

## **Brian Blancharde**

*Born in the UK. Joined the RAF Regiment 1952-1954 and served in Egypt. Joined Federal Army (in Rhodesia) 1954-1959. Subsequently taught at schools in the UK, Southern Rhodesia and Zambia. Left Zambia for the UK in 1972 to undertake an MEd degree.*

**This is Annie Bramley, interviewing Brian Blancharde on Wednesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2009. Thank you very much for your time today and agreeing to be interviewed. Could you start by explaining how you came to be in Rhodesia, and when that was?**

For my National Service in the UK, 1952-54, I was in the RAF Regiment, which is effectively a private army of the Royal Air Force. My grandfather, my maternal grandfather, had fought with the Imperial Forces in the Anglo-South African war of 1899-1902 and he had been captured by the Boers effectively, with whom he became extremely friendly. He had a lot of time for the Afrikaners and he taught me my first words of Afrikaans in the unlikely setting of an English village, Long Ashton, just outside Bristol. I suppose I was infected by that and it transpired that in the Suez Canal zone, which is where I was stationed with the RAF Regiment, we ran into something called the Rhodesian African Rifles. There were about four hundred Rhodesian troops in the Canal Zone, white and black although obviously it was mainly a black battalion with white Officers. The other factor that played a part was that before National Service, I had been employed by something called Coutts Bank in the City of London and the tedium was incredible. So what did I do for fun? Joined up with a number of other blokes to break up Mosley's mob in London. We used to go and fight them – the strange things one does when one is young – and one of the things that got to me was of course their racist attitudes. It wasn't confined to anti-Jewishness, but anybody who was slightly different. They were poisonous to us, so we thought we'd be poisonous back. We called ourselves "The Liberty Guard."

Also I'd been to a Roman Catholic boarding school outside Bath and it seemed to have a policy of one third English, one third Irish – because it was run by the Irish Christian Brothers – and one third elsewhere. So among my school mates was for instance Anthony de Mello, an Anglo-Indian of Goanese descent who I think is now a distinguished theologian in the Roman Church. There were six blokes from Trinidad, all cousins ranging in colour from black through tan and yellow to more or less white; and there were people from West Africa and from all over. So to be frank, whether a bloke was sky blue-pink, black, white or khaki, I didn't give a damn. It wasn't anything conscious, you just grew up that way. Then in the RAF Regiment whilst we were in the [Suez] Canal Zone ... I ought to point out, the RAF Regiment are known as the 'rock apes.' Why? Because they're thick as bloody mukwa<sup>1</sup> and their knuckles dangle in the dust. These Regiment blokes, the gunners, were Daily Mirror readers, genial toughies. I had several good fights with some of them.

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<sup>1</sup> *Mukwa* is a hardwood tree of southern Africa.

I remember serving Mass at the Roman Catholic chapel, and singing, with two black eyes because I'd been fighting a bloke from Tiger Bay, Cardiff. I don't know that they were consciously racist, it was just instinctive. But as we drove around the [Suez] Canal Zone they would lean out of the three ton QL and shout insults, "Queen Farida<sup>2</sup>, Queen of all the wogs" and all sorts of things. And that I think was the beginning of my conscious disapproval.

### **How had they reacted to, for example, the RAR?**

(00:04:40) Rhodesian African Rifles? It's a good question to ask because I was thinking about that the other morning and I really cannot remember. I certainly came into contact with them, but whether the ordinary gunners of 35 Light Anti Aircraft Squadron did, I cannot now recall.

### **So their attitudes were mainly towards the civilians that they were working around?**

Yes, it was an attitude of genial contempt and I just didn't care for it. So coming back to the UK after National Service, I got a job with the Port of Bristol Authority in their office at Avonmouth and again it was distinguished by a huge tedium. And I thought, "Blow this for a game of soldiers" and an advert appeared in some journal or other, 'The Rhodesian High Commission was looking for...' The Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland had come into existence in 1953 and it was looking for people for what was then beginning to be called the Rhodesia and Nyasaland Staff Corps. Which of course was built on the old Southern Rhodesian Staff Corps, which was the regular element of the Rhodesian Army, itself largely composed of reservists.

### **When had you returned to the UK, can I just ask?**

'53 I think it was, '52/'53. So I went up to what was then called Rhodesia House, 429 Strand, and was interviewed. One thing I do remember is that the half-Colonel, I think it was, who was interviewing me said, "Where would you like to be posted?" So I said "the Caprivi Strip" and he was astonished. I'm not sure he even knew what the Caprivi Strip was, let alone where it was. So I had to explain it to him. But apart from that, it all went very well because RAF Regiment training was damn good: you were both an infanteer<sup>3</sup> and you were a light anti-aircraft gunner. So I, and a number of others, joined a Union Castle vessel, sometimes known as 'a union cattle,' and sailed off to Cape Town.

### **In that time being back in the UK, had you been following events in Rhodesia at all? Were you aware of the politics around the Federation and what you were entering into?**

In the preamble to the recording before it was switched on, I did refer to the hope that was invested in the Federation. Yes, and of course South Africa

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<sup>2</sup> Queen Farida was consort of the then King, Farouk, of Egypt.

<sup>3</sup> Infanteer is an older term for an infantryman.

had embarked upon the apartheid road and Federation seemed... They were two horses out of the same stable, Rhodesia and South Africa; but one was going off on the apartheid road and we hoped the Federation would send us in the opposite direction. There was a lot of hope invested in that and I thought, "Well, ok, my grandfather loved South Africa from his time there (although he eventually finished up in the UK having joined the Imperial Forces for the First World War). This is something that he would have approved of, but in a slightly different context." Somebody once referred to Southern Rhodesia as South Africa's fifth province and you will recall that General Smuts desperately desired it; partly because of the white voters who kept his party in power. But it did seem that the Federation was going off and it meant a lot in Southern Rhodesia, which, of (00:08:31) course was the self-governing colony, whereas Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland were protectorates. The point about being a self-governing colony is that our external relations, if you can call it that, were conducted through the Dominions Office, not through the Colonial Office (that wasn't true for Northern Rhodesia, nor for Nyasaland). But the idea was that those two territories would moderate the sort of inbuilt racism of Southern Rhodesia, which took a lot of its laws from South Africa. In fact, Roman Dutch law was the bedrock of civil law in Southern Rhodesia as it is in South Africa. Southern Rhodesia was, however, 'liberal' in the southern African context, particularly in Bulawayo where you had a mob called the "Action Group." Have you come across that name at all?

**I think I have heard a bit about them, yes.**

I suppose because Salisbury was so cluttered with civil servants and hangers-on of that nature, whereas Bulawayo was a railway terminus in a manufacturing centre and had its feet firmly planted in the earth: There were people there – a minority one has to say – who realised that although the whites may have exercised a lot of initiative and had the capital, nevertheless, what was being done was being built on the backs of Africans. So there was this 'liberal' element, you might say, in Bulawayo and for a time (I'll give you a sight of my dissertation if you like), liberalism became almost fashionable. It certainly wasn't shoved out of court and this became particularly true during the early years of Federation. So it seemed to me, observing things from the UK, bringing all those strands together, that maybe it would be a good thing to go out to Rhodesia and see what's what.

**So would you say that you affiliated with that sense of hope or liberalism?**

Yes, very definitely, very definitely. And so the first place was to a training platoon at King George VI Barracks in Salisbury, KGVII for short. My platoon commander at the time was a chap called Lieutenant Don Gregory. I don't know if you've come across his name?

**No, I haven't.**

Oh really; poor chap he died only eighteen months ago. Don Gregory was a hell of a nice bloke and there were a number of other people who joined up with me at the same time. A chap called Ron Reid-Daly; have you come across his name?

**Yes.**

And there was another chap called Tom Gledhill. There were all sorts of people; we sort of messed together, if you like. A couple of vignettes from that time: I had been brought up to the idea that if you were a ranker and you were confronted by a Warrant Officer, you stood to attention, you didn't salute him. We did that for Commissioned Officers but for a WO, you simply (00:12:08) stood to attention. I ran into a Warrant Officer and I stood to attention and he was slightly surprised but, whatever transaction it was, we completed and we marched off. And I was ticked off later on for standing to attention in front of this Warrant Officer. Why? Guess: he was black. Now that seemed to me to fly in the face of things. Another vignette, nothing to do with it at all, was the way that Christmas and New Year were organised. All the people of English descent observed Christmas; and all the people of Scots descent, whether they came from South Africa and Rhodesia or the UK, did guard duty. And at New Year, it was the other way round and I thought, "This is a very civilised way of doing things!"

**So they had their Hogmanay.**

Yes, exactly. And then I was posted after completion of the training to Llewellyn Barracks. An interesting thing, and this is something I do approve of in the Rhodesian Military, everybody was recruited as either a Private or at the very highest as a Corporal. And from there you then progressed to commissioned rank and all that. So our various generals like Anderson, Putterill and Garlake, they'd all started off as troopers in the military wing of the British South Africa Police or they had joined as junior NCOs.

**So everyone had some ground experience?**

You knew what it was to be at the receiving end as well as the giving end, so to speak. So, as a Corporal, I was posted to Bulawayo to something called the National Service Training Depot because National Service had been brought in and it applied to all young white men throughout the Federation and to a number of non-Africans who were also non-whites i.e. people of mixed race or Asian descent. And so National Service Training Depot at Llewellyn Barracks, outside Bulawayo, looked after them and licked them into shape and all that sort of stuff.

**How long was your initial training?**

Well, as I say, I'd had the Regiment behind me, so not very long, a matter of a few months I think. Not a question I expected to be asked, I haven't given it any thought.

### **Was it '53 that you actually had gone out then?**

Yes, it must have been '52/'53, round about there. Maybe a bit later than that, '53/'54. And training was most enjoyable because you had all these young types and you could tell who came from the Northern Rhodesian copper mines because they were all driving very bloody smart swish cars.

### **I was going to ask that; was the training for the whole Federation combined?**

(00:15:26) Yes.

### **So who you were training with?**

Northern Rhodesians and Nyasalanders and Southern Rhodesians. Inevitably the majority were from Southern Rhodesia.

### **And was there a divide? You've said that some of the Northern Rhodesians were perhaps more wealthy.**

Yes, if they came from the copper mines, which is where the concentration of the white population in Northern Rhodesia was, they tended to have quite smart cars. And then you had youngsters off the farms in Southern Rhodesia, or from the civil servants and the businessmen in Salisbury; their cars were ok too. But you always knew who the poor bloody instructors were because they drove the crappiest cars, if they drove at all. I remember walking back from Bulawayo – Llewellyn Barracks was quite a way outside – and you probably know that Southern Rhodesia's contribution to civilisation was the tar strip roads that we had; do you know of those?

You drove two wheels on that tar strip and then gravel in the middle, gravel on either side of the tar bars. Walking back from Bulawayo – Llewellyn Barracks was quite a way outside – I slept on the tar bars on one occasion because I was so damn tired. The road was eventually tarmacked properly because the Queen Mother was due to visit. She always had a soft spot for Southern Rhodesia, I'm not sure why, but several times we found ourselves brushing the parade ground with toothbrushes to make sure it was clean enough for her. Well, a slight exaggeration, and painting patches of earth in the grass lawns green and that kind of thing. But training the NSTD blokes was quite good because white NCOs were kitted out to look very much like Officers. We had cheese cutter hats, we all had the same colour uniform, khaki drill shorts, long socks and that kind of thing, swagger canes and so on. I and a friend used to sit in the cars: we'd drive around the parade ground poking the NSTD characters with our pace sticks and swagger canes. I can't remember whether that's actually true or whether it's a good story!

### **What, to get them into line?**

Oh yes, you know, get on parade five minutes before you need to be, be presentable, have your shorts beautifully creased. And of course again being

white we had batmen, servants, to do that for us and there were some interesting anecdotes: I had a batman called Andrew, a nice young chap, he had a nice young wife and he'd look after my boots until I could shave in them they were so shiny and he had pressed my KD (khaki drill) so that it was knife edge, you could shave with the creases in the shorts. You see that crucifix up there?

(00:18:37) **Yes.**

That belonged to my grandmother. She'd got it in Germany before the First World War. The base had broken off and it's a two inch mortar cap now filled with cement and 'made in Egypt' by our people in the Regiment and it's stayed in there ever since. So that has been with me everywhere I've been and that was in my bunk at Llewellyn Barracks. Andrew knew this; he used to call me 'Mfundisi,' which means 'Priest,' which of course is totally inaccurate and he had some trouble with, not his wife, but with an Inyanga, or a Sangoma – you see, there are two types of sort of Medicine Man: one was good herbalist and the other was a Witch Doctor in the sort of mythical sense of the word –whom he suspected of putting a spell on his wife or simply putting a spell on somebody who wanted his wife. "Could I do anything about it?" Now I can't remember our SM's [Sergeant-Major's] name, but John Erasmus I think it was: a great big bloke, an Afrikaner you would have gathered from the name. Now one of the briefings we had had would have been "you don't mess about with African customs" and so on like that. But Andrew was very persistent, "Can I do anything to rectify things?" Well, at that time I was a great fan of Dennis Wheatley, I don't know if you've ever come across that author?

