

Interviewee: Marion Devlin (MD)	Interviewers: Hilary Alcock (HA); Flora McDowall (FM)
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INTERVIEWER	Hilary Alcock and Flora McDowall.
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SUMMARY	This interview with Marion Devlin was originally intended to be with her husband Ian. Ian had posed for a painting by the local artist John Halliday called <i>The Deacon Convenor</i> . Ian had been born and brought up in Kirkcudbright and Marion talks about some of the experiences he had with the local artists as a child. As an adult he worked for the local police based in Stranraer but moved to the Metropolitan Police where he quickly moved up the ranks. He and Marion raised their young family in London. When a devastating incident ended his career they returned to Kirkcudbright where Ian wrote books and furthered his interest in history and in particular local artwork. He amassed a collection which they discuss with Marion. He was also instrumental in acquiring the costumes and regalia he wore to pose in the painting <i>The Deacon Convenor</i> .

HA: So this is Flora and Hilary interviewing Mrs. Marion Devlin on April the Twenty-fourth in [REDACTED] Kirkcudbright.

MD: Correct.

HA: So we're going to start Marion with asking you a little bit about yourself where you were brought up we know you were born in Stranraer, how soon did you move to Kirkcudbright? Or did you stay there until you married Ian?

MD: No we got married in 1970 and moved to London in the end of 73 and we had fifteen years in London.

HA: Ah, that's interesting, so you didn't come to Kirkcudbright till much later on?

MD: No, we came tae Kirkcudbright in 85/86 somethin' like that. But Ian belonged here so.

HA: Did you know much about Kirkcudbright when you were living in Stranraer were you aware of the fact that there were a lot of artists living there?

MD: I knew there were artists but, at the time, not a lot.

HA: Did you ever come and visit Kirkcudbright?

MD: Oh yes.

HA: Did you why did you come visit?

MD: Oh no, it was only when I met Ian that I came to Kirkcudbright.

HA: That's when you met Ian.

FM: Courting.

MD: That's the word!

[Laughter]

HA: So how did you two meet?

MD: Well he ended up bein' a policeman in Stranraer and we met there.

01:27

HA: And you met then.

MD: Yes.

FM: Did he arrest you?

[Laughter]

MD: Oh no! Ah was young!

HA: So how did you meet, did you meet at a dance or - ?

MD: We met just through different things and then we went the dances, but remember I was only sixteen.

HA: You were only sixteen!

MD: Aye.

HA: So how long did you go out together?

MD: Ah, sixteen - engaged at seventeen and married at eighteen!

HA: Gosh!

MD: So tomorrow would have been forty-eight years married.

HA: My goodness yes, a long time.

FM: Child bride!

[Laughter]

HA: Yes, he was a bit of a cradle-snatcher wasn't he! How old was Ian then?

MD: He's three years older so there wasn't much in it.

HA: No not really and you moved after you were married to London?

MD: Yes.

HA: And where did you live in London?

MD: Hackney.

HA: Right and was he in the police force and moved - ?

02:22

MD: Yes, uh-huh transferred.

HA: Transferred from a Scottish police force?

MD: But then you had to go through all the college and everythin' again for the English law.

HA: Ah right and so was he in the Met?

MD: Mm-hm.

HA: In the Metropolitan.

MD: And then he was in Special Branch and he was in the C.I.D.

HA: Gosh, so he was plain clothes was he in the end? Right, how interesting.

MD: But the only thing is he got battered by a schizophrenic and he ended up with a brain tumour.

HA: Oh my, when he was in London?

MD: Mm hm.

HA: Oh my goodness.

MD: So that's why he had to come out the force.

FM: That must have been very shocking.

MD: It was.

FM: Especially because he was obviously so committed.

MD: He was.

HA: Yes.

MD: And then the other thing that changed money-wise was ye had lots o' money and then it went down to nearly nothin'.

FM: Of course, overnight. Did he get any sort of compensation for that? Nothing?

MD: Nope.

FM: He was off duty?

03:20

MD: No he was on duty.

