

Interview with Cal Withers and Gordon Wilkinson, Rusland, 17th April 2018

TF: It's Tuesday the 17th April and we're in Crosslands and today I'm talking to Cal Withers and Gordon Wilkinson and they're going to have a chat about old times

CW: Right Gordon, I was very interested in the piece that you did with Tim, but I felt that there's quite a lot that you left out of your own personal involvement in what went on in the vall (stumbles) valley, sorry, and I thought it would be a good idea if you could explain the workings of Rusland Show, very much active in organising it along with your wife and others, I thought a bit of history on that would be interesting.

GW: Yeah well I think it started in the early years of 19, probably 1903 or 4. Then during the war...

CW: No

G: ...it didn't happen because of the war then it started up again in 1951 and that was when I was first involved with it. I mean in those days we just had... I think it was 2 marquees, a big marquee and a... and a secretary's tent and it's just grown from that really.

CW: Am I right in thinking its actually run as a business? It owns own the marquee... does it own the field really in?

GW: Yes we own all our marquees and I think we have 8 or 9 large marquees now. I became involved quite heavily really I was made... elected as vice chairman then I was made chairman and I held that office for 36 years...

CW: This is what I'm getting at

GW: ... chairman but in that time we really did... you know, we started off with one trophy in the mid 50s, Martin Stokes he was the chairman, and er he gave a trophy for the most points in the horticultural sections, I rather think we've 30 odd now, 30 odd trophies for different thing (chuckles)

CW: Well I remember...

GW: ...that's in the show tent. and besides that there's... there's quite a lot of trophies for the running, athletics side, so it's got quite big...

CW: It has

GW: ... for the area. It started off as just a little show in the village hall, in the Reading Room, and I think it was the gardeners from Rusland Hall that... and one or two local farmers that got it, got it going. And mostly in that show, as I said, most of it was pot plants from the hall (chuckles). And then it got too big for that and then they went into the... what they call 'The old flower show field', that's opposite the vicarage where Nigel Woodhouse lives. And then I suppose that wasn't big enough so they moved into Whitestock Meadow, but I can't tell you when.

CW: But the...

GW: in the early days I think it was all... people, they bought the marquee with shares, everybody chipped in and they had shares. And I can't tell you when that was disbanded, that the show would likely ... whether they bought them out or ... it was before I was chairman I think. So yeah, it's been quite a success story really.

CW: it's been a big part of your life outside of farming hasn't it?

G: oh yes, well yeah, terrific

CW: I mean, just give us, just give us some clue as to what was involved, I mean we all turn up on show day and it's all there but is ...? I presume everybody locally helps put the marquees up, you don't have any professional help do you.

G: No no, no no, it was all, you know, we'd a very strong committee and they all, you know, chipped in and worked hard really the week before. And then of course taking... dismantling everything the day or two after.

CW: Do you still have a dance at night?

G: No er

CW: You don't, you don't have a wooden floor in now do you?

G: Yes

CW: Oh do you, even on show day,

G: Aye, terrific

CW: I didn't notice

G: About 120 foot long now the marquee

CW: But the... the mainstay of the show like the fell-racing I mean people...that's still...

G: Going ahead yes

CW: ... one of the events people come a long way to run in.

G: That's right

CW: And mentioning the fell race, that was one of your...

G: Yeah, well I used to run the fell but I never did any good at Rusland (laughs)

CW: Well I think you did...

G: (still laughing) I don't think it was steep enough for me

CW: I think you did do good at Grasmere maybe?

G: Yeah, I was second, I'd a second a third and a fourth at Grasmere

CW: And that's one of the major fell races.

G: (chuckles)

CW: Yeah. Again at the show, you've always had hound trailing haven't you?

G: Oh yes.

CW: Now not everybody will know what hound trailing is will they?

G: No no, probably not, but we still have it and er

CW: So...

G: ... yeah the hounds, they lay the trails for the puppies... they lay a trail for them to follow about 6 miles

CW: And that trail, is it aniseed?

G: Aniseed, yeah, and they old dogs er they run 10 mile. Yeah it's quite a ... you know, quite an old sport really.

