

**MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION**

**ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

**BOARDING HOUSES**

**Interviewee: Mrs Jennifer Leece**

**Topic: Summer employment – Villa Marina**

**Time Scale: 1950s**

**Date: 15<sup>th</sup> September 1998**

**Interviewer: John Beckerson**

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**JB** Well thank you very much indeed Jennifer for sharing some of your memories with us, could you say for the tape your name, where we are and just your date of birth.

**Mrs L** My name is Jennifer Leece, we are in my home in Douglas Road, Peel and I was born in March 1934.

**JB** As you know we are researching the history of the Island's tourist trade and I believe that you have had various jobs over the years and one of these was working in the Villa Marina.

**Mrs L** That's right, yes, ice cream girl. The first year I was there I had to go round the lawn with a tray but I wasn't very successful because a ten shilling note blew off and I got into terrible trouble because it was lost and that was a terrible crime, it sort of involved my mother being rung up, but I eventually graduated to the kiosk and it was tremendously busy. Bathing beauty day was an exception, every Thursday, we'd be having our lunch and we'd look out of the window and see the queues stretching from the front door of the Villa Marina right down the arcade and from the side door right up Broadway, then the gates would open at a certain set hour and they'd come tearing across the lawn and stake their place of course trying to get to the front, little aisle left for the beauties who came out of the Pavilion, which has now gone and Jack Leon was the man in charge of the band and he started every week with the same gambit

‘Good afternoon, music lovers’ and then he would say ‘while the girls are getting dressed’ and they had a few more gambits like that but the same thing every week, we got very used to that. But it was busy on other days, there were talent competitions, there were fashion shows, of course Joe Loss was in the Villa ballroom and they were packing them in and a Town Councillor complained that there were 6,000 people a night kicking themselves to death in the Villa Marina and the next night Joe Loss played ‘I get a kick out of you’! But it wasn’t just a dance it was a show and a half of the Villa Marina floor was always taken up with people standing listening to the singers and then there was half left for dancing but it was a terrific time. Saturdays was chaos because on Saturdays hotels and boarding-houses didn’t serve lunch. You see in those days a lot of people had full board, which I find incredible because it’s so inconvenient to have to go back for lunch but Saturday there were no lunches because they were changing their beds so we had a special menu on a Saturday, just a set lunch. Other days it was a la carte and queues would start about 11 o’clock for that and we had to let them in, I went back from the kiosk into the café on these busy days, we let them in in sittings and watched them eat their meat and two veg and poured them out and the next lot came in. This went on until about half past two in the afternoon, it was incredible.

**JB** Can you remember how many people they might have served?

**Mrs L** Oh I couldn't give you a number. The Villa Marina has altered now completely but it was a pretty large café it was two sort of sections, like an 'L' shaped and it was full, I'll never forget, it was tremendous. Business was booming, it really was.

**JB** What sort of thing would be served in the café?

**Mrs L** Well at an ordinary time, it was very very boring really, there was egg and chips, ham and chips, fish and chips, I think pie and chips, peach melbas and we were supposed to say that the cream was real and it wasn't, ice cream. I remember one waitress saying this old lady said to me 'it is fresh cream, isn't it dear?' 'yes madam, God forgive me'. But on a Saturday it was just a meat and two veg and a set pud and they just had to take that or starve and on a Sunday, we didn't have many in on Sunday so she did actually cook, they did cook a staff a really nice roast dinner, it was a nice one, it wasn't quite so, because of course the Saturday meat was cooked, heaven knows when, sliced cold because it goes further when it's cold. I remember the teapots they were all blue, we used say about going on the blues if you had to wash and dry the teapots, there were hundreds of them and I was supposed to work until six. Of course these days this would never happen but you didn't go home until you were told and if it was a late night and we were busy in the café, from when the gardens closed you had to go into the café and help to clear up and it could be seven, it could be half past seven, and woe betide the person who went home.

