

Edited Interview with Gerry Connell in Glasnevin (15/1/2008)

Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire (MM) Gerry Connell (GC)

1. **MM:** So Gerry what I'm going to do is just to start off with basically where you were born, when you were born and you know who was in the family, etc. etc. So what' your date of birth?
2. **GC:** 16th November 1946. So I was the youngest of a family of six. So there was Edward my eldest brother, James would be next and I had a brother Vincent who died when he was very young, a year-and-a-half. Then there was Anne my sister, Richard, Raymond and myself.
3. **MM:** And your father was Edward as well, and he was a publican is it?
4. **GC:** Yeah a publican. He owned the pub in James's Street, his brother actually owned it before him. Richard was the uncle and James was his brother, was my father's brother. They were brothers James and Edward. James owned the pub before my father did so my father got married, he took over the pub then. James moved over to Iona Road and he continued with a different career altogether.
5. **MM:** So tell us, you're the youngest, you went to school, you grew up in James Street, you lived above the pub is it?
6. **GC:** We lived above the pub yeah, 131 James Street. They were fairly big houses. You had a cellar, you had a ground floor, you had one, two, three stories then up after that.
7. **MM:** Where did you go to school?
8. **GC:** In Saint Vincents in Glasnevin, that was just up the road here.
9. **MM:** That was interesting to come from James's Street to Glasnevin.
10. **GC:** I went to Basin Lane of course for infants. Junior and senior infants I went to the Christian Brothers. My eldest brother went to James's Street; the second eldest went to James's Street and three of us then went down to Vincent's in Glasnevin.
11. **MM:** And do you think there might have been a link with the Vincent's in Glasnevin since it was so close to Iona Road where your uncle was?
12. **GC:** Possibly, possibly, it is a good school, good name, good sporting facilities, etc. etc.
13. **MM:** And you stayed in primary school till you were what age?
14. **GC:** I would say about thirteen and then moved onto secondary. Left (St. Vincents) after second year.
15. **MM:** And when you say you left after second year so you were around fifteen or so was it? Had you done any exams?
16. **GC:** I'd done primary.
17. **MM:** Just your primary like there wasn't a group certificate or an intermediate certificate?
18. **GC:** No you'd do you inter in fourth year in those days.

19. **MM:** And why did you leave?
20. **GC:** Well I just had an idea I'd like to go off and find out what the world was like outside. That was it basically. And against all advice I went off and took up a job, my first job being in '61 in Jammets.
21. **MM:** So you went straight from Vincent's to Jammets?
22. **GC:** Yeah straight from Vincent's and if I remember correctly it was January of '61 so I have been just fifteen the previous November.



Figure GC.1: Picture of Jammet's taken from Jammet Menu

23. **MM:** Wow, okay yeah wow you were quite young then.
24. **GC:** Yeah but it wouldn't be uncommon.
25. **MM:** Ah no, yeah and tell us something had anyone else in your family been involved in the catering industry.
26. **GC:** My second eldest brother, that's the only one, James. He was at least ten years older.
27. **MM:** He was known as sort of Jimmy is it? Where did Jimmy start his training?

28. **GC:** Jammets.
29. **MM:** He started in Jammets as well. Okay so he started in Jammets probably around the early '50s or something like that if he's ten years older.
30. **GC:** I can't be certain whether it was. I can't be certain but roughly around that period, when he left Jammets then he went over to...
31. **MM:** How many years would he have done in Jammets?
32. **GC:** He would have served all his time there practically, well at that time it was seven years. I don't know exactly how many years but I'd say most of his time or if not all of it. If I remember correctly its difficult to pinpoint because it was a long time ago and I was young, quite young at the time but from Jammets he went over to London then to Cumberland Hotel. He returned to Dublin and went to the Gresham with the famous, I'm sure you heard a lot about him now, McManus.
33. **MM:** I think maybe what'll I do maybe I'll go through your thing first and then I'll come back to him.
34. **GC:** That's fine.
35. **MM:** But Jimmy went to Cumberland in London and then back into the Gresham and was he in the Gresham for a while then.
36. **GC:** I think about two years. I can't quite recall.
37. **MM:** Where did he go after that?
38. **GC:** Back to Jammets.
39. **MM:** He went back to Jammets. So did he work with you in Jammets or had you left Jammets?
40. **GC:** Briefly, briefly, briefly. Just for a few months if I remember correctly.
41. **MM:** Oh right so tell us then, you'd heard about Jammets, your second eldest brother had worked in Jammets so you went there, January 1961, fifteen years old. What do you remember, your first thoughts are? Who was there to start off with? Who was working there?
42. **GC:** Well go back to the original question my first thoughts were this is the most unusual smell like from the food in the kitchen to walk into the environment of the kitchen he was like very, very different to anything I'd experienced before. Probably just a mixture of different foods being cooked, etc., etc. I remember that struck me. Straight away, but day two I didn't get that experience again and probably never ever again after that. Those were my first experience but who was there at the time, at that particular time there was Vincent Dowling who'd have been executive chef or head chef. Dessie Cahill would have been his second head chef. Louis Jammet was alive of course at the time being the boss and then down the line I suppose Mick Moore, a man called Mick Moore or Michael Moore I don't if you ever heard of him, he was *saucier*. There was Frank McManus who was the head chef of the (inaudible) and then there was Paddy Ryan who was (inaudible) and it worked a very strict but great system. There's no question about that like everything was prim and proper in that line and all the sauces were made in the sauce corner, and all the vegetables and omelettes were done in the vegetable corner. That type of thing. All the roasting was done in the roast corner, game included, deep fat frying and so on. And upstairs then was the still room where the *hors d'oeuvres* came from and any desserts. So we had Jackie Byrne who was top man upstairs who came from Churchtown if I remember correctly or lived in Churchtown.

43. **MM:** And Jackie Byrne was he a chef or a waiter?
44. **GC:** He was a chef. His responsibility was looking after the *hors d'oeuvres*, the cold section, the cold *hors d'oeuvres* I should have said and all desserts that were required. His side kick then was a man who worked alongside him was a man called Gerry Kelly who kind of assisted Jackie Byrne and then also upstairs was the grill, the grill room and the charcoal grill of the old kind.
45. **MM:** And yeah sure that was the one that was designed by Moffit, it was sort of the glass, the glass, there was the glass bricks as such as part of it, the design was there. Upstairs.
46. **GC:** I can recall it very well because I was actually up there for a while, maybe one of the reasons why I finished in Jammets because I couldn't get out of the grill. It was a kind of a very messy job in its own way and very hot. You had to get all your charcoal in the morning, clear out your grill from the evening before but actually they were quite basic. There was an oven grill with a charcoal base on it and it had support from the bars and just metal bar going right across. So what you had to do in the morning was to take the, when the fire got hot, you got it cleaned out so fresh coal, you had to put your bars into the grill to get them red hot like a blacksmith would in the forge. You had a wire brush to clean down the bars so maybe you can see where I'm coming from. So if you coughed or even blew your nose all this ash would appear.
47. **MM:** Right, it was a dirty job.
48. **GC:** You know it was a kind of a messy job but there was, but that was the charcoal grill at the time. Things changed as time went on but that was it in those days.
49. **MM:** In the charcoal grill, had you a fridge up there for the meat or did it come up from the kitchen when ordered?
50. **GC:** It would have been brought up from the larder. The orders would come in and there was a dumb waiter, sort of lift that went up and down and it brought the cold starters down to the restaurant downstairs as I mentioned earlier, Jackie Byrne and Gerry Kelly would look after those and the desserts and so on were sent down and vice versa the grill food would be sent up from the larder as per order.
51. **MM:** The steaks and stuff would come up and then you'd cook it, is that it? And how about the likes of say the garnish or the sauce?
52. **GC:** Yeah well that would be all on your counter but in reality what you could have put there would be bowls of ice which had *beurre maître d'hôtel* with watercress. Your (inaudible) would come up from the (inaudible) the roast chef, or your straw chips or whatever, that type of thing. All the different garnishes that you need. Your *béarnaise* would come from the sauce chef downstairs. Now it would be kept, the grill was a very, very warm place to work in. There's no problem keeping that warm.
53. **MM:** I suppose we should start off with your first memory. What was your first or just see if there's anyone else who was working there. How many people were working there at the time before we start off with your first job? You had Vincent Dowling, Dessie Cahill, Mick Moore, Frank McManus, Paddy Ryan. Now you talked about Jackie Byrne being upstairs.
54. **GC:** That's right and Gerry Kelly.
55. **MM:** Had you a pastry chef or was he a pastry chef.
56. **GC:** He was pastry chef.

