Ken Lazonby Interview Junior Technical College 1950 - 1952

59:28

Date

Time
Location

Present

KV Keith Vernon

HH Helen Howell

KL Ken Lazonby

KV So if you wouldn’t mind Ken, just say again your name and your date of birth if you don’t mind?

KL Right, yes, my name’s Ken Lazonby, date of birth 19th of June, 1937.

KV Thank you very much…and could you just tell us what years you were at the Harris, and what course you studied?

KL I was at the Junior Technical College from 1950 to 1952, for general lessons that the school provided, at that age.

KV Ah ok, and tell us a little bit more about the lessons that you had, can you remember about the…what kind of subjects you studied?

KL Well, yes I can, there was obviously the obvious school subjects, there was no languages which suited me, and the only difference was that one had to choose between woodwork and metalwork, and or cotton spinning and weaving. Now for one specific reason, I chose spinning and weaving. This occurred after about a month, I would say, and, we were told that we had the option, and at that point we should consider, er, whether we wanted to go into the spinning and weaving trade, or engineering, or whatever, and that was to decide whether we took spinning and weaving, as an alternative to woodwork and metalwork. Now strangely enough, I had a different reason to choose spinning and weaving, I think I mentioned this, didn’t I? [HH yes] I, for whatever reason, and I don’t know now, I hated the woodwork master, and I was almost frightened of him, a guy called Hulse, Mr Hulse [2:24], and when we got the option to choose either spinning and weaving or woodwork and metalwork, it was a, you know, it was a no-contest. To hell with what I was going to do as a job, it was a great way of getting away from the woodwork master, simple as that.

KV and just a….clash of personalities, or something, there wasn’t anything specific? I don’t want to pry too much… [2:50]

KL I don’t know but generally speaking I don’t take a dislike to people, generally, some people tend to do, erm, but I don’t, and I can’t remember why, but I detested that man, and I’d only sort of met him, three or four weeks ago, but – that was it!

KV Right, yep, it sometimes happens like that doesn’t it. What were the other teachers like?

KL The other teachers were very, very good, and I think they tended to treat you like adults more or less. [KV yeah] You know, I do remember many of them, and er, we always found out their Christian names, which was perhaps unusual in schools – Mr Hornby, the PE teacher, there was Mr Jones taught maths, er, who else was there? The spinning teacher was Claude Harrington [3:56], the weaving teacher was Bill Dagger, erm, there was the famous English teacher, which I forget his name now but you will know, the ‘39 Steps’ guy?

KV John Buchan?!

KL John Buchan? No [KV – he wrote the book, he wasn’t the teacher!] I was just going to say that [all laugh] Now what’s his name? I’m suffering from me memory now – er Dickie Birkett. [4:27]

KV Ah ok, yeah.

KL And it’s surprising how you, even after 70 years, remember certain things, and I think - he was well known for, I’ve heard, in the meetings, people mention ’39 Steps’ so they all - presumably he did that every year.

KV Ah ok.

KL I remember, he was quite an amusing guy, er very nice man, and I remember one particular incident, there was a lad in the class called Ian Mellor, now, the other thing I remember is that all the lads used platinum fountain pens, which were not over reliable, and Dickie set us an essay to write, and this lad, Ian, he just sat there and he didn’t do anything, and Dickie Birkett said to him, ‘What’s the problem, Ian?’ and he said ‘I’ve a blot in my way’ erm, Dickie said to him, something like ‘Throughout your life Ian, you will encounter many problems, far more serious than having a blot in your way, and you have to find a way of overcoming them, so I would suggest you just get on with it’ [5:50] [laughs] And you know, that was Dickie, really, but er…

KV So it sounds like there was, generally, there was quite good relationship between the teachers and the…

KL Well I think, there seemed to be very little…bad behaviour. I don’t recall any…punishment in any way, any detention, or staying behind, or extra homework, or…I don’t remember that at all, and I think that’s the case, you know, and er, they taught us like adults almost.