FM: And he got nothing?

MD: Not a thing.

HA: It's a bit different nowadays, you'd probably have got a huge payout.

MD: He tried and everythin' but no, we could have went - ah canny mind the name o' the firm - if we'd put the house and everythin' up, but we thought canny take that risk so that was it.

FM: So you must have had quite young children still then.

MD: I had.

FM: What an incredibly stressful thing.

MD: Well that was it, and so they told him they said it was stress and they told him to go back to Stranraer, but he'd been through that many Harley Street doctors through the police and never picked it up but when he come back up here they found it was a tumour and then acromegaly, that's what he ended up wi'.

HA: Right, so was he when you were both living in London did you visit the galleries and things very much did he have an interest in art?

MD: We didn't have it, well Ian was always workin', and wi' two young children ye never got much o' a chance and then you didn't have family so ye were stuck.

HA: Yes and the children were small of course so when you came back up to Scotland where did you live then?

MD: When we came back up we lived in Twynholm for a wee while and we lived at Barcloy for a wee while just down from there, and then we went into Kirkcudbright.

HA: And what did he decide he would do for work when he came back up to Scotland.

MD: He couldn't work 'cause he had a brain tumour that they didn't know he had, it took them fifteen years to know what was wrong.

HA: So during that period of time he didn't work? That must have been so hard for you.

MD: 'Cause he kept gaun to the doctor's and they just said it was stress, but Ian went fae a thin man to a bigger man and everything grew, but acromegaly yer bones grow but if you think young people go as giants, whereas when you're gettin' older you get out the way and your bones grow.

05:17

HA: Right, so was that the end of his working life.

MD: Yup.

HA: He didn't work again?

MD: Thirty-six is when he stopped workin'.

HA: My goodness that must have been tough for you.

MD: And he loved his work.

FM: Well he was obviously incredibly ambitious, he rocketed through the ranks and I mean to go from Stranraer to London to Special Branch and all that, I mean that's absolutely incredible.

HA: And to C.I.D.

MD: He said he felt like Crocodile Dundee, hello hello and nobody answered! But no that was it.

HA: Gosh so what did he do to fill his time, 'cause he must have been - ?

MD: Ian loved history, 'specially local history, he was into everything like that.

HA: And he wrote books didn't he?

MD: Yes he's written a few, they're through there on the table.

HA: My goodness he's a really clever man.

MD: Oh he didn't like bein' idle, he had to do somethin'.

HA: Yes, and did you work during that time?

MD: No, because he wasn't fit to look after children or anythin'.

HA: Yes so you had to do it, yes.

MD: So on Boreland Road we had a garage an' a wee room at the back and that's where he sat and done his work, but ye didn't bother him.

FM: No 'cause he still kept it like a job, it was like he went to do his job and that was his job that he was doing.

MD: Yes that's it and he would come back at a set time and that was him.

06:39

HA: Yes, did he know a lot of people in Kirkcudbright?

MD: Well he was born and bred here.

HA: So he had lots of friends, yeah, so that was good so when did he start getting interested in the paintings?

MD: He always had an way that he liked things, an' he liked doin' art, he'd done wee paintin's o' his own and things like that but then when the exhibition started ah think that kinna pushed him that wee bit further.

HA: Had he mixed much with the artists in the town?

MD: Well he knew John Halliday and that, so...

HA: Yes, but he wouldn't have known somebody like Jessie King would he?

MD: No.

HA: That would have been -

MD: He knew her, he said he remembers some o' them is it Lena Alexander or Jessie King when he was young they were on bikes an' different things like that. Miles Johnston, he knew him.

FM: He'd be pretty much too young really to remember Jessie King I suppose.

HA: I think he probably would yes.

FM: But the other you know I can imagine, yes.

MD: But Miles Johnston, he said he used to go down there and he would show them how tae dae little cut-outs and things like that, Oppenheimer he used to carry his golf clubs for him an' then he would take them in and show them how to do it, that's what he said - they were a' very friendly.

