

## **Caroline Daly interviewing Geoff Sleeman**

1:15:13

**Caroline Daly** My name is Caroline Daly and I'm interviewing Geoff Sleeman who was the gardener at Inner Temple for 36 years.

CD And when was it you first started working for Inner Temple?

GS July 1960.

CD And how exactly did you join the Inner Temple?

GS I was employed at a mental hospital as a System Propagator in the greenhouses. I wanted to advance my position; I was looking for another job and I answered an advertisement that had been placed in by the Inner Temple and that was in the evening news. I got an immediate reply, went for the interview, was interviewed by Commander Rodney Flynn and the then Master of the Garden Master Basil Herbert, and I was offered the job on the spot and I accepted it.

CD Did you have any concept of Inner Temple before that?

GS None whatsoever. The only views I had on the Inner Temple was that my wife's brother in law was a City of London policeman who was in that area and used to have to patrol round there so he was able to give me a very good idea what it was about – large garden with lots of courtyards. And that's as far as my knowledge went.

CD Were you interviewed on site?

GS I was interviewed in the Sub-Treasurer's office in the administration buildings.

CD And did you start quite soon after that?

GS I started a fortnight later.

CD That's very soon.

GS By the time I started it was July – that's 1960.

CD What did the gardens look like at that time?

GS Well this is where it gets a bit difficult because they were not looking in a very good state. The gentleman that was running it was ill. He had terminal cancer but he didn't know he'd got terminal cancer.

02.07

He had come out of the army after the war. He'd been a Major – he'd worked his way up through the ranks and he had acquired the position as Head Gardener at the Temple. He had one assistant ... Reg, that's the then head gardener, Reg Dickinson. He had no previous gardening experience whatsoever and he was trying to learn it from books as he went along. And I have to say that deep down at heart I knew I was a better gardener than him. But I just kept a low profile, I kept my peace. If he said do this, I did this. If he said do that, I'd do that. He was a very difficult man to get on with because he was very military in everything he did – everything had to be brushed and cleaned or saluted and I just went along with it, kept him happy and we got along fine.

CD So you weren't head gardener at this time?

GS I was not Head Gardener and I didn't live there at that time; I lived in Wandsworth at that time.

CD So how would you get to work then?

GS To start with I went by bus, it was a 77,8 from Clapham Junction and after a while in a view to save money which was the whole point of me changing my job from the hospital to the Temple – I was getting more money and the prospect of promotion cos it had been explained to me that Reg was terminally ill, and eventually there would be a vacancy and it was up to me in the time available to see if I could prove myself and whether I would be capable of filling the gap when the gap arrived.

03.57

But after a while I had a word with Reg and said, look there's plenty of room in the shed here at night – would it be alright with you if I bought myself a bike and cycled along. So I cycled along, saved the fares, if it was raining when I went home I'd leave the bike in the shed and get the bus because I didn't want to get wet did I?

CD And then did you take over as Head Gardener at some point?

GS Yes, almost exactly two years later Reg died, I was offered the position – I accepted it of course. It fitted in very well because about a fortnight before Reg into a nursing home where he died, my wife had given birth to a little girl. We were in a very small flat to have the prospect of a new job with accommodation that gave us extra bedroom that we would be needing was manna from heaven – it couldn't have been planned better. So after Reg had died and there'd been the funeral the Temple cleared his belongings; they completely renovated the flat and when it was time, we moved in, by then my baby daughter was two months old.

CD Where exactly was the flat?

GS In the basement of 13 Kings Bench Walk, which was very handy because that's right on the end of ... no, 13 is the end of Kings Bench Walk being the basement, it gave me easy access to go round the back way into the greenhouse which occasionally I would have to go into, because if the weather was hot, the ventilating, watering and so on – didn't want hot water to be going out down the steps and through the garden gates – going round the back way which was quicker. So 13 Kings Bench Walk was our address for the next 34 years.

06.03

CD I imagine it would be quite a change moving from Wandsworth to Inner Temple.

GS Yes and one of the main concerns was that my wife might be a bit lonely because it's one thing being a Bencher's wife, it's another thing being a gardener's wife and it didn't prove to be too bad. Many of the ladies there were very friendly and chat, come and see the baby, it wasn't too bad.

CD Were there lots of other families living in Temple?

GS Far more than living in my later years there. There were many children there. In fact at that time the Temple ran its own nursery school. There was Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, who at that time was not a Dame, she was Mrs and her name wasn't Butler-Sloss, it was Sloss – the Butler got added later, the Dame got added even

later on. She had two children, I think it was two children at that time; she certainly had Frances, because Frances was older than our daughter Kerry and in due course Frances got old enough to go to the nursery school. There were the Ash children;. Other babies came along, there were the , the Darlings – Master Darling from the Middle Temple had two children; there were children coming in from Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn.

