

Jeanie Lee.

Northern Programme (from Leeds)

"SWALEDALE"

Arranged by

Richard Sharp

With speakers from

Keld, Muker and

Gunnerside.

Thursday, 13th April, 1939.

8.15 - 8.45 p.m.

ANNOUNCER:

This is the Northern programme - Swaledale -
a discussion of changing times....

(Fade in Keld Singers. "Old
Wooden Rocker." Fade down)

SHARP:

There's no railway in Swaledale and the road's steep and winding. Until it was remade a few years ago it didn't tempt visitors, but now they flock in during the summer. Some people say that because of this the old dales way of life is changing, some that change is only on the surface. Some agree that it should change and others want it to stay as it was.

(Keld Singers. Fade up and fade)

SHARP:

The farthest part of the dale - the part where there's least change - is that reaching from the dale-head down as far as Gunnerside or Low Row. To-night we've brought to the studio some of the people from that part, to discuss it themselves.

(Keld Singers. Fade up to end
of a verse)

CHERRY:

I've lived in Swaledale all my life and I suppose I know Upper Swaledale better than most. You see, I was ^agamekeeper until the old lord of the manor died and Lord Rochdale took over. Our ground extended from Gunnerside round by Water Crag to Tan Hill and there were three of us for it - three beats like. I had the bottom one from Gunnerside to Water Crag. My brother from Ivelet to Hall Moor,

and James Waggett here from Hall Moor to Tan Hill.

WAGGETT: That's right.

CHERRY: Sometimes we could make the whole round in a day, about ten miles or so, but if we found any vermin we might be stopped in one place all day, ferreting them out or digging them out from the cracks in the hags.

WAGGETT: That's when a good dog would come in.

CHERRY: Aye, a good terrier's worth its weight in gold for marking the vermin and running them. I've seen sometimes when we've had a job to keep up with them, they've run them that quick.

WAGGETT: They've not invented anything yet to take the place of dogs OR game-keepers, have they!

(laughter)

Oh, here are the singers again. What are you going to sing us this time?

LAURIE RUKIN: A bit mors of "The Old Wooden Rocker".

WAGGETT: They'll be tired of that. Try something new.

LAURIE: We will. You listen!

(Song, straight and jazzed)

LAURIE: How d'you like that! I don't say that it's better that way, but it makes a change.

WAGGETT: Yes, it does. But some people don't believe in change. I remember when the first trap came up here, one old man said horses and traps'd be no use. They'd be driven too fast and people would be killed with them.

(Laughter)

WAGGETT: Then another thing, when I was a boy mowing-machines were introduced but some farmers said that grass wouldn't grow as well when it had been mowed with a machine as when it had been scythed.

LAURIE: Well, I'm a farmer and my father's a farmer and my grandfather's a farmer and I can tell you that there are lots of changes for the better nowadays - in farming, anyway. For instance, we can get everything by lorry brought right to the door - cattlefood, lime, hay, supplies of all sorts, instead of having to haul them over the fells from Hawes or Askrigg.

WAGGETT: And you can send everything away by lorry too,

LAURIE: Yes. Then we can have concrete in the byres and we've got motor-mowers, motor-tyres on our carts - I've got a motorbike so that I can get away to pictures and dances instead of having to stop at home. And we get our coal from South Yorkshire by rail instead of in pokes from Tan Hill like they used to - and better coal, too!

WAGGETT: Aye, and dearer!

(Laughter)

CHRISSIE
WAGGETT: Yes, and there are lots of other changes in this part of the dale. We're more in touch with the outside world....

SHARP: I'm not sure that's an advantage.

CHRISSIE: Oh, it is! And we get papers every day, a delivery of letters every day - when we're not snowed up - and we've even got a dial telephone. There's hot water laid on in the house and an electric light

plant. Then we can get about more than we used to. For instance, we can slip over to the East or the West coast for the weekond, a thing we couldn't possibly have done before cars came in. And we can go into Richmond for the pictures at night, though it's a run of twenty five miles.

WAGGETT: And here's an interesting thing: we came from Scotland by car last year in the same time as it used to take us to come over from Hawes.

GUY: Motors make a great difference to my haulage business.

WAGGETT: Yes, I can remember when you used to fetch my things by cart and two horses from Hawes.

GUY: That's true.

WAGGETT: Now I can fetch them myself and cut out the middleman.

(Laughter)

GUY: We got about a pound a ton profit in those days but we used to work hard for it. One man was allowed to drive two horses and two carts, one chained behind the other. And we sometimes had a third horse to help us up the hills. It used to take us a whole day to go to Hawes or Askrigg and back, and we couldn't carry more than 14 cwts. or so because the hills were so steep.

WAGGETT: 14 cwts. isn't much to show for a day's work?

