

Synopsis of interview with Ted Lethaby

Born: Countisbury, Devon, 1925

Lived: Countisbury

Recording made: 2001

Length of recording: 2 hours 25 minutes

Ted Lethaby's parents rented a cottage at Countisbury from the Hallidays. When he left school he worked at Wilsham Farm and then on the buses. He was on the Lynmouth-Minehead run at the time of the flood and helped ferry people to safety, driving a 100 mile detour to get from Lynmouth to Lynton.

Then he became the AA man, patrolling a patch from Lynmouth to Porlock in a motorbike and sidecar, and later a Land Rover. Repairs were carried out on the spot and if he needed a spare part he would go to the garage for it. Every day, twice a day, he stood by the phone box so his office could get in touch with him.

Now retired, he keeps an eye on the church and looks after Foreland lighthouse, where his wife was brought up. He says Exmoor was beautiful long before the National Park took over, it was his father and grandfather, and their forebears, who kept it so.

CD 1 (72 minutes)

1.1 BORN WILSHAM, COUNTISBURY 1925 / FAMILY BACKGROUND / HALLIDAY ESTATE / OLD SCHOOL HOUSE SIBLINGS / PARENTS / SELLING VEGETABLES

1.2 DELIVERIES TRADESPEOPLE / VISITS TO LONDON / SIBLINGS / RENT

1.3 COUNTISBURY SCHOOL / WILSHAM FARM / MR REED

1.4 WILSHAM COTTAGES / BROTHER / GLENTHORNE / PICKING LAVER / ACCESS TO COUNTRYSIDE

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1.9 MISS DARKER / FATHER-IN-LAW LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER / WIFE BARBARA'S BACKGROUND

CD 2 (73 minutes)

2.1 MEETING BARBARA / DERBY DAY / OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

2.2 BUYING OLD SCHOOL HOUSE / BUYING HOUSES / GLENTHORNE / WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT / CHILDREN / EDUCATION / COMPUTERS

2.3 LYNMOUTH FLOOD / FERRYING VISITORS AND LOCALS BY BUS

2.4 WORKING ON BUSES / BAD WEATHER / A A VEHICLES / INTERVIEW / TRAINING

2.5 AA PATCH BUSY ROUTE / BREAKDOWN

2.6 1963 WINTER / DELIVERIES / DR MOLD / HEALTH

2.7 NORMAN SCOTT

2.8 AA JOB / MOVE TO MINI / RADIO / £2 TIP / BREAKDOWNS / RAC / RETIREMENT / FREELANCE

2.9 RETIREMENT / BARBARA / LIGHTHOUSE / CHURCH / FMD

2.10 WIFE / DOMESTIC CHORES / COOKING / RECREATION / NATIONAL PARK / MEETINGS / HUNTING

2.11 LOOKING BACK / TRAVEL / DOMESTIC EQUIPMENT / DOG / TAME LAMBS / READING

CD 1 (72 minutes)

1.1 BORN WILSHAM, COUNTISBURY 1925 / FAMILY BACKGROUND / HALLIDAY ESTATE / OLD SCHOOL HOUSE SIBLINGS / PARENTS / SELLING VEGETABLES

Born Wilsham 1925, two miles away from here [the Old School House, Countisbury], stayed there until he got married in 1951. Has been here for 50 years. Dad was a gardener and then he worked for Devon County Council, on the roads. TL doesn't know much about his grandparents, he was a latecomer. Mum was married before to Dad's brother who died in 1915 leaving seven children. Dad was in the army and married mum when he came out. Dad and Mum then had two children, so the seven others were half-brothers and sisters. Dad's brother wasn't killed in the war, he was a mason. Of half brothers and sisters, oldest is a sister of 92 - TL's 76, not a great difference really. His mother never talked about marrying the brother.

Mother had a hard life bringing up seven children. No social security then. She used to take in washing. He thinks she was a postwoman during the war. They lived then at Top Cottage, the highest point in Wilsham, which belonged to the Halliday Glenthorne estate. When Dad died TL's brother came there to live and bought the cottage when Hallidays sold off most of the properties. TL bought this house, the Old School House, off them in 1951 for £300. School had closed down in 1908. He thinks if he'd offered £150 he might have got it, he always regrets that £150 that he lost[laughs].

After she re-married, his mother had two more children - Wilf was three years older than him. TL left school at 13 [1938] and went to work on the farm at Wilsham until 1951 when he moved to the Old School House and went bus driving. House at Wilsham had a sitting room, dining room, kitchen and larder and three bedrooms upstairs. Shed outside the back door which mother had the boiler in and where she did her washing. There was no water or sanitation. Water fetched from the well and thrown away in buckets over the garden. Loo was in the garden up the steps and round the back. Washed in a bowl in the kitchen. TL believes all other children had gone when he came along except Wilfred, his brother, and had dispersed all over the place - London, New Forest, Porlock, Exford, Blackmoor Gate. [check - Eldest sibling only 16 years older - surely some must still have been at home]

His mother's grandfather was a policeman near Lyme Regis at Uplyme, but he didn't know them. His mother's maiden name was Lake. He didn't know any of his grandparents. Dad's mother's family were bakers in Brendon. But there is no reference to a grandfather there, he came from North Molton - TL's wife Barbara was doing a history [of the family]. He's not sure what brought his mother from Lyme Regis but thinks her [first] husband, who was a builder, was working there and met her there. TL feels he should ask his eldest sister, Doris, more about the family because when she dies it will all die with her.

His father's people lived at Brendon at the bakery and the shop. They baked in a big bake oven, like a room. They used to fill it up with sticks and light it, scrape out all the ashes and put the bread in. All this was before he was old enough to remember more than just the shop. Remembers father used to garden at Doone Cottage, Rockford but can't remember where else. He used to grow a lot of stuff. Sold peas, beans, cabbages. People from guest houses in Lynmouth used to come up and buy his produce.

1.2 DELIVERIES TRADESPEOPLE / VISITS TO LONDON / SIBLINGS / RENT

Used to get milk and eggs from the farm. Two butchers called, Tuesdays and Fridays. Two grocers called.

Kelloways in Brendon used to make the bread then. Olive Kelloway used to deliver bread on a horse with a big sack across her knees with some bread that side and some that side [indicates]. Butcher came in a horse and cart from Lynton or Lynmouth. Their butcher was Isaacs from Lynton, others nearby dealt with Medways. The grocers were Gilbanks & Squires and Burtons, who came alternate weeks. They took orders on Tuesdays and delivered on Thursdays, something like that. Miss Broome, the chemist, came from Lynmouth once a week or fortnightly, he doesn't know why she came so regularly. Shoes and boots came from Barnstaple, Mr Yeo would take orders and take back boots that needed repairing. Pyles, general haulers at Millslade, sent a lorry into Barnstaple every week - brought back everything that was needed - pub's beer, boots and shoes, whatever. Pyles was a real collection point on a Friday.

His mother never needed to go out. He doesn't think she did, maybe to Barnstaple once a year. [pause] They used to go on holiday once a year, sometimes to a sister that lived in London or to another one that lived in the New Forest. Mother went too - he's not sure whether Dad went. After leaving school TL went to London every year.