08.00

Another family that were included just to make up the numbers, I don't know if it's still there but there was a place in Fleet Street called Mick's Cafe. And Mick's Cafe owners had children and somehow they managed to wangle their children in – it wasn't a problem it just helped the numbers. Of course that helped greatly with the general social life because once the children started to go to nursery school. The children got to know each other and make friends. The nursery school was only a morning thing. It was run by Mrs Willenbrock. The nursery was in the basement of Goldsmith Buildings, round by the church west door. And she ran a very well run little nursery school. They used to do little projects like making Christmas cards and building models and doing painting and I think there was even a bit of pastry baking or something like that went on. At Christmas they would run their own nativity play, which all the parents liked. Mrs Butler-Sloss would go and sit in the silly little chairs - pretend you're having a marvellous time when really you were most uncomfortable but the children loved it, we were pleased to see them. Mrs Willenbrock was very good. And part of the morning on the nice days they would come into the garden with balls and hoops and play roll-down the steep bank, that's in the garden and as I started to say just now, they built up friendships, so in the afternoons when the nursery school stopped the mothers would come into the garden and bring the children.

09.59

The mothers would chat, knit and sew, do whatever mothers do. The children would play and argue and squabble in the way that children will. And it meant to say that once one child had a birthday there'd be a birthday party – so we'd go up to the Sopher residence for Jennifer's party and when it was Kerry's party they would come down. It didn't always have to be parties, they would just go round to each other's houses of afternoons and evenings just to play. Master Dobry's little girl Anthea was frequently down our flat for no good reason at all, even to help. Once she'd left nursery school and going to proper school, Kerry can you come down and help me with the homework – it built up friendships.

CD You said earlier that maybe that changed after a while, that the nursery school closed, there were less families

Once Mrs Willenbrock got old enough to retire, that more or less coincided with the time that there was being a major review of the accommodation in the Temple – there was a major rent review I remember. And there were a lot of people in the living in the Temple but there seemed to be no real legal justification for them being there. A lot of them managed to get accommodation during the war, when I suppose places were being left empty but once they were in they stayed in, but as these people left, and took their families elsewhere, other young families were not being offered accommodation – they were either being transferred from living accommodation into barrister's chambers or they were being offered to senior barristers or judges who wanted a town residence – which in my opinion made more sense.

12.06

So what I'm trying to say is that gradually these young families were being phased out?

CD And did you notice a difference socially for your children?

GS Well no this didn't all happen over night. This all took a few years, the nursery school ran for quite a few years and then Mrs Willenbrock became of retirement age, by then our daughter Kerry was old enough to be going to proper school and there were not the new children to fill the vacancies, so Mrs Willenbrock's retirement was probably slightly hastened by the lack of numbers of children wanting places because it wasn't only the Inner Temple that was clamping down on these young couples getting accommodation in the Temple, it was happening in Gray's Inn, Lincoln's Inn and Middle – so all the Inns were tightening up which cut off the flow of children for the nursery school. Does that make sense?

CD Perfect sense. So your children – they went to primary school, secondary school outside the Temple? Where did they go?

GS Er...

CD Some were in central London...

GS It was Sir John Cass School in Aldgate, which was aimed at City of London children, and no trouble getting in there. They both got on famously well there. John never got on famously well at any school academically because he had and still has got dyslexia which gave him severe problems, he's overcome it to a very large degree now but as a youngster it caused problems, but I think I'm getting away from the subject.

14.10

CD What about once the nursery closed and once there were less children around, how did that effect the garden? Before you said there were lots of children running around...

GS It didn't really affect us at all because the children just didn't come into the garden – or they did when they came back from their primary or secondary schools. Anthea Dobry and her Jessica Sopher and Kerry remained friends even after nursery school and still get together. The trouble is these stories they run into each other and running away with me – my head's abuzz. But there's a knock-on effect to that because all these girls I just mentioned, they all joined the Lady Mayoress's City of London brownie group that was being held once every Monday evening at the Guildhall, and so rather than have all the mums and dads – mums and dads includes me and the Sophers and barristers and judges, whoever they were, we were still all mums and dads – instead of everybody trafficking to and fro, we organised a schedule where one Monday it would be me, would take them and collect them from the Guildhall, the next week it would be Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, the next week it would be the Sophers, the next week it would be the Dobrys, so you didn't have to do it very often and it gave these girls a real camaraderie that went on long after ...

16.00

CD Did people drive cars in Inner Temple, did you have a car when you worked there?

GS Yes, not to start with, that came at a later stage, at a time soon after my son was born, we thought we'd need to get out a bit more. Without a car you couldn't get

very far with two children from the City of London, too much travelling to carry cots and push chairs. So I took driving... actually, this is just another little story: as I was taking my driving lessons with the British School of Motoring so was Elizabeth Butler-Sloss and there was a very keen rivalry between the two of us because although she was a barrister, I was always unsure as to how to talk to her and once she became a bencher, I said I don't know how to talk to you these days – and she said to me, you talk to me as a friend because that's what we are – which I thought was very nice. If I had a complaint about anything, which I had on a couple of occasions told her off really severely and she never forgot it. she once told the Master Gardener, oh I'm terrified of him, which I don't believe, but it's what she said.

