

Interviewee: Dan McKee (DM); Margaret McKee also present	Interviewer: Betty Paisley (BP)
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BP: Dan, you've lived in Collin for many years but you were born in England.

DM: In Hampshire, aye, in a place cawd Fordingbridge, 1941.

BP: What are your memories of Hampshire?

DM: Not a lot [*laughter*]. Ah was five year auld when we came up here. Ma dad finished, was demobbed. Father was in the RAF, was stationed doon there, like, so we came back up an stayed wi granny for a couple o months an we moved into prefabs which used to be opposite where you are until-.

MM: Well, they were just built.

DM: Aye and then we moved up the road tae Rockhall Drive.

MM: An they were just built.

DM: Aye, great times.

BP: Have you memories of the war?

DM: Very little, very little. Nothing really like. We lived in a wee place cried Redcot which was in the middle of naewhere, like. Dad actually worked on a bombing range where they tested the bombs for the, for the submarine pens and things like that, like. No the bouncing bomb but the submarine pens, in France like. It was the New Forest, like, wi aw the ponies and things like that, like. Ah've been back since, the cottage is still there where ah was born, Redcot's still there an aw, that was the cottage in the middle o the moor. Well, it's no a moor, what dae ye caw it? No matter, we would caw it a moor. An we moved up here an ah was exactly five year auld when ah moved intae the prefabs.

BP: Ready for school.

DM: Ready for school, aye.

MM: First o December.

02m 30s.

DM: The prefabs are some, ah think they wanted, ye'll ken what prefabs are like. Ah mean they were temporary houses that were supposed to last ten years an they lasted forty, fifty years, like.

MM: Do ye no remember the other ones being born, Pat and Annie?

DM: Naw, no really, they were born in the New Forest, we were movin intae the New Forest an aw, like, in there cawd Sandy Balls which is now a big campin site.

MM: An yer cat.

DM: And the cat, aye, Moses the cat.

BP: Did you get a chance to ride any of the ponies?

DM: No, too young then, too young like. Made a lot of friends, ma dad and mum made a lot o friends doon there, auntie Cath, an that, she was fishing mad, you know, very much so. Then, as ah say, we moved up here, moved to the prefabs and then up tae Rockhall Drive. Mum and Dad died when they were at Rockhall Drive, ah think, so, aye, quite an interesting life.

MM: Did your Dad start on the railways when ye come up?

DM: No.

MM: No, he was a gardener.

DM: He was a gardener, Dad was a handyman, like, not a handyman, a nursery man, served his time at, ah think it was Kennedy's, on what's Georgetown Road now, ah think. There used to be a big nursery there, one field was completely nursery, like. Anyway he come back off the war, he went tae the railway, along wi his uncles, there wis aboot fower of them like.

MM: Brothers.

DM: Aw worked in the railway.

MM: Brothers or uncles? Brothers?

DM: Brothers and uncles. [*Stop there ah'm gonna have a puff.*]

MM: Rabbit for tea.

BP: So your father took you fishing sometimes?

Rabbit snaring 04m 36s.

DM: Aye jist in the Lochar, like. Wasnae as clean an clear as it wis now. And then jist to supplement the meals, we used to survive on rabbits at least twice or thrice a week, mince was a luxury. But the rabbits were caught along the railway, like, aw the railwaymen used tae put oot snares. Aye, quite enjoyed it, quite enjoyed it the rabbit, widnae eat it now, like, naw. Then Dad went tae the ICI, worked at the ICI for, at Duggans, for a while and then he moved tae Dumfries. Aye, interesting days.

MM: At Dumfries when I met you.

DM: Aye.

Schooldays 05m 30s.

BP: What are your memories of school?

DM: Aw school, well went tae Brig Street first, an that was the nuns that run that, well it wis ordinary teachers an aw, but it was a nun that was the heidmistress. Sisters o, Charity Sisters, was it Sisters o Charity? Ah think so.

BP: Were they strict?

DM: Very *[laughs]*.

