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ME: Today is the 13th of September 1995. We're going to talk with Christopher Clayson. He was on the Council of the College from 1960 to 1965 and was President from 1966 to 1970. He then became Chairman of the Scottish Council for Postgraduate Medical Education.

ME: Welcome. And can we start off with where you were born?

CC: Ilford, Essex, where my father, another Christopher William Clayson, was a schoolmaster. In fact, he died when I was three. And I don't remember him. But my mother, who was a Scot - he was of course English, she was a Scot. And she had on that account to return to teaching which she had done before. In those days, I think it was not possible for a woman, this would be about the end of the last century, I suppose, to take an MA. But the University of St Andrews gave what they called the LLA, Lady Literate in Arts, which was the next best thing. And that qualification enabled - well, I suppose it was a degree, really - that degree enabled my mother to secure a post in the Derbyshire mining town where I had my initial education, I suppose.

ME: Which was that town?

CC: Ilkeston. I started off with a nice little private school run by three ladies; they seemed to me very old ladies. I don't think we were taught much except polite manners, perhaps. And from there I went to the local elementary school where my manners didn't count for so much amongst the miners' children. But we were drilled in, really drilled in reading, writing and arithmetic. And from there I went to the local secondary school where my mother was by this time senior mistress. That was a difficult situation as you can imagine a pupil with his mother as the senior mistress. That lasted I suppose two or three years and my mother decided that this wouldn't do and she would have me finish me education in Edinburgh. There were I remember two schools which naturally were possible, one was George Watsons and the other was George Heriots. While my mother interviewed the headmaster at George Watsons, I was given an oral test by a very gaunt, forbidding teacher and the test consisted in spelling. I think he felt I wasn't suitable material, really. Then the next day I was interviewed at Heriots, and again while my mother interviewed the headmaster I was given a written test. That proved satisfactory, and I went to Heriots.

ME: How old were you then?

CC: 16.

ME: Right. So, you were quite a big boy, then? I mean, it'd be quite a change in style coming from a Derbyshire school to Heriots?

CC: The change was very austere. In Derbyshire, Friday afternoon was games afternoon. We were taught. We were taught to play cricket. Just as I was getting to… as a batsman, spin bowler I was pitchforked into Edinburgh, where that sort of thing was not on. This was an evening matter, extracurricular. Oh, yes. It was… education was certainly more austere. French was no longer conversational French; we had to master the irregular verbs and no nonsense. And the same with art. In England, we were put to colour straight away, whether crayon or paint. But in Edinburgh but at Heriots we had to show that we could draw a kettle in black and white before any promotion was possible. And well, there it was.

ME: What year was that, approximately?

CC: 1916? 17? Yes. During World War One.

ME: And did you feel World War One going on? Was that a part of your life?

CC: Oh, yes. When I was still at school in Derbyshire I used to remember my mother weeping over the casualty lists because they were so enormous in those days. I think there were 60,000 in the first day of the Battle of the Somme, for instance. Yes, we were well aware of that.

ME: And the slaughter in the, well, I'd imagine both the Derbyshire regiments and the Edinburgh regiments would be mammoth?

CC: Oh, yes. Yes.

ME: Did you transfer to sitting… were there Highers and O levels then?

CC: Ah, yes. Those days there were the Lowers and the Highers. And I took both from Heriots, yes.

ME: Yes, because my father-in-law was at Heriots about that time but I think he would already have moved on to medical school, but about that. So then you went to the University of Edinburgh, did you?

CC: Yes.

ME: So did you just across the road, in fact?

CC: Yes, that's right.

ME: Do you still keep in contact with people with whom you were at school with?

CC: No. I think I must be about the sole survivor. Really, it's ridiculous to say that but I believe that to be true. The answer to your question is therefore no.

ME: Right. And then you went to Edinburgh. And what was that like? To the medical school in Edinburgh.

CC: Rather frightening to begin with. The classes were so big. Yes, we had to work very hard. I think I got a first class certificate in every class I took. Not that that… but I don't know, that was maybe the result of hard work. But it was hard going, yes.

ME: Now, who taught you at this time? Did you do botany, zoology, chemistry and physics initially, was it?

CC: Yes. Botany… the great man was just retired, had just retired and I was in Sir William Wright Smith's first year.

ME: Right. Were those the days when you walked down on a Saturday morning to the classes?

CC: Cycled would be correct.

ME: Cycled, right.

CC: And not only so, I cycled up again which was no mean feat.

ME: Yes. And what I've been told about it is that he lectured from behind a bush of flowers, didn't he? Or that his desk had flowers on it as he lectured.

CC: There was always something on there. Yes, that is right.

ME: Was he a good lecturer?

CC: Very good. Very precise. Very incisive. And he was always kind enough to start his lecture with two short sentences describing what he had said in the last lecture. That was very helpful.

ME: Yes. And who taught you chemistry?

CC: Oh, Professor [George Marger]

ME: Really?

CC: Yes.

ME: And what was he like?

CC: He was, as a teacher, slightly distant. His manner, yes, slightly aloof. We had to follow him closely. He had an assistant whose main task it was to wipe the blackboard clean. And he would with an imperious gesture indicate to this man that it was time the blackboard was cleaned again. And every time he did this there was a little ripple of applause, you see. Appreciating the little act that was going on. And he also always had a textbook always handy which he would turn over a few pages and say, "oh, the chemistry of tin does not interest me." There were cheers at this, you see. At least there was something that didn't interest him. Oh yes, he was a fascinating man.

ME: He was the man who showed the iodine and thyroxin wasn't he? He was an FRS [Fellow of the Royal Society]?

CC: Oh, yes. We didn't appreciate quite what that meant at the time.

ME: Didn't at the time.

CC: No.

ME: I was given a knife with the handle made from wood from his bench that George Boyd made.

CC: Really?

ME: Which his wife gave me, which is rather nice. Who taught you zoology?

CC: Oh, there were two. One who commanded attention and the other who couldn't. One was [James] Cossar Ewart. He did the vertebrate stuff. And he was not… he couldn't keep order. And it wasn't easy because I suppose half of our year consisted of men back from the services, and they weren't the most docile. We youngsters were very quiet but the chaps back from the services were anything but. Poor Cossar Ewart would be pelted with fireworks. Oh yes, Catherine wheels. And he'd be jumping about all over the place. That was really disgraceful.

ME: What did you feel about this coming straight from Heriots?

CC: I thought it was terrible.

ME: Yes.

CC: Absolutely terrible. And then the scene changed as Professor Ashworth took over. He was a formidable character and he had great character. He had no trouble whatsoever. No trouble whatsoever. Really interesting.

ME: What were the people… what were the men like who came back from the war? Did they talk about their experiences or did they shut it out?

CC: I don't remember them talking about their experiences. That's a difficult recollection, that, because we youngsters were sort of a lower order compared with the heroes that were coming back and they had games amongst themselves but they had not much time for these new chaps just up from school. So no, we didn't seem to mix very much.

ME: Where did you stay?

CC: Ah well, that was the other problem. I remember my mother had to find a family where I could stay. We were very fortunate the father of this family was an administrator in the Church of Scotland offices, in those days in 22 Queen Street, by name of Watson. And he had three sons. I knew them all, of course, terribly well. The eldest of them became in due course Moderator of the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland, James Pitt Watson. And oh yes, they were a good family. When I joined them James Pitt Watson had not actually returned from France but the other two were there and it meant there were three of us boys. And I remember very well, rather to my surprise, evening prayers were a thing. Every night we were made to kneel down. I noticed this wasn't necessary in church, not in the Church of Scotland anyway. But we were made to kneel down and prayers were said, and that continued till our last year at school.

