



INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPT

Farmer's Name: Ian Maclean

Age: 69

Location: St. Mary Halls Cottages, Rochester

Size: 2000 acres

Type: Arable

Interviewed by: Katy Sharpe

Date: 5 August 2015

Pre interview, Mr Maclean told me during a general chat that Great Expectations had been filmed on the farm, he mentions it later on.

Katy: So yeah, could you just tell me about the farm, what it is, what you have, just you know....

Ian: Pretty simple, it's grass and cereals, full stop. There's permanent grass, which is not rotated, and an arable rotation of wheat, rape and peas. So all, all cut with a combine, they...effectively call them combinable crops. So, there's about 5... 580 acres of combinable crops, the rest is grass.... and a lot of it is, a sort of un-farmable, dykes, ditches, saltings cause we go down to the river. That's where the, all the, Great Expectations jobs were. So there's probably 200 acres of waste. We've got, we've got 100 acres of dykes, so ... [sips tea],

Katy: So do you, do you use the grassland for anything?

Ian: Yeah, at the moment cattle. Only cattle, fattening cattle. So, but as I say over the years we've... it's all, totally changed, it's...

Katy: And how's it changed?

Ian: I mean initially, we were, if we start, go back, we'll say 50 years, it was a total mixed farm. So we were growing market garden crops which was mainly spring greens in this area, which had a lot of casual labour in the spring. Then we were growing fodder crops for the animals, mangel-wurzels, kale, trefoil which is a sort of a clover for fattening lambs on. As I say we had amongst the arable staff, we had 5 full time shepherds. So we were running 3000 ewes then and alongside about a



thousand head of cattle, And, so the wh-...the whole farm was a mixture - we were growing crops for the, for the cattle, but gradually that, that has changed. The, the big, the main change came, labour-wise, came when I went to New Zealand for 2 and a half years, [coughs] after college. Whilst I was away the main changes happened which was the mechanisation. We used to do everything in small bales and everything was done manually, humped sacks of wheat off the combine, all this sort of thing, and then in those two or three years we moved over to these telehandlers, these machines that can push out, and lift weights, you put different things on the end, of bales spikes and buckets, and...Grabs, and

Katy: what the tractor things with the arms?

Ian: Yeah, well no they're more complex than that. They do everything. and in the in the space of 5 years we dropped from over 20 men to 6. Just, just because of the mechanisation, and then, and then we started changing the type of planting to the, the marshland, half the farm is marshland, which is- was tidal in the old days, it's all in permanent grass, but in the 60s the government wanted all this marshland, this grass permanent marsh grassland, ploughed up and drained to grow more wheat. So, we drained and ploughed the whole of the marshland which meant getting rid of most of the stock. And, we grew a rotation of, same rotation as we are now, wheat rape and peas on the marshland. And so we, took on had to get a whole lot more machinery, to do the bigger acreage, so gradually we made shepherds redundant and got rid of sheep, and, we got down to one flock of sheep and about 400 breeding cows, and then for 20 years I suppose we, we had 1500 acres of arable. So it's quite a big arable enterprise, but the problems, because of the, the fact it was tidal originally these marshlands, they got a lot of salt in the soil? And, that causes structure problems with the clay and, and basically the, the structure got worse and worse and, in the winter we had flooded areas and then the grain price dropped, and, they were, it was becoming unviable. So, at, at that time, this would have been the mid-90s, we were, they were starting these environmental schemes where you, put it back, put this arable land back to grass, and, and, you have to have, certain specifications for making the dykes smaller and, and they set out how you've got to graze it and all this sort of thing, and we didn't take it up for some years, but when the crops got worse and the price for the crops got worse as well we decided to take it, so for 20 years we've been, put it all back to grass again. So, the arable area shrunk again, and the and the stock numbers went up again, so it's been a lot of change

Katy: Yeah, so.... I've got a lot of questions - so when you had the cattle and sheep was that for meat or was that for, sort of, dairy.... [trails off]

Ian: No, no that's all, all, for meat, for selling yeah no, we never milk cows here



Katy: And when was it, when was it sorry that the...you had to make it...when you had to drain the erm, marshland, what year was that, do you remember?