GUY: No, it isn't. In those days, as well, Hawes was as far as we went. Now I've had lorries as far abroad as Bradford, Leeds, Hull and Newcastle.

RUKIN, Senr.:

And lorries come in useful for sheep as well. Twenty or thirty year ago - when I was a lad of sixty or thereabouts - we used to drive them to market. Now we can send as many as fifty at a time or even seventy in those two-deckers and get 'em to t'sale fresh and well instead of clemmed and sore.

LAURIE:

You wouldn't sooner have the old days then, [?] grandfather?

RUKIN, Senr.:

No, I wouldn't! I had to work too hard. When I was ten years old I worked in Tan Hill coal mines for 10d. a day. I was there for about forty years and used to walk there and back, about four mile each way. And then I had about a mile to go underground. And I had cows to milk and sheep to tend when I got home.

WAGGETT:

You're 91 now. Isn't it about time you retired, Bob Jim?

RUKIN, Snr.:

Well, I don't do as much as I used to.

(Laughter)

~~But I still milk a cow or two and do a bit with the sheep, and help at hay time.~~

WAGGETT:

I hope I can still milk a cow when I'm 91.

(Laughter)

MISS ALDERSON:

And women have a far better time nowadays. In the old times it was all bed and work for a woman. They still have a great deal to do, buttermaking, baking, a certain amount of farmwork, and so on, but many of their husbands have cars and there are buses running up the dale and they can

get out more. Forty or fifty years ago, in addition to all the work I've mentioned, they not only had far more of their own knitting to do, but they often took in knitting to eke out the family income.

MRS. MEE: Yes, Miss Alderson, I've heard of that.

MISS ALDERSON: Many of them never got out of the house the whole winter and when you think that there are some houses which the sun never touches from November to February, So now, Mrs. Mee, you can imagine what their life was like - or can you, I wonder?

Another advantage of modern times is that you can buy readymade clothes so easily today. ^{knit leg of cover} The old folks didn't take at all kindly to readymades. They used to say that they were "blown up" or "made with hot needles and burnt thread".

MRS. MEE: What did they mean by that?

MISS ALDERSON: Why, the buttons were always coming off, and seams coming undone. And there were some seams in those old dresses, yards of them! And bones. Some of them were so heavily boned that dresses'd stand up by themselves.

MRS. MEE: And what should you think has brought the biggest changes to the date, Miss Alderson? Wireless?

MISS ALDERSON: No-o. Wireless is very nice, but I think that motors have brought the biggest changes.

LAURIE: Don't forget motorbikes! What about getting to dances? In the old days you had to

LAURIE:

Don't forget morrisdances! What about getting to dances? In the old days you had to go on horseback or walk.

And there were only ^{about} three dances a year then, one at Hoggarth, upstairs in a hayloft - you had to climb up a ladder to it - and another at Fry House, in a bedroom at a temperance hotel.

WAGGETT:

Maybe - but we used to have proper dances then! Polkas, Sir Roger, Lambers Schottisches, Swaying Six, Three reel, Square eight and Circassian Circle.

(Laughter will be interspersed)

Modern dancing - it's just walking.

LAURIE:

You just try it, Mr. Waggett.

SHARP:

I'd like Mrs. Mee to say something about the Chapel in the old days.

MRS. MEE:

No account of Upper Swaledale is complete without the Chapel. Being the minister's wife I'm particularly interested in its history. From what I've heard and read it seems the Chapel was the focus of village life. Everybody went to it regularly and Sunday was observed with absolute strictness. It was almost as great a sin to be late as to miss altogether and discipline was harsh. All members had to give a really strong reason for even one absence from communion. The absences were noted down and examined. Here's one excuse, taken from an old register. "Reason for absence - Inconvenient, confined".

WAGGETT: In fact, n ~~... of sickness or~~
being weatherbound was considered satisfactory.

MRS. MEE: No. I've found such comments as
"Excommunicated for inconsistent conduct" and
"Turned himself out to avoid being turned out".
And here's a gem which I quote verbatim from a
minute dated 1839. "John, admitted. - Thomas,
returning as a dog to its vomit, and the sow
that was washed to her wallowing in the mire.
In the recovery of bodily health he lost his
spiritual health, and the only reason that can
be assigned is that his heart was not right with
God".

LAURIE: We're not so strict as that nowadays.

MRS. MEE: No, but we're stricter than they are in
the towns, I'm glad to say.

WAGGETT: Sunday Chapel was an occasion and no
mistake!

MRS. MEE: The day everyone wore boots instead of
clogs! But I think Swaledale people still think
about the Chapel in the same old way, though they
don't behave quite the same way.

WAGGETT: And that's true.

MRS. MEE: In the summer people are too busy looking
after visitors to attend Chapel strictly. That
would have meant excommunication in the old days!
But we keep up the weekly activities. And we
go to Whist Drives and dances.

WAGGETT: But not for the Chapel!

