



Becoming a Man



Stephen in Liverpool, aged about 10.

Margot: In your written story you said that at fourteen you became a man. Is that how you felt at the time?

Well, yes, because what happened was at that time ... I would drive in that day because I learnt how to drive when I was nine year old, right. But I never used to drive on the road at nine year old (laughs).

But what happened was, I was the youngest boy and my oldest brother was away and me other brother. What happened was because I was with him when he was working in that day I knew how to do the job but I was a little bit short on some of them to actually do them and I had to used to stand on a box to do it right because you've either the hand of tinning mixing bowl or you haven't. Like you know because when there's metal running down you have to be very quick at massaging it in and pulling it. And what I mean by pulling it is to get a smooth surface like this table. Otherwise if you put too much heat on it, you'll burn it or not enough heat, then it doesn't melt.

Yes, I suppose I become a man when I was fourteen year old, like you know. But after saying that, my oldest brother I remember him saying when he was in South Africa ... and I was a four year old at that time ... And he started to drive at fourteen year old. So he become a man at fourteen year old. But I suppose those days it was a lot of difference.

Extract from oral history interview, June 2008

'I went to school there [Liverpool]. They were very hard and rough on me. I was about 9. I used to go across the road to my cousins. They were repairing jacks. I used to watch and learned how to do them. They used to call me Gypo at school.

I got in a lot of fights ... I used to go to work with Scottie [his brother]. We were real close. We would do tinning bakery work. I remember go to the bakeries so early, about 4 or 5 in the morning. I would sometimes sleep on the flour sacks.'

Steve's story,
written down by Clarice for the Record Office



At the Liverpool house, Upper Parliament Street, Jimmy and Scottie, Stephen's brothers, used to polish the candlesticks for the church with a machine.



Stephen and Clarice's father standing by a Mercedes van, with Clarice junior in the pram, Chepstow 1967.