MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

'TIME TO REMEMBER'

Interviewee: **Mr Alfie Duggan**

Date of birth: **1912**

Place of birth: **18 Princes Street, Douglas**

Interviewer: **David Callister**

Recorded by: **David Callister**

Date recorded: **1st September 2000**

Topic(s):
Early memories of South Quay, Douglas
Early school days and popular games
***The Fort Anne* golf links**
Playing golf with professionals
Coal boats and ferry boats on South Quay
Douglas Head Amusements and stalls
Port Soderick
Working as a taxi driver
TT week and holidaymakers
Rushen Abbey
The *Moddey Dhoo*
Career as Councillor and Mayor of Douglas
Pulrose and Spring Valley housing estates
Working for builders McCormick & Davies
Working as a coach driver in Coventry

Alfie Duggan - Mr D
David Callister - DC

DC Alfie Duggan, Alfred Duggan, former Mayor of Douglas, of course, Councillor …

Mr D In 1984/85.

DC … in 1984/85 and you were born in Princes Street, Alfie?

Mr D Yes, No. 18 Princes Street.

DC And what date would that be?

Mr D You're going back in 1912.

DC You were born in 1912.

Mr D That's right.

DC Well, you've seen a lot of the century anyway.

Mr D Aye, quite a lot of the century and then eventually we went down to No. 18 South Quay.

DC So you were brought up, more or less, on the South Quay, were you?

Mr D Most of all brought up on the South Quay, yes.

DC What do you remember of those days then?

Mr D Well those days I remember that I went to Hanover Street School to begin with and quite nice teachers, there was a Miss Cannell, and Miss Ethel Shimmin and Miss May Shimmin and then a Miss Callow and then also there was the woodwork teacher, Mr Moyer, and then there was the caretaker, also a Mr Callow. And then you see you went to – the infants' school that would be, infant classes – and then they went up to the big boys, we used to call it, and you started from 4 class and you worked up to X7 class, you'd be about ten years of age when you went up to the 4 class and then you worked yourself up to X7 and in those days one class would have roughly about maybe thirty-five, forty-five pupils, so the teacher had quite a lot of work to do, specially one

teacher. But we had, really speaking, a wonderful time going to school.

DC What sort of games, do you remember the games you used to play?

Mr D Yes, I do remember the games we did play. We had to make our own games, for instance now, the girls used to have hopscotch. They drew nine squares, maybe about 6 ft. by 6 ft. and then with the lines they had, put a little bit of tile or something like that and start from the centre part of each square, but if the tile they were just pushing with their toes, hop step it would be, like a hop step, if they ever touched the line, well they were out and that's how it went.

DC So they had to get it into the square and miss the lines?

Mr D Had to get it into the square always, but the boys, we used to play, most of all, cigarette, ordinary cigarette cards which you have in packets …

DC You had to collect them, yes.

Mr D You used to get them in ciggies, and they'd amount to about fifty.

DC So your father would have them, would he, or what? Where would you get them from?

Mr D Well as a matter of fact I still have some of them cigarette cards in the full packets and they must be about seventy years old …

DC Really?

Mr D … and still in good condition. But apart from that, what playing with cigarette cards means that you used to, by all means, put the cigarette card, maybe about three or four of yers [you] playing, and you'd put the cigarette cards on the wall and let them just scoot out of your hand, and you'd see maybe fifteen or twenty lying on the ground and when one card overlapped the other, well that person would pick them cards up, he'd won them.

DC Really?

Mr D So then we also had a game we called marbles and with the marbles there you

played either ‘snooky’ or you played ‘ringy.’

DC Now tell me about the difference of those things?

Mr D The ‘ringy’ for instance, was you marked a ring, a slight ring around and you put maybe a dozen marbles in the ring and each marble represented, maybe, a little dot on them would be one, up to six, so therefore you have an ordinary marble yourself and you just press it with your thumb, your marble …

DC Flick it?

Mr D … and whatever come out of the ring it was yours. But if you used to get a wide boy, he used to have a ball bearing and he used to knock all out of the ring, and that was not playing – not really fair.

DC So that was ‘ringy.’

Mr D ‘Ringy.’ And then the other one was just putting the marble right by a little hole there, and it was a matter of placing your marble against the other marble to see if you could get it in the hole, how many times it took you.

DC Oh, I see.

Mr D Now apart from that you made your own little games, what have you, round about, and then you were – as you grew up you went along to find a little job, because we all, by all means, were like working.

DC You wanted some money as well.

