

*[Interview continued. Start of Side B – 00:00:01]*

WRM About this hand mowing...?

AM Oh yes, they used to mow one behind another, and a good mower always reckoned that he could take a brede the width of himself: he ought to be able to lie in that as big as himself. I've seen when we would have, oh, perhaps eight, one going after another, you see?

WRM So this was before the mowing machines?

AM This was before the mowing machines, yes. We had the first mowing machine, and an old man said, 'Well, I don't know, herb'll never grow when you've had a machine on it', you see, which of course it did.

WRM Was this a single horse mowing machine?

AM No, we used to have two horses in a machine and in the spring of the year, about May, my Father used to go to Ireland and buy horses. With the results we used to have so many horses sold, all the best ones were sold, and the return horses we used to have to make them work. And I remember us having in 1914, because this horse was supposed to have been bought for a cavalry charge, now whether he was... we used to have a man called Bob Carr who lived at Sedbergh who came round buying horses for the Army, and this horse went. But this was a very good looking horse, and I used to love to ride a horse, I would always saddle a horse. I got sent to bed for galloping a horse

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‘til it was lathered many-a-time. *[Laughs]* But this horse wouldn’t work and we had an old mare, Fanny, who if they hung back she went forward and if they went too far too fast then she hung back. She could always put them in, get them in. And this day, a Saturday morning and we would yoke this bay horse, this big, bay horse, and he wouldn’t go. And in the end my Father said, ‘Go and fetch some straw’, and we lit a fire under this horse’s belly and we made him go; so he had to mow in the end whether he liked it or not. But I’ll always remember that, yes.

WRM           What do you remember about these trips to Garsdale station then? Would it be dark when you set off?

AM            Oh yes, quite frequently dark.

WRM           And so you would just go by lantern would you?

AM            Yes, you had two trap lamps.

WRM           But that would be inadequate, wouldn’t it?

AM            Well, we had two trap lamps, but then you didn’t meet anybody on the way. And I mean our mare could have gone to Garsdale and back again without anybody, she didn’t need any driving. And Mrs Buck, they were the horse dealers here, she used to know our mare’s feet and invariably when we got to Appersett our mare would stop because Mrs Buck would always have a cup of hot cocoa ready for me. She used to say, ‘You know, love, I’m sure you’ll be

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starved.’ She used to give me this hot cup of cocoa when I was half way home.

WRM What, at that time in the morning?

AM Yes.

WRM Oh, that was coming back?

AM Coming back, yes. We used to get this train at six and we used to be back... you see, you didn’t meet anybody in the road in those days. Our sheep used to go to winter... we used to take our sheep from Wether Fell and they went to Brimham Rocks above Harrogate; you know, at the bottom of Nidderdale, and we used to drive them. Well, my brothers did this until the 1940s. They used to go down the dale and stay at East Witton and then over the top to Masham, to the top of Nidderdale, you see, and drive them down. And we used to take... I have gone and driven sheep and we used to ride our mare. I used to go out sometimes on the second day, when they’d taken them so far down. Sometimes we used to go over the top to Buckden to a farmer there where we had a [rest], and then go over the top again to Nidderdale. And you rode a mare out and we used to just tie the reins and the bridle up so she couldn’t get them down, turn her round, hit her on the buttocks and she’d come straight home. Yes, she’d come straight home. And I remember we used to have a grey mare who used to have a foal every year, and we’d had two foals and I was terribly attached to this younger foal, and we’d haltered it and I could do anything with it. And they went to Middleham Moor, and I was so

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upset because they came back and they'd left them. They hadn't sold them and they'd left them, as there was a second day's sale at Middleham Moor. And the following night I went to bed, and I can remember this as if it was last week, going to bed and crying, you know? And I was so upset because I was sure these two... they'd gone these horses. And during the night I heard our grey mare come up the paddock at the back, and I jumped out of bed and put the window down and I shouts out that our old gal had come back! You see, and I ran downstairs and threw my arms round her neck: I was so pleased that she'd come back, you see?

