

Extracts from John McGrath in Conversation with Colin Mortimer

12 May 1980

CM. Well, middle of 1977, after *Trembling Giant*, you said you'd come back in an artistic director role. So the next show was *Joe of England*. You said you weren't happy with *Trembling Giant*.

JMc. No. I was very far from happy at the way that went. In the autumn of 1977, there was the English company doing *Joe of England*, the Scottish company doing, I think it was a repeat of *Out of Our Heads*. We were going to do *His Master's Voice* and we ended up doing a repeat of *Out of Our Heads*. Then *His Master's Voice* at the end of that. At the beginning of 1978, we brought back *Underneath*. Pam Brighton directed that. Then we brought back *Joe of England* and that was a disastrous tour when Tim Munroe had his appendicitis and then it got complications. It was a very short tour indeed, and caused all sorts of problems because we didn't do enough weeks. Then in the autumn of 1978 we did *Vandaleur's Folly*. Then in the January of 1979 we were going to do the micro-chip show. Didn't materialise. We ended up doing nothing for two or three months and ending up with *Big Square Fields*. That was the middle of 1979 and at the end of 1979 we did *Bitter Apples* with the big thing and *Trees in the Wind* with the small thing. Then we did *Sus*. I'm trying to get right how that meshes in with the Scottish company. Beginning of 1978, we did *His Master's Voice* which didn't involve me greatly. Then a year's break in Scotland until April 1979. Then we did *Joe's Drum*, then we did it again in the autumn. And the spring of 1980 we did *Swings and Roundabouts*. Christ. I'm going to find it very difficult talking about that period. Because it's being so near. It's a great jumble. But also in a sense because it was a sort of jumble. Because certainly the first patch was a period of exploration of new ways of running the company – different ways of running the company. I think the idea of doing *Joe of England* came from a basic notion of a thing that Troy Kennedy Martin and I had written called *Diary of Young Man*. We'd written in 1963 or 1964. That was a series of six plays for television about a young man coming to London and the sort of picaresque adventures that he had. That in turn was based on a play that I wrote in about 1960, 1961, a musical called *Jack*. Dudley Moore did the music, and I wrote it for the Court. George Devine liked it but the all-powerful directors didn't, or didn't see any mileage in it for themselves.

So, it didn't get put on. I haven't got a copy of that, but that was the basis of the television series. It seemed to me that the television series had a great deal to be said for it at the time. And it seemed to me that fifteen years had gone by and it would be a good idea to explore using that framework – the reality of London, in a fairly comic way. It also seemed to be a good idea to do something that was picaresque and funny; that involved music as this would and to try to jack up the entertainment values of the company at that time. Because I really did think that this whole problem of the bourgeois actor trying to enter the minds of the working class was very acute in *Trembling Giant*. The people that we put together for *Joe of England* were a pretty fair mix. I was very pleased that we got Johnnie Clark back –

