

## Edited Interview with Michel Treyvaud in DIT, Cathal Brugha Street on (4/2/2008)

Máirtín Mac Con Iomaire (MM) Michel Treyvaud (MT)

1. **MM:** Where and when were you born?
2. **MT:** Many years ago (laugh), 3<sup>rd</sup> June 1937 in near Avenches, in the French speaking part of Switzerland, twenty minutes from Bern, two and half hours from Zurich.
3. **MM:** Was there catering in your family?
4. **MT:** My mother, she worked before her marriage in a restaurant that was about two hundred yards from the house where I was living. She as a cook in this small restaurant, but when I was big enough, eight or nine years old, I used to go into the kitchen, and that is where, see the owner was the chef herself, preparing vegetables, peeling potatoes, the usual that kids will do in that kitchen, so that is where I started. I got to like it so then when I finished school, just the last couple of years from sixteen to eighteen, every weekend I was working in the kitchen to make a few bob.
5. **MM:** So how many was in the family?
6. **MT:** I have only one brother.
7. **MM:** Did you go to catering school or do an apprenticeship?
8. **MT:** No, at that time in Switzerland, you had the hotel school; ok, but it was mostly for management, the training for a chef was done in a hotel or in a restaurant, and you had one day, that was your day off, you had to go to the college, to the school. The day release, here (Ireland) in the hotel you have the day release and you can go, in Switzerland at that time, that was your day off and you had to go. That was for two and half years the training as a *commis chef*, you know.
9. **MM:** Did you do that in your local village?
10. **MT:** No, in *Neuchâtel*, in the *Hotel de Soleil*, about forty five minutes in a car but I used to take the train because the car was not always available, so that is it. From there on, I was there for about two and a half years and I pass the exams in the school with top marks. And from there on I went to work for the winter season in *Arosa*, which is a ski resort. During the summer I went to Italy, because the head chef of the hotel had a small restaurant in Italy, between the winter season and the summer season there was about six weeks to kill, so I went to his place because he was coming back for the summer season not in *Arosa*, but in (inaudible).
11. **MM:** Where in Italy did he have his place?
12. **MT:** Oh, in the north, at the winter station, in *Cortina d'Ampezzo*. There was still work to be done there, I could have gone home, but then I wouldn't have got a salary, so you follow the work. Then I was in the summer season in (inaudible) in the Friesan part of Switzerland, then from there on I went to Zurich to the *Hotel Limmat*, on the river Limmat, and I was there for about seven months and I had to go to the army. After the army I went to *St. Moritz*, the Palace Hotel. Again that was for a summer season.
13. **MM:** That was quite a good hotel, wasn't it?
14. **MT:** Oh yeah, a five star, It's still there, so from there on, where did I go after that? Oh, they were calling me back to the army as a corporal, to go up the ladder, but I did not like it, so what did I do? I did a runner! I went to work in Germany in the *Frankfurter Hof*.

