

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

‘TIME TO REMEMBER’

Interviewee(s): Mrs Kathleen Audrey Crowe

Date of birth: 29th September 1928

Place of birth: Ramsey Isle of Man

Interviewer(s): Elizabeth Ardern-Corris

Recorded by: Elizabeth Ardern-Corris

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Topic(s): Memories of parents and grandparents
Father Head Gardener at Mooragh Park
Early schooldays and discipline
Nursing at Ramsey Cottage Hospital
Getting married and farming at *Bishopscourt Farm*
Dairy and milk round
Shopping in Ramsey and rationing
Buying farm from Lady Ravensdale
Old Manx sayings and pronunciation
Transport and learning to drive
Attending Church and Sunday School outings
Entertainment and friends
WWII and the RAF
Childhood illnesses and doctors
Celebrating Christmas
Grandchildren and farming

Audrey Crowe - Mrs C
Elizabeth Ardern-Corris - EA-C

EA-C I'm Elizabeth Ardern-Corris. It's the 17th April 2012 and I'm at the home of Mrs Crowe in Kirk Michael. Can you tell me your full name, Mrs Crowe, please?

Mrs C Yes. Kathleen Audrey Crowe.

EA-C And when and where were you born?

Mrs C Born in Ramsey.

EA-C On what date?

Mrs C The 29th of the ninth, '28.

EA-C Have you always lived in Kirk Michael?

Mrs C No. I was born in Ramsey and lived in Ramsey until I got married at nineteen.

EA-C Were you part of a large family?

Mrs C No, I had a brother and sister. My brother was older, my sister was younger. Fred was the oldest boy and my sister, Dorothy, she lives in Sheffield now.

EA-C Tell me a little bit about your parents, what were their names?

Mrs C My father was William Grant Kneale, and he was a head gardener in the Mooragh Park. He went there from the time ... he came out of the army when ... he was in the army – First World War, and when he came out of the army he applied for this job, and he was assistant to the head gardener at the Mooragh Park. And then, through the years, he became head gardener. My mother came from Bride. Her name was Kneale and she married a Kneale – no relation at all. They were married in Lezayre, at the time she was 26 and he was 28 when they got married, and they lived in Ramsey most of their life; lived in Windsor Road – I have a photograph there – Windsor Road – years ago, just after I got married, and there was no cars in Windsor Road – now it's chocker-block!

EA-C Can you remember your grandparents?

Mrs C Yes. My grandmother lived until she was about – they lived in *Grant Cottage* in Windsor Road, which was a family ... belonged to my grandfather's parents, and he was called Grant and the cottage was called *Grant Cottage* – I think it's still ... it was pulled down by my uncle and a new house put on, which was ... in them days there was this little stable at the back of the cottage and outhouses like, you know, it's a little ... well, it wouldn't be a smallholding, either, but it had quite a bit of land to it, you know. And they lived in that. My father and my grandmother lived in there, but the pair ... they owned it, and they owned two houses in Windsor Road side as well. My grandfather died when he was only 39. He was a shoe-maker, not a shoe-mender – he made shoes in this cottage. So my grandmother had to bring up the children ... were only young, you see, so she'd be only in her early thirties when he died, you see, so they had hard times, really. So she managed to hang onto the house because they owned the house, you see, so they were alright like that. So ...

EA-C And the two houses that you said they owned, did they rent them out?

Mrs C His parents lived in them, and they died, and I ... there was one ... my grandfather had one sister and she got married to a man named Kneen – they had family, but his wife died – looked it up in the things ... in ... the birth certificates and things, and I think she died in childbirth, you know, so he lived in one of the houses I think, afterwards, so ... I didn't get to know – they didn't tell you much in them days, did they, they didn't tell you anything, so ... I just picked things up by going through the ...

EA-C The Census?

Mrs C The Census, yes.

EA-C Can you tell me about the house you grew up in, what was that like?

Mrs C That was in Windsor Road. That was one of the houses, 'cos it must have been sold off, that me grandparents lived in. But I was born ... my father had been head gardener in the park ... when they first got married they lived ... my father and mother lived in a little cottage at the Dhoor, out there, and he had to come into Ramsey 'cos, with being head gardener, and having to go at night-time to water the bowling greens and things like that, you know, so he had to come into Ramsey. So he went into a Commissioners' house from this ... from the Dhoor,

and I was born in this Commissioners' house over Gladstone Avenue in Ramsey. Well, my mother never liked it ... I shouldn't be ... she never liked being in a Commissioners' house, so ... she found this house, Windsor Road, and she ... they rented it and that was where me grandparents lived, so we lived in there until I was about eleven, and then the people that bought it had a paint shop on the quay in Ramsey, and they wanted to retire and go back to live in it, so back to a Commissioners' house again, so she didn't like that. She rented a house, then, in Lezayre Road, towards the grammar school there, in one of those ... just opposite Bircham Avenue there, so we lived in that until ... I got married from there. But we went to school, like, from Windsor Road, and then ... well, I wasn't long in Lezayre Road, but ... to go to school there. Then when I left school I went to work in a butcher's shop.

EA-C What schools did you attend?

Mrs C Albert Road [School]. I was never clever enough to go to grammar school, no. And it was good – we had some nice teachers there. I remember one teacher, Mr Tommy Quayle, he went to the army, the second war, you know, when they were ... and he was an awfully nice teacher. Years after, I think, he went to head master of Braddan, you know, years and years after – he's dead now, poor soul, but he used to ... you know, he used to ... he had lovely bushy, curly hair, you know, and he used to say, 'You drive me mad!' and he'd put his hands through his hair. *(laughter)* And he had a tatty case like that with his things, and he jumped on it, you know, one day, 'You drive me mad!' you know, and we all clubbed together and bought him a new one, we did! *(laughter)* All the children thought ... we thought the world of him, you know – they were characters, but he was a nice man, he was a nice man, yes ... and then, on a Saturday, he would take us all for a walk up the Tower, with dogs and all, if you could bring your dog, you know, he'd go up to Tower in Ramsey. He used to take us out for a walk, all the children, he was lovely – he was, yea.