A friend of mine went home, she took her apron off at six o'clock and said 'I'm only working until six o'clock' and she nearly got the sack and we had a lot of girls over, seasonal workers of course, who sometimes behaved quite badly, and the boss used to say 'wait until the end of the season, wait until the end of season' and then she'd start sacking them.

**JB** How many people would be working there and would they be mostly girls?

**Mrs L** Yes, there were a lot of Irish girls came over, I think they came every year. How many people, oh there would be about fifteen waitresses and of course with having their days off and then there would be the ice cream girls, two of us in the kiosk and then there would be one or two casuals who went round the grounds and of course there was the Villa staff, the deck chair boys, they were based in the Villa although some were on the Promenade, then there was one in the Gardens, that was quite a busy job. There were thousands of deckchairs, well so it appeared to my view, but every spot was covered and even on a day when there was nothing particular on and there were fashion contests. They used to go out in the morning and spot the people walking on the Promenade and pick finalists and bring them in for a final in the afternoon and one of Joe Loss's band had a very smart wife, she was very attractive and of course she didn't win because Joe Loss was one of the judges and her husband was livid about this and Joe Loss said to him 'you should be very proud of your wife, you should be very proud of her' and he said 'that's not good enough, she

should have won'. But of course he wouldn't dare to give a member of his band's wife a prize.

**JB** So it sounds like the social hub of Douglas in many ways?

**Mrs L** It was, yes, and then we had celebrities come, we had Petula Clark I remember coming and I can remember them saying 'Jack Leon will speak to us when he is not whispering to Petula Clark' you know. I remember Eamonn Andrews coming when he was quite young and before he was famous. Lots of famous people, we used to watch them go through.

**JB** Can you tell me a bit about how you came to work there in the first place, how did you get the job and how did you know that the work was available?

**Mrs L** Oh, well everybody worked, I suppose like they do now, students work, and I got into quite a lot of trouble over this actually because I was sixteen and I was staying on at school, I was at private school, St. Francis, and I was going to stay on, I did stay on through Sixth Form but I was in dire disgrace because I took, my mother said 'well you know it's time you had a summer job' so I took off from May. My mother and father got me the job because they knew Doris Maddrell who ran the café very efficiently for the Corporation, they knew her very well, and so they got me the job and I had to behave myself because they knew my parents.

**JB** What was your first day like?

**Mrs L** Very confusing, very confusing. It was rough, I mean I had come from a private school and quite a sheltered home, it was an education, it was. My daughter got her education in the local chip shop, I got mine at the Villa Marina. It really was, it was quite tough, some of them took it out of you, there was a cook, the kitchens used to be downstairs and you used to have to go down there to go to the toilets but I offended the cook, I can't remember what I did but she thought I was being snooty and oh she didn't half go for me. So I used to have to go round the corner after that to the loos round the corner because I couldn't face going to the kitchen. They would take it out, if they thought you were students, you know, you were trying to put one over on them, which I wasn't, but if they suspected you were they made it very tough for you. There were some good friends, there were some wonderful ones.

**JB** Were they strict about what you had to wear?

**Mrs L** Oh yes I had to wear a white overall, yes, for my ice cream job and try and keep that clean with ice cream down it. And then of course in the kiosk there were three suppliers of mineral waters, there was Downwards, whose motto was 'ever Downwards', Qualtroughs whose motto was 'always on top' and then there was Kelly who sold very few but the Qualtroughs and the

Downwards men were very, there was a lot of competition between them and I can remember getting into trouble for not displaying the right amount of Downwards, I think it was. They said I'd got all Qualtroughs, Qualtroughs was nicer you see, I thought and I just displayed more Qualtroughs and we were selling more and the Downwards man came and said 'look at those shelves, you haven't put our things, I can't see ours' so that was .. Of course the Corporation had to give, they gave their contracts to everybody. They had Felices ice cream in the kiosk, which was the nicest one and then we had a Wards ice cream in the café which wasn't anything like as nice but they had to be seen to spread their custom around and we used to have quite a lot of, not interference, but the councillors used to keep an eye on you. There was a Town Clerk whose wife used to come regularly in, you and keep an eye, and anything you did went back to the boss.