57. **MM:** He was the pastry chef. So he looked after the pastries and he also looked after the cold *hors d'oeuvres* as such? And then did each of these sections then have a *commis*?
58. **GC:** Oh yeah, lots of *commis chefs*.
59. **MM:** Who were the *commis chefs* there when you were there do you remember?
60. **GC:** There was a guy on the roast corner called Tony Breffnie who is since dead, Lord have mercy on him. He died young. There was a guy called Joe Whelan but I know that he didn't continue in the business. There was another man Michael Keogh who was actually a past student of Cathal Brugha Street. Not only was he a past student but he was student of the year of the two year course that he did at the time. He would have been probably about third year when I started as a first year. I'm sure there were a few more now but I can't quite recall all the names of different *commis*. There would have been a *commis* in the larder naturally enough so lets just say like for every corner you had at least two *commis*, for every section.
61. **MM:** Okay so there was at least eleven or twelve at least chefs working there, like between *commis* and chefs as such?
62. **GC:** Oh easily yeah.
63. **MM:** Okay and you know when you arrived in there you were probably known from your brother even though your brother wasn't there.
64. **GC:** I would have been known, yeah. Not in all cases, but for the head chef because they would have worked together.
65. **MM:** What was your first job do you remember?
66. **GC:** In the sauce corner with Michael Moore and if I remember correctly what became my job on a regular daily basis was to make the *béchamel* and that would be quite a large pot of *béchamel* with the onion *clouté* etc., etc. We all know about that but like that was just one of the basic sauces so while I was doing that he was making the provençale, the fish *velouté*, the chicken *velouté* the demi-glaze or the *sauce Espanole* and therefore he had all his equipment, sauces ready for whatever he needed to do. So *béchamel* would have been the first job I can recall doing.
67. **MM:** And what you call it with the sauces would you make enough sauces say to last you around three days or something or is that how it worked or.
68. **GC:** They would do, the Espanole would probably last about two days, tomato sauce two day, provençale onion, *béchamel* every day was made fresh because some of that was passed on down to the vegetable corner for their gratins and so on. So I would say the average would be two days. The *hollandaise* and then you'd *béarnaise* from that naturally enough would be made every day, left in an earthen ware jar up on a rack over the cooker.
69. **MM:** And is that how they made it like, they didn't use a separate tarragon reduction for the *béarnaise*.
70. **GC:** No it was made as *hollandaise* and then turned into a *béarnaise*, or whatever other one you needed to use like a *maltaise*.
71. **MM:** Like I believe their *béarnaise*, you know, in a way was a *foytot*, because they used to use a bit of a meat glaze or something. Yeah, yeah I think they were renowned for that with I think was it the steak Jammets was it or one...

72. **GC:** No there was actually a big, big seller in Jammets particularly in the bar was a minute steak béarnaise served on a flat, a silver flat, a minute steak (inaudible) and a nice generous helping of béarnaise sauce.
73. **MM:** Remind me about the (inaudible) again.
74. **GC:** You had diced potato.
75. **MM:** Diced and sautéed is it. Sautéed diced potato is it.
76. **GC:** I can't quite recall but I'd say possibly deep fried. Like that would have been deep fried and rendered down fat, pure hundred per cent suet, beef fat.
77. **MM:** Yeah, okay. Now that sort of brings me nicely to the idea of the range or was it gas or was it...
78. **GC:** Unfortunately because I'm sure you probably heard it was coal.
79. **MM:** It was coal still at that stage.
80. **GC:** Absolutely, yeah, one big long range that had four sections to it. Well in actual fact it had three working sections, as you came in the door of the kitchen the roast corner was in front of you. Across from that, across from the roast corner was the sauce corner and the left of the sauce corner as you worked at the range was the vegetable corner and for some extraordinary reason the end corner opposite the vegetable corner was, I never really quite understood it, but there seemed to be a vacant space. I can't quite recall but like the soups were made by the vegetable corner too and you'd have all the basic tomato soup, (inaudible) made on a daily basis, every day fresh and then you'd have your *soup de jour*, your consommé and your (inaudible). They were always there. Its not that the *soup de jour* changed obviously.
81. **MM:** How, so how about electricity. I take it there was electric lighting in the kitchen?
82. **GC:** There would have been electric lighting in the kitchen but there would be no daylight. It was em, I don't know how you'd describe it really, like a basement kitchen almost. Although it was not on the basement it was on the same level as Adam's Lane.
83. **MM:** Right but it was internal walls as such.
84. **GC:** An internal kitchen, there were no windows.
85. **MM:** No windows okay, and how about ventilation?
86. **GC:** There was a canopy overhead but you'd have to say it was a working environment. It was very, very hot. Extremely hot in comparison to modern standards or even ten years later or even three years later when I went to the Intercontinental. We don't want to jump too far ahead at this stage.
87. **MM:** The refrigeration, they would have had a cold room?
88. **GC:** All the refrigeration, there was a cold room for vegetables and fruit and salads, a walk-in cold room. It wouldn't be very large. In the larder then you had your very old fridges with large doors and the first door you'd open in the bottom was the fish fridge which would have deep drawers with lots of ice in it. All the fish would be stored there and then probably the shellfish above that again and then on the left of that separated by a divider in the centre would be the meat fridge where the smaller cuts of meat would be. Larger cuts of meat would be up in another little

walk-in fridge. So you had this area of small, two small little walk-in fridges for large cuts of meat, large joints of meat rather.

89. **MM:** And they would have been electrical fridges?
90. **GC:** They would have been, to my knowledge yeah. Oh they would yeah.
91. **MM:** Did they mature their own meat there, you know, did they hang their own beef for any period of time or would they have bought it, you know, bought it fairly well hung and then maybe hold on to it for another bit.
92. **GC:** I would have thought that they'd get it fairly fresh and they'd hang it on recollection and it was always sort of a expertise with the (inaudible) if you want to call it that. (inaudible) that meat, don't bring me down the one in the back, pick the ones in the front because they'd be the, they used in ten to fourteen days, was the average hanging time for particularly sirloin, that type of meat. The point steak was very popular then, extremely popular. You don't hear of that now.
93. **MM:** You don't hear that now, no the point steak yeah and the point steak was part of the rump wasn't it?
94. **GC:** It was yeah, it was the pointed part of the pointed part of the rump. Actually three different types of steak came off it, off the rump.
95. **MM:** So yeah was the rump, the point, and what was the other one?
96. **GC:** I can't quite recall what the other one was because they're not used much nowadays. It either sirloin or fillet now and that's it.
97. **MM:** And they were favoured over the sirloin probably were they?
98. **GC:** Not necessarily, no, no but it was a firmly held belief that like fillet had very little flavour. Sirloin had a reasonably good flavour but the point steak though it was not as tender definitely had a superior edge in regards taste.
99. **MM:** Taste, alright, okay. Its funny how trends change isn't it. So how many, how busy a restaurant was it say in 1961 when you went there? You had, from what I understand of it now and please correctly, you had the downstairs which was quite upmarket and then you had the upstairs which was the grill room and then was there was a blue room or something upstairs as well.
100. **GC:** Yeah there was a blue room for private functions. Yeah, which is probably better known today as Lillies Bordello!
101. **MM:** Okay, yeah, yeah. And then how about the Oyster Bar, the Oyster Bar was in Adams Court then was it?
102. **GC:** That was the first door on the left in Adams Court. You went in there into the Oyster Bar, the Burlington Bar was the cocktail bar.
103. **MM:** So there was a cocktail bar, the Burlington Bar was the cocktail bar? And then there was also an Oyster Bar where you could come and have food at a bar, sit at a bar eating your food as such.
104. **GC:** Absolutely, yeah, yeah.
105. **MM:** And then would there have been other tables there or was it just a bar?



Figure GC.2: Drawing of Adam Court from Jammet Menu

- 106.GC: Actually I can't recall exactly. The people would sit at a counter. I remember seeing people sitting at a counter but I don't think it was set out like a bistro if I remember correctly. Now it could have been just that I can't quite remember. I think just the bar more or less. But there was a man there Eamon Preston, I don't know if you're aware of his name. But he was very well known in Dublin as a person who was very fast at opening oysters.
- 107.MM: Okay, like an oyster shucker?
- 108.GC: Quiet personality, strong personality, very popular person. He wasn't a head barman but nonetheless particularly after Jammets closed he went to Wicklow (Hotel). Invariably his photograph would come up every year with the oysters when they were in season.
- 109.MM: In Clarinbridge?
- 110.GC: You'd know who to get your oysters from if you were in a hurry. So it was Eamon Preston.
- 111.MM: And he was from Dublin?
- 112.GC: Yeah, yeah I think he actually lived in Santry but I'm not too sure now but Eamon was a good age then.
- 113.MM: And where was most of the business done? Was lunch or dinner the busiest time?
- 114.GC: Dinner time. On recollection I would imagine dinner time but it wouldn't be very different to most establishments even today in relation to business. It always came like weekend was a time of very, very busy. Fridays and Saturdays were the prime times. They didn't open on a Sunday so I suppose the best way to answer that question is that you could say well how long did you work or what was your roster like? It might actually quantify or even answer the question. Like Monday everybody had a day-and-a-half off.