CD And did you find generally you had good relationships with the lawyers?

GS In the main yes. I had one Master of the garden who... terrific bloke and many of the wives came up to me in many cases after their husbands had died and I'd gone to the memorial service, they would come up and say, my husband thought the world of you – and very often that was reciprocated. I do kid myself I had the knack of getting on with most people. I can even talk to you cant !!

18.05

CD It sounds like a lovely place to work.

GS Oh yes. The only fly in the ointment for the first twelve years was the Commander Flynn – and that wasn't only me. He liked to make life difficult for the employees.

CD And so were you told very clearly what you had to do with the garden or were you allowed to do what you wanted?

No to start with I had a Garden Committee, who would sit there for hours and come to no decisions and I would go ahead and do what I wanted to do anyway. In the main I was left to do things my way, I had to apply every year for a budget for the following year and providing I kept within that budget I would spend that money as and when I thought appropriate. And if I wanted to make major changes, I would have to go to the garden committee but when the garden committee was abolished and that was in the year that Sir Peter Rawlinson was Treasurer – he had a complete review of the committees, because there was a committee on everything – committee on cheese, on portraits, there's still a lot of committees I know because I've got some of the annual year books in there. There was probably even a committee on nose blowing!

CD What year was this around, when things changed?

GS I would say it was some time in the 70s that Sir Peter Rawlinson, Master Rawlinson, who I believe was the Attorney General, he did a ...

20.00

Most Treasurers when they came in, I don't know what it's like now but they would have... Commander Flynn was rather fly, in as much as that he wanted to run the Inn his way, and really the Treasurer runs the inn. So to keep the Treasurer out of his way, Commander Flynn, when they were in their year of being Treasurer you would say no next year when you're Treasurer, we really are having a problem with the accommodation here, needs a complete and thorough review – you wouldn't like to look into that sir, would you? Oh good idea Flynn, yes I'll do that. And they got so engrossed in that they could be bothered with the rest of the running in the Inn which

left Commander Flynn to do what he liked. He was very clever like that. And in the year of Master Rawlinson it was – I think we ought to have a cut down on the number of committees. Because every time we had a committee there was the committee minutes to be taken and typed up, and they'd have a chairman and a deputy chairman and about six people sitting around the table talking about nothing in particular; it was a complete waste of time

CD So it sounds like you were pretty pleased the Garden Committee was abolished.

GS Yes, I was because they appointed a gentleman called Sir Reginald Payne. I lived in 13, he lived in number 12.

22.02

We just got on like a house on fire. He would come down sometimes and say to me, oh Sleeman – because he always called me Sleeman never Mr Sleeman, but I didn't care – Sleeman, I fancy doing a bit of gardening on Saturday morning but I'm not altogether sure what I should be doing. Would you be working on Saturday morning? No sir, but I'll make an effort if you want to do that... Oh, well maybe you'll come down and help me – I'll be the gofer you'll be the boss. OK. So on Saturday mornings he'd say, do you fancy taking a run out to some nurseries? No we need some roses or we need some sort of shrub for there – shall we go out? And we'd go out in his car to the countryside and stop and have a pub lunch. He was a real mate he was.

CD Did you have lots of barristers and students gardening with you?

GS Not barristers, but students quite a lot. I can't remember the names but I had quite a lot of training students who – to fill in time – I would arrange it with the student officer. In the summer I could take on extra work because we had a lot of garden parties. Even small garden parties, sometimes you'd have two chamber's parties having their own individual what I'd term end of term parties, just before the long vacation. You'd have one in the black boy garden area and one up on the main area along. Each had got different access through different gates, they wouldn't get in each other's way and it worked, it kept them happy, kept me happy, I liked to see the garden being used.

24.05

They'd say look we have a chambers party, thank you for your help, would you and your wife like to come out. Sometimes we would, sometimes we wouldn't. Like you mentioned a lady earlier, on as a judge – there used to be a lady called Smith in Kings Bench in the chambers above me, called Smith, and I got on quite well with her and she changed her chambers but before she went she came down and gave me a hug. She said oh I'm going to miss you.

CD That's lovely.

GS Things like that happened. Some of the benchers called me Geoff, some of the benchers' wives called me Geoff. By the time I left I was well in there, I was.

CD Well you got lots of party invites obviously! What about other events that were held in the gardens?

GS Quite a lot of wedding receptions. I've got some photos in there, which when this machine is turned off I can show you – about a big all night ball we had, the Inns of Court Ball would be held, and that was supposed to be taken in turn by the four

Inns of Court as you probably know, but there are only two gardens meant to say I got a double whammy of it, because I'd have to get the Middle Temple garden ready one year and then the Inner Temple garden ready one year. But that was my job, there's no good grumbling about it. The garden could be hired out by various events of various charities, Save the Children fund hired the garden; the Royal Society of St George hired the garden, had a very big affair there where they brought in girls dressed as old fashioned flower sellers, and to complete the picture, they brought along four of the real old age pensioners from the Chelsea Hospital to sit in the [cups] there.

