

Cartmel Peninsula
Local History Society



CPLHS - Bringing History to the Local Community

Interview with Alex Taylor

Alex(ina) Taylor ('AT'), born 23 Oct 1921

Interviewer : Denys Vaughan ('DV')

Date : 22 October 1992

Recording duration : 46 mins 6 secs

DV [It is 22nd] October 1992, and this tape is prepared to talk to Alex Taylor of Flookburgh, who I hope later today is going to tell me something of her childhood, growing up in Cark and Flookburgh. [break in recording]

AT ... her fleece as white as snow, and everywhere that Mary went, this lamb was sure to go.

DV Yes, well it seems to be ... [break in recording]

DV OK Alex, that seems to be working alright. I wonder if we could start off my asking you what your earliest memory of childhood was, your earliest conscious memory ?

AT I think my earliest conscious memory was my early days when I lived at ...[?] at Haverthwaite, which was my father's home. He was in the army, and he was serving in Ireland, and my mother, brother and I, lived at Haverthwaite for a time. Then we [1 min] removed to Kents Bank, where we lived at ... at the old farm at Kents Bank, which was cut in half by the railway. I've forgotten it's name now. [DV : Yea] And I can remember my father was then stationed in Lancaster, and he used to come home, by train, and throw a joint of meat into the garden. He then took ... the train then took him on to Kents Bank station, and by the time that he had walked back, the dinner was ready ! [DV laughs] They we moved ... we lived for a short time at Rosted[?] which is in Cark, [DV : Yes, yes] and there I managed to fall into the fire and burn my hands. [DV : Oh dear] And ... but it was a lovely place, with the beck running through the garden. [DV : Yes] And ... in fact I remember that [2 mins] with great pleasure.

DV You hadn't gone to school ... this was before you were at school ?

AT This must have been before I went to school, yes. [DV : Yes, yes] My father then built the house which is now The Borridge, South Lakeland Garden Centre, [DV : Yes] and he had the garden, his ... his market garden, which was now on the site which is now Fairfield garden. [DV : Yes, yes] He also owned some fields round about, and he had a beautiful garden round our house. I didn't get to school until I was 12, [DV : Really !] I had governess at home.

DV Really. Well you must have been one of the small group of people who ...

AT Well it was quite customary [DV : Yes] for what you would call middle class people in those days. [DV : Yes, yes] And the village school was considered to be very rough indeed. [DV : Yes] And I was ... I had a governess. My memory [3 mins] was of great pleasure, but I don't know whether I learnt a great deal. I read a great deal with the governess, I learnt no mathematics at all. My father was a great naturalist, and I learnt a great deal about that, but as far as the village was concerned in those days, I grew up rather frightened of the village children, because they regarded us as snobs, because we wouldn't go to the village school.

DV Yes. You wouldn't have any ready made friends if you hadn't been to school.

AT No. We had a lot of friends in the district round about, [DV : Yes] and we used our bicycles, but they were similarly like ourselves. [DV : Yes] I shared a governess with various people. I went to a French ... one house where we had a French governess. [DV : Yes] So we had friends, but not around the village. And I regret to say, as I say, we ... we didn't know a lot of the village children very much, but I did know village adults. [DV : Yes, yes] [4 mins] The village children, rather as I say, used to tease us a bit, [DV : A bit combative] and there's one gentleman who I know very well now, who I was very afraid/ frightened of when he was about 13, and he managed to push me off my bicycle and so forth, and another gentleman, who one day got hold of my rabbits, I bred rabbits, and he borrowed ... he borrowed my rabbits, [DV : Yes] and I had to go down and be very fierce, and get my rabbits back. There's a little red light ... oh yes it is. [DV : Yes] But otherwise, the older people I did know very well. [DV : Yes] We used to go out with old Harold Manning, Jack Manning's father, [DV : Yes, yes] we used to go out on the sands, with him, on the cart, [DV : Yes] and fish, go out fishing. We enjoyed that very much, and watched the various things that went on with the fishing. [5 mins] [DV : Yes, yes] It was interesting. We also thoroughly enjoyed going round the farms. We had great contacts with the farms.

DV Why did you go round the farms, Alex ?

AT I think we enjoyed it, I think we ...

DV Was this a free enterprise amongst you children ?

AT We had complete freedom as children in those days. We had our bicycles. No-one worried about us at all, and we were free to go anywhere we liked. We particularly enjoyed threshing time. [DV : Yes] There were two old men who lived rough most of the year, but they always came into the district to help with the threshing. They were great pals of ours. Also, we went mushrooming and blackberrying, and when we'd reached the age of about 10, we used our bicycles a great deal. My father had a ... he was a very keen fisherman, and he had a boat, a full rowing boat on Windermere, [6 mins] and we used to camp on the side of Windermere on ... and the place is now known ... which is now the YMCA National Camp. [DV : Oh the camp, yes, yes] And we used to go out ... we used to go camping ... my father always booked the time very carefully, when the may fly were about.

