MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

'TIME TO REMEMBER'

Interviewee(s): **Miss Jean Burns**

Date of birth:

Place of birth: **Tranmere on the Wirral**

Interviewer(s): **David Callister**

Recorded by: **David Callister**

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Topic(s):
Ploughing horses
Holidays to the Isle of Man
Land Girl in the UK
Working on Frank Richmond's farm in Ramsey
Competing in the British Ploughing Association match
Ploughing fields for Charles Kerruish at Ballafayle
Learning how to drive a tractor
Judging ploughing matches
Breeding horses at Bolivia Mount
Breaking in horses
Horse 'vocabulary'
Winning 3rd place in World Ploughing Match
Taking part in BBC radio programme 'Have A Go'

Miss Jean Burns **- Miss B**
David Callister **- DC**

DC These interviews are with Jean Burns, and we're talking in Ballaugh, and we're going to talk about horses and we're going to talk about ploughing, we're going to talk about tractors and goodness knows what else. Now, you say you were born in Tranmere.

Miss B Tranmere, on the Wirral.

DC Yes, did you come from a farming family there?

Miss B Absolutely nothing at all. My father was in cotton in Liverpool and my uncle was a – he had warehouses, I had nothing, absolutely – because I always was crazy over animals and one thing and another and I always had the horses, my parents before me, just privately, not racehorses, privately, to ride and drive, and that's how it all started. And I wanted to do, in the war years, I used to – I worked on a farm in [unclear], but it was all the horse work in those days my boss wouldn't allow me on a tractor, because those days I couldn't drive, of any sort.

DC When did you first get on a horse then, what age would you be?

Miss B Four year old, yes, oh, yes, and the first thing about – the second time out the, it wasn't a very good riding school, I shouldn't say that but it was on the Wirral, but in those days he put me on a rather large horse, and of course the thing, I said, shouted to him, 'I'm slipping off,' which I did, and I had a double compound fracture of this arm here, the bones came through, but that was my first accident and that was about my third time of riding.

DC It didn't put you off, anyway?

Miss B No, no.

DC Well, when did you first come to the Isle of Man then, were you coming on holiday?

Miss B Well, we, as I've told many people, we've always come here, year after year for all my life and then we came to – Father wanted to, always wanted to retire so we came here after the war, which would be, what, '47, something like that. And that's when we retired here and the poor man, it was all he wished to do,

he just loved the Isle of Man, and of course he died within the four years of coming here, so it was ...

DC So did you get some education here or was it all across?

Miss B No, no, all in England, yes, at boarding schools.

DC Did you start work here then?

Miss B No, no, I wasn't – well, should I say I worked on a farm in England as a land girl and then I used to do part time here with old Mr Frank Richmond, bless his cotton socks, in Ramsey, he was just a great old chap and of course they all died, and Robin Richmond, of Ramsey, was another one, and they were absolutely great to me, and I used to do a lot of the horse work for him.

DC When you say the horse work, then, what was involved?

Miss B Well, he had heavies, heavy horses, so sowing corn, reaping in those days, he had a reaper that carried only two horses, it's normally three, but it's perfectly all right, it was a smaller one, and we used to stook in those days, stook the corn, and there was no such thing as baling hay, it was all loose. And, you know, a windy – you know what it's like here for wind – you'd be flying all over the field if you did it on a windy day, but I thoroughly enjoyed it – I've done absolutely nothing else, I wouldn't know how to type, when I look at these people with all these posh things, like the doctors now, writing prescriptions ...

DC There's no computer here then, is there?

Miss B I wouldn't know how to work one, I've had a book sent to me, you're sitting by it now, and I had it sent to me, I wouldn't know what to read in it.

DC Well, I mean, you're deeply steeped in the horse world, but when did you first plough then?

Miss B Well, I went at first into the British Ploughing Association, a big match, was 1953, that was the first match, and I ploughed in that, once a year, every year, it only operated once a year and I ploughed 14 years in that.

DC And did you pick up some prizes there?

Miss B Yes, a few, a few, yes. But it's a very, very – well over a hundred – usually, I used to meet about 32 or 40 in a class, something like that.

DC And they'd mostly all be men then, were they?

Miss B Well, it was, I was the only female.

DC The only one?

Miss B Yes.

DC Did you think – did they think it was a bit strange then?

Miss B Well, I don't know was it jealousy, but they got, they said they didn't like being beaten, but it was worthy – I was worthy of it. They said they didn't say anything but they've been all good, wonderful pals to me ever since.