HA: Yeah, I can remember Ian coming into the Harbour Cottage Gallery and talking about Oppenheimer and how they'd... because was Oppenheimer something to do with the probation service or to do with the council?

FM: I think he was a special constable.

HA: Oh, a special constable so that's how -

MD: I know Ian used to carry his clubs for him and then he would take them in and show them how to do the paintin'.

08:14

HA: Oh really, he actually - ?

MD: He'd take his off the easel and put his up aw he used dae that wi' a' the young yins, so it was quite good.

HA: So when did Ian actually start buying paintings, because he got - well - you've got some collection here!

[Laughter]

MD: Quite a while ago.

HA: Really?

MD: Uh huh.

HA: How did he start?

MD: Well when we were in London we've got John Allan's through there they're limited prints and that was the kind o' start and then after that, that was Ian.

FM: The floodgates opened.

MD: Yes, that was his hobby.

FM: I suppose he was because he enjoyed research and tracking things down, I know you told me about - you know - he would research things on the internet, obviously that was a friend of Ian's, he was on there looking and scouting around and finding things, he loved it didn't he?

MD: He did that was him he was in his glory if he could find something an' he was happy so.

FM: And he wasn't shy about sort of culling his collection?

MD: Oh no!

FM: And things, y'know, I remember him saying oh well I've had this you know but it's going 'cause I'm going to get a better one, or I've found a better one or -

HA: Yes he knew what was good didn't he and what was less good, he always knew that?

MD: No he always said he would change his collection for better when it was time.

HA: Keep improving it yeah, so how did he start buying, I mean when you started the internet wouldn't have been up and running?

09:40

MD: No, no we had paintin's before that, but then ah think bein' in Kirkcudbright and back with the art and everythin' ah think it got him started again.

FM: And things turn up in Kirkcudbright don't they, I mean if you're out and about chatting to people there's always, 'Oh I've got ...'. There's always something on the go, you know if people know you're interested, you know they'll say 'Oh I know you're interested in this, I've got a couple that you know' or 'My auntie's died and you know I'm ...', there's always something isn't there.

HA: Really?

MD: Oh, that's what happens.

FM: That's what happens.

HA: That's so interesting yeah.

MD: Or they'd ask Ian do you have such-and-such, and then if he didn't have it if he got them it would get it for them - but sometimes he sold 'em and regretted it!

HA: Really?

MD: Oh aye, once he'd done that.

HA: And who did he sell to then local people or tourists or - ?

MD: No, no, local people.

HA: Always local people.

MD: Everybody knew Ian.

HA: So he was a wee bit of a wheeler and dealer?

MD: In a fashion! Oh no, he enjoyed his art an' ah think everybody knew that, so they would come and ask.

FM: Well he's such fun to talk to about it, I mean I didn't know Ian that well but you know whenever you did talk to him about it, or when he said come round and I'll show you my pictures and, it was so fun you know 'cause he was so enthusiastic and it was always, you know, 'Well there is this, but there was that' or 'There is this, but there'll be a better one, I want to swap it,' so you know he was really into it in a big way.

MD: Well ah've had that many people sayin' ah must go an' he'll say ye must see ma paintin's, an' then an hour later they're still up the stairs or somewhere they were goin' an hour ago! So it didn't work like that.

11:26

HA: What was his most prized painting?

MD: The one in the stair, ye'll see it in a minute. Can't tell ye, ye'll see it in a minute.

HA: Ok ,that will be good to see it yes, absolutely. So what else is there did you want to say something about the - ?

FM: I did. I really wanted to talk to you, I mean obviously we have had a good chat or several should I say with John Halliday and he's as you know a great raconteur, and one of the

things we talked to him about was *The Deacon Convenor* - the painting of the deacon convenor, which obviously very much is about Ian.

MD: Have you seen it?

FM: I have seen it.

MD: It's good isn't it.

HA: We went and had a look at it didn't we.

FM: It's a great painting and you know obviously that's going to be something that is part of the Kirkcudbright collection.