**JB** So when would you start your working day in the kiosk?

**Mrs L** Well I'd start, well I had to be in at 9 o'clock, that was for cleaning the café and my job was to clean those terrible glass doors and for the rest of my life I have always been careful how I go through a door because I am so sorry for the people who clean them, the finger marks, you know. I had to clean the brass and I had to clean the glass and then you had to watch people putting their fingers on it for the rest of the day so I was there, that was nine until ten. Now of course this was again a different custom, I had a good breakfast before

I went because that's how we live but they only had, most of the staff would only have had a cigarette and a cup of tea so 10 o'clock everything stopped and they made the tea and out came the buns and the pies and, oh terribly unhealthy things, but they all stoked up before and I think we went out about a quarter to eleven to the kiosk. That's when people started dripping in and then went on until, the Gardens closed for an hour because it was free in the mornings unless there was anything special but it was nearly always free and then they opened at 2 o'clock and there was a charge, because there was usually, well there was always a band and then usually another entertainment so they shut at one and then it was back into the café and it all depended how busy you were when you got your lunch and that was when you hung on, hungry, catch the boss's eye because you had to go into the still room and help with the dishes and sometimes you might be sent for your lunch about five to two and then you had to open up at quarter past. So a good foundation for indigestion.

**JB** So what was your kiosk like, where was it and what did it look like?

**Mrs L** It was literally a little wooden hut in the Villa Marina grounds, I think it's still there. It was just room for two of us, there weren't always two of us in it but quite often there were, just room for the two of us and the fridges was the ice cream at the back and shelves stocked with minerals and that was our job. It was quite good fun really, you know, as long as you were busy, it was awfully

boring when you weren't, but we were most of the time. It was a real peak time, I don't remember the gardens ever being empty and if it was wet, of course, the entertainment was in the Royal Hall and that wasn't much fun because you had to pound round the Royal Hall carrying your tray of ice cream, you know, little tubs, well that wasn't anything like as nice as the grounds.

**JB** Could you remember what would be in your ice cream tray?

**Mrs L** Just tubs of plain ice cream, as far as I can remember.

**JB** And how much would they sell for?

**Mrs L** Oh, now you are asking me, I can't remember. I only remember the ten shilling note that I lost that blew off my tray was considered a fortune, I think my mother had to pay it actually. That was an absolute crime, a ten shilling note, 50p.

**JB** So the manager was strict?

**Mrs L** The manager was very strict, manageress, she was very strict. Her name was Doris Maddrell and her sister-in-law Gladys used to help, she wasn't quite as strict, she was very nice, they're all gone, they've both gone now but Miss

Maddrell was a martinet really she had a nice side but she kept you, her main idea was to please the Corporation bosses and you know to make it all run, and she was a good manageress I suppose really, she had a lot to put up with.

**JB** What other characters would be around the place?

**Mrs L** Characters, oh dear me, Ken the deck chair boy, we used to meet all kinds of people, it's hard to remember. The ballroom staff of course used to come in and out, there were the cooks downstairs, the still room workers, the lady on the teapots, you know, she was a nice soul. She had to measure out the tea, and that again was quite funny you know, a pot for one, one click you see that was one helping, pot for two, two clicks, but of course it resounded into the stillroom you see so the boss could hear and then you'd hear a voice coming out 'you're putting an awful lot of tea in that pot, love,' you know, 'who's it for?'

It was very tight, it certainly was tight, yes, very tight. And all this, I can remember how much I was paid, I was paid £2.50 a week and it went up to the glorious sum of £3 the second year. I don't think I ever got any further than £3 a week but it was a fortune.

