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Interviewer

Interviewee

So my name is Joshua Adams and I am recording for Eastside Community Heritage on the Stadium of Stories project. Do you maybe just want to introduce yourself for the sake of the tape?

Okay my name is er Michael Campbell I live in Colchester in Essex but I was born in Stratford E15 er I went to school in Stratford and Plaistow E13. Erm my first experience er my father was born in Manor Park my grandparents lived a stones through away erm from the Boleyn Ground Inniskilling Road erm literally like 200 metres away. And erm I lived in a house in Bolton Road Stratford opposite West Ham Park. Erm my primary school was Park County Primary School in Ham Park Road round the corner to where I lived. A couple of ex West Ham players from years ago before my time attended that school erm I erm I was very interested in football at an early age and Brian Dear that played for West Ham lived quite locally and he was a cousin of my sisters erm best friend. So we see Brian quite regularly and he would come over the park with us and put a couple of jumpers down on the floor for goal posts and we'd have a about 200 against 200 with an old leather ball. That weighed a ton on a west cold day when nobody wanted to head the ball, it was like heading a medicine ball.

Yeah

We had great fun in those days. And erm after erm my first match at West Ham we didn't have a lot of money in those days but there was a boy down the road who said 'I've been over West Ham and there a great side' I was about 11 at the time and I had to save up a few weeks to get the money to go to the ground and we literally walked to the ground from Stratford to East Ham and walked home afterwards and the first game was a cup game against Burnley. I can almost name the side now it's stuck in my mind. People that had been there for years there's Ernie Gregory in goal that was there for many many years and of course erm John Bond, Noel Cantwell who I've come to have the pleasure of meeting personally at his pub in Peterborough The New Ship New Inn rather and erm I spent many hours there one day with him one day talking to him about his time with West Ham and Manchester United. Erm and there was also Andy Malcolm, Eddie Bovington, Ken Brown of course erm Bobby Moore erm and there was Mike Grice, Malcolm Musgrove erm there was erm Johnny Byrne they bought from Crystal Palace. Phil Woosnam that came from Leyton Orient and of course John Dick that came from the Colchester area erm from Crittall Athletic er an amateur team and he was a prolific goal scorer and payed for Scotland whilst he was with West Ham. So they had some fabulous players there and they were about to be promoted 57'- 58' into back from the Second Division to the old First Division, obviously before the Premiership days. So they were exciting times and I'd fallen in love with the club. I'd only have to hear the theme tune bubbles and I would be buzzing and the sight of them coming down the tunnel and onto the pitch with the claret and blue would set the heart racing. Erm then my parents split up and I



moved to Basildon with my mother and sister but obviously didn't lose contact with the club. I started a job I worked in the city so I had a travel card a season ticket for they erm trains and I used that to attend the home games. I couldn't really afford the away games, some of them too far away. Though I attended most home games erm so erm as a young boy from about...from those early ages 10 or 11 I kept a scrap books and they were thick scrap books. I had an original hand written letter from Bobby Moore because I had sent him a team picture asking if he would sign it. I sent it to the ground at Chadwell Heath. And he got every player signed for me and a personal letter and a couple of complimentary tickets that I never used but unfortunately some time ago those books disappeared out of my possession somebody stole them from me which included that Bobby Moore letter that meant so much to me erm but I was erm 15 it was like my first job in the City of London in EC3 erm I wrote to the club and said 'I love football erm can I have a trial?' I didn't think I'd get an answer but Wallison Pier who was the chief scout wrote me a letter that was in those scrap books erm said 'would you like to come along to Chadwell Heath on a Tuesday Night?' I think training is Tuesday and Thursday night and then I started to attend training sessions very very strenuous and there was Ernie Gregory there taking training Malcolm Musgrove and sometimes Phil Woosnam so I was in aurora of them that I was actually on the training pitch with them and there was players like Martin Britt that West Ham sold for then what was a big fee for 20,000 pound to Blackburn Rovers and Trevor Dawkins that was an England youth international I was actually kicking a ball about with them

