

# MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

### DALBY INCIDENTS

**Interviewee:** Mr. Bill Brown.

**Topic:** The Dalby Incidents.

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> May 1999

**Interviewer:** Barry Quilliam.

**Q** This is an interview with Bill Brown regarding the Dalby incidents 18<sup>th</sup> September 1940.

**Mr. B** Around midnight on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1940 I was standing at Ballacreggan Crossroads, Port St. Mary, in company with Mr. John Cooil of Ballacreggan Farm when the skyline above Cronk ny Irree Laa suddenly lit up. A few minutes later a German aircraft came straight down over Port St. Mary, probably between 1500 and 200 feet above us and it was not travelling very fast, markings were clearly visible, it was a twin-engined plane and it made its way straight over Port St. Mary and out to sea. Mr. Cooil and I speculated that it must have dropped its load in order to clear Cronk ny Irree Laa but we, this point, from our point of view has ever been verified.

**BQ** You are talking about the aircraft actually flying over, what did it actually sound like, could you actually describe the noise, was it distinctive as being like a German aircraft, the way the engine sort of dips and rolls with a German aircraft whereas the standard British one would just continually carry on.

**Mr. B** While it was the first German aircraft that I had ever seen the engine noise was similar to what I later saw, later heard when serving in the army.

**BQ** Right, this aircraft that you actually seen, was it on fire at all?

**Mr. B** No it didn't seem to be in any difficulty at all apart from the fact that it was not travelling at all fast.

**BQ** Right. There has always been speculated that it was being chased by British RAF aircraft, from maybe the Liverpool area, was there any other aircraft in the area when you seen this bomber?

**Mr. B** Nothing at all in this area or nothing during the rest of the night that I saw.

**BQ** Right. Who else saw it apart from yourself and your companion, was there anybody else about at the time?

**Mr. B** Nobody else.

**BQ** Right. Were the air raid sirens going at any time?

**Mr. B** No, and it was a beautiful clear night, could quite clearly see the fire on Cronk ny Irree Laa from where we were standing.

**BQ** Cronk ny Irree Laa was actually on fire that night?

**Mr. B** Well the flames were all coming up over the top.

**BQ** So it was quite an extensive fire then?

**Mr. B** Oh, yes, yes, the whole skyline seemed to be on fire at Cronk ny Irree Laa like or above the Cronk ny Irree Laa.

**Mr. B** When you actually heard the explosion or seen the flashes how many bangs or crumps can you remember how many you heard?

**Mr. B** Didn't hear anything, just saw the whole of the skyline lit up.

**BQ** And when you actually seen the aircraft could you actually see enemy markings on it or any identification markings on it at all.

**Mr. B** Well you could see the German markings on it and you could see the rear turret.

**BQ** Really, oh. But it just continually carried on it didn't deviate from any

direction, went straight on.

**Mr. B** Didn't deviate in any way just went straight down, in fact Mr. Cooil remarked that we were taking a chance in standing like we did at, in the open at these crossroads if the rear gunner would have been in any way inclined to take a pot at us.

**BQ** So when you were actually standing at the crossroads and looking at this aircraft, how far would you actually say it was from you when it passed, it actually passed directly overhead from you, so you actually, it literally flew right above you.

**Mr. B** Almost directly above us. It looked as if it was following the main road which it could do from Cronk ny Irree Laa right down to the bottom of Port St. Mary.

**BQ** Aye, using it as a guide. What was your actual occupation at the time?

**Mr. B** I was a policeman on night duty.

**BQ** And did you have to actually report anything like this?

**Mr. B** No, no, it was, Cronk ny Irree Laa was not in our district, it was in Peel district and I understood that Peel were investigating it, the nearest inhabitant was Mr. Colby Cubbin and his mother who were living in Eary Cushlin at the time.

**BQ** They went away for a bit of peace and quiet?

**Mr. B** Well.

**BQ** So it basically went, from the actual flashes in the sky to the aircraft passing you would have literally only have been a matter of minutes?

**Mr. B** Yes.

**BQ** Right, okay. Is there anything else that you can remember, was there anything said about it the next, the following day at all, do you remember?

