

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

**‘TIME TO REMEMBER’**

**Interviewee:** Captain Harry Nelson Kinley

**Date of birth:** 7<sup>th</sup> January 1908

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

**Interviewer:** David Callister

**Recorded by:** David Callister

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

**Topic(s):** Growing up in a seafaring family  
Early ambition of going to sea  
Joining the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company  
*Mona’s Isle* and *The Lady of Mann*  
WW11 experiences  
Holman Projector on board *The Viking*  
Bombing near Dunkirk  
Transporting children from the Channel Islands  
Examination for Master’s ticket  
Master of *The Ben my Chree*  
Man lost overboard on *The Lady of Mann*  
Tourists visiting the Isle of Man

**Capt Kinley - Capt K**  
**David Callister - DC**

**DC** Captain Harry Kinley, Harry Nelson Kinley, born 7<sup>th</sup> January 1908. Where would that be then, Harry, where would you be born?

**Capt K** I was born in Colby, you know there's a little church called the Belle Abbey church, well, right opposite there's quite a large house but upside is a small cottage type of house, a beautiful little house it was, I was born in there, until I was – and we left there when I was three year old. I remember travelling to Port St. Mary in one of these stiff carts, you see, and looking at the road, and there was a crack in it, and looking at the road going past as we were going along to Fistard. We went to a house that my father had built, a beautiful house, the top of the Barney Moo Hill, and that's where we lived up to – and we lived over there until I got married when I was, what age was I then when I got married. I just forget at the minute, at the usual age anyhow.

**DC** Now your father was a seaman.

**Capt K** He was a master in Wilson's, Liverpool, Whitehaven rather, and all my school holidays were spent with him.

**DC** With him?

**Capt K** With him coasting round about, you see, as a lad of course.

**DC** You'd not see much of him during the year then?

**Capt K** Pardon?

**DC** You'd not see a lot of him during the year, he'd be at sea a lot, would he?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, yes, he was, yes, he was at sea all his days, as a matter of fact, until he retired, he was about 70 odd or 80, when he was retired. And I eventually went away to sea, I was determined to go to sea, I started work really in Danton's motor garage in Port Erin. You see my mother got me that job and my sister, they were determined, there was nine in the family. Well, my father was going to sea, George was going to sea, John was going to sea, William didn't, and I didn't and I was the youngest, there was four girls, you see, between me and that lot, you see, so I had to stay home. However I was determined I would go to sea, I wanted to go to sea and my ambition was to be master of an Isle of Man

boat, it was my top, top ambition; I was determined to do that. And I went to sea, I went in one of Savage's boats, of Liverpool, you see, in a coaster and I then went to, from Savage's I joined my father's old company in Whitehaven and I went from ordinary seaman to AB, to mate and eventually master when I was 24, 23 or 24.

**DC** Yes, right. But with a name like Nelson you were destined for it, were you?

**Capt K** Absolutely. I loved the sea and if I'd – if I was born, re-born again I would go back to sea. And my greatest pride was *The Ben my Chree* – I've got a photograph of her there on the wall there, in the next room, she was a beautiful ship that, I felt proud of being on that, in fact I felt proud of being in the Steam Packet [Isle of Man Steam Packet Company], I really did. And I had to join, those days, to get a second mate's job you had to come in by the back door.

**DC** What does that mean, the back door?

**Capt K** Well, you had to come in as a seaman, if it was ??? [unclear] naturally. And the superintendent at that time was Captain Crawford Kinley, well he and I never seen eye to eye together at any time, you see.

**DC** He was a relative, was he?

**Capt K** He is a relative, yes, he was a relative, although he didn't claim relationships whatsoever, you see. But however I came in as an AB, you see, for one season, and I remember people coming aboard, for instance one, and I had a little round sailor's hat on, and Isle of Man Steam Packet Company, at the gangway, you see, Eddie Gelling was the chief officer, and Captain Bridson was one of the masters at that time, during the period, and I was there until we were out on the *Mona's Isle*, and I was destined for second mate of the *Mona's Isle* the following year, the old coal burner, you see. But when I eventually, when it eventually came to go there, Kinley, Captain Kinley, he put me as second mate in my place temporary, you see, but I was – eventually I got back, I became second mate, Captain Albert Whiteway, and Eddie Gelling I think was the chief officer. Anyhow I went from ship to ship and ship to ship until the war eventually broke out and then at that time I was with the *Mona's Isle* in Herculeum dock fitting out with guns, being fitted out with guns, you see, and then, I was shanghaied then to Southampton forthwith, down to

Southampton. Well, I was there the first winter, John Kerruish and I, a nice chap he was, he finished up captain too, Captain John, a wonderful chap was John Kerruish, and I was down there with – John Kerruish and I and we were that long, that first winter of the war was a severe winter, it was really a severe winter and we were down all that winter and then at the end, we hadn't been home, either of us, the whole winter, you see, so I went on the home front, supposed to go for a fortnight or three weeks, to Douglas, Fleetwood, but unfortunately for me, *The Viking* it was then on the Fleetwood run, I think it was, yes, she had to go into Cammell Laird's to be de-gaussed, you see, and oh, I'm going ahead of my story, I beg your pardon. Three months before the war commenced the Liverpool – the gentleman – shipmaster, ship owners, right enough, whatnot, and agents from Liverpool were asked by the Royal Navy, in the event of a pilot boat at the Liverpool bar being sunk, you see, in the war, or it went ashore, had the company any volunteers with a master's ticket and a Liverpool pilot's licence. Well, I was the only one in the company, you see.

**DC** You'd got your master's ticket by this time?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, oh, long before that, I was only, I was only 20 something or other. But however so I volunteered, yes, Isle of Man Steam Packet said somebody's got to volunteer and I was the only one that had the qualifications for that, I'd been master for many years, you see, of *The Wilson*, and *The Norman* and *The Cumbria*, belonging to Thomas Wilson's of Whitehaven. So I was quite happy about that. Well, I was in – I joined the *Mona's Isle*, but as I say we had to – the Herculaneum dock, to be fitted out for guns. So we were stranded again with – John Kerruish and I, however we went post haste to Dover, you see, and we were down in Dover the first winter of the war. It was a severe winter that first winter of the war, it was really a bad winter. And we hadn't been relieved the whole time, we were going round relieving junior officers that had already had their leave, you see.

**DC** What were you actually doing then, what was ...

**Capt K** Well, trooping, trooping for – and every night the Isle of Man boats, bar Sunday, were at sea, every night. But the railway boats, of which there were more of them, one or two nights a week, but we were going every night, you see they're excellent troopships, they were ready made, you see. A good speed, well, good accommodation, well manned, you see.