**I don't know whether I have.**

*The Devil Rides Out* and stuff like that. So I read up some Dennis Wheatley and I got out my Roman Catholic missal which in those days was Latin and I drew a star of David on the floor in chalk. Then I put a candle in each corner of the star, shoved my missal in and said to Andrew, "bring me something belonging to your wife." And so he did, I can't remember what it was now, oh yes, it was a jacket, and whilst he wasn't looking I put some foot powder in the folds of the jacket, picked up the missal, put the jacket there and then bumbled Latin over the whole ensemble. By the time I'd finished doing a few psalms and all that, there was a mob of Africans peering in through the window and another mob at the door "Ah, ah, ah iwe ah." Are you familiar with these exclamations of amazement?

**Well, no.**

Well, you are now! And I picked up the jacket and hurled it in the air and this foot powder came out and I said, "Lo, the spirit has gone." "Wow!" exclamations of wonder and all that and Andrew rushed off highly pleased. And it worked: The Witch Doctor left his wife alone and she and he got on very well. But Johnny Erasmus, bloody hell, I'm amazed that I've got flesh on my legs, he took so many strips off me! "You don't mess about with the zots."

That was one of the nicer words, “Kaffirs,” “Zots.” “You don’t mess about with the zots like that.” Nevertheless after that I could do no wrong among the African staff and I was invited to a kind of beer drink to celebrate Andrew and his wife getting together. Filthy stuff, chibuku I think it was: that was a kind of maize beer, and half-cooked meat and stuff like that, and I was the guest of honour.

Then there were other little incidents. Standing orders say “Recruits are not to go out at all, except via the main gate” and so on (00:22:36) “But if they do use the back gate, would you please shut it after them.” I’ve never forgotten that one, now that came from the Adjutant I think. Because we adjoined a farm, a white farm; they were all white farmers in that area. In fact, curiously enough, a chap who I was with in the army is still farming nearby, a chap called Gerry Winch. How he’s managing, I don’t know, it’s not the kind of farm that Mugabe and his men want or ‘Cholera Bob’ as they call him now. It’s too small so he’s been left in peace, relatively speaking. Robbery is what he’s got to put up with. He finished up as an RSM. Are you familiar with army ranks and stuff?

**I’m getting familiar.**

Regimental Sergeant Major, the most senior non-commissioned rank. After that you go into the commissioned ranks, Lieutenant up to General. And this of course caused a couple of raised eyebrows here and there. What else did I do? I ran a night school for African soldiers and African staff and I was the Chaplain’s assistant. And again I was so damned young and naïve though, the fact is that I cannot remember any Africans coming to Mass or any other service, soldiers or civilians; there might have been a few Coloureds that came but I can’t remember. But my contact with Africans, apart from soldiering, was through the night school and that was basic literacy effectively.

**Was that something that you had set up on your own initiative, or were the facilities available?**

Yes I think so. I can’t remember now, I think it was. What else? Oh yes, the other thing I did was production. Now this I did initiate and that was “The Lion and Tusk.” It was the Regimental magazine of the National Service Training Depot and it still exists but as a publication of the Rhodesian Army Association. I wrote most of it myself I have to say, at least initially. Why the lion and tusk? Have you ever seen the badge of the Rhodesian Army?

**Yes I have.**

Well, we never called it that. We always called it ‘the cat and tooth.’ But that was the obvious title for the journal, so I did that and I ran the garrison cinema as well. ‘Bioscope,’ is that a word you’ve come across?

**Yes, because people just used to refer to that as going to the ‘bio’ or the ‘scope.’**

To the bio? Well, I've never abbreviated it, but it's such a 1920s word. In a way it sums up what Rhodesia was then: It was rooted in a past that they imagined, but possibly didn't ever quite exist. The sad thing was hospitality, a southern African tradition: Rhodesians, all of them, black, white or sky blue-pink, they would invite you into their homes and shower you with food and drink and stuff like that, even in the cities let alone in the bush. They were a good mob, and they believed themselves to be a good mob. And one of the sad things was that they were (00:26:34) blinkered by the mob. As you will realise, they couldn't see the larger picture and I suppose it was difficult to anyway: A landlocked country, prisoner of your own history and a prisoner of the ideology from south of the border. How come that ideology was so strong? Well, basically speaking, the white population of Rhodesia was about a third of South African emigrational descent, a third locally born and a third UK immigrant and that is very, very rough, and the army reflected that division. You could always tell who was who because when The Goon Show was being broadcast by the Southern Rhodesian Broadcasting Corporation; now that was a British comedy.

**Yes.**

You know it, do you?

**Yes.**

Good, well educated I must say! You knew who the Brits were because they would fall about laughing. The South Africans and Rhodesians would look at each other and think "What the hell has got into them?" I loved the Goon Show.

**Can I just ask a bit about...?**

Yes, I'm sorry I'm talking too much.

**Oh no, not at all. I just wondered if you could tell me a bit about where you felt your "home" was at the time; and also what did your family think about your actions of going abroad?**

That's a difficult one to answer. I think as far as the family is concerned, my mother and father had split up dramatically. I don't know how old I was then, but basically my family is my mother, my sister and myself. There were various aunts and uncles but my mother always thought that I would up sticks and away. She was quite a strong personality and I think in a way, she approved of me going away simply to establish my own independence. My sister too: she went off to France to a finishing school from a convent where she'd been in Somerset and then she went to Malaya, married a bloke – an English Headmaster of a school in the Cameron Highlands – and we had relatives in Malaya. My mother's brother was in Australia with his family; there were other cousins from Canada and my mother had close friends in New Zealand. The "old" Commonwealth was very much part of our family history in context. So it was no great surprise. And in any event she knew



the influence her father, my grandfather, had on me so, as I say, it was no great surprise for her. And in a way, it was another mouth not to feed and National Service had taken care of that anyway. I suppose she worried whether I was rolling around in the bush. I do remember one aunt though being rather alarmed; she said, "Look at all that trouble in Morocco. You don't want to get messed up in that!" which indicates the level of geography teaching for that generation.

**(00:30:05) So people perhaps weren't very aware of what you were entering into?**

No, I don't think they were. And in any event, it was all the British Empire, wasn't it, you see? In a way, you're quite literally looking at an historical relic, the last gasp of the British Empire.

**And would you say that you settled in, in terms of calling it "home"? Or would you still feel that you were drawn to the UK as your "home"?**

That's an extremely difficult question to answer. I think my wife would say that at heart I still think of Rhodesia, Central Africa, as "home."

**So you did build up an affiliation to it quite strongly when you got there?**

Oh yes, very definitely. Tony Wedgwood Benn, a name you may have heard of, once accused me of being more interested in the drains of Bulawayo than those of Bristol. And I think this is why I resent 'Cholera Bob' so much; if you read Diana Auret's book<sup>4</sup> and see the hope that was invested in Cholera Bob when he came to power in the 1980s as Prime Minister of Zimbabwe. My late wife, I can't remember whether I told you, she was Cape Coloured, so we could never have gone back to Rhodesia but we did live in Zambia. That's another story. She died thirty odd years ago and my present wife is a native Redlander and you don't get many of those even in Bristol, let alone in the country. When she's feeling cross with me, she accuses me of sort of being more Africa centred and all that. Yes, I suppose there's an element of truth in that. Yet at the same time "home" is very definitely here and I've drawn up my funeral service, which includes three poems to be read by my own two boys and by the senior girl. I had boys and my current wife had girls, it worked out that way. One of the poems very definitely is nostalgic, looking back to the Rhodesia that I knew; the second poem is, what shall I call it? the end of the dark night after my first wife's death and the beginning of the dawn where my second wife comes along. And the third poem is about family here in England. So I've got a foot in two homes and I'm sure that's a situation you come across in your research?

**Absolutely.**

Your Kenyan ladies today, are they in the same boat?

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<sup>4</sup> Diana Auret was the South African wife of Captain Mike Auret, Director (eventually) of Zimbabwe's Catholic Justice and Peace Commission. She is author of *Reaching for Justice* (1992) Gweru, Zimbabwe, Mambo Press

**I would say so, yes. It's an extremely complex situation, isn't it, because they often feel a strong belonging and a sense of identity for a place that no longer exists.**

Absolutely right, that's so right.

**So that is their "home" but it is no longer there, so therefore they have to call the UK their "home."**

(00:33:23) What's the phrase? "The past is another country," both physically and temporally it is.

**So it's a very complex situation.**

It needs not just a sociologist, but a psychologist as well to work it all out.

**And you mention then that you had learnt some Afrikaans as well?**

Yes.

**And that you were quite sensitive perhaps to some of the cultural and African religions?**

Afrikaans is the South African dialect of Dutch.

**But it sounds like you were quite sensitive to the different range of cultures in Rhodesia so African religions and Afrikaans language.**

Yes, in that respect you flatter me a bit but yes, I'd like to think that I was. When I was at Prior Park – that's the Catholic public school outside Bath – inevitably we had visits from foreign Missionaries and one mob, The Augustinians of the Assumption, made a terrific impression on me because they had operated in what was then the Belgian Congo and also in Eastern Europe even under the Soviet regime. I tried my vocation with the Assumptionists and my novice master had actually been in Romania before the Second World War and spoke Romanian, obviously. During the Second World War he had broadcast from Palestine on the BBC's service to Eastern Europe, in Romanian, saying "Don't fall for the Nazis," that sort of stuff. And we had blokes – Assumptionists, both Priests and Lay Brothers – who had been in various parts including the Congo and all that. At Prior Park we had Anglo-Indians, West Africans, West Indians: It wasn't so much a culture-sensitive environment, but you'd grown up with it.

**You'd soaked it up, it sounds, along the way.**

Yes, osmotic sensitivity, so yes perhaps I was, but without actually realising it.

**And I wonder how that fitted in with the sentiments that other people had in the Army and the structure in the division between the black and white troops?**

Well, you would have picked up some clue to that by the fact that I was ticked off for saluting a black WO [Warrant Officer]; and then Johnny Erasmus ticking me off, although that was a different thing. No, it did not fit in ever so well.

**So how did people react? You've mentioned a few incidents, but how did people generally react to that and did you have to dumb it down a bit?**

(00:36:33)

Well if I did, I wasn't aware of it but we went on to braais, barbeques in English; braaivleis, are you familiar with that one?

**Yes I am.**

Oh good on you. All sorts of odd things like that. We went on these things, went to parties and whatnot, and it was just part of life I'm afraid. And if any of my mates in the Army... I think they just thought I was eccentric, that was basically it; however that was in the first few years. As things hotted up, so to speak, in the middle/late 50s, I did things which certainly didn't meet with approval. I joined something called the Capricorn Africa Society, are you familiar with that?

**I have heard of that.**

You should have done, it stretched from Southern Rhodesia to Kenya

**Yes, I'm sure I was lent a book about that by somebody I met from East Africa. Well actually a husband of one of the East African ladies.**

Who was it, can you remember? Not Susan Wood?

**No, Watts was the surname and they lived in South Wales, Mr Watts and his wife was a Doctor in Uganda.**

Amazing the things...because of course much later on in life I had something to do with a hospital in Uganda. My second wife's father printed the magazine for Mengo hospital and it's got a support group in this country but that's a different story.

**So the Capricorn Society was active in Rhodesia?**

Oh yes.

**And can you tell me a bit about your involvement in that? How it upset people?**

Let me get something for you, if I had realised you were going to be so detailed or so tolerant of my speechifying I would have laid all this out for you. I didn't think it would be quite that interesting, let me find something for you...

[Break in interview]

This is my MA dissertation called in full *Liberalism and the politics of de-colonisation in Southern Rhodesia from '55 to '65* and of course this is a photocopied thing. What was the question you just asked me?

(00:39:37) **About what your involvement was in the Capricorn Society?**

Yes, just to go back a bit: origins of Rhodesian whites 1951, Rhodesian 32.7; by 1969, 41, nearly 50 percent. South Africa 30.5 in 1951, declined to 21.3. UK 28.8, nearly 29 percent. So obviously the Rhodesian-born population was growing. That's non-whites [referring to following pages]...I think my involvement was just going to meetings and there was also something called the Southern Rhodesian Interracial Association, which complemented each other in many respects. But in the Capricorn Society a notable figure I remember was called David Stirling. Have you ever heard of him?

