

Mapping Museums project interview transcript

Name: Colin Anderson

Role: Founder and Manager

Museum: Bo'ness Car Museum

Location of interview: Meeting room, Bo'ness Car Museum

Date: 15/5/19

Interviewer(s): Toby Butler

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The project is based at Birkbeck, University of London. The interview recordings and associated materials are archived at the Bishopsgate Library, London.

For readability the transcript has been made using 'intelligent' transcription (removing ums, ers etc). The interviewee has reviewed this transcript and minor amendments have been made for clarity.

TB: So, first of all, Colin, please could you just tell me your name and date of birth, if you don't mind?

CA: Certainly, it's Colin Anderson and its XX-XXX 1964.

[0:00:27]

TB: Lovely, okay, that's great. And Colin could you just tell me your role in the museum, I mean the founder and director?

CA: Yes, I started the museum and sort of manage it on a daily basis with help from others, but yes, that's my primary role.

TB: Okay, that's great. And is there anyone else involved, apart from yourself?

CA: Yes, a few of my sons, and we do have a number of car clubs that meet at the museum on a regular basis and a few of their members do help out for various events, running things.

TB: Okay, that's interesting. So, do you have a formal sort of membership, or is it more informal?

CA: More informal, I mean the car club, any of the car clubs that meet here, there's three or four of them, they all sort of, they could all be called members I suppose, and they're all very welcome to any sort of input they can make, to improve the museum, is most welcome.

[0:01:19]

TB: Okay. And they meet pretty regularly?

CA: Yes, on a monthly basis, yes. I've got a Porsche Independent Club, Club Lotus and there's Ford Owners Club, Jaguar Club, and a few other clubs that have annual meetings, maybe have their AGMs at the museum as well. The room we're sitting in just now, is a sort of club meeting room, that's where they use this, the club meeting room up here.

TB: Okay, and so what kind of, are the typical sort of club meeting, they would, what, park their cars outside?

CA: That's right, park their cars in the car park, sort of talk about their cars and then just talk about any of their own events that they have organised coming up. And just a sort of social gathering, basically, yes.

TB: **I see. Yes, that happens up here?**

CA: Yes.

[0:02:04]

TB: **I see. Okay, lovely. Well Colin, look, first of all, let's just, we're really, really interested in the very, very early days and, you know the how and why of setting it up, so, just, I mean, clearly there's lots of different elements to this museum, it's not just cars is it? So, let's go all the way back to just your interest and how it came about, if you could just tell me the story.**

CA: Initially, the building, it was a derelict building, it was an old snooker club, licensed premises as a snooker club. I bought the building back in 1997, I had outline plans to demolish the building and build another 40-bed nursing home on the site, I had other nursing homes at that time, I've now sold that business 10 years ago. And as I say we had planning permission to do that at the tail end of the 90's, but the tail end of the 90's and early noughties get a bit strange for the nursing home market, and I thought, no, it's maybe not going to go ahead and do that, so basically I was left with a building, an old derelict building on this site, and really thought of something to do with it. Then we came up with this idea and mainly it was Peter Nelson, from the Cars are the Stars Museum that used to be Keswick, he had cars, film related cars, and that sort of thing. And I asked if he'd be interested in opening a museum in Scotland, and he was quite interested in the idea and in fact he was looking for premises to open a second museum in Scotland and using some of his cars for display as well as my own growing collection. But he couldn't quite see the Bo'ness angle on it, where we were positioned, I think he was looking for something more in Edinburgh, central Edinburgh, which would obviously get a lot more tourists involved. But Bo'ness has a lot going for it, the Steam Rail Museum and Scotland's first purpose-built cinema is in Bo'ness. Bo'ness is also home to Scotland's first motor racing venue, the Bo'ness Hill Climb, which started in 1934, finished in '66 when the Council sold a bit of the ground off, but we managed to revive it in 2008 and it's going stronger, every year since. So, that's just quite a historic little hill climb, climb track. So, as I say, Peter Nelson, from the Cars are the Stars, didn't want to, you know, get involved with this building, so I thought, well, I have a bit of a growing collection myself, I'll just go ahead and do it myself.

[0:04:32]

Yes, you did say there are a lot of different various, sort of aspects, to the museum. Basically, I was at the time, I was just hoping it was going to work financially, so we thought with a car museum, probably wouldn't stand alone, so we obviously had this room we're in,

was a licensed bar at the time, I've since handed back the license because I've had enough of the 18th and 21st birthday parties that used to get booked here, just wasn't what I had in mind. We also, when we first opened, had a children's soft play area, downstairs in one of the rooms, which, again, I thought I would just throw that in to try and make it commercially viable. So, the whole thing was, fairly commercially viable, we got it opened in 2004, after spending a lot of money on the building that we were initially going to demolish, so it probably would have been easier just to demolish it and start again. But anyway, we renovated it and sort of added a bit on to it.

[0:05:28]

So, opened in 2004 and ran it very much like that for the first 10 years or so, including the bar facilities for private functions and parties and the children's soft play area. And, the museum itself, which had the sort of, housed my display of cars and other memorabilia. It's sort of gone very much down a Bond sort of theme, it wasn't initially like that, the bar was always called the 007 bar, the museum didn't have quite as much Bond stuff in it, but it seemed to be quite a popular sort of exhibit to have, it started with the initial car, the white Lotus Esprit, which was one of the cars used for promotional purposes for the 1977 film, that was my main exhibit and we just sort of added on from there and it seemed to be one of the most popular things. So, it has gone a bit, sort of, off at a tangent regarding Bond, but again, very popular. 2000 and, now, when was it, about five years ago, probably, we decided to do away with the children's soft play area and we added on just a kind of little antique department there, for sort of selling antiques and things if people were interested in looking at that, and any of the profits made from that will go towards the upkeep and purchase of new exhibits for the museum.

[0:06:49]

TB: I see, and you mentioned that you were in the antiques business, as well, at some point.

CA: Yes, that was back in the 80's before I got into the nursing home business. And then, I sold the nursing home business probably 2007, and just sort of, well, other business interests and obviously just running a museum. One of the things which initially I just didn't bother about, because people used to tell me to become a registered charity, you would have to give all of your exhibits to the registered charity and wasn't too keen on doing that idea, obviously there was some financial benefits to become a charitable status, but then, someone else told me "oh, no, that's not true, you can run it as a charity, and you can loan your exhibits to the charity and run it that way." So, we got charitable status in 2012 or 13 I think it was, so that does help with, although I haven't bothered trying to get any grants of anything like that, I'm just happy to get assistance with the rates for the building. So, that does help tremendously.