Hmmm

So when I actually played some games for them I was very very nervous I had sleepless nights before it was all like a dream to me but eventually I got a letter from, Wallison Pier who politely said 'thank you for attending the training sessions but you're not quite ready' you have to join a club locally and get a bit more experience but we'll keep in touch' And I started playing for Basildon Town then which was a man's team as a 16 and half year old and getting knocked all over the shop but erm I still enjoyed it and I managed to erm play er in local football. But I did erm go to Southend United had some time in their youth side and they decided that perhaps I wasn't quite up to standard erm I erm I still kept attending matches but erm roughly roughly 25 years ago I rang the club and said to them' I want to something commercially for the club' I used to be a builder but I'm now more into sales and marketing and I'll do anything. I'll sell ground balls advertising the programme, anything you want to do, erm I have gained experience to this because I have been a manager er a commercial manager of a few non-league clubs erm some of them Billericay town that won the Amateur cup at one time, of erm Hornchurch Football club, Maldon Town, and er Southend Manor in the Southend league erm and er and er and connected with other clubs [bang] XXX Rovers was one erm in the Ryman league erm so erm they'd said to me, "Just come to the ground if you're interested." I went to the ground, I met Brian Blorer, who was the commercial manager then and he said, "We have all sorts of people walk in off the street. This is not advertised, but you know, it's a bit cheeky of you to try and get sort yourself a job out but we'll give you a box of scratch cards," and jokingly tongue in cheek said, "Don't disappear with these or we'll come and find you," and I said, "No, I won't disappear with them. Can I have some point of sale dispensers cos I'm not going to sell them one to one. I'm going to put them in stores. Give me the approp'...appropriate paperwork so they can sign and the.. put their stamp on it, to say that they've got that amount of tickets and that at the point of sale and I le.. I'll go back every couple of weeks and work their winning tickets out, give them their winning money out of the ...out of the money and write the paperwork out and



I'll bank it for you. "He said, "OK but it remains to be seen. Here's a box. Don't disappear with them." Two days later I rang up and said, "They're all out. I've got all the paperwork. It's all signed for." He said, "Really?" I said, "Yes." He said, "Come down." I went down, showed him the paperwork. He rang a few up at random to make sure that it all was kosher and they said, "Yes, he's come in. We're...we're glad to sell you tickets. He said, "Right. Here's four boxes of tickets now. That should last you months, save you keep coming up here." He give me four boxes of tickets and in about three days I said, "Right, they've gone," took the appropriate paperwork in. To cut a long story short I, in a very short space of time found over 800 retail outlets, rent a Portakabin in the main erm part of the ground as you come through the main gates, the John Lyall gates. Erm there were, there was one porter cabin there with almost like clocking in cards erm from ceiling to floor and my cards covered one and a half walls for the amount er of customers that retail outlets that I had. Erm Brian by then said, "I've got to take you serious, now. You're selling in excess of 20,000 tickets a month. I want you to run the match day ones and bring sellers in with you where we can put the bibs on. They'll get a complimentary ticket for doing it and they'll get a small commission. You'll get an over-rider on their money. You've got a little office underneath the main stand and you'll have to go round during the match to make sure you replenish any tickets they've sold and make sure they're booking and paying the money in. Er and what we're going to do, we're going to order you a new car. I got a new West Ham car that was XXX and with the badge on and with West Ham United written all over it. I was obviously thrilled to bits. I used to get up early in the morning to get in that car and I was out at the first port of call business-wise at nine in the morning and didn't return until after ten at night because I had working man's clubs, social clubs, off- licenses and er pubs that had these tickets in and I was selling tons of the, There was no National Lottery then because the National Lottery, if I'd have had a crystal ball, was going to... to kill it...erm because of the amount of money they were paying out. Our top prize was thousand pound, and the winner for each batch would be called onto the pitch on a match day and presented with a thousand pound cheque which was a lot of money in those days. Erm so I had four, five seasons at West Ham. I was thrilled to bits to be part of the club because even if I didn't make it as a player, I could re-emerge commercially. At least I had that connection. Erm I'd...I actually went.. I did have complimentary tickets er for each game in the stands. We had the same seats. We sat next to the kit...the then kit manager's wife and became friends with them. My mother came with me quite a lot...and erm...and I'd take my mother into the pie and mash shop round the corner which was a traditional café on the corner where the players used to go in for breakfast and have their team talk and I used to leave Basildon early in the morning to casually walk in there so I could sit near them and just look at them and think,"Oh I'm almost part of the squad. I'm a table away..." Erm so the walk from Upton Park station to the... to the ground with all the rosette sellers, the wooden rattles...er old programmes, past programmes. The whole atmosphere was absolutely awesome...and walking through those gates, that goes through the turnstiles, and people queuing through the turnstiles was fantastic and of course when I had the West Ham car erm a commissionaire would come in the street and let anybody that he thought was connected with the club and I obviously was with West Ham written all over the car and stopped the traffic and let me in and let me go in the players' car park so I was obviously thrilled to bits to be part of the club in that way. Erm so.. erm mu roots are Newham...er...erm because I was born there...erm My club from the age of eleven has always been West Ham United...erm I live and breathe West Ham United...erm that's all I ever talk about. I now run a Facebook group, that's only about eight months old but I already have 2,300 members and I average anything from five to ten people a day approaching me asking to come in, some very nice comments saying keep the good work up



