

**MANX HERITAGE FOUNDATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT**

‘TIME TO REMEMBER’

Interviewee(s): Mrs Violet Corlett

Date of birth: 10th March 1928

Place of birth: Douglas, Isle of Man

Interviewer(s): Elizabeth Flynn

Recorded by: Elizabeth Flynn

Date recorded: 27th May 2011

Topic(s): Early childhood memories
Husband’s work at Clucas’ Laundry
Getting married and starting a family
Cronkbourne Village
Braddan Commissioners
Shop’s in Cronkbourne Village
Groceries and deliveries
Children’s parties and games
Local characters
Neighbours and relatives
Recitation of *‘When the Laundry whistle blew’*
Local Quarry
Wages and budgeting money

Violet Corlett - Mrs C
Elizabeth Flynn - EF

EF I'm Elizabeth Flynn, it's the 27th May 2011. I'm in the home of Mrs Violet Corlett.

Mrs C And I'm Mrs Violet Corlett. (*laughter*)

EF Mrs Corlett, can you tell me where and when you were born?

Mrs C I was born 10th March 1928 and I was born in Demesne Road where the old maternity home used to be before the new maternity home was built. And I lived in number 2, McNeal's Court, down by St George's Church; and then I moved up to Mount Pleasant to live, by St Andrew's Church; and my father had stables and we used to have horses and a *Landau*, and my dad used to sell fish. It was up in Mona Terrace and I used to go there to play and help him with the stables and everything, and then we shifted to Pulrose, to a nice, brand new house, and it was wonderful, I really enjoyed my childhood there. It really was wonderful.

EF Did you have brothers and sisters?

Mrs C Yes, one sister, Margaret Roseanne her name was – is, really, yes.

EF And how long did you live in Pulrose for?

Mrs C I left when I was 23 and I was there when I was nine. And it was really good, I really enjoyed it.

EF And why did you leave Pulrose?

Mrs C To get married.

EF Okay. Tell me a little about your husband.

Mrs C Well, his name was Stanley Allan Corlett and we married when he was 22 and I was 23 – at Braddan Church. And then we went to live in Cronkbourne Village and that was a bit of a culture shock, I can tell you! Dry closets – you've never seen the like! (*laughter*) Oh my word, I had ... took a long time to get used to that. No water, not one drop of water in the house. Had to cart it in and cart it out. Oh dear, never mind, that's how it was. But, 'Happy as Larry,' that's what

we were.

EF And where did Allan live?

Mrs C Allan lived in the tannery – one of the tannery houses.

EF Near the village?

Mrs C Yes, near the village. And those houses were a tannery at one time. ‘Cos when you went in where the garage was, at the side, you went into a little stable. And then there was a ... like a ramp, like a thing going down to the river where they used to take their hides to wash and scrape, you know, something like that. But it was a lovely little house, lovely little cottages. But that’s where he lived, and he had a dry closet as well! (*laughter*) Happy days!

EF What did your husband work at, at that time?

Mrs C He worked at the laundry. He was at the laundry – when I met him, I met him at the laundry, and then two years after he went into National Service, he went into the Marines. And then when he came out we continued courting and we were married in 1951, yea, we were.

EF Were you able to get a house in Cronkbourne Village?

Mrs C Well, we didn’t have a house, we went on honeymoon – we went to Rawtenstall (*laughter*) – lovely, eh? Rawtenstall, Lancashire. We went to Rawtenstall and just before we went he said, ‘We’ve got a little house in the village.’ He said, ‘Number 21.’ So I said, ‘Good!’ But my word, when I come back and found out what this ... dear, dear, yea, but still, that was it.

EF Describe the house in detail for me.

Mrs C Well, it had just a little living room and a bedroom and a back kitchen. And there was people living above as well. And then you went out and you crossed a little path and you had a garden. And they were all in the centre of the village, these gardens, and they were all railed off. And they went the full length of the village and people had all little allotments growing their cabbages and their all sorts, they had all sorts. And it was really nice, you know, not like it is today at

all, you know. And it was really good. People were so friendly and everything, you know, and I really loved it! I was there for sixteen years, you know. We used to have local parties down the back with the kids – different occasions, you know, it was good!