Ian: That was between 66 and 70, we drain- drained it in sections

Katy: And then in the 90s was when you had to put it back? To....

Yeah, so

Katy: Did you have to flood it again, is that how you...?

Ian: Well initially the, in in '74 we joined the common market, when all the marsh had been drained and ploughed up, course it was fairly cheap to grow wheat then cause we hadn't got the weeds, we hadn't got the disease, it was all clean land, and we used to be able to spray it with aeroplanes and we were free to use any chemicals and this sort of thing, so it was quite easy to grow and we could burn the straw as well. So we just combined it, put a match to it, burned it all, and just put the next crop in, but, as I say, the...the... we, we just drained and got them all drained at the beginning of the 70s and we joined the common market. And the price of wheat trebled, so, through the 70s it was very good and then as I say the structure went, the prices didn't go up anymore and, and so that's that when we started putting it back. We were one of the last to put it back to grass but nearly all the, the marshland has gone back into grass.

Katy: So you have cattle and sheep now, do you... still?

Ian: Don't have sheep, I just keep it simple now, I, I graze 700 steers. So, and buy them as year olds and sell them finished at 2 year old, so I can keep them for a year or just over a year [Sips tea]. I'm selling them at the moment.

Katy: Yeah. With the disease and, and, burning is that something that's changed..? Er, not disease, sorry the pesticides? What you're allowed to spray, has that changed?

Ian: Well first of all, we, we sprayed it all with the plane. Virtually neat chemical, which is very effective, and, and then, then gradually they made it harder to spray with the rules of when you could spray and when you couldn't, and then they virtually banned it altogether. And, so we had to go back to ground spraying [plate rattles] but then a lot of the chemicals had been lost, specially[sic] in the last 4 or 5 years. So it's getting increasingly difficult to maintain the yields, because the effective chemicals are gradually being banned, anything that's any good is banned. Reason it's good is because it works.

Katy: Yeah. Why are they banning it? Do you know? Do they ever give a reason?



Ian: Well they ban it because...they they think there might be some carcinogens in them and that sort of thing. For instance when we used to dip sheep, we, we used to dip them in Dieldrin, which has been banned. I mean it's very effective, we dip sheep because of fly strike. They get...

Katy: In their skin isn't it?

Ian: Bluebottles lay their eggs and then the maggots eat the sheep

Katy: Yeah, yeah I've heard of that

Ian: Er, so you used to have to dip them for that. And, Dieldrin was marvellous, once you dip them with that it would keep the flies off them for the rest of that year and the next year until they were shorn

Katy: Wow – [laughing] strong then!

Ian: So that was banned, and then there was another one that replaced it which wasn't quite so good, and that was banned and, and so now I don't think people dip at all. There's a pour on chemical that you put on for fly strike but we haven't had any sheep now for a few years, so I'm not up to date with what you can use but...

*Katy: Do cattle have that kind of problem? Or any sort of similar problems?
Do cattle have any kind of problems with flies or anything?*

Ian: Yeah, not with flies but they have their problems with worms. They do have a problem with flies getting round their...obviously they're nuisance flies, they annoy them cause they get round their feet and they're constantly getting together to get away from the flies, but the main problem with flies is a disease called New Forest disease which makes them blind, and the flies love to get round the eyes, so obviously you know when there...lot of flies about they're spreading this disease around So, we, we put fly killers on the cattle, and wormers, and mineral boluses, and, and all sorts of other things so to, to, to keep them healthy

Ian: I do all the cattle work myself

Katy: So the three...workers you've...

Ian: There's two... I'm in partnership with my brother, And my brother and two men, his two men do all the arable ground, and I've just got a part-time chap that does the fencing and hay-making for me, that sort of thing. But I do all the, the day-to-day cattle work [*Pause while Mr Maclean drinks his tea/eats*] Which is what we've been



doing today, and... going to go through a whole lot of cattle tomorrow to get the weekly supply to go off to the abattoir to slaughter, so er...

