

[Start of interview - 00:00:07]

WRM So here's a back can, tell me about it.

MH You might be interested in it because it was made by Frank Shields of Redmire in 1967, and it so happens that the Dales Countryside Museum have very recently been able to buy the tinsmith's workshop from... it's near the Castle really, but it was run by the Shields family of Redmire, and we've had this back can of course ever since 1967 and it's going to go in the Dales Museum with a beautiful allotted space for the workshop from Castle Bolton.

WRM Oh, wonderful.

MH Isn't it marvellous?

WRM How do you spell Shields?

MH S-H-I-E-L-D-S.

WRM Ah yes; and you knew the family did you?

MH Oh, very well. We knew Frank, who died some time ago now. He has two sons, and then there's a grandson who continues the work, but of course instead of being tinsmiths they're plumbers and oil-fired boiler representatives.

[Laughs]

WRM Do you remember the back can being used?

MH Ooh yes, they used to come up our road with back cans on their backs; the farmers, you know? There were fields of hay where they milked the cows. It isn't allowed now to milk cows out of doors, is it? Did you ever know Tom Kirkbride?

WRM I knew the name.

MH You would. I have a photo of him, I've lost the negative. And another one you might have heard of, [unclear 00:01:33 - Terry Kirton?] over at Thwaite, who lived right out at Moor Close, a very lonely farm. We've photos of him carrying a back can, and we've another photo that was taken by Bertram Unne, a very close-up, nice photo of a man carrying a back can at Middleham, and then of course there are all the donkeys at Redmire. They always used to have the back cans.

WRM Were they just back cans that were attached to the donkeys, they were nothing special were they?

MH Oh, no, they were separate things like that. They were very cleverly made because they were worn like a rucksack with straps. All that braid stuff, that webbing; you either had leather straps or you had webbing. And then they also had handles so that you could tip it, you see, and inside there's another lid so that the milk didn't slosh about too much. They're awfully well designed. You can see how it fits the back.

WRM Are they to be found anywhere else but the Dales?

MH Well, it's really quite a mystery. We were once asked to write an article for 'The Society for Folk Life Studies' on the back can, and you know, we really knew very little about it. But I would suspect that long, long ago they would be wooden, in the Middle Ages. They would always have them because there was always milk to carry about, wasn't there?

WRM And of course it was quite general to milk cows out of doors.

MH Yes it was, very general.

WRM To save the meadowland and let the grass grow more fully...

MH Yes; and then there were these stunted cow pastures that went on for quite a long time at Castle Bolton and Preston-under-Scar and Redmire. Well-organised people in fact used to fetch the cows to the standing and that sort of thing.

WRM They brought the cows to a specific point for milking, did they?

MH Yes, for the men to go up and milk, and then they all carried the milk away in a back can. Or it could be used for water. If you were short of water... we have another photograph of a pony in the river at the Swale, with people filling back cans for water.

WRM That was taken by Mr Ambler in 1900.

MH Was it? I've never known that and I've always wanted to know.

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewees Marie Hartley (MH)
Joan Ingilby (JI)

WRM Yes, it's one of a set actually, which was taken by a Mr Ambler and...

MH Who was he?

WRM He was a Bradford man. He was related I think to a Beresford who I used to know quite well at Hellifield, and this Mr Beresford's sister had the originals.

MH Well, I don't know how he got them.

WRM He came up in 1900...

MH So that's the date...

WRM ...and they're the most wonderful photographs.

MH They are; they are.

WRM There's a beautiful one of a horse and sledge up in Langstrothdale. There's another one of a farmer. I think there is somebody with a back can too come to think of it. I'll see what I can dig out.

MH Oh, I'm very pleased to know that. We've always known or suspected that a good photographer came to Muker.

WRM Yes, because I sometimes start a little lecture by saying, 'This man's setting off from Bradford in 1900 and people say, "Now be careful you know." And he was so daring, he got past Skipton and then he got past Grassington...' I was trying to give the idea of the Dales as being an utterly remote and little known place about that time.