MRS. MEE: No we wouldn't think of organising one
for Chapel funds.

WAGGETT: You're one of the changes yourself,
Mrs. Moo!

MRS. MEE: Yes, I know! When my husband's away,
I often take the services for him. A woman in
the pulpit would have been impossible fifty
years ago.

WAGGETT: Even thirty, I'd say.

MRS. MEE: And then there's the change in recrea-
tions. They didn't allow any games in the village
instituto. ^{then} All you had was improving literature.
Now you find billiards, badminton, cards, draughts,
darts and so on.

In spite of that we are pretty strict
really - especially on Sunday. It doesn't
prevent visitors walking or fishing. But we
don't work except so far as we must, we don't
make hay, however fine it is, and our Sunday
music is sacred music.

("O day of rest and gladness")
(One verse)

MRS. MEE: ~~But~~ When winter comes the village draws
in on itself. It's deserted. Many of the houses
are shut up. Good roads are no good when they're
blocked by snow, and there's plenty of that up
here among the fells, and plenty of wind driving
down the valley to pile it into drifts.

CHERRY: I've seen when we've had to thrash the
snow off the ling with bundles of twigs, or even
cut it off in blocks, so that the birds could feed.
They got so that they would follow like poultry.

MRS. MEE:

By 'birds' you mean grouse?

CHERRY:

Yes. I've known the weather so bad that every bird has left the ground and gone away somewhere else. And then, before there's been a visible sign of a thaw, I've seen them coming back in little packs, and breaking off to their own grounds.

WAGGETT:

Aye, and snow's a thing that your modern conveniences can't get shot on. In 1933 it started on a Friday and it snowed all day Saturday and Sunday and when I got up on Monday it was piled right up to the bedroom window. I saw some roadmen coming along with a snowplough and shouted to them from upstairs, "Aren't you coming to get us out?". When they'd dug us out we measured it and the drift at the back door was nine feet deep. And how much Post Office business d'you think we did over the weekend!

LAURIE:

I know. I've heard this tale before (laughter) but go on. Perhaps the others haven't.

CHRISIE:

Well then, from Saturday till Tuesday we sold one 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ d. stamp!

MRS. ALDERSON:

That snow hit us just as bad, Mr. Waggett, but we had to dig ourselves out.

(Laughter)

WAGGETT:

Go on, Mrs. Alderson. Take no notice of them.

MRS. ALDERSON:

Where we live it's a good half mile from any road and we can't expect passers by to help. But then we're used to getting snowed up. I

always buy my groceries in big quantities at any time. For instance usually I get 10 stone of flour at a time. But in winter I get double. 20 stone at a time. I've two boys and one daughter at home, and Mr. Alderson, and they all eat their fair share. (laughter). More if they can get it. (Laughter). We've about 500 sheep and they graze over 15 or 20 square miles of country, on Angram and Birkdale Common, right past Bockmeetings as far as Westmorland. And not flat country either! They've to be looked after and moved and folded in winter.

MRS. MEE: That'll give your men an appetite!

MRS. ALDERSON: Yes. Men's appetites don't alter whether it's ancient or modern times we live in. We kill two pigs every year and make our own hams and bacon, like most other farmers in the dale. And sometimes we put a quarter of mutton in the brine as well.

WAGGETT: You could hold out a long time if you were put to it.

MRS. ALDERSON: Yes, and sometimes we've had to, being so out of the way.

MRS. MEE: Wouldn't you ^{rather} ~~sooner~~ live nearer the village?

MRS. ALDERSON: No, I don't think so. When I was first married I used to think it was dreadful being so quiet, but I like it now. And, of course, as you've said, we've plenty to do in

winter, mending and knitting; and then there's quilting and that sort of thing in the village.

MRS. MEE:

The mention of quilting reminds me of a story. A visitor - I won't tell you his name - came to see me one evening and I told him how we gather at each others' houses and all work on one quilt till it's finished. And I described how we do the work - putting a layer of cotton wool between two sheets of ~~satin~~ and then sew it in pattern and so on, and I said, "You must have seen them." "No", he said, "I don't think I have". Well, do you know there were two on the bed he was sleeping in. That shows what men are!

SHARP:

Yes I know. That was me.

(Laughter)

CHERRY:

Mrs. Alderson was saying how quiet it is at Stone House. Now quietness is a thing we're losing nowadays. The cars on the roads and, worse still, the visitors walking over the fells, disturb the game. Aeroplanes were bad in this way, as well. When they first came, the birds used to think they were hawks and they drove the moor. But they've got used to them now. In my kind of work - gamekeeping - things were better in the old days than they are now. To take one instance - moles. Moles were in great demand once. The

old lord of the manor once told all us game-keepers that we'd to catch enough to make a coat and waistcoat out of their skins. Moloskins would fetch as much as fourpence apiece. Now you couldn't get a halfpenny for them.

