

**YS – Yvette Staelens interviewing Alan & Julie Kimber Nickelson,
Halsway Manor on 7th November 2014.**

Thank you very much to both of you for agreeing to take part in our project. First of all I would like to know a little about your personal history really so Julie if you could tell me where you were born and when.

JKN – I was born in Headington Quarry on 6th May 1939 which was when the war started. I was three months old when the war started when my father went. He was in the RAF when he went away. For the first five years of my life it was pretty quiet and nothing very eventful happened but when my father came home the Morris Dancing Team started up again and the folk activities started up again. There was country dancing and a lot of Morris dancing. My Grandfather was William Kimber who had actually met Cecil Sharp and been involved a lot with Cecil Sharp and I hadn't had a lot to do with him during the war for various family reasons although he lived at the top of the road. But when my father came home he obviously got in touch with my Grandfather again and he was very interested in music but he said that he couldn't read music. so every time he had a piece of music he would send for me because I was having piano lessons and I pretty soon learned how to read music and I had to go up and either a sing a tune to him or sing it over again so that he could play it on his concertina. But I was amazed at the way he picked things up so quickly you only had to do sing something twice and he would play the tune back to you. And then he my father and he went to the local school to teach Morris dancing and form a new side to get it going.

YS – So you were a tiny little girl. What did he look like? What do remember about him?

JKN – He was very tall he wasn't very fat, he had a moustache, he had a bald head, he smoked a pipe, he wore a cap. He was very interested in gardening and he was also very interested in the rest of the family he had seven daughters and two sons. One of his daughters had died after 1918 in the flu epidemic so he would talk a lot about what so and so is doing and have you been to see so and so. We used to take his dinner up to him on a plate he would never come and eat it at our house. He was 70 when I was born and I was the last grandchild. I had 10 cousins and they were all older than me so I was the littlest of them all. I would go up there and find him playing his concertina or I would go up there and find him talking to folk song collectors and dance tune collectors and I would sit and listen for a bit and then toddle off and do my own thing.

YS – It was a big part of your child hood really being part of this folk scene.

JKN – I can't remember. When people say when did you come in, when did you start dancing, when did you start getting interested in it –I don't remember. After I was 5 it was all going on round me and I took it as a matter of course.

YS – Alan can you tell me a little bit about yourself. Where you were born and your family.

AKN – Yes, quite a different story really to Julie I have nothing to do with the folk world at all. I was born at South Oxford at Crampon in 1944 Mum & Dad were not very helpful in our early life time's so we didn't see a lot of interesting hobbies and things and it wasn't until I was 21 I think when I met Julie and accidently in a way came into the folk world through a

man called Denis Manners who was in its early years was responsible for running Towersey Folk Festival. Unfortunately Denis is no longer with us but he was a great inspiration I think to getting people interested in doing things and he said why don't you come along and do Morris Dancing and I haven't got a clue what this Morris Dancing was all about I thought it was something to do with Morris cars because that what was made in Oxford at the time. But anyway cutting a long story short I went along to one of their meeting evenings and in a way the rest is history because that's where I met Julie through Folk Dancing on a different separate evening and of course later on we got married and had our family.

YS – Which side were you dancing with?

AKN – At the time I was dancing with Oxford City Morris Men who I think are one of the founder club members of the Morris Ring of England. I think Oxford & Cambridge were the founder members of the Morris Ring of England but then I of course once I met Julie and in later years I joined the Headington Quarry Morris Dancers of which I am a member now.

YS – So tell me about the Folk Dancing. Where did that happen and who organized it? Was it a club? Julie.

JKN – My father first took me Folk Dancing. It was called a class partly funded by the local authority in the local school and it had happened before the war so there were a lot of more or less my father's age people. You weren't allowed to join until you were 15 then you went along and it was sort of organized by them and the teachers were very rigid. They had a pianist and then after that various other clubs sprung up and really you could dance every day of the week in Oxford. There was one every day of the week somewhere round Oxford and then the sort of classes died out and it became a more of a club because I think people were fed up with being taught as in school, you know, and people just more for fun and then in that case we had more different musicians coming along.

YS – So how did it work with the musicians? Who booked the bands and put the bands together? How did that work?

JKN – People in the beginning if they played an instrument. Nobody actually booked a band they just came along and played.

AKN – There were regular attenders.

YS – Were they either dancers or musicians or did they do both?