**Mr. B** No, we never heard any comment really, as I say it would be investigated by Peel Division.

**BQ** And the Home Guard were also involved I believe at the time?

**Mr. B** Well I wouldn't know because they wouldn't even be in our Division, I don't suppose, I don't know.

**BQ** Right, okay, well that, there's nothing else that springs to mind about the incident.

**Mr. B** Its fifty, nearly sixty years ago, you know and it was only when I read in the paper that you were seeking information that made me think about it.

**BQ** That's smashing. Oh, can I just have your full name and address from when you were actually in Port St. Mary, were you actually living in Port St. Mary at the time?

**Mr. B** Yes, I was living at the Police Station at the time.

**BQ** Yes, and what was your full name?

**Mr. B** William Hull ??? Brown.

**BQ** Right. Do you mind if I ask how old you were at the time?

**Mr. B** Well I'll be 83 next week so can you work that out?

**BQ** That's smashing, thank you very much.

## MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION

### ORAL HISTORY PROJECT.

**Interviewee:** Mr. Ian Corlett

**Topic:** The Dalby Incidents.

**Date:** 9<sup>th</sup> May 1999

**Interviewer:** Barry Quilliam.

**BQ** This is an interview regarding the Dalby incident, the bombing incident of the 18<sup>th</sup> September 1940 with Ian Corlett, who was a resident of Dalby at that time. Can you give me an account of what happened that evening, what you can remember?

**Mr. C** Well as far as I can remember, all I can remember was being in bed and getting these bumps in the bedroom, up and down and didn't think any more of it until the following morning and somebody said 'oh, have you heard there's some bombs been dropped up on the Eary Cushlin' so first thing we did was go up to have a look. You said there was a guard there, we didn't see any guard.

**BQ** There was apparently at the beginning, after the incident happened they put a guard on it, I don't know if it was until it was investigated, 'til the RAF boys came over or whatever.

**Mr. C** Well we never, we didn't see any guard, we might have been there before they ever thought about putting a guard on it. Anyway the only thing that we

heard that was killed was a frog, or maybe a rabbit. They found a rabbit there, they may have killed that, that's the only, because I think it was in the papers at that time that the only thing that had been killed was a frog.

**BQ** Where did you actually live?

**Mr. C** In the village, actually in the village, just below the Ballacallin, hotel now, just below there in, there's a terrace of houses there, in one of those.

**BQ** So you never actually heard the plane going over at all?

**Mr. C** No, didn't hear anything, but we heard the planes every night, we used to hear them going over to bomb Belfast, they used to come, because they come right over us and you could hear them and you could see the searchlights in the sky and the lights, the flashes over Belfast on a good night, a clear night.

**BQ** Did you often hear the aircraft coming back?

**Mr. C** Oh yes, coming back as well, yes and you heard machine gun fire as well.

**BQ** Oh right.

**Mr. C** But there was a, at that time, or just shortly after that time I joined the ATC and we used to go to Jurby and Andreas for flying experience and there was a squadron, I think, I think it was a Polish squadron of Spitfires at Andreas and I think they used to go out after the German planes. We used to see convoys going up with the barrage balloons up during the day up past and I think the Germans used to try and attack those too, because my auntie and a lady who lived opposite they used to go fishing like at the Niarbyl. This is some time later than this happened because they'd built the RAF station there, the Radar station and they were fishing at a place called Elby Point and there was something floating in the sea and they hooked it and it was a body.

**BQ** Oh right.

**Mr. C** And of course they ran up to the top of the road and they met two airmen. One was a Sergeant Penny, I can't think of the name of the other chap, I think his name was Corlett actually, funny enough, lived in Liverpool, a corporal, and Sergeant Penny, Bill Penny, was the police sergeant in the charge of the police at the RAF station at Dalby and they went down and they got a crab hook and they fished it out and they, I don't think it had a head on, I think the head was missing, anyway they got it out and got it up onto dry land and sent for the police from Peel to come out and it turned out it was a German airman that had been shot down and I think he was buried

eventually in Patrick Churchyard. But I know there was a lot of controversy because they were arguing who was supposed to bury him in Peel and I don't know if it's true but they said the mortuary, round the mortuary there was such a smell that everybody started to complain because they kept him so long.