Mr D Yes, exactly, but actually lots of people used to go up the golf course and carry golf sticks. I myself was carrying golf sticks at eight years of age, and many others also were carrying golf sticks.

DC Now we’re talking about the golf course on Douglas Head, aren’t we?

Mr D Now the Douglas golf course, yes, it would be *The Fort Anne* golf links, it was run by a Mr Forrester from *Harold Towers*, Head Road, and that used to be just up above *Ravenscliff*, and we used to caddy, more so in the summer time, when

The Fort Anne Hotel was really, really, really busy. We used to get the same people year after year, so I started what about, as I mentioned, about eight years of age, like many other caddy, caddies they used to call us, and those days, you got one and a penny a round – a shilling for the caddy and a penny for the greenkeeper.

DC So there was a fixed fee then?

Mr D A fixed fee it was then. Of course you had to walk round about two to two and a half miles and sometimes the bag of clubs was bigger than the caddy.

DC How much, you'd only earn about tuppence or threepence in a day, would you?

Mr D No, no, if we got two rounds – in a season there like when summer was on, we got a round in the morning and a round in the afternoon, that was two shillings you had. Well that was a lot of money because two shillings there – a man's wage then was only about £1. So it was a big help to your mother really.

DC So you had to hand it in, did you?

Mr D Hand the money in but you used to get an ice cream maybe, it cost about a penny, a penny cornet, and it went on and on and on and eventually I was very fortunate because I was asked by the professional, Mr J Orford, if I would care to go in the greenkeeper's hut, along with him. So this I, by all means, said, 'Yes,' it was a good opening and I was in there quite a while.

DC Was that a paid job really then?

Mr D It was a paid job. I was getting twenty-two shillings a week, which was slightly more than a man's wage, but regarding the clubs, etc., the making of the clubs. The heads of the club, the shaft of the club, the grips, they all came from England, various parts of England, and they all had to be assembled by the professional and he used to kind of chamfer them down and then stain the woodwork with raw linseed and boiled oil, he used to put a nice shine on it. Then the professional, he would put his name in the centre of a wooden club, and then on an iron club, he would put his name on the writing of the iron club, whatever it may be, it may be a mashie, it may be an iron, it may be a – I don't think they make them now – it may be a cleak or a jigger, I don't think they

make the cleak and jigger now.

DC So you'd start playing at a fairly early age then, as well, would you?

Mr D Yes I was playing at round about, as I mentioned, eight years of age and then you see …

DC But you'd have to have specially made clubs for that, did you?

Mr D No, no, I used to – the people who were coming, maybe even members, club members, local people, I would, what do you call it, use their clubs as I was caddying for them, use their clubs, and I learned with their clubs, actually.

DC With the full size ones?

Mr D Yes, the full size ones, I got used to them actually and as it went on and on and on I eventually got the opportunity of going into the professional's hut and I eventually went out making maybe a two ball, one ball might come along, he wanted a game, the professional would say, 'Go on, Alf, give him a game.' So I remember one time I took a handicap man, six, I was just about fourteen, fourteen and a half, and I beat him six and five ...

DC Really?

Mr D … and I finished up on the thirteenth hole, six and five. And then, funny thing, the gentleman was a member of Bramhall golf course, a lovely golf course was Bramhall, and the professional's name was Mr Boardman, and those days he used to wear plus fours ...

DC Of course.

Mr D ... so he said to me, the gentleman, 'I'll recommend you to my professional, we could do with a young feller like you,' so I never thought no more of it and next thing, weeks passed, and I was walking along the quayside one day, two gentlemen in plus fours come along, I thought these must be golf professionals, and they were, and funny thing it was Mr Boardman from Bramhall. He said to me, 'D'you know where Mrs Duggan lives?' I said, 'Yes,' I said, 'I'm a Duggan.' He said, 'Do you work at *The Fort Anne* golf links?' I said, 'Yes.'

'Well,' he said, 'as a matter of fact,' he said, 'we've come along to bring you back with us.' So anyhow I found out his name was Mr Boardman, took him to me mother – I had already made my mind up I was not going to go, though I missed a good opportunity. Me mother also said, 'No, he's staying here,' so I stayed with Mr J.A. Orford, but the opportunity was there, I was offered, well me mother was offered, double the man's wage near, thirty-five shillings per week, also he would look after me, feed and clothe me and spending money, but we turned the offer down and I stayed with Joe Orford.

DC So you were really assisting the professional here on Douglas Head, were you then?