DC You'd be in ploughing fields in the Island for farms then, had you?

Miss B Yes, yes, after Richmond I went up to Charlie Kerruish and he used to have the farm at Lonan. Well, it was freezing up there, right on the east – that coast line, and I'd be ploughing all day on his land, and at Ballafayle was very cold always, coming straight off the sea. I used to do a lot of ploughing for him as well.

DC And you'd go all day ploughing?

Miss B Oh, yes, yes, oh, yes, but you'd have about ten layers on. When I came to get off the tractor you just couldn't, you were frozen solid. But Charlie's farm I found we used to break an awful lot of what we called 'socks', which is the first thing that hits the soil; it's in front of the plough and it used to smash them all the time but he said … he was – I said, 'I'm awfully sorry,' he said, 'it can't be helped.' I never, they would be cast iron in those days, they broke easily. I think you could buy steel but they weren't as – they wouldn't plough as well.

DC As a plough-woman, or did you – I suppose they called you a ploughman, or plough-woman, what was it?

Miss B I don't honestly know.

DC But did you have to know about ploughs, I mean, as well as horses?

Miss B Oh, yes, because when – after I had Fisher Humphreys and I had Ferguson, but I used to set them, what we call set the plough, it has to be set. It varies in different fields, you don't just set a plough for the duration of your life because it depends on the soil.

DC Yes, so that the set is the depth of cut and so on, is it?

Miss B Cut and how it ploughs, turns the furrow over, you've got to seal the furrow. As a matter of fact where I am now a chap wants to plough one of these fields, they haven't been ploughed in living memory, because I can't plough it, I haven't even got a plough now, I've got a tractor but not a plough.

DC Oh, right. Now when you'd got the horse plough you could only plough one ridge at a time?

Miss B Oh, yes, yes.

DC When you went on the tractor what would it be, three or four?

Miss B Two, two in those days, in two. I only ever had two, or what we call a reversible plough.

DC And when tractors came in then what was, what sort of tractor did you have first of all?

Miss B Well, a *Ferguson*, yes, Corlett, Sons & Cowley, they bought it, well, it was about the first plough, tractor, sorry, to come over. And it was absolutely marvellous.

DC But you had to learn to drive a tractor?

Miss B I had to learn to drive a tractor, I couldn't drive a car, do anything, I just wasn't interested, but I said to Mr Harley Corkill, who was alive in those days, Mr Corkill's son, he was absolutely great, and I said, and I was at Richmond, with

Frank Richmond in those days, and I said, 'Please come and put it in the middle of the field because I can't even drive.' But in the old tractors you had to stop to change gear, you selected the gear you wanted before you started, say you were ploughing and you wanted to go a reasonable – not too fast, but a reasonable speed, you would select second gear. But today modern tractors, I haven't driven a modern tractor, you just change gear like a car, yes.

DC Of course – so did you have sloping ground to work on as well?

Miss B Oh, at Mr Kerruish's, Charlie Kerruish's, yes, oh you had to be careful because it gets greasy and it could get away from you because ...

DC The tractor would turn over pretty handy, would it, in those days?

Miss B Oh, yes, oh, yes, because up at Charlie's once – I didn't do it, but there was a chap ploughing above his road at Ballafayle, the next thing the whole lot came over the side of the bank, but I wasn't even there. But it was a chap – he'd got in a skid, he couldn't help it, but he was perfectly all right at the end of the day.

DC Oh, good.

Miss B But in those days, I never had a cab or anything. I've never ploughed with a cab.

DC So you'd be out in all weathers, ploughing.

Miss B Absolutely, yes, all weathers.

DC A wet day you'd pull in and do something inside though, wouldn't you?

Miss B Not really, it depended, it depended, if it really, really throwing it down it would make a difference, but normal, well the normal rain of the Isle of Man, I used to go out and plough.

DC Let's get to horses again then because I mean you're surrounded here by horse memorabilia in one form or another, in photographs and books, and little statuettes and so on, some marvellous pictures as well, and brasses and everything to do with horses. Now, you must have been able to get on with horses very well then, as a person?