26.13

There was an exhibition of old English roses in the garden with a stand that was organised by the National Rose Society. I used to be asked to do tours, I had to do at least two, probably three tours of the gardens and give them a running commentary on what was going on in the garden for the National Rose Society, mainly because you know the story about the Wars of the Roses, you do?

CD In terms of its relationship to Inner Temple?

GS In regards to the fact that Shakespeare in one of his plays, claimed that the two roses, the red and the white rose of York and Lancaster, were plucked from the Middle Temple garden... and in my time there, in both the gardens, Inner and Middle, I had to always have red and white roses growing in the Inner Temple garden I was told it's a good thing to tell gusts and tourists, and in the Middle Temple garden I had to find the exact species and plant samples of those too – Rose [Agallaca] and rose [Afficionalis], they were actually there in the garden. I could just go on forever!

CD [laughs] And so you said that you were working for both Inner Temple and Middle Temple. When did you start doing that?

GS I can only give you an approximate date, but I could confirm this because I've got the letter – 1964.

CD And how did that come about that you ended up working for both?

28.00

GS It was because the Middle Temple gardener, his name was Tom – he was a really good old gardener and when I went to the Inner Temple garden to work, the Middle Temple garden was head and shoulders about the Inner, in standard. The Middle Temple garden was a really nice garden whereas ours was still looking a bit rough and scarred from the war. Because there'd been a lot of building going on with the restoration of the dining hall and the higher Court buildings and Crown Office Row, and the garden had been used as the builders yard, and sand had been dumped, piles of bricks, this that and the other. During the war on the lawn there's been a barrage in sight that you could still see, where the scar was, the grass was there but you could still see the difference in the texture of the growing of the grass, but I think I'm sidetracking myself. Middle Temple garden was the better garden, and old Tom after about two years Tom retired; they tried a couple of young gardeners, but they just couldn't hack it. They tried three different firms of contractors, it was a disaster, it got so bad in the Middle Temple you couldn't see where the lawn stopped and the pathway started, because of the grass growing on the pathway, it was that bad. The Middle Temple had perceived that gradually we were improving in the Inner. I did a big project on improving the lawn structure by various top dressings and fertilizers; I did a major alteration of the rose beds without taking out ...

30.04

I took out the old roses, put new soil and changed the shape of the flowers beds but put back the original roses, which Master Payne always reckoned was one of the best gardening feats he'd ever seen. In the main it worked, nearly all of them grew, so we had our original roses there and because I put new soil in and had a proper campaign of feeding and pruning them, we built up a reputation of being able to grow good roses and Middle Temple cottoned on to this and approached the Inner and said would it be possible to run the two gardens together. I was asked if I would, I said yes but I would need bigger staff and a telephone in my flat because I wasn't on the telephone, much against Commander Rodney Flynn's wishes, those two things were granted. I got a bigger staff and I got put on the telephone. It worked; it didn't work immediately, there one or two hiccups but we overcame them and after that it worked beautifully until Les Ball took over and it all started to go down hill again.

CD How did you find working for both Inner Temple and Middle Temple?

GS Interesting because I got the best of both worlds. I am not exaggerating to say I had a unique position; there was nobody else within the Inn that had access to both the Inner Temple administration office and the Middle Temple administration office. I would have to put hand in glove with our surveyor if I wanted some brickwork done in the garden or carpentry done on one of the garden seats I'd have to have the Inner Temple do it in the Inns; I'd have to have that self same relationship with the Middle Temple surveyor.

32.16

I knew them all, I could bowl into their office, I'd be welcomed there. I got on with them all. I began to think that I could possibly get on with people, and I don't think I fell out with anybody except Commander Rodney Flynn.

CD Did you notice big differences between the two Inns of Court in terms of the way they ran things?

GS I can't really say I did no. I could never see why it was necessary to have the two Inns of Court. Both of them had a Treasurer, both of them had a Reader, both of them had a Sub-Treasurer although in the Middle Temple case it was called the Under--Treasurer. Both of them had a dining hall with the steward and the head waiter and a chef. I thought, economically it would make more sense but then later on in my life I did look at the history and I found out how it all worked out. I know the answers now, but technically they were exactly the same. I wouldn't say that either of the Inns treated the staff any better or any worse than the other. In fact on the waiting side, when we had our own waiter staff, before we went over to contractors, if there was a big function going on in the Inn, some of the Middle Temple staff would come over and help and vice versa. Grand nights would be held on different nights and some of the staff would flip from side to side to help each other out.

34.04

There was a sort of friendly rivalry but I often thought there was more rivalry than friendly.

CD So there was a competitive element?