KV So, you did English and maths, and…

KL We’d English, maths, there was geography, we had history, obviously, I don’t remember the teachers for those, but as I said, I went on to textiles, and it was very interesting, I found.

KV So how much of…how much time did you spend on the technical subjects – the spinning and weaving?

KL There was one lesson a week for spinning, and one lesson for weaving, which took the place of woodwork, and the other subject which perhaps you didn’t get in other schools, was technical drawing. And I think they concentrated on that, because I think quite a fair percentage of the lads went to be draughtsmen and that sort of thing, because obviously there was a lot of engineering around here, and we were encouraged to, as I say – from an early stage, think about what job you wanted, and more or less relate the subject you concentrated on to that, a lot of them went to be draughtsmen, well there were three of us came from Leyland Secondary Modern School, and one of the other two went to be a draughtsman at Leyland Motors. [8:22]

KV And what were the facilities like, the resources for teaching or…did you have equipment?

KL Well I found they were very good. I don’t remember too much about the science…presuming we had science. I don’t offhand remember any laboratory work, but I’m sure there was that, but I don’t…I can’t just think where that was, but I really did go for the textiles. I thought that was particularly good.

KV And did they have the proper equipment?

KL Oh yes, it was quite ancient as you might expect, but, you know, how many schools had a weaving shed? [9:14] [laughs]…and I really did think…er, I did enjoy the textile subjects, and it stood you in good stead for a job. Whilst I’m on that subject, what was particularly good was the fact that, as no doubt you know, in terms of moving on to get a job, there were personnel came into the college from the bigger companies – British Aerospace, Leyland Motors, Goss printing, to interview lads and give them an apprenticeship. The textile business slightly worked differently. The man in charge, Mr Ashworth, he approached various mills in the area and asked them if they wanted an apprentice, and he then forward you to those places, and he in effect got me a job at the Lostock Hall Spinning Company, which was quite handy for, you know, living in Leyland at the time, and that was particularly beneficial. I mean I don’t know to what extent the university does that now, but it's er, probably not, but I found that of great benefit really, at the time, I thought that was very good. [11:05]

KV So was it that…you came to the Junior Tech School, and you did your studies there, and then – you got the apprenticeship at the Spinning Mill, [KL Yes] and did you carry on coming to the Harris while you were on your apprenticeship?

KL Yes, there was something called Day Release, which obviously was a day a week during the school terms, which I came here, and was taught by the same teachers, er, it was generally two and a half days funnily enough, rather than one full day, and there was also night school…two, or occasionally three days a week, erm, here, again taught by the same… students…

KV Ah Ok, so you had like a general course that included some spinning and weaving?

KL Yes it was all, it was taken quite separately funnily enough – well I suppose you can class it as two separate industries, obviously there were mills that only do spinning, there were mills that only do weaving, and there were some mills like Horrockses that do the whole thing, but here, it was quite a, …although I don’t think there was anyone who took just spinning or just weaving and it was – the course was just textiles, and of course there were erm, the very odd thing about that, there was, in the night school courses, and the Day Release courses, there were foreign students [13:02], and strangely enough, I got very friendly with an Indian lad, very nice lad, and when we’d finished the five years, er, he was going home, and he wanted me to go with him, and his parents had a cotton plantation, and he asked me to go home with him and manage this cotton plantation, but I thought ‘No’ [inaudible] But er, yes it was the textile part to it, I know I’m emphasising this but I think, compared with, what we’d have done if we’d stayed at the Secondary Modern School, it was…there was no comparison.

KV It’s interesting that erm, just that sequence of the Tech School course, and then getting the apprenticeship at the mill, and then coming back on Day Release and evening classes, that’s quite a lot to do, isn’t it, was it a mixed spinning and weaving mill that you went to…

KL No, Lostock Hall Spinning Company was solely spinning [KV Right, and…] and I generally, I mean, I didn’t need any of the weaving knowledge after I left actually, because it was solely spinning, but I mean what happened then, it only lasted ten years, because, in the early 60s, all the mills were closing down, and Lostock Hall Spinning Mill closed down…it was owned by the same man who owned Tulketh Mill, and for the last six months or so, I did work at Tulketh Mill as well, but obviously that closed down shortly afterwards, and er, I was advised by the MD at Lostock Hall Spinning Company not to try and get another job in textiles, which obviously pro…it would have been very difficult anyway, because a lot of the mills were closing down then, and I went somewhere else, a different trade altogether, erm, so that was the situation there.

