

Interview with Cal Withers

Tim Fleming: It's the 16th February 2018 and today we are interviewing Mr Cal Withers. Thank you for coming Cal, if you could start by telling me a bit about when you first came to the area.

Cal Withers: I was born in Harrogate in Yorkshire in 1935 and I moved shortly afterwards to Bardsey near Leeds. My father had a poultry farm there. Unfortunately my parents split up and my mother had been to Dairy Farm in Scotland, an agricultural college. She had got amazing qualifications and I think she was more of a career person. Somewhere along the line she met a lady called Miss Butchart, Nancy Butchart. What happened was in 1940, driving in a cattle wagon presumably with our furniture over Blubberhouses to Skipton from Harrogate, on to Thwaite Moss. I think I arrived in winter 1940. Nancy Butchart's father and mother lived and farmed at Thwaite Moss and we stayed with them. I was still very young but of infants school age. When we arrived in Thwaite Moss I went to school in Satterthwaite and the teacher there was Miss Fox. Every day from Thwaite Moss we would walk over Stricely to school. Two young children and it was quite an adventure and we always walked. I only remember once being taken by car and only because our little legs couldn't get to the bottom of the snow. The Shuttleworth family lived at Crosslands at that time and little Edward Shuttleworth was 3 years old when he first started that walk to school. He would walk across to Thwaite Moss from Crosslands. We would walk together latterly with Ann Johnston from Rusland Hall Farm. I have very fond memories of that school with only two classrooms. I don't know what age we would move into the next classroom. We were there until moving on to secondary school or grammar school. I remember learning to write. One of my biggest memories was in the big room. The top class usually had about four pupils and one of the pupils who was a couple of years ahead of me was Ewart Wilson. EW at the time lived at Grizedale, a very tall man about 6'7", or boy as he was then. Every time somebody passed to go to the grammar school they had a party and at the party, they had a huge bowl of trifle. They were wonderful times at the school and I don't remember a bad moment at all. I was living at Thwaite Moss at the time and being at school, you don't see too much of what's going on. You don't take it in, it's all school and then your mates come round and play in the (Ashes) Beck, and catch tadpoles. I have great memories of Thwaite Moss, walking over Stricely, down the lane towards Thwaite Head. All the wild flowers we used to have, you could actually smell them. Many of them you learnt you could eat, not the flowers but the green leaves and we would get the watercress out of the Beck and eat it. It was probably washed by mother! In those days illnesses were prevalent and a bit of a problem. We had things like Scarlet Fever, ordinary Measles, German Measles, Whooping Cough, everybody was frightened of getting Polio and told not to go to the swimming baths. I was a bit unlucky. I remember being in my bedroom and having Measles six weeks before the exam for the grammar school which meant I lost important schooling. I got two bites at the cherry when it came to the grammar school exams. My age meant I could go one year early and I made a complete hash of the exam but I got another chance the following year. They changed the exam and it was a so called 'intelligence test'. But again I became ill six weeks before and I missed a considerable amount of schooling

We seemed to stay in bed an awful long time when we had an illness. I got whooping cough as well, I had it when I was very young an apparently I nearly died. That was when I was in Yorkshire. It came the exam time for the grammar school again and I was petrified of not passing. The alternative was going to school at Backbarrow and I wasn't a very strong sort of kid. I was one that was very likely to get bullied so I actually dreaded going to Backbarrow. I passed the exam, it was an intelligence test, you sort of had to match squares and triangles and stuff like that and I felt it was very easy. By the time the exam results came in we had moved to Crooks Farm. Here at Thwaite Moss life was very good for a kid and of course I was here during the war. I remember the victory bonfires we had up on the hill, the Parrocks. I don't remember who put them together but they were huge bonfires. But the sad thing was when you were up there during the war you could see the bombing of Liverpool. Not the actual bombing but the searchlights and the reflections of the flames in the sky. When you are 10 years old I don't think it really registered. When I look back, I think we were so lucky to live in this part of the world. We weren't worried about being bombed. Obviously, Barrow was, but I don't remember any adverse situations so ..

TF - You weren't hungry or anything?