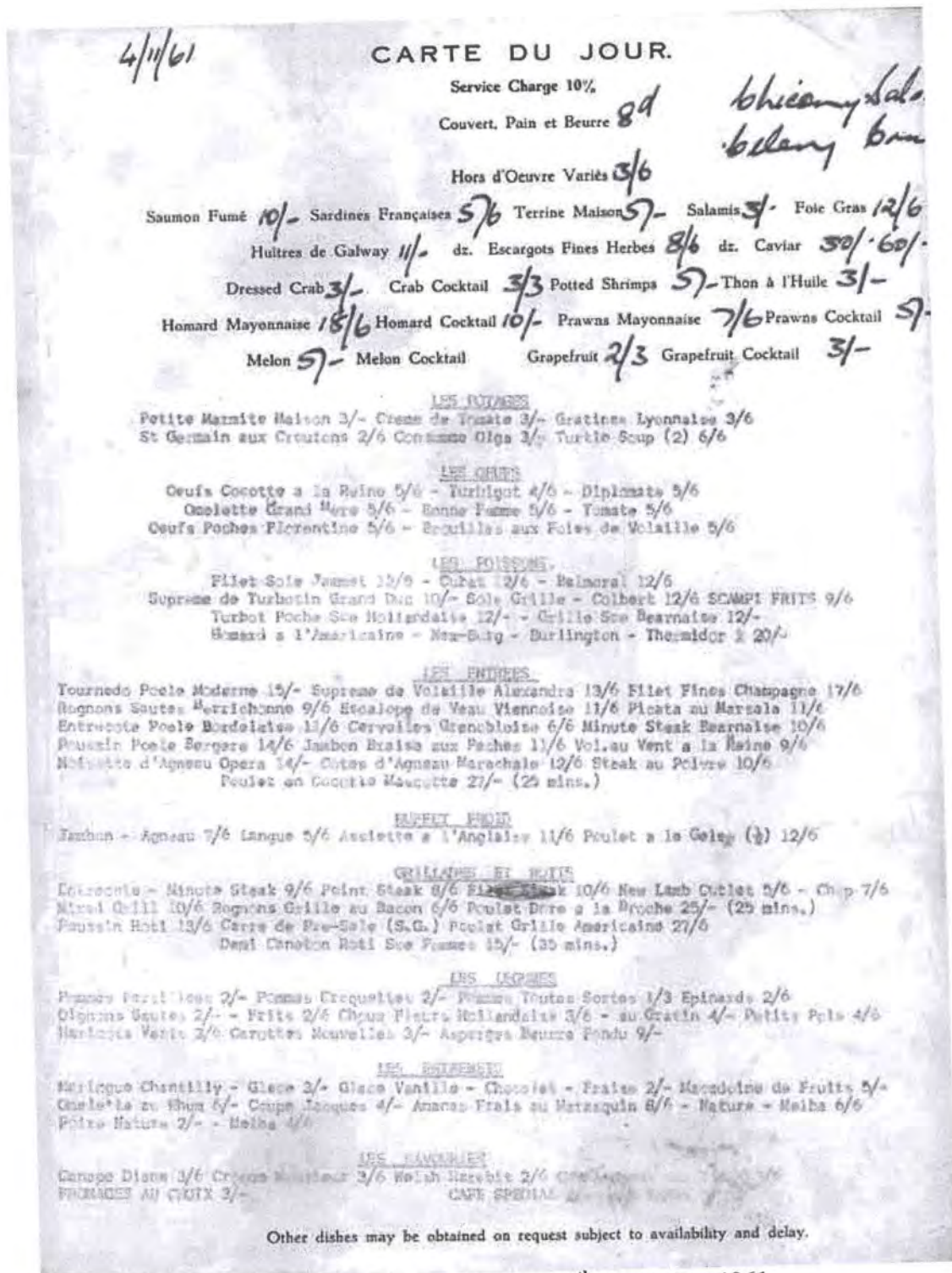


Figure GC.3: Jammet's Menu 4th November 1961

115.MM: Right.

- 116.GC: So Sunday everybody was off, no problems there, they didn't open on a Sunday. Monday you went in at nine and you worked a split shift, you were off at three, you'd be back at six and I mean back at six, ready at work and you were finished then maybe at half ten, eleven. So if you multiplied that by five days, it would give you an idea and I think you've got something like fifty-five maybe, over fifty-five hours there alone. Now we haven't gone into the half day yet. The half day was, my half day was Tuesday. I do remember that. I went in at nine and you should have been off at three but that was at the chef's discretion. You could get off at five but in fairness, you generally got off at three but not necessarily always so you had quite a hefty work schedule, long hours in comparison to now, I think its about thirty-eight hours a week, now the average and that would nearly, if we add it up, how and ever anyway, we can do that later on if you wish but just to get an idea and that probably answers the question. That applied to everybody. So it was kind of all hands on deck.
- 117.MM: But I heard the thing, I suppose the one thing that was good about working in a restaurant as opposed to a hotel is that you had every Sunday off.
- 118.GC: Yeah, yeah. Well I'm presuming that most I'm not really certain about the other restaurants but Jammets certainly did not open on a Sunday. I couldn't vouch for the rest. That's probably true.
- 119.MM: Now and was it open for lunch on a Saturday as well?
- 120.GC: It would be open every day for lunch except Sunday.
- 121.MM: Every day for lunch and dinner. And how many people could it seat do you remember, like downstairs.
- 122.GC: I would imagine possibly no more than fifty.
- 123.MM: Down stairs?
- 124.GC: Forty, you know it's a question I never thought about and counting (inaudible) its been like first, second year *commis*, it wasn't really, it didn't come into my mind that the actual amount of seatings in the restaurant. But in hindsight I'd image between maybe forty and fifty.
- 125.MM: Was there a difference between the food that was offered downstairs and the food that was offered upstairs in the grill?
- 126.GC: Well upstairs was the grill and the grill bar and you ordered accordingly from the grill.
- 127.MM: Okay, yeah, yeah, yeah. You have a menu here say from 1961 and it's probably one of the earliest because I think its an earlier, oh no it's November '61 but what we have here, I'm just looking at the menu here. Okay there's a set menu as in on the right hand side here. There's the *carte de jour*, you know which is the *à la carte*. There's a whole selection of starters, you know be it *hors d'oeuvres variés* and dressed crab and melon and grapefruit.
- 128.GC: They'd all be available in the grill room.
- 129.MM: They were all available in the grill room. Then you have your soups which as I say you'd one, two, three, four, five, six soups available at all times. You've egg dishes. They would have been done again by the *entremetier* yeah.
- 130.GC: By the *entremetier*, yeah.

NOS SUGGESTIONS

VINS		Bot.	1-Bt.	1-
Bordeaux. Rouge, Blanc et Rosé	...	10/-	5/6	:
Bourgogne. Rouge et Blanc	...	11/-	6/-	:
Loire	Muscadet Domaine de Chasseloir	15/-	8/-	

Fruité Luné Sec Rinfort 8/6
 Shrimp Cocktail 5/6 Salade de Tomate 3/-

Crème Marie Louise 2/6

Supreme de Turbot Aida 10/-
 Filet Plie Frit Sec Bearnaise 7/6
 Coquille St. Jacques Thermidor 10/-
 Haddock Colbert 6/-

Vol au Vent de Ris d'Agneau Financiere 9/6
 Cote de Beau Smitone 12/6
 Emince de Volaille Duchesse 9/-

Levi Faison Paele aux belais 15/-

Faison Roti sur Canape 20/- + 35/- Pluvier Roti 8/-
 Sarcelle Roti 8/- a l'Orange 9/6 Wildgein Roti 15/- a l'Orange 12/6
 Canard Sauvage Roti 20/- a l'Orange 25/- a la Presse 27/6

Champignons des Champs Provencale 11/- belais Frais 11/6
 Laitons de Bruxelles 8/6 Endives Braise 3/6 - au Beurre 3/6
 Broccolis Hollandaise - Milanaise 5/-

Plum Pudding Sec Vanille 6/6 - au Rhum 7/6

Figure GC.4: Jammet Menu Specials 4th November 1961

- 131.**MM:** You've got your fish section. Now was there a fish chef or was that done by the sauce chef?
- 132.**GC:** No lets just say that the poached chef and the pan fried fish, shallow frying would be done by the sauce chef and if you looked across then you had the roast chef, he'd look after the sole Colbert and the scampi and so on. He deep fried and grilled and maybe baked or whatever.
- 133.**MM:** Then you had your *entrées*, so that was all the sauce chefs looked after the *entrées* as such. You had the cold buffet. Now was that looked after from upstairs, was it.
- 134.**GC:** That would have been done in the larder in the (inaudible). That would be downstairs.
- 135.**MM:** Now I don't think you've mentioned a larder chef here.
- 136.**GC:** Oh we mentioned Dessie Cahill. He was the chef *garde manger*. It's a little bit confusing because upstairs starters were done but downstairs the meat done in I suppose the larder.
- 137.**MM:** The larder chef as such yeah?
- 138.**GC:** As such whereas in other establishments they'd probably call that the butchery. And then you'd have an orderes corner where the starters were looked after.
- 139.**MM:** So again you had your grills and roasts which the roast chef would look after that?
- 140.**GC:** Well the grills would be done upstairs in the Grill Bar.
- 141.**MM:** And say if someone asked for a grill downstairs it would be grilled upstairs and brought down?
- 142.**GC:** It would be grilled upstairs.
- 143.**MM:** Okay and then you had the vegetable section and the sweet section.
- 144.**GC:** The sweet section was upstairs.
- 145.**MM:** And actually when I look at the sweet section there wasn't really that, like today, it was quite straight forward, like you know what I mean, there were ice creams and there was sort of fruit and stuff so it wasn't...
- 146.**GC:** They did things like peach melba and (inaudible). Like at that time it would be fairly acceptable, like *crepes suzettes* were a great favourite and *omelette norvege* (baked Alaska) was a fairly regular one but you'd have no machines to whip meringue for *omelette norvege*. You'd do it by hand in a copper basin.
- 147.**MM:** And I'm just looking here as well, the savouries were there, you know...
- 148.**GC:** The Welsh Rarebit and Canape Diane, they were looked after by the *entremetier*.
- 149.**MM:** I'm looking at this menu and it's quite, there's a lot of choice on it. Would people have gone through all of these courses, you know, would they have taken something from each section or would they have maybe picked and chosen?
- 150.**GC:** Well I'd say in a lot of cases if they went to the bother of going to Jammets they'd probably, certainly money would be no object, so they'd be well used to having choice. Large choices and I suggest that most of them start with a starter possibly if the starter was anyway heavy they'd go into a consommé of some kind or any of the cream soups which were a little bit

heavier. If they didn't have a starter they might just have a soup and an egg dish. They might have a fish course but I would say on average that most of the customers would have a *hors d'oeuvres*, maybe a light soup, a main course and on down the line they'd have to select their vegetables, possibly dessert, there's a quite substantial amount of food in that. Some would go right through the whole menu with the exception I would image of leaving one course out, possibly the egg course. You know that makes sense. It would vary for different groups but people who went into Jammets had no problem. They were there for the night and they were quite willing to spend maybe three hours over a meal and more. They weren't in any hurry.

