

Ron Joy

Prison Officers housing.

After the Prison was built they started building staff houses as well, so when I was there, I'm trying to remember the numbers, well roughly about 250 houses we built in Princetown, for staff, we started in 1850 building the A block, which was 30 flats, B block, C block, D block, E block, F and G and H, later we named them, I used to live in C block, number 3 C block, HMP Dartmoor – nice address isn't it?

Sounds like a prison cell!

Right, so because of that they changed the names, I used to live in Burrator Avenue, so a row of terraced houses was called a block anyway, until fairly modern times, and then they changed it obviously. And you had dustbin collection by convicts, you never had a dustbin collector, the convicts collected all your dustbins, took it up to the farm, onto the rubbish tips and tipped it, then they used to deliver logs to you, you used to order logs – you had a farm party at long plantation, they would cut logs, deliver them to your house and stack them in your shed, and split them up and stack them in the shed all for you. Before my time, in the Victorian times, villagers, if they saw a Goldtop, which was a principle officer, which was my rank eventually - they used to wear a gold band around the peak - and if they saw a Goldtop they would take their hat off, you know, and stand off the path, and nothing happened in Princetown without the Governor's permission – when it was firework night he would send an officer down, I'm talking about some time ago, he would send an officer down to control things and arrange things, and if they wanted permission to do this they'd ask the Governor, if they wanted a carnival they'd ask the Governor, so at the end of the day the Governor was the Lord Mayor wasn't he?