

INTERVIEW WITH ARCHIE MUNRO

25th November 2011 – 84 years old in two weeks time

My son Keith is coming over today, he telephoned to tell me Barry Sutherland had been buried today. Barry was an electrician at Murton and I was a fitter at Murton the deputy engineer a lad called Ted Patterson who I served my time with, said you will be working on the surface there's too many spies there. I went down the pit to what was called the bottom level at, I was the oldest mechanic working on the colliery face at Murton. When I retired after a couple of weeks my and the wife were sitting at home having a coffee when Steven Burlington (he was a Lyons cricketer, and one of my former apprentices) knocked on the door he asked if we still went dancing on a Saturday with your two friends Jacky Car and his wife), to which I replied we did he said not this Saturday. A taxi would be at the house at 7 o'clock to pick us up and take us to the Phoenix Hotel at Seaham. When we got there all my work mates the fitters and electricians were there and a table was set for me and Jacky with flowers for the women and a bottle of champagne each. The treasurer of the Mechanics Union came over and said it was a pity there was not a microphone so you could thank every one, I went around about 20 tables and thanked everyone, after that he came over and handed me an envelope which I was to open when I got home, £144 and that was in 1983. It was the first and only leaving party for anyone at Murton, the lads thought the world of me.

Looking at Robert Hope's Book on Moorsley

Referring to the drawing of Moorsley in the book: Jimmy Alcock, he was the same age as our George, lived here, I remember all those old houses. Interrupted by phone call. There is something missing, there was a street here where Billy Pretty lived. There were two Tate lads and two Best girls, who married each other. Moorsley Colliery closed in 1935, from Elemore shaft to Hazard shaft was exactly one mile, my dad worked at the Hazard Pit, when it closed he never worked any more.

Billy Pretty arrives:

Jewitts Row and the next street were back to back houses, we lived in 109 Jewitts Row. I always wondered how the houses were numbered, I was born at High Moorsley (6th Feb 1929) in 76 Westgarth Row but there wasn't 76 houses in that row, Archie said 1st Row had 20 houses and I think 2nd row had 10, 1st row was up stairs and down stairs, 2nd Row was on one level. Archie I got a phone call and someone was mumbling at the other end, I put the phone down and my sister said ring 1471 to get the number, it was Bobby Kirtley he lived at Low Moorsley. I called in to see him he said he knew me from Elemore pit, his dad and older brother also worked there.

Archie was born at Low Moorsley, there was 12 in our family, there was 13, George he was the oldest, then me, I had a sister who died very young, then Nathan who is dead now, sister Irene, Sadie, then our Maurice, Marie, June, the twins Margaret and Mary, our Keith, then

our Jannet. At first we lived in a small house with access to the loft by a ladder, later when more children arrived we moved to a bigger house at 5, 1st Row.

Billy was the only one, he was a good footballer. How many children did your uncle Wilf have. One she still lives at Pitlington, so does our Maurice said Archie. Billy said I can tell you a good story about Pitlington – grandfather Pretty worked at Pitlington he said it was the richest place in the county because the pit paid the best wages in Co. Durham. The Londonderry pit was half way between Pitlington and Littleton, along that road there were wells and shafts all over the fields, they weren't working because they were all water logged. Littleton had a cricket team, the pub there was the Duke of York, it was only one street, then later a few council houses. Sherburn Hill Juniors used to play on the left hand side just before you got to the top, we used to change into our strip at the pub. When we played at Moorsley we changed in the Blacky Boy, I remember we always played on a Christmas day, this year we went to Fatfield, we stripped at the pub and I was the only one sober on the field, because I was only 16, they would think nowt of having four or five pints before a match. There used to be some good games at the Flats at Easington Lane, they had a good team, Blacklock and Blaylock were inside forwards, George Shanks was centre forward, Eddie Hill was full back.

