

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

**‘TIME TO REMEMBER’**

**Interviewee(s):** Mr Eric Ross Kelly

**Date of birth:** 12<sup>th</sup> December 1939

**Place of birth:** Peel, Isle of Man

**Interviewer(s):** Elizabeth Ardern-Corris

**Recorded by:** Elizabeth Ardern-Corris

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**Topic(s):** Early school days  
Music lessons  
Entertainment  
Shops and cafes in Peel  
Kipper yards  
Sunday School outings  
Birthdays and celebrations  
Teacher’s nicknames  
Popular children’s comics  
Working for Peel Carriers  
Unemployment and benefit entitlements  
Agent for *Betterware*  
The Kelly Trio and local music scene  
St Johns Good Friends Club  
The Isle of Man Guild  
Grandchildren

**Eric Kelly** - Mr K  
**Elizabeth Ardern-Corris** - EA-C

**EA-C** I'm Elizabeth Ardern-Corris, it's the 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2012 and I'm at the home of Mr Eric Kelly in Peel. Mr Kelly, can you tell me a little bit about yourself?

**Mr K** Well, my full name is Eric Ross Kelly; I was born in Peel, in Patrick Street – there were no Jane Crookall [Maternity Home] in those days – and I lived there for the first years of life and then we moved into Circular Road and that's where I spent most of my young life until I was a young adult, and grew up there. And my father's name was Thomas Ross Kelly, known as 'Rossie' in Peel, and my mother's name was Marian Isobel Kinley – she was part of the Kinley family in Peel. So we lived in Circular Road, there were myself and my two brothers, and we grew up in Circular Road and that's where we spent most of our childhood.

**EA-C** Were you the eldest of the boys?

**Mr K** Yes, I was the eldest of the three boys and I was born on 12 December 1939.

**EA-C** Whereabouts did you go to school?

**Mr K** Well, I started school in the Peel Cloth Workers' where the town hall is now – that used to be the infants' school, and you know – as you are probably aware – the old school is still there. I started school there, where the town hall is now was the playground, and I started school when I was five. We didn't live very far away from the school 'cos Circular Road was just around the corner, so I didn't have far to go to school. So err ... but that's where I started my first days at school, and then I moved up to the ... what they call the junior school, which is where Shoprite is now – the building's not there now, I'm sorry to say, because that's been demolished, but then we moved up to that school and then spent my primary school years in that area in that particular school until I was eleven and went, of course, to Douglas High School.

**EA-C** Did you enjoy your time in school?

**Mr K** It was okay. It was ... I suppose as much as any child would enjoy school because I suppose we all took it ... if we were honest, we were always looking for a day off now and again because we didn't want to go. (*laughter*) But yes, in general terms, I think I did.

**EA-C** Who was the Head teacher at your primary school?

**Mr K** Now the Head teacher at the primary school was a man called Harry Hill. He was the Head teacher at the time. His son was Albert Hill, used to be well known in local politics, but Harry was the Headmaster of Peel Primary School in those days.

**EA-C** Were there any particular teachers who influenced you a lot?

**Mr K** I think perhaps in the secondary school stage, yes, there were. There were quite a few teachers that I liked very much, but one particular teacher that I had the greatest of respect for was a man called Jack Gayer, and when I was in secondary school I was moved up into his class. Unfortunately a little bit too late in the school year, but Jack Gayer went back three years on my account, so that I could have some chance of catching up. And he put himself to an awful lot of trouble so that I could catch up with the others that I was behind, and I ended up paying him back, if you like, by coming forth from the top of his class, which I thought was super, you know, I'm sure Jack would be very pleased about that!

**EA-C** Did you take any exams at school?

**Mr K** I took what was known as GCEs – I didn't do very well. I only got about two subjects I think. But I didn't really want to go back; I wanted to go out to work.

**EA-C** Well, I know that you're a very musical person and you were part of *The Kelly Trio*. Was your musical ability very evident when you were a young child?