WRM Oh, lovely...

AM But a horse, it's like a dog. We once had a dog... my brother used to breed sheepdogs, you see, and sell them for a good price, and he sold this dog into Coverdale. Well first of all, he sold it to somebody at Askrigg, and it came back next morning as soon as they let it out. It just hopped it. So then he sold it to somebody about Leyburn way but it came back. But it always came back. He never sold it anywhere in the end. It went to Coverdale and came back. And we once sold a horse, a 'stag' as they called them in those [days], to Coverdale and he came home.

WRM Did you breed horses or ponies?

AM Yes, we used to breed, and I always had a pony.

WRM I mean, did you have some on the fell and sell them off?

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AM Yes, well my father would... No, it was very rarely we wintered horses, but my father was a great horse lover and he would never have wintered a horse outside.

WRM A lot of these farms actually reared ponies, didn't they, for sale to the towns?

AM Yes, they did, especially farmers that didn't have a lot of capital. You had a mare and if she had a foal every time... you see, they had their foals in the spring, then she could work in hay-time, and she was probably carrying another foal, because you see they come in season nearly right away. And this was a bit of extra money that you got in. Of course, I mean, you didn't sell a horse above, not a 'stag', above sixteen pounds, you know? [But at that] he'd made a good price. When I think about it now, we used to have all these little books that had the prices of cattle and the prices of sheep [in them], and what he paid. He used to go to a big sheep fair and he used to buy, you see, and what they paid for sheep and what they paid for droving them down, you see; and we used to have drovers that probably met sometimes above Alston, and sometimes we had a drover who used to come down nearly towards Ingleton, depending on the time of the year.

WRM The railways were operating at this time, were they?

AM Yes, oh yes, but there wasn't I don't think in those days... then we got that we had cattle wagons, but there wasn't a movement of cattle and stock, not at the beginning of the century, you know? Just in the 1900s there wasn't. Then there got to be cattle wagons, and we used to have cattle come from

either Scotland or Ireland. They used to come from Larne and Stranraer.

WRM These were motor wagons?

AM No, these were cattle wagons: rail wagons.

WRM Oh, yes.

AM You'll have seen those, where they used to come...

WRM But before that you used to employ drovers?

AM Yes, we employed drovers, and we used to have drovers. At this end we used to have...

WRM And each drover would do just a stretch of the journey?

AM He did a stretch of the journey, yes; or you probably took him in a trap to such-and-such a place, you see, where he was likely to pick up or where he waited.

WRM So you in fact saw some of these Scottish drovers?

AM Oh, yes.

WRM And what did they look like?

AM Oh, they were big, brawny fellas, you know, with beards and side-whiskers, and wore their plaid; and they just wrapped themselves up in a plaid and slept in the heather, you see, with the cattle.

WRM And they'd come down into the dale, would they?

AM Oh yes, but very few of them. I mean, usually they came perhaps as far as Alston, and then our own drovers would take over.

WRM Did they have dogs?

AM Oh, yes.

WRM What sort of dogs were they? They wouldn't be pure-bred collies in those days, would they?

AM Oh no, they were shaggy dogs. We used to have... I remember, and I have a photograph of him. We had a Scottish dog, Glen, who came from the Highlands. My Father bought him and brought him down, and you couldn't run him because he couldn't understand what was being said. He was to train over again. But he was a marvellous old man. My brothers had a breed off him after, you see.

WRM So this droving business went on into this century?

AM Oh yes, it did, into my time; just when I was a girl. And then there were cattle wagons and then it used to come by train. My Father would have an understanding with various drovers about certain cattle, and he would set them off and they would either be paid in advance or they might not be paid for a few weeks, you see? And they might have brought one lot one week and

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another lot another, and then they were paid in a lump sum, it depended. But I mean there was this trust between [them].