One sister [Hilda] was a lady-in-waiting to Lady somebody; she used to travel quite a lot, to Canada and Switzerland and such places. Another sister, probably went up with the first sister, finished up as manageress of a Lyons Corner House. Brother Fred was butler for Lord Goschen in London. They travelled by bus to Minehead and then train on their visits to London. TL first went to London in the early '30s, aged ?5, 6 or 7. He can't remember what they did in London but remembers playing in open land with trees opposite the Hoover factory in Perivale. The sister he visited lived in Perivale, Middlesex. She moved to Birmingham. Another sister, Chris, lived at Romford or Upminster and he used to go there when he was single and for his honeymoon. Father would look after himself while they were away.

Cottage at Wilsham then belonged to Miss Halliday. TL didn't have to do anything with the estate. He thinks rent was two shillings [10p] a week, paid half-yearly.

1.3 COUNTISBURY SCHOOL / WILSHAM FARM / MR REED

TL walked to Countisbury school with his brother Wilf - up Wilsham Lane, over the moors to Combe farm, picked up the teachers' milk, over two or three fields and into the school - about a mile and a half. The teachers were Mrs Beck and her daughter Miss Beck. It was a rough old trip over the moor, mind, when it was raining and blowing and you could get wet through. Then you had to stand before the fire, one of these big tortoise fires. It wasn't bad to get wet because you stood beside the fire for some time. There were about 28 pupils approx, including the children from Brendon who walked up through the fields. He didn't care for school too much as he was a get up and go sort of rough fellow rather than sitting down pen pushing. Teachers were very strict. Mrs Beck used to like giving him the cane. More than a certain number of mistakes at dictation and you had the cane, he used to hold out his hand before starting [laughs]. The daughter, Miss Beck, used to teach the younger ones, including him. She was all right. But with her mother they at least didn't do anything they weren't supposed to. Even on days off or on holidays you were up before the court if you stepped out of line and she got to hear about it.

They started school at 9.30 - prayers, religious instruction for half an hour, sums, then various subjects between 11.00 and 1.00, including dictation on Fridays. More general education in the afternoon. No organised games or sport, there was nowhere to play. They used to garden sometimes in Mrs Beck's veg garden.

They were all pretty friendly. George Graham, a farmer's son who lived at Wilsham, was a great pal at school and after but he died aged 49. TL and GG were best man at each other's weddings. Otherwise very few friends still alive. [interruption while postman and TL discuss the post]

Wilsham farm was about 250 acres but has been added to by ploughing moorland. At one time there were two farms. The old farmhouse was let to Mr Reed, an Oxford don who came down on his holidays. Looked after by TL's mum, and his dad did the garden. He was a bachelor, who walked and read, a very lonesome and private man. The Cranmers, who were cricketers, used to come and stay with Mr R, Peter Cranmen was

one of the sons. Leslie Franks was a young boy who was the driver - came down with Mr R - and eventually when Mr R died he took on and bought the property. Before he had Leslie Franks as his ?companion / chauffeur, Mr R would come down by train, then bus to the top, and then he was fetched by a horse and cart. Mr R was a great walker. TL remembers once his mum met him on Rockford bridge and Mr R didn't even recognise her - he was that sort of man [laughs]. [Noises off - lamb bleating TL breaks off to feed it]

1.4 WILSHAM COTTAGES / BROTHER / GLENTHORNE / PICKING LAVER / ACCESS TO COUNTRYSIDE

As TL said, Leslie Franks bought the property and when he died his wife moved back to Oxford. The farmhouse has been sold again to Tom Farthing.

All Wilsham belonged to the Halliday estate. The two cottages that belonged to the farm for the workers were down below the farm (and have since been made into one) and TL's family lived in a cottage on its own, above the farm. Donald Graham lived at the farm and later his son George, who TL was friendly with. He, George, then died of a heart attack at the age of 49 and his son John took over. When Mr Graham [Donald] retired he moved into the two cottages [below the farm] and made them into one. When he died he left to his daughter Margaret and she sold it and its been sold a couple of times since that. In one half of the semi-detached cottages [before they were converted] there lived a chap called George Garnish who worked on the farm for Mr Graham. In the other there lived a chap called Fred Steer who was the lengthman on the road from Lynmouth to County Gate, working for the council, looking after the road, clearing the gutters and things like that.

With his friend George, TL, as a child, would go down to the river to play. As they grew older they would go to Lynton to the pictures or dance or whatever, sometimes with Wilf his brother. Wilf was a carpenter and learned his trade with Nancekivell. He used to have to go the other side of Barbrook to work every morning to what was then Kivell's workshop. He'd cycle the four or five miles. Kivell [which was what they called him] was a builder from Lynton. He supposes his brother became a carpenter as it was all that was available, or maybe there were no farm jobs going.

There was little contact with Miss Halliday, it was all done through the agent Pitts-Tucker. The only contact was when she came to the school sometimes and when they went to parties at Christmas at Glenthorne, then they used to walk to Glenthorne from the school. The parties were tea parties and you got an orange when you left. It was dark and dreary at Christmas time but he can't really remember what went on and can't even visualise the tea table. When she [Miss Halliday] came to the school it was just to look around, a courtesy visit.

He left school in the July when he was still 13 - he was 14 at the end of August - and started work on 7 September - so he started work three [four] days after war broke out. He remembers the outbreak of war. They used to have a harvest home [celebration] at Combe farm and he went there to pick up the harvest home cups (white with blue CHH - Countisbury Harvest Home - on them) to take to school because they were expecting evacuees. This was on Sunday. He was at Combe farm as Chamberlain was making his speech and he stopped and listened to it on the radio. They were on their way to pick laver in Wingate wood down below Desolate. Laver is seaweed. They took the cups from Combe farm to Countisbury school for the evacuees then went to the wood down by the sea to pick laver. They used to cook and eat the laver, still do when they can get it. You can buy it in Barnstaple now, in Butchers Row.

He thinks there's probably still laver in Wingate wood but doubts whether you can get down to the sea as the trees have fallen down the slipways. The wood is still part of the Glenthorne estate but the cliffs from Glenthorne right through to Lynmouth have been sold to the National Trust. You could walk anywhere at that time without getting permission. It is only since the influx of outsiders that it has been necessary to bar people from walking all over the place. Back in those days you were local and had lived there for years and the land belonged to locals. You knew one another and you didn't stop someone you knew from walking anywhere, really.

TL can't remember any local enemies or feuds, at Wilsham they were all in good harmony.

1.5 VISITORS GAMES / COLIN AND MARY REDDY / FIRST JOB AT WILSHAM FARM / SIBLINGS' WARTIME INVOLVEMENT / COUNTISBURY IN WARTIME

The evacuees didn't come to the school. There were evacuees, but not in large numbers. There were several in Brendon. They came, TL thinks, of their own accord rather than in a block. His family had no evacuees staying with them. A number of the evacuees from London were staying with relations. There must have been a few planted nearby but TL can't think who or what. There wasn't the mass influx they had expected. He remembers good things about the evacuees [laughs], he got on very well with one of the girls. [pause] They were from London, staying with relations in Brendon. There were three sisters. [pause] They had some evacuees at the farm - a mother and baby and a woman of 40 odd who obviously evacuated herself, to get out of the way of the bombing he supposes. He doesn't know how they knew where to go, it must have been word of mouth.

