MORECAMBE BAY PARTNERSHIP
HEADLANDS TO HEADSPACE ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
2015-2018

Cumbria County Council, The Factory,
Castle Mills, Aynam Road, Kendal, LA9 7DE
Tel: 015397 34888

TRANSCRIPT OF INTERVIEW

FRONTSHEET

INTERVIEW NO: H2H2017.37
INTERVIEWEE NAME/S: Eric Greenough
YEAR OF BIRTH: 1943
INTERVIEWER/S: Michelle Cooper
DATE OF INTERVIEW: 21 March 2017
LOCATION: Over Kellett, Lancashire
TRANSCRIBER: Catherine Bainbridge

Summary of Interview:

No of Tracks: 1

[Note interviewee begins mid story.]

And it must have been late the previous… that would be a Saturday night, and he becomes stuck in the sands between the tides. And early on Sunday morning, there was a farmer out doing his sheep and he heard him calling and he contacted the police and the coastguard and a young policeman came… I think it was Steve Nixon. And they had a look round and they found him and he was well down now by his hips… and they did their best to get him out… well it was clearly

not a starter. And then the local fire brigade which was Carnforth came and then I came after them… and what they were trying to do was they were trying to extricate him using their air lancing equipment, which was a sinter [?] lance connected to a BA bottle, and it wasn't really working too well and of course we began to get concerned about the tide. So, I made what we call a situation report to Liverpool and they tasked Arnside to come with their mud rescue trailer and that was err Tom Hayhurst was in charge there, and so we came into it and the first thing we tried was our own water lancing equipment which was a sinter lance connected to a two gallon gas water fire extinguisher and what you did you pushed a sinter lance down by the casualty's limb…

What's a... explain what that is…

Well it's a tube with holes drilled in which allow the water to sprinkle out under pressure and erm… you push the lance down by the leg and the idea is to break the vacuum but also change the constituency of the sand… more liquid than solid. And that really wasn't working because he was that far in. So, everything now relied on what we call our mud pump which was a petrol engine driving a pump which delivered high pressure water by the hose. So, the situation became rather critical now because of course the tide is now starting to rise and erm… we set everything up. Now, looking after the pump was my job, and a man called Alex Bottomley, who was my colleague, in Morecambe, and a young fireman. So, what we did we put the baseboard down put the pump on the baseboard fired it and began delivering water to the rescue face. And, of course, the tide's coming in all the time so within a very short period of time the baseboard is now covered with water and it's a sparking knighted engine so we realise that if for any reason the pump engine failed, Terry Howlett's chances of survival were that much slimmer. So, Alex and I made a calculated gamble that we removed the outer strum box filter from the suction holes. Now, the suction holes had a filter on it but then that went into a box which was coarser holes in to stop debris so then we lifted the pump up, put the strum box onto the baseboard and put the pump back on the strum box, which kind of held the fort for a while. But then gradually of course the tide was coming in and at the rescue face things must be getting

pretty desperate, you know, the water's now up to his neck, kind of thing. So, we then had to make a decision, what we decided to do that's physically, the three of us, that's myself, Alex and the young fireman, to lift the pump up and put it on our knees, which raised it now, about what 600 ml off the surface of the sound, and of course the pump is vibrating and we're ourselves now beginning to sink into the sand. But, we've got to keep this pump firing otherwise… Anyway, suddenly there's great shout, 'I've got one leg out', so really that's as… you're nearly home but what seemed ages, it could only have been literally minutes, they've got the second limb out, and he was out, and erm… (laughs) we were rather relieved. So then erm…

How long had he been there? Do you have any… And how did he get there… what was he doing?

I don't really know, but it must have been late evening, say 10-ish, on the Saturday, and it was six o'clock the next morning. So, you know like we've got the tide definitely in there, but err… pretty drastic.

Was he panicking? Or was he okay?

Well I can't actually tell you that one because yeah I wasn't actually at the rescue face, like say, I was, Alex and I were at the pump here, and the rescue face was would be maybe what 10, 12 metres away. But the thing was, we were so concentrated on keeping this pump firing, we kind of what switched off, in a way, what the lads in the rescue face were doing. But it was pretty desperate, there was a lot of heaving and pushing. But, they got him out. And… we kind of stood up and you know… everything seemed to stop for a second, and I remember looking at the station officer from Carnforth fire station and the BA set and thinking this was the last resort…

What's a BA?

A breathing apparatus…and erm… clearly they're not designed for work underwater but that's a measure of how desperate the situation was. But he was out, erm… the coastguard rustled a helicopter up from RAF Valley and he was okay. He was cold, wet, but otherwise he was okay. Now, at the time, people

were worried about, with limbs being trapped for so long in quicksand, that it could affect the blood circulation. But err, he was alright…

He was okay…

And I met him afterwards…

Did you?

It was so dramatic, the BBC decided to make it an element in that programme 999 Lifesavers. And we were talking to the BBC about it, and one of the young producers said, 'we've picked this incident because of its drama value'. And I said, '…drama value?' And they said 'yes'. They grade all of these programmes on a scale of 1-10, ours was about 8 and a half. And then they wanted to make like an element of it in this programme, and err… after a bit of shoving and pushing, and toing and froing, and they decided to film it at Morecambe Lodge, you know by Red Bank Farm there. And we, we played our parts…

Fantastic, fame!

And on the day it was nothing like the incident that we dealt with, but clearly the BBC had a plan, they were going to do it, but you know, I can assure you it wasn't like that at all (laughs).

Wow, BBC recognition, that's pretty impressive. So, you met him through the course of doing that programme, did you, afterwards?

Well my job of course was, like you kind of did the jobs you were doing, and I was on the pump with Alex…

Yeah…

And erm, clearly the BBC are making, this is the piece of kit that's gunna save this bloke's life. So… you all get your position and the producer's saying to you, 'Action!' And my job was to start the pump on a pullbuoy from this engine fire. 'Cut, cut cut, cut… no we've not got the camera angle right', so we move round get another camera angle. 'Ready, right, action!' I start this pump again. 'Cut, cut, cut, no, we've still not got the angle right, move round, another one'. (laughs) A bit chocker with this. So 'action', pump again, 'cut, cut, cut', and the producer came and he said, 'it's Eric isn't it', and I said, 'yes it is'… 'could you look more

distressed' (laughs). They were laughing and they said, 'he's a bloody coastguard not an actor!'

(laughs) You need to ham it up a bit more Eric, gosh…

I must have started this about six times…(laughs)

Funny story, but an amazing rescue. So how long did the whole rescuing, in reality, take, you first being alerted to what was this person needing assistance, to getting him out?

