

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

‘TIME TO REMEMBER’

Interviewee: Mr Cyril Jones

Date of birth: 6th October 1918

Place of birth: Laxey, Isle of Man

Interviewer: David Callister

Recorded by: David Callister

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Topic(s): Early school days
St John’s Church
Tynwald Fair days and stalls
The miller at *Mullen-e-Cloie*
Sand pit in St. Johns
Local mills, mill race and shops
St. Johns and Foxdale railways
Cattle marts and auctioneer Arthur Dick
The big snow of 1929
Playing on Slieu Whallian
Going to school by train and antics of schoolboys
Sunday school outing to Silverburn
Local tradesmen
Childhood games

Cyril Jones - Mr J
David Callister - DC

DC Well I'm sitting here in St. Johns, in the sunshine, looking at the church, with Cyril Jones, who might tell me the date of his birth. What date would you be born?

Mr J 1918.

DC And what month and date?

Mr J October 6th, 1918.

DC You've been around quite a while then.

Mr J Yes, quite a while now, yes.

DC Well, Cyril, St. Johns, obviously, means a lot to you then, were you born out here?

Mr J No, I was born in Laxey, actually, but we moved around a bit and we come to live up in what's, above *Ballavagher* Farm, *Ballaoates* Farm, it's called Curn Hill, I think, Cronk Curn, or something, now. I started school here in 1925 and I've seen lots of changes since then.

DC That's the school just across from the hill here.

Mr J Just across the Fair field, yes. I think there was about seventy pupils that went to school there when I was going. Mr Armerod [sp ???] was the head teacher and Miss Alice Mylchreest, she was in charge of the infants, she rode a bicycle over from Gordon, near Glen Maye, and there was a Miss Quayle, a Miss May Quayle I think her name was, and she came up from Sulby, and how she got – I think she came by train each morning, and she bought herself a motorbike, I remember, a little BSA with one of the cylindrical petrol tanks, but she crashed on it and broke her leg, and she was off for some months ...

DC Oh dear!

Mr J ... and she was on a walking stick the rest of her life.

DC So what was school like then, I mean, a day in school typically then, what sort of things would you learn?

Mr J Oh, well, I suppose it was prayers and hymns at first, then just the ordinary 3Rs, Reading, Writing and Arithmetic, but my headmaster was a great man for gardening, so we always had a good gardening class. He was a very good teacher, very easy to absorb, but the one thing I didn't like, he didn't like us using our mother tongue, our native dialect; I know one word especially was a grip ...

DC A grip, yes.

Mr J ... to him it was a fork, but to us it was a grip, and I think it has remained that way.

DC Well it was a grip on the farms anyway, wasn't it?

Mr J Yes, yes, and this Slieu Whallian, when I went to school here there was a lot of old people, well they'd be awfully old now, they're all dead now, but it was still *Quallian*, the WH was always pronounced or sounded as QU, *Slieu Quallian*. I asked my grandfather, who was a native speaker, he had to learn to speak English, he'd speak it better than me, too, and he told me that *Quallian* meant pup, it meant pup mountain, or little mountain, so that was his ...

DC So that's what it really should be, in fact then?

Mr J Well it should, in the Manx Gaelic it should be *Slieu Quallian*, yes.

DC Did they tell you, when you were a youngster then, the story about rolling witches in barrels?

Mr J Oh, yes, yes.

DC How seriously was that taken then?

Mr J Oh, it was taken very seriously with the people then.

DC Because I mean people have said since it never happened.

Mr J I don't think, I don't suppose it did but they reckon there was a thorn tree growing somewhere along the Patrick road there and it flowered in the winter, or something unusual, I just forget what it was, and that's where the barrel landed, yes.

DC Yes, so you went into a farm nearby here then, did you?

Mr J Yes, that's many years after, we went to *The Rhennie*, in Greeba, many a time when people were there for some while but that's ...

DC Who was, your mother and father were farming there, were they?

Mr J Well father was an engineer, or an engine driver, but me elder brothers were doing the farming.

DC Ah, yes.

Mr J And me mother, yes.

DC And did you work on the farm yourself, as well?

Mr J Afterwards, afterwards, yes, I worked until twenty-seven, twenty-eight, something like that, when mother died and things kind of broke up then, which is usually the case.