DV Oh, what they call Duffer's Fortnight now.

AT Duffer's Fortnight, yes, and we would go fishing. [DV : Yes] That was a great pleasure. So that was my very early childhood, before I went away to school. And I ...

- DV Before you get ... before you get away to school, could you tell me something, a bit more about your governesses, Alex ? Did you have a governess entirely to your family, or did you share with ... did you go to someone else's house, or what ?
- AT No, I ... the governess I had, she ... we had her to ourselves for a time, my brothers and I, when we were very young.
- DV How many brothers did you have ?
- AT I had two brothers. [DV : Yes] [7 mins] My elder brother went away to school when he was 7, to prep school, and then my younger brother didn't go away to school 'til he was 9. And we had this one governess. She is ... she is ... she died some years ago, but her sister still live opposite me now. [DV : How nice] And we were going ... she ...
- DV What was her name ?
- AT Her name was Kelly, Phoebe Kelly [DV : Phoebe Kelly, well] and her sister, Mrs West opposite, lives opposite me now. [DV : Yes] She's one of the Kelly family, [DV : Yes] and they lived at Summerville[?], ...[?], which was the old house up there. [DV : Yes] It's been very much enlarged nowadays. [DV : Yes] But that's where they lived. And she taught us. But I did share her with the Dickinsons, the Dickinson family with the seven boys, John who became a great [8 mins] historian, [DV : Yes, yes] and of course the rest of the family were very very keen on horses, [DV : Yes] and I shared a governess for some time Bernard and Robin who were the younger end of the family. [DV : That's fascinating] And ... but I don't feel that we took the lessons very seriously in those days. And ...
- DV Were you conscious of this at the time ? Did you ... did you have a sort of playful attitude to your governess, or were you in terror of your governess, or did you regard it as a distraction ?
- AT No, we enjoyed it. We called her Bill the Lizard, [DV : Bill the Lizard] Bill the Lizard for some reason or other, it was out of the story, she was always known as Bill, and it was from the story of Alice in Wonderland. And I don't know why we called her that. She was rather tall, and thin, and perhaps that was why we called her, but we weren't in ...[?] No, it was interesting. She had some guidance for teaching us because my mother [9 mins] used to receive publications from the P.N.E.U., [DV : Oh yes] the ... and of course that was based in Charlotte Mason College. [DV : Yes, yes, yes] And I don't think our governess ... I don't think she was ever trained at Charlotte Mason ... I don't think she ... I think she came to us more or less straight away from being at the Grammar School. So she was pretty ...
- DV So you had a one to one tutor ?
- AT Oh yes, one to one tutor. [DV : Yes] Not ... as I say, I read an enormous amount. I was very interested in history. I was very interested in Nature Studies, because my father was very interested, and she was. Arithmetic and Maths just left me cold. I did a certain amount of French, with a French governess, I shared with my cousins over in Haverthwaite. [DV : Yes] But that was my education.