MD: Oh, is it goin' in the gallery?

FM: Well I hope it is, I don't know they've got a lot of paintings and I imagine they'll be rotating around, but it belongs to the town now and you know obviously when we started this I thought we'd be talking to Ian, but as he's not here I hope you'll be able to talk to us a bit about it.

MD: Well, I hope.

FM: I'm sure you will, what I wondered if you could tell us a bit about was the history of the painting and the, obviously Ian's wearing regalia, now what's the story of the regalia?

MD: Right, the six incorporated trades of Kirkcudbright went up to the openin' o' parliament in Scotland and every other place had the regalia, they were only in suits so Ian thought that was terrible, so Ian bein' Ian, got to the Lottery done everythin' got money and got all the costumes and everythin' for the trades, and there was a lot o' carry on because we got it through the trades and Ian said if it doesn't work we don't get them, because you canny get Lottery money if ye don't go ahead. So, he got all the costumes and what he wanted was each time they got money to add to the costume to make it kinna more -

FM: Yes.

13:36

MD: So, it didn't work like that because he used to go to the town hall in the chamber and that's where they had their meetin's, but then it ended up in The Masonic, and Ian didn't like that, so that was it, but they never ever added one more costume.

FM: Oh really, that was it?

MD: Mm hmm.

FM: So how many did they have quite a number though haven't they got quite a - ?

MD: There would be six conveners and one o' the deacon, but then they had the flagbearer that ye never see nowadays, an' then Ian was wantin' to get a drummer's wi' the drum just to step it out, but never ever got that.

FM: But the ones he did get were rather spectacular.

MD: Oh they're lovely.

HA: Where are they now, the costumes?

MD: They wear them at Maggie's Tours they wear them at everythin', which they wereny for, really [...] but they were tae be just for special things, but now they wear them - but ah see York comes up an' they join them, so ye get different ones but ah don't think there's many in the trades just now, it's kind o' fallen away.

FM: That's a shame.

MD: Well lots o' people don't want to go to the pub, whereas when it was in the town hall they didny mind goin' and then there was quite a lot older ones that are no' here now but he loved his trades.

FM: Yes, so he'd been involved with that for quite a while, the trades?

MD: Yes.

FM: And in what capacity, or do you move from different roles?

MD: Well you go into one trade and then when that deacon goes you kinna nominate an' ye go up, 'cause that's Ian's photo through there, but he never - he's just got the chain on an' then after that they got the uniform.

FM: Quite a lot of work, we've been trying to get some grants and I must say I take my hat off to Ian because it's not easy!

MD: But once he started somethin' he went on for it, went on and on - but naw he had it nice and everybody was enjoyin' it wi' the hats an' everythin' they were all made and sorted out, same to the trousers, the breeches an' the shirts an' everythin'.

15:57

HA: Were they all made here in Kirkcudbright?

MD: Eh, don't think so 'cause he got somebody then t' get them for him and then they would get paid.

HA: He did well to get them through the Lottery.

FM: Yeah very good, so the painting *The Deacon Convenor* was painted in 2005 I think -

MD: Is that when it was?

FM: I think it was, how did that come about?

MD: It was John Halliday that was talkin' about locals, an' Ian bein' a local an' Ian gettin' the regalia for that, John was gaun tae paint his portrait - but it ended up that he was a paintin' in a paintin'.

FM: It's a most extraordinary thing isn't it?

MD: Isn't it!

HA: Well there's several paintings within that painting aren't there!

MD: I know, it took him months before he actually got his canvas sorted and then after that he started doin' it, but it's very nice, it's really nice.

FM: It's a lovely, lovely thing and actually in a way it's almost better because there you've got Ian sort of surrounded by all the things of Kirkcudbright, you know it's a marvellous -

MD: He's got a dodo...

FM: Yes, well that's John I think.

MD: Some'dy asked him John why, and John said why not? So, ah thought, other than that - see that was our little dog.

HA: Oh, which this one?

