bomb Kirkby or something! – and then later – not many years since in fact – Ottie Benson had a barn fire and his buildings were burnt down – and those were three big farm fires. As well as that we've had small farm fires – Alec Gott at Fellgate had a fire, but I don't think there was much structural damage there so I don't count that as a big fire. I don't know that any houses

in Casterton have had fires, at least not big ones (they might have had a chimney on fire or something) but there always seemed to be farm fires.

[Marg. P.] Now there's something that's been intriguing me for a long time. When you look at the gravestones in Casterton Church there are a number of families where it says "of Liverpool" and in this area there seem to be a lot of people who have got links with Liverpool, and I can't understand this connection, between Liverpool and this district. Can you explain?

[Billy Makinson] Yes, well I think that is because a lot of people from this area went to Liverpool and had milk houses in Liverpool, because Liverpool was one of the towns in the north that didn't import milk from the country: the cows were kept inside in Liverpool, and quite a number of people did go not just from Casterton but from the villages round about, and then they came back either retired or to have farms in Casterton and when they died came back into the churchyard. That is the reason, I think.

There are one or two mistakes I've made: I think perhaps I now ought to put them right. The first vicar I remember was not Canon Burton but was Dr. Wateley (??) and so the story about me thinking that he was wearing a sheet was not Canon Burton but Dr. Wateley (?).
And the other mistake is that when I was describing the tramp at the bottom of the church I was saying it was the communion service and of course it was not the communion service; it was the confirmation service.

[Village shop]

I think I ought to tell you a bit about the village shop. Mrs. Robinson kept the village shop, and the village shop was what you now call Church Cottages. There were three houses down that lane originally and the shop was in the first one, and Mrs. Robinson had been a war widow and she took the shop after the war, and she was there for many years, and she sold, well, almost everything: groceries and sweets – all sorts of things. You could get anything at that shop. What you couldn't get she got – that was it. And I'm going to tell you that down the shop lane (I'm calling it the shop lane) I can remember when there was an open beck ran down the shop lane. There was a bridge: the water came somehow from the school ground – out of the school ground and under the road at the top of the shop lane and then ran as an open beck down the shop lane and then went underground again just above the vicarage (which of course isn't the vicarage now, but you know which was the vicarage) and then went underground and under the main road and into Casterton Beck. I don't think it was still an open beck when I started school, but before I started school it was, and Mrs. Robinson looked after all the children who went to school. Occasionally a child had a penny to spend. Well of course you never spent a penny all at once: you spent a halfpenny in the morning or a halfpenny in the afternoon, or perhaps a halfpenny one day and a halfpenny the next day. The favourite things were aniseed balls or mint balls, and these were not – they didn't seem to be weighed: they were counted out – you got – I don't know – ten aniseed balls for a halfpenny, or something – and Mrs. Robinson's patience, well, it was tremendous – and she

also made teas, and some people from the school used the tearooms, which were a wooden building behind the existing shop. Of course Mrs. Robinson sold paraffin: there were three people in the village sold paraffin, because such a lot of paraffin was used. They sold paraffin at the petrol pumps, and at the village shop and at Newlands in High Casterton. I'll tell you that one time when I was a small boy a local chappie who worked on farms (he mostly did hedging, walling and suchlike) and he called at Casterton shop to buy a new pipe (he smoked a clay pipe; always smoked clay pipes) and he came to get a pipe, and Mrs. Robinson said it was three-ha'pence (a penny halfpenny) and he said "Oh, no", he said "I'm not paying that for one – I can get them for a penny at Kirkby", so he got on his bike and biked to Kirkby to save a halfpenny! Of course a halfpenny was a halfpenny in those days, I suppose – but a lot of people were rather amused about him doing this.

I was going to say that in those days everybody in Casterton knew everybody; not like I'm afraid it is now when we don't know a lot of people who are living in Casterton – but in those days – well, everybody worked in Casterton and everybody was important to the village.

A bit more about the shops. As well as the village shop Mrs. Parker at Tollbar sold sweets and cigarettes and made teas – you had tea in the front room on wet days or out in the garden on fine days. I think as well as the people walking out from Kirkby I think some parents had girls out at the weekend from the school and so they had tea either at the Casterton shop or Tollbar – it would be probably a bit cheaper than it was at the Pheasant (which was the George and Dragon then). I don't know, but anyway as well as these shops that I've mentioned the tradesmen from Kirkby: butchers, fishman, bakers, came round Casterton, first of all with horses and carts and then later with motor vans, and really you didn't have to go so far away in those days to buy any of the essential foods.

