

Interviewee: Donnie Nelson (DN)	Interviewer: Caroline Milligan (CM) and Mark Mulhern (MM)
Date of Interview: 9 February 2015	Ref: DG11-3-1-1-T

TITLE	<i>Donnie Nelson interviewed by Caroline Milligan and Mark Mulhern in Stranraer</i>
REGION	<i>Dumfries and Galloway</i>
SUBJECTS/KEYWORDS	<i>KEY THEMES AND SUBJECTS Scots accents; Proposal for Stranraer and District, Lives in Trust, Regional Flashback; Stranraer and District Local History Trust; The Nelson Collection of photographs.</i>
COUNTY	<i>Wigtownshire</i>
TOWN	<i>Stranraer</i>
DATE OF INTERVIEW	<i>9 February 2015</i>
INTERVIEWER	<i>Caroline Milligan and Mark Mulhern</i>
YEAR RANGE	<i>2016</i>
SUMMARY	<i>For this interview Caroline Milligan and Mark Mulhern met with Donnie Nelson, of Stranraer and District Local History Trust, to discuss the proposal for a Flashback book based on the oral histories collected by the Trust between 1999 and 2016 which have been gifted to the Dumfries and Galloway Project. Donnie was a printer and reporter for the Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press and during his time there he ran a column 'A Peep at the Past' printing old photographs of the region supplemented with background information. The resulting collection of photos is now in Donnie's care and during the interview some of these were looked at with Donnie giving contextual information for them. A selection of images from the collection were used in <u>Regional Flashback: Stranraer and District Lives</u>.</i>

Donnie Nelson – DN: Caroline Milligan – CM; Mark Mulhern – MM.

Key Words: Scots Accent 0h 00m 00s; Stranraer and District Local History Trust 0h 02m 30s; Flashback proposal 0h 06m 20s, 0h 33m 48s; The Nelson Collection 0h 22m 48s.

Scots Language 0h 00m 00s

DN: Listen together an he could always tell, he would refer to a photie, meet somebody for the first time, an ah would say 'He's frae your area, Martin.' 'No, no', he says 'He's fae east o the line', he talked about 'the line' an it ran somewhere from Port William up through Kirkcowan, in a straight line, an he maintained that on this side they spoke differently from that side.

MM: Really?

DN: Aye. An ah'd say 'What about farms one on each side, neighbours?' 'It works, ah tell ye' he says 'it works' [*laughter*].

CM: Do you think that's becoming less the case?

0h 00m 30s.

DN: Ah think it's becoming less so.

CM: Yea.

DN: Aye.

CM: I mean I've got a nephew who's twenty-one and he was away up in Inverness with, he's on, doing an internship just now, and he was away up in Inverness and he was telling me he'd met people from Orkney and Shetland and the north-east and whatnot...

DN: Aye.

CM: ...and he was saying 'They all sound really different' because I think from Edinburgh you just, because it's such a melting pot anyway, he was so impressed with all these very distinctive accents that-.

DN: The one thing that really struck me when ah was doing ma two years National Service at Lyneham, there wis two other Scottish fellas, they were both called Smith, one was John and one was Tom but they both got Jock, they got Jock One and Jock Two, [*laughter*] and they both came from Aberdeenshire but one came from Aberdeen and the other one was somewhere away out in the wilds, round about Balmoral way, an ah can remember talking to Jock One, fae the city, one time an said to him, ah said 'I hae difficulty with Jock Two' he says, an he had a very distinctive [?] 'You have difficulty?' he says 'Ah dinnae understand the bugger' [*laughter*]...

MM: Really?

DN: ...aye, an they were both fae Aberdeenshire. He said 'Ah honestly, you know that, ah have difficulty wi him'.

MM: Aye.

CM: Uh huh. That's interesting isn't it because we always-.

MM: It's remarkable, aye.

DN: Isn't it.

CM: Yea, because we always tend to think, you know, in my subject, anyway, about that the north-east has got its quite unique language but...

DN: It is.

0h 00m 57s.

CM: ...that's understood by everyone.

DN: Everyone, aye.

CM: But not the case, not the case at all.

DN: No.

CM: Sorry, were you wanting to-?

MM: No, ah was just gonna say for the purposes of all the recording machines that it's the 19th February 2015 and it's Mark Mulhern and Caroline Milligan with Mr Donnie Nelson and we're gonna have a chat with Donnie, today, about his photographic collection and the Flashback book so, and Caroline's gonna talk about that.

CM: Yep. Do you want to do that, shall we do that first?

MM: Yea, ah think so.

Stranraer and District Local History Trust 0h 02m 30s.

CM: So, thinking about the book, I was going to ask you a wee couple of questions about the history of the Trust and how they, or when they made that decision to start collecting oral histories, you know, what was the sort of history of that, if you like?

DN: Aye, well, when the Trust started it was really Jack Hunter, who is a member of the Trust, Jack had been approached by a local chamber, a man in the local Chamber of Trade and they had got this notion that a history trust or something similar could be started and they approached Jack, who was teaching at Stranraer High School at the time, or Stranraer Academy as it is, and Jack approached me. Jack belonged to Wigtown an he approached me an the two of us met with two fellas from the Chamber of Trade an their attitude was mainly to get booklets published which might help tourists coming into the place and they turned round and said 'We're willing tae finance ye from the start, for instance, if ye do go ahead and start publishing some booklets we'll guarantee to finance the first three', which they did, to be fair to them, and it has just blossomed from there on. And, ah can't

honestly remember, Jack was never one to push hiself forward an at the very first meeting we held form it, Jack proposed me as Chairman, ah think he did it before somebody would propose him an ah said 'Well, ah'll do it, Jack, ah'm thinkin in terms that we could do it every so often' but ah'm still Chairman.

CM: So, when was that?

DN: It was away back aboot 1997, ah think.

0h 04m 13s.

CM: 1997.

DN: Ah think.

CM: And was it quite a, quite a speedy transition from it being talked about to actually-.

DN: Ah think we had aboot twenty-four or twenty-five members tae begin wi, that wis a lot, and och, a pound just tae be, a nominal fee for membership. And we had promises, as ah say, Archie Bell, who is still a member, said he would write a book about the place during World War Two and Jack said he would write one about the loss of the Princess Victoria and the third one was Bill Gill, who's dead now, Bill, in fact Bill was dead then, he had just died and we knew he had written a lot, he taught history at the High School here and his daughter, she had got all his papers and she said the Trust could have access to them if they wanted, she wanted to keep them, and we published a book o Bill's an it was about the history of the Cairnryan Military Railway, he lived at Cairnryan and he was interested in the camp and the railway they built during World War Two.

CM: Ok.

DN: An it just blossomed from there on.

CM: And so, then when did the oral history stream come commence?

DN: Ah honestly can't remember, you'd have to ask the Secretary but ah mean it happened fairly early on in its career. It was Eric Wilson, whose wife was Secretary, Christine's the Secretary, and a teacher called Nancy McLucas, an Nancy was very keen to do this, we hope, an she's still doing it. She said a couple of years ago she would like to give it up, pass it on, and then she decided 'Och, no, I'll carry on'.