WRM How many cattle did he buy each year, were there hundreds...?

AM Oh, yes, there would be a lot of cattle.

WRM Where did he sell them?

AM Well, you see a lot came to Hawes. We used to sell newly calved cows in Hawes and Hellifield. Very often, afterwards when cattle went by train, they were trucked and went to Hellifield, you see? My Father used to go to Hellifield on a Tuesday night after the auction here, sometimes. Very often he went on a Tuesday night and he would go to Liverpool because he had a sister there whose husband was a cow keeper who came from here and was left with a family of six children, and for quite a number of his years he would manage that place for her. He used to go on a Tuesday night, this was before he was married, he used to go on a Tuesday night and stop Wednesday and then come back from Liverpool to sell at Hellifield, and then home.

WRM Good heavens.

AM Yes, because my Father didn't marry 'til later on in life: he was about eighteen years older than my Mother. I remember going to Lanark and meeting a lady who said, 'How are you?' She was a Mrs Murray and always talking and shaking hands and holding hands. And my Father said, 'This is my daughter.' Of course, eventually I got tired of all this family history: they were

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catching up. So after I said to my Father, 'What was all that about?' 'Oh,' he said, 'that's just an old friend.' 'Oh,' I said, 'here you hold hands with old friends, do you?' So I said, 'Now come on, tell me.' I was about seventeen and full of, you know, romantic stories in those days. And he said, 'Well, that's the lady I should have married', you see? Now my Father's eldest sister married a man called Wilkinson, and they had a big sheep farm above Kettlewell, Parker Ash; and I suppose he perhaps had more than he could manage or perhaps he couldn't carry corn. I don't know whether they lived in more style than they could afford, or what. But he was bankrupt, and he did a moonlight flit to America, and they went to Wyoming and they started... I remember as a girl she used to write to my father that they went in a covered wagon. Of course, before he died he was a millionaire and had his own canning factories. And when he went my old Grandfather said that no daughter of his would leave the shores of England owing a lot of local people money, and that they would pay it off. And so my Father and Grandfather paid it off. Now my Father was going to marry this lady, and he realised that all his money had gone and so he gave her up, you see, and this was the meeting that we had in Lanark when I was there. I was so thrilled about this, and of course he married my Mother later who was in the village, you see.

WRM Ooh, thank you very much.

*[Interruption in tape while WRM accepts refreshment.]*

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AM And they had what they used to call ‘willy wit wisp’, have you ever heard this? Where it’s a sort of... I suppose it’s due to the frost, and it shines on the horse’s mane, and he said that he couldn’t see a thing and he felt that there was some sort of... I suppose he’d got the wind up him and felt there was some kind of presence. But he said, ‘I didn’t know where I was going,’ so he said ‘I just put the reins down on the horse’s withers and let her go where she wanted.’ And they know, you know, where they’re going? I mean, if you were coming across a moor, if you’d leave it to your horse you know you won’t get in a bog, but I mean if you have to guide her you can get into trouble.

WRM And is this on a foggy day?

AM Yes, on a foggy day coming over from Ingleton.

WRM Gosh..

AM Oh yes, horses are very... We used to take our milk to the station, and I remember going as a girl, you’d come down the Burtersett road by the Auction Mart and they used to turn so quickly round there and I flew off the seat, you know, I just whizzed off like that. But they would go down the station yard and all at once the horse turned round and went back like that if the lorry for the milk wasn’t there: they knew exactly. And my husband, after we lived here he farmed for a while at Gayle and his horse once... you see, he would put his empty cans in, and he turned round to talk to somebody and she knew the cans were in and she set off. And she came up Hawes, and this

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was Market Day, Tuesday evening, and there would be all sort of folk about, at full trot up Hawes, round the school corner and up to Gayle and into the yard and turns round. And there was nobody, and they wondered what had happened to him. He was left to walk home, you see? *[Laughs]* The horse had gone home.

WRM Gosh...