Mr D That's right, assisting the professional, and sometimes you go out teaching, anybody who wanted to learn, you know, as I went along, fifteen or so, I went along, used to – anybody want teaching, Mr Orford would let me go out and teach. And then the next thing you're – doing the golf course itself. I used to go along with the professional and he would maybe be looking at the greens, changing the holes in different positions on the green – it was an eighteen-hole golf course, by the way, *Fort Anne* golf links, and the bogey would be round about seventy, seventy the bogey. The first tee was from top of the Head Road, and a little bar up there called the buffet, the nineteenth bar, and it would be facing the Manx Radio, you'd be hitting towards the Manx Radio, and the first green was an uphill green, an uphill hit with about 300 yards. Well I could just about reach the edge of the green, and that, with a drive, I would be about fifteen then, and with bogey four, sometime I got down to two.

DC It couldn't have been a very big golf course, relative to some, could it?

Mr D Oh, yes, yes.

DC It was awfully hilly up there, Alfie, I mean it must have been a hard course to play wasn't it?

Mr D It was. The first hole was a little bit hilly, the two biggest holes on that golf course was the third hole, which was 390 yards …

DC Was it?

Mr D … a bogey five, and the fifth hole which was 410 yards, and that was a bogey five. Apart from that they were all bogey fours and bogey threes and the smallest hole on the course was the tenth, and the tenth was a mashie niblick shot, or high ball, dropped dead on the green and that was 120 yards.

DC Was it only for the people who were staying at *The Fort Anne* or was anybody able to use it?

Mr D Oh, no, there were club members, by all means, and they went on from father to son, and worked down to daughters, it was a family affair actually, *The Fort Anne* golf links had a big membership, both ladies and gents and it was a family affair. For instance now there was one big family, Bill Kirkpatrick, his Mum and his Dad used to play golf, they were members, also his brother was a member, he come from Ireland actually, and there was many like these, Mr Trustrum and Mrs Trustrum from the south of the Island, Mr Frank Horne and his good lady …

DC So it got a lot of use then?

Mr D Oh yes, it got a lot of use, and you know, like in the visiting season round about June, July and August, *The Fort Anne* golf links was very, very busy because the hotel was just down below and you got the same, as I mentioned, the same people year after year and they all knew yer [you] by – they always give you a nickname, Acky, Icky, Acky, Doola, I was called I believe at one time.

DC Icky, Acky, Doola.

Mr D Yes I was called, at one time, Doola, yes, but they were good old, nice old days.

DC Was there much in the way of shrubbery up there then, or was it pretty bald?

Mr D Well, the fairways had to be, had to be looked after and where the ground was pretty rough, well you tidied that up more so, a special man used to tidy that up with a scythe really, he'd have a scythe those days, a big scythe.

DC Was it rough compared with the courses that are in use today?

Mr D Really speaking, speaking on behalf, you know, of that *Fort Anne* golf links, in

my opinion, it was the finest golf course on this Island, the turf was nice and springy, lovely and springy, and you could hit a nice golf ball. Regarding hilly, the first hole was a little bit of a hill going towards Manx Radio, after you'd hit a ball maybe just about 200 yards, there was a bit of a hill going up after that, but the ninth was hilly and the twelfth, but apart from that it was quite good, quite good.

DC What's the best round you've ever done on it?

Mr D Well, I wouldn't like to say, I've been round about, well under seventies, maybe sixty-eight, sixty-nine, something like that, but the record was held by Mr Joe Orford. But I will tell you one thing, of a competition which was held, it was open to all professionals in England, all over, and quite a number of professionals did come over, it was round about 1927. It was one round played on *The Fort Anne* golf links, one round played on *Pulrose* golf course, and one round played on *Howestrake* golf course. Now, when they start playing the golf, the first man who led the field, the man who led the field at *Fort Anne* golf links was a Mr Taggart, a Manxman, who was a professional of a club in England. Then they went to *Pulrose* and at that time Mr Taggart had bad luck, he sliced a ball badly into the water, and that was him finished. But the man who won the competition, mind you it was a lot of money those days, it was £500 …

DC Quite a lot then.

Mr D … first prize, yes, it was George Duncan, he won the money, the prize money and there was many, many golf professionals played on here, for instance Henry Cotton, he won the British Open three times, Henry Cotton …

DC He played *Fort Anne* as well?

Mr D Yes, and matter of fact, he played up here, he played at *Pulrose*, he played *The Fort Anne*, he played at Onchan, and a matter of fact I had a lovely lamp standard given to me, given to me, Henry Cotton's name on it, and I presented this to a club that he'd played on during this competition, but, I don't know, it can't be found, it can't be found.