**DC** So would they have been well loaded with men then, would they?

**Capt K** Oh, every time.

**DC** Yes, you've got a picture there, haven't you?

**Capt K** That's right, *The Lady of Mann: Lady of Mann*, stern deck, in Brest harbour, Saturday, 16<sup>th</sup> June 1940, photo in Peel War Museum. The ship rescued a minimum of 2900 troops, estimated, on the trip, although other reports suggested a higher figure, which was true. Note at the right of the picture the device comprising a tube with circular top frame, this is a controversial *Holman Projector* supposedly meant to shoot out attacking aircraft by using compressed air to blow up and [unclear] bomb. Now we had one of those on *The Viking* ...

**DC** Did they work?

**Capt K** No, they didn't work, I could have blown half the stern off her, you see. The weapon was not considered practical as the fragments of the bomb could equally injure personnel on the deck.

**DC** And in this picture here men are actually crammed almost one on top of the other, aren't they?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, we had nearly every trip like that, the first winter of the war. I remember in *The Manxman* we had a bad night going across, it was a really bad night and she – her lower deck going right aft, you see, and the sea was coming hitting at the ship's side, over the ship, and they were lying asleep between that – the waves that were coming in, they were drenched through.

**DC** So this particular vessel was coming from Brest harbour at the time, the D-Day, activity, of course, and working mostly at night, although that's a daytime picture that.

**Capt K** Yes, it is a daytime picture, you were loading all during the day, you see and you'd be sailing at night. Now that's the *Mona's Queen*, being blown up by a bomb, I always thought it was a mine, you see.

**DC** This was in May 1940.

**Capt K** May 29<sup>th</sup>, 1940, you see.

**DC** Had you sailed as Captain of the *Mona's Queen* as well?

**Capt K** No, I was never in the *Mona's Queen*. Oh, I was on deck, at least as second mate I was, you see, because I was only a youngster then, you know, this was when the war – this was in the war – a long time ago.

**DC** Yes, of course.

**Capt K** Anyhow that's the *Mona's Queen*, that's the last of her. And it was a funny thing, I was sent down to Dover, you see, to join *The King Orry*, that was lost at the Mull, you see. Well, I was in *The Manxman* at the time, I only joined – instead of doing three weeks on *The Manxman*, I actually had been down the whole winter down in Dover, I only got six days, about six days, and we had to go into Cammell Laird's to be de-gaussed for this new mine thing that come out, you see. And when I got, when we arrived at Birkenhead, when I could get ashore, I was told to proceed to Southampton and join *The King Orry* immediately. So I was all night travelling down there. But anyhow, I went down, right, as soon as I got ashore, went down and found Cammell Lairds and went down to Southampton. And the Captain, Captain Bridson and Eddie Gelling, the chief officer, he met me at the station, you see, it would be about half past eleven at night, beautiful night, and in the distance we could hear 'Ellan Vannin' being sung. And it was by fellers I'd been sailing with earlier in the winter in the *Mona's Queen*, Paul Kelly, I just forget, I could name them but I just forget now, it was all Port St. Mary fellers and they were lost the next day. That feller there, you see.

**DC** So that's, yes, the one that went down to the bomb in May, 29<sup>th</sup> May 1940.

**Capt K** That's the one.

**DC** And they were on that vessel?

**Capt K** Yes.

**DC** Well, on these D-Day voyages then, how close did you come to being hit?

**Capt K** Oh, well, you're more or less under fire nearly all the time. Now I'll tell you, one incident in *The Viking*, Captain Bridson was the master, and we went to Le Havre, we went to – oh, aye, we were sent to Dunkirk, but not to enter Dunkirk but to lie out, not to anchor but to just lie off to port just a mile or so off to port, you see. No-one knew why, we don't know to this day why, but I think, I imagine, it was to pick up any chaps that was floating about or in rafts, or bits of wood, you see. Because the evacuation had just finished and the land ashore, right down the whole harbour, was ablaze.

**DC** Was it?

**Capt K** Yes, and we were lying there under the – right under the place where [HMS] *Kelly*, *Kelly* big guns above us, because he could fire right across to England, you see, and we were lying there, and of course they were enemies now, the [unclear] you see, so anyhow we lay there, everybody biting their nails, what are we going to do, and the next, we got an order saying, 'As from midnight you'll be at war with Italy,' you see, that's the night it happened. Well, then we got another word to remain where we were and then proceed to Cherbourg. And we were in Cherbourg, and it was a lovely summer morning and we were in Cherbourg and there was a big battleship lying up in the north east corner. And I said to the captain, 'Well, we've got to anchor,' you see, 'until we're called in the harbour.' He said, 'We'll go up close to that warship.' 'Well, I wouldn't, Captain,' I said, 'because if Jerry [Germans] comes over it's him they'll aim for,' you see. 'Oh, well, I don't know.' So anyway the Chief Officer, Eddie Gelling, says, 'I think we should go up to the warship,' you see, 'because he's more guns than we've got,' – we had a gun right enough. So I said, 'No, but please yourself Captain, but I would stay as far away from that battleship as I could.' With that over comes Jerry [Germans], machine gunning, you see, we were hit with machine gun but we all got shelter, but then they started to bomb, drop bombs, and the feller that was at the machine – we had a machine gun up on the boat deck, you see, I took over while he went down for his breakfast.

**DC** You took the gun?

**Capt K** I took the gun, you see, and Jerry [Germans] was coming over and I could actually see the bomb door opening right dead above us.

**DC** Really?

**Capt K** Yes, I could, that's God's honest truth. But I was still hammering away there, you know, and a young feller called Kelly from Castletown and a feller called Watterson from the Howe, was passing me up the bands you see, and we hit him all right but we couldn't claim him because he went down over Cape [unclear] and we couldn't see him, you see.

**DC** Had he released any bombs?

**Capt K** Oh yes, oh, yes, the battleship was bombed, but we just – one each side of *The Viking*.

**DC** Really?

**Capt K** Oh, aye, it shook the old lady very good and proper.

**DC** That was a close shave for you then.

**Capt K** It was, it was a damn close shave. The first was on a machine gun all night but he was down getting his breakfast at the time, you see. Anyway, 'We'll get the hell out of that,' I said, 'the best thing we can do, Captain.' He said, 'Yes, right ho, Harry, we'll do that.' Well, by this time we were called in the harbour and *The Lady of Mann* was just leaving, you know, in Le Havre, you see. So we went into Le Havre and we loaded up, you see, and over comes Jerry [Germans] again and we got the vice-consul of Dieppe and his wife aboard with us. Then we went into Cherbourg then, into Cherbourg, you see, to put the soldiers back, the remnants of the Black Watch, put them back to fight again, you see, and anyhow we left, we went in Cherbourg and loaded up as quick as we could. We got about, oh, it must have been about two or three hundred aboard, you see, and over comes Jerry [Germans] again, as we were disembarking them, you see, and there's quite a few of them shot too, on the gangway. It was rather a funny thing, when Jerry [Germans] came over one of the army officers blew a whistle and the soldiers went down as one, you see. Well, we were still gawking round wondering what was all the fuss about, you see.