[Tradesmen]

I must tell you a bit more about the tradesmen who came round selling things: the drapers, first of all from Kirkby and then drapers from Lancaster – they used to come round with samples and you used to order clothes and then in a week or two they delivered them. You could buy all this stuff without going very far away. There were two or three tailors in Kirkby made suits: costumes for ladies and suits for men, and I think I ought to say that as soon as the farm boys had got a bit established they went to a tailor's to be measured for a new suit, and then the suit was paid for perhaps over about twelve months or something (I think I've said before that HP was nothing new - it was going 50-60 years ago) and I'm just going to tell you about a muffin man who came from Kendal – he came with his muffins and crimpers (cream puffs?crumpets?) – he came on the bus from Kendal and occasionally sold them all up round Kirkby – he came each Thursday – but when he hadn't sold them up he did a quick tour round Casterton and sold the remaining muffins/crimpers that he hadn't sold, but you could never depend on him because if he'd had good trade in Kirkby he didn't even come round Casterton.

[Bicycles]

I think I ought to tell you that when I was a youngish boy almost everybody in the village used to ride bicycles – all the farm boys certainly, the maids and a lot of people – well, young and old seemed to ride bicycles – some people went to church on bicycles, and everybody went to the village shop – well, not everybody but a lot of people went to the village shop on bicycles. The village shop, I might add, was quite a meeting place for people – you always met somebody there, because it was one of the centres of the village. Mrs. Robinson at the shop - I keep going back to Mrs. Robinson, because she was really part of my young life - and she took over the Post Office from Mrs. Hardacre when Mrs. Hardacre gave over, so the shop as well as the village shop was the Post Office so there were always a lot of people going there and was really quite a meeting place.

Now, a bit about bicycles I was talking about – well, everybody had bicycles as soon as you could – well, you had a secondhand bicycle to begin with, which you could get for just a few shillings – but the height of people's ambition was to buy a new bicycle, and you could buy a new bicycle – the price was £3.19s.6d – I can remember that because that's what my first bicycle cost – and of course you saved up to buy the bicycle or you bought it on HP – you paid over perhaps twelve months for the bicycle – and everybody had a pride in the bicycles – you looked after them and cleaned them – and if you had a good new bicycle, well, you really were somebody! I remember I got my first light - front light - for the bicycle – went to Lancaster actually for it – and it cost – the lamp cost 7d, the battery 5d and the bulb a penny… No, I've told you wrong – nothing in Woolworths was over sixpence – I think the bike lamp must have just cost sixpence . Anyway, you bought them separately and then you fixed them up. You also in those days had just a reflector, but just before the war you had to have a rear light, and so that was an expense as well – I think the rear light cost about fourpence.

[Tramps]

I'm going to tell you about the tramps – we used to have a lot of tramps when I was a young boy. We came across them a lot, of course, on farms because they stayed the night in different farms – barns… They always asked if they could stay – I don't think any tramps came without asking. They always came to the farmhouse, asked if they could stay and gave you their matches – their box of matches, because that was a sort of an unwritten rule – you didn't take matches into a barn. Now there were all classes of tramps – from tramps who would, well, clean the shippons out for you, so they could have their breakfast, or perhaps chop a bit of wood and suchlike, or there were tramps who did absolutely nothing, tramps who weren't capable of doing anything. Now these tramps – we would perhaps have the same chaps come for years and years – maybe three or four times during a winter – and there seemed to be a lot of them. Some of them were very intelligent people: I remember Old Bert (we called him "Old Bert") who used to do the football pools, and he used to want the Sunday paper on a Sunday morning so that he could check his football pool. I never knew where he posted his coupons – or if he even sent coupons in – but he always checked his football pool.

What address he put I don't know. He came for years and years. Then there was another chap came – we called him Old Bert – they were all Old Berts or Old Jocks or something! Perhaps some of them weren't very old, but we children thought they were very old, and he used to sing himself to sleep in the barn – I remember going to hear him. Most of them never stayed more than one night unless the weather was very bad – if it was snowed up or something we had them for a bit longer. They were what I would say very loyal sort of people – they knew where to go - which farms to go to. We also had people that were a bit better than tramps. I remember in Casterton we had a chap they called "Casterton Jack" (I think his name was Robinson) and he worked sometimes - sometimes he didn't work – but he always lived in barns, and he got all the dirty jobs that nobody wanted to do – in those days the toilets were a lot of them were earth closets and all the cottages had to have their earth closets cleaned out every so often, and of course Casterton Jack was the man who did this, and they used to scale manure in the fields – but they only worked sort of when they wanted to do (I think perhaps they spent a bit too much on drink anyway) so there were various kinds of tramps, and we knew a lot of them.

Well I think that's about my story of Casterton. I've told you a lot of things I've known about the village - I've not mentioned the School much, although Casterton village and School are very much joined together in many ways, but I think a lot of people have written and know about the workings of the School – the history of the School – and I've really stuck to the village because, well, the village is what I know most about, and I don't think a lot of the things I've mentioned have been recorded. I've known some wonderful people over the years who've lived in Casterton: not all were born in Casterton, but after living in Casterton for a few years they became part of Casterton, and I'm very proud to be a Castonian.

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