MM: Well, ye'd tae dae yer times table when-.

DM: Aye, ye never forget Sister Aloysius, that's for sure.

BP: Do you remember the punishment?

DM: Naw, jist, she'd a sharp tongue, like, naw naebody got punished there. And when we finished there ah moved to St Andrew's Boys in Glasgow Street. It was a guid school like, it wisnae a bad school.

BP: What lessons did you enjoy?

DM: Anything, Geography was maist liked, History, still do to this day. Aye English and Mrs Maxwell wis oor class teacher an she was the Station Maister's wife at Brax, guid teacher, guid teacher. Ah can still dae the twelve times table *[laughter]*. Aye, very much so.

MM: But ye jist missed goin tae the college didn't ye?

Work 07m 14s.

DM: Then ah went tae, no ah couldnae, ah tried twice tae get intae the college but ah jist, jist hadnae enough marks. Maybe jist as well. Then when ah left school ah went tae Gibson, the slaters. Ah was there jist ower a year and we had a disagreement an so ah left and then ah went tae the Motor Company.

BP: Was it an apprenticeship?

DM: Yes, aye, ah did a year.

MM: St Teresa's was your highlight.

DM: Aye we actually slated St Teresa's when ah was there, like.

BP: Uhuh.

DM: Long days.

MM: [?] the spire.

DM: An nearly killed the foreman. We had a hoist *[laughs]*, pulled the string on the hoist an ah pulled it too hard an aw the slates came off it an come doon by the earhole. He chased me for a week efter that. Sammy Rammles an I sat for nearly a week, sittin boring, sorry a week, nearly a month sittin borin slates an sortin them oot, like. Thick yins and thin yins.

Road Haulage 08m 29s.

An efter that, ah went tae the, as ah say, ah went tae the Motor Company an ah drove their van. We did aw wee jobs an wee flittins an the Sunday papers. Aye, an by that time ah must have been nearly twenty-one cause ah went tae a haulage contractor cried Sandy Wood, at Keir, an drove for him for, ah cannae mind noo, aboot four year.

MM: With old lorries.

DM: Aye, auld lorries an ah mean auld lorries, like.

BP: How far did they go?

DM: Everywhere in Britain, we hauled sheep an cattle an potatoes, we jist did general haulage.

MM: Tae Wales an everywhere.

09m 19s.

DM: Aye we went intae Wales an that, aye.

BP: So, did ye meet Margaret there?

DM: No.

BP: No?

DM: Ah met her in the Assembly Rooms.

BP: At the dancing.

DM: At the dancin. Ah but you werenae in the [?] when ah wis wi Sandy Wid.

MM: No, you were at Carruthers at New Abbey, weren't ye?

DM: Carruthers, aye. Fae there ah went tae, ah went tae Carruthers at New Abbey, like, an ah was there, what? Ah must have been there nearly three or four year, ah think.

BP: Driving again?

DM: Oh aye. Timber doon the wey an feedin an things back up the wey. No, ah missed a bit, ah missed a bit there, ah went to Blue Band Motors.

MM: After oo were married were ye no?

DM: Wis it efter, no before we were marit.

MM: Oh ah cannae mind. When did we get married?

DM: Sixty-seven. An ah worked there for a year, or something. An that was aw London, that was a trunk road job, like. We yist tae run at night, doon tae London, twice a week yin week and three times the next week.

BP: That must have been hard.

DM: Oh, it was hard gaun. Never thocht onything aboot it in them days like. It was tirin, like, because ye were always nights, but ye used tae get intae a place called [?], it was jist outside London like, an ye chainged ower there. An there were digs there. Everybody stayed in digs then. We used tae get intae oor bed at four or five o'clock in the morning. Good digs, like, guid digs. Then up at three or four o'clock in the efternin, a full meal an then back up the road, sometimes deliverin on the wey, sometimes jist straight back tae Lockerbie. Aye it was a guid life, like, a guid life.

11m 12s.