Katy: Does it go...do you sell the meat – I know obviously it goes to the abattoir does it then go on to supermarkets or markets, or does it, do you not see that side of it once you've sold your...cattle.....?

Ian: No they go, the slaughterhouses will, will buy the cattle and they will slaughter them and then they will have their outlets either to the supermarkets or to private butchers or for export or whatever. So, it's not a, a process that the slaughters actually buy the cattle *[Any tapping noises that now appear are from Mr Maclean tapping his hand on the table whilst making his point]* And then they slaughter them and then they sell the product on the 5th quarter, which is the offal goes to China and the skins go somewhere else and... so that's how it works.

Katy: I mean has that, has that changed at all? Who you sell your cattle to, over the years

Ian: Yeah it has changed because... though it used to be markets in every town, there was a market in Rochester. In fact as a boy I used to drive the cattle from here 8 miles into Rochester along the road on foot. And it's, you can sti- you can do it now if you want to

Katy: What road? What the main road erm... [points outside the window]?

Ian: Yeah down the main road, and through Strood high street into Rochester market...But obviously there wasn't the traffic then but it was, it's always been the responsibility of any, anyone along the road be it a house, or a shop to fence against the road. So we had, some cattle get into Woolworths once and smash it up, but that's their tough luck, cause they should build a fence against the cattle. So we had a local market where we'd drive them to on foot, and we had a butcher with his own slaughterhouse in Stoke, which is a little village 2 miles away. So he would buy a lot of the stock and take it there and so, so the little circuit was from where they were bred and fattened and marketed and slaughtered and sold was all in a small area. But gradually the markets have all closed down and now there's only one market in Kent, which is Ashford, and there was a slaughterhouse at Charing, Anglo-Dutch which went broke a fortnight ago, three weeks ago, so there's no now, no slaughterhouse in, in the country, in the county, so my cattle go to Guildford to be slaughtered.

Katy: That must have quite a big... that must... financially does that cost you quite a bit? Does that affect you at all?



Ian: Well you're...it's, you're in, you're getting in the hands of the big boys. I mean I, the Guildford abattoir's owned by Anglo Meat Processors who've been all over the world so, so it's getting into the hands of fewer and fewer people. But the the miles they do now is, is huge. If we used to sell to an abattoir in Bedfordshire, we used to breed, fatten bulls leave them as bulls and sell them as 12 month old meat. And they went to Dawn meats in Bedfordshire who killed for Safeway's, when Safeway's were a supermarket. And they'd be killed, at, they'd go from Kent to Bedfordshire to be killed and then when they were slaughtered they'd go to Anglesey, to their main cutting department, and then they'd be cut in Anglesey and then they'd go to the Midlands to their distribution store and then they will come back. So, we might get a piece of meat come back to Rochester, having been right round the country. So it, it's no longer a local thing, and of course a lot of the lambs, probably half the lambs go for export to Europe anyway. So, things, things have changed a lot in that respect

Katy: Mm, yeah how do you feel about that, that it's all changed from being local to bigger, do you...

Ian: Well, it's, thing is, it's you have to go with the tides, not a lot you can do about it. It's probably not as, farming generally is not as profitable as it was. I mean I've got a son, my brother's got a son, but they've seen their own fathers getting up at daylight and going to bed at dark and think there's an easier way to make a living, so neither of them are following in the... although they'd have a right, to follow into the farm, they've opted to do something, something else. So, it's very capital intensive now farming, whether if you're in the cereal job you've got expensive machinery, combines, and tractors and machines that can work the ground so you need a vast amount of capital to run the machinery, and on the livestock side which is my side you need an awful lot of money to maintain the stocking numbers. So any, any hardheaded businessman will look at the farming enterprise and they'll think we're mad for doing it [laughs]

Katy: Yeah... cause apparently lot- well, a lady I saw last week, she was another smaller farmer and she's actually now had to get out of cows, and completely shut her... is that something you, er [falters] do you know any other farmers around in the area...

Ian: Oh yeah

Katy: Is it affecting...?