AKN – Some were both they hopped in and out. John White was a musician and a dancer for Folk and Morris.

JKN – People just hopped in and out with what they wanted to do.

AKN – I think it came under the umbrella particularly in our association with Oxford District. They used to run districts almost by county sizes years ago. All that's missing now it doesn't happen quite like that

YS – Do you mean EFDSS?

AKN – Yes EFDSS and always those people met in those same places doing their same thing whether it be Folk or Morris, Singing, Ceilid or whatever. They did tend to group together quite frequently.

YS – Tell me about your grouping together. How did that happen, you two?

JKN – We met at a Folk Club Dance. Aesop's on a Tuesday and Alan used to cycle me home. I would cycle down there and he would escort me by bicycle up that steep hill and back again.

YS – So who chatted who up, come on?

JKN – I thought he was awful when I first met him. He stood there and put a bow tie on and I thought “Who is this silly man” (laugh) I certainly didn't chat him up. He thought he was funny but we gradually got together didn't we?

AKN – Yes – it just developed, you know, there was a relationship and it happened in its way. Our relationship not everyone's relationship.

JKN – But we decided to keep the name because people come to find Kimber's in Quarry and if we changed it they wouldn't be able to. We still have a lot of people who want to know things and come and call us and want to know about music and dance so that's why we kept it.

AKN – But not always good people some despicable people too sometimes would come with the intention of wanting to do something and then not really complied with what you agreed i.e. somebody came and said they wanted to write a thesis and they came I think to your Dad (Fred Kimber) and asked him for some information on the Kimber family because they were doing this thesis and very very unfortunately they agreed they would take away some of the personal photographs, get them copied, and bring them back when they had finished with what they were doing and never saw them again. That sort of thing you had to be wary of. Particularly Julie because of Julie's connection with the Folk world and the Morris world had to be extremely careful about sometimes who they were opening the door to.

YS – Goodness. Can you tell me about this baldric Julie? We talked about this the other day.

JKN – I don't know an awful lot about it. It has been here a very long time and it says it was made by William Kimber and I am absolutely sure it wasn't because I never saw him sewing but my Grandmother who I never knew who died when my father was nine, she was a seamstress and she had made his smock and she made his other baldrics and I wouldn't be at all surprised if she hadn't made it.

YS – What was her name?

JKN – Her name was Florence Kimber but as I didn't know her she died when my father was 9 but apparently she was well known and well liked.

YS – I wonder how this got to Halsway.

JKN – I have no idea. I have tried to find out. I have asked everyone I can think of but I can't – nobody seems to know how it got here. It has always been here since I've been coming to Halsway & that's 34 years was it?

AKN – Would it be 1965? Would you have seen it then?

JKN – I did see it and I asked how it got here. It is not in Quarry colours that's what amazes me.

AKN – That is the most obvious thing. No Quarry connection.

JKN – Because Quarry wear navy blue & red and there doesn't seem to be any connection with it at all.

AKN – I had a separate theory about it. Whether it was from another side and presented to him and so it effectively was almost this was William Kimber's baldric but it isn't really his. It might have been presented to him. I don't know.

JKN – It is not even complete is it? When you look at it. You need more straps to go over that. One over the back and two in the front. If anybody else knows how it got here it would be interesting to know.

YS – So whilst we are at Halsway Manor tell me how about how Halsway came into your life. How did that happen?

JKN – We were at Folk camp in Porlock.

YS – Tell me about Folk Camp.

JKN – Oh it was a marvelous thing. It was a family camp originally. We didn't have any family but we were allowed to go. Lots of people didn't take children. But children & people went. You took a tent and various things like buckets & things that you would need. The catering was done on a rota in a tent and people danced and sang and there was a marquee with a boarded floor so you could dance in the evening or the daytime if it was wet. Lit by Tilley lamps. It had primitive toilets that somebody volunteered to empty. It was always Joan Cook, Patrick's sister, she was a big girl and she could carry buckets. She would empty the toilets. We went for years and years, didn't we, to folk camp. They were in different places. They moved them round this area like Corfe like that sort of area we went.

YS – Who organised them?

JKN – Bill Rutter and they had a leader.

AKN – Designated a leader like um

JKN – Bill Rutter organised them. Then Tubby Reynolds or Dennis Manners was the actual leader of them.

YS – What was their job what did they do as leader?

AKN – Some of the leaders were permanent staff weren't they to the EFDSS? Hugh Rippon, Brian Heaton, Peter Dashwood.