The farm took in visitors. They used to get quite a lot of visitors. Some brought their horses by train to Minehead, they used to come for the hunting. There was another place in Wilsham called The Cabin, where the Hendersons lived. He was a ship's captain and his wife and daughter used to come and stay quite a lot in the summer. At the top of the lane there was The Hut (all self-built). People called Reddy used to come there, with a son Colin and daughter Mary. He used to play with them in the school summer holidays. They introduced different games - murders, in the barn, and charades. Normally local children just messed about in the fields and farm buildings. [relates story of subsequent death of Colin Reddy]. Mary Reddy, stays at Silcombe every year (with Jane and Henry Richards), she was there a month ago. She comes down with her daughter, who's a dentist in Portishead. Mary lost her husband, who died while on holiday in Spain many years ago.

TL and the visiting children would go into each others homes.

When war was declared he was about to start his first job at the farm at Wilsham. During the war his father was working on the roads for the council.

Of his older brothers, Fred was in the army in Burma, Stan also and Les (his nephew John's father), who was invalided out. His sisters weren't involved, he imagines they were all up and married and had got families maybe. Chris never had a family but lived in London, married of course. They had a tailoring business, she wouldn't have gone in the services. At home they didn't know there was a war, there was no shortage of food. Fred was the only one long time in the army in Burma. Cecil was unfit for the army and lived in Porlock. Les went in [the army] and came out again. Stan went in the army. So far as TL knows he did his time.

1.6 FIRST JOB / DELIVERING MILK TO ROCKFORD / GEORGE GARNISH

His first job was on Wilsham farm. He milked twice a day seven days a week. Didn't have a day off, not even Saturday afternoons. On Sundays only had the milking to do, taking the milk to Rockford, walking carrying two cans. One can was three gallons, oblong, and one can was two gallons. They used to milk 14 cows in the summer by hand, no milking machines, no electric. He had help from Mrs Graham and sometimes Mr Graham. [pause] Sometimes all three milked. No white coats, but they washed their hands and washed down the cows. They scrubbed the milk containers with cold water and put them upside down on the wall outside. Milk was delivered and decanted into jugs around the houses in Rockford. On return the milk cans were washed in the house but the milking buckets were just washed in cold water. Milk was delivered in Rockford between half past eight and nine. They started milking at half past seven until about half past eight. People at the pub in Rockford wanted the milk for their breakfast. In those days milk didn't keep very long. Keeps about a fortnight today. In the summer on a hot thundery day it didn't keep overnight, they used to have to scald it after milking. Milk that was milked in the evening they made cream with, and the morning milk went to Rockford. But not all of it went to Rockford because they milked more than they needed to sell, so they made cream with that as well and fed the calves with the skimmed milk.

After walking to Rockford with the two containers he went from house to house filling jugs. He either walked in to pick up jugs or some people left their jugs outside the door, or a can. At one place, at Allerford (between Rockford and Brendon), the chap used to leave his can behind the wall at Rockford, by the bridge. He [the chap] would come down and pick it up so TL didn't used to see him. Then he used to go to the pub and see how much they wanted. People didn't used to have a lot of milk in those days. If you had two pints you had a lot, even the pub. He suppose they used to sell more beer. If people left jugs on the table he would go in [to fill them up] without them being there.

After milking, in the winter, he would clean out the shippens, feed up, tend up the cows, do the calves and feed them. In the summer you just turned them out and went haymaking or hoeing swedes or drilling potatoes, or whatever.

Only two worked on the farm. George Garnish was the horse man, he used to do the horses, the ploughing and all that. TL was the boy. He'd do the dragging, perhaps, with another horse. He did plough with horses when he [George Garnish] was ill one time. Then the tractor came along and TL was the 'boss', he was the tractor man. With the boss, Mr Graham, there were only three of them. When the tractor came along the horse man [George Garnish] went, he probably had to go. He went to Wingate to work on a farm there. [pause] TL thinks that's where he ended his days - TL's not sure whether he still worked with horses, he probably did general farm work then. However, [he knows] they didn't have a tractor at Wingate as he went ploughing there, so they probably did still have horses. George was a little short chap. TL reckons he was probably a bit peeved when tractors came in - 'progress doesn't suit everyone does it?'

1.7 PAY / RECREATION / ROCKFORD PEOPLE / DR HEAD / FIREWORKS

TL doesn't know whether his brother the carpenter would rather have worked in Wilsham than travel seven miles to work. Maybe he wanted to be a carpenter - probably that was it. It was very convenient for TL to work there [Wilsham] - he could just roll out of bed and he was at work.

He enjoyed working, it was good to be earning money. He thought now he could buy some fireworks, because there was no pocket money while he was at school. Of course then the war came and there were no more fireworks.

He earned seven shillings [35p] a week. They didn't pay him for three weeks, then he got a guinea - one pound and one shilling [£1.05]. TL doesn't think he saved any and didn't pay his mother anything because he only slept at home, he would eat at the farm. In the evening he might play cards at home or the farm and then as he got older he spent the evenings at Rockford, walked across two or three fields and through the wood. Didn't get many women in the pubs in those days - you would play darts or shove halfpenny. Then they might walk up to Staghunters up the valley and back to Rockford again - 'just knocking out time, really.'

The pub was run by Ray Beesley. TL thinks his mother came down from Birmingham and took the pub - then he [Ray] got married and ran the pub for many years. He had three daughters, there's only one still living.

At the bottom of the hill, there was the Youth Hostel, a thriving business - for the place and for the pub really. Across the bridge you had what's called The Nook and then you had the pub and next door to that you had the doctor, Dr Head. He was the doctor for the area, he walked everywhere. Opposite the doctor was The Villa, the Mackays lived there, then Doone Cottage. That was Mr Bland, a retired policeman from Zanzibar with plenty of money. He spent £5 on fireworks one night, which was a fortune. Then Green Tiles. He doesn't remember who lived there, it changed hands many times. That was Rockford.

The doctor was TL's doctor. TL used to go with the milk and say he had a cold and the doctor used to make him up some medicine. He used to make up his own medicines. The doctor's patch went all the way to Broomstreet (near Culbone). TL thinks the doctor had a car but he didn't drive it much, he can never remember him driving a car. Dr Mold from Lynton used to do this area as well, he came to Brendon twice a week on Tuesdays and Fridays. Dr Head was a long long time ago before Dr Mold came [in 1953]. Dr

Head was here before and during the war. TL can't remember when he died, probably in the late '40s. He doesn't know if Dr Head was brought up in the area or any of his past history.

When Mr Bland bought his £5 worth of fireworks they had a bonfire and fireworks display on Guy Fawkes night which they hadn't seen before. The only time you could get fireworks was around Guy Fawkes night.

1.8 FATHER'S JOB / TAKING IN WASHING / FATHER / CHURCH / PARENTS' SOCIAL LIFE / GAMES / STAGHUNTERS / RECREATION GROUND

[phone rings] His father used to work at Scob Hill quarry cracking stones for the roads, hard work. They used to wear glasses with a square mesh to stop the chips going in their eyes. TL doesn't know why he changed jobs, he stayed with the council until he retired. TL reckons his father was all right. He [his father] used to take a buckle strap to him sometimes but could never catch him. He doesn't know which end, as he never caught him.