ME: Right.

CC: That doesn't happen much now, I'm sure. I think the effect was good but I can hardly judge that yet.

ME: Then you moved on to the sort of pre-clinical years. And who taught you anatomy?

CC: Oh, Arthur Robinson and above all E. B. [Edward Bald] Jamieson.

ME: Now, dancing Arthur Robinson. Now what was he like?

CC: He was tall. Very lucid. Yes, a bit inclined to gesticulate, that's quite true. A great favourite with the students. He was referred to by on one occasion by E. B. Jamieson as "that tall Englishman with a large Adam's apple." And as you can imagine, that brought the house down. Terrific. Oh, yes. And

then there were many demonstrators, of course, you know the drill. One guy I got on well with was A. J. C. [Arthur James Cochrane] Hamilton, who later became a surgeon at Inverness.

ME: Right.

CC: He was a very nice chap.

ME: What about E. B. Jamieson? This would be E. B. Jamieson as a young man, wouldn't it? I mean, he must have seemed an old man at the time.

CC: He did. Yes, certainly. I presume he must have been in his fifties, late fifties when I was a student.

ME: Oh, right.

CC: Would that be sensible, do you think?

ME: No, I think he was in his thirties.

CC: No! Never.

ME: I think so. I'm not sure but he was not as old as that.

CC: Well, he always wore a skull cap with a wee tassel on it and that seemed to me to suggest he was an old man.

ME: And did he sit in that wee cave at the end of anatomy in those days?

CC: Yes, yes.

ME: He did. And can you tell us about being examined in the spots. Do you remember those?

CC: I do indeed, but never by him.

ME: Oh, you were lucky.

CC: The demonstrators did that.

ME: Yes. And you never had that appalling experience of being asked by him as he lifted up something to name it?

CC: No. Well, the demonstrators, they took the spots, as far as I remember.

ME: Oh, right. Yes.

CC: But I can't recall E. B. Jamieson ever doing that.

ME: But he came round the tables and spoke to you.

CC: Oh, certainly. Oh yes, he knew us by name. Yes.

ME: Did you go to… He lived in those days at the top of the high street, didn't he. I've forgotten the name of it.

CC: Oh, Ramsay Lodge.

ME: Yes, Ramsay Lodge, at one stage, didn't he. Did you ever go to the Shetlands with him?

CC: No.

ME: Right. Now, who taught you physiology?

CC: Oh, old, and I mean old this time, [Edward Albert] Sharpey-Schafer.

ME: Were you there on the famous occasion when at the end of the war he greeted the soldiers back. Because his son was killed.

CC: I knew that.

ME: And he broke down.

CC: I wasn't there at that time.

ME: No, because he was rather a severe man, wasn't he?

CC: Yes, yes.

ME: What was he like to be taught by?

CC: Distant, again. Again the actual practical teaching was done by his staff. I've no vivid recollection of his lectures except for one thing, a continually recurring phrase which was, "previously, an assistant in this department". He'd talk about [Haring] and [Sheringham], all kinds of great names which we knew about, probably had the textbooks. It was always, "previously, an assistant in this department…" and that made us think by Jove, this must be a good chap.

ME: And then you did your second M.B. [Bachelor of Medicine] and moved on to clinical work.

CC: Yes.

ME: And who was in pathology?

CC: Oh, [James] Lorrain Smith.

ME: Yes. And did you enjoy being taught by him?

CC: Again, he did the systematic lectures. The practical stuff was taught by others, Frank Reynolds, for instance. Yes. Oh yes. But he had his own witty humour.

ME: And did that go down well? That would be quite modulating to the assembled students presumably.

CC: Yes. He, some time ago, was talking about influenza, of course when influenza had been rampant. And he described the interest one of his staff was taking in this influenza and he asked this member of staff, whose name I can't recall for the moment, to describe the early symptoms of influenza, which was done very well. And as part of the description he mentioned, a little unfortunately, that there was a leucopoenia. And Lorrain Smith thanked him for his introduction to the subject and then turned to the class and said, "Now, if any of you feel a leucopoenia coming on, don't hesitate to get in touch with Dr so-and-so." I thought that was rather cruel, mind you.

ME: Who was the forensic?

CC: Oh, Harvey Littlejohn.

ME: Oh, really?

CC: Yes.

ME: Now, what was he like?

CC: Oh, he was terrific. He was a great entertainer. Nobody was ever absent when he was lecturing.

ME: And what was so particular about him? How did he attract?

CC: Marched up and down. Always took every opportunity to wave a silk handkerchief. Oratory. Certainly oratory. Again he had the same tactic that he employed to perfection which Lorrain Smith just employed in relation to that leucopoenia. He was talking about alkaloids and his senior assistant, whose name escapes me for this moment but he was at one time Vice President of this college, his senior assistant, we all had to attend the professor's lectures, of course, and his senior assistant was dozing. Harvey said, "and now, there is another alkaloid in this group which I think you ought to know about. The name escapes me for the moment but Dr Smith will tell you." And Dr Smith woke up and hadn't a clue what he was talking about. And so Harvey addressed the class and said, "Can anybody tell me the name I've forgotten?" And somebody, bright chap in the front said, "coniine, sir." "Ah, coniine. You are a man of intelligence." And he had a glare at the assistant who had gone to sleep. And this teasing of senior assistants just to keep them on their…I don't know what they do now, but that was common enough. I suffered for it myself at one time, I remember.

ME: And then the wards. Which wards did you go on to?

CC: Firstly, Edwin Bramwell.

ME: Can you tell me about him?

CC: Well, now. That was a mistake on my part because everybody else wanted to go to Edwin Bramwell.

ME: And these were big clinics?

CC: They were tremendous.

ME: Did you see the bed?

CC: I don't know that we did. It was very difficult. And I never made that mistake again. We were allowed in those days to choose who we wanted to go in. I don't know if you can do that now but we were able to say who we would like to be taught by in clinical medicine. And I, along with everybody else, said Edwin Bramwell. Very famous man. But most of us were sort of crowded out, I think. Then the next one was John Eason. John Eason of course was very keen on thyroids and all that sort of thing. He had a group of us, not a very big group but we did get to learn a little clinical medicine. He asked me to feel the thyroid gland. I'd never even heard much about the thyroid gland. But I had heard the phrase 'woody thyroid'. So I felt this, and said "oh, that's a woody thyroid, sir." And this delighted him; it was in fact woody thyroid. I'd never seen it before and I've never seen it since, but on that particular occasion woody thyroid served his purpose because it brought me to his attention.

ME: What was the pattern of the day? Did you… Were the lectures… How did the day go?

CC: I think there would be a usual systematic lecture by somebody in the morning, and then at 11 o'clock the clinic session started till about 12:30, I think.

ME: And in the afternoons?

CC: I don't know, I can't remember.

ME: I can't remember what we did in the afternoons, either. I was trying to think.

CC: I think those of us who did a bit of junioring about the wards went up but I honestly cannot quite picture what we did in the afternoons now.

ME: Now, who taught you surgery?

CC Ah. Initially, Alexander Miles.

ME: And what was he like?

CC: I only got his systematic lectures. And they were very good. Alexander Miles never had a blackboard. He had enormous sheets of paper. Not quite as big as that, but getting that way. And having drawn what he wanted to draw by way of illustration, and he drew very well, on the paper, he tore the paper off, flung it to the side, ready for the next sheet. There was no question of getting someone to wipe the blackboard or anything like that. No, no. Just tore the paper off and started again. Yes, and he was followed of course, we only had I think one term of him before Sir David Wilkie took over.

ME: He must have been, well, the stories about him are of a remarkable man. Are they well justified?