It must have been two hours.

Yeah…

The funny thing was that I appeared back at home, I was covered in mud, and Jennifer said, 'where have you been?' (laughs), and she had to wash my clothes twice to get rid of all the soot and the mud.

Wow, I can see why that's one of your most memorable, definitely, yeah, astonishing. Well, we've got that on tape now, I'm going to just rewind slightly, just to go back to a bit of context, for your, sort of, coastguard career. Can you just for our records, state what your full name is, and when and where you were born, if you don't mind?

Well I'm Eric Greenough, I was born in Leigh, Lancashire… and err it was probably about midnight on the 14th of June, 1943.

(laughs) Right, and erm, so you weren't born on Morecambe Bay, what brought you to this neck of the woods?

I came to work at the Heysham Two Power Station, that would be 1984. And I had quite a lot of experience off-shore sailing, and it got me yacht master coastal and chief radio operator's license and maritime first aid, that kind of thing. And Jennifer and I were walking in Arnside at Ashmeadow and I saw a coastguard station there, so I got in touch with the coastguard, and… John Jurden came and he interviewed me. But he wasn't just interviewing me, he was also interviewing Jennifer… because behind every coastguard is a long-suffering wife. As you can appreciate.

So you'd been a sailor before coming up to this area? What kind of sailing had you done? What sort of thing?

Oh, all sorts of things… erm, I'd done mostly yachts, err square rigging, I did some tours with Fishers, James Fishers, the ship managers, erm dinghy sailing, that kind of thing.

Is that in the family blood? I mean, do you come from a family of mariners?

No, on the contrary, I don't. My parents really were farming people, I come from a farming background, really. No so as a young boy at twelve I joined the local sea cadet unit and that really stimulated my interest in, you know, matters maritime.

And so, you say you saw the coastguard, did you just think I'll have a go at that, or what sort of motivated you to sign up for it because it's a very selfless thing to sign up to do…?

At first, erm I thought, you know, maybe my maritime skills, would be of some use and that was it, err… I think you need to be in the coastguard a while, you identify where you stand. And I think the important thing is putting something back into your community and also, you know, helping to save lives in the maritime environment.

So what year was it when you signed up?

I joined in 1985, in the March of 1985.

And when did you finish?

I finished at the end of March 2009… I'd done twenty-four years.

Incredible... and so can you talk a little bit about when you first sign up, what's the process? So you have this interview, who interviewed you, who's this chap?

He's a man called John Jurden.

Okay, and what role is he?

John was in those days what we called the auxiliary coastguard service, and he was the auxiliary in charge at Arnside. There was no station at Morecambe, err… it relied on a thing called IRT, Initial Response Team Members, and they were like something like the American Minute Man, where they could go you're lightly equipped, they could go to a seen incident and report and bring in the big guns. Erm… so, the first, the chap who first got the job was a man called Frank Horton, who began to have some ill health, so, there was a man, the district controller,

called Alan Scoltock he decided that they would have two IRTs in the Morecambe area. And I was one and a man called Larry Bellis, was the second, Larry lived in Bolton-le-Sands, I lived in Carnforth then, and erm…likely John Jurden came to interview us and he kind of outlined what we were expected to do and the kind of work we would undertake, and I was signed up, and then the district controller and the sector officer a man called Don Shearer, they came to see me, and trying to (laughs) get my garden something like… and err… I was stood in what was this… Jennifer's rockery with this Al Scoltock and Don Shearer and John Jurden come to see me and thought what the hell is this bloke up to (laughs). Anyway… erm then we basically signed me up, we signed the official secrets act…

Did you?

And you're in. And what you did, you did about a year probationary, and erm… you kind of did your basic training and then you're basically allowed to go on your own.

And what sort of thing gets covered in basic training?

Well here, Arnside was err in those days, it was mud rescue and it was one of the very few boat stations operated by the coastguard in the UK. There were only about five coastguard boat stations because they had the Royal National Lifeboat Institute and community lifeboats to call on. But Arnside, because of the dangers of the bay had its own coastguard boat station so you kind of went through boatman process, mud rescue process, search process, first aid, map reading, that kind of thing. I can tell you a funny story about my training.

(laughs) Please do.

Well… it's like rite of passage. What you have to do is go through your training and one of the things, Arnside was the crack mud rescue team. They were crack because they got a lot of practice at it. And erm one of the things you did was in those days we put a pair of thigh waders on, which you fastened to your belt of your trousers, you went out onto the sand, and you generated your own quicksand, and so you make your own quicksand you see. And erm… the team then come and rescue you you see, so its pretty crude stuff. So what they do is

they put a board over you like a duckboard so they could stand on it, and err they inject water and this kind of thing, and John Jurden was a big man, and the other man involved was George Crossman and George was quite a big bloke, and what they did, they got one under one arm and one under the other arm, and a mighty heave but my thigh waders and my trousers stayed where they were, and there was about a foot of midriff showing and in those days, I had a pair of quite highly psychedelic briefs on (laughs).

(laughs) oh I see

And George Crossman went 'where do you get them?' (laughs)

I bet you never wore them again after that, oh dear (laughs)

I would say about the coastguard, some of our incidents were really very serious and sometimes we had unpleasant jobs to do and other times were really hilarious and there were two maxims well we had two maxims in Ridge Lea, one was eat now quick because you don't know when Jennifer put a meal on the table- (clicks fingers) gone. And the other one was whatever you do don't laugh, because sometimes incidents were absolutely hilarious (laughs) and in one incident you gave a situation report, you see, so it's kind of what we call call sign to call sign and it said like it was at the end of the stone jetty and I said 'Liverpool coastguard you know Morecambe coastguard' and they said yes and I said ref the incident stone jetty Morecambe. And I have a long sit rep- situation report, break, now the break is if somebody's got a more urgent traffic, they can come in you see. And Liverpool said come back by landline they wanted me to talk over the telephone, they didn't want me to broadcast it you see to occupy time on the rescue channel. So I rang Liverpool and I explained what was going on with this incident you see and I'd finished and there was absolute stony silence on the other end of the line. And I think it might have been Jed Lynch said to me, 'Eric, are you sober?' (laughs) and I said, 'Jed, this is going on on Fornbury Face if you don't believe me get yourself down here and have a look at it' because I couldn't believe it what these two people were doing out there.

Do we use our imaginations as to what was going on out there?

I'd had enough of this (laughs).