MH The end of the earth wasn't it, I fear? Well, there were no visitors; that's the funny thing when we remember. Even we remember the '30s. There were no visitors hardly worth speaking of. Not in Swaledale, at the top end.

WRM You actually came up into the Dales then in...?

MH The 1920s, late '20s. There was a group of us.

WRM Was this the famous caravan period?

MH Oh, well that was '35.

WRM Ah yes, but in the 1920s, you came up?

MH Yes, there were four of us.

WRM What were the circumstances?

MH We just came on walking tours. It was the fashion to go on walking tours, and we started off with rucksacks on our backs. We did take a taxi say from Kilnsey down to Skipton station, but we walked the whole length of the dale, sort of started at Richmond, stayed the night at Reeth, then went up to Keld and back over the Buttertubs, down to Hawes and then over to Wharfedale. That sort of thing, carrying a rucksack you know?

WRM And this would take several days would it?

MH Oh yes, a week or so. You know all these people that you see with everything

but the kitchen sink on their back? We just had small rucksacks with the minimum. You know a pair of bedroom slippers.

WRM Where did you stay?

MH Oh, at Keld. We stayed at two places, the Waggetts and the Rukins. There were two places to stay at in Keld and none now, as far as I know.

WRM What sort of accommodation was it?

MH Oh, it was lovely: six shillings a night all in with a picnic and evening meal.

WRM And the bedroom would have the obligatory jug and basin?

MH Yes, that's right.

WRM And you got hot water in the morning?

MH Yes, but beautiful food.

WRM Yes? What sort of food was it?

MH Well, I do remember that they gave us what we call 'cakey puddings', you know, a fruit base with a cakey top. And that seemed quite up-to-date to get cakey pudding up here. I forget the first courses.

WRM Where did you stay apart from Keld?

MH We once stayed at 'The Green Dragon' at Hardraw, and that was fun because it was the time of... this is Ella Pontefract and I in the '30s. It was the time of

the Hardraw banner contest and they were local people had ‘The Green Dragon’ in those days, and we quite often had goose to eat. Geese were much more common then, weren’t they, then they are now as you will know.

WRM Wonderful. What did you wear on your feet?

MH We’d lovely, good, strong shoes, not boots; really very strong, good shoes one had in those days.

WRM Was this little group a member of a Church organisation?

MH No, no, we were just four friends. There was Ella and there was me, and a cousin of mine and a friend.

WRM So Ella Pontefract was the one who eventually collaborated in the first of the Dales books. And then your cousin, what was her name?

MH Olive Bedford, she’s still alive. She’s as old as me.

WRM What age are you if you don’t mind me asking?

MH Ninety.

WRM Ninety, yes?

MH *[Laughs]*

WRM And the fourth member of the party?

MH Eva? Eva was much the same age. Alas, she died two or three years ago. She left a lot of money to The National Trust.

WRM What was her second name?

MH Johnson, Eva Johnson.

WRM Yes. And Ella, what was she before she decided to break out into the Dales with you?

MH Well, as a result of these walking tours that the four of us did, we settled to do work on the Dales. Nobody had done anything then, you know? Not even *The Dalesman*.

WRM That's right, yes. I know you've both done wonderful work over the years, yes.

JI I've done nothing like her.

WRM Pardon?

JI Nothing like her, she should have gone on a lot longer.

WRM And what were the conditions at that time? I mean, nowadays people hurl about in cars, don't they?

MH Oh, there was hardly a car to be seen.

WRM No, I mean, you 'do' a kind of dale every twenty minutes now, don't you?

MH Yes, that's right, you do.

WRM I mean, that's the pity of it all, isn't it?

MH It is. We used to think Hawes was about the farthest place you could get, and now people seem to come in an hour or two and it's crowded out. It hasn't got the old atmosphere as a result, has it? It was just nothing but farmers.