His mother was a very gentle lady. She never got upset, never drunk, never smoked, never swore, She would help anybody. She was a model person. She used to take in washing from Glenthorne and even when he was at school she used to take in washing for Mrs Tattersall at Barton Farm cottage. The grocer used to bring it and take it back. The Glenthorne washing was before TL was born. She did the washing, looked after Mr Reed and looked after them. [pause] It was a hard life, no electric, no sanitation, no running water. He doesn't know what she'd think now.

The house was nice. Cold, mind, no rayburn, no central heating then. Heating was from a black open range and a fire in the sitting room in the winter time. When they came down in the morning it was like ice again, cold. They had a primus to boil the kettle with in the morning before the fire got up. Dad used to go to work about seven so mother had to be up early to get his breakfast and fill his Thermos, cut his sandwiches. TL took sandwiches to school as well. They probably had meat in them because they used to eat a lot of meat then. Meat came from the butcher and they used to kill their own pig one time.

Dad was the church warden and gravedigger. TL had to go to church every Sunday unless he could get out of it, he used to hide away when they were just setting off to church. There was Sunday School as well at the school they went to all week, at eleven o'clock. They had to go there, and then in the afternoon to church over here [Countisbury]. Dad dug the graves on his own. He took the collection [pause] when they used to put a penny in the collection then, he expects.

His parents had little social life. They listened to the radio. [pause] They used to go to whist drives and dances at Brendon, at least his mother went to the whist drives and stayed for the dance as well. You'd walk down in your wellingtons in the dark and carry your shoes and change when you got there.

[When not in the pubs] TL would play cards or games, things like bridge, snakes and ladders or ludo. He played a lot of three handed bridge with Mr Graham and his wife.

The Staghunters at Brendon was run by Mr Totterdale [?sp]. TL didn't like it as a pub.

He used to go to the recreation ground at Park House, where the swing and see-saw were, where a lot of kids and the young girls used to collect. They'd congregate there in the evenings as well.

1.9 MISS DARKER / FATHER-IN-LAW LIGHTHOUSE KEEPER / WIFE BARBARA'S BACKGROUND

Miss Darker, at Desolate, was an eccentric, knowledgeable. She had a pilot's licence, he believes. She used to maintain her own vehicles [pause] not knowing the sort of money her house would have made [laughs]. Her house was sold about three years ago, he supposes for £380,000, for a wreck - about a year after she died. [BJ queries whether it was sold last year]. There was a guide price of £200,000. He said they must be joking to think that the place was worth that and it made £380,000 - and they probably spent another £50,000 to £60,000 on it anyway. He doesn't know who she left it to but there was a Miss Potter who used to come with her very often. She was a great friend he thinks, whether she had it he wouldn't have a clue.

He worked at the farm for 11 or 12 years - 1951 he started on the buses. He lived at home until he got married in 1951. Change of job not connected with getting married although he was courting at the time - he wanted a change and probably more money and a day off once a week.

His wife came from the lighthouse. He always called her a gypsy because she was a lighthouse-keeper's daughter and she was never in one place very long. He met her at the school dance in 1947. Her parents came to Lynmouth Foreland when she was nine months old. When she was five they had to move because of her schooling so they went to Strumble Head lighthouse up at Fishguard, She went to school in Fishguard until she was 14 - then they moved to Whitby in Yorkshire and she went to school there for a year. Then he [Barbara's father] was moved back to Lynmouth Foreland again - she hadn't finished her schooling so she went to Portsmouth with her auntie and finished her schooling there. Then when she'd finished she came back here and went to work for the Electric Light Company in Lynmouth. She used to walk from the Foreland every morning to Lynmouth. He didn't know Barbara when they were first here. Her father's name was Fred Roberts. They were related to Grace Darling - one of her great grandfathers married one of the Darlings.

CD 2 (73 minutes)

2.1 MEETING BARBARA / DERBY DAY / OLD SCHOOL HOUSE

Met Barbara at a dance at the school in 1947; got engaged on Derby Day in 1948. The horse that won the Derby on that day was called 'My Love' but TL didn't have a bet. At the time TL lived at Wilsham and Barbara at the lighthouse.

When they got married they lived at the Old School House. Dad bought the house; TL hadn't got £300 then; things haven't changed. [laughs] They bought the house in May 1951 and it was a wreck. The school [The Old School House] closed in 1908, it was not where TL went to school. Two old ladies lived in the house just before TL bought it. They died and TL tried to rent it from the agents but it was to be sold. He asked the price and was invited to make an offer. TL offered £300 and the agents accepted it. TL still thinks he should have offered them £150.

The house then had a school room 25 foot long and about 10 foot wide. TL had a partition put up to divide it into two rooms. One end became a bedroom and the other a sitting room, but the sitting room was so small that TL took down the wall between the sitting room and the dining room to make one room (where the recording is being made.) The dining room, before it was joined to the sitting room, was the living accommodation for the school teacher. Originally the house was 'one up, one down' but then two rooms were put on and that was living accommodation for the school mistress. When the wall was taken down [between the sitting room and the dining room] there was no support for the bedroom and TL had to jack up the ceiling and put in a beam that came from Ashley Coombe House. The beam wasn't quite long enough and TL had to make two plinths to carry the beam. The beam came in a load TL had for firewood, but he recognised a good oak beam and put it by thinking it would come in useful one day, and it did. He wasn't at Ashley Combe; Tim Huish, he thinks, was dismantling it and TL had a lorry load from him just for firewood really.

2.2 BUYING OLD SCHOOL HOUSE / BUYING HOUSES / GLENTHORNE / WIFE'S EMPLOYMENT / CHILDREN / EDUCATION / COMPUTERS

TL's father put up the money for the house and TL paid him 4 per cent. It was bought in TL's name so that when his father died it became his anyway. He used to pay his father £12 a year.

It wasn't usual for working people to buy their own houses in those days. Desolate was the first place to be sold from the estate, the Blue Boar was the second and TL's house the third; all in 1951. Now there's very little left of the Glenthorne Estate; there's Ashton, Yenworthy and the other old school, that's all that's left.

TL was married in Countisbury . 'Married here, christened here and be buried here I expect. Won't have far to carry me will they? It's only next door to the church, they always say I'm the vicar.'

Moving from Wilsham wasn't far enough to make any difference, only two miles. TL's wife went to work at Lynmouth from the new house until the floods came, when the generating station got washed out. Then she went to the SWEB shop in Lynton. She stayed there until such time as she had Nigel in 1956.

TL also has another son Jeremy who's just gone off to America. He was in the Air Force for 12 years, went to Kuwait for 2 years and now he's trying to get to America to live.

Both sons went to school in Countisbury until it was closed and then Nigel went to Combe Martin. When they opened the school in Ilfracombe both boys went there. Nigel was 11 when he left Countisbury for Combe Martin and Jeremy went on to Ilfracombe when he was 11. So in 1970 the Countisbury school was still going and probably closed some time in the 70s.