DC Really, no, they sometimes mysteriously disappear.

Mr D Well it disappeared mysteriously, yes that's right.

DC There's one other thing that occurs to me, can you remember how much the membership fee would have been, the annual membership for the members then?

Mr D Yes, a daily ticket, for instance, would be 2s. 6d for a daily ticket, I think there were weekly tickets – a weekly ticket was 12s. 6d and I think round about, an annual ticket, for annually, would be round about the region of five guineas.

DC Let's think about what life on the Douglas Quay was like as you remember it in your early days, Alfie.

Mr D Well on the Douglas quayside everybody had to work, they worked very, very hard indeed. Your coal boats coming in and out, of our own boats, *Ben Voar*, *Ben Veg* and many others like them, *Ben Seyr* and a coal worker, those days, they had a little horse and cart, they called the cart a stiff cart, they hold about one and a half ton of coal. Well they went along to the coal boats and then, by all means, the man who was emptying the tub, would just maybe, throw about three or four tubs in the stiff cart and the cart was then filled. Then the stiff cart driver would bring it along to the coal yard where he was working, more so the majority were on the quayside, and then he had a kind of a lever at the front which he pulled out and then put a shoulder to it and the cart would go up and then he, after it was emptied, he'd pull the cart down and then proceed on to the boat until the boat was empty. But those days, for instance, a man who was trimming coal in a coal yard got 11s 3d for his day's work. 11s 3d, and that was from I would say half past seven in the morning and you may be looking to half past five at night, maybe a 170, 180 ton of coal.

DC Really?

Mr D Yes, and the same with the – they got a little extra in the boats, in the boats shovelling the coal, I think they got about 2s. 0d. extra, it might have been about 13s 3d something like that. But everything was really, wasn't easy work, and then you had the cargo boats coming in, they weren't finished with that, Corlett Sons & Cowley's, with grains, different grains of sugar beet and stuff like that, which was conveyed over to Lake Road, and those bags weighed about 140 lb. And, in those early days, there was no such thing as escalators, you had to make

steps yourself, put one bag, and then two bags, and then step up all the time like you're going up steps, until you got to the very top. You may go about fifteen or twenty high, but it had to be done, that was a tough job.

DC You'll remember the little ferry boats as well, won't you?

Mr D Yes, I remember the little ferry boats, they were very, very busy in the season, you were talking about boats coming in maybe of a Saturday, you'd be looking at maybe eleven or twelve boats coming in, in and out, on a Saturday.

DC All packed with people?

Mr D All packed with people and they were carrying between two and three thousand passengers. Well there was also four little ferry boats, one was called *The Rose*, and then *The Thistle, The Shamrock* and *The Daffodil*. Now these boats, they did have singers on them, I do remember one singer, a lady singer, her name was Lily, an excellent singer, and also a man used to play the ukulele, [he] was a man called Jimmy Ventro. So they had music going along to and fro …

DC Just across the harbour there?

Mr D … across the harbour, they'd go across from the pier over to the Battery Pier and then after they would get to the Battery Pier there was a little toll station where they proceeded up the steps into the toll station, and they paid the fare, whatever it would be, maybe tuppence or threepence, and then they'd proceed then on towards Douglas Head. Now …

DC Up the steps they'd go then, would they?

Mr D Well, before you reached the steps, they would meet a lot of Scotch girls and they would be – what d'you call them, we used to call them – gutting herrings, and there were hundreds upon hundreds of barrels of herrings, and they used to gut these herrings and salt them and put them in a big barrel and from the quayside, I'd say from the Battery Pier right up to the top of the South Quay, there were nothing else but barrels of herrings. More so, a boat, I think used to come from Russia, it used to come and take nearly the whole lot away …

DC Really?

Mr D …salted herrings. But going further along now, up towards Douglas Head, Douglas Head, as you were going up the little hill, there were – by the petrol station – there were all little stalls, various stalls. I remember one stall was a Miss Lindsay, her brother had a shop on the North Quay, Mr Lindsay, an outfitting shop, gents …

DC Jimmy Lindsay's?