**Mr K** Not that I'm aware of really; just that my mother decided that she would like to send me to Piano lessons and she asked me if I'd like to go, so I said, 'Yes, okay then, I'll go.' So I did. And my first music teacher sent me home after a little while and said, 'Don't bother wasting your time and your money because Eric will never learn to play.' So mother didn't agree with that, so she found another teacher and I ended up being her best pupil. And that teacher's name was Vera Hugh. She was daughter of a well-known entertainer in Peel called Howard Hugh. Now I'll tell you a bit about Howard; he was an entertainer *extraordinaire*, if you like. He used to sing and dance, but he was also a little bit of a conjuror and we would meet him in the street and we would say to him, 'Show us a trick, Mr Hugh,' and he'd always have something up his sleeve, where something would disappear out of his hand, or go from one hand to the

other, and always the kids stopped him in the street and asked him to do a trick, and he would never refuse. But he used to put on silent film shows, Howard, and you know where Empire Garage's showroom is now on the promenade at Peel, well, that used to be called *The Playdium*, P-L-A-Y-D-I-U-M, I think it was spelt – *Playdium*. And that was an amusement arcade and Howard would put silent films shows – Charlie Chaplin and stuff like that – and Howard would put these shows on, on a Saturday afternoon and he would have his old projector there, and of course, in those days you had to have to stand it on a book to get the right height or something like that, and somebody would be up at the other end trying to adjust the screen, and of course the shout would come up from the other end of the room, 'Do you want it up or down, Howard?' And of course, 'Up or Down Howard' was what we knew him as – Howard Hugh was 'Up or Down Howard!' We fondly knew him as 'Up or Down Howard,' but he was a lovely man, he really was, and of course his daughter taught me to play the piano.

**EA-C** Did anybody play the piano to accompany the silent films?

**Mr K** Yes, yes, a lady called Elsie Clark used to play and the faster the film went of course, the faster the music went – you can imagine ... and another one, Iris Johnson, I think they were related, I think they were sisters, and she used to play as well – they were both good pianist and you had to be in those days to keep up with the film, because when things were going fast, you had to play fast, and when things were going slow you had to follow the film – I often wondered how they did it! But that's how they did it in those days, yea, and I remember it. It was actually going out in those days because the talking films were coming in, but we had a good time – yea, we enjoyed it!

**EA-C** Well, apart from going to watch these silent movies, what else did you do for entertainment?

**Mr K** In Peel, my thing in Peel, of course, was ... I used to go fishing, I mean, I've told this story many times, too, we'd go fishing on Peel breakwater in the summertime, when we had school holidays, and – we had no fishing rods in those days, it was just a hand line with a hook on the end of it – and we would have a pair of trousers and a shirt, and that would be given to us at the beginning of the summer and that would last us the whole six weeks, and by the time it was ... the six weeks was over, we didn't have rags to wipe our hands on,

we'd just wipe it on the trousers, you know, (*laughter*) or the shirt. Well, they reeked, to be quite honest! But we used all these trousers and shirts all through the summer to go fishing on Peel breakwater, and by the time the summer was over they just got burnt, because they were rotten. So ... but that's how I used to amuse myself was going fishing.

**EA-C** What did your father do for a living?

**Mr K** Well, father was ... he worked for the brickwork company in Peel I remember. I don't remember much about it, but I know he told me that he did. And they used to make the Peel brick and a lot of the houses in Peel, of course, are built with Peel brick. In fact probably a lot of houses in the Isle of Man were made with Peel brick, but father worked down there. I'm sure that must have been hard work, working in those kilns down there, because, you know, he was ... even though he was a young man, I bet it was hard work. But then I remember him when he worked on the buses for the Isle of Man Road Services – he was a conductor on the buses in those days. And he was a conductor for over thirty years on the Peel buses – quite well liked on the buses as well, he was well known as Rossie, and you would often see him standing on the back of the double-decker buses in those days, and ... yea, he stuck that job quite well after he left the brickworks.