**I'm not sure if I know much about him.**

He was founder of the Special Air Service and I've got a book about him somewhere actually with a photograph of me in it. David Stirling's brother in law was one of the Governor Generals of the Federation. Notice we had a Governor General because we were almost a Dominion at that time as opposed to colonies, which have Governors. But we never quite made it to dominion status. And there was a missionary called JH Oldham who wrote a terrific book on Capricorn; he was the sort of intellect behind it you might say. The theory behind it was, and its badge was a zebra-coloured map of Africa. Why a Zebra? Black, white and brown stripes. Now is it black on white? or is it white on black? or is it brown on both? or so on like that. But that was the thinking behind it and it got a lot of support from things like the Rhodesia Selection Trust and so on. Through both the Capricorn Society and the Interracial Association going to their meetings, I gradually got drawn into political life, although they were both technically non-political. I met Joshua Nkomo through the Interracial Association for instance. The Capricorn Convention of 1956 up in Nyasaland was a major thing and it included people, black, white and sky blue-pink from the three territories of the Federation and the three territories of East Africa. That's why we went to Salima on Lake Nyasa, because it was convenient to get to.

**So it was very much born out of this ideological hope for the future of the Central Africans?**

I wasn't attuned enough to say what it was born out of, but I think the answer was that there were white Kenyans and Tanganyikans and Southern Rhodesians and what not like that, and Northern Rhodesians; and there were black and Asian ones as well, who really did want to see a colour blind-ish central and Eastern Africa, as opposed to the rigidities that were coming into South Africa through the advance of apartheid. Yes [quotes from dissertation] "educational work among African troops and staff" which I've already alluded to...and in 1956 I was Matabeleland delegate to the Capricorn Convention

and so there you are, you've got this be-goggled, dark haired in those days, curly haired in those days, young chap gaping out of the front of a mob of people, Capricorn delegates, in the biography of David Stirling. Now during that time (00:43:55) of course Garfield Todd had become Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia, do you know anything about his background?

**Not a great deal, I do know of him though.**

He was a New Zealander, Churches of Christ missionary at Dadaya Mission. He was in some respects quite a good bloke and he became Prime Minister of Southern Rhodesia when Federation came into existence, and Godfrey Huggins moved up to become Federal Prime Minister, which is why the establishment in Salisbury (by that I mean the Salisbury Club, the Argus Press, Parliament), was known as the Huggins bureau = a sort of catch all phrase for everybody who was in parliament and his establishment. Garfield Todd was slightly out of that; he wasn't British to start with, he was a New Zealander and he had some sympathy with Africans, quite literally. And although he introduced a number of fairly tough laws controlling Africans and African education and Trade Unionism and stuff like that, he also looked to liberalise laws in terms of a franchise, in terms of access to public utilities and that sort of stuff. It was this perceived sympathy for non-whites that eventually got him unseated in a palace coup. I must find a legible copy of this and if you're really interested in this stuff...though it's long before the time you're interested in.

**I'm more interested in how it affected you.**

Well, then I was posted up to KGVI Barracks in Salisbury, King George VI Barracks, and I became involved in politics then.

**And so this was in the time of Garfield Todd?**

Yes it was and when I was still in the army. Now politics and the military technically shouldn't mix, politics as opposed to ideologies. I effectively joined the United Rhodesia Party of Garfield Todd and actually canvassed for its candidate in one of the elections. Again it's all in there [refers to dissertation] I suspect. The chap who was standing, he might even have been sitting MP in one election, was a chap called Hardwicke Holderness, DSO, DFC, AFC do those mean anything to you?

**Yes, I think so.**

Distinguished Service Order, the next best thing to the VC, DFC – Distinguished Flying Cross, AFC – Air Force Cross. He'd developed a technique during the Second World War of, if you've got a plane flying like that normally, he did it that way [demonstrates with hands that the plane was flown on its side] along Norwegian Fjords to bomb German shipping. He was a Rhodesian born and bred and after the war he founded a firm called Scanlan and Holderness lawyers who took it on themselves to defend African Nationalists as African Nationalists were gathering strength. Scanlan and

Holderness are still operating in Salisbury although obviously Hardwicke has died and all that sort of stuff, but Hardwicke Holderness was a hell of a nice bloke. Now there were another couple, Victor and Eleanor Tarica. He was a chemistry lecturer at the University, he was also a (00:47:37) bookseller and they were Sephardi Jews, or he was Sephardi Jewish, she was Ashkenazi. And I was in the army still but I went and helped them out in their bookshop because they were nice people. They gave me access to books and they were very much involved with the United Rhodesia Party as well. This was not a quick way to advancement in the Army, it's not a thing you could keep secret.

### **How did people react to that?**

Well, up in Salisbury, a bit anti-ly. I have a friend to this day who was in the Army with me; he'd been in the Kenya Police and then joined the Staff Corps and he's now an Anglican Priest retired. He stayed on in the Staff Corps after I'd left and among other things he was in charge of something called 'non-effective records.' And all this stuff apparently was on my dossier: "Watch this bloke, he's not reliable."

### **So these were the records that were kept on all Rhodesians?**

I presume, well at least certainly on all...

### **On all suspicious individuals.**

Yes, well, on promotions, tickings off, punishments and that kind of thing, what you'd done. And this was eccentric to the nth degree.

### **So you were being watched?**

Yes. And then a family crisis broke out in this country [the U.K.] and my sister left Malaya and my mother's heart was broken. So I had to come back to this country and so there was a, you might say, an interregnum for a bit.

### **When was that? The end of the 50s would that have been?**

Yes somewhere around there. Yes that's right, until 1959. And so whilst I was in the UK I obviously had to earn a living. I mean, it's OK being on leave in the UK, which was initially how it started. Every colonial comes to the UK to go to theatres. I got a job at a prep school in North Yorkshire, which was jolly nice. It was more than a prep school, it was a grammar school.

### **Can I just ask briefly, was that 'leave' that you were taking? Or did you actually leave the army?**

No, this was 'a leave,' yes quite right, but I quite enjoyed the teaching at this school, not least because they had some quite attractive teenagers although as I say it was a grammar. I joined the Green Howards, which is a British Regiment territorial, and I and a Canadian bloke were allowed to wear our

colonial flashes on the uniform. I don't think it was ever legal, but it lent a certain exotic taste to the British troops. I think "yes, we've got colonials in our thing. Look, there's one there, he's from (00:51:00) Rhodesia, and there's another one there, he's from Canada," that kind of thing. But it kept me in touch with things. I retroactively resigned from the Staff Corps whilst on leave teaching at this school and as luck would have it and I don't believe in luck...you've heard that phrase 'the finger of God?' Bloody nonsense! It's the toe of His boot time and again. And things came together; a school in Southern Rhodesia was looking for somebody, and this was a prep school, to teach general subjects or something like that. I think the only qualification I had for that was having done a degree through the University of South Africa. But the head was on leave in the UK and he came over to see me; a chap called Anthony Cheetham and he had some connection with the SAS as well. So I had done a degree in South Africa, I had lived in Southern Rhodesia in the army and I'd lived in that part of Matabeleland and I had done some teaching in the UK for a year. It all came together, "Yes, I'll take you on." So I went back to Southern Rhodesia and taught at this school.

This school was an Anglican school, though not part of the diocese of Matabeleland, and it was multi racial. Not many non-whites but some, and they tended to be the children of families, ex-pats and government ministers or soon-to-be government ministers from Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, particularly Northern Rhodesia; and a few Coloureds and Asians from Southern Rhodesia. That was interesting too: We found our sports fixtures, for instance (I was a cricket master), somewhat limited because we had non-whites in our team, you can imagine. But we also were unable to play non-white schools. There was a place called Founders High School, for instance, in Bulawayo, which was a Coloured school, although the staff were mixed. Are you familiar with the terminology 'Coloured?'

**Yes.**

Mixed race or Eurafrican, come to that. Talking to one of the staff during the thing they had – I can't remember the name of the woman but she was a Coloured girl – I sounded forth about my opinions on these things, and she said, "You ought to come and talk to us about this." I think the reason I put forward was that basically women were the linchpin of racism in whites in Southern Rhodesia. I'd actually done an essay or something like that for the University of South Africa and this is what emerged. You know, I used to listen to the girls, the wives particularly, of the people in the Staff Corps. You listen to them in the shopping streets and so on like that; and the soldiers for instance black or white, run around together teaching each other how to kill each other and stuff like that. What were the women doing at home? They had their servants, they never met Africans in any capacity other than as servants; whereas the men could see, "that black can shoot as well as I can," or "he's a damn good tracker, I wish I could do that," and so on and so forth like that. So once you are out of the suburban setting, out of the barrack setting, out in the bush actually doing the work, it didn't matter whether you were sky blue-pink or khaki. This proved particularly essential during the Civil

War. You must have come across...have you done lots of other interviews? I expect you have?

**A few now, yes.**

(00:55:17)

You must have come across it that black and white troops developed a respect for each other?

**Yes.**

Which was not sharable by the women?

**Yes.**

The other thing was when you think about it, you must have heard the phrase that Kenya settlers came from Officers whereas Rhodesia got the 'erks.' Have you not heard that?

**I can imagine the sentiment, I haven't heard the terms.**

That was always quite interesting, that, because Rhodesia was pretty generally a classless, but working-class based white society. We are talking about a white society here and you as a sociologist must appreciate this, there were whites there who've come up from the UK who for the first time in their lives found themselves at the top of the heap. These were the Daily Mirror readers who were liberal for about six months until the sun burnt their liberalism off them and they found that their life of sunshine, swimming pools and sex was bloody appealing and they were never going to get that in the UK and so who the hell was going to rock the boat? The 'zots,' the 'kaffirs.' And they picked up the terminology from the rest of the whites very easily and the womenfolk, with all their servants running around doing things for them in the garden, in the house, looking after the children. They didn't want all that disturbed and the white blokes who were doing the semi-skilled but leadership jobs, whether it was directing Africans on how to fill a hole in the road or wire up a house or paint a wall, they didn't want that threatened by an uprising African proletariat either. So there was a lot at stake.

**Would you say there was quite a division in the Rhodesian society between those different groups? Say, for example, skilled workers and those that were in the forces?**

You can't say in the forces because even the Federal Army was basically reservists. Those of us who were in the Staff Corps, the regulars, were all full-timers, career soldiers you might say. We were such a minority that we had very little effect on the sociology of it.

**Perhaps then, between those that were working say in agriculture, and those who were doing skilled and semi-skilled jobs?**



Well yes, I think there was up to a point. The division that you've got in this country between town dwellers and rural dwellers for a start; rural dwellers tend to be more self-sufficient than town dwellers. Having said that of course, Salisbury and Bulawayo, followed by Umtali, Gwelo, Fort Vic, Sinoia,<sup>5</sup> which are the smaller towns, the majority of the white population lived in these (00:58:46) places. But there was a kind of strong and recent folk memory of Rhodesia being an agricultural country so to speak, much as every Frenchman likes to think that he's got it from the soil. It wasn't quite so true for the Brit descended, but the love of the soil was very strong among South African whites and Rhodesian whites. And if you look, Sir Humphrey Gibbs, the last Rhodesian Governor of Southern Rhodesia, when he eventually succumbed to Smith's intimidation, I suppose that's the right word, he retired to his farm you see. I've got a photograph somewhere of Sir Humphrey Gibbs addressing the kids at Whitestone School where I taught. In fact one of his sons lives over in Cirencester I think. A few years ago he wrote an article in the Times saying, "I blame Smith for Mugabe" and I thought, "Bloody right mate!" because Smith was a flaming good teacher and Mugabe a very apt pupil. Because Mugabe is employing the Central Intelligence Organisation set up by Smith; he's employing Joint Operations Commands set up by Smith; he's employing laws laid down originally by Smith but 'refined' by Mugabe. So when the Zimbabwe cricket team came over to Bristol a few years ago, my son and I, and to our amazement a number of others paraded around the ground with placards saying something to the effect of "Mugabe – a black Smith," which offended blacks and whites equally, which I thought was a good place to be. So you can imagine stunts like that and as I grew older, of course, they became more articulated and entrenched too much; it didn't go down too well.

**And so you were saying you had gone back to teach. Was this 1959?**

Yes it was, 1960-1963.

