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DATE OF INTERVIEW: 29 March 2017
LOCATION: Portland (Dave's house)
TRANSCRIBER: Shari Mitchell PROOFED BY: (in progress)
Duration: *tbc*

Q: Can you talk about how music came into your life prior to your involvement with Banner?

DD: Bloody hell. Well I had a cousin who used to play these records. Well I've still got him, I haven't spoken to him for years. I used to listen to rock and roll. I was never a big Elvis fan but Lonnie Donegan, I used to love him. You used to see him on the telly with this acoustic guitar. One day my cousin played, they were called EPs in those days, and it was Buddy Holly and it was a song called Words of Love. It knocked me sideways. I said, what's that instrument? It's a guitar. I'd heard Lonnie Donegan and I thought, I know what a guitar sounds like. He said, no it's an electric guitar. I'd obviously heard them before, Scotty Moore with Elvis Presley and things like that, but it never really struck me. But this did. Then I saw him on the Telly on the Ed Sullivan Show and he got this bloody beautiful Strat. I didn't know what it was at the time and I just thought, oh that looks incredible. He had all these girls screaming at him and I thought, oh that's what I'd love to be. Then I was in Birmingham one day and there was a shop called K. Westworth's in Cherry Street. I was always popping in and out of these music shops. I went there one day and they've got this Strat hanging up in the window. I spent about half an hour just standing there drooling. It was the sexiest thing I'd ever seen. I thought, oh God I want one of those. I did eventually but it took many, many years. I remember we went there because I talked my mom into buying me a guitar. Somebody had given my sister a guitar one Christmas, this really awful, horrible acoustic, Spanish guitar it was called. She lost interest, so I used to mess about with it. There was a fellow called Allan Hales, and he taught me a couple of chords. I'm, oh this is good, but I need a decent guitar. I talked my mom into going to K. Westworth's and there was this guitar hanging up there which I fancied. She asked him how much it was and he said, oh I'm afraid it's a very expensive instrument. It was 28 quid, which was a fair bit of money, but she got it for me. It was an Echo Ranger. If anybody knows these guitars, they'll know that

they've got huge blocks of wood in them and six inch nails, not quite that bad. They used to call them jumbos. I loved it but I swapped it, and I used to keep doing that for different guitars just trying to attain my ultimate guitar. There was a kid from school who took me to his house one day. He played me this track by a group called Jethro Tull, who I'd never heard of then. It was called Cat's Squirrel, it was cream coloured as well, an instrumental. It was brilliant. Then we found out that Jethro Tull were appearing at Birmingham Town Hall. So we got tickets and went along to see them, again brilliant. There was what was called a sampler LP came out called Bumpers, and I'd bought it because there was a Jethro Tull track on there. But there was also a group called Fairport Convention playing a song called Walk a While from the latest album. So we used to go and see them. It was Dave Swarbrick, Trevor Lucas, there was an American guitarist as well, I can't remember his name now. But they were brilliant. Listening to their songs there were the names of songs that I saw on various different places and it started giving me other threads to pull out, which was how I got into folk. Originally I had a fair understanding of folk from people like Lonnie Donegan and the Spinners I suppose. I really got into it like that. I was playing in various bands. I was in heavy metal band called Swamp Rats. We all had hair sort of... I was a bass player. I met Ian Soady because he was running Saltley Action Centre, and we ended up playing together. He was always saying, oh you should go and join Banner. I'd seen Banner on a couple of occasions, we'd shared a bill with them. I always thought they looked very serious, so I never would. I met Charles Parker once. I'd written a song, the first song I'd ever written, and I can't remember it now. It was about Margaret Thatcher and it's called I Wish They'd Do Away With Mrs. T. I thought, I'll go and try it out. So I went to, I think it was the Grey Cock Folk Club. It was like an open mike night so they said, does anybody want to do a song? I was like, ya I'll go on and do one. It went down a storm, I couldn't believe it. This bloke came over and said, did you write that? I said, ya. It was Charles Parker. I think that was the only time I met him; he seemed really nice. I never knew the Bloke but he was one of Dave's heroes. As I said, Ian Soady kept saying, you should go and join Banner. I'd never thought any more about it. But I used to go busking. I met Kevin Hayes and ended up busking with him as well, and Jacqueline Contre used to come along sometimes. It was good fun. Then one day Kevin said, Banner Theatre is short of a guitarist; this Saturday will you fill in? So I said, ya alright, why not? I think we had about an hour's rehearsal and I'd forgotten it by the time we came to do it in the gig. But I remember the gig well. The guitarist I was supposed

to be filling in for actually turned up, John Wrench, so it just left me free to do my own little thing. I was asked if I wanted to do a song so, ya alright, and I did this song called You're Sacked, the other one I wrote; I've only ever written about six songs in my life. I really enjoyed it. Then a short while later the miners' strike started and I was asked if I'd go to Sheffield with Dave Rogers. Fran Rifkin was there, I remember that, Pete Yates. There might've been Jacqueline, I can't remember now. But it was an outside thing, miners everywhere. I remember it well because afterwards this fellow came over and said to Pete Yates, I'm from the BBC, we just recorded your concert and we'd like to show it this evening. I'm like, oh this is the big time ?? That was the other thing when I was young, but Pete said, well we're all members of the MU or Equity, so we'll have to pass on this, we can't do it. So it never went out. When I was young, 15 or 16 my philosophy as all I had have to do is work up the guts to play in public just once, and I'll immediately become famous, the world will be at my feet. The first gig I ever played, it wasn't even a gig. One of my neighbours asked if he could borrow a guitar and I said, ya. He said, well can you bring it down to this pub in Vauxhall called the Eagle and Ball. It's still there, as far as I know. So I went down there and he was playing with this accordion player from Aukney called Peter Bughs. I doubt he's still alive because he must've been in his 60s or 70s then. I was sitting there waiting for Fergus to turn up and this Peter Bughs looked at me and said, don't just sit there boy, play. So I started jamming along with him. He was playing all these Aukney tunes really fast. I loved it. We all had a few drinks and in the end somebody said it and I sang a song. It went down really well. I didn't become famous, but I used to carry on doing down there. I suppose that's how I got into music really. What else can I say? I don't know.

Q: What were your first impressions of Banner?

DD: I was quite surprised. They still seemed quite serious for a lot of the time. They used to have a lot of meetings, which I couldn't get into. I did try but I used to be sitting there wondering, you know. They all seemed to know each other so well. I've got to say Jacqueline was brilliant. She's got a wicked sense of humour. You know who you are, Jacqueline. I always got on most of the time with Jacqueline. We had our ups and downs, everybody does, but most of the time you couldn't wish for a better friend. She was brilliant. But I found some aspects of Banner hard work. When they used to do warmups I really

couldn't get into that. I remember we booked, do you remember the Mermaid on Stratford Road? We booked their upstairs room for a day for rehearsal, and it was 2 o'clock in the afternoon before I'd played a note. We were lying on the floor pretending to be on a desert island with the waves washing. This is to relax you, and I'm lying there thinking, I can't take much more of this. But those times were few and far between. Most of the time, because we were covering the miners' strike, there was Dave, Kevin and me, and we used to rehearse at Dave's house I think when he lived, well is he was still with Chris at the time. But we used to rehearse at his house, and it was fun. It gave me a lot of space. Dave used to play rhythm on the guitar and he was the main singer, Kevin used to sing and play the accordion. I'd taken up the mandolin as well at the time. I'd never really cracked it because I could never play tremolo, but I used to be able to knock out a few tunes. So we had a fair range. Kevin played the whistle as well I believe, well I know he did. We did a lot of gigs for the miners, well exclusively really. Throughout the miners' strike we played some really big ones. We got invited to play at the Yorkshire miners' gala, which was amazing. We did three or four of those, we were invited back year after year, maybe more.

Q: How did Banner's material go down in the mining community?