Mr D … Jimmy Lindsay's, that's right. And she had a weighing machine so she would guess within 4 lb. Now if she was over that you got the weight free, but if she was right you had to pay. But anyhow as you went along, as you went along up the hill, left and right of the hill there were stalls. Kind of stalls like, what they call 'ringy,' where there was little rings there and coins, and you got so many rings given to you and if you could ring that coin, what was on there, maybe a shilling, maybe sixpence, maybe two shillings, or maybe half a crown, whatever coin you happened to ring, it was yours on that stall. Then as you went further along, of course you had the old, what do you call it, the oyster man. They used to, what do you call, sell these oysters at the top stall, and opposite used to be quite a big – it was just like a pool, an ordinary swimming pool, and up above that swimming pool, it would be about maybe fifteen or twenty feet in length, and about maybe ten feet deep, of water, depth of water, and there was a gentleman sat on two or three planks in the centre, and at either side of him was a bull's eye, a big bull's eye, and it was, as much a matter of fun, but these bull's eyes, you were to get three balls given to you for tuppence. Now if you hit the bull, the bull's eye, the feller in the centre used to have to drop down in the water, pick himself up and go back up again and to be truthful with you, I was a crack shot. I know the gentleman, he lived over in Oak Avenue, his name was Jimmy Caine, and I used to always hit that bull and he used to say to me, 'Go on you,' he'd say, 'go on you, beggar away,' because he knew very well he'd have to go in the water and get up again. So nevertheless as you went further up, as I mentioned, you come to a little inclined railway, incline railway, instead of people walking up an awful lot of steps, you could get on this little incline railway, it would take you up to the Douglas Head Road and as you alighted you'd go through a little toll box again, and pay whatever, I think it was about tuppence or threepence, and then you'd go up across the road as if you were walking towards Manx Radio, the steps, and there would be a car which would say Port Soderick. The people then would alight on to Port Soderick and go along the lovely Marine Drive, which was beautiful.

DC You've been on that yourself, have you?

Mr D Yes, my father was a tram driver. I used to be delighted going along Marine Drive, it was a beautiful run and nice scenery and sometimes me father would stop just before the finish of the run and there was a little incline chair, something like the ones over Falcon Cliff Terrace, you could enlight, sit in that chair, and it would take you right down to the hotel itself.

DC Yes, at Port Soderick, yes.

Mr D Port Soderick itself, where there was lovely roundabouts for kiddies and everything was wonderful, singing, and you could have a little drink for the kiddie, a lemonade or something like that, outside, and everything, a little dance hall and everything. Little pleasure boats calling at Port Soderick, they used to come from Douglas, one was called *Karina*, and many others like it, but *The Karina* was quite a boat, they would carry maybe about forty people.

DC That tram was running very close to the cliff side, wasn't it, really?

Mr D It was in a way, but it was really on the other side of the cliff …

DC Oh was it, right.

Mr D … on the other side.

DC On the landward side?

Mr D On the landward side, the cliffs really were, part of the cliffs were very, very high, but the majority was all, of the drive, was very low, the cliffs.

DC And did a lot of people make use of that, Alfie?

Mr D Well they did, by all means, they used to come in their hundreds and sometimes maybe the thousands. Port Soderick was a very, very busy place and it was really a pleasure to go down there to Port Soderick because everybody was happy, the kiddies were specially happy because as they got further down there, there was more swings and more little games for them to play and it was really excitin'.

DC Was the open air theatre in use then, was it?

Mr D Yes, there was singing going on and things like that, plenty of singing and it was a good entertainment really for the visitor, because you used to have taxis and buses going down to Port Soderick, used to turn at the very bottom, turn round, until they had rock falls. Now, meself, they did have experts over, I think they were from Sweden, and they were facing the rocks, but meself, it was only the higher part of the rocks that was causing the trouble. I think if they would have kind of, you know like, made the height half the height, if they'd have cut a big half of the height off the rocks I think it would still have been there and made a good road, it would have been still a wonderful piece of the Island, which people, by all means, would enjoy. And I would like to see, really speaking, that happen. It's only the high parts of the cliffs that's causin' the trouble, the other part is very, very lovely, but we may get it done some time, I hope so.

DC Yes, let's go back down the town then and onto Douglas Promenade, did you spend much time down there?

Mr D Yes, that's going – coming on now to the fifties or so. In the fifties and sixties, seventies, the Promenade was – thousands of people.

DC In the fifties especially?

Mr D Especially in the fifties and the sixties, they used to come in, you used to get maybe, of a Saturday morning, maybe about eight or nine boats coming Saturday morning in, and then you had maybe about the same number going out, throughout the day, you'd boats from Ardrossan, Liverpool, Belfast, Dublin, and used to have the Llandudno boat coming in, *St Ivel*, [sp ???] and we had a big fleet by all means, I must say, a big fleet of boats. You'd be talking, I expect, oh, maybe fifteen or twenty boats, it was one of the biggest channel fleets in England actually, the Manx fleet.