Did you have a lot of time wasting, time wasters who, you know I don't mean people who get themselves into trouble by mistake you know people do silly things, but people wasting your time? Does that happen a lot?

Yes, right, we have a thing called FAWGI, a false alert with good intention.

I wondered, I saw that in your log and I wondered what that stood for.

It's a false alert with good intent, again people may be on holiday not realising, would make that call and that's precisely what the coastguard wanted. They didn't want people to ignore it, we would far rather we turned out and it was a false alarm than not turned out and it would have been tragic.

So I'm interested in your, what's the sort of team structure within the part of the coastguard you were with? And can you explain how many people you work alongside and what's the structure within that? And how does that link with the national coastguard?

Well in the Morecambe when I joined, there were just the two of us, Alex and myself, and we were called IRTs, Initial Response Team Members. We could call on the response of Knott End or Arnside they were what we call our flank stations. Now for training, watches, payment, whatever we were based at Arnside. But our guard, our guard is your stretch of coastline, was Alex and I, and our responsibility was from the Keer to Sunderland Point. There was about twelve linear miles of coastline.

That seems a lot of work for two people.

Well… yeah it was. We were fairly busy, Morecambe was of the three teams, in the end Morecambe certainly became the busiest and we dealt with some of the major rescue operations in the bay. And err… at Arnside the auxiliary in charge was John Jurden and there was about seven or eight local men plus Alex and myself. Then, Morecambe began to get busier and busier, and erm… one of the things that's critical was when the RNLI introduced the hovercraft, the coastguard took a good hard look at things, and it was the recommendation of Chris Turner that Morecambe became its own team and we recruited three of the members, including a lady, one of the very first coastguard female members, erm… and that leads me to another story. And that was about 2000, and we then became

our own unique team. We were based, we had an office in the town hall, we were what we call a search company, because we didn't have, in those days, we didn't have mud rescue potential. And because that was Arnside or Knott End we couldn't bring that in, and the RNLI had that potential in the hovercraft. So we were basically a search company with helping out with quicksand.

So just explain to me how the coastguard and the RNLI work alongside each other and what's the sort of jurisdiction and areas of responsibility?

Well the coastguard are a government service, they are a uniformed civilian service which is responsible for the coordination of all maritime search and rescue operations around the coastline of the UK. And they do go out, they go about 200 miles out to sea. And the Royal National Lifeboat Institute, are a voluntary organisation which provide lifeboats to the coastguard to call on, the same with Bay Rescue that have a rigging so if you like the RNLI are by far the biggest provider of resource to the coastguard but they are not the only one, Bay Rescue have a rigging. And what they have to do, they have to have certain standards, methods of call out, equipment… they can call on 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. But the coastguard do not run the RNLI, the RNLI come to the coastguard and say we have got x number of declared facilities, hovercrafts, offshore lifeboats, inshore lifeboats… the same with like Gary Parsons, with Bay Rescue, they make available their resources, and the coastguard can pick what they want to deploy… for you know rescue missions.

So they're sort of the management body really that pulls everybody else together?

Yes. The important step change came a couple of years ago, you now notice that the maritime rescue operations for helicopters are now very much a coastguard driven service. Now that's, bond helicopters and they provide helicopters dedicated to the coastguard, purely dedicated to the coastguard. And you now see a coastguard helicopter in the Lake District rescuing climbers, where previously that was an RAF helicopter from Leconfield but now the coastguard send their helicopter from Caernarfon. They also have towing vessels, counter

pollution, they are the agency that start the wheels rolling on maritime emergencies.

Just going back to something you said right at the beginning, I think before I had the machine switched on, you said you have to look with a coastguard's eye, do you want to explain what you mean about that?

Well it's not something you develop right away, it takes a little bit of time, but for example, when you walk on the beach you would see an area where you say oh that's quicksand there. Where a member of the public would just walk into it, you'd say hang on here. The other thing too is like the weather, and erm… sometimes you would say, like somebody would be out in the bay in a boat and you'd think that's completely ludicrous that. But you'd also be looking at the way they'd be handling the craft, but the kind of safety equipment they've got, they've got life jackets, they've got kill cords connected, all that kind of thing, so you are moving your gaze wider to take in situations.

And you were saying, just for the purposes of this recording, you have the most amazing view down to the bay from your house, and you were saying out there is the most dangerous bit of the bay potentially, which bit is that, could you just describe that for the tape?

Well it's where the big cockling bed is. And that's where the cockling disaster was.

And we'll come onto that in a bit… what makes that so particularly dangerous that bit there?

Well basically we've got two rivers enter the bay there, you've got the Keer and the Kent. And one of the problems with those rivers is, heavy rain in the Lakes very quickly reacts in the flow in the rivers as they come from high ground the sea level in a relatively short distance and the water is very cold. All the estuaries round here, Kent, Keer, Duddon, the water is quite cold because it falls from height very quickly and won't get warmed up. And of course, the channels are constantly moving caused by the tide you know that kind of thing so areas of soft spots are moving constantly, it's not fixed so you say that's a soft spot, come back in a month's time, it might be somewhere else.

It's very unstable.

Yes.

Yes, okay. I'm interested to explore some of the different types of rescues that you've done over the years. But, first of all, do you remember your very first call out or your very first event…

Yes, I do.

…that you had to go to?

Yes, I do…

What was that?

So it was two people, and I was at work at the time at the power station, and they'd wandered out in the bay, and somebody must have got a bit worried and they rang and of course my pager went off in work and I nipped out to work and it was a young bikini-clad lady and her boyfriend… they'd clearly spotted the, you know, tide coming in and you know they walked out and that was my very first call out. And then it just kind of went on from there.

And how often, on average, do you think you were beginning called out over your career?

Right, well when I was in the Morecambe, when we finally established the Morecambe team, we reckon we were called out between sixty-five, sixty-eight times a year. But post-cockling disaster, of that year, it went something like 130… and erm Alex, we kept statistics, and of that thirty were definitely related to somebody doing some cockling, or something like that.

Just trying to think how many times a week that is… that's at least three times a week?

Yeah, like this where Jennifer is very, very important, it might be in the middle of the night, so I'd kind of tumble out of bed, answer the phone, and Jennifer would go out, unlock the garage, open the gates, and you know, kind of that's it.

It's interesting you said about, when you got interviewed, they were also interviewing Jennifer, your wife, and I mean that it's a huge supportive role that person has to take, and she's always… has it ever bothered her that you're in the coastguard, I mean obviously it must worry her but…?