- 151.MM: Yeah and how often, you were saying the menu changed every day, the *table d'hôte*?
- 152.GC: This menu here on your left the *table d'hôte* would be written every day. This one would probably be written on a weekly basis if I remember correctly.
- 153.MM: Okay so the *a la carte* would change. Okay but sure I can compare because I have one or two of them so I can compare them and contrast them with that which is good. So how long, you started off with the sauce chef and how long did you stay with him. A few months, six months or something like that?
- 154.GC: I stayed there for almost two years and then I was asked would I like to go up to the Grill Bar and I said not particularly. So they said 'we'd like you to go up for three months, just for three months only'. So that's fine so to be perfectly honest with you I went up and I was there three months. I came down. I spoke to Vincent the chef and I said my three months are up and he said 'I'm a little bit stuck at the moment you wouldn't mind staying another three months'. So as time went on it went to seven months and I thought no I don't really need this anymore. It was quite a good experience being there but it had a lot of disadvantages working in the grill in terms of the ergonomics of the place and atmosphere and the temperature and heat. Small confined area, I mean small confined area. Not to mention you were on your own.
- 155.MM: Yeah, yeah which would be sort of lonely enough?
- 156.GC: You were detached from the main body which never actually occurred to me before but I'm just thinking of it now, and low and behold an advertisement came along in the newspaper, interviews for the Intercontinental Hotel in Ballsbridge due to open in 1963.
- 157.MM: Right.
- 158.GC: Or maybe if we want to move on or do you want to stay with Jammets for another while.
- 159.MM: I'll just come. So that's what brought you to the Intercontinental.
- 160.GC: That's what brought me to the Intercontinental.
- 161.MM: That's brought you in 1963 because it was only opening as such and there was an advertisement in paper. Do you remember what paper it was by any chance?
- 162.GC: The Press or The Independent. I'm not sure if it was in all the papers, more than likely because it was a big hotel requiring lots of staff, lots of expertise.
- 163.MM: Now tell me about Vincent Dowling, because like we're looking here at actually everyone in the kitchen was Irish.
- 164.GC: They were, before Vincent there was another man who was head chef, he was French, before my time, Mark Faure. So moving on from that like Vincent was the next head chef.

- 165.**MM:** Would I be right in saying or do you know that I believe that Vincent actually was sent to France by the Jammets to train. Is that right?
- 166.**GC:** Correct yeah. He served his time in Jammets, all of his time. And then he was sent to France.
- 167.**MM:** To the Bristol was it?
- 168.**GC:** The Jammet family. I can't be certain of the name but the hotel had a Jammet connection, relatives of Jammet and he stayed there for a number of years. I can't recall quite how many, before my time anyway but he'd been there for a number of years and he came back to Jammets then.
- 169.**MM:** Yeah because it's funny because Vincent Dowling was in the same primary class as Jimmy Kilbride, and actually the other person in that same primary was Sean Kinsella.
- 170.**GC:** Oh yeah you were saying that to me recently yeah. I didn't know that before.
- 171.**MM:** So it's quite amazing actually when you think of three people who went to become quite well known chefs as such were in the same primary school, you know?
- 172.**GC:** Yeah when you think about, yeah it is amazing. It's unusual to say the least.
- 173.**MM:** The other lads, had any of the other lads been to France do you know?
- 174.**GC:** No, no. It wasn't unusual for some of the senior chefs to have been in England not necessarily for too long. They used to pop over, maybe stay a year, two years, maybe six months and come back again and after they'd come back after six months they say things like 'how's it going mate, are you well'. (Laugh). We used always find that very amusing but all joking aside looking back on it now there was very few that actually travel anywhere but moving on, I'm just kind of moving on a bit like, others guys that I've met, an awful lot of them had worked in England but for a short period. Not too long a period. Just get the experience I suppose.
- 175.**MM:** Do you remember, in the early '60s, do you remember what the competition for Jammets was?
- 176.**GC:** Absolutely, there would have been the Hibernian hotel which was just around the corner and then I suppose the Russell would be next or thereabouts, certainly the Hibernian and the Russell come to mind and the Red Bank in D'Olier Street. There was a great favourite place in town but it wouldn't be in the same category called the Parradisio.
- 177.**MM:** Or right, that was in Westmorland Street.
- 178.**GC:** Westmorland Street but it would be very much middle of the range, different. The Gresham had a very good reputation at that time for fine food, maybe not quite to same standard but it wouldn't be too far off either.
- 179.**MM:** Yeah. Was there anywhere else?
- 180.**GC:** Well I'm just thinking about the centre of Dublin really.
- 181.**MM:** How about the, was the Dolphin still there or was the Dolphin on its way out?
- 182.**GC:** No it was still there. It was very much still there but there it was always considered to be, the Dolphin and Wynns were much a hotel that clergy went to, to my knowledge. The distinct recollection I have about it. Now the food would have been, I don't think you could make a

comparison in terms of classic food, like Jammets, the Russell, the Hibernian, the Redbank. Maybe they were in a different link, maybe slightly down from that. There's no question about that.

183.**MM:** How about the Wicklow Hotel?

184.**GC:** The Wicklow. I would put it on par, it might be a little bit above the Dolphin and Wynns, a little bit above but still not reaching the same heights in cuisine.

185.**MM:** Yeah so sort of the Hibernian, the Russell, Jammets, the Redbank and the Gresham sort of stood, and the one that's missing there now and maybe for a reason is the Shelbourne. Was the standard of food not as good in the Shelbourne?

186.**GC:** Well it must have been but we never really heard much, strange, it was never spoken in terms, in later years I do recall the Shelbourne having a good name in later years. I mean much later but it must have had but it just never came up or it never was mentioned on par.

187.**MM:** Well I have evidence from a little bit later in the mid '60s now of it sort of sliding you know from Egon Ronay visiting.

188.**GC:** Yeah well it just wasn't mentioned much in our day so I'm assuming, you know certain amount about a certain amount of things, that's as far as I can recollect anyway. There was no great buzz about the Shelbourne at that time.

189.**MM:** Do you remember any of the people who were working in the other establishments, like say you know the Gresham, the Redbank, the Russell, the Hibernian at the time.

190.**GC:** Yeah I do, I do but I wouldn't have know them personally. I mean I just remember the names. I think there was Pierre Rolland in the Russell. There was Roger Noblet in the Hibernian. The Dolphin I can't quite put my finger on the Dolphin now. There was the Central hotel as well but that would be kind of quite good for food but more down market again. There was a man called Billy Marshall. He was supposed to be, very tall.

191.**MM:** Billy Marshall had worked in, I think he might have worked in Jammets but he definitely work in the, he trained in the Shelbourne originally. Billy Marshall he did. He trained in the Shelbourne actually with Johnny Opperman and with PJ Dunne.

192.**GC:** Ah right, and P.J. Dunne. I think P.J. was in Jammets.

193.**MM:** P.J. was in Jammets before going to the college.

194.**GC:** And his brother too I might add. Yeah but his brother wasn't a chef. He was in another line of work. He was actually the, I'm trying to remember the French terms for it now. He was actually the silver man.

195.**MM:** Okay yeah. So PJ's brother was the silver man.

196.**GC:** I just can't think of his Christian name now at the moment but it will come back to me.

197.**MM:** Actually just on that before we move away from Jammets and move on then to the Intercontinental. Waiters, so was the head man front of house when you were there.

198.**GC:** Well the head man front of house was probably the best description you could use, Willie O'Regan was the Maître D' and very much as Maître D'. His next in line was a man called Jimmy Beggan. He was downstairs in the main restaurant. The head waiter in the grill bar was man called Paddy Flynn. There was Tom Foley, worked in the restaurant along with Willie O'Regan

and there was Paddy Wilson and there was a man called Pop Baker who I'm told much later years was actually the father of Don Baker. He was a lovely man and I remember him retiring, he retired at the princely sum of £10 from Monsieur Louis Jammets, thank you very much, *au revoir*. That was Pop Baker. (**note**. Don Baker's grandfather) So the other name then was Brendan Lorton, we're talking waiters now, Stephen Kirwin, Seamus Harper the *sommelier*.

199.MM: Shay Harper?

200.GC: He went on to, oh one of the wine merchants now, at the time they were big. Was it Gilbeys or somebody like that. Seamus Harper left anyway and he took up a job of marketing of wines in some large company. It will come back to me and to mention the army of *commis* waiters that would have been assisting them and I haven't named all the waiters.

201.MM: Do you remember anymore of them?

202.GC: There's one guy, I'm trying to remember his name and it just won't come to me. There was Jackie Mulhall, Jackie Mulhall who went on to America.

203.MM: That's the fella who got in contact with me.

204.GC: Is it?

205.MM: He went to Mosney with you on holidays or something like that. He got in contact with me. He sent me a... He did very well. He went on working with the airlines. Yeah he became a chef and became an airline chef then and the whole lot. No was it an airline. I have the information.

206.GC: I think he worked for a family when he went to American.

207.MM: Yeah he went to Chicago or somewhere like that and he did very well for himself.

208.GC: I lost contact with him. He was from Cabra actually. A nice guy. So we didn't mention Ms Riordan the manageress. Ms. Riordan would appear every Friday with your pay, which was a pound note in my case, two shillings and six pence, better known as a half crown wrapped up in the pound note. That was your pay for your first year.

209.MM: So your pay was one pound?

210.GC: One pound, two shillings and six pence and a huge increase going into second year. It was one pound and five shillings which was two half crowns. So it was one shilling, ten bob I suppose for the want of a better mind. But the mind boggles when you think of it.