At Moorsley everybody knew everybody, our house was never locked, you could have come in our house at 3 o'clock in the morning. Archie – I went to High Moorsley School, when I first started a man called Farnsworth was headmaster, I think it was Gibbons later, then Kelly came, Miss Hodgson and Miss Patterson and a man called Brown, he was also a good cricketer, This lad went to school with Bill called John Steel, we were practicing cricket in the school yard and John Steel got too near the bat and Brown broke his jaw. John Steel's dad was a gamekeeper for Lady Baker, Jack Steel is his cousin, John now lives in Shakespeare St near to the Burn Hotel. That man now never goes out, he has ulcers on both his legs from his knees to his feet. Nearly all the men at Moorsley were either miners or farmers. Bill – 18 men worked at Swindburn's farm when I was there in 1943., there were six lasses there as well, it wasn't really a dairy farm one man called Johnson looked after all of the cattle. The women worked on the threshers, planted potatoes, hoed the turnips, put the tatties into sacks. The farm went all the way down to Pitlington, it was over 600 acres, practically a square mile. There was very little difference between Thompson's and Swindburn's farms, a lot of the miners would go to help at the farm at busy times such as potato picking, Billy used to get half days off school to do tattie picking, Archie and his brother George used to walk over to Potts farm. My mother used to chase us out to earn some money we were 10 or 12 year old then, the walk over was where the men went on their way to Elemore pit. There were a lot of Moorsley men working at Elemore, Archie said he could tell who the man was from half a mile away, by the way they walked. There was a well at the bottom of the hill, water was pumped from the Hazard to High Moorsley, Archie and his brother were sent to the well to fetch water, it was better than a pint of beer. Swindburn who had the farm always carried a cup in his pocket and drank the water from the well, he said it was the purest water in Co Durham, there was a well at Moorsley and one at Pitlington, it's still there as you go down into Pitlington. Archie

gave me a map of High Moorsley streets, which we discussed, Billy's grandparents lived in 4 Valley View which was built in 1937 (Archie they were built about 1933/4 the same time as China Town), so the map must have been after that date. Jewitt Row was all mixed there were four houses at the front and four houses at the back we lived in 109, the families were Thompson's, Bowman's, Noterly's, three families Williams at the back, their grandparents at the front and Peter Cairns (he moved to 3rd Row) lived on the side, then a back to back house with Hawxby and Rathbone. We lived in the 1st house then Dicky Gulliver, Turnbull's, Jacky Horn, Matty Ambler, Barbara Homes and old Mrs Turnbull. This is Blue Row there was Tates, a lad called Foster who was killed in the Eppleton explosion, they moved to Peatcarr and Joe Best moved into that house, then there was Heal, Delaps, Nichols, O'Brian, Speed, Simpson, me mothers uncle Tom, Joice, Shepherd and Burnhope, old Mrs Burhope was caretaker at Houghton School. Hetton Hill Quarry, do you remember that Bill, aye there was a Gamekeepers house about there, there was strawberry's in the woods (where Alan picked rasberry's) There were a lot of quarry's and a lime kiln behind the store, I think a lot of the stones were used for buildings. Swindburn's land whent right down to Pittington Station. George and and me used to walk to Finchael Abbey and plodge in the river, during the school holidays father used to tell us to go there.

Hazard shaft to Moorsley shaft was exactly one mile, 1760 yds, a young girl fell down Moorsley shaft and was killed. Do you know Maurice Dobson he was a historian like Blondy Stabler and them. The only phone in Moorsley was just below the Post Office, a public telephone, in 1951 when I was courting the wife, she was working at Long Benton and I used to walk down there to telephone her. The hinds houses, the little terrace which has been made into one house (Jean Gleason has that house now), way back they were the only two houses in Moorsley which had baths in, they were more modern than the other houses. Bob Hutchinson and Harry Johnson lived there, then Dicky ? and Billy Ethel went in, I used to go there for a bath on a Friday night before I played football on a Saturday. Billy played outside right, sometimes centre forward, I played for the Methodists, we won the all England Methodist Cup. Two Moorsley lads Sproats and Harry Greasham both played for Sunderland, not for the first team though. Archie referring to the map, do you know what WT stands for – Water Tap, there wasn't very many only three in Low Moorsley. Joe Myres had the farm beside the quarry, he also had a butchers shop at the Lane Ends.