CM: And so that was just a kind of, because there was that enthusiasm, you thought you would just get started on it.

DN: Aye, ah cannae remember, Christine gave me, ah'm sorry ah havenae got the information.

CM: No, that's fine.

DN: Tremendous number o discs.

CM: Yep, yea, ah've been listening to them, yep.

DN: And available in the library here.

Flashback proposal 0h 06m 20s.

CM: Yep. So is the thing that we also wanted to talk to you about, you know, the proposal to have another, a Flashback book...

DN: Aye.

CM: ...concentrating or using material from the recordings. So, I've been going through them all and thinking about possible...

DN: Aye, uses, yes, can be used.

CM: ...ways that they could be made up and so I thought it would be interesting to talk through those with you to see what you felt yourself about what should be-.

DN: Ah feel quite happy about it, ah don't think, we never approached the Trust in general but I'm quite sure they'd be quite happy too, I'm sure they would.

MM: Good.

CM: You know, looking at the content of the recordings, World War Two is obviously quite a strong contender. There's some nice material about the Stranraer Telephone Exchange...

DN: Oh, Margaret Clerk that would be, yes, aye.

CM: ...including a wee ghost story as well...

DN: Aye.

CM: ...which is something that we haven't collected.

DN: Sorry? Ghost?

CM: A ghost story, yea, about...

DN: Ye havenae?

CM: ...a ghost in the exchange and we've not collected many stories at all and not much supernatural material.

DN: In there, there's about five or six foolscap pages, ghost stories.

MM: Ah.

CM: Ah.

0h 07m 40s.

DN: Which I gave a talk to the local Rotary here...

CM: Ok.

DN: ...some time ago.

CM: Yea, because ah'd be, ah mean it's something that I'd quite like to include in the Flashback because we've not collected material anywhere in the region about it and because there's one recording that looks at that specifically..

DN: Aye.

CM: And then there's this wee connection then with the telephone exchange, ah thought 'Oh maybe that's a way that we could go' so if you've got more material...

DN: Ah have.

CM: ...that we could look at in connection with that, that would be super, wouldn't it?

MM: Yea.

CM: That would be great. Tramps and travellers is another area...

DN: Yea.

CM: ...an that also links in with the War cos a lot of people are saying how these were folk who'd been displaced either from the First War and then took to...

DN: Mm, aye.

CM: ...wandering about the country and...

DN: There's always-.

CM: ...and the way that they were accommodated on the farms and with farm work and things and in Stranraer itself, you know, the different areas...

DN: I've a few photographs of that.

CM: ...is there photographs there as well?

DN: Tramps, aye, yea.

CM: That would be good, yea. So, that's another idea, potato work and the Irish workforce...

0h 08m 42s.

DN: Yea, there's one or two o that.

CM: ...there's some nice material. Yea? There's some nice material there about workers coming from Achill Island, quite a lot of very specific, quite often in other interviews that ah've heard from the region people will be talking just about the potato squads and things but in some of these interviews there's really good detail about where people were coming from, what their social habits were while they were here and the fact that they came back every year, etc., which is really interesting as well. And then, then other thing was, Nancy McLucas herself did an interview where she's both the interviewer and the interviewee [*laughs*].

DN: That's Nancy [*laughs*].

CM: On Bishopton, but it's actually an amazing interview, it's a really lovely interview. So, you know, that's another contender, ah think, just to go in the book as a stand-alone piece.

DN: Aye.

CM: Which, you know, maybe also makes a nod then to the fact that she's been such an influence in the oral history side and that, you know, all but ah think about four, did you do one interview?

DN: Ah've never done-.

CM: Did you not do any of them?

DN: No, no, never.

CM: There's about three or four interviews that were done by people other than Nancy...

DN: Nancy.

CM: ...but all the other ones are Nancy so ah thought that might be quite a nice idea.

DN: Uh huh.

CM: Ah don't know anything about Bishopton now, or, you know, I don't really know-.

DN: Ah, but the only Bishopton ah know is in Renfrewshire.

CM: Ok, so then that's probably not a, that's not a contender then.

DN: Ah don't know what-. Ah cannae think o Bishopton in this area.

Oh 10m 22s.

CM: No, that's fine, that's good to know. No that's fine then, that's all right. There are other, ah mean there are other, there's, Dunmore, is that nearby.

DN: Ah don't know it either?

CM: No?

DN: No. Dunmore?

CM: Right, well ah'm just gonna say...

DN: Dunmore?

CM: Well, that's quite good because actually we've got too many choices so we've been able to sort of say 'That's not gonna be a worth-, you know a useful route of enquiry'. Ah think, do you have any sort of feelings about, thinking about what's already represented in the Trust's publications or any of these subjects that you think would, that would be very good, you know, more beneficial to shine a light on?

DN: Ah've never thought about it in that respect, we just publish when folk come to us and say they want to dae it. But it's funny you should mention that, ah'm sitting on a text just now and ah've got very mixed feelins about it, it's a local farmer who died and left all this paperwork and he starts off beautifully in it an then he gets, he spends a couple o pages talking about farm carts...

MM: Right.

DN: ...the different type o farm carts an ah mean he's obviously been a thing that's, he's wound up about it. But he talks about Drummorie and the Chillcarroch plough, he says, here there and everywhere, ah don't know how I'm gonna put it together.

MM: That'll be of great interest to somebody though.

DN: It will be, it will be and ah mean he was a great fella tae speak tae.

MM: Uh huh?

DN: Ye could ask him about anything about Drummore farms and he knew it.

MM: Right.

CM: Ah mean these are, the interviews are great, ah think they're really super.

Oh 12m 03s.

MM: There's quite a bit, sorry Caroline...

CM: Sorry, no, no..

MM: ...i was just gonna say, I seem to remember one or two of them talking about shops and shopping in the town...

DN: Mm.

CM: Yea.

MM: ...and ah wonder, the changes in the town over the years...

DN: Oh aye, yes.

MM: ...would be interesting to talk about because there's a fair amount of material.

DN: Well, it would be because it's funny you should mention that, the local Facebook, when ah first, when Facebook first started in this area ma wife was interested in it an her an ma two sons, both live in Edinburgh, they use it a lot an ah looked at it once or twice an ah said 'Ah'm no lookin at that, ah think it's damned dangerous,' kind o thing, you know. [REDACTED]

CM: [REDACTED] it's a sort of, a challenge whenever there is an oral recording that's about things like the shops changing and whatnot, an ah've heard that in other interviews is that they're very rarely tied down in terms of 'Well, when are you talking about? Are you talking about the 1950s, are you talking about the 1960s?'. So, when they say 'Oh and that used to be a grocer' or whatever, it's really interesting, but it's very difficult to get a sense of 'Well, when was it a grocer?' you know, 'Was it a grocer in 1942 or was it a grocer in 1968?' or you know, it's quite, it is, it can be a little bit problematic in that respect.

MM: Yea, we've got an interview in Whithorn, an the lady was asked 'Can you describe the change, you know, the shops, how they've changed over the years?'. And she speaks for half an hour recounting all the shops in Whithorn, now Whithorn's quite a big place but it's not that big.