**EA-C** Did your mother stay at home?

**Mr K** She stayed at home to look after us when we were school age – I think she had a little bit of a part-time job sometimes when we were at school in the old knitting factory in Peel. You know where *Shoprite* is now in Michael Street? Well, that used to be the old knitting factory and I think she occasionally went down there and did a bit of knitting, but in general terms, when we were coming home from school, or when we were going to school, she was always there. But apart from that, she didn't do an awful lot of work, most of the time she spent at home.

**EA-C** Can you remember some of the other shops in Michael Street?

**Mr K** Yes, I mean, Michael Street has changed now. I mean, it used to be full of grocery shops. There was Benny Kelly's the baker's, there was Joe Durber, there was Stanley Quirk's – they were the bakers, there was two butcher's shops

in Peel – Harrison and Garrett’s, and err ... Ken Garrett’s butcher’s shop; then further up there was the Palatine Café ... what else can I remember from those places? Cowley’s the chemist – the chemist shop is still there, it’s been refurbished, it’s still being there, called Cowley’s Pharmacy as far as I know, but Cowley’s the chemist was there; then there was a place called Charlie Whitfield’s, the chemist in Christian Street; there were quite a lot of places there that are not there anymore. Yea, all the grocers’ shops, you know, that Peel used to be full of grocers’ shops, but of course, when the supermarkets came in, eventually they went ... went down.

**EA-C** Would people have gone down to the harbour and bought fish directly from the fishermen?

**Mr K** When you went down to the harbour when we were kids, if you went down to the harbour you got the fish for nothing. Yea, they used to give you a string of fish to go take home. Many a time we would go down to the boats when they were coming in, landing the herring, if you brought a bit of string with you, they would say, ‘Take a few and take them home,’ – we used to get them for nothing. You wouldn’t get it now, I don’t think.

**EA-C** Was Moore’s, the kipper people, there when you were little?

**Mr K** They were, there were several kipper yards actually, there was Moore’s, there was Clucas’s, there was Devereau’s ... I seem to remember there was one in ... at the back of Michael Street as well – I can’t remember whose that was now, but there was one there where Moffett’s baker’s is now, there was a kipper yard there. And actually, there used to be a kipper yard at the back of our house in Circular Road – before I got there I think, but there used to be a kipper yard in there, used to smoke kippers in there – it was called Curphy’s, but I don’t think it was ever there while I was there, but I believe there was a kipper yard in there. There were several kipper yards in Peel. And during the summer season, of course, the smoke would be hanging over the town where they were all smoking the kippers – lovely atmosphere!

**EA-C** Do you remember Granger’s Cafe?

**Mr K** I do. I remember the Granger family, we would spend lots of happy hours in there, having something to eat or ... in fact, one ... my uncles got married and

that's where he held his reception – my father's brother got married and held his reception in there – and they used to hold all sorts of functions in there – yes, I do remember Granger's Cafe.

**EA-C** Did you get a lot to tourists visiting Peel in the summer months?

**Mr K** Yes, we certainly did, I mean, if ... anybody of my age would remember that the coaches used to come in Peel and they were strung along from one end of the promenade from one end to the other. The place would be packed full of coaches and of course the shops did extremely well out of them – a lot of souvenir shops and things like that, you know, but there ... the place was strung along with coaches. There were so many coach companies doing tours around the Island, they weren't bringing them over on the boat in those days on coaches, they were using the local people, and Peel used to be buzzing in the summer.

**EA-C** Do you remember having your first ice-cream?

**Mr K** Don't remember having the first ice-cream, but I do remember one shop in Peel that used to do ice-cream and he used to make lovely ice-cream – a shop called Willie Woods, and he was up in Athol Place, next door, I think, to where the estate agent's is on the corner of Athol Place and Bridge Street, there's a shop there, and he used to be in there making his own ice-cream and he made fabulous ice-cream. Yea, and he used to have it in the old thing where you put the wafer in first, then you put the ice-cream on the top and then you put the other wafer on the top of that and that's how I remember – that's where I first sort of remember getting ice-cream in general terms.