**That was when you were teaching?**

That was when I was teaching and then the Rhodesian Front came to power and I've a couple of little vignettes on that. Whitestone School, outside Bulawayo but surrounded by suburbia in many respects, was built near a river called Matsheumhlope which means 'white stones.' We had cricket pitches in the grounds and stuff like that. Whilst I was still back in the UK, uproar had broken out in Southern Rhodesia and it looked as if there was an African uprising and incipient insurgency. So I thought; I had a girlfriend in this country, in fact several although I'm not boasting, and there was my mother and all this sort of stuff and I thought "No, I can't stay here, I'm going back to Rhodesia." So I boarded the 'Union cattle' boat and again it was filled with white Rhodesians going back to the colony, sort of "what's happening?" "We've got to find out for ourselves. You can't depend on the British press: they're still fed from the government." So we went back and what did we find? Basically to quote the words of a British Governor of Nyasaland, a Judge who

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<sup>5</sup> Umtali, Gwelo, Fort Vic(toria) and Sinoia are now called Mutare, Gweru, Masvingo and Chinoyi.

lived in the uproars in Nyasaland, “there was scarcely enough skin of a rioter’s body to cover a postage stamp, nor enough blood spilt to fill a teaspoon.” Now that was said about Nyasaland, but it was true then. On one occasion whilst I was teaching at this school, a bunch of youths – I think they were probably having fun but we thought they were rioters – came roaring across the cricket field and there was this chap called Sellars – I can’t remember his first name but he was an Englishman – and he looked at this with horror. Anyway he was the bloke that (01:03:19) looked after the main cricket pitch. I was just the junior, and he picked up his cane and he stalked out, “Get off my cricket pitch you lot! Bugger off” and they looked at this mad Englishman and ran away. But that’s...in Indonesia do you remember the...oh you’re too young, the Konfrontasi, and one of the Indonesian leaders confronted the British over Malaysia and some rioters stormed the British Embassy. Some lunatic soldier, military attaché, pulled out his bagpipes and walked up and down on the veranda playing the bagpipes and terrified these Indonesians...well it was the same sort of spirit. “You can’t mess about with my cricket pitch,” and that was about the level of it at that time. But what was significant was that the townships were becoming politicised; they weren’t just fed up with lack of access to running water or electricity and that sort of stuff, what were lousy housing conditions. The Southern Rhodesian African National Congress had been founded 1952/53, maybe even a bit later. This was Joshua Nkomo, and they were taking the leaf out of the South African book you might say. Am I running on too much?

**No, I was just looking at a note that I was going to ask about the townships.**

Well, I’ve got an interest there because I have a Godson to this day who’s the son of a Mashona father and a Matabele mother and Fred Zwambila was a great friend of mine. Now I met him through the United Rhodesia Party, Central African Party – they were one and the same thing with different names at different times – and Fred and I had been the prospective parliamentary candidates for the CAP. You can see how desperate the memory is that I’ve got to...[refers to notes]. Yes, I joined Garfield Todd’s Central African Party in 1958 and campaigned for Hardwicke Holderness in his election, and in 1960-63 I was a voluntary officer for the Central African Party and was its parliamentary prospective candidate in Matabeleland South ’62. Fred Zwambila was the candidate for Matabeleland North...are you familiar with the electoral system in Rhodesia at that time? ‘A’ roll and ‘B’ roll?

**Oh not really.**

The ‘A’ roll was basically as you’ve got it in this country. The ‘B’ roll, however, demanded lower qualifications.

**Oh yes of course, I am familiar with it, so it meant that...**

Fred and I were ‘B’ roll candidates or candidates in ‘B’ roll constituencies.

**And that also affected who could actually vote and so on.**

Yes, there were a very few Africans on the 'B' roll, but there were very few but some Africans on the 'A' roll. According to your education qualifications, your wealth and all that sort of stuff, that depended which roll you were on. The 'B' roll elected fewer MPs than the 'A' roll. Fred got threatened by ANC types who wanted to firebomb his house, so it was the usual wave of intimidation. I was threatened with the loss of my job, (01:07:00) so he and I kept in step with each other and of course in the throes of my candidacy I canvassed in both country districts and in the townships. Not many whites ever had much to do with the townships but some did, the clergy of a certain stripe anyway and by that I don't mean denomination, I mean in a certain class of white missionary as opposed to ordinary clergy; whites who worked for things like the Native Affairs Department or local government and not politicians. But for most whites representative of the territory it was practically unthinkable and I was a bit horrified by the conditions. Fred and Pat Zwambila had quite a nice house, all things considered, and when their first son Tony Brian was born, I was asked to be Godfather, which was nice. I've got a photo of one faintly embarrassed white standing by this proud African family. I often wonder how they got on because as I say, he was Shona and she was Matabele and if you think back to 1980 and the massacres in Matabeleland, you wonder.

**I just was going to ask that in the piece that you'd written, you mentioned that you'd done some marches in the townships, flag marches?**

Flag marches.

**I wondered how different it was being there in the early days with your flags?**

Good question.

**And then what it was like going back, actually politically campaigning? It sounds like there was this change of tune perhaps?**

Well, in the first place, if I was on a flag march, I was part of the official thing and in a way I was in a kind of military cocoon. Anyway it was damn good fun: Weather was good, you were young, you had air, you were active and there was a drum beating, maybe even a small band or something like that. Yes, it was good fun generally speaking and the kids ran around after you laughing and joking. It was like small boys do when they see soldiers...I'd still do it now. But going out campaigning, that was a different thing in the sense that you were...I think I was aware that there was a sea change going on. The reception was always courteous at the very least and there was never the poisonous atmosphere that I experienced years later in South Africa as an election observer and monitor, when you were sometimes greeted by cries of "Bulala ama-bhunu!" "Kill the farmer, kill the white." But that's again, a different story. You know what the word 'Bulawayo' means don't you? 'A place of killing.'

**Oh right.**

There's a long flat hill outside Bulawayo called Ntabas Induna, the hill of the Chiefs, and that's where Mzilikazi would throw dissidents off to their deaths hence 'a place of killing.' 'Bulala' is the imperative of the word to kill. I was never aware of anything threatening or even uncomfortable but I was aware that some of the chief people were beginning to put together that the (01:10:58) conditions they were living in could be altered and ameliorated by political action and there was a rising African middle class as well and there were concessions coming. I remember one thing: I think I was still in the army at the time but we had first, second and third class coaches on the trains. The third class coaches were for Africans, the second class for mixed race and poor whites and the first class was for the generality of whites. I can't remember quite why, but one of the things Federal government did, or maybe Southern Rhodesian government under pressure, was to open the second and first class...all classes were open to everybody. Oh yes, because of Federation we had high commissioners, not just from the UK and South Africa and Canada, but from India. Sir Francis Ibiam was a West African, a very prominent churchman and he came to Southern Rhodesia whilst I was still in the army. I can't remember the date, but he was turned away from a country hotel because he was black and that shocked people left, right and centre. The Indian High Commissioner, on the other hand, used to make a point of – well he wasn't called that, he was called Commissioner – he made a point of going to places as a non-white, not perhaps diplomatic but certainly effective and you couldn't bugger about with a member of the diplomatic corps. So there were cracks appearing. I mean, it depends how deeply you want to go into this because stuff like that is all in there [refers to dissertation].

**So would it be right to say that in these townships, it was more the sense of awareness amongst the local populations that was changing, rather than your position changing?**

Yes, I think they were running in tandem. My position was changing because their position was changing and their position was changing because I was there. But I was only prospective candidate; I was just propping up my constituency. It didn't work anyway because of the Central African Party, which is, as I've told you, like the Rhodesia Party. It was becoming mired in white politics and the end of Federation and all that sort of stuff. But what might be more to your interest, you'll have picked up that things were changing and so I was changing.

But let's get back to the army for a bit. I wasn't alone and this I think is what you might want to pick up. The names you want to look for in any of your reading, and perhaps in other interviews, are General Jock Anderson, General Sam Putterill. Have you seen his obituary? He was the one who said to Smith "The Queen is my boss, not you." Air Vice Marshall Hawkins.

[Break in formal interview to show photographs of Staff Corps personnel]

We all started off as NCOs of one sort. Derry McIntyre became a General; GP Engela, he was an Afrikaner and he didn't like what was happening in South Africa so he came up to join, still a soldier but in the Staff Corps

because he liked the way that things appeared to be going. There was another chap, a Roelofse, whose first name I can't remember; he was an officer and he and I were doing our University degrees at the same time. Leon Jacobs I think became a Brigadier.

**(01:16:36) So these were all people that you trained with?**

Yes, John Lancaster joined as a Sergeant, which was fairly unusual, the reason being that he already had the Distinguished Conduct Medal from the Brits. But this is the photograph taken from history published in *The Lion*. So as I say, the title is one I dreamt up but the magazine's produced slightly differently now, I don't know if there's much else...

**But it was the list of names that you were interested in, wasn't it?**

Yes, I was hoping that it would fall out of these but it hasn't. Mike Auret is a name to put down, have you come across that one before? He was a captain in intelligence. He and I again were NCOs together. He was a Rhodesian born and bred. I've got a note about him somewhere here; I think he was third generation. He was educated by the Jesuits at St George's College, Salisbury, trained by the Federal Rhodesian Army, didn't like what he was being ordered under the Smith regime and became a farm manager I think in Belingwe. Some of the white farmers were pretty tough on their African staff and Mike didn't care much for that. He was also a damn good Roman Catholic, took the social teachings of the Catholic Church very seriously indeed. I mean there are all sorts of hares here that you could start running and you will know that the Roman Church had produced quite a number of documents from their posts on the way workers should be treated and so on and so forth like that. So Mike became organising secretary of the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, which is a fruit of the Second Vatican Council anyway. And Diana Auret's book is very interesting, people seem to think that it was always white against black; no it wasn't. The Catholic Justice and Peace Commission...in fact some of the members, the white members of that managed to smuggle Mugabe over the border into Mozambique at one point. I mean, Mugabe had his Catholic contacts; you see he was brought up a Roman Catholic. A chap called John Deery too.

And you need to read Diana's book if you want to follow it through because eventually he [Mike Auret] fell so foul of Ian Smith that he and his family had to flee the country and they took refuge at the Ammerdown Centre just outside Bath, which is a very interesting place in its own right. He lasted a year or two and then they went back to what became Zimbabwe and then he fell foul of Mugabe. Now my wife was out there when a report was due to be produced I think on the massacres in Matabeleland by the Fifth Brigade and it was supposed to be issued by the Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, Lawyers for Human Rights and some of the bishops of the Catholic Church: Donald Lamont of course was always outspoken but he was Ulster Irish. Bishop Haene was Swiss; he spoke out once in a while but some of the Bishops were dead anti what Justice and Peace Commission were doing. My wife happened to be due back in the UK at some point and Mike said, "Take

this with you if you can, but be aware you might be arrested for this at Harare (01:20:51) Airport.” And notice I use the word ‘Harare,’ and what it was, was the report on the massacres in Matabeleland. I think that’s right, we’ve got a copy upstairs anyway so that’s how far he had travelled, you might say.

**And these were the massacres that were done...**

By the Fifth Brigade, trained by the North Koreans, in Matabeleland basically against Joshua Nkomo’s ZAPU and also to punish people for supporting him. About twenty thousand people suffered as a result.

**And can I ask about your work in an Anglican school? Did you perceive any difference between what the Catholic element was doing?**

No, I mean that’s where this dissertation comes in. If you want to borrow it you can because I’ve got two copies and this is the one that’s more legible even though it’s the crummier copy.

**Because the churches did, as you’ve pointed out, play quite a key role didn’t they?**

They did, the Catholic and Anglican churches particularly. But it was Catholic and Anglican churchmen as opposed to the Churches basically. Donald Lamont among the Catholics, Kenneth Skelton among the Anglicans. I never knew Donald Lamont but I did meet Kenneth Skelton a couple of times and there were plenty of white clergy. In fact it’s noted in the Pearce Commission during Smith’s era that the churches were divided: Clergy were divided among the missionaries out in the sticks, there was a degree of sympathy if not active support for the Mujibas,<sup>6</sup> the guerrillas, the African Nationalists; whereas in the towns the white clergy tended to take on the colouration of their congregations. It was damn difficult. This bloke [in picture] was never a clergyman; he’d been a Gurkha Officer during the Second World War for the British Army. He may not look like it from his appearance but, yes, that was the case. But he never became a priest: He became a kind of hermit looking after lepers in Southern Rhodesia and neither the whites nor the blacks liked that very much. In the end he was assassinated by, we think, dissident blacks who, maybe just criminals, there was a lot of that. It’s quite evident from his background he would have been in sympathy for black Nationalists if not in active support. And then there were a couple of Roman Catholic nuns who were eventually deported by Ian Smith because of their outspoken support for, and actual activity with, African Nationalists.

**And did these sorts of activities affect how you were perceived, or was this too early?**

I’m talking about the Smith era. No, this was too early.

**So your time...**

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<sup>6</sup> *Mujibas* means ‘boys’ as in ‘boys in the bush,’ who were guerrillas or terrorists.