Miss B Well, I suppose, but I was just crazy over, always have been, I have four now and I'm just crazy – of course I'm too old now, I've given up riding, but I drive, I drive, compete in England, but these past two years I'm – especially this last year with the foot and mouth, I haven't been over. I've got a horse box and I just live in it, take the horses to England, and the horse vehicles, as we call them – there's photographs here, many of them, and away I'd go and compete in England. The last time I was over, I'm very pleased, terribly pleased with myself, I knew a chap there, and this, my little tiny pony of 12.2, he went in at the Royal Show, and he came out fourth and this chap looked at me, and I didn't say a word. But he did, he went very, very well, but he's absolutely a superb pony, he is.

DC Are some horses, I mean do they all have their own different sort of characteristics?

Miss B Oh, yes, oh, yes, these – this particular one which I drive a tremendous lot in England and I drive him over here, I compete here as well, obviously. But to get more competition I go to England, but oh, no, I could drive him through London and not turn a hair, he wouldn't turn a hair and I wouldn't, but I have another pony, I wouldn't dare take him to the boundary of London.

DC Really?

Miss B No, they vary, and if they're on their own – if they've company they're far better, because I spoke to – I went to the Life Guards in London, I had a look through their stables, absolutely fantastic, the new stables in Kensington, and I said, 'How do you start?' He said, 'We get all our horses from Ireland,' and he said, 'if they have the company when the Guard go out, on horseback, they teach one another like human beings teach one another, but driving a single pony he's got to face everything on his own because I'm behind him and I've got to …' – they say that it goes through the rein, I don't know how, we will never know, because a horse can't talk, giving him confidence.

DC But it's the way – yes, I can understand that term, it goes through the reins.

Miss B But I still can't, I can't see that, well, I suppose it must be, but as I say, I've competed at the International, which used to be indoors, it's left the International now, and my friend was with me, she said, 'Oh, I'm not coming

with you.' 'Oh,' I said, 'he'll be all right,' and off he went. There's a photograph here of the indoors, but he couldn't – the only thing is when people clap when you're indoors, but he didn't, he didn't worry, he must have – he went a bit fast to get out of the arena, but otherwise perfect. But I've always, as I say, it's all driving now.

DC Now people who wouldn't know anything about ploughing would look at somebody at a ploughing match and think, well, there's not much to this, you just go and do a straight ridge and that's it.

Miss B So many people say that.

DC I mean, what is it about ploughing, what is it that was, that made a champion ploughman?

Miss B Well, it's really very hard to explain without having the field here, and, you know, the plot of land. But this gentleman that's going to plough one of my fields here, I said, 'You can plough?' He said, 'No, I've never ploughed.' I said, 'Right, that'll be all,' because – I'm not being blasé, but a good ploughed field – I should take – excuse me – a field that's ploughed well puts up a good crop, it's got to be a certain depth. Here there's a lot of sand, there can be sand in the Isle of Man, so you want to keep slightly above that if possible and you don't want to bring the sand up because that won't be any good for the good crop. But you've got to, obviously I started off, my first ploughing match was in Andreas, here, and I had three little pieces of gorse to follow, but you have posts, you have – and you follow those right ...

DC Aside or ahead of you?

Miss B ... yes, yes, to side, but the first match, everybody was laughing at me, I hadn't a clue and I'd just got three pieces of gorse out of the side and off I went. Anyway you have to go right through with a very, very light furrow to give you a marker, more than anything. Then you come back the other way with say two furrows, if it's lea, which is permanent grass, but you must – you want to try and keep it straight because it makes such a – not so much the appearance, it keeps good level ploughing and you must make sure that the two furrows that come up are absolutely level to match the next two that are coming up, otherwise you'd have it up and down.

DC So you actually go judging ploughing now, do you ?

Miss B Oh, yes, quite a lot.

DC Do you judge both horse and tractor?

Miss B No, I haven't judged – I've judged horses here but not in England.

DC There'll not be so much horse ploughing in England now?

Miss B Oh, tremendous, coming up, oh yes, rather. I always dive to the horse to have a look see, oh, they're very much to the fore.

DC Are they?

Miss B They're coming up all the time and we usually send two pairs away from the Isle of Man now, which is rather nice. We have about fifteen pairs flying now ...

DC Do we?

Miss B ... in the Isle of Man now, yes, oh, yes, it's great, it's great, I love to see the horses.

DC Of the two then, which would you prefer, plough with a horse or plough with a tractor?