DC The farming days then, I mean what did you have to do, you wouldn't have any electricity up there or water in the house or anything, would you?

Mr J No, what they call a spout outside and oil lamps, and cooking with a coal fire of course, that was all we had. You're talking about the church here, I remember seeing that church steeple scaffolded from the ground up to the top, I'm not certain, but I'm sure, pretty certain, it was scaffolded with ropes and poles.

DC Yes, wooden poles.

Mr J Wooden poles.

DC It would have been, yes.

- Mr J** I knew about it, large poles.
- DC** Large poles, yes, that's right.
- Mr J** They used to drive a spike into the wall, and then they would lash the pole to that.
- DC** Tie them in.
- Mr J.** Aye. My brother, Billy, one time, he climbed up the scaffolding, I don't know how far he got up but he got well up, yes, and could have been killed if he'd fallen down, of course.
- DC** Of course, he'd only be young at the time?
- Mr J** Oh, he'd be about twelve, maybe, aye.
- DC** Was that scaffolded right to the top of the spire?
- Mr J** I wouldn't be sure of that, but it was well, well up, I think they must have been doing some repairs to the outside, but they wouldn't have any tubular steel scaffolding in those days. I remember going over there one time asking one of the men who were working there, what height it was, he told me it was 120 feet. There was an old yarn used to go round that some feller stood on the top of it, on that little contraption on the top there, and drank a bottle of mineral water but, he did, but it was before it went up, when it was on the ground, that was the yarn.
- DC** Right, before they put the piece on the top.
- Mr J** Before they put it on.
- DC** Well that's a good story, isn't it?
- Mr J** Yes, yes.
- DC** Well of course, what about the Tynwald Fair days then here.

Mr J That was a great day, yes. I well remember my first Tynwald Fair day we come down, there was a great big tent on the hill, different to what they have now, and mother gave us sixpence each, I remember that well, by gum you could do an awful lot with sixpence seventy years ago, yes.

DC The Fair field was out the front, of course.

Mr J The Fair field was out the front, there was nothing out here at the back, and there was a Canon, not Canon, Archdeacon Kewley ...

DC Oh yes.

Mr J ... he read the laws in Manx, he was very, very good.

DC He was the Archdeacon with the big beard, wasn't he?

Mr J Yes, big beard, nearly down to his waist, yes, yes, and half his dinner was on it, they reckoned.

DC What sort of things did they have in the stalls out on the field in those days then?

Mr J Not a lot, there was people from Laxey, I think their name was Killip, and they had a stall there, it was a kind of a donkey, some sort of mechanism, and you hit this bull's eye, with a ball, throwing a wooden ball at it, it would tip up and they called it 'kicking Maud,' I remember that. And some other fellers had a kind of couple of monkeys, now they were metal monkeys, they would be half the size of a man, I suppose, and they had a coconut held in their hands in front of them and if you could hit them in the face they'd work, activated some mechanism that threw the coconut out to you, and it was all this rollin' balls and shovin' pennies and all that sort of thing, but your chances of winning anything were pretty slim, I think.

DC Were there stalls with people selling stuff, as well?

Mr J Yes, there would be, not many, not many, I remember seeing a feller selling chocolate, it was all melted I remember, ah, yes there'd be the ginger beer stall and, there was a little feller from Peel I remember selling ginger beer, his name

was Walter Coldridge [sp ???] and he was known as 'wee Bobby,' he was a great favourite of the Peel people.

DC Was there big crowds attending Tynwald then?

Mr J Big crowds, yes there were big crowds, but they didn't stay very long, you know, usually over about two or three o'clock, and head for home then, aye.

DC Well, down just a way to the west of us here now, what was that like when you were a kid then, was there an actual sand pit there, was there?

Mr J It was a sand pit, there'd be carts carting sand out all day long.

DC What was the sand getting used for then, Cyril?

Mr J Well, it was going to the station, taking it down to St. Johns station, putting it in trucks, and it was, going, I suppose, all over the Island.

DC So it was used for building work, would it be?

Mr J For building work, I would imagine, I was only a kid, I don't know, but I can remember these fellers.

DC But later on when you were a bricklayer you actually used that sand, did you, occasionally, did you?

Mr J Yes, for the mortar, yes.