211.MM: And was that very poor money or was it relatively okay when you were there.

212.GC: That was the average. I'd say it was relative to what was being paid at the time. I know it sounds but things moved on then. The chefs who were married men with families the senior chefs would probably have been on anything from eight to ten pounds. You know just to put it into perspective, the head chef had a car, Vincent Dowling, a small little Fiat but I don't believe anybody else in Jammets had a car except maybe (End of side A tape 1).

213.MM: Louis was getting a bit older now, Louis died in '64, I think, in '63 or '64 he died. (**note**: Louis died October 1964)

214.GC: Yeah it could be. I was away at the time because I wrote to Ms. Riordan and she told me that he had died. That would be about right. I went away in '66, she wrote to me in '66/'67 to say that he had died.

- 215.MM: The son Patrick, was Patrick involved in the business?
- 216.GC: You'd see him occasionally, but only occasionally. The answer is really no, not really.
- 217.MM: So Ms. Riordan was really sort of managing the day-to-day finances and sort of stuff?
- 218.GC: Yeah she would have been. Her title was kind of manageress and I believe she was a Cork woman.
- 219.MM: What age would she have been?
- 220.GC: When you're so young it's hard to tell but I reckon she was in her forties, mid forties or thereabouts. But after Jammets closed she went to live with Jammets, with Patrick out near where the Top Hat is Dunlaoghaire is, around that area.
- 221.MM: Kill of the Grange is where, Bakers Corner around there is where they had their original house, that's right. So basically you got fed up, was there many other people coming and going while you were there.
- 222.GC: Not particularly, no, because it was unusual at the time to say that you were leaving.
- 223.MM: Yeah, yeah. When you had a job, you stayed in it really?
- 224.GC: Well yes and no and the fact that it was Jammets. But it wasn't taken very kindly when you gave in your notice because it was probably deemed as some kind of a, do you not like it here or is something wrong. It's almost an honour to be here, you know. To me looking back that was the way, the feeling at the time so I don't think the chef spoke to me when I gave in my notice for a couple of days (laugh). But anyway there's another side to that story as well.
- 225.MM: And just sort of a question on that, because you know Vincent had his own problems, you know what I mean?
- 226.GC: Yeah he had his own problems.
- 227.MM: He had his own personal difficulties. But when you were there did you notice much of that sort of drink culture?
- 228.GC: Oh absolutely.
- 229.MM: And how widespread was it?
- 230.GC: Very widespread. Well it wasn't uncommon. Well not to the extent now that some people had severe difficulties but it was not uncommon, certainly now. There was a drink culture, a very strong drink culture.
- 231.MM: But there was a drink system anyway, wasn't there.
- 232.GC: There was. You got beer at work.
- 233.MM: There was a beer allowance or something like that.
- 234.GC: There was, yeah, but *commis chefs* would get orange. The chefs had a beer allowance. There was a daily basis. I think that's the same in some other hotels anyway but how and ever, yeah there would have been a strong culture of drink.

- 235.MM: Would you have seen it affecting the work, or would it be a sort of a wind down exercise, you know, wind down from the stress and the heat that they'd sort of have.
- 236.GC: I would say it was a wind down exercise maybe after work.
- 237.MM: As opposed to drinking during work.
- 238.GC: There wasn't really that much during work. Not really. Well I mean not to my knowledge at the time but let's say just that a small percentage of people had difficulties and it was obvious.
- 239.MM: Yeah so this advertisement appeared in the...
- 240.GC: Oh the advertisement for the Intercontinental Hotel and I really had no idea what Intercontinental Hotel was about. Did a little bit of research on it, asked a few questions, discovered they had hotels all over the world and they were predominately owned by Pan American Airways which was the greatest things since fried bread. So the interviews took place in an office in Ballsbridge. To this day, across road from Roly's on the corner. You know the opposite corner?
- 241.MM: Near Gunnes?
- 242.GC: Yeah that corner there, it was upstairs. The interviews took place there and I went for an interview with a lot of other people and I received a letter saying that 'thank you for your interview; we look forward to being in touch with you sometime in the near future'. So I waited for a while and the next thing I was called back for another interview so I thought maybe this looks promising.
- 243.MM: But had you left Jammets?
- 244.GC: No, no. So went for the second interview and I got the job and I was to start there if I remember correctly on the first, I think it was 1st May, I think. The hotel wasn't even open. We were just going to move in and start making preparations. The building was not even totally finished. The kitchen was almost there, almost there but to say that walking into the Intercontinental was an absolutely, it was like a paradise in terms of working conditions and I mean that. I mean Jammets was a great place to work in for learning but we have to look at the realities like too. When you went to work in the Intercontinental, you walked up, you had a clean uniform everyday, it did its own laundry. You had a beautiful canteen which Jammets did not provide. There was a place to eat alright but that was a locker room. We won't go in too much about that but you had your personnel office, you had your personnel manager, a human resource, *chef de partie* with all of them, every one of them were foreign. Not one was Irish with the exception of Bill Kavanagh. He was the most senior Irish person at the time.
- 245.MM: In the Intercontinental they hadn't opened up, how many of these foreign chefs were there.
- 246.GC: There was one for every section that you can think of.
- 247.MM: The top fella was Freddie Goldinger.
- 248.GC: Freddie Goldinger yeah, the executive chef yeah and Roland Fuchs was *sous chef*.
- 249.MM: He was the *sous chef*, okay. And then you had all of the different sections.

- 250.GC: All the departments. Marcel was the sauce chef. Marcel was French, I don't know what his surname was. He didn't speak any English, none whatsoever. Guido, I don't know what Guido's second name was.
- 251.MM: Was he Italian?
- 252.GC: He was Swiss and he was the (inaudible). Josef was the butcher. He was from Germany and Hans Schneider, John Taylor if you want to translate it was (inaudible), he was the pastry chef. He was from Germany. And Yoachin, his name was actually Joachin Yessen, you can have a guess now at spelling his surname, and he was German and he was the (inaudible). And then we had the Martello room, the Roof Top restaurant. There was a George (inaudible) who was the chef in charge of the Martello room.
- 253.MM: Where was he from do you know? Was he French?
- 254.GC: Yeah he was French.
- 255.MM: And then where did Bill Kavanagh fit in here. He was *sous chef* wasn't he.
- 256.GC: Actually at the very beginning now I think Bill was sort of *sous chef* assistant. He'd be next in line after Roland.
- 257.MM: Yeah. Okay. So did you do some training first then before because you say that the hotel itself wasn't open or something like that. How long before it opened as such?
- 258.GC: I reckon it was probably about two or three weeks.
- 259.MM: So who was with you? Who do you remember? Who were the Irish people with you say starting off? There must have been a gang of you.
- 260.GC: There was. I was on the larder. The *garde manger* with Guido as *chef de partie*. There was Jimmy Kennedy who was probably the most senior Irish guy and then there was Shay Kirwan, I won't say too much about that. There was Johnny Haynes and that was all that was in the larder. Guido, Jimmy Kennedy, and those three lads. So it's difficult to trace them all back now. Jim Bove would have been on the sauce with Marcel. He'd be kind of assistant.
- 261.MM: And Jim Bove would have started at the beginning.
- 262.GC: Yeah, definitely, definitely, yeah. I'm trying to remember now, the roast chef was a guy called, he worked in Dublin Castle, he was Church of Ireland, Eric Bryant. A very nice guy, I think you might have met him, did you. Somebody met him a year or two ago purely out of the blue. He was English, sorry he married an English girl, I beg your pardon and I think he went off to England. Somebody met him. I can't remember who it was, recently. It doesn't matter. So we had Eric Bryant on the roast and then there was Bill Kavanagh, not Bill Kavanagh, Bill Kennedy was the staff chef, mind you there was quite a big staff in the Intercontinental. Him and a guy called Cox, Michael Cox they both worked as staff chefs, so they had a couple of hundred meals to do each day and so on. Moving on then I suppose there was Val Dodd who worked on the sauce. (Interrupted by phone).
- 263.MM: What I'll do I'll take it from the bottom row and we'll work from left to right and that way I can just transcribe it later on.



Figure GC.5: The Intercontinental Kitchen Brigade 1963

264.GC: So we're going bottom row, left to right. We have Guido, *Garde Manger*, then we have Marcel *saucier*, then we have Josef who was the butcher, then we have Hands Schneider who was the *patissier*, Roland Fuchs seven foot two or three I think, he was *sous chef*. Freddie Goldinger, Swiss, executive chef, our own Bill Kavanagh who was next in line after Roland Fuchs. Then we have Joschin Yessen, then we've Johnny Martin who was next in line after Josef in the butchery, Pierce Hingston was *chef tournant*, then we have Eric Bryant, he's the last on the front row. Okay so we'll go up, the next row. There's two women there now and I can't recall who those ladies are. They worked in the still room anyway. So we've Bill Kennedy who as personal chef and Michael Cox, Personal Chef. We had Jimmy Kenney (inaudible) assisting Guido, then we had Jim Bove sauce corner with Marcel, Val Dodd, sauce corner, Kevin Duffy, Lord have mercy on him, he was in the pastry. There's three ladies then from the still room. I can't quite recall all their names. I'll move up to the third row on the left hand side again and its myself, Gerry Connell, Peter Lawlor, *entremetier*, like he was helping in the vegetables. We were *commis*. There's one guy there now, oh yeah, Michael Finnegan would have been on the vegetables. Brady, Jimmy Brady, I think Jimmy was on the roast corner with Eric Bryant. Johnny Haynes would have been on functions. Another lad there I'm not quite sure who he is. I'll just have to pass him. We've another lad here called, I think his name is Michael L'estrange and I think he worked in the pastry as a *commis*. We've Joe Frayne. Now I'm after skipping one after Michael La Strange. The next one after that is Joe Frayne who worked in Aer Lingus with me. Joe, I think Joe was over in the larder as well actually. He was. Then there's little Tommy Sommers at the end of that third row and he was a brother of Willie Sommers. He died in a car crash. And he was also a brother of Jimmy Sommers, a very big executive is SIPTU. I don't know if Jimmy Sommers is still with SIPTU. Up at the very top then, I'm not sure who that lad is there. Did I mention a Michael Finnegan.