Ian: I mean all these farmers that I say we've, we've take- we've taken on as farm business tenancies you know the ones we, for three years. They were all living breathing farms but everyone's just chucked it in. You need, if you're going to have any chance of making a profit you've gotta be in a really big, big way nowadays. So, I



mean a lot of these Welshmen, Scottish hill-farmers, are not earning the minimum wage, and they've got investment in farms and livestock and everything else, and, it's not in a good place at the moment for, for prof- for profits anyway.

Katy: And is that coming from....who is that coming from? The we- who is it that's not paying enough, is that... does it depend on the farm and who they sell it to?

Ian:it's influence of the multiples

Katy: Right

Ian: The supermarkets are the villains. I mean great for the consumer, I mean they've driven prices down to rock bottom.

Katy: Yeah especially with milk and things like that, yeah

Ian: But erm, A... a good yard stick, is, it's no good comparing prices with 40 years ago, because obviously with inflation and one thing and another it's difficult to match up, but a good yard stick is how many hours a week you have to work for your food and, just after the war, about that time you had - the average family had to work for 22, 23 hours to buy their food, you now work for three to buy your food. It's that cheap compared with, with wages, and I think 50% of the country's expenditure on food is through restaurants and fast food outlets, not for act- the actual food. So...

Katy: So I suppose, it's trickling down

Ian: And I, I don't... that won't change either, not so a lot of farmers have been squeezed out by the supermarkets so they have....especially the ones that are producing vegetables and the soft fruit, when they have a buy one get one free, it's not the supermarket pays for it, it's the supplier. So they ring you up and they say, half price for the next month cause we're having a promotion.

Katy: I didn't know that

Ian: And all the stores they build are not built with their money, they're built with farmers' money. If you want to sell to Tesco's then you've got to pay for their new stores and so on And so, so it's... yeah the supermarkets are the ones that have killed the small farmer off, without any question.

Katy: Yeah. So are you...



Ian: And of course you've got the aeroplane which has made a, a huge difference. As I say we used to grow spring cabbages, the whole area grew...it's the sort of...everyone had their hundred or two hundred acres of greens, and, you know they were good money, because that's... people didn't have deep freezers, there weren't the planes flying it in from all around the world, so if you wanted green vegetables they had to be locally grown. And, and then the freezers came in, of course you can buy frozen peas and frozen beans and everything, so that tended to drive the price down. And of course now you can get fresh vegetables of any sort at any time of the year from anywhere in the world And, and so, you, you're not competing with a few farmers around you, you're competing with everyone in the world. So it's now become a global, a global market

Katy: I mean does that affect you and what you do much?

Ian: What affects us more than anything else at the moment is the currency movements. Because most of our exports go to Europe, not being in the Euro, if the Euro's weak and the pound's strong, obviously it makes our produce expensive for the Europeans and it makes their produce cheap for the British. So, at the moment we've got beef coming in from all over the continent, from Ireland, a lot of the beef comes in from Ireland because they're in the Eurozone. So, so, the strong pound doesn't do us any favours. And as well as that, we're fairly heavily subsidised because if we weren't subsidised, there wouldn't be a farm or farmer in the country, so we get about 80 pounds an acres subsidy from the government.

Katy: Right. And is that, what every year?

Ian: The whole of Europe does, European farmers do, the CAP they call it, the Common Agricultural Policy

Katy: And when do you...how often do you get that subsidy, is that?

Ian: Once a year

Katy: Once a year, ok.

Ian: But it's paid in Euros, so 3 years ago we were getting, paid 80, 86, 87 pence for every Euro of subsidy, and now we're back to about 68 so our subsidy cheque will be about 15% down this year, and it was down last year on the year before, so currency movement's our biggest enemy

Katy: So with that subsidy, is that how you then...have the money to for your machinery, for...how you deal with the farm?