15. **MM:** That's the train station in Frankfurt?
16. **MT:** Yes, that was a *Steigenberger* hotel at the time. I was there for about three months, I did not like Frankfurt, at about forty or fifty years ago, you can imagine at the station, it was not great, the Hotel was very nice, you know, but I changed. I went to the Ritters Park Hotel in *Bad Homburg*, that was again a *Steigenberger* Hotel, and I was there for about two years, that was five star overlooking the park where you go and take the water, a spa, and from there on I was on my way, believe it or not, to Texas, Fort Worth, (laugh) and I never made it. If you speak English; I had French, German and Italian, but if you speak English you would be earning extra dollars. So a friend of mine, from Germany said 'well fuck it, we will go four months in England and see if you have two or three words of English' and that is what I applied for and I was supposed to go to Leeds and I ended up in Edinburgh in the Caledonian Hotel. The larder chef there broke his wrist or something like that, so two days before leaving Germany, they contacted me by telegram saying go to Edinburgh instead of going to Leeds, so I was in Scotland for about four and half years, but I was working as *sous chef* in the Gleneagles Hotel for summer, well from Easter until the last Sunday in October. I don't know if you know Gleneagles?
17. **MM:** I do indeed, it is an amazing place.
18. **MT:** Well, when I was there, it was only the hotel, we had a French restaurants which was open only eight weeks and they used to bring all the chefs in from Manchester, that was owned by British Railway at the time, Manchester was closed during the summer, you know, and during those eight weeks they used to bring all the waiter and some of the chefs to work with us. And on a Sunday we had a buffet, and it was only the head chef and myself that were allowed on the back of the buffet on a Sunday. Nobody else, because it was (Harold) McMillan and all those people, so they were not going to bring any youngsters, that was always the way, that was a very good place.
19. **MM:** All the movers and shakers were there?
20. **MT:** Yes, I spent four summers up there as *sous chef* and then in the larder as well.
21. **MM:** Do you remember where the head chef was from, or his name?
22. **MT:** He as Swiss, but I can't remember his name.
23. **MM:** Did you come to England through an agency?
24. **MT:** No, on my own, I just wrote to the British Railway, the head office was in London in St. Pancreas, we wrote them there. My friend went to Leeds, but I had been working in the larder in Germany and when the guy broke his wrist they say 'héy, you go over there'. So I did two winters in the Caledonian (Hotel) in Edinburgh and two winters in the Central (Hotel) in Glasgow.
25. **MM:** This is roughly around 1957 or so?
26. **MT:** Yes, it would be because I left Glasgow on the Clyde to come over to Ireland on the night of Guy Fawkes (5<sup>th</sup> November) in 1964, I know it was Guy Fawkes because of the fireworks and all that. So that is when I took the boat from Glasgow.
27. **MM:** What was the link that made you come to Ireland?
28. **MT:** Woman (laugh), now we were married and she was expecting, and I had been there before, I had bought the house I live in now while I was working in Scotland. So, I had bought that house, and she was expecting, and I said Scotland is not my country, so what am I doing here, it is not yours either so do we go back to Switzerland or do we try Ireland?

29. **MM:** What's your wife's name and where was she from?
30. **MT:** Breda London, and she was from Passage East, Waterford. She was working in the Caledonian Hotel but she did not come to Gleneagles. When I moved to Glasgow, she came while I was in, not the Central but the North British Hotel, they were all owned by the railway, she was a book keeper / receptionist. I could speak a bit of English and she had no French, and her mother was here, so we thought it would be better, so that is what happened, I took a chance to come over here in November 1964.
31. I had checked the papers and saw it was no problem because lots of restaurants were looking for chefs, but when I came over I found it very hard to get a job because of (the Union). I went to Jury's, yes, I went to the Gresham, yes, 'you can have a job but you have to be in the union'. And you had to have a union card, and where do you get a card but in the union. You go to the union but you had to have a job, it was like tennis, you go here, you go there!!! I couldn't get a job. When I saw some of the restaurants (where he could get work) oh my god, I would prefer to be unemployed or wait until I found something even if I have to go back to Scotland or Switzerland, I said to Breda, 'I'm not going to work in there, no way', my pride would not let me do it.
32. **MM:** So the places you could get work without the union were not worth working in?
33. **MT:** It wasn't a place worth working in, but the way it came is that The Montrose Hotel was opening, you know P.V. Doyle, he was moving from the South County or Parkes Hotel there, and opening the Montrose, in fact he caught the South County well because he said that he would not open a hotel within three miles of the South County, so he started out as apartments and ended up with a hotel, you know, but anyway. He had a chef there, a German fellow, who was there at the time, you see it was just opening so that union hadn't worked into it, they had a manager there, Lawlor was his name, and he said 'you can start there' so I started there and I was doing the job as the chef and P.V. Doyle saw that, because the German chef, (**note:** Heinz Marquardt) to tell you the truth he had jumped submarine in Waterford (laugh), he was there – he worked somewhere in Glasnevin.
34. **MM:** Can you remember his name?
35. **MT:** I can't remember his name but anyhow, he'd say 'Michel, what do you think we should put on the menu?', so in the end I was doing *chef saucier* for him and in fact I was running the kitchen. From there on there were still problems with the union, the breakfast chef that was there was supposed to be the representative of the union, and the guy was a thief, so he had to stop. The day he was stopped, he had sole on the bone, cutlery and everything, he was getting married, that was all in the boot of the car, you know. Still the guy that was causing the most trouble from the union was an Englishman, that money from the union was stopped from the salary. For six months they had stopped my money every week and the English fellow was causing problems again saying 'all the fecking foreigners coming here' – an English man, so I say 'fair enough, yeah ok, so I am a foreigner, but so I work here and you work there'. And something happened, he was not a member of the union, he never paid his union dues, so I went to Micky Mullen and I said 'I pay, where is my (union) card? You stopped money from me for the last six months, so I am entitled to my card'. So I got my card anyway, I got an interview up in Liberty Hall. Where did I do my apprenticeship? What's that? Are you a chef? Whatever, well at the end I got my card, and when I got my card I went down to the manager Pat Lawlor and I say 'thank you very much but Jury's in Dame Street want me', so that is the way I went into the Jury's company. I had my union card, they had a job, and that is where it started and I was there in Dame Street for about four months.
36. **MM:** Was Willy Widmer there?
37. **MT:** Willy Widmer, yes, I was his second chef. Second chef in work, but the second chef really was Joe Collins, Joe was a good chef, a nice fellow, you know. What exactly happened? I went to the Moira. Lee Kidney went from Dame Street to the Moira, and there was a chef there who left, and Lee said to me 'are you interested to come there?' and I said 'why not', so I went to