CW - Of course living on a farm, and at school you got a third of a pint of milk, whole milk not semi skinned and a third of a pint of orange juice. I'm not sure if they gave us malt and cod liver oil as well. On the farm, in those days there was more agriculture of course, some ploughing was still done, there were vegetable gardens and orchards. The orchards were bearing fruit so there was fruit and vegetables, and even though we had rationing, and we had ration books, clothes were rationed, everything was rationed, I can safely say even though it was wartime, growing up in the countryside, we didn't suffer. We did have our own searchlight here in Rusland. If you go to Rusland Hall

and turn right to go down to the Beeches, it was in the field at the bottom. I think we had a searchlight and an anti aircraft gun. Jimmy Johnston would know the true facts, Jimmy along with his sister Ann lived at (Rusland) Hall Farm. Going back to walking over Stricely, I remember one day going on my own to school, I got to the top and there was this snake under a holly bush. Snakes terrify me. I just turned round and ran all the way back to Thwaite Moss. Mother led me by the hand back to the top of the hill and said get on with it. She loved snakes! It was an adder. Mr Butchart, the boss, he was an amazing man. I don't remember too much but he got on with his farming. I didn't get much involved as I was too young. All I remember is him in the evening, sitting in his big leather chair in front of a roaring fire. Just an amazing man. I mentioned that my mother had been to dairy school, an agricultural college in Scotland. She was Scottish butter making champion at one point. She went into partnership with Mr Butchart's daughter, Nancy. They bought 3 farms, 2 working farms and one derelict farm. Those Farms were Crooks Farm, Hay Bridge Farm and the derelict High Hay Bridge Farm. The two of them and myself moved there in 1945, but I still had 6 months schooling to do at Satterthwaite. I had been lucky in that my godfather had arrived at Christmas with a brand new bicycle, which in those days was just unheard of. I was quite essential this bike because Crooks Farm is up on the hill and I had to push it down to Rusland Pool, across the bridge, through the woods, come out in Rusland Beeches and cycle to Thwaite Moss, leave the bicycle and then do the walk over to the school at Satterthwaite. I was anxious that I would pass because the alternative schools, I felt I would struggle at. I remember the wait for the postman to deliver the letter with the exam results. Fortunately when they came through, it was a pass so that was a huge relief. After the exam results, it was a few weeks before moving to the school. Ann Johnston passed as well and it was going to be a big adventure for us. Because I was now living near Bouth, the route to school was going to be different. This involved cycling from Crooks Farm through the woods to Bouth, along the Causeway to Haverthwaite crossroads, leaving the bicycle there and catching the bus to Ulverston. Ann Johnston, probably caught the Hadwins bus via Colton. Now the problem with passing the exam, which I was relieved about, was when we got to school, we had gone from a school with 28 pupils to a school with 600. I just couldn't hack it and I don't think Ann could either, so we both struggled the first year. Ann was kept down which I think was the best thing. I did go up to the second year but I struggled all through school and it really was a nightmare. I think I was very unhappy there. I was mildly bullied because sweets were on ration and I remember after school, I'd go down to a shop in Ulverston, where a little old lady had a sweet shop and even though they were rationed, she kept some sweets for me under the counter. I'd go and get these sweets and I'd come out of the shop. By that time there was a group of older kids standing round and I didn't have any sweets left after a very short time. Back at Crooks Farm, Hay Bridge Farm had a tenant. Unfortunately the tenant wasn't farming very well and the only way you could get rid of a sitting tenant was through bad farming. So Miss Butchart and my mother had to go through that process which took some time. In the meantime, I was obviously going to Ulverston Grammer School. When I came home at night, I was expected to do farm work before tea and then I would have my homework to do. It was always a long day. The women were quite remarkable really as Miss Butchart had also been to agricultural college and between them they were very well qualified in more modern farming methods. I think they became the talking point of the local farmers to an extent as it was very unusual two women running a farm. There was no sexual relationship; it was purely a business relationship. For example, they used to make hay pikes – after the hay had been cut, instead of raking and gathering into the barn, they left these huge pikes. They would leave them out for a period of time, then they would go with a horse (it was horse and cart time) and winch them onto the trailer. The locals thought what are these two idiots up to? I assume it was done elsewhere in the country. The thing that surprised the locals most, I'm pretty sure they introduced silage into this area. The end of the war, the army sent out German prisoners to help on the farm and we had two come out, the same two every day. They brought their own rations with them.

