INTERVIEW WITH FRASER LOGUE

[AC]
Interviewers are Amelia Hope and Chris Hopkins and we are interviewing on the 26th of November 2025 in Whitney in District Museum and we are interviewing Fraser Lund.

[FL]
I've been retired now coming up three years but spent a long time working at Abbott Diabetes Care in Whitney.

[AC]
Lovely, so Fraser could you tell us why you moved to Whitney and what sort of attracted you to living here?

[FL]
Yeah, it was work like many people. I'm a scientist trade PhD biochemist started in Glasgow in the health service and universities and my role was for my PhD was to develop new tests and implement them into the health service laboratory. A lot of changes came in the health service around about that time so I moved to a company that did similar things and I joined Abbott Diagnostics in Germany.

So I worked in Germany for a while again in development and various technologies all to do with diagnostic testing for patient care. I then moved to Germany and from Germany I moved to the US for a while and then spent a long tour of duty in Ireland in the west coast of Ireland. Abbott has many factories in Ireland when we went in the early it would be 90s it was a very small operation but when I came back to Whitney which would be in about 2006-2007 Abbott in Ireland had three major factories about two and a half three thousand employees all again in either pharmaceuticals or in diagnostic technology.

So what brought me here was the presence of the Abbott site Abbott Diabetes Care.

[AC]
So I suppose you sort of touched on this but what led you to a career in Abbott?

[FL]
It was my background in developing diagnostics tests and applying them to patient care and what happened like most technologies you start off developing tests and then you've developed all the tests that are needed it's now a question of how you do the tests efficiently and Abbott was the leader at that time in automation of

diagnostic tests. Health service laboratories in the NHS etc were short of people, were short of time, were short of money so Abbott and other companies as well but Abbott in particular came with these machines that would take the same materials as we did the test with and they would do many many tests per hour. So I joined Abbott in Germany and then followed them to the US and Ireland all in the same general area of test development.

What part of the US did you go to? Chicago.

[AC]
It was their headquarters?

[FL]
Yeah there's a place called Abbott Park it's got its own postcode it's a massive place at that time it was centred in Chicago. Nice town by the way. Much better for shopping than New York.

[AC]
I suppose what major changes or advancements did you experience while you were working at Abbott?

[FL]
Oh wow that's a big question yeah I suppose several things in there one would be the size of the automation and we started off Abbott started off with kind of a desktop size and the technician would come and put the patient's blood on and then the machine would do that test. Then you go to a much bigger machine where you just load all the samples in one end and the machine decides what testing to be done and then if you expand that further you go to the very big laboratories now if you remember all the small hospital laboratories shut and it's a large laboratory then you'd have whole rooms of machines all linked up and you put the sample on one end and it would go right around all the different stations and get the tests done such that a big hospital lab would do as I said many many thousands of samples in one day. So Abbott is a big company and if you look at the Whitney site it's developed from everybody knows the strip tests you know you do the blood well that's still done there but they've now developed on body monitoring with the patches so that's the next development you don't take blood samples you just get it straight from your arm and you can just put your phone up to it and it'll give you the result and your past results and then if you take it one step further which is what Abbott is doing and also other companies you then hook that up to the insulin pump so you're no longer just taking a result on your finger and then deciding whether you're going to have an apple or a lardy cake or whatever the insulin loop manages your glucose.

[AC]
So it's life-changing for these people.

[FL]
It's life-changing particularly for the parents of children and adolescents night time hypoglycemia is a nightmare for parents. They sit up all night just trying to watch after their children whereas this sort of system takes care of it. So that's the kind of development that's gone on but Abbott has a massive innovation technology and stents.

It's hard to remember all the things they have but they are tremendously innovative and they've taken that concept of diagnostic testing and made it more applicable to real-time situations.

[AC]
Do you think AI will have a...

[FL]
Yeah AI is an interesting development. You've seen all the publication about don't trust AI etc. It gets things wrong if you do your own profile on AI do it three times a day it'll give you a different profile each time.

There'll be a core of things that are correct but there are other things that are not quite so correct but where AI is most applicable and has a lot of potential is in things like reading x-rays, reading scans. AI can be taught by expert radiologists etc and you can now load up your scan and AI will read it. If you take other companies like Siemens, there's also a Siemens factory here, I also work for Siemens, they've got the concept of your digital twin.

Now the idea there is that when you're well or when you're young you would get complete scans and diagnosis and then when you get a test result, at the moment you get a test result, you're compared to the population which is different for everybody and what they want to do is build the database that you would be tested against your previous self so you would get much more precise results. It's called precision medicine things like that but all these companies are working on Abbott as well. Fascinating field to be in.

[AC]
Is there any sort of specific memories about working for Abbott like maybe a specific event that was sort of momentous in your career?

[FL]
We've done several events at Abbott which were to do with the factories 10 years old or 20 years old etc and these were big community events. Abbott's also very much involved with the local community, they sponsor the Christmas lights, they're very much involved in the response fastest mile in the London Marathon. Yeah they do that, they're big sponsors of the Whitney Carnival, I just couldn't remember the

name of that but yeah Abbott because of the connection with diabetes etc they've always had a big presence in road running and races and they have teams who join marathons, the London Marathon etc.

World Diabetes Day is always big here and it was a big community event.

[AC]
Do you actually have any copyrights?