DN: It is, it's no that big it's obviously got a lot of property.

MM: Because she's leaping through time, you know.

CM: Yea.

MM: And so you're getting kinda lost, there were about thirty-five thousand hairdressers and-
[laughter].

DN: She didnae tell ye about the Academy?

MM: No.

DN: That was my favourite story o Whithorn.

MM: What was that?

DN: I used to play a lot of table tennis when ah was younger and Whithorn had a great youth club an we went doon there regularly an had table tennis nights wi them and we got pally wi some o the boys doon there, an one night ah made some mention that, there was always some o the ladies were there and they were givin us tea and they treated ye well...

MM: Mm.

0h 15m 50s.

DN: ...and ah said about this little old lady, very quiet, she never had much tae say, 'Oh no, she's busy at the Academy'. Ah said tae Billy, ma pal, 'What dae ye mean 'The Academy''?' He says 'She lives on her own an we call her hoose 'The Academy' because when a boy reaches a certain age, his mates will take him there, against his protests, knock on the door and throw him in and say 'Never look back'. [laughter]. An ah discovered from others that was quite true [laughter]. They got accepted it and went on [laughter].

CM: No, we've not come across that before.

MM: No, we've not come across that, no. That's [?].

DN: [?] that's one of your difficulties. Where do you stop? [laughter].

MM: Well-.

CM: Well, you get different things from different people.

MM: Yea.

DN: The Academy.

MM: The other thing I was wondering about, what fest-, were there festivals in the town over the years that were particular to Stranraer that maybe don't take place anymore?

DN: Any more, no. We had a Loch Ryan Princess, the thing for some years, some of the councillors had started it just after the War, they thought it might attract tourists, visitors, an they started this Loch Ryan Princess, now that would be about the very early fifties.

MM: Right.

DN: Ah think it sort of faded a bit and merged but there's other things noo, ye know, we've got the Ryan Centre which runs gala days and stuff like this an a lot o the places round aboot, for instance, ah was working on the old Free Press [Stranraer and Wigtownshire Free Press] photographs ah was tellin ye about, last night, an ah was cursin them because, naturally enough, there's a lot, there's lots o photographs which never appeared in the paper.

MM: Right.

0h 17m 40s.

DN: Somebody, when ah looked up the files for this, the last disc ah was workin on, ah think it was 2014, the early part of the year, Garlieston Gala, now Garlieston's a wee village but there's about forty photographs, an ah mean this wee lassie won such-and-such a prize, that wee boy won such-and-such, an ah'm thinkin 'Oh God, ah've got to keep them all' you know, ah never reject photographs.

CM: Uh huh.

MM: Uh huh.

DN: So that accounts for [*tapping noise*] the considerable numbers.

MM: That's the beauty of that technology, you can store all that.

DN: Aye.

MM: Aye.

DN: We kept that as a stand-by, my wife and I, in case anything happened to the other, got a computer, an ah mean the photographs started, it must hae been 1950, 1953 or '54 an at that time ah was workin in the Free Press and ah was actually a printer...

MM: Right.

DN: ... but ah did a bit of part-time reporting because they knew that ah wrote quite a bit, and the editor we had at that time, he had difficulty keepin reporters, he expected them to work twenty-four...

MM: Oh right.

DN: ...sixty to five, you know, and he an I used to, ah gave him a hand at the football and it was extra money an it grdually developed, 'Can ye do such-and-such a night, such-and-such a meeting, for me?' And that was fine, ah a was also, when he took over the job he wanted, he insisted the paper should have a reader. Before that it had been a case o 'Ye're no busy, ah need these proofs' an you just grabbed somebody tae read the copy tae ye. So, everybody an anybody was doin the readin an then he appointed me as reader and ah can remember quite clearly sittin in the wee tiny room, there was maself an a boy holding the copy for me an readin to me and the buzzer went an that meant the editor wanted tae see me an ah went intae his office, he had aboot five or six waste paper baskets on his desk an he says 'You'll no have heard.' Ah says 'What Mr [?].' 'We're building a new office, we're shifting.' 'Oh, where?', 'Jist two or three hundred yards away, buildin a brand new one in St Andrew's Street.' 'Great.' So, ah'm peering into the basket bein nosey an he says 'That's why ah'm clearing out', Ah says 'They're no gonnae build it that quickly surely?' 'Oh no, but ah'm getting ready, you take these, get them emptied' he says 'an ah'll fill them up again, get rid of all this rubbish that's lying aboot this office.'

Oh 20m 22s.

And lying on top o one was a photograph an ah says tae him 'Ye're no flingin oot photographs are ye? Ye canna fling oot photographs.' 'Look', him an I used tae argie a lot aboot the football, an ah could argie wi him an get away wi it. He says 'Look' he says 'if you want to keep photographs, you keep them, ah'm no keepin them, take that if you want them, you keep it'. 'Right' ah says 'ah will'. We were snappy wi one another. An that started this local collection.

MM: What was in your mind when you thought that it was of use to keep photographs then?

DN: It was a nice photograph.

MM: Right.

DN: It was a photograph of the Cross wi the Christmas Tree decorated, it had been taken aboot midnight, on Christmas Eve, and it was a lovely photograph.

MM: Right.

DN: And that's what kick-started the whole thing an the laugh o the thing was, it was after we flitted from Castle Street, two years later, and we'd changed everything, we went from letter-press printing to web-offset for the paper, everybody had to learn the job again. Ah worked for a couple of weeks in Lincolnshire, at a place near Liverpool, that had done a conversion and we just stopped one week in Castle Street, an the paper came oot from St Andrew's Street the following week, different size o paper, the old one was a big, an old-fashioned newspaper, this was a modern type o thingy. An ah can remember the firms that we were dealing wi, they were very good, sent us new machinery, stuff like that an one of the guys, aboot a year after we had started in St Andrew's Street, this fella came in one day an ah thought ah recognised him and he minded me, he says, 'Ah worked wi ye here for a couple o weeks' he says, 'when ye did yer first shift'. And he said 'Ah thought it was quite funny because' he said 'because ah'd just finished in Stranraer' and his firm sent him to Southampton, there was a firm there, a big, a much bigger newspaper than the Free Press, changing over in Southampton. An he says 'Ah went there to advise them an that' an he said 'Do you know' he says 'they printed the paper at somewhere different for aboot four weeks before they could get started.' An he says 'They laughed at me when ah said tae then ah worked in a place in Scotland where they shut one week, the next they put oot a paper' he said 'They widnae believe it'.

MM: Yea.

The Nelson Collection 0h 22m 48s.

DN: It was jist after we shifted, again the editor came to me one day, an he said 'Is there anything in standby?' Standby meant stuff set up in type in the old place an he was thinkin aboot the new place, he was getting used to it himself, he said 'An advert has been cancelled' an it was a Wednesday morning and we were going to press. An ah said 'No.' He said, it was his idea really, he says 'That book, ah saw ye lookin at the other day' it was a book of old photographs, he says, an it was a, it was a tourist guide, published for Stranraer and District aboot 1905, he says 'Is there any decent photos in it?' Ah says 'Aye, there ye are' handed him the book. 'Right' he says 'get me a copy, a three four copy o that one, gie me a couple o lines about it.' An we pit it in, it filled the hole in the paper and the following day he came back at me an he says 'That photograph' he said 'been quite a bit o comment' he often went oot for his lunch tae a local hotel.' He says 'They're all talking about it' he says 'Hunt oot another one in an we'll put another one in next week. Gie me a wee bit more about it this time.'