EF By now, we're talking about the '50s and 1950s and '60s?

Mrs C Yes, that's right.

EF You had some children, I believe?

Mrs C Yes, I was four years married when I had our Ian – Ian – Allan Ian Corlett, yes. And then seven years later I had my other son, Clifford Keith Corlett, yes. And when I had Ian I shifted from number 21 up to number 2, Cronkbourne Village and Ian was born two days later. So that was a busy time. But yes, we've been very happy, we've been very, very happy in the village.

EF Were children born at home in those days?

Mrs C Yes, they were, probably, but a lot of them went to the maternity home. I was at the maternity home, yes, good, yes.

EF And do you think that the village was a good place for children to grow up in?

Mrs C Oh yes, yes, it wasn't bad, apart from the busy road – dangerous road, really. Full traffic right through, you know.

EF What kind of traffic would have been going up and down?

Mrs C Wagons ... and commercial vehicles, a lot of them, yes – not many people had cars those days.

EF I'm assuming you got the house in Cronkbourne Village because Allan, your husband, was working in the laundry.

Mrs C Yea, tied cottages, they were tied cottages, yes. 2/6d a week I paid for the first one, yea – 2/6d – can you believe it?! Mind you, that's all it was worth when you come to think of it! (*laughter*) Yes!

EF It sounds like you had a happy life there.

Mrs C Oh yes, definitely, oh yes.

EF Were there any issues with damp, because I know the village is near a river.

Mrs C Well, to tell you the truth, there was a little bit of damp, but that particular house has been grounded now. That was grounded, number 21, to make the pathway wide so vehicles could come into the village – make more access into the village. Yes, that was grounded. But the other house, number 2 Cronkbourne Village, not one, not one speck of damp, a good strong little house, yes. I was sad to leave it, really. It was nice, yes. ‘Cos it had all been altered. You see, they were tied houses, belonging to Clucas’ Laundry, then Clucas’ Laundry sold them to the Braddan Commissioners. And the Braddan ... we were in a few years there, and then all of a sudden they had them modernised. And what a time we had, having them modernised. You couldn’t just shift out of the house, I used to take the boy, my boy, up to my mother’s house, spend the day there, and when I came home and opened the door, you couldn’t see for dust! And that’s what I had to go through for a long time until the house was done. But it was worth it in the end.

EF Tell me what modernisations they made.

Mrs C They had new bathroom, toilet, the back kitchen was extended. It was very nice. And they re-wired them all and all, you know. But what I really wanted was a Willaston house – to shift to a nice house, you know, not just go through that, but that’s how it was.

EF Were there any shops in the village?

Mrs C No, not as you say, ‘shops.’ There was Mrs Huntstall’s and she used to sell a few sweets. And you had to go over a little wooden thing to get into her house because there was a little trickly river running down in front of the front door – it’s gone now like, but it was there, little thing running down, you had to go over a little plank to go in the house for a few sweets. And then there was Mrs Kelly, she used to make herb beer, she used to go past my house, ‘cos I could see her going past, ‘cos there was a tap at the end of where my house was, and every – there was a tap there, and a tap across the road, and people used to ...

she used to come past with their buckets full of her herbs to wash underneath this old tap outside! *(laughter)* I don't know how she washed them properly because the bucket was packed with herbs, *(laughter)* and there was only a trickling tap! But there you are – that's how it was. She had her herb beer, and she used to sell a few cigarettes and sweets – yes, two shops you might say! *(laughter)*

EF Would she have bottled the herb beer, or would you just get it out of a cup?

Mrs C No, she just sold it in glasses. People – the visitors used to stop and ... when they were on their way to Kirk Braddan [Church] for the open air service or ... they'd stop there and get a herb beer on their way.

EF Do you know how much she charged for a glass?

Mrs C No, I can't remember, probably about tuppence, or something like that, yea.

EF And what about normal groceries, where about would you have got your groceries from?

