

I think I can go back to the 70s. Er, for no apparent reason to me my, er, heart would start beating very rapidly. Em, a bit uncomfortable. But usually... At that time I was in Australia working and, er, I used to... Could go to the doctor, would ring the hospital. And I would get down to the hospital and they would stick a needle in my arm, put me up in a bed and so long as... The needle seemed to settle things down and... Or whatever was in it. Then next morning I would get discharged and back off to work. This happened ooh for about 10, 15 years it went on. And, er, I had particular pills but, as I say, I can be daft as a brush. It never bothered me. And the answer was simple – hospital, needle, out again the next day. However, until I came back here for a final holiday before we settled – I was 60 – and we came back and, er, we'd been back about 9 months and I ended up in hospital with this rapid heart beat. And the chappy who looked after me there said that they could sort me out, but, er... But, he said, It'll take a time. Might take a year, might take 2 years. But he said, We've got plenty of pills that will keep you settled. So I think the second lot of pills he put me on seemed to settle me down and I had no problems. I was going back to hospital quite regularly. And he said, "Right, okay. You're right now. You'll be on those." Which was, er, called amiodolone. Now, all very well. That went very well unit about 19... (Pause) About 2001 – somewhere around about there. Er, my doctor thought it was time I saw a specialist again, because it had been a long time. So anyway, he sent me there. And this chappy I saw here said, "How long has it been since you've been on those amiodolone?" And I think we worked it out at about 23 years. "Oh, good heavens," he said. "Far too long." He said, "We found there are side effects with it." Er, he didn't tell me anymore, so I assume I didn't have any of the side effects. He said, "I think we better wean you off those." So he slowly got me off. And gave me something else, which didn't work. And then I started my period of a couple of, two and a half years, in and out of hospital. And the last time I went into hospital, maybe they got sick of seeing me, because somebody from... A lady from another hospital came over, who said she was going to do a (pause) Ablation therapy. Ablation therapy, that was the word. Which, er, for me was very simple. I knew nothing about it, but she told me she would go up from my groin, up into my heart. And what they discovered – I had three or four short circuits, as she put them, in my heart. And, er, she said, "With this, I'll put two wires up until we get to your... The right part of your heart. And when we find it, we'll short the wires together and it'll clear the short circuit." And, er, (pause) and touching wood that was about 3 years ago and certainly I'm on... I don't know that I'm on any pills. All I'm on pills for now, I think, is virtually to keep my blood flowing and keep it thin. And, er, I've got... I've got something for angina. And in the meantime I also had a pacemaker fitted. Or before I had the ablation therapy, er, they put the pacemaker in, which was to, er, stop... Keep my heart beating, apparently. I'd fallen a few times and one time I took quite a bit of skin off my arm as I fell down, slid down a rough wall. And then after that they put the pacemaker in. But I was told it was an unusual one – it had two wires in. But goodness knows. It worked and that was all that bothered me. So, er, I got well looked after, I think. Certainly at the... And as I say, today, I still see... Haven't had any problems because with the pacemaker I check every so often. And, er, apparently with it they can tell the... What's happened in the previous 9 months, or 12 months – however it was. It sounds amazing. Medical science is an amazing thing today. Long ago since I first went in to hospital in 1937. It just shows you how, er, things have improved. It was just a cartilage – I used to play rugby for Gosforth and, er, it was a cartilage operation I had and, I think, 6 weeks I was in hospital. And about 4 weeks doing physiotherapy. Today you can, I believe you can... You're in... You can have it one day and discharge the next day and two tiny little holes. I've got a scar about 4 inches long. It's just... It's just amazing. And it's fantastic that I've got this pacemaker, which if it slows down too much it gets a kick. And, er, I had another lady saw me... About the middle of last year, because I was over 85. She wanted to know a little bit of my history. What we ate and

this sort of thing. And, er, she, er... She did an ECG but, er, she was more inclined to explain it to me. A lot of it went over my head, but there was an obvious, little dark dot in there. And when I said, "What was that?" "Oh," she said. "That's your pacemaker kicking in, just to keep your heart steady." (Laughs) Which was... But without modern technology I'm sure 20, 30 years ago I would probably have been not sitting here talking to you, I'm sure. But it's... I'm very grateful anyway. I must be... At the proper... I've enjoyed it, to an extent. Especially when I used to go in the second... Another time and they would see me. I would get a lot of cheeky remarks from the nurses. Which always made it... Joking remarks, you know? Which... You could have... In spite of not feeling the best you couldn't help but smile or laugh and, er... That's about my little story I think. I Okay. And when you went in to have the pacemaker fitted did you have a...? What was that experience like? Being in a hospital at that time? R It was quite good. There was no problem. You went in... I went in in the afternoon and, er, settled in bed. Went down... No, I went in the morning. Went down in the afternoon – about 2. And (pause) I could see the monitor. Unfortunately somebody got their head in the way (laughs) – I didn't see it all being done. But, er, maybe it was just as well. But the funny part... The... There was no problem with it. I didn't feel anything at all. But the hard part, to me, was lying still for 12 hours afterwards. I've got arthritis of the back as well as my hands and wrists now. And, er, it was agony trying to lie there, still. And I find... I found when it was over and the nurse came round – "Right, Mr Duncan, you can wriggle about if you want to." (Laughs) And... Because I'd been on that warfarin medicine which precludes painkillers. And, er, he gave me something that he said would be alright, but it was only after the time was up. He said, "That will get you settled a bit quicker." But that was the hardest part about it – was my back. But then I got told off then by him. He said, "You have told us when you came in yesterday you had arthritis. And we would have sorted things out for you." So obviously there was other ways of making you more comfortable afterwards. So that's what I get with keeping my mouth shut".