JKN – There was lots of laughter and dancing and singing and we would all go and dance round the countryside in costume and go swimming and midnight swimming things. They had quizzes

AKN – They had quizzes like Animal, Vegetable or Mineral and there were some really crazy answers. Oh yes I think this is vegetable, it is obviously vegetable because it is green. It tastes like a vegetable. Almost a bit Goonish some of the answers. Brilliant people.

JKN – We had some brilliant fun. I remember when in Wales once we did a mock mamas play and the mayor of the town decided he would come and have a look so he brought his entourage and sat in the front. They did this mamas play and it was raining outside and I think it was when Ron Beard came in with a bucket of water because it was all a scam and he said "in comes our old water cock" and he slipped and threw this bucket of water clean over the Mayor (laughter). It was that sort of thing it was sort of clownish and crazy.

AKN – It was crazy yes some of it was crazy brilliant stuff.

YS – Did you go for a week or a weekend?

JKN – You couldn't go for more than a fortnight and it lasted for a month. But you could not go for more than a fortnight.

AKN/JKN – We had disasters too. People got badly hurt. One lady slipped on some planking with some scalding water and she was taken to hospital. Oh dear we've had some

JKN – They had a dance one night and it was all lit by Tilley lamps and the Tilley lamps were on the beams of the tent and local lads came from the village and of course they danced up and down like that (clap clap clap sound) and a Tilley lamp got near the end and descended on to somebody's head.

AKN – The best one not the best bit for you was when somebody chose to change the toilets.

JKN – Peter Dashwood decided. I was in the camp on my own, I don't know why and I was sitting on the loo. Peter Dashwood came along and said "these toilets were in the wrong place" and they picked them up and left me in the middle of the field.

AKN – Julie was in the toilet at the time and they said right lift and they marched the toilet tent away leaving Julie exposed in the field on the toilet. (laughter) Crazy things like that. Another day on an occasion, I don't know why, I think a lot of the people on the folk camp went swimming and I wasn't a keen swimmer. This sounds silly now but I didn't learn swimming until 10 years ago, more or less. I was sort of 58 ish when I started swimming but I was at Folk Camp and there wasn't hardly a soul about and who should turn up? Were the Yetties, complete group, Bob Common, Pete Shutler, Bonny & Mac and he said "Where are they all then?". I said they have gone out swimming as far as I know. "Oh well we're going fishing do you want to come with us?" and I went fishing. That was an experience, honestly. Fishing with the Yetties in a tiny little boat you would be lucky if it floated. (laughter).

YS – But did you catch anything Alan?

AKN – Mackerel, brought them back and cut them up and had them in the evening for supper.

YS – So Folk Camps sounds like lots of fun actually.

JKN – I think they still are but they are a bit more sophisticated now and I can't crawl about in a tent anymore. They like to take caravans now it is incredible.

AKN – There were quite dangerous elements. Not deliberately but it was just the way that it happened. You know in this day and age you have got Health and Safety all over the place and probably good in lots of ways.

YS – How many did you participate in? You mentioned Porlock and you mentioned another one.

AKN/ JKN- Gosh, Studland Bay, Porlock, maybe Porlock more than once, the Gower,

AKN – You did some without me.

JKN – Yes I went on some before I met Alan so I done the very second one because The Yetties were in a field and they were the 1st Axminster Scout Group. They got nearer and nearer to see what we were doing and then they got over the style and then they joined in. They made themselves into the Yetties. Yes early sixties.

YS – Before Halsway came into being obviously.

JKN – Yes because we were down at Porlock at Folk Camp when Bill Rutter bought Halsway and he sent a message down to say would we like to come up and see it. So the Folk Camp came up and actually looked over the Manor when he had just bought it.

YS – What was your impression?

AKN – Marvelous idea. We were asked. Everybody that turned up were asked if we would like to buy debentures and unfortunately in our particular case we were in the throws of trying to get sufficient money together to buy a house of our own. We were just thinking of getting married so we couldn't afford it we could hardly afford a mortgage yet alone additional finances like that. But yes it was in the beginning I think we thought it was a brilliant idea if they could get it off the ground. If they could get it off the ground and thank goodness in its way they have.

YS – What did the house look like? Can you describe your impressions?

JKN/AKN – Massive, big what do we want a big place like this for.