CW: Am I right that... is there two guys lay the trail, start in the middle and one comes to the start and the other comes to the finish?

G: That's right yes, yes.

CW: Yes so you need to be fit to do that

G: (chuckles)

CW: Everything I think has occasionally a bit of a murky past, weren't there occasions when people tried to slip a dog in in the middle?

G: Oh there was always that sort of thing, we thought... (*hard to make out*) we'd catch one that was winning or something (chuckles)

CW: Because it's a huge betting sport isn't it?

G: Aye it was, don't know whether it's so bad... but going back to the dances. It was all sort of old time, it was very notorious was Rusland Show dance. Very well known, people used to come... just absolutely packed.

CW: Yeah, yeah.

G: But in those days the electricity came through, just on a two core wire, because that's all we needed, that's all we had electric for was the light, in the early days.

CW: Right

G: And it used to come from a house at Whitestock, through the wood, over the road and in, and then as time (chuckles) as time went on the old time dancing sort of faded out a bit and the Young Farmers got a band to come, like a jazz band type of thing and er... when they fit up they got this tingling, and (chuckles) and we realised there was just two core wire, so we'd to put a wire... we knocked an iron stake in the field and earthed it (laughs) and I always said that was my first experience of live music.

(Both laugh heartily)

G: And er... So that's how it goes. But now it's all... we got some cabling done and that, now, well they run everything off it. Well no, they don't actually, they've stopped doing that, they do it all by generators now. We used to bring a piano... take the piano from Rusland Room for the dance at night, and the one at Rusland was out of tune or something so we went for Satterthwaite one, and I went up with the tractor and buck rake for this piano and I was coming down through Force Forge and there was... this bumpy road and the buck rake tripped and the piano (chuckling as he speaks) ... anyway we got sorted out and er nobody ever knew, I think you were some of the first people I told. (laughs)

TF: Was it still in tune when you got it...

G: We got it back to Satterthwaite alright after the show and I don't think Mrs Lamb (?) knew any different really. (chuckles) So it was quite

TF: It stayed in tune did it?

G: Yeah, yeah, well as far as I know (laughs) There were... I don't think there wouldn't be many of us really bothered about tune by about 10 or 11 o'clock at night (laughs). But it was... eh they were good does, really were.

TF: Was this the night of the show?

G: Yeah. We'd all to clean out and all the cables to clear away before the dance.

CW: In those days when there was a dance in the hall or anywhere else you had the girls all in one group and the lads in another group. Most of the lads wouldn't dance, but because Gordon had his partner Elsie and his brother, twin brother Donald had Margaret, they were always first on the floor, you know, they didn't... they'd got their partners and sometimes they'd dance for ages and nobody else would join in

G: (chuckles) Ah

CW: Right, so

G: We always used to have an MC

TF: Yeah?

G: For the band, Syd banks they used to come with their band and I was often MCing and ... used to sort of “What dance now Syd?” and “Oh we’ll have a quickstep” so you used to say “Take your partners for a quickstep” and that was it, that was the MC. Oh, good days.

CW: they were, they were excellent. Moving on from there, something else very traditional was market day on Thursday wasn’t it in those days?

G: Yeah

CW: On market day what was your day? Because all the farmers went to Ulverston that day didn’t they, it was like a club really.

G: Yeah, well, in our early days here we’d no vehicle and we used to go across to catch the bus.

CW: Just while you mention that I heard you say that in the previous recording, but what you didn’t say was how far you had to walk from Crosslands to the Vicarage to catch the bus.

G: Yeah, could be what? Mile and a half

CW: Yeah

TF: And you’d get the bus into town for market day

G: Yeah

TF: So you weren’t taking stock into town or anything?

G: No we used to use a cattle wagon with Saunders

TF: So you’d send you cattle in a wagon...?

G: Saunders’s yeah

CW: The people who are around now Saunders.

G: Yeah

TF: And then you’d go to the auction would you?

G: Not often, probably Donald and me probably wouldn’t go, Dad would go to the bus and go to town (chuckles) eventually we got a car 1949 or 50 somewhere

TF: What was the auction like in the 40s then Gordon?

G: Oh terrific, because it was in the town then.