the Moira and Eugene McGovern came with me as second chef in the Moira, he had been working as larder chef in Jury's Dame Street. I was there for two years and after that I went to Jury's Hotel opened...

38. **MM:** Now this was around 1966 or so?
39. **MT:** Around that, no before '66, '64 or so.
40. **MM:** Well, I think Willy Widmer arrived in 1964.
41. **MT:** Willy Widmer arrived around three months before me, so he would have been there in 1964 so I would be in the Moira around 1965. And I was around two years in the Moira and Lee Kidney, Jury's opened in Westport and I was in Westport only for about, they opened the hotel for about three months, and then Jury's opened the Park Hotel in Sligo. So Lee Kidney went from the Moira to Sligo and asked me if I would go down there, so I went down to open the Sligo Park with him and I was there for about two and a half years. My wife didn't like Sligo because it was one of those border towns, now I had no problems with Sligo people, like with the Protestant Catholic thing because I was a complete outsider, I had come out from Switzerland not from ... so I had no problems, but she did not like it, it was difficult to make friends, so we came back here (Dublin). Johnny Opperman was opening in Kiltiernan and that is where I came back to.
42. **MM:** That was in 1970 or so?
43. **MT:** That would have been in 1970/71, because I was up there for about eight months, and it was starting not to go well at all. Did you talk to him?
44. **MM:** Oh, yes, he is a great guy, he is ninety one years old and still looking as fit as anything.
45. **MT:** A fantastic guy, the whole family, it was Willy, and Carl, Carl worked for Gilbeys, a wine exporters. Willy was in Jury's and the Moira which is where he met his wife, and then he went to the place at the back of the Clarence (Hotel), ... The Dolphin (Hotel). He was manager of the Dolphin for a while, you know. But nice fellows, they are all dead now except Johnny, Johnny still survives with Eileen in their little cottage down in Blainroe.
46. **MM:** Yes, I was down with them. Now, the Opperman's place, you went in there as head chef. How many people did you have there with you in the kitchen at the time?
47. **MT:** John Clancy was there, Freddy Steinberg who was the pastry fellow there, then there was a small fellow who was the *sous chef*, I can't remember his name, I think there was around six or seven to start with, but it never took off. It never took off.
48. **MM:** It was very busy in the weekend, I believe?
49. **MT:** Johnny was not a manager, he was a good chef, he had his place in Malahide and it was a very good restaurant, and the manager was Eileen more than him. But the problem with that place is that it was ahead of its time. The wrong people joined the golf club. I don't play golf but nobody likes to go uphill then downhill, kick the ball up and it rolls down. So people were not playing golf, they joined the club, the likes of Charlie Haughey and that kind joined the club just because it was Opperman's Country Club, they joined for that, and you'd see them maybe once a year in the restaurant. Those guys were not interested in coming up here for a meal and that is the reason that the place did not do well. The rooms were sold, Breda worked there for a while, but they were fifty years to early.
50. **MM:** Well the troubles had broken out in Northern Ireland as well and I think that had some bearing on it as well?