An a few months, that started it, it never finished, it started, an folk kept handin in their old photographs an it gradually went fae a couple o sentences tae about 800 words every week. Ah can remember actually sittin one night an fallin asleep, at home, ah wakened up an thought 'Ah should be in bed' it was one o'clock in the morning an ah realised ah'd 800 words tae write [*laughter*]' ah hadnae done it this week yet. But nineteen-an-a-half years it lasted...

CM: Uh huh.

MM: Gee whiz.

DN: ...until ah retired.

CM: It's a big ask, but are there particular ones that you remember, you know, that were...

DN: Ah've got copies o the lot.

CM: ...but you know, that were real finds in terms of the photographs themselves or ones that you really enjoyed writing out about?

DN: There was one photograph ah can remember, it was a woman somewhere about Lytham St Anne's had sent me the photograph. She said she'd spent a lot of her childhood in Stranraer, she was related to people there, an it was a photograph o children playing in the park opposite, children of about six, seven or eight-year-old, but she could name everybody an ah thought 'That's fine, children playing' an it was, we knew the house where this was takin place in [?] Street, so we put it in the paper and she'd sent it in wi letter an ah wrote back returning her original photograph to her, thanked her very much, and ah thought, ah was gonnae write to her an ah thought 'No, I'll phone her up too an say 'Thanks' in person an ah said to her 'Have ye anything else' an she said 'Ah've got another one here' she says 'an ma husband' who had no connection wi Stranraer, an she had a childhood holiday one, she says 'Ah think it's Stranraer, ma husband says it's no, it's a lot of nonsense'. She says 'It shows big [?] at a pier'. An ah says 'Would you like to send it to me an a'll gie ye ma opinion on it?'

0h 22m 50s.

She sent it to me an ah said right away 'Aye, that's the East Pier' but the boats had me puzzled', an one looked like a galleon, you know they high, aye, an here was a paddle steamer, Earl o [?] sittin beside her, ah coudnae figure this at aw, an there's something strange about the side o the pier, an ah sat an ah thanked her for it and said 'Ah'm copying it an trying to do a bit o research' an it must hae been about two or three months later that ah finally published it, an ah said 'It is the East Pier in Stranraer, ah'm not sure about the timing' ah said 'but it must be the early days, about 1870s, '71, '72'

ah said 'When such-an-such a boat was established on the Stranraer – Larne route'. About three weeks later we got a letter from Texas [*laughs*].

MM: Texas.

DN: Frae a guy who I knew as a student, when he was a student he was doing a thesis for his degree an he decided to write about the short sea routes an he wrote a book which became a best-seller, it was a really fantastic history, lovely photographs, an as ah say, ah knew him as a student, ragged jeans, aye short o a pound or two an he come doon often because he was getting his book published, an this was him, he was a professor at a university somewhere in Texas. But it was accountancy that he took up an he said 'You're spot on Donnie' he said, he says 'I've seen a copy of that years ago but at the time ah didnae know but he says 'You're right enough, that was the first paddle steamer on the route. That galleon was an old ship, a working hulk...

MM: Right.

DN: ...an he says 'If ye look closely at the pier, you'll see there's steps doon the side, comin doon at an angle. Somebody thought that this would be a very clever way of building the pier, ye could shift the boat along to cope wi the height o the tide.' He says 'It was an idea, it was a good idea but it disnae work.'

CM: Uh huh.

MM: No.

DN: But he said 'Ah wid say' he says '1872'.

CM: Uh huh.

0h 27m 58s.

DN: So ye get things like that happenin the whole time.

MM: Isn't that remarkable?

CM: Yea.

DN: An another time the editor came in one day, he said 'Ah think that's for you' an he flung the photie doon, an it was somebody writin from somewhere in Nigeria, because ah had shown a photograph of an old hotel in Stranraer, jist up the road here, which had, in my days, it was a ironmonger's shop, an a big garage in behind it, but it had been a hotel an ah said 'This was Meikle's Hotel' an what I got from Nigeria, no Nigeria, sorry, it was, it was, ah'm trying tae think o the early

days, it was Rhodesia, Southern Rhodesia. The son of the man who owned Meikle's Hotel, he an a sister had decided that Stranraer was too wee for them, away back in the 1850/60s, and they went off to South Africa, they finished up in Rhodesia, an they started a Meikle's Hotel there. And seemingly at the time that this was sent to us, this Meikle's Hotel was a very swish place, the place to stay at in Rhodesia, there was a photograph of a black fella wi a beautiful uniform standin at the door, to greet guests.

MM: Yea.

CM: Uh huh.

DN: An somebody had gone into the hotel one night, into one of the bars, an produced a clippin from the Free Press, this old Meikle's Hotel, which started them off, could it be the same? Because the folk owning the hotel in South Africa knew nothin about the early days o their own hotel so ah was able to them right.

MM: Oh right, so they just sent it on spec?

DN: They thought it just had the same name, they sent it on spec an 'Can ye tell us?' An ah was able to tell them about the son an the sister.

MM: Ah was gonna ask ye about the circulation of the paper but it sounds like it was global.

DN: Well, the circulation has remained much the same. Ah know in my time when we started on the new style of paper it went up but what ah can remember all the, ah didnae go to the Free Press until the middle 1950s, after ah came back fae ma National Service, but ah can remember Mr Arnott who was the editor, the first editor ah worked under, he told me one time that the circulation of the Free Press went up during the Second World War, it went up from something about 6000 which is a very small circulation to over seven which was quite a jump an he said when the War finished all the camps round about closed down, an there were a hell of a lot of camps roond about, he said 'We thought it would go down again, but it didnae.'

Oh 30m 39s.

MM: Really.

DN: An in my time there it went up slowly but surely to over eight, but ah don't know what it is now but it's probably nine or ten.

MM: Because the population of the towns up?

DN: The population was the same, it jumped fae 6000 before the War an it went up tae about eight after the War an it slowly increased, now we're just over, just over eleven.

MM:

Eleven?

DN: Aye.

MM: So, to sell eight thousand copies in that population is quite a thing, isn't it?

DN: It is.

MM: Was it a locally owned enterprise?

DN: Aye, the Earl of Stair owns it.

MM: The Earl of Stair. Still?

DN: Still, James Stair, aye, alang wi the Tustees o the Pension Fund.

MM: Right.

DN: Jamie tells me ah'm livin too long, living on the Pension Fund.

MM: It must be quite a rarity these days though because a lot of local newspapers are owned by big groups, conglomerates, aren't they?

DN: Aye.

MM: So, how long were you at the paper in total?

DN: Thirty-nine years, ah think.

MM: Right, right.

0h 31m 38s.

DN: Ah served ma time wi a small printin firm, Moodie's, an then they sold out to the Free Press, the Free Press decided they would increase the commercial side o the business but ah'd only been there about a year an everybody was drafted intae the newspaper side.