[0:07:55]

So, as I say, I was, sort of, guilty of ploughing a lot of my own money into it initially and not necessarily making much out of it, but that wasn't the point. It was really just a point of having somewhere to store my growing collection of things and we have other exhibits from other museums as well in the museum, now. So, from that, we're more or less concentrating, now, on the museum side of it. Going back to the initial set up in 2004, as I say, Peter Nelson from the Cars are the Stars, did subsequently get a place near Ingleston, at Ingleston showground in Edinburgh, but, again, I don't think it was the right location, I think he thought because the address was Edinburgh, he was going to get tourists from Edinburgh, but I think it was outside Edinburgh, so that, unfortunately didn't work out for him and since then, sadly, the Cars are the Stars Museum in Keswick has been sold, and I believe everything has now been moved to Miami. The Dezer Collection in Miami, they have everything. Yes, so nothing at all left of the Cars are the Stars Museum.

[0:09:05]

TB: That's interesting, so he sold the collection off?

CA: Yes, I think personal reasons, as well. He had to sell everything and it all went to, every last stick, to Miami.

TB: Right. It's very interesting that cars are by far the biggest sort of transport museum to open, and they've also got the biggest closure rate.

CA: Right, yes.

[0:09:30]

TB: And I'm just wondering whether you could give me any idea as to why that might be. I mean that's quite a nice example, I suppose, we were thinking that probably, these are personal collections, and when someone dies or retires, or whatever, then that's it, they go, you know.

CA: Yes, that's right. And very often, I hear my wife saying, she can't wait for me to go, but "when you go, the lots going!" But I'm sure my sons won't let her do that, I'd like to think they'd continue it on. I think, possibly, people do, just as you say, that they get a collection together and run it, and probably it doesn't make any money, any financial gain from it, but they enjoy doing it and enjoy having people look round it, but as you say, when, invariably, the people who started it pass away, it's sold on or just closed down, and it is quite sad. And again, I think other people might do it thinking they're going to make money at it, and certainly that's not the case it's very hard. There was another museum, the London Motorway Museum I think that was called, and that was owned by a chap who did a lot of restorations, a lot of custom vehicles and he had a massive place in London, just outside London, and I think that closed down about two years ago. Now, looking on his site, I mean, he was obviously thinking I'm not making any money at this, I need to just keep on charging

more money, and people will not spend the money to go in the museum. They'll spend £2 or £3 on a cup of coffee but £5 or £6 to enter a museum, which cost a lot more to make than the cup of coffee, they'll not tend to do. And I think that he probably priced himself out of the market, but I think, the way he's going to remain open is to charge more money, but again, it didn't work, and that's now closed as well. Yes, I can't remember the, is it Eno or Elo or something? Strange name, the chap, he did have a lot custom stuff and, yes.

[0:11:26]

TB: And, I mean I don't know how much you're in contact with other motor museums, is there a network of any sort?

CA: Not really, as such, but I mean the Beaulieu Motor Museum has given us a couple of exhibits when they were, maybe, moving on, exhibits changing the things round about and we have a couple of exhibits that did come from them. Again, they are in private ownerships and the owner were just sort of told by Beaulieu, we're changing things about, you'll need to get your vehicle, or whatever, out, and they've contacted me and said "would you like them here?" I said "yes, certainly."

TB: That's interesting. And is that because, for them, they just want to store it and don't need to insure it, that kind of stuff?

CA: That's right, yes, basically they're getting free storage, yes, because storage of classic cars and the sort of cherished vehicles is quite a boom industry, as well. But people have to pay money to have their cars stored and they're just locked away in sheds, somewhere. So, this way, if there are, there is a few exhibits, most of them belong to ourselves, but there's a few on display and people are getting free storage and other people can enjoy them.

[0:12:32]

TB: Yes, I see. So, just on the collection itself, then, because it sounds to me that for 2004 you opened, when did you start collecting car related, or cars and stuff? Was it many years before that?

CA: Yes, well when I used to be in the antique trade, a lot of the stuff you see downstairs on display, I never used to bother about, enamel signs, petrol globes, all of the things now that make vastly more sums of money than antiques do in auction and at that time I would have said no, I'll never bother much with that. But the first sort of main thing I got was probably the blue room we're in just now, all of these posters and things are going back to the late 60's, early 70's, I collected them when I was quite young and then added to them later on. Cinema cards and lobby things, lobby cards from cinemas and just always held onto them.

[0:13:25]

TB: And was this all Bond related, or was it more cinema in general?

CA: It was more Bond related, actually, yes, when I was younger.

TB: Just tell me about that interest.

CA: Well, initially, when I was quite young I did like the Saint, the TV series with Roger Moore, and then he became James Bond in 1973, just obviously it was Roger Moore I liked, rather than just the characters he was playing, his characters always seem to be pretty much the same, but, yes. So, that's what got me onto the Bond related things. As for the cars, I've always liked older cars and I think the first one we managed to acquire was the Lotus Esprit, and that was back in 1992. And then I met Peter Nelson when he was at a Bonham's auction when he was buying the other white Esprit, the road car in The Spy Who Loved Me. He was purchasing that at auction and I got talking to him and saying we had the sister car to it and yes, it added on from there.

[0:14:26]

TB: Oh, so that's how you made that contact. So, you were going to kind of high-end auctions.

CA: Yes, I bought that car privately, but as I say, I was at the auction that the other one turned up in about five years later. In 1999 that was, yes.

TB: And, so once you got that one, did you then decide, right, what are the other cars in the series, and I'm going to get every one?

CA: No, not really. No. I also had a wedding car hire business, which I had older cars for and bought maybe the Aston Martins and things, used to hire them out for wedding cars, but I don't do that anymore. Yes, I wasn't really my intention to do that, but I suppose it was after seeing Peter's museum and talking to him and thinking, yes, he might be interested in opening something in Scotland, but, as I say, he wasn't, not here anyway. And I thought, well, just go ahead and do it myself, because I had the building. The building, it would be good if it was a bit larger, the building, we're a bit sort of crammed for space, but some people do like that aspect of it, sort of having to go round a couple of times to see everything that is squashed in. At the minute we're not really getting much in the way of extra-large exhibits, but have got a prop maker in the south of England who is a professional prop maker for films and he is making his different props and things to display, mostly hanging from the ceiling because there's not a lot of floor space left. He's just finished a TV Star Trek series, seven foot Enterprise for us, which he made, and that's about half the size of the original one that is in the Manzanera *[phonetic 0:16:11]* Museum in America, and I think that's about a 12 foot one, so he's made half size and it's a really nice exhibit and he's currently making Bond related things to display in the museum.

TB: Oh fantastic.

CA: Yes.