51. **MT:** I don't think that was the main thing, the wrong people joined the club to make money. In the K Club, the restaurant is not that busy, because people go there to play golf and go into the club house for food. When Michel Flamme was there (as head chef), the food was excellent, I went there one weekend on a Saturday night and there were about three other couples with us in the restaurant. The owner there had the money to absorb it, the rooms were full, they were making money on the rooms.
52. **MM:** Yes, the restaurant was a loss leader?
53. **MT:** They were playing golf and meeting in the club house, and the food in the club house was excellent, I was at a wedding there in the golf club and it was a beautiful meal we had there. So that is why Opperman's place never really took off.
54. **MM:** I'd say it was an exciting time; there were a lot of stars and celebrities staying?
55. **MT:** It was, I ran uphill (jogging), believe it or not, with Cassius Clay, and my wife has a photo that was taken with him at the reception. But again, for Cassius Clay, you had a table over there and everybody was pushed away, and what do you cook for a man like that? Double T-Bone steak and salad. That is what he was eating. But we were doing good cooking in the restaurant and the celebrities were all (interrupted by a phone call).
56. **MM:** You were up in Opperman's club at this stage, where were you living?
57. **MT:** Still in the same place in Cornelscourt, in the first house I bought.
58. **MM:** Would you have eaten out in restaurants in Dublin at this time?
59. **MT:** Yes, quite a lot. You could say that nearly every restaurant or hotel, that I would have gone there, to see what they were doing. Food was somewhere good, somewhere not so good, somewhere appalling, but I never complained.
60. **MM:** Where were the really good places?
61. **MT:** Well believe it or not, I had a meal in the Russell. That was a really good one, the Hibernian, the Shelbourne, those places were good, you know.
62. **MM:** Did you eat in the Red Bank?
63. **MT:** Yes I did, and in Jammet's, and the one in Dun Laoghaire – The Mirabeau, Seán Kinsella's place. Have you spoken to him yet? That was a very good restaurant.

**Directions on how to find Seán Kinsella's house in Shankhill**

64. **MM:** So what were the places that were ok, and what were the places that were really bad?
65. **MT:** Well I won't mention that bad ones. Most of the hotel restaurants weren't that bad, as I said the Russell, the Hibernian, the Gresham, those were good, you know, as forty years ago standard.
66. **MM:** And the Moira? Jury's Copper Grill was supposed to have been very good?
67. **MT:** You could compare The Copper Grill with what you have today, the restaurant in the Four Seasons, that kind of place. Jury's had a restaurant and they had The Copper Grill which was special.
68. **MM:** The Dolphin was more of a steak house than haute cuisine?