KV And when you were at the Harris, how many of you did the textiles course? And did anybody suggest at that time that, you know, is this something that you really want to do kind of thing? [16:15]

KL I think it came all of a sudden really, obviously it was over a few years, but no, that was not mentioned then, and of course at that time, sort of 1951 say, the textile industry was thriving, but it was about ten years, and then it sort of went, you know, but that’s what I feel the real benefit was of learning something at school that related to a job. Now, if you hadn’t have come to somewhere like here, I’m sure you wouldn’t have got that at all, and the fact that I, I think everyone really who was in the textiles, that chose textiles here, I think, did go into textiles. I’m sure they did, there was nobody that opted out and said ‘No, I don’t want that, I’ll go and be something else,’ I don’t think they did, but there was only about, erm, and I say, we had the choice, there was only about, I think six of us that decided on textiles rather than woodwork and metalwork, you know…

KV Ok, and while you were on your apprenticeship, presumably you didn’t have to pay the fees for coming here on the Day Release?

KL No, there was no charge at all, nothing, and the other great thing about it, and I think this came from Mr Ashworth, all the lads that came here, to Day Release and Night School, we got a bus contract. Now he arranged that, I’m sure he did, because everybody had one, and for me it was particularly valuable, you could use them 24/7, on the…they were a set specific route between your nominated bus stop and Fishwick’s Bus Station or… and where I gained by that, of course, the mill was on the route. I could go to work for nothing, and I was the envy of all my mates, ‘cause when we came to Preston on Saturday night, I could use my pass. It cost them 4 old pence return [all chuckle], and again, I’m sure that was due to what Mr Ashworth did, and it was primarily to come here to study.

KV And presumably, your bosses at the mill were quite keen for you to do this and did you get any recognition in the mill? Was there any pay or promotion when you finished the course? [19:34]

KL Well yes, er, when I…of course National Service was on the go then, and there was a deferral scheme for anyone who was studying, and when I got to 18, I had to be…I had to apply, I’m not sure how that actually happened and worked, but I had to apply to be deferred, which was more or less automatic if you could prove you were studying, and I left here, obviously five years when I was 20, and the following February, I went in the RAF, and…do you want a story about the RAF, which was relative?

KV, Oh, go on. [20:40]

KL You’d to go to Cardington to be kitted out then you went to square bashing, and I did square bashing at Wilmslow, and whilst you were there, the RAF, or, you hadn’t to say RAF, it was the Royal Air Force, you had to decide what job you would do once you were in the Royal Air Force for two years. Now, the system was, anyone with any qualifications, and by that time of course I had passed all the exams, and got an HNC in cotton spinning and weaving, anyone who had any qualifications more or less got first choice, and they knew, they had all the details, and they knew who had certain qualifications, and I, amongst others, were sort of, picked out for, get first choice you see, and I had to go in front of a board of three officers – little fat Group Captain in the middle, as there always is, you know – and he said something like ‘We in the Royal Air Force aim to make the most of our Airmen’s qualifications and experience and workmanship and so on, to obtain…get them the right job, suitable, in the Royal Air Force. Now Airman, what are your qualifications?’ ‘I have a HNC in cotton spinning and weaving, Sir.’ And all the three of them just roaring with laughing [all chuckle]….What could they say?! [KV ‘Balloons’] [all laugh], and er, this chap said something like ‘The Royal Air Force don’t do spinning and weaving.’ ‘Right, OK, I understand that,’ and I…he said ‘Have you anything in mind? What would you want to do?’ Well I had no idea at all, and erm, he said ‘Oh, I see,’ he said, ‘We do have tailors.’ Now where they kitted out at Cardington, they had tailors who altered uniforms for the new recruits, so anyone who was about 6 foot 8 or, you know. I said, I thought, ‘Blimey no, I don’t want to do that,’ I said ‘Well, no, that’s not relevant at all, I’m not – I can’t be a tailor,’ and er, they looked at each other and nodded, and said ‘How about the Police?’ I said ‘Yes, that would be alright.’ So I end up in the RAF Police for two years, well, you know, there we are. [24:02]

