

James MacKellar, Interviewed: ?

Q: I'd like to ask you about what you were doing when the war broke out. What were you --

JM: Farming. Farming.

Q: You were farming.

JM: Yes. Shepherding and ploughing. All farm work.

Q: In this area?

JM: In this area, yes. Aye. Aye.

2nd Q: What age were you when the war broke out?

JM: What age was I when the war broke out? Well, I was ... I don't know. The age of ... something like that. I don't know. I was born in 1912, anyway.

Q: Right. Born in 1912. So, could you describe some of the things you did on the farm? What was your normal working day, for example?

JM: Well, feeding cattle, feeding calves, and oh, I was planting tatties! Planting all the single turnips and all that sort of stuff. You know, bring the sheep to clipping. Dipping. Aye. Just the general farm work.

Q: And what time did you start in the morning?

JM: Well, you know, we were gathering sheep around four o'clock in the morning!

Q: Four o'clock!

JM: Aye. But the hours ... you went to half past six or six o'clock. Half past six, aye.

Q: So what would you do? In a typical day be? You'd get up ...

JM: Oh, I'd feed the cattle.

Q: Feeding the cattle.

JM: I'd feed the cattle, like. Aye.

Q: And in the after --

JM: But that was during the war, you're wanting?

Q: *Yeah, in the war.*

JM: I'd two horses at the beginning of the war. Aye. For the pair --

Q: *Yes. For the ploughing.*

JM: For the ploughing. Aye. I was the first one to get a tractor in [] here. I got a tractor in '47, I think it was.

Q: *Oh, you got a tractor?*

JM: I got a tractor, the [] tractor came out about that time. '47 or '48. I think it was '47.

Q: *Oh, right.*

JM: But other than that, it was just the general farm work. And at night you went to the Home Guard.

Q: *You were in the Home Guard?*

JM: Aye, I was in the Home Guard. Aye. Aye.

Q: *Could you describe that? What that involved?*

2nd Q: *Yes, and where did you have to go?*

JM: What?

2nd Q: *To ... meet up with the other Home Guard? Where was that based?*

Q: *Where were they?*

JM: Oh, I had to go up to the hall! The old hall, there. We used to meet there and do our [] come up and put us through our paces.

Q: *Right.*

JM: And we used to practice with the rifles, too. Shoot our own rifles.

Q: *Did you have a uniform?*

JM: I think we had an armband. I think that was all we had, aye. As far as I

mind. That's all we had. Oh, no, we had no uniform. No.

Q: And what were your duties? What did you have to do? During Home Guard duties?

JM: Well, some nights we'd watch ... in the hut over there, we'd watch in case there were any paratroopers --

Q: Paratroopers.

JM: Aye. Aye. But other than that, that was all we were doing. Just training. We'd do marches, too, sometimes. And bayonet charging!

Q: And grenades? Did you have to do any grenade practice?

JM: Aye. Hand grenades.

Q: Hand grenade practice.

JM: Oh, yes. Aye.

Q: But with live ones? Or were they not live?

JM: No, not with live ones, no. No, I don't think we had live ones. We'd got no ammunition at all. We'd got no equipment at all.

Q: No, no.

[Conversation with the cat.]

Q: Were you affected by rationing?

JM: Oh, I was on the ration book, aye.

Q: You had a ration book?

JM: Oh, aye.

Q: But you had your own stuff on the farm?

JM: Aye, aye. But we all had the ration books. Aye.

2nd Q: Did you think we'd win the war? Because nowadays they always talk about the war that we won it, but during the harder times did you think we would win? All the way through?

JM: No, I always thought we'd win. I always thought we'd win. But when you look back now, we were damn lucky. We were damn lucky. When you see the films now, aye. I followed the old Churchill's history, there. The old Churchill's history.

Q: *Oh, yeah!*

JM: There were films, there. But they told you a lot what he did.

Q: Yes, yes.

JM: And the first election after the war, he was thrown out!

Q: *That's right!*

JM: Aye.

Q: *Do you remember that?*

JM: I mind that fine.

2nd Q: *That was '45.*

Q: *Yeah. Did that seem like a big change, when Churchill was thrown out? The Labour government ...*

JM: The Labour Government came in, aye, aye. But I couldn't mind that ... I couldn't mind they got back in again!

Q: *Yeah, they did. Of course, yeah.*

JM: A couple of ...

Q: *They did.*

JM: I remember that. In the film.

Q: *They did, they did.*

JM: Aye. Aye.

Q: *So what did you do in the evenings on the farm after work, after you'd finished?*

JM: Oh, just read the *Herald*. I got the *Herald* every day. I've got the *Herald* ever day, all my days! I got married about '43. Then Hamish, my first son, was

born in '48 or '49.

Q: So when were you married?

JM: I got married in 1943. Oh, yes, he was born before that, yes, he was born in '44. I got married in '43.

Q: And where did you meet your wife?

JM: I met her at dances. Dances, you know, I met her at some function, anyway.

Q: Right.

JM: Aye. We had a different --

2nd Q: Was she local?

JM: Beg your pardon?

2nd Q: Was she local?

JM: Not really. She wasn't really. She was working local. She belonged to the Borders. She belonged way down [].

Q: And did you go in to Glasgow at all? Did you travel to Glasgow for any reason? Or other ...

JM: I used to go to the market, yes. We used to sell in the market. Right in [Dullally]. It was mostly in Glasgow at that time. There were local sales, too. There were local sales at [].

Q: Right.

JM: Used to send stuff there. But other than that, that's all we did.

2nd Q: How many other people worked on the farm with you?

JM: Well, my two brothers. My brothers were with me.

2nd Q: So you didn't have any of the Land Army here?

JM: No, I don't think so. No. No. I think we had a Land girl for a wee while. One Land girl for a wee while. But, no. No. It was just those two. Of course, our neighbours give us a hand with the sheep. We were neighbours. So we neighboured one another.

2nd Q: Did she know how to farm?

JM: Who?

2nd Q: Did she know anything about farming? The Land girl?

JM: I can not mind. She'd learn. She would gradually learn!

2nd Q: What did you listen to? Did you have a wireless?

JM: Aye. A wireless. Aye.

2nd Q: And what kind of stuff did you ... do you remember listening to during the war?

JM: Oh, the war stuff. Not much on, I don't think. Not much on. We listened to the war, the wireless bulletins.

2nd Q: What was the main thing that you grew? Was there one particular main ...

JM: Turnips and tatties. Potatoes. Turnips.

2nd Q: Do you know where they got sent?

JM: Corn. Corn. Oats.

2nd Q: Do you know where they got sent?

JM: Oh, they got sent ... Aye. I don't know ... I forget where they got ... Turnips were for the cattle. Turnips and the sheep, for maybe fattening the lambs.

Q: And you did ploughing?

JM: Oh, aye.

Q: Ploughing with the horses?

JM: Aye. Ploughed about ten acre every year. Aye.

2nd Q: Did you ever hear any German planes coming over? Were you ever worried about a bomb being dropped?

JM: No, no, no.

2nd Q: *Good.*

JM: No. No.

Q: *Before the tractor, was the ploughing quite hard? Was it hard work?*

JM: It was a long day, aye.

Q: *A long day.*

JM: A few hours, aye. Oh, aye.

Q: *Did the Ministry or the government ever come 'round to your farm?*

JM: Oh, some did! Aye!

Q: *What did they want?*

JM: I don't know. I didn't have much for ... officials. Occasionally, not an awful lot.