**BQ** Do you remember when that was, do you remember what year it was?

**Mr. C** No, that, no I wouldn't know, it's before I went in the forces, I joined, I went, joined the RAF in January 1944 so it must have been before that, it would probably be '42, maybe, '41 or '42. Anyway this Sergeant Penny turned out eventually to be my uncle, he married her, he married my auntie, yes. He only just died last year.

**BQ** Talking about the night in question of the actual bomb what time did you go to bed that evening, do you remember?

**Mr. C** We used to go to bed about half past ten, eleven o'clock. I wouldn't like to say what time it was even, I know, as far as I know it was dark.

**BQ** And you were actually in bed?

**Mr. C** We were in bed.

**BQ** And then what did you hear, like a crump?

**Mr. C** Just a, just a 'sunk', and things rattled, you know, you could hear the things in the room rattle, but I mean we were used to hearing bumps and bangs so we didn't think anything of it really.

**BQ** So when did you actually find out?

**Mr. C** The following morning.

**BQ** The following morning?

**Mr. C** Yes and we went up straight away to look at it, I remember cycling up to it and I think I went up by myself, I don't think there was anybody with me and looked at these craters. But the funny part was there was a row of craters and then a few yards up there was chip marks in the heather, in the peat going up, whatever caused those I don't know. Because it was getting near the top of the mountain there, the plane had hit, I thought afterwards he'd never have got away without touching the mountain because it was still rising. Have you been up to it?

**BQ** Yes, we've been up to it.

**Mr. C** And the craters still there are they?

**BQ** There's three of the furthestmost up craters are still there, the fourth one has been fenced off a long time ago, it's filled with water.

**Mr. C** Is it?

**BQ** Yes, but the three are still very visible from the air and also if you're walking there you suddenly come across them, they're still about twenty-five feet wide and they're pretty deep but they reckoned at the time they were a 550 pounder a bomb.

**Mr. C** I remember finding bits of the shrapnel of the casings there, I never kept any, should have done I suppose.

**BQ** We've dug some up since then, we went up there, we took a metal detector up so, but apparently found that also was dropped was an oil bomb which is about 250 kilos and then they were dropped with incendiaries as well which basically it's like flammable liquid in it in a bomb, when that exploded the incendiaries helped it burn because another witness said the whole skyline was on fire for a while until it burned itself out.

**Mr. C** But there must have been planes shot down, this chap that they found was from the long range ones, I think they were called Condors, American, I think, German, I think that's what he came from actually, they'd been attacking the convoys going up.

**BQ** I think that was a chap called Spengler, I think that was his name?

**Mr. C** Was that his name?

**BQ** But we've not come across anything about him really, only the fact that he was lost.

**Mr. C** I don't know what year it was, I know, it must have been before the, and the station had been built and was operating. It didn't operate for very long actually Dalby because at that time, when I left school I got a job there with the Air Ministry and I wasn't down there very much because they were building a little station at the top of Glen Maye, you know where the Radio/Television station is at Glen Maye now, the mast up there, it was just a concrete pad and a caravan on it. And then after that the one at the Sloc that I was telling you about.

**BQ** What were they actually doing there?

**Mr. C** It was Radar, they placed all those huge masts there, they had one at Scarlett, one at Bride and the one at Dalby.

**BQ** Is there anything else that you can think of regarding what went on at Dalby around that time?

**Mr. C** Oh yes, the first, the first plane that came down was a Botha and it was on, you know the old chapel out past Eary Cushlin, there's a waterfall out there called Gob ny Ushtey, do you know where that is?

**BQ** I'm not quite sure but I know the chapel.

**Mr. C** Well the old chapel, well out past there, the hill coming down, it was on there, in the middle of the hill, and it had been there quite a while and looking from Niarbyl, café, you know the thing there, you could see it quite plain, how somebody hadn't seen it I don't know, somebody out hunting I believe found it.