DD: Most of the time brilliant. I remember we played at a place called Muhurtham up in the northeast. This was after the strike and it was going really well. It's only like a village, a mining village. We came to an interval and I said, would anybody like to get up and do something? This bloke stood up at the back and it was like watching Apollo take off – big lad. He got up and started to, he didn't want to sing, he just wanted to tell the whole village how everybody in the strike scabbed except for his family. Geez, a fucking ? went up. This fellow came running up and I said, play. So we just started playing something, I can't remember what. It worked, it all calmed down and we did a gig. We went through three or four gigs on the trot where there was a fight. In fact, there was a recording of one and you can hear Dave Rogers saying, he was introducing some song and he said, bloody hell, look at that. There was this punch-up, I was starting to think it was us. But most of the time people seemed to love it. One of the first ones we did in Yorkshire was Grimethorpe, and we went down really well. We stayed with Ken Hancock and his wife Gail, I think we stayed with them a couple of times. They're really nice people, I hope they're alright. As you know, it's all gone

now. They had us playing on picket lines as well at 6 o'clock in the morning freezing cold, trying to play. We did loads of things like that. One that sticks in my memory as well during the strike was we played at Pontllanfraith Town Hall. We didn't have a sound engineer at the time, so what we used to do, I'd set the PA up with the mixing desk at the side of the stage so if it needed adjusting I'd just dash over. I always played on the left hand side of the stage, because that's where the mixing desk was. This fellow came on and said, look, we're playing after you; can you do our sound for us? It was a six piece band with a singer. So I said, ya alright. We managed to mike them all up and I'm sitting at the side of the stage, and there's a corridor to my right leading to the dressing rooms. I looked down there while this group were playing, and Elvis Presley walked out. I thought, oh my God. He had the white leathers, the rhinestones, he looked amazing. Elvis Presley walked up to me and he said, ????. He's not really Elvis. He was in his 50s, this bloke was, and Pontllanfraith Town Hall, I'll never forget it, the stage is about six foot high. He was dangling this scarf over the edge and the girls were going mad trying to grab it. He kept doing this and he came off and I said, what was all that? He said, your lights are melting the glue that holds my sideburns on. He was as bald as a coot. He was a smashing fella. The lead guitarist I remember had this vintage Stratocaster which he called Me Bobby. He was a really good guitarist. Which other ones to I remember? I get confused now because I can't remember whether they were during the strike or after, because we did loads after as well. I very rarely used to get stage fright with Banner, and the reason was because I was having to walk out and accompany these brilliant songs written by Dave Rogers. How confident do you need to feel? I knew that we were 99 percent sure we were going to go down well, so it worked out. I remember one gig when we were in York and I don't know why but I was really nervous. They'd given us this lovely meal. They were all college lecturers or something like that, I can't remember now, and there were about 60 or 70 of them. They had speeches and that after the meal, so we were asked to wait outside. We were there about 20 minutes and I must've gone to the toilet about eight times. I don't know why. As soon as we were announced it went, and we went down really well. I remember at the end of it this woman got up. She looked at us and she said, what can I say except blimey. We were doing, Dave had come up with this song called Hallelujah I Love Her So. I can't remember who wrote it, it's an old standard and for some reason he wanted to sing that, so we rehearsed it. It was a real cross section of music but it was mostly Dave Rogers Banner stuff you know. Like I said, I always felt comfortable

with that. Doing gigs like that with Dave and Kevin, Dave and Aidan, that was my favourite sort of thing. The thing about Banner, it always gave me a lot of space to sort of stretch myself and do different things on the guitar. As I was saying, the only time I didn't feel that comfortable playing was if I knew that Miriam was going to be in the audience, because I had to harmonise sometimes with Dave Rogers, and Miriam has got a really good ear and she can tell if there's a bum note being sung. So I'd always feel really nervous about that. I don't know why it mattered but it really did. I dreaded if Miriam was in the audience.

Q: What are your memories of Songs of Struggle? How did that come about?

DD: I can't remember how it came about. I remember Dave had written a song, because rap was very big at the time or it was just starting to come in, and Dave wrote this song called Rebellion Rap, which we rehearsed. I remember it well because a lot of the time all I had to do was sort of plink on the strings. I don't remember how the show was written. I do remember going down to London with Dave, Kevin, I think Fran was there, Pete Yates, Jacqueline obviously, oh and me. There was Pete's sister I think and her husband who played drums. We were at the studio, Petri Studios I think it was called, but we were there for a good few days, staying somewhere in Stoke Newington. I used to get the bus there. It turned out to be a really good week's recording. It was a bit of a struggle at first to get everything together; we seemed to be a bit loose for some reason or other. But I remember playing on everything because, poor Dave, they didn't let him play guitar on it. He walked into the booth to do some singing at one point and he said, you're a permanent bloody fixture in here. Andy Hamilton as well, a sax player, I don't know why he impressed me so much but it turned out that he used to be, well the story was he used to be the musical director on Errol Flynn's yacht. As I say, I don't know why, but I was really impressed. I got on really well with him. We did, what was it, he played on the song Rebellion Rap. He was a really good sax player, used to play with Andy Hamilton and the Blue Notes jazz or blues band in Birmingham. They had a singer called Anne Arscot who ended up doing a show with us. But I remember Rebellion Rap being recorded. I do remember doing some gigs with it, and I think that was when Anne Arscot came along. For some reason, Jacqueline couldn't do the tour.

Q: I think she had a bad throat, didn't she?

DD: I thought she had nodes or something, ya. So Anne Arscot was drafted in. I've got a photo somewhere of, Dave couldn't make it because he'd been clipped by a lorry outside his house and he'd done his back in. So on this photo there's Pete playing fiddle, Anne Arscot singing, Kevin's there I think, I'm not sure now, and I was playing bass on that song. I don't know if I should actually tell you this. When we used to unload the van to get into gigs, everybody would chip in. Anne Arscot – I hope this doesn't get back to her – she would always carry my mandolin. Joe Cannon, if anybody looked like him I'd be skiving, he said they're going to get the Anne Arscot Golden Mandolin Award.

Q: One of the things we want to do in this project is get people's memories of those members of Banner who are no longer with us. You mentioned Pete a couple of times, so could you talk about your memories of Pete?

DD: There were lots of them. I always thought he was a really good musician, there was no two ways about it. I used to like it if he was going to come and tour with us; he couldn't always. He went off to do a show about a Catherine Cookson book, Fifteen Streets. He got us some tickets to go and see it in Wolverhampton. He played about eight instruments in it, he was brilliant. I remember we did a gig in Sheffield. There was a place there called the Lead Mill, which we played at sometimes. We finished this gig and we went back to the Lead Mill just for something to eat. I remember me and Pete sitting opposite each other just having a long natter for hours. It was all about music. That's when he told me he was trying to get a band together to play for these things in the Jubilee Arts; they did these different projects around the borough. He asked me if I wanted to be the guitarist. He said he got a drummer, Ron Collins, he had a bass player called Lenny, this young Rastafarian, he had an Irish fiddler. It was a real ethnic group. We had a gay sax player, he was brilliant. But that's how Kitchen Girls, as I remember it, was born.

Q: The sax player, was that Jas?

DD: No, it was a man called Howard, and he was excellent. He went off to do a degree in engineering I think at Lancaster University. Ron Collins told me one day that he'd been in a car smash and he was paralyzed from the waste down or something. I don't know. I did try and find out from anybody who might know, but I couldn't. Jo Broadwood joined after he left. But ya, Pete was responsible for all that. I remember him telling me afterwards, we were rehearsing at Banner and we were just in one of those moods and we kept cracking jokes. Dave said, do you know the cumulative effects of stopping every 30 seconds? Fair enough, he was quite right. But apart from that I don't remember having cross words with Pete. He was always very solid to play with, he always knew what he was doing. I always felt confident being behind him. I don't remember him playing that much with Banner. Obviously he did on the Songs of Struggle, he was there for that. The one thing I do remember about Pete, he couldn't tell jokes very well. When we were recording Songs of Struggle Jacqueline one morning was nervous about something. I can understand that, because when you're on stage if you make a mistake it's there, it's glaring, everybody sees it, you can't do anything about it. In the studio if you make a mistake you can go over it, do a drop-in maybe, or do the whole thing again. But Jacqueline was nervous, so to cheer her up I said, have you heard the news? She said, no. I said, Princess Di kissed President Mitterrand. She said, so what? I said, oh he didn't work, he's still a frog. It worked, she cheered up. But on the way back on the motorway it was thick fog and it was just like the inside lane and the hard shoulder open, you couldn't see more than ten feet in front of you. There were ? whizzing past us and cars really speeding – it was a dangerous time. We came to this spot and there were blue lights flashing everywhere and there were bits of tarpaulin on the ground with blood coming underneath. There was a car, couldn't be more than four foot long, it had been absolutely crushed. It was awful, real carnage. We stopped further up the motorway and I remember Pete Yates telling somebody this joke. He said, ya so Princess Di kissed President Mitterrand, he said, but it didn't work, he still didn't turn into a prince. I said no, no, it's the wrong bloody punchline. He said, have I told that wrong? Yes Pete. I got a phone call at home one night. He'd just started rehearsing with us again, with me and Dave. It was really good. But he had to go away that weekend to play with Donna McGuire, the band he used to play in before, well he was still a member of it as far as I know, up in Blackburn. I got a phone call on night that weekend from ?, on a Friday night I think. He said, compose yourself, I've got some really bad news. I says, it's Pete isn't it? I remember my

hand was shaking holding the phone. I said, what's happened? He said, he just keeled over while we were playing; he was playing his flute, and he was dead before he hit the floor. I was, oh God, what about Jo? He said, well exactly. I said, what do you mean, she's up there with him isn't she? He said, no she's still at home. Oh right okay, I'll be there in ten minutes. I had to go around and of course Jo was screaming and crying. I had to phone around different members of Kitchen Girls to let them know. I couldn't tell Dave or Jacqueline because they were away somewhere. Somebody else told them in the end. I was quite glad, because I didn't want to. We had to go up to Blackburn the next day. I don't think it was an official identification though, we went down there and there he was. He had a smile on his face, he did look really peaceful. But it's not something, you don't like this sort of thing, nobody does. He was killed far too young, not killed, he died far too young. He had an aneurism they said. But like I said, he looked so peaceful. I thought, I hope there's life after death and we meet, because I'll give you such a smack for doing this. Then we went up for his funeral. I'd been given to practise on a dulcimer. Do you know what a dulcimer is? It was Pete's and I ended up playing it at his funeral. Jacqueline remembered it because she knew the instrument. I played it again at the miners' gala because we did that song again just in memory of Pete. That was about it. I thought he was a smashing bloke. Nobody's ever perfect, but he was really good to be around and good to play music with, nice to talk to, a nice bloke. That's all you can ask for really isn't it.

