

[Start of Side B - 00:00:09]

WRM Oh, I've got a copy of this.

EY Have you? And those Yorkes were not close relations of ours, but they do come from the same tree, and one of the things about them is that they were very good family people and very good to their dependants, and they wrote poems to all their servants and had them painted and hung in the Servants' Hall. I've been there twice to see them. And they also never threw anything away.

WRM I know!

EY I said my husband, 'I think that's a characteristic you have in common.'

[Laughs]

WRM Looking at all the pictures of the Yorkes down the years, I mean can you sum them up as being thin or tall?

EY Can you what?

WRM I mean, is there a kind of physical characteristic of the Yorkes? Are they generally tall...?

EY Yes, I think... well, my husband has two brothers and he's got three first cousins, and of course they have a Scottish grandmother but they've all got a little tinge of red and a little red moustache. My son had reddish

hair when he was born, and my husband had a reddish moustache. And they're all tall and all outdoor men, quite nice looking...

WRM And all very, very keen to preserve their rights, you know, as reflected by the various litigation that went on down the centuries, or was that just a normal thing?

EY Quite normal: all those seventeenth century people you read about, they've wasted all their money litigating. I can't think why. We've always been determined never to do it again! *[Laughs]* But I think that was normal rather than a characteristic... And I was interested in these, because these were all the pictures of the servants and The National Trust bought it, you know, and they spent a tremendous lot of money on it. There's the head gardener, you see, and all of them. A great many people maybe did go into politics, like the Yorkes, for one moment and that sort of thing, but it seems to me that their hearts were always in the country.

WRM And they were very sporty, weren't they?

EY Very sporty, very sporty, ever so much. Oh yes, they've always been very sporty. To way back, since all the times we can find. I don't know going back as far as Sir Richard in 1498, but certainly since 1540 they've always been very sporty.

WRM This took the form of grouse shooting...?

WRM008A: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

EY Yes, grouse shooting, and hunting, and fishing. In Grandfather's picture in the billiard room, he's got a fishing rod... And he's got fish, you can see there.

WRM And of course your husband has been in the hunting field for sixty years, is it?

EY Yes, of course, they've started making a great pain about that just lately. He said by accident to somebody, 'Of course, the first time I went hunting I was seven and I rode to High Cross,' whereupon [unclear 00:03:40] paled, and put a photograph in the paper [unclear 00:03:43] whereupon a lot of people wrote and said what a wicked man he was and 'The Ogre of Halton West and that sort of thing, so three people wrote to support him. They asked us what we thought about it and we said, well, we'd better read it, there's no point starting a controversy. But they did. I think they'd bow down now. I mean, whether you think hunting is right or wrong I think it's difficult to justify, but in matter of fact it is a very strong, male instinct, isn't it?

WRM One thing I always noticed about... I spent eleven years, several times a week, watching the deer down in Bowland there, and one thing I noticed was there were in fact harriers in the area and yet because the hare was more or less preserved for hunting and because the harriers didn't often catch a hare, there were a vast number of hares and in fact one evening I was watching deer in spring as one field was greening up and there were twenty five hares in one field. And I thought, 'Gosh, it must be the highest density of hares in Britain'.

[Laughs]

EY I don't know that they've tried to prevent them. Of course, the point of it is that although they go hunting very, very often, they often don't touch anything, and there were a tremendous lot of hares. Of course when the gentleman from London wrote to say they were an extinct species that rather annoys everybody because we've seen so many in a field that the hounds didn't know which one to chase! But of course the deer are a different story because... I'm not on now, am I?

WRM Well, it doesn't matter at all.

[Interruption in tape]

WRM *[Reading from deeds]* So there is the bargain and sale '...from Christopher Hales,' that's H-A-L-E-S, 'Knight, Master of the Rolls, to Thomas Proctor of Cowper Cote in Craven, Gent., of the Manor of Appletreewick with all...' Is it 'messuages' or?

EY Message, yes.