WRM I used to be a Methodist local preacher and I'd set off on the bus from Skipton to Airton, take the morning service, walk up to Malham, take the afternoon and evening services and catch the last bus back home. And latterly, after about forty years, I decided that was enough. But I used to just simply go up in a car and draw up outside the Chapel, which was the first building in Malham at that time, and draw up you know in a kind of cloud of smoke and squeal of brakes ten minutes before service time, you know? And it's such a pity, isn't it? Everything is speeded up.

MH Well, you can't get rid of your car, can you?

WRM No, no.

MH You can't at Hawes. You can't in Askrigg.

WRM No, do you drive now?

MH Yes, I drive now. Joan's eyes aren't good enough to drive.

JI Well, there used to be such a lot more public transport didn't there in those

days?

WRM Yes.

JI I remember in the war coming up to stay with Marie and Ella from Wetherby. From Wetherby you took a bus to Knaresborough and you changed. From Knaresborough you took a bus to Harrogate and you changed. From Harrogate you took a bus to Ripon and you changed, and as far as I remember you could come straight through from Ripon to Askrigg and the same on the way back. You see, they don't exist anymore; there are hardly any buses at all, and the wretched trains have gone. We're hoping to get some back at some point, but public transport is no good at all.

WRM What was your first car in the Dales then? What type was it?

MH Well, we just used the family cars. The Pontefracts had a car and our family had a car but we were the only drivers. The older people, our parents, none of them drove in those days. So we just used the family car, sometimes Ella's family's and sometimes my family's, as it suited us.

WRM What type of car would this be?

MH Well, they had an Austin 16 or something of that sort and we had an Alvis, mostly. I know if you go back far enough one had Austin 7's but that was the '20s, and you see now we'd got to the '30s by the time Ella and I were coming up to write our books, or collect material.

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewees Marie Hartley (MH)
Joan Ingilby (JI)

WRM This famous little caravan, you got it from Cara-Cars, did you?

MH That's right, yes, at Otley, and that chap still exists and remembers us.

WRM Does he?

MH We have friends somewhere living there and yes he does, he remembers us.

WRM Mr Kilburn, was it?

MH Yes!

WRM Yes, I once interviewed him. He told me about the early caravans which were eaten by cows! *[Laughs]* You know the kind of plyboard-y things with resin in them, the cows seemed to love them and just chewed at them. *[Laughs]*

MH Well, they do come round of course because they're so inquisitive.

WRM Well, I went up to Lee Gate above Malham with Freda, my wife, a couple of days ago with a new car and when I came out there was a circle of cows all licking it and pushing the wing mirrors back.

MH Oh, dear.

WRM I should have known that really.

MH How are they? We know those people rather well.

WRM Yes, Florence...

MH Is she alright?

WRM Her husband died...

MH Yes?

WRM ...and she used to go to school with my wife actually and so they had a good old natter. But really we went along to the farm, New House Farm, because the old chap has just sold it to The National Trust.

MH There was a piece in *The Times* about him.

WRM That's right.

MH Did you do that?

WRM No, I just went along to photograph the flower field actually. I mean, there was more plant and more herb in that field than there was grass, it was astonishing. And the smell of the clover was great.

MH Joan, he's just been up to Lee Gate at Malham.

JI Oh, really? Yes. Did you hear the programme *Postcards from the Country* about the Dales?

WRM Oh, it was lovely.

JI Well, now, a very funny thing, there was a Florence Carr from Malham, the same name. But she was the very best, she was first rate. We didn't think

much of the programme otherwise.

WRM Oh, that was Edith, Edith Carr.

JI Oh, was it?

WRM Yes, she's somebody I've taped for many years and I put her name forward and they loved her. Yes, she had the kind of purple thing on, didn't she?

JI Yes, she was awfully good I thought.

WRM Edith is very, very good, yes. She is the sister-in-law of Florence from Lee Gate.

JI Oh, is she? Yes, I see.