**DC** You weren't trained for that, were you?

**Capt K** No, no. Anyway we left to go out and it became very hazy, foggy, you see, and he said, well, and with that there was a naval ship, a frigate, came out of the fog

and said, 'I'm sorry,' he said, 'we can't help you; there's two lights.' It was getting evening now, there was two lights in the boom defence, a huge boom defence, you know, it was going right up to one, one side, round the other side, and certainly about quarter of a mile, about half a mile apart, and you had to be a good shot, so he said, 'I don't know which light is the out – is it the north one or the south one?' 'Well, what are we going to do? She's a big frigate,' and he said, 'I'm awfully sorry, tell your navigating officer there's nothing I can do,' or any of that. 'But I think you're in a pretty good position for the fairway buoy.' With that, there was a big *Esso* tank blew up on the quay inside, you see and lit the whole bay up, you see, and here's the fairway buoy dead ahead, and I said, 'Thank God for that!' you see. Well, we made a departure from there, but even then as we were creeping through the boom defence, was only one light – are we the right side? And I'll tell you everybody, there was a deathly silence, but we were safe, we went through the centre of it.

**DC** Oh, right.

**Capt K** We went for Cherbourg, you see, and I was on watch and Captain Bridson went below, he was tired, we were all tired come to that, every man on the ship was tired, engineers in particular and we came to the land, the Cherbourg peninsula, we come out there, we picked that up lovely, the sun came out, a beautiful morning, and a lot of Scotchmen on board, all Scotchmen. She was, the fo'c'sle end, from one end to the other was one mass of Scotchmen, and they commenced with, with the rifles and kit and all, they'd been travelling for four days, chased by the Germans, I don't know how they were able to stand up, them men, the remnants of the Scotch regiment it was, and they were looking at this land, you see. He said, 'Hey, Jock, that's no' Dover,' so, 'Mr Mate, that's no' Dover,' you see. Well, I couldn't tell him where it was, 'No, I'm sorry old boy, it's not,' and I went like that, you see, couldn't tell him where it was. So anyhow we went along, we turned round, we went into Cherbourg, we lay in Cherbourg, and we were disembarking them again to fight back, you see.

**DC** And they didn't know they were going back?

**Capt K** They didn't know, no, they thought they were going home for Dover, you see, it was an awful shock for them, those men had been travelling for days and with all the gear they had. But anyhow we loaded up again, over comes Jerry [Germans] again and we'd to break loose and out again and the vice-consul of

Dieppe, he was left ashore but his wife was – so off again. The weather was absolutely beautiful apart from the fog and bad visibility and off we went for Southampton. Well, I went below for a kip [sleep] then, you see, and I came up again approaching Southampton and we were going in, moving in for the forts, there's forts outside Southampton and we had to report at each fort, you see. Well the first one, the examination would come up, and he says, 'Where are you from?' you see. Well, I said, 'Fort 23,' you see, went by number. 'And what have you got?' you see. Oh, dear, and one Scotchman said, 'What does he think we've got? We're all troops,' you see. But anyhow and then two of them would be lying over stopped, you see, and this lady was up on the bridge, you know, leaning over, 'Oh, dear, dear,' she said, the poor man.'

**DC** So how did you feed them then?

**Capt K** Well, we took all the rations we had, the lifeboat rations, and everything we could get a hold of, you see.

**DC** There'd not be a lot to eat then.

**Capt K** Oh, no, no, no, very little to eat. But they blew the whistle, at the back was two big funnels, and says Jock, 'Come on, the bell has gone for our breakfast,' he said, 'you take me gear and I'll go and get two lots,' you see, so he done that. We eventually got into Southampton and it was a relief too, to get up to, everybody was dog tired, the engineers and everybody I think, you see, it was a tiring job. It might have been excitement because there was the odd floating mines going about now, you see, so anyway we got into Southampton and the next thing we got was, 'Proceed forthwith to ...' I don't know, 'load up, go down to the Channel Islands to St. ...' what was it? 'Down to the Channel Islands,' and go into the port there, I forget the name of the port, now, there was only one decent port in it anyhow. We went in there, we went to anchor, and we were routed out up to the west of the Island, away round the west, and then come up into the north bay, you see, and anchor there until they were ready for us. Well the pilot was on board, you see, he was still on the bridge with me, and I said, 'Pilot, isn't there a north entrance coming round here?' If I remember rightly I was in here with a ship called *The Briarfield*, one time, when I was in Liverpool, and we were in here and there was a way out on the north side. 'Yes,' he said.' So he give me a sketch on the back of a Notice to Mariners, you see, a book like that, and he wrote me a sketch of the way to go so far, round,

round, 'There's plenty of water,' he said, 'but there's a rock there, the close end of the rocks, into the cliff, you go out there, and get these marks and lines and you'll make it,' he said to me, because I was the navigating officer, you see. So we loaded these children and the guy says, 'Well, we stopped counting at 1800,' one thousand eight hundred.

**DC** You'd gone to collect children from the Channel Islands to take them where?

**Capt K** That's right, children, to take them to Weymouth, you see. So anyhow I went down to my room and the poor kids, all they had was a parcel of sandwiches, and some of them had beetroot in them, well, imagine what's happened – they're holding – this is 7 o'clock in the morning, it was 9 o'clock when they got aboard our ship, you see, it was the earliest we could take them on board, you see. And I went down to my cabin, because I knew it was full up with children and I went in, some were laughing, some were crying, you see. Some were looking out through the porthole and whatever. And this schoolteacher was there, well, she says, 'Officer, I'm awfully – but they've got no more food.' They'd eaten all their sandwiches, you see.

**DC** Of course, yes.

**Capt K** Well, we had to do something about it, the poor little kids, they were starving, imagine young children, hungry at that time of morning, you see, so I went up to Captain Bridson, he was well known as Ginger Bridson, he was a good chap was Ginger, and I went up, 'Captain Bridson,' I said, 'these children are starving,' you see, 'they're literally starving,' – they've been on, they've been standing since 7 o'clock till 9 o'clock till we embarked them.

**DC** From seven in the morning till nine at night?

**Capt K** No, seven in the morning till nine in the morning.

**DC** Right, two hours, yes.

**Capt K** Two hours, well, they were really longer than that, but I'm going by the hours we logged, you see. So they were all – so I said, 'I'll tell you what, we've got American rations on board,' you see, in little cardboard boxes, like that, condensed milk and cigarettes and all sorts of stuff, you see, 'what about those?'