MD: Aye that was a Papillon, that was our dog. And that's a dogs bowl. But no ah remember Ian goin' an' sittin' in John's flat, above the showroom, that's where he was.

FM: Yes, oh yes, of course he was there at that time.

MD: And he took that.

17:34

FM: And did he have several sittings?

MD: He didn't have many no.

FM: And what did Ian think of it?

MD: He thought it was great, we tried to buy it but John wouldn't sell it.

FM: He's a terrible boy for not wanting to sell things!

MD: No, he wanted it to go to -

FM: Yeah, he wanted it to go to the town.

MD: Uh huh, but it would have went to the town eventually any road but Ian wanted to buy it an' nuh.

HA: It's a big painting.

MD: It's a big paintin'.

HA: Where would you have put that one!

MD: There would o' been a place!

[Laughter]

FM: Somebody else would have got bunked off the wall!

MD: Maybe a couple! But ah must say John is a great artist.

HA: Yes, he is we think he is too.

FM: And an amazing character.

MD: Yes, see that's a silver gun.

HA: Yes, we knew that didn't we.

FM: Yes, now what else did he tell us? The silver gun, he said this is a bowl that's in the museum.

MD: Is it the wassail?

FM: Except that it's not a painted bowl it's a wooden bowl, but he thought it was improved by having some lozenges with all the heraldry – oh, I don't know what these

18:38

things are called - 'armorial bearings,' I think they're called, and all these various little icons all around.

MD: Ah think they meant somethin' to John.

FM: Yes.

HA: What's this?

FM: That's the those are fruit there's a lemon an' a pear an' a peach.

HA: What do they represent?

MD: That's just John.

FM: Just have to quiz John on that one!

HA: Yes, it's a very interesting painting.

MD: No, but when Ian sat he thought it was just gauny be the paintin,' he didny realise it was a paintin' in a paintin'.

FM: Yes.

HA: And then there's another painting.

MD: That's another paintin' in a paintin'!

FM: A painting of Kirkcudbright.

MD: Aye a paintin' in a paintin' in a paintin'!

FM: Yes, were they chums, were they friends?

MD: They were.

FM: Of long standing?

MD: John knew - sorry Ian knew - John's father, an' then John as he stayed local so they were quite happy for a while.

FM: And did they sort of commune about art and all that kind of thing?

MD: John used to come here and talk away.

HA: So when you came back to Kirkcudbright did you always live in this house?

19:51

MD: No, we were in Boreland Road.

HA: Oh right, so when did you move here?

MD: The millennium, 'cause the garden was gettin' too much for Ian, so we moved here.

HA: Yes, did you have more wall space here?

MD: Well we were in the bungalow then.

FM: That was the other reason, more walls!

MD: We were in a bungalow, quite a lot o' paintin's in it, but then we moved here.

HA: Are your children interested in the paintings?

MD: Yes, especially I've got a granddaughter that's really intae it.

HA: Really?

MD: Uh huh.

FM: He must have been awfully thrilled about that?

MD: She does her drawin's she does her paintin's.

HA: How old is she?

MD: She's coming nineteen an' oh she's been intae it for a long time.

HA: Really, that's interesting, oh he would have loved that wouldn't he?

FM: Yes.

MD: Well he seen her artwork fae the school an' everythin' an' he thought it was great.

HA: Yes, did he encourage her a lot?

MD: Yup.

HA: Yeah I bet he did.

MD: They've got one that's she's eight and she's intae things like this, so we'll wait and see what happens wi' her.

FM: It's in the genes! *[Laughs]*

MD: Well it seems to be the girls, no' the boys so, though my son's a good painter and the art for everythin' like that but he didny carry on wi' it.

FM: What did Ian, and what do you, think about the new gallery what are you feeling on that?

MD: I think it's good and so did Ian.

FM: It would be nice to see it open won't it?

MD: Won't it? It shouldny be long now should it?

HA: June, I think is it June sixth or seventh yeah, something like that?

FM: It's very tantalizing now, you see all the vans outside!

MD: I was gauny say, there's that much work goin' on! Next tae have a wee sneak in an' have a look!

