**Interview with Thomas Hall**

A. Well, it was in either June or July, when I got a job from Mr. Gray, he was

the Works Manager at the time. Of course, I could have went down the mine,

pony driving, or things like that, but I wasn't very keen on it! I got a

nice job in the office, and.......

Q. Was that just at the end of the war?

A. That was in.....the war was from 1914, till practically 1919, you see. The

war was still going on that time in 1918, and we had connections with the

Glasgow Office, you know, and I could phone up from Pumpherston office, and

I used to phone the offices in Glasgow.....a regiment.... looking from

Pumpherston to go to war, and things like that, on the phone.

Q. When you started, at thirteen and a half, was that's a bit earlier than you

should have done?

A. Well, fourteen! You weren't supposed to leave the school till you were

fourteen, you see. But I got an exemption at that time, it was hardship, you

see! You see, we had a big family, you know! And I got an exemption, we

were needing the money, it was actually for to get a wee bit more money into

the house at that time, and it made a big difference! It doesn't sound an

awful lot, but it went an awful long way! Ten bob! At that time!

Q. Now, you worked....you worked in the office first......

A. That's right, for about a year and a half, I think!

Q. About a year and a half?

A. Then I got a chance of going down to the co-operage, where I got two or three

bob more, you know, we had a big family, you see! To get the money, you see!

Q. And what kind of work did you do in the cooperage?

A. Oh......painting barrels! They used to have a big pail....you know, those

whitewash brushes, and there were maybe three or four of us maybe painting

barrels, and we had more paint on ourselves than what we had on the barrels,

but it was blue paint, and then there was white paint on the end of them,

and big Pat Smith, he cut out the stencils, oh, they would be going to

Buenos Aries, and all over the world, you know!

Q. And what was in the barrels?

A. Oh well it depends..... .it was mostly paraffin, paraffin and........ lube oil,

lubricating oil, and at one time they used to have five gallon tins, George,

too! And we had to solder the caps on the top of them, and they went away

abroad too! All over the world really!

Q. And did you do any other jobs in the refinery part?

A. Oh aye, I treated the lube oil, lubricating oil too! And I was on the wax for

a long while, treating the wax, and wax was a very special thing, you.... you know!

Q. Now, what were your main pastimes and hobbies during your working life?

A. Oh, fly fishing....! liked to go to the fishing! You see, Mary's father was a fisher,

he got a medal for it, there were thirty two spaces on the medal....for this

competition and and he won it sixteen times out of thirty two!

Q. And you also had an interest in the local pipe....Pumpherston Pipe Band?

A. Oh aye, I was in the Pumpherston Pipe Band, and I played in it for years

with old lan McIntyre.

Q. And how much practice had you to put in?

A. Oh, we had quite a lot of practice! You see, at that time, the Pumpherston

Pipe Band was local, all our players were local, and then.....the local

youngsters seemed to lose interest, and then we got hold a a couple of

boys from Bathgate

Q. When you remember the Gala-days, now, where did the Parade start off some

years ago when you were in the Pipe Band?

A. Oh, at the school!

Q. Now....can you remember much about your early life? Have you always stayed

in Pumpherston?

A. Well....when I got married first, that was in 1934, I was in Pumpherston,

working on shifts at the time, on the cracking plants, and we stayed with

Mary's mother for a few weeks

Q. And what kind of conditions did you have? In the house....how many rooms? A. Well, we had a room and a pantry and a kitchen. And there was a sink at the

window, and the coalhouse and washhouse were down the stairs. But, och, it

was alright! I mean, it was alright......but you see, we were expanding, you

see, we had to get another house, there were too many of us, coming, we had

to get another house, and we got one in Pumpherston! Back to the old home

town again, up in Pumpherston! And Mary likes Pumpherston fine! Och, it's

a grand place.......

Q. And had you the built in beds and things like that? The big ranges and that,

at that time? In Pumpherston?

A. Aye, in Pumpherston! And we had the same up in Dedridge too, at that time,

too! The big range, it was always spotlessly clean, you know, it's difficult

for women nowadays... they don't realise that, when they go and wash their

washing in the washing machine, and an hour after it the..machine...and then

they'll say that the washing's done, and you see....

Q. Now, how was the washing done then?

A. They used to put bricks, maybe about half a dozen bricks out and you put a

tin bath on them, and you filled it....you filled it with water, you see!

Q. Was this outside?

A. Aye! Oh aye! And then.....you see, when the boys

came home....when the boys came home from the pit, they boys came home from

the pit, you see, and I can always mind of...I can mind of a family, I'd better not mention any names, I can always mind of a family, and if the...

old boy came in and the water was ready, and he fell asleep, there was nobody

to get washed before him...... they daren't get washed before him! He had

to get the first of the water, and I've seen the water kind of half cold

before old Jock got into it! After he got washed, anybody could get into it,

after that! He didn't care who it was!

Q. How did they heat the water?

A. They had a wee coal fire in below it!

Q. Oh! Outside!

A. Aye! Outside!

Q. So, they had their bath outside?

A. No. No. They hadn't their bath.......!

Q. So the bath was brought in.......?

A. No. No. They had their bath in the washhouse, you see, they had thon two big

sinks, you know, in the washhouse. (Wife talking) But at that time, that

you're talking about, they had no washhouse! Oh, they hadn't a washhouse at

that time, first of all! It was a big tin bath! It was practically ice that you were

washing yourselves with, it was that blooming cold! You used to come out and

wash yourself, I even washed myself among the snow in a big tub!

**Questions**

1. *From what you have learning about life down the mine give reason why Tom claims he “wasn’t very keen on it”.*
2. *What age did Tom start work?*
3. *Why did Tom start work earlier than he should have done?*
4. *What jobs did Tom do at the co-op?*
5. *What did he do in his spare time?*
6. *How did people get washed when they came in from the mines?*
7. *What, in your opinion, are the five key points from this interview?*
8. *If you had been interviewing Tom what else could you have asked? Try to think of three additional questions for your research.*