They'll have to get food, Captain, it doesn't matter who they belong but they've got to have food.' 'And I damn well believe you too, what will it take?' That's me bugged!' I said, 'It's a desperate situation we're in. Right, Captain, get a crowd together and get them.' Well I made sure that for my lot, there was about eleven in my little cabin, lovely children they were too, and I collared these and I ...

**DC** You opened the cargo you were taking really, was it?

**Capt K** No, it was rations.

**DC** Oh, for the vessel.

**Capt K** For the vessel, you see.

**DC** So you weren't pinching something that belonged to somebody else?

**Capt K** Oh, no, no, it belonged to – they were ours – they were American rations right enough but they belonged to the ship, you see. Well they had to, they had to feed them, the little children, you see, and you had to go across to Weymouth, and then all the way up to Scotland, to Glasgow, that's where they were going. So they'd got to get something,

**DC** So they were still going on from Weymouth to Scotland, would they go by rail?

**Capt K** Yes, we landed them. I'll tell you a funny thing as I go along about that, remind me. Anyhow I went down in the cabin, my cabin was down on the main deck and they were funny children, they were lovely children, and there was a school teacher in charge of them there, a lovely person she was too, 'Captain,' she says, 'well, I'm not the captain; I'm a second officer but I see what you want.' Well I says, 'I'll see the captain.' And I said to Captain Bridson, 'We'll have to rob this,' 'right,' he says, 'get a crowd with you and get them.' So I rounded up some seamen and we robbed the lifeboats, there was nowhere else, we had to do it, there was no question about that, you see. Anyway they were lying months in the lifeboats, never used, we replaced them as soon as we got back to Southampton, that was no difficulty, you see. Anyhow, I went down, I opened a tin of condensed milk first, you see, and one for you and one for you – it was laughable. It was a scene, it was laughable. And one boy said, 'I've only had the

one.’ ‘Well, here’s another for you,’ but I give them a whole tin of condensed milk, you see. And then they got the biscuits and hard rations was going, and I left them there quite happy. Well, we got out and got on our course for Weymouth and I was about, oh, I was tired now, you see, so anyhow, ‘Captain,’ I said, ‘go in my room and see how they are and have a rest,’ and that’s what I done, you see. And I said to him ‘She’ll make up on the north bay at Weymouth,’ because of the way the tides are setting you see, and right enough she did [unclear] and I’d never been in Weymouth and no one else had been but I had a plan of the harbour and I knew if you opened the harbour well, like going into Ramsey, and look along the quay, you could slide in. And just thinking about that, here’s an oil tanker outside, it exploded, it had hit a mine, and she was at anchor, how it happened I don’t know, but however that’s another story. So we went in alongside this, alongside, this is funny, it was dark, you know, but there was lights on the quay shining down on the quay and one of them must have been loose a bit and flying round like that, for a little air of wind had got up and I’d leaned over the rail there, working, working the ship into the berth, you see, and Ginger was there, he was good – there’s one thing about Captain Bridson, he would leave you to a thing, he would never interfere with you, and we were sliding in along the pier and I see a feller, and all of a sudden, ‘Ah dammit, that’s you Kinley? That you Harry?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ A feller called Connall, Harris, he lived – as you go along the Gansey there you’ll see a house up on – a building down here, just down below here, a big house, I said ...

**DC** Down at Cregneash you mean.

**Capt K** Along at Gansey, along towards Gansey, a bit house there and the Connalls lived in that house, that was there house, you see, a great family, wonderful family, and that was Chris Connall.

**DC** Anyway he spotted you?

**Capt K** He spotted me, well, just saw my face, you see. ‘Ah, dammit, that you Kinley?’ ‘Yes, Chris.’ Well one of these days, we had to get these people out into the train and he was in charge there, completely in charge, he was an army officer.

**DC** But there was no passenger list of names then?

**Capt K** Oh, no, no, no.

- DC** Who kept them, the teacher presumably?
- Capt K** Oh, the teacher, the teacher had all that, well we got no – that wasn't our job, you see. The purser wasn't – we were getting them on board and get them across, that was our object you see.
- DC** Just on a head count really, was it?
- Capt K** That's what it – well, we had little counters to use. Well, as I say we counted 1800 on all the counters but there was another two or three hundred besides that, because we got tired counting, you see.
- DC** Really.
- Capt K** Yes, only little counters, you see, and we went on counting and we'd – we made a rough guess, anyhow, and we weren't far out I understand.
- DC** So there we are then, you got a couple of thousand children dispatched.
- Capt K** Yes, got them dispatched, safely dispatched, and they went from there on the train right up to Glasgow. And rather a funny thing about that, years later the war had finished, you see, I know I'm jumping a bit, but I'll go back again, you see, I was on *The Lady of Mann*, I think it was, sailing, you see, with Tom Woods, one of the finest – company's masters – in the company, Tom Woods, and I was home each Sunday being on the home front, you see, well, [unclear] what a job it was, but however a niece of mine came down you see, she said, 'I've ...' this is after the war, we're going to now, 'I'm courting, Uncle Harry,' you see. I said, 'Good,' [unclear] or what, 'I'm very pleased.' 'Well, I'll be home next Sunday, bring him down and I'll vet him,' you see. 'Right-ho.' And right enough she did. A very nice chap and he was down there and we had a nice chat and I said, I queried him a bit, you know, and he said he was, where he was living now and he was courting this girl and all that and I said, 'Where did you come from?' He said, 'The Channel Islands.' 'Oh,' I said, 'how did you get from the Channel Islands?' 'Oh, we were evacuated, evacuation,' he said. 'Did you go up to Glasgow?' 'Yes, that's right.' I said, 'Tell me, this is interesting,' you see, 'how did you travel and that.' 'Oh, it was a fine big boat, two funnels,' he said, 'and there was an officer came down, an officer came down,' and he said, 'he started feeding us with just condensed milk.' Now, wasn't that funny?

**DC** Amazing.

**Capt K** He married my niece.

**DC** That's wonderful, isn't it, really.

**Capt K** And he was one of them, 'I never tasted condensed milk so sweet in my life,' he said, 'it's sweet enough as it is!' And he went up to Glasgow and he came down, he was a fully-fledged plumber by that time and he came home and eventually he come back to Castletown and met her and married her.

**DC** That's a lovely story, isn't it?

**Capt K** Isn't it a good story, that's the God's honest truth that.

**DC** Now, you said to me that you wanted to, your great ambition was to become a master on a Steam Packet vessel, tell me how all that came about.