EA-C And can you remember the names of any of your other teachers?

Mrs C Yes. There was Miss Key, and she got married to a minister afterwards, yes. She was lovely, yes, she was lovely. And I remember Margaret Davis in Michael, she was a teacher at Albert Road, and ... well, I remember Miss Williamson. She was nice, too, but she married after that, when I left, she went to ... she married a Mr Kennish afterwards – I don't think she's long dead, now,

you know. But they were very nice – some – wasn't keen on the headmaster, Mr Fletcher, I didn't like him much, no – I didn't care for him very much. And when we first started, the little ones, Miss McAdam, she was a lovely little teacher, you know, when we first started school in the infants, she was lovely, she was the headmistress there, she was nice – they were all nice, really – can't say anything wrong, really, about them.

EA-C Would you say you enjoyed your time at school?

Mrs C No, I didn't like school. I wasn't awfully clever, you know, so I ... well, I was a bit nervous, really, you know, I was kind of shy and I was nervous, and ... so I didn't care for school at all. The best thing, my mother used to say – she was clever, mother was – they wanted her to stop on at school when she was ... but her mother had died and her father took her away, 'cos she wanted to go on for a teacher, but she was a bit too strict, you know? (*laughter*) She said they should know as much. So no, I didn't care for school at all.

EA-C What was discipline like in the school?

Mrs C It was very good.

EA-C Do you remember anybody getting the cane?

Mrs C Oh yes, they did get the cane, but they deserved it, you know. No, if they got the cane, it was ... it was very good, they were very strict, but you ... I mean, it was good ... good.

EA-C Do you think you would enjoy going to school today?

Mrs C No, no – never liked it. (*laughter*) I didn't think so then, not sports, or anything like that, but I went to music lessons, to a Miss Carol, and I passed three exams in that, yes, or yes, with merit and all. (*laughter*) And then Miss Carol wanted to put me in for the Guild; well I was too shy, that was no good, that finished me – wouldn't – no ... when she said she could put me into the Guild, no. But I had passed three exams – I got certificates for it. (*laughter*)

EA-C Tell me what you did when you left school – what age were you?

Mrs C Fourteen.

EA-C And what did you do?

Mrs C I went to work in a butcher's shop. Eric Teare's – were very good to me. I enjoyed that, but when I come to sixteen, a friend of mine I went to school with, Audrey Lyle her name was, her auntie said ... she worked ... she was a nurse at the hospital, and she said, 'Come to the hospital and be a nurse.' She was trying ... I thought, 'No, I can't,' but I thought ... I took it – I went for an interview and I got into hospital. So there was ... I enjoyed that very much. I was there until I was nineteen, I got married.

EA-C Which hospital is this?

Mrs C Ramsey Cottage.

EA-C And did you do training there?

Mrs C No, I didn't, but I was ... made ... well, you didn't train there. You had to go away to train. You couldn't train until you were eighteen, anyway. But we were ... well, we nursed all, but we just had one ... the matron, and she was marvellous, marvellous. Very strict, but you admired her, she was marvellous.

EA-C What was her name?

Mrs C Matron Proctor. And she treated us like ladies, you know. There were four nurses on duty. We got up at seven, we were on duty at half past, we gave the patients their breakfast and then we went off for our breakfast with Matron into the dining room, and we sat with Matron – Matron was at the top of the table in seniority, you know, 'til the junior nurse sat at the bottom. And we went there for our lunch, too, we met with Matron for lunch, and the evening meal, too. During the daytime you were only allowed out two hours, either in the morning – it was two on duty, two nurses in the morning – four nurses on all day, but two went off from ten 'til twelve and then we gave the patients their dinner – well, lunch, and then in the afternoon, the other lot – the other two went off from two 'til four, and then you were in then for ... you finished at half past seven at night. You weren't allowed out, you weren't allowed out at night at all. It was like ladettes [sp ???] really ... very good though, it was good. So even

when ... now when you had your first course for lunch and evening meal, if a junior nurse rang the bell, the matron used to come and give us our sweet course, and it was very ... she was strict, but it was good. She checked all the laundry, and when it came back in, a nurse went with her and she checked everything. And even ... now we had to go across to the larder, she had the key of the larder and she locked everything in, and she give the cook all the instructions for the day and give her the ... what she had ... and for us, we had ... we used to give the teas to the ... we give the teas to the patients about four o'clock, and it would be bread and butter and jam, and if anybody brought a cake in for a patient, you know, she had a cupboard ... there were two cupboards in the nurses' kitchen and she had them locked, and the name was put on the tin of the cake, and she came and she cut the cake and she'd give the cake to the person, and if you were buttering the bread, she stood at the bottom of the table, you see, and watched you. I mean, she would give them bread – 'To the corners, nurse, to the corners!' (*laughter*) But she was marvellous, and there was nothing – I admired her, 'cos she never crept up on you, you know what I mean, you heard her coming, you could hear her click, click – coming along, and she never ... there was nothing, you know, everything was out in the open with her. And when I said to her – I was engaged, you know, to be married, at eighteen, you see, I can still see her sitting at the top of the table – 'Engaged! Giving up your career for a man!' (*laughter*) I can still see her sitting ...

EA-C You never had any desire to go ahead and do your nurse training?

Mrs C Well, I ... when you're young like that, you don't think of things like that. But, no, she was very good, I will say that. And I've been, you know, we had to take turns, we were allowed one day off a week; and before you went off you had to clean your ward out, and when ... we – no ward's maid, we had to do our own ward in the morning, when we came back down from breakfast, we'd polish the floors and dust, and wash roundabout and everything. They had one lady coming in once a week and she scrubbed all the corridors down. On her knees, that woman went right through in the sluices, everywhere, on her knees. She scrubbed, but we had to do it during the week, and we had no ward maid in or anything, we had to do it – even on my day off I did – I turned my ward out before I went off at nine o'clock – and you had to be in for ten then – that was your day off.