Miss B Well, I think it's a lot – it sounds ridiculous really, but horse ploughing is quite – it takes quite a lot out of your arms, especially on the headlands. When you come to turn you've got, a certain angle, you've got to hold that plough to get round, otherwise – I mean, a horse, a heavy horse can't just stop like a tractor, you put the brake on, it usually goes about two or three strides ahead and then it brings the tractor over sideways, but I think, no a tractor ploughing is easier, obviously.

DC Yes, and better still have you ever had a cover on your tractor, but you didn't have a cab.

Miss B Well, I still wouldn't, I don't think I could go in a ploughing match now on a

covered tractor. I like to see absolutely everything.

DC Oh, see what's going on round you.

Miss B My brother used to say, 'Every photograph I see of you, you're looking behind!' He said, 'What on earth are you looking behind for?' I said, 'I'm watching what the furrow's doing as it comes up, at the ground, is it a beautiful furrow.' It must be sealed, one against the other to stop the grass coming through, that's another thing that has to be – and the depth of it has to be uniform, and there's all sorts.

DC So there's a lot more to it than just an average person would see, then?

Miss B Oh, yes, yes.

DC Well, Jean, what about the breeding of horses, you've been involved, I'm sure, in breeding horses as well, have you?

Miss B Yes, just for my own private use, and when we lived at Bolivia Mount, that's when I started to breed them, I just wanted a foal in those days, that's how it started, I thought they were so wonderful and my first foal, which was called *Bolivia's Pride*, I always called them after the prefix, Bolivia, *Bolivia's Pride*, *Bolivia's Supreme*, *Bolivia's Spring Morning*, but however that's how it started. And I have the last of that line, of course the mother, the dam died, and I have the last one with me here, and she's now 35 years old.

DC That's old for a horse, isn't it?

Miss B Well, I think so, I can't really find out what's their years. I would imagine it could be over 100, I don't know, I don't know, I would be telling a lie if I really, you know, told you about that, but it would be interesting to find out.

DC So you'd be there from the birth then.

Miss B Yes, I was in the birth.

DC Did you have to have – you'd have a vet for the birth, or not?

Miss B No, no, I always slept in the field with the horse, it sounds ridiculous, I'd take – we were at Bolivia Mount, had the fields behind the house, you've got to know when it was due, they produce wax on the udder and when the wax appears and sits there you can rest assured within at least 48 hours, not over, and I'd go out with the car and there I'd sit all night in my car and she'd wander round in a triangle – it's amazing really, trying to select a position for the foal I would imagine, and of course I used to panic a little bit, and if – it was very fast at foaling, very fast, and if they're not there's something wrong, but I was so lucky they all went according to plan and this was the last foal, who was – *Cheeky* that's with me now that ...

DC So would a foal stand up straight after birth then?

Miss B Well, within half an hour, there's something wrong if they don't, and I used to be friendly with very – after we left Bolivia Mount I was a bit stuck for land of my own, because we lived up Grove Mount, and the Burrows of White House, Kirk Michael, Tyson and Harry Burrows, they had my breeding mares, and I used to breed out there and it was just great, a beautiful place.

DC And did you have to pay for stallions to come in, or not?

Miss B No, well, I forget now, no, it was, I always used Eric Bosworth's, of Glen Auldyn, and all right, people go for these very high falutin' – in England, you can't here, because there aren't many about, there are more now but in those days there wasn't, it was just a stallion and that was it, but in those days it was so different. But today if you select – people select – oh, I'm going to select a stallion, it's cost about so many thousand, well, I said, I only had one to select and I never had a dud, they were absolutely wonderful.

DC And what is necessary to break a horse in then and at what age would you do that?

Miss B Well I used to, from the day she'd be, what we call dropped, onto this earth, I would perhaps put a little, slip a head collar on her, and just teach her to be led a little bit and that's where it starts really, but you've got to do it the right way, you must never pull a foal, he must come with you. If he says no, when he's on the end of a rope, you mustn't try and pull him like a person pulls a dog, you must go to his shoulder or back – and just put your hand on his quarter, and just

bring him forward that way. Otherwise you're starting them to pull back and start and rear.

DC They start to resist you?

Miss B Yes, yes, and that goes on all through their life, you can teach a tremendous lot within the three months, the first three months.

DC But when you want to get a saddle on a horse then, I mean for the first time.

Miss B Well, again, they vary terribly. I used to put them in a loose box, always in a loose box, never outside, and sometimes they'll buck, other times they accept it, but you don't girth them too tightly and they – I never had very much trouble about that, perhaps with what we call backing them, getting on, they had to, always doing that, and I had a very young girl I knew very, very well and she was a superb rider, they've got to be a superb rider to stick to it, they mustn't, you know, be thrown off the first time, otherwise, you know, they get into these, sort of, habits.