TF – Was this from Grizedale Hall?

CW – I'm not sure. Even though we went to Satterthwaite School, I don't think we were really aware of what was going on at Grizedale Hall. My understanding is that it was predominantly for officers. Later on I owned a barn in the Broughton area which is supposedly where the German prisoner who escaped from Grizedale hid and on which the film 'The One that Got Away' was based. Going back to the silage, these two German prisoners gave us the rations that the army gave them. I can't remember what they were but we gave them potatoes etc., and these two guys dug a silage pit. Now digging a hole anywhere in the Lake District is not easy and I don't know how they did it. It was in the field nearest the house and we made silage, which is cutting the grass green, delivering it into the pit and spreading it with treacle or molasses. I'm pretty sure no one else in the Rusland Valley had seen silage. We had a herd of Jersey cows, some purebreds and crossbred. During the war you killed your own pig and it wasn't something I was very comfortable with. Coming home from school and finding this huge pig hanging up from the ceiling, but that's how it was. They were very adept at it. My mother made black pudding in big deep tins full of fat. I've never been able to find any that tasted the same. There were no additives or anything like that and it made full use of the

pig. I remember after, it had been cut up on slabs and covered in salt. My mother actually became while we were at Thwaite Moss, president of Rusland WI. She used to play the piano, 'Jerusalem', which they play before each meeting and she was the representative that went to London for the annual WI meeting. Very flourishing, the WI in those days at the meeting room in Rusland. In fact that meeting room was a big part of our lives even after I'd left Thwaite Moss. Going back to Crooks Farm, as I was at school I didn't realize what was going on but I think they managed well. But at some point they must have fallen out and it ended up with a splitting of the ways. Going back to the German prisoner of war, one of them was an artist and one was a solicitor and I've always thought that those guys didn't want to go to war any more than our guys. One, the artist painted me a picture of a spaniel which I still have. His name was H.Hahn and I've always wanted to trace his family but when I was looking, there are thousands of Hahns all over Germany so up to now I didn't get anywhere. That's a treasured memory.

It was obvious to me that I was never going to be a farmer. You need really to be born into farming and I wasn't even though my father became farm manager for Lloyd George – a successful one too. Going back to Thwaite Head (Moss?), I can remember I had a A40 Somerset van and I don't know how it happened but driving down the lane from Thwaite Moss to Thwaite Head in the dark with Alan Armitstead beside me and his brother Brian sitting on the bonnet with a gun shooting rabbits. Now it certainly wouldn't have been my idea but you'd put Alan and Brian down as proper farmers and I was never going to be.

At Crooks Farm everything was done with a horse. Some sad times there like once your horse gets old and there comes a time when you find it in the field and it can't get up., and you lose it. When Miss Butchart and my mother decided to go their separate ways, we had by this time got the tenant out of Hay Bridge. Mother and I moved there, and we also had ownership of High Heybridge. When we moved to Low Heybridge, I had more or less finished school so I was about 16. I was sent to a farm in Suffolk, a place called Bungay, to get work experience and it was a pedigree Jersey farm and the two things I remember about that was we were locked in the farm for about three weeks because of the Foot and Mouth . We were having lunch when they announced that the King had died. I was there for I suppose a few months. The problem was as I got older, I became liable for National service but because I was farming, I was exempt. That was fine but if we employed anybody else, I had to go to do my National Service. My mother wouldn't have been able to afford to employ somebody else. When I first left school, I got 10 shilling a week and when you are working for your parents on the family farm you don't necessarily get the going rate whatever it might have been .At Hay Bridge there was no such thing as wages, you just get what was needed for food and everything else. At Hay Bridge, I was developing a herd of Jersey cows, cross bred and pure bred. While I'd been in Suffolk, they had arranged to sell me a cow, one of their pedigree Jerseys, long in the tooth but probably good for a few more calves. I bought her for £50 which was a lot of money. My godfather had left me that, sadly he died out in Kuwait. He'd left all his nephews and nieces £50. He also left me a much more sizeable sum. In actual fact the sizeable sum that he did leave me was used by my mother to buy Lower Hay Bridge so you could say that I as an 18 year old owned Lower Hay Bridge. That came about because the Public Trustee looked after the money my godfather left, £1500, and my mother got permission, with agreement from the Public Trustee for the money to be used to buy the farm. I could go down as the owner, though the documents are more likely to show my mother.