Ian: Well the whole of agriculture's subsidized. Every acre of the country apart from horse paddocks gets this subsidy, this, really it's a subsidy to the consumer, because if you took the subsidy away from the producer, then you'd have to pay 20% more for it in the shops. So, although the consumer thinks farmers are getting these fat subsidies, actually they're subsidising the cheap food you're getting rather than, than the farmers. So, I mean a good example at the moment is the dairy farmers, ten dairy farmers are going out of production every week. And, and you can now buy, they went into Sainsbury's, did a survey last week, they were paid three times as much for a bottle of water as they were for milk. I mean, it's.... a year's milk is a loss leader. Every dairy farmer in the country is losing a fortune at the moment, it's just a case of whether they can ride the storm out. So, it's huge numbers of cows being slaughtered, dairy cows being slaughtered every week, because they've got no value now, cause no one wants to buy them, if someone packs up, the job's so bad that they're not, no-one's expanding, so, yeah so the dairy sector is in... is in bad shape.

Katy: Yeah. [quietly] what about the beef sector? Your sector, the beef sector, is that in [bad shape]?

Ian: The beef sector is.....is... not brilliant. The, the the lamb, sheep job, is dire at the moment, The lambs are at their lowest price for 10 years.

Katy: Is that's cause it's coming in from abroad again, or?

Ian: Erm.....again, it's the supermarkets. Th- they're, we bring in a lot of New Zealand lamb, there's nearly as much New Zealand, New Zealand lamb sold as... as English lamb [sips tea], but it does complement English lamb, cause obviously their season is exactly opposite to ours, so now is the peak time for English lamb and the New Zealand lamb comes online beginning of the year in January, which fills the gap when our lambs run out, And, and the deal is when our lamb runs out then New Zealand lamb comes in, and then when our lamb comes on again the New Zealand lamb dries up. But, Tesco's are still selling 70% frozen New Zealand lamb which is not helping, and lambing numbers were good this year, so there's a lot of production, but, so they're, they're being produced well below the cost of production, or being sold at below, and also the supermarkets for some reason, you have a market share from the supermarket so you have a, if... we're say for example an animal makes £100 pounds to the farmer, and when it's sold onto the producer, to the shopper, they sell it at a percentage of what they paid for it. Well the farmer, last year was getting 55 percent of what the supermarket's sold it for, that's now dropped to 40%, that's another 15% profit for the supermarkets, and a lot less for the farmer. But the thing is, with, with most farmers, they're born and bred to it, they don't know anything else, it's it's a way of life, and they're....you get these bad times and they just, just carry on hoping it'll get better, which it tends to do, you have ups and down, but you have a lot of casualties along the way. And the



casualties have been all the small farms, so, yes there's been one, two, three, four, 5, 6 farmers adjacent to this one that have disappeared over the time I've been farming. So, there was one stage where we were farming... the area we were farming was 30 years before, 7 difference farmers - we were farming the whole lot....and er, still not making a lot of money out of it! [laughs] But, yeah so what's happening now, it's getting into, a lot of small farmers rather than keep their own staff and their own machinery which obviously costs a lot of money, and they're only employed, effectively employed, a few months of the year, especially the with the cereal crops. They're flat out from now till November. They they clear the crops that's just come ripe and then they put the next crop in, and then for the entire winter there's nothing to do. So a small farm has a job to to maintain the labour, and so what a lot of them now, if they don't actually sell up and get out, they're contract farming to, to big contracting businesses. So, I've got a cousin who, farms at Meopham, who had his own farm, a small farm, about 300 acres, to make ends meet he started doing work for neighbours, and now he's, he's farming 5000 acres on contract all over the county and with that, with that amount of land he can buy a huge tackle, which I mean he would come in and cut 200 acres of wheat in a day, which would be a whole farm for a lot of farms

Katy: [quietly] Yeah... what's his name?

Ian: So he, he's got the economies of scale

Katy: What was his name?

Ian: What was his name?

Katy: Yeah

Ian: Oh I won't tell you who he was [laughs]

Katy: Oh, he wouldn't be interested in doing this then? [laughs]

Ian: [laughs] He certainly wouldn't, not at the moment! He's flat out, yeah, He's got 5000 acres of combining to do and then get it all back in, But erm, he's got all the, his his er combine harvesters he gets in from America cause they don't make them big enough in Europe

Katie: Oh really?

Ian: Yeah, yeah, so...



Katy: That's quite a feat, if he does that all over Kent, is it just single-handedly, he does it all himself?