**EA-C** Peel still has a great reputation for good ice-cream.

**Mr K** Yes, it certainly has, I mean, you've got Davidson's now, haven't you, which is ... I mean, you've got to hand it to him, he makes good ice-cream.

**EA-C** Just going back to your childhood years; did you ever go out on Sunday School outings?

**Mr K** Certainly did. We ... I used to go to the Athol Street Sunday School and we ... I don't know how many kids we would have in those days, but I think, probably a

best part of a hundred, going to Sunday School. And when we had the Sunday School outings, of course, we had ... there were several coach companies in Peel – there were three that I can remember; there was Gale's Coaches, there was Fargher's Coaches, and a fellow called Cowley had a coach as well. And they were all used for the Sunday School outing, and we would have about five coaches going out, leaving Peel. And not only for our Sunday School, but there's a Sunday School in Christian Street in the other chapel, and they would be the same, and the church used to have a Sunday School outing as well; so there would be about three different Sunday School outings going during the year. And of course we were allowed time off school to go to the Sunday School outing – you had to go to school to register, but then you were allowed to go for the day, then, when the Sunday School had its annual outing. So they were wonderful days! And we used to go to Ramsey to the Mooragh Park, or Glen Wyllin, or places like that. Down there with half a crown to spend, and then, when that was over, you had your lunch and then we moved off to Douglas then. Those that wanted to go to Douglas, it was entrance to the cinema to the pictures, and then home – lovely days!

**EA-C** Sounds like something you'd look forward to all year round.

**Mr K** Yea, oh yea, yea, they were good.

**EA-C** What about other occasions, like Christmas time and birthdays, did they play a big part in your life?

**Mr K** Christmas was always a special time – still is for me. Because, you know, we always ... I mean, when we were kids, of course, we always had Santa Claus and we always had to wait and we always had to go to bed excited at night time because Santa was coming. But Christmas was always a special time when we were all together as a family, and it's only in sort of later years that I realise the true meaning of Christmas, what Christmas really means – the birth of Jesus and we celebrate his birth and his coming into the world, but I mean, when we were kids we had, as I said, the main thing, of course, was Santa Claus. But, nevertheless, when we went to Sunday School we sang Christmas carols and we were taught what Christmas really means. Yea, so it was rather nice.

**EA-C** And what about birthdays? Were they big?

**Mr K** Not specially big. I don't think we had birthday parties like we ... like the kids have nowadays. We just had more or less a birthday card and something ... your mum and dad bought you something for your birthday – basically that was it. But now, of course, you have to have a big party and invite all your kids round and all the rest of it; but I don't think we ... I don't think they had the money to do it in those days to be quite honest, 'cos they were ... money wasn't awfully ... you know – money was a bit tight.

**EA-C** Was religious education one of the subjects taught at school?

**Mr K** It was, and I always thought it was important that religious education was taught. When we were at High School we had a chap called Bertie Reed, he was Geoff Duke's father-in-law at the time. Now the Reverend Bertie Reed, he used to take us for religious instruction – you might like to look him up – and ... but he used to take us for religious instruction and I always thought that that was important. A lot of youngsters didn't always feel the same way, but I always did. I always thought that religious education was very important.

**EA-C** Did any of your teachers have nicknames?

**Mr K** Yes, we had quite a few, we had ... let me see now ... we had a fellow called Mr Jones, he was Welsh so we called Taffy; we had another fellow called Slipper Smith, and you can guess why he was called Slipper Smith, because we ... most of us were on the receiving end of the slipper now and again; and then we had another fellow, Mr Garrett – lovely man he was, but for some reason we called him 'Pimple' – I don't know why, but he was a lovely man, I liked him quite well, he was my form master; and then we had another fellow called Entwistle, his name was ... we called him Ernie Entwistle because I think there was a comic strip character in those days that used to be called Ernie Entwistle, so he was called Ernie Entwistle; and then we had another man called Mr Kelly, and for whatever reason I do not know, but he was always fondly known as 'Putty,' so yea, we had ... there were a few, there were a few nicknames, but I don't think they were anyway disrespectful.