TF – At 18 you were pretty well set up then?

CW – I can't just remember the exact age but it must have been in that area. At that point my father also wanted me to go to live with him. Lloyd George had died and my father had moved on to a farm of his own. I felt I couldn't leave my mother, though I saw my father at school holidays and so on, and there were no problems there. I had some fabulous holidays on the Lloyd George Estate, I just felt I couldn't go. So I stayed with my mother and we were building up this herd of Jerseys. I did the milking, I had Wessex Saddleback pigs that produced pigs for the fatstock market incorporation. We sent the pigs up on the hill with electric fencing because they were so good at destroying the roots of the bracken. In that period, I think we were one of the first to do that. We also bought a milk round. Probably it wasn't the right thing to do but we did. How it worked was, I would go to milk the cows. We had a small milking parlour put in for the cows and that was an innovation in this part of the world certainly. I'd been milking by hand prior to that. I did the milking, carried the milk across the yard and my mother would bottle it. Because my mother had passed all these examinations with regard to butter making etc. , she did just that . The butter fat content of our milk was an average of 6% and one of the Lancashire universities (we were in North Lancashire then) did monthly tests. Out of all the farms in Lancashire we had the highest butter fat content. We also had cream available and she made cream cheese. The milk round amounted to about 36 miles, which was utterly stupid, so I had this A40 van and I eventually passed my test. The milk round extended as far as Bowness. We sold the bottled milk with the nice yellow deep cream at the top and it was very popular. There was some Hungarians who owned a house half way between Newby Bridge and Bowness and they were there at weekends and they ordered crates of it. There was one problem – it was illegal! You weren't allowed to sell milk like we were doing. All you did after milking

the cows was put it through a cooler. It had a very short life as fridges weren't as readily available and the higher the butter fat content, the quicker it was likely to go off. So it was illegal. The reason we did it was quite simple. The majority of farmers had Ayrshire cows, Friesian cows in particular, and they give umpteen gallons more than the Jerseys or Guernseys cows but the average butter fat was about 3%. The Milk Marketing Board, who you supposed to sell the milk to, didn't pay you on quality. So the only way we could get value was as we did, with the milk round. We had some quite interesting customers. I think it was every Friday I used to go to the Sun Hotel in Coniston and when Donald Campbell was staying there, he was living off our milk and cream. In fact in the evenings when Donald Campbell was up here on his world waterspeed record attempts, after work at night, we would know from the radio what the water conditions were like on Coniston and whether he was likely to go out testing, because he would do it early morning or in the evenings. I would drive over with the van and park on the opposite side of the Lake and watch Campbell. Indeed I've got some film of Campbell. The only problem is it shows this little speck and an awful lot of water. It was just an 8mm cine camera. They were beautiful evenings and when you see the number of people out there watching. Also during that time I developed a hobby. Even though I was at Crooks Farm, one of the major parts of my life at that time was Rusland Young Farmers Club and it was a very flourishing young farmers club. The Wilkinson twins and their partners, Gordon and Donald Wilkinson, and Elsie Jackson and Margaret Watson I think it was (apologies if I'm wrong), were I think the mainstay along with Ewart Wilson and his sister Ena. Most of the time Elsie Jackson seemed to do the job of Secretary, which she did very well. I was vice chairman on occasions so if Gordon or Donald, whoever was chairman at the time wasn't available, I'd sit in. We had some wonderful experiences. There were a lot of trips on Hadwin's buses. Ewart Wilson, because he was so tall, always sat at the back of the bus in the middle so he could put his feet nearly all the way down the bus. We would go on trips for example to the Royal Lancashire Show. I think it had a permanent showground at Blackpool at the time. I remember one visit there, we entered a netball team, a mixed netball team with the girls and the boys and I believe we won the competition. There was a 100 yards race there which I won and I thought 'I can run' so I did a letter to Barrow Athletic Club - can I join? Several weeks later came the reply 'we are very sorry to refuse your application as you are a professional. You won 7 shillings and 6 pence at the Young Farmers Club Show in Blackpool. We are very sorry. I had all these plans about running in the Olympic Games. I thought 'I can run, what do I do now?'