People thought I was eccentric, misguided but not dangerous. (01:24:37)

**And that all changed afterwards?**

Yes, after I left the army and went into teaching and things were beginning to 'hot up' as they say. Then yes, it did become a bit more pointed you might say.

**And can I ask was that one of your motivations for leaving the army?**

What, leaving the army?

**Yes.**

No, it wasn't.

**It was just your time teaching in the UK or...?**

No, for leaving the army it was because my sister's marriage to this bloke in Malaya had broken up, pretty poisonously and it broke my mother's heart because it was a social coup for her at the time and that kind of thing. Both of them went different ways and needed my support so that was that.

**And were you tempted to stay on in the army in any sort of reserve capacity?**

Well yes, as I say, I joined the Green Howards territorials in the UK with a view eventually...I wanted to keep my hand in.

**But when you were in Rhodesia?**

Well, then I joined the...perhaps I hadn't got that far. Teaching, I joined the British South Africa Police Special Reserve. Now the BSAPolice always took the right of the line at parades. Why? Because they were the senior service. The army, Southern Rhodesian Staff Corps and Rhodesia and Nyasaland Staff Corps had started off with the military wing of the police and when the army was set up the men in the military wing had to be re-attested into the army. Are you familiar with the phraseology?

**Yes I am.**

And a lot of blokes were recruited, soldiers or ex-soldiers were recruited from the UK and from South Africa into the new thing and that's why there's that division into three, but it reflected the division in the white population anyway. People who...I never had anything to do with Generals Putterill, Anderson and so on like that. There was another chap, Kit Owen, Captain Christopher Owen, an interesting bloke: I only met him once and that was only a few years ago when we were both picking up our new lives. He was a Rhodesian, again in the Federal army, not the British army, and he was aide-de-camp to Sir Humphrey Gibbs at the time of UDI. Smith – who was a mean minded

turd, if you'll forgive the expression – cut off the electricity and the water to the (01:27:39) Governor's residence and removed the police guard. Kit Owen stayed on, defying orders from his superior officers, as aide-de-camp to the Governor. Many white Rhodesians adopted the curiously British way of showing their support for Governor Gibbs by signing the Visitor's Book. It may not have gone any further. I mean I signed the visitor's book at Rhodesia House at the time of UDI saying this wasn't necessary and that's how I felt at the time. By that time I was going out with a Cape Coloured girl anyway, so I couldn't have gone back to Rhodesia so it was no hassle to make. What we did was go to Zambia and a number of blokes did that. Now, add to your list Colonel TPJ Lewis, he went North to Zambia. There was somebody else, Tom Gledhill, you can add that name to your list. He finished up as a Colonel in the Zambian Army. Then I think Peter Godwin. This is quite an interesting one. Have you come across him before?

**I think I have.**

Well, Peter Godwin was called up for National Service... Oh yes I've just remembered another chap called Wilkinson, I can't remember his first name, [*transcriber's note: Anthony, also known as Tony*]. He was called up, he wasn't a contemporary of mine but he eventually left Rhodesia. He was called up, had to do his National Service fighting the terrors and this was true for Peter Godwin and Mike Auret. They didn't care for what they had to do and Wilkinson I'm almost sure finished up as an academic in this country, specialising, predictably, in Southern African affairs. I think he taught in either Cardiff or Swansea and established quite a name for himself in the field of counter terrorism and that kind of thing. Again, the name Paul Saunders, put that down, he was a hell of a bloke. He and I had the same sense of humour and we got on extremely well and again we were in the army together, I've got a photograph of him somewhere. What happened to him, I don't know but if you come across in your reading of various papers or conversations with people I suspect he would have been disapproving at the very least of Ian Smith. I'd be very surprised if he went the other way.

**So these are all people that were generally against what was going on around the time of UDI. Can you talk me through what you were doing before that?**

What, before UDI?

**Yes, you were teaching in this school in the early 60s and then you were in the BSAP?**

Yes, well that was just the police reserve. The thing I remember about that was they kitted us out with white soup bowl-type tin hats, a club and an armband saying "police reserve" and technically we just patrolled our own areas in the event of some kind of insurgency. What the tin hat painted white was useful for was as a target for flying bricks. Well, that's what we thought anyway.



**(01:31:59) Did you volunteer to do that or was there some kind of conscription going on at the time? There had been conscription during the Federation?**

There was a degree of unrest and, yes, I was in the school with a lot of young kids. This was a prep school and whoever was going to fart-ass around (if you'll forgive the expression, very elegant one), then I didn't want them fart-assing around with the kids. And so yes, I volunteered and I think Sellars did as well. But we were the only two of the staff that did do so. It had another bi-product though: If I did go to extreme things like being a prospective candidate for a liberal party, my credentials were authenticated by being in the police reserve, you see. That's a technique I've had to use many, many times in history, one might say.

**So they felt that you were...**

"Well he can't be all that bad, not that bloody lunatic. He is in the police reserve after all."

**Being in the BSAP, did you have any sort of political indoctrination or was there any political element to it?**

No, I mean let's face it, we were third-string. There were the BSAPolice regular, there were the BSAPolice Reserve and we were Special Reserve. I mean, it's just like a bottle of old port and it was just to establish a presence in a particular area, that was all. We just patrolled the school grounds effectively, and not often. In fact the only relic I've got of this is a photograph of me with my white tin hat, my club and my armband, on the bed. Never did anything active at all.

**So that photo is quite rare?**

But the parents or colleagues or neighbours around couldn't point the finger at me and say "he's a dangerous lefty." They could, but they also had to say, "He's also special police." And funnily enough, there were some neighbours, Rob and Myra Scott who lived across a block or two away. They were a hell of a nice people, again, Rhodesians born and bred and their children are scattered to the four winds now. But the Scotts have stayed on in Zimbabwe; I spoke to them on the phone whilst I was in Zimbabwe a few years ago and they thought I was just a lunatic lefty. When there were elections going on, to be a member of the URP, United Rhodesia Party and Central African Party was forgivable because it was part of a regular political party. It advocated policies which people didn't care for, or even disliked, but nevertheless they were within the parameters of political life. Sir Robert Tredgold, a name you know of? Former Chief Justice and acting Governor General; again a Rhodesian born and bred, he wrote a book called *The Rhodesia that was my life*. Have you come across it?

**I think I have heard of it, yes. (01:35:33)**

It really makes me weep to read it because it was a Rhodesia that was part of his bone and blood structure and he saw it disappearing. In fact he resigned from his Chief Justiceship because of the way Ian Smith was bugging about with the laws. It may not even have been Smith. Again it's all in there somewhere [refers to dissertation].

**So can I ask if your move to be in the BSAP was self-preservation in a way; or tactical, in that it threw people off the track?**

Yes I think there's a lot of truth in that: Self-preservation in the event of any riot and self preservation in the terms of the local community and colleagues.

**Because it must have been quite a conflicting situation.**

Yes, it was, but again it wasn't one that troubled me much at the time. I suppose when you're young you can throw things off, whereas now you think, "oh God, why did I do that?"

**And I was also interested in asking a bit about what sort of influences people were following at the time. You mentioned that a lot of the Rhodesians were reading *The Sun* and newspapers that perhaps were right wing? How did you get your news about what was going on politically?**

Well, a lot of the British born element in white Rhodesia were 'erks' as opposed to officer class. Now that's not to say they weren't a hell of a nice people, a lot of them were. But they read, they had probably been *Daily Mirror* readers; I don't think *The Sun* and *The Star* that are around these days, they didn't exist then, I mean the *Mirror* was lowlife.

**Was this something that was produced in Rhodesia or was it from Britain?**

Now I'm not talking about...it's the kind of Brit that came out was a *Daily Mirror* reader. A paper called *The Citizen* appeared in Southern Rhodesia, which was the *Daily Mirror* right wing then. You're going to have to read this if you really want all this background because later on a paper called *The Central African Examiner* appeared which was produced by a chap called Theodore Bull who, I think, again was Rhodesian. Certainly his wife was a black princess: He married her up in Zambia though. Now *The Examiner* took its cue from *The Spectator* or *The Economist* in this country and was invented by one of those. At that time, until it was eventually banned by Smith, it was the mouthpiece of the liberals in Southern Rhodesia. Then you had the Argus Press, which was controlled from South Africa, which produced both the *Rhodesia Herald* and *The Bulawayo Chronicle*. There was a degree of editorial independence which was not true after Smith came to power and so *The Chronicle* and *The (01:39:24) Herald* quite often took slightly different approaches to things. So the news that I acquired tended to be from *The Bulawayo Chronicle*, or from...not *The Citizen*, *The Central African Examiner*,

have you come across that? [*The Citizen* has been corrected with the CAE where referred to above]

**No I haven't, no.**

That's worth looking at because that was the voice of the liberal wing, if you can trace any copies. But he eventually went up to Zambia because things became too hot in Smith's Rhodesia. This is why I say that Smith is the father of Mugabe because so many repressive laws and censorship are still in place: He had papers appearing with great chunks of white in the pages where censors had been at work and so rather than print something where the censors had been and removed copy, to fill it up, they left it to say "This is where the censors have been." Where did the censors come from? South Africa. He imported his censorship personnel from South Africa.

[Break in interview]

Things were certainly getting much more tense both between the various groups of whites in the political party: United Federal Party, which is basically a right centre thing; the Dominion Party, which later became with others; the Rhodesian Front, which was very 'right;' and then the various bits of the liberals. The liberals never had a consistent ideology and it wasn't until Garfield Todd's party had to come into existence because of a palace coup that you had a recognisable liberal party. But you must remember it's liberal in the Rhodesia sense; it's not liberal in the more general sense. There were some curious little sidelines to that: when I was doing my degree at Unisa, I went down to Pretoria for the vacation schools. In University of South Africa you met people from all over the Republic and indeed other places. I did meet some people from Natal, which still is a very sort of Anglo centred province and to the extent that until quite recently the Union Flag used to fly over Pietermaritzburg Town Hall. I met some people from Natal who seriously thought that there might be a possibility of Natal joining the Central African Federation; the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland. Because the 'Nats' were clamping their party grip on the country at that time and they, like us, saw the Federation as some kind of hope, some kind of light at the end of the tunnel, perhaps not realising that the light was that of an oncoming train. It can't have been serious because we were all quite young at the time, but it was an interesting little perspective from there.

**And you did that degree whilst you were actually in the army?**

Yes.

**Was that normal, were many people doing that?**

(01:43:11) Well, I know there was an Officer whose first name I can't remember but he was an Afrikaner chap called Major Roelofse. He was also doing a degree through Unisa. For a hell of a lot of people ... I mean you look at the biographies of the first South African cabinet and leaders of the ANC as well, a lot of them have got their degrees from Unisa, it was the only way

through. The vacation schools were strictly segregated, of course, and I met black people in Rhodesia who had their degrees from Unisa but we would never have met at the various vacation schools.

**It was a vacation programme, so how frequently would you have gone there?**

I suppose once or twice a year, the rest of the time, huge masses...of nothing; like Open University TV or even tapes. The nearest thing I've come to it funnily enough is this course that my wife is on which is a distance-learning thing. But what we didn't have was tutorial support, because there just wasn't the infrastructure in the colony to support it. I wouldn't say it was a standard thing in the army; it's just another eccentricity.

I remember at Whitestone School a young chap coming out from the UK: a very solemn sort of bloke, classics I think was his bag, saying once in all seriousness, "All I'm doing this for is to get a degree from a colonial university and then become a Don in the UK." But you see this Unisa thing, the stuff that I've done for the historical studies department at University here, a leaflet's always put round about, with 'BA Unisa.' Now those that have got eyes to see, will see that authenticates what I'm talking about, which might be 'State and Church in South Africa;' or 'South Africa from the San to Mbeki,' all that kind of thing. The fact that it's Unisa authenticates it for a lot of them. One of the nice things about teaching in continuing education is that I'm very often the youngest in the class; or alternatively there are people there who have come because they want to know in what context we are operating. There were a couple of doctors, husband and wife couple, in the last course that I taught and they'd been in South Africa at Jane Furse, which is a hospital in what I still think of as the Transvaal. They'd come to get the context of South Africa and I was able to tell them in detail about Jane Furse because there happened to be a mission hospital set up by the mission society that I worked for once. So that's one of the gratifying things, the interplay that you get from the students at that level. It's not the cut and thrust that you get from students at your level. With us it's clumsy claymore swapping whereas with you, it's rapier and épée. Are you into fencing?