69. **MT:** Yes, big steaks, mixed grill and things like that. The Moira was good, the Moira was a small restaurant that was very good, and it had a bar on the side there that they used to get food there, a bar with seventeen or eighteen seats. We used to serve fresh prawns and chicken, if you served twenty lunch or dinner, you would serve eighteen scampi (laugh).
70. **MM:** What about places like Snaffles on Leeson Street or the Soup Bowl?
71. **MT:** The Soup Bowl was not bad, the soup bowl restaurant was not bad, places like that, so many restaurants, the memory is bad, you know.
72. **MM:** Do you remember a place called Alfredo's?
73. **MT:** Alfredo's was the restaurant that I was supposed to start in but I walked out of. The food was Italian, it was a good Italian restaurant but the conditions were appalling, and he was going to open another restaurant in Dun Laoghaire, and he was supposed to open on Monday and I went there on Friday and there was absolutely nothing, cobwebs from here to there etc. 'Oh, I'll have my woman clean it'. I was coming into Alfredo to work for a week or two in that restaurant and then to open the other one, but I said 'ah, forget about it'. But the food was (ok).
74. **MM:** I believe it was more about the ambience than the food, that people liked to be seen to be slumming it in Alfredo's, there was a kind of a buzz to it?
75. **MT:** Yes, do you know the Italian restaurant in Dame Street, *Nico's*, *Alfredo's* was a bit of the *Nico's* of that time. *Nico's* again, now I had a meal in *Nico's* last year with Mervyn Stewart and it was just ok, not great, but it used to be very good, typical Italian food and the food was good.
76. **MM:** And Bernardo's was there on Lincoln Place, and *La Caprice*, *Quo Vadis*, all these places. Did you ever eat in Mike Butt's place on Leeson Street, The Tandoori Rooms, the Indian place?
77. **MT:** No, the only Indian one was on the other side of the Westbury Hotel, The Rajdoot, but I like Chinese and Indian food but my stomach doesn't like it. I don't mind doing the cooking myself at home and using very little of curry, you know everything nowadays in chilli, chilli, chilli. You know the chilli kills the taste of everything anyway.
78. **MM:** Opperman's went bankrupt, didn't it? Where did you go then?
79. **MT:** Well, Pat Quinn took over Opperman's place and Dave Edwards went there from The Clarence. I went straight into Jury's Ballsbridge as head chef. Joe Collins had been head chef, he came from Jury's Dame Street when Jury's took over the Intercontinental Hotel. Pierce Hingston had been there but went to the Burlington Hotel.
80. **MM:** There was a Swiss chef in the Burlington too, Alfred Thoma?
81. **MT:** Thoma was the chef in Annabelle's, the night club in the Burlington. Jury's had the Martello, there was a kitchen in the Martello. Annabelle's had the same, they had a restaurant and Thoma was the chef there. He was the chef working Annabelle's. You see in Jury's we had the Kish and there was a chef there, so Enda Dunne was the chef in the Kish, he is now in Parkes, the other chef there was Derek Dunne, no relation, he went up to the Glenview Hotel and then started his own business.
82. **MM:** So you arrived into Jury's in Ballsbridge, and Joe Collins had been there briefly, since it was a big change moving from Dame Street to Ballsbridge, so you sort of took over. Do you remember who you had working with you?
83. **MT:** Well Jimmy Connell was one of them, and Brendan O' Neill who went to Vincent's (Hospital), not the man who went to The Red Cow (Hotel). Paddy Reilly was the third *sous chefs*. Jimmy, Brendan and Paddy were the three *sous chefs*.

84. **MM:** So at this stage there weren't really that many foreign chefs left in Dublin or in Ireland at the time? And from your experience with the union it was clear that they were anti-foreign chefs at the time?
85. **MT:** No, it was anti-foreign chef, even the Irish chefs were anti-foreign chef because I know for a fact that one of them was really against any continental chef coming because, that guy, he was not happy with his job, he wanted the next job, wherever a continental chef was going he wanted that job. So it made life difficult. Do you remember Bernard Gaume? He was a French guy in the Intercontinental; I think he went back to France. Another one who is still here but probably retired is Jacques Mansion. He was in the Hotel Europe in Killarney and then he was in the Clontarf Castle Hotel.
86. **MM:** You had Jimmy, Brendan, and Paddy there as *sous chefs*, but you had a really large crew there, didn't you?
87. **MT:** There was forty eight, including Joe Erraught, John Clancy, Jimmy Rock, Gerry Byrne and a lot more that are teaching here (Cathal Brugha Street).
88. **MM:** So how long were you in Jury's Ballsbridge?
89. **MT:** From 2<sup>nd</sup> January 1972 to around 1990, about twenty years in Jury's – a lifetime – too long!!!
90. **MM:** The fact that you stayed so long, means you must have liked it?
91. **MT:** Ah yeah, I loved it, the work was hard, the work was not so hard, but the problem with Jury's was that when Jury's Dame Street took over Ballsbridge, there was a lot of redundancy. And where you get redundancy, most good chefs, twenty years ago will always find work, so the good ones took the money and started work the following week in another place. So what have you left? I'm not talking of the guys here because they came in after, and John Clancy came in with me. You have left with the worst, you were left with a lot of wasters who would not ever find another job, so they were dictating, the union were their strength not their cooking ability; and that is what it was.
92. **MM:** And Dave Edwards was brought in to try and sort things out?
93. **MT:** Dave Edwards came in, the reason they brought Dave Edwards in was to have an Irish chef there and he was brought in to control the union and the chef. And then after a short while he was made Food and Beverage manager. But I enjoyed Jury's because at that time chefs were working in the kitchen, they were not in front of the television. I was doing most of the service. You used to serve 120 people a night, at the time the food was reasonably good, and you served that with five chefs. John Clancy was on the larder and the starter, and most of the time we had a sauce cook, and during the service I was doing the pass and the cooking. And I enjoyed that, I used even to go up cooking in the Kish, if there was a *sous chef* on at night, very often I will take a function or do the Cabaret. At the time I used to enjoy cooking, to me it was nothing more enjoyable than to take a young guy, at the time it would be John Clancy or Enda or Derek Dunne or Delores what is her name is, to take them and do a function, one hundred people just me and the *commis chef*. And it was nothing to see those youngsters do it, because they were working hard, because I would cook nothing (beforehand), because most of those functions, very often I would go in to the Martello and give out to the banquet chef because everything was already cooked. When I was doing it, we did it *à la minute* or as close as possible to the guest eating it. The timing was the most important part, but I used to enjoy it.
94. **MM:** That brings me nicely on to a good question, you spoke about Delores. Before that time had there been many women working in any the kitchens you had worked in?