AM Yes, and I remember as a girl once, not us but the Browns the other farmers in the village, would be going down for the six o'clock train and it would be dark and old Aaron Naggs, who had a shop in Bainbridge, and always got a bit tight Market Day and he was jogging along and his horse... they collided and the front part of the shaft (which often comes to a point) went in the chest of this horse and of course it died. They brought it home but it died, you see? It's the only accident I can ever recall happening to a horse, and we always went... I mean, at one time the milk went, it used to go... all the milk here used to go to Burgess's at Manchester, and before that it used to go to the north-east to Shields and Newcastle, you see? And you took it for a train at about twenty past six mebbe, but it was dark you see, and you had two trap lamps. We had a lot of trap lamps, whatever happened to them. I mean, now they would be money, but I don't know where they went. My Mother would throw them out.

*[Interruption in tape]*

WRM This was in hay-time?

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AM Yes, we always had two thirty-sixes of beer and a bottle of... I knew it as a child as 'Orand', but I suppose it would be 'all round'. Now this was like the lad said, 'Well, if it 'ad been any better we couldn't have supped it, and if it 'ad been any worse we wouldn't have got it.' But it would be a sort of tee-total beer, and we used to have a small of this... and we always had two thirty-sixes of good beer. And my Grandfather used to go round. We used to put one into a little square float, and we used to put this in, and we had an older mare and he used to go round wi' t' bottle, you see?

WRM Yes.

AM We used to go round first thing. We used to have these stone bottles with a basket base round, you know, and he would maybe have a gallon bottle and he would go round all the men with a hor. We used to have a horn, you'll have seen them shaped like a glass: a horn. And he used to go round, and all the men had beer first thing in the morning before you took them their breakfast. And I can remember, I was only a girl, we were leading hay with sledges from a field down in the bottom near against the river down at Eller Beck and we had to come up another field up a hill, and my Grandfather came and it had got to be late, it was getting dark. And my Grandfather went and he said to my Father, 'That bottom field's dry,' he says. 'We'll get it in, the glass is going down.' 'Nay,' me Father says, 'The men have been working since five o'clock'. This was a Saturday, and of course they wouldn't work on a Sunday, you see? And he said, 'The men have been working since five o'clock, I won't ask the men to work on.' My Grandfather, I can see him

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now, he was a big, tall man, 6'4", with white hair and a white beard, and he stamped his foot. 'There'll be men and horses when thou and me's gone,' he says. 'They'll work on,' he says, 'I'll go and see the men.' And my Grandfather stood at this gap and led us through; I was only a girl and I was working with a quarry horse, you see riding a quarry horse, and you took your sledge up and tipped it. And we worked on 'til midnight and got the next hay in, and of course on Sunday afternoon it rained. *[Laughs]* 'The men can have all Sunday, they can stop in bed all Sunday', you see. And we used to have all the quarrymen, and I've seen my Mother cook for mebbe twenty five people a day.

WRM What was the technique with a sledge? Did you load a sledge like you did a cart? Did you put the corners in first?

AM Yes, you put two on the front and two on the back, and then two into the middle to seal them up and then you went round a gain, then you put two on the back and the front and then you put your tail gate up, you see, and if you put more than that you very often came adrift.

WRM And then you tipped short of the barn, did you?

AM No, you tipped... you came up to the barn and then they tipped it, and then your horse walked on and your hay fell over like that, so that the forker gets in behind and he forks his bottom armful; so that's it isn't it, so you can pull it. If you go the other way then you can't divide it, you see.

WRM So the horse and the sledge go up to the barn, and short of the barn somebody grabs the sledge and tips it?

AM No; you come up, and if the barn is there your horse has gone past, and you tip opposite your hole but you see as you tip it goes like that, so that the man who's forking comes in behind it and he can then fork his bottom armfuls first and it's easier to fork. So it's gone like that, just a little bit past your hole, you see?

WRM Oh, I see. But the sledge itself was tipped, wasn't it?