**EA-C** Can I ask why you got the slipper?

**Mr K** I only ever got the slipper once; I was sitting alongside the chap that was my form-mate, if you like, we used to sit in twos in the desk, and I dropped my pen

on the floor and bent down to pick it up and he was full of mischief and he kept my head down beneath ... behind the desk – underneath the desk, rather, and of course it was the ... the teacher spotted us doing it, and it was Ernie Entwistle and he was good with the slipper as well, and he called us out and we both got the slipper. I wouldn't tell on him and he wouldn't admit that he did it, (*laughter*) and that was the only time I got the slipper at school! But I reminded him of it once when I met him years ago and he said, 'I don't remember it,' and I said, (*laughter*) 'No, but my backside is still sore 'cos I still remember it!' (*laughter*) No, but anyway ... we laughed about it at the time, yea.

**EA-C** What boys' comics were available when you were young?

**Mr K** When I was a youngster we had *Beano*, *The Dandy*, we had *Wizard*, *Hotspur*, I think, was another one, and then of course *The Eagle*, with *Dan Dare* – that was the ones that we had in those days and we always waited for the weekend to come to get your *Dan Dare* comic or your *Beano* or your *Dandy* or whatever. And I still remember some of the characters in some of these, like Desperate Dan, and Dennis the Menace, and Biffo the Bear, and things like that. I wish I had some of the comics to read now, because I mean, not only did we read them when we were kids, but my uncle used to live in the same house when we were kids, and he would wait until we were finished and he would have a read of them as well – he used to read all the comics. (*laughter*) Yea.

**EA-C** And would you have swapped them with your friends?

**Mr K** Oh yes, I mean, some of us would buy different things, you know, some had the *Hotspur* or whatever, or *The Wizard* or whatever and we would swap them round so that if you hadn't seen one, 'Oh well, I've got one, I'll swap you.' Yea.

**EA-C** Were you a good pupil at school?

**Mr K** I think I was fairly well behaved. I tried not to get into trouble. You know, I mean, I'm not saying I was perfect by any means, but err ... 'cos I used to ... I'm afraid that I ... probably, if I took a solemn note, I got away with a few things that I shouldn't have done, but in general terms, yea, I wasn't bad. I tried to do me best in whatever class I was in. You know, and some of the teachers that I had, they really were, you know, if they knew you were trying your best, they would do their best to help you. That wasn't always the case; if you were a little

bit struggling, some of them wouldn't, I'm afraid, and they would come down on you if they thought you were a bit stupid, or if you weren't ... picking it up like you should do. And one or two used to do it, but in general terms, if they thought that you were trying, they would do their best to help you.

**EA-C** Were the classes' big classes?

**Mr K** Roundabout thirty, roundabout the thirty-mark was the average size of the class in those days. And we didn't sit round like they do now in...I don't know what they do – is it higgledy-piggledy, or whatever they do? We sat in rows, one behind the other, and the further up you were in the class, the further forward you sat ... you know, or something like that, anyway, I can't remember exactly, but ... yea, you were privileged if you got top of the class or thereabouts, you were sat in a certain position in school. That was what it used to be in those days.

**EA-C** Were your parents sent out report cards?

**Mr K** They were. I don't ever remember getting into trouble over me school report, because it wasn't usually too bad. Especially in ... I particularly liked English at school when I was there, and I always got a good mark for that. But yes, they would get reports, the same as they do now, and it wasn't bad.