WRM That's right, yes.

MH We thought she was excellent, and there was another man from Lower Wharfedale, Bolton Abbey, that Nelson, he was very good.

WRM He was very good, wasn't he?

MH But you know, not a lot of people have thought much of that programme.

WRM They didn't?

MH No; we haven't said anything. We thought it was rather nice, but several people have said, 'Oh well, it was alright', you know, that sort of thing?

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
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WRM One farmer I met, I said, 'Did you like it?' 'Aye,' he said, 't'best bit was that bit of documentary film about Lancaster bombers dropping hay.'

MH Yes.

WRM And he said, 'I last saw that on a news reel at the New Vic cinema at Settle.'
[Laughs] So it must have been on Gaumont British News, you know, and he actually saw it at the time when it had just happened. It's astonishing, isn't it?

MH There was far too much in that film about Mike...?

JI That was terrible, if you really want to know, it absolutely ruined it.

WRM I know.

JI And so much about shooting.

MH You know we were interviewed for it and they rejected our efforts?

WRM They did mine.

MH *[Laughs]* Well, they would have done a lot better to have had you, and us!

WRM I know, in fact, I took the little lass round and introduced her to Edith and various others, and I'd just come out of hospital after my heart trouble and they photographed me down by the river in very unpromising circumstances, and I had no real idea what they were getting at and I got a note to say they weren't going to use it. *[Laughs]*

MH Well, first of all Karen somebody-or-other came and spent hours with us picking our brains.

WRM Yes, quite, that's what she did with me.

MH Then they came and recorded us, a whole morning gone. Do you know, we had a girl the other day, she was doing a programme on the Dales on Radio 4 and she spent about two hours with us, and she sailed in and sailed out.

WRM I know, they do that, it's terrible. I must send you a copy of my latest book, which is called *The Wasdale Monster* and gives the impression early on that it's an irradiated tup up in Wasdale; but in actual fact the monster is the media and it's exactly what you've been talking about so I'll send you a copy of that. It will confirm some of your...

MH How about this novel that you've written? Has that come out yet?

WRM That's the one. It's just come out. Yes, I'll send you a copy. I should have brought one along. It's quite fun, really. I got Ionicus to do the cover. Yes, well this caravan of yours, what kind of car pulled it?

MH Well, it was one of these two, either this Austin or the Alvis. We only had it for one book, you know? We were in rooms in Swaledale and when we got to Wensleydale we thought, well, it was rather expensive. You see, we'd no backing; I mean we hadn't grants or anything like that. We had to make our own way, and you had to put out quite a bit of money for rooms, hadn't you? Even though they were very reasonable there was money involved,

and we thought the caravan would be a good idea, and it really was rather nice in Wensleydale. We got to know a lot of people by being in a caravan, especially down at Redmire. There were some marvellous old people at Redmire with terrific recollections. And then when we got to Wharfedale we still had the caravan and we tried it out for a short time but there was nowhere to park it. Somehow or other it didn't work, so we sold it back to Mr Kilburn. *[Laughs]* 'The Green Plover' it was called.

WRM That's right. Did you call it that?

MH Yes.

WRM Yes, that's right; yes.

MH It was painted a greenish colour so that it fitted in. I don't know why caravans have to be painted cream, do you? They might as well be painted...

WRM I think it's probably to reflect the light so that it doesn't absorb the light. A dark caravan is unbearably hot, isn't it?

MH Oh, is it?

WRM Yes, where a light caravan tends to be cooler.

MH Well, this was alright, but probably because it was light green.

WRM And when you were in Swaledale you were then staying in accommodation, weren't you?

MH Yes, in rooms.

WRM What do you feel about the Dales today, looking around; if you were to come into the Dales today writing about them afresh...?

MH Well, I wouldn't be a writer. I think that there's far too much. Everybody's cashing in now, aren't they?

WRM Yes.

MH There are books by the dozen on the Dales, and an awful lot are getting remaindered, aren't they?

