

Brew

**MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT  
ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT**

**‘TIME TO REMEMBER’**

**Interviewee(s):** Mr Kenny Brew and Mrs Connie Brew [who is blind]

**Date of birth:** Mr Kenny Brew: July 1920  
Mrs Connie Brew: 1915

**Place of birth:**

**Interviewer(s):** David Callister

**Recorded by:** David Callister

**Date recorded:** 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2000

**Topics:** *Mr Kenny Brew:*  
Working as a joiner  
Early school days  
Working at *Ballamona* Farm  
Changes in Ballaugh  
*Mrs Connie Brew:*  
Early school days  
Moving to Ballaugh  
Girls Friendly Society  
Meeting future husband  
*His Honour Henry Callow:*  
Connection with church choir  
Elizabeth Sawford’s bequest to Church

Kenny Brew - Mr B  
Connie Brew - Mrs B  
His Honour Henry Callow - HHC  
David Callister - DC

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**DC** Right, I'm talking to Kenny Brew, from Ballaugh. I suppose I ought to put your date of birth on this tape, Kenny?

**Mr B** July 1920.

**DC** July 1920, right, you're a young fellow then, you're only a young fellow yet.

**Mr B** I'm eighty this month.

**DC** Yes. We're actually in Lezayre Church, but before we start talking about the furniture in here, which we came to talk about, when you started working as a joiner, because before that you were a farmer and we'll talk about that later, but when you were starting working as a joiner, then you joined the firm that I later knew as Kelly Bros.

**Mr B** Aye, no ...

**DC** It was originally ...

**Mr B** ... it was originally old John Danny Kelly & Sons.

**DC** John Danny Kelly & Sons.

**Mr B** ... in Kirk Michael.

**DC** Yes.

**Mr B** A manufacturing joinery business and I think it had somewhere round about twenty three or twenty four men working at that time and they did most of the joinery work for the Isle of Man. They were making windows, doors, stairs, all for three-quarters of the builders in the Island. And sometimes we were going out and fixing as well.

**DC** Where did you get the timber from?

**Mr B** Well the timber would be coming mostly into Ramsey, into the, into there, coming from ...

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**DC** Shipyards?

**Mr B** ... Sweden, Finland, more like that you see. It was coming in on ships into Ramsey Quay and sometimes it was stored in Corlett & Cowley's timber yard and then there was a man called Corrin opened a timber yard at the back of the, just near Ballamanenagh in Sulby there, between that and *The Ginger*, he put a yard up there and he was bringing boatloads in, aye.

**DC** Did we have any native timber here that could be used? Any wood that you cut on the Island?

**Mr B** Not in the churches, no.

**DC** No. Anything for any work at all.

**Mr B** No there was very little Manx oak used, it was mostly used for coffins.

**DC** Coffins, oh aye.

**Mr B** Coffins, we used to make coffins of it and we would fall [fell] our own trees for that.

**DC** Where were the trees then?

**Mr B** Oh various places all over the Island, yes. We used to go out and fell them, up Bishopscourt Glen some of them. Some would be cut from Bishopscourt Glen.

**DC** How would you get them out of the glens and these various places?

**Mr B** With the steam engine.

**DC** Oh yes, steam engine?

**Mr B** Steam engine and a big long dray behind it. We would lift it on to that with the engine and drag it back to the yard and then he would cut them up on a big saw there into big planks and boards and then we used to, what we called skid them. We'd put one down on the ground on grass and then lower on it another and cover it with galvanised, corrugated iron, and then we would leave them for

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three years and in three year rotations as they were seasoned we would take them and make them into coffins.

**DC** What kind of wood would you be felling then? What kind of trees would these be, oak trees?

**Mr B** Oak, chestnut and elm.

**DC** Yes, what would you use the elm for mostly?

**Mr B** Well, sometimes it was going into carts, mostly into wheelbarrows for the Highway Board, because they used to make quite a lot every year because when they'd be taking men on they'd always have these wooden wheelbarrows on these works. I don't think there's many of them left now, because we're going back a long time.