Q: The next show was Little Red Mole.

DD: Right I remember rehearsing that. There was a left wing bookshop in Digbeth where we used to rehearse over the top. Banner had held auditions and I didn't want to be involved in them because of me and my decision-making you know. I was there for a couple of people, there was a flute player, classically trained, but thankfully she wasn't ???. Lovely woman but I couldn't see her fitting in with Banner. But we ended up with Jo Broadwood and Julie McNamara. As I say, we used to rehearse in this room above, I can't think what it was called now, the bookshop. It was always getting attacked because it was a left wing bookshop.

Q: Star Books.

DD: Star Books I think, ya. When we had a break I went for a walk around with Julie. Julie was a scouse and I got along well with her, well I do with Joe as well. But I remember for this walk with Julie and she turned out to be as common as me. She was real sort of working class, she used to work at the Kellogg's factory in Liverpool making cornflakes. That was part of the show. That show, we all had to write our own parts. We used to speak for about 10 or 15 minutes each and then we'd do songs together. I remember Julie McNamara had a beautiful voice but her timing was terrible and it got to be so that I knew when she was going to leap a beat or two beats. We had base player in Kitchen Girls called Del Walker and he came over after we'd done this show and he said, you're brilliant you are, he said. He said, she missed a couple of times but you went straight with her. I haven't seen her for years. We met in Sheffield once. We still got on. I remember she was really upset in the van when we were going somewhere. I didn't help because without thinking, I was driving, and she was crying about something. She said, I feel like covering myself with petrol and setting fire to myself. Without thinking I said, oh that reminds me, we need some juice. Everybody burst out laughing. I just realised, I hadn't done it deliberately, Dave Dale. Jo Broadwood I remember being in that. She was a sax player and she used to do a duet with Julie during that show. I can't think what it was called now, I can't remember, but it was very enjoyable. I think that's the show that had Blood on the Coal, which I used to sing. I was quite nervous about that because I always found it very difficult to remember because it was in two or three different parts, key changes and things like that. But ya I enjoyed that most of the time, as I said, apart from being a bit nervous about that song. I was never happy if things weren't rehearsed enough so that I couldn't sort of relax into it. By the end I obviously did, unless Miriam was in the audience. Jo ended up, as I say, in Kitchen Girls, so we used to see each other quite a lot. I used to drop them off home in the van and I remember her partner at the time, Dillis, I was talking to ? last night. We got invited back there after the Kitchen Girls gig. It was just me and Mike Haytor the bass player. We had three bass players. I remember sitting, they gave us some fish fingers. I don't know how that happened, but it was really nice and relaxing and I had Dillis's foot on me or I was rubbing her foot for her, I don't know. She said, you missed your vocation. Then somebody said, aren't you honoured? You're in a room with about eight lesbians and it's rare that we invite men back here. I said, ya I suppose so. Mike Haytor was just sitting in the corner mumbling to himself like he used to. There's not much I can remember about that, what was it called again? Little Red Mole,

ya. My grandson Thomas likes me to play it for him in the car. He loves that song and I still have to. My granddaughter Emily was involved in some theatre thing down in Fortland Trall halfway down the hill in Fortland there, and I used to have to go and pick her and her friend up and bring them back. I was playing it one night, Blood on the Coal was on and the Little Red Mole and something else as well. We weren't in the car that long. But oh my god Emily said, my friends were really impressed. I can't remember much else about it. That's my age.

Q: In the Reign of Pig's Pudding was the show after Little Red Mole.

DD: I can't remember where we rehearsed it now. There was a school that your dad used to work at in Digbeth, I think Paul Mackney was involved and we rehearsed it there.

Q: Floodgate Street?

DD: Ya that was it. It was a very enjoyable time for me apart from one thing. When we first started doing it Paul Moore, the dancer, was doing the sound or the lights or the slides, I can't remember now. No it couldn't have been slides, because we did it in the round. There was a friend of him, Joan Bingley I think her name was, I remember she had a Dulco O'Brian, got nothing to do with it but just one of those things. But about halfway through the tour Paul had to drop out and it was taken over by a man called Paul someone. We just used to call him The Canal, because that was part of the show. He used to walk on with this bucket. I'd have to explain the whole bloody show. But every night he'd cock something else. One part we're supposed to be sitting in a wood, Dave and I, with a campfire. So what it was a red spotlight on the floor in front of us, the campfire. That was green. There was another time I'm supposed to fall into a river, well I'm going for a swim and there's supposed to be a big splash. It ended up with somebody speaking. This was just every night. When we were rehearsing just to get him into it, he was sitting there reading the Daily Mirror of something, not taking any notice out of it. He seemed quite confident that he was going to do it all. Another night one of the lighting tables, which he was supposed to unroll, he left it curled up and of course it caused a coil and it burst into flames. But this one thing we were in, I can't remember where it was now, but he cocked it up right at the first bloody thing that he had to do. So I stopped the show and said, I'm sorry, there's been a mistake. I probably

pointed out what he'd done. So I said, while we wait, and I just grabbed the mike and started talking to members of the audience cracking jokes. Poor Dave was standing there in his false muscular chest, couldn't move. When you're ready. But on the whole it was a very enjoyable show for me until I got beaten up in Uttersfield. But I remember we did quite a few gigs with that. The first couple of times it hadn't quite been ironed out, but with a bit of tweaking it was one of my favourite shows. I really used to love doing that, because Dave was just so good in it. We weren't supposed to, but we used to ad lib sometimes. I remember I used to have to pull him around the stage in this circular area on a supermarket trolley. Dave was playing Jim, this sort of slightly anal bloke that was going to make it no matter what, the yuppie mentality at the time. Somebody shouted something and he said, who asked you?

Q: You were acting in that show more than playing the guitar, weren't you? What was that like for you?

DD: Being with Dave, it was a piece of piss. He made it easy for me. I have to say a great deal of credit must go to Fran Rifkin, who directed it. I didn't always get on with Fran, most of the time I did. But I couldn't take away the job she did on that show, it was really good. As I say, Dave made it so easy. I always found him really easy to work with because he had a weird sense of humour. He never knew any other songs really apart from the ones we were doing. You're driving along in the car and I was just thinking then, when the blue of the night meets the gold of the day, and Dave used to join in sometimes, and he never knew them. I started singing, in the blue of the night and he sang, meets the brown of your hair. What, what are you talking about? But he was full of things like that, and he did just come out with this big of doggerel. Jesus puts his money in the trusty savings bank, Jesus puts his money ... and Jesus saves, Jesus saves, Jesus saves. I'm sitting there pissing myself; I don't know where that came from. He just seems to come out with it sometimes. But ya that show, we carted it all over the place and it was real good fun. The one I remember was the night I got beaten up, funny enough. We were in Uttersfield but I remember the audience kept talking to us. Me being me, you can't let them get away with that, you've got to talk back. Dave was as well, to a lesser extent. I think he was a bit more professional than I was; I'm sure he still is. He's got a really good sense of humour. He keeps it hidden sometimes, but it's there and it'll