CW: They were really buzzing weren’t they?

G: Oh yeah terrific

TF: Can you describe it for us?

G: If you go now there isn't many people there, a lot of people send their stock and... see in those days every farm had plenty of help so the boss used to go to market and.... But now a lot of farmers are just on their own and they haven't time to go so they just send the stock in. It can be very quiet now... so

CW: While we're talking about market, I happen to have a copy of the catalogue when we had to sell Hay Bridge and sold all the cattle. And I've got here just at random, one of the cows, lot 7, it sold for 44 guineas. It was all guineas then, 21 shillings, guineas.

G: Yeah. Well pedigree cattle were always sold in guineas.

CW: Was it just pedigree?

G: Yes

CW: Ah well these... that's interesting actually, most of ours were pedigree so that's why they were sold in guineas. Let's get this right, 44 guineas, what does that add up to in today's money?

TF: What was a guinea then?

CW: Twenty one shillings, one pound one shilling.

TF: So 44 guineas would be forty pound and four shillings

G: Forty two pounds four shillings.

CW: What would a pedigree milk cow, average pedigree milk cow sell for now?

G: Oh, £1500 to £2000.

CW: Little bit of difference. You also mentioned the vicarage where you caught the bus, and that of course was an active vicarage, we had a vicar there then didn't we.

G: Oh yes, yes.

CW: And across the road, I don't know whether it's still there, is it Friends Meeting House?

G: Meeting house yes.

CW: Mrs Addis (?)

G: Yes

CW: That's right. Is that actually still there as a meeting house

G: Yes

CW: It is

G: Yeah, yeah

CW: Because I know my Mother visited there, well she was good friends with Mrs Addis, and my mother's actually buried in their graveyard in Hawkshead.

TF: It's called Rook How¹ nowadays.

CW: It was called Rook How then wasn't it?

G: It was Rook How

TF: It's still managed by the Quakers

CW: Right, right, right.

G: I mean I can't remember it but in the early days there was a shop there...

CW: Was there?

G: A sweet shop. Elsie used to talk about that.

CW: I watch quite a bit of television. Two or three times recently they've been featuring cows calving and they've got this wonderful machine that they can jack the legs of the calf to drag it out...

G: Yes, calving aid, calving aid

CW: ... and I remember doing that sort of stuff but it was just hands then

G: On the rope

CW: ...just pulling, no fancy machinery, we didn't need it.

TF: Hard work

G: Aye, it was, aye, (*it would*) take two or three sometimes to pull.

TF: How come the cows don't just come naturally then?

G: Well they can get maybe a leg back and things like that. And you've a job when they've got so far, you've a job to rectify it without having to come... but now, now they do caesareans like every day thing...

¹ The Meeting House

CW: Yeah the vets are amazing

G: ...no problem they just take them out sideways.

CW: In your... in your recording you seem to be making a similar view to me that, you know, what's missing from when we were growing up there in the 40s, and I think you were mentioning the greenery and I mentioned that to me the lack of wild flowers, so many birds that we don't hear any more...

G: Ah right

CW: ...and it's such a shame

G: Yeah, yeah

CW: And yet a lot of the things we're missing sort of nationally they blame the fact that we cut down the hedgerows, but we didn't have many hedgerows here did we?

G: No

CW: So that can't have been the problem...

G: No

CW: ...in a valley like this

G: No

CW: So what was it? The fertilizer? The more cars?

G: I don't know, I don't think it's that much different (chuckles) the wildlife to what it used to be.

CW: No but if you think walking along the lanes all...

G: But I mean all those

CW: ... those flowers you had, you could smell them.

G: Oh yeah, yeah yeah

CW: But now...

G: Yeah

CW: ...you don't

G: Well it's all rushes now isn't it, and wet. They used to dredge the pool, used to dredge it quite regular.

TF: And they don't do that any more?

G: No don't know when the last time. It was a long long time ago, I bet it's 30, 40 years

TF: So does that make the water back up and makes the ground a bit wetter?

G: Yeah well they used to lower the bottom of the pool you see and the water could get away differently.

TF: And now it doesn't get away...