- DV And then you went away to school when you were what ... 12 ?
- AT I was 12. I went away to school, and I went to George Watson's Ladies College in Edinburgh. [10 mins] My mother was a Scot, and she decided ... she felt that a Scottish education was far superior to anything [DV : Yes] in England, and I went there. And it was a very academic school. And so consequently, I was regarded as almost illiterate, [DV laughs] except, of course, that I had read a great more than most of the girls had.
- DV Yes. Did you feel at a disadvantage when you first went ?
- AT To a certain extent. I don't remember really feeling very disadvantaged. I had ... I knew that I knew a lot of things that the other girls didn't know, [DV : Yes] and so Maths ... Maths lessons were ... pretty terrifying, [DV : Yes] 'cos I didn't ... But I obviously ... although I had ... I obviously knew more French than they did. [DV : Yes] And I enjoyed the other languages ... I enjoyed Latin very much, I loved English, [11 mins] I loved History, but of course, being Scotland, I then ... we ... [bell rings, few words unclear, probable break in recording] some disadvantage in the fact that, having had private individual attention, I found to working in a class difficult.
- DV How many other girls were in the class ?
- AT Well, there were about 30. It was a big school. [DV : Yes] It was ... now it's the ... the school was in the centre of Edinburgh, [DV : Yes] in George Square. It was ... I loved the old house which had originally belonged to Edward ...[?] of ...[?]. It's now the Psychology Department of Edinburgh University. [DV : Yes] I did a visit the other day. It's magnificently furnished now with carpets all over the place. [DV : Yes, quite a grand building] The gardens in the centre of the ...[?] ... in the centre of the ... of the Square, we were not allowed [12 mins] to go until we were in the 6th Form, and then we were allowed to walk in pairs, with gloves and hats. [DV : Suitably lady-like] But we had no playground, no playground at all, and so any recreation time was spent in ... on your books, indoors.
- DV Did you actually board in the house, or ... ?
- AT No I didn't board. I boarded with an uncle and aunt, [DV : Yes] and I stayed with them.
- DV So you'd be free from the terrors of bullying in a girls boarding house ?
- AT Oh, no question about that. [DV : Yes] There was no question of that. And I made very good friends. I think one of the interesting things was ... it was 1932, 1933, at the height of the depression, and Edinburgh was very ... a very poor city in those days, and I had to walk through an area in the very poorest part of it, in Edinburgh, and I still remember the children with no shoes. [DV : Yes] They had [13 mins] no shoes at all. And yet, there didn't seem to be any ... I never any reaction from them. We had our school uniform.
- DV What was your school uniform ?
- AT The school uniform was navy blue ...[?] apron[?] and white blouse, and a maroon ... a maroon berry. And of course, we had various ... when we played games, but our games field was five miles away. [DV : Yes] So we used to have to go out ...

- DV Did you take part in games yourself ? Were you keen on games ?
- AT Yes, very keen. I played hockey. [DV : Yes] And I was very keen on running, on athletics. [DV : Yes] It was quite an athletic school. [DV : Yes] ...[?] We had a lot of girls. There were 800 girls in the building, [DV : Ooo, gosh] ranging from kindergarten department up to sixth form. A very academic school indeed.
- DV Yes. That was an [14 mins] independent school ?
- AT An independent school. It was one of the four very famous merchant company schools in Edinburgh. The school itself, now, is ... is now co-educational with the boys, with George Watson's High School, [DV : Yes, yes] and the primary department is in a different part of the city. [DV : Is it still an independent school ?] It's still an independent school, [DV : Yes, yes] and then there were two other schools, Edinburgh Ladies College and Daniel Stewart's College, which was ...
- DV Don't remember what ... any idea what the fees were like in your later years there ?
- AT They were minute. [DV : Really] About £50 a year ... £50 a term, £50 a term. And yet our academic staff ... our staff were very highly qualified [DV : Yes] ... extraordinary.
- DV Oh that's nice. What was your favourite subject there ?
- AT I think history, and English. [DV : Yes, yes] I loved school, I really enjoyed it, [DV : Yes] very very much indeed.
- DV Well I think you must have done to go into the teaching profession when you left. [AT : Yes] You wouldn't have gone into that ...
- AT It was an interesting [15 mins] building from the point of view of one thing. If people had watched the film that was put on ITV, the Pride of Miss Jean Brody, [DV : The Pride of Miss Jean Brody, by Maggie Smith] it was actually filmed in my school. [DV : Really] And of course it relates to that era, which of course was when I was there. [DV : Yes] It brought back great memories. [DV : Yes, I can imagine, yes] It was an interesting school. But I enjoyed it very much.
- DV So it was a happy time for you. [AT : It was, very much] What did you take ... you'd have taken School Certificate in England, what did you take [AT : Well] as your 16+ exam ?
- AT Well. I took ... we took ... there was a Lower and a Highers [inaudible comment from DV] in Scottish schools, and I did my Lowers, and then in 1939, war broke out, and I was ... my school was evacuated. Edinburgh ... the German planes crossed the Forth, very rapidly, in the first [16 mins] week, and the Scottish schools were promptly evacuated. Most of them ... particularly a school like mine which was in a very crowded part of Edinburgh, [DV : Yes] and we had no shelter or anything. And it was evacuated to Perthshire. And my parents felt that there was no point in me being evacuated, so I came back here.
- DV So you didn't actually finish your whole course [AT : No] at the school ?

AT But then I went to ... I took my School Certificate in Barrow. I can't remember where I took it ... where I took it ... it must have been ...

DV One of the higher grade schools ... [both talking suggesting Duke Street ?]

AT But I also took a course in shorthand typing. [DV : Ah, Pitman College ?] That's right. And I took that. And it was interesting to know that the Lower, my Lower Certificate that I had in Edinburgh, I sailed through the School Certificate in England. Not ... I didn't take Matric., because they ... [17 mins] that would have meant taking some subjects I hadn't done before. [DV : Yes] but I always remember ... I sailed through that. And then in 1940, I joined the army.