HA: Yes, wouldn't it be nice.

MD: But no, there's a lot of activity there.

FM: Uh huh, oh well I hope the painting does go up.

MD: So do I.

FM: Because it would be very nice.

MD: Well Ian told that many people about that, but they couldny get into the chamber tae see it.

FM: Oh how annoying.

MD: The only way ye get in if the caretaker had been there or somebody an' ye could get a sneak, but see when ye went tae the trades an' they done their meetin's he was sittin' there.

HA: It's a fantastic painting.

FM: It's such a big painting it does need a fair bit of space just to get far enough away to see it properly!

MD: Aye ye've got tae actually stand back and have a good look.

HA: Yes, because where it is now you can't really do that.

FM: You can't get far enough away I think it's just sort of in a holding, you know, it's on a wall in the council building but it's not - you can't see it terribly well, which is a shame.

HA: No, you can't.

FM: And what about the other things in Kirkcudbright the other sort of arty things, like the art trail and stuff ,do you think this Kirkcudbright artist town is - ?

MD: Just my opinion?

FM: Yeah.

MD: I think it brings people in, I think it's a good thing, an' ye see wi' other folk their talent, I think it's a good thing.

FM: Yes, it seems to have taken off a bit doesn't it?

MD: Aye, it's not half, got big.

HA: Well it can impact on the economy can't it really, and you know if people are coming into the town they're spending money in restaurants, cafes, shops.

MD: The only thing is we find is when we used to go a walk people would be lookin' for somewhere to go to eat at night, no' wanting tae go tae a hotel - there's nothin'.

HA: No, that is a problem yes.

[REDACTED]

24:04

MD: It could be open a lot better than that he just stands at the door, mind he had The Gordon House before, didn't he?

FM: Oh, I didn't know that.

MD: That was him that had The Gordon House, then they were changin' him he got somethin' tae do wi' his half-rent or somethin' there, so they put him out.

FM: The Gordon House is looking rather splendiferous, for us that's quite exciting I think.

MD: It's really nice.

FM: Can't wait to see that in action.

MD: What's happening wi' the Bay Tree next door, they're not there now are they?

FM: I have no idea.

HA: It looks closed up.

FM: It maybe is maybe somebody's bought it, I don't know.

MD: No no what they were doin' was lettin' the rooms.

HA: Yes that's what Hilary told me too.

FM: Oh, just sort of Airbnb?

MD: Just lettin' the rooms an' ah don't - ah think usin' the kitchen ah think that was about it.

HA: Not Airbnb, just letting the rooms.

MD: 'Cause at night time when ah go out [?] ye would see the workmen and everybody goin' in, so they must just let rooms an' then ah don't know if they get a cleaner?

HA: Oh I don't know.

MD: But ah think Joe and Geraldine are away up north somewhere aren't they?

HA: 'Cause she got a job or something I think, 'cause she was in I.T.

FM: We're drifting somewhat off topic!

[Laughter]

25:30

[...]

FM: So, I'm just trying to think if there's anything else on the art side that comes to mind, or any stories you remember from Ian about the artists or anything along those lines that we should record and remember.

MD: Well the only things are about Oppenheimer allowin' them in and gaun tae Miles Johnston and doin' the little cuts outs or cuttin' out for him, same wi' the potter, he went tae the potters and different things like that - he says they always encouraged ye, they never chased ye.

FM: It does actually - that's a very interesting thing that has come up quite a few times - that there were these artists in the town and they were very encouraging to children and really welcomed them in and gave them a go and -

MD: That's what Ian said, they never chased ye no matter what - they spent time, they never were in a hurry tae get rid o' ye or anythin' like that.

FM: Because I suppose quite a lot of artists and people, makers and things in the town now - but I don't know if it's the same kind of set up.

MD: I don't think ye'd be able tae walk in now and they would let ye -

FM: Well I suppose we've got the dreaded health and safety.

MD: Well, there's that included.

FM: Give a child a fretsaw then cut their finger off!

