

## HENRY COX AND THE DOCTOR

WRM It was when you were eleven years old, was it?

HC Me mother... I were ready for work, an' me mother would 'ave me start at t'High Mill. She worked at High Mill as a cotton winder. And we 'ad to pass an examination before we could go. Well, I was at Giggleswick National School an' the Headmaster was Mr Stephen Parker and he belonged to Stainforth, he come from Stainforth. And there were no examinations at that time at Giggleswick and Settle, and there were an examination at Stainforth. So Stephen Parker took me and another boy to Stainforth, we set off at seven o'clock in t'morning, and we went to Stainforth an' were there all day. We stopped wi' his mother for our dinners - got them free, of course - and he came back to Giggleswick. And we stopped there all day, going through this examination, an' then word come through that we'd passed so we could go to work half time.

WRM What sort of an examination was it?

HC Just an ordinary National School, Standard 3 sort of, an' we had to pass a doctor then. Before we could go to work at eleven year old we 'ad to pass a doctor. An' we got word we had to go to Shed Mill one Saturday morning, an' me mother said, 'Now, I'm going to bath you and see you get clean, an' put yer Sunday clothes on to meet t'doctor.' I've told this to Dr Hislop an' one or two more but they laughed, they wouldn't believe it. But when we went to this place, Shed Mill on Saturday morning, there were about a dozen of us altogether from different schools who 'ad to pass the doctor. And they called out, 'Cox!' An' the nurse there brought me in out of another room and I had to walk in. And when I walked into this room there were

old Dr Hislop there, the old doctor, the old Victorian doctor, an' he just looked over his glasses like this : 'What's your name?' 'Henry Cox,' I said. 'What's your name?' I said, 'Henry Cox.' He said, 'I'll ask you a third time, what's your name?' I said, 'Oh!' I said. 'Ooh, I forgot. Henry Cox, sir.' I 'adn't said 'sir'! *[Laughs]* And he looked at me again and he said, 'You'll do'. That were me examination. When I told Dr Hislop that he laughed; he wouldn't believe it. Another lad went in after me, a pal o' mine. He were goin' out farmin' half time, he were only eleven. He couldn't make 'im say 'sir', so he passed him out. That were the examination we got to go to work.

WRM            What year was that?

HC             At eleven year old.

WRM            What year was it? What time was it, just before the First World War?

HC             Ooh, 1894.