**BQ** Oh right, and the crew were all lost on that one?

**Mr. C** Oh they were all lost, and they rolled it down, it was so steep there that they rolled it down and then took it away by fishing boat I think, down and over the cliffs. That was the first one, no there was, the second one was on Dalby Mountain, it was an Anson, and it had been coming from Jurby, I don't know where it was going but the following morning in the mist and it just tipped on the top of Dalby Mountain and stuck there and I think one had broke his leg, they weren't too badly hurt, anyway they got out and they walked down to the village and the first place they went to was Tommy Teare's, Sheila Teare's, you've heard of Ballacool, the farm, and knocked at the door and old Mrs Teare came out and saw them and told them to go to hell, she thought they were Germans because they were covered in blood. Anyway they went then to Ballacallin House you know where the hotel is now, and the people who were in there was called Hudson and he said 'oh I'm sorry I haven't got a car nor a phone' he said 'but the chap down at the café, Qualtrough, he's got a car'. So he went down and got him and he came and he took them into Peel. Well the police station was down by, I think it was down where the Co-op used to be, down that street, is it Market Street, down there somewhere. Anyway to get to it he had to go down a one way street, it's a one way, and there's an old chap at Dalby called, he was the local Coroner, but he was also a special constable, and he was on duty, anyway Qualtrough was taking them down to the Police Station, these, I think there was four of them, I'm not sure about that, but anyway he got stopped by this bloke, this special constable, who he knew by first name, and stopped them, put his hand up and stopped them, and said 'where do you think you're going' and he said 'there's been an air crash, I've got the crew in the back, they're hurt, I'm getting down to the Police Station' and he said 'no, not down this way,' and

made them turn round and go back again, because it was a one way street.

**BQ** It was a one way street?

**Mr. C** Yes and that was a let down.

**BQ** What was the other Anson?

**Mr. C** Now the other Anson, I used to get up early in the morning, I used to get up about 5.30 or 6 in daylight most times and go out shooting with a 12 bore, because it was, you know, quite a lot for rabbits in those days, and I was, I hadn't been out very long, just up side Dalby in Ballacooil in the fields there, and there was two Blenheims flying round low round the coast and I watched them for a while, I wonder what they're doing, and then it suddenly dawned on me there must be a plane missing because they used to do that, they'd be flying round looking for it if there was a plane down somewhere and I looked across to Cronk ny Irree Laa and there sure enough I could see this wreckage. So I pushed the gun in a gorse bush, got on my bike and cycled up to Eary Cushlin, the gate that you go down to Eary Cushlin, you know the gate where you park now, I left the bike there, ran up across the mountain towards it and I looked down and just above Colby Cubbin's house there was two blokes ferreting and they turned out to be Metropolitan police, they were guarding the internees at Peel and I bypassed them, I didn't, I think I might have shouted to them about a plane down or something like that, but anyway I ran up and I jumped over the hedge right on top of a bloke lying there and a parachute open and this bloke had congealed blood coming out of his ears and then I went round the plane and I looked and all I could see it was a mangled wreck. They'd hit the hedge and turned over as it had gone through the stone wall in the corner.

So I ran down again, shouted to these blokes, 'there's a plane down up here' and they said 'okay' and anyway they came up behind me but I ran over to this Radar station up on top of Cronk ny Irree Laa, up by the Sloc there and told them and two blokes came back with me but there was no sign of these policemen anywhere, didn't see them, so whether they'd been up to it or not, or just disappeared I don't know but we stood there and they looked in the wreckage and they found the Aldis lamp and they started signalling to these two planes that were flying round and of course the planes came up and they just swooped in low over us and they got the message it was down so the bloke said 'well knowing the RAF they'll bring an ambulance and one bloke with it' so we waited there and they found the axe in the plane. You know they've got the axe in the back, they found that and they said 'well when they come we'll have to help get the bodies out so we may as well start now' so we got them out and laid them out and put parachutes over, opened the parachutes and put them over them.

And eventually the word must have got round the village because I've a friend called Leslie Corrin, who had farmed down The Lhag, and he came up

first and then two or three of the villagers came up and this ambulance arrived, I think there was two blokes with it, one was a doctor, and the driver. And we had, it started snowing, it was November, I think it was in November, it was some before Christmas. Anyway, it started snowing anyway we had to carry them right down to this gate, these blokes, and when we were going down I happened to walk round the front of the plane and I looked and I saw some flying boots sticking out of the engine, there was a bloke in there, and so got him out and brought him down. Me auntie that I was telling you about, her name was Oates at that time, before she was married, was there, and of course it was snowing and they all got wet so she asked the doctor and the bloke in the ambulance to stop down at our house for a cup of tea. So they stopped the ambulance outside and of course they had dead bodies in and later all the neighbours complained because they'd left these dead bodies outside in the ambulance.