who had been in the company before, who's an East End bloke also politically very involved with the SWP. I was delighted that we got Alan Ford to come with us on that tour. There again is somebody with great experience of working class entertainment. And Pauline Melville, similarly with a lot of experience of entertaining working class audiences, and a working class girl, and heavily committed politically in a CP sort of direction. To play Joe, there was Tim Munroe who had a lot of the qualifications necessary. He could sing wonderfully well. He was the right kind of actor. But I feel looking back on it that... I mean, Joe was supposed to come from Sheffield and Tim comes from Cromwell Road. I think the sort of basic gap that was needed between Joe's experience and London was not something that Tim was totally aware of or familiar with and so maybe, though he did it well, it needed someone who themselves had experienced that blow of coming to London and finding out at first hand for themselves. Katy Feeney was in the company and she had provided a kind of continuity through that year. She played extremely well. She'd had experience with *Borderline* and the Theatre About Glasgow TAG, Glasgow Citizens Theatre. So she'd had experience in the Scottish community theatre. So, it was a kind of interesting company. The band were back, in force. Mike O'Neill was writing songs very well. The show itself, I felt, ultimately was disappointing. We did a great deal of... We had a terrible time in rehearsal. The place that we'd found to rehearse in was in King's Cross, was absolutely terrible. It was a room above a pub. We couldn't get in in the morning because the guy who ran it wouldn't wake up to open the door. He didn't indeed wake up at eleven o'clock when he was supposed to open his bar. He woke up sometime around midday or later, staggered down. We lost an awful lot of time through his inability to wake up. Then we would go into the rehearsal room and do whatever we could, have a quick lunch and come back and we kept discovering that we were actually locked in the room in the afternoon. Three o'clock he'd close his bar which had never been very full anyway and lock us in because he had a huge Alsatian that he used to let roam around while he went back to bed. So when you talk about the theoretical problems of working class theatre... you've got this dog! And the fact that you couldn't get out and there wasn't a loo in the rehearsal room so we ended up pissing out the window! It was a nightmare. We wasted weeks trying to create an atmosphere in the middle of this bedlam - absolute lunacy! Eventually we got the whole thing vaguely organised and going. We got the band in and the minute they started to play the police came round. And it was really a wonderful moment, actually, because the police came round about three in the afternoon or half past three, summoned by the person next door, who was objecting to the noise of the band, and the police were banging on the door which was locked; we were locked in the rehearsal room upstairs, so we couldn't get out to let them in... We put our head out of the window and the police said, 'We've come to complain about the noise'... We said, 'How about us complaining about being locked in and could we issue a writ of habeas corpus to the landlord?' They didn't seem to care at all about that. They just said, 'Shut up, make less noise'. It didn't seem to bother the landlord, who was obviously sleeping through thick and thin. Anyway, this awful mess.... It made the concentration on the show absolutely impossible. It was a filthy place, anyway. Sort of messy. Eventually, we moved back to Shroton Street, where we had rehearsed *Lay Off* and *Yobbo Nowt* and awful memories of *Relegated*. It was a sort of church hall in Marylebone. We moved back there but by this time all the windows had been completely bricked up. It was being turned into a video studio. So there was no light coming in and precious little air, but at least we were able to work. But by this time it was getting a bit late. We'd been working on the

basis of the basic story of one of the episodes of the TV play, but changing it completely. Characters changed – everything. And adding music and making it about 1977 or whenever it was, lad coming to London then. It was a very different proposition from 1963. So when I say I was disappointed with what came out of the end of that process, I think that the work that we did, that we were allowed to do, was very good. Some of the scenes that we took off on, we improvised. Alan and Johnnie improvised miles of dialogue. Once they got going, on some sort of cockney routine, there was absolutely no stopping them. The band wrote some very good music and I was quite pleased with some of the lyrics that I wrote and that they wrote. The basic idea of the show was fine, but it was the work we weren't allowed to do that was the problem. There just wasn't time to get together. It was scrappy in the end. Plus the fact that it was overambitious in the sense that as a television play, terrific. It moved like nobody's business. But as a stage play it was very very difficult to try and co-ordinate all the ideas. The design ideas were non-existent, really.

CM. You mean in moving the story along?

JMc. Yuh. I suppose it had got a bit out of hand at the design level. We didn't have a designer, but then a designer came in, but too late to be able to pull it together, and too late to influence the way things had been shaped. I suppose if we learned anything, it was that you have to have a designer creatively involved in that kind of thing. But it toured. It went to Holland. It toured round England and Wales. In the north it was not really appreciated, because a lot of it was cockney. In London, it wasn't greatly appreciated because it was knocking London. It was actually saying that London is a great maw where all the money is made and the rest of the country is sort of sucked in and swirled around. Most of the employment in London is in grabbing at everybody else's money. Cockneys didn't like this very much... Though by and large it's true. Plus the fact that the East End family we showed in *Joe of England* was a family of crooks basically. So again they didn't like that very much, the London working class being shown like this.

CM. Who didn't like it?

JMc. Well, cockney audiences actually, didn't like it greatly. I got laid into at the Albany. People said, 'Well, what do ya mean by this?' I think on the whole it was dodgy. That's how I'd describe it - 'dodgy'.

CM. Fell between stools?

JMc. Well, I believe that if we'd had a proper rehearsal period, if I hadn't been doing *Out of Our Heads* again in Scotland before going into rehearsal with it, so I could prepare it a bit more, if we'd had a designer involved and I suspect that if the person playing Joe had had similar experience... He could contribute more, not necessarily words, but performance values. Then we might have made something better. If not totally satisfactory, at least, solid. It felt flimsy. It felt insubstantial. It was OK. We didn't get booed off or anything. It kind of went along. It worked along.

CM. It keeps moving.

JMc. It certainly keeps moving.

CM. It seems to get bogged down at the end.