KV Could you backtrack a bit Ken, you mentioned that you were at Secondary Modern in Leyland, can you tell us a little bit about your education up to when you came to the Harris, and then how you came to be here…[24:26]

KL Yes, well there again, that’s quite interesting…I went to Leyland Secondary Modern, obviously because I failed the 11+, which I would have gone to Balshaw’s Grammar School. Apparently that was…one of the teachers told my parents that I was a bit slow and I had to check everything. I knew that two and two was four, but I had to make sure, you know. As a result, I don’t think I completed the papers, that was the fault. Leyland Secondary Modern was ok, the one thing that I did not like about it, er…when you went there, there were five classes in each year, and I was in the top class of the five, and the top class were taught French. Now, I hated that, I couldn’t see the sense of it, you know, in 1948 nobody went to France…why did you need to learn French, and I couldn’t get the hang of this damn French and I hated it, erm, that was…other than that it was alright, we had our general school subjects, and it included things like gardening, all the sports things and so on…Now when it…after two years there, of course, then I was 13, we had the choice of sitting for a Technical College, and from Leyland, we sat for three. We sat for Wigan [Miningham?] Tech, we sat for here, and we sat for Horwich, and there was about ten of us I would say who sat for all three, and I sat for all three. Any order of preference, that was the order – Wigan, here and Horwich. Wigan Tech was supposed to be the bees knees, but only one of us passed for Wigan, one passed for Wigan. There were three of us came here, and I think two went to Horwich, so there was three of us from Leyland came here.

KV But it was the school that…it was organised through the school, and they put you onto it?

KL I think, I think they were selected. There was only about ten of us went, it was the same ten I think that sat all three, so I think we were selected as potential… you know, we were bright enough to go, whereas the others weren’t I suppose. [27:39]

KV Yeah, and was that like a scholarship exam, so you didn’t have to pay the fees?

KL No, I never…No I’m sure there was no money involved at all…well I’ve never…happen my parents would have paid, but I don’t remember any – I’m sure there was no money involved…

KV OK, but did you have to buy things like your uniform, or…

KL We certainly had a uniform for the Secondary Modern School, and I had a uniform here. In fact my tie, I think it was my tie, is in the er…museum [HH Ah, is it?] I took a tie and maybe something else…I’m sure it’s there…I’ve nothing now, at all. It’s a pity really because going back to the textiles, what we had to do – one of the things we had to do was design fabrics, and we designed them on a jacquard loom, and then we had to weave them and cut them up, and of course I think these went towards the exams and so forth, but those have long gone, I never kept anything, I only kept my tie.

KV And was it all work at the Harris Institute, or were there any…extra-curricular activities? [29:25]

KL No. I don’t think so. [KV No?] No, I didn’t er…I don’t recall er…have you any – you’re obviously thinking of something that you think or…

KV I suppose just sort of erm, I know people had games and PE as part of…

KL Well there was a PE lesson, obviously, and the only thing I can remember about the PE lesson, was that Jim Hornby [29:54] devised a game called Squat Soccer, has anyone else mentioned that? [HH and KV: Yes] Now that was great that, instead of jumping up and down all day, you played Squat Soccer, and it was very very enjoyable, was that, er…I wasn’t sure whether that was within the compass of what you were talking about.

KV I suppose it was sort of, you had – once you had your lessons all day…did any of your pals meet up after college, or at lunchtime, or anything?

KL There was one thing I should tell you about lunch. Occasionally, every three weeks, a month or so, Friday…if anyone ever does anything special for a lunch, it’s always on a Friday, isn’t it? There was a café in Corporation Street, the bit that goes down – it’s not there now, obviously it’s gone – but it was from the Ring Road up to Fishergate, just round the corner, on the right hand side, it was called The Dinky Café [31:18], and half a dozen of us went there about probably once every three or four weeks for our lunch, that was what we did. But the thing that – the worst thing ever, here, for me, was Wednesday afternoon, which was football afternoon. Now I wasn’t really built for football, I was – I wouldn’t say I was a fat lad, but I was overweight really, I wasn’t one for running around really, er, and we played football, of course on the field the other side of the river from Avenham Park – that was the sports field, and we got changed in the Art School in…Ribblesdale Place is it? And after you’d been running around playing football for 90 minutes, we got to go back across the old tram bridge, going up this ramp at Avenham Park [HH Oh yes – its steep, isn’t it?!] Oh! I will remember that forever, it was awful, that used to kill me, that! [All chuckle] That’s the worst thing about coming here [laughs]. [32:41]

KV And did erm…just thinking about, some of the background – did…what kind of thing did your parents do… and were they keen on you coming here?

KL Er, yes. I was brought up quite strictly actually, my parents were quite keen on discipline. I was… I was well behaved, you know, it was the era when, if you got owt wrong, you got your backside smacked, and I got that often, but, I was encouraged, as I say, I was generally pretty slow at things, apparently, that’s what the teacher told me, but they did encourage me, and…they helped me with – I mean, they weren’t exceptionally clever. My father worked in the wages office at Leyland Motors, and erm, me mother worked at the Royal Ordnance Factory in Euxton, on the production line, but er, I mean they were relatively intelligent. My father was good at figures, of course, and they did help, with maths and so on. I leaned towards maths, I was generally, I liked the maths things better than the English things really, but er, yeah, they did encourage me, yes, I would say so.

KV Did you have any siblings who went to…here or somewhere else?

KL No, I was the only one, yeah, yeah, I was the only one. [34:52]

KV OK. And when you finished working at the mill, what did you then go on to do?

KL I went to work in the laboratory at Echo Ensign, the electric light place in Kent Street [35:13], and er…no actually, because when I was at the mill, after I came out of the RAF, I went back to the mill, and I worked in the lab part, and that was a similar job, obviously a different industry, but a similar job in the Kent Street plant factory. It was testing and whatever, you know, er, so I went for an interview there and I got a job there. I was there probably 5 or 6 years, and, it was fairly obvious to me that I wasn’t going to get on particularly well there – the job was alright, the guy who I worked with was only a few years older than me, and I didn’t see any future there, and, I knew the personnel manager at BTR in Leyland – Farington – and I said to him, you know, are there any jobs going, and he, unofficially, I’m not so sure he should have done this, but he got me an interview to go in the conveyor belting sales office as a sales correspondent, and I did that for 3 to 4 years. Of course there were 2 rubber factories in Leyland, there was BTR and there was Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Company. After being there about 3 years, Leyland Birmingham Rubber Company wanted some representatives, and I applied – there is a story attached to that, but I’m not sure whether you want to hear that, I don’t know [laughs] I applied for a job as a sales rep, and I got a job as a sales rep.

KV OK. So you moved…

KL [Laughs] let’s just say it was a bit fixed.

KV Oh OK.

KL laughs.

HH May I ask something? Was it quite a different type of work then, in the sales, to what you’d been doing and what you had learned at the Harris? It doesn’t sound as technical somehow…