TL does not believe his sons' education differed much from his own 'til we come to the Computer age, then it's different.' He can't get on the Internet. [he was on the computer just before the recording]. He has his own computer for typing letters etc: but Jeremy has taken it out to the caravan [TL mentioned pre-recording that Jeremy has a base there] and brought his own 'Internet thing' into the room from his bedroom as he is going away. At present only TL and Nigel live in the house. TL has had a computer, not a sophisticated one, for about 3 or 4 years: not much more than a typewriter really, which, when he got a printer, would print out anything he typed. The Internet is another story; TL has not come to grips with that yet. His son [Jeremy] said he would email him when he got there [America] having shown him how to 'do it' the night before instead of showing him a fortnight ago. He will have to ring Jeremy to find out 'what's wrong'.

Nigel works for Devonshire Motors in Barnstaple. He's not a mechanic but a driver, picking up and delivering cars.

When the boys were at school in Ilfracombe they went by coach; they were picked up about twenty to eight down the road and brought back about twenty past five. They were first to be on the bus and the last to be dropped off.

2.3 LYNMOUTH FLOOD / FERRYING VISITORS AND LOCALS BY BUS

TL's wife Barbara was working in Lynmouth when the floods happened in 1952.

TL was on the buses at the time and went down the Blue Boar for a drink: 'spend most my life in that pub, sounds like it doesn't it' [laughs]. The landlord's son who was at the Rising Sun ['another drinker'] rang up while TL was there and said the boats had all been washed out of the harbour. They jumped in the landlord's vehicle and went down to have a look. This was in August at about nine or ten o'clock; it was dark anyway. They got down to the bottom of Countisbury Hill. It was raining and there were no street lights. They looked and listened, the noise was terrific; the side of the Lynn Valley Hotel fell out while they were there; there were candles in the various rooms and they blew out one by one. The only time you could see anything was when a flash of lightening came. They went home.

The next morning TL jumped on his motor-bike, knowing he couldn't get to Lynton to get his bus, and went there to have a look; 'of course you couldn't do anything'. TL rang Minehead and was told to pick up a bus there. All day he spent backing from The Beacon at the top of Countisbury Hill [now a private house] down into Lynmouth picking up people. The buses from Minehead then were coming down, turning round at the Beacon, taking TL's passengers which he'd brought up from Lynmouth, then he'd back down to Lynmouth again, pick up another load and he was doing that all day. He reversed down the hill because there wasn't anywhere to turn round down there. TL found this fairly easy; 'nothing's a problem when you're twenty-six'.

The people being brought up were visitors that were staying in Lynmouth. The last load at night were all locals.

The locals were taken straight into Minehead but they said this was no good as they wanted to go to Lynton. [Pause while TL takes a drink for his cough] Minehead was all right for the visitors as they could catch a train to wherever they wanted to go. The locals all either lived in Lynton or had friends they could stay with there: they had nobody in Minehead. TL and another driver ['two loads'] turned round and took them

back to Lynton. 'So it took us 100 miles to get from Lynmouth to Lynton' [laughs] They arrived back in Lynton about ten o'clock at night. TL slept in the back of the bus that night: he couldn't let Barbara know as the telephones were all down and the army who had been there all day with their walkie-talkies had all gone. No mobile phones then! He got back home Sunday at dinner time.

It was a question of the hotels seeing all their guests away getting their luggage out to the bus. Following this the locals had to go as well. People didn't seem to have much with them. The people 'seemed to be taking it all in good part; you've got to haven't you!' They [the locals] stayed with friends and relations in Lynton. A mother and daughter stayed with TL; in fact until she [the daughter] got married from there on the last day of the month, so she was there a fortnight, her and her mother. She went off on her honeymoon and the mother left then; probably her husband had got her some accommodation by this time. They [the mother and daughter] worked at the Electric Light Company in Lynmouth and afterwards got transferred to the power station at Fremington where they probably went to live.

TL was not in any other way involved with the floods and there were no subsequent effects on TL or Wilsham. It was only down by the rivers that were affected really. When TL went back from Minehead to Lynton [on the day people were ferried to Minehead] he couldn't go through Exford, he couldn't go through the Bray valley; he had to go down to the Black Cat into Barnstaple and back into Lynton. [This accounts for the earlier claim of a 100 mile trip]. The summer service which they were running then on the buses, which were on good money in the summer, that all come to a stop. The summer service didn't exist any more because Lynmouth was closed off.

2.4 WORKING ON BUSES / BAD WEATHER / A A VEHICLES / INTERVIEW / TRAINING

TL was in Wilsham when he applied for a job on the bus from Lynton to Ilfracombe as a driver, and he got the job. They said it was a seasonal job and at the end of the season they said that if he'd like to go on conducting on the Lynton to Barnstaple he could stay on the winter. So this is what he did and also some driving in Barnstaple as well when they were in there. And then the job on the service bus from Lynmouth to Minehead came up; TL applied and got it. He did that for three years and the AA job came up, which he applied for and got.

The people on the bus were regulars but it wasn't a workers' bus. People would be on the bus to catch the train or to go to Minehead shopping. There were quite a few people all the time, not like today when everybody's got their own car. [You] used to get quite a lot of people, visitors, off the train coming into Lynmouth and then [he'd be] taking them back again. It was a bus for the trains for the visitors. There were not many workers from here [Lynmouth?] who went to Minehead to work. The workers in Porlock had their own bus service into Minehead. TL had been both conductor and driver. [long pause]

The bus fare from Lynmouth to Minehead was 5 / 6 [five shillings and sixpence or 27½ new pence] single. It was what was called an express service; a dear service, compared to Barnstaple to Lynton which was about 3 / 6 [three shillings and sixpence or 17½ new pence] return or something like that. The express service used to stop 'all along the top' but when he got to Porlock he went straight through to Minehead. He didn't pick anybody up at Porlock. The journey took one hour and twenty-five minutes TL thinks. He used to leave Lynmouth at twenty-five past nine and got in there [Minehead] at about ten to eleven he thinks..

In bad weather sometimes you couldn't go. Didn't get many bad [days]. The last week TL was on, he finished on March 6th, he only went the last two days as Monday to Thursday he was snowed up; so he went in time to get his cards and his money. TL was paid even when the weather was bad. On one occasion he drove the bus when it was too bad to drive; he went down [from] the top of Porlock hill and decided he couldn't go any further and backed it all the way up to the top; [laughs] his neck was aching. He got down to where the old RAC box used to be, not the bottom RAC box, the one they've just taken away now at Holmbush. This was in the snow. There wasn't any salt then. There probably wasn't anyone on board; TL doesn't think there was.

Then TL joined the AA; started on the 14th of March. This was in 1954. He had to go to Nottingham to

the training college. So the Superintendent was coming down to pick up TL to take him to Taunton to catch the train; this was on a Sunday morning and it was snowing. Two patrols came out on one bike with him [the Superintendent] in case he got stuck and they had an awful job to get back to Porlock. They managed it but missed the train in Taunton so they went on to Bridgwater and caught the train. Then to Nottingham for a fortnight's training; came back and then he [the Superintendent] came and picked TL up and took him to Bristol to pick up his RSO [Road Service Outfit]; his motorbike and sidecar. TL then went on for about 10 years on a motorbike and sidecar; then a Mini for about five years; then an Austin Gypsy for a couple of years and then had Land Rovers until he retired.