G: No

TF: ...so that makes it more of a wetland

G: See the drains are all... they're not kept cleared are they? It always flooded with high tides but I mean that was it, it was gone. But now, well all those fields from the A590 up to here were all lovely and green and cropped. Like Abbots' Reading Farm it was one of the best farms in the area and they used to win green crop competitions

CW: Right

G: Competitions for their crops and... there's nothing

CW: There was peat cutting

G: Eh?

CW: There was peat cutting down there wasn't there?

G: Oh yes there was. Just below Ealinghearth there yeah. Cutting peat yeah.

TF: But now that's rushes and bog isn't it, all of it?

G: It is yes, oh aye, it's all gone.

CW: and there are farmers up and down the country aren't there that are ... I think are being paid to...

G: Oh yeah

CW: ...to bring back the wild flowers and...wild birds and so on

G: Oh yeah, yeah. Aye.

TF: do you think more of that should happen up here then?

G: I would rather see good managed fields and things (Chuckles)

TF: Good grazing

CW: Obviously there must have been plenty of good quality grass because it was all milk wasn't it?

G: Oh yes, yes.

CW: You had your sheep I know.

G: Well we grew all kinds of crops, we used to grow grazing maize and kale and turnips, and mangolds.

CW: That was a job wasn't it? Cutting kale in the wet with your sou'wester on

G: Yeah well it was all right, didn't take any harm did we?

CW: No

TF: Was the kale for the animals?

GW: Yeah it would grow this tall

CW: You'd nibble a bit yourself.

G: Yeah, good sugary (?) wasn't it?

TF: So why do you think people aren't growing that kind of thing any more?

G: They haven't got the labour for one thing. Everything's just done with contract now isn't it. I mean we used to grow fields of turnips for the sheep, that isn't done now is it?

TF: Was that a very labour-intensive job then?

G: Well not really, it was... no, it wasn't... we used to just let the sheep eat them on the field. But it was quite intensive when we used to cut the turnips and bring them in, that was quite...

TF: You'd do all that by hand

G: Yes.

TF: I bet that was hard work.

G: Well it was but anyway there was nothing else for it. (chuckles)

CW: All farming was hard work

G: Well haytimming, I mean, everything was done by hand wasn't it?

CW: Yeah, well I remember at Thwaite Moss, this was when I was very young, bringing in the hay and stuffing it in the barn and, you know, when it got up to the er... the large beam

across the barn, I was scared of heights and being told to go up and sort the hay out up there. I struggled a bit with that.

G: Yeah, yeah.

CW: But did you ever... with corn for example or whatever you want to call it, did you grow any, you know, wheat?

G: Well not wheat, but we grew oats...

CW: yeah

G: ... and barley

CW: Yes, now did you have your own thrashing² machine?

G: No he used to come round

CW: I thought that was the case. But I remember my father was farm manager for Lloyd George, former Prime Minister, and when I was on school holiday they had huge, you know, cereal fields, and I went on top of this thrashing machine... you know...

G: (*hard to hear*) cutting the band

CW: ...yeah cutting the bands and dropping them in and Broomph! But, when you think about it there was no health and safety there...

G: No nothing

CW: ... there was nothing stopping me falling in there.

G: Well all these belts with no covers on them.

CW: Yeah

G: Oh dear

CW: And then afterwards, you know, just to punish me for something I hadn't done, going to the back and bagging the corn, and all the bloomin' chaff coming out, and all the dust choking you to death.

G: Well, it, they were hard days but everybody... you all went to help your neighbours and they all come to you.

CW: That's right, you did

G: Thresher would go to one farm...

² Threshing machine, CW pronounces it "thrashing"

CW: Yes

G: ... and we would all go and help and

CW: But then...

G: It used to come off the back and, there was sort of 12, 14, 16 stone bags big'uns...

CW: They were

G: ... of oats and they used... more often than not they used to carry them up to a grainary³, up some steps

CW: Yes

G: Oh it was unbelievable really what you used to do.

CW: Thinking about other implements that we used to use, when you were cutting the grass for hay, sitting on that mowing machine...

G: Aye, I loved that

CW: ... you'd do it with horses did you?

G: Oh absolutely I loved it

CW: Did you do it with horses?