GS Oh definitely. But it went it went to further extents once you started to talk about Gray's Inn and Lincoln's Inn. To a certain extent it was the Inner and the Middle versus the other two, but when you broke that down a bit further and were



within the Temple, there was still this rivalry between the Inns. To be quite honest for a long, long time in my service there, the Middle Temple would have won all Inns [out], because for a long time it had the better garden, and it definitely had the better dining hall. To go into that dining hall, it used to knock me out – you could feel the history oozing out of it, and obviously as I got to know the porter, he went into all the details about the hammer roof which is quite, not unique but very unusual; about the long table in the Middle Temple – do you know about that?

CD No I don't...

GS The long table in the Middle Temple hall was a gift from Queen Elizabeth the first and it was felled from Winter Great Park and brought down via river to the river opposite where the Middle Temple garden is. This was years and years ago.

36.00

It was hauled up through the garden, and they took the big stained glass windows out at the end of the hall, and they hauled it up through the windows as a tree trunk that had been felled and the carpenters got to work and made the table in situ, in the Middle Temple hall – that's the story of the table. The thing is, they made it so big, they can never get it out! It's true, they can't get it out. You didn't know that?

CD No I didn't, no.

GS Well there you are, you've learned something today.

CD And so you think that the Middle Temple hall has much more history to it than Inner Temple?

GS There's no doubt; Inner Temple is relatively new, about 1950? 52? There is just no comparison, which is no fault of the Inner Temple. Their hall was blown to pieces; the Middle Temple survived, lucky them, but it doesn't get away from the fact it is a fantastic hall. I am not joking and I'm going to repeat it, to go in there used to over-awe me. Just before I retired, I got on so well with the people who worked in the surveyor's office. They said, Geoff before you retire, next week will you come into the hall and have lunch with us. Well, excuse me... That really did something.

CD Did you ever get to eat in Inner Temple?

38.03

GS No. No, only on a couple of occasions. One was after I returned and the other occasion was when I was asked to do a garden evening tour of the Temple gardens by the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. They had brought drinks on the terrace after I had done my tour, then after we'd had drinks we went up into the hall and had dinner. They arranged to have dinner served and because I had given the talk, I was sat on the top table and ... no Sheila's with me for this... that was quite a moment too. And I later joined the Worshipful Company of Gardeners. Incidentally some of you might be interested to know, along with the other million things buzzing round in my head – is that by being resident in the Temple and on the electoral role, I was able to apply to become a Freeman of the City. Which I am.

CD What does that involve?

GS It means any day I like I can drive sheep over the bridge!

CD Have you done that?

GS Often!

CD That's a really great honour.

GS It's not classed as an honour, it's classed as a right. I did it because most of the people that do it were judges and barristers, and er...

40.00

I did it because I thought it would be possible that if anything happened to me and I was a freeman of the city, the City of London would probably help Sheila out, two children, more than they would if I was ordinary Joe Bloggs. Fortunately it never happened but I like to think they might have helped out a bit more.

CD Are you still a Freeman now, is that something you'll always have?

GS Yes and my children can apply on the basis that I was a Freeman and my daughter has talked about doing it. There are three ways you can be made a Freeman – one is patrimony, that is if you're parent has been. Two is servitude, if you have served an apprenticeship with them at any of the City of London's Worshipful companies like goldsmiths, silversmiths, boat builders, that sort of thing. Or redemption, which means to say if you'd been on electoral role for seven years you can apply.

CD Sounds great. We were talking earlier about traditions and how traditions changed over the time you were at Inner Temple. What kind of things changed?

GS I covered the nursery school – that isn't a tradition but when I first went into the Temple to live, or when I first went there to work – I saw it before my wife did – inasmuch as the old lamp lighter, the old gas lamp lighter would go round to the Temple gas lamps as it got dusk every evening and light them and go round in the morning to extinguish them. During the week he'd periodically come round and clean the glasses. This got to be... maybe it doesn't carry the same significance to you but as I grew up you used to hear stories about lamplighters going around lighting them

42.12

There was even a song about them... [sings] *Each morning after dark, around the park an old fashioned gentleman's parading...* It's about the lamplighter... *Dressed in funny clothes and singing as he goes, the lamp lighter serenade.* I know this is meant to be an interview, not a musical concert, sorry.

CD Musical interludes are allowed!

GS He got to be quite a tourist attraction. It did hold a big significance for me... As I grew up there was something magical and mystical about the lamplighters. This chap that did it was a very fierce character, he didn't look magical or mystical at all. He looked terrifying! He would become quite a tourist attraction. People would time their visit to the Temple, particularly in the autumn time, as it got dark, about four o'clock, to stand there with their cameras, but he wouldn't take to cameras unless they came up with some lolly for him.

CD So when did that stop?

GS I can only guess that stopped in the 1970s, there was a review of the gas lighting system in the Temple. There were when I returned still the gas lamps there but more of them were put in to light the place up more and in the doing of this they

put them on timers so that they automatically turned on and off, but obviously someone had to come round periodically and clean the glasses.

44.08

As a little boy my son, he was a little monkey he was, he got everywhere... he went round with the old lamplighter and it was like a long cane with a flame on the end and an old fashioned hooter; you'd squeeze that and it would send a whoosh and John did that.

CD Very exciting for a little boy.