DV Did you ? I hadn't realised that you had been in the army.

AT I was 5 years in the army.

DV My goodness. Following in your father's footsteps.

AT Well, my father joined up again. He was called up. He was also on the Reserve, and he was called up in 1936. [DV : Yes. Called up ?] Called up. [DV : That's interesting] Well, he was on the Reserve, [DV : Yes] and he was ...

DV Which regiment was he in ?

AT He was in the Kings Own Royal ... the Kings Own Regiment, but he was particularly ...

DV Was he a Territorial Officer as well ?

AT Yes. [DV : Ah] And he had a Territorial decoration. He was particularly involved in defences, and he worked out the defences for Barrow, [DV : Ah] and also for Chorley, for the ... for the munitions for that before the war. And in 1940, he was in France, [18 mins] but he didn't actually come back at Dunkirk, he came back before. And then he went into the Military Police. [DV : Yes] An interesting thing, personally, he did look after was ... oh dear what was the chap who landed, [DV : Hess] Hess. He looked after ... and I thought it was just ... I didn't think it was a real ... I thought the family had made it up, but no, a recent book on Hess mentions my father, as looking after him in South Wales.

DV I didn't realise your father was ... had been a professional soldier.

AT Yes. [DV : Yes, yes] And he ... unfortunately, he had poor health. He was gassed in the First World War, [DV : Yes] in 1915, and then he wasn't very fit in the war ... in the Second World War, and died in 1946, [DV : Yes] at the end of the war.

DV How old was he when he died ?

AT Forty ... about 47. [DV : Ah, that really was a very early death] [19 mins] A very early death. My two brothers ... one brother was out in Burma, he was with the Kings Own Scottish Borderers, and then my younger brother was in the navy, and he was in destroyers, [DV : Yes] and he did the Atlantic conveys, and he also did the Russian conveys, and recently

has been sent a medal by the Russians, [DV : That was ...] because he ... he conducted the ships that brought supplies to Murmansk. [DV : Well, that was nice] Special ...[?]

DV So you ... when you joined the army, you'd be quite young girl, you'd be 18, 19, something like that ?

AT I'd be 18, Yes. [DV : Just like the Queen] Yes, very very much so. [DV : Yes] And I went down to Salisbury Plain. I joined the army ... I only expected to do so because I could join what was the local platoon, which was commanded by Dr Tennant's daughter from [20 mins] Grange. Miss Tennant was in charge, and I was permitted to go down to her platoon on Salisbury Plain, and ... [DV : Was this the family's decision ?] The family's decision, oh yes, very much so. And I went down there. And although I had ... my father had suggested I did shorthand typing, so at least I would have some skill, but it wasn't for the army, I was made an assistant cook. [DV laughs ... that's army logic, isn't it] I peeled onions for nearly a year, in an army camp. But it was very very interesting on Salisbury Plain, because, in 1940 ... when did I ...[?] about November, October November, and it was after Dunkirk, it was packed with people that ... every nationality ... [DV : Yes] people who had come over from ... from ... It was a very muddled time, we had quite a lot of raids, we got machine gunned, [21 mins] we had the trenches, which we used to go to in case of a raid. [DV : Yes, yes] But it was a very ... very ... very interesting time, and very ... very ... you felt you were really doing something. I was promoted from the onions. And I went to ... I was put in the/an office, with what I suppose was the beginnings of the S.A.S., one of the early ... early ... 700 Canadians there. One of the Sergeants was ... he became Headmaster of Blackpool Primary/Junior School. Oh I've met him, but I remember him as one of the Sergeants, [DV : Yes, yes] and my job there was ... supposed to be in the office, I lit the Colonel's fire, took the letters about on my old bike, and that was my main job. Well, they all went out to Dieppe, and most of them didn't [22 mins] come back, [DV : Yes] so our unit was disbanded. And I came up North, sent to Hadrian's Camp, outside Carlisle, which was an unbelievable terrible place, [DV : Bad] oh shocking, absolutely shocking. If you've ever seen fighting women, you don't want to see it again. People ... people ... Newcastle versus Glasgow. [DV : Oh dear] It really was ... And so I didn't quite know what to do, I was absolutely foxed what to do. So I went ... I applied for a commission. And I got a commission. I went down to Windsor for training, and then I had a commission, and was sent to North Wales, training, training recruits.

DV So you must have had an early commission in the A.T.S. ?