**DC** Aye, did you ever make one yourself?

**Mr B** Oh, yes, plenty of them, dozens of them, oh aye, dozens of them.

**DC** What was the job that you liked best in joinery, did you have a favourite job then?

**Mr B** Well, I would rather be out of the workshop and out on the site, aye, more of a roofin' man myself.

**DC** Well you've worked a lot on ladders in those days?

**Mr B** Oh, yes, oh yes.

**DC** What about scaffolding, there wouldn't have been much of that?

**Mr B** Well, scaffolding in them days was large poles.

**DC** But we've come to the church here to look at the wonderful work that's been done here in Lezayre Church, I mean, let's talk about the pews first of all, you had a lot of work involved with them, did you?

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**Mr B** Well the pews was all taken out, so many at a time, and taken back to the yard at Kirk Michael, and took to pieces, and they used to be a very straight back and they were made to slope, which was much more comfortable than they were.

**DC** Yes, I just sat in a straight-backed one there, you'd hardly ... you were slipping off, weren't you?

**Mr B** Exactly, yes, but I think the straight one would have been, it was more carved, and it wasn't, it wasn't allowed to be taken out, that was a special seat. But then when they were out, there was an old joiner called Tommy Kelly, he used to live up Sulby Glen. The *Fairy Tea Gardens* was the place he lived in, aye, and his daughter was the Matron of the Ramsey Cottage Hospital, and he was, they are all dead and gone, I think there's only two of us left that worked on this Church, and while the seats was out, Mr Kelly and I used to panel the walls and we panelled them all round and then they would bring them back and then reset them and while that was getting done, Mr Keig was making a complete new pulpit.

**DC** That's Stanley Keig is it?

**Mr B** Aye, a new, complete new pulpit, and a beautiful job he's done of it.

**DC** Fantastic, I mean there's some marvellous furniture in here.

**Mr B** And then he made the new lectern, he carved the eagle.

**DC** That's an absolutely magnificent carving, isn't it, really?

**Mr B** Yes, it's very good; he was very, very good at that job.

**DC** This would all be done in the workshop of course.

**Mr B** All, he had a room of his own upstairs, and us two young fellers was up there helping him, aye.

**DC** So, you've had a bit of a hand in some of these.

**Mr B** In all of it, in all of it, yes, in all of it.

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**DC** You must feel very proud looking at it all here now so much later.

**Mr B** And then they brought, the communion rail was made as well, up there, all that oak work.

**DC** Right, so this is all oak, is it really?

**Mr B** Oh yes, it's all oak, yes, except the seats.

**DC** Yes, of course,

**Mr B** They were pitch pine.

**DC** And this would be, what sort of year would this be then, when you were doing this in here?

**Mr B** Oh well it must have been round about 1938, I would think.

**DC** Before the war, so ...

**Mr B** Oh yes, it was, I would say, '38, around about that, yes.

**DC** Well Stanley Keig was a real artist then, was he?

**Mr B** Oh he was a marvellous craftsman on the bench, oh yes.

**DC** Well what sort of tools would you use to shape some of these, this woodwork here that he's done; I mean did you have a special ... were you working with chisels, were you working with a mechanical machine?

**Mr B** Well most of his carving was done by carving chisels, all that eagle and all was all done by hand. But then they had a big lathe up there you see which they could turn, turn the ...

**DC** ... the stand, the pedestal itself ...

**Mr B** ... the pedestal and all you see.

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**DC** You'd have to have a mighty lathe for that one.

**Mr B** It was a good lathe, yes, but all the small carvings all round the bottom that's all done by hand.

**DC** And they're very intricate as well, aren't they?

**Mr B** Oh yes, yes, the pulpit was made in sections in the workshop and then brought down.

**DC** And there's a lovely handrail on that pulpit as well ...

**Mr B** Yes, it's nice, isn't it?

**DC** ... with a couple of bends in it, I wonder how do you get that?

**Mr B** Yes.

**DC** Is that pieced up, is it, probably?

**Mr B** I don't think so.

**DC** Let's have a look, we'll just go round.

**Mr B** I think that's cut with a lathe.

**DC** Ah, there's a section there.

**Mr B** Yes it's done in ...

**DC** It's done in sections.

**Mr B** Done in two pieces, yes.

**DC** But it looks smart, doesn't it? ... and here's His Honour Henry Callow coming to see us.

**HHC** Just making sure [unclear] ...

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**DC** Well His Honour Henry Callow has popped in to say hello to us here and of course you've been connected with this church a very long time, Henry?