CC: I think so. A remarkable man. What I remember about him is two things. First, his gentleness in his approach to patients and secondly, the gentleness of his voice. He'd a delightful voice which would have inspired confidence in any patient, I'm quite sure. Yes.

ME: And what… Did you… And what were the patients like in that period? Was poverty and malnutrition a feature?

CC: Oh, yes. Yes. Poverty was extreme; there was no doubt about that.

ME: Ones impression was of women who were deformed and rickets, and then the diseases that were associated with this. Was this the reality of the time?

CC: I think yes. Certainly rickets was common enough. You used the phrase "women who were deformed". I can't recall very clearly.

ME: Well, the rickets had a profound affect.

CC: Oh certainly, rickets. Yes. When you went in to it, as we were made to do, it seemed to me apropos the only milk a woman would get to drink in the week would be a little with her tea. …

CC: … no more. The kids might have what could be spared. But poverty was of that extremity, certainly, yes.

ME: Now, you had quite an exciting time just before you sat your finals. Is that correct?

CC: I did. Right in the middle of the finals I started having haemoptysis. Finals went on for about three weeks, you remember. And the middle of them, this is what started it.

ME: Did you get your finals?

CC: Not at that time, no. I failed.

ME: So you were a September club?

CC: September on that year, because normally it would've been December. But September, there had been the general strike, you see and I'd done my bit during the general strike.

ME: What did you do during the general strike?

CC: Special Constable. I found out later that my colleagues landed jobs which earned a lot of money and I was very annoyed with myself. I just was a Special Constable. However having done that, they allowed me to sit again in September, not December.

ME: And were you quite poorly then or was this…?

CC: Oh, yes. I was having haemoptysis frequently. But I decided I'd got to get through and I wasn't going to report sick. So I carried on, took an extra class during the summer run by W. D. D. [William Douglas Denton] Small.

ME: Did you?

CC: Yes. Then come September it was alright, I got through. And then I reported sick.

ME: Just one person, I didn't ask. Who taught you obstetrics and gynaecology?

CC: Ah, B. P. [Benjamin Philip] Watson. We were in his last year. He went off to Columbia, New York.

ME: So, having sat your finals and got it, then what happened after that?

CC: I was booked, so to speak, to go on with John Eason. And so I told him what was happening. And he - "Alright, get stripped." So I stripped, and he started to listen to me chest [laughs]. Oh, dear. In the middle of that examination I actually began to spit blood again. In the middle of… while he was listening. So – "oh, dear me. Students ward at once."

ME: And where was that? That was in ward 20?

CC: 19, it was in those days.

ME: 19, yes.

CC: Well, that was fine. This is grand, we're being looked after. But of course since I had an infective disease the infirmary was no place for me. And I was very promptly sent off to Southfield Sanatorium under dear Sir Robert [Philip].

ME: Now, Southfield Sanatorium. Where was that based?

CC: Liberton. It became later Liberton Hospital.

ME: Right.

CC: Not Liberton Geriatric Hospital, Southfield Hospital.

ME: Right. And tell me about Sir Robert Philip. What was he like? What did he look like? What did he speak like?

CC: Small. Small man. He was a… three inches shorter than I am, a small man. He had a very large head. His bowler hat came down over my ear. I know because I tried it one day. [ME laughs] Small man, large head. Large ego. He must have been a very able man. When I got to know him, he was already I think 65, and when he was appointed Professor, you see… this would be – what did they say – ad vitam aut culpam – he could go on as long as he liked. He did. And therefore his greater

achievements… his achievements were over really by the time I came under his wing, and so… I would not at that time have classified him as a great man. But there is not the slightest doubt that he had been a great man.

ME: He revolutionised the approach, didn't he?

CC: Oh yes, so that when I came under his care at 65 years of age he was no longer able to direct things in the way he'd liked to do for so long.

ME: What was the treatment that you got?

CC: Treatment. Rest in bed. Cod liver oil laced with [lycoris] [unidentified] which he regarded as a good tonic. Raw eggs. Three a day. How my stomach stood up to it, I don't know [laughs]. Raw meat. He was very keen on his raw meat. This was simply scraped steak. Not minced steak. Scraped steak. It just seemed to…it separated the muscle tissue - sarcolemma, do they still call it?

ME: I'm not sure, but I know what you mean. Yes.

CC: We were taught sarcolemma as being separated from the connective tissue, anyway. And it was alright. There was nothing wrong with it. But later on I looked up his original papers on the subject. Miss Ferguson looked up the papers for me. And I was horrified to find he used to prescribe this half a pound twice a day! It was appalling [laughs]. I only got two ounces or something like that.

ME: Were you put outside? Were you…or was the sanatorium open to the weather?

CC: The windows were always open. Winter and summer alike. Oh yes, it was extremely cold.

ME: And how did you spend – how long were you in the sanatorium for?

CC: Well, three years altogether. But part of that time – of course, I forgot everything I learned as an undergraduate, can you imagine being – putting aside a whole year in bed for doing nothing? Not even listening to a heart, or anything like that. Oh, dear me.

ME: How did you spend your time then?

CC: Well… read. Slept, as prescribed. Wrote. Started keeping a diary but that didn't last long. I suppose reading was part of it, yes.

ME: Did you meet people of quite a wide range of backgrounds? Was it a very curious experience?

CC: Oh, very.

ME: What was – I mean, what was interesting about that?

CC: After I was admitted to the ward, this particular ward, there were seven of us, I think. And I have no doubt I got to know them in the end, I got to know them very well. But yes [laughs] very wide range. I remember one day I happened to let it drop, and I should have been wise to it, I happened to let it drop that during the general strike I had been a Special Constable. The atmosphere was electric. Scab, scab, oh, I was called all kinds of names. I thought, goodness Clayson, what sorts of place have you come to now? However, that settled down in due course and we all became great friends. They – I remember one of the patients, because they came from all over Scotland, one of the patients opposite me was a wild fellow. He was one of the Glasgow Billy Boys. You've heard of the…?

ME: No, what are Glasgow Billy Boys?

CC: Well, in those days they were the leading gang in Glasgow.

ME: Gosh.

CC: Dreadful people. And I remember him saying to me but I got on better than he did and in due course I was on the staff and he said to me one day "Doc you get me out of here and we'll have a night with the boys. [laughs] [inaudible] Another was a theology student. Another, again a young doctor from South Wales, joiner, miner… oh yes, very mixed lot.

ME: Did you have contact with them after you came out of the…did you ever come across them again?

CC: No. Not many. Again, I think within a few years I was the sole survivor. Because in those days you didn't get better. I mean, I was fortunate. My draining bronchus closed, the cavity closed – that was, I suppose, sheer luck. But that's what happened. It didn't happen to the others.

ME: It must have altered your attitude to patients for the rest of your clinical experience.

CC: Oh, undoubtedly.

ME: If you've been a patient oneself, you never think about hospital again in quite the same way.

CC: That's right. And of course, later on when not only Southfield but when I went down to Dumfries to Lochmaben, down there almost all the medical staff and three quarters of the nursing staff were themselves patients.

ME: Yes.

CC: Had been. And this altered the whole atmosphere. And the sanatorium community in those days was really quite a remarkable… was a remarkable community. Yes.

ME: So as you began to improve and pick up, what happened to you then? Were you one day discharged?

CC: No. It was much more gradual than that. After I'd been I suppose in bed or virtually doing nothing for a couple of years who should come back to Edinburgh but Derek Dunlop. He'd been in London. He was in my year, of course.

ME: Oh, really?