WRM 'Messuages, mines of lead and other metals and bills.' And that's in 1539, and then 'bargain and sale from Thomas Proctor of Cowper Cote, Gent., to Sir Arthur Darcy, Knight, of his Manor of Appletreewick'. And then, that's right, agreement between 'Sir Arthur Darcy', this is now spelt D-A-R-C-Y 'and John Yorke for the sale and purchase of the Manor of Appletreewick for two thousand pounds'. That's in 1549. 'Bargain and sale from Sir Arthur Darcy,' we've gone back to D-A-R-C-Y-E, 'Knight, to John

Yorke of London, Esq. and Anne his wife of the Manor of Appletreewick, etc.

1549.’ That’s interesting.

EY Yes, that’s what I was looking for, for you. These were all the long leases for five thousand years which he had to give in order to pay his Star Chamber fines.

WRM Oh, I see, yes.

EY We’ve got a lot of them too.

WRM These days one tends to think of it as Gowthwaite, but it’s G-O-U historically is it?

EY Yes, well we’ve always called it [*sounds like*] ‘Gothut’ and I think probably that’s the way it was called. But then of course there’s a place called [*sounds like*] Brinnith; they call it [*sounds like*] Brinwith but we’ve always called it Brinnith.

WRM And Appletreewick becomes Aptrick and Grassington becomes Guston, doesn’t it?

EY Yes. [*Pause*] There are only for two thousand years, you see; this was for five thousand.

WRM So among the long leases at Appletreewick was a lease from ‘Thomas Yorke of Richmond, Esquire to Antony Hebden of Grymouth in Appletreewick, husbandman of a farm at Grymouth preserving game and minerals

for five thousand years', and that was the 1st November 1682. Incredible!

EY And I found somebody called Baines in Wales. He knew all about it and he'd had a long lease for years: Christopher Baines. I don't think he's just here.

WRM Do you know there was an echo of that when I went up...?

[Interruption in tape]

WRM I don't know that area too well, actually; but Bewerley Hall was pulled down?

EY It was sold in 1924, and pulled down in 1925.

JY There's just the old laundry and the stables, which are now intact, and the garden is planted with four houses or bungalows which you can see if you go past.

WRM Yes, you would remember the Hall as it was, would you?

JY I stayed there all my young life, yes.

WRM What do you remember of that particular period actually, of your residence in Nidderdale? First of all the shooting: was that always on a very large scale?

JY The what?

WRM The grouse shooting at the head of the dale.

JY Yes, well we had Ramsgill, Heathfield, Bewerley Moor, Sigsworth...

WRM008A: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

EY Stean.

JY And Stean.

WRM Yes? Can I just pop that down there? These are just for notes, by the way.

JY The grouse shooting was very good. Some of it was left. We had Ramsgill and Heathfield in hand, the two best, and then Stean was let, Bewerley Moor was let, Redlish and Sigsworth.

WRM What was the routine of the glorious 12th? I mean, how did you go about getting there?

JY We went in a brake, a two-horse brake.

WRM Where from?

JY From Bewerley Hall, starting at half past seven and all the loaders had another brake behind. The beaters and drivers had already walked there, and when we got to Ramsgill we walked up. No Land-rovers or anything then, we walked up and we walked down. The cartridges went on a pony but everyone else walked, even my Grandfather walked until he was eighty. And they shot that, and then the next day they shot Heathfield.

WRM Yes. Did they go back to Bewerley Hall in the meantime, or did they stay up on the hill?

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Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

JY Oh no, they went back at night. And when we had ‘little days’ we used to go up with a keeper sometimes to get a few brace, and we went on the light railway that was running then, you know, up to Ramsgill?

WRM Yes.

JY And we got off at Ramsgill and walked vertically up the hill and started shooting, and then we walked back at night.

WRM What did you do about refreshments?

JY We took them in our pocket on ‘little days’, and on other days they went up on the cartridge pony to the hut where we brewed tea and had sandwiches and what not.