Billy worked on the farm, then went into the air force, then when he came out worked on the gardens. Archie started at the pit on 3rd Jan 1942 at Elemore, when Elemore closed I went to Murton and I was there 9 years. When I first started at the colliery I was a report lad, coal produced was written down, signed by the manager and those reports had to go to Bunker Hill, where Philadelphia cricket field is. Three lads from Murton, Elemore and Eppleton collieries, had bikes and cycled to Phili, except we didn't cycle all the way, when we got to Houghton the engine driver would put the bikes on a wagon and give us a lift. After that I served my time as a fitter at the pit, some of the lads from Phili Yard came to work as fitters at the pit. I am going to phone a lad called Tommy Tempest, from Easington Lane he now lives at Shotton, in one of the old peoples bungalows as you go in, I'll ask him to come to the

commemoration service for the Elemore pit disaster on Sat morning. There was much talk about the commemoration and Alan gave a poem written about the disaster to Archie. Archie looked out a poem by Joe Solesby called Times Gone By he got from Frank Wright. Talked about the references to gambling – Hugh Eden was a big gambler, he would gamble his life away, they used to do pitch and toss over where the lakes are now, they didn't do that at Moorsley it was all card schools. Not in the pub, outside at the top of the Well Banks, they played three card brag and people on the bus going past could see them. I remember the first year the pit got their holidays Geordy and Tupper Teasdale lost their holiday money. When they played Pitch and Toss they played for big sums of money half a crown on the flip of a coin and that was a lot of money in them days. When we used to go to Durham on a Saturday night it was 9d return fro Moorsley. When George and me were about 10 or 11 we would be sitting on the stairs waiting for me dad to come in from Tub Loading, he would come in and say we are off to Durham Big Meeting, he would get a bath, a shave and have his breakfast, then say howay were away, we would walk down to Pittington, get the train and get off at Elvet Station, which was in the show field. We used to sit and watch 120 banners come in, as soon as it was 12 o'clock, dad would say howay you two we are going home and I am going to bed. He worked at the Hazard then went to Elemore. Billy's dad worked at the Hazard, then Hetton Lyons, then the Downs until the Busty closed, after that when the war started they all went to Aycliffe to build the factories there, then after that the Busty reopened and they all went back to the pit. Alan asked if anyone could remember Aubrey Caudell who was a Bevan Boy no one could remember him but was told Billy Cavana's oldest sister Beatrice married a Bevan Boy, he was from Scotland, a Jock, and he is still alive, they live down the Middlelands. His first job was working in the fire holes, throwing on the coals to keep the boilers going, then he worked down the pit and became a deputy. Billy - I was watching a program this week called A Long Walk to Freedom, it was on prisoners of war walking 800 miles from Poland to Germany, there was a Welshman on who said "I joined the army to get out of the pits and I ended off working down the pits in Poland for the Germans" Two or three people have tried to buy the land where the old Mission Church was, including his relation Vic Simpson, but it is church land and no one has been allowed to buy it.

Do you remember any disasters at the pit? There were three men that got buried in the Duff Hole, between the pit baths and the flats, that would be in the late 1940's. Do you know Billy Savage who lives down the road on the front, her dad went in the spiral and was killed, Billy Dobson, nickname Buller, the spiral took the coal down to where the tubs were (Alan's dad was working with him that day, he also told the story of his dad pushing tubs into the Tipler which turned the tubs upside down, one day the tub didn't stop and he went into the Tipler and was turned upside down over the spiral, he managed to hang on) Alan there was a young lad called George Wears was apprentice to me, he said I don't want to work down the pit, so I told him if he served his time he would be able to get a job anywhere. He went down to brake the Hauler, controlling it, pulling the tubs along and I was told to go down someone was fast in the Hauler, it had pulled his arm right out of the socket, there was a ring on his finger and he said would I please get it for him, he then only had one arm and never went down the pit again, he was only about 17 (Alan went to school with him) he was the brother of Doreen

Wears. If you ever look in the graveyard at Hetton Church, there is a gravestone there to a 10 year old lad killed at Hetton Lyons Colliery. Billy had got the job of supervising some jail birds to clean up the graveyard, he didn't have much bother with them but the first day they brought about 12 bottles of milk in with them like, from Houghton Road. There was a lad called Ken Greenhow working for me at the time and he was due to get married, so they said to him would you like a couple of televisions for your wedding present. When Alan was a young lad there was someone killed playing on Hetton pit heap, it collapsed and he dropped inside. You could see steam coming off Moorsley heap on a frosty morning and we used to play over there.