CC: Yes. He was in my year. When I was packed off to hospital he went to London. He was going to – he became a partner, a junior partner to a very swagger West End practice. And he said he learned everything there was to know about elegant prescribing. He was pretty caustic about it. He didn't like it very much. And naturally knowing him as I got to know him I'm not surprised. He must have disliked it. He used to say his partner "saw people upstairs and expected me to see them downstairs", and he didn't care for that. He was quite honest about it. There's no doubt Derek, with his manner, and his charisma in a West End practice in London, he could have made a gigantic fortune. To his credit, he couldn't stand it. He came back to Edinburgh.

ME: Now, what was he like as an undergraduate?

CC: Just the same as you might imagine he was a postgraduate. Namely, obviously he stood out amongst his fellows chiefly on account of his extraordinary self-confidence.

ME: Where did that come from, do you think?

CC: I've no idea. It's… it's certainly something I never possessed. But he possessed it to the nth degree. But that's not to say he didn't take great care. He took great care over everything he did.

ME: He was very subtle, wasn't he?

CC: Oh yes.

ME: And who else was there in the time when you were an undergraduate, were there people who stand out in your recollections?

CC: … When I was an undergraduate.

ME: In your year, were there other people of Derek's-?

CC: There were none that I recall of Derek's immediate stature but [William] Ritchie Russell who became Professor in Oxford, didn't he?

ME: Yes, yes.

CC: He was in the same year. Ritchie Russell…

ME: Not to worry. So Derek came back to Edinburgh. What did that do to your wellbeing?

CC: First of all, he saw to it that I was given work to do in the laboratory. That made a great difference. And then later on - oh I owed him quite a bit because he became assistant in the department of tuberculosis. In fact, he became assistant in three departments at the same time. He was assistant in therapeutics, in the department of pathology and in the department of tuberculosis. And of course that gave him pretty wide ranging experience. Then he ultimately relinquished the assistantship in the department of tuberculosis. And I fell heir to it.

ME: And how well did you feel at that time? I mean, presumably you would have to learn to auscultate the heart and chest again?

CC: Oh yes.

ME: And who taught you that?

CC: Simpson. Old Philip himself didn't teach me much of that. I'll swear he didn't hear what he said he was hearing. He heard far too much.

ME: Right [laughs].

CC: This sounds facetious. It sounds almost as if I didn't admire the old man but he had enormous bushy, hairy ears, and he stuck his stethoscope in his ears. Naturally he heard all kinds of trepidations that just weren't there. [Both laugh] Dear man that he was… But Simpson, his number two. John C. [Cormack] Simpson M.C. [Military Cross]. He got his M. C. in Gallipoli in the first war. John C. Simpson taught me much more by bedside.

ME: Right. As an aside, was there a man Bogey Watson, was he the man who irradiated -?

CC: Ah, yes. Chalmers Watson?

ME: Chalmers Watson.

CC: That's right.

ME: That was an extraordinary and littler side in the tuberculosis story, wasn't it?

CC: Yes, it was, really.

ME: It sort of makes metaphors of scientific [CC laughs] [inaudible] Then you re embarked on a clinical career somewhat, so you never go in to work with John Eason.

CC: No. No.

ME: So you at that stage were embarked on being a tuberculosis doctor. When did you sit the membership?

CC: '48?

ME: Right. So quite – where were we at this stage when you had recovered from tuberculosis, approximately?

CC: When I recovered, I stayed on at Southfield then. Yes, I inherited Derek's assistantship in the university, initially in an unofficial capacity. That is to say I wasn't paid.

ME: Right.

CC: And Derek by this time had I think by this time he really was involved in therapeutics. One day he found out I wasn't being paid. Of course, by this time old Philip had died. And he found out I wasn't being paid and he put that right very quickly. Oh yes, I owe him a lot. The whole thing sort of evolved on a sort of unofficial informal basis and it was all very well and I was very glad to be able to swim once again. Because when Derek found out I wasn't being paid, he got that put right.

ME: So when would that be, approximately?

CC: Yes, that would be… Now… '31, '32.

ME: Right. So what happened after that when you were established as a tuberculosis doctor?

CC: Well, then… After that, I assisted then in the department. I was given a formal job at Southfield and… So, here I was then… formal job at Southfield, assistant in the department, but that carried with it charge of beds not only at Southfield but also at the City Hospital because the university had two pavilions at the City Hospital for teaching purposes. And I found myself in charge of the university beds there, which I visited. Of course the staff there looked after the day to day work. The house - I remember the house physician, or the second house physician I had there was John [Rutherford].

ME: Really?

CC: And of course he and I kept in touch ever after that very well. It also carried with it work at the Victoria dispensary in Spittle Street. Yes, we had our own clinics there. So the university ran clinics at Spittle Street, beds at City Hospital, beds at Southfield.

ME: Did you travel round by car?

CC: Yes. By that time I had managed to get – initially, I had a bike.

ME: Yes.

CC: Yes, indeed.

ME: At what stage did you marry?

CC: 1933. I had to pause there.

ME: How did you meet?

CC: What?

ME: How did you meet your wife?

CC: Oh, she was a nurse at the infirmary.

ME: Oh, lovely.

CC: Yes, indeed as you say. When I clocked like that I thought, Clayson, what are you going to do? I had a word with T. R. R. [Thomas Robert Rushton] Todd. Do you remember T. R. R. Todd?

ME: Yes, very well. Tarara.

CC: "Clayson, better get out of it." And I thought, oh dear, oh dear. Well, I didn't get out of it. [Laughs] Possibly I was a coward. But the girl didn't want me to get out of it, she stood by me. So that ultimately we got married, yes, in 1933.

ME: Right. And you remained within tuberculosis medicine right the way from that point on, did you?

CC: Yes. This is the astonishing, ridiculous part of my career. Old Sir Robert used to say because I said to him I remember one day, I'm not making any progress in general medicine, sir. "My boy, if you know tuberculosis, you know general medicine." Now that was the dictatorial thing he said. Now, I knew what he meant but it's simply not true. If ever there was therefore a self-trained physician, if I can even go so far as to call myself a physician, if ever there was a self-trained physician it's me, because apart from tuberculosis, I had no training. And even in tuberculosis, much of it was my own self training.

ME: When did you move to Dumfries?

CC: The war was still on. '43.

ME: Right. So even then, you had yet to sit the membership.

CC: Oh yes. I couldn't possibly have sat the membership.

ME: So how did you – and you went down to Dumfries to – what made you think of that? What was the decision there?

CC: How do you mean?

ME: Why did you decide to move to Dumfries?

CC: It was quite obvious I was getting nowhere in Edinburgh. Simpson was the number two. Old Philips number two, John C. Simpson was still there, and he told me one day he was not going to retire until he was 65, and he told me how old he was. I put two and two together. Then one day I saw the advertisement in *The Scotsman* for a medical superintendent at Lochmaben Sanatorium. I knew nothing about Lochmaben Sanatorium, really. I rang up [Andrew] Fergus Hewat. D'you remember Fergus?

ME: I know the name, yes.

CC: Well, I said, “Do you know, sir, that Lochmaben Sanatorium is vacant? “ And he said, “No, I don’t, but you should go for it.” I went for it and I was appointed there, yes.

ME: And how many beds were there?

CC: At that time, 142.

ME: Gosh.

CC: That was hard work.

ME: So you continued the same pattern of work that you had really been trained in in Edinburgh. Did you have to make a lot of sort of management and clinical management changes there or did you fall in to a good hospital with good practice?

CC: Yes, we’re speaking in camera.

ME: Right, okay.

CC: My predecessor in Lochmaben – I never found out what was wrong, but something was wrong. And I think he was encouraged to retire early.

ME: So there was a lot of scope for you to introduce what you’d learned in Edinburgh?