**HHC** Yes, I've sung in the choir for the last ten years, they still put up with me.

**DC** You pointed out to us a plaque on the wall here which is significant in what I've been talking to Kenny about.

**HHC** Yes. Elizabeth Sawford, a wealthy lady, who lived in the parish of Lezayre, she died in 1935 and she left a legacy of £1,000 which was a very big sum of money in those days, and the Vicar and Wardens considered what was the best use it could be put to, and they decided to ask Mr Keig of Kirk Michael, well-known, of Kelly Bros., to carve new choir stalls, a new pulpit and lectern, and the panelling round the altar and the altar itself and he did a marvellous job with Kenny's help and they had a bit of change left out of the thousand pounds.

**DC** Really? How much would you be getting paid an hour for this then Kenny?

**Mr B** Me, I was getting ten shillings a week.

**DC** A week?

**Mr B** A week.

**DC** (*laughter*) This was as an apprentice or as a fully trained?

**Mr B** I wasn't out of me time, oh no, not then, no ...

**DC** No.

**Mr B** ... because I was late starting because I couldn't get a job in the early thirties.

**DC** Yes, so really there's only Stanley Keig and yourself now left with any connection at all to this work.

**Mr B** Well Stanley is ninety. But Stanley was the man who carved, who done all the carving and made the pulpit, all up in the workshop.



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**HHC** A lovely job. Do you see how the design on the pulpit matches the front of the choir stalls?

**DC** Yes.

**Mr B** They've done very well.

**DC** Well it'll be here for a long time yet.

**Mr B** Oh yes, but everything was made and all the panelling and on the walls, it was all done there. As I said before the seats was taken out and taken back to Kirk Michael and they were taken back on a little trailer behind a car and I'm not jokin' but the car was called a *Whippet*.

**DC** The *Whippet*?

**Mr B** *Whippet*, aye, it's true that.

**HHC** Yes.

**Mr B** You'd take some out and take them all off and while they were getting done in Kirk Michael we were panelling the walls. And the man, the man's dead and gone now that was panelling the walls and I was helping him, was Tommy Kelly, from up Sulby Glen. But the main man was Stanley Keig and I think it's only him and I that's left alive that worked on it.

[His Honour Henry Callow plays the organ]

**DC** Well, we'll leave Henry Callow playing the organ here in the church at Lezayre, walk down the carpets past these pews that were altered as we've heard, looking across there to where Kenny's handiwork is on the side there on the panels, on the panels and make our way out.

**Mr B** His [His Honour Henry Callow] mother and my grandmother were sisters ...

[Break in recording. Interview continued at Jurby Church]

**DC** Open the door and into the passage we go. Now we're looking at something I

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have not seen before, and that's some rather well decorated doors here in Jurby Church.

**Mr B** That's it, well these were made up in old Jack Kelly's workshop in Kirk Michael as well, by the same man, Stanley Keig that did all the carving for Lezayre. And then they were brought up here and I was still working for him as a young fella, and Leslie Christian and I hung them all here.

**DC** So you hung these doors?

**Mr B** Helped to hang these doors and ...

**DC** Let's have a look.

**Mr B** ... this is all before the war.

**DC** They're closing and opening very smoothly so it must have been a good job.

**Mr B** This is before the war. And this is the West Door and they made this one, this is shut from the inside you can't get out, but it's only opened for funerals, this one.

**DC** Who'd have put these designs on this glass, would they have been bought in like that maybe?

**Mr B** They were brought in, yes. But one particular one has got the three legs of Man on.

**DC** That's right, it has, we should be looking at it from the other side and it says there; 'From a fragment of glass in St. German's Cathedral.'

**Mr B** There you are.

**DC** So that's how they've made that one up, yes.

**Mr B** Done nice, isn't it?

**DC** It's very good isn't it? But you worked mostly on the outside of this church at

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Jurby then?

**Mr B** Oh yes, yes, mostly on the outside.

**DC** We'll go and have a look at that in a moment.

**Mr B** The glass in this door, this panel, shows you how the roof of the church was, the tower before.

**DC** There was a tower, yes.

**Mr B** Round, see the pointed roof on the tower.

**DC** With a bell in it.

**Mr B** Now that tower was taken off and levelled and then there was a small hip roof put on because of the RAF flying in and out of Jurby and it was lowered for that reason for the war coming.

**DC** So did you have some job in that?

**Mr B** We helped to make the roof in the yard and we brought it down and I helped us put it on the walls up on the top of the tower.