GS It was yes. But you know the fierce old guy didn't like cleaning the glasses so I think he faded out. It was one stroke, one time I think he used to have this thing that he puffed had methylated spirits in it, it seemed to get some sort of leak and he had a great big black beard and it puffed methylated spirits and it also puffed flamed and his beard caught fire [laughs] and he had to go dunk his head in the pond in Fountain Court!

CD Were the tourists watching this?

GS I don't know, I would like to have heard the language on him if they did! Another tradition that faded out – I've got a note of it here, I can itemise it a bit more correctly – I'll have to do it from memory... During my time there, the dining hall and the kitchen situation changed a lot.

46.02

When I first went there it was all male waiters in the dining hall and the majority of the people in the kitchen, there may have been the odd one or two ladies helping in the kitchen. And all the administration staff in the Treasury Office, behind the counters, were all male. There was a head clerk and two other men behind the counter. There were two porters as I think I've explained, patrolling around with their top hats on, but there was always one porter in the post, looked after the post – his name was George Fairy, less like a fairy you couldn't imagine. And so it was all men – Chief Clerk, two men behind the counter and George Fairy. This didn't suit Commander Rodney Flynn's tastes at all and the Chief Clerk had a nervous breakdown he had so much work put on him. It was suggested he took early retirement and the two men, I don't know why they left but they left. One of them had been there a long time and he knew the history of the Temple like the back of his hand – his name was Mr Hancocks. And as these people left the places were filled with very elegant very smart very young ladies – I'll say no more.

CD So things changed then.

GS Things changed. After the men waiters in the kitchen were got rid of and a catering manageress was brought in – her name was Mrs Morgan, she was called Molly Morgan, but if that was her name I don't know, or just her nickname.

48.21

She was set to organise the team of waitresses to work and there was still the head waiter and the ... sorry ... sorry there was still the steward and the head waiter and I think the wine waiter. The rest were to be women and so she organised this band of women who would come in every day for lunches, term time during dinners and serve at tables. About that time, this is what I'm working my long way round to get there – up till then, in my early days, up to the time I was talking about, twenty

minutes before evening dining during dining term, the head porter used to have to go out onto the terrace in front of the dining hall and blow an old fashioned Robin Hood type hunting horn: 'de-te-de-te-de'. It didn't sound quite like that, it sounded quite rude. The idea was, and this went back down the centuries, it warned students in the olden days, who had gone across or on the ferry boat to the other side of the river to go hunting in Suffolk, that dinner would be served in twenty minutes, so they had better get back, get washed, get their gown on, else they wouldn't be eligible for dinner.

50.05

And that carried on right up to the 1970s, but once they brought in – sorry I've got my facts slightly wrong – it didn't happen with the change of the waitresses, it was when they brought the contractors in that that disappeared. There again, my son had done this 'de-de-le-de-de-le', as I said he got in everywhere. We got to know the Head Porter he called up – called Ben – another porter was Uncle Jim, there was Uncle Arthur, all Head Porters in their turn. He knew them all and they all knew him. Hello John how are you getting on, are you going to blow this for me? Did you know about this hunting horn?

CD I didn't know at all. How do you think people felt about traditions?

GS I know one old bencher, Master **Alti Colburn**, he was a real stickler for tradition. I think he had died before the hunting horn died out but some of the other traditions had died out even before I knew about them. And as I said earlier, some of the traditionalists didn't like this. I don't like it actually but these things happen.

CD Can you think of any changes that were good over the years?

GS I think lady benchers was a good idea. I think pound for pound women can be as equal in most things.

52.03

There are some things I draw the line – I don't like to see women driving articulated lorries – I think that is a man's job. When it comes to being a bencher and senior barristers and judges, that was a big change, it was a big change and I approve of that. Should I glance at my list to refresh my memory? There is one thing I wanted to talk to you about before we finish, that is quite important to me and I do want to get it off my chest. Another item that I think is worth mentioning is the attempt to take the estate management away from the Temple's own surveyor staff, which happened during Commander Rodney Flynn's time. When I first went there we had our own surveyor, our own foreman, I don't know how much you know about it but the Temple was almost totally self-sufficient. They had their own team of carpenters, their own electricians, their own painters and decorators, their own gardeners. There wasn't much that couldn't be done in-house. But Commander Flynn wanted to take it away and put the running of the estate in the hands of estate managers, and to start off with he brought in a firm called Drivers-Jonas and they ran the place for a couple of years.

54.10

I can't say it was any better or any worse but obviously where you'd got your own employees doing things, they should have the interest of the Inn at heart when they are doing it. When you've got contractors doing it, they're in the case of Drivas-Jonas, their loyalty is going to be with Drivas Jonas not the Inner Temple. That's the way I see it. Things weren't being done quite right. After a few years, maybe six,

maybe seven, that contract was taken away from them and it went to another firm called Knight Frank and Rutley and they ran it for a time. But there was such problems, particularly with Temple gardens, round the 1970s, maybe the 80s, had an infestation of dry rot that was really bad and it was decided that every piece of wood that was in that building had to come out. That meant the joists of the roof, the lathes in the plaster walls, all the window frames, doorframes, floorboards, everything had to be gutted. They undertook it to do it piecemeal. People would be moved out, there'd be a spare set of chambers, one set of chambers would have to be moved out and they would go into the spare set while their set was done.