I think on one occasion it got to her, it was my birthday, it was a lovely day in June, it was a lovely day and she said, 'we'll have a meal outside', so I got the rustic table and the umbrella, and the chairs and everything like this. And suddenly, the pager goes, so I said 'call out' and I rushed out, got my kit on and backing the car out the drive, and as I've just made it back out the drive, there's this (knocks on table) on the passenger window, so I opened the window and a tinfoil package arrived on my lap, and Jennifer said, 'there's your dinner!' (laughs) But generally speaking… like, the phone would ring and Liverpool coastguard, 'is Eric about?', and she'd say, 'oh he's in the shower', 'well, tell him to step out and get some clothes on, we want him now', so you know she'd take…

She's part of the team really isn't she.

Yeah she'd take the message, kind of thing, yeah.

Yeah.

'You've got to go to' you know.

Yeah, I bet she breathed a sigh of relief when you decided to retire (laughs).

Well, funny thing was, when you've done twenty years, you get your service medal, and the coastguard take it quite seriously actually, that man who makes the presentation has got to be like, you know, quite senior officer level, and in mine it was a man called David Thompson, who was my area's operation manager. So, you'd go up to him and he said a few words, and he said, 'look Eric, half this medal belongs to Jennifer', and usually what they did, they gave the wife a big bouquet of flowers as a thank you for putting up with it (laughs).

Yeah. I was… we had a tour round the lifeboat station in Morecambe, for the Morecambe Bay Partnership a while ago, and they were saying how you could guarantee that your pager would go off, I think he said, the minute you took the cork out of the bottle of wine, you know (laughs) you just knew that the pager would go.

Yeah, something like that. Of course, that was one of the things, I think Alex was teetotal, you had to kind of keep your drinking under control, not only that you could drive and not infringe road traffic acts, but you were capable of doing your job when you got there. That was the thing.

Were you ever off duty? I mean could you take time off?

Oh yeah, well what you did, you would just ring Alex and say, 'we're going to see my brother in Warrington, I'll be back about six o'clock this evening' and then that was it. Or Alex would ring me and say, 'Eric, I've got twenty rolls of wallpaper to put up, can you come', you know that kind of thing.

And how did it work alongside your job, I mean were they quite understanding about man rescue, you would just have to go, you know?

Well in coastguard terms, employers were very, very important, so when I decided I would join the coastguard, I went to see my boss at the power station and they explained and, of course, the generating board then, in the shape of Ken White, the station manager, he was very keen to have his staff involved in, we had a number of retained firemen, there were lifeboat crew, there was myself in the coastguard there were other things too, basically it was you could leave your job providing it didn't compromise safety and things like that. Now, being in an administrative role, I wasn't really that crucial to the operation of the power station, so, generally speaking, both at the museum and at the power station, I could leave.

So just talk me through what would happen in terms of a call out. The first thing that would happen is your pager goes, is that right? And what steps follow?

Right well pager goes, and of course, we've now got mobile phones, so you would ring Liverpool and say, 'pager's gone to alert' and they say, 'yep, we have an incident, man's stuck in quicksand at the end of the stone jetty'. And then you say, 'right, I'll take the task, I'm on my way', and off you'd go. Then invariably because you dialled another patch, Alex would be there first, so I would join Alex, and then if I was coming that way, I would go to the police station, pick up the coastguard vehicle and meet Alex there, or if it was say an incident in Lancaster, I would ring Alex and say, 'do you want me to go direct?' and he would say, 'yeah go direct Eric, I'll bring the CRV and the rest of the team will come there' and that was how it worked.

So the vehicle was kept…

Originally, we had it in the police station yard, and then, I think it was about 2007 we got a garage, so we could house the vehicle in the garage with our rescue equipment.

Was this at Morecambe or…?

Yeah, this was in Morecambe, behind by the…, near the Morecambe Yacht Club there, we managed to get ourselves a garage. And then we had the office in the basement at the town hall- 'the bunker' (laughs).

And what kind of kit would you automatically take with you, and did you have to wear special clothing?

Well your personal equipment, of course the most important thing was the radio, your personal radio, mobile phone, your coastguard coveralls, and your PPE, your protective clothing, that would be your hard hat, your fluorescent jacket, waterproof trousers, wellingtons, and you stored those in a box in your car, which was permanently in the boot. So, when Jennifer say, 'I'm going shopping but I can't get my shopping… the coastguard kit' (laughs), so that was it. Yeah you had binoculars, loud hailer, that kind of thing. Then when we'd got our own office, in Morecambe, and we got our own response vehicle, we carried much wider things, and of course one of the delightful things we carried was a body bag, in fact, we had two body bags. And err… we had things like sheets of plywood boards to stand on, heaving lines, throwing lines, breasting lines, life jackets, it was quite a comprehensive set of kit, for our style of operation. And then we got things like a rescue trailer, which we had portable lighting and a generator, and you know.

It was very interesting, you very kindly lent me your record of, service record of things that you attended in, the last ten years or so I suppose. I just was interested to find out more about the different types of things that you do. One thing that struck me was the amount of references to dead sea mammals and things like that, which it never occurred to me that you would have to deal with things like that, porpoises and dolphins and you know I wouldn't have thought that was on your list of responsibilities but there's quite a few references to things like that there.

Well, yes. There was like an unwritten rule in the coastguard, if there was a body to recover, you send the older member of the team, not the longest serving member of the team, the oldest member of the team, maybe they thought we could handle it better. And on a number of occasions, I've had the famous tap on the shoulder, which said, 'Eric, can you help get the body back?' Getting a body back, it's a fairly distressing thing… the thing that used to upset me was we couldn't handle the bodies with the dignity that we would want to. They were invariably in a gully, or they were out on an open beach, and we would have to struggle to kind of get them out and, you know, there was some pushing and pulling and that was maybe of the older type person, we felt we couldn't handle the body with the dignity and respect. At the end of the day, they're somebody's loved one, somebody's next of kin, and you would expect people to handle it with care, but until we met the coroner's office and then of course they were dealt with properly, you know trolleys and things like body bags and things like that.

Do you get training about how to deal with… I mean obviously that's, reading your record, that's a lot of the work that you did, or people in very vulnerable positions who are wanting to throw themselves off Carlisle Bridge or, you know you're dealing with people in quite traumatic states of mind, or you're dealing with dead bodies. How do you kind of process all of that? Do they support you with that?