95. **MT:** No, in Jury's Dame Street there had been one woman, she was the breakfast cook, and you would find that most of the hotels, in that department, it would be a woman. And the reason I would say is that they would come in at 6am and they would do the breakfast and they would be finished at 11am and they would be home. In Jury's you had Delores, and you had Connie Murray, who married Enda Dunne, and there was another one who was working in the Lansdowne Hotel, but I can't remember her name. But now you have a lot of women, and a lot of foreign women, Lithuanian and Polish women coming in. It is changing. In the last ten years, the Irish hotels to me are like Switzerland fifty years ago. In Switzerland, the Swiss were head chef, were *sous chef*, manager, owner, the rest was all Italian, and then after the Italian there came the Portuguese and lately it's been the Polish, and it is the same here. Swiss people were above working in the kitchen, and the last ten years that's what has been happening in the catering here in Ireland. Who wants to be working at 10pm or 11pm when they can finish at 6 or 7pm? They must really love the kitchen!
96. **MM:** Would you have seen much technological changes in your time in kitchens?
97. **MT:** The Montrose was a brand new kitchen, Jury's Dame Street wasn't bad, old equipment but strong good equipment, and it was still the standard that you had with the pass and you prepare your food and it all comes out together. The Moira was bad, down below in the basement. Ballsbridge wasn't bad, but when Jury' took over it was still old style, everything came out of the one kitchen. When we re did the kitchens they were near the restaurants, each area had there own kitchens, Coffee Dock, Martello, Kish, Banquets. With the Kish restaurant they built the kitchen into one of the bedrooms. They were good kitchens.
98. **MM:** You had the Embassy room which was the main restaurant, then the Martello which was exclusive because it had the great view over Dublin?
99. **MT:** Jury's never used it, the Intercontinental used it as a restaurant, but Jury's just used it as a function room for maximum one hundred people, which was nice for weddings because there was a balcony and you could use it for taking pictures.
- 100.**MM:** So Jury's never used it as a restaurant, because it was quite a good restaurant when the Intercontinental was there?
- 101.**MT:** It was the top restaurant in Dublin, and not only that, it had the top view, you had the glass all around, and if you were lucky enough to know the head waiter or tip the head waiter well, you had a good table where you could see all the lights of Dublin (laugh).
- 102.**MM:** Was it silver service when you started off in Jury's?
- 103.**MT:** Yes, in Dame Street, most of it was silver service, but in the Copper Grill it was mostly copper pans rather than silver. To tell you the truth, it is the only menu that I have still left at home, the menu of the Copper Grill. Joe Gray was the head waiter and Tony Conlon worked there too. Joe Gray took over the Celtic Mews when Jury's took over the Intercontinental and Tony went with him. When Joe Gray died the son took over but something happened, I don't know what, ask Tony.
- 104.**MM:** Yes, Willy Woods had been there as chef in Celtic Mews, he had come from the Russell. You may not have known him. Did you know any of the other Swiss chefs in Dublin at the time? You knew Willy Widmer, did you know the Fred Guigax?
- 105.**MT:** Willy Widmer, I knew and I met Guigax but didn't know him. The only one I would know well was Thoma. (Alfred) Thoma used to come to the Swiss Club at the Swiss Embassy where we always organised something for our national day. The club used to organise something but now the Embassy has been directed to have the Swiss National Day in the Embassy on the first of August where the other embassies come in at 6pm and the Swiss come in at 7pm. But we used



to also have a day for the Fondue where it was Thoma or myself would always end in the kitchen with Willy.