[0:16:27]

TB: So, on the space thing, you've got your kind of mezzanine floor, which you put in, I guess. Was that right from the beginning?

CA: Yes, we built that there, again the room you're in just now, there was no flooring here, this was just an open space, sort of vaulted ceilings there, it was originally built, this place, as a garage and this space here accommodated car ramps, which came from downstairs and you could have vans on ramps, so that's how they added space. But when we got it, there was nothing up here, it was just a complete shell, so we spent a lot of money putting in steel beams, flooring and everything.

[0:17:05]

TB: Okay. I want to talk a little bit about the money in a minute, but just going back to the collection, also you've got an awful lot of, you've got fruit machines, amazing, obviously toy collections and so on, so, are these all your things that you've got? Where did you get them all from?

CA: Yes, things that were collected.

TB: Was this from antique dealing?

CA: Yes, antique dealing and other collectors and people sort of bringing things to me for sale. But, a lot of the thing is, they seem to be, yes, a lot of interest to people back in the 60's and 70's and they do, sort of, Chopper bikes, for instance, just now, seem very popular, and people do, you just go on the internet and you can see on eBay how much they're asking for Chopper bikes. I can't see that lasting, I think the market might crash on that once the 40 somethings get a bit older. People nowadays maybe don't sort of relate to having a Chopper bike as a lot of folk, when they were young, didn't manage to get one, because they were quite expensive, so they're buying them now. Yes, but a number of people have written comments in the comments book about "oh it was great to see the old Chopper in the same colour I had." Yes.

[0:18:18]

TB: And also, you've got one downstairs for sale, for £750 or whatever.

CA: That's right, yes.

TB: And that's what they're going for.

CA: Well, more than that, as I say, have a look on eBay and you'll see a bag of rusty nuts and bolts in a frame, it's just crazy what they're, I had a, there's another one downstairs, a Mark 1 orange Chopper, which I had when I was young, 1972, and I bought that one a couple of years ago, paid quite a bit of money for it. I also had when I was young, Queen's Silver Jubilee 1977, special edition Chopper, which had alloy wheels and fancy silver paintwork, and the last one I gave it away to a neighbour and the last one of them I saw on eBay went for almost £3,000 for a pedal bike.

TB: Crikey, yes.

CA: So, I wish, hindsight is a wonderful thing, it really is.

[0:19:05]

TB: Yes, yes. But I'm really fascinated by the way that you put those displays together because what you've got is things like, you've got the toys, the ephemera, the cinema posters, and you've got the thing, or a version of it, that's a really interesting combination. I'm kind of wondering, so what we're doing is, we're tapping into people's pasts here, aren't we?

CA: Exactly. Childhood memories, that's not too distant, folk from probably the same age as me that can remember the 60's and 70's a lot of the Gerry Anderson stuff is very popular.

TB: So, what do you think people are getting out of it by coming, by seeing these displays, then? They must talk to you about it.

CA: Yes, I mean it must be, sort of just nostalgia, remembering and having happy memories, hopefully, of their childhood memories, you know having these things about and seeing then on TV and again, I'm showing their children and grandchildren the sort of things they had and things they played with when they were younger. I think one of the signs, I sort of put it up as a bit of a joke beside one of the old Chopper bikes, saying that, and then there was a new version of the Chopper bike which didn't have the gear stick, and didn't have the bench seat on it, and sort of comparing the two saying that it was sort of health and safety Britain, and the cotton wool society that we've got nowadays, you know, just, kids wouldn't be allowed to play on anything like that, you know.

TB: Oh, I see, that's interesting, yes.

CA: And, you know, just stay at home and play on your Xbox. That was obviously the sign was written a while ago, I don't know what they're on now, some sort of game console, but.

[0:20:50]

TB: That's interesting, I'll go back and have a look at that. So, you actually kind of put a little thing up about it.

CA: Yes.

TB: Okay. So, nostalgia is a word which is often used in, well I don't know, in two sorts of ways, it can be seen, yes, as going back to a warm place, but also it can be seen as kind of backward looking and, you know, I don't know, but I just wonder whether you could just, what do you think it really gives people, because you mentioned a couple of things, one was a feeling of happiness and another one was the people being able to have a conversation with other generations. Is there anything else that you think they got out of it?

CA: Yes, I don't know, I'm just trying to think what else you might get out of it. I mean we do get a lot of people come round that are collectors themselves, and sort of maybe give them an idea to sort of go down a certain avenue, collecting certain things.

[0:21:51]

TB: Oh really? That's interesting. So just tell me about that, so that they might start off say, collecting, I don't know Dinky toys, or something?

CA: That's right.

TB: But they come here and think, oh maybe I'll give.

CA: Yes, I mean, just now, it's a very popular thing to, you'll probably see it advertised on TV, the magazines that sell you a small part of a vehicle, or a figure of something with each issue and then they build it up into some sort of rather expensive model car. Again, you know, whether it's a model train, a model car, I think the latest one was a Terminator T2 sort of end of skeleton model which came out at about 150 parts and at the end of the day was going to cost you well over £1,000, I think a lot of folk have jumped on the bandwagon sort of selling these things. But, again, yes, there are a lot of collectors out there, Dinky toys, Corgi things, again, back in the 90's that was sort of peak period for them when they were making a lot of money. I mean they have, it's dropped a way a bit since then, but it's coming back again. I think it's people's nature, just sort of, you know, collections of things, like them to have lots of things round about them that they like, as you say, it makes them, you know nostalgic, and feel sort of happy to have all this sort of thing, and in some ways it would be nice just to not have them, maybe! Yes, have a room with white painted walls and not much furniture, all so minimalist. But, yes, unfortunately I'm not like that, I've always sort of, coming from a family who were in the antique trade, as well, back in the 60's, yes always liking sort of older things. I think, for me, it's value for money, as well. I just, I don't like modern cars, and unfortunately, the way ahead is electric cars and other sources of propulsion that.

[0:23:55]

TB: Why does that worry you?

CA: Well, it's a dying era, just the, yes, no I'm glad in a way that I have, I was brought up in a time where, yes, the cars were all belching out fumes and you could work on them and you could lift the bonnet and actually work on the thing, but it's just progress, I suppose. But the cars nowadays are just soulless, you know. And I do like a bargain, I don't like buying something that's depreciating the minute you drive out of the showroom. A lot of the cars in here, as I say, I've purchased, and hindsight is a wonderful thing, I wish I'd purchased more of them, particularly Aston Martin, because they seem to be off on a tangent on their own with regarding to increase in value. I think they were pretty good investments.

[0:24:45]

TB: I see. Well, that's fascinating. All right, so there's two kind of really interesting things that you said there, one is that the idea that the past isn't backward. In fact, it's, in some respects, better and that we're losing something.