AT I wasn't ... oh yes ... I wasn't ... it was quite an early commission, yes. [DV : Yes] And I was there with the recruits. [23 mins] We trained ... we trained a lot of ... mostly girls from South Wales, [DV : Yes] Liverpool, and a lot from Southern Ireland. They used to come across to[?] Ireland. [DV : Really] We had ... I had many funny stories about them, but one of the best I think was ... when the girls had been ... had their statutory two months training, they were permitted to go home. Of course our girls went home in their uniform, but the Southern Ireland girls couldn't. [DV : They couldn't, no] And they were allowed to go home in their underclothes, [DV laughs] because mostly they had arrived in a cotton ... in a cotton dress, plimsolls, across the Irish ... they came without any ... [DV : In what they stood up in] what they stood up in, so they went home with their underclothes, and then they deserted, when

they get over there, we didn't see them again, but ... [DV : Taking their army underclothes with them] with them. But it was curious how many came back again, a few months later. And you'd recognise them and say, well, haven't you been here before. Oh no Miss. [DV : This must have been ...[?]] (laughs) [AT inaudible whilst DV laughs] [24 mins] So we had ... we had a lot of those. But one thing notably, looking back as a teacher, I remember so clearly the girls, particularly from South Wales, very under fed, very ... very ... almost illiterate, it was extraordinary. They ... you ... I was ... one of the jobs I had as an officer was to classify them into the jobs they would do. [DV : Yes] And I was always distressed to find how few of them could really read. ...[?] reading today. And the girls would say oh yes, I could read the books we had at school. But they hadn't really ... [DV : No transfer] No, no, going no ... no, it was ...[?], particularly the Southern Ireland girls as well. It was ... it was interesting. That was an interesting job. And then after that, I ... I went off, I went up to Durham, to the Warrant Officer's and NCO's [25 mins] school, where I became a ... I suppose you'd call it a lecturer. I became one of the officers who training on those, and I trained the Warrant Officers and NCO's ... until D Day, about six months before D Day, when of course the whole country was ... weren't worrying about training at all. We ... we ... we went out ... as officers we were sent out with a group of girls, and made to work ... sent to work anywhere. I was sent down to Chilwell in Nottinghamshire, and we packed screws, in a box. Then I went to another place on the East coast and painted ... painted boxes which contained aeroplane parts. And then the most interesting job that I had was to navigate convoys from Newcastle down to the South coast. And you sat in the first of the trucks, and [26 mins] had to navigate a way through. There were special signs, because all the road signs were put down, it was blacked out.

DV So the sign posts were coded ?

AT They were coded, and you knew exactly which way you went. You had to follow this code, which was an interesting job. And then, after D Day, they ... they started the training college ... training centre again. But that was to train the ... all the girls of course thought they would, immediately the war was won, would be allowed to go home, and of course they weren't.

DV Didn't happen like that, did it ?

AT We had to ... we had to occupy people, and one of the jobs I did was to ... I suppose you would call it environmental studies today. I did an environmental study of Durham, where it was, Durham City. And I took the girls round housing estates, and the ...[?], various things, social studies. And we went down a coal mine, a very early ... one of the coal mines ... very primitive today, but it was a very interesting course. And then [27 mins] I remember being called into the office, the commanding officer said, there are representatives from the Ministry of Education here, looking for future teachers. And they asked me if I would be interested, so I went off to Emergency College, and became a teacher.

DV And lived happily ever after then, yes.

AT Thoroughly enjoyed it. [DV : Yes, yes] It wasn't very easy ... I went ... it was one of the very first Emergency Colleges ...

DV Where was your College ?

AT Bognor Regis.

DV Was it an old established College, or was it simply established for the particular task ?

AT It was an army camp. [DV : Yes] And the Canadian army walked out, and we walked in. [DV : Yes] And we had barrack rooms, and the old army biscuits instead of mattresses. [DV : Yes, yes] We kept our books in the old lockers, and we started with ... they were barrack rooms, there [28 mins] were eight teachers in a room, and we studied and did our things there.

DV How many were there on your course ?

AT I wouldn't ... can't remember exactly. One of the interested ...

DV Dozens, or ?

AT No, there were about a hundred, hundred and fifty I should think. [DV : Yes] The interesting group was the ex-Japanese prisoners of war. [DV : Yes] And they ...

DV Was it all ladies or was it mixed ?

AT No, no, mixed. [DV : Yes] And we ... the inhabitants of Bognor Regis felt that this was very disgraceful.

DV When ... 1946, 47 I guess, so ... ?

AT Yes. They thought it was disgraceful, we shouldn't be trained together. Well, as I say, all of us practically had been ... we mostly were commissioned ... had been commissioned officers [DV : Yes] in the services. We were all ex-service. But the Japanese prisoners of war, very interesting, because they sat at one table, and were fed on ... as you can imagine, they had the most magnificent meals. And we were on [29 mins] civilian rations. [DV : Army rations, civilian rations] civilian rations for the first time. And army rations were very good, and I really realised what civilian rations had been.