265.MM: You did.

- 266.**GC:** That is actually Michael Finnegan. The next lad is Christy Clarke who worked in the (inaudible) and the next lad is Shay Kirwan who was on the *garde manger* with me. Now that's the whole crew.
- 267.**MM:** So its just that Michael Finnegan then. The guy down here.
- 268.**GC:** So that kind of tells the story about the Intercontinental.
- 269.**MM:** So the Intercontinental started off, you had basically as you said the Martello Room was upstairs?
- 270.**GC:** The Martello Room was upstairs. It was the roof top restaurant.
- 271.**MM:** That was roof top restaurant and that was like fine dining.
- 272.**GC:** It would have been fine dining. It was an expensive place to eat in, probably the most expensive, possibly the most expensive around at the time. A small kitchen, good menu. A lot of flambé work done and so on done in the restaurant.
- 273.**MM:** Who were the waiters up there do you remember?
- 274.**GC:** There was a head waiter, Dessie Quinn. There was a man called Jack Ryan from Limerick was a waiter there and there was Dessie Quinn. There was another Quinn but it's difficult to remember their names. Gerry Gallagher would have been there at that time and there's not really a whole lot of waiting staff. It's easy to remember the chefs, it's a lot more difficult to remember the waiters.
- 275.**MM:** Sure you weren't working with them as closely as such.
- 276.**GC:** The only thing I can remember is they earned a hell of a lot more money than we did but that's neither here or there.
- 277.**MM:** Well come to that (laugh). So upstairs at the Martello Room, that was the most expensive as such.
- 278.**GC:** Then you had the main kitchen. There was the Embassy Room then. That was big restaurant. That would sit a hundred plus.
- 279.**MM:** Right okay and the Martello might have...
- 280.**GC:** And there was also a roast trolley in the Embassy Room. A charcoal grill in there.
- 281.**MM:** But it wasn't a separate grill room. It was part of the Embassy Room as such.
- 282.**GC:** It was part of the embassy room yeah so the *commis* would stand with a trolley with a raw sirloin and a chopping board and scales and if anybody wanted steak he'd go to the table 'I believe you'd like a sirloin steak'.
- 283.**MM:** With the trolley.
- 284.**GC:** And he'd cut, you'd be terrified you'd cut it an ounce too many or too little but he'd put the steak on the scales and they were charged two shillings and six pence an ounce. I remember that clearly and you put a flag on the steak for whatever way they wanted done. Pink, and there was blue for well done. I can't remember. There was different colours.

- 285.MM: Colour coded then.
- 286.GC: You brought it over to the grill chef with the flag on it.
- 287.MM: That's gas isn't it?
- 288.GC: There was roast beef trolley of course always. Peter Farrell was the head waiter, the *Maitre D'* where they called him captain and the higher the grade you had, they were done in a kind of American style, so captain was a *Maitre D'* and he'd have the highest percentage of the takings or whatever. I think it was a percentage of the savings I think. You had a huge amount of waiters down there, quite a large number but...
- 289.MM: Now Tony Conlon hadn't arrived at the beginning. He came later on as such, right, okay.
- 290.GC: I can't help with the names of the waiters. (Inaudible).
- 291.MM: That's fine, I'll leave that to someone else as they say. We'll leave that to someone else. So it was a busy place. You're talking about the ideas that there was a roast beef trolley, there was like a grill that you could do.
- 292.GC: There was everything.
- 293.MM: And there was all that. Would there have been a *hors d'oeuvres* trolley?
- 294.GC: There would have been a *hors d'oeuvre* trolley. They would indeed. There was pandemonium one over the trolley, because one of the *commis* in the *garde manger* decided to the egg mayonnaise, you know the six half eggs in the *ravier* dish and he thought I'll get some red peppers in it, put a swastika on each egg after putting the mayonnaise on the half egg.
- 295.MM: To garnish them yeah (laugh).
- 296.GC: So the trolley went out the restaurant and the food and beverage manager was a German man, (inaudible) was his name but he wasn't impressed at all. He came flying in with the trolley. 'Who done this terrible thing?' but sure the guy was only sixteen he hadn't a clue, he was offending everybody.
- 297.MM: Brilliant plus around the corner there was the swastika laundry when you think about it.
- 298.GC: *Hors d'oeuvres* trolleys, there was a course a *hors d'oeuvres* trolley.
- 299.MM: And how about would there have been a sweet trolley?
- 300.GC: There would have been a sweet trolley exactly.
- 301.MM: So it was very much in that sort of tradition of the big restaurant with the sweet trolley and with the *hors d'oeuvres*.
- 302.GC: The American style, show them what you got, so the big night was Sunday night, was the buffet, the grand buffet.
- 303.MM: Why was Sunday night the big night? Was it because other restaurants were closed?
- 304.GC: I'm really not sure. Maybe they're trying to pull in clients that maybe didn't have a niche or somewhere to go on a Sunday. I'm not really certain about that. It was hugely successful. So there was a big buffet. Absolutely huge. The main attraction was one whole leg of beef was

always standard and that would take like forever to cook. You know the big, big leg. A huge big leg of beef.

305.MM: And that would be carved then.

306.GC: That would be carved on the buffet, but then the usual suspects to stroganoffs, the scallops of veal and the cold and they had side (inaudible) that type of thing.

307.MM: You had a picture in here of Jim Bowe would that have been at that sort of a buffet.

308.GC: No, no. That was a special function. I can actually tell you when that was. That was called a Caroline ball and President Kennedy was, became President and his daughter was Caroline, there was young John, and then Caroline and for some reason people here in Ireland got together and had a Caroline ball. I'm sure it was a charity event of some kind but I'm sure that photograph represents part of the Caroline ball function. It's in there somewhere.



Figure GC.6: Buffet at Caroline Ball, Intercontinental Hotel, Dublin

309.GC: So if you look at the centre pieces they had beautiful black mirrors that nobody had ever seen before.

310.MM: Wow.

311.GC: Someone with an American idea. This was really something special.

312.MM: And then you had, I can see here a sort of *pastillage* or something like that.

313.GC: The Hans (Schneider) would have done (inaudible).

- 314.MM: Model of the hotel as such.
- 315.GC: Freddy Gygax wasn't there at the time but he would have appeared fairly soon after the opening. See that's where they go, that's Jim Bowe, that's Shay Kirwan, that's Guido and (inaudible) was a genius at the butter work. He won a lot of gold medals for butter work and yeah this would be representative of the Caroline ball. I don't know what this is, I can't make it out.
- 316.MM: It looks like lobster sauce and stuff.
- 317.GC: But these men brought great skilled to the country and an awful lot of people gained a lot of experience working with these foreign chefs. I wouldn't imagine they stayed any longer than two years, in most cases a year and a half, that was their contract.
- 318.MM: And would they have all been gone by then?
- 319.GC: Well I know Roland was there for about three years, second head chef. Freddie was there for about three years. But the *chef de parties* bit by bit moved out and the Irish lads moved in then and took over. But they were just laying down, what should be done.
- 320.MM: Setting the standard?
- 321.GC: Don't forget there were functions, a huge ballroom and Freddie Goldinger had a great love for chicken Maryland. This was a great favourite at the time. Nobody wanted to know about it but the larder was boiling all the chickens. The chickens would come in whole (inaudible) Martin and Josef and whoever else was there at the time in the larder, in the butcher rather would prepare all these chickens. There would be a thousand for a function. No such thing as buying in a breast of chickens. It didn't happen that way.
- 322.MM: And the chicken would have been *panéed*?
- 323.GC: They *panéed* the banana. Tomato with the bacon around it, and all that would be prepared.
- 324.MM: Put sweetcorn in pancakes?
- 325.GC: Yeah put on a dinner plate, a ring on the dinner plate and they'd be stacked, maybe four or five pudding to a hot plate, a large.
- 326.MM: The chicken would have been cooked? Everything was cooked and they were put into these sort of holding ovens?
- 327.GC: No actually it was a hot plate. It wasn't an oven as such, it was a hot plate like a hot plate you'd put plates in to get hot and stay hot. And that's how they were done. So when the main course was going out the plates were whipped out, the rings were thrown into a basket.
- 328.MM: The plates would have been fairly hot?
- 329.GC: Oh now that's just particular, in the particular case of chicken Maryland which was very, very popular. It seemed to go out all the time. Beef would be next I suppose and that would be carved if I remember in the room.
- 330.MM: I remember Bill Kavanagh telling me about the fact that he says they used to do the turkey and ham, he said like the turkey that was the first place in Ireland to do the parcel.
- 331.GC: Yeah I'd often him saying that but I think he said he brought that with him. He'd come from America. He did actually. He came straight from America into the Intercontinental.

