

Elsie Metcalfe (nee Scott), formerly of Park House, Keld

Q: How many cow'usses did your dad have at Park House? 'Four in different areas'. **Q: Cows lived in them in winter?** 'Yes, we had to let them out in a morning to let them go find some water, and then give them some more hay and then go and bring them in again - twice a day, morning and night.' **Q: Did they come back in willingly?** 'Well, mostly! You had to give them a bit of time... they obviously wanted a bit of exercise as well, but by the time you got your little jobs done, it was probably time for them to come back anyway. We'd no electricity or anything like that, so you had to do it before it got dark.'

Q: When were the buildings emptied? 'April or May. April I think usually.'

Q: Was the hay all used? 'Oh no, there was usually some left. It depends on what the crop had been like really.'

Q: What about lunchtimes at haytime? '...my grandma often used to make us a hot meal ...most days'. **Q: So the whole family went in to eat?** 'Yes and back out in the afternoon, hopefully to lead it in after tea, but then we often had a picnic in the field about 4 o'clock... granny used to make it .. She used to bake teacakes and pies and things like that ...we went to help her, yes, a little tin can full of tea or coffee. She used to send a little signal, used to stick a tea towel out on the wall when it was ready.'

Q: Were the cows in the cow'usses milked? 'Well, the barn at home was, but the others weren't. There were the cows at home and a little place for the calves ...and the hay mew ...we made butter and cheese ...milking twice a day, morning and night. The cows at home had to be let out into the yard to drink, we had no water supply, the water we had came from a rock across the Swale, came from a hillside, and it came down one side, but there wasn't enough pressure to bring it right up to the house, so it only came half way up, so we had to carry all our water from half way down this hill (for the house).'

Q: What about the cows? 'Well, when I was small, they got a pump so we had to pump it into this trough outside for the cows.' **Q: So the pump was useful as milk cows drink a lot of water?** 'Well, it was, but it was hard work, you know, when you've got to fill a whole trough using a hand pump.'

Q: Did you ever play in the barns? ‘Oh yes, used to play schools and things like that...in the summer when the cows weren’t in there...we didn’t go in the hay mew much, it was more in where the cows were...we were all together really, well we didn’t know anything different. I think we were all quite happy in our own little ways.’

Q: Did you do the treading of the hay? ‘Oh yes, when they were leading the hay. It was nice to go in there because you were away from the midges, you used to get eaten with the midges...lot of trees around Park House. Probably two of us might go in, it was very hot and as the hay mew got fuller it got darker, especially when it got up round the forking hole. There was often a place at one side where they could throw the hay over into the byre and so there was a little bit of light would come in from there, but when that got blocked up you couldn’t, but it was hot and there was dust from the hay...it was nice when you came back out again.’

Q: Right up into the rafters? ‘Oh yes, sometimes you did, you were sort of sticking it in, after the hay had been a while it did settle quite a bit.’

(Adapted from the 27th July 2016 interview transcriptions from the Every Barn Tells a Story project by the Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority)