

MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BOARDING HOUSES

Interviewees: Ronnie & Mary Rigby

**Topic: Hotels
 Douglas and Peel**

Time Scale: 1945 - 1988

Date: 2nd October 1998

Interviewer: John Beckerson

**pp 1 - 26 Tape 1 Side 1
pp 25 - 51 Tape 1 Side 2
pp 52 - 81 Tape 2 Side 1
pp 82 - 100 Tape 2 Side 2**

JB Thanks very much Mr. & Mrs Rigby for allowing me to come and talk to you about your days in the Savoy and your family's memories. Could you just say for the tape your name, Mr. Rigby and your date of birth please?

Mr. R Well it's Ronald Rigby, 6th February 1931.

JB And Mrs Rigby?

Mrs R Mary Rigby, 13th February 1933.

JB I believe that the Rigby family have been involved in the Savoy for many years.

Mr. R True.

JB And I wondered before you talked about your own experiences in that well-known hotel could you tell us a bit about the family's history and when they first started?

Mr. R Well my grandparents first came to the Island early, from going back in the archives, what I can remember, early 1900s they started to the best of my knowledge in the early 1920s, would be, Mary?

Mrs R 1928 when they bought the Savoy.

Mr. R which was the Collingwood at the top of Broadway, it's the Claymore, I think it is now. My mother and father were married from there and my sister and myself were born there a few years ago. They started in the Collingwood and in those days from what my mother and father told me they were the first, or one of the first, to start doing full board residents because in those days the people used to buy their food, their eggs and bacon and things and bring in things into the Collingwood for them to cook, there was not the same facilities obviously as we've got today and they decided after a few, well I can't give the exact dates, but after so long, obviously just when we were born I believe, they decided this was ridiculous people coming in just sleeping there and all this hassle putting names on eggs and on your bread and all this carry on and they decided to do full board and they were told by certain people, friends and family, you were crazy because only the promenade then had people that were in for bed and breakfast or full board. So they then, this was in the early 20s they started from doing this full board, they eventually then moved down to the, this is my mother and father, because my grandparents were in the Manningham which is behind the Savoy.

JB Is that still standing?

Mr. R That's still standing, it's not as far as I know, I believe it's for sale, they open it I believe now for TT week.

JB Is it still called the Manningham?

Mr. R It's still called the Manningham, yes, as far as I know, yes. And then my mother and father moved into the Manningham and then, this was in the early twenties when my grandparents bought, moved into the Savoy. And then they followed in to, when my grandparents retired came out of the Savoy in early 1930s I believe, 1933/34, I think it was, obviously before the Second World War and then my mother and father moved in, followed, so it was a family, and my father's brother, Fred Rigby, but also my father's younger brother was also involved, got married and moved into the, took the Manningham over and so we had the Manningham the Savoy and also my Uncle Fred had the Kenilworth and so we had the corner places. I mean this isn't obviously to the exact days or months but my memory isn't as good as it should be is it, my love, at the moment? But that was of course the start of, in those days of course it was the heyday of the tourist industry as many people will tell you. It really was hard work, you worked hard, you played hard, you worked hard and I mean you are talking thousands, not hundreds, thousands of people, when you think of it now, you know, ten or eleven steamers coming in you know as hard as they could go during the peak weeks of the season, you know.

JB I'm fascinated that the family managed to get those three places all next to each other.

Mr. R Yes, three places right on the corner, yes.

JB That must have taken quite a lot of money and effort?

Mr. R It did.

JB Were they all renting the properties or did they manage to buy?

Mr. R No they bought them and in those days there was not the facilities that you've got in this day and age, it was brought up with the belief if you couldn't afford it you did without it. Whereas, you see, that was the basis of the family the way they did it, you know. And then other members of the family obviously came over from the mainland, my grandparents family because my mother's family were all from the Isle of Man, are Manx, all born and bred here, so that's how it started, so this is the last of the summer wine we are aren't we, virtually, Mary and I, we carried on in 1961.

Mrs R 1961 when we got married and took over then.

Mr. R So that's some of the history.

JB Did the family, do you know why they decided to come to the Isle of Man, your grandparents, in the first place?

Mr. R Well from what I can remember was that they decided that it was, they were business people, at least my grandparents were, and as far as I can remember, I know my grandfather, because he was my idol, was an engine driver in those days, I can barely remember him and my ambition was to be an engine driver when you look back on it. But they had decided in fairness that they saw the potential of the hotel and boarding-house business as it was then, it was you know, and that's how they decided to go into it.

JB Which part of England did they come from?

Mr. R From, my grandparents were from Warrington and St. Helens, it was mainly Warrington.

JB And knowing people who'd been to the Island on holiday so they would have had a feeling?

Mr. R Oh yes and they used to come on holiday I believe beforehand and then decided to uproot and I mean in those days it was a, you know the Isle of Man was a long way away but you know, I mean, it was abroad.

Mrs R Go abroad to the Isle of Man.

Mr. R You sort of go abroad kind of thing but I suppose in their day it was a big decision to take you know and the two young children, sorry, my uncle was born here but to bring a family over and uproot and that's how it started.

JB Are there any family stories that have been passed down from your grandparents or your parents about life in those days, running the businesses?

Mr. R Well only, I mean, not that I can remember a lot to be quite honest, some I know, it was major surgery putting electricity in, that I remember from my grandparents and when my father took it over.

JB Can you tell me a bit about that?

Mr. R Well actually they used to work all winter on it, it was literally a winter's work putting in, in those days and they did it themselves, I mean obviously they had an electrician, an electrician and I believe it was Walter Hawley, I always remember the name, Hawley the electricians, they're well gone now but I was only a kid then remembering this because in those days it was gas, all gaslights, you know, gas lanterns and all this carry on and it was a winter's work putting in and then it was an achievement to advertise that you actually

had electric light in and then in the early thirties they put the passenger lift in which was absolutely, I mean it was like going to the moon, you see obviously in those days, because that was, in those days, from what I can remember there was the Castle Mona, the Sefton of course, the old established, like the Fort Anne, you could count them on one hand then, the number of passenger lifts, and to put that in and I remember in 19, there again I remember my family telling me, it cost, I think it was the whole assembly and it came from Manchester, Etchells of Manchester, it was £300, I think it was £350 to put the whole, that was everything, you know, cutting the floors, the whole assembly, putting the lift in.

JB What year would you think they might have put the lift in?

Mr. R 1933 I think it was, '33, '34, it was the mid-thirties.

JB And when do you think they did the electricity?

Mr. R That would be in the end of the, they bought it in 1928 and no there wasn't electric in it then so it was in the, I'm sorry 1928, 1929, it would be just over the year, between my grandfather, I mean I'm not to the exact, either that 1928, 1929 I would think, again I'm only going on what I've been told.

JB It sounds like they were quite progressive business people?

Mr. R They were, very much so.

JB And from what you heard do you think they were ahead of their time compared to some of the others?

Mr. R I do now, yes, but I seriously do, yes.

Mrs R And then they put water in, hot and cold water in all the bedrooms, that was another thing that they did.

Mr. R Hot and cold water, there was no hot and cold water, that's right. That was in my grandparents, they saw that, because then it was just going round with the jugs, you know the jugs of water and then they had one bathroom in for eighty people.

JB When would they have put the hot and cold in?

Mr. R That would be in, again it was all in the late twenties, early thirties that started. This was in, then it was progress I mean all paid for out of your own pocket, there was no running off for loans, I mean that's the way people were so it was, they certainly had the foresight to see, it was an achievement then to actually have your own hot and cold water. And my father helped you know, I

mean did a lot of this himself and that's why it's probably rubbed off to me even to this day that's why I'm probably sitting like I am now with, don't put this on you, but again you know always brought up to do things for yourself. The more you did for yourself the more beneficial we always found it for your business.

JB The grandparents sound like really lively characters. Can you remember what sort of people, what were they like?

Mr. R They were, well from what I can remember, especially with my grandmother, very outgoing, I mean very very good business, very very keen business woman, she always was, more than my grandfather from what I've been told, you know, because she decided she wanted to do extensions in the Savoy which until when we came out, as Mary would say, decorative work for the ceilings, anaglypta and all this high relief on ceilings which were there all the time until we came out.

Mrs R Were there up to us selling, yes.

Mr. R And my grandmother, she had a chance of going on a world cruise, and this was in 1930, in the mid-thirties, which was an achievement I remember this and she said no she wanted to do all this high relief work in the Savoy, this was late twenties, early thirties, just before I was born I believe. I've got

photographs, my grandfather said right he was going to take the chance to go and he did. He went on his own and she stayed and did, but she had the always for the business always looking for, so she was very ongoing for her time when you think of it. I'm not, I don't take after her quite as well as that do I?

JB So how many bedrooms did the Savoy have at that time, you said they extended it?

Mr.R They put on, we put on more bathrooms, no they extended the dining rooms, they had the, they did, they made an extension from what I can gather between the smoke room and the dining room and it was then made and of course the electricity and water, the major things we all take for granted for many many years and they've, that was when they really got started and of course that was when the, and of course it paid, I mean they had in those days members of family cousins and relatives who would come over and work for them as well during the season of course so I mean and labour was great difference to what it is even in our time.

JB Can you remember them talking about staff and how they got their staff or did you know anything about that?

Mr. R Not much no I don't remember very much only that I know some of them, certain, and when I was a lot younger remember ones that used to say they'd

come and see us and say 'well I used to work for your grandparents' you know, but we didn't, they used to keep them for a long, I mean they had ones that would come back every year which was nice you know so obviously they must have treated them very well.

JB Did you remember did you go and visit your grandparents in the hotel as a young boy when they still had it?

Mr. R I can remember only being brought in down, because we had a nanny, I mean we were out, kept out of it and I can remember it was a treat once a week or maybe twice a week to be brought down to the hotel for dinner.

JB What would be your impressions of that visiting as a child, what would you see and feel and hear?

Mr. R Marvellous, marvellous, absolutely wonderful because to see all, having the staff there and seeing the way things were going on or even as a child you know at times being dragged out of the elevator, I mean they couldn't keep me off that, playing on that, but this was things I mean that stick in your mind as a, I never thought then that I would ever, obviously you'd go into it and carry on with it but having, it was just a natural thing for me just as, when I got older, it was a shame to see, you know, it would have been the end of an era. Because as I say Mary and I, we haven't a family so it is an end of the Rigby family as

far as we are concerned now obviously and this present, well since 19, when did we come out 19?

Mrs R 1988.

Mr. R 1988 when we finished.

JB Just before you move on to your parents' time, when they were at the Savoy, what sort of impressions would it leave you in terms of the look and feel of the building when your grandparents were there, what sort of colours, what sort of furniture, do you remember anything of that or were you a bit too young?

Mr. R A bit too young, I remember some of the, I remember mainly when my mother and father were, because what's disrupted me out of it was about obviously 1939, all the years we were out of it during the war so of course I was just coming to an age, I remember, obviously remember them but not much about the actual running of it in the thirties, you know.

JB So coming on to the time what year did your parents go into the hotel, when was that, because your grandparents retired?

Mr. R That was it, they retired in I think, moved out in 1937, '36, '37 because I know my parents just had really two years before September 1939 they had about

two seasons in the Savoy before the, we were all kicked out, you know, just for the outbreak of war and we had to get out.

JB What was that time like, can you remember when the letter came or the announcement came?

Mr. R No I don't. I can remember them coming to the Savoy in September and they had police, I remember the police standing at the end of the, outside the Savoy and there was police round the back because we weren't allowed to, we had to leave in so much, they came in, I mean this is my parents now saying, well they all had it, I mean everybody went through this, they had an inventory, that you had to leave in so many sheets, so many articles of silver you know, things, all basic things this was for the navy when they came in and I can remember, you know you had to take carpets up, things, drapes down of course and we were given two bedrooms, the top of the Savoy, to put all these things in and the lounge carpets were so big, in those days, we couldn't get anybody to help you, they had to cut these up into, they'd only been laid oh twelve months or whatever it was. I can remember my mother especially in tears virtually at this having to cut this up because we only had forty-eight hours to do it. It was a government, you know, they took a lot, all the furniture went out into storage, into the Derby Castle, I remember all this, you had to mark things, or you tried to. I mean everybody went, it wasn't only us mind you, everybody, all the hoteliers and boarding-house keepers that were involved, all the, back

me up on this, I mean again we were only at school then. It was a hassle to get out and then you had to hand the keys over and it was handed over to the government for the navy, I think it was the navy was the first came into our, the central promenade block.

JB What sort of things can you remember your mother saying and worrying about at that time and your father?

Mr. R Well it was just they were so concerned that things, we were given two rooms, they had to padlock these rooms and things would, when you had a chance to go in, I remember they were allowed to go in, you had to go, the police came with them, this is what hurt them more than anything, that somebody come, you had to go into, because it was a home mind you then even though you had to get out because of the war effort and you were allowed in, I remember my father saying they had to go down, they were allowed to go in every so often and of course the locks had been tampered with on the, things had gone you see out of these rooms, things that we packed away, never saw them again. It wasn't again this happened with different, oh it was a real, I believe it was really dreadful. And after the war it was, I believe the Derby Castle, from what I can gather, in 1943 ...

Mrs R 1945, 1946.

Mr. R 1945, you had to go down, everybody had a, I can't remember if it was alphabetically done or not, as each person was allowed to go and claim your furniture and of course certain things, we wrote, some people had the presence of mind to write you know paint the name of the place on the back of furniture and you could see some of it going into other people's homes I believe on the promenade which wasn't very, very nice. They eventually I believe it was a terrible hassle I believe just for everybody concerned trying to get, some things you got back some you never got back you know, you just, you know, it was a right mess I believe. Eventually they were allowed compensation I believe but it wasn't, obviously from what my parents said, enough to get what stuff you wanted, quality stuff you wanted to get back and of course trying to get it then after the war everybody was in the same boat, you know with rationing and everything.

JB Have you ever been at the hotel as a young boy when they had the navy in, did you see it like that?

Mr. B No, my father did and it was absolutely appalling, go down in history and I've said it and Mary will back me up with this and the worst people that were in it and I'll tell anybody after, the navy was the worst, the Royal Navy was the worst and I've said this to people and not been very popular as you well know my love, it's true, it was utter hell I believe after that, when the navy left it, before the internees came in and I remember going down and there was

banisters taken and there were floorboards ripped up, there was, it was absolutely, because ours was the NAAFI canteen I believe.

Mrs R It was filthy wasn't it?

Mr. R And it was absolutely appalling, the filth that was under the floorboards and things like this and that nearly drove my parents up the wall with, again other people were in the same, we weren't the only ones mind you and then the internees, I can't remember, I think it was, was it the Germans or the Italians and then they turned it into a prisoner of war camp.

JB Can you remember which camp it would have been because I think the different camps had names?

Mr. R Valkyrie ours was, Valkyrie 1, I think there was Valkyrie 1 and 2, Castle Mona wasn't taken because that was an officers, I believe the officers' mess, they all, the Castle Mona, but the Palace was, I believe was, the Palace, the old ballroom was a gymnasium or you know they use this obviously for all the facilities and when they moved, when the internees moved out okay they did a lot of work because I can remember going in when, after the war obviously and again it needed a lot of, there was, obviously it had been, all the fittings had gone, there was no, you know, lights, wires left from the ceiling and all this and some people opened that year and they had a bonanza. We didn't because

we said we wouldn't open no way until we could get it as we wanted it so that first summer, that first year when they were queuing up you could have put anybody anywhere, you know the first post war holiday period and we opened the second year whatever it would have been 1944.

Mrs R 1947.

Mr. R 1947, I beg your pardon, yes, that's right.

JB Was there anything the internees left behind that you saw because I know some of them painted and did murals on the walls?

Mr. R They did actually, yes, there wasn't as much at the Savoy but it was in, because my grandparents bought Ballacottier up at, that was their private home and when my grandfather died of course my grandmother stayed on until she died actually in the fifties and they did, and I believe they are still there now, I don't know, but that's going off from the Savoy, but that's internees we had working for us at Ballacottier on the farm, they did these paintings on the, in the dining-room, and I believe they were there, I say there were a lot of them from Naples and they did the Bay of Naples and Vesuvius and all this and I believe, I can remember that and it was beautiful and we did have paintings that they did for my family which we haven't got now of, that they actually did of some of the dogs we had and some of the animals and some of us as

children but unfortunately we haven't, they were left with my, when my father died, we haven't got those now, have we Mary, I'm afraid all those went when he died. But yes we have memories yes and they were and they came to the Savoy after the war on holiday with their families, I remember them coming back.

Mrs R With the internees?

Mr. R The internees actually came back, they came back to us on, because they never, they were really some of them were Fascists that were just living in England when, at the outbreak of war, but of course Italian nationality. They loved the Island, they thought it was absolutely marvellous of course and out on the farm, they used to take me out fishing, down to the river fishing and when we were up in Ballacottier and that was that era, after the, so it's been quite a hectic life when you look back on it hasn't it?

JB Can you remember the first time that your parents or yourself walked back into the hotel after the war when you got it returned by the government?

Mr. R I do, yes, I do.

JB What was that day like?

Mr. R Pretty harrowing at first to be quite honest, more emotional more than anything I think it was, but I think when you've, you know, when it's your own, not now then, but my parents, it was very emotional because things you've spent, done such a lot of time on that had to be replaced and had to be just, well vandalised up to a point, I mean, they were just, but again we weren't the only one, everybody, we were all in the same boat but it was very emotional at the time and I mean it was a lot of work, lot of work to get it, well it took us years to get it back I mean it's, we were working, as we wanted to get it back so it was quite, in those early, but the business was excellent, I mean, we had the wonderful business and you know, but its, obviously you thought it was just going to go on but ..

JB How old would you have been at the time when you got the hotel back?

Mr. R I'd just left, fifteen, I think just fifteen and I left school prematurely because I didn't want to carry on, I wanted to get back, well we were helping then, Mum and Dad to get because we were just doing it, it was just the three of us, then my sister was married, married shortly after, when was Pat married, because my sister really wasn't involved with it at all, she was, she got married when she was twenty-one so it was of course just left with my Mum, Dad and I doing the main part of it really, you know.

JB Can you remember what sort of challenges there were getting open for the first time and what, you mention that they didn't open for the first post-war season, can you tell me a bit about that decision and what they said?

Mr. R Well they said really, from what I can remember, getting stuff, getting food, getting, with the rationing, all the rationing that was going on, tea coupons, I mean again everybody was in and trying to get themselves, getting stuff they wanted that it was....

Mrs R Furnishings, carpets, curtains, everything.

Mr. R Furnishings, you couldn't get, carpets, you know, lino, we had to put, everything, we had to just cut strips, we had lino you know, and just a runner of carpet in a room, all the other carpets you see, some had been stolen you see, some had gone, things we had taken and put in storage, they gave you compensation but not enough so it was really hell from what I can hear, remember my parents talking about and they said, and of course we just had to get what, the second year of course we did open but it still wasn't, from what they, not for the kind of standard we would want to. People were more tolerant though mind you in those days.

JB Can you remember either of them saying how they managed financially at the time having lost the business for the war, then of course they couldn't open for

that first season so they didn't have any turnover, obviously they had to buy a lot of these things, did they have to borrow?

Mr. R Exactly, yes, they did, yes, they actually borrowed from my grandparents because my grandfather was, died at the outset of the war and it was loans that my, fortunately they had enough money to help, I mean, it was paid, obviously it was a loan, but it was given to my father and to my uncle as well I believe from what I can gather because it, he just, again my uncle, you see, my father's brother, he went to, he served in the RAF during the war because he was quite, there was about ten years, twelve years age difference and being younger of course he had to go to, he was called up, in other words. But my father being over the age, he was too old to go in then, to the forces, so he literally went out, they had the farm and we used to grow I mean literally, all the, he adapted himself, he loved the farm life anyway, keeping pigs and sheep and things like this you know and that was literally how we survived selling these, greengroceries and all this during the war, he just had to do something.

JB Did the farm in more peaceful times help to supply the needs of the hotels, I was just thinking about the fact that you had a group of hotels as a family, did you ever, your family, buy in bulk and save money that way or did they all make their own arrangements?

Mr. R No, they made all their own arrangements because I mean Ballacottier, it did, it sustained us during the war because again what compensation that, I can't remember those figures but I know you did obviously have a, you were compensated from the government but the same, you know, the usual thing even in those days and it wouldn't have been enough you know with, for the family of four as we were then to, not say to survive, but not to have a lifestyle so of course this is what Dad did and he was capable of doing this and but, after the war of course when we went back into the Savoy we had a good connection, at least my father did, with the farmers, which helped us out considerably you know with the ones he would work with during the war and they helped, they used to supply, it was nearly home grown things then from then, you know, from the Island, meat and everything.

JB So that helped you a bit with the rationing problem they would allow you a little bit maybe?

Mr. R It did, yes and I mean in fairness if they were saying, let me say they were very helpful, in more ways than one.

JB What was it like that first season opening after the war, what was the atmosphere like?

Mr. R Absolutely, well what I, absolutely amazing because I mean to us, seeing people queuing for glasses of milk, I mean Mary appreciates this more than me because coming over and her family living away during the war, we never went short of milk or any basics on the Island, as I am sure you have been told before, I mean, it was far worse, obviously from where Mary, where you came from in Stoke-on-Trent and round the Midlands because your father used to come over didn't he to bring things back for you and we couldn't understand people like Felices when they opened these kiosks on the promenade and there were queues, there'd be queues, not just half a dozen, thirty or forty people queuing for an ice cream and just glasses of milk because they were, you know things like this, this was initially after the war. I mean everything was in such, things that we took for granted more or less as the basics of milk and eggs which we weren't really, you know basic food and bread even though it was still, you know, obviously still on food rationing but we never had the problems that they had on the mainland.

JB So was that how they put their greatest efforts into the kitchen to get the money first.

Mr. R Because they did it themselves and we had cooks that we'd had, people that we knew from before the war, they came back to us just after the war. Naturally they wanted their, you know, so we had a standard in the kitchen which we carried on that everything that went into that dining room we had, so there was

no way, it wasn't a thing that there was one for the guests and one for the family and it was the same with the staff, everybody had what was cooked, that was how we ran the business and that was how, we still say to this day, we had people coming back and that's how you had to, we always believed in this, never mind putting on different, I know things have changed now, then it was basically family, everything had to be done, even Mary will tell you this, no tins of peas, no other tinned stuff, everything was all fresh, vegetables you know and everything.

JB How did they find their staff, did they have trouble getting enough staff back and did they open the whole hotel in one go or did they do it in stages?

Mr. R No they used to open it usually, they'd bring them over in May, the end of April, the beginning of May, because the seasons used to be, just before the, Whit, because we used to call it Whit week, in those days because of the TT, the practising, starting for the racing and you'd get them, they'd come over, because we used to do all the cleaning ourselves, all the, everything, we used to do all the spring cleaning and decorating

**** end of side 1.**

Mr. R And we used to live there of course.

JB Where would you used to live in the hotel, at the top, the bottom or did you have a flat?

Mr. R We used to live, first of all we used to live in what we used to call the smoke-room which was one which we used to use, we always called, it used to be a smoke room but we used to use it as a dining room because we could get different table arrangements in there, more than the main dining room and we used to, you know, well we used to think spread people out more didn't we?

Mrs R And you lived in that room in the winter time.

Mr. R We used to live in there in the winter time and we used to sleep upstairs on the first floor but in the summer, once the summer came then we used to, everything had to be moved out of there, our private furnishings and things, we used to go downstairs, which used to be a hairdressing salon in the Savoy which, the area which we used to, where we eventually converted into a flat for, I mean my parents had started on this, Mary and I eventually completed it more when we moved in but again my grandparents saw the potential of this, this was in the, just in the thirties, a ladies hairdressing salon.

JB Well that's unusual on the Isle of Man to have had that, can you tell me a bit about how they got the idea, I've not heard of any other hotels having more than maybe a little kiosk.

Mr. R Well the position of the Savoy which when you see these photographs, there was an open area, it's gone now, they've walled it up I believe these people that are in it now but that's another story, but it was opened, it had been opened up but they did take the wall down and in those days there wasn't the same planning there as obviously we've got today and they could, they turned it into a, only a ladies of course, it's own ladies hairdressing salon and one of the windows, the bay windows at the front which is on the promenade was taken out and there was a double door put on, with steps because it's below sea level down into this area and they ran this through the, up until 1939, my grandparents, they weren't, they had somebody in to run it obviously but they were living, they obviously were upstairs, they took one of the bedrooms off because of course they had to have somewhere to sleep and they lived on the first floor but this was another business outlet for them.

JB When did they establish the salon what year do you think?

Mr. R Oh it would be in 19, I think 1933,34, just after they went into it from what I can remember.

JB Would the visitors at the hotel sometimes use that as an amenity for the ladies?

Mr. R Oh yes that was, as we would say a little bit of one-upmanship, they had to pay to go into it I believe, I don't know, I never remember the lady that was in it but I mean it was then, in those days, to go and have a salon where, adjacent to the property as we say, but I mean, it was just, again what I am going back to, to see this potential then, I mean who the devil would think of doing that in the 1930s really you know I mean apart from normal hairdressing places.

JB And did that business survive the war or did your parents, were not able to carry it on?

Mr. R No they wanted to take it back I believe after the war I believe and then my parents were, because they were like this whether to decide to reopen it again, it would, but they decided no they would leave it, where we wouldn't live there, turn it into a bedroom, little apartments downstairs and that's what, that wasn't my decision that was my parents' decision but again it's history, you wonder now if they'd have kept it on what it would have been like but again that finished 1939 at the outbreak of war.

JB Just thinking back to when your parents were refurbishing the hotel at the end of the war, getting ready, did they change anything to get it ready or modernise at the time or were they just doing it in an urgent way to try and get it ready.

Mr. R An urgent way to get it, those first few years it was just literally getting the accommodation reasonably, you know, I mean there was no point, I mean, well I say no point it was again the finances, you just had to get, as long as it was, the food was all right and everything was clean and you know and well decorated as best as we could do then to get open, that was, but as I say quite a few people that we know that actually did open that first year, they just, fair enough, and they had a wonderful season but they had an extra year than we did.

JB Did the prices have to go up?

Mr. R Yes, well from, when we, going back to when my parents started, we came into it, opened up after the war, they started at I think it was 1947, 1948.

Mrs R After the war, 1947.

Mr. R A guinea a day and that was, which was then breakfast, sorry, early morning tea, obviously the full breakfast, a full luncheon, afternoon tea, dinner and a supper of sandwiches and that was it, that was a guinea, and that was what they'd call full board and it was damned hard work I can assure you and that went on right up until the actual full board, we changed it, didn't we when we

were in it, and that was only the last eight or nine years that we were in the Savoy I would say, isn't it, we went on to half board.

JB How many staff did they have to run the hotel, because that obviously would have been a difficulty?

Mr. R They used to have then I would say about nine or ten, ten I think it was with the kitchen, when they had the ones in the kitchen, the kitchen staff obviously, they used to have, we didn't, they used to have a hall, a boots as they used to call him, in those days, this is in my grandparents' time and of course chambermaids, waitresses, of course, kitchen, in the, you know kitchen staff and again the bar of course there wasn't as much as, I don't even, no I don't think there was a proper bar it was just a matter if you brought a bottle of wine in or, because again in those days it wasn't in existence.

JB When did the bar arrive?

Mr. R My father started, my father started the bar, from what I can remember, and we were only allowed to sell sherry, nothing, no gin, whisky, anything of the high alcohol content it was sherries, port wine, beer of course, I think they were allowed beer and you had to close, very strict.

JB Would that have been before or after the war you got the bars in?

Mr. R After the war, I sorry I beg your pardon just before the war because they were one of the few that had one of these, they prided themselves with the licence then, that was in the nineteen, late thirties, they were one of the oldest, of that, not talking about the Castle Mona but one of the few then.

Mrs R Seasonal places.

Mr. R Yes, the seasonal places that had these short, in those days you could only get them from May to September, October, that's all, they were short, what they used to call the short term licences.

JB So in your parents' day there'd be perhaps ten or a dozen staff, this was the late 1940s, early 1950s, who would be working then and in what departments would these be?

Mr. R Well mainly with the family you mean with us?

JB Yes who would be helping the family run the hotel in terms of staff?

Mr. R Well we used to have them, as I say, the ones, there'd be two or three in the kitchen, yes there used to be three in the kitchen when we used to take a cook in but there again we used to work it between the family going in and helping,

I mean they wouldn't be on their own in there, especially in the kitchen, and then we used to have them, we'd have two in the pantry what we used to call the upstairs, the still room, for the dishes, no dish washing machines of course in those days it was all done by hand. You'd have two chambermaids and then we used to have two, obviously two, sometimes three waitresses, we used to have, used to vary between two and three waitresses, or a chambermaid/waitress and again the general cleaners you see, the ones that would come in to see to the lounges and you know the general cleaning of the downstairs areas, so that's and then of course ourselves used to be always there, there was always one of the family, always, we did it all, we carried on that as well, there was always somebody on call as it should be because no matter how good staff are you've got to have somebody there to, that somebody can go to, because you never know what, when you're ever needed you know so you were on call virtually for those months.

JB Did the family eat with the staff or did they have a separate staff meal?

Mr. R They used to have a separate, I mean I remember they used to eat and have their own meals in the still room and we used to then get, and I remember father and mother doing this, they could get, they used to wait until, you know everybody, obviously the guests would be done and they would have, sometimes they would have it downstairs and sometimes they would have it in the dining room when everybody had, when all the guests had finished because

as I say they are the, they had to come before everything else they were the, that was the way we were brought up, you know.

JB When did you first start working, did you as a young man start working in the hotel straight away or did you do other things before you came into the business?

Mr. R No, went straight in, virtually straight in to it.

JB Was that about sixteen?

Mr. R Yes when I was sixteen, about sixteen I started, you know I mean doing, obviously helping with you know cleaning, painting, helping my father brought up with the, not the cooking side, not I, always Mary will tell you to this day that was where I admit I slipped up, I should have done but I never did any of the, any part of the cooking, there was always some member of the family or somebody there that was capable of doing it, it wasn't my strong part, was it, Mary and you always said I should have done, I mean, in fairness, been able to, bit late in the day now, but I agree.

JB How did you gradually take on more responsibility or did you do that as the years went by and you grew older?

Mr. R As we went on as I said, with my sister being married with a family and not being involved in it in that way there was just Mum and Dad and myself until my Mum died in 1960, very suddenly so then by this time, before this mind you I'd been meeting, involved with Mary anyway and Mum died in, yes 1960, so it left, in those days again they were still very very big seasons, very busy seasons so of course it was just left my father and myself but we did have some staff we could turn to but, and some of the local ones that had been with us did come and help us out that year. I mean that first year because we were floundering, there was no two ways about it, Mary came, that was in 19, she was very much involved then, she wasn't with me, we got married in 1961 and then Mary and I took over.

JB How did you meet Mary, was she in the trade as well?

Mr. R Yes, but not in the, we didn't meet in the trade as such, no, I used to play a lot of badminton in my youth, we both did, and I met Mary through badminton but she had been involved in the business in Peel where Mary lived how many years?

Mrs. R 1946 we came to the Island, my parents came over to the Island and took a boarding-house on the promenade in Peel.

Mr. R And ran the Fernleigh.

JB Can you tell me a bit about that, your parents came over in '46 did they?

Mrs R 1946. They always used to come over on holiday and we always used to come with them and one year my Dad bought this place. Again just prior to the war and then the war broke out so of course we never got to live here and we eventually came over in April 1946.

JB Fernleigh, is that one of the larger ones, the red brick?

Mrs R Yes near the tennis courts, yes.

JB So you purchased it just before the war and was it then requisitioned?

Mrs R Yes, before ever we got a chance to come and live over here, yes, so we didn't get to live until 1946.

JB So what was that like coming to a hotel again that had been requisitioned and how did your father manage to start that with the double burden of being, was he new to the catering trade?

Mrs R Yes, but I mean he was able to work, he was working all during the war so it wasn't as though you know he was without work and then when we first came over he carried on with his work and Mum and one of Dad's sisters came over

and that was how we started, started then. I can remember when we first came over and the first time I went into the place and it was huge and I looked up stairs and I thought my goodness, just coming from a semi-detached house.

JB Stoke on Trent?

Mrs R Yes Stoke on Trent and this enormous place which, okay we only had nineteen bedrooms but I mean it was enormous after a three bed roomed house, you know.

JB Did you know why your parents decided to come to the Isle of Man?

Mrs R Well they always used to come on holiday as children and they actually met here in the Derby Castle and then they got married and there was my brother and myself, we were, no the three of us we were all born before they came over to the Island and they always used to bring us on holiday every year, all during the war, we still came over, we used to come from Fleetwood on the old boats, we used to stay with friends in Poortown near Peel and then of course that was it, when we came over to live that was it?

JB So how did your parents find it, how old would you have been at the time?

Mrs R I was thirteen.

JB So would you have helped them in Fernleigh?

Mrs R Yes.

JB Well what was it like because they must have been plunged into the trade at an interesting time?

Mrs R Yes. I suppose a lot of it was common sense really and you just had to, there again you see there was no business so we weren't starting full right from day one and I think that they only used two floors to start with and again, like the Savoy there was no hot and cold water and one bathroom and you know all that sort of thing and I don't think that there was electricity all the way through it, I'm not sure about that but I don't think so.

JB So they gradually worked up, they opened just a few rooms at first?

Mrs R Yes, yes, for the first year and then I think the second summer they had the whole place open and you know we just learnt as we went along.

JB Obviously you know a lot about the trade between your husband and yourself and as it was then, what would be the difference in the business, the nature and

the feel of the business between somewhere like Fernleigh in Peel, you know in the late forties, and somewhere like the Savoy?

Mrs R Well I suppose you were, there again you see we weren't doing, it was only a boarding-house in Peel so we weren't doing dinner, although it was full board they had their main meal at lunchtime and then in the evening it was high tea that they had. But again it was breakfast, full breakfast, lunch and high tea and supper in the evenings, sandwiches and hot drinks or whatever you wanted and I think they charged about 7s 6d.

JB How did the prices charged at Fernleigh compare with prices charged at the Savoy in those years do you think?

Mrs R Well I think we were about 7s 6d full board, that was '46.

Mr. R Yes it used to be, we were a guinea, it was, before the war I think it was 10s 6d in the old money, this was my grandparents, we're talking up until the thirties, they could have the same menu virtually and the same amount of food and provisions for 10s. 6d and the Castle Mona who again my grandparents were very friendly with Miss Reece that used to be the manageress of the Castle Mona and I think they were then, as we were 10s 6d they were about 2s 6d more or 3s. 0d more because the Castle Mona was really, which fair enough which it was the, really one of the hotels on the Island.

JB In terms of social class of the people visiting the two hotels who would be coming to Fernleigh, what sort of jobs would they be doing and where would they be from?

Mrs R Mainly from the factories and that sort of thing, from the industrial areas, because I mean in those days there was, they used to call them the Wakes weeks so that there were certain areas had their week and you'd get the, well really the working class.

JB So blue collar as it's sometimes called?

Mrs R Yes.

JB And what about the Savoy, would that be any different?

Mr. R Slightly, but not a lot of difference, only we got a lot of families, I mean people were what you were catering for really, we used to get, there were still, I mean fair enough people that was, as Mary said, as we would say the Wakes, we used to get the Wakes people but not as many as, not a lot of young people as much in the Savoy, the difference between, as I remember my parents saying when they were in the Manningham which was even then, well just off the promenade, that was what they called high tea, the Savoy was, well it's like

keeping up appearances, the late dinner they used to call it, 6 o'clock well I mean it was a late dinner then in those days but it wasn't high tea. The Manningham was high tea so you used to get groups of younger people, now that I'm going, that age group, eighteen, nineteen and you would get more people, so many, five or six to a room in the Manningham and even youngsters, lads and girls on the Wakes weeks and they were good business but as Mum and Dad used to say when they went into the Savoy, you got even then, they used to say because they were family people, they were a little older and more mature if you want to put it in age, weren't they Mary, I mean, more family people. We used to have youngsters, don't get me wrong but not as much as the ones that used to come to, and pay that extra two or three shillings extra a day it was a bit, they used to call possibly a bit more upmarket.

JB Would you get clerks, people like that and floor managers?

Mr. R Yes, and things, in their particular, more business, some of them had, were more involved, more business people, in those days, you know, they would be managers or sometimes and they would have groups, not all, but a lot of the people, family people, weren't they Mary, retired people, people used to come that would say right, where it used to be Saturday to Saturday and booking part of it you could open it, as my Mum used to say you could open and close the reservations. Everything emptied on a Saturday, people come in seven days and that was it. In the Savoy we always had them coming in virtually every

day of the week, I mean, even in our, even before the war, you know, just before and after the war so it was more difficult with the booking side of it, you know.

JB So that would be different to Fernleigh, would the change over day be quite strict there

Mrs R No, no, we were flexible, yes, but again it used to be mainly Saturday to Saturday because of the so called Wakes weeks.

JB And the length of the season, would you be open for the same amount of time in those two establishments or would the Savoy perhaps be open for longer or not, would they all be the same?

Mrs R Not much more, I would think, there wouldn't be much difference

Mr. R No I don't think so not in those days, maybe a week or two.

Mrs R We would open a few days before practice week really, wasn't it?

Mr. R In those days, yes, true.

JB Did you feel the people coming to Peel were any different from the people who like to go to Douglas, were there any things they particularly valued about coming to Peel?

Mrs R I think there again you most probably got more of the younger families, the ones with little kiddies because of the beach, and it was quieter, even in those days it was quieter than Douglas and they'd go off for a trip round the Island for about, I don't know what it was, about 5s. 0d or something like that for the day, yes.

JB So as you were growing older and taking on more responsibility at the Savoy, Mr. Rigby, what sort of things did your father say like today is the day I'm going to let you have control of this job or did it just grow gradually or did he make jolly sure that you didn't do anything?

Mr. R They were pretty strict, I used to think it was awful at the time, today well they just laugh about it today about coming in to the bar and being at certain times that I used to be in the bar side of it one of the, not that I'm teetotal but that was one part of the business that I never did like, I had to do it, but it wasn't of choice I can assure you but the rest of it it just, it more or less, jobs that you did that seemed you know, being on the hot plate, seeing to the food side of it, not cooking it, as I said but the serving of it, oh we were always there, I mean there used to be the three of us, Mum Dad and myself always involved either one,

somebody in the kitchen and somebody in the upstairs still room, seeing to all aspects of the food, how it was presented to the people you know, from behind the scenes this was obviously and that was how we did it.

JB Did you feel it was important to have a member of the family available to meet and speak with the guests, was that something you did?

Mr. R Yes that was very important, yes, very much so and I mean sometimes it wasn't always convenient because there was always so much that had to be done behind the scenes, but people expect you to be there some, well at least some member of the family, somebody at some time of the day which was fair enough and that's how we did, that's how we used to do it and of course it used to be people, even up until when, well even now we still have cards, Christmas cards, I mean they are getting less because obviously it is a dying race, they are literally dying off, but I mean I'd, they'd seen me grow up, people that used to come before the war, that had seen me, you know I was always Ronnie, even when I was, even when we were married and running it, it was still Ronnie and Mary, or Mary and Ronnie, wasn't it that had seen me from so high, which was nice. I mean that was wonderful to us and they would bring their, other generations would be, their grandchildren would, if they were coming to the Isle of Man, go to the Savoy, you see and I mean, and that's how you did it, I mean obviously we advertised like everybody else but a lot of it was on recommendation, which was nice.

JB Can you tell me a bit about the advertising and what your parents did and what you did yourself in terms of advertising just on that theme. What was their policy if you know anything about that?

Mr. R Well in my time remembering it, I can't remember with my grandparents because even in my time, and my parents time, it was all, 99% of it was correspondence, with letters, with the phone, it was used, but very rarely, the phone bookings, it started I mean, obviously, the late '60s and '70s but we used to spend days, at Christmas well Christmas time, during December, I mean we used to have these circulars printed, reminders in other words, more or less like a semi-personal letter printed and we'd be doing hundreds of these, licking the, folding these, all by hand, all hand written, I mean there was no, in those days and there'd be piles of these things on the table, and all posting them, remember such and such and they were all little postscripts put on them to people we knew personally and we were days and days doing this.

JB How many would you think there would have been?

Mr. R Well to me there seemed to be hundreds, I mean, at that particular, I had the job of folding them, sticking them, blasted things into these letters and Mum and Dad used to be addressing the envelopes and, but again it paid, that was what, we used to advertise in the Guide, that was our main...

JB The main thing was the guide.

Mr. R ...for the Isle of Man, the official guide, but that was virtually all we did.

JB Was there any newspaper advertising or wireless?

Mr. R Never did any, not in our time at all, no.

JB What about your parents in Fernleigh in terms of advertising?

Mrs R Again, in the Guide.

JB The tourist board official guide to the Isle of Man?

Mrs R Yes.

Mr. R That was the main one.

Mrs R I don't know whether they ever did anything in any other papers, I don't know, they might have done in latter years, in the newspapers, but I don't know.

Mr. R We never did, we never, we used to advertise sometimes for staff in, when it started to get all these dicey years when you used to, getting very difficult to get suitable staff, you could get staff but you know there's a difference between you know, you could get plenty of enquiries but those that we thought were suitable, you used to thin them out quite a lot, you know, but, so I mean that was the only advertising we, regarding the papers, the Scottish, the Irish national papers when we were wanting seasonal staff.

JB Did the staff that you yourself with Mrs Rigby took to the hotel, were they the same people and places that your parents and grandparents had staff from or did you have difference preferences?

Mr. R We did eventually, when we were first married we carried on virtually the same, didn't we, with some of the, I mean obviously not, some of Mum and Dad's.

Mrs R Yes your Mum and Dad's old ones.

Mr. R There again they were getting too old, I mean obviously, you know, getting past it, really until 19 ...

Mrs R 1966, 1965

Mr. R 1965 and we had then, it was the biggest change we'd ever done and I think the family had ever done because we'd never employed, we'd had, I'm not saying employed, we'd had people in helping us, men, mainly it was always women, we even had, used to take them from, where was that, the centre, the, before we had the other staff, Mary, from the Ballamona, the ones that used to help us in the kitchen, Chris and the ones that were mentally retarded, which is no disrespect, I mean they were very different job but they were supervised.

Mrs R Yes from Ballamona but they were kind of ...

Mr. R And we used to take them from, they used to see us, say the ones that were suitable and it was pocket money for them doing potatoes, I mean, cleaning the yard, I mean it wasn't a very and they were, they were very very good for years.

Mrs R Some of them were with us for years.

Mr. R And then eventually they, that stopped, whether they, I can't remember now whether they put more restrictions on them and that stopped and we had one dreadful year for staff in the mid-sixties that we couldn't, we, you know things were being stolen and things, and they were, this wasn't locals, this was people, ones that came in from the mainland and we decided then to have Portuguese staff because we had been going to Madeira for many years and we

had been approached for many years from these boys and girls, qualified, especially the boys were, in the hotels because they couldn't get employment that they wanted in Madeira and we started in 1965 and it was the best decision that we had ever made for years because we had them for, was it twelve or thirteen years, it was,

Mrs R Until they put a clamp on here, they wouldn't give us work permits.

Mr. R ...and we used to bring them until they stopped us here, stopped us in the Island, I never forgive them for this, because it was just they, quite rightly the unemployment was high I agree at that time, I'm never arguing, not like it is now, because we had to guarantee, we weren't going to be any encumbrance on the Manx Government, quite rightly, so any problems, I had to sign that if anything went wrong, I had to get them back to Portugal, to Madeira, which was fair enough, so we paid their flights over and, of course I'm not talking about medical naturally, if there were any medical problems but they had to go back at the end of the, off the Island at the end of the year, or September, October. If they could get other employment which of course they, the Palace, different other hotels wanting them when we finished with them, that was their decision, that was up to the board down here. Their contract with me terminated in October so for the first few years they, some of them stayed on the Island through the winter, came back to me for the summer, some went

back to Madeira and then came back but again we paid there was no, and they stopped it right out of the blue in 1979, I think it was.

JB Was that an idea that you had that was quite unusual?

Mr. R It was, very much so, because nobody, I mean, then, we were approached by many different people in the trade could we get them for them because they were, they used to live in you see, it was full, everything was found for them, and we had our, obviously, I mean, our ups and downs, behind the scenes, I'm not talking in front of the people, they were emotional naturally Latin temperament between, because husbands and wives used to come, but that we accepted this, didn't we Mary because that's human nature. But workwise, as Mary will tell you, they were wonderful, absolutely wonderful.

JB Can you tell me a bit about that maybe?

Mr. R Yes, they were absolute gems and they would do anything and they never wanted to go off duty they wanted to stay there all the time, didn't they, you more or less had to force them you know, 'no, go to bed, you'd better go to bed, it's bedtime' and they couldn't understand why they had to close the bar at quarter to twelve, this they could never understand, oh no.

Mr. R The boys, no.

Mrs R But workwise they were absolutely excellent, excellent.

JB So how did you get the idea, was it just that people spoke to you on your holidays in Portugal and you thought?

Mrs R Well a lot had approached us over the years.

Mr. R They'd approached us for years beforehand.

Mrs R And we hesitated and then one year when we were away I'd collapsed.

Mr. R You did, yes.

Mrs R You said right, that's it, we're going to see if we can get some of the Portuguese staff, which when we got home, we enquired about it and that's it. They gave us the work permits for them.

JB Did you use an organisation in Portugal or did you make a personal arrangements?

Mrs R No, we made personal arrangements.

Mr. R And they were coming from, some of them came from the Savoy, funnily enough, that we had stayed for many years, this is the Savoy in Madeira, which is a five star hotel anyway and we always used to tell them, to try and get over to them the five star hotel there compared to coming over to a small family run hotel, there was going to be quite a gap.

Mrs R No comparison.

Mr. R Well obviously, I mean, but the difference was they were being treated in those days, because it was before the revolution, to be actually seeing the Patrao, as they call it, the boss, you know, the owners, actually working, physical work, and of course, and to this day isn't it Mary?

Mrs R Oh yes, we still see them to this day, some of them now are retired and some of them have got their own businesses, married with families.

Mr. R Oh yes got their own businesses, but they couldn't see, it wasn't, as the owners wanted you to do things that we were there to, that was their attitude whereas the English attitude was if you've another pair of hands fine but we used to do this, and we never changed and you would

**** End of side 2**

JB Was the chief advantage in to the business with the Portuguese staff, was it in terms of, was it more economical or was it the attitude and friendliness of the staff or a bit of both maybe.

Mr. R Yes, a bit of both. We used to, they, a) they never, any of them, I think it was, every year, all the years we had them they used to, I always used to say did they want their wages weekly, fortnightly, or monthly or what, that was left, as they used to say, Mae and Pai, mother and father, Mae and Pai, that was, they always called us that even to this day, behind the scenes, not in front of the clients, because we always, they used to treat us as their mother and father, as I say even to this day we still get letters and cards from them, don't we Mary with this.

Mrs R Oh yes.

Mr. R But seriously we used to say, right, I would bank this money for them every week, whenever they wanted their wages they could have them, they never did until they went home apart from buying souvenirs and as we used to say, every one of them, their idea was to come and earn money for those three months, they lived on their tips because we didn't have a service charge so everything, the laundry, they had their own rooms, their own individual rooms, you know, husband and wife, with a television in and they had their own shower facilities so they, all their food, so virtually it was okay, it was, they were here to work

obviously, but the money they saved, I mean some of the English staff we had, you'd pay them on a Friday, it would be gone, they'd be wanting subs on us, not all of them, some of the youngsters we used to have they'd go out to the Casino and it would be gone but that was their attitude but not with the, any of the Portuguese, every one of them I would issue, I'd give them a cheque or a draft to send it to Portugal before they went home.

JB So as compared to what your parents and grandparents had, where did they get their staff from, was it Ireland or England?

Mr. R Mainly Ireland, and mainly England, a lot of them from England and Scotland, and they were very good, I mean, some of them were, but I mean in those days they were, some were excellent, they came for a number of years, didn't they, Mary?

Mrs R Yes.

Mr. R Yes, I mean it was a different attitude then to that type of work to what it is today.

JB Shall we take a quick break before we go on to when you came to run the Savoy yourselves?

JB We'll just talk a bit now about when you came to the Savoy. Were you married at the point when you came into the business?

Mrs R Yes.

JB What year did you marry?

Mrs R 1961, October 1961.

JB Right. And how soon after that did you both come to run the Savoy?

Mrs R Straight away, as soon as we came back from honeymoon, we took it over then, didn't we?

Mr. R We went straight, we took it over then. Dad came out then, said he was going to step aside then and let Mary and I, obviously he was still involved in it in the business sense, for the running side of it he didn't, he, we had a home in Princes Road then and Dad lived up there so I mean that was just an end of an era for my father but I mean again he knew Mary and I, prided ourselves, capable of keeping the family name on and we did, didn't we, in that way, and he was very pleased.

JB How old would your father have been when he retired?

Mr. R Now then, Mary, he was, it was 1961, wasn't it?

Mrs R 1961, sixty-two, sixty-one, as old as the year.

Mr. R He'd be sixty-one, yes, sixty-two because he was the same as the, sixty-one yes and that year was the first year we were on our own and we felt that, well I'll not say that we felt we were thrown in the deep end because Mary was more than capable of doing, I mean obviously with the catering and that's how we ran it, Mary saw to all the running, that was I'm saying the catering side of it, all the food side was Mary's, the main, all the curtains, everything to do with the domestic side of it wasn't it with the curtains, bed linen, I mean, this is before, I'm talking about before we opened, but obviously when everybody, the girls used to go to Mary, the boys used to come to me, because I used to see to the ordering for the bar, used to do the accounts and the booking side of it.

Mrs R The bookwork.

JB What sort of condition was the business in when you came in to it, in terms of profitability and the condition of the building and staff and the guest levels, how did you find it?

Mr. R Yes, because I mean it was just literally and a very easy hand-over wasn't it Mary?

Mrs R Oh yes.

Mr. R I mean with barely knowing, coming in and helping Dad the year before even though she wasn't, she was in nearly every day even though they were running their own place, that was, I mean, you see, helping us out in other words, marvellous. So she was very much, she knew the gist of running it anyway didn't you?

Mrs R Yes, running of the place, yes.

Mr. R So Mary went in then and started to do, we had, I mean again, Elsie still kept coming in even if, when it was part time, so they used to run it the kitchen side of it, which is a major job, the cooking, it was still full board then.

Mrs R Yes Elsie was with us right until we sold in 1988.

Mr. R She used to come in only part time then.

Mrs R Part time she used to come in then.

JB This is Elsie Wegener.

Mrs R Yes.

JB How did you find it Mary, coming into a business with so many ghosts of Rigbys lining up behind you, watching over your shoulder?

Mrs R Well there wasn't really because there was only your father, wasn't there?

Mr. R Well you got on so well with him, didn't you?

Mrs R Yes I always got on extremely well with Dad and of course Ronnie's sister was not involved in the business at all and she was on the mainland anyway.

Mr. R Yes she was away, yes.

Mrs R So really there was no, and your Dad's brother and wife they were, had just retired as well.

Mr. R They had just retired as well, yes.

Mrs R So really there was no family, there was only your father's cousins and that, they were still involved in other places on the promenade.

Mr. R So it was just a matter of handing over and I mean obviously and knew, guests that had come obviously knew that we were married and it went off straight off from there so there was no hitch and the, and certainly no differences regarding the standard of it, I mean we just had to, we just wanted to maintain, and then try in our own way then to alter things as we did over the years that we were on our own.

JB What sort of ideas did you have in mind when you first came about things that maybe you thought you might like to change or modernise and what did you feel was really good that you wanted to keep the same?

Mr. R Well we certainly felt that we wanted to do something about more bathrooms and that sort of thing.

Mrs R Oh yes because we only had the one bathroom.

JB What year was this?

Mr. R 1961, 1962, there was still only one bathroom in the Savoy then and three, four toilets.

Mrs R That would most probably be, it would be the end of '62 because we were married October '61 and our first summer together was '62 so it was most probably ...

Mr. R '63 yes.

Mrs R during that first winter that we started doing things.

JB One bathroom and three toilets for how many people?

Mr. R Eighty people, that's true, they used to be queuing, I mean when you think of it, with a towel over their arm, queuing up for the bathroom and then the parents, because it was the jug, as Elsie will tell you exactly the same as I am, because the boiler, it was a coke boiler that used to, because everything was done by hand upstairs and downstairs still room and upstairs.

Mrs R No dishwasher.

Mr. R No dishwasher so of course, all the hot water for the meal times had to be, that was priority so the bathroom used to be locked and the key was, come and ask for the key when they wanted a bath.

JB So you thought it was probably maybe a little old-fashioned?

Mr. R Well having been abroad at the time and seen, there was no way, and to be quite honest we were not rudely criticised by any means but people that shall be nameless in the trade then, because we decided we were going to put en suite accommodation, we said it's not, ridiculous, we thought in the, you know, which it was, putting toilets as we did and we decided we'd only do so many, you know, again we were paying for it as we went along then and then they brought in eventually these government, these loans which we said right we'll take, you know, use this facility which we did, but people were saying to us that had been, you know friends, you don't really, you don't think people really need this, aren't you just really wasting your money and it made you think, well this is ridiculous this well we, we expected, we wouldn't go into accommodation when we were away, especially when we were abroad, I'm not saying it was all roses in those days but it was, they didn't advertise en suite it was there then even, let alone, so we said right and we advertised for it surprise surprise of course we just couldn't, I mean all, it spoke for itself, the first year they went, they'd just gone, surprise surprise because we had to then, of course we had to put showers, we hadn't room for a bathroom so shower and toilet, we used to partition off, so obviously we lost some of the space in some of the rooms which we had to explain. I mean the rooms were smaller there was no two ways about it but they put up with this then, I'm not saying now but because fair enough they still had the room but they had those private facilities and it was a turning, wasn't it, Mary, it was a turning point. As far as, as

regards that side of it, we didn't lose anything out of it, so, then we had the tour companies coming along that got wind of this, oh we had, from Wallace Arnold, we dealt a lot with them in the days, we were one of the first of the smaller hotels to go in, take Wallace Arnold, because they wanted, with older people you see, wanted their own facilities, quite, even then in the sixties, and that, and then extended our season because first they were coming early and late, they used to come in April and May, parties of sixty and fifty, maybe fifty or sixty people, fair enough it was an all in rate but it, the numbers, you were making, it was a turnover to start you off for the summer and then they'd go on until October and then eventually they wanted to come all, and obviously and allow, they wanted an allocation of rooms during the season and that was one of the most difficult decisions because we'd so many regulars did we go and take Wallace Arnold and not say kick our regulars out but give them more of the accommodation. If Wallace Arnold, the company they are, very good for us, decided to pull out we could have been left with, on our heels, so we didn't, it didn't go down very well, but we stuck to our guns and we allocated so many rooms and we lost some locals because, some of our regulars, didn't we, because we couldn't accommodate them.

Mrs R Oh yes, we couldn't accommodate them.

Mr. R But it was in those late sixties and seventies then they virtually they pulled out, they went to the Majestic of course in those days and the, I think they are still

going to the Metropole now I think it's still the Metropole, some of them, the Sefton, I can't remember, but they eventually did pull out a lot so of course you would have been left high and dry if you had all your eggs in one basket with them but they were good people to deal with, the years, we had them, no we did very well with them and they were a good company the years we had them.

JB So when you first put your en suite in you said that there were some other hoteliers saying, looking down their noses a bit at you, how many others would have had that, other hotels of your size and clientele, were you one of the first to do that?

Mr. R Yes, one of the first, in our particular capacity, I'm not stating about the bigger ones obviously.

Mrs R But in our size.

Mr. R But in our size that's true, we were and that was early sixties and then I mean obviously it started, now I mean fair enough quite rightly so, people aren't going to, but I mean this was, you couldn't foresee now, obviously, I mean all those years away.

JB Was it a problem trying to shoehorn it into an old building did you find that the age of the building sometimes affected how you operated the business?

Mr. B It was very difficult, very much so at times yes, you did, because when you think of the building, you know, the way the Savoy is positioned, all the, well you only had three single rooms.

Mrs R Which we turned into bathrooms at the back of the house.

Mr. R Which we turned into bathrooms at the back, all the rest of the rooms either looked, all the had virtually a sea view with the Castle Mona so that was wonderful for the summer. In the winter it was sheer hell because it was just an ongoing battle with the gales and things of trying to keep the, those type of windows, in those days it wasn't thought of, double glazing, I don't think they've even, they may have done some of it now in the Savoy, that I don't know. But in our day it was just a matter of trying to build channels on the window sills which we did, my father and I did, and the rain used to come in one hole, run along the, this was in the winter, in the storms, and run in, channel it in and out through the other end and that was how we did it.

Mrs R Didn't you drill a hole and put lead piping in it so that the water would run through that?

Mr. R Yes lead piping and down over because otherwise it used to come in and we used to seal, even then I was days and days sealing the windows up and every, it took us about three ...

Mrs R Right up to us coming out we were sealing all the windows up for the winter.

Mr. R Even when we came out of the Savoy, to seal them up and take everything down, strip everything down and that was Mary's job, the curtains, every curtain came down, everything was taken, not nowadays, those days are gone, I mean, I'd be quite honest about it because they don't do it the same now, it was hard work, but it saved, all the big lounge curtains used to be taken down and folded and laid, covered with, Mary will tell you all about that side, that used to take days and days, didn't it and the same putting them up.

JB Can you tell me a bit Mary about how you'd go about that, how long would it take and what process would it be at the end of the season that you would be doing?

Mrs R Well we more or less used to do a kind of another spring clean at the end of the summer so that we were sure that everything was perfectly clean before it was closed down for the winter and I would say that we used to take, what, maybe, five, six weeks. We would start at the top and slowly work down and fold everything up, get everything laundered.

Mr. R Blankets and everything.

Mrs R Yes, everything used to be stripped down.

JB When would you start that process, what date?

Mrs R As soon as ever we closed, according to whenever we closed and of course we could stop and start then whenever we wanted so if it was a nice day we'd say right we're going to have a break this afternoon so we'd only work in the morning or we'd work all day and some weekends we'd work all weekends or, and then we'd have a holiday then in the New Year or Christmas time and start again then after the New Year spring cleaning getting ready for the summer.

Mr. R I used to do the outside decorating as Dad and I always did it, we always used to, you know, see to the, there was always a ritual we had there we used to do one part, there were nearly three hundred windows and knew everyone by name nearly, back and front, over the years, when I look back on it you wonder why you had back trouble, in later life, in fair we did because we said it was our work that we, and we could have got somebody in to do it but I always enjoyed decorating, I'd been brought up doing it and again you were earning, why pay somebody when you could do it yourself.

Mrs R Pay somebody when you could do it yourself, that was the attitude.

Mr. R That was our attitude and that was what we, as long as you could do it, be capable of doing it as Mary used to do all the blankets, all the, certain things used to go to the laundry but you used to wash all the blankets yourself in the, every year those were done weren't they, you'd have to, every season.

JB Three hundred windows?

Mr. R Three hundred windows and that used to do, I used to do different ones, I mean obviously either gloss, I mean obviously painting sometimes you had to burn them off, sometimes you'd do them, I mean, some were done every year, some part of, I mean obviously in the summer with, once the spring came you had to get out as much as you could before the hotel opened, with the weather conditions, inside was different, and you'd be going up to usually the outside of the walls and the front of the Savoy up to about a week to ten days before opening because we used to leave it, weather conditions of course and we'd be frozen sometimes weren't we?

Mrs R Well you had a deadline and you knew that you'd got to be finished by then because I mean no way would you painting when any guests arrive or scaffolding of anything.

Mr. R When you see it now, scaffolding up now, it was unheard of in our day to put scaffolding when visitors were there, and I still say it, and I think it is appalling, that people put scaffolding up and working on doing that type of work in the middle of, I know I'm old fashioned, but I'll stick with that until the day I die.

JB You must have had a good head for heights to be able to climb up ladders, how many stories is it?

Mr. R That never bothered me. Four, five to the top, on the top one and that never

Mrs R Yes, there's the basement, the ground floor and four floors of bedrooms.

JB Did you find that the exposed, I mean obviously being a corner hotel, it must have been good business because you had more rooms with views, but did that increase your maintenance bills being so exposed?

Mr. R Yes, it did because you had to, well the weathering it got, east and south-east, winds, all those cornered buildings, the second one, the Kenilworth or even the Manningham, they used to get it certain east or north east winds but then certain parts of the building was at the, overlooking the lane, like the back wing of the Savoy was obviously looking, we got more, a certain amount of shelter but all the front parts and the side of the Savoy, east and south east, the

whole lot, there wasn't a window on that part that didn't, or the brickwork, so of course it was just an ongoing, it was like the Forth Bridge I used to say. Every year I'd be, you used to stop one part of it and then the next winter you'd see another part that would suddenly start, you know, and you'd be on, it was just, wasn't it, Mary, it was just with the

JB Did you ever get angry and frustrated at the age of the building, curse it or were you quite calm and didn't mind?

Mr. R Sometimes I did, because I used to think, because, you know the floors would start, you know you'd start, you know you couldn't really measure for decorating as you would say in the likes of here for the same, in our own home because obviously there was subsidence and different gaps under the door and you would never say if you did one room you couldn't say well that's it, I'll do the same next, there's no way you'd be inches out, on a different, and ceilings and things. But they were built to last, there's no two ways about it, I mean when you think of the work.

Mrs R Well they're over one hundred years old now, aren't they, 1891 I think.

Mr. R Well they're over a hundred years, of course they are and of course, as you said, with putting bathrooms, putting the lift in it meant altering each, there was different levels on each landing of the Savoy because of the way they had

to move the stairs, I mean obviously before my time and that was all done by hand, I mean it was, it was all, there was not the maintenance things they've got today, so I mean in fact they did it, and it was all veneered, the panelling on the, you know, each, I mean in fairness when you think of the work it wasn't all, none of these metal, there was nothing, because when the fire precautions came in we had to have all the inside of the shaft all fireproofed, I mean in today's, I mean it would go up like a torch, all the woodwork so, and it was all hand done, I mean I don't know today mind you but what they've done but when we left it, we had to have the fire, we had the fire regulations, the fire escapes and all this.

JB Was it the same lift that was installed in 1931?

Mr. R When we left, yes the same.

Mrs R Yes it certainly was when we left.

Mr. R It wasn't exchanged because it was DC current when we went, it was DC then and of course it was, well I can remember this, anything that was there, you had to have a generator to convert you see, model trains I used to keep, rectifier in those days and then the Corporation, that must have been, obviously after the war, the early part, obviously in the forties, they changed it over to AC, you probably know this more than I do but they did pay for the conversion

but we had to have a new lift motor put in which is still, well I say still, when we left it was the same one. But the rest of the parts, the components, all the landing selectors were the original ones that were put in the day it was, so they'd built things to last then.

Mrs R Was it twice a year they used to come to service it?

Mr. R To service it and we used to clean that out every year.

Mrs R That's right and it used to be scrubbed all inside the lift shaft and he used to say it was the cleanest lift on the promenade.

JB A clean lift is a wonderful thing though, so many never get done ever!

Mr. R Yes I mean the sliding doors, we used to, didn't I, I used to go on the top of the lift and you used to, because I couldn't, I used to stand above the cage and you used to control the buttons and I always used to say if she wanted to get shut of me press the wrong button and I would have come out looking like that, you know. I said I've got to trust somebody with it, but that's how we used to, because the two of us used to do that and I used to, didn't we and you know they're not all locked up yet so we used to do it every, once a year. Admittedly I said once, used to, oh.

Mrs R I did get my reward though didn't I for cleaning the lift out?

Mr. R Yes you did you found a diamond in it, you found a beautiful diamond which, in the bottom of the lift well and Mary reported it to the police and they, because we hadn't a clue, nobody had written to us about it.

Mrs R It was in the well of the lift.

Mr. R In the lower part.

Mrs R And I saw something sparkling and when I went down and picked it up and it was in the thick, you know the black oil on the lift, three quarter carat diamond it was.

Mr. R A solitaire diamond, it was, three-quarter carat, and the police, we kept it how many months was it?

Mrs R Six months I think it was.

Mr. R Six months, they, and then if nobody, we informed the insurance and they said right it's, Mary had it remounted and she's got it to this day so that was one good thing that came out of it, I wouldn't guarantee the diamond mines

Mrs R That was with cleaning the lift out.

Mr. R It's not the sort of thing, out in South Africa you know, but everybody's been looking since.

JB What other sort of things would people leave behind that you used to find?

Mrs R Oh all sorts of clothes.

Mr. R You'd be absolutely, we had the, one year we had one, when all this IRA business was going on we had this couple that came in and that was in July and I can't remember, the police, anyway, that's right they'd checked out, out without paying, that didn't happen often I must admit, and they were what do we call a chance booking and they came in and to cut a long story short they didn't arrive for breakfast the following morning.

Mrs R Ah no but it was the day that they arrived that we somehow sensed that something was not quite right.

Mr. R Yes, we did, we did

Mrs R And we decided we ought to contact the police and we did and they came and they had a look and they said they would leave it until the morning and see

what happened and in the morning we sent the chambermaid up and they had gone but there was a load of stuff in the wastepaper bin, wasn't there?

Mr. R So they had obviously used the ...

Mrs R So the police came and they took all that away so what happened we don't know.

JB What did they leave?

Mrs R Well I don't know it appeared to be all paper and stuff I don't know we didn't touch it.

Mr. R Old packaging that they'd obviously got round things.

Mrs R And we called the police and they just came and took it all away and we never heard any more about it but they went away without paying and it was a false name that they put in the visitors' book.

Mr. R Oh yes, this was all false, this was somebody, but these things the way the situation was then, it's, these things happen you know.

JB Did you ever have any moments of high drama like someone dying in the hotel or people having bad fights?

Mr. R Yes we did, we did. We had one girl that went out, that was just before, again that was in, walked, the gates, the gates for the grill in those days open grills.

JB On the fireplaces?

Mrs R No on the lifts, on the doors you know.

Mr. R On the elevator itself and the engine house was on the fourth floor and the lift used to go from the basement to the third so there was just one flight of stairs to go up so if you went to the third obviously that was the highest you could go to the third floor, and this, that's right she'd gone to, this particular girl, ready to go out, an Irish girl, go out to the Palace, you see, just after, they went to the, that's right went to the second floor to go down to the dining room, the lift was on the third floor which was above her, and the gate opened, of course it shouldn't have done so she stepped out, correctly, stepped out onto the, I mean the light, there was a light on on the landing but it obviously wasn't sufficient and she went down the lift well but these cables that, she had the presence of mind, these balance cables, obviously to, we, you just go cold even to this day when we heard this. And she, landed, sorry the lift was at the bay, I beg your pardon, the lift was on the basement, sorry, so she came down the cable, the

cage was, cables but of course she just opened the door and of course there was a fault on the, and it had all been inspected by these engineers, and she went down and onto, landed, and there's two girders on the top, there were two girders on the top of the cage, she went between these and all she had was, we took her up to the hospital, she was a nurse as it happened, she was, in those days, she was more worried, she'd laddered all these, what's these?

Mrs R The nylons.

Mr. R Nylons and friction burns on her hands because she'd gripped the cable, she never realised how near, and then after this, because we got the insurance, because as I say you just go cold you know what could have happened.

JB Was she all right about it?

Mr. R Fine, because she said she was more worried about, I mean, realised, we felt, you know we made her go, we took her to the hospital.

Mrs R She was more concerned about her clothes than anything else.

Mr. R Yes typical of the ladies, you know, and it was, but I mean in fairness you know she could have taken the, I mean we absolutely felt appalled, over this because I mean she could have, talk about being killed, but she, that was one of

the most harrowing ones. We had some of those, one fellow, one of the farmers that went out, tried to jump out through one of the bathroom windows.

JB Suicide?

Mr. R Yes one of the, went high, whether he was on drugs or not we don't know, he'd have gone four floors, he would have gone, he'd have gone down four floors into the yard.

Mrs R We stopped him at that.

Mr. R We managed to pull him back in.

JB Can you remember that day, who talked him in, what did you have to say?

Mr. R He was well away, well I don't think you remember.

Mrs R I don't know, I think somebody came and said there was somebody going to jump out of the toilet window.

Mr. R Yes and he was well away, only a young fellow, don't know whether he was on, because it was alcohol, we never said it was drugs because in those days it

wasn't mentioned, we think it's, looking back on it it could have been but that was not very pleasant you know.

Mrs R You had to talk to him did you?

Mr. R Talk to him to get him back in again and we got the police in to him. He was all right, he apologised the following day but he never realised that he was quite, he was going to walk on air you know, I'm balancing on the, and he could have, I don't think he realised to this day the height. but they had the presence of mind to come and get us and we talked him out of that.

Mrs R Then we had somebody else had a heart attack and died on us.

Mr. R That's right, oh yes that's a sad day, yes that went poor soul, just died.

JB Tell me about that.

Mrs R They'd only arrived that day.

Mr. R Just arrived that evening and checked in and the husband, she said she didn't feel very well and went up to the bedroom and the husband came down and said 'I can't, there's something happened to my wife' and of course we, 'could

we get the doctor?' Of course we did. Well we went up, and of course it was Dr. Hamm, it was Richard then that came in

Mrs R And by the time he came in she was dead.

Mr. R She'd died, he said she'd died, so that wasn't very pleasant.

JB How did you deal with the body without upsetting the other guests?

Mr. R Well we had to wait until, obviously when the police people that Richard Hamm had informed came, and he said we'll wait until about 1 o'clock in the morning you see because obviously they had these special things that they carry them in and of course they said well our, didn't want our, well you shouldn't laugh but I always said to Mary it reminded me of Fawlty Towers afterwards. It wasn't funny at the time obviously and when he said 'Well Mr. Rigby' he said, 'I don't know we might meet somebody on the landing' and I said 'if they walk down the stairs', you know, anybody coming in late, I said 'well I think your easiest', I said, 'either to go to the basement and go out, if you can get it through the basement door, or down round the front entrance of the hotel'. So what they had to do was, they had to obviously strap them up, it was like, it reminded me of one of these mummies, because they couldn't obviously, it had to be vertical.

Mrs R They had to stand it up.

Mr. R They had to stand it up in the lift, I thought if anybody, I mean afterwards, we'd, I mean it was a dreadful, I mean experience, but we thought after if anybody had come in and had seen this I mean it was like something out of Boris Karloff you know but they eventually got whatever they carried this very discreetly, as discreet as they could be that hour of the morning, got the poor soul out. Oh dear, oh no, as we say we had some memories all right.

JB You didn't ever have any, to go to the other end of the spectrum you didn't have any babies born or anything like that or amazing children getting up to strange behaviour?

Mr. R No, not really, no I can't remember anything like that.

JB Any old grannies leaving their false teeth behind?

Mr. R Oh yes, you got all those sort of things.

Mrs R Clothes and presents that people had bought to take home and they'd leave behind.

JB What was the weirdest thing anybody left behind, the strangest?

Mr. R Well I think one of the weirdest things with you was the one that brought you the wreath in.

Mrs R Oh that was when this one died.

Mr. R Yes this lady brought this wreath, whatever it was, that was what we thought was weird at the time.

Mrs R Yes, she arrived and she, and I immediately jumping the gun, now she was with the party.

Mr. R Of the lady that died?

JB The one that had the heart attack?

Mrs R The lady that died and she didn't really know the woman it was only that they'd arrived and they'd all arrived the night before and she arrived at the door with a wreath and I said to her 'do you want me to put that somewhere cool for you?' Thinking that she'd bought it for the funeral tomorrow you see, because the soul was going to be cremated here and she said 'oh, no, no, I've brought that for you' she said 'because you've been so kind to us all and I would like you to put it somewhere so that everybody can appreciate it' Well I

didn't know what on earth to do with it and I finished up, that I got an enamel pudding bowl, a big one, and literally put it in there and put chiffon scarves round it to decorate it up to make it up to not look like a wreath, because I thought, good heavens I'm not having a wreath in the house.

Mr. R And it was, it was a very nice gesture, for a bunch of flowers, a bouquet of flowers.

Mrs R Yes and they didn't want to take it up to the cemetery, that was for me and they wanted me to put it on show so that all the other guests could appreciate them. Quite an odd present, but still.

Mr. R Odd one.

JB You must have seen real characters in the hotel over the years

Mr. R Oh yes.

Mr. R We have yes, especially with the

**** end of side 3**

JB The lads from Lancashire that used to come every year?

Mrs R Yes, these lads used to come every year and in those days you could leave your windows open all night and I mean you weren't bothered at all and we had these big laundry baskets that we used to have from the laundry and when they were empty we used to put them down at the side of the hotel, which they were out of sight of everybody and this lad, who always used to remind us of George Formby, wasn't it, we always used to call him George.

Mr. R Yes, very nice fellow.

Mrs R I think nearly every night he used to get these laundry baskets and climb on the laundry baskets and in through one of the windows.

JB After you'd locked up?

Mrs R Yes, after we'd locked up.

Mr. R Because I mean in those days

Mrs R You didn't hand keys out to anybody in those days because I mean the door used to close at midnight.

JB What time did you lock up?

Mr. R It used to be midnight in those days we used to close the doors, yes.

JB You didn't give out keys.

Mr. R No, not then, eventually we did.

Mrs R Because I mean the doors used to close at midnight.

JB So he'd be climbing on these baskets?

Mrs R He used to climb on these baskets and then through the, and then it got that in the morning we used to say to him 'well George which window did you use last night?'

Mr. R Oh when you think of it today, I mean, we used to say, well I mean, where he'd been to who knows because this would be prior to, well this would be, no Casino.

Mrs R There was no Casino or anything like that.

Mr. R But we didn't ask, he was on holiday and as I said he was very much unattached so where he'd been or who he'd been with that was obviously his concern but I mean I never, I used to say to Mary 'well he won't be in' and we never, I mean in those days we wouldn't obviously leave the front door open because you never, in fairness, I mean we always, it never happened like that.

Mrs R You wouldn't leave the front door open but you'd leave the window open you know.

Mr. R I used to say to Mary, well don't leave these, just leave the, because George as we used to call him, I said 'he'll be in this window, he'll be coming at this window tonight', and he used to think it was a great joke, when you think of it today there'd be absolutely, oh gosh you're going back now, in the early, I mean just after we were married this was, wasn't it?

JB He'd be up to amorous adventures no doubt?

Mr. R Well of course.

JB Do you remember having some strange couples, or Mr. & Mrs Smiths checking in?

Mr. R Oh, yes, many and they'd come down and say Mr. Smith and Miss X, the way they'd even sign the register it stood out a mile, the sheepish, you know Mr. & Mrs, you knew damn well they weren't married and then of course they'd order two single adjoining, can we have two adjoining singles and then they'd come down and they'd say well there's only been one bed used and that was really, and in my parents' time when that used to happen they used to, it did happen knowingly, they'd ask them to leave because that wasn't the, would you kindly, your bill will be made out in the morning, out.

JB Did you feel more relaxed about that or did you keep a certain ...

Mr. R No, well as it went on more and more I mean at first we, it didn't go down very well, I think old habits die hard, but in fairness, and once the Casino started, well then the whole aspect of it changed, there was none of this, I suppose some of them did, with us being virtually next door to it, we could, we had to then get pass keys and of course, because in those days, again there were no yale locks, again I'm going back in the early sixties, they were the ordinary old locks, you know with these massive keys that they had that, it was like opening a dungeon, when you think ...

JB In the bedrooms?

Mr. R Yes, I mean key virtually opened all the doors in the, anyway I mean it was just to keep the privacy for people in the bedroom obviously and then we had yale locks fitted throughout and of course with pass keys the people, quite right, they would only be going out then at midnight naturally once the Casino started, it changed the whole thing of closing the doors. We used to just leave, obviously there were lights left on all night and then they had these pass keys and they could come and go as they wanted to. It was difficult at first to us because it was a complete change of what we would say lifestyle wasn't it Mary we were always a bit, but then you had to.

JB Did the Casino bring good business or was it just a development of the existing trade?

Mr. R At first it was hell for us because it's, and not only us there were people, because the way it was at the Castle Mona, Crockfords took it over, opened it in, late sixties I think, don't quote me, it was mid-sixties anyway possibly, this was at the Castle Mona and it was the best thing, you know from short bread, as we thought then, with it for people, naturally it was an amenity and a lot of locals, but the noise, as we thought then.

Mrs R We lost business with it.

Mr. R Yes eventually we did, we tried to take it to court, we had tape recorders put in, in bedrooms, we got our lawyers onto it because the first year it was utter hell because people

JB What year would that be?

Mr. R That would be 19, the late sixties, wouldn't it, middle, late sixties.

Mrs R How long has the proper Casino been there, and I mean it was prior to that so it must have been sixties.

Mr. R Yes it would be Mary, before the Casino, before the Palace opened, and of course we couldn't move people you see and people were going, this was a starting at one and two o'clock in the morning until five, coming out and shouting from the Castle Mona, and that area, you see, that was before your discos got going and of course 'you can't move us Mr. Rigby, we'll have' and you know, I had to accept this and we can't, we'd nowhere else, we'd no back rooms to put them in so they were getting it at all levels so they would come down playing hell, quite rightly so, so of course we did, so after the first year well we said there's no way, we can't, we used to ring the police, you know, they couldn't do anything because it was outside.

Mrs R They had to ring the security people and then they'd say well phone us when you have any trouble or if there's a fight, well by the time the police got down it was all over wasn't it?

Mr. R Oh it was dreadful for those years, but we didn't win because there was no way because it was a closed, virtually closed shop, we had these, sound, to monitor the sound, we put our recorders on to try and get the, you know the, and they said you've got the, and a lot of car noise as well you see, banging doors and shouting and people do, so then when it moved to the one, to the Casino where it is now it was a bit better, obviously, we lost most of that but we got all the aftermath of the drunks coming out and our areas, with many times used as a public convenience and that wasn't very pleasant. Well we had a hassle with this fights and things going on.

JB Did you feel that the trade was changing generally at that time?

Mr. R Oh yes, yes. That was the start of the, yes definitely, we could see that, when you look back on it now it was the thin end of the wedge once, I'm not condemning, because I mean it's an amenity, because people would like to, could go to the Casino, I'm not a gambler but that doesn't, I mean I'm not condemning it for that because everybody's to their own, but it's the after, the knock on effect, you got people that'll go and use it, have a wonderful time, fine, but you always got this element of people that will abuse it and then we

had, wasn't it Mary it used to be dreadful, the fights and all the mess we had to clear up from it and I had, used to be when they used to come towards Broadway coming out, if they went the other way we used to consider ourselves all right.

Mrs R A couple of times we had them, the bell ringing at about 3 o'clock in the morning and I can remember one particular night and here was this fellow and he was absolutely saturated and he was as drunk, he was legless, wasn't he?

Mr. R He thought he was in his own hotel, you see, and he didn't know where he was.

Mrs R He didn't know where he was staying, he didn't know what his name was.

Mr. R He had a wad of notes.

Mrs R I think we got the police that time and they took him away and then another time there was somebody and they had thrown him in the sea, and he came to us to see could he use the phone to get a taxi to go back to where he was staying.

Mr. R We used to have all, we'd say the knock on effect, not always.

Mrs R Well we were the first thing when they came out of the

Mr. R The light was on you see, it was the first, you see with the Castle Mona being set back, they would see from the promenade, they would see the Savoy, Broadway, coming obviously into Douglas, but we used to say it would be like a

JB That would be after you had only had the hotel a few years, in the late sixties?

Mr. R Yes, then, we were just starting off, I mean Mum and Dad and the family never had that problem because there was no night life in that way, there was just no Casino, everything was finished you know eleven, twelve o'clock.

JB Did you find that the sort of age group of the people who came to your hotel changed over the years or was it, for example the same people getting gradually older or was it more older people you knew, or just the same or what sort of, did it change or was it the same?

Mr. R No we saw the change, didn't we Mary, in fairness.

Mrs R But we never went in for young parties did we, I mean if we had an enquiry for six or eight young ones we wouldn't take them.

Mr. R No we never did, no.

Mrs R We used to try to stick to the more family, older type, didn't we?

Mr. R We didn't want the young, I know it sounds awful now to say this, I mean in fairness they are entitled to the holiday like everybody else but it wasn't, to put it bluntly, our scene, because you can then have naturally gangs of girls and boys especially lads bringing women in, vice versa, you knew, the girls would be going out trying to bring fellows, I mean I've known this for years, not being a killjoy but it didn't go down with family people, quite rightly so, and with families with children that we had didn't want all this carry on, drunkenness.

JB You just took families in?

Mr. R And we just stopped too, to this and there was no way, people don't want to sit in a lounge and seeing somebody being ill.

JB Where would the groups of young girls and young lads go, where would they stay, what sort of hotels?

Mr. R They used to, I mean in fairness, the Kenilworth, they used to be particular, they had youngsters in there as well, and certainly up the drives.

Mrs R They used to go more to the ones that were still high tea places, didn't they, they didn't go to the late dinner.

Mr. R Well in those days, it stopped.

Mrs R It was more the high tea places and of course I mean all the places up Broadway and the upper part of Douglas.

Mr. R Yes Hutchinson Square and Derby Square and all that, fair enough.

Mrs R They all took people.

Mr. R We are talking of in those days, of course they did but we always said, we never, we used to have, you don't get me wrong, we'd have certainly younger people in at times you know with families, they'd be grown up lads in their, eighteen, with families, you know with their parents, or with their, or honeymooners, naturally, fair enough, but we didn't, as I, well we never had gangs of, groups of youngsters.

JB Thinking of the Savoy, if you had to place it in a sort of mini league table of hotels who would be the two or three above and who would come below generally?

Mr. R Well in those days you are talking about the Fort Anne, as it used to be, Fort Anne, the Castle Mona, the Sefton, the Villiers.

Mrs R The Sefton, the Villiers, the Majestic.

Mr. R They were what we used to say the stalwarts because they used to be open twelve months, they were the twelve month, I know it's all changed now but in that day and age, those were the, as we always called, the fully licensed hotels that had their functions and at, where we'd go out to for a meal or something go in the winter or something like this like many other of the people that were in our business used to and then it gradually, so in our league, in fairness, we were, there was boarding, we were if you want to put it one point up from the boarding-house really that's all compared only to how we were late dinner, we couldn't offer the facilities that the likes of the Castle Mona and you know dancing and cabaret and all that.

JB You were the second division.

Mr. R Exactly, if you want to go to, like the Hydro.

Mrs R I suppose yes, the Hydro, the Milnes.

Mr. R Milnes Waverley, the Imperial, they were all, you know.

Mrs R Sandyford.

Mr. R Exactly.

Mrs R And they always used to regard the Loch end was the cheaper end.

Mr. R That used to be, that was an unwritten, the Loch end, that's what they always used to say was, you'd get the ones, more chance people as we used to say coming off the boats, the first ones they'd go to, not all of them, but I mean, in those days, and now it's ironic, they're the ones ...

JB Most of yours were bookings?

Mr. R Yes.

Mr. R 99, yes, we used to pick up chance, as we used to call it, very very rarely indeed.

JB And who would be coming below the Savoy.

Mr. R Well you'd be going on then to your Castle Mona Avenue and up the drives as we used to call it, up the Palace Road, in those days, Palace Road, Empire Terrace, up there in those days, they were good, wonderful.

JB Where would places like the Broadway ones and the Bucks Road, would they come in?

Mr. R They would be mainly bed and breakfast places as they used to be, I mean they're all gone.

Mrs R All boarding-houses really wouldn't they?

Mr. R Yes Belmont Terrace, some very good places, in fairness, probably some of them a damn sight better than some of the places on the promenade, I mean the way they'd look after them. I had an auntie that had a place in Drury Terrace up until the day that, looked after them, did all the cooking herself virtually, and had a couple of helpers and she'd feed them like kings up there, really, without a word of a lie.

JB If you wanted to go somewhere really cheap and cheerful, absolutely had hardly any money and you wanted to find a room?

Mr. R I would have said, I'd go back to, I would say to the likes of Castle Mona Avenue, Tynwald Street, I'm going back years now.

Mrs R Allan Street.

Mr. R Up there, they're all up on upper Douglas, as well they would come up the top of Derby Road and up round Derby Square and round that and they would just go and maybe in those days, now you see they're all

Mrs R More or less all private houses, that had got a couple of rooms that they would let in the summer time for a bit of extra money.

Mr. R Yes, he'd be out working all day you know but take a few in for a bit of holiday money as they used to say, up the top of Broadway, up there below St. Ninians, up there they used to take them in, Palatine Road, Murrays Road they used to take them, right round that area, you know, he'd have a full time job and she'd have, you know, family, she'd do bed and breakfast and fine because there was no registration, or anything in those days.

JB Just to sort of finish off with what would you say was the secret of running a successful hotel, what was your recipe for making it all run smoothly and that you found worked well?

Mr. R Not taking too much out of it, as shall be nameless, quite a few did, but they were in, go in and take everything for themselves and not put anything back in, that was what we always said you've got to put back into it to get something out of it, look after them, but be there to look after them.

Mrs R Cleanliness.

Mr. R Cleanliness

Mrs R Personal supervision and a good table.

Mr. R Look after them, be interested in them, you really take, be interested, that's what we found in all the years we were in it, it didn't always work, we still had our hiccups but I mean its, we've no regrets, I'm sorry, the only regret I've got is to see the way it's gone now.

JB Do you feel that, obviously, how many years ago did you leave the Savoy?

Mrs R 1988.

JB Do you feel that, what did you feel about the state of the trade then because obviously I suppose the 1970s would have been the decade when things really started to fall off and you must have seen this?

Mr. R It was declining, then.

JB Did you still feel it was a viable trade or were you glad that you were coming to the end, the closing part of your career?

Mr. R We were, we were then, I mean as I said it was health reasons for me, in hindsight.

Mrs R I don't think we would have come out when we did only because of your health, it was your health reasons that made us decide to sell.

JB It was still worthwhile?

Mrs R For us it was, it was, because we still had the connection and then we had gone into other, we were taking tours in then, but again we could see the writing was on the wall because our clientele had obviously literally died off during the years and ones that were going were having a main holiday abroad and having, if they were coming to the Island come for a long weekend or three or four short breaks, you know, that's what we found, but their main holiday where it used to be on the Island, obviously the prices, they were getting better value going to the continent.

JB Did the occupancy rates changing towards the end by 1988?

Mrs R Oh yes, yes it went down.

Mr. R Definitely, yes, it was a general thing, we were staying on, we had never considered tours, I mean again, as I told, Wallace Arnold, a different one, we were one of the smaller places, the same with the Germans, these FFO people, the Tourist Board, they were a great help to us, we were one of the first of the smaller hotels to take, that they came and approached us because they knew that ...

JB Continental tourists.

Mr. R These Germans coming in, these tour people, that we normally wouldn't have, to say nothing personal, but that number, we couldn't have accommodated, we found we could, you know, it's better to have the rooms going than have unoccupancy.

JB What occupancy rate did you need to break even, how many rooms did you need to have filled, percentage wise, maybe, or numbers?

Mr. R Oh, to break even you would need, I would say, approximately about half, I would think Mary, I would have said, approximately to break, to just, to make

it just about balance out, I think below that you would then have to start cutting down on staff obviously you would have to start, well the more, your staff wages would go, obviously you'd have to, naturally certain things you'd have to do, you can't be everywhere, you know, so, the places we were in, the same with the Hydro, you've got to have to have help, you've got to have good help to do it properly, you know, there's only so much two of you can do with the best will in the world, you know.

JB It has been really interesting hearing you and that's very useful information because somebody that's been in the trade knows these things and it's not the sort of thing that gets written down so thank you very much indeed,

Mr. R It's a pleasure, I hope its come over all right.

Mrs R It's been nice reminiscing.

JB Thank you.

INDEX.

- 1920's, 4, 9, 10
 1920s, 2
 1930's, 8, 9, 10, 13, 26, 31, 38
 1930s, 4, 28
 1940's, 38, 69
 1940s, 31
 1950's, 18
 1950s, 31
 1960's, 61, 62, 85, 86, 87, 90
 1970's, 61
 1970s, 97
 accidents and chance, 10, 15, 35, 72, 94
 accommodation, 11, 21, 26, 28, 29, 40,
 60, 68, 77, 86, 95
 administration, 27, 73
 advertising, 44, 45, 46
 afternoons, 29, 65
 agriculture, 18, 19, 22
 air travel, 74
 alcohol, 5, 30, 31, 42, 49, 55
 anecdotes and stories, 3, 7, 8, 10, 24, 27,
 67, 72, 81, 99
 April, 25, 35, 61
 arrival on Isle of Man, 5, 34, 35, 36
 arrivals, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14,
 15, 16, 19, 24, 25, 26, 29, 30, 32, 33,
 34, 35, 36, 40, 43, 47, 48, 49, 51, 52,
 53, 54, 55, 56, 58, 59, 61, 63, 64, 66,
 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 76, 77, 78, 79,
 80, 82, 85, 86, 87, 89, 90, 92, 95, 96,
 98, 99, 100
 association, 92, 93
 babies, 79
 banks, 52
 bars, 30, 42, 49, 55, 93
 baths and bathing, 9, 11, 37, 58, 59, 60,
 63, 68, 76
 bay, 27, 74
 beach, 42
 bedding, 3, 14, 49, 55, 85, 95, 96
 bedrooms, 9, 11, 14, 27, 28, 36, 67, 77,
 85, 86, 87
 bells *see also* gongs, 89
 best rooms, occurrences, etc, 2, 29, 48,
 86, 100
 bills and finance, 53, 67, 85
 birth, 2, 3, 5, 7, 10, 36, 79
 boilers, 59
 bookings, 40, 44, 55, 72, 94
 bread, 3, 24, 86
 breakfast, 3, 29, 38, 72, 95, 96
 Broadway, 3, 89, 90, 92, 95, 96
 builders and building industry, 13, 55,
 63, 67, 68
 buses and charabancs *see also*
 excursions, 61, 99
 business, 6, 8, 10, 11, 20, 21, 25, 27, 28,
 33, 34, 37, 40, 42, 52, 54, 55, 57, 63,
 67, 72, 86, 93
 busy times, 15, 34
 camping, 17
 carpets, 14, 21
 cars, 88
 cellars *see also* storage, 67, 74, 78
 chambermaids, 30, 32, 73
 changeover day, 41
 changes over time *see also*
 improvements and repairs, 15, 17, 25,
 26, 28, 29, 39, 41, 42, 47, 48, 49, 51,
 53, 58, 66, 68, 69, 85, 86, 90, 93, 99
 charges, 38, 52, 60, 72, 73
 children, 7, 12, 16, 19, 36, 42, 74, 79, 91
 choices, 42
 Christmas, 43, 44, 65
 class, 39
 cleaning and cleaners *see also* staff, 25,
 29, 32, 33, 47, 64, 65, 70, 71, 72
 coke, 59
 colours, 13
 condition of houses, 55
 cooking, 33, 42, 56, 95
 cooks *see also* staff, 3, 24, 31
 cost of items and activities, 8
 cousins, 11, 57
 crime and criminals, 21, 47
 crockery, 32, 81
 curtains, 21, 55, 64

- cutlery, 14
 daily occurrences, 5, 7, 10, 19, 25, 29,
 31, 33, 37, 40, 41, 42, 43, 51, 52, 63,
 65, 67, 70, 71, 72, 74, 76, 77, 93, 95,
 96
 damage and wear, 53, 65, 97, 99
 dancing, 17, 93
 deaths, 67, 78, 85
 December, 44
 decoration, 10, 13, 16, 18, 33, 66
 deliveries, 9, 14, 24, 42, 73, 78, 81, 96
 dining room, 11, 18, 24, 26, 32, 74
 dinner, 12, 29, 38, 40, 92, 93
 dirt and decay, presence of, 17
 discipline *see also* rules and regulations,
 30, 41, 42
 Douglas, 1, 42, 90, 92, 96
 drunkenness, 89
 early, 2, 3, 4, 8, 9, 10, 20, 29, 31, 61, 62,
 69, 84, 85
 eggs, 3, 24, 62
 electricity, 7, 8, 11, 37
 employment, 39, 42, 44, 47, 48, 56, 64,
 96
 end of season etc., 8, 12, 14, 25, 28, 48,
 54, 55, 59, 63, 64, 79, 81, 88, 94, 98,
 99
 evenings, 38, 77
 expenditure, 44
 extras, 29, 40, 96
 facilities, 3, 5, 17, 52, 60, 93
 fairs, 29, 38, 39, 43, 48, 60, 62, 65, 92
 families, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 11, 12, 18, 22,
 23, 24, 25, 31, 32, 33, 34, 39, 40, 42,
 43, 47, 51, 54, 57, 90, 91, 92, 96
 father, 3, 4, 7, 9, 13, 15, 16, 19, 22, 23,
 24, 30, 32, 33, 34, 35, 42, 52, 54, 57,
 63
 February, 2
 fire prevention, 69
 fireplaces, 74
 fires, 69
 fires and fire precautions, 69
 fishing, 19
 floor coverings and floors, 14, 17, 21
 floors, 8, 37, 67, 68, 76
 food, 3, 21, 24, 29, 38, 42, 52, 55
 food, visitors bringing own, 51
 foreign holidays, 6, 7, 60, 98
 Friday, 53
 fuel, 59
 full board, 3, 29, 38, 56
 furniture, 13, 14, 16, 26, 44, 92, 97
 gas, 7
 Government, Manx *see also* Local
 Government, 96
 grandfather, 6, 8, 10, 11, 18, 22
 grandmother, 10, 18
 groups, 22, 40, 90, 91, 92
 guests, 25, 28, 32, 43, 58, 66, 67, 73, 78,
 81
 happiness, 11, 12, 20, 29, 43, 49, 63, 70,
 84, 88, 95, 99
 heating and cooling, 9, 37, 38, 42, 59,
 69, 74, 75
 high tea, 38, 39, 92
 holidays, 6, 18, 19, 35, 36, 50, 65, 84,
 91, 96, 98
 hotels, 2, 6, 12, 13, 16, 19, 20, 25, 26,
 28, 30, 31, 33, 35, 46, 51, 66, 67, 74,
 78, 81, 82, 89, 90, 96
 hours of work, 14
 husbands, 37, 49, 52, 77
 Hydro, 93, 100
 illness, 91, 98
 improvements and repairs, 13, 55, 63,
 67, 68
 improvements and repairs *see also*
 changes, 20, 27, 28, 49, 50, 52, 58
 improvements and repairs *see also*
 changes over time, 97
 insurance, 71, 75
 internment, 16, 17, 18, 19
 Irish persons, 46, 74
 July, 72
 kiosk, 27
 kitchen equipment, 25, 42, 59, 87, 88
 kitchens, 24, 30, 31, 43, 47, 56
 Lancashire, 82
 late, 9, 10, 31, 33, 38, 40, 44, 61, 78, 86,
 87, 90, 92, 93
 laundry, 32, 52, 66, 82

- learning the trade, 79
- letters and correspondence, 14, 16, 44, 52
- lifts, 8, 12, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 74, 79
- linen, 55
- linoleum, 21
- loans and mortgages, 9, 22, 60
- locks and keys, 15, 59, 82, 83, 85, 86
- lounge, 14, 32, 64, 91
- lunch, 38
- management, 47
- managers (male and female), 38
- May, 25, 31, 61
- meals and food, 3, 12, 21, 29, 32, 38, 39, 72, 92, 93, 95, 96
- meat, 3, 23
- milk, 24
- mornings, 29, 65, 72, 78, 79, 83, 85, 87, 89
- mother, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 15, 32, 52
- moving, 3, 4, 13, 17, 26, 69, 87, 88
- music, 12, 87
- navy, 14, 16
- noise, 12, 21, 86, 88
- October, 1, 31, 48, 54, 59, 61
- opening times, dates and procedures, 4, 17, 21, 23, 24, 25, 27, 29, 37, 40, 41, 55, 66, 74, 82, 84, 85, 86, 87, 93
- orders, 55, 85
- pantries *see also* storage, 32
- parents, 7, 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20, 21, 26, 28, 29, 31, 34, 35, 36, 39, 44, 45, 46, 53, 59, 85, 92
- passages, corridors, halls and landings, 30, 68, 70, 74, 78
- peas *see also* vegetables, 25
- Peel, 1, 34, 36, 38, 42
- plumbing, 9, 37
- police *see also* crime and criminals, 14, 15, 71, 72, 73, 77, 78, 87, 88, 89
- potatoes *see also* vegetables, 47
- prices, 13, 29, 31, 38, 39, 44, 45, 52, 55, 98
- privacy and modesty, 18, 26, 60, 86, 96
- promenade, 3, 15, 16, 24, 27, 34, 39, 57, 66, 67, 70, 78, 84, 90, 95
- queues, 24, 32, 78
- racing, 25
- radio, 45
- railways and trams, 69
- rationing, 16, 21, 23, 24
- frozen food *see* freezers, 66
- regulars, 47, 48, 50, 61, 91
- relations, 11
- rooms, 15, 37, 52, 60, 63, 67, 87, 96, 99
- routine, 7, 10, 11, 15, 25, 26, 32, 33, 35, 36, 40, 42, 43, 47, 51, 52, 56, 57, 65, 70, 72, 78, 82, 84, 85, 86, 88, 89, 92, 93, 94, 97
- rules and regulations, 69
- sale of property, 56
- sandwiches, 29, 38
- Saturday, 40, 41
- Savoy Hotel, 2, 3, 4, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 23, 26, 27, 30, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 51, 53, 54, 58, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 90, 92, 94, 97
- school, 15, 20
- season, the, 4, 11, 21, 22, 23, 29, 41, 61, 64, 66
- high tea, 38, 39, 92
- violence, 14, 55, 61, 88, 89
- departures, 13, 14, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 28, 34, 41, 52, 61, 62, 66, 69, 70, 72, 73, 79, 82, 84, 85, 86, 97
- finance, 5, 22, 24, 38, 47, 52, 60, 95, 96
- theft, 21, 47
- storage, 14, 21, 32
- machinery, 32
- staff, 47
- money, 5, 22, 24, 38, 40, 47, 52, 60, 95, 96
- age, 8, 17, 20, 22, 36, 38, 46, 54, 55, 63, 67, 68, 79, 85
- seasonal matters, 31, 46
- tradesmen, 7
- shipping, 16, 20
- married persons, 3, 4, 5, 20, 34, 36, 43, 46, 51, 54, 58, 59, 84, 85
- couples, 84
- newspapers, 45
- sinks, 9, 37

- love, 4, 16
 waiters and waitresses, 30, 32
 clothing, 75
 old-fashioned, 59, 67
see shipping, 16, 20, 36, 94
 Sefton Hotel, 8, 62, 93
 September, 13, 14, 31, 48
 service, 52, 70
 shipping, 36, 94
 shops, shopping, 88
 silver, 14
 smoke room, 11, 26
 smoking, 11, 26
 spring, 25, 64, 65, 66
 staff, 11, 12, 25, 30, 31, 32, 34, 46, 47,
 50, 52, 53, 55, 100
 stairs, 27, 36, 48, 69, 74, 78
 start of business, 2, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 26, 29,
 30, 33, 36, 44, 46, 48, 56, 59, 62, 85,
 86, 97
 stillroom, 32, 43, 59
 supper, 29, 38
 tea, 21, 29, 38, 40
 telephones, 44, 88, 89
 television, 52
 tennis, 35
 tinned food, 25
 tipping (gratuities), 52, 70
 toilets, 58, 59, 60, 76
 Tourist Board, 99
 trips *see also* excursions, 42
 troubles and difficulties, 14, 16, 25, 41,
 42, 46, 61, 63, 65, 77, 86, 88, 91
 TT week, 4, 25
 Tynwald, 96
 unusual or rare occurrences, 27, 44, 49,
 94
 vegetables, 25, 47
 views, 63, 67
 Villiers Hotel, 93
 violence and anger, 68, 74, 87, 88, 89
 wages, 9, 11, 22, 28, 40, 44, 48, 52, 65,
 69, 100
 Wakes, 39, 41
 walking, 19, 74
 war, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 19, 21, 22, 23,
 24, 28, 29, 30, 31, 35, 36, 38, 41, 43,
 69
 water, 9, 11, 37, 59, 63
 weather, 61, 63, 66
 weekend, 98
 weekly occurrences, 4, 12, 25, 39, 41,
 52, 66
 Whitsun, 25
 wives, 49, 52, 57, 77
 yards and alleyways, 47, 76