[FL]
Oh you mean patents? Not so much patents from me, I've got maybe 100 scientific papers but not specific to Abbott. Because of my work in the development of tests and diagnostics in general I was actually made an honorary professor at Cardiff University for a while so I've been very lucky in that I've been able to keep my business life with working with Abbott's in particular, Siemens Oz etc but also kept research interests so I've kind of had the best of both worlds.

[AC]
And what did you do your PhD in?

[FL]
Glasgow. Oh Glasgow. Yeah it was Glasgow University and did my first degree in biochemistry and my PhD in medical biochemistry.

[AC]
Yeah I suppose thinking kind of more broadly about living in Whitney like how do you feel about kind of your local community and how do you feel like that's sort of changed since you first moved here?

[FL]
Yeah it's a very interesting question. I worked, I was the managing director of the Abbott site and I've worked with Siemens but more in North Wales sites but in each of these jobs I've had other sites to look after and in Abbott it would be Donegal in Ireland plus some other work in the headquarters and also had some connections in San Francisco so I travelled a lot in all my jobs. I was telling some of my colleagues I have a million air miles not used so that's left over but that shows you how much you travelled because those were different times.

We would think nothing of flying to LA on a Monday and back on a Thursday which these days well the zoom's much better yeah but in those days face-to-face meetings were everything and everybody was in the office every day but with that amount of travel I really didn't get to know Whitney too well. I knew Whitney through the workforce and one of the things that I think that is really important about companies like Abbott and Siemens in any factory you have jobs for all levels. You have the starter jobs, the production jobs, you have the massive jobs for

scientists etc and you have your professional finance jobs, HR jobs etc so in one enterprise you have jobs for almost all levels and all stages of life and one of the things that was really good in these places was to see young people coming in and they'll always be out and you're worried if they're coming in on a Monday morning and in the canteen they want big meals because they ain't cooking anywhere else and then you see these people pairing up and they start to get together and they buy their house etc and then they want healthy meals at lunchtime. All this is different so you follow people through all the stages of their life and then if you're lucky you see the ones retiring and the ones coming in and also parents can send a child to university and one of the things that's difficult about sending your child to university is they're gone and are they coming back but companies like Abbott provide that framework of the scientist can come back here, finance guy can come back etc and have good careers.

[AC]
I think you mentioned about the similarity between perhaps the more modern Abbott and what weaving possibly would have been two or three hundred years ago.

[FL]
I see it as the same thing it would be all levels you'd have your manual workers you'd have the skilled weavers and all the different trades of them and it would be the same thing people would come in and they'd spend their lives in the factory and they would move up through that yeah so it's a very similar and it's a bit tenuous but if you think the reason for the mills being here was the power source it was the water yes well the reason for the tech companies being here is the power source from Oxford these were all spinouts from Oxford so you get these clusters but they're based on sources of energy or momentum either the water and it would mean proximity of the wool and and for Abbott it would be the spinout from Oxford and then highly educated people at all levels and that's what keeps the companies here yeah and I wonder about other high-tech

[AC]
companies that could be coming in as well on the back of that I suppose as we mentioned Longford

[FL]
well you've got Abbott comes and then they need suppliers of plastics and tubes and stuff so you've got the engineering excellence comes through and Owen Mumford comes up and becomes a big player not just for the supply and the locals but they become worldwide players in medical diagnostics the Siemens factory in the ancient was again a spinout of magnets from Oxford and it used to be called Oxford Magnetic Technology and the big magnets are used for I don't know if you knew that as well yeah and they've developed amazingly there and now one of the big things about MRI scanners is they need liquid oxygen to keep them cool and that's a

pain now they're developing cool technology that you don't need that so so it's the same thing you come in because of the source materials and why you're close to it and then things develop from there

[AC]
I think that's been fantastic Fraser I appreciate you are you sure yeah yeah I think that's been amazing and really appreciate you coming down not at all excellent if you have any other questions just I don't think I've touched on everything but I mean just in terms of Whitney itself

[FL]
it has really developed I mean the speed that Whitney's growing at is quite amazing

[AC]
I think the future as well I think where they've they're planning I think 18,000 houses until 2050

[FL]
or something like that I think that's the danger yes when we came Whitney town centre was quite big relative to the outskirts at least as far as I knew it but the number of schemes that are now round about and what resources are in in the centre yeah well I think the other thing what I find is

[AC]
say weekends or during the week you know the footfall going through Whitney it's quite high in the sense you see a lot of people walking in there and of course you talk to people well I come here from the village outside because we've got three hours free parking yeah we've got Sainsbury's you've got two shopping malls we can walk in distance a gazillion coffee shops yes that's right so you know you can do pretty much everything around here and then go home yeah and they said that's that's a real attraction I mean Abingdon has probably gone down a bit because there's obviously you know Patesco's on the outskirts

[FL]
right and Abingdon doesn't feel safe Whitney feels a safe place if you come in at the weekend people are walking about as you say and the free parking is a big draw for people yeah

[AC]
I think the council have decided that's a big draw and stick with that and you know from one point of view I don't drive I get the bus in every day from Oxford

[FL]
and the buses seem to be getting better yes which is good yeah yeah yeah they're really

[AC]
regular and reliable yeah you get to most places from here so like it is a central place it's a good hub yeah it is a good hub