**No... And so you were saying, these were Natalians that you had come into contact with?**

Yes, they simply were floating the idea of Natal joining the Federation of Rhodesia and Nyasaland which at that time, this would be about '56/'57 offered some kind of other template for development than that offered by the (01:47:18) Nats (The Nationalists in Pretoria). And being the sort of 'English' province of South Africa, they thought they could join on to that, but there wasn't a snowball's chance in hell of that. But it was an interesting and gratifying reaction on what we thought; it was brilliant at the time.

**Which way do you think that Rhodesian identity was going at the time? It sounds as if, leading up to the UDI period, there were lots of complicated changes and forces?**

There was a strong sense of Rhodesian identity very early on. When I say 'early' that means almost from the arrival of the Pioneer Column onwards. The Matabele and Mashona rebellions, which I've written of in that paper there, that welded together the planters, the shopkeepers, farmers, miners and that sort of stuff. You know, when confronted by adversity it bonds people and they saw themselves as threatened. And then of course there was the threat from South Africa: Smuts wanting to make the fifth province by taking over Rhodesia. And the campaign to rebuff that again helped bond white Rhodesians. And notice I'm saying white Rhodesians, as the blacks didn't have a voice one way or the other.

That helped develop a sense of identity. Then there was always this curious constitutional position where it was a self-governing colony after 1923. The BSA Company, I mean, if you look at the history of the chartered companies like Hudson's Bay and the Honourable East India Company, the history of the chartered company, to put it very, very briefly in a huge generalisation, they bugged people about so much that you would do anything to get away from company rule. But the British did insist on retaining the reserve powers, as I expect you've come across, effectively involving the treatment of Africans – and this was another point that developed white Rhodesian identity – I might even go so far as to say nationalism, because resentment of the British potential for interfering in Rhodesia's internal affairs grew and grew and of course it became almost a *casus belli*, not quite *belli*, at the time of Ian Smith and earlier.

Then there was the question of Federation itself. Southern Rhodesia did not want to go in with the North but it was more or less forced, you might say. A lot of Southern Rhodesians sympathised with whites in Northern Rhodesia, and a few settlers in Nyasaland, but they didn't really want to sacrifice their constitutional and lifestyle positions on the altar of a British-induced Federation. But in the end that happened and lots of reasons, mainly economic, were put forward: You know, "Think what a labour force you've got" and "Think of the markets you'll attract" and so on and so forth. Now if you want chapter and verse, I've got the Federal Handbook upstairs for the 1960s. But that was the attraction that it was sold to Southern Rhodesia on. And in many respects that proved to be the case and Rhodesia did damn well out of Federation.

What they hadn't realised that wasn't just a sting in the tail, but was a kick from the donkey's hoof, was that there was both a politicisation of the African masses in Southern Rhodesia and a resentment among blacks in the north territories of the imposition of Southern Rhodesia on them. We in Southern Rhodesia in the United Rhodesia Party, for instance, tried our best to forge links with people like Harry Franklin in Northern Rhodesia, or Colin Morris the Methodist minister, in an effort to have a kind of a liberal colouring to proceedings in both the federal parliament and generally through society. But because Southern Rhodesians bulked so large in (01:52:12) both the economy and in constitutional affairs and in politics generally, this was not possible. You know I wasn't a policy maker or anything like that in the URP or what later became the Central Africa Party – notice the change of title – I

really don't know whether people in Southern Rhodesia thought it was worth toying with Northern Rhodesian liberals such as they were.

And of course there were constitutional differences: Our police, our army and all that were paid for by us in Southern Rhodesia; our law was Roman Dutch law. In Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland, it was British Common law, it was colonial police and civil service and judiciary generally paid for by the Brits; a bit like England and Scotland, only writ large. So I think we lost out on that. It was even true for the army in some respects. I mean, you look through those magazines there and you'll see references to 1NRR, first battalion Northern Rhodesia Regiment. Interestingly enough, that was effectively a colonial battalion of the British army but it became part of ours but it won more gongs than any other overseas unit in the Malayan Emergency: More than the Fijians, more than the Brits, the Australians or whoever, it was the Northern Rhodesia Regiment. Then you have the Kings African Rifles. We had two battalions of the KAR; you'll be familiar with the KAR. They were the Nyasaland battalions of the KAR. The KAR drew the rest of its battalions from Kenya, Uganda and Tanganyika. And again there were differences there because although their Officers were technically in the Federal Army, many of them, in fact, were on attachment, effectively on secondment from the British Army. They were not locally bred officers like our people were, or even South African. One I kept talking about, he was a South African, GP Engela whose photograph I showed you; he was South African. So in a way you could say that the Zambezi represented a psychological sort of split in many respects.

**In terms of the Rhodesian identity, were there more English or British people coming into Rhodesia? Because as the country developed, you said the white population grew an enormous amount, didn't it, during that period?**

Yes it did.

**So the Rhodesian born population was growing but also there were many British immigrants.**

Yes, they would have been Rhodesian born although from English parents or from South African parents.

**But also during the 50s, I suppose there were far more white immigrants, so it had altered? The population breakdown had changed, hadn't it, between the 50s up to the 60s. How did you perceive that affect on identity?**

Well that's a fairly difficult question to answer because there were a number of other factors that had come into play. You would find, for instance, that the centralist parties and even the liberal parties tended to draw their support from the Rhodesian born or people who had been there for a hell of a long time. Have (01:56:13) you ever come across something called the Pioneer and Early Settlers Society?

**Yes.**

Well, in our book they were kind of royal dukes and a lot of support for a vaguely liberal approach was drawn from that group of the white population. And that's replicated, and again you'll find that in there, in the support that they got from big corporations like the BSA Company and things like that. The South African immigrants tended for a while not to be too politically active because they had not given up their South African citizenship. For the British immigrants, it didn't matter. So if you were British you could vote, that was it, finish. A lot of them took out Rhodesian citizenship, like me.

The British immigrants were of voting age very often in the early part, whereas of the Rhodesian born, quite a lot were not. And so the British actually had a disproportionate influence on voting patterns and at first, cautiously liberal, Ian Macleod type Tories you might say, well that's far too intellectual for many of them! But politics became polarised with the growth of African Nationalism with the strength of Afrikaner apartheid-ism further south. And with the acquisition of reaching voting age or many of the British immigrants, and perceived threats from the pusillanimity of various British governments as the Federation stumbled, tottered and eventually fell, a lot of people for a while submerged their British sense of identity in a Rhodesian sense of identity: To the extent that no one, curiously, named cuckoo armies like the Rhodesia Republican army and the Candour League: Have you come across these?

**Not the Candour League.**

Well it was just another little right wing group, obscure well wishers trying to claim that it was the one and only true guardian of Rhodesian heritage. All these rose up for a bit and fell away a bit but the ones that were really hard stayed in the Dominion Party and they became the basis of the Rhodesian Front.

**I get a sense that in this time, or leading up to UDI, it sounds like there was quite a battle for who was more Rhodesian...for the rights and wrongs of the country; who was in the right and who was in the wrong?**

An interesting viewpoint, an interesting question. The Rhodesian Front published an advert which became almost notorious at the time of some election or other which showed schoolgirls' legs from the knees downwards, their little white socks and shoes, "Do you want black legs among this lot?" or something like that, I can't quite remember the context. But it was a frightener and the Rhodesian Front would claim that they were defending the heritage of Rhodesia. There were among the pioneer and early settler section of white Rhodesia, people like the Tredgolds, Barbara Tredgold who was a kind of missionary in townships in Salisbury and her brother, Sir Robert Tredgold, the Chief Justice and that kind of thing. And there were lots of others as well, they were true blue Rhodesians and not recent immigrants, long standing immigrants or born and bred. Their sense of Rhodesian (02:00:39) identity was tied up with, "We're in this together, we've got to look after each other and that included the blacks." That's putting it very crudely but they reckon

that there was some kind of...it may have been a paternalist way of looking at things, but it certainly wasn't as virulently aggressive as these jokers from the Rhodesian Front. I can't remember Sir Humphrey Gibbs' son's name out in Cirencester now [*transcribers' note: Timothy Gibbs*]. He'll be somebody you want to talk to, if you wanted to pursue this, which, it's not germane to your main research interests, but you might say there were two versions of Rhodesian identity. There was one of sun, swimming pools and sex and what we've got we're going to bloody hold onto; and the other was that we've got a heritage, we've got a moral duty to look after the blacks. Call it...one's the Livingstone stream and the other's the Rhodes stream, it comes from that.

**Would you say that you fell into one of those? Hopefully the latter?**

Yes, not the Rhodes stream, the Livingstone stream. If I hadn't been of the Livingstone stream, I would have stayed on in the Staff Corps or gone back after finishing. Even before I met my Coloured wife I was naively, if you like, uninformedly if you like, but temperamentally of course, a 'liberal.' And this I think was the weakness of the liberals. Don Gregory, who used to run the Central Africa Forces Association; he'd been my company commander when I first joined the army and he once said to me, "You're far too gentlemanly to be a soldier." But there were a hell of a lot of people like that in the liberal sort of wing and there were liberals, partly out of expedience some of them, partly out of conscience, partly out of temperament, some of them out of pure conviction, particularly the church people; but mostly it's a mixture of motives. I think I would have been a 'liberal' partly out of temperament, partly out of Christian conviction and partly because I think I saw ahead a bit and if you didn't get people on your side they'd become your enemies.

**And you mentioned the Christian conviction; do you think that religion did have a large part to play in the founding of Rhodesia, or how it developed?**

In the founding of Rhodesia?

**In how Rhodesian identity developed and in the sense of what a good Rhodesian was?**

I think up to a point, yes, because when the Pioneer Column came up, there were already missionaries attached to it at Rhodes' request. Anglican and Catholic Dominican nuns were in the Pioneer Column I believe or very, very soon after. I think Bishop Knight Bruce of the Anglicans was another. It's not a question I was expecting but I could research that for you. And the Christian churches again, given that time, the late Victorian era and early Edwardian when Christianity was much more overtly visible than it is now you might say in the English speaking world. It offered a kind of, both a unifying factor and a form of familiarity and refuge. So you go to church, you played cricket and you go to the English club and that kind of thing. Even in post-colonial Zambia we had a club in Mbala, what used to be called Abercorn, (02:05:10) not that my first wife and I went there.



**I'm wondering as well how that took you down the liberal path as you were saying, or it perhaps heightened your awareness? But then, did it maybe also conflict with some of the things that you were against? I wonder if it conflicted with Rhodesian identity, especially in the later years.**

It didn't sit comfortably with...

**With the religious ideal that had contributed to Rhodesian identity in the early days.**

Yes, I think that is absolutely true. I mean, you don't need to use me as a case study in that case. Mike Auret I might have already referred to as a case study of where Christian conviction impelled him out of the typical white Rhodesian mindset to the extent that a few years ago – well some years ago now, when Hilary, my present wife and I went out to Zimbabwe; again there's a lot of story behind that – we finished up having lunch with Mike and Diana Auret (she had met him because I'd given her a letter of introduction on a previous visit to Zimbabwe when I wasn't with her and she, an Anglican representing an Anglo-Catholic mission society and he a Roman-Catholic and she, my wife, stayed with the Aurets) and they talked shop obviously and she said "Well, this is what we believe" and he said "Well, thank God to meet some Christians that think the same way," and that crossed denominational barriers.

But the other way ... let me tell you another story from when I was in the army. Now when I was doing my basic training up in Salisbury, one of the blokes there was a quite an agreeable chap called George Pope (with a name like that he could be Roman Catholic, and so he was!). He took me off to Sacred Heart Cathedral in Salisbury and we went a couple of times together. On one occasion though there was the usual holy smoke and candles and all that kind of stuff, and the crucifix came in, the thurifer, the acolytes, the choir and then the clergy and altar party, all of that was white up until the celebrant, the actual Priest – who was black – and there was an audible gasp from most of the congregation. George Pope looked at me and he said, "That's a kaffir. I'm not having a kaffir saying my mass for me," and he got up and walked out. I don't think he and I ever spoke a polite word to each other again, that was bloody awful.

On a theological point, he was a Priest as opposed to a Minister. Now I'm a Lay Minister but I'm not a Priest. But my wife will be a priest. In army terms she'll be an Officer and I'll be an NCO, but a Priest ordained by a validly consecrated Bishop is a Priest, it doesn't matter whether he's male, female, black, white or a Martian, that's my standpoint. In my young days the word 'stuff' wasn't in the vocabulary, but that's what I would have said to George: "Stuff you, buster," because that man was a Priest. He happened to be a Tanganyikan, actually, visiting.

Now there was another interesting thing because the Christian community was pretty divided right through to the end, you know that already no doubt?