DC So was that quite a busy place then, that sand pit?

Mr J Yes, it was a busy place, yes, there'd be carts carting out of there all along. There was a man living there, he was a watchmaker called Crennell, he kept a lot of goats there.

DC Really?

Mr J I remember that, aye. But it belonged, if my memory serves me right, it belonged to T C Moore, which is now called Tynwald Mills, T C Moore, or

Moore the dyer, or Moore's Mills, that's right. I think the farmers used to, I've heard talk of it, before my time, they used to bring their wool, sell their wool to T C Moore's, I can remember their flannel, they used to make this Manx flannel, it was like sandpaper. All the old boys used to have these flannel singlets on, goodness gracious, it must have been a strong man then to wear them.

DC Before your time, I suppose, but there must have been quite a few mills around this area, was there?

Mr J Oh, I don't know about the cloth mills, or the woollen mills, but there was a corn mill at *Mullen-e-Cloie*, one at Lower Foxdale, and there was one at Glenfaba, one up here past Ballig, that's all I can remember now.

DC Were they still being used when you were young?

Mr J Oh, yes, oh, yes, oh, goodness, yes. This old miller up here, we called him Ned the miller, *Mullen-e-Cloie*, he used to accuse us kids of getting stones and throwing them in the race, blocking his race for him, and he was going to play billy-o, but the race used to come down alongside the road, it wasn't – now it's gone – but it was an open race alongside the road then. They built a wall and we used to sit behind the wall and in there was a little cottage, and a fellow called Johnny Geel, or Gell, but it's pronounced *Geel* in the Gaelic, and he and his two sisters lived there and they used to sell milk and Johnny had a cart on the road carting sand, working on the high road. St. Johns station was a hive of activity, I don't know how many men that was there, and there was ...

DC There'd be quite a lot of trains a day, running through?

Mr J Oh, yes, working on the farm, you didn't have a watch, you went by the six o'clock train; twelve o'clock you went by the blasting at Poortown, so that's only twice a day that you didn't look at the time.

DC St. Johns, and we've come down, Cyril, to look at a mill you remember as a working mill, when you were young?

Mr J Yes, it was working when I was a young feller, an old feller called Ned Gale, I think was his name, an old villain he was too, he used to accuse us, we kids, of

throwing stones in the race, the race used to come down alongside the road, and he reckoned we used to pull stones out of the wall, throw them in ...

DC You'd never do a thing like that, would you?

Mr J No way, I thought many a time I'd throw him in one day, but never got around to doing it.

DC Aye, all the millers were known as Dusty Miller, weren't they?

Mr J We always called him Ned the Dusty.

DC Oh, Ned the Dusty.

Mr J Ned the Dusty he was, yes. I think he came from out Maughold way.

DC So this would be, obviously, a corn mill here then?

Mr J Yes, flour, not flour, crushed oats and rolled oats and oatmeal, I think. It wasn't a threshing mill, no.

DC So they'd come in carts really, there wouldn't be any ...

Mr J Yes, people would come from the farm, they'd bring half a dozen bags of oats, or whatever they wanted and get it crushed and come and collect it. I don't think he did a lot of oatmeal, I don't know whether, I can't remember him doing oatmeal, but I didn't – I remember going there with some oats once, after he'd gone, and there was an old Scotsman had it then, but he said the plant wasn't working, so he was just doing crushed oats and rolled oats.

DC And the building, of course, is still here.

Mr J The building is there, it looks quite substantial.

DC The mill race has gone, I take it, hasn't it, yes?

Mr J The race has gone, yes, and the wheel has gone, of course. After the Scotsman went, Harry Mylcraine took it over, I think, Harry had the mill up at ...

DC Glen Helen?

Mr J ... up towards Glen Helen, yes. His son is still living in Peel, Bernard Mylcraine, I think he's the last of the line, unfortunately.

DC That's right, that's right, yes, because it was a great industry, the mills in the Isle of Man, really.

Mr J Yes, yes, aye, it was.

DC Also around St. Johns area then, there was, what would there be in the way of shops?

Mr J Well on the corner, there was the school, of course, and then there was the police station, a man called Gale was the acting sergeant then, when I was ...

DC Did he have a push bike?