**Capt K** Well, right, you see, my father was a master of Thomas Wilson's of Whitehaven, which used to be a very old company and Whitehaven was a great shipping place those days, Brocklebank's and the Cunard Line, they all sailed out of Whitehaven before Liverpool, you see, it was a fine old port too. Well, I eventually went on the Whitehaven boats and I wasn't long till I was master there with a master's ticket and a Liverpool licence, because the last one I was skipper of, *The Cumbria*, I was on *The Norman*, *The Wilson*, and *The Cumbria*, and she had to have a Liverpool pilot licence, you see.

**DC** Well, what did you have to do to become a master of a ship though?

**Capt K** Well, you've got to do, I think it's so many years an ordinary seamen, and so many years as an officer, or as a mate, and then you sit for your master's – you've got to have to have your time in as a mate, you can go up for master then, if you're so – if you're properly qualified for the – you see, had the experience. And then you ...

**DC** So you have an examination then, do you?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, a stiff examination too, oh, by jove, yes, they weren't easy, you see.

And you went ashore, and those days, you know, you got no dole or anything like that, you know, you had to save up every ha'penny you got. I was in the Garston coal tips, mate, I was loading coal at night time, getting the Articles off, there's 32 Articles, and you had to have them off, every word, prevention of collision at sea, navigating at sea and fog and things like that, you see, and you had to get those 32 Articles off in absolute detail. Because the examiner would say, 'All right, Kinley, Article 2,' or whatever, 'Article 4,' which is a big one, 'section so-and-so,' you see. If you start from the beginning you were all right, but – and things like that. You were a whole week at the examinations, you started on a Monday. Monday was writing essays, letters, you see. Tuesday was instruments, or was it, it doesn't matter, or was it Wednesday. Then another day on instruments, sextants and that, and nautical – taking sights, noon sights. There was a big tobacco warehouse down below us, you see, and you had to bring your sun down on that, it was a perfect horizon you see and take sights like that.

**DC** Would this be aboard a vessel you were doing this, was it?

**Capt K** No, in Liverpool.

**DC** Oh, in Liverpool.

**Capt K** Proper examination rooms in Liverpool, you see.

**DC** Right, right, but was there a practical examination aboard vessels as well?

**Capt K** You could, yes, such as lifeboat drills and things like that, you see. Then we had to go to the first aid, the hospital first aid, to learn first aid too, you see, first class first aid, I already had a second class, you see, for mate. But, and that was for mate, you see, a mate, and then master's and so forth. But I was very fortunate really, I'd been going to sea a long time, I'd everything at my hand, and there was a couple of the seamen I sailed with, they wanted to have – to go to navigation school too, so I got – went up to Captain Bill Watson to get the loan of the parallel rulers and – which he kept in his room there, the old fashioned way, and we were doing navigation every night in Liverpool.

**DC** Oh, were you?

**Capt K** Yes, and it kept me on line too and done them in good stead when they went up

for the examinations, you see. But my last, I had a feller, for the first examination, oh, he was a real twister he was, Hopwood, old Captain Hopwood, but however I'd Keating for the second, for master's examination and Keating and I got on well together, you see, but – and my father, I was master now in *The Cumbria*, at this time, you see, at Whitehaven and my father relieved me in my place, you see, but why – I was only a week at the exam – I had just started my examinations when he took ill so I had to go and relieve him, so Captain Keating, he says, 'All right, Captain Kinley, don't worry,' he said, 'I'll fit you in very nicely, come back as soon as you're ready.' My father – it wasn't long till I was back, within about ten days I was back, and he took me in, 'Now,' he says – I had a conversation with him, you see, he said, 'now, all right, you'll get ...' I had a verbal examination with him, you see, and he came up to handling ships into Liverpool docks, and I wondered – this is a new one, you see – and he was pretty – you had to be correct with him, oh, aye, his mouth would stick out, and 'Now, Kinley,' he said, 'you are going up Liverpool river and you're going into Prince's dock, Prince's half.' I said, 'Which dock – Prince's, Prince's half tide, sir?' because I'd traded in there for years, you see, with Thomas Wilson, into Brunswick, you see. So I said, 'Going – all right, go ahead, you're coming up the river now past the rock light,' I said, 'yes, sir.' 'Well come on up about whatever speed was necessary, according to the traffic.' 'Yes,' he said, 'and then I would turn round and two blasts, astern to port,' you see, 'and come round hard a port and got off the entrance – it was stemming the tide. Then eventually blow your whistle and when the harbour – the dockmaster give you the whistle to come in and the gate would open you would go in. Now,' I said, 'you go up close to the north end of the landing stage, keep nicely off the jetty because you're setting her all the time, then in the entrance and get a port check ashore as quick as you can because other docks were open by now and there's a tide coming through from the other docks further down and hit you on the port bow,' you see 'and you finish up in Prince's dock.' 'Oh,' he said, 'what about a starboard check?' 'No, no starboard check, just a port check, sir.' 'So you're going in that entrance then, Kinley?' 'Yes, that's right, sir,' 'and you only have a port check?' 'Just a port check, sir, you don't want a starboard check, it's not required, in fact it would be a hindrance to you because there's such a weight on the port check that they can only handle that one at a time, you see, because she was hit by the tide coming in to the docks further down and then you ...' 'Well, wait a minute,' he said, 'you must have ...?' 'No, sir, we have no starboard checks.' You see he was getting nastier now and so was I. So he rang up one of his colleagues who was dockmaster down at one of the other docks you see,

‘Hello, yes, Keating here, yes, all right we’ll have lunch at so-and-so, I’m not, after...’, he used to have lunch once a week you see, he said, ‘I’ve got a chap here, Kinley,’ he said, ‘oh, aye, Kinley, what ship?’ he said, ‘He trades in your – in Prince’s dock quite a lot and he tells me that to go in Prince’s at high water, coming up to high water, you’ve got to have a port check only.’ ‘Oh, aye, who is he? What’s his name?’ ‘Kinley, dammit,’ he said, ‘he’s forgotten more about Prince’s dock than you and I will ever damn well know,’ he said, ‘he’s quite right.’ ‘Oh, all right, all right,’ then he said – and he turned to me then, well that done me in good stead, you see, it did ...