Discussing Nicholas Wood and Hetton Hall, Billy's grandmother used to go to special events at the hall. Archie – when my father was a boy he was boarded out, my grandmother couldn't afford to keep them, when my dad was about 10 years old he was at a Boarding School at Shotley Bridge learning how to garden and he was a very good gardener. My grandmother was married three times Munro, McCardle and Garthwaite, I remember going in from school one day, I was about 13, and my mother was crying, she said "I promised to make your dad a pie crust, I have no flour and no money" dad walks in "Sarah, what's the marrer" she told him and he said "Archie, off you go up to my mothers and get some flour, bring it straight back, don't stand talking" she lived about ten doors away and gave me some flour, times were hard then. We talked about the children working in mines who's parents had begged the viewer to take them on, as they had no money.

There was an old woman used to live in Coalbank Terrace, called Tumelty, she stood at the gate and croak unrecognisable names, she was about 18 stone and rode a bike up the woods, John Smith from the Store would say Mrs Tumelty, do you want any bacon and she would say no I'm on me bike man, she could not understand the local dialect, the family were all characters.

We used to go to Belmont to a dance, have a drink in the Sportsman's Arms, walk the girls home to Durham and then walk back to Moorsley, there was never any bother then, you could walk all the way without passing a motor car. Archie – I wouldn't go out now when it's dark unless I had a lift home. When I was a lad there would be drunk men lying on the path and I would pick them up and walk them home. Mrs Guliver was a big church woman, on a Sunday she was getting ready for church and old Jimmy was getting ready for the pub, he used to sing "when the beer is on the table I'll be there" a parody of one of the hymns "when the roll is called yonder I'll be there. He was a lovely singer, better than on the telly now, there were a lot of good singers. We used to drink in New Durham pubs a lot, the Lord Seaham on the way into Durham Tommy Sharp had that and Pierpoint the hangman lodged there, Tommy was one of the original bear knuckle fighters. Tom Stephenson said when he was coming home from work at Elemore, the area in the Brickgarth opposite the Nag's Head would be roped off for bare knuckle fighters. Billy – on a Saturday we would wait outside the Blackie Boy to watch the men fighting after the pub closed, but the next day it was "you all right mate" they were friendly fights forgotten about the next day. Bob young and them used to get as drunk as a noodle, he would stand on the green shouting "I'll fight any bugger in

Durham” my dad would say if I blew on him he would fall down. There were a lot of pubs in Moorsley then, the Wheatsheaf, Lamb Inn, North Hetton Hotel, the Workmens Club, the Grey Horse, one of the pubs was called the Westgarth round about where the green was. There was also a Westgarth Row, the Westgarths lived there and had a butchers shop, there was also a pub in the row, I think The Prince of Wales, there was a shop old Mrs Gibson and Jack Snowdon had a shop my grandmother Garthwaite also had a shop, there was a fish shop at Low Moorsley just above the Blacky Boy. We never called the pit Moorsley Colliery, it was always North Hetton Colliery and the school was North Hetton School. There was a brick works (we called it the factory), just behind Jewets Row which had outside toilets, it was common to find workers from the brickworks asleep in the toilets after a night shift. There were two rows of pigeon lofts between the row and the factory, the second one was called the Milers, they flew from Low Pittington and kept low. Others from Rainton did a straight mile, you could see them released and fly all the way back, the fanciers called for them, but we were not allowed to speak or move. Tommy Jarvice would recognise any pigeon sitting on a roof and tell you who it belonged to. Geo Williamson repaired all the pigeon clocks, his daughter still visits twice a year. When the long races were on the men played quoits there. Pigeons, quoits and football were the pastimes in Moorsley, Billy once got hit on the head with a quoit. Archie – remembers when his dad was home from the army (he was a boxing champion) he took him up to the Top House for a couple of pints, there was always arguments in the bar, they argued about anything, this bloke Billy Thompson wouldn’t shut up so me dad took him outside and came back in to say he’ll not bother anyone again, there was a lot of fighting in those days. If we beat Pittington or Rainton at football we would get stoned across the Moorsley boundary, we did the same. Billy – One day I was sitting opposite a man in the Big Club and he looked at me and he said “Do you not remember me? we used to chuck bricks at each other”

The blacksmiths at the pit always made sledges, bleazers, hollygigs and pokers, they were always asking for more ½” round. We sledged down the hill to the well banks and beyond, where the field dipped we would be in the air for 10 feet before we landed. The farmers sledge was about 6ft long, you could get six people on.

We then talked about the beautiful view from High Moorsley where you can see to west Durham and beyond.