**Discussion on barbeque organised by the Swiss in Wicklow where Michel spit roasted a leg of beef (end of tape 1)**

106.MM: You handed in your notice in Jury's, because you said if you didn't you would either be an alcoholic or kill someone (laugh). Explain that, because there was a sweat pint system in place in Jury's at the time, wasn't there?

107.MT: Yeah, it was, the sweat pint came with the Intercontinental, it was not Jury's who instigated it, it came in there and you could not cut it off. So each chef on duty got two bottles of beer at 10pm or a lemonade if you wanted, one every so often (laugh), but it was not that, the pressure was getting too much. Its fine in a small kitchen when you have eight or ten chefs and they all pull together, but when you have one chef over there on fish, and one chef in charge of the banquets and three *sous chefs* and they are not pulling their weight, I tell you I don't think those guys were pulling there weight. If somebody was off or sick, never would a *sous chef* say 'I will work tonight and get tomorrow off'. I was the one left behind, it was not worth it. So that's why I decided, I never even told my wife, I went home one day and said 'listen, I am not working tomorrow', and she said 'why not', and I said 'I quit'. She said 'what are you going to do?' and I said 'you go to work now for a change' (laughter) So I had looked at the papers and I had already the plan made that I would open something myself, I was not going in to an empty home and we bought that place and it was a vegetable shop. Paddy Shovelin, do you know him?

108.MM: Yes, Paddy used to own Blakes in Stillorgan.

109.MT: When I came out of Jury's, I opened Shiels in the top of the Stephen's Green Centre. He had his place Shiels in Moore Street, the butchers, and he opened up over there and I opened it for him with Tony Campbell, who gave a hand there as well.

110.MM: That was around 1988 or so because I had worked in Blakes in Stillorgan for a while and the manageress went from Blakes to Shiels.

111.MM: How long did you work with Paddy Shovelin?

112.MT: Only six weeks or so, I just opened it up for him and then I opened Simply Delicious, the delicatessen on Foxrock Avenue.

**Discussion on the future plans for his business in Foxrock Avenue with his daughter.**

113.MM: How many children have you?

114.MT: Four, and the four of them are involved in catering. The eldest one Francis, is in Waterford, in the Bodega restaurant: Lucienne is in Simply Delicious; and Mark and Paul opened Treyvaud's restaurant in Killarney around five years ago.

115.MM: So these business's have kept you busy since you left Jury's?

116.MT: Oh, yes, more than enough!

117.MM: Tell me about P.V. Doyle, did he make going to hotels more accessible to the average man?

118.MT: I worked for him for six months or so in the Montrose, but P.V. Doyle was a builder, but he was more into rooms in the hotels than the restaurants. The man was very good to all his staff, it

would not be one weekend without coming into the kitchen and say 'good evening or good morning' and he was always very good staff wise, I found anyway.