CA: Yes.

TB: Which I think is interesting.

CA: Yes, with regards to the cars, I think, you know, the pollution, what have you, you know, we've got to lose it, there's nothing else, there's no avoiding that, but it is a shame in a way.

TB: But it seems that we've lost, with the technology, we've lost the ability to mend our own cars.

CA: Well, that's right, yes.

TB: That simple design, or simpler design that in fact anyone could have a go at.

CA: Yes, exactly. So, I think it's quite appealing to a lot of people that they can sort of work on older vehicles themselves, and not have to rely on a garage and their computer system to plug it in, and a lot of cars nowadays, I think the Jaguar S types, they're modern, the X types were very prone to this, as soon as some module went in the car, and a lovely looking car, a few years old, but as soon as some module went, the car was written off because it was maybe an £800 or £900 sort of replacement part, it just wasn't economically viable to replace. Bit of a shame.

[0:26:01]

TB: I've got a car and the sensor has gone and it's an airbag sensor, the airbag is probably fine, it's just a loose wire, but my God, to have that investigated it's like £400 or £500.

CA: Yes, I know.

TB: And the car is not worth it, it's nuts.

CA: Yes, I think, I've always been one for a good buy, so I think that helps me.

[0:26:20]

TB: That's fascinating. So, let's talk about finance and money, then. Unusually, I suppose, when it starts with a personal collection, as you say, there is an investment issue here, isn't there? So, you're buying things but you're thinking a) then this could be on display, it could be part of the museum, but b) at the end of this, in fact, that will appreciate and this is a really good way to invest some money.

CA: That's right. Financial side of this place, again going back to my other business at the time, the nursing home business, I'd purchased it with bank's money in order to open the home, we got outline planning and then things went a bit off and then decided, managed to persuade the bank to, with the addition of the other sort of license part, the children's play area and the sort of projected figures for the business plan, managed to persuade the bank to give me the money to do this.

TB: Wow! That is unusual to get a bank to finance a museum is almost unheard of.

CA: Well that was at the beginning of the 2000's, the banks were still, sort of, throwing money about, willy nilly. So, that's how we did it.

[0:27:33]

TB: And how much money did it take to convert this?

CA: To convert the building, it was about £250,000 to renovate the building, yes.

TB: So, it was a big investment.

CA: Yes, on top of the original purchase price. Yes, so it was quite a bit of money to do. And the brewery, as well, they lent me some money because they knew it was going to be a licensed premises, so, yes, anyway we got it open and sort of, probably didn't make the projections that we said it wasn't going to make, but by that time we'd already gone ahead and got the place open.

[0:28:06]

TB: Many museums start with, you know.

CA: Yes, promises that you can't quite keep.

TB: It's also hard to know, it genuinely is, isn't it?

CA: So, we kept going and, yes just sort of plodded away and worked away at it. But when I decided to sell the nursing home business, 2006/2007, I just got a little bit fed up with it and the staff, that is the problem with nursing homes, you need a lot of staff, and with staff you have a lot of hassle, I think we had 65 staff with two homes, I had, and this place was going to be a third home, but it didn't happen. So, 2007 I was introduced to someone that was from the London area who was interested in purchasing nursing homes, and yes, they made me an offer and I decided to let it go. So, at that point, I was able to pay the bank back what I owed them on the museum and so, as I say, I don't owe anything on it now, and I can do with it as I wish, and I don't have anyone to answer to, which is good, only my wife! But, as I say, a lot of the things that she sees on display here, she thinks are great, the enterprise I mentioned earlier on, that's a nice exhibit, but I think she just thinks that it is the cost of the deposit and the materials, that's what the thing costs, she doesn't realise how much the thing cost me to get built, but, anyway, she thinks it's a great exhibit anyway.

[0:29:41]

TB: Right, sure. And also, did selling the nursing home business give you a bit more money to spend on cars in order to fill it?

CA: A little bit.

TB: Or did you have it all already, really?

CA: Yes, I'd had all the, pretty much, the vehicles at that time anyway.

TB: Where were they stored? Did you have, were these at home?

CA: Well, I had most of them at home, yes. And then, as I say, when I realised that I was going to, hopefully, open a museum, I did start collecting a bit more.

[0:30:12]

TB: And just tell me about your visitor figures. Roughly, per year, how many are you looking at?

CA: It's not a vast number, I'd say maybe 5-7000 a year. Which isn't a great deal.

TB: Actually, that's not unusual, I mean it's kind of.

CA: But as I say, I'm not in it to make money, and I don't take a wage from the museum. As long as I can make enough to pay the, well the museum charity they have to pay a rent to the owners of the building, which is obviously the company I have, so, it works out that way, as long as I have the money to pay the rent and what have you, I'm quite happy.

[0:30:57]

TB: I see, okay. So, do you see it less as a business, but more of a) a place to keep your investment b) to show off what you've got to the public, which is always a lovely thing and a space where clubs can meet and, so it's less of a business, and more, perhaps, of a...

CA: It is certainly more of a hobby.

TB: Of a hobby, yes.

CA: Hobby gone a bit mad, but, at the minute, and since we became a charity, at least it's not costing me money. Before, it was costing me a lot of money.

TB: Because the business rates are crazy right?

CA: Yes. So, that was, in the first 10 years or so, I was ploughing money into it that maybe shouldn't have been. But now, I'm happier that we don't have to have the, all the screaming kids running about in the soft play and people who've had too much to drink, perhaps, we're not having to put up with all that, we can just sort of run it the way we like and it's more enjoyable for folk to come and look round and it's more of just a museum now, not with the added extras in order to make it work financially.

[0:31:59]

TB: I'm with you, so that was important in the early days, just to feel like it was washing its face.

CA: Yes.

TB: Okay.

CA: That's how, I think.

TB: That did bring money in.

CA: Yes, that's how we got the bank to look at it, I think. And the brewery, we had money from them as well, as soon as we realised, it's not actually making that much money and not selling that much drink, we weren't too enamoured with it so, thought, well.

[0:32:23]

TB: But it's brilliant to have those two things, so the children's play area and the museum and the bar, so it wasn't just one thing.

CA: That's right, it was certainly something for everyone, at that stage.

TB: And also, now, you've got a funeral directors which is attached, and you store your cars here.

CA: That's right.

[0:32:41]

TB: So, just tell me a little bit about that, because was that, kind of also part of the mix, from the early days? Or did that come in later?