DC And of course on the shore, you'll see pictures these days of the shore actually thick with people, just crammed at times.

Mr D Well, really speaking, when you went along the shore, especially in the busy season, I remember George Formby being over here, playing in a show over by

The Empress, and the shore there, beautiful golden sands, children playing with castles, and building castles, George Formby, TT week it was, but he was playing his ukulele and everything was so beautiful and thousands of people, thousands of people. As a matter of fact when it came to Saturday morning and the people were going back home, we were dropping the people off, the taxi driving I'm talking about, the taxi drivers would be putting the people off many times on a Saturday morning at Broadway, queuing up for the boat all …

DC All the way from Broadway down?

Mr D … the whole width of the pavement, all the way down from Broadway right along to the Victoria Pier and the Edward Pier, thousands of people queuing going back.

DC Carrying their cases?

Mr D Carrying their cases all the way. But, as I have mentioned, you used to get maybe the same people comin' year after year and they'd be going up and down either one of the piers, Edward Pier or the Victoria Pier and somebody would say, 'Hello, have you seen Gussie Craine?' or, 'have you seen Kearney?' or, 'have you seen Duggan, that Alfie Duggan feller?' So they'd all wait to be called and have a good laugh and anyhow I'd one party in particular, he came from Ormskirk, a Mr – Geoffrey his name was, and he used to come along with all the staff, he had a big nursery in Ormskirk, his name is Geoff Waring, that was his name, and he used to come and say, 'Well Alf, here we are again, take us to *The Athol* and *The Regent*.' We used to take them to *The Athol* and *The Regent*. He'd say, 'Now, fine day tomorrow, we'll go round the Island, Alf, we'll have a nice trip round the Island. I want you to book me a nice lunch.' I'd say, 'Which part of the Island to begin with?' 'Oh, we'll start from Peel.' 'Right ho,' I'd say, 'I'll book in *The Marina* or the Peel Castle.' So anyhow he said, 'Fine.' So anyhow the following day would come, book a nice lunch, *Marina*, Peel, or the Peel Castle, whichever they wanted. Anyhow, we'd go along with the party, there'd be fourteen of a party, three-car job, I had a big *Landaulet*, beautiful big car, anyhow, CMN 431 was the number, lovely car. We used to go along there and had a nice lunch, enjoyable, then we'd proceed then maybe up over the mountain, on to Port Erin, beautiful day maybe, if it was a beautiful day, the *Landaulet*, the hood would be down. Well, we'd arrive at Port Erin and the people alighted, they had a nice walk round looking at the shops, etc., and

then we proceeded on towards Rushen Abbey. We'd arrive at Rushen Abbey, dozens of coaches there, coaches, also dozens of taxis there. Now Rushen Abbey was noted for its strawberries and cream, its peaches and cream, dancin', singin', beautiful place, and they also made their own strawberry jam which was wonderful, lovely, nice and tasty. Now every driver, whether he'd be a coach driver or a taxi driver, he always went along into the kitchen, kind of a kitchen and then he got a mug of tea given to him, a nice sandwich, probably their own home-made strawberry jam, or you could have anything you wanted, wished for, and they'd also give you a shilling for fetching a taxi, and a coach got two shillings, for the reward.

DC For bringing your people in then?

Mr D For bringing the people in, yes.

DC That wasn't a very big reward, was it?

Mr D Well, it was quite nice, it wasn't a reward really, it was …

DC Like a tip really?

Mr D … letting the people see what a lovely place the Rushen Abbey was, you know, and the people really all delighted with Rushen Abbey. Then you would take them along, after they had enjoyed themselves, and then you're proceeding then towards Douglas, off to Douglas. Well, coming towards the Fairy Bridge, you used to always say, 'Now, don't forget,' – nobody would have a hat on in the boiling hot day – 'but never forget,' I said, 'that if you're passing the Fairy Bridge and you do happen to be wearing a hat, raise your hat before you come to the Bridge, because the little fairies,' I sez [said], 'think you are unkind if you don't do it, so you've got to be kind enough to raise your hats.' So you used to always be that way, that the people, even taking them out during the winter, would raise their hats to the fairies. And as you proceeded towards Douglas, specially when you had maybe, apart from an all-Island tour, you may have an afternoon tour, and as you were proceeding towards Douglas, maybe five to four, something like that, going down the quayside, you'd hear the boat blowin' and all of a sudden somebody in the car would say, 'Pull up here, Alf, want a few kippers, we can't go without the kippers.' You'd pull up at the Market there and then next thing you'd see them running down to the ship, to catch the boat.