**JB** Was it a job that you took for several summers?

**Mrs L** Three years I worked there, yes. It was hard, I was very tired and Sundays as well. Sundays was one of the busiest days, you had one day off a week, mine was Monday. Sunday was a very busy day in the gardens.

**JB** What other sorts of things would be going on in the gardens then and in the Villa?

**Mrs L** Well, what was there? There was the bathing beauties was the big thing, there were talent contests, they were pretty awful, they could go on and on. Fashion shows, and that's about all really, the music was very nice actually, what is my type of music now but it certainly wouldn't go down very well today. It was an orchestra with soloists, it was very nice but we didn't have a lot of time to listen to it but the band, they were all very friendly and we used to meet the band boys from Joe Loss and there was a friendly sort of atmosphere really. Howard Jones, who married a local girl, was a singer, Tony Ventro, Rose Brennan, I don't know what happened to any of them now, they are probably all gone. We are having a revival on Thursday night with the Todd Miller so it will be interesting to see.

**JB** So what would you say was the spirit of the place?

**Mrs L** Well, I can sum it up, I looked through my autograph book when I was looking for photographs and I've got them, all these autographs have been signed and

one I think which perhaps was written by a woman who worked, who came from Laxey, it really I think perhaps did sum up the spirit of the staff.

‘You go to work to earn the money to buy the food  
to give you strength to go to work’.

It was a good-humoured staff on the whole but it was hard work and it wasn't very good pay, it was hard, the ones I was sorry for were the ones with young children. I can remember a girl with two little girls and coming in and being very upset because one of her children was sick and she'd had to leave her. That was the harder type, the young girls weren't so bad it wasn't, I don't know it wasn't much of a life really I don't suppose.

**JB** How did the work and conditions at the Villa where you were employed by the Corporation compare with the pay and conditions say in the boarding-houses where it was private?

**Mrs L** Well I honestly don't know because I never worked, I didn't really know anybody who worked, I had friends who worked in the Villa with me but I don't know, I don't know so I can't really compare that.

**JB** Would most of the staff at the Villa be young people doing it for a year or two, for a season?

**Mrs L** No, no, now there was Millie who was an absolute character, Millie Nugent who had been there, I wouldn't like to say how many years but she was an institution and she was there winter and summer because the Villa Marina did keep a small part of the café open in the winter and one or two of them were regulars, Millie was a regular, so there were older women but the younger ones would probably be the seasonal staff, you know there were droves of them. And the washing up, it was a terrible still room because it was, how can I describe it, it was sort of oval you know, you went round, came in one end and went out the other, but it was so hot, you know and at one end were the two ladies who presided over the bread and butter, they were the only people who were allowed to do the bread and butter because nobody else could possibly get the butter evenly, I don't know what happened when they were off, I can't remember. But they presided over the bread and butter practically all day, you know, I think they presided over the still room and this was a really high place to be able to do the bread and butter, the rest of us couldn't. There was a lot of them, most of them were seasonal, but a few regulars.

**JB** So what per cent would you say were seasonal and what per cent kept on, maybe?

**Mrs L** Oh, I would say only about 10% were the regulars, the winter ones, and then perhaps some who came back every year, I don't know why they did really, I

don't know why I did when I come to think of it, it couldn't have been that bad.

**JB** Could you take us a walk in your mind's eye round, say if you were going from your kiosk into the kitchens, the still rooms, the café, what you'd see?

**Mrs L** Well one part of the Villa that I think was destroyed was the balcony. When you went from the gardens you went through the balcony it was beautiful, it was an open balcony, it was hung with flowers and it was lovely and then you went into the, you went through into the big entrance hall of the actual ballroom and then through into the café and then through there, behind there into the stillroom. But the balcony reminds me of quite an amusing incident when I was a student, I was put on there one day to wait on. Well I wasn't a waitress so I didn't know the prices but they were short on the balcony so they asked me to go and help so I did and what they were doing for me when I got my tray filled up, one of the waitresses would look at it and count it up and tell me how much to charge for the whole tray. So this I did and on one occasion I was doing this and there was two couples, one rather superior man and they wanted their bills separately and I had the tray, the contents of the whole tray. So I just said, 'oh I'm sorry that's a bit of a problem' meaning to go on to explain that I wasn't regular and didn't know the prices and he produced a piece of paper and pencil and said 'it's all right dear if you can't spell sandwiches just draw them'. That really happened, when I think back over that,

oh, it must have, I was pretty livid but I think I'd have been more livid now, so anyway when I went back Miss Maddrell rather prided herself on having students, she rather liked that, so she said 'you should have said they taught me to spell at my university' and I said 'well I'm only at college actually', a training college, but she liked to have students. But it was really very insulting but that's the way people treated, you know, to treat anybody like that, they just put you all on the same plane as the lowest of the low, you know. Patronising.

**JB** So did quite a lot of the visitors treat you badly or were they generally..?

**Mrs L** No, no, not on the whole, no, you didn't get many, you got your odd complainants, you know. I think one of the worst jobs was sitting on the cash desk, of course I didn't do that very often in the Villa, have you ever imagined sitting on a cash desk watching people eat all the time, I think it's awful and the lady who did it regularly, I mean she spent a lifetime doing it. I don't know how on earth she did and then to our utter amazement, she was quite an elderly lady, really, well fairly, I suppose people look old to you in your mind when you are young, but she certainly wasn't young, and at the end of one summer off she went and she and the Entertainments manager, Sidney Perry, were married. I don't know what happened to them but off they went, I mean everybody was absolutely, because we hadn't seen, he used to come in for his meals but nobody had seen this courtship going on over the cash desk and so

everybody was absolutely astounded by this, because he was a funny character. He was an excellent manager, rather a peculiar character, but an excellent manager, he ran that Villa Entertainments complex has never, never been as tightly run I don't think as when Sidney Perry had it. He was excellent. They had good shows, they did Sunday concerts that were absolute sell-outs and Joe Loss every night and supporting band, you know, for the interval, no records or tinned music, you had a supporting band and then the big one and the curtains would close on the supporting one and then you'd hear, there'd be a bit of shuffling around and then you'd hear the beginning of 'In the mood', the curtains would go back and the band would be on and then Joe would come in and skate in and swivel round and do his flourish, it was great, marvellous.

**JB** So you were mentioning the romance between the manager and the cash lady were there many other romances among the staff?

**Mrs L** I don't remember any other romances, that was such a startling one, of course all the girls always talked about their love life, you know, they had, I can remember being sent for aspirins for my colleague in the kiosk who had a terribly bad headache because she had fallen out with one of her boyfriends who was in the band, but I met him on the way and he said 'where are you going, what are those aspirins for, are they for Jess' and I said 'Yes, yes they are' so I thought well, anyway it all ended happily because they got married as

well, so that's the only other romance I remember, that's like two romances yes, but most of the band the fellows were attached I think, but this one wasn't, he was very nice actually.

**JB** What part would using the Villa Marina play in the daily routine of the visitors from your perception?

**Mrs L** Oh, I think some people just came, I suppose, I don't know how much people travelled round the Island but I should think that some of them would come in day after day after day and not only that we had people who came for the summer. We had a lovely man who lived, who used to stay down Strathallan, a man, a Mr. Hirst, and he was a regular and he came in every day for the entire summer and you knew it was autumn when Mr. Hirst had disappeared and there were a few like that. But I think a lot of people made it their centre.