CA: No, not at that time, no, the funeral business I started in 1999, I think it was, and that was really a sort of a continuation of our services that we could provide within the nursing homes, when someone passed away, we thought we might be able to go that little bit further and provide them with a funeral, that service as well. So, yes, we've got a few small offices, three, we've got one in Paisley, Bo'ness and Falkirk, so that's my day job, funeral directing. And, again, very often when the museum isn't making enough in a particular month, we might, sort of, dip into other pocket, that being the funeral business. As I say, it is, yes, I think that's probably why a lot of museums have failed in the past, or they maybe haven't had the advantage of being able to sort of finance it or help it along with something else.

[0:33:48]

TB: Yes. I mean, just a question to satisfy my curiosity, really, but how did you learn about a funeral business? Did you do a course? How does it work?

CA: No, I didn't actually, no.

TB: Just employ someone who has done it.

CA: No, it's just, a funeral business is really just common sense and it's just being able to sort of be nice to people, bereaved families, it's quite an easy business to get into, or it was then. In Scotland it's becoming very competitive in the last five or six years there was a company Fosters Funeral Directors, who advertise a lot on television at the minute and that chap set up, he's an ex car salesman actually, and he set a funeral business up maybe 10, 12 years ago, and really pushed it very hard that he would do funerals very cheaply. And it was all down to price and advertised in such a way that he was bought out about two years ago by a big equity company which has kept the name, but it is no longer a family business. It's more or less owned by a bank, now, and at the minute they're opening up very nice premises all over Scotland and they're really shaking up the funeral industry right across Scotland, a lot of the old established companies have realised that, I think they're going after the likes of the Co-op and Dignity, big funeral companies that have vast numbers of branches. But it's affected everyone, and it certainly, at the end of the day it's all very good for the families because they're getting a good service at a much-reduced rate. Because I think, for a long time,

TB: Prices were crazy.

CA: Prices were crazy. I don't think it's happened in England, yet. But certainly, across Scotland, this company is really shaking everything up and now the Co-op and all the big, sort of, conglomerates Scotmid, Dignity, they're all starting to drop the prices a bit. I think it's a bit late for them, because people are starting to realise why are they dropping their prices now? And it's only because someone else has come in and decided to go for, well, quantity of funerals and, I must say, I wouldn't say quantity over quality, because their parlours are second to none, they've got this bank money behind them, they're opening up fantastic parlours, doing a good service and they're doing it for a fraction of the cost that anyone else is doing it for. So, that's certainly shaking things up a bit.

[0:36:23]

TB: I see. And for you, was it easy in as much as, clearly you knew a lot about cars and looking after a lot of cars, and one of the business of keeping a car really nice, isn't it? A house, whatever.

CA: Yes.

TB: So, was that like, a natural thing, to do, or?

CA: Yes, I mean, I don't know an awful lot about cars. I mean, I always, you know, I can tinker about and keep them going and a good year when something goes wrong with a car that I don't, you know, it would be nice to say we have, sort of, a few restoration projects at the museum, ongoing at the minute, but I don't actually. I tend to try and get the cars where someone else has spent all the money in restoring, because it's not cost effective to really do it yourself, spend fortunes on it and then, you know, very often, you spend a lot more on the

car than the car is worth. You can get something that is someone's pride and joy, and they've spent money on it. Or even better, originality means a lot to me, I like a car that's original, great if it's still in original, good condition, rather than something that's been restored beyond its sort of even original, factory condition.

[0:37:37]

TB: Yes, well it always looks too good doesn't it?

CA: Even better than it was, initially, it's nice to have a car that is completely original, you can't replace, you know, originality, that's just something you can't put back into a car. So, it means a lot to me, having original condition.

TB: And also, just going back to the, to the income from the museum, you've got a really amazing kind of shop selling, these aren't just, you know, museum shop kind of reproductions, but you've actually got collector's stuff in there too.

CA: Yes, it's more collector's items.

[0:38:14]

TB: Yes, and it's quite hard to tell the difference, actually, between, in a way, walking into the museum to the shop, because they are, in fact, antiques which is rather nice, does that generate much income?

CA: It generates a little income. A lot of museums go in for the, we don't have an awful lot of pocket money things down in the museum, but certainly there are one or two little bits and pieces. A lot of museums go in for, sort of, selling vast quantities of, I don't know, rubber animals, or something that, yes, we don't get the footfall for doing that. Having said that, the new museum that opened in Dundee last year, the new Victoria and Albert Museum, it's a fantastic building, I don't think they've made best use of their space, it all seems to be cafeteria space downstairs and shop space. Having said pocket money material things, items for, in their shop display, that seems to have gone over their head because they're selling pencils at £3 a time and it's just vastly over priced items, I think they'll have to change their mind about that because, yes, I don't know, museum shops do seem to go overboard, sometimes, on pricing things. And the sort of things we have, I'd like to think that if they bought them, okay, they're not necessarily that cheap, but they'll not lose money, they'll not lose value on them and they could probably, in years to come, probably sell them for more money than they purchased them for, yes.

[0:39:45]

TB: I see, yes, sure.

CA: So, they're getting value for money in a way. Again, people might think, yes I'd like to have a part in the museum, I mean if everything that's in the museum that belongs to me, it's not got a price on it, but if the price is right, you never know, I might just decide to let it go, yes.

[0:40:02]

TB: **I see, yes, sure. And, just tell me a little bit about, have you had any support in the way of, I don't know, grants or marketing, or anything from Local Authorities or from the government?**

CA: The only thing we've had, sort of marketing grant, was from the local Falkirk Council, they gave us a couple of thousand pounds to design a new logo for us and to make our promotional video, which we have on display as you come into the building. Yes, that was a handy thing to have.

TB: **How did that come about? Did you approach them?**

CA: Yes, well no, they approached me and said they had grants available for this sort of thing and it's probably not something I would, I wouldn't have spent £1,000 on designing a logo had they not offered me the money. But, whether it's jobs for the boys or not, I don't know, but it certainly, they had to use their recommended suppliers of the logo design company and videographers, and things, but, that's fair enough, it didn't cost me anything and it's provided a nice logo, a nice promotional video. But apart from that, I mean, yes, possibly could apply for, I don't know, Lottery funding or something. It would need to have a pretty decent project in order to, I couldn't just say to them "give me some money, I want to go and buy some new vehicles, or something, for the museum." I'd need to have something, it might be an idea, but again we don't have a lot of ground space, to have an extension onto the building, to give us a big more space.

[0:41:33]

TB: **Yes, because that's what I thought, if you wanted to expand, because of course that would be the next step.**

CA: Yes, it had been a thought to try and do something with that, but again, at the back of the premises I have a bit of ground there but I have it leased out to other folk, which again, commercially, it helps support the museum.