Mr J A push bike, yes, yes, and next door to that there was an old shop, an old feller called Billy Peters, he had a shop in later years, but his – he was the kind of – had – on Monday – he had landaus, and if it was a wedding he'd supply the carriages or if it was a funeral he would supply the carriages for the funeral, that type of thing, but I don't remember that, but I know he officiated at my mother's wedding, my parents' wedding, with his carriage, yes.

DC And then if you wanted a few sweets, there was a sweet shop, was there?

Mr J Yes, next door, there was the post office and the two ladies called Gill, two spinsters, it was the post office and a shop, I think they had more or less everything. Then later years they built a new shop, a new house, just across the station hill and had another post office there, I think the old post office is now a café, it was a photographic place, I think it was. I remember when we were kids at school all these horse drawn carriages, phaetons, landaus and all the rest of them used to come there, there could be a dozen there, a pile of horses, and we used to go over dinner time we kids, and this landlord would be saying, 'If you'll pump the water for us, I'll give you a few coppers.' Well I reckon I pumped thousands and thousands of gallons and never ever got a copper. The trough is still there, it had a pump on the, on the kind of the end of the gable or

the pillar at the end of the trough and if you look up there, then, above the hotel, you'll see that overflow, when it's full, it'll overflow there. We were, there'd be a dozen kids, we'd be pumping all dinner time – I don't think I ever got a copper.

DC No. Well we mentioned earlier the railway, of course, and the importance of the railway there, and I mean did you have to keep away from the station, what were the stationmasters like?

Mr J No, no, they were all right, they were good, there was a feller called Corkan, was the first, there was a great overpass, you know, to get from the road to the ...

DC From one side to the other.

Mr J ... yes, yes, you'd go up, you wanted to get Peel side or the other side, like, yes. In later years, I think, the last stationmaster there was Joe Mylchreest, you would know Cyril, the policeman, Cyril's father.

DC That's right.

Mr J I think he might have been the last stationmaster there. But it was a hive of industry, it was the sand, they were carting sand, it must have been going into Douglas and from there I don't know where it went to, but they were carting sand from the sand hole, the sand pit there. There was, oh, I suppose there would be half a dozen carts cartin' the sand, and they were cartin' coal from the station around about somewhere.

DC For delivery around?

Mr J Yes.

DC But of course it was important for the mart here, wasn't it?

Mr J Oh, yes, and there'd be the cattle, when the mart was over you would see the men from the mart going off up to the station with the cattle. The two men in the ring there, I remember them well, I knew them both well, one was Jack Consan, [sp ???] I think his daughter, Jean, still lives over at *Ballaspet*, along

the Patrick Road, she was in, I think she was in my class in school and another one was Stanley Skinner, some of his people are still in Douglas, he won the Cleveland Medal once, I remember, and his grand wife he had.

DC So there would be a lot of animals round here on mart days?

Mr J Oh, yes, it would be full up, yes, yes, it was a great place. The auctioneer was Arthur Dick.

DC Oh, I've heard of Arthur Dick.

Mr J I spent many years in Australia and I attended many sales but I never saw or heard an auctioneer yet that could come within [unclear] of Arthur Dick, he was terrific, and he was a comedian. There was one or two fellers he used to have a joke with, he was a real comedian, but he was a terrific auctioneer.

DC What about the weather then, I mean we're talking summertime, the sun's shining here, but it wouldn't always be like that, I mean, you've seen one or two big snows, haven't you?

Mr J I've seen one big one, it was in 1929, I can remember it well, it was 11th February 1929, and I was going to St. Johns School and we used to have an urn, the old schoolmaster had an urn, we used to boil this, we could make ourselves a cup of cocoa, and we used to go down from the school to his house, which is down by the church, and I remember, it was a feller called Albert Guest, who is now deceased, and me, going down to get this urn filled with water, and it was snowing, it was driving along the ground like, oh, I don't know what like, so we were in the school and he never let us out, we didn't get out for dinner time, he kept us in school until about three o'clock and when we got out, oh, it was shockin', it was, going down, we had to go about two mile from St. Johns up the road to the Hope, up the Ballavagher Road, up to the Curn Hill, and it was coming down there like a tunnel, it was shocking. We got as far as *Mullen y Cloie*, and we went in there, into the cow house and we warmed our hands on the cattle and then we got as far as *Ballaoates* farm, there was Leslie Lowney, my brother and my sister, and Billy, my brother Billy and Leslie Lowney, they went ahead of us, they were going to break in the storm, we were younger, and Leslie, he dropped off when he got nearer his place, and we had to go on, on our own, we got as far as *Ballaoates* farm, the Leeces, and we'd had it. Anyway

Walter Leece came out and he got sacks and wrapped round our hands and sacks over our heads and we got home, but I don't think we would have made it on our own. The next day my brother, he was in bed with the measles, that's why he was so – he wanted to lie down.