DC Oh, right. So would they be day trippers or long stay?

Mr D They would, more so, be day trippers, those, they'd be running down to catch the boat, more so, the Fleetwood and Liverpool and Llandudno boat, whatever it may be. But also during that tour of the Island you visited many places, for instance, you visited Peel, you went along to Peel and if it was the tour of the Island, you went to Peel and you took the people round the castle, you showed them various places, you told them the history all about the *Moddey Dhoo*, the big dog that haunted the Peel Castle, the whole story. That one time they were always warned that when there was a garrison, never to go alone, that's any soldier, not to go alone, they always had to be in company with another soldier. But there was one soldier in particular and he was defiant, and he said, 'I'm not afraid of man or beast' and he proceeded to a place just past the guard room where this dog was always seen and the next thing there was a scream, his comrades came along, and there they seen their comrade lying on the ground, and from that place they seen their comrade lying on the ground, they sealed it up, and the *Moddey Dhoo*, the black dog, has never been seen in the Peel Castle. Now apart from that, what now …

DC Well you must have spent a lot of time on the taxis and in transport and in the funeral business and so on, but you also found time to be a part-time politician, really, if I can call you that, as a Councillor and a Mayor of Douglas.

Mr D Well yes, I went in as a politician in 1975 and ...

DC What made you go in for that then?

Mr D Well really speaking, I thought, really speaking, well, regarding the people, you know, they were approaching me asking me would I stand for the constituent and I said, 'Yes, I would,' so I stood for the constituents and that was it.

DC Well you were a councillor quite a long time, weren't you, really?

Mr D Well, going on, roughly seventeen years, yes, but Adrian came in right after me in 1976 and …

DC Which was the year you were Mayor – that was 198 ...?

Mr D 1984/85, yes, it was quite a nice year, busy year, All Island Games, always kept us on our toes, we didn't have a moment's peace but I enjoyed it and so did the Mayoress.

DC How many engagements would you have had then?

Mr D Oh, private engagements, we had an awful lot, I was saying, we can look at 787 altogether, counting engagements which we did ourself, but it was roughly over two a day, and we had a real enjoyable year really because, as I mentioned, we had the Island Games over, and then we had the two Governors, Sir Nigel Cecil and Lady Cecil who were going out in September, out of office, and then we had Major General Laurence New and Mrs New and the family come into office in October, so, it was very, very busy but on the other hand we enjoyed it thoroughly and I don't think we missed any engagements.

DC And during the time you were a Councillor then quite a few things happened, I mean there was the big incinerator row going on here, wasn't there?

Mr D Well, the incinerator is still going on …

DC Yes.

Mr D … I can go back and I would think it would be 19 – oh, we would be looking at about 1979 and it's being going on ever since then but I think meself, in my opinion, if they ever, ever build an incinerator, it will be the biggest epidemic they will ever have because, in my opinion – I was listening to a little boy, I think it was on June 11th – it was on a Sunday, I think Mrs Brenda Cannell was on there also, and I heard the little boy mention that with an incinerator it will be throwing out all this toxic poisonous gases, it would eventually fall on the pasture, the cattle, by all means, would feed of [on] it, and then it would reach the human people, ourselves and I think meself that the way things are goin' it's very undecided. I think it should be left to the people, the people to decide, and not the politicians. I think it's most unfair because the incinerator will cost plenty of money and if it's a 'white elephant,' the taxpayer has got to pay for it. The ones who, by all means, wants an incinerator, let them put their hand in their pocket and let them pay for it, for the biggest [mistake] ever they'll ever make, that's in my opinion. But the incinerator has been up and down all the time and it's always been the saying, 'Oh, wouldn't have it in my back yard,'

they made sure, the south hasn't had it in their back yard, neither has the north, I know the reason why the north hasn't required it in their back yard, it's because of the distance, maybe out to Jurby, places like that, but an incinerator amongst these constituents, which is talking about, up here, Richmond Hill, you're talking about at least 4,000 people all together, Ballavagher, Saddlestone, Farmhill, and all round the Pulrose/Anagh Coar area, and also round the farms, round about the farms, the *Middle* Farm, especially, and by all means, this, in my opinion today, is to be the biggest disaster they'd have ever made and that's my opinion. Because many people have their opinions, but I think it should go to a referendum of the people, because they have to pay for it, the taxpayer, but it's going on so quiet, and it's stopped so silently, all of a sudden something will spring right out and that's it, it'll be going up, but my opinion, it should, by all means, go to a referendum and the people to decide.