TB: **Oh okay, oh right.**

CA: Yes, sort of storage containers and that sort of thing, so we'd have to get rid of them in order to extend the building, so it might not be commercially, sort of, it might not make sense to do that. But, yes, a bigger building would be nice, but again, it would just, you know, in

Edinburgh would be nice as well, but obviously it would be a lot more expensive than Bo'ness, and I do think Bo'ness has a lot going for it, with the steam rail museum and everything else.

[0:42:25]

TB: Which is just around the corner, isn't it? It's really close.

CA: Just around the corner, yes.

TB: So, do you find that tourists go to one and then the other?

CA: Yes, we have signage there that brings people here. But Bo'ness it's a funny little town, there's not a lot in the town itself, it was an old coal mining town, originally, and the mine, blast mine, was just down in the late 80's or mid 80's, so it has struggled a bit since then, but the tourism part of it is sort of putting it back on the map. Which is nice. There was plans to re-open the small harbour in Bo'ness, back in about the time I was opening this place, or thinking about doing it, 2003, 2005 they were talking about building a marina along there in Bo'ness harbour.

TB: Yes, it's beautiful there.

[0:43:12]

CA: Yes, shop fronts, the sort of shops in the harbour and all the rest of it, cafes, restaurants. But the Council sort of dithered a little bit, and I think it was in a Norwegian company that was behind the idea and they got a bit fed up and then the down turn and the financial side of things sort of stopped that from happening, which is a bit of a pity because they are just a few miles along the coast, in South Queensferry, there is a marina there, and they've pretty much got all the things there now starting to be built, nice restaurants and other things for people to come to. But they have the Forth Bridges to look at, it's quite an iconic view they have along there. I think if you stand out at the marina, proposed marina site in Bo'ness you can see the BP chemical works in Grangemouth, that's the thing you can perhaps see. But again, two, three miles along the road, Blackness Castle, that's a very popular place, they're talking about the Outlander effect at the minute, very popular TV series, a lot of it has been filmed along there. Other films as well, at Blackness Castle. But the local tourist people are talking about an Outlander effect, how it has increased visitor numbers tremendously in the area, foreign visitors coming to look at all the locations for different films.

[0:44:38]

TB: Well, just on that subject, you've linked films almost entirely throughout the museum, so just tell me about that, why have you done that? Half of it could have been un-film related, but you decided to.

CA: It could have been, yes, again it's stemming from the Bond related thing, I have six children, six boys and three of them are actors. One of them is still, he's at the Rose Bruford in London, he's into his final year, another one has just, he graduated from London, what is it, which one did he go to? Central London School of Speech and Drama and the other one, the oldest one, Ross, he was at Drama Centre in London, he stays just outside London, Bagshot, and they've all been into films. And I don't know if you noticed, some of the props, Ross managed to acquire, from Ross, downstairs, there are shirts downstairs he was in a film called The Silent Storm, that was made 2012 and that was made by Eon, the production company that make the Bond films. That was a shirt that he got off the set with that.

TB: I see.

CA: And a very nice letter beside it, as well, which Barbara Broccoli, she put him up for a newcomer's, or a young Brit Bafta thing.

[0:46:07]

TB: Right, so was this your son?

CA: Yes, Ross, he's certainly, that's the oldest one that's an actor, he's certainly, he's a bit particular about what he does. There was also another poster, Unbroken, he was in that film with, that was directed by Angelina Jolie and she thought Ross was great and she really liked him. There's a film about to come about this summer called Crawl and it's Paramount Pictures, it's a small budget film, I think it was only \$20 million, which in film terms is small budget, but they seem to think this was perhaps the way ahead. They had a film out two or three years ago called The Quiet Place, a sort of horror film, and that again was a \$20 million budget, very small, but it grossed almost \$300 million, so I think the percentages in profits speak for themselves. So, I think they're hoping this film, Crawl, which Ross has a very good part in, does well.

[0:47:03]

TB: So, the museum also has elements of family history as well? Which is rather lovely.

CA: Yes, he's been promised, but I can't see it happening, we'll wait and see, they said once the film has been released they said they're going to give him his dummy that they had made, he flew out to Montreal and had a full body cast made of himself, which is very realistic and it's, in fact my wife can't look at it, we'll have to get a picture of Ross standing beside it, and it looks, he's looking at his dead self, half eaten by an alligator. And he's said "oh no, they've

said I can have this exhibit once the film has been released." So, it will be interesting to see if we manage to get that for display.

[0:47:47]

TB: Yes, that would be brilliant, wow! Okay. Let me just see if I've got through. *[mutters to self 0:48:01]* Oh, brown signs. Now, some museums really struggle to do this, but you have got very, very well signposted, how did you do that?

CA: Yes, it's not bad coming from the Falkirk side, coming from the West Lothian, because we're right on the edge of Falkirk Council *[phone rings]*.

TB: Just take it if you want to.

CA: Coming from the other side, it's not quite as good.

[0:48:26]

TB: So, did you have to pay for those signs to go up?

CA: Now, how did I do that? Yes, we did have to pay for them. Initially I think we were having problems with getting permission for them and I think I went ahead and went to the company that provided them for the Council, got them made and put them up myself.

TB: No!

CA: And they were up for a good few years before the Council realised that they weren't officially supposed to be there, so they took them down, and then they, when they were doing new brown signage, I think they maybe felt sorry for me and with the new brown signage for the railway museum, they decided to add me on as well, so I think they thought, yes, that they just had their jobsworth hats on, because I got the same company that provided them for the Council to put them up for me and they looked fine, and certainly worked for a few years before the Council realised "oh, we didn't actually give permission for that." Yes.

TB: That's absolutely brilliant.

CA: Yes, but having said that, after they took them down, I think the local tourist board, and things, and they thought, well, we've putting new signs up, we'll just add the museum onto it.

[0:49:37]

TB: Well it's a good quality attraction, isn't it?

CA: Yes, I think they realise that now.

[0:49:43]

TB: And just in terms of the town itself, you said it was in the doldrums a bit in the late 80's, so has tourism really taken off for Bo'ness, or?

CA: Mainly Falkirk district, we have the Falkirk Wheel there which is quite an engineering feat, I don't know if you've seen that or not, you can see that from the big sort of.

TB: I've seen a sign for it, but what is it?

CA: Yes, it's on the canal, the Forth, which is the River Forth, and Clyde Canal, that goes right across Scotland, it was re-opened.

TB: Oh, does it lift boats?

CA: Yes, it lifts boats in a big sort of weighted, round thing and it's very well done, so that, sort of, a lot of money spent on that, there's probably a lot of people go on, and then again the Kelpies which is, did you see that from the motorway? The two big horses.

TB: Oh yes.

CA: Yes, that gets a lot of visitors.