DC So that was a really big snow then?

Mr J That was a terrific, it was a terrible snow, a lot of people didn't know much about cars at that time and they didn't let the water out, and they didn't have anti-freeze and didn't let the water out of the radiator, and there was quite a few cracked, cracked cylinder jackets, I think they called them, is it, I don't know.

DC There wouldn't be many cars around at that time, either?

Mr J No, not many. There was a feller called William Teare, up at Foxdale, he had an old T Ford, and a feller at Kerrowgarrow, Stanley Moore, he had a Ford, he had one, I think Garretts of *Ballachurry* had one, I think that's about all I can remember. But at the station in those days there would be three or four taxis, we will call them taxis, old motor cars. A man called Stanley Brocklehurst, another feller called Tommy Kenny, and another feller called, I think his name was Carter. I'm going back over seventy years.

DC Of course, of course, you've got an amazing memory really, for these things.

Mr J And I remember once we were going to the Niarbyl, me mother and me brother and sister, we were going to the Niarbyl for the day, and we got Stanley Brocklehurst to take us to the Niarbyl, half a crown ...

DC That's another thing of course, money, people wouldn't today realise the value of things. You said to me a couple of pennies would buy you all sorts of things.

Mr J Yes, well as I said, we used to save up, four or five of us, Leslie Lowney, brother Billy, Bert, and a feller called John Holgate, and myself and we used to get tuppence somehow or other, and we'd buy a packet of *Woodbines*.

DC How many *Woodbines* for tuppence.

Mr J Five for tuppence, and we'd go up over the Slieu Whallian Road, and have a smoke up there, and cough and splutter and we'd come back down across the track across the river, like we are now, David, that's our smoke.

DC And you'd be hiding away from everybody here then, would you?

Mr J Yes, nobody would see us, and we would tell them, douse, as I say, before we got down here.

DC So were farthings in regular use then?

Mr J No, they weren't.

DC Weren't they?

Mr J No.

DC Well Slieu Whallian's just behind us, here, as we stand under the trees, you've been to the top of that a few times?

Mr J Many, many times. We used to go up there at dinner time sometimes, before that second lot of trees was put in and some of the boys would roll stones down, and they used to roll right down nearly to the Patrick Road, it's a wonder they didn't kill somebody. But Leslie Lowney and my brother, Billy, Leslie Lowney, was Ruby's, Ruby Lowney, Ruby Kennaugh, John Kennaugh's mother's brother, John Kennaugh's uncle, him and Billy, some old feller reckoned that they had more mischief in them than the divil [devil] wanted them to have, they were very mischievous, never done any harm, never done anybody any harm, but mischievous, like a bag of monkeys, yes.

DC Well Cyril, we've come over now to, we're just standing opposite the Agricultural Department's Forestry office, behind us the saw mills working, we're standing in the car park here, we've had a bit of a walk around, how much has St. Johns and this area changed since you were a youngster, then?

Mr J A lot, a lot, none of these houses were here, there was the Forestry house was there, and where we're standing now was just fields, belonging to *Mullen-e-Cloie* farm, it was farmed by, when I went away it was farmed by William

Quilliam, who was in *Ballacraine* farm, but previously a couple of old brothers, William and Tommy Quine, they farmed this, this was a lovely level farm here, yes.

DC And of course the railway to Foxdale was still there, I mean we've been looking at the pillars, they're still standing pretty well, aren't they?

Mr J Oh, yes, the railway was still there, whether it was running or not I can't remember. But I can remember, remember it going, it used to go up head first up to Foxdale, came down backwards, I'm not sure about that, but I think it did because there was no, wasn't a turntable at Foxdale, I don't think.