MM: Right.

DN: It became more important, that side o it, it was really quite funny.

MM: And how long was your apprenticeship?

DN: Six years.

MM: Six.

DN: Aye it was six in the printin trade then.

MM: Gee wizz. All at Moodie's?

DN: All at Moodie's, yes.

MM: Did you enjoy that?

DN: Ah did, it was good, it was good fun.

MM: Was it just yourself or were there others?

DN: Oh no, there were about four of five of us worked there. But the boss, Jim McGuff, he was a good boss but Jim became more interested in wholesaling stationery, he had a stationer's shop, which is still in existence in Hanover Street.

MM: Right.

DN: And then he decided that he would, I don't know why, but I think he was helping at a shop in Drummore, an a shop in Port Patrick an he decided tae get intae the wholesale stationery side an he loved travelling around...

MM: Ok.

DN: ...like that, daen that an that was why he decided tae sell out tae the Free Press.

MM: So, what other products would you be printing at that time?

DN: It was mostly commercial stuff really, all the local firms, ah mean likes o McQuarries family we did all their paperwork, all sorts of forms, stuff like that.

0h 33m 01s.

MM: Mm.

DN: We didnae, the Free Press moved more intae better commercial stuff, like printing the books for the History Stuff, like that...

MM: Aye.

DN: ...kind o thing. An ah notice he's talkin aboot startin a magazine now, Bill Henderson, he's the boss at the Free Press now.

MM: In addition to the paper?

DN: In addition to the paper.

MM: Gee wizz, right.

CM: What kind of thing-?

DN: I think it's just a magazine about...

CM: About the local area as well?

DN: ...Wigtownshire. Yes, the local area.

MM: Aye.

DN: It's difficult to know just how wide to put it.

MM: Shall we have a look at these photographs?

DN: Yea.

MM: I'll fire up the computer.

Flashback proposal 0h 33m 48s.

CM: Because that's another thing about, you know, thinking about the Flashback, we were thinking we could have a section just on your photographs, you know, and maybe with you picking photos that are particularly of interest to you or that you've found over the years you've been-.

DN: No, as ah say, ye'll know enough no to touch the family photographs but all the rest ye're very welcome to them, ah've always shared them on the basis that folk shared their photographs wi us. An we made it clear to them when they brought photographs intae the paper, it may go wider than the paper 'Have ye any objection?' And nobody had any objections at all.

0h 34m 24s.

MM: Oh right, that's good.

DN: And in fact, it's quite funny because that first photograph that started the whole thing off, the one with the Christmas tree at the Cross, it became a best-seller, the Free Press printed twelve by ten copies and folk ah knew had given it as a Christmas present.

CM: Yea?

DN: An it was amazin the number they sold.

MM: Black and white?

DN: Aye.

MM: So, you were right, it was a good picture.

DN: It was a good picture [*laughter*].

MM: And would you and others in the Trust but perhaps yourself, would you be content, as we get the text started, to have a wee look at and review and give us your feedback?

DN: Yea, aye, ah would.

MM: Yea.

DN: As a say, we've never discussed it wi the members, as our membership went, but ah don't think there'll be any objection.

MM: Yea.

DN: Ah mean when ah say I've always shared it because it's got a, ah'll tell ye a very funny story, a friend o mine, an this goes back aboot, maybe four or five years, a guy whom I'm friendly wi, he works wi a local farmer, he's a, he holds a lot of copyright on market designs, he builds barrier [?] and stuff like this and he's quite a jovial character. Ah got to know him through reporting the football, ah only gave a talk aboot a couple of years ago aboot the football and he come to the house one time and ah'd been workin on old photographs and he was very interested, he says 'You might' he says 'Ony chance o gien me copies o these?' 'Och, Tommy', ah says 'It'll cost a fortune to print all them.' 'No, no, a mean on the-' Ah says 'Right, gie me yer memory stick' an ah shoved it an ah said tae, May was workin on the computer at the time, ma wife, an ah said 'We'll run off some o the old photies for him' and she says 'What?', 'Och just pick them at random', which she did. Now, by the time Tommy finished talkin to her and me, ah think she'd run off aboot tw or three hundred.

MM: Uh huh.

0h 36m 32s.

DN: And she gave it to Tommy an, oh, Tommy was fair pleased aboot this. An it must hae been aboot six months later somebody said to me 'Ye're interested in old photographs, bought that' an it was the photographs.

MM: Oh.

DN: The silly beggar ha taken it tae the place where he worked, two o the women, one o whom had turned oot tae be a policewoman who went in there regularly for a cup tea every day, Tommy couldnae resist showing this lady 'The old photographs ah got [?] ye know', he showed them an then he walked oot an he left them wi it, an it was copied an we've traced it tae, there's somebody in Girvan was sellin copies of it, there was somebody in Newton Stewart was sellin copies of it, an my attitude was, Tommy got very upset when ah told him about all this an ah said 'Tommy, don't get upset, ah've got them fae other folk. As far as ah'm concerned it was silly, but there you are, it's happened', ah says 'Ah'm no bothered'.

MM: It just show you.

CM: Yea.

DN: Oh aye, yea. Ah've had folk give them to me, an ah'm saying 'Aye it is a nice photograph, ah really, ah liked it?' 'Oh ye've seen it before?' 'Ah've seen it before, ah took it' [*laughter*].

MM: Oh dear, right, where will we, that's it connected now, so where will we find the pictures?

DN: Now, wait a minute, that's, you're in one o them, these are things that are on my, 'Ardua Astra' is my story of RAF [Royal Air Force] days.

MM: Ah right.

DN: The local Health Service, that was a trip around the town, where all the hospitals and that had been.

MM: Oh right.

DN: The second, aye, that's it all in one thing, Bobby William's, aircraft crash on Cairnsmore.

MM: Aye, there's a document.

DN: Aye, these are all documents in one file.

Oh 38m 30s.

MM: Would it be Peep-.

DN: Peep in the Past is the whole collection.

MM: Ah. Got ye. Oh right, you've got them categorised.

DN: Air images, that's right, Alec Fall's photos, if ah have something like that, Alec Falls, photos, ah would rather ye, ah don't mind ye using some o them but don't mention where they come from.

MM: Right.

DN: As ah say, they've given them to me but ah would hate them to think that ah was using their name. This is the kind o things ye get in.

MM: Ah, right.

DN: That's me in the early days. Alec Fall worked wi me at the printin ye see.

MM: Here.

DN: That one there, that's Alec and I, that's me, that's Alec, taken doon the [?] work. That's Alec again, that's at Moodie's, where we both served oor time at the printin.

MM: What age would you be there?

DN: Ah would be aboot seventeen ah think...

MM: Aye.

DN: ...just before ah went off tae ma National Service.

MM: Right.

DN: Alec and I met up by chance in Malta.

MM: Ye never?

DN: We did [*laughs*].

MM: What's the boat at the back, dae ye know.

DN: It could be the Victoria...

MM: Right.

DN: ...because it was before 1953, it could be the Victoria. That's taken standing at the door, that's ma wife, it's very dark.