G: yeah, yeah

CW: But I mean you were only however long away from being tipped off weren't you...

G: (chuckles) We were

CW: ... in front of the actual mower, you know, it stuck out...

G: (chuckles)

CW: Some of the things that... (*break in continuity?*) I never did it because I didn't have the skill but ploughing, I'm sure Gordon did it...

G: Yes

CW: ... and you were just one step away from a broken collar-bone if it hit a rock

TF: Did you used to plough with horses then at (?)

³ Granary, G pronounces "grainary"

G: Yes, everything was done by horses, all... we used to stitch the potatoes up with them, aye

TF: So how did that work, did you lead the horses across the field...

G: Oh no

TF: You sat on them?

CW: No

G: No, you walked behind them with the plough.

CW: You had reins.

G: Walk right behind with the plough.

TF: So you had the horse in front...

G: Two horses

TF: ... with the plough

G: Yes

TF: And then you pushing, guiding the plough

G: Yeah, well you didn't push it, horses pulled it but you... yeah

TF: You had to guide it did you?

G: Yeah, yeah more or less

CW: And that was the problem because specially in this part of the world there's more stones than you care to think about aren't there?

G: Aye there's fixed rocks

CW: And you know, you hit one of those and the plough shoots up and the handles that you've hold of...

G: Telling me

CW: ...I say I didn't do it personally but er you know... of course one of the big things, ploughing competitions wasn't it?

G: It was aye

CW: And when you saw how straight some of these guys could actually plough a furrow... you'd have a huge field with all these guys and separate...

G: Yeah

CW: ...you know, pieces of ground to plough. Utterly amazing

TF: Did you the ploughing competitions?

G: Just one it was down at Roose. I've a photograph of me ploughing actually that day.

TF: How did you get on?

G: Oh no good (chuckles)

CW: Seeing as you've mentioned competition I'm going to boast about one

G: (chuckles)

CW: I never, I was ... I retired unbeaten in tractor backing competitions. I was never beaten. And the reason I was never beaten was I only did one

(chuckles from TF and G)

CW: For some reason somebody persuaded me to enter a tractor backing competition: - you just back a tractor and trailer round the course - and this was at Witherslack, and I won it, much to my surprise and everybody else's, so I thought 'that's the time to retire'...

G: (chuckles)

CW: ... because, you know, I wasn't noted for me skills with a tractor. There was an awful lot of... because you had were hedging competitions

G: Yeah, walling...

CW: What was your Donald's speciality? Your twin brother

G: Oh he hedged, he loved hedging, aye won the lot, he won a lot of competitions. Well two or three of our lads did didn't they?

CW: Yeah

G: Alan and Brian, Harry Bennett, went all over Lancashire

CW: Real farmers, you know

G: And then eventually Donald, he was instructor for Lancashire

CW: Was he?

G: Yes

CW: that's... you know

G: Yeah.

CW: He did very well to achieve that

G: Aye he did yeah

TF: Are you more of a waller Gordon?

G: Aye. Too prickly thorns (laughs)

CW: Thinking about wall gaps as I said on my piece I could put a wall gap up and then I'd stand back and look at it while it fell down

G: Oh right

(Both chuckle)

CW: But was it... am I right in thinking the rule when you're repairing a wall gap, you pick a stone up and you don't put it down except on the wall?

G: Well that's what they say don't they, a good waller never picks a stone up twice

CW: Yeah and was that... did you operate by that rule?

G: No not really, (chuckles) I often put one down again. There's an old saying that... well I always remember Mr Martindale from Low Dale Park and he said this, he was putting a wall gap up one day and this visitor came past and said to him "Well that's simple enough, that's, you know, nothing to it, you just put a stone on another, upon another." And (?) Martindale said "well that's where you're wrong, you put one stone upon two."
We used to make pikes, and you did at Crooks.

CW: I thought that my mother and Miss Butchart (?) who were farming at Crooks, like you say, we did pikes, I thought they introduced it to the valley, but that might be wrong.

G: I don't know...

CW: We went to Crooks in...

G: ...we did quite a bit

CW: yeah, but...