KL Well, I will tell you what happened. The conveyor belting, it was rubber conveyor belting sales, and what we did was all the quotations, customer’s enquiries, put orders on, all the correspondence relating to the orders, that was fine. Now, how it was set up, was – I don’t want to take too much time, because I know this is not relevant – [KV no no, it’s interesting] Each correspondent, there were three of us, we worked for either 2 or 3 sales reps. All their reports, and anything - correspondence, phone calls, from any of their customers came to their sales rep. Now, one of my sales reps was a guy called Harry Brown, who was the sales rep for the North West of England, and he came in to see me a couple of times a week, brought his reports, and - because he was local - brought his reports, and talked about jobs and so on. Now, the company as a whole, BTR, they employed a man who was about 30 years old, highly qualified in business, and he was brought in for potentially higher management, but he was brought in from not the rubber industry, he didn’t know anything about rubber, and when he joined he worked with 3 or 4 people to learn the trade more or less, and one of the people he worked with, was Harry. So when Harry came to see me, he brought this other guy, called Terry, he brought Terry with him, and I got to know Terry quite well, he was a nice chap – fine. When Terry had gone around with these 3 or 4 people learning different aspects of rubber, he got the job of Managing Director at Leyland and Birmingham Rubber Company, and as I say, shortly, about 3 weeks…about 3 months after he’d joined, they advertised for 3 reps, and Harry said to me ‘Have you heard about the reps jobs at L and B?’ I said ‘Well, yeah.’ He said ‘Are you going to apply?’

I said ‘Well I don’t know really, I don’t know anything…’ they made extrusions, mouldings, gaskets and sheeting and all…I said ‘I don’t know anything about what they make.’

He says ‘Well…I’ve never been a rep,’ he says ‘That doesn’t matter, you can learn that.’ He said ‘you want to apply – you’ll get a car – a better job than this.’ [KV and HH laugh]

So I did, and the interview – I got an interview, and Harry rung up, and talked to me one day, and said ‘Oh, I should have asked you, when is…’ I’d told him I’d got an interview… ‘when is your interview?’ I said ‘Oh, next whenever.’ ‘Oh, what time?’ ‘Such a time,’

‘Oh, right, OK.’ I didn’t think more about it. I went to the interview, I was sat in the interview, which was in the Sales Manager’s Office, with the Sales Manager, he was interviewing me, and all of a sudden, the door opened, and Terry walked in, and he said, ‘Oh, it’s Ken isn’t it, Ken!’ I said ‘Yeah.’ He said, ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘what are you doing here?’ I said ‘Well, I’m being interviewed for the sales jobs.’ ‘Oh,’ he says, ‘that’s great’ he says, ‘that’s really…oh well, we’ll be seeing more of you then!’ [All laugh] [42:17]

KL Well, I know it’s not relevant, but it’s…

KV It’s the kind of interview you want though, isn’t it…

HH Isn’t it, yes.

KL It gets worse [KV and HH laugh] It gets worse. I got that job and that was in…there was three jobs, one was in Durham…one was in the North East of England, one was Derby, Notts and Lincoln, and one was London and Surrey and Kent, and he gave me the choice. I chose the one in Durham. When I’d only been there 12 months and they wanted me to move and take over Yorkshire and somewhere else, and I…we had to move from Durham to Garforth in Leeds, and after a while, they wanted me to become Southern area Sales Manager, which meant moving, so we actually moved to Barwell, near Hinckley in Leicester. I wasn’t keen, I didn’t particularly like that there, and I said to the… my boss, who worked in Leyland, I said, ‘Is there any chance of coming back to Leyland? I wouldn’t mind doing that.’ ‘Right OK,’ he said, and it must have been 2 or 3 years later, and he said to me, ‘Do I recall you mentioning that you wanted to come back to Leyland?’ I said, ‘Yes.’ He said ‘Well if you want, you can.’ And the sales rep from round here was leaving, so I came back here, and from that time on, they were gradually…When I started, I was one of 15 reps, and I was actually made redundant, and I was one out of 3. But they slipped up when they made me redundant – this is another story, so I’ll have to tell you this now won’t I? [KV and HH chuckle] [44:21]