**DC** Of course.

**Capt K** ... so anyhow then he took ill as I say, and I come back again and I went up to see him and I was all right, ready for to carry on the examinations so he was talking there, and we were talking there away about how – and this is part of it, you see, the conversation we had before I started the examinations again, so he said, ‘Yes, that’s all right, Kinley,’ and this, that and the other, he asked me all the things, rigs of schooners, and things like that, yes, that’s all right. ‘Right, well, you’ve passed your seamanship.’ The conversation ... he said, and that’s one of the biggest important ones, is that, you see, if you’re all right for seamanship you can – ‘You’re back now, we’ll see you to carry on your examination.’ I said, ‘Yes sir.’ ‘Well, your seamanship is out and your written work is out now that’s a good start now,’ you see. And he was a wonderful chap too, and anyhow I carried on with the examinations, my examinations and I got through all right in the end, no difficulty as a matter of fact. And one day – I’d one mistake and funny how you make funny mistakes. My chart was semi-distance between two – Sound – you’re coming out of the Sound you see and you’re equidistant between the two headlands coming out and you started from there, you see, and deviation, you took a sight of the north star, you see, and the deviation bore so and so, and all your courses had to be based on that, whatever deviation you got, and that was quite a sum that. Now you just press buttons, but not then, there’s a column that long, you see. So I done – and you come out seven mile and a half mile, you see, and change course. So I done this chart, oh, no trouble, done the chart, you see, and get done, good time. And I looked at the chart, I read it, oh, dear, oh, dear, dear, it wasn’t seven and a half cables it was seven and a half miles, so I went and got a new sheet from the other master, the other desk, you see, lower than Keating, so he give me the sheet, and he went and he said – and Keating said, ‘What’s wrong captain, what have you done?’

So I told him. ‘Give me that new sheet,’ and he tore it up. ‘Now put a single mark to the wrong answers, well, they’re not wrong really,’ he said, but – ‘and put the new answers underneath,’ and he gave me double numbers for that.

**DC** Did he?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, I got on well with the examiners, but you had to be on top lines, you’d get away with nothing. Then his last question was, ‘Right, rigs of vessels,’ – brigs, brigs, fore and afters, and all that and a full rigged ship and so forth, sails from top to down, square sails, flying shape and all that sort of thing and then he give me, ‘now give me a yawl rig,’ you see. ‘Well,’ I said ‘a yawl rig?’ ‘Aye, a yawl rig,’ he said. ‘Well, I don’t know of any yawls; I’ve got two yawls in Perwick but we had rowing boats with us, when we call them yawls,’ you see. ‘No, there is a rig. All right,’ he says, ‘forget about it, but listen I’ll tell you what to do.’ Well, I was going home that day and come back to finish – I’m going ahead of myself, you see. So he said to me, ‘Well,’ and I asked – ‘when are you going home?’ I had to go home because, I just forget why anyhow but I had to go home for the weekend, although I should have been finished, well, I was finished as a matter of fact. But anyhow, he said, ‘Ask your Captain Watson, he’s the master of the ship you’ll be going home on,’ he said, *The Rushen Castle*. ‘And the chief officer, which is your own brother, ask them to see will they know what the yawl rig is.’ So I got on board and I said to my brother George, I said, ‘George, what’s a yawl rig?’ ‘Well, I don’t know, Hal,’ he says, ‘a yawl rig,’ he says ‘is a yawl – you know we’ve got two of them in Perwick,’ he said. ‘Well, he wants the rig of a yawl.’ ‘Well, ask Captain Bill Watson.’ Now Bill Watson was a deep sea man, you see and ‘Captain Watson,’ I said to him, ‘do you mind if I ask you a question?’ ‘Yes, how are you getting on, Harold?’ [spoken in an American accent] – that’s how ... he talked like a Yank. ‘Not so bad at all, Captain,’ I said, ‘I’m getting on pretty good as a matter of fact, I think anyhow, but,’ I said, ‘can you just explain to me a yawl rig?’ ‘No, yawl rig, dammit, I know all the damn rigs but I don’t know that one,’ he said, ‘no, I don’t,’ he said, ‘a yawl to me is a rowing boat.’ ‘That’s right.’ Anyway I went back a few days later, like, to complete the examination you see, and he says to me, ‘Well, did you find out about the yawl?’ I said, ‘Yes, sir, but I still don’t know.’ Well, he said ‘A yawl is a mainsail and a jib, that’s all it is and it’s on yawls, like the boat you’d call yawls,’ that’s all it was, ‘but you had to get it,’ he said, ‘and you put me to a lot of difficulties to get it Captain,’ ‘I knew I would,’ he said. But funny thing, there’s deep water men coming here

and they don't know what a yawl rig is either, but it's in the – you should know, and that's all it was, you see. But he was a fine chap was Keating, Captain Keating, he was a really good chap. Well, most of the examiners were, they all were on the board for – to have, to make sure that everything was perfect on board, lifeboat drills and things like that, you see.

**DC** How did you get to the Steam Packet, how did that come about?

**Capt K** Well, I had, by this time, my master's ticket and a Liverpool pilot licence and I increased it from 16 feet to 18 feet, that's a deep licence, you see, and my one ambition when I joined the Isle of Man Steam Packet Company was to be master of a ship like *The Ben my Chree*. I liked all the rest of the ships, I was in every one of them and I've always been proud to have worked in the Isle of Man Steam Packet, especially during the war because it had a wonderful war record, you see, men and ships. And I, first of all I joined the *Mona's Isle*, you see and she went on war service, of course, at that time, she was down on the – in the Mediterranean, and in fact a friend of mine was killed, lost his life, he was on the bridge and they got a bomb on the bridge, but that's by the way. However I was – my one ambition, and always was, to be master of a ship like *The Ben my Chree*, the old *Ben my Chree*, like the latest one.

**DC** What was so good about that then?

**Capt K** Well, she was a beautiful ship, I have a photograph of her over there, of her, you see, one of my last trips taken at sea. And all the ships, I liked all the ships, they were good ships, good sea-going vessels and they had everything one could wish for, you see, but I took a notion on this *Ben my Chree*, and she was a darling, she was a beautiful ship, that's my last ship, you see. But I went through the fleet, of course, as an ordinary seaman in *The Rushen Castle*, to start off with, and then second mate in all the fleet, the *Mona's Isle*, a long time on the *Mona's Isle*, second mate, and chief officer and eventually master, you see, and that was my ambition, you see.

**DC** But some vessels were easier to handle than others, weren't they?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, oh, no doubt about it.

**DC** What was the worst then?

**Capt K** Well, the old *Manx Maid* was the worst, but I skipped her because she'd gone out of the company, but she was – well, they were all – only some had bow rudders and some hadn't and now they've got bow thrusts and everything which I didn't have, you see, so you had to use a lot of anchor line. And if there was a nor-west wind getting off the landing stage was a difficulty, you see. You'd get her off about 20 feet, well you'd be pulling her off with the anchor, by the time you'd got the anchor up to the hawsepipe she's slipping again and you had to be quick to out – shoot out, half a full speed if you could to clear, to get out into the river, you see. I've seen a 30 fathom line out following that. But some of the other ships now, for instance *The Ben my Chree*, as I've mentioned *The Ben my Chree*, the old *Ben my Chree*, you could have turned on a back spring, you see, and you'd give her a bit of weight, and stand by and the engineers would do – let go aft quick and full ahead together and she'd shoot off the stage no trouble. She's a darlin' old lady, she was, she was indeed. But they were all pretty good, good handling ships, I mean ...