G: It's funny how some of our forebears up Cumbria they used to do it all like that

CW: Right, you could understand that

G: When it was a catchy (?)⁴ time... that was best. But I can remember going with my horse for the pike bogey, to Crooks.

CW: Right

G: Down the Beeches, over the bridge...

CW: That's right

G: ... and we brought it back and we carted out pikes in with it, yeah, lovely.

TF: Is that a picture of the pikes Cal?

CW: That's a picture of Miss Buchart winching a pike on...

G: Oh, aye, well I went... I borrowed it...

CW: Oh right

G: ... one year if not two. And of course... eventually we got a tractor. But yeah, that was... I went down Beeches, down that bridge under Crooks there, across the pool.

CW: Yeah that's the way for 6 months when I left Thwaite Moss and was still going to Satterthwaite School I had to push the bike down from Crooks, down the hill, over that same bridge, through the woods down... cycle down the Beeches, leave the bike at Thwaite Moss and then walk over Stricely

(break in continuity?)

G: Well when we first came we were still... we were members of Furness Young Farmers and er we used to cycle back to Urswick for meetings and then in... was it 48, 49? We sort of had the idea and tried to form a club here and we did in 49. One or two of the leading members from Furness came up and the county organiser Mr Sutton and we organised a Young Farmers and we ended up with forty or fifty members. It was... marvellous days them.

CW: They were weren't they? We had some wonderful occasions at the meeting room in Rusland and we had some fabulous trips.

G: Terrific yes.

CW: Hadwin's coaches all over the country. You lot always stitched me up with these... when we went to these shows...

G: Oh...

⁴ Assume this refers to summer with showery weather and no long periods of sunshine but best check with Gordon, transcriber may have misheard !

CW: ...you had me trussing chickens and stuff like that while you did the hedging and the walling (chuckles)

G: (chuckles) Oh we haven't done so bad then have we for stitching you up

(TF and G laugh)

CW: How old were you when you and Elsie got together because it seems to me like you were together for ever

G: Oh right. Well actually we... when they formed Young farmers I was first chairman...

CW: You and Donald were chairmen every year I think

G: I was first chairman and Elsie was made secretary

CW: That's right

G: So we sort of, you know, worked quite a lot together and eventually we started life together

CW: So you weren't and item before the Young farmers then, it developed from there

G: No no

CW: Yeah, yeah. She was a brilliant secretary, because on the odd occasion for whatever reason you or Donald weren't there I stood in occasionally

G: Yeah

CW And then Ena Wilson she... she I think she was secretary for one year

G: She was a bit, yeah. Oh, quite a few... they changed most... quite often didn't they?

CW: We couldn't shift you two

G: (chuckles)

CW: Partly because nobody else would put their hand up really. And I mean this is the thing about Gordon and Donald and their girlfriends and later on wives, they put so much into the community. And, you know, as I said to you, coming back after fifty years they're still doing it. Rusland Show: who's in the tent giving out the prizes? Gordon and Elsie. And of course still hugely involved in organising it.

TF: Well you did the spring show on your own for...

G: Yeah

TF: ... many years didn't you Gordon?

G: Twenty three years.

CW: Oh and he's Rusland's best bowler as well aren't you.

G: (chuckles) I don't know about that. I managed a win last night but I lost first four this year. (laughs)

CW: So how long have you been playing bowls

G: Oh... not long enough really, must be going on for thirty years.

CW: Mm

G: It was before we retired quite a bit, yeah

CW: Well of course when you were full-time farming there wasn't time for that sort of thing was there?

G: Wasn't time, no

CW: But...

G: I love it, love it

CW: It's a great thing if you're physically able to do it.

(Continuity break?)

CW: Most of us were farmers but we'd two families which, correct me if I'm wrong weren't particularly known for farming. There was the Archibalds at Rusland Hall...

G: Yeah

CW: And then there was the Dobsons at Whitestock Hall, but they were still a huge part of the community...