JMc. The plastic grapes. Since then the BBC TV have asked me to do a show. I thought it would be good to do that properly. It never got away from being a TV show. What I've done is to re-do that show as the *Adventures of Frank*. The bloke is now called Frank. I didn't want it to be confused with a TV adaptation of that because it wasn't. I kept a great deal of the other characters and the invention and the story. I think – I don't know because I haven't finished editing it yet – I think it's going to work on TV. It certainly felt to rehearse it, much more satisfying. And quite a lot of the company did it, Alan Ford, Johnnie and the band. So it worked quite well on that level but it didn't work in the theatre. So that was that one. It was very much under pressure because this whole business with the company through that summer, of me resigning and then roundabout August finding out really that if I did resign the company would not exist within six months. Finding that the people that were proposing to inherit the company really weren't prepared to put themselves out to make it survive. In August all this... having already a commitment to *Out of Our Heads* in Scotland, it was very, very difficult to put anything together in that situation. And then given the added complication of Alsations roaming in corridors and being locked in and locked out and everything else. It was a strain, but it was a show and it went on. It had a lot of the virtues that 7:84 should have, a lot of the entertainment values. Although it was a bit insubstantial it kind of worked. It certainly kept us going. What I needed having come to the point of no return with the company, I suddenly found myself actually returning, was time to think and organise. I then approached John Arden and Margareta D'Arcy about writing a show and got them involved in commission for *Vandaleur's Folly*.

CM. That was at the beginning of 1978?

JMc. Well, actually, I think it was during this period of 1977 that I started talking to them.

CM. You chose the cast for *Joe* yourself?

JMc. Yes, I did. With a lot of care.

CM. With a view to keeping them or just for that show?

JMc. Well, with a view to forming a kind of nucleus, who would come back. Maybe go away, come back again. Which indeed is what happened.

CM. Jenny [Tiramani] says that when she came in she felt that 7:84 had not really thought much in terms of design before.

JMc. Actually, that's not quite correct. I, as a director, had thought a great deal about designers, but I never actually found a designer who I thought was right to work with us permanently. And we tried a great many designers. And it wasn't really till Jenny came along that there was any sign of somebody who understood. And interestingly enough Jenny is... comes from a whole new generation of designers who... Jenny was actually taught by Malcolm Griffiths, who worked with Portable

Theatre. And so a new generation of designers actually had to be created by the touring theatres before we could find one who even began to understand...

CM. She implied that for all sorts of reasons, design had come out of rehearsals...

JMc. That's very true.

CM. And it was only in recent years that you'd thought in terms of a designer...

JMc. We'd always wanted a designer. I had a great distrust of designers. Every time a designer got any power they made it impossible to tour the show. Simple as that. *Trembling Giant* was a prime example where Jim Sheridan who's a very experienced director in Dublin in one theatre; very inexperienced in terms of 7:84 kind of touring, got together with a designer who was very good, lots of nice ideas, produced a set which had to be jettisoned after the first gig. It took a day to put up in Lancaster: a day and a half actually. It was quite extraordinary. That was Genna and she's a good designer. But she just didn't or couldn't think in terms of a whole touring show. She designed the show not the tour.

CM. We must come back to the business of design.

JMc. Because Jenny had been properly educated really... Because our generation and Malcolm coming from the generation of touring theatre had gone into this – spent his time and energy on the Design Department at Nottingham or Trent Poly as it's called – then we were able to find somebody. But it's not true that we haven't thought about design. We've thought a great deal and rejected the designers mostly or treated with a great deal of caution.

CM. Was there anything about 1977 that made doing a show about London compelling?

JMc. 1977 was an awful year. Politically, it was the year when Callaghanism and the heavy tread of the Police Federation running the Government first became totally apparent. It was very depressing, I felt. The Labour Government finally absorbed the militancy of the working class and I suppose, in a way, *Trembling Giant* was showing the giant of capitalism propped up in the twentieth century after its great period; propped up by social democracy and the Tory Party. In a way *Joe of England* was a response to the nihilistic feeling one got at that time that politics was becoming pointless on a parliamentary level.

CM. When you say nihilistic, you mean cynical, everyone's on the make? That's very much the feel of the play...?

JMc. Exactly. Yes, it is. I felt that in 1977 very strongly, that things were beginning to sort themselves out; that they were beginning to sort out the inflation and everything, but that everybody was being very fly; that all socialist principles had been totally abandoned. Completely abandoned. And this sort of ability of Callaghan and his Cabinet to absorb opposition, to absorb the militancy of the working class even to turn the worst elements of Labourism to their electoral advantage, cast people with any principles, any belief in socialism, into a certain gloom and cynicism.