**DC** But we're talking about the days ...

**Capt K** ... fine, wonderful engineers too, you see.

**DC** ... of steam, aren't we, of course?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, steam, oh yes, all steam and then they come into the motor, now I – of course I liked the steam boats myself, because *b...b...b* coming along.

**DC** How much coal would be used in a journey Douglas to Liverpool then?

**Capt K** Well, it takes – *The Peveril*, the old *Peveril*, now the chief engineer there, he was coaling every chance you could get, she would never run out of coal, you see. As a matter of fact when she went in dry dock one time for her overhaul where they dumped all the coal in the dry dock you could have walked ashore on it, in dry dock. Whatever, they were good ships.

**DC** They would handle a fair amount of coal in her too.

**Capt K** Oh, yes, you'd take a lot of coal, a whole barge load, that's perhaps 50, 60 tons, you know, more, you see, and the barge come alongside, in the old days, of course, you see. Or those days as the ships came in and disembarked and you

land your passengers, you go to the Sloyne, the anchorage in the Sloyne off Cammell Lairds, and you lie there overnight and the barges come alongside you then and bog you then, you see, that went on for years that, you see, until they become – doing without coal, they were finished with the coal, of course and that finished that too.

**DC** Went on to diesel.

**Capt K** And the diesel, one thing and another, you see, and then diesel gone and now they've finished up with motor.

**DC** Of course, yes.

**Capt K** But those big diesel turbines, they were beautiful engines, made by Gillespie, Goldie, Gillespie, they were made, and you wouldn't hear them, not a murmur out of them and the ship had no vibration, things like that, you'd just go along there and you'd hit the sea, and climb up on the sea, they were wonderful, the ships today, they'd a great fleet of ships, you see. But the coal boats, I was on *The Conister* for a while and you always coal everything – coaling every time really, you see, you were chewing coal dust, yes.

**DC** What about weather conditions then, the master controlled whether the vessel would sail, did he?

**Capt K** Oh, yes, the only time I was wind bound, all the years I was in the Steam Packet, only once, and I was in, I forget which passenger boat it was, but we were bound to Dublin and there was a whole gale of sou'west wind, blowing really hard, and had been all night too, so the commodore, the shore master then was John Kennaugh, the late John Kennaugh, you see, he wasn't long made master and he was shore skipper at that time. And I said, 'Well, John, I don't know, it's about time we ...' – you see, unless you're in Dublin, you leave half past nine, for 1 o'clock, it's hardly worth your going for the passengers have got to walk from the ship, up to Dublin, up to that big street where all the shopping is up there, you see, and it's quite a good walk and then they've got to leave again in – about 4 o'clock to get back to the ship for a 5 o'clock sail and it's hardly worth going, all you get is complaints, people sick, seasick and one thing and another, and that's the only time I was ever windbound, you see.

**DC** So you sailed every other time then, did you?

**Capt K** Oh, yes.

**DC** What force wind would stop you?

**Capt K** Well, that's a good question. Well, now, we would take my last ship, *The Ben my Chree*, that vessel, I've never been windbound in her, you see, and there's one thing about those, the type as *The Ben my Chree*, I'm talking about *The Ben my Chree*, mark you, the late *Ben my Chree*, her picture there, those would do anything for you. You could heave them too, you see, in a gale of wind, ease them down, and the old *Lady of Mann*, too, she was another, coming out of Fleetwood one time, I remember she got a smack with the sea, and broke all the rail round the fo'c'sle end, now if we'd went down another two knots she'd would have taken it more easy, you see, but you can't judge it to a point or two, but they will, you can do damage, but must ease down.

**DC** But the vessels today, they'll not take them out in certain – over a certain wind level, will they, and I mean ...

**Capt K** You called them vessels, didn't you? Well, I beg your pardon, I have another name for them, I'm afraid, from a seaman's point of view anyhow, I suppose they're all right eventually as they get older and more civilised they'll be better ships but they're not for me, I don't like the look of them one little bit. To me, well they're not ships, not as I know ships, you see. And they've got – *The Ben my Chree* and all those ships, *The Lady of Mann*, *The Victoria*, the *Mona's Isle*, and all those old ships, they were good ships, you see. And you could, you would, now I remember one night the feller that was mate with me, he's just died lately, oh a nice chap he was too, a good chief officer, and we were in the old *Peveiril*, not, one of the modern *Peveirils*, I forget what her name was now, and a full whole gale came on and we were packing the lightship, no cargo you see, and I went away for the Welsh hills, for Moelfre, you see, and creep, and she'd go over, and she went on the shoulder and she'd ride it very nicely and then you're about 20 miles off Wales, away then for the bar with the sea right behind you and it was tumbling behind you like a mountain and they lift up to it, no difficulty, they lifted their sterns and they'd a lovely, wonderful ships, you see.

**DC** Were you geared to go at a certain speed, were you told to keep power down?

**Capt K** No, that's the master's, he, that's his job entirely. A master was ...

**DC** But the journey was about a 4½ hour, wasn't it?

**Capt K** That's right, yes. You had to ease down, well, once you get the four hours out and then you'd be – if she's properly handled and you go along, ease them down a wee bit, you see, you'll get there just as quick, you see, and then you'll get under the lee of the land and then you can step up then, sharp then, you see. One of my last trips on *The Lady of Mann*, we'd an officer, a sailor, jumped over the side, not a sailor, well, he was a seaman, but nothing to do with us. And we were about nine miles, about seventeen miles from Douglas, you see, and I'd been on the deck, up on deck all the time because it was blowing a real gale, a whole gale at the time, with the wind, and we'd a lot of the directors aboard too that particular time, you see, and next thing I went down to relieve myself, the first time, and when I got down the whistle went, seven short blasts, man overboard. So I dashed up, you see, and she was going slow, by a half, I went slow, you see, and we released a lifebuoy and all that, and the crew, my crew at that time, *The Ben my Chree*, I was proud of them, they were in the lifeboat sitting ready for lowering in four minutes, four minutes they were all in the lifeboat with their life jackets on, now, all a matter of lowering them down in the water.