Well it's a difficult thing to teach somebody because your emotions are involved, but one of the things was you never said 'I have got a dead body'. We had a special code and you would say, like, 'call sign to call sign, welcome coastguard Liverpool, I am at condition tango', which means you have got a body there, which is dead. On a lighter note, a senior coastguard officer once said, 'now look you lot, nobody dies in the hands of the coastguard' (laughs), which of course nobody did because you needed a doctor or a paramedic to declare them dead, they were alive while we had them. And I thought… hmm. That was the main thing, don't blurt out because one of the things we'd fine was the next of kin might be stood next to the coastguard mobile with an open radio channel on it. So of course, you had to be guarded by that. You couldn't say you had a man,

you had to be careful and say, 'I am at condition tango'. And then, your colleagues knew you couldn't say very much, so all that kind of thing. Sometimes of course, the police were interested in it, so you have to kind of avoid trying to, I know it's a crude thing to say, cause damage to the body, you know of course forensic examination.

It's evidence…

That kind of thing. So a lot of it was just experience and some of it was training, you know 'what to do if you find a dead body', you know because things like coroner's offices and that kind of thing, which tended to be the police, and then they would bring firms in to kind of take the body away, and doctors…

What do you think that most of your callouts was… was it usually people stuck in the sand or people who've lost their dogs and are putting themselves at risk and the tide's come in, or what? Do you think there's a thing that happens most on the bay that was your most common callout?

I think the biggest callout was, people out in the bay, people walking out in the bay, and perhaps that's to do with the bay's reputation, the tide coming in so quickly. I've got a funny story about that one too, but that was the thing, mainly people out in the bay, further out than they should be, at risk of being cut off by the tide.

Okay, tell me your funny story (laughs).

Well I was at Arnside, and we had a probationer with us, Dennis Procter, and we'd got the boat away, and I was like in the station, and we were going to lock the station up now, move into the patrol with a coastguard Land Rover, and we got a call that some of the residents of the cottages, in Silverdale Cove, had noted that two people were out in the bay. So away went the boat, and Dennis and I jumped in the Land Rover, and we came full board, blue lights, and we came down to Silverdale Cove, and luckily there was a young chap, I think he was a retained fireman, lived at the cottages and he'd seen what was going on and he'd gone out there and he'd escorted these people back ashore. So when the two coastguards arrived, the two people, man and wife, they're quite elderly, so we sat them down in Land Rover, wrapped her in a blanket, and we asked the

standard questions, like, you know, what's your name, and do you require any medical assistance and how old are you. And he says, 'well, I'm eighty-six, and she's eighty-four', and I said, 'did you not notice the tide coming in?' 'Eh, no lad,' he said, 'we don't have tides in Blackburn!' So, for the exercise we'll say, call the man Mr Gleave, so I said, 'Mr Gleave, if you wish to see your eighty-seventh birthday, please don't do that again' (laughs), 'Eh, nay lad, it were fun, weren't it'. (laughs). What do you do… what do people in Blackburn do for kicks. Two bemused coastguards left to go to back to Arnside (laughs).

I guess you must have quite a lot of good diplomacy skills, Eric, in terms of speaking to people, trying to educate people in ridiculous situations…

Yes.

I know I read in your log, about I think two people were trying to join the cross-bay walk, and just sort of following it, I got the impression they'd just set off and thought they'd tag along halfway through and you know there must be a lot of trying to educate people.

That was one of the things too, with the coastguard, we were very keen on public relations, talking to groups, talking to children, talking to anybody to kind of spread the word, how dangerous Morecambe Bay was to the unwary.

Just thinking about, obviously a big part of the project that we're doing is talking to the fishing community of the bay, and trying to record their heritage. Did you know the fishing community well, were ever involved in many rescues to do with the fishing community, or were they pretty savvy and obviously know the bay? Was there much interaction between the coastguard and the fishing community?

Oh yeah, I knew people like Charlie Overett, Dick Langley, Keith Willacy, that kind of thing, but no we... I can only ever remember once being called out to an incident involving a local fisherman. I think what he'd done, he'd got his net rope caught round a propeller you see, he must have taken a turn a bit sharp. I arrive there and John Beattie was the on-sec and John said, 'whatever you do don't laugh', and when we got down there, there's a big, whole lifeboat crew (laughs).

He'll never live that down!

So there you are, but no the main people, like… cockling was what really switched the system on for us.

So just obviously the cockling disaster of… 2004 wasn't it, was one of the most infamous incidents that's happened in Morecambe Bay in recent times, and you were involved with that, so am I right in saying twenty-three people drowned in that incident?

Yeah, erm… our pagers went off about quarter past nine on the Thursday...

Yeah, tell me how it all unfolded from your point of view then…

Actually, I was at a, representing the coastguard at a youth organisation, and I had to race home, rang the coastguard in Liverpool and they said, 'Eric, we need every coastguard we can get our hands on, get down there, speak to Alex'. So I changed from my best uniform into my ordinary work clothes, and got down there, met Alex… and they'd started to bring bodies ashore initially at Morecambe Lodge, Red Bank Farm there. Myself and John Bibby, he's a colleague of the coastguard, and we were bringing body bags from the hovercraft to the ambulance you see. And we moved about two bodies and they were quite heavy, and we came to the third body and it was light, lighter, and my initial thought was, my god, we've got a child. I don't know what John's face looked like, but you know it was suddenly light, and it was one of the two women. Now, at the end of, that would be the Friday morning, we'd nineteen bodies and there'd been a step change now, we left early morning because the tide was coming in and we couldn't do anything. So I kind of came home, had my breakfast, went to bed to get a few hours sleep, because of course I'd not slept from the previous like, kind of Wednesday morning, you see. And erm something happened there, the phone was ringing and Jennifer was answering the phone, and it was friends ringing in and they said, 'how's Eric?' And I don't think it was 'how's Eric' physically, it's how's Eric dealing with this mentally. And she said, 'oh well he's in bed' and that was it. So then I kind of, got up, had some lunch, went back there and suddenly we're in a crime scene, so we've moved from search and rescue, to a crime scene. And one of the things that we did was, by these days we had personal GPS, and the police gave us brown paper bags, and we were just going

out on the sands, picking up clothing, tools, bagging them up, putting the coordinates on and your name, and then handing them back. But going back to the night itself, when I arrived there we started to move bodies, and there were so many bodies, that the mortuary at the hospital was full, the helicopter was taking bodies there. They moved the operation to the Lifeboat Station on the Green Street there where they had the space to make a temporary mortuary, and the other thing too is, the bodies could be handled in a more controlled way, and myself, John Beattie… err John Bibby, and Margaret, we went to, what we call, 'snatch search', we set off from Morecambe Lodge and went to places where we thought any cocklers could be driven ashore by the tide, and we worked our way round to Silverdale Cove, and the residents of Silverdale Cove had done their own search operation, they were quite spontaneous and then we then returned to Morecambe Lodge. The thing that took us by surprise was media, by the time I'd got back there, there was the satellite vehicle there and the police had got the crowd at one end and we were all at the other end, and by then it was really getting geared up, we had the Bowland Mountain Rescue team, and what they did, they split the team in two. I became what they call a pathfinder, and John Bibby became the other pathfinder, and we were given two sets of coordinates to search, because one of the things was the bodies were very cold by now, and there were doubts if the thermal imaging on the RAF helicopters would pick the heat up, so it was basically what we call a line search, where we just walked along in a line and covered ground, searching for well bodies or anybody who'd come ashore, because some did make it ashore but they didn't stay round and they were picking them up on the A6, places like that.