EA-C Tell me where you met your husband to be.

Mrs C (*laughter*) At a social – there were socials them days, not dances the same. We met at a social – that was it, so err ... but you see I'd started going with him before I went for a nurse. I was going with him at fifteen, so before I went nursing, so I mean ... must have been three and a half years before I got married, yes.

EA-C And so you got married, gave up the nursing.

Mrs C Yes.

EA-C And what did you do after that?

Mrs C Well we came out to the farm, *Bishopscourt Farm*. There was two cottages so we went to live in one of them. And them days there was no water – Matron was disgusted when she knew that. We did mind, we were young, we didn't ...

EA-C The cottage, was it a tied cottage with the job?

Mrs C Well, it was my husband's father that had the farm you see – Frank Crowe. At first, when we got married, well, my husband had three other brothers, so there was four brothers, and his father ... well, it was a rented farm in those days – the church owned the farm. And his father, in them days we were all milking by hand, so they ran the farm, they had the milk round, and father Crowe used to go off on horse and trap with the milk keg.

EA-C And what area would he deliver to?

Mrs C He delivered at Kirk Michael.

EA-C And did you have any experience of farming before you got married?

Mrs C Not at all, not at all, no, no!

EA-C So what's it like becoming a farmer's wife?

Mrs C Well, I wasn't really ... my mother-in-law and sister were on the farm, really, so I used to go over to help, and I didn't do any milking or anything like that, well, I used to help in the house and things like that for the mill-day and all, 'cos for

the mill-day there's be ... we had about three days of the mill and there'd be about seventeen men there to give the lunch – well, dinner – we had lunch in the morning dinner, then lunch in the afternoon – didn't give them tea, they all went home at teatime, generally. So I used to help in the house there. And then we got gradually onto ... we had the milking machine and that wasn't so bad, but then we started off with bottles – Dennis was the first. Well, father Crowe came to retire, you see, so we started off then with ... well, the younger brother was on the milk round then, and then Dennis took over the milk round and we went into bottling milk then – it was loose before that. And we bought a second-hand bottler and a second-hand bottle washer and so Denny and I filled the bottles – well, Denny and I filled the bottles of a day.

EA-C How many bottles would you fill a day?

Mrs C Oh, let me see now ... I'm just trying to count the crates now ... it would be four or five hundred, I think.

EA-C And would you have caps on the top?

Mrs C Yes, and used to cap them ...

EA-C Silver foil?

Mrs C Dennis used to fill ... he'd be on the machine filling it and he'd be ... he'd lift the crate to the table and I'd put the tops on and clamp them, and then I'd bring them out to the cold-room then, you know, we organised that.

EA-C Was this in the days before pasteurised milk?

Mrs C We never pasteurised, and we never sent any milk to the dairies, and the first time that ... we used to separate milk for cream – when we had surplus, we always separated, and then we decided to go out of the cream, you know, we needed a new separator and all – it was electric stuff, and the first time the tanker came up he said, he said, 'I can't get over this – it's the first time I've ever come up here.' 'Cos you know, he went to all other farms, but we never put any surplus, but then surplus went into dairy so ...

EA-C And did you have a dairy as well?

Mrs C Yes, we had a dairy on the farm, right by the parlour where we were milking, milk went from the ... when they were milking it went straight into the dairy, into a jar in the dairy, and then ... no, that was into the jar, that's right, and then it sopped up into the bottle-filler, you know – I'm trying to think now!
(*laughter*)

EA-C And was it just dairy cows that you had?

Mrs C No, there were sheep and cattle as well.

EA-C What breed of sheep and cattle?

Mrs C We had a mixture of cattle, you know. Well, you see, with dairying we had *Friesians* which you had to have a bull, you know, to go with the *Friesians*, you see, because ... to get the right ... with the *Friesians* being the thinner breed of milking breed, you see, you had to have ... a different type of bull, you know, to get the round one?

EA-C Did you often have to call the vet out to your animals?

Mrs C Yes we did, but them days, our men were very good at lambing sheep, you know, they weren't ... they didn't have too big a hands, you know, so they were able to manage to lamb the sheep. It was not often they couldn't get a lamb, you know, they were very good at lambing sheep. But oh yes, you had to call a vet, yes. In them days it was two government vets and they were very good, they were good to advise you. It were two government vets at one time, and they were very good to advise you what to do.

EA-C Were you ever affected by the foot and mouth disease, or any other outbreaks?

Mrs C Yes we were, yes we were. My son ... I was out at the farm, then, and oh, that was terrible. We had lovely cattle, nothing wrong with them! Had to dig a hole and ... it was terrible, terrible ... terrible. There was nothing wrong, we didn't know ...

EA-C Well, who was living in *Bishopscourt* at the time?

Mrs C In the main *Bishopscourt* at the time? Oh well, oh well, there was ... Bishop

Pollard was there, I can remember him well. Before that ... I can't remember now ... who the bishops were.

EA-C Did you have any contact with the Bishop – did you ever see him around?

Mrs C No ... well, we ... when we first got married the Bishop was in there ... I forget his name ... used to always have a Bishop's Party every year and invite everybody from roundabout – yes, he did. And it gradually died down, you know.

EA-C What was the interior of *Bishopscourt* like, can you remember?

Mrs C The main *Bishopscourt*? It was very good, you know, you went in the house, like. There was a nice entrance there and then the stairs went up to one side, and ... you know, walked along the top ... and there was big kitchens there, you know, we had meals in the big kitchen. They had their tea, you know, it was all set out – it was nice, yes.

EA-C Did you supply *Bishopscourt* with their milk?