and it's excellently...er...all the up to date information you put on there so it's quite flattering, very encouraging and I've made some really nice friends and it's gaining momentum and I'm hoping that those figures will continue on erm in the rise and the Facebook page is "West Ham United FC Group" so if anybody is er interested in visiting the group you'll be made very, very welcome erm and we accept anybody who is a true West Ham fan. Erm so...my connections with the club, disappointing as a player, erm great to pop back there commercially and very proud to drive that beautiful car around...and erm.. as I say it's my whole life and I eat, sleep and breathe West Ham United and the future looks very bright with this new branding, new stadium. Sad about leaving the Boleyn, because it was wonderful memories, and going back all those years but I think we will soon realise that you've got to move forward and it's a fantastic stadium and XXX so many tickets now which actually can only move the club onto the next level and I feel very excited about the future of the club and as I say very very proud to have been connected with the club in that way and hope that one day that I can re-connect with the club directly.

Erm...so what other memories do you have of West Ham then?

Erm my memories of West Ham are mainly of the players throughout the years and my favourite players and erm people.. erm that have come from other clubs, where they come from, where they went to afterwards and obviously a big thrill for me was when West Ham swapped Martin Peters for Jimmy Greaves and when er his first game was away for West Ham he scored because he scored in every debut that he's ever had including when he went to Milan. I think that was 99,999 that was a world record at the time.. Erm when he come down the tunnel with Geoff Hurst against Liverpool, his first home game and I was in the North Bank and before it was all seater of course and saw Geoff Hurst with Jimmy Greaves wearing the claret and blue coming out of that tunnel onto the pitch, it was absolutely awesome. Geoff Hurst appeared in the Cup Final and scored a hat trick for England, erm and of course Martin Peters followed closely behind, another great footballer, lives in Essex now...erm who scored the other goal and to see Hurst and Peters walking on the pitch in the claret and blue was just absolutely awesome. It was like a dream come true and I remember rightly that was a one all draw and erm and it ... it was disappointing that he ... that we didn't win but ..it..it was nice to think that they could attract somebody like Jimmy Greaves...erm to the stadium and I've met him... I've had the pleasure of meeting him privately since, and had an interesting conversation with him.

What was that conversation about?

I... really about his time at West Ham...when they used to congregate after training in the Whalebone, then the Moby Dick...erm in the Whalebone Lane, it's round the corner to the erm ground that I told him that I'd got to know Bobby Ferguson, that lived in Upminster who was a West Ham goal keeper that was a signing from Kilmarnock, Scottish international and I believe he was a record signing of 65,000 at the time. I think he emigrated to Australia or somewhere afterwards but perfect gentleman. I met him several times socially and I spoke to Jimmy about him and he said what a nice chap he was and told them what a character John Bond was and how majestic Moore and Cantwell were, how solid Ken Brown was in, in, in the middle of the park, what does he think of the new formations now, where is used to be two defenders, two fullbacks, three midfielders, two wingers, two inside forwards and a centre forward, how it's now become almost continental Italian style with perhaps one up front shutting up shop, not so many goals and he said he preferred the old wingers. I said I've



got a programme of his when he represented the England under 21s side when he was 17, played at Chelsea's ground...erm and how quickly the years must go and he said yes, it seem like yesterday.. and erm he was a bit like Trevor Francis I suppose, from Birmingham, he shone very brightly at a very very early age and he had this little gallop that he used to do a little skip in his run, Jimmy Greaves and away he went and just a goal machine and erm I was just...felt so privileged to be speaking to him face to face.

Mmmm. So obviously I want to hear about all your memories ...erm and all your interactions with all these footballers. Do you want to share them all with us?