**BQ** And the whole crew was lost on that one?

**Mr. C** Oh they were lost, I think they were all New Zealanders.

**BQ** I mean how old were you at the time?

**Mr. C** I was a teenager, I would be, well I joined, as I say I joined the ATC when I was fifteen, you were supposed to be sixteen, I joined at fifteen I first started and I was in the ATC at that time, I do know that and I went for Air Crew Selection Board to, you used to have to go across to Liverpool for the Air Crew Selection Board, and medical and that, and that was January 1944, so it was before there. Do you know what year that plane came down, was it '43.

**BQ** I think it was sometime in '43, '44.

**Mr. C** It would be November '43 probably. A funny thing is, I didn't, I think the bloke in charge of the police was called Christian, in Peel, at that time. Anyway they carted that plane up to, Sloc, up on to that road there and presumably somebody pinched the radio, a radio out of the, there was a radio for the dinghy, it was missing and they accused me of taking it.

**BQ** Charming.

**Mr. C** Mind you they didn't, well they just asked me , they said 'did you take it' I said 'no'.

**BQ** Do you remember one about a Wellington going into the sea?

**Mr. C** Now the Wellington, I think this was before that happened as far as I remember. McKibbin's, the builders were building, it must have been before

then I think, they were building, it was at the beginning of the war sometime, they were building Colby Cubbin's house, getting it ready for him, and I think, I don't know had I started with the Air Ministry at that time, or was just about to, there was a chap working there called Wardell, he was in charge of it, the works part of it, and there was another chap working for him called Wilfie Quane, and he rode about in one of these Air Ministry yellow motorcycle and sidecar things and he was, he shouted to me 'there's a plane down, jump in'. And I said, 'whereabouts?' 'Eary Cushlin' so I went up and the two of us went out and the builders were there and we said 'we understand there's a plane down', and they said 'oh yes, it tipped the mountain, it's gone in the sea here'. So we went down and they were standing at the top of the cliff looking down and you could see the blokes, at least I presume they were blokes, dots in the water with the oil slick you see and they, I think there was two Blenheims flying round and there was a trawler steaming past and they were dropping flares at this trawler and they nearly took the mast of this thing and it just steamed on. Anyway eventually the launch came out from Peel but it took quite a while to get there and pick these blokes up that were in the water.

**BQ** Was the aircraft still visible?

**Mr. C** No, no, it had gone down, there was just the water when we got there. I don't know how long it had been on the surface but it was quite misty and the mist, when we got there the mist had just lifted you see and I think McKibbin's that's all, the workmen, that's about all they saw as well. Anyway some weeks later there was a body washed up, one of the blokes, an air gunner, Sergeant Yates I think his name was, Gates, he was found somewhere near the White Beach out there.

**BQ** Right.

**Mr. C** A bloke called Richard Faragher, we used to call him, Dickie-di-do was his nickname, he still goes about in Douglas, I still see him now and again, he used to work for McKibbin's, no Quilliam's, Saw Mill, he found him.

**BQ** So quite a bit of activity went on at Dalby during the war?

**Mr. C** Yes there was that, there was another one, this was, I was in the Forces, I think that was a Wellington, on South Barrule, I don't, I think they got it off pretty quick, that, I don't remember that, I know there was one there. And also while I was away I think it was a Marauder on top of Cronk ny Irree Laa, full of I think they were American, I'm not sure they weren't a lot of medical staff because there was quite a few of them were killed and the ones that survived crawled round and give the injured morphine or something like that.

**BQ** Right, I didn't know about that.

**Mr. C** I don't know whereabouts on Cronk ny Irree Laa, it was somewhere near the top, I think it was a Marauder, I wouldn't like to be certain about that. Any more, oh I saw an Anson tipped the sea out of Dalby, just flying low. They used to fly low and you'd just see the wake coming up, the tips coming up and they'd take off and the next, this was on a Saturday, the next Sunday we were down at Jurby and we saw an Anson there with just the tips of the propellers bent and we said 'oh he's tipped the sea they did it the other day'.