WRM That's right.

MH I know it was very lovely to have the place... it was an open book to us, and no-one else was writing it. That was marvellous. But now everything is trodden ground, and Hawes has about fourteen cafés for example. We're geared for visitors now, aren't we, which we weren't. Mind you, it probably saves the day because things aren't too good are they, otherwise? It's now a source of income that one has to consider.

WRM That's it, yes. And of course the Dales themselves don't even look the same do they, with all this rye grass everywhere and the flower fields gone?

MH Well, it's a pity the fields have gone.

WRM It's not so bad in the Upper Dales, up in Swaledale there are still quite a lot, but they tend to take a lot of buttercups as a flower field, don't

they? And really there used to be probably thirty different types of flower growing.

MH Oh, they were lovely, weren't they? But there are still the wild roses up the roadside, those are still lovely.

WRM That's right, yes. What is your own routine at the moment? Do you keep yourself busy both of you?

MH Well, we get an awful lot of letters to answer for one thing, and then every now and again we have to do a job like this. We should like to write another book of a series of essays because we've still quite a lot of material that has never come to the surface before, but we never seem to get a chance, there's always something 'doing'. *[Laughs]*

WRM Yes, quite. Do you mind me mentioning the fact that you're gathering together a lot of your engravings from over the years?

MH Yes, we're compiling a book of engravings. Nothing else but engravings, and all the engravings I've ever done into one book. It's going to be printed quite simply, you know? You can use awfully good paper and print very few at a time, but this is just going to be done like any other book so that it can be sold at a reasonable price.

WRM Where did you actually develop your skill as an engraver?

MH Well, you know when Ella and I started, I started as the artist and she was the writer. And I'd been to Leeds College of Art and then I went to the Slade and was taught wood engraving at both places. I was taught at the Leeds College of Art by E.O. Jennings.

[Phone rings. Tape recorder switched off briefly.]

WRM Because the last time...

MH They're totally re-organising just at present. The Dales Countryside Museum has had all the by-gones and implements, tools and domestic appliances and everything taken out and put into store while it was re-organised, and there has been a new mezzanine floor put up which gives more room, and now very soon we'll be bringing it all back. We've got one or two stores, and they've been sorting out today to bring it back. It should have been ready for the visitor season, but things don't always work out well. But it's had new ideas put in, and it's going to be a totally re-organised display, so it should be very nice when they get it finished. But it's taken a lot of time. And they're doing entirely new labels for each section; for instance, the knitting industry. And we're having to help; well, we've been asked to help with information, historical information.

WRM And Colt House, of course, has been your home pretty well all the time you've been here, hasn't it?

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewees Marie Hartley (MH)
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MH Oh yes, we've never moved. We built on this new room in 1957, which has been a great boon. We like working up here, it's peaceful and there's plenty of room. Before we were very crushed working in the dining room, say, or a bedroom or something.

WRM What was it like working in Swaledale that first year? You know, when you were doing the Swaledale book? You had a cottage did you?

MH Yes, we were at Angram. We heard that a Mrs Clarkson had two farms but she lived in one farmhouse at one farm, and the other farmhouse was unoccupied and she let it out to visitors. And we had it for the month of June in about 1931 and it so happened that it was one of the most beautiful, brilliant summers; but what we always remembered so well was that there were no visitors about. There weren't any in June, really none, and I remember when the book came out Mrs Waggett, who ran one of the places where we stayed in Keld where we were staying in rooms, wrote and thanked us for having written the book and put them on the map!

WRM *[Laughs]* Mrs Waggett lived up there, did she?

MH Yes, at Keld.

WRM That's right, yes. When did it begin to change? I mean when did the visitors start coming in?