DC Right, so you weren't thrown then, were you?

Miss B I was thrown many times, but afterwards, but not to begin with because I always sort of, what we call, lunge, which is on a very long line which is called a lunge line, you'd lunge them for so many weeks in a circle, on both reins, one way and then the other and I used to – that's how I do – I'd have her on a lunging line with this girl on top.

DC So this really is quite a long process of getting a horse trained then, isn't it?

Miss B Properly, yes, and schooled. I mean I hated to have a horse that wasn't schooled, I liked them to, like a lot of these children today I think are, what I call, are not schooled. But the ponies would – I'd just say, 'Walk on,' and they'd walk on without a thing and say, 'trot on,' and they trot on.

DC So have you ever got, have you ever mounted onto a saddle of a new horse that's just accepted it and not bucked or not shaken you off?

Miss B Oh, yes, oh, yes, oh, yes.

DC So that happens as well?

Miss B My first foal was absolutely magnificent, she never did a thing wrong and I took her out to *White House*, to the Burrows, and Harry said, 'I'll get on her.' Harry Burrows is now dead, bless his cotton socks, however, and he set off down the field and up again. I said, 'Harry, that's the first time she's ever done that.' He said, 'Oh, good, I'm glad I was the first one.'

DC Yes, when you give horse's instructions then, both ploughing and on the road then, there are certain words you use, presumably.

Miss B You want to keep as small a vocabulary as possible, like 'walk on,' or 'trot,' and always throw your voice, *trrrrrrrrot*, sort of slowly, not too quickly. But nothing else, I never use – as few words as possible.

DC What about stopping?

Miss B I'd, well, it sounds ridiculous but I go, 'who-hoo,' and I've always used that and they stop, yes, I've always used that, or, 'steady down,' but of course you put a slight pressure on the rein as well, but nothing, you don't want to pull their mouths very much otherwise you ruin their mouths as youngsters.

DC And if you were starting a ridge of ploughing what is it, just 'tch tch,' is it?

Miss B No, I never use that again, I still say, 'walk on.'

DC Oh, 'walk on,' right.

Miss B Yes, always, even to heavy horses. And in the Isle of Man it varies tremendously, in the Isle of Man I forget which way it is, but if you go to the right, one way, it's 'gee back,' and 'gee whoa,' the other way. But I forget which, how it goes, left or right. But wherever you go in England you always hear these ploughmen using different words for the heavies, as I say, the Isle of Man it's 'gee whoa,' 'gee back.' And it's the same, we call, when we finish a ploughing, when we finish a field, for the ploughing, sometimes you might have two or three, it's called a clash here ...

DC Oh, yes.

Miss B ... and it's called a finish in some places in England. And I sort of – we all talk 'double Dutch' when we go to all these different ploughing matches, especially in England, because they've all got all different expressions to do this sort of thing.

DC And this talking to and using words and so on, it's definitely done in conjunction with the use of the reins, then, isn't it?

Miss B The use of the reins and the use of your horse and depending on the district, I've found that, it's tremendous, especially in England, but as I say, it always used to be 'gee whoa,' and 'gee back.' I forget which way you went but that's how it was.

DC We think of horses just eating oats but I'm sure they eat other things as well, do they, I mean what do you feed them on mostly?

Miss B Well, in the summer time it's mostly grass and then if they're working heavily they have a good feed of bran and oats. Of course again these days, they say bran is not good but I still keep feeding bran, bran and oats, there's nothing to beat it – what we call the crushed oats. But again there's so many different feeds today but a horse has to be well fed, especially a heavy horse, if they are working hard, because pulling a plough must be quite something. I used to hear Mr Tyson Burrows at White House, they used to have twelve pairs, before tractors came into being, they must have been a wonderful sight going up those hills to plough. And you can only average about an acre a day, with horse ploughing, whereas today they nearly throw the furrow into the next field they go so fast. And I said to this chap, 'You're not going to throw the furrow into the next field,' but I've stopped it, anyway, I'm going to get an experienced man to do it, it sounds a bit blasé, but it will make a tremendous difference. They all tell me it hasn't been ploughed for years and years and years.

DC If you were going to plough that yourself then what would you expect to find, hard ground, stony ground, you wouldn't know, would you?