**DC** Right. And your handiwork's still to be seen outside then, is it?

**Mr B** Oh, some of it.

**DC** Well let's go and have a look at it ... okay, well we have now come outside, this is a mighty high tower, Kenny, you mean, how did you get up there to work in those days?

**Mr B** Well we used to cut holes in the wall, put a large pole up, put a short one into the hole in the wall with wedges, and tie it to the pole and carry on going up and tie the poles one on top of the other and that's how we went to the top.

**DC** And that was the way scaffolding was done ...

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**Mr B** That's the way we were doing scaffolding, and I can remember we came back, we made the new roof back in the yard, we made the hip roof, and we come back and when we got up, there was a plank missing off the top, and we found it out in the field here three foot down in the sand, the wind had blew it off the top and that's true that, yes.

**DC** How did you get this new hipped piece up there then, I mean did you have pulleys?

**Mr B** It was all scaffold you see, it was platform all the way up, platformed all the way up.

**DC** So carry it bit by bit then?

**Mr B** Oh aye, yes we made it in sections up there all ready to nail together up there.

**DC** So you had to have a head for heights then?

**Mr B** Oh not too bad, not too bad. Oh I've put new spires on Ballaugh Church on my own, new concrete spires on them.

**DC** Did you really? You're a tough man, a tough man. And this then, it had to be lowered then for the flight path.

**Mr B** For the RAF, yes, because this was getting in the early part of 1940, when this was finished.

**DC** Of course there's great fears now about it, isn't there? ... because of this great cracking that's on this end gable here.

**Mr B** Yes, there's a lot of controversy over it but I don't think it's in any danger, not looking at that at all.

**DC** How is it tied in to the main building then?

**Mr B** Originally the tower and the church was all built as one, oh it would be yes, but in 1939/1940 there was two steel girders put into the church and into the tower and concreted all in then ... the church was all plastered at that time because it

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was all rough stone before.

**DC** Yes, and will this be local sandstone here or will it have been imported probably that would it?

**Mr B** I wouldn't know; that I wouldn't know.

**DC** It looks in good condition really.

**Mr B** It's the same sandstone as you'll see in Peel isn't it?

**DC** Yes, well perhaps maybe its Peel sandstone, yes ... we're just walking round to the other side of the church now.

**Mr B** There's nothing much on this side of the church at all.

**DC** That crack is on the one side.

**Mr B** All on the one side.

**DC** Yes.

**Mr B** There's a few cracked plaster cracks here ...

**DC** Of course.

**Mr B** ... but they're not settlement cracks.

**DC** The tower looks pretty safe, doesn't it?

**Mr B** Oh it's straight. Yes, I don't think there's any fear of it. But they're wanting to shut the church, aren't they?

**DC** I think so, yes. What about these downspouts and the drainage system here then.

**Mr B** These was all, when they re-roofed the church we came down and you can see all the new ends of the rafters, the church was re-roofed completely and all re-slatted and then we put this special guttering on which was all cast.

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**DC** Yes, it's got a design along the edge, hasn't it?

**Mr B** Yes, oh yes.

**DC** Where did this stuff come from?

**Mr B** It all came from Douglas.

**DC** Did it? What, made in Douglas?

**Mr B** Yes, all came from Douglas, in the Foundry. Yes, Gelling's Foundry.

**DC** Yes, it's got a date on the top there, 1939 is it?

**Mr B** That's right.

**DC** '39, just before the war.

**Mr B** '39/40, yes. Oh yes, we had quite a job putting all that together.

**DC** I should imagine you did.

**Mr B** It's not in very long lengths, you see, they're only about five foot. The old gutters would be six.

**DC** There's swallows nesting in there now, look!

**Mr B** Aye.

**DC** And you'd have worked a lot off ladders, you wouldn't scaffold this along here would you?

**Mr B** Well the scaffold we had them days was angle brackets, and they go up the wall and one out and then a plug, shoved up underneath it, what we called cripples, aye, and that's the way and a couple of planks on top all the way along like that.

**DC** And that was it?

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**Mr B** And can you imagine what the cripple looks like now?

**DC** Yes, yes.

**Mr B** Timber, maybe a three by two up the wall, one out, and an angle on it. An angle to hold it, and one shoved up under the other, cripples we called it.