DV So civilian rations were a comedown for you ?

AT Oh terrible. We were very very hungry. And we went ... I was ... we got a grant, course our training was paid for, but we got a small grant ...

DV An F.E.T.S. grant, if I remember, [AT : Yes, that's it ...] [then both say together "Further Education Training Scheme."] Yes. I missed that by about three months.

AT It was very ... it was very ... it was a very small grant ...[?] And so I can remember fish and chips, when it first arrived, and cups of tea and biscuits when we ... [DV : At the end of it] at the end of it. We were very hungry, I can remember that, very hungry. And it was interesting because the ...[?] then, I had two ... in that year, it was a year's course, we had five ... [30 mins] what do you call it ... they call it now kitchen practices.

DV Five in a year ! [AT : Yes] My goodness.

AT We had ... we really had to go in ... we went in straight away, and we really trained. [DV : Yes] Our whole training was based on that field practical. [DV : Yes, yes] And I remember my first one was in a school in Brighton. And I ... the squalor and poverty was unbelievable, [DV : Yes] which you could see. My later one, I remember, it was ... there was one with ... in a very remote village school, where the teacher was still using slates. It was interesting ...[?]

DV I remember using slates at school, as a child. [AT : Ah yes, yes] I enjoyed it.

AT I used slates up here, when I first came up here to teach, in some of the ...

DV You could make a very irritating squeak, [AT : Ooo] if you put your pencil the wrong way.

AT Well, now I do ... [31 mins] I go round ... I have for some years given talks about education, rural education, and, you know, I call it "Slates to Computers", because ...

DV Yes, I think you ... I think I heard you speak at the Surroptimists dinner on this, it was quite fascinating, [AT : Well, I ...] having been at both ends as a con ... at one end as a consumer and at the other end as a distributor of these things.

AT Yes. And it was interesting too ... it was interesting to go ... and now ... the school have asked me to go ... and I very often when they ... they do anything on education, I talk about it. I have a collection of slates, especially ...[?].

DV That's really quite a fascinating history. So you ... you were more or less recruited into teaching by the army ?

AT Yes. I think ... I think one really didn't have a lot of choice. My father was dying, there was no money, and the ... my brothers, two brothers, my elder brother [32 mins] had been ... he hadn't been wounded but he was very ... sent home from Burma. He was fighting right through Burma, and he'd been very seriously ill, [DV : Yes] with dysentery and ...[?], and all the other horrible diseases, he came home to ...[?], and my young brother, he was in the navy, so there were three of us, and my young sister, to be thought of, she was coming up to ...

DV And it was regarded as a safe job in those days, wasn't it ?

AT It was very much a safe job still.

DV Yes. You won't make a fortune but you'll never be out of a job.

AT Oh no. And I enjoyed it. I enjoyed teaching, very much. I enjoyed ... I knew I liked teaching when I was teaching the recruits and the NCOs in the army.

DV What sort of ... how many people didn't stay in the course, for one reason or another, from your Emergency Training College ?