JKN – We all got together and danced on the grass on the side, yes. Mm yes it was – they had done some of it up. They had started to decorate some of it. I thought the kitchens were a bit dilapidated a bit primitive really.

AKN – A bit wormy (laughter)

JKN – We thought it was a marvelous place didn't we?

AKN – I think you might be able to correct me if I am wrong here but I believe the interest was mainly in the house and not the mews because I don't think that was available. I think there was somebody actually living in it. Some elderly people were living in it.

JKN – John Satcher's wife's aunts lived in that.

AKN – Did they really?

JKN – Yes funnily enough we found out.

YS – So did you meet the owners when you came?

JKN – No it was just Bill yes.

YS – So you just collected the key?

JKN – No they were already in there.

YS – and then what happened next?

JKN – Well our interest faded away a bit.

AKN – Which is a pity, yeah.

JKN – We kept on doing folk camps and then we heard it was getting better and better and when my son was about 9 we came down here and we had a marvelous time didn't we? Because our son was 9 and.

AKN – This was 1983.

JKN – Yeah. Susan Swan's Barnaby were the same age and the manager here at that time had twin boys so we used to come down open the car and we just lost Chris. They used to go out the back and make tree houses and then we used to get them in and feed them and make sure they were clean.

AKN – That was Bruce & Pepsy. They were in charge of it at that time. They really were devoted to Halsway Manor as it was and they really made you welcome and everybody liked them. I can't say too much about them. They ended their time here and I don't think it was so good at the time. They, I think their intention was that everybody that came here had a good time and I think that's what it was then.

JKN – It has an atmosphere you feel like you are at home and quite happy to walk in here, you know. We've been every year since then, haven't we, two or three times a year.

AKN – Since 1983 did I say? We have had about between 36 and 40 visits, here, we have. Yes, at different stages for different reasons but mainly folk, Morris and singing. That's been our interest.

YS – Goodness! So how would you describe that long period of change. What have you seen? Can you take me through what you have seen and the things that have happened that has changed. Important things and significant things. Anything at all from the early 80's. Give me a feel of the place, what was it like?

JKN – It was fairly primitive in the early days because if you got hot water you were very lucky and sometimes we didn't get water at all. It just cut off and there you were without any.

AKN – Yes it was, it was fairly brief at times but obviously over the years it had improved.

YS – Dormitory accommodation at the beginning? Were you in dormitories?

JKN – But we weren't because we were married so we had Chris in with us so we had a family room, mm yes it has improved. The food has definitely improved, hasn't it? Sometimes it wasn't.

AKN – The buildings have improved so for lots of reasons there has been improvement in the building because it had to keep up with time and I think one of the main instigators at the time was Peter Swan who is an architect. He had a lot of input, no doubt about it, into the improvement of this place for all sorts of reasons mmm including in his later years the improvement of the heating system which had to be electronically devised and put in and whatever they do to it. He was responsible for a lot of it. I think the early planning of it or did he go through the plans of it? He was a terrific man for what he did and I don't think it always goes recognised of his involvement in the improvement of Halsway. Obviously it is easy to make some comparison with a hotel and say oh it's not the same as a hotel but I think their cash strapped as far as getting their money and finances. It is not quite as easy, they haven't got the overall numbers which again is a pity. We are not talking about 150 to 200 people attending here every week. We are only talking about comparatively 60 to 70 people. And that must be difficult to try and maintain somewhere of this size, of this caliber, you know of this caliber, because if it wants upgrading like the (hunky tunks) this statue that sticks out the front the dragony bit that sticks out the doorway I mean when it is down on the ground it is colossal and it is up there and it looks ever so small. Those sort of things must have cost quite a lot of money and it is constant upgrading it and keeping it up to its maintained useable level of today.

YS – and you mentioned ghost stories you two. Can you tell me any of those?

JKN – About 4 years ago there was six of us bell ringing in the Library and it was twenty past five on a Summers afternoon. All the doors were shut and all of a sudden there was seven of us in the room and six of us saw this person who was dressed in grey, said nothing and had long fair hair who walked towards the door and disappeared. But it wasn't spooky and it wasn't ghostly. We all sat there and said "Who was that? " There wasn't anybody else here was there? Counted round again but there was no atmosphere, no oh lord that's a ghost, but it puzzled us.

YS – Goodness!

AKN – The other one was when we stayed in Room 7.