The talk turned to dances and friction between groups of boys from different villages, there were often fights but never nasty. The Moorsley boys got to know the girls from Rainton when the Moorsley girls went over there for cookery classes, they always walked over there. If anyone wanted to be married in the C of E they had to go to East Rainton or Hetton.

Talked about about men from West Rainton, Moorsley and Pittington working at Sherburn Hill Colliery and travelling to work by bike. Billy told that in 1929 his father was working at Sherburn Hill, we lived in Westgarth Row then and he travelled by bike, on returning home the snow was so deep he could only get as Pittington, when a bus turned up. He stood at the door of the bus and held onto his bike to get home. There were lots of bad years for snow

1941 and 47 were bad, sometimes the snow was above the door of the house and we had to dig ourselves out. Sometimes the men had to dig a way through for the buses, if it snowed everyone was out with a shovel, the kids never lost a day at school due to snow, not like now. In 47 Billy was working for Swindburn's Farm, was digging sheep out of 6ft drifts and carrying 8 stone bags of corn across to feed the sheep. Archy – I remember me and Tom Young, we lived in number 5 1st Row, Tom lived in number 1 2nd Row, coming home from work at Elemore at 6am in the snow, we couldn't see where we were walking and crossed fences and hedges ending off at Coalbank Farm, we had no idea where we were walking. In 41 a bus taking workers to Aycliffe got stuck at Half Way Houses along Robney Road and was there for a month. At Half Way Houses lived the Thompsons, Parkin, Crake, Turnbull and Siddaway families. Siddaway was a church army captain, who ran the scouts, he was also in the St Johns Ambulance, he taught us many things, a wonderful man. Robert Hope was always in the St Johns, as was Bob Best, my Archies dad would send his boys down to Bob to learn about first aid, we went for two years.

Turnbull's – Bob Moody has a photograph of four men Bob Kirtley, Andrew Wilson, Ralph Ayre and a man carrying a stick called John Gilisland, who was a head safety man, he lived in Houghton Road, was a keen gardener. He originally lived in Moorsley and Smiles took over their house. There were two Turnbolls, one on the front at Jewitts Row and the mother lived at the other end, that was Elly. Archie's mother and Poppy Turnbull (she never got Mrs, even her headstone is Poppy) when they went to the store the store girls were always told to have everthing in order before Mrs Turnbull and Poppy came in or they would be told off.

Billy used to work at the farm, which was a reserved occupation during the war, but he was hard pressed to get two hours off to play football on a Saturday afternoon so he packed it in. He was told he would get called up for national service, sure enough he did and was in the Royal Air Force. Swindburn was a hell of a farmer, but he was very strict like a school master, if we did anything wrong we would be told off by Dick Swindburn, he would go down and tell the school, then we would be given the cane. Swindburn said to Billy "If thou's gana work on a farm, work on thee awn" Archie – when we were at school there would be about six of us would get together and go over the neut pond beside the railway line, we would catch neuts and put them on the railway line to see which ones would get off before the train came, However, it started to rain and one of the lads said let's cross over the field, old Dick will be getting his dinner, aye but Dick the old git was aback of the dike with a stick, he reported me to the school and my mother, I got wrang three times. Ay, but he was a good boss, said Billy. There farm was the one right at the top of Moorsley, they had the high and the low farm, they had a hind in the cottages, Bob Staples was the last man there, he was fully employed by the farm. We wre just kids 14 years old, we worked hard, long hours for little wages, but, in the winter old Dick would give all the old people of the village a bag of taties, it was a good job to do taking the taties out as the old women would give you a shilling. Archie – my dad was walking home from the pit and decided to help himself to a turnip from the field, farmer Thompson pops up and says "Archie, what's tho doing" "just

getting me sel a turnip” “no tho’s not, all bring tho a bag awer the mora” The farmers were good then, they would chuck a turnip into each garden when bringing them in from the fields.

If ever you see a photo of the Moorsley Swifts football team 1928, it’s the Swindburn house in the background. Archie had a photograph at Elemore when the winder crankshaft was replaced in the 1940’s, unfortunately it is now lost, but shows, Archy as a young man, Kenny Guy, Ronny Tate, Laury Thwaites, Sid Swan, Ted Pattison, Bob Moody may have a copy.