**EA-C** Were you ever given advice as you got older in school about what career choices to make?

**Mr K** I think we were more or less left to make our own minds up what we wanted to do really. We never had any career decisions – discussions, rather – and nobody ever said to us, you know, 'Well, would you like to come and discuss what you want to do when you leave school.' And ... no, not really, I don't think ... I don't know whether that was 'in' in those days – it is these days, very much so, but not in those days. You did your schooling, you took your exams, then you left school. Then you decided what you wanted to do yourself.

**EA-C** Did any of our school mates ever go to university or college?

**Mr K** Err ... one or two of them did, I think, went a bit further on. I remember one friend of mine, he went ... I'm not sure what training he did, but he ended up as

a ... in a ... he was a ... deep-sea sailing, anyway, and he was quite qualified in what he did. I think he was something like an engineer, and he obviously must have done some training somewhere, because I remember ... and I think he might be retired now, but he used to go deep-sea sailing, and he was ... I think he was an engineer on one of the ... some of these big ships, so ... but I can't recall everybody ... anybody in particular going to university in those days, 'cos I don't think as many of them went there then, as what there is now. You had to have a bit of money behind you if you went those days.

**EA-C** When you left school, what age were you?

**Mr K** I was seventeen when I left school – just coming up to seventeen.

**EA-C** And what was your first job?

**Mr K** My first job was with the Peel Carrier; and a lot of older people will remember that. A fellow called Harry Gell, used to live in the same street as us in Circular Road, and he had this wagon which he used to call down to the Steam Packet every day, pick up the goods and then deliver them round Peel, and that was my first job – as the driver's mate, if you like. Yea, it was a bit heavy at times, but ... I think I was with him for about a year. And then when I was ... I got paid off from there, and I went to work, then, in the Manx Co-op in Duke Street in Douglas in the furniture department. I walked into the shop, and I was looking for a job, I went up to see the boss and I – a Mr Burns, it was – and I said, 'I could do with a job, have you got any jobs in the shop?' And I started the next day and I was there for quite a number of years, yea ... so ...

**EA-C** What would happen with people who couldn't work due to sickness?

**Mr K** Well, there was unemployment or sickness benefit, but in those days, I don't know whether it's the same now, but you loss – if you went off sick, or you were unemployed, you lost the first few days of your unemployment or sickness benefit, and it was a tough – I remember my father was off sick for quite some time, and my mother was getting a bit distraught because the money ... there was no sign of the money coming through. And sometimes it would be a bit slow, slow getting paid out in those days because, you know, the entitlement ... I don't know whether there was as much entitlement as what there is now. Because it's done in line with inflation and all the rest of it, and in line with

what you need, and you can get income support as well as sickness or unemployment benefit, but in those days it was just unemployment benefit or sickness benefit and that was it! And it wasn't very much. It was poor. I've only ever had one week off sick in my working life, actually, where I had to claim benefit, and, quite frankly, for the money I got at the end of the week, it wasn't even worth bothering to claim it. I got about two pound, something like that – wasn't worth it, really. But I had to sign off to get me stamp paid, of course, but I'd injured me back or something and I couldn't ... wasn't ... couldn't work, and I signed on, and of course I lost the first two or three days, and by the time the end of the week came, it wasn't worth having, so I said I'm not going off sick any more, I think I'll say at work! (*laughter*)

**EA-C** How long did you stay at the Co-op for?

**Mr K** About nine years I stayed in there, and I left there in 1966, I think it was, and I went to work for *Betterware*, selling brushes round the doors; and I worked for them for quite a number of years, and people think it was a dead-end job, but it wasn't such a bad job, they paid good commission, and they paid your stamp, and they paid your holiday pay, and Christmas bonus as well, on top – I don't know how they managed to pay it, to be quite honest, but they did. And I eventually got to be a branch manager for a number of years, and then, eventually, as time went on, things started to go down, the commission started to drop and all the rest of it – I don't think they pay the same amount of commission now as they used to do then. So I had to leave, and then I went into music full time.