take you by surprise. Did you really say that? He was so good, Dave was. Mogs and Jacqueline were saying it really showed up the relationship that we had. But it was, it was just nice. I really miss it to this day. If I was still living in Birmingham and if I could play again, I would love to go back just to relive things like playing with Dave. I remember when he used to do The Elixir of Life. I used to love playing that. He'd be in the middle, giving a little spiel, he was so good at that. He took that out of it in the end, which I thought was a shame, because the audiences loved it. He used to pick on some bloke and he'd sing out, don't be say and ????, put a drop upon your punk and it'll stand erect for several hours a day. They used to love it. I can't remember why now, but he took that verse out, which I thought was a shame. I couldn't just stand there and do my own thing, I used to love the guitar work on that. What's the other one? There was a point in the show where I had to convince him to take this, it was just a body shop bottle with this green liquid in it, and I had to convince him it was the elixir of life. I was supposed to say, this is to help support my father who is dying on his deathbed in his castle. I'd say, but where oh where can I find such a man? In the end it became obvious that it was a... I'd say, but where oh where can I find such a man? It went down better, and Dave loved it. He became this entrepreneurist, I think he described it as. Then he'd go into all this spiel, like in the marketplace flogging the elixir of life. What was the end song? David and Goliath, ya. I used to love that one as well because we'd worked out some quite nice harmonies with it. The only problem I had with that was that Dave would sometimes finish on a different note, so that instead of singing harmony I was singing the exact same bloody note as Dave. I'd think, well alright I'll change it tomorrow, and so would he. Bugger. But most of the time it was just a really happy time. It was a good show, audiences liked it. Perhaps Dave has different memories, I don't know. But for me it was a very good one. I felt that I was making some sort of contribution as a musician. That was the thing about Banner, it always made me feel like I was a musician, which was all I ever wanted really, just for people to say, he can really play. Not that he's another Clapton or anything like that, but he's not a three-chord merchant, he actually knows his way around the guitar and he can play – which was all I ever wanted. I suppose it's the, what's the word, oh I don't know, the recognition I always wanted. It's just under the surface with all of us. I never wanted to be a superstar or anything like that, but I just wanted to be able to be a guitarist. I knew a good few guitarists who were just excellent. I told you I was in a heavy metal band. The guitarist in that, Phil Carton his name was, and why he never became

famous is beyond me, because he was just such a fantastic guitarist. The last time I saw him he was playing keyboards. What are you doing? He said, oh I really love it. Fair enough. Do you remember The Railway on Curson Street, he used to play there sometimes. He was such an excellent guitarist. I never aspired to be in his league but, like I said, I always felt I was adequate. Being with Banner it gave me the space to be that, being around Dave. Dave would just say, join in, play what you want. It was good, in Little Red Mole especially, not Little Red Mole, the Reign of Pig's Pudding. Yes I have really good memories of that.

Q: I think you said you just went out on the sound in Rock and Roll Jordan.

DD: Ya.

Q: Anything from that show particularly?

DD: I remember we used to have these little fold back speakers that we used sometimes, and we'd put one on the stage or whatever it was behind an old '50s radio so that it would sound like it was coming from there. It was somewhere on the mixing desk and I couldn't remember where half the time, so it would come out through the out sound. But most of the time they got it right. The theme from, it was something to do with women, Housewives' Choice, that it was it, it was from that. But most of the time in that show I just used to enjoy watching Paul.

Q: Paul?

DD: Paul Moore, I think his name was. I'm told that he died. Bloody shame. But there used to be a song in that that he used to dance to, Sea Cruise. I can't think who it was by now, Rock and Roll Jordan, the bloke himself. I can't remember. Rock and Roll Jordan was an actual person, I believe. But ya this Sea Cruise, I used to love that point in the show because not only would Paul be doing all this stuff, I could relax and just enjoy the music. It was a great song. Louis Jordan, that was his name, who sang it I believe. It was an old '50s or '60s rock and roll song. Oh baby let me take you on a sea cruise, it was full of that, it was lovely. We did a show in Nottingham one night and for that show he was playing his dad, and

somebody drove a car at him and ran him over – a racist attempt to kill the poor bastard. But we did this show in I think it was Nottingham, because that was where Paul lived. His dad was there in the audience and I met his dad. Smashing bloke, lovely fella. I can't remember much else of what happened with that show. I know it was good and I really got on with Paul. I remember being in, I think it was Stafford, Stoke on Trent, somewhere one day. We got there and we were setting up for the show. Then Paul said, I fancy a pint. I said, do you fancy a pint? Ya alright. We'd just come into a strange pub and they just weren't used to seeing black people. They weren't being nasty but they thought it would be fun to say, hello there mon. You know Paul's accent – oh hello, how are you? They were, oh. I always felt like I was there as his minder, I thought, if this kicks off. I'm not a fighter or anything you know, but there are times when if you get pushed into a corner there's nothing else you can do. That's partly why I went back up those college steps the night I got beat up. I thought, if I don't go up there they're gonna come down here. There's all the equipment, Dave's there, somebody's gotta ... I did. It was alright, we got through it with a few bumps and bruises, but like I say, they didn't get the guitar. That as a Telecaster. You don't come between me and that Telecaster. That's about all I can remember about it.

Q: Were you part of the Red Megaphone weekend at the Trinity with MacColl?

DD: Ya, I remember getting told off by... You know those two newspaper clippings, Peter Lille is the bloke who did double bass. He was one of the organisers or he was like the stage manager. Dave and I, I remember we did something with Jacqueline as well, like a medley of lines from a Ewan MacColl song. Then I think Dave and I had to do some songs as well, and we overran. Didn't mean to, it wasn't deliberate or anything, but he got really ratty with me, kind of ? really. I remember Peggy Seeger was there obviously and she did some songs. She was so professional, so good. We got invited from that to do a thing in Abbey Road Studios. They were doing this film and we got asked to go down there for that. It was just a couple of songs. Not just us, there were a big group of people. Why was that woman, she sang Smiling Shores? She did a couple of songs with Fairport Convention once. I can't remember her name, but she was there, Leon Russleson I believe, a good few people. Abbey Road Studios, and it was the exact studio, big sort of barn of a place, where the Beatles used to record. I remember that as well because when we left we were just leaving London and there was

this kebab show, so I got Dave to stop and I went in and got a kebab. I remember saying to the bloke, he said, I hope you enjoy it. He was Turkish or something like that. I said, ya if I do I'll come back again. I told him we were going to Birmingham, and he laughed. We got up onto the motorway and Dave realised he left his briefcase in the studio, so we had to go back. When we were leaving I was still hungry so we got to this kebab shop and I went back in. He said, hello. I said, I told you I'd come back again, and I bought another kebab. It was good. I remember the Ewan MacColl weekend because it was a good night. I had to play the next day with Kitchen Girls at Canon Hill where the Ewan MacColl weekend was in the bar during the lunch hour. There was a group that had come down for that weekend called the Eliots of Burtle, this close harmony group from Burtle. They'd crashed their van on the way down in Darby or somewhere and I was asked if I'd drive them back up to Newcastle, so I said yes. The next day when I was playing Kitchen Girls they came over to listen. We all got on really well. Driving them back to, this was a Sunday afternoon, driving them back up north I was treated to a free concert because they were all singing these lovely old traditional folksongs, all done with Northeastern accents. They didn't do Cushy Butterfield. Have you ever heard of Tommy Armstrong, the pitman's poet? They did a few of his I believe. I can't think what else they did. I know that I dropped them off and I wanted to get back so I could have a drink. It was nearly 1 o'clock when I got back. So I knocked on the door of the pub in Saltley and the ??, oh come on in. Mind you, I shouldn't have driven that fast, but that van could bloody move when it wanted to.

Q: Banner's been all over the place. North Korea?

DD: Ya, god where do you start? We had to play...

Q: Do you know how it came about?

DD: Ya I remember it being mentioned and some bloke was organising it. We were asked to go and play at the Hackney Empire. Have you ever been there? What a beautiful old theatre it is. I thought it was a choice between us and this other group. So we played and they played, I don't know. But just afterwards I was told that we were going. Jacqueline said she jumped in to ask if she could come. I thought she'd been booked, I don't know. But I was

told that ya we were going to go to North Korea. I'd never even been on a plane before, so I was quite looking forward to it. The night before, we were in London because we had to get to Heathrow, and we were stopping at somebody's house. This bloke who'd organised it took us for a drink in this pub, and there was this band playing. They were doing lots of covers and one of them was the Buddy Holly song Oh Boy. They started singing, all of my love, all of my kissing, and I sang, made a lot of money when the plane went missing. This bloke said, I don't think you should really sing that, given what's happening tomorrow. But anyway we got up the next morning and got to Heathrow. I remember a concord coming in to land. As I say, I'd never flown before, and Dave and Jacqueline were keeping their eye on me to make sure I wasn't airsick or anything like that. I said, I'm flying. It was brilliant. We flew to West Berlin airport, Tempelhof I think it was called, and we were trained there through to East Berlin. The wall had come down but it was still all split as it were. Gatow, I think the airport was called. From there we got a plane to Moscow where all the others converged. I think the people from Denmark were with us from Berlin because I remember talking to a bloke called Uler who had been in Beijing at the time of the Tiananmen Square massacre. He was talking about that. A really nice bloke, well they all were. I remember at Moscow airport we had to get out, get off the plane and take our hand luggage. I'd got that Strat. There were people standing there with machine guns. This woman opened the case and I'd got a fret something clean. She took the top off it, it looked like a shaving brush but it was solid. She said, oh yes. I thought, this is going to end up being taken off me; you can't have my guitar. I don't know why I took it now, because I didn't use it. But from there we got on the plane to Pyongyang. It was a long journey of about nine hours and we were all extremely jetlagged. It's going from west to east, isn't it. We got off the plane and there were all these people lined up on the tarmac. I was saying, ? We were told afterwards they were government ministers. There were all these girls giving us flowers. My god, they're treating us like bloody film stars. We got into the building and the first thing they did was take photographs and we were all like corpses, just for identity things you know. They put us on a coach and took us into the centre of Pyongyang. I think Jacqueline said the same thing, the countryside was just drab brown. Two weeks later when we went back it was a lush green, in that short space of time, because they were paddy fields. They were still using oxen. This is amazing. Anyway they put us in, I can't remember the name of the hotel now, but they put us on the 22nd floor. Me and Dave had a room; Jacqueline had another room, I