There were two Methodist chapels the PM’s and the Weslians. Every Sunday Archie’s family went to the chapel, the church and then the kids were sent down to Pittington to the Salvation Army. On the photograph showing Moorsley bank with the kids at the bottom, the building at the top of the bank was the winding house, one of the kids was called Matally Joice, he told me. The chimney came down in 1916, from Billy’s mothers diary, the pit closed 1915.

Bobby Hope had a brother called Ralphy, we used to all go to Durham on a Saturday night, to Belmont, get the last bus back. Ralphy was always in charge, he was only a little fella, played the mouth organ. He made everyone on the bus sing, all the passengers used to laugh, he wasn’t the height of half a pennith of copper, he also played the accordion. One of the brothers died when he was 8 of 9 years old, I used to sit next to him at school.

Bob Hope’s Book – where he refers to Billy’s grandmother Galley he says the son is Stan but Stan Galley was my uncle Jack’s cousin, he lived in Blue Row. My mother’s uncle Tom lived in Blue Row. Two of the miners killed at Eppleton lived in Blue Row Jacky Hicks and Albert Patterson. Billy I knew another two of those killed very well Alan Hunter was my dad’s cousin and Bobby Foster, I went to school with him.

The Blenkinsop family:

George Blenkinsop and his wife were clerks at Elemore Colliery, they lived in the end bungalow in North Road, beside the shop, (Derwent Street when they were first married) his wife Nora was a Hunter, her dad was Tommy and he lived at the end of Eskdale Street, he was a cousin of Billy’s dad, her brother was killed in the pit. There was only Tommy and grandmother Pretty left in this country, all the rest emigrated to Canada. George did very well, I think he ended up a millionaire. Billy is on the film they made when they got married when he was only seven years old, that shows you how well off they were.

Alan Blenkinsop – a plumber, tall thin lad about 6’4”, there were a lot of Blenkinsop’s his grandad lived in the officials houses, his dad was a blacksmith, he could do wonders with a hammer.

There is only one of the Blenkinsop’s alive now, that is Doris who goes to the lunch club, she lives in Springwell Terrace

Hall & Blenkinsop – the blacksmiths.

When we were young there were six of us knocked around together, from the time we went to school, Joe Thoroughgood, the eldest, Archie, Billy Stabler, Ernie Williamson, Billy and Dicky Gulliver. Jimmy Gullivers died recently, Jack and Vicky, we all used to drink together in the Blacky Boy, mind they wouldn't drink with Jimmy because he never paid his turn, Margaret is the only Gulliver left, she lives at South Hetton. Talked about some recent deaths of friends.

Archie: My wife had a rocking chair and that was her favourite place to sit, by the window, she said that the people passing by were good company, they would pop in for a chat, she wouldn't move to a bungalow. She became bedfast and I looked after her for a long time, until it became too much for me. Dr Pepper came every day and she arranged for full 24 hour nursing care. The MacMillan nurses looked after her for three weeks and she eventually passed away, in perfect peace.

We talked for a while about George Westgarth's health for a while. Billy said George used to work about 24 shifts a week (double shifts) when we were playing football for Hetton Methodists, he would clock-off at the pit for two hours, come down and play a game then go back to work. I was once talking to him on a Monday and he already had 7 or 8 shifts in by then.

Archie: There's an old man in Bramble Hollow, Adi Storey 94 years of age, he worked at Elemore and went to Dawdon where he was Safety Officer and he used to love dancing. He lived with his wife near the Board Inn, my wife and I once met him in Benidorm, I often think I should visit him.

Billy: I remember one time when we beat Sunderland B team at Hendon and we were sitting in the baths, Tommy Irwin came along and said "There will be hell to pay on Monday, it cost £110 to put that team out and you lads came along, paid your own expenses and beat them" That was the only game I thumped a bloke, Bircham the outside right, he was hacking young Bobby Bleanch, there was a 50/50 ball, I hit him and was 20 yards away by the time he hit the ground, I told him not to touch the kid again, you used to have to look after yourself those days. One game at Penshaw, I was coming in from the wing, this bloke chopped me, but before I was on the bottom I jumped up and cracked him. Bob Paisley was a Hetton lad, his nephew Fred was a plumber. It was hard playing football all Blood and Thunder, in them days. Elemore Colliery Welfare team played on the Flats, it was an old ash tip which was levelled off, they often went around picking up pieces of glass off the pitch, from the old tip, before a game. The area was fenced off by pit props at 3 ft high with an old winding cable along the top, it never stopped anyone getting into the match but someone would soon come over with a cap for your admission. Early on they would change at the pit head baths, later at the Welfare. Charlie Robinson, he was a character, (Billy) I remember when I moved up the Lane, he said "ah nar tho dint ah?" I said "Billy Pretty", "is tho uncle Jacky Galley" a said "ay" he said "he was a queer fella him" he said "he could mark a pack of dominoes before yeed played two hands" he had a good football team, ay when Geordie Shanks was centre forward, Billy Richardson he was good as well, Jacky Rutlage was outside left, Barty Croft