**EA-C** Tell me a little bit about your music.

**Mr K** Right ... umm ... well, you know, I've told you before that I was sent home, because I would never learn to play, but anyway, I decided that I would go into music full time in the ... what would it be? In the 70s, I suppose – there was a lot of work in those days, you could pick ... we still had – we had *The Kelly Trio*, and we ... myself and my two brothers, we started with *The Kelly Trio*. We had different singers during ... over the course of the years. Mary Reed was with us for a while, and then Eric Quirk was with us, and a girl called Kay Willison, who's left the Island now, she's living out in Tenerife or somewhere but we had different singers with us, but we always had meself and me brother on the drums, and we were doing the hotels; in the wintertime there were functions,

there were dinner-dances, there were ... we were out every night of the week! There was too much work, really, because ... and of course, we weren't the only ones, there were other bands on the Island doing very similar. And in the summertime of course we could have the choice of places to play. And we used to play ... I spent a number of years at *The Douglas Bay Hotel*, which is where the Scandia place is now, and then we went down to *The Metropole* – I did the David Whitfield Show down there – you remember David Whitfield? And then I ended up in *The Villa Marina* playing for dancing for what was then the Garden Room, and playing alongside the famous Ken Macintosh; and we did a little while down there, I enjoyed working with Ken – he was a gent. And those were the best years really, but, as I say, it wasn't only us that were doing it, there were quite a number of bands, there was *The Ray Norman Combo*; there was a band called *The Suedettes*; *The Phantoms*; one or two others as well that used to be going round doing functions and dances and playing for various things. We were all into the music, and we all loved it of course – how we ever did it I don't know, because a lot of them had to get up in the morning and go to work after they'd been out playing. But they used to do it, and there were quite a few dance bands around as well, like Harold Moorhouse; and Frank Moorhouse, and Steve Larmer's Band. You know, the music scene was good! I'm afraid it's gone down a bit since then, though.

**EA-C** How do you account for that? What happened?

**Mr K** I don't really know. I think it's because the tourist industry went down. I mean, in the '60s and '70s, if you walked along Douglas Promenade, you could hear music coming out of just about every hotel on the promenade – you know, apart from *The Villa Marina* and *The Gaiety!* There was *The Crescent*, as well, they had entertainment as well. And there was music coming ... there was virtually music coming out of your ears, because the place was really lively. Well, of course, once tourism dropped, the amount of work dropped. And I don't think you could make a living in the Isle of Man now, with music really.

**EA-C** Discotheques became popular instead of live music.

**Mr K** That's right, they took a lot of the work of the 'live' musicians, and I'm sorry, I have to say that me own son does it but err ... nevertheless, that's the way it is these days. They took a lot of the work, because you could get one fellow to do the whole lot, couldn't you? But it ... I still don't think you can beat live music.

**EA-C** Do you perform now?

**Mr K** I still do; we're on a tea-dance every Wednesday at the St John's Methodist Hall for the St John's Good Friends – myself and Jimmy Maddocks – Jimmy used to play in *The Ray Norman Combo*, and other bands, but Jimmy and I play together and we do a tea-dance every Wednesday, and then we've got *Keyboards Are Us*, of course, which is the group that we had with ... originally we had three keyboards and a singer-come-compere – myself and Jimmy Maddocks and my friend, Geoff Quine, and Granville Christy – we call him Chris – unfortunately Geoff died just before Christmas and there's only the three of us now, but we're still going out, doing entertaining and ... going for fun, just because we love it! Yea.