MD: Ye wouldny get away wi' that, but naw, when ye think about it - it might come back.

HA: And you weren't aware of the artists the same way.

FM: Well I think that's true, I think you're right, you know there are a lot of artists but they're in their studios working away - and the other thing that's come up a bit is that quite a lot of the artists it seemed that, you know, they were doing what they were doing and of course they had to make a living, but it wasn't done on quite the same basis that people work now.

HA: No, and they were much more bohemian in the way that they presented.

MD: Exactly.

HA: So they stood out in the crowd, now the artists look the same as everybody else.

MD: That's it.

27:20

FM: Incognito!

[*Laughter*]

HA: Well you would be!

FM: Slightly dirtier than most other people in the town!

HA: Yeah, but that is interesting that definitely has changed hasn't it?

MD: Yes.

FM: I think, well I mean I suppose part of it basically is 'time is money'.

MD: Well I suppose that's it.

FM: And you know it's lovely having people in and showing them things and chatting but -

MD: Well if you've got tae earn yer -

FM: Got to earn your crust.

MD: Ye've kind o' had it ,ye've got to get on so.

HA: Yes. But they were quite savvy, if you think how Jessie King was you know into Liberty's and people were painting murals for shops and universities and bars, so they were they did see it as an income generating thing.

FM: Uh huh.

MD: Well that's where Ian said when he was young Jessie King wanted a plate or somethin' fae his parents just a white one to put on whatever she wanted, but they never ever got it.

HA: Oh really?

FM: How maddening!

MD: For Ian it would be, but he says that lots o' parents got things done for their children.

FM: That was quite ... some it was quite a common thing wasn't it 'cause she just bought these blanks and if you were having a wedding or a christening or something people got these.

MD: That was it and you had them so.

28:42

HA: But that became a sort of little industry.

FM: Well it did, but of course it's like all the other like the little cut outs and things, you know as kids we all had them and because everybody had them you didn't look after them.

MD: That's true!

FM: They all got smashed!

HA: Yes, yes.

FM: Only really good children looked after them properly.

MD: And there wasny many o' them!

[*Laughter*]

HA: So did they actually sell them?

FM: The cut outs?

HA: Yes, and the cut out -

FM: Oh absolutely that was a -

HA: And the plates and things were they sold?

FM: Yes.

MD: Well ah've got a set o' Miles Johnston's cut outs.

HA: Ah. And you're looking after them!

MD: Yes! Same wi' all the pottery through here that I'll show ye.

HA: So did your grandchildren play with them?

MD: No. My children were never allowed to touch, grandchildren don't touch.

HA: Right.

FM: Quite a strict regime round here!

MD: Oh no, ah've always said that never let mine touch, so why should you let grandchildren?

29:44

HA: Yes absolutely, so they respect.

MD: Yes, they know from this – wee-est day - they knew, don't touch.

HA: Quite right.

MD: And they still come back! [*Laughs*]

HA: They know the boundaries and that's important.

MD: Yes that's it.

FM: That's great was there anything else that you would like to say or you remember relating to *The Deacon Convenor* painting?

MD: No.

HA: You don't know why he chose to paint such a big painting do you?

MD: John painted big.

HA: Ah.

FM: And he had space when he was in that place, if he was living above the showroom he'd have had quite a lot of room then.

MD: He didn't do it in the showroom, he had the bit down the bank, ken? Dee Walk? He'd got a lock up there an' that's where he done all his -

FM: That's where he did this?

MD: Uh huh.

FM: Uh huh but he'd have had a bit of space?

MD: He must have, Ian was in it, ah was never in it - it must hae been a big place 'cause he put a lot o' his paintin's there, but he used tae go there an' he spent about six months sortin' the canvas an' everythin' before he started.

HA: Yes, and you know that they got the costumes?

MD: Yes.

HA: For the men, there weren't any women?

MD: Women weren't allowed.

30:58

HA: Ah, that's what I was going to ask. So as a wife of the convenor, you didn't have an outfit?