[0:50:34:]

TB: I see, so these key attractions are bringing people into the area, so the trick is to try and get them to tour round a little bit, or stay and see stuff.

CA: Yes. And, as I say, on the other side of where we are, just it will be nine miles along the road, you've got the Forth Railway Bridge, iconic structure, the 1964 road bridge and then they've opened at the Queens Crossing, two years ago now, so these three big bridges are quite a sight to see, just along the road. And that's, as I mentioned, the marina, that's been built, well it's been there for a while, the marina, but it's only in recent years it started to try to attract more sort of, you know, the general public, you know, opening nice restaurants and other facilities.

[0:51:27]

TB: So, but apart from the signs, have you made any kind of big efforts to get into the maps or the regional guides, all that kind of stuff?

CA: Yes, we're certainly on a lot of the, Falkirk Council again, do a lot of regional maps and we're always on them. When we first started, I did try various mediums of advertising, but they weren't always cost effective, it was very easy to know if they're working or not, anyone that comes in the door you ask how it was you found out about us and invariably it wasn't a newspaper advert, or something like that. But certainly, the internet has helped a lot. Trip Advisor probably helped a lot, but having said that, you get people who go on Trip Advisor and put on nasty reviews for no reason at all, and they're very hard to get removed and there might not be any truth in the matter, might be a slight shred of truth in it, but, yes, they seem to get the hump up.

[0:52:24]

TB: So, do you try and put a comment, if you can, straight afterwards, or is it just too much to keep up with?

CA: Most, we still get almost a five-star review on Trip Advisor, and most of the reviews are excellent, but I thought no, I'd probably print something I shouldn't although Trip Advisor probably wouldn't print it. But, no, I thought, no I don't need to justify myself; I think the good reviews speak for themselves. So, that certainly helps. And, I find the best form of advertising is free advertising. We had a few different little things on TV, for instance, you know the new BBC Scotland channel that opened up back in February, March, I don't think it's getting very good viewing figures, they did a bit on the museum and we've been in, if there's a Bond film coming out, there tends to be something, I think the last one was from, you know, you wouldn't expect to see Bond in Bo'ness, but yes, they do tend to play on the old mining town version of it, but then they sort of come and do a bit, so free advertising, TV or whatever, seems to be better than anything, certainly, most cost effective, well it doesn't cost you anything.

[0:53:42]

TB: And so, just give me a high point and a low point of the entire museum experience. What's been the best and the worst?

CA: Yes, probably the best was actually managing to get it open. [phone rings] Sorry.

TB: No, it's fine, take it.

CA: Do you want to stop that?

[0:54:05]

TB: So, yes, you were just saying about a high point and a low point, but the high point?

CA: The high point was probably getting the place opened, because it took me quite a while to organise the finance on it, and a lot of restoration work in the building, so the high point was getting it opened.

[0:54:23]

TB: So, we haven't discussed the actual fitting out of the place and the design of it, did you model it on another museum that you'd seen?

CA: No, not really, just from what we had and a lot, my favourite Bond film, in fact, was on TV just now, probably The Spy Who Loved Me, because we've got the car and all the rest of it, we did tend to, you'll notice the bit in that thing, just now, regarding the sort of design of the silver sort of parts to the roof, you might have noticed a bit of mezzanine floor downstairs, again, that's got it very much, because it lends itself, the shape of the building, to that design.

TB: Oh, I see, so you modelled it on the Bond film?

CA: Yes. And up here as well, although we didn't go for the lines, it's very much the sort of inside a tanker, type thing. So, I suppose it was, sort of modelled along the lines of a kind of Ken Adam film set, yes.

[0:55:18]

TB: And what about the displays and the layouts, and stuff, I mean, obviously, you've got the cars, and you've built some cases around it, and so on, but, was that something that has just grown?

CA: It has, the cars are pretty much sort of squashed in where we can get them, trying to leave enough room to walk round, but, yes, it's really just trying to make the most of the space that we have and trying to fill every last, sort of, empty wall space or whatever, that's why we're having to get the props made now for hanging from the ceiling, but they're all flying related props, mostly, anyway, so it's the only place to display them.

[0:55:58]

TB: And how about the opening itself, was there like a launch event or something?

CA: Yes, we had a couple of the stars from The Spy Who Loved Me opened the museum. The girl who flew the helicopter in the chase scene, Caroline Munro she was here and the gentleman, who has just sadly passed away, a couple of months ago, Shane Rimmer, he'd

been in actually about three different Bond films over the years, Shane Rimmer, he was here as well, he had a big part, that was probably his biggest part was The Spy Who Loved Me, playing Captain Carter of the American submarine, he was here on the opening night. And we had other Bond events where Richard Kiel, the chap that played Jaws, he was here, we had an evening with Richard Kiel, yes that was quite a high point.

[0:56:46]

TB: Did you get these people through agents or are they local?

CA: With Richard, yes through agents for the people who initially opened up, Richard Kiel, he was over doing a memorabilia thing in Glasgow and we managed to tie it in with that.

[0:57:05]

TB: And has there been a low point? Or the hardest moment where you think, you know, why am I doing this?

CA: Yes, every time we'd booked an 18th birthday party up in the bar, at 3 o'clock in the morning when we were trying to clean up the mess they'd made, that's probably the low point. So, there was quite a few low points back in the early days, as I say, it seemed to be a popular place for, you know, young people to book their parties.

TB: I was going to ask, what do you think the place has given the town, because clearly, it's driven tourism here, along with the steam museum? But also, it's been a great venue for that period, as well, for the teenagers, which was nice, somewhere for them to go.

CA: Yes, well, they're not teenagers anymore but I'm sure they still talk about having their party at the 00 Bar. Yes I hope people do look upon it in favourable terms, I'm sure Bo'ness, being incomers ourselves, we've only been here for 33 years now, initially came to the town to convert an old manor house into a nursing home then we built a new nursing home, purpose built, so I'm very much still an incomer. Bo'ness is quite a cliquey kind of place, so I think there are other people who look upon it "ah, that Spying, and there's always fancy cars" you know, but they don't tend to be your customers, anyway, it's people from outside the town.

[0:58:33]

TB: That's interesting, I didn't realise that you weren't from the area. So, whereabouts did you grow up?

CA: From the west coast, initially. I grew up in the Garloch.

TB: Oh really? I'm going there, actually, to the Gairloch Museum. Next week this will be.

CA: That will be a different Gairloch. The Garloch I'm talking about is G A R. The one you're talking about is G A I R, yes different. The one I'm talking about is the Garloch on the Clyde, just past Helensburgh. In fact, again, I come back to The Spy Who Love Me, the Faslane submarine base is on the Gar Loch. I remember sort of 1976 sort of going to school on the school bus round the loch and seeing the bright lights on the Faslane submarine base, and realising later that was when they were filming parts of the film on the Faslane submarine base. So, that's where I initially grew up, on the west coast of Scotland.