G: Oh yes, yes

CW: And as you say we used to have committee meeting at er Rusland Hall and I remember one day when I was at Hay Bridge to do the milking and this that and the other and I was... this calf was running about the yard and I was getting annoyed. It wouldn't go where I wanted it to, and I was chasing the damn thing and it knocked down a muck fork, and the fork fell with the prongs up and I was... I had my wellington boots on, and one of the prongs went right through the wellington into my foot. And I got on the bike and went to the committee meeting at Rusland Hall that night, didn't even go to the doctor's till next day...

G: (chuckles)

CW: ... and, you know, they were panicking, "oh you should have had a tetanus, you should have had a tetanus!" you know.

G: The good company pulled you (laughs) No, we used to have it in the right hand side of the hall, the archway to the hall, and that was the old harness room when it was a hall, they'd have horses wouldn't they? That was classed as the harness room and Mr Archibald let us have committee meetings in there. He was our club leader, he was all right, used to take us all over. But it did (*well?*) later on as well didn't it? You know, when our lasses were running it, there was really fifty or sixty members then, but they started to come from all over. They were coming from Coniston, Ambleside.

CW: Right

G: Because Ambleside er Young Farmers finished, and Grasmere. So they were coming to us. That was before Broughton ad Lowick started.

CW: Why did it fizzle out then? Was it sort of...

G: Well there was no... there was no youngsters

CW: right.

G: No young ones

CW: And those that were around they were getting their mobile phones and stuff like that, they'd sort of like better things to do.

G: Well maybe (chuckles). We had a young men's club here as well, we formed that and we used to meet on a Tuesday and Saturday in the room. We got twenty six, thirty members. Used to play all sorts, it was good. And then that's another case, when the electric came people got televisions, that fizzled out, (chuckles) they were getting more entertainment at home I suppose.

CW: You didn't need to go on a diet, you know, if you weren't walking to the bus you were cycling somewhere, and... or running behind a plough or trying to get the sheep or the cows going in the right direction (G Chuckles in the background)

TF: Did you ever do any work in the woods Gordon on anything?

G: Er

TF: Because you didn't have any woodland did you really?

G: No, the only thing I did was... I used to go with my horse and cart and cart logs down, people who were sawing up in the woods, (I) used to cart them down to the road for them, more or less for a little bit extra.

TF: You didn't do any coppicing or charcoal burning or anything?

G: No, no

(G's daughter Jean): Have you talked about your horses? Because you brought the horses with you didn't you when you came?

G: Yeah, yeah

CW: How many horses did you have?

G: Two

CW: Two yeah. So when you were ploughing it would be with two horses

G: Yeah

CW: And when you were cutting the grass it would be with two horses...

G: Two aye, yeah

CW: Mowing the grass and stuff like that. Two horses, er, you're guiding them with the reins, mind you I think experienced horses knew where they were going...

G: Aye they were good yeah

CW: ... anyway didn't they? Because you'd got the trench when you made the first cut, but holding onto these ploughs...

TF: And this was ploughing to... what, what would you be planting

CW: Potatoes?

G: Well you plough grass, what we would call ploughing out a lay (*ley?*) out of grass, and that first crop would be corn, oats. And then the following year we would work it up for potatoes and turnips and things like that.

CW: There was...

G: And then the following year it would be ploughed and sown with oats again but with grass seeds under and it would go back to grass.

CW: Yeah, there was a very definite cycle wasn't there?

G: Yes it was like a rotation

CW: Yeah, yeah.

TF: Was that better for the soil that you did that?

G: Like re-seeding, putting fresh vigour into your sward. But it isn't really done now.

TF: I don't think people talk about swards any more do they?

G: No, no, and er, you know, you used to go in for these... sort of better quality grasses, high in sugar and all that, for feed. But that's what you used to do, used to try and invigorate your ground make it better. Rye...

TF: Nowadays people just put till⁵ on

G: Yeah. Ryegrass and that, that was the stuff that used to grow like... it would be a heavy crop

TF: And what does till do when you put that on?

G: Well it makes it grow but... yeah

TF: It's not the same

G: Well, no well we used to still fertilize but er, but er, no it was all quite technical really. No we used to plough quite a bit and re-seed. And sometimes you got a contractor in with a machine and discs and they used to make a slit in the grass and put seeds in, put some new seeds in and it would sort of improve it a lot.

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⁵ Till = dry fertilizer, usually granular