**EA-C** Have you any involvement with The Guild?

**Mr K** Yes. Some years ago I decided to go in The Guild in the keyboard class. I saw this chap playing and he got a good mark, he got 90 marks, and I thought, 'Well, I think I'll have a go at that next year, and then at least he won't be in on his own.' Well, unfortunately, not long after he won the ... he got his 90 marks, he took ill and died. So in the end, when I did go in it, I was actually on me own again. But anyway, my friend, Geoff Quine, decided that he would have a go at it; and he said, 'I'll come back, and I'm going to take this trophy off you.' You know. So, true enough, he did! But he came in and he said, 'We'll have a go at it next year.' I said, 'Okay, we'll have a go, I'll come down to your house and we'll work out a programme between us and we'll go in it for a bit of fun,' you know. And it was known as the friendly class, because there was no ... there wasn't a competition, really, it really wasn't. There was as much banter going on as there was ... you know, competition, because we used to pull each other's leg something awful. And ... but we went in it and we enjoyed it and we both got good marks, you know. And sometimes Geoff would get more than I did, and sometimes I would get more than he did, but ... whatever happened, we had a good time, and the winner always paid for the lunch! (*laughter*) It was a good ... good fun. And of course I go in the bible reading and the public speaking as well. I was involved in The Guild when I was younger – I used to go in the piano classes in those days. I didn't win anything in those days, I did reasonably well, I suppose, used to get mid-80s I suppose, as far as marks was concerned, but I never actually won anything. But went in, because me teacher wanted me to go in, and it was okay, I didn't mind going in really, but, for some reason I

was always a bit nervous when I went in there in those days.

**EA-C** Were you allowed time out of school to do that?

**Mr K** We were. If you went in The Guild, you were allowed time off from school – I think they still are, actually. But we were allowed to take the day off if you were in The Guild. So that was something ... something nice – you could have a day off school. Whether you won or not, didn't matter – you had a day off! But those were the days when there were a lot of people in the likes of the piano classes and things like that – used to have about twenty or thirty in each class, you know. And I don't know how the adjudicators ever got round, because they had to sit and listen to the same thing twenty or thirty times (*laughter*) before they could make their mind up – it must have been soul destroying, really!

**EA-C** What do you think the educational benefits of music is to young children?

**Mr K** Oh, I think it's invaluable, I mean, I'm glad that they do teach music at school, because I mean, it teaches them, especially in things like school choirs and things like that, if they're singing together, they're working together as a team. And of course music is, well as far as I'm concerned, is the food of life, really, because it really ... it sets you up for the day, if you like, because if you like music and they teach it to you at school, I would say to any child, if music is there at school, and they want to teach it to you, you grab it with both hands, because it's a wonderful thing to have music in your life – I wouldn't know what to do if I didn't have music.

**EA-C** Do you have grandchildren?

**Mr K** Yes, we've got four grandchildren, and they're ... the eldest is six and the youngest is not a year, yet.

**EA-C** And can you see any talent that's passed down to your grandchildren coming through?

**Mr K** I can see rhythm in them, especially if I'm here, if I happen to play something, or the music is on, on the television, I can see the youngsters, you know, going along in time, in reasonable time to the music, especially the two young lads. One's ... what is he now? Two? And the other one, he's not ... he's only ... he's

much younger, but I can see them moving along in rhythm to the music and the rhythm is there, and me granddaughter, of course she likes the dancing, and they come to the tea-dance with me when they can, when they're not at school, and you can see that the rhythm is there in their feet. So I'm hoping that somewhere along the line, one of them will ... or some of them – or all of them, if they like, will take it up and get into it – whatever way they decide to do it, whether it's dancing or playing an instrument or singing or whatever, as long as they can get into music I'll be more than delighted.

**EA-C** What would you say is your preference for music?

**Mr K** Oh, I think easy listening is the type of music I prefer. I like a lot of different types of music; I like country music; I like big-band music; I like some classical music; I like some of the stuff we do in Church; as long as it's got a good melody and it's what I call easy listening, I like it! So what I'll do for you now is – I'll play something that I played in The Guild last year, and hope you like it.

**[Mr Kelly plays a selection of music on the keyboard]**

**EA-C** Thank you very much for sharing your memories with me.

**Mr K** You're more than welcome.

**EA-C** And for that lovely rendition.

**Mr K** Thank you, my pleasure.

**END OF INTERVIEW**