Miss B Well, I've dug because I've had the soil analysed and it's surprising I went down quite deep, after about five or six inches you're coming to sand, and you can usually tell that because the land never floods here, whereas Bolivia you could get it quite flooded, it's different, all parts of the country and the world, I

suppose. But it varies tremendously in the Isle of Man but here, he'll have to keep ... I said, 'Don't go deeper than six inches because I don't want to bring up sand.'

DC Tell me where you go judging now?

Miss B Well, depending on the – I do a lot of the Manx judging over here for the local matches which I thoroughly enjoy, they're great fun, they're great sports and I also do what they call the English ploughing match, which was a British ploughing match, I don't – I forget what they call it now, it's changed a little bit, but I judge there, but they have so many classes, I always judge what they call the world style. Every time you go over they've got it called a different thing but this, since it's become – from the British Ploughing – there were two ploughman go to the World Match, which takes place in various countries and that's how it goes, but it's very, very interesting, it really is, and they accept me. But I've never judged at the World, never judged at the World, they've got a panel and that's only really happened since I've left it, although I got into the World for competing at the World and I got third.

DC Yes, that was a proud day for you, wasn't it?

Miss B It, well, not proud – I was disappointed.

DC You wanted to win?

Miss B Yes, I wanted ...

DC Well, you would, of course.

Miss B ... but I have seen, I always go to these, I went to Sweden as reserve for the Isle of Man and then I've been quite a few places, but it's terribly interesting.

DC And how many other women ploughmen have you met then?

Miss B Two.

DC Is that all?

Miss B But I believe Mr Alfred Hall, he was secretary, he formed this British Ploughing Association, and I was the only female ploughing for years, and they'd always said, 'Oh, you made the BPA,' and of course anybody from the Isle of Man or another girl used to be headlines in the paper.

DC Of course.

Miss B I felt such a fool, I really did.

DC The spotlight would be on you, wouldn't it, I suppose.

Miss B I'm afraid it was, yes, but they accepted me and you just got – and they used to send me the chaps on the head and they used to say, you should be doing this or you should be doing that, and Mr Alfred Hall would see this going on, he was secretary, and he said, 'Jean, for goodness sake, don't take any notice.' I said, 'I'm not really but,' I said, 'I've got to say, be ...'

DC Polite.

Miss B Yes, polite with it. And they used to say, 'Look she's *kithee-handed,'* which, they said, whatever does that mean. I said, 'It's Manx, I think, for left-handed.' And I was always left-handed, all the spanners were different, yes, oh, we used to have some wonderful times, wonderful times.

DC Well, one of the reasons that I got in touch with you was coming across a tape recording that someone had given me of 'Have a Go,' when it was broadcast in, or recorded and broadcast from Ramsey, and there you were, one of the guests on the programme.

Miss B Yes, well they'd sort of heard, obviously, they'd been doing their homework and they'd found out – anyway they interviewed me with a few others, about ten of us being interviewed and I think they wanted about five to take part, which was taking part at the Ramsey swimming pool, in the ballroom in those days.

DC That was 1963, was it, or thereabouts?

Miss B Yes, around that time, and so however the next thing I had a phone call, they said would you do it with us along with about three or four others, I just forget

who they were now, I think one was a nurse, I forget. But Mr Pickles was so nice, so terribly nice, I thoroughly enjoyed it.

DC Well, you have a letter here from the BBC, dated 12th September 1963, it says: 'We should like to thank you personally for volunteering to take part in 'Have A Go' last Tuesday. We hope you enjoyed yourself and that your friends and relations thought you were as good on the air as we did.' And it's signed by Wilfred Pickles and Mabel.

Miss B Yes, well at the end of the thing, when they interviewed me, obviously they asked me about ploughing and horses and things, I forget what it was really, the gist of it all, but at the end of the day they had a question which was thrown open ...

DC Yes, the first one to answer, wasn't it, yes.

Miss B ... so I think the question was, 'How often is gorse in bloom.' And I think I shouted, 'Always,' because I only knew that because of the Isle of Man, I'd hardly seen, when I lived in England I hardly saw gorse, but it's like a weed over here, isn't it? So I got, I won about £10, or something like that, I forget, oh, I was thrilled to pieces with myself.

DC It would be more like ten bob I should think.

Miss B And I bought myself a new pair of jodhpur boots with the money.

END OF INTERVIEW