was another good outside left, Jacky Trewit was a good centre half, he was a landlord at Sherburn Hill. One day there were four of us lads and Jacky said "come to our house, my mother will make us dinner" It got to time to go to Durham Big Meeting and Gordon Smith said "Archie, how about we have a pint in every pub from here into Durham?" Archie said "do you know how many pubs there are from here to Durham, there are about 20, if you get to Durham it will be a wonder." When Billy played for Hetton Juniors he was playing against centre half for Hylton, Tommy Cummins, the next week he was playing for Burnley first Team. Geordy Walker used to run Hetton Juniors, he got all his strips off Harry Potts and they used the team as a nursery, Ralph Coats, was also manager at Burnley, when Billy was playing on the Welfare field Ralph lived next door, he would go over to play without his boots, so that Ralph could bring them over and get in for free. Their passage was next to my bedroom and every Saturday and Sunday the ball was banging off the wall, he was a good footballer. When Harry Potts played his first game for Burnley, it was a terrible winters day, Harry was the only player with his sleeves rolled up, Bob Lord the chairman asked who he was and looked after him ever after that day. Billy's father told him about a cup tie being played for Hetton United, the full back didn't turn up, a bloke called Hodgson, from Bog Row, was outside left, they put him left full back, there was a scout there for Luton Town, from that game he was picked-up and went on to become a director of Luton Town.

All the Moorsley lads stuck together, people called them the Moorsley Mafia, we had to stick together with the headmaster Leo Kelly at school, he was sadistic, we got the cain every day. Mind he was responsible for getting flush toilets to replace the middens and the tarmacing of the roads.

During the war we used to get these barley sugar sweets at school, Joe Therowgood, Archie's next door neighbour said he should climb over the wall and get some of the sweets from the cupboard, while the cleaner was busy, he knew exactly where they were. Billy, I could remember when we were singing in the hall, we were always at the back and Bondy would get them out of the cupboard and pass them along the row, then hand them around at play time.

The school had a number of stoves, when we were about 13 we would go to the school early to help Mrs Burnham lift the pails of coal in. I think there were four, one in each class, then two additional in the hall, where there were two classes. There were about 40 pupils in each class, Archie and Billy were in the top class together for about two years, there were 252 students overall. Miss Hodgson who taught the juniors, called me over one day and gave me a parcel for my mother, I took it home and there was a pair of second hand childrens shoes inside, my mother was very pleased, as money was very tight then. She did that on a few occasions. There was Miss Baker, Miss Hodgson, Miss Macintosh, then Brown and Mr Farnsworth, headmaster. Archie, I got to sit the exam for Houghton Grammar School, I was sat between two other boys, Alan Larma and Chris Young, we got a form to fill in, I had completed mine, then the other Two said Archie, what do you do here, so I showed them, the teacher supervising came over and said I was disqualified for helping the other two. One girl Marjory Hepple passed, she ended up as a professor. There were seven of us from Moorsley

sat the exam, it was a privilege to go there, but very expensive for working class families. When it was Billy's turn the war had started and there were no exams, air raid shelters were being built and half of the time they didn't go to school.

Archie: My dad told me not to go to the pit, he said why don't you join the police force, unknown to him I did apply to join in Birmingham. I got word to go to Houghton to sit the entrance exam, the Houghton inspector read my exam sheet and said if I had applied for Durham, I could have started on Monday. When I got the exam results, I told Mr Kelly I had failed and he said the only reason I had not been accepted was because I had applied for Birmingham rather than Durham and they did not understand why. Jimmy Arniston was a police at the time, he said if I had gone to see him I would have got straight into the police force.