**BQ** He must have been low to do that.

**Mr. C** Yes and he got off with it.

**BQ** How often did you actually go up to Jurby?

**Mr. C** We used to go up quite a lot, as often as we could.

**BQ** Did you go up for the flying?

**Mr. C** We used to go and fly in the planes, we used to go in Ansons, they used to do navigation flights down round Shrewsbury and we used to go and sit on the main spar there shivering, oh it was cold, yes. And then, I think the first time we went down, the first plane I ever flew in down there was a Lysander with a Polish pilot. Of course there was no runways, it was just grass at that time and I think they used to show off a bit if they took you up on your own you know they used to try and scare you and I remember flying down round Andreas somewhere I think it was hedge hopping and a bloke in the garden and he came over and he was running for the house with a cabbage because they just came over and you know it was right low he must have thought they were going to hit, but they used to use the Lysander for towing drogues for gunnery practice I think and then after that they got Martinets.

We used to go down there for summer holidays as well you know from school or anything during the summer, King William's College used to go down there quite a lot because I had a friend called Noel Clucas and I got friendly with him at one of these school things I think he was going to King William's at the time and I got friendly with him and when we joined up we went away together and he went in the Fleet Air Arm and he was a pilot in the Fleet Air Arm and he was killed in the Mersey with Captain Higgins' plane that went down, the Rapide, did you hear about that?

**BQ** No.

**Mr. C** It was coming from Ireland, Southern Ireland, and they couldn't land at Ronaldsway, or, they reckon he would have got in, it was misty but they wouldn't let him land and they had to divert to Liverpool and he didn't have enough petrol and he came down in the Mersey and there was only one

survivor and he's still alive, Matty [Matthew] Ward, still going in Douglas, see him often enough, his wife was drowned and he swam ashore and I think he was the only survivor.

**BQ** Oh dear.

**Mr. C** Anyway Noel went down on that, he was the co-pilot with Higgins, Captain Higgins.

**BQ** I mean going back to Jurby it must have been a very busy airfield at the time?

**Mr. C** It was very busy, yes. It was quite good down there we used to go on to the, they had a place where you used to do bomb aiming and the map used to move underneath you and they used to bomb aim with that and we used to go on the link trainer, that would probably be the thing nearest to the, what they have now, the simulators and it was quite good that was done on the crab on the table, and you'd fly blindfolded put the top over, in the room, it was quite good at Jurby.

**BQ** Did they have a guard on at Jurby, did you actually ever see a guard as such going round the area?

**Mr. C** At Jurby?

**BQ** Yes, or was it one of the, it was a bit more relaxed maybe.

**Mr. C** No, the first time I went to Jurby, I had an uncle lived down there, Ballamoar, and we used to go, when they were actually, when Jurby was first built, I think this was just before the war, just before, because I was only a boy and we used to go up and we used to look over the hedge and they used to have Fairey Battles there and Hawker Henleys all in a row. But it was a good place Jurby at that time and then we used to go to Andreas some days too. I never flew from Andreas, they had, it was mostly fighters they had down there, Spitfires.

**BQ** And you ended up joining the RAF yourself?

**Mr. C** Oh yes, yes, I went in the RAF but you know in 1944 it was getting near the end of the war and by the time I went away I went, joined in January I went away to the RAF and I did a bit there and they said 'you're going to be waiting a while to get trained as a pilot' you see so I said, but they said they want them in the Army Air Corps, well I thought hang on that's it, I'll get in to Austers, you know these spotting planes or something like that, we did, you know you learnt to fly Tiger Moths, no, yes Tiger Moths, and then they said 'you're going on gliders', they wanted glider pilots so that's why I put in for

that but I wasn't no sooner in 'til it was, they disbanded it, it was getting near the end of the war.

**BQ** Was that on Horsas?

**Mr. C** Yes, I didn't have much on gliders, never got a chance. They came and said they were disbanded what do you want to do, well helicopters were coming in, they didn't mention that at the time, helicopters were coming in, and there was two of us on this course and they said 'what do you want to do?' and I said 'well I would like to go back into the RAF again'. They said 'Oh I'm sorry that's out, you can pick the regiment you want'. Well prior to that we had to go and do infantry training and they did it with the Parachute Regiment at Shorncliffe ??? down in Kent, and they said 'if I was you I should go into the Parachute Regiment seeing you have done your infantry training with them and I said 'no I don't fancy jumping out of aeroplanes' and anyway I thought about it and thought about it and said 'well I'll have a go' but the other bloke wouldn't you see and he stuck in. Now I've heard since that he stuck out and he got on to helicopters and I wish I'd have done that when they first started. Anyway I went back to Shorncliffe for a couple of weeks and I went to Commando School up in Yorkshire, up in Derbyshire, Hardwicke Hall, and it was a tough course up there and did that and then I went to Ringway and did my parachute jumps and never thought anything of it afterwards. Well they toughen you up that much you don't bother about it and I finished that and I went out to Malaya.