don't think she was sharing with anyone. But we used to meet up at coffee every morning and we'd get taken to, first of all we were taken to some sort of acclimatisation thing where they went through what's going to, it was like the United Nations. Jacqueline was sitting on the stage with all these other people, Dave and I were sitting in the audience with these headpieces listening to the translation. This bloke said, and I am beautiful to be here. I remember that. Jacqueline was saying they wanted to know what we were going to play and what we were going to sing. We were introduced to a man called Wichel, who was a minder, interpreter, both. He taught us this song, Jacqueline knows what it was about, I can't remember now. We learned it parrot fashion and I sort of wrote it down along with the chords. He even supplied those; I got my guitar and we just played it. Fair enough, that saves a lot of pissing about.

Q: Do you remember how it went?

DD: [singing] That was the first verse, that's the only one I remember. There were three verses, the third one you sing it fast. The audience, because they all knew this song, they ha, ha. You know the word inscrutable? You can't read people's expressions. I found that to be quite true, especially when I told you I got followed by that soldier. I sneaked out one morning. Do I tell you the whole thing?

Q: Briefly, ya.

DD: Well what it was, they used to take us out for walks every morning, just showing us what they wanted us to see basically. I just didn't want to go one morning, I don't know why, so I pretended I was ill. As soon as they'd gone I got dressed and went out for a walk. There were school children all over the place and every morning they used to line up all in these blue sweaters, red neckerchiefs and shorts, and march along singing their version of The Red Flag; it as roughly the same sort of tune. I walked around this corner and there was this big square and there were thousands of the little buggers, and they were sweeping up. They used to do that, they used to get women cleaning the pavements. One of them waved and I waved back, and immediately I was surrounded, there was a plague of them. They all lined up and as I was walking along they're marching along either side of me singing The Red

Flag. I thought, how do I get rid of this lot? We came to a fork in the road and they went off to the right so I went off to the left. They waved goodbye and I thought, good. I thought, I'll just walk down here. It was getting narrower and narrower and I don't know why, I looked around and there was a soldier following me with a rifle. He wasn't pointing it at me or anything, but he had this rifle. I had a feeling I was somewhere I wasn't supposed to be. In North Korea everybody, I don't know if it's still the same, wears either a uniform because they're in the armed forces – they still have conscription, and women, they all have to do it – or they wear a suit. Me, being a scruffy looking English bloke, the way I always have been, I never thought twice about it but of course you stand out like a sore thumb, western features as well, you know. But I was walking down this, it became a gully. There were these, I can only call them hovels really. It stank. They were very small just like big sort of coal bunkers they looked like, and there were people in little yards cooking over open fires. I knew this bloke was behind me and I thought, oh god I'll just walk straight through and go around the back, back to the hotel. It was a dead end. Oh shit. I found out later there was some sort of military installation around there, and I think I might've walked past that. So I had to turn around and this bloke's in front of me with his rifle and he's looking at me. As I said, inscrutable, couldn't read anything in his face. He just stood to one side and I walked past him, and he followed me back. I went back to the hotel and got back into bed. The others turned up, and I don't know how the grapevine worked, but Wichel, our translator minder, looked at me and said, you're very naughty. Don't do that. I said, okay, so I didn't again. But I mean there were times when we were allowed out just on our own, I suppose it depends on where they wanted you to go.

Q: So what was the performing in North Korea like?

DD: It was a piece of cake. We were only on stage for 10 minutes, maybe 15. Whether these audiences had been invited, whether they'd been told, I don't know, but they seemed to love us. They did have a sense of humour. I told you we wrote out the words to this song; I was given a music stand to put them on. When we finished our performance I picked it up to carry it off and this young lad came running over, again in a suit, and he took it off. I looked at the audience and went ... and they all started laughing. Oh, they have got a sense of humour. They were good audiences. We were playing 3,000-seat theatres every night and at

the end of the first week whoever was in charge of this decided that they didn't want all of the acts for the second week in 6,000-seat theatres, but we were chosen. I remember the Danish contingent weren't happy about it because they were saying, we were much better than some. But I was saying, well I don't think it's anything personal. We had a bit of a session with them in their room one night – their fiddle player Uler, another fiddle player Christian, there was a woman called Benta, and Christian's girlfriend, whose name I can't remember now. I don't know if I actually saw them perform. But we had this music session in their room and a few drinks; it was really nice. But ya we got asked to play for the second week as well. Then one night, it was filmed on a couple of occasions for television and had these huge spotlights. They spent a fortune in North Korea on their theatres. Backstage was huge. They had all these sliding stages where they'd set up bands or groups of musicians, the curtains would close and they'd just slide them on. But this one night we walked out and the front half of the theatre was empty, which was odd. Then halfway along up there were this huge table and behind it sat Kim Il-Sung surrounded by generals I assume, just a sea of uniforms. It was off-putting. They still gave us a generous applause and all that, and we had to have our photographs taken with him; not just us, all of us. But it was only sort of afterwards, long after we left Korea we started to realise what a bloodthirsty bastard he was. Who was the other one? Kim Jong-Il, his son, although it was always denied, he took over. He was there as well I believe. It's just strange. They treated us really well, we couldn't complain. But it's not somewhere you'd want to live, or I wouldn't anyway. It's very strict.

Q: What can you remember about Saltley Gate?

DD: I remember Dave mentioning it to me and I knew it was a show that they'd done before. He said, but we'll just be following the script, which we'll have in front of us all the time. That's what we did really. I was used to doing the song itself, Saltley Gate, because we did that at lots of Banner gigs. I've only got vague memories of rehearsing it but I do remember playing it at lots of different places. The response to that was always really good because a lot of the people we played to had been there, and they were always eager to come up and talk to us afterwards about their memories of it. Most of the time I used to leave it to Dave. One thing that struck me one night, I've told this before at the 30th anniversary, when we'd finished I'd usually go and get a pint and I'd let Dave do the

business of further bookings or whatever and I'd be taking the gear down. I think it was in Stoke on Trent we did this show, I don't even know what it was, it was probably Saltley Gate. No it couldn't have been because for the encore we did the song Saltley Gate. It finished and I went to the bar to get a drink. There were two blokes in front of me, big miners. The one was saying, I've heard that song loads of times but it still does this to me. I looked up and he'd got tears running down his face. I was thinking at the time of Dave, to reduce people to that state you gotta be doing something right. That's when it all came home to me why I always felt fairly confident with Banner, because I was doing these songs that Dave had written. They were just so good. The show itself, Saltley Gate, I remember we used to do, what did it open with? Brothers, sisters. . . I can't think what it was called now though, Song of Organisation? That's one thing that used to ? me about Banner, song titles. They could be a bit more. . . sorry, my throat's really dry. I always thought the song titles could be a bit more punchy. The Coaches Song that I wrote, I always just used to call it Coaches. But it came out on the tape as The Coaches Song. I don't know who decided on things like that, but a lot of them were the something song. I just used to call it Coaches. I don't know what the alternative titles for other songs would be, but they always seemed longwinded, the song titles, like that that song of organisation. But I used to enjoy playing that. As I said, we recorded that whole show live one night in Manchester. There were about 70 people in the audience, which was a fair size. But it was a big room so it seemed to be cathedral-like.

Q: So we're in the middle of Saltley Gate.