MM: For some [*laughs*].

DM: Aye.

BP: You would know all the transport cafes then?

DM: Aye we knew where tae stop an where no tae stop. There was nae motorways, no many motorways in them days, ye see, there was only bits and pieces. We used the auld A5 gaun across the way, there was nae M6 across the way then. No, no. come doon tae Cannock an turn off the A5, it was dual carriageway in them days, like, it wisnae motorway. There was a wee bit by Preston an that was aboot it. An the M1, like, ye picked the M1 up at Watford. No, that A5 [*laughs*], a policeman woke me one morning, ah was sitting at the traffic lights, ah had fell asleep waitin on the traffic lights chaingin, 'C'mon Jock, ye cannae sit there, ye'll hae tae move'. Efter that, as ah say, ah went tae, a met you then, ah met her then, an ah went tae work for, we yist tae caw him that auld [?] [*Laughter*] Jim Carruthers.

MM: At New Abbey.

DM: At New Abbey, he had four lorries an aboot six buses. Aye he was a decent soul tae work for.

MM: Was it his car we had for a weeding car?

DM: Aye, it was his Humber Snipe...

MM: Oh, that's right.

DM: ...that we got, that we yaised as a weddin car. Aye it was a great, aye it was a guid existence, like. We used tae dae Ellesmere Port an then across tae Liverpool or Manchester, an load and back again, twice, thrice a week then, depends what wis gaun.

MM: Cannae remember yer wages fae there, can ye, which is a shame?

DM: Nup. Fae there we were in Collin when we moved, ah must hae been still there when we moved. Aye, when Hamish was born ah was in Cambridge.

MM: Sorry, ah thought ye were in Glendarule.

13m 36s.

DM: Naw ah was in Cambridge. Aye picked up a lot an loaded an emptied in Ellesmere Port, loaded a crane in Liverpool an went tae the Infirmary in Cambridge, the new Infirmary they were building, a new hospital they were building, an ah think ma some was what, aboot twae days auld afore ah seen im the first time. Didnae get time off in they days, like, no like they dey noo. An then when ah, ah left him an went tae the Kennedy's, the timber merchants.

BP: Was it a better job?

DM: It was a better job, aye, no it wisnae sae much a better job it was jist, ah cannae mind why ah left. Oh, he wouldnae gie me ony mair money, that was it, aye, he wouldnae gie me any air money so ah decided tae gaun tae Kennedy', an they were timber merchants. It was aw their ain stuff we hauled.

MM: Was that him in Penpont?

DM: Aye, we were based in Penpont but we had the lorry hame maist o the time. Maist o oor work wis oot here and ah did a lot of work oot in Inverary, in Argyll. Aye, quite an

existence, an auld eight-wheeler, thirty-eight mile an hour. We used to even gaun as far as St Helens, aye, thirty eight mile an oor, that's what it did. That's a long wey tae St Helens wi a full load, wi timber tae St Helens, tae the glass works, Pilkingtons. The only guid thing about that wis the forklift there, ye could lift a whole load in one go. Twenty ton, nearly twenty ton. Brilliant. Efter that, where did ah gaun efter that?

MM: When did ye go tae Jimmy Graham, when did Jimmy an you work thegither?

DM: Ah must have went tae Jimmy efter that. Naw ah went tae Pickfords first did ah no? Went tae Pickfords, worked wi Pickfords for about six years, like, in removals, aw ower Britain, some on the Continent. It was a guid job, but it got too heavy.

BP: What do you remember about the Continent?

DM: Jist had tae drivin on the other side o the road [*laughter*]. Naw, it was guid fun, ah mean workin for a big company like Pickfords it was well organised, aw ye paperwork an everything was bang up to date an everything, an there were nae hassle. The only hassle ye had wis wi Customs coming in, always seemed tae pick on me when ah come back in. An then ah went tae Jimmy Graham.

BP: That was a local firm, was it?

16m 46s.

MM: Aye, that's Jimmy himself.