WRM Oh, yes. I’ve just been doing a scheme of study with the WEA at Clapham and for some reason I said that I would do a study over ten weeks of everyday life in Clapham Parish as it was between 1900 and 1935, knowing there were people who remembered that period. And one of the funniest stories was of a beater who said that they used to send a round of beef up to the moor every year from ‘The Traddock’. And he said this particular day they’d forgotten to bring up the bread. He said, ‘But we still had our sandwiches. A bit of fat with some lean on either side!’ *[Laughs]* And I was most impressed by the sort of general humour there was on the grouse moor, you know, the characters that were among the beaters?

WRM008A: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

JY Oh yes, they were very keen, the drivers; a marvellous lot.

WRM Bewerley Hall then would really be very large, and of course at that particular period it would be very well maintained.

JY Very well maintained, yes. They had about sixteen bedrooms and a tremendous lot of servants to run it and it was very comfortable, but it is very much in a hole, you know, Pateley?

WRM Yes.

JY On a thundery day it was terribly oppressive. I like this much better.

WRM Yes, we've also mentioned about Yorke's Folly up on the hill actually; was that frequented from the house?

JY It was supposed to have been built by John, the brown man there, in a period of bad weather and great unemployment, and they marched up there and built it. It was a folly. Of course, half of it's blown down now. It blew down in a big gale in the... was it the '90s?

WRM Did people from the house used to go up there for picnics?

JY Yes.

WRM So it was always a focal point, was it?

JY Oh, very much so, and opposite is the Crocodile Rock which is another picnic spot, which is a huge stone with an open mouth which is like a

crocodile's head. It's nearly hidden in the bracken now but you can see it. It's close to the road as you go up on the old Otley road out of Beverley it's on the right, and the folly is opposite it on the left.

EY Last time I went up there I was with a nephew of his who has now gone out to New Zealand. He was very interested in the family. I took him up there and we had a picnic.

WRM Well, thank you very, very much. I am most grateful to you.

JY Then of course, there is very good fishing in that reservoir, Gouthwaite Reservoir, and in the River Nidd, very good trout fishing.

WRM Yes, what do you remember actually of that Gouthwaite period?

JY Well, it had gone you see. The only bit I knew of it is was that they removed the stone up the hill. Those two nice houses you see as you go up to Ramsgill, one was the keeper's house and the other was a farm, I think. And they used the nice old stone, that's all I ever knew. Of course it had all gone with the reservoir. When was the reservoir built?

WRM Oh, it would be towards the end of the last century, wouldn't it?

JY Yes, about 1893; well, it was swamped by mistake, you see, the old house? So they whipped out the stones and built those two nice houses on the left.

WRM Have you fished in the reservoir?

JY Oh Lord, yes, lots of times.

WRM Did the family for a time retain the fishing rights?

JY Yes, until the sale.

WRM Yes, I see. Were several boats kept on the reservoir at that time?

JY We had about two, I think. Mostly they did it off the bank. You could walk along, it wasn't deep near the edge. We mostly fished it from the edge.

WRM And these would be trout would they?

JY There was very good grayling in the reservoir, very good grayling, and of course a lot of duck and snipe at the top end. We used to have a go at them sometimes.

WRM The estate in Nidderdale, was it pretty well known for its angling?

JY Oh, yes, the Nidd is a very good river, you know? I learnt to fish off the Nidd with my Grandfather.

EY Is it switched off now or switched on?

WRM No, it's still on actually, but I will switch it off.

EY No, ask him about the acreage of Bewerley, I can't remember.

WRM Oh yes, the acreage of Bewerley?

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Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

JY About fifteen thousand, with the moors.

EY I couldn't remember.

WRM What was the total acreage of the Nidderdale estate?

JY About fifteen thousand.

WRM Oh, altogether?

JY Well, it may have been more. Bewerley was fifteen, and I think Brinnith... we only had bits and pieces of it but I should think the whole lot was about sixteen thousand roughly.