Gosh, so did you know when you first were involved, did you appreciate that it was a major incident at first, or you know, did that unfold over the course of the night?

No complete, like looking into a glass door. John Bibbey was the first there, and he met a Chinese who sounded quite distressed, and of course there was a language problem, so John was trying to find out how many, so he said kind of, how many, and he held his five fingers up, and the man seemed to say, 'more,

more!' So John said, like ten fingers, 'more, more' and it started to get confused, did he mean like another five or another ten, and in the end the numbers were just unbelievable. It dawned on me it was serious when the RAF came with their helicopter, and they were only going to overfly the bay once and return to valley, but it was such a scale by now, they were going to stay on spot. Three things will stick in my mind, one of them was Harry Roberts requesting more body bags, and we'd no more body bags, we'd gone, the ambulance service, there were no more body bags, that was how big it was. The second one was, he was a man called Steve Cross, Steve was a watch officer in Liverpool coastguard and he'd been in the Royal Navy air crew and he said to the pilot, 'do you want hot refuelling, rotors running?' Now I don't know a lot about helicopters but I know if they're still fuelling a helicopter with the engines running over, this is serious. The other thing was when they started bringing another helicopter, another military helicopter in, and suddenly we had another call sign, beside rescue one to one, you know this was serious.

And who was in overall command of the search and rescue operation, what that the coastguard in charge of the whole thing? Who was the main coordinator?

The coastguard were coordinating it, and they were working with the police, because like I say, within twenty-four hours, we'd moved from search and rescue to a crime scene, and that's where the police, you know they've got bronze, silver and gold commanders, so like bronze commander was on sea, silver would be either with Liverpool coastguard, or for the police, at like Lancaster Police Station.

So how long was your whole involvement, you were in search and rescue?

My pager went off about nine thirty on the Thursday, and at four o'clock on the following Sunday, there must have been quite a serious meeting at quite high level about what to do, and by now we were on our knees, we were literally on our knees… sleeping, searching, sleeping, searching. And the coastguard took a decision with their fellow services, we either bring more teams in, Bootle, Millom, Fleetwood, and withdraw all the local teams and kind of rested, or we terminate

it, and somebody, I presume the police, at four o'clock terminated it… and a senior police officer came to Morecambe Lodge and said, 'thank you very much lads for your help', and 'go home'. So I went home.

Wow.

I learnt something about myself that night, in here you have a stream, and when things are really on the floor, you can tap into that stream, through literally putting one foot in front of the other. And if I go off topic a bit, our rapport with the public. On Saturday afternoon, we were coming up Mill Lane, and we must have looked… covered in mud, looking a bit dejected, and a lady at the cottage by the old mill there, said, 'how's it going, lads?' and we said, 'not good'. And she said, 'come on, I'll make you a cup of tea'. Now, twelve coastguards just dropped on her drive, and she came out with coffee and tea and biscuits, and I thought that's the regard that we're held by.

Anybody involved with the coastguard, however long their experience, to be involved in an incident on that scale, no one can prepare for that, no one would expect that to happen in the bay. I just wondered how you all regroup after a situation like that, even the most experienced of you involved, or do you just wake up the next day and carry on, you know?

Well within seven days, Alex, myself and John from Arnside, we're standing in front of the chief coastguard, John Astbury, and clearly from that disaster came a lot of things, like better cooperation with the police, resilience groups, that kind of thing, and again after every major incident, Terry Howlett and the quicksand, cockling bay, the coastguard relook at things, and with the Terry Howlett one, they clearly looked at the floating wood pumper, better equipment, better lancing, better delivery, training, and the same with the cockling disaster, we got together, and we were here and the phone rang at about half past six in the morning and, 'hello, Eric, we've had a report of a herd of cows got out the field to the bay, any ideas?' So, I said, 'what colour are they?' So, he said, 'hang on a minute, I'll put you on hold' and he said, 'black and white'. And I said, 'are they more white than black, or black than white?', and he said, 'hang on a minute… err don't really know', so I said, 'right, it sounds like a herd of holsteins and there's a farm in

Sandhop Lane, they've got holsteins'. 'Oh right'. 'Do you want me to turn out?' 'No it's alright, go back to bed'. (laughs) And that was it.

Did it take a while, after you retired, to stop jumping every time the phone rang or to unwind from it?

If it was in the morning, early morning, I mean very early morning, it was, tended to be coastguard, of course in the day your pager would go off.

Yeah, just a few last things about the cockling disaster, were you involved in any of the enquiry afterwards and all of the process that followed?

Yes, it was very interesting, when it was over, Chris Turner, the secretary, commander as he is now, he said, 'as soon as you can, get down everything you did, what you said and everything, and let me have them', so I got down, wrote this, I've got a copy in my file, and the idea was that would go off to our legal beagles at headquarters in Southampton, to make sure that we'd not perjured ourselves and things like that. So, then the legal beagles read them and we kept our statements, and sure enough the police wanted to interview us, so we went down to the police station, individually, and we handed our statements, and said, 'there's my statement', and the police read it and said, 'thank you very much', and they took their own statement. So, at the end of it, they said, 'are you planning to be away on holiday or anything like that?' because they said, 'there will be a court case' and then they wrote to us all and said, 'if you have any photographic evidence at all we want it' and we were told by a senior officer of the coastguard, 'don't say anything if you're talking to the public', because PR work was now being demanded of us, 'decline to answer'. And we had a standard statement which said, 'I'm sure you've got questions about the cockling disaster, if I decline to answer, you must accept that I cannot answer that'. And so, the idea was that it would have to go to court because by now, the police were having charges, so it was going to be a court case. And so we were on stand by to go to court, and I think if memories serve me, Alex did go to court with the watch officers, and his job was to identify all the voices, because of course, when you make a phone call to Liverpool coastguard on a radio transmission, a multi-channel recorder records it, so they had reams and reams

of verbal information, and what Alex was saying was, ‘oh yes, that’s Eric Greenough of Morecambe, that was his call sign’, or ‘that was John Bibby’, and he identified voices. But I didn’t actually have to go to court, I think they got that many witnesses, what would I add that say Alex wouldn’t add.