- 119.MM: Did you know Robert Kavavangh who was head waiter in the Montrose, and who they named 'The Robert Room' after, when he died?
- 120.MT: No, it was a Belgian head waiter when I was there, Louis Ghandi. He left the Montrose, in fact just after me, and opened a little pastry shop in Stillorgan Shopping Centre, and again he was ahead of his time, especially where expensive (pastries), so after that he started doughnuts from a little kitchen near the Graduate (Pub) on Rochestown Avenue. He taught pastry in Shannon in the Hotel School before the Montrose.
- 121.MM: Alfred Thoma had taught for a while in Rockwell College. We have discussed women in kitchens, and the trade union issue was important for you because they were anti-foreign chefs as such?
- 122.MT: I think every union, the hotel union was anti-chef coming in, but the building union would be anti-foreign workers too. To me, the Irish people, even now, have forgot their past. Of old, there was no work for them and they had to go away, you can say that every family in Ireland has somebody that at sometime of their life who went away to another country. Where did they go, it doesn't matter, because they left home. How they were welcome at the other end, most of the time yes, because the Irish worker, to me, was always a good worker except he was mislead by somebody above, but otherwise I never had a problem with the Irish worker. If I told them to do work, they did it, I never had to swear or shout at them, once you showed them, they did it, I always found them very good at that. But they forgot that their children went away and it would be nice to find somebody to teach them in the other country as well. But there is absolutely no problems, I go down there to Killarney and I love every minute that I am here in Ireland, you know, sunshine or not (laugh), I know it is because I do a lot of fishing, it doesn't really bother me (laugh). I like it here.
- 123.MM: Why do you think so many people leave the business?
- 124.MT: I think for most of them it could be a dead end, or they see it as a dead end, or not enough interest. Don't make the mistake, chef or waiter is a hard job, maybe the work is not hard, but the hours, you know. Remember if you were leaving the house, as I did many a time at 7am and not returning until 11pm because you cannot go back home if you have only two hours split, what do you do with those hours? Most of them used to go to the pub or the bookies. It is not that the work is that hard, but at the time the splits and that.
- 125.MM: Alcohol and drinking clearly was a problem in the industry, did you see much of that?
- 126.MT: Well, I saw some of it, I would not say much of it. I would blame the culture of the splits because there was nowhere else to go. And remember because you were a chef or waiter or working in the business, even your car insurance was loaded, you were penalised because you were working in the hotel industry even if you only drank a little bit. When I was in the Moira, often in the afternoon I would go up to Grafton Street to the picture house to see the Pathé news, pass an hour seeing the news or sleeping, particularly if it was raining. But a lot of people used to pass the time in the pub or in the bookies.
- 127.MM: When did the silver service stop and plate service take over?
- 128.MT: Around the 1980s and I'll tell you the reason, the chefs were doing a nice job with preparing all (food) thing on the dish. When the first person sees it, it looks good with the garnish etc. but when the last person is getting it, it looks a mess. So the chef started to do it on a plate, they'd put the main course on the plate with a little piece of veg and that was going out, and the waiter was going into the restaurant after that just with a follow of veg. And on your plate you'd

- have your steak or whatever, or fish, a little spinach, maybe a few carrots and the waiter would come back with some mash potatoes. But each customer would get a nice plate in front of them, as we say, you eat about 40% with your eyes and what looks nice tastes better.
- 129.MM: When did menu start to differ between restaurants? At one stage most menus were classical and looked similar?
- 130.MT: I would say about the same time as the television programmes started to arrive, around twelve or fifteen years ago, around the mid '80s or so. You know with the influence of the *nouvelle cuisine*.
- 131.MM: Were you aware of the *nouvelle cuisine*? Who were your main influences?
- 132.MT: The customers would influence the restaurant, to me, that is what they wanted, so we had to change.
- 133.MM: And who were they copying? Was it Robert Carrier or was it more the French chefs like Bocuse or Troisgros?
- 134.MT: Bocuse was one of them and Michel Guérard was another, they came in with these books and every chef would jump into the pot and copy them. Nowadays it is lamb shanks, everyone is doing it whereas it was only one a while ago, it is very hard to find a chef who is going to do something themselves, something that is not too expensive but something good and simple. They all follow each other, if the restaurant sells, the waiter will go over with the chef and say we sell a lot of this and a lot of that, and what ever sells well that's what they put on. I started with the shanks, now it's the belly of pork, every restaurant has belly of pork on the menu, slow cooked and it is very nice.
- 135.MM: I have three very short questions for you now at the end. What would you liked to be remembered for?
- 136.MD: Being a decent chef.
- 137.MM: A good answer. What part of your professional life are you most proud of?
- 138.MD: Well I'm proud to have achieved that my children are in the business and doing well with a little help from the father.
- 139.MM: If you were to start your professional career again, would you do anything differently?
- 140.MD: I don't think I would do something differently, but I do not think I would come to work in Dublin. Any part of Ireland but not in Dublin, the life is too fast compared with the lifestyle in Kenmare or Killarney with the houses and the lake etc. I would have preferred to have lived in the country. When I came here, Dublin was the place with the good hotels and the good restaurants, there was only a few down the country. When I moved into Jury's in 1972 there was no better job in Ireland. Jury's was an example to everybody of how a hotel should be run, so it is difficult to find a better job.
- 141.MM: It is interesting that most of the people teaching here in Cathal Brugha Street trained either in the Intercontinental Hotel or Jury's around that time. That was the Four Seasons of the day.
- 142.MD: I believe that those guys who are teaching here today learned a lot from me that they would not have the chance to learn today in a big hotel.

**End of Interview**