**DC** Very unsafe wasn't it or was it safe?

**Mr B** It was safe enough if you stayed it well, if you stayed it well, oh aye.

**DC** Any accidents that you remember then?

**Mr B** No, we never had any trouble with them. But they're illegal now.

**DC** Of course, yes that's right ... well we've come right round the church now here at Jurby and we're looking at the tower, the revised tower, the shortened tower, as it is, and we get a better view from here, of course it's like a little, a little kind of pitched roof, isn't it?

**Mr B** No, sorry, it's what they call a 'hip' roof.

**DC** Yes.

**Mr B** It's four sides, it's hipped.

**DC** Is that a lightning conductor on top, is it?

**Mr B** Yes, it goes up, there is a lightning conductor to it but that was ...

**DC** That's a representation of a cross is it?

**Mr B** That's right ... that was put up as a cross at that time.

**DC** Well, you've worked on a few churches then, have you?

**Mr B** Oh yes, quite a few.

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**DC** What were you telling me, you worked at St Olave's?

**Mr B** St Olave's Church, yes I put the big stained glass window in the east in, the big east window in.

**DC** What sort of a job was that, it would be a tough job to do, would it?

**Mr B** Well, I scaffold that outside with cripples as well and planks across and I had an apprentice with me then, oh aye, yes. Made all the patterns and sent them away to Pilkington's and the window all came back complete and when you're putting them in you can't see from outside when you're putting them in because you can't read the picture of the Lord and all this so what we done we laid them down in the aisle in the church and then take them out section for section and put them in. And one day I had, I think it was the left window, on the floor, all nicely laid out, ready to go out, and I was out the back, and I heard the door opening and footsteps and there was children running up the aisle. Well I had the fright of my life, I thought, oh heavens they're going to walk on that glass. But anyway we got it all in safe and complete and it's worth seeing today.

**DC** It is, yes.

**Mr B** It's a fine window. It's a beautiful big window.

**DC** What I want you to try and remember for me now is what it was like when you were a youngster here in Ballaugh because you were born in Ballaugh I suppose, were you?

**Mr B** Born in the village in 1920. Okay.

**DC** Did you live in the same house here?

**Mr B** No, no, I was born in the village in 1920 and then we moved from there up the glen, to the old mill house. And then I went down to Ballaugh Curraghs to live with me grandparents and I was brought up with them.

**DC** In the Curraghs?

**Mr B** In Ballaugh Curraghs and walked up there to Ballaugh School every day.



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**DC** What's that, a couple of miles?

**Mr B** Oh, not quite, but getting on though, by the time you got up it would be getting on, a mile and a half, and all this road here was all, between the churches here and the village was only a dirt road, just a horse track, there was a track where the wheels were and the horse walked in the middle and that's all it was and the playground was only soil, there was nothing, and there were three classrooms, and the little room had a big black stove in it, and two big black kettles in it and the teacher in the middle class used to put them on about half past eleven, a quarter to twelve, and boil the water for us to make a cup of tea or whatever we were having and we would be bringing our own sandwiches.

**DC** You'd bring your 'pieces'.

**Mr B** 'Pieces,' aye.

**DC** What would you have in your 'pieces'?

**Mr B** Oh, I don't remember, hard to say, I'd never remember that. Goodness knows.

**Mrs B** It'd be cheese and blackberry jam.

**DC** Blackberry jam and cheese.

**Mr B** It would probably be jam in it, aye, and things like that. There wouldn't be much meat going.

**DC** So this was schooldays then, so I mean you'd have only gone to the one school then?

**Mr B** We went to school here, aye, and I left Ballaugh school when I was fourteen then, yes.

**DC** And you went into farming then, did you?

**Mr B** I couldn't get a job when I left school and I went to work for Ballamona down on the farm.

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**DC** Doing what then?

**Mr B** Mostly after the horses, aye, general work you see, really.

**DC** It was only carts in those days, no cars.

**Mr B** All carts, aye.

**DC** When did you see a car round here then?

**Mr B** Oh, I remember the first car coming down through Ballaugh here and they were making the 'Manx Wedding' and I remember that clear and I was only a young lad, I was in the village, and I remember it going down through the village and there was a car with that, but apart from that there were very, very few, very few, only a very odd one, it was all horse and carts, and bicycles.