Had there been any warning, I mean obviously people were aware of these people cockling illegally, had there been any near miss incidents in the run up to the disaster?

Oh well, after that, the system went completely mad, like I say, suddenly we’d gone from something like 65 call outs, to like 130, and it’s a rude thing to say, but it’s like a nervous twitch, some of them were genuine, some were just concern of like folks with good intent. I went to one, we were on a routine patrol, and there was this huge cockling gang there, they were huge, and I said to this chap, you know the gangmaster, ‘how many people you got out there?’ And he said, ‘oh, I don’t know’, and I said, ‘don’t you make a headcount before they go out and when they come back’ and he said, ‘oh no’. Madness.

And presumably you had no power to stop them doing it?

No, we didn’t actually. No, that’s one of the things with the coastguard, we had no legal powers until the 2006 act came in, and we got where we got by persuasion or force of argument, we had no legal powers to stop or detain.

So, the situation now, after these legal changes came in, it’s a much better situation in the bay now, is it still going on? What can you say about that?

Well, from what I can see of it, commercial cockling on that scale, will never return, possibly for years and years and years to come. Stephen Headkins, my next door but one neighbour, he’s a chap to talk to. It will go on, a bloke will always go out with a bucket and get himself a few cockles but I don’t see it coming back on that scale, certainly for a long, long time. There are cockles out there, but I don’t think that scale.

So, did you get any kind of recognition for your involvement in that?

Yes, we did.

Tell me about that.

I've got my certificates with me, we… the award was Chief Coastguard's Commendation, and what it is, at the end of the year, the coastguard senior officers would look at all the notable incidents, and they would say, 'yes, that is worthy'. So, for Terry Howlett, we got a Coastguard Chief Commendation. We also got illuminated relum from the Liverpool Humane Shippings Society, and for the cockling disaster we also got a Chief Coastguard's Commendation. And what you would do, when you got one of these commendations, you were given a little gold badge that you could put on your dress uniform, so of course I'd got two, and I went on a course shortly after… Morecambe Bay, and other coastguards were saying, 'where you from?', 'Morecambe', and immediately you were kind of slotted.

So, have you got them all? Have you still got your uniform and everything?

Yeah, in my study, and I've got little gold bars.

Well I'm really interested to see the things you've got on the table in a minute, we can go and have a little look at those, but just wanted to ask you about when you decided to call it a day really and ask what made you think I've done my time and time to stop?

Well, retirement age is sixty-five.

Oh is it? Okay.

And by then I was a senior station coastguard in Morecambe, and I passed my medical okay but I was kind of having problems with my hearing a bit, and I was moving towards my sixty-sixth birthday and I thought it's time to go, I've done my bit, I've paid my debt to society.

(laughs) Certainly.

I didn't want to hang on and like become a bit of a drag on the team with my hearing, like I say I was coming up to sixty-six, and I just thought, you know, I think Jennifer's had enough, you know, you're doing a lot of work for the coastguard. Once you move into like a deputy station officer and the station officer's slot, you're doing a lot of work for the coastguard, not on call outs just administrative training, because of course we had a lot of equipment and it all had to be checked and signed off, and you were audited and looked at, and you

know it was quite a demanding, we were doing work as well as call outs. We had something like thirty hours a month work, just maintaining vehicles, organising, training, that kind of thing.

Big commitment for all those years, I mean it's astonishing really…

Oh yeah.

Do you still see the guys from the coastguard, are you still in contact with them?

Oh yeah, yes, I still keep in contact with the coastguard and, they don't bother me anymore like, 'Eric, when you were in the service, how did you get past that gate?' But I tend to save newspaper cuttings and send them to the area commander, just to see what the press are saying about the coastguard, and you know, I'm a member of the Coastguard Association, so kind of I lay a wreath on behalf of the Association with the Coastguard team, you know so I keep in contact, yeah.

And so, when you look back on all of those years in the coastguard, how do you feel about all of that, I mean it's a massive contribution?

Well I'm proud of what I did, I think it was something that was worthwhile and worthy of my time, and err I think you tend to push away the more gruesome bit and remember the more funny things and think I've been here before, you know. I was watching the television, and erm there was a group of coastguards from different parts of the country, and they had to chase the casualty, and I thought, eh, I've been there myself (laughs), legging after!

(laughs) Oh dear. Do you keep a close eye on what they're up to, the coastguard, I mean there was something just other day, I know it was on social media, rescuing, pulling someone out of the quicksand and it being filmed, you must be, always have an interest in it?

They did one in Morecambe last week…

Yeah, maybe that was the one.

Yeah that was John, John Bradbury, I know John well, he comes up on Facebook and there's John and he's covered in filth, and his son, and his son is now a regular Coastguard Officer, Adam Bradbury, and I said something like, 'Oh

you've been in the muck, good result, well done', you know, I've been there you know (laughs).

If you come back clean, does that not count, you've not been working hard enough if you don't come back with mud in your clothes (laughs).

Oh, right, no, no.

Well, that's amazing, I don't know whether there's anything else, I've got to the end of my list of things I was going to ask you about, but I know you've got a few things on your list, is there anything else you'd like to add from your things? Have we covered it?

No, not really, like I say, some of the incidents were absolutely deadly, you know really upsetting, but some of them were really hilarious. I think the oddest thing was having my hands kissed (laughs), and it was a German couple, and they were sailboarding, and she was spending more time in the water than on the sailboard, you see, so erm Eric, highwater plus an hour, radioed Liverpool and said, 'don't go to standby, immediate launch', so lifeboat went out and got her and took her away you see. So she's a German and came from Paderborn in Germany you see and Keith Willacy, he's trying to talk to her, you see, and she don't speak any English, and what Keith's trying to do he's trying to give her a piece of paper with the address of the lifeboat station, you see, and she thinks she's handing him a bill, now by some fluke, my Dalmatian who was with me, he found a little boy, and suddenly I'm thinking, oh God, this is the last thing I need, a little, you know, and suddenly you know that funny thing clicks in, the coastguard eye, and he was German, and he was saying, 'Mutter, ist Mutte', and I said, I in those days spoke a few words of German, so I said, 'ich kommen ze', you come with me and Sam, so he got in the car with and came along, and when we got to Green Street, there's this little lady in a wetsuit, tears are flowing, and surrounded by a great hunking lifeboat crew, and Keith Willacy, Keith can't get his piece of paper, so I came on the scene, and Keith said, 'I don't think we'll have much success here'. So, I said like, 'Guten Abend, Eric Greenough', you know that kind of thing, and you know, I had her son, with me, you see, and she

grabbed my hands, and kissed them (laughs) and I thought, whatever you do don't laugh.