JKN – I woke up in the night and sat up in bed and there was a lady, a woman in a black dress with a hood on a sort of Tudor hood on and a long string of purple beads. She had a horrible face and she leaned over me and I screamed and I screamed so loudly I woke the whole corridor up. But I mean that doesn't stop me coming here. It's just odd.

AKN – chuckle chuckle

JKN – Nobody else has seen that one but several people have seen the person that walked through the Library. Yeah but I as I can say I don't say ghosts are horrible and I am scared to death. I am not. The one that walked through the library.... I was talking to Cynthia Sartin and she said that some people have seen her and she is supposed to be the ghost of the person who died very young and was married and she was buried in Bicknoller. No she was buried in Crowcombe and her husband was buried in Bicknoller and she walks through to find him. But I mean it wasn't horrible it was just odd.

YS – Now I have heard all sorts of fun stories about how the Christmas tree fairy was put on top of the light and things were managed here to make do. Can you think of anything amusing over the years that you witnessed or have been party to or perhaps with the Yetties or I don't know.

JKN – Well when we've all got together we've done funny dances, haven't we. Like when we were all nuns and you came round with a baby to see which nun.. We danced nun circles.

AKN – Generally speaking when you have been here the week or term whatever it is. It might be 3 or 4 days or a week. Usually on the last night or thereabouts each person who wanted to would do their thing. Very often we used to write our own silly bit of a play when we are talking Mummings Play but instead of have the usual named characters in the Mummings play you had the appropriate changed name for whatever happened funny of that week. I mean if it was a traffic warden or a policeman came in. Someone would come in with a truncheon and he would take a part in the re-arranged new play of the evening. Those sort of things were quite fun.

JKN – We won't say who this was actually done this to but mm somebody put a parking ticket on somebodys car and they thought it was real, didn't they? And they said someone's put a parking ticket on my car what am I going to do, what am I going to do. It was breakfast time and at that point two burly policeman arrived and this person thought they had come for him. (laughter) they hadn't they had come to see if we had a dog here that was worrying sheep on the top of the hill. (laughter) We did do silly things didn't we?

YS – So why do you two keep coming back?

JKN – I think it is partly because everyone who comes here has an interest in folk. So you are with like-minded people and the other thing is the atmosphere. You are always welcomed. The staff always welcome you. You feel it is not like being in a hotel you feel you are in a second home almost.

AKN – It is a home – that's what it is. You come here you can sit, more or less, anywhere. within reason do anything. You can go anywhere. You can rest if you want to, if you can hide out the way of the people telling you to get involved with something. But it is a homely atmosphere. I mean I could take my wallet out of my pocket and I could leave it in the middle of this table like I have just done now and I could leave that there for two days and that would still be there. It is trusting and it is good to know that you can go somewhere and do that. And obviously at the end of the day you have come here for some fun really and you do meet people. You meet some people you don't want to meet, but I mean you do meet people and it is fun. And like Julie said we all have the same or similar interests so you are guiding towards that Ceilidh night when everything happens that last night at Halsway Manor. Then the next morning everybody gets up for breakfast all miserable as they have got to go home.mmmm

YS – Take me through a typical week. You have mentioned that as being the highlight of the week so what would be a typical week. Start with maybe when you first came here. What was it like ? How did it work?

AKN – Well first you have got to get your body moving. (laughter) You can't move. At our age you can't move so easy – no you just develop into the chosen workshop of your choice whether it be Rapper or Morris.

YS – Did you learn that here or did you learn that at your club?

AKN – Oh no Rapper we learnt that back at home at our local club. Probably most people would. But there are some people that come here who have never seen such things as long sword Rapa or have a go at the hand bells and never done hand bells before. Mmm it is starting off slowly. It almost sort of speeds up through the week because then you've become interested and you've left that and gone over to the craft room where the people have done various crafts and you've got interested in making something, doing something. It's being something totally different. Particularly with this week which we've called a mini-fest. And it is aimed to be like a mini festival.

YS – Have you been in the organisation of that?

AKN-JKN – No Ted Morse I think is the one yeah.

AKN – Ted's taken – as we have seen this week. Ted has taken lots of things under his wing and he never stops and never gives up. He just keeps going. Cos Pat, his wife, said "I try to get him to stop, he just won't stop." As soon as he has finished one thing he will go and get the instruments out for the next workshop even knowing that is another hour away or whatever. So, he is good there is no doubt about that and all the people this week have been good. The band, the MCs, the people in charge you don't like because they are telling you what to do but (laughter) It works.