DM: Aye the yaird was doon there. We worked for a company cawd Biggar Beef, we used tae run meat an that tae Smithfield in London an other outside shops, butchers' shops an things like that.

MM: Fresh.

DM: Fresh meat, fresh lamb, maistly lamb wi a bit o beef among it, but mair lamb as onything.

BP: Did they give you any roasts for the pot?

DM: No, no ye got none.

BP: No.

DM: No, but ye could buy the meat cheaper in London as what ye could buy it here.

BP: All this driving, Dan, did you have any time for hobbies or pastimes?

DM: Drivin was the hobby, ye didnae have time tae dae onything else. Ye yaist tae get a day or maybe a day an a half at hame an away again.

BP: The boys must have looked forward to you being at home then, on that day.

DM: An then ah went tae Annandale, Annandale Tiles, which we delivered, roofin materials, slates an roof tiles when ah worked at. Ah worked oot Newton Willows for a year, jist went doon on a Monday an back on a Saturday. Delivered, there was a yard doon there an delivered in Lancashire an then Yorkshire, some o Yorkshire places an aw. An it packed in and where did ah go, no Pickfords wanted me back an ah went back tae Pickfords for a couple o years but the job wisnae the same, wisnae the same. And ah went tae Miller's didn't ah?

MM: Sort o in between times as well.

DM: Aye, ah went back tae Miller Paterson.

MM: Local coal merchant.

DM: Ah finished ma workin days there, like. Had tae take early retirement because o the lung disease ah've got, 1999, an now ah'm retired an live in Collin [*laughs*].

MM: Listen, you could say about this house.

18m 59s.

DM: What are ye gaunt tae say aboot the hoose?

MM: Well, it's quite interestin. We actually bought it for £250.

DM: Dinnae tell them that.

MM: Pardon?

DM: Don't tell folk that.

MM: But the state it was in, it was amazing. It had freestone flooring an it was just like it wasnae even a but an ben, it was even poorer condition than that. Nae electricity and...

DM: There was electricity in it.

MM: ...and the water just-.

DM: The well was at the back, just there.

MM: So we had to do the whole thing, we had tae dig down tae get the proper depth from ceiling to floor and extended it, first of all, the kitchen and the bathroom. Then in later days we put on the other bedroom, you see. So through the years it's been ongoing, our renovations. Ah think we've finished now.

BP: How long have you been in this house?

MM: Fae we were married.

DM: Fae we were marit, well forty-six years or so.

MM: Ah was pregnant wi Hamish when we came here.

DM: Forty-six years, ah think.

MM: Yes, since 1967, you were married.

DM: 1967 we were marit, like, aye we werenae in it the first year.

MM: It would be the next year, no, ah was pregnant, ah think, an he was born in '69 was he? Aye '69 and Angus is 1971, ah think [*laughs*]. So we were here all that time, an the front door, that window, the door went out there, which was the most dangerous thing on earth, you know, that was the door. And we had a wee square window here, it was a nice wee window, mind you, jist at where the door is now. So that was a lot, it was a major conversion at the time. Thanks tae yer father an other people for helping.

20m 55s.

BP: I know you're very busy in the village and you're active in many different organisations. Can you tell me a little bit about your interests?

DM: Well, because o ma condition ah'm a member of the Breathe Easy group, which is people suffering frae lung disease, a social group.

BP: Where do they meet?

DM: In Georgetown Community Centre, first Tuesday o every month. Ah've got quite a following, like, ah think there's mair than about thirty-odd folk come tae it, aw spread ower, like, because wi this disease, no everybody attends an no everybody's well.

MM: Ye have been on the Community Council for how many years?

DM: Ah'd hate, ah'd hate tae say how many years ah've got. As long as [?]. Ah don't know how lang ah've been. It's twenty-five plus.

BP: And have you always been an office bearer in the Community Council?

DM: No, no really. Ah'm just the Vice Chairman just now. Was a Chairman for a while, cannae mind?

MM: The hall committee.