KL I mean, Leyland and Birmingham, were, by rubber companies, was quite a large company, and they sent work out to an extruder and a moulder in Accrington called Dale Polymers. Now, they announced - Leyland and Birmingham announced - that they were looking for a new sales manager, Managing Director. And he announced there would be 14 redundancies. Now, when I worked there and lived in Leyland, on Friday morning I went and I worked in the office, and I went in this Friday morning, and these redundancies had been announced, and one of them was a sales person. Now funnily enough, on that morning, the sales manager said to me, ‘I’ve got a drawing here, for a rubber part,’ he said, ‘can you nip over to Dale’ – it was called Dale Polymers – ‘can you nip over to Dale and give it to a guy called Roger?’ Well I knew Roger. I said, ‘Yeah, sure,’ so I went over, he wanted a quote for these parts, and I said to Roger, ‘There’s going to be some redundancies at L and B.’ ‘Oh aye?’ I said ‘I might be one, you never know, there’s a sales person going to be one.’ He says, ‘Well if it is, let me know.’ [HH Brilliant] And sure enough, it was me, and er, I was 58 at the time, and, I said to the sales manager that made me redundant, I said, ‘Just as a matter of interest, why was it me?’ and he said, ‘Oh,’ he said, ‘I’ve had nightmares about this, I didn’t want to make anyone redundant, but it had to be you because you were the only one of the 3 reps that was old enough to be retired, and that was the reason, and he arranged for me to take my works pension at that time. And I didn’t feel like I wanted to stay at home, I was only 58, so I rung Roger up and told him, ‘Yeah, it’s me,’ and within a couple of months, he offered me a job, and it was far easier than the job at Leyland, far easier. Leyland and Birmingham, it was an old company and they had old machinery. They weren’t very efficient in all honesty. The prices were high, and it was difficult. I went to Dale, and it was a doddle, it really was. So that’s what I’ve…and then I was there 5 years and then I retired. [47:41]

KV Even though obviously you changed direction a number of times, do you think the time you spent at the Harris was still valuable?

KL It was certainly…undoubtedly valuable initially erm…I think it was very disciplined here, and I think you were treated very well, I think you were…I think you got the impression that you were…respected in a way, and not looked down upon in any way, and possibly that contributed, really. As far as what I learned here, didn’t, once I’d left the mill, didn’t really apply [KV yeah]. I mean at the lamp factory, it was all electrical stuff which we didn’t learn here, and we didn’t learn anything about rubber, obviously, erm, but I think the discipline and the general attitude here was very very good, and I think I mentioned to you, when we spoke before, this was the only real school that, I mean I didn’t particularly like school, but I liked coming here. There was a difference here, no doubt about it. [49:10]

KV And if I may ask, you met your wife at the mill, in your first [works?]? What did she do, if you don’t mind my asking?

KL No, and I think I told you this story didn’t I?

HH Yes.

KL We go back to the woodwork master [all laugh]. We go back to the woodwork master! I only went in the tex…I only studied textiles because I didn’t like the woodwork master, right? [KV Yeh] Now, we hear these stories about…now I’ve got to mention upstairs downstairs, haven’t I? Now that was, that was very serious, I mean a lot…it’s sort of laughed about, but I never went upstairs, I wouldn’t have dared go upstairs [KV Quite right too] Wouldn’t dare go upstairs. The only time you saw a girl was when they came down to the, either play netball in the quadrangle, or they went in the gym [all chuckle]. But of course, you met them outside. I didn’t meet anyone here at the... I know it went on, and some people have gone on to get married, you know, they either came with them on the bus or they met them outside or whatever, but that didn’t apply. But the 2 things which are very significant I think are the woodwork master, and Mr Ashworth who nominated Lostock Hall Spinning Company for me. Now, you say that just one simple thing in your life can make a…dictate your whole life, and what actually happened was that I went to Lostock Hall Spinning Company, and as a direct result of going to that particular mill, I was introduced to this girl. She didn’t work at the mill, but it was a contact from the mill that introduced me to this girl, and we’ve been married 61 years [KV Lovely], and that all goes back to the woodwork master. If he’d have been a nice guy, I might have never studied textiles, and never have met the girl, [chuckles] so, I think it’s a good example of one particular thing almost dictating your whole life. I mean I would never have – I don’t know what would’ve happened – where would I have worked? Where would we have lived? It may not be round here. I’d have obviously presumably met somebody else and got married, you know, you don’t know, do you? But it all goes back to the woodwork master.