CC: Yes. Nothing had been done for a long, long time. Before I applied for the job I went down to have a look at it. My predecessor was very kind, showed me round and told me everything he was doing. But he obviously – I don’t know what had gone wrong but he was encouraged to go. From there I went to see the Chief Medical Officer in the Department of Health. I said, “There’s something funny, what’s going on?” I was encouraged to apply. So, I went there.

The standard treatment at the time was calcium lactate, which was purchased in sacks. I mean great sacks. And Parrish’s chemical food… What was it… Syrup [ferrous phosphate] or something of that sort. Regular routine. Patients loved it. When I tried to change it, oh dear. This new… this man’s no good. It took me a very long time to alter things, gently. Oh dear.

ME: How did you pluck up courage to sit the membership, then? Because that – how did you – because that’s a very defined clinical experience, isn’t it. Did you – did it take a lot of thought?

CC: It didn’t take a lot of thought in one way because I knew something had to be done about it. But I also knew perfectly well because I’d got the papers, and couldn’t have looked at it. Well, you were asking who were my fellow students. One was Ian [George Wilson] Hill. So after the war I said, “Look, Ian. You know my medical career. I don’t mind sitting an exam in tuberculosis however stiff but I realise I could not pass general medicine.” So he said, “Well, leave it with me.” Famous phrase, this “leave it with me”. I heard from him a day or two later and he said, “Righto, I think you should apply. We’ll set you an examination in tuberculosis that will really test you, and we’ll include general medicine in that.” …

CC: … the formal examination can be omitted.”

ME: How wonderful.

CC: So, I went down to the college. I was sat in what I now see is called the Vice President’s Room, in privacy with specially produced papers, and I was left there for quite a long time. I was getting on

fine, writing what I thought were reasonable answers, all that sort of thing, and who should come in but the librarian, Mr Graham. Do you remember him?

ME: No, I –

CC: He was a charming man. I knew him very well of course. Of course, I'd been in and out of college doing all sorts of things. And he sat - I should have been writing my papers! [Both laugh] I said, "look, I'm writing an examination!" About half an hour later he went away, and I was able to get on with it. Then by this time of course Charles Cameron had been made professor. And I think Charles was out to show me what he knew! [Laughs] So in a sense, my friends were examining me for the membership on more or less equal terms, it was. So therefore I got round the membership problem thanks largely to Ian Hill's appreciation. Because although he and I started together, in 1926, he through ill health lost a year on the way.

ME: Right. What was wrong with him?

CC: I never quite found out. Something abdominal, I think. Whether it was – I just don't know what it was. But he lost a year along the way and actually graduated a year after me.

ME: I think we should stop there and have tea. Would you like tea?

CC: Oh, that'd be excellent. Thank you very much indeed.

ME: That was very good. That was fascinating.

CC: [Laughs] Is this the sort of thing you wanted to know?

[Interview recommences]

ME: The introduction of chemotherapy must have altered your life in a very dramatic way.

CC: Yes.

ME: Did you feel that at the time? Did you suddenly wake up one morning and think, life will never be the same again?

CC: Not quite as quickly as that. By this time I was at the periphery, you see. And the chemotherapeutic agents were slow to emerge. We had to wait a little longer. For instance, penicillin became available in Edinburgh quite a bit before I could get a hold of it. And the same with streptomycin. Then the other agents came, for my purposes, fairly slowly. So the change wasn't sudden. On the other hand, it had one advantage – other people made the mistakes. Well, that's a crude way of putting it.

ME: Well, it's a reality, isn't it?

CC: When new things come out, particularly where a question of double or triple treatment is required, and only one agent is available, well, it's wrong to call that a mistake. The knowledge was being used to best advantage at the time.

ME: Yes.

CC: At the periphery, the time of experimenting was getting a little past so that routine was fairly well defined by the time I was able to get what was required.

ME: And were you coming close to retirement by the time this had come?

CC: Oh, no. No. What would this be? ’50? ’52? That the chemotherapeutic agents became available. And then, of course, we really did get very busy.

ME: And what did you do once tuberculosis was under control? Did you become a chest physician in the traditional sense?

CC: Well, yes, that’s right. One of the advantages that I found immediately when I went to Dumfriesshire was that the place was already becoming more of a chest hospital. You see, Philip, good though he was, he regarded Southfield as a centre for tuberculosis and unless you had tuberculosis, you didn’t get in. That was wrong. At Dumfries, I was able to develop things as I wanted. There was no question – I was under no – when I went to Dumfries I was not under a Medical Officer of Health. I was in charge of the service and I could use the beds in the way I liked without asking anybody. So that we were able to develop things very nicely.

ME: So farmer’s lung and these…

CC: Oh yes. Farmer’s lung. Cancer of the lung. We built up quite a connection with Edinburgh and Glasgow over chest surgery. And heart surgery, come to that.

ME: When did you start getting interested in, if I could use the phrase medical politics. It’s a horrible word that but when did you start… Was it through the BMA [British Medical Association] that you or…

CC: Not quite. No. [laughs] You have a gift for bringing back memories. Right. The answer is this. 1948 the health service began.

ME: Was that exciting?

CC: Oh, very. And they… Western Regional Hospital Board in those days comprised Glasgow and the surrounding counties. So the Chairman of the Western Regional Hospital Board was Sir Alexander MacGregor, himself an authority on tuberculosis. And he appointed a number of chaps he called Area Supervising Tuberculosis Physicians. Five in Glasgow, because Glasgow administratively was in five different sectors and one in each of the main peripheral areas: Dumfries and Galloway, Ayrshire, Argyllshire, Lanark and so on. And there were I think 13 or 14 of us Area Supervising Tuberculosis Physicians. Well, one day we were all bidden up to Glasgow to hear Sir Alexander MacGregor’s views on the tuberculosis problem of the day. Well, we thought this was grand. Must go and hear what the old man’s got to say, this could be important. He’s Chairman of the Regional Hospital Board, no less. So we all went up. We met in the ante-room and were issued in to a… board room. Then Sir Alexander with his team, secretary, Chief Medical Officer, walked in, sat down and Sir Alexander said – we all rose, of course, very politely, we rose to our feet when the great man came in. Looked round and said, “well gentlemen, what have you got to say to me?” Well, we were thunderstruck. We’d been asked to go to listen to him and the reception was, “well gentlemen, what have you got to say to me?”. I think I was the first to break the silence. And I made the first and I think the only extemporary speech I’ve ever made. And that was the start. The end of that meeting I remember so well. My colleagues were kind enough to say, “well, at least we’ve found a spokesman.” [laughs] Your question was “how did it…?”

ME: Yes, yes.

CC: Well, that’s how.

ME: Then what developed from there? How did they use you as a spokesman?

CC: Well, we had of course periodical meetings with the Western Regional Hospital Board on the development of the tuberculosis service and we had our own little meetings beforehand, of course. And then we would go up to the Regional Hospital Board or to the Home and Health department and talk about what we required and that sort of thing. Yes. And I usually set the ball rolling on these occasions.

ME: Who were the great and famous in the Scottish Home and Health Department?

CC: At that stage it would be… Sir Andrew Davidson was the Chief Medical Officer.

ME: And were they receptive? Was it an exciting time?

CC: Oh yes. They were… I began to see how people could be receptive, sympathetic, interested but nevertheless expert in keeping people at bay. And that's what you've got to do, I've found, in the Civil Service. [Laughs]

ME: Yes. And was this the time… Was this the period of the introduction of the bovine tuberculosis eradication?

CC: Oh, that had begun before…

ME: Were you involved in that?