56.16

If they wanted any alterations done structurally while it was being done, they could be done, but if they wanted it put back exactly the same, then it would be put back exactly the same. I heard of cases where on assistance from the head of the chambers, special window casements were having to be brought over from France and wallpaper from France because it couldn't be obtained from this country, but he Inner Temple did keep its word but it didn't half knock the Temple financially. I heard all sorts of figures bandied around starting at a million pounds. And we were even told as the Heads of the Department, which I was, that things were so tight financially that if we could make do with half a sheet of paper instead of a whole sheet, will we please use half a sheet. Money got very tight. The firm that Drivas-Jonas or Knight Frank and Rutley had taken on to do the job, in the middle of the job, went broke. And so there had to be a renegotiation and somebody had to agree to come in and I am a little bit familiar with all this because while all this work was going on on this building of Temple gardens the builders had to have a building area where they could have their huts, supplies, sand, cement, and that had to be in the garden. I had to agree to a corner for the garden being fenced and it wasn't my garden any more, it was theirs.

56.05

It wasn't their fault and we got on alright but it was over... I think it was Knight Frank and Rutley actually – sent contractors in and they put the garden back into repair quite spectacularly – yes it was good, no complaints about that. It was just inconvenient at the time.

CD A difficult time for the Inn and you as well.

GS A difficult time for everybody and we had a sub treasurer at the time – Commander Rodney Flynn had retired and we had Tom Holman and he wasn't in the job very long because I think this job got on top of him and I don't know how long he was there but I doubt if it was three years, which is most unusual for a Sub-Treasurer. Most of them stay ten or twelve years.

CD So I think we should finish off quite soon. Is there anything else you'd like to say?

GS There are three things I want to talk about. In the garden there's a pond, by the pond is a statue of a boy, you must have see it surely? And that boy is leaning on a tree stump. Now there are some impressions on that tree stump that are significant to the legal profession and I had this fear that I'm possibly the only person that knows about it. I think it should be passed on.

1.00.02

That Lamb boy by the way is facing them buildings because Charles Lamb was born on the site of the old Crown Office Row, because Lamb's father was an employee of the Temple. Did you know that? Charles Lamb's father was a servant of the... and there's these impressions there, how I'm going to get to you what they are, you'd need to go down and look closely. Have you got a bit of paper there? I'll tell you what they are. He's leaning on a tree stump. Now if you look more or less under where his hand you'll see if you look closely the outline of the judge's wig. Slightly lower down, to the right hand side of it, as you're facing it, you'll see two small depressions, like little bowls that you could possibly put your finger in. they represent the scales of justice. And somewhere underneath them, if you look closely, chiselled out, you will see two straight pieces, the books of knowledge and learning. Now the last one is difficult, it really is difficult, and you'll probably have to move slightly further away and slightly to your left, and look at the base of the statue, and you'll see the Pegasus.

1.02.06

You'll see the wisp, you'll see the hind quarters and the wisp of the tail; you'll see the rear leg going down and then you can follow the back line and you'll see the mane, the ears, the eyebrows and the nose, and you'll just see the crook foreleg as he's flying.

CD That sounds fantastic, I want to go right now and look at it.

GS If you find it, will you let me know – because I am worried that nobody else knows that. And that was told to me because in the late 1960s, maybe early 70s, the original statue was stolen and it was just before the American Bar Association came over because the four inns of court held really big garden parties at exactly the same time and the American Bar Association was divided into four lots. Some went to Grays, some went to Lincoln and there was great rivalry over the garden part. Of course I had to get both gardens ready. The details of that are in my book because I've had to write about it. The statue was stolen just before the garden party and there was a panic on as to whether we could get it replaced, this Master Reginald Payne, who I told you I got on well with, he and a Master I for Lloyd did some research and found the name of the sculptress, and they found that she was still alive, she was 93.

1.04.00

They went to see her, and explained the problem, and said do you have a student who might be able to replicate that statue for us, we need it there for the American Bar. She said give me a couple of days, I might have the original mould in my cellar. Apparently she got her manservant to go down to her cellar and he found the mould and they asked to pay her I for Lloyd's arranged to have it sent to a foundry. It was stolen for its precious metal – there was a lot of precious metal being stolen at that time. It was the same time as the Blackfriars Underpass was being built. So they said, this statue that there now is in fibreglass, so it won't get stolen again. It was ready in time, it was put up, and in position for the American garden parties and everybody was happy. When the American garden party was over, the benches – I presume they still have Sunday lunches – it was decided that this lady sculptress should be invited to Sunday lunch and if she could get down to the garden, go down to the garden and see the statue. Because of her age, would she like to bring a friend with her. So they came along. Master Payne said look, you've been very involved in this, keep an eye open and when you see us come down in the garden, will you pop out, I'd like you to meet the sculptress.