MD: No, no, it's only men but now ah think there's women in it. Ah think they had to change for, the kinna the law.

HA: Yes the equality.

MD: Yes, but before it was only men.

FM: I bet there was a bit of grumbling about that then!

MD: What for the women comin' in! But it was always a man, never women.

HA: Right and what did they actually do in his -

MD: Well years ago if you were - well there's a hammerman there's different things so, if you made nails an' stuff an' there wereny good an' that that was your reputation - an' then ye had the glover an' ye had different things.

HA: So were they like a sort of guild?

MD: Uh huh.

HA: Ah I see almost like a union.

MD: More or less, so they all had tae if ye wereny very good you would hear about it.

HA: You were thrown out and you didn't -

FM: Because there is a painting in the Dumfries and Galloway collection isn't there, I think it's called something like 'The Kirking of the -

MD: Oh, the Kirkin' aye.

FM: Of the trades.

MD: Aye.

FM: And it's got various of the artists are actually in the painting I think it's a Hatrick, isn't it?

MD: Aye.

FM: And it shows them all down at the Tollbooth corner looking very serious indeed, yes.

32:25

MD: Oh no, that's how ye did yer trade - if ye wereny very good that was it.

HA: You were thrown out.

FM: So which trade was Ian?

MD: The hammermen, I think he was in, don't ask me why.

FM: That was his choice.

MD: Whether he got a choice ah don't know.

FM: I don't know, that's interesting, so you didn't necessarily have to have been in the trade for this?

MD: No. No ah think the biggest majority in it wouldny be in the trade.

FM: So quite – ah, I mean it's an honour to be part of it.

MD: Exactly, well it was, now it's kinna fallen away but Ian Swan he was the deacon convenor just lately, so an' he's got a different trade.

FM: Yes.

MD: But no, John was happy doing that.

FM: He enjoyed painting it?

MD: Oh he thought it was great.

FM: And he was pleased with the result?

MD: He widny let Ian see it tae it was finished.

FM: That must have been very frustrating.

MD: It was, an' Ian used tae gaun in tae talk tae him an' that an' see if - but nuh, he widny show him it.

HA: So when did you actually get to see it?

MD: When it was finished.

HA: Were you invited down to look at it or ...?

MD: No.

33:36

HA: So how did you see it?

MD: It was Ian that seen it first an' then John had his house an' that's where he had it in so that's where we seen it, an' then when he sold it or to the council he had a kinna tea an' everythin' an' that' -

HA: It was presented?

MD: Yes.

FM: Can you remember what Ian's reaction was, 'cause as you say he was expecting to see something completely different, what did he think?

MD: He thought it was great! He thought it was great that John could put this, but he knew not to ask John why the things were in there -

FM: Better than us then, because we gave him a real grilling, didn't we?!

HA: Yes!

MD: Well we knew that was the siller gun an' then he was talkin' about the dodo, but somebody had asked him about that an' he said why not? So the rest would be why not!

HA: I wonder why the bowl is as big as it is? It's huge isn't it?

FM: I haven't been to the museum to see the original one. I don't know how big it is, I mean maybe that is how big it is.

HA: Maybe it is a big one yes.

FM: Very interesting.

HA: The hat's quite large too.

FM: Yes, I suppose all the different feathers are probably representative of different trades are they or different - ?

MD: Yes, they've got different colours.

HA: Yes, the cockades are different colours.

MD: Uh huh an' then ye've got a kinna goldie one, ah think that's the deacon.

HA: Right.

FM: He certainly looks like a very powerful man sitting there.

35:05

MD: Oh he enjoyed it!

FM: I bet he did.

HA: It's a lovely thing to have.

MD: I've got the postcards o' that.

FM: I bet you've got hundreds, you should have!

MD: I've got quite a few!

FM: Okay, well unless there's anything else, I think that's terrific.

MD: Ah canny think on anythin' else.

HA: Yeah it's been great.

FM: That is absolutely brilliant thank you so much.

MD: You're welcome.

FM: Really, really nice.

35:31