MH Well, it's very awkward to answer that because once we'd written about Swaledale then we went and left it and we came to Wensleydale,

and Wensleydale was quite keen to have a book. For instance, Kit Calvert was a great help to us indeed. He'd liked the Swaledale book and he thought it would be a good thing for Wensleydale to have a similar book and it would do the dale good. So he was most cooperative, and people knew what we were about. In Swaledale they were a little retiring, not much perhaps, but I don't think it's an exaggeration. They didn't know what we were doing really. But when the book came out and you saw it and you read it and you liked what you'd seen in it, it paved the way for the Wensleydale book very nicely.

WRM What was the impulse to bring it out in that particular form; because it was a new form wasn't it?

MH Well, that's rather a long story.

WRM It was something quite distinctive, and everything you've done since and with Joan as well has also been distinctive. You know, there has been a sense of novelty about it all the way through, it didn't just ape other books did it? They're rather special little things. I think the engravings helped a lot, didn't they?

MH Well, they did. We had an introduction from a friend to J.M. Dent, a London publishers, very well-known publishers, and that was the great advantage because they supported us and they backed us throughout; and they were very keen on wood engravings at the time. For instance, a very famous wood engraver Robert Gibbings; they produced all his wood engravings and a lot of

the books were...

WRM Was it *Sweet Thames Run Softly* or something?

MH That's right, that's one of them.

WRM Did they publish those?

MH Yes, they did.

WRM So this was in the same sort of tradition, wasn't it, of craftsmanship?

MH That's right. At that time wood engravings had a sort of surge of interest in them, and the little wood engraving chapter headings had to be the same width as the text of the book, and they designed these quite small books really to fit, you see? Each chapter had a chapter heading and then little tail pieces at the end. And I'd seen other books that Dent's had published rather done in the same style, and off we went.

WRM How did one begin? Did it begin as a drawing?

MH Yes, on the spot. Yes, I have a lot of old notebooks, I still have them.

WRM And so it begins as a pencil drawing on the spot, and then it's transferred...?

MH You have to have a mirror because it transports it round; it makes it the wrong way round. It's quite tricky really but of course once you get into it, it isn't that difficult.

WRM I think it imbues it with a tremendous romance, and I think that romance is a good thing isn't it, in anything really? I mean you can become too stark, can't you, and realistic?

MH Yes, you can.

WRM You know? And I think probably... I mean, the Dales are a very romantic place really. I mean, although the farmers face north easterly winds and the snow and all the rest of it, yet it's very difficult to write about an area like the Dales without making it slightly romantic, isn't it?

MH It is.

WRM And this kind of bore it out, didn't it?

MH Yes, I think so.

WRM I mean the alternative is to do something so stark and realistic that it's not very appetising.

MH No, you've got it right. Some people can make it all rather grim, can't they?

WRM Well, Channel 4 is an example of that. I mean its grimness and dolefulness throughout and it doesn't mean anything, does it? You don't remember it; you just become annoyed at it really. *[Laughs]* But wood engraving is certainly a very romantic medium, isn't it? Oh, that's wonderful; and the Dales today, and your lives both of you...?

MH Well, to be perfectly honest we live very quiet lives now. We haven't a great deal to do. We've to do with the museum, as you can see. I'm going to draw a drawing of that back can, its one reason why it's here. I don't know quite for what purpose yet, but it might go in this exhibition that's going to be there. We've quite a lot to do with the museum. We're not in authority anymore because we did resign as Chairman and Vice-Chairman, but we like having to do with it and we're very pleased to help if somebody asks us for help, very pleased. And you see nobody has been at it as long as we have.

WRM No, no, quite.

MH That's one of the things. With the museum exhibits, the Chairman and the Vice-Chairman are both very good and very keen, but they haven't been there for so very long as we have, so...

WRM Do you go for walks still?

MH Little walks, only little walks. Not very far.

WRM In the old days you'd walk for many miles, would you?

MH Oh well, we'd go up Pen-y-ghent and think nothing about it. Both of us were great walkers.

WRM Are you great gardeners still?

MH Yes. Joan doesn't do much. We had an illness about four years ago. We had flu, and we were both very poorly after it.