I was going on holiday to America, my mum said for my twenty first birthday you can either have a party or go to America. So I thought I'm off to America because family had gone out there in 1860's or so on. I was trying to find out as I was a professional, was there professional athletics in America? Effectively no and that was my worldwide fame down the drain! So George Burrow in Oxen Park, who became a friend of mine, he and I trained together. At Hay Bridge Farm going along the fields at the lower level out to the Pool, we actually rigged up lights with a car battery so we could train at night. George tended to do 400 yards as they were, 800 yards and the mile and I did sprinting. This was to a degree proper professional running but it was all handicapped. So Saturday, which is the usual day where you go and compete somewhere, I'd milk the cows in the morning, do the milk round, look after the pigs and drive to wherever. This could be Dearham in Cumbria, out into Yorkshire at Dent, could be Grasmere or Ambleside, anywhere. So after the running it was back to milk the cows again. A few weeks ago, I met Reg Harrison who trained with us sometimes but he was infuriating because he was one of those guys who didn't need to train very much and he was a brilliant runner. He was reminding me that we were up in Workington, Brampton or somewhere and there was a dance that night after the races. They were local shows not just race meetings though some were. He reminded me that we had decided we had to come back to Hay Bridge, they would help me do the milking and go all the way back to Brampton to the dance.

TF – Did you run at Rusland Show?

CW – Oh Yes. I wanted to be a fell runner and I dreamt a lot about winning a lot of fell races but it never happened. I confined myself to 100 yards, 200 yards and I might have done the odd 400. Certainly I ran at Rusland. My biggest success was at Grasmere which in the north of England was probably the tops but because it had so many. There was cycling and Cumberland and Westmorland Wrestling. They did high jump, pole vaulting but nothing to land on at all! I won 5 races there, I think it was in 1956 or 1957, that was heats, semis and final of the 100 yards and the semi and final of the 220. I was pretty proud of that and I picked up £20 but I wasn't the fastest guy there as it was a handicap. The fastest guy in England was there, a guy called Malcolm Spence who held the world record for a professional at the time, I think about 9.65 seconds on grass, properly timed and a proper record attempt where the British amateur record was 9.8 for a hundred yards. It was held by I don't know how many people for donkeys years including a family cousin equalled it who also picked up two medals at the Berlin Olympics. So that was me as a professional runner. Again with the Young Farmers Club we would have lectures and quizzes. I remember going to Carnforth and I had about 5 people in my car and it was an old 1932 Austin. I remember going down the A6 just before Carnforth