To get the [AA] job TL was interviewed, at which he was asked a few general questions on what he would do if he had a car that was broken down or what route the electrics took when you switched on and how it went to the coil, the points and whatever. Then you have the school where you get all sorts of training; you get rigs [engines] to work on and an awful lot of paperwork. They put faults on the engines and he had to find the faults and things like that. They had lectures all day and at night they had to write them up; it would be gone midnight before he had finished writing. TL had always been mechanically minded though he had never done a mechanics course and he had these two motorbikes at the time. He was that way inclined. He had bought a second bike and hadn't sold the first one.

2.5 AA PATCH BUSY ROUTE / BREAKDOWN

TL's AA 'patch' was from Lynmouth to Porlock via the toll road. He daren't go off that road. If somebody came to the AA box and said there's somebody broken down out on the Exford road, he couldn't go, he had to stay on his particular road; he'd ring up the garage and get them to go out there; Pollards or Central. They used to give 'em job and job about because they were very competitive. If he gave one two jobs there was hell to pay with the other one. He gave him one job, him the next, share it out.

Lynmouth to Porlock was enough to keep him busy. Nowadays you could go up and down here for weeks and you wouldn't get a breakdown but then they were breaking down all the time. There was one [AA] man on Porlock hill alone. Then there was an AA man, an RAC man and the garage going up and down all day touting for business. There was plenty of business. One AA man's beat was just up and down Porlock hill and TL used to do the Toll road.

It was very busy then and he used to 'make' members on the way whenever he could. If someone broke down who wasn't an AA member he invited them to join and if they joined he helped them. They generally did and if they didn't he'd probably get [hold of] a garage for them. If they joined TL had to do the paperwork on the spot.

On a typical day TL would start at nine o'clock in the morning and on then until seven o'clock or sunset whichever was the earlier. He would have dinner from one to two, a ten minute break in the morning and a ten minute break in the afternoon but your vehicle had to be on the road and you had to be able to see the vehicle. At dinner-time he could take his vehicle off the road for an hour. Otherwise he just had to patrol from Lynmouth to Porlock and Porlock to Lynmouth and pick up any jobs on the way.

In the summer coming up the Toll road or coming up Countisbury Hill you'd get fan belts break which you never get today, you'd get water hoses split which you never get today, you'd get radiators boiling which you don't get today. Of course with the MOT [certificate] it's done away with a lot of the rubbish that could come out at any time. Provided it would start and it would go you could take a vehicle on the road; well you can't do that today; they've got to be in reasonable order. Therefore you don't get the problems [today].

Most breakdowns could be dealt with on the spot unless you got something like a clutch gone or a back axle or a half shaft, then you had to get the garage to pull them in. He didn't carry much in the way of spares, only plugs and points and things like that and didn't carry a lot of those. What happened in those days, he used to take the points out and clean them up, take the plugs out and clean them up. It was only latterly he used to carry more spares. If somebody's fan belt went you'd to go to the garage to get another one because there were so many different types of fan belts you couldn't carry them, although latterly he used to carry

a lot of fan belts. This meant that if TL came across somebody who'd broken down, he was the one who drove to a garage to pick up a fan belt or a new coil or a new petrol pump or whatever and then would come back and fit it.

In those days there was no way that he could communicate. He used to have to stand by the box twice a day, at eleven o'clock in the morning for a quarter of an hour and three o'clock in the afternoon, so that if the office wanted you they knew they could phone the box and get hold of you. What they called standby point. If somebody driving along broke down and went to an AA box they couldn't phone him. They'd phone the office or a garage. Back then you could phone a garage and get the garage to come up to you without contacting the AA. You'd sign a form that the garage brought with them and the garage would send the bill to the AA. So apart from his twice a day by the AA box he was totally unconnected. This was until radios came in when he changed to a Mini.

2.6 1963 WINTER / DELIVERIES / DR MOLD / HEALTH

For ten years with a motorbike and sidecar, protection from bad weather was all right, in fact 'you got wetter since you had a vehicle than you did when you had a motorbike.' When he went out in the morning with a motorbike he was dressed up for it. But when he had a vehicle he used to jump out and do a job quick thinking it wasn't worth putting a coat on; the job would take a bit longer and he'd begin to get wet. Whereas if he had a motorbike he dressed accordingly. He would come home for lunch.

TL still had his motorbike in the bad winter of '63. He was off the road for 8 weeks. At the time, his motorbike was due to go back for replacement but he couldn't get up the [local] road. So three or four AA men came and they manhandled the bike out across the snowdrifts, out across the fields, into a road which was then clear, although he still couldn't get out because his road was blocked up.

For 8 weeks and 3 days the road from Lynmouth to Porlock was blocked; a long time. It wasn't very far to the main road but it was blocked for 8 weeks. Up as high as TL is, the snow was covering all the bushes, 10 or more feet high. There was no way you could shovel it and he can't remember how they got it clear in the end, possibly in that time it had dropped a lot and then probably they came up with a JCB and bucketed it out, he doesn't really remember.

During the 8 weeks there was always plenty to do; he walked to Lynmouth to get his supplies and one thing and another. The helicopter used to come up and take food to the farms around for the cattle. The lorries could get up to the top here and the helicopter used to land in the field and they used to put the sacks over into the helicopter and they used to deliver it round to the farms. TL didn't know how they knew what they [the farms] wanted and assumed they rang in their order and someone like Trumps in Barnstaple would bring out their lorry and the Chivenor helicopter would be there and deliver the order.

The phones were not affected, or if they were they'd soon put them right because it was a long time before they could get up here; they couldn't get up [for] the first week or two. TL was completely cut off for the first week or two. They managed all right for food.

TL listened to the story told by Dr Mold of the AA man in the snow. Dr Mold was going to Ashton farm with the Red Cross driver and had to abandon his car. He got back from Ashton farm to find his car had been started and was being driven towards him by the AA man. He doesn't exactly remember the event but it would have been him as this was his beat.

Dr Mold repaid the favour when he found TL passed out in an AA box which TL does remember. It was on top of Porlock hill with his motor bike; it was cold; it was the first week in January and he passed out. He was with a colleague who rang down to the doctor in Porlock who said TL wasn't his patient and he wouldn't come up. They had to ring Lynton to get Dr Mold up. After that TL was put off driving for some time because they didn't know what it was.

Dr Mold, on his way up to Brendon, used to call in and see TL and he came walking up one day and said his car was broken down on Countisbury Hill and could TL come down and help him. So TL jumped in his car

and took him. TL wasn't supposed to drive, Dr Mold had stopped him from driving [laughs]. TL drove him down, repaired his car and drove back again. [laughs] That was good, saying he mustn't drive any more, and then he comes up and says 'my car's broken down will you take me down and repair it.'

So TL was off the road. He went down to Exeter and had all sorts of tests but they couldn't find anything wrong and he went back on the road again.

2.7 NORMAN SCOTT

[muddled question from BJ about the shooting of Norman Scott's dog] He didn't shoot Norman Scott's dog, he found it! This is the Jeremy Thorpe dog.