CC: No, not really. Only in so far as we had to teach in Edinburgh on the facts of the milk special designation orders and that sort of thing. The eradication of bovine tuberculosis was being started long before I became involved. I think it's fair to say that, yes.

ME: Did you keep in touch with Derek Dunlop during this period?

CC: Yes. But…Now we've reached '52… No, not at that time. I'd lost touch with Derek Dunlop at that time.

ME: And had you kept good health during this period?

CC: Oh, yes.

ME: So, in that respect you had been fortunate?

CC: Very fortunate.

ME: So, when did you start being involved in the college?

CC: Well, membership in '48. Fellowship in '51, perhaps. And it was at that stage, yes, that once I became a fellow of the college, I got very interested in the college.

ME: It's a wonderfully exciting thing that, isn't it?

CC: Oh, very. Yes, oh yes.

ME: It's a very great fulfilment. Then how did you become involved? What was your initial participation?

CC: In college affairs?

ME: Yes.

CC: I don't know. I suppose I must have spoken at one or two quarterly meetings perhaps.

ME: You started coming to the quarterly meetings?

CC: Oh yes. As soon as I became a fellow I became very diligent I must say in attending the quarterly meetings. Oh yes.

ME: And were they well attended?

CC: They varied. On the whole I think they were probably very well attended possibly except for the July one which I don't it ever was so very well attended as the rest. Yes, I attended all the quarterly meetings – occasionally spoke. And then much to my astonishment was elected to the council.

ME: And who was the president then? Was Ian Hill?

CC: No. James Cameron.

ME: Right. And had you known him previously? Was he a friend?

CC: No, I'd never known him previously.

ME: Right. And what was he like as a president?

CC: … I think he was good… He was a good president. He obviously did his homework very thoroughly indeed. But he listened very carefully to what everybody had to say.

ME: Do you remember what the issues of that time were? Was the…?

CC: Well of course, all the time I was on the council, and certainly all the time I was president, the main issue was the membership examination.

ME: And was that the… was this leading towards the common MRCPUK [Membership of the Royal Colleges of Physicians of the United Kingdom] or was this just the massiveness of it or the… because there were a number of factors, weren't there? One was the question of whether there should be a part one, and to divide the examination… were you responsible in part for that?

CC: No, I don't think I was responsible for anything to do with part one, as such. What was worrying the council and the successive presidents, and certainly me as president, was the circuit. The way candidates had to try and take the membership of three different colleges in the hope of passing one examination. Whilst it was appreciated that this was beneficial for the college financially, it was pretty hard on the candidates financially, many of whom were from overseas were being, I think, privately assisted. And it was really… I think we felt not altogether on the level to expect them to take three. So it… the standing joint committee all the time I was on the council of the colleges, the standing joint committee was examining this and I think by 1968 a reciprocal part one had been established but reciprocity in part two was obviously being much more difficult.

ME: And was that difficult to negotiate? Were people… was there resistance?

CC: Oh yes. From us, mostly. They… the reciprocity in part two was obviously going to be very difficult.

ME: It meant the giving up of a wonderful exam.

CC: That's right. But there was at one time, I remember, I think it was Ian Hill's time as president, there was an advertisement that appeared suggesting that membership of the Royal college, of an English Royal college was essential. That was where we were able to pick them up and really put the

brake on. I think that was started by Ian Hill. During my term, these discussions were going on and I remember it was Max Rosenheim at a meeting in Glasgow.

ME: And how did you get on with him?

CC: Oh, excellent.

ME: Very nice man.

CC: I got on very, very well with him right from the start.

ME: Had you met him before you had met him through the college?

CC: No. Oh… no. I met Max Rosenheim first of all in Dublin where the colleges were meeting in the…in Dublin. The American college had come across for a meeting there and our colleges were there. That's where I met Max Rosenheim for the first time.

ME: How was it being, if I could use the phrase, a Dumfries consultant meeting one of these flash London people. Was it… Had you been prepared for it with Derek Dunlop?

CC: It was just astonishing, it really was. It got more astonishing as time went on. But it was Max in Glasgow who suggested, "Let's forget reciprocity. Let's try another approach, namely a common membership."

ME: And how did that go down?

CC: Well, they… I remember well at that meeting the presidents were Max Rosenheim, myself and Jim Hutchison, the Glasgow paediatrician. And we discussed this and over time general agreement began to emerge. We discussed it in Glasgow and London and Edinburgh. We finally reached certain propositions as it were. We agreed, the presidents agreed, there should be equality between the colleges with the aim at a common membership. That in such examinations there must be examiners from all three colleges. That the colleges, that examinations could be held at any suitable place in the United Kingdom. And that the fees collected after defraying all expenses should be shared out between the colleges. Hm. Bad grammar. Should be shared out among the colleges on an agreed formula. That success in the examination meant that the successful candidate was a member of three colleges of physicians. But thereafter advancement for the fellowship, to the fellowship, would be a matter for individual colleges. Well, that was all very well but for us, we had a special examination which would be very difficult to get round. I told them this would mean us abandoning our long-held and much appreciated selected subject which was professed specially ever since 1925, or whenever it was. Well, again, this was discussed up and down and finally it was decided that they would… we would meet in York as a halfway house. Max hoped that with it being a halfway house an agreement might be reached. Well… we met in York. It was a London fellow, and I just can't remember who it was, said "You know, I'm sorry about your seeming diffident about the Edinburgh selected subject. This must be a disadvantage to Edinburgh." I thought and said, why? "Well, a candidate selecting a special - professing a selected subject in Edinburgh has to have such a high standard of excellence he would naturally delay his entry into the examination in favour of one of the other colleges which didn't have such a handicap." I was able to point out that we no longer in our selected subject asked for a higher standard than we demanded for general medicine. Indeed, I believe it was so at one time, but this high standard of excellence was no longer operative. It was the same standard. So that held them on that. I was terrified they would raise the subject of the special subject as opposed to the selected subject because we knew perfectly well that candidates, especially those from overseas, if they professed a selected subject, regarded themselves as

specialists in that subject which we were not prepared to concede at that stage. But the London fellows never raised that. So finally, I said I agreed, I could see what was going to happen here. We were the only college for whom this would be such a handicap. Glasgow and London were not so involved in that way, or anything like it. And I could see them drawing closer together and I could see that well, we can if we wish, go it alone. And that's where I had to make my decision. I said no, we'll not go it alone. We'll all have to go forward together. But I thought this was going to be very difficult. In the end, it wasn't difficult at all. Were you at the meeting?

ME: No, no.

CC: Only two fellows spoke against this. One of them, however, was Alastair Alexander, the old president. A much respected, much loved…

ME: Wonderful man, wasn't he?

CC: Yes. I remember vividly him saying, "If you proceed along these lines, before the end of the century only a trickle of members will be advanced to the fellowship of this college." What are we going to do now? So, in the event it was put to the vote but there were no dissensions, although these two spoke against it.

ME: Was Henry Matthew the other one?

CC: No. Oh, Henry was all in favour.

ME: Oh, how interesting.

CC: Yes! Henry supported. Henry was in favour because… one of the steps that I forgot to mention was we decided to leave out standing matters to an ad hoc committee. And Henry was on that ad hoc committee.

ME: As you brought back the developments of the argument from Max Rosenberg and… Rosenheim… did you… how did the council initially take it? Were you apprehensive sometimes when you came back, or did you feel the council was behind you?

CC: The council was behind us.

ME: So it seemed you were thoroughly backed?

CC: There was no question of any debate on the council. The two chief, most influential members, of the council were John Croom and J. G. M. [James Gilbert Murdoch] Hamilton. They were both strongly in favour of this, yes. But you asked who the other one was? The other one was… As you get old, names vanish and I'm at that stage. Gracious me!... [John] Crofton's famous, well known associate…

ME: Not to worry.

