

Interview with Mrs Mabel Mason. 9th April, 1984.

- M.M. I'm 84, as you can tell, and I went out before I were 14.
- S.H. Were you born in Horton?
- M.M. You know Hellith Brig? The first house you meet, Newfield House, it isn't a farm, I were born there. Then I come to Cragg Hill, Mr Bentham had lived there, and Mrs Sarginson, they were girls then. I thought it were grand when I went there, it was a cottage, but then the people who had it let it go.
- S.H. Was your Father a farmer?
- M.M. No, he worked in't quarry, and he lime drawed, and then he used to go walling for Mr Redmond at Foredale farm.
- S.H. How many were there in your family?
- M.M. There were 10 of us altogether, all lads, 10 boys and I were the only girl.
- S.H. So you had a lot todo helping your Mother?
- M.M. I had. I learnt to work. I liked farm work. I^{sc} wouldn't go into a private house. You were never done, and they don't appreciate what you do.
- S.H. Where did you go to work in a private house?
- M.M. Chapel le Dale, Mrs Metcalfe's. They lived off E'road, down in't bottom. Wethercote, after that it were sold.
- S.H. What sort of a job did you do there?
- M.M. Cleaning up, and I showed 'em how to clean up, and all! I set on and I thought the look of these tables and I'm fed up, so I got some water and scrubbing brush, and Mrs says 'Have you cleaned these?' I says 'Yes I have, they wanted it and all! 'Well, she says, they're very nice and clean. They were white tables with no table cloths on, and you know what they are, they get dirty. The other lasses come back in and they said 'You've been busy' and I said 'Aye, and that's what some of you want to be, and all! If you think owt about you meat being on't table.
- S.H. How many of you worked there?
- M.M. There were 2 Irish lads. She had these folks, the parents used to let them go out and pay for them. Mr Kenyon and Mr Smith, t'others were all women. They were supposed to be gentlemen. Mrs Ellum had the farm, she were a grand person, she were a different person altogether, we always got more when she were around. She (Mrs Metcalfe?) used to give us on of them little pots of paste, one of them full and there were hind, Mr Kenyon, and 2 Irish lads and me, and Miss Dowbiggin, and another, me cousin, we had the pot of paste between all of us! I were last on, cos you see, if she was I used to have to go and wait, so my meal were nowt much, you only had what they left, what come back from the dining room. There was only a spoonful of two for me.
- S.H. How long did you work there?
- M.M. Six months. Then I worked on Mr Bull's (?) farm at Austwick. Mr Nathan Bull. He used to go out with the entire. He had men to work for him. His brother and two more men on't farm. Then me and Mrs Bull, and the lads who were going to school. I were all day, week in and week out, cheesing, but by gum it were lovely cheese.
- S.H. Now, tell me how you made the cheese.
- M.M. Well you see, I don't know how much salt they put in, I never weighed salt cos you see I were always frightened. You ha dn't to use no soap, I used seven pound of soda a week, I did, to clean the cheese vats, we had two, a fifty and a forty, we made a sixteen, happen, to in summer, if some gentry were at Cock Inn, they paid extra for 'em, but I didn't get it.
- S.H. When you say a 50 and a 40, is that the number of gallons of milk that go in?
- M.M. No. First we used to have a big cheese maker, a bit longer than that fireplace, there were like a bat, thing were inside. It were a very small kitchen, we hadn't much room. It had a lid on to fasten down, then when she put whey in we used to have to turn it round, like a churn. She had to test it, twice she let her thing go into this bottom thing what you put this article in and you couldn't get it out.
- S.H. So did you put the milk in.
- M.M. On a night we used to put new milk, the whole lot, it never had no cream taken off, and there were no back door and they'd to trail through house in't

kitchen and it were only a little kitchen, out o shippon and I'd to scrub up twice a day. You couldn't call 'em cosmenhad nowhere else to put it. Then you see we used to put thing on it and we didn't touch it while next morning, and they milked again, all t'cows and they brought it through into that. Well you see that's two lots of milk, so many gallonand they had one o they big things to measure it wi, but mind you it were lovely cheese. She used to cut it out, cos I mean I couldn't do all, and I were looking after her Father and all. We had him downstairs in sitting room and all She thought I could run upstairs every time to see if he was smoking. He'd habit o throwing match down on t'bed. I said to her, you'll have to ask Doctor if he can come down, its hard work running upstairs. First fortnight I couldn't hardly stick it. She says 'it looks like you're going to have to leave us'. Isays 'O no, I'm stopping another week, I'll chance it', She says, 'get aht'. Well Isaid, its no good if you give in. I used to always wash thing out that they used to drain the milk through

S.H. When you put the milk into the cheese makerdid you put rennet in it.

