

MBL 16**John Owen was born in 1949, and lived in Heysham until 1971.****He worked in the Publicity and Entertainment Department in Morecambe Town Hall from the late 1960s to 1971.**

	John leaves Morecambe Grammar School 1966 and goes to work in Publicity and Entertainment Department in Morecambe Town Hall.
1.10	The department was the forerunner of tourism dept. In the winter months they produced and distributed 40,000 copies of the guide to Morecambe. Their promotional target areas were Glasgow, Bradford and Leeds & Manchester. The team attended tourism exhibitions. He describes their publicity van. 'Go motorway to Morecambe' was their slogan.
3.15	He talks about the number of people in team - their boss was Jeff Thompson.
4.20	During the summer period they organised and ran events. The first event of the year was the Easter Bonnet parade held in the Harbour Band Arena. They looked after 1000 deckchairs. The organist Harold Graham provided the music.
5.20	John talks of Miss Great Britain competition. He developed the photographs that were taken. The chief clerk was the official photographer. Talks of Morecambe's connections to the Milk Marketing Board – cycling tour, marathon from Morecambe.
6.30	Talks of Morecambe Illuminations - held 2 weeks earlier than Blackpool. Celebrity for switch on. Talks about Illuminations dept.
7.50	He describes switch on in August and Happy Mount Park during the illuminations.
9.25	Description of first 'It's a Knockout' – Morecambe V Blackpool which was broadcast live.
11.25	Marine land on stone jetty was developed. This was the first dolphinarium in UK. Dolphins were brought in from Florida.
12.40	Heysham Head was redeveloped - brown bear, go-kart track, butterfly house shell bar, beach club and holiday homes.
13.35	Talks of changes in tourism - investment tried to counteract this.
14.25	Talks about other attractions including the swimming stadium, daily shows at Harbour band arena, Happy Mount and Regent Park sports facilities, Heysham Head, piers, two fair grounds, zoo at end of stone jetty and 7 cinemas, The Dept. ran deckchairs which in the winter were collected and repaired. Ballrooms at floral hall, Winter gardens Gaumont knocked down in 60s. Gala bingo originally a tenpin bowling. Broadway has since been knocked down.
17.18	The Central Pier was his favourite place to go as a teenager. The Friday night event cost 7 & 6 but he had a free pass. He also went to the Broadway. He lived in Heysham and as a child played at Heysham Barrows.
18.34	John's Mum worked at the information centre. In July accommodation was very busy. People would travel from Glasgow and find it full. When it was the publicity van, equipped with loud speakers, travelled around residential parts of the town asking for accommodation. People would open up their rooms. Complaints.

20.55	The worst bit of his job was packing up and sending out town guides. No set pattern to job. He enjoyed driving publicity van around town.
22.15	What Morecambe provided best? Describes living standards in cities. Morecambe was a place to get away from the mundane.
23.50	Morecambe was one of leading resorts at the time. He talks about the 50s and the British Resort Association which his father was involved in. Morecambe was always in the shadow of Blackpool. Morecambe began to fade when people began to go abroad towards the end of the 60s.
25.46	What's been lost? Broadway was an architectural gem. Sad to loose piers. Marine Land & swimming stadium things of their time. Morecambe used to be a commuter town with people travelling to Bradford and Leeds. He thinks it could be a commuter town again. Wonderful seafront and view across the Bay. He remembers the Queen Mother visiting in the 60s and remarking on the view across the Bay.
28.23	He is proud to have been brought up in Morecambe. He moved away when he was 21 to pursue career but came back to work in local tourism (Windermere) in 1990s. He always remembers it as a welcoming town. He has a good childhood and teens with lots of space to run around and be safe. He would go anywhere on his bike and used to go train spotting. Used to play tracking and hide and seek in Heysham Barrows. Morecambe provided lots of places to go as a teenager.
31.03	He was aware of seasons. If weather was nice at Easter there would be new faces around Heysham village. Great time with tourists. Some local altercations due to heavy drinking. There was a tail off of visitors in September. Pensioners would get a 6 pence concession pass to play games.
33.28	He talks about the end of the 60s – he moved away in 1971- the town was seeing an erosion of people going to Spain etc. Efforts to turn it round. Overseas hotels offered private bathrooms which was unknown of in seaside towns. He talks of advantage of new by-pass and possibility of Morecambe picking up.
35.57	John talks of mum working in the tourist info centre – she became manager. He went to work in tourism in Broadstairs. His mum was a proud Morecambe woman. They would have robust discussions as he thought that Broadstairs was better. The family was involved in Morecambe Tourism and they took work home a lot.
Break	
38.16	Morecambe didn't have much to do with Grange. His father was electoral registration officer and he talks of constituencies. Talks of going to Lancashire for shopping and the trains between the 2 towns. A Ribble bus went from Heysham to Lancaster every hour. Talks of Heysham being part of Morecambe.
40.35	Talks of Pontins at Middleton. & Ocean Edge Caravan Park. Middleton and Overton were the 'country' areas of Morecambe. Visitors to Morecambe come out to a country pub - the Roof Tree at Middleton or 'Ma Mccluskies' in Overton. Ma was landlady who ran the pub with a rod of steel she would always wear a trilby hat. It was always known as Ma's. There was a collection of birds eggs on the wall of the pub.
42.38	John talks about Heysham Port. The Isle of Man excursions were another attraction. Good train service to London from Heysham via the boat

	train. Could hear the Port so were aware of it. Busy port time was in the evening. There were occasion smells from ICI,	
	Interview by Emma Aylett Summarised by Emma Aylett	24 th Oct 2017 Nov 2017