- AT We were weeded out very quickly. [DV : In the practical ?] At the practical. Practically the first ... the first or second ... [DV : Yes] first or second ... you were weeded out [33 mins] very quickly. And to a certain extent I suppose, we had ... we were all ... well ... our qualifications were not as high as today, we were pretty well ... [DV : Your maturity would help] mature, and maturity ...[?] a great deal which helped a lot. [DV : Yes] In fact, I remember the Principal writing to me afterwards, and within I think 10 years, 50 ... I think nearly 80% of our course were Head Teachers. [DV: Yes, yes] I was the first Emergency trained Head Teacher up here, in this area. There were quite a lot afterwards, but I was the first.
- DV Yes. I think it was in many ways a creaming of the talent that was available, this Emergency teaching scheme. Vic Gray was an Emergency trained chap, [AT : Yes] and he was a very good headmaster at Milnthorpe[?].
- AT Very very good. The headmaster at Grange [34 mins] was a ... he was also a ... [DV : Which one was that ?] the one ... the one[?]
- DV Not Grundy ? [AT : Grundy, yes] Was he Emergency trained. I didn't think he was old enough ?
- AT Yes, and the Sergeant who was ... as I say, the Sergeant I worked with on Salisbury Plain, he was Emergency trained, [DV : Yes] and became the Head Teacher at Millom. And he was the Head Teacher at ...[?] [DV : What was his name ?] I can't remember his name now. [A location, Blackpool[?] mentioned again by both as both were speaking simultaneously] And it was ... I think we had the experience... we certainly had the experience of man management.
- DV [inaudible word, maybe 'discipline', whilst AT was speaking] [AT : Oh yes] which is regarded as a dirty word by many students and new people now. [AT : Oh yes] We ... at Heversham, we had a very good maths student, who had hopeless discipline, because he said, no no I think it is morally wrong to command other people, and tell them what to do. Couldn't understand. He lasted one year.
- AT Yes. Well, I think we learnt it when ... certainly when I was [35 mins] commissioned in the ATS, the principle was, you never punished, girls were never brought in for punishment, you had to handle the situation, [DV : Do it yourself] and not let a situation arise, and you managed to handle, to deal with, a whole lot of problems which used to come up. But I can remember in most cases, if a child ... if a girl was put on a charge, you knew it was your fault, [DV : Yes] [a few inaudible words] so you had to see that ... that the organisation was good. [DV : Yes] There wasn't the situation where people could get into trouble, [DV : Yes] and I think this happened ... this was a great help in teaching. [DV : Yes, it's people management] People management, and also, whatever you say, in rural schools ... particularly at the Head Teacher level in rural schools, you've got a great deal of community management as well, [DV : Yes, yes] which you have to deal with. [36 mins] [DV : Backing] Backing. I mean, I am very interested now when I see how much ... see how much involvement the community has within the school, the parents, and the teachers are learning ... are coping with it marvellously nowadays. [DV : Yes] But when I went to be a Head Teacher first ... when I first went to teach, parents were excluded. They weren't part of the situation at all. [DV : Yes, yes] Your

- ... there was enormous respect for teachers, [DV: Yes] but you were a race apart, [DV : Yes, yes, that's how it was] and now of course it's a very different situation. [DV : Yes] But it's interesting, and I think a lot of our teachers today are learning a great deal about man management. They're managing ...[?]
- DV Well since 1956, 57, 58, you've had a race of men and women who don't know what Service life is. [AT : No, no] That's a whole generation now, isn't it, [AT : And ...] start learning at 18.
- AT Yes. And I think ... I do think today, [37 mins] I mean, I think it's a pity ... what is called discipline today ... it's not discipline, it's self control, and learning to work in with others. [DV : Respect] Respect, and a responsibility, which a lot of our young people don't have. [DV : Yes] They think they're entitled to everything, [DV : Yes, right away] ...[?] but it's interesting.
- DV Can we go back to your holidays, when you were ... when you had a governess, what were the school holidays like Alex, if you had your own group of friends who also had governesses, and you had this ... did you have four five six weeks of no governess, while she took an annual holiday ?
- AT Yes, we did. We had that.
- DV So I imagine that would be a time of immense freedom.
- AT Oh, immense freedom. [DV : Yes] We had a lot of ... as I say ... my father ... although we were ... we had a governess, and we went away to school, [38 mins] my parents were not at all rich, we had very little money, especially when my father started up with the market garden. [DV : Yes] He ... during the depression, in the early 30s, it was ... it was very difficult time altogether, because nobody had any money to buy. I can remember crates of tomatoes going on the train from Cark Station, and being returned because they couldn't sell them. [DV : to Barrow or ?] Manchester. [DV : Oh, Manchester] Manchester or Barrow or ...[?] So money was very scarce. My mother ... [DV : That's a whole year's crop ?] Yes. And my mother was an expert cook. She kept a pig. She kept pigs, chickens and turkey, and we fed well, but there was no spare money at all.
- DV Yes. Did you have to help around the house, as children ?
- AT Oh yes, a lot.
- DV Did you all have your set jobs, or did you get your orders each day, or what ?
- AT We had certain responsibilities I think, [DV : Yes] more than anything else. [39 mins] It was certainly not a house where the girls did everything. Well, I was the only girl, my sister is 10 years younger than I am. But, in those days, the boys had to do as much as ...[?], which was a good idea. But it was ... it was interesting on those ...[?] But the holidays were lovely, and, as I say, my parents ... my father didn't have a car, and many of my friends' parents ... friends' parents did have a car, which rather limited us, but we were an expert on our bikes.
- DV How did he get his stuff to Cark Station ? Just with a hand cart ?