WRM What sort of maintenance staff did your Grandfather have? I mean how many gamekeepers would he have?

JY He had a head keeper and two under keepers, and he had his own masons and drainers and carpenters.

WRM What kind of estate vehicle was used to go over to Appletreewick?

JY *[Laughs]* A cart and two horses: he always had to have two to get over Greenhow. I've been over there by horse but you have to walk most of the way, it's awfully steep.

WRM And Appletreewick was more or less on the edge of the estate wasn't it?

JY Yes, it was, yes.

WRM008A: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

WRM Did the family actually own the village at one time virtually?

EY Did they own what?

WRM Did the family virtually own the village of Appletreewick at one time?

EY Not all of it but a great deal of it.

JY Yes.

EY He asked me where the Manor Court took place, it was in that place called Appletreewick Hall wasn't it, on the left hand side?

JY High Hall.

EY Was it?

JY I think so.

EY Not at High Hall.

JY Wasn't it?

EY Oh, no, in the village.

JY Well, it is in the village, High Hall, just as you go in.

EY Ah, well, where was the place you went to, to see that other man?

JY Oh, Low Hall.

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Interviewee Eleanor Yorke (EY)
Interviewee John Yorke (JY)

EY Ah, yes.

JY Yes, that's the other end.

EY That man you went to see not long ago, it's up for sale now.

JY Mason.

EY Yes. It's up for sale now.

JY Is it? No, High Hall is up for sale.

EY Well, the place we went to see was up for sale, and there's a picture of it.

WRM Did you actually attend any of the Manor Courts before they were disbanded?

JY I don't think I ever did, no. They ceased you see. I do feature in one Court Roll as owner, minor, but no, I never attended. Old Mr Boord the agent used to run them. He was there thirty eight years.

WRM How did you spell his name?

JY B-O-O-R-D. W.B. Boord. He was agent for thirty eight years. He ran the Court.

WRM Where did he have his office, was that at Bewerley?

JY Do you know Sigston Thompson?

WRM Yes.

JY Well, in their house.

WRM Oh, yes.

JY That was the Estate Office.

WRM So he was responsible just for the Appletreewick side, was he?

JY No, no, the whole lot.

WRM The whole lot, yes?

JY Yes.

WRM The moors, actually, between Wharfedale and Nidderdale are among the most featureless I should think in the north, aren't they, in the sense that there is miles and miles of country with very few distinguishing marks.

JY It's strange.

WRM It must be comparatively easy to get lost up there.

JY It is, oh yes, very; especially when a bit of fog comes down.

WRM It's probably the least known part of the north of England, isn't it really in the sense that very few people penetrate very deeply into it?

JY Fortunately very few, yes. They get lost you see.

WRM *[Laughs]* Meugher is about the most obscure hill, I should think...

JY Meugher Hill, yes.

EY Of course, we have it very clearly in our minds because we've so many deed maps.

JY Well, I've been fortunate to go shooting up there by the kindness of the people who have bought all these magnificent moors. I've shot there all my life. Steve Ramskin, he's at Redlish.

WRM Well, thank you very, very much; I'm most grateful to you.

[Interruption in tape]

JY The unusual feature of the shooting in my Grandfather's day was that instead of starting to drive grouse on the 12th he walked over pointers and setters in parties of two or three, six days a week sometimes in a good year, and all over the moor they had little stone drinking troughs at a spring for the dogs to drink at.

WRM Good heavens.

JY And to put in their whisky, I suppose.

WRM *[Laughs]* Yes.

JY And then on the 1st of September he started to drive, and he had regular shoots for the rest of the year. But at the beginning were these nice little dog walks.

WRM008A:	Interviewer	W.R. Mitchell	(WRM)
	Interviewee	Eleanor Yorke	(EY)
	Interviewee	John Yorke	(JY)

WRM Well, thank you very much.

[End of Side B and interview - 00:22:02]