Ian: Oh no, no, he takes on a lot of staff this time of year. But, but you know with these, if you're in a big way like that you can, a lot of the machinery you can get on a sort of a lease-hire business. Which he does with all his, I mean, these big combines now you're talking, getting on half a million pounds for each machine, and, but, what he does, he'll, he'll have a lease-hire on the machine for one or two years, and it'll cost him so much a year for it, and at the end of the lease he'll go back to get another new one, so all his machinery is bang up to date, and all working efficiently, so he knows exactly what he's going to have to pay for his machinery. So he charges the farmer an amount that will cover the costs and make him some profit. So, some of it's contract farming, where the contractor will charge for what he does, sort of £40 an acre for combining, 10 pound an acre for spraying or whatever. But a lot of them do a share-farming agreement now, where they have a, the, the contractor has his costs, the farmer has his costs, that's the cost of the land and any fixed costs like insurance and all this sort of thing, and then they have an agreement that if there's anything left, they share it. So they call it *share-farming*. So each one takes his costs out and then if there's anything left, they split it. So, there's various ways of doing it. But, I would say in this county, that probably half of the arable area is under some sort of contract or share farming.

Katy: And is-, yeah...Would you say that's pretty much one of the only ways you can survive-In arable farming?

Ian: If you're in a small way, yeah. I mean if you want to keep the farm, which a lot of people do for tax reasons and inheritance, and all this sort of thing, rather than pack it in and sell the farm, cause land has been a very good investment, especially in the last 20 years. They want to keep the land or they don't want to incur the taxes for selling it. They can actually, farm it without doing the work.

Katy: Right...Oh! By selling the land to other farmers that will farm it for them you mean?

Ian: Yeah, or to a contractor like my cousin that, that does it. Some people'll do sort of part contracting. They might do a little bit of work themselves, perhaps the cheaper work, but the big work like combining or the drilling they might contract it out. But I mean a lot of the smaller farmers now haven't got the luxury of staff, they just do everything themselves. So, as I say, we used to have 20 men here, 20 men and two foremen, 5 shepherds and now [jokingly] there's me and a part timer, doing the same thing [laughs] But, in a different way...



*Katy: But yeah but then you had the sheep back then though didn't you as well, so.....
But I get what you mean, yeah*

Ian: Yeah but we still graze. We didn't have so, so many cattle, but we have with these environmental schemes one of the conditions is that you don't have so much stock on it. To allow the grass to get a bit longer, and the spring for the birds to nest in and all this sort of thing. So, there, there's obviously less requirement for labour, but nevertheless you're doing the same, you're still producing the same amount of food

*Katy: Yeah. You know you said – you said you grow... was it rape, wheat and peas, what sort of percentage of your acre is rape, and what's wheat and what's peas...
[trails off]*

Ian: In the arable rotation? Well that's changed. Going back 50 years you'd have a long rotation, you'd have probably two years of wheat and then you'd have, you wouldn't have had oilseed rape cause no one grew it then, But you you'd perhaps have barley, or oats, for cattle, and then you might have a short grass break and then you might grow some wurzels, and and it was all very mixed. But then as time went on people made it simpler and simpler and then rape came in, oilseed rape which is a very good entry for wheat. And people were going two wheats, one rape, two wheats, one rape. So two thirds of the farm would be wheat, and a third would be rape. And it was simple, and, and these contractors were doing different farms, they would just put the whole farm in with wheat, or the whole farm in with rape. So they come in, do the whole farm and out again. But, they keep putting more rules on us, environmental rules from the EC, and the one they brought in this year is called the three crop rule, we have to grow three crops now in rotation, you can't grow two.

Katy: Oh so you have to grow like wheat rape peas, wheat rape peas

Ian: So instead of growing wheat and rape, my brother now who does arable now grows wheat, rape and peas...and unfortunately everyone else is having to do the same thing and there's only a limited market for peas. And, the trade for peas is on the floor. Why we should have this three crop rule, I don't know, it's all to do with someone thinks it's better for the environment. But, and of course for the contract farmer that has a whole farm in with different crops he's now got to come back for that small farm three times to cut three different crops.