CC: It will come in a moment.

ME: What was Henry Matthew like? He was the secretary of the college at the time, wasn't he?

CC: He was secretary at one time, yes. He was an excellent secretary. I found him very helpful, very cooperative. He… He could be a little bit nippy at times, but I found him always very helpful.

ME: Full of enthusiasm, wasn't he? I mean you never fell asleep when he was about.

CC: Oh no. I, of course, had been taught by his father.

ME: What was his father like?

CC: His father was an excellent teacher. Very stern. Oh, very, very stern chap but a very good teacher.

ME: Were you taught by – now, John Croom's father was in general practice, wasn't he?

CC: Yes. No… wasn't he an obstetrician or was that going back a further generation?

ME: That was the grandfather.

CC: Yes, that was the grandfather, that's right.

ME: And had you known John Croom from before you became involved in the college?

CC: No, not before.

ME: I mean… I think both you and I share the same views of John Croom, but… how did you find him in the college?

CC: Well I got all the support from him I could possibly have asked for. I sometimes felt that he was waiting for a lead. Well, I suppose that was in some ways that was natural enough, I was president and he was vice-president but nevertheless vice-presidents in this college make their views well known! I thought he was excellent. Yes.

ME: When did the idea – you initiated the Croom Committee, didn't you? When did the first idea of that come to you? I mean, was this as a result of a realisation that the college was moving in to areas that were new and represented an opportunity and at the same time a threat, or…?

CC: I think it was because my only recollections of the college were quarterly meetings, at which everybody assembled and had a quarterly meeting, and everybody went away again. And as far as I could make out nothing very much went on in between quarterly meetings. And then the first man to start college, or to encourage the development of, college lectures was Jim Cameron. This was continued by Ian Hill. During Ray Gilchrist's time I don't remember very serious moves in that direction. No, it was Jim Cameron who really got it… started it followed by Ian Hill, followed by myself. Gradually the whole purpose of medical education was becoming more and more an activity within the college. To begin with, there would be one or two lectures in the year. Well, you see what's happening now! And I think that it was at the stage when I was president, I could see what was going to happen. And I thought well now, this is not going to develop that far in my time, but we better have a look and see the lines along which things might develop. And I thought at the time that John Croom would be the chap to undertake a longer look at this and take on this future of the college.

ME: It went on for a year or two, didn't it?

CC: That's right.

ME: The actual committee.

CC: Yes, yes.

ME: Because I was a sort of junior on that committee and I remember I was with John Crofton and Michael Oliver. And some of the proposals were quite radical, weren't they? Moving out to a greenfield site and all manner of things. But…

CC: Oh, but that was very interesting, moving out to a greenfield site.

ME: The proposals were that we moved from here, weren't they? That we moved from out of Queen Street.

CC: I remember those very well. I remember there was one proposal by William Macleod, the then treasurer, that we should purchase the Royal High School building.

ME: Really?

CC: Did you ever hear of that one?

ME: No.

CC: He raised that in council. And we had a look at that. I think somebody suggested there was a lot to be said for that. A bit near St Andrews House, maybe. [Laughs]

ME: Bit curious that the Scottish Assembly would been in 8 Queen Street, wouldn't it?

CC: Wouldn't it? But then you see, of course things began to develop. In Jim Cameron's time, number 11 Queen Street came on the market. £19,000.

ME: Gosh.

CC: I can't – I was on the council and I can't remember why we didn't go for it then. But we didn't. And it didn't come on the market again till I was president. Well, it wasn't very long, about five years later. Came on the market again at double the price. So, I said to the council, "Now look, we should have had it the first time but it's on the market again. We mustn't lose it this time." So, it was I think Jim Hamilton said, "We must get this done. Get it done." I think John Croom said to him, "Well, it's not quite so quick as that you know, you have to persuade the Trustees to release the money". Oh well. I said, "We must persuade the Trustees to release the money". Which they did, they bought it. And then the question was what to do with it. This… So, we issued our first appeal. This was masterminded very largely by Derek Dunlop. I wrote and asked him.

ME: By this time had you re-established sort of closer contact?

CC: Oh yes. Yes. Through the college we got… our paths separated. And then as soon as I came in to college affairs, they crossed again.

ME: And your friendship gel in the same way as it had been?

CC: Not quite. We were not intimate friends, but we were very friendly indeed, put it that way. A slight distinction, then.

ME: Is… because he was very forgiving of how at one time the college had perhaps dealt with him, wasn't he?

CC: Oh yes. That's very interesting too. However, we'll come back to that one. They… We got our target, I forget it was, £108,000.

ME: Huge amount of money.

CC: Very. Got that. So we were very pleased. But disaster lay ahead because in successive years inflation took over. 26% inflation one year followed by 11% inflation the next year. 38% inflation in two years. Our £100,000 was… and fellows were furious because we weren't getting on with the job. But the money had hit us… Well, that had to wait for the second appeal. And this was the one masterminded by John Crofton. And that was a great success. And of course, you know the result. We now have the Queen Elizabeth centre.

ME: Your presidency also coincided with the idea that that should be built, or did it?

CC: No. I can't think we had any credit in my presidency for that because we wouldn't possibly have had the money. All we knew was we wanted number 11 Queen Street for the development of college purposes. We had in mind at that time seminar rooms and other ways in which to develop college education. But no, we hadn't at that time anything quite as grand as what came on later when John Crofton's appeal succeeded.

ME: That was an enormously visionary concept, wasn't it? Because I remember the discussions about how the college had evolved when 11 Queen Street was bought and nothing about the conference centre was even thought of at that point. I mean, it was such a leap in imagination.

CC: But you mentioned a moment ago about Derek being so forgiving, and he was. Because Derek - had things… had he just judged things a little more nicely, he would have been president. He would have been president and I wouldn't. And I can tell you why this happened. As you know, a chap's elected to the council, or in those days, for five years. And unless things went wrong, or unless he wished to resign, he was eligible for re-election. Right. On that particular occasion, and I think John Croom was secretary, on that particular occasion every member of the council was eligible for re-election. Now, that doesn't happen very often. I don't know what happens now with that enormous council and the different arrangements we have. But in those days, and it didn't happen very often, every member of the council was eligible for re-election. And of all years that was the year Derek allowed his name to go forward. And he wasn't elected to the council. Now, if he'd waited a year he'd have been… that's how it happened. And it's really sad. How he didn't know that, I can't imagine. But that's it. There were doubtless other reasons because his work on the Regional Health Board, which was very, very important and very genuinely carried out, didn't please everybody.

ME: No, no. But he… he was a quite a complicated man to understand, wasn't he? I mean, there was this remarkable front and behind that a mind and a caring that was quite exceptional.

CC: Absolutely. Absolutely. You talk about that front. Those of us who got to know him well realised the truth of what you said, it's absolutely right. I know in his speeches - which were very clever. Very clever. He got to the stage at which he would pretend he was forgetting. Now, it takes a courage to do that. I could never do that. I could forget, but I wouldn't pretend I was forgetting. But he could pretend he was forgetting and then suddenly drag it back to the mind again. Oh, that was very clever. And I wish I could have done that.

ME: You also travelled while you were president, didn't you? Was it more than one trip or did you have this big magnificent trip?

CC: I don't know if I would call it magnificent… a lot of travelling, but nothing like what presidents have to undertake now. Yes, in my official capacity I went to Canada, to America - to the United States, that is, to Australia, to New Zealand… Kuala Lumpur. That was a disastrous one.

ME: What was disastrous about that?