Mrs C Yes, oh yes, all round there. Yes, we were lucky, we had most of Michael and the ... but the milk round, it was good, yes.

EA-C When you first went to live at *Bishopscourt Cottage* ...

Mrs C Yes.

EA-C ... and you were doing the milk round, was it still being delivered by horse and cart?

Mrs C Yes.

EA-C Tell me a little bit more about that.

Mrs C Well, father Crowe – we used to have one big keg – a couple of big kegs and father Crowe used to go off early in the morning and (*laughter*) he'd go through Michael and people used to see the horse coming, had a piece of bread for (*laughter*) you know, and if you weren't quick – if he wasn't quick enough,

father Crowe, you know, he'd be going to the next house with the bread. (*laughter*) And father Crowe, he was a happy-go-lucky, you know, he enjoyed going round on the milk round, he did. (*laughter*)

EA-C And how did people actually get their milk?

Mrs C They come – they had a jug – they'd leave the door open, you go in and the jug was there – you knew where to find the jug. You just went in, 'cos you used to be ... I used to do rounds – well, that was later on, we had a van, then. No, people used to leave their jug for us, and went in, the door was always open and you went in and put the milk in the jug and put a saucer over it or something, and ...

EA-C And when would they pay for that?

Mrs C Once a week at the weekend, yes.

EA-C Can you remember how much a jug of milk would have cost?

Mrs C Well, Dennis always used to say, 'A pint of milk used to be the same price as a loaf of bread,' but not now.

EA-C Whereabouts did you go shopping, as a young wife? Where did you do your shopping for groceries?

Mrs C In Ramsey. You see, there was rationing in them days. See, when I was at the hospital, my ration card went into the hospital, and they dealt in Blackburn's in Ramsey, so I still dealt with them. I still had me ration card and I had Dennis's then. And they used to deliver once a week to me – put your order in, and they come out in the van and delivered it, yes.

EA-C And what about fresh meat and fish?

Mrs C We had a butcher in Michael, yes. We used to ... fish ... Samuel's used to come round with fresh fish. The herring-man used to ring (*laughter*) 'Fresh herring, fresh herring!' My sister was only speaking of that the other day, there, you know, he used to come round in Ramsey, 'Fresh herring ...' you used to hear the bell ringing on the old cart. (*laughter*)

EA-C Did you do a lot of baking at home?

Mrs C Yes, we did.

EA-C What kind of things would you have baked?

Mrs C Well, tarts, mostly, for the men, and err ... I liked to make sponge cakes and things, scones and things like that. Well, and pies for the men, likely.

EA-C Did your husband have any help on the farm?

Mrs C Well, he was with his parents, as you know, but then, when we ... latterly ... after ... my son was about fourteen, then we went ... besides having *Bishopscourt Farm* – the main farm there – when he was fourteen he went and took over another farm, opposite, *Lower Bishopscourt Farm*. Well, Dennis and I, Frank, moved over there. We also took a farm up further. Well, no, the other three brothers ... there was Douglas and Sidney and Dennis, and Frank was just ready to leave school, we were ... we had the two farms then, and Frank, before he went to school, I used to go with him and we would go down and we had loose-boxes there, before he caught the bus to school at eight o'clock, he used to go down and give them turnips and hay before he went to school. I'd stand with the door while he fed them, like. There used to be a black cow, a black bullock used to come out, and I'd say, 'Are you there, Blackie?' and he'd come to the door and I'd just give him a hug, and he went off to eat, then, you know.

EA-C How long were you involved in farming?

Mrs C Well, we ... well, Dennis retired, we came up here, retired – he was 74 when we retired. Came up here, well, we couldn't ... it was a bit awkward, you see, because the Crowe brothers, there was Dennis and Douglas and Sidney, they were in partnership when we took on the three farms – they were all in partnership, we took one on hire – we didn't have the house to that, we only had the land, and we rented them, we rented all them, 'cos we ... Lady Ravensdale owned the farms in them days, 'cos it had been sold from ... church used to own it, and then Lady Ravensdale's mother bought it and she left it to Lady Ravensdale. Well, she owned the three farms, you see. We rented off her – the three farms. She gave ... she was friendly with the people in the top farm and she kind of give the farm to them – she was very friendly with them, so she still

had the two farms, you see, so there was still ... Dougie, Sidney and Dennis were running ... the three Crowe brothers ran the three farms – Frank was there working, like the son was working for us then. Well, they come to retire, they were getting older you see, Dennis was next to youngest, so Dougie and Sidney wanted to retire. So we had to let the bottom farm go then, because we couldn't manage. We had to pay Dougie and Sidney out, so we couldn't afford to keep our farm going. We still rented the top one. Well, it was awkward, you see, by the time we'd done that, we just then ... when they retired, it was Denny and Frank ran the farm now, Frank's in it, so we just had to have the one farm, but we kept the top farm on, we managed to keep the two on – that goes well with the thing ... so then they wanted ... so we took over the top farm then, and we lived there 'til, and we were in the milking, well, you couldn't do anything else because you hadn't the money, you know, we had to ... so err ... then we heard they wanted us to buy the top farm. Well, we had to scrape to buy the top farm ... land off these people. So we did, then Lady Ravensdale said one day, 'I'd like you to buy *Bishopscourt Farm*.' I said to Dennis, 'How are we going to manage?' you know, we'd have to put a mortgage in, but we managed, he said, 'We'll manage,' and we did, we did. With a ... we had to get a government loan to ... you know ...

EA-C How many acres were in *Bishopscourt Farm*?

Mrs C In the two ... there was about five hundred ... five hundred.

EA-C And what was the name of the top farm?

Mrs C *Bishop's Domain* ... *Domain*... There's just two, now, there's only Frank and Frank's son running ...

EA-C Your grandson?

Mrs C My grandson, yes.

EA-C And they're still in that farm.