- 332.MM: He was five years in New York before coming here.
- 333.GC: He was and he worked on the ships as well.
- 334.MM: Oh yeah prior to that. He'd had an amazing life, actually an amazing career. So you've mentioned there the foreign chefs had done wonderful work in the few years they were there and they had trained in the Irish lads.
- 335.GC: Well yes to a wider degree but not trained in completely because a lot of them had great experience, some of them had been away on the continent, not too many, but some had.
- 336.MM: Who had been away, do you know?
- 337.GC: Jim Bowe had been away. He'd be in Switzerland, in Zurich I think it was if I remember correctly and Jimmy Kennedy had been abroad in Germany. Johnny Martin had worked all over the world. He was the butcher now.
- 338.MM: Well you mentioned Fred Gygax, he had worked away and he came back later on, he came in after a little bit.
- 339.GC: Freddie was later. Slightly later but he did come in not long after it opened.
- 340.MM: And Pierce Hingston he had worked away, had he?
- 341.GC: He had worked in England. And probably a lot more of them that I...
- 342.MM: So there was sort of like a second wave of people came in then, was there. The likes of you know John Linnane, did they come in...
- 343.GC: They came in later.
- 344.MM: Later. Not while you were there.
- 345.GC: Oh yeah I was there when John came so that was '63. John would have come possibly '64 or '65 and then Ben Smith would have come later. John Clancy would have come much later. By and large the brigade was there when it opened in '63. Stayed on, most of them, not all of them course stayed on for some considerable time because it certainly was a great place to work in. It was a new hotel and everybody was starting at the beginning from the beginning and you know.
- 346.MM: What were wages like because you've said you've come from earning sort of one and five or something like that, do you know what I mean. Did it go up a fair bit?
- 347.GC: It would have gone up. Actually its funny you should ask me that because I've actually no recollection of what it was but I'm sure it was more. I have no doubt in my mind that it was because things started to move fairly quickly as the years went by, in terms of wages, not very quickly but a lot quicker than they had in the past I'd imagine, but I really don't recall exactly what it was that I earned when I went in first. It was more than what I earned.
- 348.MM: Uniforms were an issue for you though as in that it was a novelty?
- 349.GC: It was very much a novelty, yeah, but not just that beautiful staff canteen. Brand new, remember the building is new, the locker rooms are new, the showers and the toilets and everything was spik and span.

- 350.MM: And there were showers like in the changing room.
- 351.GC: Yeah even though people were more senior in position in a lot of cases when everybody was starting out in a new venture and a new hotel and there was pecking, there was pecking order in terms of seniority but it wasn't like there was a *clique* here and there, you know. I don't know if you've experienced that, did you, working in a brand new establishment? It's quite something different. It really is. So there was a very good atmosphere all around.
- 352.MM: Just on that because it brings up the question I was trying to ask earlier, when you were in Jammets the staff meals, like did you get to sample any of the good food that was served there or was there a lesser sort of food for staff?
- 353.GC: There would be absolutely lesser food for staff. No question about it. Like the, for the staff in general there would be a coddle, generally speaking, not necessarily every day but I just seem to remember coddle. This pot with a couple of sausages in it, onions, a few potatoes, maybe a few carrots in some cases and that was standard. Evening time you know that lap end of the sirloin, that's like the sole of your shoe a bit of that would be fried off. Now if you could chew it, fair play to you, because I don't think it was possible.(Laugh).You'd get a few chips. They'd cut the chips by hand so it was the little trimmings would be fried off. The trimmings of the chips so really like it wasn't.
- 354.MM: It was 'waste nothing'.
- 355.GC: You know, okay so I might make it sound very negative, but that's the way it was.
- 356.MM: Oh no, I've worked in a few of those places myself you know and they were good places for food like but not for the staff as such. Yeah, yeah. So how long did you stay in the Intercontinental in Ballsbridge.
- 357.GC: I stayed there till '66.
- 358.MM: And in those three years, so that's 1963 to 1966, in those three years, you started off in the *garde manger*, did you move on then to different sections or...
- 359.GC: I actually made an error. I didn't start in the *garde manger* at all. I started in the bakery.
- 360.MM: In the bakery, okay.
- 361.GC: With a man called Eamon Cunningham who hasn't been mentioned. He's not in the photograph, funny enough. He must have been on his day or something which makes one wonder how many chefs were there that I'm not even thinking about but started there for about a year in the bakery and when I say the bakery I mean we did the croissants, the Danish pastries, the brown bread which the Americans went mad for, scones, the hamburger baps. Continental breakfast generally speaking and that was our lot you might say but when Eamon left after about four to five months, he went off I think to some other hotel.
- 362.MM: I think he worked with PV Doyle if I remember. I know he was in the Skylon I think at one stage and the Montrose.
- 363.GC: So like there was a lot of them coming in.
- 364.MM: Yeah there was a whole family worked...
- 365.GC: But the point is that when Eamon left I became the baker or the *boulangier* whatever you want to call it but the interesting question you asked me a few minutes ago, what kind of money did you get? I actually didn't get a penny extra but I didn't mind because I quite enjoyed doing it

but looking back it wasn't very clever because I was a third year *commis* I think doing *chef de partie* work and I was on my own which previous to that I had a *chef de partie*. Now I was the *chef de partie* with no *partie* (laugh). But how and ever, anyway, that's that so then I went to the *garde manger*. I'd forgotten about that bit actually yeah and I did get on very well with Freddie Goldinger but at the end of the day I suppose it just goes to show, you were done, if you want more and there and knock on the door and let it be known.

366.MM: And did you finish your time there in the *garde manger* or did you move on to sauce or anything like that.

367.GC: No when I was in the *garde manger* for the first year which I'd forgotten to clarify earlier had been the bakery or *boulangier* and then went to the larder like from '63 to '66. From '66 I asked a transfer to Frankfurt. That moved me onto Frankfurt Intercontinental.



Figure GC.7: Gerry with The Frankfurt Intercontinental Kitchen Brigade c.1966

368.MM: Now '66 you're twenty years old at this stage. So you'd been working for five years so you felt you were sort of trying to see a bit of the world probably yeah.

369.GC: Yeah, still not qualified because they had this little word in Frankfurt called *demi chef* meaning probably half chef or you're nearly there. So that was my title job description in Frankfurt. So I thought the idea would be nice. Move over and see a little bit of the world.

370.MM: And the Intercontinental facilitated that and they set it up?

371.GC: Absolutely no problem. They set all that up. If I remember correctly they paid for the fare over, they did actually, yeah and that was how I started in Frankfurt. I applied through

personnel and I think they did most of the paperwork transferred etc. etc. So it was a great experience being in Frankfurt.

372.MM: And how long did you go to Frankfurt for?

373.GC: For a year.

374.MM: And what section did you work on in Frankfurt?

375.GC: Well we mentioned the Martello Room in the Intercontinental in Dublin but I actually ended up working in the Silhouette Room which is the roof top restaurant in Frankfurt and that's where I stayed for the whole year. It was quite exclusive, small kitchen with a bar. I mean a service bar in the kitchen, small and all as it was and enjoyed that experience immensely.

376.MM: Where were the chefs you were working with there? Were they from all over the world or were they mostly from Germany?

377.GC: Well when I was working in the Silhouette they were German, all German.

378.MM: All German yeah.

379.GC: Peter Diegal would have been my chef in the Silhouette Room. He went on to own his own restaurant. There was Rolf (inaudible). The barman I got to know very well.(Laugh). His name was Jacques, a Frenchman Jacques (inaudible) funny enough name for a barman. Jacques (inaudible). Yes he was a very nice guy and I might add Peter Diegal was a gentleman as a chef. So that was sort of, if I remember correctly I think we went in at 3 pm and we'd one day off a week and we worked until 1 am so that's nine or ten hours is it, six days a week. We had one day off and I think that day was possibly Monday if I remember correctly. But it was a nice little team. We got on very well together.

380.MM: And how did you find learning the German. I take it was all German they spoke.

381.GC: Well of course the German lads wanted to learn English. But when you had to survive, that was the biggest mistake made was not to gone, not brought somebody else along and I would always say to young people now if you're going anywhere, get someone else or get one or two others. I had gone on my own. Now I did meet an Irish guy very quickly in that hotel. He was a gas character. His name Kit McSwiney. He was doing hotel management but he was working as a waiter, *commis* waiter up on the, doing his work experience in the Silhouette.

382.MM: Where was he from?

383.GC: Dublin.

384.MM: Dublin yeah. And did you hear from him since?

385.GC: No, like everything you know. But I've a lot of regrets in that regard because looking back you should really keep in touch you know. Hindsight is a great thing.

386.MM: And so you were there for a year. What did you do then?

387.GC: I went on to Switzerland through personnel.

388.MM: Through the Intercontinental. I presume you came home for a holiday or anything like that?

389.GC: No straight through.

390.MM: And did you come home at all?



**Figure GC.8: Brigade from Intercontinental Geneva with visiting Chefs from Karachi
Intercontinental 1966**

391.GC: In that period, no, because I was in Geneva for about nine months.

392.MM: And how was that, was it any different?

393.GC: Well it was French number one.

394.MM: But was the food different?

395.GC: The food very French. The food in Frankfurt was a mixture of French and German or German/French, maybe that order would be better. Very much a French kitchen. The head chef, executive chef was a guy called Sauget who had worked in America for many years.

396.MM: Yeah, yeah. He'd worked in America.

397.GC: In the (inaudible) and places like that. He showed me menus. He used to love to bring me into the office at night time if it was a little bit quiet. His wife would come over and sit in his office because they lived in an apartment across the road and having worked in America they liked to talk through English and talk about their experience. It was interesting to listen to them but he had menus with his name on it, the village he was born and the year he was born and where he

worked and where he didn't work but a nice man. But it had its disadvantages getting to know the head chef very well because the second head chef wasn't very pleased. So we had a conflict. His name was Constance, surname, I can't remember his first name but I've a good other name for him too. (Laugh) He was very young actually.