JKN – We've made friends from different people in other parts of the country and they have been good friends to us now – you know. The Swans.

YS – How far do people come to Halsway would you say?

JKN – Last year there was Scotland wasn't there?

AKN – Scotland, this next few days usually on Neville Gardeners' music violin workshop, he usually brings some people come down from Scotland so it is quite a broad span. I mean some people this week come from Northumbria that area and region. Other people from Lancashire, some people just down the road from Somerset, you know. It is it's nice because it has a broad range of people and it – don't forget we are only here for a small section. We are not here for all the rest of the year and this thank goodness, in its way, runs all year round.

YS – and you've made friends for life you say.

AKN – Oh yes oh yes so it is a good thing and the other thing I think about Halsway Manor is the fact that in more recent years they have managed to try and adopt and get an interest in the younger people. And I think that is one of the good things if we can do that and there are a lot of people behind the scenes that are making this effort to involve younger people at

Halsway Manor. To the future and the future building of the Manor which they are going to have hopefully (keep every finger crossed) that we've got to get permission to build additional stuff here to improve the facilities and hopefully not get too many people. Get some more people here to keep it running easy.

YS – So if I was to say to you Julie in your life how important is Halsway. What would you answer me?

JKN – I think it is very important I mean you get home and look forward to the next bit. You know, I am just sad that we are getting older and we can't join in all the things. But I mean I shall still come if I can and it is important and we go home and tell people about it and spread it about as much as we can. I must admit I like the Countryside as well around it and the fresh air and the animals and things. So yeh it is a big part of our lives really.

YS – And the same for you Alan. In proportion to your life how important has Halsway been would you say?

AKN – oh yes I think I've developed into Halsway because the interests that. I mean, I like singing er well if anyone else likes my singing. I like singing and I think it helps me to improve in what I am doing. I come in here into the Library and look at various books and bits and pieces because I am looking really for information for what I do back home. Cos I do quite a bit of singing, a little bit of entertaining for old folks when I do back home and I just find it is interesting and it has got what I want here.

YS – So when you are back home. How, what do you do folk wise? You've mentioned what you do. How about you Julie?

JKN – When I am able to I, we dance. We dance at our local club which meets on a Thursday but also there are Saturday dances.

YS – Which club is that?

JKN – Headington Quarry Folk Club. We are lucky in Oxfordshire as we've got a lot of dance clubs and we've got a lot of live music. I mean if we can't dance I sit in the band. We belong to a choir which is Folk based. So we do a lot of singing, as well.

YS – and you play, both of you, instruments?

JKN – Well, no. I play the piano but I am not needed in the band for that one. I just take tambourines and things and stuff like that. I've just started that as I couldn't dance.

YS – What about you Alan?

AKN – Well, I attempt to play a flageolet or tin whistle. That's about all I play. But I think that one of the most lucky things and important things we'll say with the Oxford area is that we have a couple of good MC's who have been MC's for a long while. Bill & Barbara

Kinsman. Barbara Kinsman comes from Birmingham, down to Oxford and MC's some of our weekly dances that we have. Not always. But she says "Do you know what" she says "You are very lucky in Oxfordshire to have the amount of live music that you have" and this doesn't and she travels the country, far and wide and she says this does not happen all over the country. But here it doesn't matter where she comes to take a dance at Oxford there is always a local band, not the same one, a local band and that is quite a rarity.

YS – and thinking about musicians. You mentioned John Kilpatrick's sister.

JKN – Yes I don't know what happened to her in the end.

YS – So what was his involvement here. Was he involved at all?

JKN – Well he must have been but I have never been here whilst he has been here.

AKN – Mainly folk camps we saw John. Because the other one we saw – what was his name? That funny couple did a ventriloquist doll. What were they called? They were regular attenders of folk camp. Not Betty? Oh dear sorry its gone. I can't remember but there was two chaps who were friends and about the same age.

JKN – Not Buttercup and Daisy? We don't know what their real names were.

AKN – So we called them Buttercup and Daisy and they would come along – this is going back to the folk camps. Everybody who wanted would do a skit of some form and these two came along and one would sit there and they would be the person and the doll and it was very hilarious. Actually got his hand up the back of his shirt seemingly working him to perform.

YS – But there must have been folk acts that started in the folk camps who came on to be quite famous like John Kilpatrick. Was there anyone else you were of who was famous that came to the folk camps that you have butted up against?