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
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WRM But the garden, I mean, you love to do that do you?

MH Oh, we are genuine gardeners, yes. Not that it's a good place to garden, is it, the Dales? We're a bit high up.

JI We're 800 feet up.

MH We're 800 feet here.

WRM How would you describe your garden, what type is it?

MH Well, that first garden part where we have a grass plot and a herbaceous border, that in the old days was called a calgarth, so it was perhaps a calf garth or something.

WRM Cow garth?

MH Calgarth. You could hardly call it a smallholding because it was so tiny, but somebody would live here that would keep things in it then. The far garden, which is our kitchen garden, is quite extensive because it goes back further at the top there. We used to have vegetables. Oh, we were very great on our vegetables, our peas were marvellous. But we got beyond doing it, so we're all roses now. We've a bed of roses.

WRM Gosh. How old are you Joan if it isn't too much to ask?

JI How am I?

WRM Yes.

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
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JI Well, I'm alright, but you see I did have that minor stroke in 1991 and I'm not the same as I was.

WRM I just wondered what age you are?

JI Age? I'm 84; I shall be 85 in December.

WRM If you don't mind me asking...?

JI I've outlived everybody else on both sides of my family, so I think I haven't done too bad.

WRM Yes, well actually somebody rang me up the other day and they seemed to arrange their questions in order of importance and the first one was, 'How old are you?' So I thought that was a bit too much.

JI Well, I came here in 1947, and for a lot of 1946 as well. My family moved down to the south to live with my sister and I went down and helped them quite a bit but I came back off and on in '46; and in '47 I came for good, right in the middle of the '47 winter.

WRM Oh gosh.

JI We came up by train, the train came up Wensleydale with Marie and I from Wetherby and it stuck at Asygarth station in the cold and the evening, and they had to send for another engine from Northallerton. Which they did do, and which pushed us back up again to Askrigg. You know, this road was

absolutely full; I'd never seen anything like it and it's never been like it since.

That road, if you wanted to go up it you had to walk on the wall top.

WRM Gosh.

JI It was absolutely staggering. In fact we really had '63 and the last one was '79, but it was never as bad as either of those, and we've never really had a bad winter since. It's extraordinary. We had friends here who lived in that house for twelve or thirteen years and they never saw a bad winter the whole time they were there.

WRM Yes, we've had a succession of mild winters until this last one which was rather long, wasn't it? Tiresomely long. *[Laughs]*

JI Yes, tiresome, and sort of wet and horrid. July was so dry. We haven't had rain since I don't know when, we're watering the garden. In fact we've bought a rain tub, you know, to catch the water off the roof. We're using that water. We think that Yorkshire Water ought to give us all one free.

[Interruption in tape]

WRM Finally Marie, what was the impulse for... your latest book of course was *Fifty Years in the Dales*, wasn't it? And I suppose it's pretty obvious why you did it. I mean, it's a milestone isn't it, but what were the circumstances behind writing that? Was it an attack of nostalgia?

WRM187: Interviewer W.R. Mitchell (WRM)
Interviewees Marie Hartley (MH)
Joan Ingilby (JI)

MH Well, we knew that we had very wonderful notes and letters. We've kept things, you know. Those two files over there: there are two four-door quarto files jam-packed with notes from all the books, letters from the people who have written to us, reviews, and every possible thing connected with our work. So we couldn't have written that book, in the rather detailed way we were able to do, if we hadn't had all that to fall back on. And we thought perhaps, although nobody in a review has ever said anything, that it would be rather a help to people to see how a local historian went about what they did. You ring record offices, how you find your people; we're rather proud of our relationship with lots of old people who we used to know so well.

WRM And also it's very nice to know that they're not going to be forgotten either, are they?

MH That's true, isn't it? Yes.

WRM Well, it's been wonderful. Thank you very much. That's lovely.

MH Well, thank you.

WRM Well, I will send off a little note to the *Telegraph*.

[End of interview - 00:34:18]