DD: We recorded it at this hall in Manchester. As I was saying, there were about 70 people, which was a fair size, but it was a big sort of cathedral-like building, it shows up on the tape. I remember on that song, Song of Organisation, I used to have to play a guitar solo, and I cocked up the last note. I remember having to go back up to Darbyshire with Aidan just to do a drop-in, and I cocked that up as well. So in the end we just had to tweak it until you had an acceptable ending. It was about a week later we played at Marxism '93 I think it was, or maybe '94 because it was an anniversary, in London. There were about a thousand people there. It was just one of those nights you couldn't play a wrong note, everything just went ideally. When we got to that last line, close the gates, close the gates, and the slide came up,

Saltley Gas Works shot or whatever it said, they went mad. The applause just seemed to be going on for ages. That's what I miss as well, the applause, it's something you just don't get tired of. Maybe it's just me, I don't know. But we'd recorded the wrong one, we should've recorded that one, but we didn't know. But ya so I have, sorry, my nose is running. I have lots of happy memories of doing that show as well. There were songs in it like The Great Divide, I think Dave wrote that, which was always a really stunning song. When I was working delivering papers down here and I was on my own in the van coming back from ? overnight, I used to be singing that at the top of my voice. The other one, We Are The Engineers, what a cracking song. I think that might be Ewan MacColl, I'm not sure, but I used to enjoy doing both of those just for the musicality of it. And with Dave singing, you can't go wrong, he just had such a stunning voice. Dave Rogers is a lot of things, but something nobody will ever be able to take away is the fact that he can sing. He's a proper singer. I always was there just to join the dots as it were, do the occasional bit of harmonising, but when he was on form... He used to do a song called Melvenus, do you remember that? I found myself harmonising with him on that one for the last verse. We hadn't rehearsed it or anything and I don't know why to this day I did it. But I hit the notes okay and after he said, oh ya you should do that again. I thought he was going to say, what were you doing? But he had – I suppose he still has, I haven't heard him for a long time – a stunning voice. He was really, really a good singer. As I've said, going out with that kind of thing, how confident do you need to be? I'd got that to fall back on. I used to think even if I wasn't there it would still be the same sort of thing, he'd still be knocking them bandy because he was so good. I remember doing that show on lots of occasions. I remember that Marxism '94 particularly because of that, that audience that was so good and they went along with it. We used to do things, Cops in Bailey and there was another one, Evening Mail Blues. Sorry, my nose is running. That was a song that I always used to enjoy, and ended up doing a guitar solo on that. We did it at trade union club on Pusher Road one night. Paul Mackney was in the audience and we finished the solo and before Dave could start singing he was all his feet Paul Mackney and clapping for my solo. I thought, what have I just done here? Ya I remember we did that there, I'm trying to think where else we did it. There were lots of places. After a while they all sort of meld into each other. There are some that stick out, like that one in London, but like I said, they meld sort of into each other. That's about all I can remember of Saltley Gate.

Q: The next thing was the Green Shoots of Recovery. Aidan had joined Banner by then.

DD: That was a weird one because I was supposed to have left and Aidan was supposed to be my replacement. I can't remember how it came about but the three of us ended up doing that show. I don't know if it was a scripted show or a collection of songs, I can't remember now. But it was a real bonus having Aidan there because he's an excellent musician. He came up with Women On The Line and Aidan played this beautiful introduction on the acoustic. All I had to do was knock out these chords behind him. Do you remember when we went to the Green Room in Manchester? Dean was there doing the sound and it was a strange gig. They were very safety conscious – all the cables were taped down. We didn't know. He put us in this dressing room and he said, right, I'll announce you and they won't hear what I'm saying to you and I'll tell you when to walk out on stage. So it all duly happened, we walked out. The lights were down, and as we walked around to the mikes the lights came up. I felt really odd and I looked at the audience and said, you can applaud now if you want, and they did. We started doing this song, I can't remember what it was now. Dave used to grab his mike and he'd walk around with it. Not realising the cables had been taped down, he grabbed his mike and yanked the cable out of the plug. My first thought was, oh ya, we're gonna be The Who. So I ran into the audience and jumped up on one of the chairs. Do you remember? I was just banging out power chords at them. The chair nearly tipped up and I nearly went and Dave said, what are you doing? I said, oh I thought we were being The Who. It was a bit of a cockup because we had to swap microphones around, but we covered it. I'd been looking forward to the Green Room because I'd heard a lot about it. There weren't that many people there, I don't think. I remember Anna Seymour was in the audience, and I haven't seen her for years either. Her father used to make rocking horses, handcrafted rocking horses. I remember going to see them and we had to drive through Chorlton in Manchester I think. All I could think of was Chorlton and the Wheel, a kids' program, because my kids used to watch it. I remember doing Women On The Line and there was another one about immigration about people coming from places like Amaritsa and all these different communities, joining together to work in Britain's coalmines. Coalmines are a strange thing. We were in Stoke one night playing a gig and this fellow came in halfway through still in his underground gear, and there'd been a cave-in and

somebody had died. He was saying, that's the price of coal. It didn't do a lot for the gig but we got through. But it was just horrible. I read somewhere, have you ever heard a song called The Graceford Disaster? Well that's when 266 people were killed and only 11 bodies ever recovered. There's this fellow and he said, I worked at Graceford for a time and he said it was very eerie underground walking past this place that was sealed off, knowing that there was still hundreds of people in there. I think in the song it says the owners sent some lilies; 266 people dead. Bastards. But we did other songs that I'm trying to remember now. I remember it was quite exhilarating having Aidan there, because as I said, it left me free to do whatever it was I did, just to enjoy myself playing, the thrill of just creating some music. I used to really enjoy it. Like I said to you, we had nights, the occasional duff nights, everybody gets them. But when everything went well and every note you play seems to be perfect, there's just no feeling like it. You can hear it coming out of the speakers and you think, I'm part of that, I'm helping to create that. It just makes you feel really warm inside and good.

Q: How did it feel relating to the audience? When we were in the audience, we always felt you had an ability to connect with every audience that was there, whatever they were like.

DD: That was one of the things that got me about Banner when I first joined. They would announce the songs but there never seemed to be any interaction. Before Banner, a lot of times I used to play on my own in pubs just to earn a few bob. You had to talk to the customers. It was a bit awkward sometimes. I remember being at a pub on Coventry Road, a right rough hole, and a fight started. Some fellow went flying across the room straight into the jukebox. I stopped and this big Irish bloke next to me said, don't stop, ignore them fuckers, you carry on. I was standing there trying to sing Old Cowhide while this is going on. But I learned to speak to an audience and I found that maybe that wasn't missing but I didn't see a lot of evidence for it, so I thought it was a good thing to start doing. I only found out years after that when people joined Banner they progressed up the ranks into doing the occasional line in a song and then if they got good enough they'd be allowed to do a song. I never faced any of that. The first gig I did with Banner, as I said earlier, they said, do you want to do a song? I said, ya. I didn't know about any of this hierarchy stuff, I was just sort of plunged in at the deep end with Dave and Kevin. When we were doing that with the miners

we used to talk to the audience as much as we could, and Dave and Kevin got into it as well. A lot of it was scripted but some of it wasn't. I used to like it when it went off on a tangent like that. As I said, when we were doing the Criminal Justice act we got to, I don't know where it was, but we couldn't do the actual show. So Dave said, we'll just give them an evening of songs. I was really pleased. Paula, I don't know if she actually played that night, I'm not sure. All I remember was me and Dave haranguing the audience and getting reactions back, and just talking to them and having a joke with them. If you let them and encourage them properly, they'd be forthcoming. Wherever it was that we were, maybe I'm mixing it up with the ? gig, I don't know, I can't remember. But we went for a walk through this market area just for something to do before the show, and on the way back the heavens opened and it flooded the one part and we had go all around. So one of the jokes that night was, is this what the weather's typically like in this part of the world? It was, oh you ain't seen nothing yet, and stuff like that. That was my favourite kind of Banner gig. Paula came up afterwards and said, oh so that's what you're really like. She'd only seen us doing scripted shows. She saw us doing one in Colby which was just songs – Dave, Aidan and me. I remember it was a very sweaty night but we had to keep all the curtains closed because the sun was coming through on the back of the slides and it was stopping them from being seen. I remember I think that's when we first met Paula and Sammy. I think that's how Paula got involved; she got in touch with Banner afterwards. But ya as far as talking with the audience, it wasn't a chore, it was a delight. It wouldn't always work but a lot of the time it would. If you got a laugh it was brilliant. I remember, I don't know whether it was you and Mogs or Jan and Spud. I was asked if I'd do some musical arrangement for you, and it was over at your house. I remember you offered to pay me and I said, well keep it in abeyance until we've actually done it, and if you think it's worth it then pay me but if you don't, don't worry. But it was good fun. I remember having to concentrate on Spud quite a lot because I had these guitar bits going on and Spud was playing something different. I kept trying to get him to play different things. I remember you worked out harmonies as well. I think one of the things I said to you at the time was, when you go on stage, because I'd noticed you're almost apologetic. I said, I think what you ought to remember is that they've come to see you, not the other way around. If you weren't good enough they wouldn't be there. I always thought you were really good, especially the four of you together. I think that's the way Banner seemed. We should interact more. Do you remember a place called Homefirth

where they used to record Last of the Summer Line? They got us to play there once, just Dave and me. We did everything except open a vein for them, and nothing worked, it was just one of those nights. We did one in South Wales and it was such a weird night. We didn't know at the time, but the audience had turned up expecting ballroom dancing or something with some songs at the end by a local bloke called Tim Jones, who was a Tom Jones tribute. He was very good. But somebody went to the women's toilet and came back and said, there's these two women in there saying, I wasn't expecting this shit. Your confidence is like, oh ya great, but we just slugged our way through it and got off. But most of the gigs I did with Banner went down really well and they were enjoyable. Not all of it, but most of the time.