AKN – The Yetties, John Kirkpatrick was another one. I don't think we met many others.

JKN – Denis Manners

AKN – I can't think of professional people that were involved in folk apart from Denis Manners who was living at Towers. Willum Towsky lived in the village to get involved with the festival. The conductor Willum Towsky and another conductor you've met through the folk world was Vaughn Williams.

JKN – I didn't meet Vaughn Williams

AKN – No – his wife. Was it his wife?

JKN – I have met his wife once or twice. That was through Bill. I met various people through him.

AKN – Imogen. Was it Imogen? Ursula Vaughn. But no I don't think we met anyone else. I can't recall anyone anyway.

JKN – Who was it we went to? Peter Fleming – David Fleming Williams. I had an upsy down with him not so long ago. We went to tea with Sir Malcolm Sargent. I was about five and he was about 3.

YS – Why? How did that happen?

JKN – Well he wanted to meet Bill and we were up at the Albert Hall and he wanted to do something in the afternoon.

YS – This was Bill?

JKN – Bill Kimber and he asked us to tea. I don't remember very much about it. I wasn't very old.

YS – Good Heavens!

JKN – We do meet

AKN – You are very fortunate to meet various people.

JKN – I know who people are. Who was it we met recently. Giles Brandreth did and interview in the Quarry didn't he? People look different when they are on the television don't they? They are either shorter or fatter or completely different. But he was very nice wasn't he Giles Brandreth?

AKN – Yes he was Yes.

YS – What was that for?

JKN – They were doing the history. The One Show was doing the history of country gardens and Percy Grainger so we got involved in that somehow.

AKN – and we met with Percy Grainger's sort of Biographer was it?

JKN – Yes I met with Percy Grainger's Biographer – it is coming back to me.

YS – So the Kimber connection is really live. People still come to see you and talk about family

JKN – Yes, but I find it very difficult because having said that Bill was my grandfather they expect me to do marvelous things, you know what I mean. I can't always live up to their expectations.

YS – What to dance or?

JKN – Well they expect you to know an awful lot about folk music and stuff like that. I have got gaps in my knowledge like everybody else. He was a marvelous person and do so and so. But you can't always live up to their expectations.

YS – I think it is wonderful that you guys have this lovely connection with Halsway and you come every year and more than once a year and I think that is amazing. Is there anyone else like you that you know of?

JKN – Yes, Norma comes back at least four times a year. Lots of people come two or three times a year.

YS – and that's still Oxfordshire connection. That's quite interesting isn't it.

JKN – Yes we are trying to get the younger people to come down here as well. My grandson thinks Morris Dancing is bats (laughter) and he is sick of watching it. (laughter). Michael is nine and he plays the piano – he does have music inside him. So does Harriet doesn't she?

AKN – Oh yes

JKN – They are both musical but he is football at the moment.

AKN – Goalie for the local club.

JKN – He will get there.

AKN – He takes knocks, he is incredible, he takes knocks like any bodies business. It doesn't matter you can kick him. He will go down, he will get up and carry on. I don't know how far it is going to take him. It frightens me.

JKN – The awkward thing about it was that I was an only child and I was a girl which was a great disappointment to everybody, so. I taught at Horspath School which is still a fairly small village on the outskirts of Oxford in a Victorian building although it had a big hall. I always taught singing games to the little ones. Folk dancing to the bigger ones up in the top class, 11 year olds and Maypole dancing as well we did and we always had a big thing on the green in the Summer where they all danced. But one day a lady came to see me and she had got a book in her hands. Now I knew that my great grandparents had lived in Horspath Manor. They didn't own it they had rented it from the Church or one of the apologies. They had been turned out because in the 1930's they had to pay an extra Tithe bill and they refused to do this so they all de-camped from Horsepath Manor which was a very Tudor building and they had gone and bought themselves a plot of land in Horsepath and each one of them had built themselves a house. Well at this particular time the Manor was being sold and the Manor Barn was being renovated and they had found this book in the roof and so they brought it across to me and this is what it said. " Ann Kimber is my name, single is my station, Bullingdon is my dwelling place and God is my salvation. When I am dead I am in

my grave and all my bones are rotten. This book is to remember me when I am dead and forgotten. Ann Kimber 1702.”