Mrs C Yes, they're farming it now. So they had to go out of the milk, because they couldn't ... well, so many restrictions, you know how they are? Everything ... we couldn't afford to make it nicer. They went out, so they just have sucklers

now, and sheep, so they can run it themselves.

EA-C Can you tell me a little bit more about Lady Ravensdale – who was she?

Mrs C Well, her mother was Lady Salmond and I think her father was ... he was ... well up in the RAF – I don't know what it was, but she lived down at Bride – she came over here to live and she lived down at Bride, at ... I forget the name of the farm ... but she had a [unclear] – she was an artist. She'd got a big outhouse she made into a big room with all her art in. It was lovely, yes, it was very nice. She was a real lady, she was very nice.

EA-C And Lady Ravensdale, did you have much contact with her?

Mrs C Oh yes, yes, yes, oh yes. She used to go down to see her. And I'd make her come in, and come into the kitchen and make her some lovely tea. Oh, she used to say, 'You're wearing well, Dennis.' (*laughter*) And the poor lady, she was determined for us to buy the farm out – 'I want you to buy it,' she said. So we managed to buy it, and you know, she died about a year afterwards – collapsed in the bathroom, and ...

EA-C Was Lady Ravensdale anything to do with Ravensdale Castle?

Mrs C No, nothing, no.

EA-C Where did that name come from?

Mrs C I don't know where that name came from. No, she had nothing to do with that, no. Husband ... she was married, but the marriage didn't ... you know, she was separate from her husband.

EA-C Did you ... did you like living in the country, 'cos you grew up in the town?

Mrs C Yes, well, I did, yes. I was just thinking that I have the laptop here, so (*laughter*) I bring up ... I brought up *Bishopscourt Farm*, and I got all the family tree came up. So Dennis is on it, and Frank – well, Frank's name is not on it, but it's come down as far as him, but, go back generations there. Well, Dennis's grandfather was in that before him, you see, his grandfather, and Denny's father and his grandfather were in it, too, before that, you see – they all came from Michael,

the Crowes are a Michael breed. (*laughter*)

EA-C Are you related to any Crowes elsewhere on the Island?

Mrs C No, I think going back in generations I think we're related to Fred Crowe in Peel, I think, I think we are ... there on the Crowe side, yes.

EA-C When you were growing up and you were a young child, would you have remembered hearing anybody speaking in Manx?

Mrs C Well, there was two aunts of my mother's. Well, one of the aunts was ... she had lots of Manx saying – I didn't, my sister was with her a lot – used to go out and stay with these aunts in Bride, you see, so well, she used to go out and stay with them, and she had quite a few ... they used to have quite a few Manx sayings. She always used to call it, 'Going to *Rhumsaa* [Ramsey].' *Rhumsaa* – she always said *Rhumsaa*. Now I never heard it, but Dot, my sister, heard it. She said that she always ... Aunt Edith always said, 'We're going to *Rhumsaa*.' She always said *Rhumsaa* – so it's still going this, on the buses, *Rhumsaa*.

EA-C Can you remember any other Manx sayings?

Mrs C Well, no, only the ... only the ... (*laughter*) no, I can't! Dot could, but I can't, I'm not very well up on them, no, no I'm not, (*laughter*) no.

EA-C Well tell me about transport. How would you have got from the farm into Ramsey town?

Mrs C We went by bus where the Joe ... Joe thing ... oh, isn't it awful? He had a private bus, and he used to go in, and he was very good to everybody – it'll come to me in a minute, and if anybody ... he used to come as far as Michael, and he was very good, if anybody wanted medicines and all, he would go and get them, and ... you know, he was very good, he was getting – pick up parcels and bring them out to people and all. And he used to run the bus and the railway ... well, we used to call it ... the ... the bus company now, they used to run a bus and people would let that go past and wait for Joe – they would wait for Joe and let that bus go past and wait for Joe. And when we first got married he brought a roll of lino out for us on the bus!

EA-C Can you remember getting your first car?

Mrs C Yes.

EA-C What kind of car was that?

Mrs C A little *Ford 8*. And it was a wheel on the back, and it was second ... oh, you know, cars around much when we got it. It would be in 19 ... we were married in 1948, so it would be 1949 we got the car – this little *Ford 8*. And I can remember we paid £125 for it – that was terrible – we were only getting £3 or £4 a week, so it was a lot of money. So we improved as the years went on. *(laughter)*

EA-C Did you learn to drive?

Mrs C Yes, I learnt to drive when Frank was about ... he had, when he was seven, he had trouble with his hip, he had birth disease as they called it – his hip was out, and he had a calliper on for a couple of years, so I learnt to drive so I could take him to school, you see, so ... and we had a ... we ... by then he was seven, we'd a van then, we bought a brand new van, then, but we had to paint it ourselves – you could buy it cheap and you could paint it. *(laughter)*

EA-C If someone had taken ill at home, or you had had an accident, would you call the doctor out?

Mrs C Yes, that's the only person you could call. Yes, you never called an ambulance really – you always called your doctor.

EA-C And how would he get out to you?

Mrs C They had cars in them days, yea ... but by the time we got married ... 'cos I was thinking when Dr Beaton had a car, it was ... he was very, when he first came, he only had a little car like we had bought, with the wheel on the back and all, and we used to like to call, 'The doodle-bug is coming,' you know, when he ... it seemed strange to see, that he was very ... more handsome then, you know, in this little doodle-bug car, and I said ... Mother said something to Dr Magee one day, he said, 'What are you talking about?' he said, 'I bought that car for him!' so he had enough heating off it when he came, but he ... if they had a car, he

would come out – they were very good to come out to you them days, they were. Wouldn't hesitate – never hesitated, they'd come to you, doctor never hesitated, in the middle of the night, he would come.

EA-C And would you have had a telephone at *Bishopscourt Farm*?