Archbishop Chichester, the Jesuit, he was sort of (02:09:36) noble British of the Jesuit line. So was his successor Archbishop Markall who was very good to me when I left the Roman Catholic Church and became an Anglican. I think both of them, but Markall particularly, were both part of the 'Huggins bureau' if you like; whereas the Irish, Spanish and Swiss Bishops of the Roman Catholic hierarchy at that time identified a lot more with their African flock than did Markall, and this was a fissure that was visible even in the ordinary clergy. I think I've already said about how the town clergy catering for whites tended to be right-ish; I mean, that's a huge generalisation whereas the people in the bush...And I'll tell you what, again it's in that dissertation...(you'd better have that copy, it's more legible than the other. I want it back please because one goes to one son and the other goes to the other). I think what turned me on to the church in many ways is as a result of the Rhodesian army; we used to go on these flag marches and stuff like that and then there would be exercises and the old dash and turn manoeuvre or sighting and push. I was out with a group of blokes; did I say this in that essay I wonder? and we were deep in the bush and we heard the sound of singing in the early morning, have I told you that story?

### **I think it's in the essay.**

Well, I heard the sound of singing. We were a bit amazed by this, the buzz of mosquitoes, yes, even the cough of lions, but singing? So we hacked our way through the bush and we came across a very typical structure, four poles with a thatched roof on top and logs and a bunch of kids sitting on them and this bloke in a dog collar and a rough old suit sitting on a chair with a table in front of him, teaching ABC to these youngsters. Again, one of the admirations I've got for Africans is their thirst for education, I'll tell you another story about that in a minute. These youngsters would have walked for hours through the bush to get to school and, of course, they were as amazed as we were and here we come blundering through the bush. It's not without reason that South African soldiers during the 'bush war' were often referred to as 'clumpies' because they did blunder through the bush.

They were surprised to see us, we were surprised to see them, but we all got on pretty well and the kids of course absolutely fascinated by these strange creatures. This minister, and I've no idea what denomination he was, probably AME,<sup>7</sup> well, we said "Is there anything you would like here?" because all of us Troopies, NCOs, Officers alike were amazed. Here he was in the bush, bloody miles of blistering, bug ridden bush, doing this job for no apparent pay, no support that we could see or anything like that and yet he was doing it and going on with it and we were all utterly amazed by it and touched. When we asked him "Is there anything we can do for you?" he said "Yes I would like a cross, a decent one" because what he had, just a bare table and a couple of sticks stuck together like that (symbolises the shape of a cross with fingers) on a pole. So the SPCK<sup>8</sup> at that time had a bookshop near Salisbury Cathedral and the Ambassador Hotel is just across the road from

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<sup>7</sup> AME stands for African Methodist Episcopal (Church).

<sup>8</sup> SPCK stands for Society for the Promotion of Christian Knowledge (an Anglican organisation).

Salisbury Cathedral. So Sunday was a good day to go and have a couple of drinks – well, any day was a good day to go and have a couple of drinks! – so we went in and did just that and then went over to the SPCK and we got hold of a super brass, I think it was, a crucifix as opposed to a cross, very ‘high church.’ Making an excuse about following up on the last exercise, we took it out to (02:14:04) this bloke, oh and he was so chuffed.

Then years later there was a bloke in Zambia. I was teaching at a local school, but I was also the unofficial Lay Minister at an English language church there. There were some Roman Catholic nuns there, the Catholic cathedral was down the road and my wife, my late wife, had been brought up a Methodist, had become an Anglican (I like the Anglican church, it’s very Catholic). And one of the Priests at the Roman Catholic Cathedral (they had a number of them there) they used to go out on ‘ulendo,’<sup>9</sup> same kind of word as a safari. Have you come across ‘ulendo?’

**No, I’m not sure if I have actually.**

Well, that’s interesting because that’s an East African word really. And they used to go out and we got friendly with one of these Priests. I think he was a Belgian or a Dutchman. Lake Tanganyika sits at the bottom of the Rift Valley, flaming great cliffs thousands of feet up, and there was a winding road down. He used to go down and he used to get this dug out canoe, put his motorbike in it, 2CV or whatever you call it, and loads of protein-filled biscuits and stuff like that – again there’s another story there – and of course he took his musket with him. He was so devoted and I thought, “Stone me, he’s given up family, being a Roman Catholic.” He hadn’t got a wife, for a start and that was a disadvantage, I should have thought, but still. And he’d feed these people, feed them literally with this protein-filled biscuit and feed them spiritually through Mass and so on like that. It wasn’t a motorbike, it was a pushbike, that’s right; he’d strap this pushbike to his pirogue, row across the water of Lake Tanganyika and then bicycle into the bloody bush. And it reminded me of that minister in Southern Rhodesia all those years ago. I thought there’s got to be something there; people wouldn’t do it otherwise. And that’s why saying that little talk I was jolly glad to join the mission society later on and do something in that direction. As I’ve indicated, that happened because of that connection; I was recruited for the ecumenical monitoring programme for South Africa as a peace-keeping monitor and was able to use my little experience of the military to some effect.

**So it informed the actions of the South African army?**

I was able to recognise what they were doing, what they were up to, particularly when it was Internal Stability Unit and I was able to authenticate from my own experience. So the two strands of my life, church and military, came together.

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<sup>9</sup> *Ulendo* is a word meaning safari, trek or journey.

**Yes, that's very interesting. So can you tell me then how you actually came to leave Rhodesia? What were the events that led to this?**

Well, partly the way things were going. I left Rhodesia when I finished at Whitestone School and it was quite evident the Federation was going to break up and there was a lot of ill feeling against the Brits. I'll quote some letters that I wrote to my mother back here in the UK about the Profumo affair. Do you remember the Profumo affair? Have you come across that?  
(02:18:09)

**I don't know.**

Some British showgirl [Christine Keeler] was found to be bedding both a Russian naval attaché and a cabinet minister. This girl, I can't remember her name but anyway John Profumo was the British cabinet minister and he was hopping in and out of bed with this woman who was also bedding the Russian naval attaché and that was the time when Britain was discussing what to do with this obstreperous Federation. I wrote to my mother saying "and we've got to take dictation from these toads!" I didn't put it quite as elegantly as that but it was going to be a hard thing to bear, I can tell you. If I felt like that, how much more so a hell of a lot of other people thought that Britain was bugging about again, again, again; and there is a certain history of mishandling affairs. You look at the history of the Sudan civil service and it's very often been the Conservative party in this country that has shilly-shallied about. I think it was Sir Roy Welensky who said he'd rather deal with a Labour government than with a Tory government because the Labour will stab you in the chest as they look you in the eye, the Tories will actually grab you by the arm and stab you in the back.

For instance, we were called out very often to stand by in case the Brits invaded, but they never did. But neither would they give us full Dominion status and neither would they relinquish the reserve powers. Duncan Sandys, another blasted Tory, he bamboozled African nationalists in a way into accepting a kind of settlement. But he was described to me by the Times correspondent in Africa at the time, a chap called Bill Kirkwood, as being a devious and powerful personality. And this is what bamboozled the African Nationalists. But a friend of mine, Leo Takawira – who finished up dying of diabetes because of lack of medical attention when he was detained by Ian Smith – realised from Salisbury what was going on in London. And when Nkomo got back to Salisbury, Leo Takawira debriefed him, you might say, and so the agreement that Nkomo and the other Nationalists had accepted, they reneged on. That had its effect on the white electorate, as you can imagine. What the devil are the Brits doing? You can't trust them. Even Whitehead, the then Prime Minister of allegedly a liberal government, even Whitehead said "You can't do business with the African Nationalists." So the interplay of all these factors...

**So what year did you leave Rhodesia? It must have been '64/'63?**

Round about there, yes. I left the colony in '63 after the Rhodesian Front came to power.

**So that was quite a conscious decision? It was because of the Rhodesian Front coming to power?**

Yes, oh very definitely. At that point I decided I didn't like the way that things were going. I came back to the UK, went to the education branch of Selfridges in London, a place called Sydney Webb College, took a teaching certificate. That's where I met my South African wife and then we decided, well, if we can't go (00:22:33) back to our own countries, then we'll go to the next best thing and that was Zambia.

**And so Zambia by then had...**

Well it was Zambia. It wasn't Northern Rhodesia any more, it was Zambia and that again was interesting in lots of ways. Now, funnily enough, whilst I was teaching at a place called Mbala which is the southern end of Lake Tanganyika, it used to be called Abercorn, a battalion of the Zambian Army came up on exercises near us. I can't remember how I got into contact but I did get in touch with that Zambian battalion and its CO turned out to be an old fellow recruit of mine in the Federal army. This is Tom ..., did you take his name down? Tom Gledhill. Now he and I had been, as I say, young corporals together. Now he was a half Colonel and so Mr Kasombe, the careers teacher at Mbala Secondary School, laid on a careers talk for the youngsters, not children; I'll tell you about that in a minute. And so there was this Colonel Gledhill, a Zambian Officer, I think a Lieutenant or Captain, Kasombe the careers teacher, and me up on the platform. So Mr Kasombe, one of the few Zambians on the staff at that time because not many Zambians had a decent education – and there are other reasons for that too – he stood up and he said “and on our staff here at the School you all know Mr Blancharde. He was an Officer in the Rhodesian Army” and that was a sensation “but he's here now.” And the young Lieutenant was highly amused by this and that I'd been...he said “and what rank were you?” And I said, “actually, I think the highest I got was acting Sergeant” and Tom Gledhill laughed when I said that. He said, “there's something to be said for being an acting Sergeant in that army, than a Colonel in this lot.” He wasn't a racist he was just comparing the way that...

The interesting thing was though that the Zambian Army had never staged a coup in the African style that you get elsewhere. When you look at Ghana and Sierra Leone and all of the bloody Corporals and Lieutenants and God knows what, Flight Lieutenant Jerry Rawlings in Ghana dishonours the rank speaking as an ex-Flight Lieutenant in the Air Force. But you do know that Zambia came to independence with fewer than a hundred graduates and fewer than a thousand people with school certificate. That was quite a contrast with Southern Rhodesia, which had not been under the Colonial Office.

**You mentioned then what the school said about you. But how did you generally find you were received as a Southern Rhodesian going into Zambia?**

Oh absolutely fine, not least because we had quite a lot of black Rhodesians in the student body and living around were a lot of exiles; a lot of exiles. Talk about history repeating itself. They have a hell of a lot of Rhodesian exiles in Zambia now, not to mention South Africa.

**You had left by then, but did you perceive any sense of African Nationalism building up in Zambia or in Southern Rhodesia, that Rhodesia was then going to be fighting against in the coming decade?**  
(02:26:28)

You mean any sense of there's a kind of Civil War?

**Did you sense that a lot of the challenge against Rhodesia came from Zambia?**

Yes.

**And so did you sense any of that building up; I know that was a decade later, but did you begin to sense that?**

In a way the answer's got to be, 'No' because I was right in the far north of the country. In fact our points of reference tended to be Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi. There was a time when we needed a pint of proper milk as opposed to powdered milk, so we drove a thousand miles up to Nairobi to get it, you know, that kind of thing. Well it wasn't quite as bad as that but... It's almost true though, because on another occasion we did need a break, my late wife and I, we had one tiny boy (who is now thirty something) and the SS Liemba (and again there's a story there) was a steamship that went up and down Lake Tanganyika to a place called Ujiji, which of course is where Livingstone met Stanley. The Captain of the ship was a bloke called Sutcliffe and he was a very genial chap. He and his wife had their house in Kigoma overlooking the lake and it was the main port; Ujiji was just a stop off point. He was allowed to make use of prisoners kept in Ujiji jail and so when we left we were piled high with fresh veggies and stuff like that, proper milk and things, courtesy of Captain Mike Sutcliffe. But we had to go down to Lusaka from time to time to fight with the income tax people, or I was chief examiner for geography in the Northern Province, and stuff like that, and had to go down to meet other provincial examiners in Lusaka.

And of course we had friends, now here's an interesting little sideline... There was a bloke... I was tied up with the national food and nutrition commission in Zambia and it was hellishly difficult to get supplies. That's what these milk biscuits were for that this missionary carried about to supplement a rotten diet. And how the hell do you get stuff up from Lusaka? Because the inefficiency of the civil service was proverbial, given the educational standards and lack of technical staff/expertise, and obviously against Rhodesia it's not surprising. But the Brits had not done a good job in preparing Zambia for independence.