**DC** Yes. That's how you got around, on a bike, I suppose? You'd have got around on a bike?

**Mr B** On a bike, oh yes, yes, I was on a bike, aye, oh yes, done a lot of cycling.

**DC** Did you like the farm work?

**Mr B** No, not really, no, I always wanted to get away from it, I always wanted to get away from it and I always hankered to be a joiner because it was in the family, it was going back to me father and me grandfather, they were all carpenters and wheelwrights and I seemed to want to do the same, but me father was a ship's carpenter – he was at sea all his life.

**DC** Right. Did you ever do a bit of wheel work yourself?

**Mr B** Sometimes, oh sometimes.

**DC** What cart wheels and that?

**Mr B** I've had lots of wood wheels to fix, she's laughing, my missus is laughing over there. I'll tell a little story about a wheel. There was a man here, he was an MHK, Mr Cannell from Jurby, Tom Cannell, Ballateare, and he came up here

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with a coldrow, [sp ???] with two big wheels on it, of course you know the sections all round the outside are called felloes [also spelt felly NCD] you see and then you've got your spokes put into the felloes, the felloes is the half round pieces. And he brought it up here with it all twisted and buckled to pieces and there was a man came in the yard here one day and he said to me, 'You'll never fix that mister.' But he come back some time later and I had a new wheel, and I got it hooped, I got it hooped by builder Kelly's, and he come and got it away and there was never a word. Yes, I put all new felloes on it and I straightened the spokes and made a good job of it, oh aye, I fixed lots of stiff carts.

**DC** So once you get the woodwork part of the wheel then the getting the rim on is a job, is it.

**Mr B** Oh aye, that's a flexman's job because what they do is they have a big ring, it's usually a big ring of concrete outside the smithy's and a hole in the centre and they drop the wheel on it and they measure it all roundabout with a kind of another wheel which tells them the distance you see and then they cut the iron and then they weld it together and then they put this iron in a big ring of fire 'til it's red hot, and then you get the big tongs, one each side of it, and drop it on and as soon as it's on you lash water on to it, as much as you can pour on to it to cool it down straightaway, and it tightens it up to the wheel and any little joints that open in the furnace will tighten up tight, aye.

**DC** So it's a mixture of the carpenter's work and the blacksmith's work together that, is it?

**Mr B** Oh yes, hooping, making a wheel and hooping, yes, oh yes.

**DC** And getting a wheel on and off a cart wouldn't be all that easy would it?

**Mr B** No, it wasn't easy, no, had to take the lynch pins out, they were heavy, weren't they?

**Mrs B** Yes.

**Mr B** Oh they were heavy.

**Mrs B** They put something underneath the shaft of it to hold it up.

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**Mr B** Yes.

**DC** Block it up.

**Mr B** Aye, put a post under it, yes.

**DC** So you were with horses a bit then were you?

**Mr B** Oh yes, I done a lot of ploughing with horses, yes.

**DC** What do you make of horses, they're temperamental aren't they?

**Mr B** Sometimes they would be, it all depends who you were, sometimes they would get off, and make off on the cart on their own of course if they were disturbed. But they weren't bad, it all depends if it were a very young horse you were breaking in, but mostly you went out to plough with a pair of old hands.

**DC** Well, you weren't finished when you came in ... presumably you had to look after the horses as well.

**Mr B** Yes you had to clean them down and feed them and all that before you'd leave them and before your breakfast you see you had to feed them before you went in for your breakfast, oh aye, give them hay, oats and stuff like that.

**DC** They'd get fed twice a day would they?

**Mr B** Oh yes, well they'd have a bit at midday when you stopped for yours as well, oh aye.

**DC** So you'd get whatever you're having out on the fields, would you?

**Mr B** No, you'd come in for your lunch midday because the dinner was all cooked in the farmhouse ready for you.

**DC** Well fed were you?

**Mr B** Oh aye, reasonably well, lots of rabbit going.

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**DC** Rabbit?

**Mr B** Aye.

**Mrs B** Young rabbits were very good when they were put in salt and water overnight.

**DC** Now then I'm going to talk here to Mrs Brew, and I should know your first name but I've forgotten.

**Mrs B** Connie.

**DC** Connie, yes, yes, and when were you born, Connie?

**Mrs B** 1915.

**DC** 1915, great. But you weren't born in Ballaugh here.

**Mrs B** No I was born in the Little Mill, Onchan.

**DC** Ah, right, and where did you go to school then?

**Mrs B** I went to Onchan School but I had been to school across as well, but I finished up at Onchan School.

**DC** Yes, what do you remember of your schooldays then?

**Mrs B** Oh well we had a good playground out in the field, and we used to play hockey at dinnertime.

**DC** Hockey, oh right.

**Mrs B** Yes, girls played hockey and then there was a big field and the boys had that gardening, it was a good school was Onchan School and we had a cross schoolmaster, Mr Wilkinson.