AM Eh? Oh yes, the sled was put up on edge like that, and as your horse drew it away and then you popped it down. So I remember as a child once, it was an Irishman, and instead of that he wasn't careful and he went the wrong way and this horse bolted with me and ran away; and of course I wasn't old enough to hold her, you see? But I sat on all the time and it didn't...

WRM Did the horse get used to the sled? Well, it would do I suppose, but with a cart I mean you can tell when to stand and when to move.

AM Oh, yes, very often if you were short you usually had one or two hay leaders that were hired for hay-time and helped to carry out drinkins and helped to do various little jobs, but they were there for hay leaders. Then I've seen... you very often laid hay onto horses and you took one horse and the other horse and the leader could shout at it, 'Go on', and 'Way' and it stopped, and they loaded

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it and then you got off one horse and went onto the other one, you see, and loaded your hay like that.

WRM What do you remember about barns? They've got these glorious names. What are their names up in this part of the world? Do you call it a 'grupe'?

AM No...? I mean, this far barn we used to have...

WRM I mean the actual names of features of a barn.

AM Yes, we had [unclear 00:22:22 – Jonahshaw?] and the Old Lathe, and High Lathe and Shaw Lathe. And then on the other hand we had Cubble Head Farm: there was Cubble Head and Lower Cubbles, and then we went down to Eller Beck and [unclear 00:22:37 – Scarmouth?], and they were all known and, you know, they're names in their own right.

WRM But in a barn though, you call it the 'mew' and the 'baulks'...?

AM Oh yes, that's right.

WRM But these were fairly general through the Dales... and 'boskins'?

AM Yes, a baulks... but where the Dales differ from say Skipton or even Settle where they went in with their carts, backed in with their carts, you see here they never did load with carts. We never led hay with carts. We led hay with sledges and then we had what they called an Irish sweep of which you tipped over. And then you see now they have the balers which is more general all over. But in Settle it's leveller, across to Rathmell and Giggleswick

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it's more level and they lead with carts. We never did, it was always sledges you see.

WRM You don't call them 'shippons' in the Upper Dales either do you?

AM Yes, we call them shippons. I have a shippon across the way.

WRM A 'byre' is often the name, isn't it?

AM Yes, you do in the Settle area, but you don't in the Dales. We call 'em a shippon, and a lathe; not a barn, a lathe. You see, it's either New Lathe or...

WRM Have you ever had a Barn Dance in a barn? Or been to a Barn Dance in a barn?

AM Yes, we used to have some friends of ours at my old house, and they used to have a big cheese room and we used to dance there. And we used to dance in ... a place above a stable is a 'chamber', not a baulks.

WRM How do spell that?

AM Well, I suppose just as you spell 'a chamber'.

WRM Oh, a 'chamber'?

AM Yes, but they would call it 'chamer', you see? You have your steps up the side and in Burtersett village we used to have... my Grandfather built a long building for all the wagon horses, with a lean-to place where the wagons went in, and then the steps went up and the chamber was for the hay, for this time of

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the year when there wasn't any hay, you see? Because my Grandfather, my Mother's Father, used to go to York you see to buy corn and to sell slate and stone, and he used to walk to Leyburn and walk back. Get a train and walk back from Leyburn at ten o'clock at night.

WRM Good grief.

AM To Burtersett, you see? In those days...

WRM What did 'a cheese room' look like?

AM Well, we had a cheese room at home, and you had an upright like that and then you had all your shelves one above another, mebbe five, you see?

WRM These are wooden shelves, are they?

AM Yes, wooden shelves, and you washed them down about once a week. And as you washed you moved those cheeses up onto another shelf; each shelf had to be dried. You see, you turned your cheeses every day. And we used to have... in this big kitchen we made our cheese in the big kitchen that had been a yard, and then in the outer kitchen we had three big iron presses, you know, where you had a big stone on the end and you put it down and you put your cheese. And we used to put two, one on top of another with the tops on, you see, and then you did it down.