DC When you travelled then did you use the trains yourself?

Mr J I went to school, I went to school in Peel on the train, yes, and I used to go into Douglas sometimes on a Saturday night on the train, they were good, another thing was Ramsey, a good trip to Ramsey on the train, go to the Ramsey mart sometimes.

DC Sunday school picnics?

Mr J Well the first Sunday school picnic, I can remember we went down to Ballasalla, to – it was Lower Foxdale Methodist Church, known as the [unclear] – [in] horses and floats, we went down from Foxdale, Lower Foxdale, we all congregated there to Shimmins, it was, what do you call the place now, just opposite the – just by the bridge there, you know, at Ballasalla, Shimmins gardens and there was hurdy gurdys and roundabouts and boats, and all the rest there, that's a long time ago.

DC And did all the kids behave themselves on trains, did they?

Mr J Oh, no.

DC Go on, go on.

Mr J We went on the horse and floats to this here picnic. What do they call that place, I forget the name of it, Shimmins were the people.

DC Oh, I think you're talking about – was it Silverdale?

Mr J Silverburn.

DC Silverburn?

Mr J You used to come through Ballasalla, where the river goes under the road, and you turned in there, I think it's a café or something now, right opposite the thing-um-a-bob place there now – where they're doing the digging.

DC What sort of things did they get up to on the trains then?

Mr J Oh, take some young feller's shoes off and see if his feet were clean, all these things, but you'd push somebody under the seat and then put the cushions down and keep them in there. There was no supervision, they could do what they like, there should have been somebody with them, I think ... it was all right though. Used to leave here, about nine o'clock I think the train left, and got into Peel about oh, five past, ten past, something of that sort, and walk up to the school, the Clothworkers School, and it didn't leave then again until quarter to five at night.

DC So you had a long wait for it then?

Mr J It was dark going down to the station then, it was dark when you got to St. Johns in the winter, and I had to walk all this way up to there. In the winter, going to Greeba, they would go on the bus.

DC You still had miles to walk off the train?

Mr J Yes, off the train, yes, and the rain always seemed to be blowing, the wind always seemed to be blowing down the road ...

DC Into your face?

Mr J ... into your face, never had a tail wind yet, I don't think.

DC Was there work for people in St. Johns, in your days, tradesmen, that sort of thing?

Mr J Well there was two joiners' shops, yes, there was one near the vicarage, there was Sydney and Bobby Quine, they ran it, I think that's their son, Bobby's son, he was Mack Quine, I think it's him that's started the present business, I could be wrong there, but he had a son Edgar and a son called Mack, I know that, and a couple of daughters, I think. He also, I remember he had an old [unclear] motor bike, Bobby lived up in Lower Foxdale, top of the [unclear] hill, I think they called it, and there was another joiner near the school, a man called Kelly, he was an expert on making the wheels for the carts, what the old Manx people called the *queel*.

DC The *queel*, so he was a *queelwright*?

Mr J Aye, yes, and there was two shoemakers.

DC Was there?

Mr J Yes, or cobblers, repairers.

DC Would they make a living, both of them?

Mr J Oh, one of them was a postman as well, Ewan Quirk from Peel, he had a shop on the station hill, the other feller, Joe Corris, he had a little place up on the Foxdale Road, up above the Hope, and he also was the gatekeeper down on the Curragh road, for some time, yes.

DC The poorer families, the kids wouldn't be wearing shoes in the summer, would they?

Mr J We were never allowed to go without shoes but some of them did, I liked to get me shoes off and walk home in the sand and dust, but we weren't allowed to, no.

DC Where did you mostly play, would you say, then?

Mr J At school? On the Fair field.

DC Oh, on the Fair field, yes.

Mr J Mostly on the Fair field and in the school yard. Round about TT time every kid would have a piece of stick with a number plate on it, he'd be a racer, round about the hill.

DC Did you have hoops?

Mr J Yes, we had hoops, and tops.

DC So hoops then would be just the outer rim of a bicycle wheel?

Mr J No, they used to get them made, Willie Garrett, the blacksmith, used to make one for us, for sixpence.

DC Oh did he?

Mr J It was just a bit of, I would say, half inch rod, made into a circle and welded and made a bit of a hoop.

DC So you'd push the hoop along with a wire, would you?