Mrs C At *Bishopscourt* the only telephone around was at the farm and at the main house, and people ... oh Dennis used to ... and people would ring up and say, 'Will you go down the road ...' or ... 'down round Orrisdale, tell them we won't be home tonight,' his mother would make him go off and ... 'we're not going to have a phone,' he said, 'they're only a nuisance!' And people used to come across, from all round about to use the phone at the farm – there were only two phones, that was just at *Bishopscourt*, the main house, and at the farm, they had a phone there.

EA-C And what about entertainment, what did you do for entertainment when you were young and newly married?

Mrs C Well, we had our friends, and Dennis had a friend that he'd always been friendly with, and they got married a month before us, Bobby and Moira, they got married a month before us and we always kept very ... I'm still friendly with Moira, and Bobby died before Denny, but I mean, we've always kept friends like that, always had friends. But the main things on the farm and all, used to be anniversaries and harvest homes. All people used to come – at the farm, when we were first married, father and mother Crowe, would be about two or three sittings for an anniversary, yes there would. People are coming – father Crowe – 'Come on up for a cup of tea, come on up,' he'd say.

EA-C Did you attend chapel?

Mrs C Yes, when we first got married we did, yes, down Orrisdale.

EA-C Did you ever attend chapel at *Bishopscourt*?

Mrs C Mother Crowe and Isobel, they went to church, they always went to church at *Bishopscourt* church – we didn't. But father Crowe went to chapel at night – he never went to church while they were busy on the farm, you see, but they always went to church, mother Crowe and Isobel, her daughter went to church,

you know.

EA-C Did church play a large part of your life?

Mrs C Well, not really, well you went to chapel every Sunday, that's all. And Frank went to Sunday school, he didn't go to church – well, there wasn't a church Sunday school, there was chapel Sunday school and he went to that.

EA-C Sunday school outings – do you remember them?

Mrs C Oh yes, well we went to ... we always had a coach, and we all went, you know, Dennis went and all, not at home, he always looked forward to it, when we were married, oh we always went, Frank went, so ... 'til he was about ten or eleven he went. Went all around, it was good, went over round south, and Silverdale and places like that, yea – we looked forward to that every year. But you didn't go ... latterly we went out when we got the car, we went out more, like, you know. But before that – when I was young, we never went. To Douglas was a marvellous thing, to get to Douglas, oh, yea! We went to Sunday school too, you looked forward to the picnics, and getting off school half-day (*laughter*) – that was good! I think when we were young we were very lucky really, because we had a very happy life when we were young. You could go out to play and no bother, you know, and it was good and we had a good life really. When you look back you think how lucky you were – had good parents and things like that. There was no fear them days, you see, when we were in Windsor Road we were going down into the park, you know, with father being there – fell in the lake, true enough, but ... it was good, really, when you think back – we were very lucky.

EA-C Did you have any chores to do as a child?

Mrs C Oh yes, you had to be ... if your mum ... well, you thought ... if mum was out when you come home from school it was a crime, but if she was out, you had to have the table laid for when she came back for tea, you know, had to do bits – not a lot. But we had to do shopping for our grandmother and things like that, but ... not really, we didn't have lots of jobs to do, only do the shopping – we had to do the shopping, we had to pay the bills on a Saturday – we went round, paid the bills at the Co-op, and paid for the coal and things like that – that was our job like, so ...

EA-C Let's go back to *Bishopscourt Farm* – who would have been your nearest farming neighbours?

Mrs C Across the road there was a Mr and Mrs Corlett farmed across the road. And we used to help a lot – there's *Bishop's Domain*, there was Teddy and Herbie Kermode up there, and Elsie and Mrs Kermode up there and they farmed, and everybody was good to help one another. You know, they would help one another, anybody needed – it still goes on with my son, really it does. But they helped one another which was good.

EA-C And would they have shared farming equipment?

Mrs C Not so much them days, no, no you didn't them days – well there wasn't so much equipment that needed you see, nothing like today.

EA-C Well can you remember the days of the horse and plough?

Mrs C Yes, well, we had two horses on the farm, two heavy horses – no, I think there was four! There was Queenie, I knew there was one – Queenie and Charlie – there was two, and Sidney used to do the ploughing mostly with them, and one day there were ... a fellow came down to talk to them and he had a little child there, I remember Denny saying, and the child went up to this horse, this big heavy horse was drinking out of the trough, and it went up and touched its leg. Well, they couldn't speak, couldn't speak; and the horse just turned round and looked at the child and went on drinking. They couldn't speak, you couldn't, could you? You see, with a child of that age, they ... you know, you don't know where they are, they're quick, aren't they?!

EA-C Farming is generally seen as a very dangerous occupation, because of all the farm machinery and equipment.

Mrs C Yes.

EA-C Would you agree with that, from your memories of ... from when you were younger?

Mrs C No, I wouldn't say that at all, really, because they're always very careful, very careful, they knew what it was all about. You know, you had just to watch

things, they were very careful.

EA-C Were there any favourite places that you liked to visit as a child?

Mrs C Well, (*laughter*) when we were young we used to like to go out to Bride because Mother's people came from Bride and the two aunts and then I had an aunt and uncle – they were living out at the Lhen, and we used to go out and stay with them, and I thought that was lovely, yes.

EA-C Would you have ever gone on holidays as a child?

Mrs C Not as a child – well, we used to go ... Mother had cousins in Liverpool and we went to stay with them, yes. They were cousins and they used to come and stay with us at Mother's at Windsor Road, and when we were young, I can't remember much, but Mother used to take the dancing lady – there was *Pierrots* in Ramsey, and the dancing girls stayed with Mother – they used to be practising, you know, dancing girls, and I can remember we got tickets to go to see them – I was only ... I would have been very, very young. And these *Pierrots* were running across the stage – I can still see it – and I was scared, I was scared, you know. (*laughter*)

EA-C Did you learn how to swim?