You're a knight in shining armour though aren't you, I mean people must express their gratitude, I mean they must be so grateful. Do you ever hear back from people that you've rescued, I mean do you ever have any letters of thanks…

Not really, erm…

Or do you think that people are embarrassed that they've had to be rescued?

Well with Terry Howlett, when he kind of recovered, the BBC ran another programme, like for breakfast television, and we kind of ran the thing again, you know, on a much, much smaller scale, and I think he was a BBC presenter, and he was a Scot, Bill, and he got together at the Albion, and Terry Howlett was there and he went round and shook everyone's hand and that. But err, hand kissing was [inaud] (laughs).

What was your last call out? Do you remember what your last one was? Was it anything eventful or?

My last call out…

Did you know it was your last one at the time as well?

I'll have to look in my journal for that one, and I think it was the one that said, I've had enough of this.

I could ask you about every one in there, it was so interesting reading.

Oh, erm… the last one was, investigate a red flare sighting at Haysham.

Oh…

And it was negative, it was a false report. What happened is, at certain states of tide, the port hand buoy comes to what they call the dipping distance, when suddenly it will pop up above the line of tide and drop back down again. The one before that was the one where I said to myself, why am I standing here? And it was a young female, in the River Lune at Salt Ayre, and I was stood there and she had a knife and it was self-harm, but she would knife anybody who came near her…

Oh gosh…

And we got this standoff, her with a knife and [inaud], you know, I thought, why am I standing here? Anyway, we kind of kept her occupied, and the lads in the lifeboat came, and they just jumped on her, and dragged her into, you know, disarm her, after one time of stood here, I thought, no sorry the second time I was standing saying, what the hell am I standing here for. The other one was a suicide and he began slagging us off, you know, he called us… I don't have to take that from you, you know. But that was the main thing, my hearing was beginning to become a problem, I was coming up to my sixty-sixth birthday and I think Jennifer had had enough.

Yeah… do you ever feel like your own safety was at risk, I mean, that Terry Howlett, certainly sounds like, you said you were in the sinking sand as well, did you ever feel in danger from people like that or from the elements?

…I was never really, that incident apart, the only time I seriously, seriously, put myself in harm's way, was one Thursday evening, in Morecambe at the Sea Cadets, pager went off, and it was a fella, he was down by the clocktower and he'd gone out for a swim, it's February, it's a freezing cold night, and this character's out there swimming, and Alex and I arrive there, and I was first there because I was in, and the police helicopter arrived, and it was illuminated with that spotlight of theirs and he was swimming away from us, and we were waiting for the lifeboat to come and suddenly, I think his head went underwater, and I put my lifejacket on, so I handed Alex my radio, and I waded out into the tide, to like my hips and that, and there's the search light, and I grabbed him by the scruff of the neck and dragged him up, and the police made a video of it, and it's me, and could I be that violent, I grabbed this bloke and dragged him out by the scruff of the neck and when we got him to the clocktower there, he wasn't breathing. So, we did all the things and cleared his mouth, and I then got his head into the position to start, and a young policeman there realised what I was doing, so he jumped down, so I started inhalations and he started chest compressions, and the next thing was, he started to come round, and I made a mistake, I put him into the recovery position by turning him onto me, and he was promptly vomiting

all over me, my trousers, my jacket, my lifejacket, everything. And I thought, charming. Anyway, Alex said, 'get yourself over, get yourself washed and showered and warmed up and we'll deal with all this lot', so, off I went. Got home, phone call, 'Eric, you better go see the casualty officer at Lancaster Royal Infirmary, the guy's a drug addict, and he's also, he's a high risker'. So, I went down there and saw the casualty officer, pointed out I was the one on the mouth, kind of thing and he said, 'oh, right, I think we better start you on hepatitis injections'. So, for six months, I'm on like blood tests and things like that, and the Coastguard took quite a dim view of it, and my sector officer, John Burnsweeney, gave me a kind of reprimand, very mild slap on the wrist, 'Eric, what were you doing?' And we had a little mouthpiece with a valve in you see, and in the heat in the moment I didn't use it, and he said, 'there's no commendation because you put yourself in harm's way and you shouldn't have done'. But that's one of the things isn't it, on my certificate from the Liverpool Shipwreck site, there's a little picture and it's a man pulling a child out of the sea, and it says, lots save as we perish. It was hard for Jennifer too you see, because her husband is under… and it was like six months, and as I say the Coastguard took a dim view of it, because you put yourself in harm's way unnecessarily, but it was one of those things.

Yes, and you saved him, you did save him.

And it all ended in tragedy.

Oh, have you ever totted up how many lives you might have saved?

Sorry?

Have you ever counted how many lives you might have helped to save?

I don't think I have. Erm, all I can think of is, I would think about three, really.

But you've been instrumental in so many.

Yeah, hopefully by issuing a warning notice, or shouting at them, 'get yourself out there', you know, you don't really know, but I would think, physically hands on, about three.

Is it hard, you know when you're out and about around the bay today, if you see people and think what are they up to? Is it tempting to kind of get stuck in or are you able to just step back?

Not really, erm if I saw something, I would ring the Coastguard, I now ring Holyhead, and you see the telescope there, like for example, when a cross bay walk, when they move into the channel, I may ring Liverpool and say, or I'll ring Holyhead now, and say, you know there's a cross bay walk and you know that was it, so still that bit of feedback, but I think once you're in, you never really…you still retain the coastguard eye, you know to look at things, but you tend to stand back. I've stopped, I've seen coastguards there, and I've stopped and I've said something, and clear off, let them get on with it, yeah.

Fantastic. Thank you so much, unless there's anything else you want to add, can we go and have a little look at the things you've got out? I'll just pause that for one second, thank you so much for sharing all your experiences.

[End of tape]