Mr J With a wire, yes, a coop, we called it, yes, and we had tops ...

DC Tops with whips?

Mr J I used to go out on the main road, on the tarmac, which is pretty smooth, yes, with a whip, some of them would fly for yards when you hit them, I think they were called 'window-breakers,' I think.

DC Were they?

Mr J I think that's what they were called, I can't remember a great deal. And we used to go down to Moore's Mills and gather up a lot of bechnuts and we used to eat them.

DC Beechnuts?

Mr J Beechnuts.

DC What else did you eat then, because kids used to eat anything they could get their hands on, wouldn't they?

Mr J Well I remember Leslie Lowney eating the pig nuts but I don't think, I can't think of anything else.

DC I don't know what they are, pig nuts, I mean I've dug pig nuts as well and eaten them, and I'm not quite sure what they are, but they were edible, weren't they?

Mr J I don't know, they never killed Leslie, but I never tried those, no.

DC Oh, didn't you? What about turnips from the farm then?

Mr J Oh, I loved eating raw turnip, oh, yes. Another old recipe they used to have, if you had a bad cold, a bad cough, you get a good swede turnip, they call them suede, of course, and they would peel it, slice it up on a big deep plate, and put sugar on it, and they reckoned it made a lot of juice and they reckoned it was good for the cough.

DC Oh, really, probably the sugar that did it more than anything.

Mr J It might have been.

DC What about apples, and pinching apples and such?

Mr J Oh, I pinched one or two, yes. There was a tree down at Ballacraine, behind, there used to be an old black hut there and this old apple tree was down there and we used to go down and nick a few apples, Mr Quilliam wouldn't have minded us anyway, but if he would have given us permission that wouldn't have been so exciting, would it? But you couldn't eat them, the skin was like sandpaper, I couldn't face them, I couldn't. But I know, *Kennaa*, my grandfather's farm at *Kennaa*, there was – they came over from, they came over to *Kennaa* from *Doarlish-Cashen*, where the spook was, and they brought a cutting off a tree with a Manx mother apple, and they stuck it in the ground and it grew, it was about – they broke pieces off it and they had about a dozen and they had beautiful apples, but I've been trying to get on to a tree, but I can't, since I've come home, I've been trying to get a cutting of a mother apple tree to grow but they're gone.

DC Yes.

Mr J We didn't do nothing shameful, kids never got into any bad mischief in those days, you were pinching apples ...

DC You never had the policeman after you?

Mr J Never had the policeman after us, perhaps we should have had but I don't think we ever did anything really wrong. Got accused of, my brother got accused of robbing birds' nests, which he never forgot.

DC But kids did rob birds' nests in those days, it wasn't illegal I don't think, then?

Mr J If you took the eggs it was illegal, but I don't think, he only went to look at them, but he got accused by the police of robbing the nest.

DC Oh, right. A lot of kids had birds' eggs collections in those days, didn't they?

Mr J They did, I didn't, no.

DC Well we're standing here with the saw mill going in the background and we're looking out across here to the Forestry Board building, and a road that you tell me wasn't a road, it was just a dust track really there?

Mr J It was a dust – it was just a gravel road when I was a kid but I can remember it being made up, when they put what they call the pitching stones in there, kind of slightly arched, and then when they put the big roller over them, it, you know, it tightened them up, yes. That was a long time – that was in the middle twenties.

DC And you had a name for the road there, did you?

Mr J I don't know what this road is called no, no, no.

DC But you had a name for the ...

Mr J Here, the heater, round the heater, that was from St. Johns to Ballacraine, Ballacraine to the Hope and the Hope to St. John's.

DC It was called the heater?

Mr J The heater.

DC Why was it called the heater?

Mr J It was shaped like the heater that they put in the old irons, the old box irons, they used to have this heater, a lump of wire, triangular shaped, it had a hole in it, put it in the fire, when it was red, get the poker, yank it out, and there was a little trap door at the back of the iron, pop it in there, and then that would heat the iron up.

DC That was the way they did it, was it, the old original irons was it?

Mr J Yes, it made it shiny.

DC And that's why the road's that sort of shape, is it?

Mr J So they tell me, that's why it's called the heater, yes, before my time, yes.

END OF INTERVIEW