0h 39m 52s.

MM: It's a good picture that.

DN: Aye.

MM: That's better, a bit lighter.

DN: Aye, that's a couple o pals, Alec again and Sandy Sherrifs.

MM: Is that you on holiday or going on holiday?

DN: No, that was taken doon the seafront in Stranraer.

MM: Oh, right, uh huh.

DN: That's what ah'm sayin, these are family photographs, that's Alec wi his uncle an his grandfather, an his father.

MM: The book ah've given ye there's quite a lot of pictures quite similar to that, you know, studio pictures.

DN: Aye, well ye see ah've got stuff frae the Royal Flying Corps at East Freuch and West Freuch, that there that was-

MM: St Joseph's Drama Group.

DN: 1890, that was a great aunt o mine.

MM: Right.

DN: That's another great aunt o mine, there's two sisters, that's Alec Fall's grandmother.

MM: Uh huh.

DN: And these two, that's a McJove girl an ah've been trying tae trace all a can about the McJove family. One o the McJoves, Peter, was a local, his folks were, you were talking about tramps and vagrants, Peter's father and mother were alcoholics, dreadful reputation round about here, way back in the 1860s, and Peter decided that it wisnae guid enough an he an a brother left Stranraer an got a job taking a herd of cattle tae Canada. And Peter came home aboot four years later, an he was absolutely stinkin rich.

MM: Was he?

Oh 41m 25s.

DN: He set his brothers up in business and the folk said at the time, he paid them to keep quiet but ah knew one man in town, one elderly man, who had been pally wi them, he knew them, ah mean, they were all gone before my time, an ah can remember interviewing this guy an asking him what he could tell me about the McJoves, 'Oh' he says 'he went fae there tae Australia' he says 'he was wi Ned Kelly' [*laughter*]. But Peter, an ah'm getting letters from the Bishop of Galloway, the Roman Catholic Bishop of Galloway to Mr Peter McJove, thankin him for his kindness, he built the convent in Stranraer,

he built an addition to the church. He flung money about left, right and centre but the only thing he would not do was he would not touch drink...

MM: Gosh.

DN: ...because o his parents. And he had a son who became an alcoholic an a solicitor an he walked oot o a pub in Liverpool one night and was so drunk, straight under the wheels o a bus.

MM: Oh, my gosh.

DN: A most peculiar family.

MM: And are they still in Stranraer?

DN: There are still McJoves who were related in an Illegitimate line.

MM: Right.

DN: Ah wis at school wi a girl o that, ah used to keep her going aboot that. Ah said 'Ye ken we're related Cathie, don't ye?' 'No' she said 'Ah've got nothing tae dae wi you' [*laughter*].

MM: Which production do you know?

DN: That was school children at St Joseph's School, ah went tae St Joseph's School, but this was long before my time, as ah say.

MM: I wonder what they're doing. What do you think they're doing?

DN: It's obviously a death bed scene.

MM: Yes, aye, it's very dramatic.

DN: Aye.

MM: Aye. The [?] are very fine.

DN: I know.

0h 43m 00s.

MM: These are astonishing, so what else have we got here.

DN: Ah think if ye go down the list.

MM: Yep.

DN: There's flying balloons or flying.

MM: Oh, yes.

DN: That was the first aircraft to land in Wigtownshire, 1914.

MM: Oh, crikey.

DN: 1912, sorry 1912.

MM: It looks early anyway.

DN: His name was Captain Dawes, that's at the Cults at Castle Kennedy which became an RAF landing ground in Second World War.

MM: Right.

DN: But that was a Longhorn, the Morris family had a Longhorn and it was part of a Squadron that were flying to take part for the first time ever in British Military Manoeuvres, you know, they had them every year, as a sort of practice, and they always held them in Ireland at that time, it was still part of the UK [United Kingdom] and they decided the Royal Flying Corps, or they were Royal Engineers still then rather than the Royal Flying Corps, they would take part for the first time and they were a squadron based at Montrose, there was only two airfields in Scotland, Glasgow and Montrose, an they flew down to Wigtownshire and it was quite funny because that one was the first to land in Wigtownshire, it landed at the Cults, where it was supposed to be, one landed at Newton Stewart, they all got lost an ah've other photographs which show floats fitted underneath the aircraft in case they came down in the North Channel when they were crossin to Ireland.

MM: It's very insubstantial, just fits [?].

DN: Aye.

MM: Gee wizz.

DN: There should be more than that, that's him again at the controls, Captain Dawes, ah mean look at the wheels.

Oh 44m 48s.

DN: One bounce and they'd be-.

MM: Like pram wheels and wooden straps on a tin metal bath.

DN: Catelina World War Two stuff ye're on now, Wig Bay became a maintenance unit and that was one taken just, it's a field just outside Stranraer about 1923 or '24.

MM: Right. Do you know what might be quite useful, if you would be prepared to do, would be on another occasion, if we could go through the photographs and just record your memories for...

DN: Yea, yea.

MM: ...or descriptions of the contents.

DN: Ah widnae mind.

MM: Not today because...

DN: No.

MM: ...that would take up too much of your time. You'd be happy to do that?

DN: I would be, yea.

MM: There's a fair old collection here.

DN: As ah say, ah tended to make copies.

MM: Do you have any plans for what to do with them in perpetuity?

DN: They belong to the History Trust.

MM: Good.

DN: As far as ah'm concerned, they'll pass on to them, the only stipulation ah would make tae them is, ah shouldnae say it in the library in case ah'm overheard, that they stay in Stranraer...

MM: Yes.

DN: ...the originals. Ah've had some dealins wi the library, things have a habit of disappearin to Dumfries.

0h 46m 12s.

MM: Uh huh.

DN: And then ye ask tae see them 'Oh, no, ye have tae go to Dumfries tae see them', they're no even sending them back, and there's more than me has had that happen to them. It's a good library, don't get me wrong, it's a good library, but the local collection's concerned that's the kind o thing that's happening.

MM: Well, what we plan to do with the material that we're collecting is for where we get material, that's where it should stay.

DN: Stay, yea, aye.

MM: We've got a lot on Whithorn [?].

DN: Ah don't mind it being available wider.

MM: That's fine but it should be in the place where it comes from.

CM: And modern technology makes that so much more possible.

DN: It's does.

MM: It's dead easy.

DN: it's dead easy.

MM: Aye, aye.

CM: Because that's, ah think, a sort of widespread thing about archives [?].

DN: When ah started this ah was takin a lot of photographs maself, there's a lot of photographs in there, ye look at them an ye say 'That's a field somewhere' an that was because ah heard there were plans for this, they were gonna build a, an ah would go up an ah would take maybe a dozen photographs, jist old kind of field kinna thing, they'll never be any use for other than somebody wantin one, what it was like before that. But ah was trying tae do things like that.

MM: Well, these are things that are quite important because people don't take pictures of that.

DN: If ye go tae Starnraer now, lookin at RAF Stranraer and Wig Bay area, these guys were Canadians, there was a lot of Canadians, aye, that's taken at Marine Gardens just outside o Stranraer...

MM: Uh huh.

0h 47m 46s.