There was a chap on the staff of the Anglican cathedral there: he was actually a Hollander but his wife was a Cape Coloured and he had been a Priest of the Anglican Church in South Africa. He'd gone to South Africa, become an Anglican Priest and he fell foul of the South African authorities, and wrote a rather good book, a copy of which I've got upstairs, listing the various laws and how they applied. Well, of course having a Coloured wife, as I did at the time, he knew these from the sharp end, you might say. Pierre Dil was his name and so we wrote to Pierre – I can't remember how we initially got in contact – but anyway, we wrote to Pierre and said, "Look, can you organise us some milk and all that kind of stuff" and we kept up a certain sort of friendship with Pierre and Wendy Dil, or I think it was Wenda Dil. Then years later after my first wife had died, with Hilary, my present wife, we were in Zambia some years ago now and we went to the cathedral and I said to one of the sidesmen (we went with the mission society, that's right), "is Pierre Dil here (02:30:36) still?" "Yes he is." I said, "will you tell him there's an old friend of his." So after mass, Pierre came down still in his robes. "I know you" he said and that was it and again it was an interesting lead in, but he later split off from the Anglican church and tried to found his own church over the question of the ordination of women which was a great, great shame; and he took a number of talented young Zambian priests with him.

**And of course you were in a newly independent country as well, in Zambia. What were your feelings about the end of the empire; experiencing a newly independent country?**

Well, actually I rather relished that. I was bloody glad to be adding a spoonful of mortar to the creation of a new country because Zambia was so dependent on expatriates at that time; even the Air Force, the Zambian Air Force. Now there's another story there, it was being trained by Italian expatriates. The medical service had a number of expatriates who had stayed on after independence. There was one remarkable bloke who was for thirty-seven years in medicine but he was joined by Armenians and Russians of various kinds, Soviets. The teaching force was largely English speaking, mostly British, but the odd Canadian and the odd Australian. And that was the way it was. The Zambians had to just sit and learn whilst we tried to help them out and I was jolly glad to be doing it. Not like the way that Ian Smith was bugging about in Southern Rhodesia, he and his stupid cohorts, and this was a chance to try and redress the balance a bit, just a bit.

**So you were quite conscious of what was going on across the border?**

Yes, very much so, for two reasons. Mporokoso Secondary School and Mbala Secondary School were the two schools I taught at, both in the Northern Province, very far north of the country. But there was another school called Luwingu where there was an Anglo South African Indian family. She was English, he was a South African Asian and I can't say we knew them well. Like us, but not at the same time, they went off to the Southern Province to see Vic Falls and to Kariba Dam and all that sort of stuff. (I can't remember whether Francis was his first name or his second name, I suspect his second name.) But they had to get back to Lusaka, so what did the fool do? He

walked across the Vic Falls Bridge into Rhodesia; from effectively Livingstone into Vic Falls, which is Rhodesian territory. And he was picked up and we think that the Rhodesia police were tipped off by the South Africans...I think they were calling it DONS, Department of National Security, then, which was the successor of BOSS (the Bureau of State Security). By that time however he was a British subject but it just showed you, you couldn't do it. And his wife was left distraught and destitute on the Zambian side of the border. It was nasty for a bit, so Ray and I went down and we did the Vic Falls stuff and then we went to Kariba. Now I'd been in Rhodesia when Kariba was being built and all that, damned interesting particularly because of the church there built by Italians, because the dam was built by Italians. We went actually on to the dam wall and I think I've got a photograph of it somewhere, showing Ray and maybe Ambrose, who would have been two or three at the time, standing by a board saying "You are now entering Rhodesia." (02:35:19) There was a white line and you could see Troopies up in the hills, so to speak, looking at us wondering who these whites were and all that sort of stuff. We dared not put a foot across that white line so we went back and that was the nearest that Ray and I ever got to our own countries together. A couple of years ago Hilary, my present wife, gave me a Christmas present in the shape of a ticket to Cape Town because Ray and I had two boys and they had saved up their pennies and they were going off to South Africa. This was after Mandela was released and all that jazz, to see if they could find any of their mum's relatives in Cape Town and go and see where she'd been to school and where she had lived and all that jazz. My late wife's brother with whom we are still very much in touch was there – he still is – and we went to Cape Town to the District Six museum. She'd been born in District Six. Do you know anything about districts?

**Yes I do.**

Oh you do?

**Well I'd heard of the museum.**

Oh have you?

**Yes because it's quite an innovative museum, isn't it.**

Yes indeed. By God it's evocative it really, really is. And so the two boys did see something of their...We actually went to where their home was and her brother, my brother-in-law still, we knocked on the door and this family came out, explained the situation and they welcomed us in and he was able to show us where Ray had...where her room was, Beattie his sister, his own room and it was terrific. Her father had been a big wheel in something called the Non-European League for the Blind or something, and you go into this massive institute for looking after non-white blind and so on. So that was our tribute to my late wife, but she and I could never go to South Africa together. But I did go with her sons, courtesy of her successor. But you get some curious kickbacks from the past. For a while Hilary and I thought we would subscribe to Waitrose, 'we'll bring the food to your door' service, and the chap that came



was very friendly and I listened to the accent for a bit and I said “are you from South Africa or Rhodesia?” he said “man, yes I’m from Rhodesia” and we nearly finished up with a spat because he was a leather-necked Smithian. He’d left the country, like so many.

**I hope you don’t mind me asking about the marriage to your late wife and how was that perceived in Zambia; because you’ve said that you couldn’t go to Rhodesia, or South Africa?**

There was a Canadian couple: She was French Canadian, he was Anglo Canadian and they were very good, particularly the French Canadian girl. There was a Zambian domestic science teacher, she was very nice. There was a Guyanaian, a Guyanese girl she was extremely nice as well, so it was a (02:39:06) mixed staff, so to speak. The only people we got any flak from and there wasn’t much of it, was the deputy head who was a Scot and I think he resented the fact that Ray was a doubly qualified teacher. She had qualified in South Africa and she had qualified in this country and another couple; he taught woodwork or something like that and I think he thought that anybody who could put two or three English sentences together coherently was getting a bit above themselves. It’s not the first time I’ve come across that. In the RAF Regiment I was regarded as eccentric because I could actually speak English. So that was one Scot and two Brits but the rest were perfectly ok and the Zambians were...And in fact it was the Guyanese girl that got hassle, the reason being given the sort of image of women in the average Zambian man’s mind. They thought they could chat her up and seduce her, take her away to be a wife, and God knows what, and she got endless hassle. Ray and I finished up effectively being her escorts when we went into town. And we came across that again, funnily enough, when Hilary and I were in Egypt, nothing to do with what you’re interested in, you can switch it off if you like. Do you remember a film called *Death on the Nile*?

**Yes.**

OK the vessel on that film was actually a Nile steamer, a proper one and we went on a holiday on the Nile a good few years ago and that was the ship that we were on. It was beautiful, had real Edwardian stuff and there were a number of others. It was effectively a floating emergency service. There were two church people, that was Hilary and I; there was an ambulance controller; there was a nurse from some hospital in Wales; two policewomen; and there was a Doctor as well. And the policewomen were not from the Metropolitan Police, but from the City of London police. One was white and the other was black, the black girl was a descendent of Barbadian immigrants to this country and they were super girls. We got on hellishly well with them but every time we dropped anchor and went to shore, Egyptian men would come up to this girl and say “You want a bit of stick? I give you” and all sorts of things like that. It really got quite unpleasant because they thought she was a Nubian. In the end I think we managed to convince her that if she said “Imshi Yallah” which is “bugger off” in Arabic, it might surprise these bloody men. But it does happen. Women are very much second-class citizens. In Zambia it was interesting when we were at Mbala Secondary School because

the wives of the Air Force men, I've told you the Zambian Air Force was trained by Italians?

**Yes.**

Their wives were very Westernised as well, very fashionably dressed. Presumably they had private wires into Italian fashion houses, I don't know. But they were an interesting bunch of people to meet. When we went back to Zambia years later, Hilary and I this time, she was effectively an honorary man. She even had a Bishop kneeling to her, he was only joking you know kind of thing but just not, not, not the kind of thing that a Zambian man does to a woman. And she remarked on this to him and he said "ah well, my dear Hilary, English woman you may be but here you are a (02:42:49) Zambian" leaving the word 'man' unsaid. Very curious episode and this is why the role played by...we had women in the army in Rhodesia, as you know, although it's only military service WAMS they were called, but not an African woman that I could recall. But again, you see, in the African view they were white and therefore in a way sort of men.

**So there was quite an emerging class division amongst Africans but also the racial division was still there as well?**

Oh yes, very definitely. You had your urbanised African, your semi-urbanised African, your lightly-urbanised African and then you had your rural African. Which is why again I think more in terms of Zambia than I do of Zimbabwe at this point. Witchcraft, which is the old fashioned way of putting it, was rife in one part of Zambia where we were and although Zambia is technically a Christian country, the traditional religions have still got a very strong hold and I suspect the same is true of Zimbabwe actually, as I've already indicated with that story.

**And so then drawing it to a close, can I ask just what your reflections were then, or had you left Zambia by the time of...**

UDI?

**Yes.**

Zambia?

**Yes, sorry.**

No I went to Zambia after UDI.

**I was thinking more of the time of the war, by the Seventies. How long were you in Zambia for; whether you'd left Zambia before the war was emerging?**

It must have been '72 because after the birth of our second son, Ray developed epilepsy and so we came leisurely back to the UK. So that would have been '71.

**So you will have observed quite a period of what was going on in Rhodesia?**

Yes, although as I say I was in the far north of the country so I don't think I would have seen...Once or twice there were riots in Lusaka and the Copper Belt about Rhodesia, and whites who happened to be in the wrong place at the wrong time got a lot of stick. But it certainly didn't affect us. On one occasion, I can't remember quite why, but we were in the middle of Tanganyika and I gave a talk to Kasima Secondary School on the history of Zimbabwe, Southern Rhodesia as it then was. They had an interesting thing going then, National Service in Tanganyika, Tanzania as it then was. They'd put (02:47:49) you into army uniform and then sent you off to be Doctors or Teachers or whatever like that, and so there I was at the invitation of this soldier teacher giving a talk on Rhodesia. That would have been about 1970, '69/'70, and I think the civil war wasn't really...I don't think the civil war was at its height at that point, (refers to notes) yes, '65 to '72 a winning war for the Rhodesian forces. But it was all quite quiet and we just got on with the job I'm afraid.

**And then finally how did you find it returning to the UK? How did you find people interpreted your time there?**

Well there are two answers to that. First of all, Ray, as I say, had this epilepsy and we stayed in...I registered for the MEd at Bristol University and got a place there. I did that by sending them an application form through Luxembourg and I think the sheer exoticism of the stamp did it. Anyway, so we settled in south Bristol whilst I did the MEd and she died halfway through that in '72. We knew she had epilepsy and it was treated and we didn't realise that it could be so fatal. So my preoccupation then was looking after her and earning a living of sorts while I got a grant for University and all sorts of things like that. We had a gratuity from the Zambian government and we gave talks on apartheid and on Rhodesia to things like the Anti-Apartheid Movement, the Fabian Society here in Bristol: all stuff, very middle-aged and teacherly, and then she died. We had been due to give yet another talk to the Fabian Society and I rolled up alone and gave our talk. But looking after the boys was enough to keep me occupied, you might say. And the other thing was of course, there didn't seem to be a way I could go back. Looking back on it, perhaps I should have done, to go back to Zambia with two small boys in tow. One was five and the other was two when she died and I had to find something stable for them so I got a job teaching at a comprehensive school in south Bristol where the fifteen and sixteen year old girls taught me domestic science – so I can cook me a baked bean, the right way up now – and finished my MEd eventually, which is what that green thing is [refers to a bound copy of MEd dissertation]. And then I got a job at what was then Redland Teacher Training College and Jack Taylor, the Principal there, was a hell of a nice bloke. Again we had an international staff of sorts, mostly Brits

obviously, but there was a New Zealander and there was an Indian and there was me, and we made a little commonwealth club. I got involved in university politics and tried to keep the Department of Architecture going and stuff like that. And I got involved in local politics in south Bristol and then helping to run a housing association, all the usual middle-aged preoccupations.

**But that's interesting that your central African identity still carried forward in your talks and things at UWE. So again, you've kept that alive.**

Oh, yes. Well you see this is the second answer to your question, how did people react? Well they didn't, the Brits are not greatly interested in the overseas countries really and thinking about the time that we'd lived at Whitchurch both with Ray and on my own and when joined by Hilary and her girls, if I'd been on the Isle of Wight that would have been as exotic as being in central Africa.

(02:53:01)

**And what did you feel about the end of empire looking back?**

That's an interesting one. You really ought to ask some of my students because I taught Imperial and Commonwealth history at UWE and I remember one of them saying, "I didn't realise that the empire had done any good at all." But it's like every other damned human enterprise; it's a mixture. I welcomed the end of empire in this respect the current British generation need feel no guilt you might say because it hasn't been involved in it but at the same time...

Interview ended here – when daughter rang doorbell

...the British have an obligation to know about their former Empire. I also now realise that the Empire can indeed 'strike back!'

[added to transcript after the interview]