[0:59:31]

TB: And you said you came from a family of antique dealers, is that right?

CA: Yes, well my father, he was in a building business in the 60's and then, I'm not quite sure how he got into the antique business, but I think a lot of maybe, the architectural antiques at the time he probably started with that, when people, his uncle had a fire place business in Paisley, and I think he maybe initially got into the architectural side of things when people were ripping out lovely fireplaces to put in modern things and he ended up shipping a lot of stuff to America. But, from that, he got into dealing all sorts of antiques, mainly Victoriana and antiques and fine arts. So, he was really sort of self-taught in the antique business, but back then it was very much a growth business, a lot of people shipping stuff to America and Going for a Song with Arthur Negus on the initial sort of TV antique programme, very popular back in the 60's. So, he stopped doing the building business and went into full time antiques. And when I left school, in 1980, I went into the antique business, and then had my own business in antiques then for six or seven years.

[1:00:50]

TB: Wow, so you went straight into it?

CA: Yes, but I realised the antique business, yes, things were sort of drying up a bit, and getting hard to make a profit at it, you were dealing with a lot of money, but not necessarily a lot of profit, so the tail end of the 80's I decided to see what else was out there and came across the nursing home business. So, I just got into that at the right time, as well, and had that till the late 80's to 2006, 2007.

[1:01:26]

TB: And, so clearly you had an interest in history or old things, through that, and also a knowledge of dealing, which must have been brilliant for getting hold of stuff for the museum, but just, I'm not sure, we might have covered it already, but why did you want to open a museum? Because a lot of people have a private collection, or it could have been, you know, it could have been a website or something, but you wanted to have something that was open to the public. So, where did that idea for the museum kind of come from?

CA: Yes.

TB: Was it that meeting, you did mention that meeting with someone who ran one?

CA: With Peter Nelson, yes.

[1:02:10]

TB: Was that really the point where you thought "oh my God, that's it"?

CA: I think it was, actually, yes and having the building and deciding not to knock it down and build another nursing home, I thought, "what can we do?" And I knew, I think that was the point, in the late 90's that the catalyst was seeing Peter's place and thinking, oh he's looking for somewhere in Scotland, would he be interested?

TB: What was his museum like? Was it a similar kind of thing?

CA: Yes, it was the old bakery in Keswick, which he opened up. Much like myself, he was bit sort of stuck for space, didn't have enough space, but he made a bit more of each display, he maybe had the Batmobile in a sort of area on its own, and didn't have everything sort of crammed the way I've got it, with lots of little knick knacks, he had the sort of cars on their own sort of film set, type setting. But I think he was probably one of the first in the late 90's really to come up with the idea, what happened to all the cars used in films and you know, well known cars. And before that, people really weren't that interested. Subsequently he managed to get a lot of very rare, original cars at probably not very much money, whereas nowadays, they make stupid money. So, he, again, he was a dentist, initially, from Keswick. Which I think he's retired from dentistry, but he's an artist as well, he does sculpting and sort of painting of some description, so he still does that.

[1:03:46]

TB: Sorry, the penny has suddenly dropped now, so film cars, suddenly that attracts people, not just your car buff, but actually, everybody. So that gives it a broad appeal, doesn't it?

CA: Yes. But as I say, Peter was probably the first to think on that, and at the time managed to acquire a lot of cars that, well, in later years he was spending a lot of money on them, but at the time he probably managed to get a few bargains, because he was the first person to really kind of think about it and open a museum.

[1:04:18]

TB: And your visitor profile, would you say, is it mostly car enthusiasts and collectors? Or do you get a lot of families as well?

CA: Yes, we do get a few families. I would say, I would probably say a third car collectors and enthusiasts, third families and a third Bond enthusiasts, yes. It's as much as that, I'd say, the Bond, yes.

TB: Which is a big thing, isn't it?

CA: Yes. And the foreign market, we had the Swiss Bond fan club chap over from there, their place and he's given me, he's done a big article on the museum in the Swiss Bond Club magazine, and that seems to be very big over in Switzerland. The Germans seem to like Bond.

[1:05:06]

TB: Yes. Are you on any of the coach kind of circuit things at all?

CA: Yes, we are, we get a few coach parties booking in, it would be nice to have a lot of coach parties. We used to get a lot of French students, sort of school trips and that sort of thing, but I've kind of, yes I'm not too keen on booking them because a lot of French kids, particularly Parisians, seem to be a bit sticky fingered and the last lot we had in here, there was another lady in the museum at the time, who had her handbag rifled and a few things taken.

TB: Oh no!

CA: Yes, I don't know if you've been on the underground in Paris, but it seems to be a very popular thing. The last time I was on, it was busy, sort of squashed in and then someone else tells you "oh, that guy is trying to steal things out of your bag." And they do it in sort of two's and three's they sort of try to distract you from the front and someone is in your rucksack or bag from the back, yes. So, anyway, I'm not, I'm pretty careful who we book parties for now, not so much in the way of large, French, school kids. It's terrible to label them in such a way, but, yes. If the hat fits.

[1:06:20]

TB: One last question, a lot of car museums have closed, a lot, and yours hasn't, so, well done, but how is that the case? What have you been doing which others haven't, do you think?

CA: I think it's because I always, from the outset, realised I probably wasn't going to make much money out of it, so I'm not surprised, in fact, it's not making much money, and I don't need to take a wage out of it and, unlike the nursing home business, I don't need many staff, very much volunteers, and there are people who just like to help out. So, I think, if you've not

trying to make money, if money isn't the interest you'll be looking for, then there's a good chance you'll make it work, but you do need something else, maybe just to obviously put food on the table. But, yes, I wouldn't guarantee getting it from here. So, yes, I think that's probably why we're still here, we're not trying to make money out of it and we're not making money out of it! So, that's probably why, it's just for the love of the exhibits and having somewhere to store a lot of your collection.

TB: Well it can tick over alongside the other things that you're doing, which is great, yes.

CA: So, I think that's probably why the other ones have closed down, and people were thinking it was an easy way to make money, charging folk at the door to come in, but that unfortunately, that money just goes on electricity and everything else. So, yes, as long as you don't want to make money, you'll get a good chance of keeping it open.

TB: Yes, Colin, that's great. If there is anything else you want to add, then do, otherwise I've got to wrap it up, I think I've covered everything.

CA: Yes, I think that's it, I think you've covered everything, yes.

TB: Lovely.

Audio ends: [1:08:04]