And seeing at the same time a kind of revival of commercial success, a kind of perking up of the entrepreneur, don't know whether it was perking up the economy exactly.

CM. You mean the beginning of the pattern now emerging – Michael Edwards...?

JMc. Very clear now. I suppose it was all the people who were no good, who were bad capitalists...

(END OF CASSETTE.)

JMc. ... cynicism at that time about the way people in the country were going. And so to have this boy coming to London and see for himself that the heart of the nation that he is so proud of, to see what it's like – in need of a transplant, was what that play was about and what the impetus to put it on was about. The cockneys suffered more than they should of because the same 'grab-it' ideology was at work throughout the whole country but maybe not quite as obvious as it is in London. The point of all that was to show that crookery and wheeling and dealing and buying and selling of stolen goods with the cockney family was a mere pale repetition of the wheeling and dealing and buying and selling of our people's property that is going in the City which is the heart of it.

CM. *Threepenny Opera*.

JMc. Yeh. It was *The Threepenny Opera* writ out twice on one level and then the next level rather than put together in the classic proper way that Brecht did it. It was a very hard year to come to terms with, as a socialist, I found. But at the same time the Scottish company with *Out of Our Heads* was doing very well. No, it was *Trembling Giant* repeat tour.

CM. Immediately before *Joe of England*?

JMc. That's right. The revival of *Trembling Giant* in Scotland, which was a short tour, which ended up coming to the Royal Court, round about Christmas time. So... I'd asked the Ardens... We'd been talking initially to the Ardens about doing *Ballygombeen Bequest* again, which was now called *Little Grey Home in the West* and which they had been re-writing. What they did was quite extraordinary. The case was sort of resolved, although it was never very clear to me how it had been resolved, except that they had used the company's non-involvement in the case to their advantage. They had laid all the blame for the identification of Burgess with Holliday-Cheype at the doorstep of the company. And they, somehow or other, had come to a settlement on the basis of this and it had cost them about three or four thousand pounds. When this happened we said, 'OK, come and talk to us' and we met – this was the policy group of that period – we met with them in Shroton Street. Maybe that was during *Underneath* rehearsals beginning of 1978. We said, 'What about us doing *Ballygombeen* again or *Little Grey Home in the West*?' They were sort of willing but extremely hostile and aggressive towards the company and said, 'The company have got to agree to doing anything that we say and any changes at any time that we dictate. And we are going to direct it.' The company were a bit concerned about this. Then it transpired that they had also offered it to the Royal

Court and Stuart Burge. I found out about that completely by accident because I was talking to Stuart about something else. He was thinking about doing it. We said, 'We can't do it. There's no point the Royal Court putting it on... Why can't we do a co-production?' But that didn't work out. Then we found out they had also offered it to the Half Moon. Then they said, 'Well, it's not the first production or whatever. It's now free to be done by whoever wants to pick it up.' So, we thought 'Fine, but we are going to look a bit silly touring'... Well it was going to make touring it a bit difficult and fairly pointless, if there's already another production going on at the same time that could be toured. So, we were a bit worried by this, and by their general behaviour. What then transpired was they said, 'Look, the Half Moon are now going to do it. And we're going to re-write it for all women', or something. 'Why don't you do our new play which is about Ralahine and the co-operative at Ralahine on condition that we direct it.' We had a meeting of the policy group and I put forward the proposition that the Ardens might make a mess of it; they might make a triumph of it. Either way they deserved the right to do it because of all the work they've done in the past. We had tremendous respect for them. We said, we place the company entirely in their hands for the period of that production. That was the proposal and that was agreed by the policy group and that was in fact how it went ahead.

(END OF EXTRACT.)