**DC** Cross, was he?

**Mrs B** Oh he was cross, the boys come in one day and they'd all got into trouble

Brew

because they'd been smoking. He put them all across the desk.

**DC** Yes, give them a good few whacks.

**Mrs B** A good tanning on the backside.

**DC** Yes.

**Mrs B** What used to happen you see, there was, in the summertime, the people that was working over at Onchan Head, in Onchan Head, they were bringing their children over you see and of course they had to go to Ballaugh School, well then they were little rascals ...

**DC** Onchan School you mean?

**Mrs B** Yes, well then they had to go school while they were over well you see they were bringing cigarettes and things and giving them to our boys, so of course our boys got lathered.

**DC** But girls were all well behaved I suppose, were they?

**Mrs B** Yes, not bad, not bad, we'd be mischievous sometimes, but we weren't bad.

**DC** Well how did you finish up in Ballaugh here then, when did you come over to Ballaugh here?

**Mrs B** Well the people that I came to stay with, they were living in Ballaugh, and she had, they'd been friends of me mother and father when they were young and her daughters had died and she wanted a girl so that's how I came down to Ballaugh to live.

**DC** So did you lose your mother when you were young then?

**Mrs B** I was twelve and a half when she died.

**DC** Right.

**Mrs B** So then I came down to Ballaugh to live with this Mrs Caine, 'cos she'd lost her

Brew

girls, she wanted a girl, so I came and lived with them and I came in as one of their own.

**DC** What did you think of Ballaugh compared to Onchan?

**Mrs B** Well, I enjoyed it but you see the girls didn't get out and about like they do now.

**DC** Didn't they?

**Mrs B** Oh gosh no, when you were done your work at night and the tea dishes were washed, 'Come on there's a bag of socks there wanting mending,' 'the socks are wanting mending,' or 'the socks are wanting new feet putting in them.' Oh we didn't get out at night time.

**DC** So you had to work.

**Mrs B** Oh, we had to work at night time ...

**Mr B** How many were you looking after?

**Mr B** Four.

**DC** Look after four men?

**Mrs B** Yes, and I nursed her, she died with cancer and I nursed her in bed with cancer, so no, we had plenty of work to do.

**DC** But they taught you how to cook a good meal then, did they?

**Mrs B** Yes, but no fancy stuff, a good pot of broth, a good, as I say we used to get young rabbits, put them in salt and water all night, roast them and they were like chicken, they were good. But then of course when the myxi [myxomatosis] come nobody wanted them.

**DC** That's right.

**Mrs B** They were never brought in the house after that.

Brew

**DC** No, no.

**Mrs B** It was a good home made plain food we got, they'd kill a pig and then there were spare rib pies going. You put a crust on top of them. Do you know what spare ribs is?

**DC** Oh, I do, I do.

**Mrs B** Yes and put a crust on top of it, no there was no fancy cooking.

**DC** Well how old were you before they let you out of the house then?

**Mrs B** Oh well you used to go to church and go to Sunday school, church and things, I went up to Ballaugh Church.

**DC** What about dances and things, did you do anything like that then?

**Mrs B** Well dances didn't bother us, there was no dances, well there were latterly dances come into the village when the RAF came over but before that we never bothered.

**DC** No, so you just had ...

**Mrs B** We went to the Girls Friendly Society, where we were knitting and sewing at night and maybe singing, but no there wasn't the rough activity in them days that there is now.

**DC** No, no. Well when did you come across Kenny then?

**Mrs B** Oh we'd known one another, he was going to church and I was going to church, that's when we met up ...

**Mr B** When we were fourteen.

**DC** When you were both fourteen?

**Mr B** Fourteen or fifteen.



Brew

**Mrs B** Yes, about fourteen. There'd be a lot of us coming up to church together and we'd be all walking home together at night.

**DC** Aye, what was around here in the way of, was there more shops and things in those days?

**Mrs B** In the village there was, but then you see I didn't live in the village, I lived down in what we called The Cronk, down by the old church – well we were a different lot; we didn't mix up too much with the village ones, did we?