398.MM: So did you witness more of a French style of thing there?

399.GC: The (inaudible) was predominantly French. There was oddly enough there was a guy who worked in the pastry end of thing Jesus De Valera. Because their names used to be on a board as you come into the kitchen. I remember the slips of paper I can't quite remember. It must be to do with clocking in or something but the names were written quite large. A very big brigade of chefs but Jesus De Valera I was highly amused at that. He was from Spain. He hadn't got much English anyway but a nice guy. My *chef de partie* I worked in the *garde manger* in Geneva and he was Michel Curell from Lyon, an absolute gentleman. Unfortunately I can't say the same for the rest of them, because they were very clannish. I found the Germans not very unlike the Irish. They liked oddly enough and believe it or not they liked the bit of crack and a bit of laugh. Maybe have a few beers and a sing song. They took their work serious no question about that but when they want to let their hair down they were good fun. They were nice people.

400.MM: They worked hard so they played hard?

401.GC: Yeah the French were always together in their own little groups but I was lucky with my *chef de partie*. He was excellent.

402.MM: So when you came back from, you were gone for a year-and-a-half, a year and nine months you came back to Dublin and what did you, did you come back to the Intercontinental.

403.GC: The Intercontinental and Gyax was the pastry chef at the time.

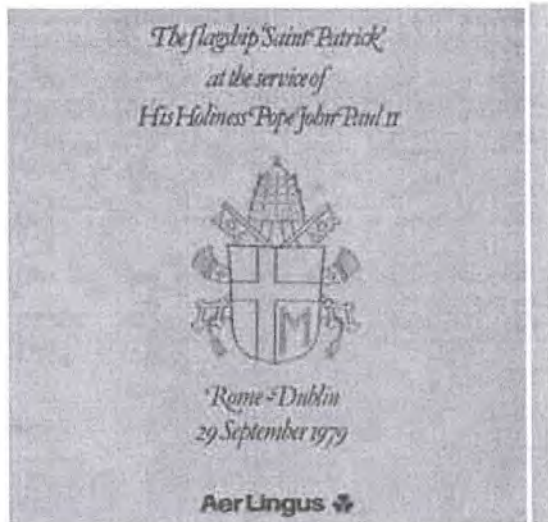
404.MM: So this was say around 1968 or so.

405.GC: We're talking '68/'69. Yeah '68 I'd say yeah.

406.MM: And Pierce Hingston

407.GC: So what happened then I work in the Martello Room. If you remember I spoke about a man called George (inaudible) and George was a nice man to work with, he was a gas character. Blow the head big time but a very quiet, shy man in actual fact. Him and I and a guy from Limerick called (inaudible) **end tape 1.**

Gerry went to work in Aer Lingus and studied for the City & Guilds 706/3 with Jimmy Kilbride and went on to teach in Cathal Brugha Street. The Figures below include the menus for meals he worked on for President Reagan and Pope John Paull II.



I duna l'occasione di salutarvi nel vostro paese
 per un breve periodo.
 Papawad Jannas Pabhadh Dhuireas
 a cinnas gaoi gaoi a Rinnas de Shlana na pabhadh
 "ceannas gaoi", ainnas Flagevags Binnig A 1979.
 I ghabha mairiannas pabhadh gaoi, iakin na
 iakin na gaoi mairiannas gaoi.
 W' harras na gaoi mairiannas gaoi ainnas
 Dhuireas h' harras gaoi.

Naomh fionn e mairiannas de gaoi il harras a Rinnas Binnig
 Pabhadh Jannas Pabhadh Dhuireas a Rinnas de Shlana na pabhadh
 mairiannas de Rinnas de Shlana na pabhadh
 del ainnas gaoi a Rinnas de Shlana na pabhadh.
 I mairiannas de gaoi ainnas gaoi mairiannas gaoi
 ainnas gaoi mairiannas gaoi ainnas gaoi.

Your recent flight to Rome was very pleasant and we
 are happy to have you on board the flagship
 of the airline, the "Saint Patrick", on the
 flight to Dublin. We are happy to have you on board
 the flagship of the airline, the "Saint Patrick",
 on the flight to Dublin. We are happy to have you on board
 the flagship of the airline, the "Saint Patrick",
 on the flight to Dublin.

We are happy to have you on board the flagship
 of the airline, the "Saint Patrick", on the
 flight to Dublin. We are happy to have you on board
 the flagship of the airline, the "Saint Patrick",
 on the flight to Dublin.

We acknowledge with deep gratitude the honour of his presence among us,
 the staff of the crew of this flight,
 and all the staff of Ireland's Transport Authority.

David H. Kennedy
 Chief Executive, Aer Lingus

Figure GC.9: Menu for Pope John Paul II on Rome to Dublin Flight 29/9/1979

The flagship 'Saint Patrick'
 at the service of
 His Holiness Pope John Paul II



Shannon - Boston
 1 October 1979

AerLingus



Figure GC.10: Menu for Pope from Shannon to Boston (1/10/1979)

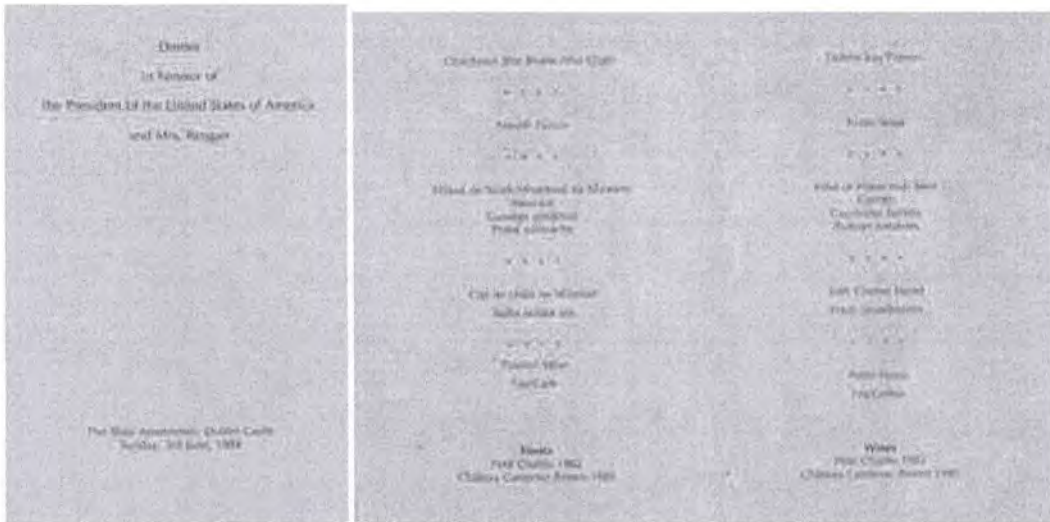
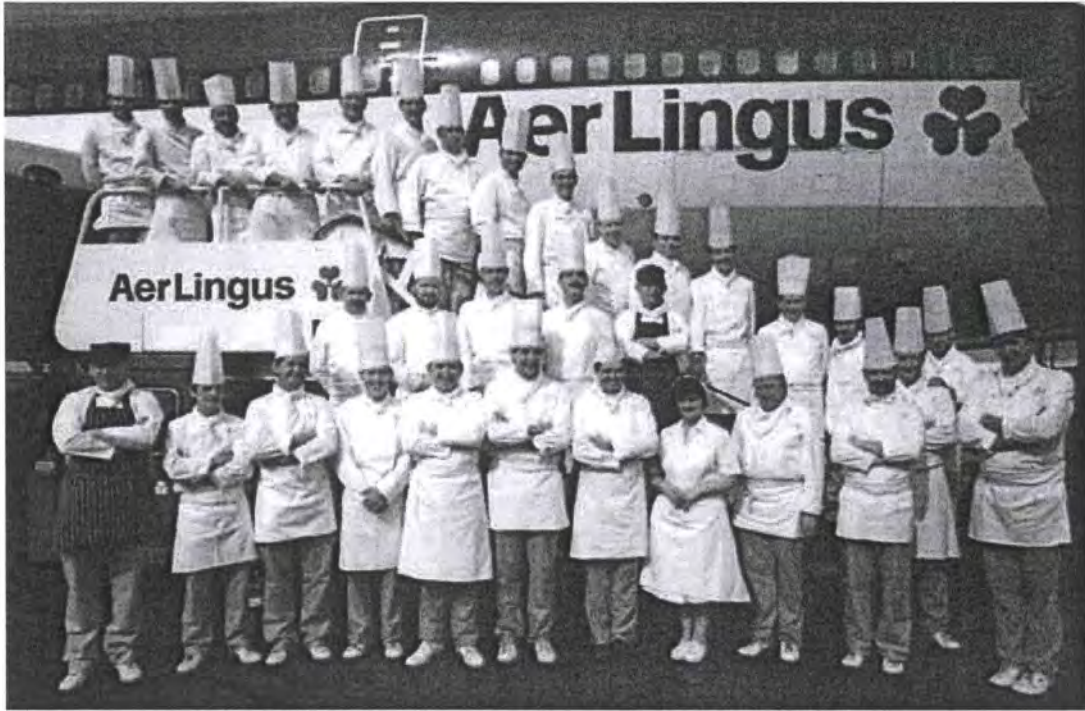


Figure GC.11: Menu for Ronald Reagan, Dublin Castle (3/6/1984)



Figure GC.12: City & Guilds 706/3 Class with Jimmy Kilbride and Bob Lawlor on front steps of Dublin College of Catering, Cathal Brugha Street, 1986



**Figure GC.13: The Aer Lingus Kitchen Brigade 1993
with Executive Chef Paddy Keys**