

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

‘THE DALBY INCIDENT’

Interviewee(s): Mr Bill Brown

Date of birth:

Place of birth:

Interviewer(s): Barry Quilliam

Recorded by: Barry Quilliam

Date recorded: 9th May 1999

Topic(s): Memories of ‘The Dalby Incident’
Ballacreggan Farm
Cronk ny Irree Laa
Sighting a German twin-engine plane over Port St Mary
RAF
On-duty policeman for Peel District
Mr Colby Cubbon at Eary Cushlin
The Home Guard

Bill Brown - Mr B

Barry Quilliam - BQ

BQ This is an interview with Bill Brown regarding the Dalby incidents, 18th September 1940.

Mr B Around midnight on the 18th September 1940 I was standing at Ballacreggan Crossroads, Port St. Mary, in company with Mr John Cooil of *Ballacreggan* Farm when the skyline above Cronk ny Irree Laa suddenly lit up. A few minutes later a German aircraft came straight down over Port St. Mary, probably between 1500 and 200 feet above us and it was not travelling very fast, markings were clearly visible, it was a twin-engined plane and it made its way straight over Port St. Mary and out to sea. Mr Cooil and I speculated that it must have dropped its load in order to clear Cronk ny Irree Laa but we, this point, from our point of view has ever been verified.

BQ You are talking about the aircraft actually flying over. What did it actually sound like? Could you actually describe the noise; was it distinctive as being like a German aircraft, the way the engine sort of dips and rolls with a German aircraft whereas the standard British one would just continually carry on?

Mr B While it was the first German aircraft that I had ever seen the engine noise was similar to what I later saw, later heard when serving in the army.

BQ Right, this aircraft that you actually seen, was it on fire at all?

Mr B No it didn't seem to be in any difficulty at all apart from the fact that it was not travelling at all fast.

BQ Right. There has always been speculated that it was being chased by British RAF aircraft, from maybe the Liverpool area. Was there any other aircraft in the area when you seen this bomber?

Mr B Nothing at all in this area or nothing during the rest of the night that I saw.

BQ Right. Who else saw it apart from yourself and your companion? Was there anybody else about at the time?

Mr B Nobody else.

BQ Right. Were the air raid sirens going at any time?

Mr B No, and it was a beautiful clear night, could quite clearly see the fire on Cronk ny Irree Laa from where we were standing.

BQ Cronk ny Irree Laa was actually on fire that night?

Mr B Well the flames were all coming up over the top.

BQ So it was quite an extensive fire then.

Mr B Oh, yes, yes, the whole skyline seemed to be on fire at Cronk ny Irree Laa like or above the Cronk ny Irree Laa.

Mr B When you actually heard the explosion or seen the flashes how many bangs or crumps can you remember how many you heard?

Mr B Didn't hear anything, just saw the whole of the skyline lit up.

BQ And when you actually seen the aircraft, could you actually see enemy markings on it or any identification markings on it at all?

Mr B Well, you could see the German markings on it and you could see the rear turret.

BQ Really, oh. But it just continually carried on it – didn't deviate from any direction, went straight on.

Mr B Didn't deviate in any way just went straight down, in fact Mr Cooil remarked that we were taking a chance in standing like we did at, in the open at these crossroads if the rear gunner would have been in any way inclined to take a pot at us.

BQ So when you were actually standing at the crossroads and looking at this aircraft, how far would you actually say it was from you when it passed? It actually passed directly overhead from you, so you actually – it literally flew right above you.

Mr B Almost directly above us. It looked as if it was following the main road which it could do from Cronk ny Irree Laa right down to the bottom of Port St. Mary.

BQ Aye, using it as a guide. What was your actual occupation at the time?

Mr B I was a policeman on night duty.

BQ And did you have to actually report anything like this?

Mr B No, no, it was ... Cronk ny Irree Laa was not in our district, it was in Peel district and I understood that Peel were investigating it, the nearest inhabitant was Mr Colby Cubbin and his mother who were living in Eary Cushlin at the time.

BQ They went away for a bit of peace and quiet?

Mr B Well.

BQ So it basically went, from the actual flashes in the sky to the aircraft passing you would have literally only have been a matter of minutes?

Mr B Yes.

BQ Right, okay. Is there anything else that you can remember, was there anything said about it the next, the following day at all, do you remember?

Mr B No, we never heard any comment really, as I say it would be investigated by Peel Division.

BQ And the Home Guard were also involved, I believe, at the time.

Mr B Well I wouldn't know because they wouldn't even be in our Division, I don't suppose, I don't know.

BQ Right, okay, well that, there's nothing else that springs to mind about the incident.

Mr B Its fifty, nearly sixty years ago, you know and it was only when I read in the paper that you were seeking information that made me think about it.

BQ That's smashing. Oh, can I just have your full name and address from when you were actually in Port St. Mary, were you actually living in Port St. Mary at the time?

Mr B Yes, I was living at the Police Station at the time.

BQ Yes, and what was your full name?

Mr B William Hull [Hall ?] Brown.

BQ Right. Do you mind if I ask how old you were at the time?

Mr B Well I'll be 83 next week so can you work that out?

BQ That's smashing, thank you very much.

END OF INTERVIEW