Katy: Yeah, ok. [Getting confused, thinking you divide the acreage into three] so yours is a third peas, a third wheat and a third rape....so is it done in the same year- sorry, is it done....so you have a.... wh...[trails off]

Ian: No you have it, a year rotation



Katy: Right, ok.

Ian: So you have, you have one year, we call it the first wheat after rape or peas or whatever you're getting cause you get the fertility that's left behind from the other crop. And then you can normally grow a reasonably good second wheat, if you go into a monoculture and just grow nothing but wheat, as the years go on you get a disease build up, so a third wheat is probably unprofitable. So you have to have a break in rotation. And, so, so what as I say what most people do they'd have wheat for two years and then rape for one year, and then back to two wheats again.

Katy: And when you bring in, so where you bring in the peas is that... [still confused] erm just wheat rape peas and then you re- re-do that cycle again, or, do you?

Ian: Yeah, although peas are very susceptible to a mildew type disease and, and if you grow them more than about once in 6 years you get a big drop in yield

Katy: [Surprised] 6- years?!

Ian: If you grow them more than once in 6 years

Katy: Yeah.....no that seems like quite a big...right, gosh

Ian: Yeah, so the, the mildew spores are in the ground. And erm, and so that's a crop that you don't grow too often....But you can get...the old wheat, rape rotation worked well cause you can quite happily go rape every third year and you can get two wheats, but this new three crop rule's mucked that up.

Katy: I was just thinking, yeah, [had it in mind that the rule was for wheat rape peas rather than any 3 crops] how's the new crop rule going to affect...if you can only grow peas once every 6 years, how...the three crop rule...surely...?

Ian: Well you have to think of something else to grow, But you're probably only growing...what my brother's growing is, he's growing two wheats, rape, peas, so he hasn't got back to the...he can go for 4 years without any problems, so then, then he might grow barley or something else to... [joking] or they'll probably change the rules again by then, so...

Katy: Yeah...So do you see your farm developing in the future or do you think it'll stay pretty much, I don't know.....cattle...

Ian: Well, we don't know where we're going from one year to the next. Cause soon as, the, the bureauc- the bureaucrats in Brussels, have got one scheme underway,



they... to keep themselves in a job they've got to think up another one, and, our subsidy payment which they call the single farm payment which, had been bedded in for about 10 years and was working fairly well, they decided that all had to change this year, so we've got a totally different system, totally different rules, and, there was a two year notification for the government to get all their computer software up to date and they didn't. And there's all these hoops we have to jump through and, and the whole computer system fouled up and, at the last minute we have all these deadlines, they had to admit defeat and sling the whole lot and go back to paper. And it's all because of these changes that, they're just changing every couple of years.

Katy: I mean that must have, that must have got worse obviously since the EU came into...that must be a massive- surely that's the biggest change of all, would you say, the bureaucracy, has that, come...

Ian: Oh, yeah I mean the bureaucracy I've got...I'm sending 15 cattle a week to Guildford, I send them every week, from June through to Christmas. And, I'll probably take an hour and a half, two hours tomorrow to, to sort them out and get them ready to go and then I'll have probably an hour replacing ear tags because they have to have 4 different ear tags, the same number on each tag but you've got to have 4 of them

Katy: Right. Any reason?

Ian: They lose them, they fall out like confetti, So they have to be re-tagged the lot of them. And then they have to be checked for age, cause you get a different price if they're under 30 months, and a different price again if they're under 3 years so, so I've got to have all the ages with me so I've got to age them, check their tags, if they haven't got the right tags I've got to chuck 'em out, and and get them back the following week when I've got the tags, and then I'll have two hours paperwork in the office doing the paperwork for them: passports, movement licences, all the records of on and off the farm and everything else. So the bureaucracy is, and, and for the arable rotation, my brother, he's almost full-time in the office. You know we have to record every chemical we put on, when, what was the wind speed, everything else...

Katy: [laughs, incredulous] the wind speed....

Ian: It, it's a nightmare! Our fathers, the last generation...