Mrs C Well we were just getting taught to swim when the war started. Miss Davis, Margaret Davis, she was just teaching us to swim and the war broke out. We had to stop it.

EA-C Where would you have learnt to swim?

Mrs C At the old baths in Ramsey (*laughter*) – outdoor baths. And it was good – it was cold! (*laughter*)

EA-C How would you have spent your summer holidays from school?

Mrs C Well, when we were young we were down the park mostly, because there was lots to do in the park. Well, you can always remember the sun shining and the ... my father used to have a boat, used to get the boat and go out to the island – there was rabbits on the island – yes, there was rabbits on the island in the park.

Yes, we used to go out there. And when they used to let all the water out at one time – the sluices, you know, and let the water out. Used to like to walk on it (*laughter*) – we loved it, we spent hours down the park really – it was lovely.

EA-C And would you have helped your father?

Mrs C No, no. No, never helped him, no.

EA-C But you'd see him, working?

Mrs C Working, yes, with the men, they didn't have ... you see the wartime was on then, and you only had an elderly man helping with a young boy at that time. No, there wasn't much help going. You had to rear all his plants himself, you know, in the nursery in the east. Used to like to go and see him when he was working in the nursery. (*laughter*)

EA-C World War Two broke out when you were a young child.

Mrs C That's right, yes.

EA-C What are your recollections of that?

Mrs C Well, at that time we were living in the Commissioners' houses – bus station like, and I can remember, there was men working, Mother had lodgers in, they were working at the airport. Well, you didn't understand then what they were doing there. They were getting ready for ... and as soon as the war broke out they all went home. I can remember that as clear ... and then afterwards when the RAF came over, she had the RAF fellows staying too, she did.

EA-C What about the internees, did you ever come across any?

Mrs C Not really, no, I never came across them, no.

EA-C How would your family celebrate special events like Christmas and birthdays?

Mrs C Well, Christmas ... well, it was just like every ... we just had the ... we didn't have many presents, put it that way. We put our ... hung our stocking up – that's all we got, and if there were any main presents, they were put in the sitting room

and you weren't allowed to touch them until you'd had breakfast. (*laughter*) We had our stocking, you know, there was an orange and an apple and a sugar-mouse and a few things like that put in the stocking, but any big presents were in the sitting room and you weren't allowed to go in there until you'd had your breakfast. And you had – usual, always a goose, probably, for Christmas. Mother liked a goose.

EA-C Can you remember some of the smells of the food?

Mrs C Oh yes, it was lovely, yes, yes.

EA-C What was your favourite part of Christmas?

Mrs C I can't think – well, I liked the goose, I did, the goose was lovely, you know. We always made ginger wine, that was it, we got the bottle of ginger wine – still do if I can get it – and we put it into a bowl – the essence, and you put two pounds of sugar to it and filled the big bowl up and it made about seven bottles of ginger wine and it was lovely that, it was a lovely ginger wine, that, I loved that at Christmas, it was good. That's what we had – well, there wasn't much drink going, you know, only the odd port or something.

EA-C Would your mother have saved the goose fat from the goose?

Mrs C No – oh yes! (*laughter*) Don't remind me! Whenever you had a bad cold you had ... your chest was rubbed with goose grease and brown paper were put on, and you were crackling and (*laughter*) and it didn't smell very nice!

EA-C Can you remember some of the shops that you would have gone into as a child in Ramsey?

Mrs C Yes, well ... well, we always went to the co-op, it still the co-op that's there. And ... when you went down the street ... now where do you start with ... Stephenson's Cake Shop was the first one on your right hand side from the square ... and when you went down further now ... there was a garage there, there was a garage, and then there was a butcher's shop – Quayle's Butcher's Shop was there ... and then Teare the grocer was there – my brother worked for them as a message boy; and then there was the Primitive Church was there but that's all gone now. And then there was a garage, chemist shop, and then there

was a cafe – Spelly [sp ???] Kelly’s Cafe was there; and then there was a ... Dorothy ... shop where they had children’s things and then the Co-op; and then on the corner then there was a bank at that time – the bank has gone to the other side of the road now. And then the other side was like a bicycle shop; and then there’s the paper shop, and then there’s a vegetable shop next to it; and then there was a grocer’s shop; and then there was a ladies’ clothes shop – Corletts; and there was a shoe shop then; and ... then Corlett & Cowley’s had a shop there, then Maud Cottier had a clothes shop; a sweet shop in the corner and then there was Clegg’s – was an ironmongers; then across the lane was Blackburn’s, that’s a grocer’s shop; and then the Misses Clarkes had a lovely shop, beautiful stuff; and then there was another baker’s and confectioner’s. Then there was a jewellers ... and what was ... and then there was a vegetable shop; and then on the corner another grocer’s; and across the way ... I’m not too sure who was in that shop ... I’m not too sure about the others now – what was in there – the photographers, I think. Go across the lane and then there was the fish shop – that’s still there; then there was another outfitters – like a clothes shop; then the Courier office; then the chemist again ... where the Chinese was – I think that was a greengrocer’s; and then there was a paper shop; and then the meeting hall – a small meeting hall there; and then on the corner was another grocer’s shop.

EA-C They would have all been independent grocery shops?

Mrs C Yes I think they were.

EA-C Do you remember the first supermarkets opening in Ramsey?

Mrs C Well, that would be the ... the Maple, would it, let me see, well, a supermarket would be Shoprite, wouldn’t it – Shoprite was the first.

EA-C What kind of newspapers and magazines would you have read when you were say, newly married?

Mrs C I think it was *The Woman* book I only got, it was only one book I got I think when I got married. We used to have *The Weekly News* which is still going. Oh, we always had *The Courier*, yes, that was very interesting because it was more the north, you see, if anybody came home on holiday, what’s-his-name was the editor, he used to go round and have a drink and he’d be talking to this fellow and that fellow and he’d get all the news of the north, you know, and it was

good, it was very good that – *Out and About* it was called, you know, in the paper, in *The Courier* that was.