DC Spring Valley and Pulrose area now, I mean, what's the earliest memory of that for you?

Mr D Now, let's see now, Pulrose area, I didn't, I don't know actually who built them, personally speaking, but they were started up here round about, I'd say you're looking at about 1926, something like that, '25, '26.

DC So you'd be a young boy, a youngish fellow then, would you?

Mr D Yes, they were hard days. I remember one feller, David, I was on the quayside then, let me see now, yes, I was on the quayside living. I remember one young man, twenty-two, he was a lovely man, and he met me on the quayside and he said to me, 'Can I have a word with you, son?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Do you know whether your mother will give me a crust of bread?' I said, 'What?' I thought he was only joking and he was serious. I went in to me mother and I said, 'Young man out here and he wants a crust of bread.' 'Bring him in,' she said, 'the young man.' Anyhow she give him a good, a nice meal and he'd nowhere to go, so mother put him up and fixed him up for oh, quite a number of weeks. He went up here to try and get a job, to try and get a job, no vacancies, couldn't get a job, electrician, qualified, and that would be about, I would say about 1926, '27, '26, something like that.

DC Was he a Manxman or not?

Mr D No, he was an English lad, an English lad, an English boy he were, and he couldn't get a job, and, by all means, it would be round about '25, '26 the Pulrose I think would start and they were finished round about 1929, the same, just slightly before, I think, the power station, it was erected and finished about '29.

DC So you remember the building of that, then, do you?

Mr D Yes, that was finished in roughly '29, and I think the Pulrose houses was just ahead of them, not much, and the little Sacred Heart church up here, it was completed, it was round about '39, 1939, and the houses, Upper Pulrose, they were in the '30s also.

DC And Spring Valley then, who will have built that?

Mr D Spring Valley, definitely, was, first of all, was Captain Clucas who had the contract to begin with but it finished up that Mr George McCormick and Arthur Davies, McCormick & Davies, got the contract and they continued on Spring Valley Estate and then they went to Anagh Coar and Willaston, oh, they were all round the Island, they were definitely the leading builders, a very, very good firm to work for.

DC You worked for them, didn't you?

Mr D Yes, I did work for them, I drove the wagon, and I don't know, doing all kinds of work, hod carrying and all. But they were real gentlemen to work for, real gentlemen, and they done an awful lot of private work too, all over the Island. They were good bosses to work for.

DC So you've done a fair variety of jobs in your time, haven't you?

Mr D Yes, I did.

DC But mostly driving, I suppose?

Mr D Yes, I did a lot of driving in England actually. When you're self-employed you've got to look for work. I did have a couple of wagons here but I thought to meself I could do a little bit better than that, because there was advertising

going on, they wanted drivers in Coventry. So I went off to Coventry and approached the transport, I was very happy in a way, because it was September and I was out there until the middle of May driving transport, Coventry Transport. There was an agreement between them that you can only go twice, so I went there a second time, a second winter.

DC What were you actually driving?

Mr D I drove all kinds of vehicles really, heavy vehicles, a double decker, single decker as one man bus driver, all kinds of vehicles, private work and things like that, all over the Midlands and long distance driving.

DC Was that because there was no work here at the time?

Mr D Well, there was very little work, and, by all means, you had, as I say, a self-employed person had a job to get a job, but at this time I'm talking about, Mr McCormick, he'd completed his work, I'd still have been with Mr McCormick because he was so nice, and Arthur Davies. Nevertheless as I mentioned to you, you'd only got to be two winters, you could only go back twice to work with Coventry Transport. But I then went with the Midland Red, Birmingham, and I used to be on their buses, used to go to Lancashire, London, all over the place, with the Midland Red, Birmingham. And then I had – the Crosville buses I went one year with, the Crosville buses, I was with them for one good winter, Crosville buses, and I was there, double decker, single decker one man bus driving, what have you, and I remember on a 50-seater coach, leaving Chester, and I was going past a little street called Bridge Street, Bridge Street, just something like our Strand Street, but smaller, not as long, and I seen a gentleman through the mirror runnin' for the bus, and I pulled up. I said to him, 'Where do you want to go to, Sir, please?' He said, 'Where do you come from, *yessir*?' And he was a man down in Bridge Street, had a chemist's shop, and his name was Mr Quayle.

DC Yes.

END OF INTERVIEW