**JB** Was there ever any feeling of competition with the Palace, say?

**Mrs L** Well I never remember any because on my days off occasionally, you know, being a glutton for punishment, I would go to the Palace gardens and of course it was only a very, it was like a little pocket handkerchief compared to the beautiful, and the Villa was beautiful, I never go in it now, but it was beautiful. And this was just like a little square behind the Palace, the Coliseum of course now gone, long gone, and I used to think oh you know this isn't very much,

and it attracted a few but I don't think it ever had, maybe the Palace ballroom, yes, that's different, but the actual, yes I suppose that was right, because the Squads were at the, or am I going a bit later on, the Squads were there when I was in it, the Squads were there late fifties, I can't remember if they were there at the beginning, but I think there was a bit of competition. Of course there was Derby Castle as well, we weren't allowed to go to Derby Castle as young people because they had a bar. When you think about it now. The Villa wasn't licenced, the Palace was licensed, but it wasn't in the ballroom, you had to go to a separate place but the Castle, the Derby Castle had a bar sort of rather on the premises, you know near the ballroom and as young people we weren't allowed to go there. Of course the Highland ball was a great thing, now that's going to the Palace. They had what they used to call Scotch, which of course is a word you should never word, they never said Scottish fortnight, they always said Scotch fortnight, when Glasgow practically emptied and they all came here and they had a Highland Games at the Nunnery and they had a Highland Ball at the Palace and it was tremendously busy, well what we've lost. I gather that the highlight of it all was 1910, 1911, 1912 but it was pretty busy in the fifties compared with now anyway.

**JB** What would you say was the hallmark of the fifties that defined the decade for Manx Tourism what was the feel of the times?

**Mrs L** As far as I can see there was no market for the heritage things we are doing now, which of course I thoroughly approve of, I think this is where our future lies, but it was really a bucket and spade Blackpool holiday really. It was the mill towns, you know, this was there holiday, some of them came every year to Douglas. I suppose looking back on it now I wouldn't have liked to have done it, not my sense of adventure there, but it was, it was a Blackpool type holiday and I mean there was good entertainment, we had all the good stars. But of course we always did very well for films. We used to get the films here, winter and summer, pre-release, pre-London, I don't know why, but I mean I was a young person, I went to the cinema a lot and they were films that were not even premiered in London. I mean I remember seeing 'Whisky Galore' here and there were so many cinemas, there was the Strand, the Picture House in Strand Street, there was the Royalty, there was the Crescent cinema in the summer time, that great big enormous cinema, and of course there was Onchan, Peel, Port Erin, I mean the pictures and they had tremendous queues for the pictures too.

**JB** Which was your favourite of all cinemas?

**Mrs L** Oh, I don't know really. The Crescent was lovely because it was so big and airy, you know, I liked that, but I don't know, they were all nice the Regal, the organ came up in the Regal you know, but they have all gone, it's just

incredible that they have all gone, it's terrible. I don't know, going over on the ferry to Douglas Head was another attraction. You used to go from Douglas Pier, it only took you about five minutes, over to Douglas Head, and that was marvellous, we used to do that on our days off. It was lovely.

**JB** Tell me some of the things, because obviously you only got the one day off, you were working, so what would you yourself do for recreation?

**Mrs L** I don't know, walk the dog! Well we'd sometimes go to Douglas Head on the ferry, I can't really remember what I did on my days off really. Caught up with some rest, it was pretty tiring.

**JB** You were mentioning about Feldmans Hall before.

**Mrs L** Oh well that was all over in 1940, 1939 when the war came Feldmans Hall finished, Feldman never came back after the war, that finished. The minstrels were on the ...

**JB** Can you tell me a bit about the hall because you were saying a little before we started the tape about what went on there and would that be something you saw as a young child.