LAURIE: You'd a special way of catching rabbits, hadn't you. (statement)

CHERRY: Yes. Listen.

LAURIE: That's a rabbit squealing when the stoat has got him?

CHERRY: Yes. The other rabbits hear it and come to the mouths of their holes to see what's up, and then you shoot them. And listen to this. This is a hengrouse. And this is a cock grouse.

LAURIE: I'll tell you one thing you can't imitate.

CHERRY: What's that?

LAURIE: A fish.

(Laughter)

PARRINGTON: Fishing! That's my chief hobby for sport and that hasn't changed much. We've new flies, that's all, but you still catch the trout in the same old way. Upstream fly if the wind's right, or downstream if the wind's downstream. And worm if the water's too thick for fly. I do fishing in the summer and then travel the grouse-moors with Lord Rochdale as beater.

LAURIE: And you make boots and clogs as well. (Statement)

PARRINGTON: Yes, but there's not so much call for bootmaking nowadays. In the old days I'd as much work as I could do, but now everybody uses these rubbers - wellingtons they call them. One farmer up here started wearing wellingtons and his eyesight began to fail, and he blames them for it, nothing else.

MISS ALDERSON: Now what about you, father? You're eighty-two but I know you think that modern days are best on the whole. Still, the old days had their advantages, hadn't they?

ALDERSON: Aye, that shall be true! We were better off in a many ways. Visitors bring a certain amount of money into the dale, but that's nothing like having a good steady industry like the old lead mines.

I've seen when the bridge over Gunnorside beck was black with men and boys in their best clothes on the third Thursday of the month.

MISS ALDERSON: It must have caused some hardship only being paid once a month, didn't it?

ALDERSON: Oh I don't know. In those days there weren't the ways of spending money that there are today. There were no pictures, no trips to Richmond, not near so many dances. Rents were lower, too, and food was cheaper.

MISS ALDERSON: Yes, but wages were smaller.

ALDERSON: They weren't so small as all that. Some of the men made good money. You see, the masters paid on results and there are tricks in all trades.

If the men found a good place in the mines - where they could get a lot out with little work - they'd hap it up when the masters came round to put a price on it, and then they'd unwall it when they'd gone away, and that meant a good pay next time.

I've known my father draw forty pounds one month. That was for the whole family of course, and it included peat pay.

MISS ALDERSON: The masters didn't have it all their own way then.

ALDERSON: No, they didn't. And another thing which made the men better off, there wasn't the variety of food in those days to spend money on, and nearly every miner had a field, a pig and a cow.

MISS ALDERSON: And I'll tell you another way in which the old days were better - we had quieter Sundays. Nowadays we've cars going through Gunnerside all day on a Sunday. You've hard working getting to chapel safely. You're side-stepping all the way. And people come to the wood near our house and strip it of nuts and ferns and holly. In the old days we had the place to ourselves. We never saw a stranger in winter, and very few in summer. Now, we're overrum.

SHARP:

And so you've heard both sides to the argument. Is the dial changing? Of-course it is. And most of the people here seem to think that, on the whole, it's changing for the good. But I, for one, hope that it doesn't change too much.

MISS ALDERSON:

And just one last word. We got all sorts of people coming in from the towns:- journalists, novelists, and young men from the B.B.C. By the way a many of them talk to us we might have lived all our lives in a bottle and never seen the cork. But let me tell you we're not so silly as all that. Why Gunnerside alone has produced a Deputy-Lieutenant of London and a K.C.

(Laughter)

SHARP:

And Swaledale produced all of you as well!

MISS ALDERSON:

Yes, all of us as well.

ANNOUNCER:

You've been listening to a conversation among speakers from Swaledale arranged by Richard Sharp. Those taking part were, from Gunnerside

Ruth Alderson
George Alderson
and Simon Cherry.

From Muker:
Richard Guy

and from Kold:

Chrissie Waggett
James Waggott .
Alderson
Jonnie Moe
Laurie Rukin
James Rukin
Tom Farrington
and the Kold Singers.

5 0--Children's Hour.

6 0 Exchange Concert

by the Students of the Royal Manchester College of Music and the Leipzig Konservatorium, with introductory greetings from R. J. Forbes and Professor Davisson; From Manchester: Agnes Stephens and Brenda Old (violins); Gwendolen Veevers (soprano); the String Orchestra, conducted by R. J. Forbes; From Leipzig: The Orchestra of the Konservatorium, conductor, Professor Davisson.

7 0--Time, weather and news.

7 20--"One Day This Week. . ." Jeanie Mee: "The Dales Conference."

7 30--Listeners Answer Back at Mansfield; Stephen Fry receives and answers comments, criticisms and inquiries.

8 0--"I Want to be an Actor," devised by Rion Voigt; incidental music by