DN: ...as ye're comin into the town itself. And the Craignelder Hotel there, it was taken over during the War, it had been bought by Captain Fergusson, the man who later was drowned in the Victoria, and before his wife could move into it the War started and the Government grabbed it, shoved RAF men into it, RAF Stranraer an RAF Wig Bay were separate entities, an it became a trainin area for Coastal Command, these were Canadians. There is a book called, ah think it's called The Saskatchewan Seven an it was written by one o these guys and he's dead now, his wife published it after he had died, he wouldnae publish it when he was alive, and he mentions Stranraer in it quite a bit.

MM: Right.

DN: Did his training here, he mentions the ladies of Stranraer, the ladies he became friendly with.

MM: Made quite an impression [*laughter*].

DN: Ah cannae even remember where ah got, that's them again.

MM: Aye.

DN: They're all lookin down into the Rock, what we call the Rock Gardens.

MM: Oh right, aye.

DN: But ah mean it was the same, ah can remember, ah was in the ATC [Air Training Corps], and that, that building there is probably where we are sittin just now.

MM: Is it?

DN: When ah was a wee boy there was a old buildin, there was an old brewery occupied this site and old houses round the corner, and one o them was a kind of, almost like a poor house, the local authority would shove folk into it that had nowhere to go.

MM: Aye.

DN: It was nicknamed Bethel and this was one o the ones that the RAF took over.

MM: Right.

DN: And this is the guys in it, it wis, the place was absolutely hopeless, it was, it should have been destroyed long before the War.

MM: Aye, aye, aye.

0h 49m 35s.

DN: An ah can remember being in it after the War, playin a lot o table tennis, the old Crusaders' Club, had a choir, it was their headquarters. All they did was clean up one room, paint the walls quickly an shove a table tennis table in because the rest o the building was decrepit. But ye can see these are RAF Stranraer men.

MM: What was the Crusaders' Club?

DN: That was jist the local table tennis club.

MM: Right.

DN: Ah played for St Mildred's Club, St George's Church had two clubs, but we fell out wi some o the older guys, they became St Joseph's, we became St Mildred's because that was the name o the church hall [*laughter*].

MM: And, now ah'm just gonna see what, how much memory it can take. Oh, gee whiz. That's a huge amount. I think, that's over a hundred gigabytes.

CM: Well, if you're going to interview Donnie again about the photographs you could always-.

DN: Will it help if I took off some o the things that ye wouldn't be interested in, ah mean for instance, ye're no interested in, ah was gonna say my writings.

MM: Well, we probably would be.

DN: Oh.

MM: Why don't we as, when we meet again, as we're going through them I can take copies...

DN: Aye.

MM: ...in each, it'll take a few meetings if you're happy to do that.

DN: Aye, I'm quite happy to do that.

MM: And over the course of those meetings we can build up a collection. Caroline's gonna edit the Flashback.

DN: Aye.

CM: Yea, because ah had written down here, you know, maybe one option would be to do a chapter where, you know, say we pick a dozen photographs and their stories like you told the story about the Meikle Hotel and whatnot, just as a kind of window onto that collection.

DN: Mm.

0h 51m 48s.

CM: Ah thought that would maybe make, so that exercise could, you know, could provide the material so if you were thinking about that, you know maybe a dozen or fifteen pictures.

DN: The photographs will be there, but not the stuff ah'd written about them, ah've got seven books wi cuttins, as they were printed in the paper, books about that size, ah kept them week bi week.

CM: Yea, so that would be great because we could use the actual things an then also your, your sort of your reflections as well, you know, now looking back at that. That would be, that would make a lovely...

MM: Yea.

CM: ...section, wouldn't it?

DN: Ah would need tae check, ah think wi the Free Press.

MM: Yes.

CM: Yep.

DN: About copyright.

CM: Yea.

MM: Aye, they'll have copyright.

CM: And if it didn't, if it didn't work, if the copyright thing didn't work we could still do it based on the photographs and your commentary on them.

DN: Aye, an the written-.

CM: But I think that would be lovely and then there'll also be, you know, then separately photos as you were going along, you know, that we'd we'd feed into other bits...

MM: To the other chapters, uh huh.

CM: ...because ah think the War, you know, even, ah felt it was a very strong contender but as we're talking it seems, you know, the War and the RAF station an everything are really very important.

DN: [?] fold up two, try that one. It's alphabetical order.

MM: This is some of your writing.

0h 53m 20s.

DN: I didnae realise there was so much in this.

MM: There's a lot of stuff there, aye.

DN: Ah'm just curious to see if it was still on it. Aye these are all lettered, that's my folder wi all the football club. T, ah'm just curious to see what was on it. Things.

MM: Things, things that go bump in the night.

DN: Is the whole thing there?

MM: Let's see.

DN: Yea.

MM: Yep.

DN: That was the ghost stories.

CM: And were these, were these stories that you had heard as a child?

DN: Mm, yea.

CM: Yea?

DN: Aye.

CM: Fantastic.

MM: Can I save a copy of that?

DN: Yes, you're welcome tae it. One of them actually finishes off, they discovered who the ghost was.

CM: Uh huh?

MM: And?

CM: You'd need to tell the story [*laughs*] before you tell us the punchline.

DN: That was quite funny because it linked up two different ghosts. There's a street which runs fae the top o the Sheuchen Ridge down steeply to the shoreline in what we call the Clay Hole, in Agnew Crescent. And there was an old housing bit at the top o that, really old, early Victorian, there were a all cleared away after, as soon as the War finished, there was supposed to be a ghost inhabiting this, these houses, and it never had a name, we cawd it the Back Rampart ghost, the Back Rampart was the name o this wee tiny path, it was only a path, it was not a road.

0h 55m 35s.

And the folk in these houses said it would feel a sudden draft and said 'The ghost has been so somebody go and shut the so-and-so door', the ghost had a bad habit o leaving the door lying open. And they reckon when they came, some o the houses were being demolished way back in, talkin back now in terms o about 1900, an a man had been murdered one time and the ghost got the name o this and when they demolished the houses they found hidden under the floorboards quite a pile o money, he'd been a rent collector for all the houses and somebody had murdered him and they reckon the

money was hidden there. And then the next thing the Back Rampart, turned left, two or three houses further up, there was two little cottages called Jubilee Cottages, ah don't know what jubilee referred to because they were long before Queen Victoria's Jubilee and the next thing was, a few years later, folk were startin tae report hearing and seeing, hearin a ghost, did the same thing and doors left lyin open an ah actually worked at the Free Press wi an elderly man who told me, he said 'When ah was a wee boy' he said 'ah lived there next door, I can hear ma mother sayin 'Well, son, that's so-and-so's ghost, away an shut the back door' an he said 'Right enough the door would be lyin open' he swore blind that this was absolutely true an he called it 'The Jubilee Ghost' an it wis started in the s1920, it was either 1920 or '21, there was so many sightings reported and the story came out at the time, everybody agreed that The Jubilee Ghost was a man who had owned a ship, a small ship, employed two or three sailors, fished out the Clayhole Bay, and seemingly one time he took ill and he couldnae go his ship, the other three took the ship out and they were all drowned in a storm in Loch Ryan and they said this was The Jubilee Ghost, he came down, lookin and holdin the doors lookin for the men...