**Mrs L** That was something I saw that as a young child, I would be under five years old. There was a hall in Strand Street, just near the end of Strand Street towards Granville Street. I don't know which one it is now, it's not very far down, I don't know what building is there now, and there was just a pianist and everybody flocked in to sing the popular songs, and especially on a wet day it was packed out and schoolboys, would, if they hadn't to be at school early because of exam times, would go in there on their way to school, have a good sing, and I myself remember being taken and pushed through this enormous crowd to the foot of a woman and being told this is Miss Forde, and looking up and seeing, well she was getting, she must have been well in her sixties I calculate by then, a rather Queen Mother style lady in a floating dress and a hat and, it was a little cloche hat and she was in sort of purple and they were saying 'this is Miss Forde' in hushed tones and of course as a small child I thought so what, I mean I couldn't think what all the fuss was about and I remember I used to ask, my father worked for Feldman and I used to ask to be taken, if the office girl was going out, could I go with her and they would say 'oh no no you can't go through the street, it's taking Joan enough energy to push herself through without you because it really was so packed you had to fight your way through the streets.

**JB** You mention that your father worked for Feldmans, can you tell me a bit about his working life, his career, how he came to get involved in that.

**Mrs L** Well I honestly don't know, isn't it dreadful, I don't know. There are so many things that you should ask, perhaps, my father died fortyfour years ago so I was only twenty when he died. I know that he was actually in the music business, he was Blakemore's Music but there were three of the family in that so he had a sideline, he had a, well he had two sidelines really, he had a cigarette business, a shop at the Castle Mona, which was another little gold mine, but it meant that he had free access to cigarettes which attributed to his early death unfortunately, but he also had an office in Victoria Street, a room, for his Feldmans work, my mother used to help there as well, and I can remember the minstrels coming in on a Friday for their pay and I was terrified of these minstrels on Douglas Head. If I was taken up to Douglas Head I was absolutely terrified because the show was in, the audience sat in two halves, a front half and then the cheaper section I suppose and then they'd come out with their collecting boxes and I knew that they only went round the front half and I used to duck down because I was terrified of them and then they came in on a Friday for their pay, white, of course, and I can remember them saying 'this is Mr. Sharp' and he was actually almost albino coloured, you know, he was very very pale with sandy hair, 'this is Mr. Sharp, there's nothing to be frightened of' and I used to at him and then the next time I went up there I still screamed when I saw them, I just hated it. But they were popular shows, Douglas Head was a real centre of entertainment. Those days have gone forever, the war finished that. Of course Florrie Forde had her cottage here on

Niarbyl Beach, she had a connection with Peel, but I don't know, I don't even know when she died, I don't know much about her really.

**JB** Did you live on the Island before and after?

**Mrs L** I was born in Onchan and I lived on the Island until I went to college and then I came back from the college terms to work at the Villa and then taught away for a few years and then returned but by the time I got back to live it had changed.

**JB** When did you return, what year?

**Mrs L** '58.

**JB** How did you feel it was changing by that point?

**Mrs L** Well I don't think it was as busy then and gradually it got less and less and less.

**JB** Did you notice any change in the type of people that would come or anything like that?

**Mrs L** No I don't really think so.

**JB** There were just less of the same?

**Mrs L** Just less of the same really. I think it was when continental holidays became cheap and you could guarantee the sunshine. Of course I can, I'm looking back on a, they say you do, with sort of rose coloured spectacles, no I don't remember as much rain.

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I can remember after I'd come home walking along the Promenade one afternoon behind Billy Cotton for example, you know, the original Billy Cotton. You know we seemed to attract all the top names of entertainment.

**JB** Your father was obviously involved in the tourist business, did he ever say to you 'don't go in to it' or 'you ought to go into it'?

**Mrs L** No, no, I never remember him saying that and it was all literally dead by the time it came to making any decisions as to what to do, I mean it was all dead by, his side of it was all dead by 1939. Mine was just a stopgap holiday job I wouldn't like to have done it, I always said I wouldn't like to have done it for long, three months, it was about May, June, July, well of course from college it

was shorter. The first two years I think I was from May, June, July, August, that was enough, quite enough.

I think that's about all I can tell you, I hope we've got some bits out of it anyway that will help you.

**JB** Thank you very very much.

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