Er yeah I think the...the obviously the memories of the ground...I mean it...it applies to most teams I suppose, the smell of hot dogs, hamburgers the man selling the fanzine, the programmes, erm getting there early so you can get a nice position. I know in my younger years I remember people, before it was all seated that people at the back used to pass a young kid down above their heads and we used to carefully pass that kid down and we'd...there would be a few plastic milk crates on the floor so if the wall was too high the kid would make sure he had one of the crates and we'd look back and we'd give the thumbs up to say he's Ok with us. We'll take care of him, so we made sure even the youngsters...cos they were the supporters of tomorrow could see over that wall. So it was the banter, the things that were shouted out...er, the, the typical flat cap erm supporter...erm the little kids getting all excited and getting used to the atmosphere and the roar of the crowd at floodlit matches with the lights coming on and you can see the twinkle of erm...cigarettes being lit up all around the ground.. the "I'm forever blowing bubbles" theme tune erm...which erm was originated in the 1920s [traffic noise]...erm and the...the erm...it was erm produced and upgraded by somebody who attended Park School, my former primary school.. erm and it was from the Pears Soap.. erm advertisement, the commercial of a little child called Bubbles with like gingery blondish curly hair and the theme tune was Bubbles and West Ham had that for their...for their theme er theme tune from the 1920s so particularly with a floodlit game with the...the light shining, the twinkling of the cigarettes lighting up, the football rattles going that you saw in abundance in those days and the rosettes that they wore, I'm forever blowing bubbles and those players coming out of the ground, I don't know whether they had...were in tanning booths but they had always sort of tanned, athletic and I felt so envious to see them. I thought I wish that was me, that's what I...I dreamed of being as a boy when I used to play football on the streets and kicking a ball up against the wall, running round the block to keep myself fit. I lived for the day that one day perhaps I'd be a famous footballer but it wasn't meant to be, but the whole atmosphere, the smell of the food, the men walking around the pitch like the women do in...er sometimes men in cinemas with a little tray with a strap round their shoulder with the Percy Dalton peanuts in shells that you bought from them over the wall and gave them the money and the big shells all round the ground where people were eating peanuts throughout the ground so it was the whole atmosphere, the theme tune, the smell of the food, the people shouting out their wares, the West Ham singing I'm forever blowing bubbles and the banter between the rival supporters and it became addictive. I live for Saturdays because I mean there was some midweek games but Saturdays was the day you just didn't make arrangements to go anywhere else because that was a West Ham day and of course after the game there was so much to talk about and of course you meet people where you've got a lot in common and lots to...make a lot of friends and it was the walk back from the stadium to Upton Park station and talking to people on the way and the banter on, on the train and feeling elated and in those days erm I'd get on the train and who should be in my carriage but Brian Rhodes (?) the goalkeeper for West Ham that lived on Canvey island and



said, "Oh, hello Brian," and he was friendly and I often got to talk to players that used public transport in those days, they didn't all have erm Rolls Royce's and Ferraris...

Yeah. Anyways, so what would you do before a game?

Erm, before a game...erm I never...I was never one to go into the pub [cough] and drink loads of drink because I realised I'd be going backwards and forwards to the toilet in a crowded area and miss most of the game...so if I did want a drink I'd make sure that was after the game because I didn't want to miss a second of it. I remember one evening...er one evening game when we played Leeds United at home when Leeds United were all powerful, all conquering and we won 7-0. Erm and there was lots of people around me leaving to the toilet and coming back and missed several goals and kept asking me what the result was so I learnt a lesson that wasn't the time to drink. It also changes people's personality and I wanted to behave myself at the ground which most people did.. erm but erm er before the ground obviously I'd just get on at erm Basildon railway station and go erm go to Barking and change to the underground and get off at Upton Park and walk down Green Street...erm...lots of people selling all sorts of stuff connected with the club on the way and into those main games and after the game, erm, I'd either...I'd always make my way back if I wanted a pint or something afterwards to the area where I lived and I met some supporters in there and we'd go through the er what happened in the game and we all thought we was an authority what the team should be and what the next tactic should be, but I don't think we quite realised just how many wonderful players Peter Brabrook and people like that and we signed from er...Chelsea...erm at the outside right and I had the pleasure of meeting him when I did a bit of commercial work for Tilbury Football club. He...he, he's I don't know if he's still connected there but he was connected there for quite some time. Erm so er I... I loved the match atmosphere. Unless you've experienced it... er, it's very hard to explain what it is but it...it makes the adrenaline go and it's...and it's almost like a anti-climax when you get home because it's all died down and you've got the memory of it but then you're looking forward to the next game. But I used to go straight to my scrapbooks even at that age, write down the attendance, who scored the goals, what minutes they scored the goals. If I'd have known their postcodes in the crowd I probably would have logged that as well. I was almost like the equivalent to a train-spotter, but erm I had two fabulous scrapbooks which were probably about two or three inches deep that erm went missing from me with a lot of hard work over the years that put into it- all the original press cuttings and erm I dearly miss them but I've had to sort of switch off from it and resign myself to the fact that I'll probably never see them again but no one can ever take those wonderful memories away from me.

Mmmmm. So you're just describing there the atmosphere inside the stadium, what was the atmosphere like on Green Street and the surrounding area?