1.06.00

So they came down, I went out, I was introduced to her. If I looked hard enough I could find her name but it escapes me for the moment. I was introduced to her and she said, you probably think he's just leaning on a tree stump don't you young man – I was 40 years old, to be called to be called young man, what a nice lady! So I said yes I do – and she showed me that. Another little anecdote – it goes on forever! – the lady she brought with her came across, I was introduced, she said we have met before. I said I'm sorry madam, it's very impolite of me, I don't remember. She said, your daughter was christened in the Temple church. She said, I came to the service and the congregation were invited to stay behind for the christening and I came across, had a word with you; I saw the baby. I said, and afterwards, the following week, you sent a cheque saying would you please put this on the baby. She said, yes I did, and you very kindly wrote to me and thanked me – she said, I've never forgot that. I said, it goes a bit further than that doesn't it. Didn't your father used to be a master of the garden years ago? Yes, she said.

CD What a great story.

GS It goes on forever, doesn't it. I've got a million of them.

CD I think for today we'll have to finish there!

GS No you cannot, there's one more thing.

CD Ok one more...

1.08.00

GS By the pond there are three big London plane trees, yes? It can't be one more, it's got to be two more... three big London plane trees and a Master of the Bench, Master Langdon-Davis, who has died now, told me that those three trees that are there are three that are left of a line of six or seven that were planted across there and he knows this because his father was on the City of London corporation council, and it was decided long before when Master Langdon-Davis was a boy that these trees will be planted to mark what Langdon Davis claimed was the old shore line of the river before they pushed the river back to make way for the embankment. You know the underground runs under the garden: before they narrowed the river down considerably, I've looked at that line and the line of buildings and I think it is dubious but if you've got the facilities to look into that, it might be worth pursuing. I know there were other trees there because when I first started some of the roots were still in the ground and it was having a bad effect on the grass. We had to take the grass away, dig them out, fill the hole and re-turf. One more thing... in my communications with the Middle Temple, I got to know the surveyors very well, I told you I got to know everybody.

1.10.05

And there was one gentleman who was the surveyor, his name was Michael Murray and he used to prefer, when he had a problem, he preferred to come and sit in the Inner Temple garden than he did in the Middle Temple garden, even though he was the Middle Temple surveyor. He used to come across and have a chat. He said to me one day, when you've got five minutes can you pop up to my office, I've got something to show you. I found the time; I was up there before he was. He showed me a document that relates to the Lloyds Bank building in the Strand. It said that the building at some time or the other had been part of the Inner and had been used as some sort of dining hall, for catering either for benchers or barristers to go and eat. How or why this should be I don't know, but it was there in black and white. I didn't know I was going to get involved in this, else I'd have paid more attention. There

were pictures of it and that bank is still the bank that [unclear?] our cheques still say 'law courts branch'. They say there's big computers, there's no point changing your bank. When we used to go in there, there's the desk, the place where the tellers are, there's also a place reserved for tables and change, so if you were going to write a document or a cheque, you sit down. On the walls all around, they have the most beautiful ceramic tiles, and they are chrysanthemums.

1.12.00

Not only chrysanthemums they're named varieties of chrysanthemums – I can't see a bank doing that, and I just think maybe somebody should look into that.

CD That sounds very interesting. The only thing I would say is we're sitting in Geoff's cottage in Rutland and looking outside there's a few things that are from Inner Temple, aren't there? If you want to briefly tell us what they are?

GS You're talking about the gas lamp.

CD And the flowers as well...

GS I've got some standard fuchsias growing in my front garden and as I speak they are in full bloom. I grew so many standard fuchsias for the Temple garden that when I left I thought, well they won't miss one or two and I brought three with me – that's 18 years ago and they're still going strong. And they are, I'm not blowing my own trumpet because it's Mother Nature not me, they're greatly admired by people as they go past.

CD And one other thing that you've got outside...

GS Well I've brought myself a little souvenir from the Inner Temple. All the time I lived in 13 Kings Bench Walk, out in the back yard, the back area, where the coal bunkers are, there was a old fashioned lamp standard. Street lamp, I'm talking about, I don't know how tall, 12 foot tall maybe. It was there when I started work, it was there when I was tired.

1.14.02

And I thought well, if they don't want that, I'll clear it away for them. So I brought it up here with the removal van that I had, and I duly painted it up and as the cottage was restored I've had it put in my front garden. As I was doing the final painting of it, a local electrician pulled up with a van, said, cor that's alright mate, innit, do you want that wired up? I said, no thank you, nice of you to offer, but we had the cottage rewired, it's only fair that the man that does the rewiring does it. he said, oh yeah that's fair enough. He said, where did you get that from? I said, with great difficulty, I fell off my bike twice. That's it! I've got nothing else to say.

CD Thank you very much Geoff, I think we'll finish there.