[tells story] TL and his wife and a colleague and his wife were going into Minehead to have a drink once. This was 1975 he thinks. They were going along over the top, the other side of County Gate by the Yenworthy turning, and this man appeared in the road, right in the middle of the road stopped. TL had to stop or run over him. It was Norman Scott and he'd got the dog on the side of the road dead. He [NS] told this tale of somebody driving him into Porlock, or rather they'd been into Porlock and they were coming back again. He [NS] said they wanted to change drivers so they jumped out and the dog jumped out as well. Well he [Andrew Newton, see below] was going to shoot Scott and of course the dog jumped out so TL supposes he thought he'd better shoot the dog first and then shoot Scott. So he shot the dog and then tried to shoot Scott. The gun jammed and it wouldn't work. So he got really annoyed and jumped in the vehicle, turned round and drove back to Porlock and left Scott and the dog there by the road. Well, every time a car came from Porlock, Scott ran down over the moor because he thought it was this guy [AN] coming back again. So TL's car was the first car that came up from Lynmouth and he knew that would be all right so he made sure they stopped. TL left his three [people] there and went back to County Gate and phoned the police and that's how it went on from there.

The police came and took the dog away and [did] all sorts. TL got no end of calls from the papers and one thing and another and the television. He made one or two television recordings up there at night in the dark driving the car with lights stuck on the bonnet shining in his face. He had to drive the car with a spotlight shining on him re-enacting it: not with his wife and friends but on his own. He did that a couple of times until they got it right. This was ITV and he [the TV man] said, if TL left his name and address, they'd send along a cheque for £25.

About three weeks later he hadn't had this cheque so he wrote to them and said you've obviously overlooked this. He posted it that day and the next morning the cheque came and about three or four days later another cheque came. So TL thought he would put it in his bank for safe keeping and it's still in there. [laughs]. Then the BBC came down and TL did an interview with them. It didn't turn out right so they had to come and do it again so he had a double payment on that as well.

And, of course, they had to go into Exeter for the trial. TL went in and said a few words, not very much, and Barbara went in and said her bit. It was the trial of Jeremy Thorpe [but see correction below] accused of plotting to have Norman Scott killed. This fellow Andrew Newton was the chap that shot the dog. He's since changed his name to something else and the girlfriend he was out in the Alps with fell down and got killed. The occasion didn't amount to much, they were only in the witness box for a minute or two. They weren't going to call them [TL and his wife] at all. They hadn't been called to the trial and they, really, were the people that were first on the scene. It was one of the papers that kicked up about it so they got called, but they didn't really want them. TL remembers then that this was Andrew Newton's trial. It was Jeremy Thorpe's trial in Minehead and they never got called to Jeremy Thorpe's trial.

He doesn't know what happened to the dog, he supposes it was taken away and buried somewhere; [it was a] big dog. It was called Rinka. TL got a letter from Norman Scott afterwards; he got TL's address from the papers; and he's still got the letter now.

The outcome was that they never went to Minehead that night. They went on to Culbone, but it was a long time before they left the scene and it was nearly closing time.

2.8 AA JOB / MOVE TO MINI / RADIO / £2 TIP / BREAKDOWNS / RAC / RETIREMENT / FREELANCE

TL was with the AA until he retired.

The transition to a Mini was nice [in] the way of the weather. You hadn't got to stand beside the road, you could sit beside the road although they didn't like you sitting about in your vehicle. They liked you to stand out and salute everybody as they passed.

With the motorbike, he wore breeches and leggings and the short thick overcoat. Of course in the Mini he wore slacks and a tunic with a short car coat plus his oilskins for when it was raining.

After the Mini, he went to an Austin Gypsy then to a Land Rover; same kind of thing. [He was in a] Four wheel drive vehicle for the last twenty years.

Over the twenty years not a lot changed. The thing that changed was the radio. Once you were on radio, you didn't have a beat, you went anywhere. That happened when TL had the Mini [sheep noises off] in about 1964.

When he 'did' Lynmouth he was not responsible for Lynmouth Hill. There were very strict rules. He went to the bottom of Countisbury Hill, that was his beat. TL was attached to Bristol office and the Lynmouth patrol was attached to the Exeter office. So he didn't really see those fellows [from the Exeter office]; he went down to the bridge and back again.

The kind of people he helped over the years didn't change much.

One of the best [was when] he hadn't been working with them too long; he was on the motorbike and sidecar and he was coming back home to leave work, in the winter or spring, and he met a fellow on a horse at County Gate. He stopped TL and said I'm lost. He said I've been hunting and I've got my groom and the lorry at Triscombe farm, which is way out Wootton Courtenay way TL thinks. He [the man on the horse] asked TL if he could go there and ask him [the groom] to come and pick him up. So TL [thought] Triscombe farm, go all the way out there? - no I won't do that. So he went back to the AA box and he rang up Sherrins garage at Carhampton and asked if they could tell him where Triscombe farm is. They said they could give TL the number; so TL rang up Triscombe and asked if there was a groom in their yard with a lorry. They said yes and TL asked if he could have a word with him. TL spoke to the groom and told him his boss was out at County Gate coming this way, could he come and pick him up. The groom said all right. So TL went back to the fellow [man on the horse] and told him and he gave TL a £2 tip when his wages were only £6. [laughs] 'This is corn in Egypt' he thought 'this isn't a bad job after all.'

Breakdowns have changed over the years. Now the member can't call a garage himself; if he does he's got to pay. All the jobs [have] got to go through the AA office. If they [the AA] couldn't manage to do the job they would phone a garage and send them.

TL [in the AA] was in competition with the RAC. At least the RAC used to say TL was the opposition and TL would say he hadn't got any opposition. [laughs]; but yes there was competition.

There wasn't an RAC man on TL's beat but there was one on Porlock hill where the bulk of the work was, really. But TL didn't have one on [his patch] unless someone came along and said to them that they had a job out back home in the stables then TL thinks they could go off their beat. TL thinks that the RAC man's beat was probably from Lynmouth to Porlock but he spent most of his time on Porlock hill. TL was the only man on his stretch.

When he retired TL had a party and probably a golden handshake. He can't remember how much, [afterthought] oh! Yes he can! It wasn't a golden handshake. [pauses to think] 'How was it calculated? I can't remember how it was calculated.' [long pause] 'No I can't remember how it was calculated, how they arrived at the sum.'

The party was between themselves, the patrols, which TL expected they paid for. Then the AA, with two or three of the bosses, the big boys, and TL had a lunch at the Tors Hotel. This was just TL, his wife, the superintendent and somebody else from Bristol.

After that TL bought the Land Rover fully equipped and then he was doing virtually the same work as he was doing for the AA but he was doing it for the garage because the garage in Minehead was given all the jobs that TL would normally do. They would ring him and he was doing all the AA work around him after he retired. Nobody took on his job when he retired. 'I said I was irreplaceable.' [laughs] The garage was P G Hayes; they had all the AA work. He used to do all sorts of work for the RAC and National Breakdown and all. So he had six or seven years doing that for him [PGH]. TL wasn't employed by him [PGH], he was just giving TL peanuts, just to keep the Land Rover running really.

2.9 RETIREMENT / BARBARA / LIGHTHOUSE / CHURCH / FMD

TL retired at 65 on his birthday. After the garage he did 'as little as possible.' His wife, Barbara, worked at the County Gate information centre. She liked it there. She was very keen.