**BQ** When would that be, late '45?

**Mr. C** '45 when I went out to Malaya, late '45, I went out just before they dropped the atom bomb, we went out there and I think, they told us afterwards that we'd gone out to do the invasion but I joined the 7<sup>th</sup> Light Infantry Parachute Battalion which landed on Pegasus Bridge first in Normandy and I went out to replace the ones that had been killed then, as a replacement. But we went into Malaya and disarmed the Japs, you know, we went in and did that afterwards.

**BQ** Were you involved in any liberating of prisoner of war camps or things like that?

**Mr. C** No I didn't see any prisoners of war, we were in, we did the War Crimes Commission they had out there and we had to go round for proof of war crimes, you know they get word to say went to one village where there was a report that an airman had landed and the Japs had chopped his head off so we had to round for proof and of course the locals showed us the grave and we had to dig it up and that and found out it was true. But we also got things from prisoners, I think they came from was it a Dutch part, Dutch, where were the Dutch in, Jalva, ??? came back from prisoners there of the tortures

that the Japs had been doing to the Dutch out there and they had been blowing them up with compressed air until they burst and things like that. We gave the Japs a bit of a rough time when we went into Malaya because, we made them dig monsoon trenches out with their bare hands and things like that to get our own back on them.

We did patrols mostly, some of the Japs were still lying about in the jungle you know, I don't think that they'd believed that the war was over. And then we went up into Siam and wound up at that railway, you know, the Siamese railway, we went up on the train up there and it was wood burners and the sparks from the engine, because we were stripped to the waist and that, and they were open like cattle trucks really, and the sparks, we used to be all burnt on our chests with the sparks, and backs, but I never knew afterwards what had happened on that railway because I mean it was shortly afterwards before it came out and we didn't know what had happened. It was a funny thing there was a programme on about a fortnight ago and we were watching it and I said to the wife 'I went up this railway, I could recognise the cuttings and that we went through'.

**BQ** That's amazing.

**Mr. C** But we didn't know at that time we went past where the bridge had been and everything, we didn't know anything about it, what had happened there.

**BQ** And when did you actually come home?

**Mr. C** I came home forty? well my father was a farmer and he wanted me to be on the farm but I had this friend called Leslie Corrin who farmed down the Lhag and we used to go out shooting and that together and I'd got ... the CO came to me one day and he said to me 'you're going home' and I said 'am I, why, I'm not due for release?' And he said 'you are, you're getting a B release'. And a B release was somebody in a, you got it on farms and everything like that, 'your friend wants you home because he can't manage the farm'. I thought 'my friend?' and it was him and he'd put in, he'd been to, I was brought up by my grandmother, he'd been to my grandmother and said 'do you think I can get him out, I'd like him to come home' you see 'and help me out' and of course they jumped at the idea and that's how I got home.

**BQ** Were you glad to go home?

**Mr. C** At the time I probably was but looking back I shouldn't have done, no. I came home and I went down to help him out on the farm and I think the first week I was there, I mean although I'd been brought up on the farm, I'd never done any ploughing or anything like that and these tractors had just come in, they were these old spade lugged ??? Fords and he'd just got one of these. And I think it's the first week I was there and I went down and I was talking to him and he said 'oh look what I've found on the shore' and he had a red box and