Q: The next project was Sweat Shop, and Paula Bolton was involved in that with Aidan.

DD: I don't think I was actually in that show. That was when I took to Ireland. I remember having to go on a coach up to Stranraer. . . . That's someone mowing the lawns. Ya, I had to get a coach up to Stranraer. I remember sitting in some sort of balcony. Were you doing the sound? It must have been with you then, just watching the show, from behind I think it was, I'm not sure. I found it a weird position to be in. The next day I got the ferry and went to Ireland. I'd never been to Ireland before; I've been there a few times since. But it was really nice. We went to Derry. One of my abiding memories of Derry is cooking fried eggs for breakfast, because it was my turn. Somebody lent us their flat I think. But we did the show, or they did the show and I was there. I don't know if I actually did anything, I probably helped to get the gear in and out. But we went to this pub and I think I'd got a guitar with me. There were these people playing and they were so good I wouldn't even consider joining in. They were just too good to listen to. They said, are you going to play at all? I said, well what would you like? They said, we'd like our country back. He was not being serious with me and he said, oh I'm sorry man, and he said, how long have you been here? I said, about 800 years. He said, oh you bastard, you got me back. But the next night I don't know who organised it, it wasn't in the same pub, it was in a bigger space. They said, well we'll get together and just have a jam. Paula played some reels and that. It was what I used to think of as a typical Irish pub audience that I used to play to when I was on my own in Birmingham. So I played this song called The Plainsman to the tune of Tramson Hawkers. It's

a real schmaltzy song, but they loved it. I don't think I ever went wrong with that song. Do you know we used to go to the Old Fellows, I played it in there one night for you lads. I think it was Spud said, where'd you get that? It was an old Fairport song written by Trevor Lucas I think. I used to play that in pubs in Saltley and the boss of the one pub, the Havelock, she used to know another version of it about some bloke working on the motorways. But ya, so back to Derry. We had this session and I don't remember the end of it. It was a cracking night and then we went down to Belfast and did the show there, and then we ended up in a pub afterwards. You were getting filthy looks off somebody, I remember. I remember we all sat down with you and nothing happened, but we were quite obviously Brits. We went to Carlow, there was an American diner in Carlow – burgers, donuts, it was brilliant. And we went to Kilkenny. This was on St. Patrick's night and everybody was going there. Do you remember Derrick somebody Donovan? He used to work for the BBC. Freddy Donalan. It was a relative of his, I was staying with her and she wanted to go out but she'd got a little son and somebody had to stay behind and babysit. So I don't know how I was chosen, but I ended up being the one. So everybody went out and left me and this kid in the house with a load of cans. I remember he put this DVD on, would you like to watch this? I said, what is it? He said, The Wrong Trousers. So me and this kid sat there watching that, and I was getting through these cans. They turned up a bit later and nobody had had a drink, the pubs were all full, being St. Patrick's night in Kilkenny. Well I had a great evening. They came home and I was three parts pissed, I think the kid was as well. We ended up in Waterford. The thing I remember about Waterford, it was a freezing cold day. We were backstage in this club and it was freezing cold in there. I don't know who discovered it, but there was a sauna, a real proper built sauna with pine walls, and we sat in there. It was beautiful, I remember doing that. In the end we had to get out because we were so dripping with sweat. It's a wonder we didn't all end up with pneumonia going back out into the cold. But that's what I remember about the trip to Ireland, and seeing steam engines over there, which I really enjoyed. Who was it wanted to buy a Buran? Helen yes, I'd forgotten her. I knew there was another singer from somewhere but I couldn't remember her name. I was thinking of Anne Arscot but ya, Helen MacDonald, ya that's right. She said she wanted to buy a Buran didn't she. That was in Derry I think, and somebody took us around to I don't know where it was now, but they sold her this Buran. Kevin used to play it as well. I remember going back to my old school to see if I could use one of their lathes to make a beater. I met the old French

master and he was telling me how he remembered me and what a good lad I was. I was like, you ? bastard, cuz I wasn't, I was horrible at school. I felt out of my depth and I didn't know why I was there. Anyway that's got nothing to do with this.

Q: Do you have memories of the Denmark tour?

DD: None whatsoever, none at all, no. I remember the ferry crossing from I think it was Harrich, maybe Felix, I can't remember now. But it was a really smooth crossing. When we got there we had to change to another ferry which took us through all these islands, the archipelago or whatever. It was beautiful, lovely country. I remember walking, it was Elsinore I think we first went to. Wasn't that the setting for Hamlet? I don't know Shakespeare, wouldn't talk to him if I met him. But I remember we were walking down the street in Elsinore and something caught my eye and I looked around and it was a red squirrel half way up the tree just looking around at us. I was stunned. That's the only time in my life I'd ever seen a red squirrel in the wild. These people have got them in a bloody shopping area; I was so envious. They did a gig that night. Aidan was doing most of the driving because I think I'd lost my license because I got pulled by the police for drink driving and lost my license for a year. Backstage at this one place there was a double bass just in a canvass cover, so of course we had a look. The owner turned up and he wasn't very happy, so he stopped that. We were staying at I think it was a trade union college. I remember there were machines around the place where you just pressed the button and you got a bottle of lager. There was one place where they left the bar and somebody, I can't remember which Dean it was, climbed over the bar and started giving us drinks. Dean and I got pissed and we were just wandering around this college on our own. In the basement or somewhere we found a two-lane bowling alley. It was quite primitive. When you scored you just pulled a lever or something and there were strings on these pins and you'd just pick them up and plunk them back down in the right place. We must've stayed there for about an hour with intermittent drinking as well. The next day, well I don't know about you, but I couldn't walk because we were using muscles you hadn't used for years in this awkward position. It was murder. I remember we did go to, I think we were only there a week and then the shows sort of merged into one. Then on I don't know if it was the penultimate day or the last day, I can't remember that, I felt awful. It wasn't through drinking, I'd got

screaming squids. So we were in Copenhagen and people went off for a walk around. I tried, I just wanted to see Little Mermaid, I got as far as that. In the end I went back to, we were in a hotel or something. I bought some coffee, went over the road for an English copy of The Guardian and a couple of Danish pastries, and I just sat on the balcony enjoying the sunshine while they all walked around Copenhagen. I remember on the way back, again a beautifully smooth crossing, the North Sea was just like a skating rink, I couldn't believe it. But when we got back to either Felix or Harrich who was singing then, was it Ellen MacDonald? Out of all of us, they chose her to go to ? Maybe it was because of her colour, I don't know, but it seemed most likely. She was in a right state, I know that, poor bugger. That was a real sort of downer to end the holiday. Well that's what it was, was a holiday. There were gigs after that but I don't know if I was involved in them.

Q: The last show you were in was Criminal Justice.

DD: Ya, I never felt that comfortable with that show. It just didn't seem to have a lot of humour in it or audience interaction. I remember the first night we did it it was quite confusing because I'm supposed to be this new age traveler or something like that who gets mistaken for a superintendent. But I don't think it was explained that well to the audience, because when I came on in this disguise I was getting booed. I was trying to figure of way of saying, no no, it's me, but it never really worked for me that show. The first night I actually forgot my lines. I was standing there with Paula and really unprofessional, just hang on a minute, I had to run back stage and check where I was and run back out. The first line was, have you ever had one of those nights? That was the script, so that probably got the biggest laugh of the night. But it was a show I was never really comfortable with. I don't know why. It seemed very tightly scripted, all the moves, it seemed a lot to remember. I can't remember playing very much in it either, which was my sort of raison d'etre to be there, to be a guitarist. It just didn't sit right with me. I think Dave and Paula probably coped with it better, I don't know. I don't know whether I was going through a bad time or what, I don't think so. All through my life there've been, you know there are songs that speak to you, Words of Love, Buddy Holly and things like that. There are shows that speak to you like Reign of Pig's Pudding, Saltley Gate, The Criminal Justice Act. There seemed to be an awful lot crammed into it. The ending was scrappy as well. I think I had to play an American or

somebody did, I can't remember now. It ended up with me putting somebody in handcuffs, I don't know whether it was Dave or Paula. The audience went, oh that's the end. It was just, I don't know whether it was the show or just me or what, but I was never comfortable with it.

Q: Do you remember doing gigs like The Exodus?