Mrs C Well, I used to go to the Terrace, Prospect Terrace for my groceries. Do you know, I can't remember the name of that shop, but still, I used to go there and they used to bow you in, and they'd bow you out, because they were grateful for your service in those days. And by the time I got home, my groceries was just with me, delivered to the door, no supermarkets then and all the hassle you've got, nothing like that – just delivered to the door.

EF Were any other goods delivered to your door?

Mrs C Yes, coal, we used to have coal. And milk, we had the milk, the dairies used to bring the milk. Well, yes, that's what I can remember, yes.

EF Mrs Corlett, did you have bread delivered to your house?

Mrs C Oh yes, we had bread delivered to the house, yes, every day. And there was a man next door used to deliver to grandmother and he used to bring her a loaf in and when he put that loaf on the table there was a ring of scones put – sultana scones put on top of that loaf! I never got that, mind you, but granny did, next

door, yes, it was good! (*laughter*)

EF What would you do with any left-over food?

Mrs C Well, apart from the scraps, such as cabbage leaves and potato peelings and carrot scrapings that went into an old bin at the bottom of the Mill Road, we never had any left-overs, because we never wasted food those days. Anything that was left over was maybe put the next day or made into something that we could eat. And I still don't waste food. Never waste food.

EF So what did you do with all the vegetable scrapings?

Mrs C Well, we used to put them in that bin and, as I say, there was an old tap across the road and this here bin was beside it, and we used to put all our materials in it, and then once a week a man used to come and collect the swill for his pigs. And he did that for years, every week, nonstop. And he had plenty of swill, oh yes.

EF Tell me about the furniture that you had in your house.

Mrs C Well, to tell you the truth, we didn't have much new furniture. Allan and I used to just get an odd little second-hand bit here and there – yes! We didn't have ... we didn't have the money, my dear, to furnish our house with new stuff. But when I had the children, I had a beautiful *Silver Cross* pram – that's one thing I did have, and it was absolutely beautiful. We had no buses, you know, no buses at all. And I used to wheel that pram all the way to Douglas, to The Terrace and then into Douglas – thought nothing of it! And all the way back again, along the Tromode Road – thought nothing of it my dear, nothing because ... you couldn't have got a pram on the bus because it was too big. Anyway, they wouldn't take prams. But there was no bus, so couldn't choose! (*laughter*) But it was good, lovely, but we didn't have a lot of new things at all. And it was always make-do and mend.

EF So you were living in Cronkbourne Village ...

Mrs C Yes.

EF You'd got two boys ...

Mrs C Yes.

EF ... tell me what life was like for them growing up as children in the village.

Mrs C Well, our Ian was a happy as ... well, he was really happy, he was. He had little friends and not only that, he loved fishing – he was never away from the river! Oh, he loved fishing, my goodness gracious, he did. Floods used to come and all the bairn – I’m not kidding you – you’d see them all stood at the edge of the river – it was like a fever – salmon fever! (*laughter*) They’d be all stood there, watching the boys fishing, and our Ian would be among them (*laughter*) – oh, it was lovely! They enjoyed themselves, they did. And there was all sorts going on, he had bogeys and ... all sorts of things – he was happy, yea, it was good, yea.

EF Were there any parties in the village?

Mrs C Yes, on occasions, they used to have little parties down the back, but there was not much room in those days for parties ‘cos there were all allotments and everything. It was later on when the Commissioners altered the place and put a nice lawn at the back, we used to have beautiful parties, oh yea, I’ve got pictures of them, all the children there, and the mothers, it was really good, it was, yea, I really enjoyed it.

EF Did Clucas’ Laundry ever put on a party for the children?

Mrs C No, never, no. The only parties the children had were those ones we arranged ourselves down the back – and the football parties – used to have really good football parties.

EF Is this Braddan Football Club?

Mrs C Yes, everybody used to ... all the ladies and the men used to club together. There was one lady, a Mrs Kermode, and she made coconut ice and ... what was it called now? Cough candy, every Christmas, and she used to put it in a little bag – sixpence a bag, and it used to go all round the laundry, they all used to buy it in the laundry and around the village, and them little sixpences went for the children’s party. And then there was a doll, the football doll, used to go round the village and round the laundry, people used to buy a raffle tickets and

that was money for the children's party as well. And I had a doll once, I won it, and I called her Eleanor, I had her for years! But anyway, it was good, and they had lovely parties and all the little kids got a little present, you know, and it was really nice, yes, the football parties. And they were usually held down at St Mary's Hall, yes.

EF There's an old school house in the village ...

Mrs C Oh yes.

EF And the old chapel ...

Mrs C That's right.

EF Do you remember them being in use?

Mrs C Yes. I remember our Pete went – her name was Barbara, really, she married Ernest Corlett – when they first got married they live in that there little place, yea, and it was lovely, very nice inside, too. But my daughter-in-law, Helen, Helen Qualtrough, her great aunt lived in that house, a Mrs Kneen.

EF This is the old Church ... the old school house?

Mrs C The old Church Hall at the top of the hill of Cronkbourne Village, yes. She lived in there and her name was Mammy Kneen, they called her Mammy Kneen, and at the old milestone, out of Douglas, there used to be a little shop there, and it was called Mammy Kneen's. Yes. And when I lived in Pulrose, my mother used to send me all the way down from the top of Pulrose to Mammy Kneen's shop with a jug for buttermilk – every Sunday morning – and a bottle of dandelion and burdock to have with our dinner, (*laughter*) and I used to go for buttermilk every Sunday to Mammy Kneen's. And Mammy Kneen lived in that schoolhouse up the top. I've got a photograph of her sitting playing the piano in that house, yes. So there you are, now! (*laughter*)

EF Can you remember any other characters that lived in the village?

Mrs C Yea, there was Mrs Oliver, yes, Mrs Oliver, yea, she used to take little bets down sometimes and people wanted to bet on a horse. (*laughter*) Allan's

mother used to have a little bet now and again. Yea, it was good. And yea, there was nice people – not many what I call ‘characters’ you know. But there was one when I was a little girl when we lived in Mount Pleasant, and his name was George Clegg, and he lived in that quarry, where the laundry was. I can’t remember now whether he lived in a caravan or what he lived in, but he lived there. And he was an awful nice old man. And the trouble with him was, he had no smell. My mother always told me that he had no smell. He couldn’t smell anything, whatever was the matter with him. And my mother was very ill at one time when we lived in Mount Pleasant, and he used to come to visit, and one time he brought a little ... what do you call them ... these little ... with the handle on ... little ... say a jug, let’s say a jug ... and he brought it full of goat’s milk for me mother. And he said, ‘Come on now, Emily,’ he said, ‘drink some of it while I see you drinking it,’ he said, ‘so I know you’ve had it.’ And my mother had to drink it out of the can because ... and it smelt of paraffin!!! And she said she had to drink the goat’s milk to please him, she said. *(laughter)* She never forgot it, she always told me about it, goat’s milk with the paraffin in it – he must have had paraffin in it, you see. *(laughter)* Anyway, that’s how it was. But what a nice old man. He used to have ... I always remember, he used to come and visit us, and he had a penny in his fingers, and he’d be going like this, all round with his hand, for me to try and catch the penny, you know, and in the end he’d let me catch it. Yea, it was good – always remember poor George, yes. And then, I always remember, used to walk up from where we lived in Mount Pleasant, and when we got to the bottom of Bray Hill, used to be a house there with all gnomes in it, you know, and one day we went past and I said to me father, ‘Where’s all the gnomes gone out of the garden?’ ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘they’ve gone to shop for a loaf.’ So I always remember, ‘They’ve gone to shop for a loaf!’ *(laughter)* The things ... I always remember him saying that, yea. They were gone, whether they’d ... don’t know where they’d gone, but they were gone to shop for a loaf, yea, yea. *(laughter)*

EF Can you remember the names of your neighbours on either side of you or people in the village? Can you just mention a few names of people who used to live in the village when you were there?

Mrs C Oh yes. There was ... well, I remember ... what was their name ... Orry Gray lived next door to us when we were in number 2 – and they emigrated to Australia – yea, I remember that, Orry Gray his name was. And they went to Australia. And then next door to us was Allan’s aunt, two aunties, Gladys and

Nellie Corlett, and the grandmother. And then there was ... what was his name now? Oh, I forget now. Anyway, there was Allan's father, he was the brother of them, and yea ... and there was one little boy lived there, his name was Arthur, a little boy, he had a little brother, Arthur, and when the big terrible 'flu epidemic was on, years and years ago, the whole house was laid low with the 'flu, and nobody came near. The only one that came near the house, granny said, was Tommy Tickle, and he used to put a little bucket of water in the porch for them so as they could open the door and get that water, because none of them could go out, they were that weak. And that little boy, Arthur, died in that house when they were all there. He just died, yes, yea. Terrible times, some of these here epidemics and things that happened over the years. But that's what happened to little Arthur. The whole village was just at a standstill with this influenza. But Tommy Tickle used to put a little bucket of water in there. They never forgot that, never forgot, they were so grateful, yea. So there you are.

EF People would have been frightened of course, we don't have ...

Mrs C Frightened to death, darling, yes. Oh, they were very ill, they said they were very ill, but little Arthur died, yes, so ...

EF And who else can you remember in the village?

Mrs C Oh, Mrs Kerruish down the back ... and Mrs Hunstall; Mrs Kermode that used to make the candies and ... oh, and then there was the ... what was their name? One of them's just – Humphries, one of Annie Humphries, who's only just recently died; and her sister, Edith, Edith Humphries. Oh, this ... awful nice lot of people, I've got pictures of them all, really, you know. You've got to look to see, to remember them, to get the memory of them all, you know.

EF Now, Mrs Corlett, I know you're a terrific writer ...

Mrs C Oh goodness, no.

EF ... and you've written quite a number of books and had them published. And you've written a poem about Cronkbourne Village ...

Mrs C Yes, yes, yea.

EF Would you like to read that to me now?

Mrs C Yes, that's if ... if I can! (*laughter*)

EF What's the title of your poem?

Mrs C *'As the Laundry Whistle Blew'*

*Cronk means a green hill;
Bourne a flowing river;
Marry them and there will be
Sweet memories forever.
Little tied cottages;
Rent, 2/6d a week;
No water or electric in any room to seek.
But big coal fires burnt brightly
As kettle gaily boiled;
To welcome home a loved one
Who long the day had toiled.
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*The Kneales, Corletts and Cannells;
Arderns and Cowells I choose;
With Hunstalls, Kellys and Bullocks;
To tell us the wonderful news
That life was good in the old days
When friendships were treasured and true;
And life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*Braddan shone at football;
The Blues sure had their day;
Great victories recording;
Bright medals on display;
Those china dolls each Christmas;
All won with great delight;
As the players and their ladies
Staged Children's Party Night;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*Looneys, Ticks and Humphries;
Boys, Curphys, Gilmores and Slacks;
Radcliffes, Magees, Quirks and Rosses;
Such good folk the present now lacks.
Proud of family and homestead, hard-working,
So faithful and true;
No fortunes lay neath their oilcloth,
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle.*

*Joyful children's laughter;
As merry games were played;
Hopscotch, marbles and skipping;
And rag-dolly mother made.
Old crocks and home-made bogies;
Roller-skates demanding skill;
Joyful, joyful memories
That echo joyful still;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*The Briggs, Kneens and Clucas';
Kitty the caravan too;
The Collins, Cowells and old George Clegg,
The kindly old man through and through.
The Eatons, Gawnes and the Cubbons;
Grays, Mitchells and Ennetts true blue;
Lighting the past like a beacon;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*Thie Vegs all like soldiers;
Stood standing in a row;
For those so urgent journeys
Through wind, rain, hail and snow;
The carting in of water
To fill the old tin bath;
Then dealing with the soap suds
Whilst facing winter's wrath;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*Here come the Kerruishs and Kermodes;
Cains, Corkills, Craines and Gills;
The Bridsons, Cubbons and Cannans;
Good gosh, how this story now spills;
Names that will live forever;
Like the Quirks and Blackburns so fine;
All with the Hudsons now gathered;
For the sake of Ould Lang Syne;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*The boathouse and pavilion;
Near the clear and sparkling dam;
For model yacht racing and cricket;
Mapped out was life's wonderful plan;
The swans, moorhens and wild ducks;
Salmon and trouts silver glean;
Bulrush and tall golden iris;
Such beauty enchanting each dream;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*Cheers for the Cronkbourne chapel;
Where taught was God's grace;
As faith, hope and charity;
Did light each gentle face;
Then raise a glass to Tossy;
And hope that he won't be
Washing angels surplices
Throughout eternity;
As the laundry whistle blew;
As the laundry whistle blew;
Life was simple yet happy;
As the laundry whistle blew.*

*Last but not least come the Beatons;
Lena and Percy so fine;
From this sweet memory shining;
For the sake of Ould Lang Syne.*

Yea.

EF It sounds like the laundry whistle really dominated your life in the village.

Mrs C Well it did, really, yes, it did – everybody's life in the village, yes. They were all there, eight o'clock in the morning, they had to be there. Come home – the whistle blew for their dinner to home, and the whistle blew an hour later for

them to come back, and then when they came home. Oh yes, the whistle dominated your life alright! Yes – went off at ten o'clock some nights, 'cos that's how long they had to work. I never hardly seen Allan from eight o'clock in the morning, used to come home for his lunch, little bit of lunch, cup of tea, and then he'd come home for his dinner and his little cup of tea later on, and then he'd work 'til ten o'clock at night. And that went on all summer, all summer. And you had to do it, you know. And not like today, they take an odd day off here and there, but not ... that wasn't like that those days. You were expected to work 'til ten o'clock at night. And not only did he work 'til ten o'clock at night, he took the girls home, and they lived ... some of the girls lived out in the country, he used to go out with the girls, yes. Bring them home, bring the van back, park it and home again. So yea, it was a hard life. Allan worked hard in that laundry – they all did – every one of them.

EF What kind of work did Allan do in the laundry?

Mrs C Well, he was the van driver. I remember, the first time I'd ever seen Allan, very first time – he was fourteen years of age – and he was in the van. And he had a Sea Scout's cap – hat – at the back of his head. That was the very first time I'd seen him. And he was in this laundry van. It was parked inside the building, they were loading all the parcels up to bring out. And he ... when he got older, that's what he did. He rode a ... he was in a van, ages in a van. And then, later on in life, he was cleaning carpets. And then he used to go round to people's houses cleaning carpets and different things. And he was like a sort of a manager of a department – not much of a job – still he was called the manager. He used to go round cleaning furniture in situ and all. And then he had the government offices and Athol Street – he had offices in Athol Street and different places like that, and there used to be girls there at night and he used to be in charge of getting the girls to do the jobs in Athol Street and the government offices and everything, and ... yea, he had a nice enough job. Alright, yes. He was there 49 years, you know. Yea, 49 years, one year short of his 50, so ... yea, all those years, he was in that laundry, my word! Oh dear! *(laughter)* Never mind! *(laughter)*

EF A lot of the work, of course, coming into the laundry was driven by the tourist industry.

Mrs C Oh yes, definitely, yes. And I'll tell you, one of those skips that they carried on

the promenade, I remember Ernest now, used to carry these skips and they must have had their backs nearly broken carrying those skips, full of your ... I don't know whether anybody's ever tried to lift a skip full of sheets – my word, dreadful – enough to break your back you know! (*laughter*) Still, that's how it was, wasn't it, yes, so, there you are, now.

EF Were there any concessions because you lived in a tied house belonging to the laundry?

Mrs C Well, yes, used to get sometimes a bit of dry-cleaning you'd get it maybe at half price. And laundry half price. But I always wash me own laundry. Did me own washing – didn't have a washing machine mind you – never had a ... not for years. But I did me own washing by hand, yea.

EF And in those early days, in the village, you didn't have indoor plumbing?

Mrs C No, nothing, nothing at all. And we ... with me living on the ... when we first ... in the little number 21, we had a garden, as I told you, hang your clothes out there. But when we went to number 2, Cronkbourne Village, had to cross the road and go down the quarry – we had a line in the quarry to hang your clothes up, and that was wonderful, wasn't it? But still, that's what we did! Hung our clothes down the quarry.

EF And what happened ... what was the quarry for?

Mrs C The quarry was used to store the coal for the laundry. Used to be boats come in, some of the men used to go down and get the coal, load it onto the wagons, and bring it up and empty it. Journey all day backwards and forwards with these wagons for the coal – the laundry coal. And ... yes, Allan did it once, I remember once, (*laughter*) I remember once, it would be ... I had me lovely white mac on, we all used to wear these lovely white macs, and I got off the bus all dolled up, you know, to meet him, and he was stood where the cafe is, you know, where the bus stop is, the co-op cafe or whatever it is. There he was, stood as black as the rook, waiting for me to tell me he couldn't come with me, so there you are, (*laughter*) yes.

EF I just want to go back to what you were saying earlier, Mrs Corlett ...

Mrs C Yes.

EF ... and you seem to mention a lot of Corletts living in Cronkbourne Village ...

Mrs C Oh yes.

EF There were lots of relatives ...

Mrs C Yes.

EF ... and people related to each other in the village?

Mrs C Yes. Well, the Kneales and the Corletts were Allan's family. There was his grandfather, everybody called him Da Kneale; and there was Ada Kneale, Amy Kneale, Alison Kneale and Sonny Kneale. And then there was the Corletts. There was Alice Corlett – oh, I tell you a lie – she wasn't a Corlett, she was a Kneale. There was Nellie Corlett, Gladys Corlett, Stanley Corlett and the little boy that died, and there was Grandmother Corlett, and ... what's the other boy's ... the fellow's name? I can't remember his name ... I just can't remember the other fellow's name. I know he got killed, he got killed up by ... near St Ninian's Church, on the crossing, and he got killed, yea, I remember that. And then there was Annie Kneale – married Harry Slack, he was the gravedigger over at Braddan, yea! And Nellie and Gladys were spinsters, they never ever got married. And ... yea!

EF With so many people related to each other in the village ...

Mrs C Hmm.

EF ... do you think that helped to make life in the village more community centred?

Mrs C Well, yes – a very close-knit families, the Kneales and the Corletts – especially the Kneales – they were very close-knit. And I'll tell you ... they were all cake-makers, every one of them, oh my word. Allan's mother ... goodness gracious me, she used to make some lovely cakes. On Christmas time, she used to make cakes for nearly everybody in the village, nearly all of them, she'd make them as well, yes, lovely cake-maker. And she had an oven there, I swear to God, she'd never ever cooked anything, it was that clean, it was like a brand new

oven stood there – she was awful house-proud – very house-proud woman. Yea, she was a lovely little woman, she was, Mrs Kneale, yes. Mrs Corlett, like, yes, her name was, you know, Miss Kneale, she was. Yes, she was a nice little woman, Allan’s mother. Very house-proud.

EF Do you remember anyone ever falling out, or any arguments in the village?

Mrs C No, no. No, they were very nice people, all of them, all of them, yes. Yea.

EF Did the children in the village ever get up to any mischief?

Mrs C Well, yea, I suppose they did, the kids. They wouldn’t be children now, otherwise, if they didn’t, now would they? They wouldn’t be kids. But I remember Allan telling me, he got up to a bit of mischief. Just below the old Church house, you know, the thing ... the little cottages are very low there, aren’t they, just little storage houses ... well, the kids used to climb up and put slates on top of their chimney pots and smoke them out! And they’d come running out and chase them down the road and they’d be helter-skelter home, but that’s what they used to do – put slates on top of the chimney to smoke the people out! (*laughter*)

EF What did the children in the village, while you were living there, do at the weekends and after school times?

Mrs C Well, there wasn’t really a lot at the time of boys around about our Ian’s age at the time. There used to be a little boy that lived in the old Collin’s house down at the bottom where Allan’s mother, the tannery was. Lamb, his name was, Allan Lamb or something like that. And he used to come up and play with Ian. But there wasn’t an awful lot of his age. There was the Ardern boys but they live up further, they weren’t near Ian, you see, so there wasn’t a lot of boys. And Ian used to have a lot of little cowboys and Indians and soldiers, and he used to play a lot of jigsaw puzzles and things like that. And I used to go down, when I was in town, I used to buy – they were only 1/11d – I used to buy him one of those little *Matchbox* things ... *Matchbox* cars every week, you know, and things like that, and he loved them. And the boys took them and played with them, and they’d go down and play with them, or he’d be round about. You know, they had skates and all sorts of things. Bought him a bike once; bought him a bike for Christmas once; thought he’d love a bike. Bought him the bike, didn’t want

the bike, that bike stood in my back kitchen for a couple of years and he never rode it ... never rode the bike, didn't want the bike, and that's unusual, isn't it? And yet he had a scooter after all that, but he didn't want that bike. Strange, isn't it?

EF Can you remember what the salaries were like at that time?

Mrs C Oh yes, I can remember alright, oh yes, very poor, exceptionally poor. When I got married to Allan, the very first wage packet Allan brought home, there was three pound notes in it – that was Allan's wages. Three pound a week. That was in 1951 – I remember that so clearly. I thought, my word, yes. But that's how it was – very poor wages.

EF And would most of that have gone on living, or were you able to save anything?

Mrs C Well, to tell you the truth, yes, I used to do. I used to have a little box belonging to the Manx Bank – you know, the Isle of Man Bank – and it was shaped like a little book, and every week I put one half a crown into that little book. And when it was full, I used to go down and have it emptied and put into my bank book. I always saved, because you've always got to remember what Mr Micawber said, 'Outlay one pound and six pence – misery. Outlay, nineteen shillings and six pence – happiness.' So I always made sure that I put something away every week of Allan's money. Yes, always.

EF How did you manage your weekly budget?

Mrs C Easily, my dear, very easily, yes. I used to put my rent away, and the coal money away – I used to put them in different places. But we knew how to manage our money in those days, did Allan – really knew we had to manage, and we did manage. We never went short of anything, always had good food, but the main thing was, we knew how to manage our money. Nobody went short of anything, yes. It was very good, yes.

EF You lived in the village for sixteen years ...

Mrs C Yes.

EF ... what year did you leave and where did you go after that?

Mrs C Well, I was there for sixteen years – I can't exactly tell you ... oh, yes! I came into this house on my husband's birthday, the 30th April – it was a Saturday. And I always remember coming in here and oh, it was ... I thought it was wonderful coming here. We had water and everything, you know. But we had it in the village, but it was ... you know, the house was lovely, a nice little house. And not only that, I found out that day that I had a neighbour next door, that came in and brought us some tea and cakes while we were there, and I'm going to tell you something, there's nobody on this earth every had a better neighbour than Ivy Cubbon. Her name was Jenny, really, but I called her Ivy and she never ever corrected me. She was the nicest and wonderful neighbour I've ever had in the whole of my life. She's dead now, the poor girl, but by God, she was a wonderful girl, really nice. And we came into this house and we got ourselves settled. We were happy here. I've been in this house now, forty four years. Had to move out for ten month, went up to Anagh Coar for ten month while they refurbished the house. It was nice up there, I enjoyed it, but it was nice to get back home again. You see, I've got a handicapped boy, and he's used to this house, and this is where he wants to be and this is where I want to be. I'm 83 now, you know (*laughter*) – yes! 83 years young, yea! And we're happy here, yea, really do, all those years. Allan used to have the garden beautiful. Used to grow dahlias out the back – massive beautiful dahlias – it's like a jungle at the moment. Lovely little lilac tree and a blossom tree – Allan took pride in his garden and he's been gone, now, nineteen years – twenty years next year. I miss him awful, but, yea, he was a nice man, kept the house lovely, always decorating it and doing ... good father, yea, everything he was. We've got wonderful memories in this house, that's why I want to stay here, yea, great.

EF Thank you very much, Mrs Corlett, for sharing some of your memories about life in Cronkbourne Village.

Mrs C That's alright my dear, yea, good! (*laughter*) Thank you, my dear.

END OF INTERVIEW