**DC** Didn't you?

**Mr B** There was a shop down there

**DC** There was a shop down that end?

**Mrs B** Yes, yes.

**DC** There was a village policeman about, was there, do you remember?

**Mrs B** Yes at Michael there was one, was his name, what was his name, oh yes I forget his name.

**Mr B** Brindle.

**Mrs B** Yes, Brindle.

**DC** Sergeant Brindle, or was he Constable Brindle?

**Mrs B** He would be. I got fined one year because I never took a licence out for me dog.

**DC** Oh did you? How much did you get fined for that then?

**Mrs B** Oh I don't, it's forgot at me now.

**DC** A few shillings?

Brew

**Mr B** A few shillings.

**Mrs B** I suppose it was, but the coroner come and he said, 'I've got a fine for you,' and I said, 'what for?' and he said, 'you didn't take a licence out for your dog.' 'Well,' I said, 'it wasn't my fault,' and I don't admit it because I said, 'I didn't do it on purpose; my dog goes everywhere with me.' And we had the children then, and I said, 'Even yesterday,' I said, 'she was in Ramsey with me.' So anyway I said, 'I forgot.' So he'd gone through the books, John Bridson was in the village, he'd gone through the books on the Sunday and he'd found that I hadn't taken the licence out.

**DC** So you got fined?

**Mrs B** So I got fined.

**DC** Nearly made a criminal of you, did he?

**Mrs B** Nearly made me a criminal, oh dear.

**DC** Was that the worst thing that's happened to you?

**Mrs B** Yes that's about the worst time ...

**Mr B** I don't think we've been in any trouble.

**DC** You must have seen, Kenny, an awful lot of changes here in Ballaugh though?

**Mr B** Oh quite a lot, an awful lot of changes. When I would be a young feller or going to school or leaving school, after I left school there was eight shops in this village.

**DC** Was there?

**Mr B** Eight shops.

**DC** All selling what? What would they be selling?

**Mr B** Well there was the big main store, on the corner was the post office and shop,

Brew

general grocer's stores and you see then they had to come up with pony and traps or that and buying it by the sack of flour and a sack of sugar and all that sort of stuff in them days you see, because there was nowhere else to go and then where the toilets is now in Ballaugh used to be a butcher's shop and the slaughterhouse down behind the One-Stop shop, that shop wasn't there, and then up the Glen on the left was a bakehouse, a feller with a big horse and cart with, you know, the old square bakery cart coming round, all round the Curraghs and all round here selling bread, oh aye, old Bobby Christian, wasn't he, and the horse he called Robert, he was calling the horse Robert.

**DC** Aye, yes.

**Mr B** And then you'd go down the village and you'd come to what used to be the police station, now Dibbs had a store there.

**DC** Did they?

**Mr B** Grocer's store, Dibbs had a store there and then cross the other side of the road was the cobbler, the shoemaker, old, old Sayle, and he used to cut our hair and all that for you, we used to go in and get your hair cut from him and all, mighty handy, then there was a tailor's shop further down and then further down again there was another grocer's shop,

**DC** And where are these now, they have all disappeared, I suppose.

**Mr B** They're just houses now.

**DC** They've been converted.

**Mr B** Turned into houses now. The only shop that's in the village now consists, is what they call the One-Stop shop and I built that thirty years ago.

**DC** Did you? Built the One-Stop shop?

**Mr B** I built that shop.

**DC** Well you've done a bit of building in your time then, haven't you?

Brew

**Mr B** You bet, aye, quite a bit.

**DC** So when you go in the One-Stop shop then you're looking around to make sure everything's all right.

**Mr B** Oh, they don't know there now who built it.

**Mrs B** He does.

**Mr B** Does he know, the man?

**DC** The man knows?

**Mrs B** Yes he knows.

**Mr B** But there was two pubs in Ballaugh, too. There was the one further down, the end of it has been taken off, it used to stick out in the road and they took about eight feet off it and that's right opposite, practically opposite where the post office is now.

**DC** Yes.

**Mr B** And that was the old *Albert* and there was a fella in there they called beautiful Billy, beautiful Billy.

**DC** Why did they call him that?

**Mr B** I don't really know, I was a very young fella at the time, but there was some characters around here at that time, ah, there was that.

**DC** Yes.

**END OF INTERVIEW**