17 June 1980

JMc. Scotland the Brave. What happened when Liz, Dave MacLennan, Feri and I went to Edinburgh is the next bit, really. I'd been wanting to do this play about the Clearances for some time. Richard Eyre had suggested two or three years before doing a play about the Clearances and about Upper Clyde. I wasn't able to do it at the time but it was a nice idea. When the whole oil boom swept over Aberdeen and the Highlands and looked set to do quite a lot of other things to the Highlands, that relationship suddenly seemed very clear and very strong; in fact stronger than the connection with U.C.S. I also wanted desperately to work with an audience, again. That I knew because I knew the audience in Liverpool. I loved working the Everyman but I'd come to the end of a spell there. I knew the audience in the Highlands through going there. For years and years I'd been going at that time. And I knew quite a lot of the history from people and reading and so on, thinking about it, the Clearances subject from 1961-62. I actually knew the set up, I knew how it would be. It would be in the village hall, that there were stages in the village halls that were not big enough, I knew what the problems were, I knew what the people would like. And I also reckoned that the idea of a dance to follow was a good idea, so we could get to talk to people and... you know. It turned out that all that knowledge, that Dave MacLennan and Liz had as well, was actually the root of the company's work, that setting up of it was the fact that we knew those audiences, we wanted to work for those audiences, we wanted to tell their story. We wanted to bring things out into public that had been pressed down in the Highland conscience for centuries. We wanted to celebrate the victories of Highlanders, because for years and years and years and years, hundreds of years they've been given over to laments. The traditional, the most characteristic Highland song is the lament. Well, fuck the lament, let's have some victories, because they also won some victories. In the

course of researching the Clearances I dug up all kinds of extraordinary things... The land war that went on in the 1880s was scarcely researched at all at that point... The connection with Parnell and the Irish Land League was unknown. The fact that Marines landed on the Isle of Skye and on Tiree and paraded up and down and duffed people up in the 1880s was not at all known to people. Above all what seemed important to me was to provide a perspective, historical perspective on all these events which was a Marxist/socialist perspective which tied all these elements in with the development of capital and the demands of capital and to show that the latest phase which was the oil thing, was just another development of capital. And to say to the people in an entertainment language that they knew and which we knew and loved that actually their lives are... they don't control their own lives, they're dominated by capital and the whole idea that they live in a democratic society is absolute bullshit. Their whole lives are controlled by the demands of capital and have been for two hundred years and to say it such a way that they enjoyed hearing it and understood it, participated in it, actively. And it was really out of that relationship with people that the Scottish company came into being. The Scottish company has always had a much stronger sense of audience than the English company. It's not only... It's not just willed, it's there. One of the great things about doing that show, *The Cheviot*, was that I felt I knew who I was talking to. When we were working on the show, in rehearsal and when I was writing doing songs... I was thinking of one bloke as a sort of test audience, who I knew very well. I was thinking of his response to what I was doing, whether it would work, as a kind of touchstone. Fortunately, he liked it. It would have been terrible if he'd turned round and said it wasn't very good. He didn't know he was a touchstone. It didn't matter. It was a slightly abstract notion, but it was real enough to me. So because of the actual sense of person-to-person communication, and also the sense that there is a huge cultural tradition which is there in people's bones and in their houses, to draw on. Also because the people of the Highlands have a kind of openness. The traditional idea of the Highlanders as some sort of closed minds is absolute rubbish. They're far more open to events and new ideas and new thoughts and different people than any audience I know. Always interested. It's lovely. And they like stories. The whole Celtic, Gaelic tradition of storytelling is still alive. They love stories, even if it's only gossip. It's a story. It's great. And of course the music was there. The fiddle music, the singing of songs in English and Gaelic and the contemporary folk music: the pop done to an accordion band, the Country and Western which has been taken over in the Highlands. One of the big hits of the Wembley Country and Western Festival has been a band from a tiny village in Sutherland, who have done fantastically well. They just love Country and Western. I personally think Country and Western has got the seeds of a lot of reactionary things in it. We used Country and Western critically; we took the piss out of it in other words. Nevertheless, it was a form of... it got a response. So that was the basis of it. And we were very fortunate in a sense in that people who came to work on the show were people who understood that person to person contact. I spoke to a lot of friends that I had made in Scotland about who would be right. And I saw a lot of people with Liz and Dave. We talked to actors and musicians and we came up with a very interesting group. Dolina MacLennan who is a Gaelic singer and began to do some acting had not spoken a word of English until she was five and went to school. She was brought up in a fishing community, family in Lewis, and her brothers were all fishermen and, in so far as there are any fish left in the Minch, some of them still are. She'd been very involved with the folk scene and knew the Edinburgh end of the folk scene very well, Hamish Henderson and all those people.