and it was quite a straight road then and I was doing sixty miles an hour. When I think back that was pretty fast for those days. What I was nervous about was, they always stitched me up at the Young Farmers Club. They thought because of my mother's upbringing, I was never accepted as a proper local. Anyway this particular Young Farmers was a public speaking contest and they elected me to do it. I had never been more terrified in my life. You'd go to the local shows, there would be a Young Farmers section, to judge the weight of a chicken. I was quite good at that but then they put me in for trussing a chicken! They were fantastic times. We went on quite long coach trips. I've got a catalogue from the Ford Motor Co at Halewood from that era and I think we must have gone there. I remember while I was at Hay Bridge my nearest neighbours were Crook on one side but I didn't have cause to go there anymore. When I went to the Young Farmers in the evening times I would go on the tractor and we had a young Australian girl staying with us, I couldn't get on with her at all. She came to the Young Farmers meeting one night. I got the tractor out and she had to sit on the wing. It was a Fergie tractor and there no real coverage from the mud. She got her best dress on I think and we went across to Hulleter where the Armisteads lived and then down to Whitestock with her on the tractor on to Rusland Hall. Before that I remember, when I was learning to drive, you are supposed to have L plates on and you are supposed to have somebody with you. I was first introduced to driving by Miss Butchart when we were still at Crooks. We went on the highest field on the farm and we were in her Landrover. She said 'You can drive a tractor can't you?' and I said yes, so 'Get in the driving seat of this'. So I got in the driving seat and she said off you go and that was it. I put it in gear, put my foot on the accelerator and I never thought to take my foot off the accelerator. She never batted an eyelid. But when we got this van, I remember going to the Young Farmers in this van and going quite a few places, and I certainly didn't have anyone with me. That was fairly typical of what would happen. There was no alternative as there was no one to go with you. When it came to take my test I went to Barrow the day before. I'd never been to Barrow before and I wasn't used – I'd been driving round the country which was basically around the Rusland valley as a learner. So when I took my test the following day I failed it and the examiner said you can drive beautifully but you haven't got a clue when it comes to traffic sense. It was true and I passed the second time. Driving is a very big part of my life and living in a rural area, if you couldn't drive especially now with no buses, if you can't drive you are snookered. The Young Farmers was a very big part of the life, the Saturday night dances, Saturday night Whist Drives, Women's Institute, the community spirit even though you were quite far apart, it was not as though you could shout to your neighbour. Hulleter was my nearest neighbour and I used to go there at harvest time and help. I always remember Mrs Armistead making such wonderful teas. I was very fond of my cakes in those days. We would come in after some hard work in the fields to this lovely meal. We enjoyed the picnics they brought out when you would stop in the middle of hay making and you had these tin cans with the tea in. They were really exciting times.

TF – How long were you at Hay Bridge Farm?

CW – I went to America in 1956 so I was 21. When I came back my mother became ill and I'd been struggling with the farm work. When it comes to putting a wall gap up, I can put a wall gap up but you wonder whether it will fall down today or maybe tomorrow. We engaged a guy and I don't remember his name, but he was probably about 30 and he could do anything. Wall building, laying hedges, top class but the problem was I was this upstart in charge telling him what to do. Not necessarily how to do the wall gapping but it didn't work very well and my mother became ill so we had to give up the farm. This would be about 1957. I was left on my own as my mother was away when she became ill and we couldn't afford to pay anybody. I think it's true to say we weren't making any money. We owned High Hay Bridge as well as Hay Bridge, the barn was still intact and there was this huge opening and if you stood in this opening, you look down the valley. I used to think, what a place to convert to a house. This was really before this sort of thing really took on. Perhaps the planning laws weren't that strict then. There was no chance we were ever going to do it but we put the farm up for sale. There were two sales, one of the farm and it was both together, High Hay Bridge and Low Hay Bridge. There was a separate sale of all the cattle implements, household goods and everything like that. The two farms sold but it was for £1200, for 175 acres approx. A few weeks ago, I was in Michael Hodgsons estate agents office in Grange looking at property and there was one of his a\$ sized property descriptions in front of me. It was for High Hay Bridge, £850,000! Obviously they had spent a lot of money on doing it. Going back to Crooks, a year or so ago, I decided to show my partner where I had lived at Crooks Farm and when we got there, it was undergoing renovation. Brian Armistead had owned it, I understand and I presume when Brian died that Alan took it over. The person who had bought it apparently was a Tesco employee who was working in Czech looking after their affairs over there. When he told me the figure he had paid for it, in the region of £500,000 and he was spending another £500,000 on it. When we were at Hay Bridge we had the telephone put in and that was about a mile of telephone pole. I think it's amazing that they did that for us but at that time it was still what they called 'party line'. So if you want to make a call, you pick up the phone and you find that Mrs Armitstead is still on the line from another call! We didn't have electricity at Hay Bridge. I'd had a huge electric shock there as I