DM: Aye, Vice Chairman o the hall committee. Member o [?] Cottage.

BP: Collin Social Club?

DM: No, ah'm no on the committee o that, no ah refuse tae gaun on the committee, too mony auld craws in it.

BP: I think you help to drive for the Social Club, you drove the mini-bus.

DM: Ah drove the mini-bus for what?

MM: Two or three years when oo first joined.

DM: Two or three years, aye. It's like everything else age catches up wi ye an ye werenae allowed tae drive when ye were ower seventy. What else dae ye want?

23m 00s.

BP: And you're enjoying your grandchildren?

DM: Ah do, aye, very much so.

BP: Can you tell us about the ones who are abroad?

DM: Ma youngest son teaches in Qatar.

BP: Doha.

DM: Doha an he seems tae enjoy it, like, they come home every summer, we see them for a week.

MM: Because, you know, it's a wonderful invention isn't it, the modern invention, Skype.

DM: We Skype them every week. Ma other son just stays across, aboot a mile an a half away or so. We see them quite regularly an ma granddaughters. Aye, what else dae ye want tae know?

Cars 23m 47s.

MM: Our cars are very [?], make o car.

BP: Yes, anything you like about your cars?

DM: No, they're jist four wheels tae get roon about.

MM: Aye, but ye'd an auld Morris Minor, what was the oldest one you had?

DM: The auld Morris Minor, ah think.

BP: You mentioned the Humber Super Snipe...

DM: Aye.

BP: ...ah remember it.

DM: It wisnae a Super Snipe it was the yin below it.

BP: Hawk?

DM: Humber Hawk.

BP: Hawk, mm.

24m 10s.

DM: It was a Humber Hawk because it was only a four cylinder engine that was in it. That was, aye, the Super Snipe had a big six cylinder in it. The auld Morris Minor was the only car ah ever made a profit on. Ah bought it off ma brother for fourteen pound an ah sold it for nineteen pound an that had been aw ower England wi me. Went doon tae Clapton, we were doon at Sandy Balls.

MM: An Pat drove it himself tae Portsmouth umpteen times cause he was in the Navy.

DM: Aye, Pat used tae come up an doon the road, he was in the Navy, wi this auld car an ah'll tell you something, it didnae owe us a penny. Ah pit another engine in it.

MM: Split screen, had it a split screen?

DM: Naw, naw, it wisnae a split screen.

MM: Oh didn't it?

DM: No.

MM: Oh right.

DM: Don't think so, no. Jist kept four wheels under us an that was it.

Holidays 25m 06s.

BP: Where do you enjoy going on holiday?

DM: Well we usually gaun up tae see her sister in Drumbeg, in Sutherland. Ah've drove twae or three times tae France, Spain, enjoyed that but she'll no gaun back.

MM: Because your sister lives there, dear.

DM: Aye, but ah did enjoy Spain, like.

MM: When we had the caravan we went ourselves tae Holland, didn't we?

DM: Aye we had a caravan for a while tae, ah enjoyed that. But it got too much for us an Margaret was havin tae dae aw the work so we sold it. But we had it in some strange places, we had it, as ah said, we had it in Belgium an Holland an...

MM: Ireland.

DM: ...an Ireland. Aye, it did get aboot.

25m 58s.

MM: Ah think we always had a holiday, even when the boys were small.

DM: We always tried tae get somewhere. Even the year we were at Sandhead wi had a son wi a broken leg.

MM: That's right, [*laughs*], he was quite heavy to carry about. That was Angus. No, we did, people, like yourself, nobody had any money, had we, but we just got by. We just did it.

BP: That's right.

MM: Without credit cards in thae days. Isn't it true? There wasnae such a thing then, well, we didnae get involved wi them anyway, no.

BP: It sounds like an interesting life, Dan, thank you very much for telling me about it.

DM: Nae problem.

BP: If you think of anything else I can always come back.

DM: No, ah think ye've got enough on there, ah think.

End of interview.