And Alan Ross who came from Croydon but whose grandfather came from Easter Ross. He had been classically trained as a violin player and then given it up and been a carpenter and done that kind of shop window display stuff and had also just built his own house and done all the carpentry and started to learn Scottish tunes and he'd fallen in love with the folk fiddle so bringing a great classical training to bear on that. He was an extremely useful and very talented fiddler and he's a huge repertoire and great panache about the way he did it. And he was huge and tall with long red hair and a big long red beard and he looked like... his great-grandfather I should say. A worthy from Tain. He was also a good visual artist. He's been to art school and had a good design sense, practical design sense. He built the bloody things as well as thought about them. Liz and Dave have both immensely strong connections with the Highlands. Although they had both been born in Glasgow and both brought up in Glasgow they'd both spent a great deal of their childhood and youth in the Highlands and were very concerned about the place. Of course, their brother was M.P. in Caithness and Sutherland and so through campaigning to get him in and things like that they got very involved in the politics of the Highlands as well, in a practical way. Bill Patterson who was doing a School's Telly with Alex Norton when we met him and had done a certain amount but really not a lot. I think he'd been grossly neglected by Scottish Theatre. He's playing a very tiny part in the studio theatre at the Lyceum in the evenings, in *Loot*. He was playing the third policeman or something.

The great thing about Bill was that person-to-person communication thing, the entertainer was in him. He sang very well. He told jokes very well. He was an actor, extremely good actor. He played and generally understood music. The idea that the West End would take Bill Patterson and confine him to a performance that was entirely in a bed, just his head showing above his bedclothes – entirely characteristic of the way the West End treats performers. He's the most dynamic, alive performer you could think of with so many talents and so many directions. And what they do is just use his head. He took over from Tom Conti in Brian Clarke's *Whose Life Is It Anyway?*

Well, it's a fucking good question, 'Whose life is it, anyway?' Bill came into the company and developed just 'phhhrooom', huge leaps and bounds, immensely popular, wonderful comedy brio... His performances were connected with the Billy Connelly variety, folk-club performance, with that kind of energy Billy acquired, got going. He's just part of a Scottish tradition of the all-round entertainer. He can come on and be a red-nosed comic. He can come on sing a ballad. He can come on and belt out a satirical number. He can come on move around the stage, or he can sit as I had him in *Little Red Hen*. He can sit on the stage in a chair silently for the first half of the show and just drag you into this character that he's doing. Very strong. Alex again, very talented. Plays guitar, writes music, writes pretty good songs, sings a lot. You turn him on and he can perform Elvis Presley numbers for two hours without stopping, playing guitar and singing, doing it all. Johnnie Bett who again is a very talented performer. A good actor, can put a number over, can't dance and move his feet to save his life, but he's very funny when it comes to... falls over himself. But in fact John is a very tremendous presence on the stage, a very powerful presence, with a kind of intensity of authority which maybe the other two didn't have. Power to play Lords and businessmen, tycoons, terrific, but also a witty, funny, wild man. All of this company... the guy who came in to do the publicity on the road was dragged in

to play Queen Victoria was Chris Martin, who was a friend of Dave's from university [...]. They were all incredibly talented people. It was a very good mix. Chris went off with a mate of his and started selling mopeds and has now got a chain of motorbike shops across Scotland. All the others wrote. MacLennan has been writing. Dolina has been writing the Gaelic version of the *Archers* for the radio and writing plays and other things in Gaelic and is very much part of the Gaelic language movement thing now. In fact, I think, she is going to work for the *Gaelic Language Association, An Comunn Gaidhealach*. Liz has been writing a television play. Well, Liz is always writing stuff for the company. Alan Ross even started writing, wrote a film. John Bett is now one of the young writers of Scotland, with about three or four plays at the Traverse to his credit. Bill Paterson has written... I don't know if he wrote formally anything but within the company he was very much involved in ideas coming flooding up. Alex Norton has just last season written a panto and he writes songs. Pretty well the whole outfit was talented in so many ways so many directions we were just extremely lucky. When we did *The Game's a Bogey* we brought in some people from Glasgow, a girl Terry Neason who is a fantastically good singer, who then was seventeen, and had spent the last year as the only girl with an all-male show band. And was recovering from this experience. Dave Anderson came in as well, who was a friend of Alex's living in London and not very happily going round playing in a combo in a pub, who was a very good songwriter piano player, guitar player, extremely good guitar player. He's spent some time in America, in San Francisco and so on. Billy Riddoch came into that company, who was an Aberdonian actor drummer – good drummer. He sang, he told jokes. He related with the audience, instant, direct contact with the audience and those people and Kris Misselbrook, I think, was on that too on the stage management side, again multitalented sort of person who could do lights, build a house, do stage management, act a bit, dance a bit, sing a bit. That group was the nucleus of 7:84 Scotland for next five years.

(END OF EXTRACT.)