**DC** Had he been blown overboard?

**Capt K** No, I'll tell you what it was happened. No-one seen him go overboard, but visitors being seasick, looking over, seasick over the stern, seen something going past, and they sent word to the bridge, just the time I was off the bridge to go down to relieve myself, you see. But however, that's all right, so anyhow, it's a funny thing this, I never forgot it, I was in touch with the shore and I told this – I didn't mention a man going over the side at that time, you see, and yet when we got in Douglas harbour, the reporters were down, all meeting the boat. Now how did they find that out now, you see?

**DC** Was he rescued?

**Capt K** No, no, we never seen him, very heavy sea running, we had the lifeboat ready

for putting down and we would have gone to him if we could have spotted him. We went back, turned, went back, you see, we spent an hour and a half looking for him. And even a French trawler there, he came to our aid to help us, too, but naturally, signals up, you see and he came with us, looking, and I said, well, the manager then was, what's his name, oh, a hell of a nice chap he was, and Mr Shimmin said – I said, 'I think I'll give up now, I've been an hour and a quarter.' 'Yes, I agree with you, Captain.' We had a lot of the directors aboard that day too. And she wasn't all that far behind time when we got in and tied up.

**DC** And the man was never found then?

**Capt K** No, we never found him but his brother came over the next day, you see, he got to know, and he said he thinks it was suicide. They don't know what was wrong with him but he was looking that way, they didn't even know he'd gone away that morning, you see, so I think it was a suicide, we never seen him again. That's the only time I've had any trouble like that, you see.

**Capt K** But in all, I mean some anxious times going up Fleetwood channel, you know, at low water. My first time as master in Fleetwood, was a night job, going in at night time and blowing hard, it would be about 4, 5, 6, or even stronger and a mate of mine, I knew as master of the Irish boat coming in, and he's hearing me, 'I'll hang back, Captain, while you get turned,' because you'd turn to back up, you see. I said, 'All right, Patrick, I'll do that.' I turned round and we backed up, beautifully, and we got alongside but it was a dark, dirty night, wet rain too. That was my first trip in, in the night time. But I was always with the bo'sun going up and down Fleetwood channel, you see, especially *The Lady of Mann*, I was seven years in the old *Lady of Mann*, second officer, doing Fleetwood, and a fellow called, there were two, bo'sun, Captain Bridson's son was the last bo'sun, but the man before, a hell of a nice chap he was, what the devil was his name, I wish I could think on his name, he was a Douglas chap, he was connected a lot with the church in Douglas, in fact he died in a church. Oh, what's – I wish I could think on, because a really good bo'sun he was. And you're in the cabin, you're in the wheelhouse, the second mate, I was going down the wheelhouse with him, he was steering, and you'd tell him a little this way or that way, and he had a good idea himself, and you'd go down at low water when you're clear of the first buoy, the Knot End buoy, and there's a shoal of shellfish across there, these black shellfish, you know, and you'll feel her squatting and creeping, going over them. And we were going down this

night and the captain was out the wing of the bridge and he was just looking because you could feel her stuttering, she's losing displacement you see, and she was just going squatting a little bit, she got over it all right but you'd always get that, you see, until you got used to it. Very near the bottom sometimes.

**DC** Really?

**Capt K** Yes. And this night, this time when I went in, as I was leaving the port to come out, the trawlers, they let them out of the dock, to come in, rather, from outside, we were looking down the funnel of one going past. We had all sorts of tricks ...

**DC** So Fleetwood was ... you didn't like Fleetwood going in then?

**Capt K** Well, no, it's all right, it's like all, you had to know it, you see, and I was seven years on *The Lady of Mann*, going down in Fleetwood, you see, and the skipper, you see, and I knew the place well, and the point, me and George Davenport, was the bo'sun I was trying to think of, good chap was George, he was that. In fact *The Lady of Mann*, they were all good chaps, well, all the sailors in general were all good men, you see, they really were very good seamen.

### **Break in recording**

**DC** What do you remember of the summers where we had, all pushing towards half a million visitors a year, I mean you'd be on the go all the time, were you?

**Capt K** Yes, more or less, more or less, you see, on the go all the time, and you're packed all the time too. But I remember one funny incident happened, *The Lady of Mann*, not *The Lady of Mann*, what do you call her? *The Lady of Mann*, I was in *The Lady of Mann*, second mate, you see, and we were loading and she was getting chock-o-block, on a Saturday morning, you see, and *The Ben my Chree*, the two funnel, *The Viking* was ahead of us, you see, and they'd been, they'd come over in the morning you see and come back at 4 o'clock, well, there was loads of them, well, I stopped counting when we had our complement, because we were packed.

**DC** How many would that be then?

**Capt K** Oh, it's about 3000 odd.

**DC** 3000?

**Capt K** Oh, nearer 4000. But anyhow we had to be careful, you're limited to your passenger capacity, you see, you had to be very careful about that, but everything had to – everybody wanted aboard. Now, there's another ship, *The Viking*, loading ahead of us for Fleetwood, also, as a second string, you see, you heard some lads come down the [unclear] and 'Eh,' I said, 'well, you'll have to go onto that ship there, *the Lady of Mann.*' 'Eh, *The Lady of Mann*, we're going on *The Lady of Mann*, they have meat pies on *The Lady of Mann.*' They'd had meat pies coming over you see – they were wonderful people the Yorkshire people, they're marvellous people to work with, those days, and all the holiday season to Lancaster and all those places, you never met better people, they were wonderful, they'd put up with anything.

**DC** But today you see everybody wants a seat, don't they, in those days they'd be standing everywhere.

**Capt K** Oh, yes, and sitting on the deck or lying on the deck, you see, they were going on holiday and that's all there was to it, you see. Going to Ardrossan in *The Lady of Mann*, she was a wonderful boat for Ardrossan, she had a huge fo'c'sle head, you see, and there'd be all sorts up there, couples up there, and all the way to Ardrossan, enjoying themselves, on a night run, you see, and the carpenter, one night, he switched the master light out and lit the them all up, you see, they were enjoying themselves.

**DC** There was some funny goings on going on then?

**Capt K** Oh, indeed, but there were good people to deal with, they'd put up with an awful lot.

**DC** You didn't have trouble with drunks and all that then?

**Capt K** Oh, on the Fleetwood run you had. I remember one time there was a drunken boy, I think he was a fisherman, I wouldn't like to say that, but a well-dressed man too, and I got word he was in the ladies' first class room, dribbling there. So I always made sure I had two good sailors with me, tall men, there was two from Peel, what was there – oh, I can't think of the name, Big Tommer [sp ???] was one, anyhow, and I always called for them to do, and he'd be behind me

when I went in. So I went up to this chap, oh, he was full of fight, you see, so I said, 'Well, you can please yourself,' I said, 'go ahead, just hit me, go ahead if you want to, mate,' you see. So of course he never ...

**END OF INTERVIEW**