JKN – So at this point we decided to trace the family tree. We traced it back as far as the late 1600’s. I haven’t actually got any further with it. One of my ancestors actually had his head cut off for hearing mass of Edwin Capier and this sort of put me off a little bit. But we think . They weren’t rich or anything . They farmed at the Manor and had various bits of land and I think in the back of my mind it must have. They must have been cleared of some land at Littlemore but unfortunately the Littlemore came in the Parish of St. Mary’s the Virgin in Oxford which is the University Church and I haven’t been able to get my hands on the records yet to see how much further they went back. But this book is a primer, a spelling book. But we didn’t actually manage to find out what happened to Ann Kimber. We think she might have died in a scarlet fever epidemic later on. But everybody inter-married and it is amazing I mean my great grandparents were cousins and it almost goes straight back it wasn’t a difficult thing. It just went back in a straight line back to her in the late 1600’s.

AKN – It is a very common place to leave artefacts in the roofs and rafters of buildings. It has happened before.

JKN – I think she just got fed up and stuck it up there because she hadn’t learnt all her spellings.(laughter) What I found that was so interesting is that she they could all read and write but there was a school in the Church at Horspath in the 1700’s but they were all quite – looking back through the records – they were all quite sort of familiar with reading and writing and put things together.

YS – and your teaching and working with folk dance tell me how that came about. Was that something you did at Teacher Training College?

JKN – We did it for fun at Teacher Training College but no it was just that they had always done it there so I just took it over.

YS – So who started it do you think at the school. Was there anyone in particular?

JKN – I don’t know. I didn’t take anybody’s place. The school grew and I was taken into it and it was already happening there so I just went on with it.

YS – and did you have folk dancing at your school or Morris or music or did you Alan?

AKN – No we didn’t have any of that. Because I was at a boys school only. One of my earlier schools South Oxford School where there were boys and girls we had minimal amount of folk dancing but I certainly wasn’t interested in touching girls. (laughter)

YS – and what about you singing because you have a great voice. So how did that come about Alan?

AKN – It was because I met Julie really. Ever since I met Julie in 65 we’ve always expected to do a spot of some sort particularly at Ceilidhs. As Julie said we were in the habit at the

time. There was nothing to hold us back. We were going out 8 nights a week folk dancing, singing and doing whatever. It was a bit like that. Er but no I got into a habit of if there was a song that I was interested in. In my way I noted it down and it got into a little book and then the book went into another book and before I know where I am I've got something like 260 songs and stories that are in my books in my way words – written only, no music. All the music is in my head which I suppose I should be very grateful for. I only wish that the words were in there too sometimes. But no over the years I think I got to a stage of well, I've got 50 I'll get some folders and put them in folders. Then the 50 became what it is now and it is such a shame to not at least keep those. But of course if anyone else comes along and looks at the book it is not a lot of interest to them because it is words only. What I would like to do is go through the whole lot particularly the songs cos the stories speak for themselves. But the songs even if I record them in my manner, in my way I would like them to go down into some form of recording so we can produce it to somebody like. Because I know there is some interest there at Woodstock Museum in just outside Oxford. Seven & a half miles outside Oxford who would probably be interested in storing that sort of thing or maybe elsewhere. Even in here in the Kennedy library

YS – It can be done.

AKN – I am not talking about professional recordings. I am talking about recordings where they are or will be of interest to people in the future when I am dead and gone.

JKN – and talking about me and I don't talk about me very often. One thing that did influence my life an awful lot. In our village there was a Methodist Chapel and I went there to Sunday School cos all my friends did but it was a very musical place, wasn't it Alan? I mean you weren't there when I was at Sunday School. The superintendent – We used to get about 100 children – used to look round and say “ who is going to play for us today?” You can because most of the children could play an instrument. Or you two can or who is going to play the organ today and they were very very musical. We used to have Sunday School Anniversaries – a hundred children stood up and sang.

AKN – As if it was forced upon them in a way.

JKN – Yes, it was. You will do it. You will sing. You will do that. And we used to have these anniversaries and practice in the other days of the week. Oh and Mrs Leonard used to have a bust like mine and a purple hat. This hat used to go up and down and it was great fun. We used to sing a lot and awful lot and you had to be able to read music and the majority of them would by the time I'd finished I they would give out the music and you would learn it and that was from the age of 7.

YS – Have you ever sung together. Do you do songs together.

JKN – Sometimes, if we are pressed. We generally have a fight about it but generally we do it. We sang here this week.

YS – What did you sing?

JKN – We sang “Lady Standing in the Garden”, “No John, No John, No”.

YS – Would you do it for me now?