inside it just looked like 303 cartridges inside, packed in cork, and I said 'those are detonators' and he said 'oh, they're no good' he said, 'I've just tried one and they're no good' I said 'don't try that' and he said 'look' and he had one cut in half with a pair of tin snips and before I could say Jack Robinson he'd put it in his garage, his tractor shed on a piece of wood and put a match to it, shumff, it blew big lumps out of his leg and his arm and he dragged himself to a tap across the yard and put it under and then he just passed out. Anyway they blew windows, it blew the windows in the house, because it was like a few yards like from the front door, the wife and I dragged him in and I had to cycle down to, I think it was Glen Maye, I don't think there was a, I don't know was there a telephone kiosk at Dalby at that time or not, but there was at Glen Maye. And I cycled there and got a Doctor out and it was Doctor Poyser, he came out and stitched him up and of course the doctor used to do that in those days there was no such thing as, you had to be dead before you got to the hospital nearly, stitched him up, and he said 'oh by the way what did he do?' and I told him and give him this box and he said 'I'd better take these to the police' so he put it in the front of the car and he set off a couple of yards and he stopped and got out and took them out and said 'no, on second thoughts, I think I'll put them in the boot'.

Anyway he was in bed for weeks so anyway I had to do all his farm work for him, I had to do all this ploughing, never used a tractor before, had to do all this ploughing for him. And I was there oh quite a while, but while I was at Ringway training I had met my wife so I eventually, I probably did the winter there with him and then I went away across and got a job at Metropolitan I came back over here and couldn't get work, I worked for Brown Bobby, Fletcher Quayle, for a few months in the petrol station, couldn't get any work, so I went back again, went back to Metro-Vicks, they took me back, I spent another year or so there and then television came out and of course with working in electronics I got, I went right through Metro-Vicks all electrical part winding motors and some big generators right down to little motors for submarines and things like that, and I got a job ... oh no before that I went to De Havilland's, Mosstock ??? and got a job there, on a thing called constant speed ..... ??? for aircraft.

And then my father-in-law he was an engineer with a big steel works, trained engineer but he had been in the Royal Flying Corps in the First World War and he got into Radar, radio and he was building radio and he built his own first television and that and I helped him and he had a friend that had a television, radio shop and then television came out and they wanted an engineer, who had been in electronics, well I'd never done television so I just picked it up and went and worked for them and eventually after a while I came, got a job over here when I was on holiday and when the Co-op opened up, you won't remember that, will you, and I stayed at the cottage at Mount Rule just on the corner, the cottage, I was staying there. And I was on the bus going up and a bloke, painter and decorator sitting alongside me, and he said 'what are you doing, on holiday?' and I said 'yes but I really come from the Isle of Man but I'm on holiday' and he said 'what do you do?'

and I told him but I said 'I'd like to get back over if I can' and he said 'oh, the Co-op opened a television in this new building they've got, a television business, they've been advertising for a manager for the television department they're going to open' so I didn't get off the bus, I went straight back and told them and I had an interview straight away and I got the next bus back up and when I got back up the house there was a Co-op van there and the bloke ... oh I said to the bloke at the, Burns, his name was, the manager, I said 'I'm going back again across in the morning' ... when I got back up to the house there was a bloke in the van, he said 'don't go back in the morning, you've got the job' so that's how I came to be, to get back over here. So I had it for a while and then I went on my own, took that one at Peel Road and then the other engineer that was at the Co-op with me was Arthur Radcliffe, 'will you come in partnership?' I'd had it a while, 'will you come in with me', so he did.

**BQ** And you did that until you retired?

**Mr. C** Well more or less, no I actually give it up before then because we used to do rentals until coloured television and that and there was a lot of work in television because they used to break down a lot you see, but then people like Woolworths and that started selling televisions cheaper than we could buy them so it just went flat so we sold out to Partingtons in Peel.

**BQ** Oh, right.

**Mr. C** And I took over the art shop, my wife was an artist you see, an art teacher, you see the picture there, so took the art shop and we worked that for a while and the oldest boy, he's in to art and we kept it going and we've turned it over to both the sons. Do you know Julian, my younger one? A great cyclist, Julian Corlett, he did quite well. He had a bad accident, he was in hospital eight weeks, on a push bike, he used to motor cycling, he was in the International Six Days in Wales 1984 but he's took up cycling now, he's doing road cycling, road racing, he was doing mountain bike and now he's doing road racing. He's up in the top six.

**BQ** Good, he's doing well.

**Mr. C** This year he is, he's only just gone back to road racing this year.

**BQ** Well that's a smashing insight into ...

**Mr. C** I don't know anything else I can tell you.

**BQ** Well that's been a great help, thank you.