EA-C Was that free at that time?

Mrs C No, no, we had no free papers, no.

EA-C Can you remember your first pay packet?

Mrs C Yes. When I was at the butcher's shop it was 15/- a week. When I went to the hospital, my first pay packet was £2 6s 8d a month, but I had my uniform, you know, we had to go measure for our uniform, we had to go ... well, we were measured and it was made for us, our uniform like, you know, we were measured for our uniform ... and that was my first pay packet.

EA-C Were you allowed to keep all of your pay?

Mrs C No, I gave half of it into Mother.

EA-C Were you still living at home at that time, or were you living-in?

Mrs C I was living in, oh yes, we were living-in – we weren't allowed out, no.

EA-C And you still gave half to your mum?

Mrs C Yes. No, we were ... oh no, you had to stay, oh you weren't allowed out at night, no way! Because ... I was ... another nurse and I – poor girl is dead now, but ... this lovely summer evening she said, 'Go and ask Matron to see if we can go out on our bikes for a ride.' So I went down, 'No, Nurse,' she said, 'no, you can't, in case there's an accident.' Good job we didn't go, it was race-time, there was a bad accident, and fellows came in, one fellow had his leg removed, and we were going all night in the theatre, so it was a good job we didn't go out – there was nobody there, you see, only her and the one person on night duty – that was all. And then another time I was on night duty on my own, and I was only eighteen at the time, but Matron – you could always go to Matron, she was upstairs, if you ever ... there was 24 beds like, you know, so I was on me own, and it was getting near morning, and I thought ... this lady had had a badly burnt foot, you see, so I was wondering ... she was a bit agitated, you know, and I was

going round, just nearly ready to...for the others to come on duty, you see, I was on me own, so ... I heard a crash, and I went in and she'd picked up a chair and put it through the main window! So I went up to her and I said, 'Oh, come here, go back to bed, look what you've done.' And then I just took the chair off her and put it back and put her back into bed, so I rang the bell and rang the bell for the girls to come, and in the end they came and Matron came down, and she said, 'You should have went for me,' but I couldn't! There was another lady in another bed there, so I couldn't, I didn't want to do, you know. So Matron came down and they had to get the police in, you see, and Matron came in and she said something and she knocked her across the room! (*laughter*) I've seen life a bit! But still, it was an experience.

EA-C Where was the police station when you were a child?

Mrs C It was just the main police station at Ramsey. You had respect for the police. Everybody had the respect, there would only be a certain ... count on your fingers certain ones in Ramsey who would ever be in trouble. There was no trouble in Ramsey, you never heard of it. Only certain ones, oh well, they ... they're always in trouble. But not like it is today, you know?

EA-C Do you think life is very different today?

Mrs C Very different, yes, it is. Well, we had a good life, I can say.

EA-C What were your parents like as they got older?

Mrs C Oh, my father was only in hospital for a week and he died. But Mother – I had Mother for a little while. She kind of had a bit of dementia so I had her with me for a while, you know, but she had the house in Ramsey ... my father was dead then, and I was at the farm, I was at *Lower Bishopscourt* then, but she wanted to go home – I had her with me and she wanted to go home and I couldn't stop her, you know, I couldn't stop her. And she was hitting me, and ... you know, and ... but my husband came home for milk round and she started, 'I want to go home.' I couldn't stop her. She went walking and Dennis got the car out and went down and he said, 'Come on, you must get in the car ... you've got to get in the car.' She got in for him, she wouldn't for me. And so she was got into a home then for a while, so ... but it upset me.

- EA-C** Hmmm ... is there anything that you'd like to do that you haven't done?
- Mrs C** Not really, because I've been very lucky, I've been out to see my brother twice in New Zealand, and my brother and his wife went with us when it was our fiftieth wedding anniversary we went to Canada ... on a trip to Canada, and so I've seen everything really and I'm quite happy with what I've got (*laughter*) as long as I'm able to keep going!
- EA-C** How do you spend your time now?
- Mrs C** Well, I've a friend, who comes, we go out about three days a week, company – go shopping together. And it's good, it's good, we have a good laugh and a joke and go to the dancing once a week, and we go shopping, well, I'm quite happy with that, you know. I go to see my sister in Sheffield – I'm going in about three weeks' time to see her in Sheffield. She lost her husband too, so, but I enjoy life, really, and I've got the car, and I get around. (*laughter*)
- EA-C** And how many grandchildren do you have?
- Mrs C** Well, I've got two granddaughters and a grandson, and I've got one, two, three, four great-grandchildren – they're all there, as you'll see from that [photograph]. (*laughter*)
- EA-C** So could you like to see your grandchildren and possibly great-grandchildren carrying on in farming?
- Mrs C** Oh yes, they've got – one of the great-grandchildren – me grandson has got two boys, Jake is very intelligent – he's just started school, he's five; and the other boy is just not three, he's a farmer – oh, farmer, he's nothing in his head but farmers and tractors and delighted, because his son, my son was always interested in farming.
- EA-C** Do you think farming is in the blood?
- Mrs C** Yes it is, in with it, yes, Frank has always been interested, so is this Freddie – Freddie, he's the youngest. (*laughter*) The other fellow, he's more ... he's more, you know, into schooling with ... but I think this fellow, farming – very lucky, really, 'cos it could go the other way.

EA-C But it means then that the farming legacy is carried on.

Mrs C They'll carry on, especially when we own the farms now, so I'm glad, I'm glad about it, 'cos me ... Dennis's father tried to buy the farms years ago, when they put the three farms up for sale, we couldn't afford to buy, he just wanted to buy the one, you see, so ... but they wouldn't do that, so in the end, we have got two, anyway, we managed to buy two, and I'm delighted!

EA-C Thank you, Mrs Crowe, for sharing some of your memories with me.

END OF INTERVIEW