CM: Oh.

DN: ...that worked on his ship an they called him 'The Jubilee Ghost', and then, as ah say, the Free Press actually had a report in 1921, the police had been called out to control the crowds lined up in the Clay Hole waitin to see the Jubilee Ghost [*laughter*]. There were so many folk and everybody swore bind that lots o people told the Free Press they had seen it and the ghost was gaun in the houses an then go up, there's a sharp ridge behind them and immediately on top o that was the cemetery an they said there's trees between the cemetery but, they said 'ye can see the ghost between the headstones and the trees.' And ah wrote in it that the Free Press had printed a report the following week sayin 'The police had dispersed a crowd an afterwards visited various folk lookin for information from them. And it wis to the effect that the police would stay confident that the ghost would not be seen again [*laughter*] and I served on the District Council wi an old fellow called Alfie Kirkie, who had been Provost o Stranraer, an ah said to him 'Alf' ah says 'you lived up the Crescent?' 'Aye', 'What about the Jubilee Ghost?' He smiled, Alf had been them manager o the local picture house in the town as his father had been before him an Alf say's 'Och yae, ah remember aw the stories, ah remember the police' he says 'comin tae see us'. 'No' he says 'Ah'm no sayin anything moer about it' he was laughin about it but before he left he said 'Ah'll tell ye something' he says 'If ye get an auld fashioned cinema camera for showing films, stills and that' he says 'It's amazin what ye can dae' he says 'Ah'd go oot in the dark' [*laughter*] [?]. So ah reckoned this was the Jubilee Ghost, it was Alfie as a boy [*laughter*] and the police had warned him off.

MM: That's fun.

DN: He was like that, he was quite a character, aye.

MM: Aye, would you believe this.

CM: Oh, that's a good, that's a good story, that was best one.

DN: The best story wi Alf was the fact that he courted this woman, she worked in the cinema when he was the manager there, an he courted her for years, ah think they practically lived up together but that was in days when ye didnae do that kind o thing, ye know. An Alf was on the Town Council for years an he became a Baillie and then it was his turn to be Provost and the story went round that Alfie was gettin married, he'd been quietly told 'We cannae hae a Provost that's leevin up wi a wumman.

MM: No [?]

DN: After he married her an became the Provost.

MM: Right.

CM: That's great.

MM: ...ah think that's, from my point of view, that's all I needed for today.

DN: Hae a quick look at one o the Stranraer ones.

MM: Ok.

DN: An ye'll see the kind a-.

MM: Right, Stranraer.

DN: Book number, let's see, book number three maybe.

MM: Three, ok. Right-.

1h 00m 43s.

DN: Just pick something, that's a nice one showin the old mill.

MM: Hannay's Mill.

DN: Mill, aye, the burn, that's covered in over now, ye see.

MM: Is it?

DN: Ye see it's gone.

MM: Right.

DN: The burn's covered over, that's the [?] Burn. See ah find oot things like that when ah was daen the investigating these old photographs, an everybody 'Oh it's the [?] Burn, son' 'And what does it mean?', 'Ah don't know'. That's Agnew Crescent, again, these are all gone.

MM: When was this taken?

DN: That would be jist before they were demolished, ah think about 1947 or '48.

MM: Aye.

DN: Fisher Street.

M: Uh huh.

DN: That's all gone now, these houses are still there, they've been done up.

MM: Right.

DN: That's gone, the big mill, this one has been, that was an old church building, a UP [United Presbyterian] church an it's been rebuilt as houses, it's, these are the kinna photographs that ah wanted tae save.

MM: Oh right.

DN: That was Port Rodie, that's a fairly modern photograph, that.

MM: Yea. Stormy day, Agnew Crescent.

DN: Some o them ye'll find havenae touched photographs, ah havenae had time to do them all, to clean them all up.

MM: That's fine.

1h 02m 03s.

DN: Circus [*laughs*], now that's a modern one.

MM: Uh huh.

CM: Would there be pictures of, you know, this area, that you were talking about in the ghost story of the Jubilee Ghost?

DN: Just got to that one, the Jubilee Cottages.

MM: So, tourism, has tourism always been a part of the town?

DN: Jubilee Cottages were in there.

MM: Is it just the-?

DN: It has really, it has really, that's quite true.

MM: Aye.

DN: Somewhere in there, it might be in that one, there's a lovely postcard view taken along the seafront in Stranraer, printed in heavy type, across the top, ah showed it tae an old lady, recently, who's Dutch and she was fair taken because it said on it, in Dutch, 'East, west, home's best'. She said 'Where did ye get that?' An ah discovered year ago that the firm that produced the postcards for sale locally, here, had had extra ones and they overprinted them and sold them in Holland [*laughter*], photographs of Stranraer.

MM: Away!

DN: Aye, there should be a photograph of it in there.

CM: Gee whizz.

MM: Quite strange.

DN: It's maybe in book two, that one.

MM: Ah, ah'll have a quick look.

DN: There's the kinna thing, aboot the kids pram, right old fashioned one.

MM: There ye go, aye.

DN: These are what we called 'The Buildings', they were all razed to the ground after the War and that's the buildings that you enquired about, see, lookin up the other side, the derelict ones.

1h 03m 40s.

MM: Uh huh, the buildings, these are called 'The Buildings'?

DN: Sheuchen Buildings they were called.

MM: Ok.

DN: And again, there was a story, this was when they built the Marine Lake,

MM: Oh aye?

DN : See, that used to be Clayhole Bay.

MM: Right.

DN: Or the Cley Hole as we called it and this was when the Council decided they would tart it up, the hole there, and create a lake behind it for boating. This was the construction o it.

MM: And was it used?

DN: It was used quite a bit and then they decided tae fill it in [*laughter*]. That's the creamery being destroyed.

MM: Ah, when would that be? Eighties?

DN: It must have been round about the eighties, yes.

MM: Ah could look at these all day [*laughter*]. We'll meet again, just on a practical level, is there any day of the week better for you than any other for meeting?

DN: No.

MM: That's fine then.

DN: Whatever suits ye, I'm quite happy to do it.

MM: Well, we'll get started quite soon...

DN: Aye.

MM: ...if that's ok. I'll be in touch, after ah go back to the office on Monday, I'll look at the diary.

DN: Aye, that's' what ah was gonnae say, would it help if I was to take off, puttin them maybe on a memory stick for ye? Ah mean obviously you want tae be interested in photographs that are showin an area that was gonnae be changed.

1h 05m 21s.

MM: We would.

DN: You would, aye, ah meant ah'm talkin aboot open fields.

MM: Yea.

DN: Ye wid? Oh well, fair enough then.

MM: Well, I would. To me the great value of what we do is recording and describing changes that otherwise don't get noticed.

DN: Yea.

MM: And unless you do record them they never get noticed, and that's part of the history of a place.

DN: Aye.

MM: So, no, no. We'll do that.

DN: Very good.

MM: I'll just switch the recorders off now, I think.

CM: That's been great.

MM: Thank you very much.

DN: Not at all.

End of interview.