DD: Yes I do, because I nearly got into a fight, didn't I? We were walking around their site and there were these two blokes. The one was bigger than you and was obviously bullying him, and I walked over and pulled him off. A couple of times it happened with these two people and he kept saying, oh it's a private chat. I said, it's hardly a chat is it. He didn't try to have a go at me, thankfully. But this Exodus, peace and love and all that, and these two are ? the shit out of each other. I remember going to that. Was I in the Criminal Justice Act, Exodus, that was one of the times I remember playing it. It wasn't that Fender Telecaster then I had, it was a Japanese make but quite a well known one. I can't remember now, but I remember the guitar, it was really good. We did that, because it was sort of like a reggae song. Paula played the bass. We just showed her which notes to play and then she picked it up. I played the bass on something else and there was another one, Juggernaut, that was in there, which is quite a fast sort of rocky song. I just remember having the distort on the Strat turned up. Ya I remember that. But the show itself, I never came away from doing one of those feeling satisfied. I wasn't satisfied with my performance or that the show had gone well. I don't know, it just doesn't sit well in my memory. Perhaps I'm imagining it all, who knows? Do any of us know if we're really here?

Q: What effect did working with Banner have on you as a musician?

DD: It was brilliant, as I can't stress enough. It really stretched me. I was given all this space. Dave used to play guitar and I always thought it would be silly to have two guitars both playing the same thing. Dave would get on playing the rhythm and I'd try and work out something that I could play along with it, or use the mandolin. I remember turning up to rehearsal one day with Dave and Kevin with a Strat and an amp. I remember Kevin saying, hey good luck with whatever you're going to do with that, because Dave won't like it. I

remember trying for ages to get him to use an electric instrument, and finally he did. There was a song called Henry the Accountant, I don't know if you remember it. But it's like a modern-day version of John Henry the steel driving man, but he's an accountant. We used it with that and Dave was really taken with it. I remember for weeks he wanted to use electric guitar on everything. Perhaps he remembers it different, I don't know. But it did take a long time to get him to use any kind of electric instrument. The Little Red Mole, was that the one with Julie McNamara and Joe Broadwood? Up until then we used acoustic guitars but we had to mike them up. I'd got a couple of acoustics and I went to a big shop here in Birmingham, Musical Exchanges, and I found this electro acoustic guitar. They agreed they'd swap it for these two acoustics of mine. I just went back and plugged it in. In the end Dave saw the sense of it and he got that Takamine I think he bought, and after that it was all electrified. Musically, as I said, I was allowed to just push myself. Dave was always quite encouraging, so was Kevin. I think Kevin had a bit of a block about electric instruments at that time; I think he got past it. I think what finally attracted it to Banner was we were using them in Kitchen Girls with Pam Bishop, give my love to her because I really miss her as well. I never found any restraints really in Banner, in particular with people like Pete Yates being there. I always hoped that, there used to be a dance band, Pig Town Fling was it? The one with Pete, a French connection, Sabotage was it. I always used to have this dream about getting members from them to come on tour with us. I thought if anything would set off Dave's voice even better, because they were excellent musicians. Pam Bishop and Pete Yates and John Wrench – I didn't know the other members but I knew those three. We met here and there, I can't say that I knew them that well until later. In fact when did I first meet Dave Rogers? I was with Kevin, we were busking. This was when I was being asked if I'd go and do that first gig with them. We did busking, so we met them at a pub in Gloster Green, not the Sack of Potatoes, it was called the Halt, I don't remember. But I was introduced to Dave there, I don't know if he remembers it, and we just sat around having a natter. Then I think it was a few nights later I did the first gig with Banner. I remember Dave introducing me. He said, here's Dave Dale, it's his first gig with Banner, me thinking, I wish he hadn't told them that. But it was alright. As I said, I never found any of this hierarchical stuff that people spoke about. It was just you're in at the deep end, just do it. I've been in a position not with Banner but I was in a music shop in Green Lane in Birmingham once. There was this fellow in there buying a Telecaster copy. He didn't know me, I didn't know him. Don't even know how

it came about but he said, what are you doing this Friday night? I said, I don't have anything on. He said, would you come along and play with me at the Rosary? The Rosary was a big Catholic club in Saltley. So I said, ya okay. For some reason he knew I had a Telecaster and he'd always liked Telecasters. He said, I've got this drummer lined up. I said, alright, what are we going to be playing? He just said, oh you'll know it. What? I thought he was going to tell me we could rehearse. You'll know it – bloody hell. So when I went along to this thing and luckily I did know it, they were all standard rock and roll songs, country and western songs. The Summertime Blues, I remember doing that. It kept throwing me because ??, Dave Dale on guitar, and I'd have to come up with something. But by that time you were really into it. But at the beginning of Banner it was like that, I wasn't told do anything – it was just we're going to play, play along, see what you can come up with. It was just really enjoyable. There must have been black spots as well, but I don't remember them that well, perhaps Dave will.

Q: Banner always based plays on actuality. How did you find that as a way of creating musical material in the shows?

DD: The only time I really came into contact with it was when, I don't know how it came about, but I was actually expected to write a song. It was the Coaches. I had to talk to the people involved in it. I found it a bit cumbersome. I'm not good at that sort of thing. But as a way of getting through to the audience, I always found it really seemed to work. I don't think anybody else was doing it at that time. It always really seemed to work, as long as I knew where it was coming in so I could sort of fix my playing around it. It was there right from the beginning when I joined Banner, it was there then. He used it for Saltley Gate. It was just something that was always there. I didn't find it a problem really, it was just something you had to base your playing around. I didn't feel that it held me back in any way.

Q: What kind of things were hard or challenging?

DD: Warmups I think, I always found those really difficult. As I said, we hired this room at the Mermaid and we were lying on the floor imagining we were on a desert island with waves coming over. If it worked for people I had no problem with it, you get on with it, but it did

nothing for me. It was supposed to relax you, and I was lying there tight as a knot. All I wanted to do was pick the guitar up and play and do what I always thought was proper rehearsing. Others saw it differently. I know it worked for Dave and Jacqueline, and Paula was well into it. I remember we pulled up at John Dean's house one day. We'd had a long journey to get there. I can't remember where we'd come from. But Dave was having, sorry, oh bloody hell. Dave was having back problems. So we pulled up and opposite where Dean lived, where his mom and dad still live, there was a balcony and people on there who I believe were drug dealers, I don't know. So Dave got out, he got on his hands and knees on the piece of grass outside and he's doing his exercises for his back. Paula meanwhile was hugging a tree. These people on this balcony were looking and I'm, I don't want to be involved in this. So I got out the other side of the van and just stood on the far side having a cigarette. Things like that stand out. These warmups and exercises, they did seem to work for some people, they just didn't seem to do anything for me. Whether that's a blind spot that I've got, I don't know. I used to get really frustrated. All I wanted to do was play my guitar. Things like that used to frustrate me. I can't think of any real bad things associated with Banner. The amount of time that it took up could be a bit of a nuisance at times, but that's all.

Q: And there was never any money.

DD: Oh no, that's why I had to leave in the end. It was getting so it was costing me money to play with Banner. I remember I was having to pawn instruments and then pay money out to get them back for the next gigs or whatever, I was borrowing money. I remember it was a Friday evening in Saltley and I'd taken the dog for a walk down the canal. People were going home from work and I was thinking, they've all got all these wage packets, I haven't got one. I'd got a wife and kids, and I just couldn't afford to carry on. It was a real wrench. ? said, what are you going to do about the instruments? I said, I'm just going to leave them. I did often wonder who got them and I hope they're looking after them. But it was a real wrench to do that. I told you earlier we had this contract with Deloitte and Touch, their internal removals. I heard this noise out the window one lunch time. I looked out and there was a big crowd outside the council house and there was some kind of music going on. I thought, I bet I know who that is. It was my lunch hour and I walked over and there was Dave and Fred.

Dave said, grab a guitar. I couldn't because I had to get back at work. But the temptation was certainly there and it would've been nice to. It was nice to play at the 30th anniversary even though I hadn't played for ages and I was nervous because I was really rusty. But ya, it was sad but it was just one of those things you had to do. Given the chance and going back in time, I'd still do it. Knowing what I know now, I'd still do it, because it was mostly such fun. All of you, these couple of days seeing you all again, if only Dave would've been here that would've been the icing on the cake. But poor Joyce, sorry.

Q: Is there anything else you want to say?

DD: Not really, I just hope that when you get back, whoever you meet that I was in contact with in the past, give them my best. They were really good years, they represented a really happy time in my life. Not always brilliant, but you know. I remember staying at a place with Dave once and none of us could get to sleep. We had every item of clothing on us, it was freezing. I don't know whose house it was, but neither of us could sleep. It was bloody horrible. But most of the time people were really good and they put us up and looked after us. They were really happy years and I'm sorry they're gone.

Q: Do you remember being put up in a church, and there was nowhere to sleep but on the floor?

DD: Vaguely. I don't know if it was that. At the time of the Sun dispute, because we played for them as well didn't we? I remember sleeping on the floor there, I don't know where it was. Ya there were the occasional uncomfortable ones, ya.

[END]