

Ran a Weekly Charity Whist Drive for over Forty-five Years

Mr T. Taylor was born in 1905 and interviewed in 1990

I was one of those unfortunates who, when I left school, it was the same time when all the soldiers were coming back from the First World War to their jobs. I wanted to join my dad and work for the railway but in an accident playing football, I broke my arm and I was off for about two years because I couldn't do anything, and there was little or no work for cripples in those days.

Anyhow I managed to get work with a builder at Tebay and I stayed with him for three or four years, a man called Fothergill. We only did repairing. Then I left to go to a better job at Sedbergh. In those days jobs were always moving, so you had to keep moving.

We worked 60 hours a week for one shilling (*5p in today's money*) an hour. We started at six o'clock in the morning. When I started work at Sedbergh for what was over a year on the Sedgewick House on the top of the hill for the school who wanted a more modern building. There would be at least one hundred men on it. There was very little fast mechanical stuff. Everything had to be done with picks and spades. We worked six until eight then half an hour off for breakfast, then from half-past-eight to twelve o'clock. Then after the half hour lunch break, twelve-thirty to half past four. Another half hour break and we were back at work until seven thirty in the evening.

The total pay was quite good when we worked the full sixty hours. Three pounds was a lot of money in those days. We lost pay if we didn't work. The foreman would just blow the whistle and everybody stopped and we didn't start again until he blew his whistle again. One such week we just had 20 hours in so we only got a pound.

Then I came to Kendal. I thought it was t'likeliest place to get work. There was three million out of work and you just did anything and I was lucky I managed to get a job with a firm called Nelson's. That eventually came to an end. Then I got another job with a man called Hooton as a jobbing labourer. I was about 24 years old and I'd got married by then and had a daughter and so I decided I would work for myself. Work was bad and I went out looking for work. The dole was about twenty-three shillings for the wife and daughter.

Work was very scarce. I heard tell that a man down at Witherslack might have a job. So I walked down to Witherslack and he wasn't there, he was at Underbarrow so I walked up to Underbarrow and he said he had nothing. You thought nothing of walking a mile or two looking for work. I was very lucky, a couple of days later he had got a job building the garage at Helsington Laithes so he came looking for me.

From then on I worked for myself. I had a little workshop in Castle Street, underneath Bell's Bakery for four shilling a week. By then (1930) I moved from a Council House on Castle Grove on to Shap Road where the rent was seven and four pence a week. I got more and more work and I had to take two or three men on. I did quite a lot at Castle Mills, Goodacres and I kept working right through the second world war, with my bad arm I wasn't called up. I didn't give up at 65 for the simple reason the two men I was employing were climbing up to sixty and I didn't want them to have to look for other jobs at that age. So I stayed there myself until they both retired.

By then I had bought a house for £2,650. I divided it into to flats, upstairs and downstairs and I think I would spend about £5,000 before I finished. The one good thing about it was that after 100 years it was still the end house, in a town the size of Kendal, at that side of the road. When I retired we took up bowling I'm an honorary member of the bowling green just off Sandes Avenue and one of my friends from Kendal said we wanted to improve the bowling

green, so he said "I'll tell you what I'll do I'll run a whist drive to get some money. We started up then in 1945 and I'm still running it yet, with his wife, his widow, she's 92. We ran it for years and years and then about ten years ago little Elsie Wilson's nephew went down with Multiple Sclerosis, so we (*Elsie does the clerical work*) decided to stop the bowling green money and we've run it for Multiple Sclerosis ever since. And we still run it every Thursday night and in all those years I've only missed once when I could have gone.

My daughter has two boys and a girl and they started Orienteering so I was detailed with to take the boys to events. So after a while I decided to have a try myself. I started when I was sixty-five taking my grandson and he won the British Junior Championship and I was the top pensioner for the Gazette and Insurance Company. We still go orienteering with me daughter now and the British Orienteering Federation gave me a cup.

You get a map from the organisers and it's got numbers on it. You follow a track that they've set you find where these numbers are. My courses are roughly about three and a half miles but the young ones will do about fifteen miles on a hard one down to eleven miles. My biggest 'enemy' lives up in Elgin. He's only a lad at 72 years old. I'm in a club called The South Ribble Club at Preston. We are going up Dow Crag this Sunday, not to climb, but go the back way round.

My arm has never really affected me doing anything. I write with my right hand. Little cups and saucers are not good I have to have something I can get me fingers through because I can't twist it. They wouldn't have me in the army because I couldn't salute properly.

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