She [Barbara] came from the lighthouse. One of the clocks TL stopped at the beginning [to reduce background noise on the recording] came from the lighthouse. The lighthouse was 'disbanded' manually, there are no men on the lighthouse since 1993 and 'of course most everything' was stripped out. He had been second in command of the lighthouse. There was an attendant and TL was his 'sidekick', although when he [the Attendant] was on holiday TL took over, for the last seven years. Then on the 1st of January this year he took over the Attendant's job at the lighthouse. The clock was down there, busted. So he sent it away and had it repaired. It is a seven day wall clock. A bit more than 12 inches in diameter. TL thinks it had been there [in the lighthouse] since 1900 when the lighthouse was built.

His duties now are: he goes down and keeps the place clean, he goes down there and changes the bulbs when they need changing, he goes down and stops the lens and cleans it and reports any defects that are down there. Trinity house from Harwich ring up (everything is monitored down there from Harwich) if anything goes wrong and says the light has gone out. Well, the light never goes out because there's a bulb there and when that one fails the other one automatically cuts in. If the electricity fails there's one outside, an emergency one, that cuts in. So, there's always a light there. It was last manned in 1993.

He has never been involved in anything dramatic with the lighthouse.

TL's house actually adjoins the church. All that part there [indicates] backs onto the church. [the dining room side]. From the schoolroom bit there's a gap of about 18 inches between the schoolroom wall and the church. He doesn't perform any duties for the church except that he 'goes and empties their money box every day or whenever he feels like it and then he banks it at the end of the month. The amount 'all depends.' Last April he took £130 this April he took £4. Because the 'Foot and Mouth see, nobody's passing through here at all now.'

2.10 WIFE / DOMESTIC CHORES / COOKING / RECREATION / NATIONAL PARK / MEETINGS / HUNTING

TL's wife died 6 years ago. When he's not looking after the lighthouse, and looking after the moneybox in the church and he's not on the computer he's not doing a lot. By the time he does the cleaning [reflects 'do I do any cleaning? I don't know', and laughs] and does the cooking, because he has to cook a meal every day. TL cooks for himself and Nigel who has a cooked meal every night when he comes home. TL cooks beef, mutton, they have quite a lot of roasts. They had someone up to Sunday dinner the other day and she said they [his family] were about the only family she knows that has a traditional roast Sunday lunch. [laughs] 'Seems to be a thing of the past now, doesn't it? Open a tin of beans!'

TL still has a motorbike. He doesn't ride it though. It's out in the shed, [reflects] two out there.

For recreation he will have a drink. The pub opposite was the Blue Ball originally then it changed to the Blue Boar and now it's gone to the Sandpiper. The Blue Boar is not really the pub he would drink in;

although it sounds as if he drinks a lot but he doesn't. He goes to Culbone once a week with his next door neighbour. TL takes him, he hasn't got a car, and he goes to Rockford once a week in the mornings.

TL is aware of the county boundary between Devon and Somerset, he knows it's there, but it doesn't make any difference to him. He doesn't have to show his passport when he goes across the border. If he had to identify himself, as to where he came from, he'd say North Devon although he'd probably say Exmoor sometimes, it all depends who he talking to and about what, really. Very often he will say Exmoor if he is talking to a person who probably would be more associated with Exmoor.

He doesn't believe that the creation of national parks has done a lot of good, 'they're a bit of a fly in the ointment really. They're trying to be God somehow. They've just now kicked up in Lynton because they haven't got planning permission for their Sky dishes.' He thinks this [planning refusal] is something that only applies to Lynton, Dulverton or Porlock or Dunster. That's something he must find out when he goes to Dulverton next week or the week after [for a meeting of the Parish and District Consultative Committee, of which he is a representative].

TL reckons they looked after the countryside before they [National Park Authorities] came. The moors now are getting in a shocking state because there's no burning. The National Parks and the National Trust are not 'keeping the moors in good fettle.' Like TL said to a guy, that was Skipworth [the first Warden for the Devon side of the NP], that was here back when the parks started: he said 'what'll you take over Exmoor for?' The guy said 'because it's beautiful.' TL said 'Well who kept it beautiful before you came here?' There's TL's father, his grandfather and their fathers before them, that's who looked after it all these years to make it beautiful for them [National Parks] to take over. If the tradition that had been going on for years carried on now it would still be beautiful. The moors are getting so ragged and so untidy because it's not managed properly.

Like TL told them at the last meeting out there 'you lot have got no idea how to look after the moor.' He goes to a meeting twice a year out there. These are the Parish and District Consultative meetings at the National Park's offices in Dulverton.

Hunting: TL used to follow the hunt on motorbike or Land Rover. He enjoyed it. [asks BJ if she is pro- or anti]. He likes to see the deer get away, mind. If there is a ban on hunting, he thinks it is going to have a great impact to start with, but the wound will heal. [pause] They will diversify; if that stops, something else will take it's place. He does not believe it will stop though.

2.11 LOOKING BACK / TRAVEL / DOMESTIC EQUIPMENT / DOG / TAME LAMBS / READING

Looking back he can't think of anything particularly special, to single out at random, or anything he wished he'd done. No, he thinks he's done all the things he'd liked to have done. He's travelled a fair amount, been to many of the places he wanted to go.

He's been to America three times, he's been to Russia twice, he's been to Israel three times, he's been to Cyprus once, he's been to Kenya once and he's done a bit of a tour on the continent. This was himself and his wife. He went to Israel since she died, the Christmas after she died he and Nigel went to Israel. But all the rest [of the trips] were with Barbara.

He has a lot of gadgets. 'Well, you've got to have something, living up here, haven't you? You've got no women, so you've got to have something!' He has two microwave ovens in the kitchen and a satellite dish outside. [Correction] Two satellite dishes outside. One for that one there [points at television] and Nigel's got one up in his room.

[BJ asks if anything's been missed out] TL doesn't think so, they've been through his life's history. He'll no doubt think of something later.

[TL points to a model of the lighthouse] People expect to see a big long thing of a lighthouse, don't they? It's 200 feet above high water which TL believes all lighthouses are.

He has a dog, which he put in the kitchen. It's a wonder he hasn't come in; he usually opens the door himself. It's a big Golden Retriever [TL calls 'Brack'] and two tame lambs that have been bleating [Calls 'Brack' again]. TL found a lamb where the mother had disappeared. He took it round to the sheep and thinks he found the mother but she wouldn't have anything to do with it. So he brought it home and said to the farmer that he'd got it and was feeding it on cow's milk and he [the farmer] said he'd better keep it. A chap down the road found another one down Countisbury Hill without a mother. He brought that one up so he's got that one as well.

TL has a paper Saturdays and Sundays and half the time he doesn't read it; The Telegraph [on Saturday] and the Express on Sunday. They used to have a Telegraph every day, then half the time it wasn't read, and the paper bill was so dear [we] cut it out. Just have it Saturdays and Sundays: the Sunday paper is £1 now and the Saturday paper is about 70p.

If he wasn't being interviewed TL would probably be out in the garden messing about or out in the garage.

[RECORDING ENDS]