KV Thanks for that, I think that’s mainly what I wanted to ask you about…

KL That’s about it really…

KV Is there anything else you’d like to tell us that maybe we haven’t touched on, about your time here, or anything else about your education or your work, or something that comes back to the Harris in a way?

KL I’m trying to think of…well I think we’ve covered quite a lot of it really, er, but I do think about it, and I think I wonder, talking about the Alumni, do you actually, or have you actually made any effort to contact children who were there when I was there?

KV Yes, yeah, Jodi’s had this list of the Harris Alumni for a long time, and I think Helen you’ve come across a few people haven’t you [HH Yes] so we’re still finding, looking for people. Is there anyone you’d be interested in finding out about or..

KL No I don’t think so. Of the 3 of us that came from Leyland, one of them has passed away, and the other one is…I don’t think he would be interested at all, really, but I did wonder whether, because I found out by accident really er, how I found out, and I don’t know who I was talking to – there’s a lot of mysteries attached to my life! [HH yes, laughs] Probably – ten years ago? – One of the things that you could study here I think was erm, what do you call it- Not Hotel management [HH Tourism?] something associated to events [KV Events management] Events management was it? [KV Yeah] You know the university has a connection with Leyland Band? [KV OK, yeah] They play the fanfares at the events and what not, and they do – there is a sort of connection, and one of the things that these…is it Corporate Management or something they call it? Something like that. One of the things they had to do was organise an event, and they asked the Band. I was, well I should say, as of up to…6 months ago, I was involved with Leyland Band, I was the Chairman of the Support Committee. I didn’t play – I wasn’t in the Band, and I [absolutely knew?] about the band, and I’ve done that for about 15 years, and apparently whoever was here then, asked the band if they would perform in one of the lecture theatres, and the students had to organise everything – sell the tickets, advertise it, as part of their thing you see, and I thought ‘Well, we’ll go and listen to this concert, but I didn’t know where this lecture theatre was, and I rung up, somebody here, I found a number and rung someone up, and I explained what I wanted, and I said ‘Can you tell me where this lecture theatre is?’ and she set off by saying ‘You know the old brick building in Corporation Street?’ and I said, ‘I should do, I went there for 2 years.’ Oh my God, it was like she’d found a long lost brother [all chuckle] ‘Are you an Alumni?’ I said ‘No, no’ like I don’t know who it was if it was Jodi, or somebody else or, I’ve no idea who it was, but I ended up then getting all the Alumni stuff [KV Excellent] [HH yeah, great]

KV Well, we’re making a concerted effort to erm, sort of all Alumni, and we’re particularly keen to get in touch with the Harris Alumni, so we want to record.. [57:15]

KL Yeah, you talk about being a reunion when you have the meetings here, but I felt…I do know, funnily enough, I do know one person, that wasn’t here when I was, you know, I’m not meeting all my old school friends, which some people may do, but I mean, there’s not many really is there, when you think there was about, what, was there about 40 in a year then? Something like that? Erm, there’s not many, really, but the only person, that I know, sadly now, is Arthur Whitlock. He was involved in the Bursary Scheme, wasn’t he? Now, I came here and I met…I knew Arthur because Arthur was involved with the Band as well, he was marketing manager at one time, they had a mar, and Arthur was that, and I knew Arthur through the Band, and one of the times I came here, I met him, er, and he apparently, he’s two years older than me, so he left here the year I came. Sadly now I understand he’s got Alzheimer’s, you know, and that’s the only person I knew here. I didn’t know anybody in our class…

KV Yea, I suppose the Harris Alumni goes from, certainly from 1945 to about 1972, so it’s quite a long span of time, but erm, no, we’re trying to get hold of as many as we can.

KL Mmm, well of course er, sadly a lot will have passed away now won’t they, the earlier ones, I don’t know, what year did the Junior Tech finish, roughly?

KV It was about f…mid fifties – 55, 56 or something and that’s when they set up Preston College – Tuscon, WR Tuscon College.

KL Oh aye, yeah, yeah, so it was just about 5 years after I left probably, something like that…yeah, it was fi….

KV Well I’ll stop it….