CC: Well, Kuala Lumpur. I knew it would be my turn to go, so I had a word with Ian Hill. I knew he'd been out there and I asked him about it. I sort of said, "It's my turn, I have to go to Kuala Lumpur. What's the sort of procedure?" He said, "Well, the college likes to intimate to its senior fellow in the area the president's intention to visit, and ask him to make suitable arrangements so he could meet all the fellows in the area." Well, the senior fellow at the time was a man called [Danaraj]. He was a no doubt able physician, but he didn't like us for some reason. However, I wrote very nicely to him, tried to arrange matters. Booked in a hotel in Kuala Lumpur. We got to Kuala Lumpur, my wife and I. We were met not quite as I expected. We were met by a lady who said she was a member of the Royal College of Physicians of London. Now, that told me a lot. So, we were taken to [Danaraj's] magnificent hospital centre and issued into the… an anteroom where we were kept waiting three quarters of an hour before [Danaraj] deigned to see us. Then he told us there was a certain amount of unrest in the country and cancelled our hotel appointment and they put us in somewhere else. Well, I thought it was a pretty low [laughs]. In the end I said I was wanting to meet our fellows. Oh, but the disturbed state of the country has prevented that. Well, the country wasn't disturbed at all. I made what enquiries I could and he was just behaving very badly.

ME: Oh dear.

CC: And I reported this when I got back. I thought Ian Hill was going to take a seizure. But I think [Danaraj's] passed on, and John Crofton has been out since and had a splendid time. But I felt that went very badly, I must confess.

ME: You went to New Zealand.

CC: Yes.

ME: Was that a nice visit?

CC: Yes. On the occasion of that I was due to go to India, I think. But the New Zealand people wrote imploring me to go - now was it their centenary or something? There was some special occasion why they wished the Edinburgh president to attend these functions on the centenary of the other Edinburgh hall, or words to that affect. So yes, that was an extra visit.

ME: Was the air flight difficult? I mean, wasn't –

CC: Tedious, but not difficult exactly. Tedious, yes. I think our feet began to swell, or something like that [laughs].

ME: Yes. I think we've covered almost everything, haven't we? Is there anything that I haven't covered?

CC: Various odds and ends happened… There was the time at a council meeting when attempts were made to ease tedious meetings of the council when sherry was brought in. Have you heard this?

ME: No, no.

CC: Neil MacMichael was treasurer at the time, Ian Hill was president. I'm sure he knew nothing about it. These were evening meetings and they went on a long time. So, there was a knock at the door and in marched Mr Frank Manson, the then college officer, with silver tray and a decanter, sherry glasses. He marched forward and put them on the table [ME laughs]. Neil MacMichael explained that, "Well, president, you're kind enough to ask us to your room for a glass of sherry. You're very welcome. But I felt with such a long meeting perhaps just a ten minute break halfway

through would be a help." So, alright. We had our break for sherry in the middle of a long meeting. I don't wish to imply that we councillors of the Royal College of Physicians of Edinburgh could not carry our liquor. I can only state that after one glass of sherry we got more verbal, and the meetings lasted longer. And after a couple of such occasions Ian Hill just very bluntly said, "This would not go on, we couldn't put up with this."

ME: It was a very short lasted tradition.

CC: There was one when the lights went out. Have you heard about the lights going out?

ME: No.

CC: Oh, that was a splendid occasion. The lights went out and these were evening meetings, of course. We were in darkness! Well, in no time at all Manson came in with a candelabra. Ray Gilchrist presented the college with two beautiful candelabra. Well, he brought these in, lit the candles and he put the candles on the table. Well, that's all right. We could see our papers, but we couldn't see each other because of the candles in between casting a bright light. Well, after a little while the lights came on again. And Ian Hill, the president, said, "Blow out these candles." So we blew. Now, there were three of us on either sides of the table and since we were blowing in opposite directions the candles paid no attention. They flickered, but didn't go out. So we got up and blew harder, and still didn't go out. And the president let it be known that the forced expiratory volume of his council left something to be desired. We felt very hurt about this because he didn't try to blow out the candles. Anyway, Mr Manson came in with that long stick with the candle snuffer on the end and in a dignified way put all the candles out and we got on with the business.

ME: At least your FEV [forced expiratory volume] was the same as everyone else's in the room.

CC: Theoretically it should've been considerably less, but I like to think it was as good as anybody else's.

ME: A great tribute to your recovery… I can't think of anything more to ask you. I think that's been a wonderful account… I can't… I think that was one of the most formative periods in the history of the college, isn't it?

CC: Oh, compared to what it used to be, yes. Oh, yes indeed. Indeed. There's one other thing I could just mention, if I may?

ME: Yes.

CC: Because we were talking about Max Rosenheim and I'd like this to be remembered about Max. One of the… College councils often discussed about accepting money from drug firms and that sort of thing. I remember a time where it was faintly indecent even to consider playing the stock market. But then it was really dreadful to think of money… I talked this over with Max once at some length. He said he saw no difficulty whatever in the Royal College accepting money in any way they could get it. And he mentioned the Lily Dinner. I said, well tell me more about the Lily Dinner. And so he told me that the Lilys made a handsome donation annually to the college for a college lecture to be followed by a college dinner. And the only string attached was that two directors should be invited to the dinner. And I thought, this was splendid. So he said, "I'll tell you what, Chris. We've got a Lily Dinner due in London in December. If you like, it could be held in your college instead of London." And I said, "I'd like that very much." So, I made – he said, "Of course, it's just the lecture and the dinner." And I said, "Alright." "Any excess is your college money, course. Any excess goes to the college." So, I made the necessary arrangements at my end and he at his. And in December the first

Lily Dinner was held in this college. But it was the London one, not ours. But after that, it became an annual feature in this college, too. But it was Max Rosenheim's kind gesture that started that. Do we still have Lily Dinners, do you know?

ME: I don't know.

CC: Well, it went on for some years, anyway. And it was very good of him to do that.

ME: But that very interesting insight in to the… negotiations, isn't it? Because these negotiations were… were fraught with problems, or had potential for being fraught with problems, hadn't they? And I think that it says a lot for you and Max Rosenheim that it went so well.

CC: Yes. We got on very well together.

ME: Yes.

CC: And I… in return, I proposed his advancement to the honorary fellowship of this college.

ME: Yes.

CC: Which - that pleased him very much.

ME: I'm sure. Yes. And then you were succeeded by John Croom.

CC: John, yes. Then John Crofton.

ME: But it's interesting because John Croom in fact - he obviously… he was given his programme and his plan and he took it on very wonderfully, didn't he?

CC: I think so. Yes. I think so.

ME: I think that he drew a great deal from the Croom committee that… I remember one of those meetings and the college officer coming in with his silver tray and there was great sort of - people just wondered what was being brought in and in fact it was the racing results [CC laughs] and the… Well, that's wonderful.

CC: Thank you.

ME: Thank you very much.

CC: It's been a great pleasure. A great pleasure. I shall doubtless think of lots of things I might've said to you when I go away.

ME: Yes, that was very good because that was I think a very critical period in the college's history, isn't it? Because it came out of a staid period, it took on, it expanded into the college it is today and it responded to contemporary needs.

CC: Well, and your past president kept a copy of this or is this entirely for the college archives?

ME: We haven't decided yet.

CC: Well, if you do decide, count me in.

ME: Yes, we have so far three and that's six hours, or nearly seven or eight hours of tape.

CC: Gracious.

ME: And I think that before it gets totally out of hand that we should start editing it into selected moments.

CC: I think you'll have to.

ME: But just imagine you're a PhD for someone in the year 2500.

CC: Oh, yes.

ME: So, we'll have to get the Ouija board out then.