- AT With a hand cart, yes. And they put it off on the train. [DV : Yes] [AT continues very quietly & inaudible] I suppose there was a certain amount of ... I suppose to a certain extent the local fishermen, who did the hawking as well in Flookburgh, I think they probably took quite a lot of his stuff then. [DV : Hawked it around] Well, most of them stood on the markets at Kendal ...
- DV And they had a fair old [40 mins] territory. They went up as far as Coniston in those days.
- AT Oh yes, yes. And then they had ... they had their horse and cart, and went around, and they stood on the market, [DV : Yes] and they stood on the market at ... Barrow as well as at Kendal, and I can still remember them coming home, and they used to stop at ... come off the train. I don't think very much money ever came home actually, because they would have a stop at the pub at the ...[?], and then would stop at the Station Hotel, which was at the bottom of the drive of our house. And I can see their hand carts tipped up. They used to ... they used to put their produce on the carts and stand on the market, and then they came home empty, you see, thanks to ...
- DV Did they bring their hand carts on the train ?
- AT Yes they did. [DV : In the Guard's Van ?] In the Guard's Van, Yes. [DV : Yes] One of our other great places of interest was ... was the station. And we used to go down there and sit in the ... in the station. [41 mins] And we knew all the porters. One ... great excitement of course was to be allowed to go into the signal box. We knew the signal box man very well, we used to help with the signals. It was extremely ...
- DV Bit like [the film called] The Railway Children ?
- AT Oh yes, very much so. I mean, we were very free to do a lot of things, [DV : Yes] and it was one of those sort of things. And then when we did go out with friends, we went ... we played tennis ... we played games with them, with the friends that were ... that we had in the houses round about.
- DV How did Church and Sunday School figure in your experience ?
- AT Well, my father ... my uncle was vicar of ... was vicar of Flookburgh, from 19 ... 1911 'till 1926. [DV : Yes] He was ... he went out to France, as a padre, and I've just recently been reading his diary, that he ... [DV : You've got it ?] I've got it. [42 mins] I suppose I was just getting it ready to send to a great niece of mine who is doing A Level History, and one of her projects is doing First World ... [DV : Was he a Kings Own man as well ?] No. Yes he was, he was in there. And he's very interesting, terribly interesting diary [DV : Yes] of a padre, [DV : Yes] He went right through The Somme, [DV : Yes] right there, in that area. [DV : Yes] A very interesting diary altogether. But of course when he came back, we went to church, finally of course, when we came to live in Flookburgh, he was still there as vicar. My mother was a very strict Scot, had been brought up in the Presbyterian Church. [DV : Yes] Somehow or other, she had been confirmed when she became an Anglican, rather reluctantly I think. She was quite happy with my uncle, but he was replaced. When he left, he was a vicar who was of very high [43 mins] church persuasion. And there was much incense and bowing as for forth. My mother disapproved of it strongly. [DV : Anglo Catholics rearing their head] Yes, rearing

their head. And my mother used to use us as an excuse, so she didn't sit through the whole service. So we were always taken out before the sermon. [DV laughs] And then when we were too old to be taken out before the sermon, she used to disappear. And we ...[?] an excuse ...[?] : the rice pudding was burning, [DV laughs] or something like this, but my mother didn't ...[?] But of course, after he left, and we had a much more middle of the road vicar, she was very ... she was always very ...

DV So it was a regular part of your family life ?

AT ...[?] Yes. We went regularly to church on Sunday. My father was a sidesman at the church, and involved with the ... he was [44 mins] on the church council. I always remember very clearly, when I went to Edinburgh, and I was about 13, I was told ... decided that I should be confirmed, and I should have my preparation in Edinburgh with a friend of my uncle's who was the vicar of the large church at the West end of Edinburgh. The big church, I think it was St.John's. And I was prepared on Saturday mornings for my confirmation, with another girl. And also I missed my place in the hockey team, so I'm afraid I was a very reluctant member of the Church of England then. But actually, when we grew up, in Edinburgh, I ... my uncle and aunt went to the local Church of Scotland, and I joined their Guide company, and youth club. We had a very very lively minister. He became ... he became padre to the 51st Highland Division, [45 mins] and was taken prisoner, when they were taken prisoner in 1940. And he was very good with us all. I learnt a great deal. So the Church of Scotland figures very strongly in my early education, [DV : Yes] I was very ... and I still have a great deal ... a great sympathy with the Church of Scotland. But it was interesting. The Anglican Church ... no way ... because after I was confirmed, I had to go to communion every ... once a month, and I had to cycle three miles, to church, and no-one on any account spoke to me. Absolutely nobody cared. [DV : Like a cold shower ?] Cold shower. [DV : Yes] And the difference between a lively church, that the Church of Scotland presented, was quite a contrast as well. But that was the beginning of my interest in Girl Guides, because I'm a member ... [46 mins] I joined the Girl Guides in Edinburgh, at I suppose about 13, and ...

Recording ends abruptly at 46 mins 6 secs when the tape runs out.