WRM Who did you sell your cheeses to?

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AM Well, when I was a girl it used to go to a grocer at Bainbridge, Leylands at Bainbridge, and he used to send it to Liverpool, Manchester and all over. We used to take them down in a milk float and we put straw in the bottom and then usually a wool rug, and then they were all put on end and packed very, very carefully, and then you put another lot of a straw on and carried them very, very carefully down. We used to make... some were 15 lb, some were 17 lb. We never made small cheese.

WRM Did you ever make cheese with blue milk?

AM No.

WRM Because I believe they did occasionally.

AM Yes, I believe they did occasionally.

WRM It would be pretty hard stuff, wouldn't it?

AM Yes, I would think so, yes.

WRM It used to be called 'Wangby cheese', I think.

AM Yes, that's right, yes. And we used to have a mare; if she could get into t'kitchen she would push at... we used to have an oak board that we put all the cheese curls on. She would push this aside, she used to love to drink... I've taken her out a bucket of fresh whey many a time. My Father used to say, 'Oh, it'll do 'er good, it'll scour her.'

WRM *[Laughs]*

AM But you fed it to your pigs, you see? We used to have a lot of pigs, further away from the house.

WRM Did a lot of farmers keep pigs in those days?

AM Oh, yes, all farmers, and all cottagers that could kept a pig one way or another. I mean we used to have... in the village when we had a lot of milk a lot of folk would come and beg a bucket of whey or a couple of buckets of whey and use it up if they kept a pig. I mean this is how they had to do; wages were low, and in villages, all villagers kept geese. They hadn't a yard of land but they kept them on the roadside, you see, and they kept chickens.

WRM Weren't there geese up on the hills in summer?

AM Yes, well on all these moors such as Wether Fell, everybody in Burtersett had... there weren't only sheep gates there were goose gates, you see, and they could keep geese. But then you see they didn't because in later years somebody introduced a lowland breed of foxes, you see, and we came to have a lot of foxes and that didn't do, you see. At Gayle, you see, they all kept geese and they used to sit them in the house against the fireside, you know, in a box. Oh yes, they all had [them] in Gayle, the older folk, you see.

WRM Somebody actually told me over in Swaledale, it might have been Bill Alderson, that they used to keep geese and one chappie used to walk them over

from Swaledale down to one of the railway stations, probably Aysgarth.

AM Oh yes...

WRM And he said he walked one lot of geese over for the train and he got back home, and he said an hour or two later the geese were back home as well, they'd come back over the fell. *[Laughs]*

AM Yes, well they would. We once had geese that went to Semerwater, you know? They were short of water, I suppose, but they came back. I don't remember this, but the people from the village used to take them altogether and they went to York. And you know, they used to drive their geese through tar and sand so that their feet were... just as they used to shoe cattle. I tell you, in these books we burnt there used to be lots of, you know, what they paid here and at various places in Scotland for shoeing cattle. You see, they used to put them light plates on, and then their feet didn't take anything.

WRM Who was the first of your family then to go to Scotland?

AM Well, my Father would follow his Father, you see; this is how it happened.

WRM And your Grandfather was called...?

AM He was Pratt, you see, James Pratt; he was James Pratt, too.

WRM And your Father was James Pratt?

AM Yes, the Pratts all have a Jim and a Richard. The Pratts at Skipton had a Jim

and a Richard.

WRM Do you remember the Pratts at Skipton?

AM At Skibeden?

WRM At Skibeden? Oh, yes.

AM Well, perhaps the Richard Pratt that you knew was my cousin, but my Father's brother farmed at Skibeden and he married... she was from Bend Gate at Long Preston. She was a Butterfield from Bend Gate.

Mr Mason There's a family of Pratts at Barnard Castle.

AM Oh, is there? Oh well, they're not our Pratts.

*[End of Side B and interview - 00:30:53]*