M.M. Next day she'd put a bucket o warm water to heat, that it were cold in bottom, it were grand and warm new, what were put in that morning, but you see t'other were cold. Anyway, she used to put this water in, she had to seive it downso she could heat it, she put lid on, that lid it were like sort of a seive, then she turned it round a time or two, while it got warm then she got her lid off again, you had to sort of, I don't know what it were to stop it going round on youit'd all go into water if you didn't. All floor wanted doing up, ?????? You seethere wern't much of a window And you hat to put these two vats(?) bats(?) on to this thing, you know what had them tables to put on top, they had these things for underneath em, Mary'll know. (M. Metcalfe, for trestle tables, S.H. the bases)

M.M. The bases, well you see, it were an old fireplace and we used to put it there, you put them bats on, I used to wash em out, and he took cheese out on 'em at night before, Mr Booth used to have to carry them upstairs evey night, two on em, then it was like a tablecloth, its like proper nets, to put cheese in (S.H. cheese cloth?) cheesecloth to put round, we used to make them, they never think of making owt like that, well we had two of them to make every night. S.H. you bought the material and cut it up, did you?

M.M. Yes, she bought it in rolls. Mr Booth took cheese out of cheesemaker, they were ready for going upstairs, out of these vats. You see, you put these cloths in, then I used to have to grind it. through a little grinder, same as they used to have for grinding turnips, no bigger than that, and you put to weigh it up, and you put it seperate, well I'd grind that through twice, she'd put salt in the second time, then I'd put it into one of these vats into this cloth, you didn't put cheesecloth round it while you took em out at night. He used to have table andand put em on a ? thing up, and turn em over again, and ? the other up

and you used to have 'em to grease every night them cheese. You used to have to grease them. It had to be where it were warm, you had to have a little stove in. A part of Grandpa's bedroom they'd made, because we hadn't nowhere else, you couldn't put it where it were cold. There were three or four shelves *all the way round.*

S.H. How long did they leave the cheese there?

M.M. That used to send it away before I went. Then when the war were on, one come they all come. You couldn't say you couldn't have it. I said to Mrs Booth You'll have to weigh it up and all. Well, she'd upstairs to go. she had scales, brass, big 'uns. They had an old fashioned bedding chest, you know, them woodw 'uns, well we had that in passage. He used to put one out for her for folk coming, to cut two pounds, some would want three pounds.

S.H. What weight was a whole cheese?

M.M. Fifty, a fifty and a forty, I made them two every day, week in and week out. When you had it out of cheese maker you had like a wooden thing, ^{over} it had weights on, when you cut it out, you cut em out in squares, happen one in two. But you only had to use soda, you couldn't use no soap. Then I put em off this Stock(?) and I put cloth around then, it'd gone shape then.

S.H. Were they round when they were finished?

M.M. Yes, they were round. I've seen em on telly, same sort of cheese as I used to make

S.H. I wish people still made it.

M.M. Do you know, it were lovely, it were just like butter, somebody says, Ooh it is good is that cheese you make. I said, You're lucky to get it.

S.H. Did it come out like a Wensleydale cheese?

M.M. No, it were a proper plain cheese, cream, she didn't take any cream out only a drop for an old lady as lived farther up, and she always give her a little jug full, every Sunday, she were getting on like, When we had milk we had a bucket full, that was for us lot to sup, we never had no tea, if you didn't want any, me and th two ? lads and his brother, we had a jug full, and many a time we had two jug full. only her and her husband and her Father had tea. She said you needn't have it Mabel. It's what kept me going. When I left and went to another shop somebody said 'By gum, Mabel, you do look poorly'. I said 'I aren't getting me milk'.

S.H. So they didn't actually sell milk from the farm?

M.M. Oh no it were all cheese. You see they had a float, and after I went they started selling it. When one come they all come. But you had it to grind twice through that grinder, same as you put through a mincing machine, it had to be like that, fine. It everw hard work for him when he'd been out all day, travelling, cos he had to walk, you know, miles, to go to see horses, anybody that rung up. He had this entire, and he went to the horses, cos there used to be horses then, all the farm horses. It got stomach ache, well if you aren't ther to let it out and go round field after he'd given it summat. They get colic, and I said to him you know that entire isn't

quietening down.

I were frightened on it. I don't know what salt. I wished many a time I knew what salt. She used to make it all ready so I didn't do owt wrong.

S.H. The amount of salt was very important then?.

M.M. Yes. We used to have that block salt, we used to have one of them in't dairy. I used to have to roll some much on it and then leave a dish for her.