Katy: Had it easy! [laughs]

Ian: If they saw that, they would turn in their graves! So, yeah, yeah so when we used to spray the marsh, we had a thousand acres of wheat down there, and we'd



have a plane draw up and we'd fill him up with neat chemical and he'd fly up and down about every 200 yards, job done by the afternoon.

Katy: Yeah! How long does it-, it must take you, what, dunno, about a day...? How long does it take you now to do that? Would it take you the same?

Ian: Well I mean with the big field here, you can get it done fairly quickly, but

Katy: Yeah...what you use...

Ian: there are rules about when you can spray, you know with the wind, and obviously you can't spray when it's wet, there's only so many days you can do it. So, and now you have, to use so many chemicals and, probably, the- we have tramlines, you've seen the tramlines through the crops? Wheel marks. Well I mean it's sophisticated now, the, the, my brother's tractor's all on GPS mapping, so the tractor drives itself. So the tractor drivers can read the paper while he's doing it And the tractor will do its own turns and everything, and the computers on the tractor are programmed to deliver a certain amount of chemical to a certain part of the field, which are, which are using the information that was gleaned from the combine the previous harvest, so the previous harvest the computer would map different amounts of yield over the same field, and then you feed that into the sprayer and the fertiliser and the chemicals that go on. More and more fertiliser than chemicals and then it'll.... the rate will differentiate as they go along, by how much crop there was last year, so it's all got extremely technical. And the trouble is when they break down, you need a rocket scientist to sort them out. So.... But fortunately it hasn't got into the livestock section quite so much, yet! So, it can, can still be done by eye.

Katy: Right, yeah. And that probably won't change will it, it'll probably only get worse I suppose...Would you say, like all the...

Ian: Oh yeah, it'll get worse. It'll get worse all while we're in the EU anyway. I think the consensus among most farmers is that, although it's got its faults the EU at, at least they look after the farmers, but if we pulled out of the EU the British government would hang us out to dry.

Katy: Do you think? How, how....why?

Ian: Well they, they, I mean the subsidies they'd just cut those off overnight, or if they replace them they wouldn't be as..., as what they were, so, so if there is a referendum, if they ever get round to it, although we all dislike a lot of the things that the EU does, for, for our own livelihoods we've probably got to vote to stay in. I mean the French farmers are our salvation really because if there's any problems...



[jokingly] well you've seen them on the television, burning tires, blocking roads and everything else. And they get away with it! But the message gets through and, and it, and what's good for them has to be good for everyone else in Europe. So they're the ones that fight our corner really, we don't do that because

Katy: [jokingly] You wouldn't get away with it would you?

Ian: Cause, cause, we'd a) we'd probably end up inside, and b) it would alienate the consumer anyway. So, all the while the French are doing it, that's fine! So, but...the, most of the aggravation over there's been through the dairy, you know the low price of milk.

Katy: Yeah. Cause there was something recently...I think yesterday, again on the news that there was a protest done by farmers where they bought milk, and then gave it away for free... or..... [struggling to remember] it was something silly like that

Ian: That's right I did see a bit of that yeah, Yeah, and what else were they were doing, they were buying something

Katy: Can't remember exactly

Ian: Oh that's it, they were buying milk. Buying milk in the supermarkets and wheeling them out and slinging them all or something

Katy: Yeah, yeah cause it was worthless or something

Ian: They were going out with trolleyfuls of milk. Yeah...Yeah, well I mean even the the farmer that's been leading the protest, cause they've been protesting for years now, they, there's an outfit called FFA, Farmers For Action, and these dairy farmers have been lobbying Tesco's, and the milk plants and everything else, and the one that's been leading it all this year, he's thrown the towel in and sold his dairy herd [laughs]

Katy: Oh my god [laughs], oh no!

Ian: He's had to pack up [laughs]

Katy: Oh no [laughs] Oh dear

Ian: So, yeah.

Katy: Gosh... yeah, it's sad really [sighs]



Ian: Well is there anything else you really want to hear, cause I've still got a fair bit more to do.

Katy: No, no that that's everything, that's absolutely fine. Yeah, it's been....I'll end it here....