was milking the cows in the milking parlour, there was a torrential thunderstorm and because Hay Bridge is at the bottom of a slope the rain came down like a river between the milking parlour and the house. There was this lightning strike must have struck the water somewhere and a huge blue flash right across the milking parlour, under the cows and hit me right across behind both legs. I had wellington boots on and I'm not aware I suffered any after effects. There was a young lad in the dairy and he had his hand on the water tap and that flung him right across the dairy. He didn't apparently suffer any other effects. George Burrow who I was friends with, and ran with, became a very good friend George, he helped me to put electricity in the house. What we did was after I won that money at Grasmere, £20, I sent away to London for an alternator, and this alternator arrived and we took the old 1932 Austin off the road. We took the engine and gearbox out, made a platform for it, bolted it down and then we connected the alternator to run off the back of the gearbox with a belt. We tied the fuel pipe along the exhaust manifold and started the engine on tractor vaporising oil which is the fuel you used for tractors. I got that wrong in that you start it on petrol and turn it over to vaporising oil. It's what you did with the Fergie tractor which had a big tank, a TVO, and a little tank of petrol. You started on petrol then turned over. To heat up the TVO so it would run, I tied the fuel pipe to the exhaust manifold and the George brought several lights. We ran a cable from the barn via the milking parlour. We had a light in there and we ran a wire across the yard into the house. We put several lights in. Father had given me a black and white television with a 10 inch screen and with those 10 inch screens you could get a big glass bubble that you put on the front of it. It magnified the screen so we were all set up with lights and television. I just managed to get up on the roof and get reception somehow. The only problem was as you switched each light on or the television, the lights went down because there was no governor on the engine. As soon as you put a load on! Another experience I had was actually at Hay Bridge which upset me and it proved why I was never going to be a proper farmer. Hunting with the hounds of course was very common in those days and there were some organized shoots, well just shoots without hounds. The pig, the Wessex Saddleback was farrowing and the thing I didn't like was the hounds could appear on your land without your permission. Two things had happened. The hounds on one occasion had gone to the sty where the pig was farrowing and jumped over into the pig sty. The other one was, on the moss, I saw from the farm a hound (fox?) that had obviously been chasing for a long while, absolutely on its last legs with the hounds just about to catch it. I'm very anti hunting and whilst we had been at Crook, we put some hens out a night and they had all gone by the following morning. At Hay Bridge, the lowest fields were effectively a peat bog. I got very good at getting the tractor stuck down there – it would sink up to the axels. Getting it out was a problem but I got quite clever at it. Somehow or other we had located some long metal sheets, I suppose at the most they were 2 foot wide and 20 foot long. They were what the army had used during the war to drop into jungles or wherever to make temporary runways. They hooked onto each other so what I did was I'd take one of each of these and put it behind the back wheels, chain it to the wheels and put the tractor in reverse. It would wind them underneath the wheels and then, if I was lucky, I could get out. When you went down the Rusland Valley, there was the peat cutting at Ealinghearth and places like that.

TF – Lets just finish with a few random questions. You have talked a lot about community life and sharing but what do you think we have lost?

CW – The thing I really feel is, I was fortunate enough to come back here in 2006. As I've mentioned, when I was young, I have these wonderful memories of all the wild flowers and birds. I'm not an expert on birds but things like the Tewit, which I'm right in saying is a Plover or a Peewit and a Curlew, and so many others and because in so many places we've lost hedgerows, we've lost all the wildlife that lived in them. I used to enjoy, whether it was walking over Stricely to school, from Thwaite Moss to Thwaite Head all the different wild flowers, the different colours, that's what I feel we have lost most. We are quite fortunate in a way that not so much has changed. I was away for 40 years. I visited on a regular basis but I could still when I came back literally drive the roads blindfold because they haven't changed. We are very lucky indeed. There are very few structural changes. Just sitting here today, right there have obviously been changes but you can still relate to it but it's not the same place sadly. I think, even though it was wartime, I can't say I've any bad memories. We were very very fortunate, we weren't evacuees, we weren't brought out of a big city because it wasn't safe to be there, we weren't separated from our families. We got on with life, farming went on. Yes there were restrictions and rationing hit us as much as everybody else but we had an advantage in that we grew our own vegetables. We had the pigs that were killed and so we were very much self sufficient. That's probably been the best part of my life.