Well on Green Street...erm...I mean there's some people in the road but obviously it's a busy road and cars come through and you have to step out the way but both pavements both sides of the street were about five or six abreast erm...like an army converging on this street. Er I noticed that the opposition used to come with a police escort for safety and there would be some er pointing at each other and trying to er...er have some banter to wind each other up but mainly friendly. Erm but erm and I know this at like a lot of grounds the way supporters kept behind after a game and they would go out once the er...stadium was practically empty but the...it was masses, masses of people but having said that in those days you was lucky to get a 20,000 gate. Things have changed a lot and I've seen it progress from 20 to 36,000 and



obviously now 60,000 plus at the new stadium so it's a whole new ball game but you certainly know when a game's on and of course the local, small local businesses made their money on match days. The Boleyn pub on the corner that my father used to drink in...erm was packed on a match day. They probably took more money on a match day than they did the rest of the week, so they [Mmmm] were quite dependent on that extra money which obviously they won't get now they're going to the Olympic Stadium but I believe that the Boleyn is going to lay coaches on to take them from the pub to the new stadium so they don't lose the clientele...erm but there was cafeterias on the way and pubs on the way the XXX [Queens?] got a lot of extra business. I believe Bobby Moore had the sports shop op'...almost opposite the main gates at one time so erm it was a hive of activity. You could see that...if you weren't a football person there was something special going on because it was just...you'd think the Royal Family was due to come through because there...there was no space on the...like sardines on the...on the pavement.

Did you ever go to the pie and mash shop around the corner?

Yes very often. Erm I used to go round and have pie and mash...you go to erm turn left put the main gate, past the Boleyn on the corner, turn left, it was just a few shops down on the left hand side with the marble table tops er...pie and mash.. You had a, the cafe on the corner where people like Malcolm Allison who sadly got TB and had to finish his career around 26-he was a big mentor for...for Bobby Moore and a fabulous character who became a successful manager of Manchester City- very erm.. er flamboyant type of person...erm and he...and I've seen him in the café several times years ago and some of the old faces there. Erm...I obviously didn't intrude but I'd sit as near as I could just to look at them not...in awe just to think, Oh that's my idol sitting over there and I'm in the same room as them. So that...I think there was a lot of tactical stuff talked by the first team squad in that cafeteria and...but I never saw any first team players in the pie and mash shop but apparently some of them did frequent it.

Yeah. So...in regards to the stadium as well...erm why did some people call it Upton Park and why do some people call it the Boleyn Ground?

Well it's called the Boleyn Ground because it's on site of the Bo...where Henry VIII lived at one time but it was the Boleyn castle years ago and the ground was built on that ground it's called the Boleyn because that's where the original Boleyn Castle was but people get confused because Upton Park isn't the name of the ground. It's the area that's called Upton Park- it's Upton Park station...the immediate area is the Upton Park area-it's just a small part of the East End. So when people say, "Well I'm going over Upton Park," they...erm...erm ground they really mean the Boleyn ground so there really shouldn't be that confusion. It's the Boleyn Ground because it's on the grounds of the old Boleyn Castle and the area is Upton Park, the immediate area to it.

Mmm. Do you think the stadium...well obviously it has...but what other changes have took place within the stadium over the years?

Well I remember when I first went over the Chicken Run, was just a single storey with the corrugated roof on, quite crude and I think it was called the Chicken Run cause before my time there used to be chicken wire at the front of it to stop people running on the pitch so it looked like a chicken run so they call...they called it the Chicken Run cos that's what it



looked like at first glance. It was quite crude... erm and of course there was just concrete steps there was no all seating and erm...it wasn't the best of grounds but it.. the atmosphere would more than compensate- the players these – the audience were very close to the players so it must have been a daunting task if you'd just tripped one of their home players up because you'd have to hear it every time you took a throw in. they were almost reaching...arm's length away from you and I don't think a lot of teams liked playing at Upton Park because of the close proximity of the of the home support but erm, they did do a revamp on the stadium and improved it considerable and then there was the revamp some years later where I believe they spent in the region of just over a hundred million pound which was a lot of money then to give it the castle look from the front, spent a lot of money on the front and... and obviously improved it somewhat but having said that obviously not...nothing like the seven hundred million plus stadium that they're moving to now....erm but I don't think people were too worried about it not being too plush...erm it was the history, the nostalgia, its past, the legends that had walked onto that pitch...the wonderful moments erm I remember when West Ham played Chelsea and Bobby Tambling their player accidentally kicked West Ham's goal keeper in the head as he went down and there was a massive pitch invasion. The game was held up for a long, long time over it. How Laurie Leslie, the goal keeper, the Scottish goal keeper erm...was erm...it was a Scottish international was injured. There were no substitutes then. He had to go on the wing against Arsenal and play the blindo (?) and kept putting wonderful centres in and people thought perhaps he would be better on the field and not in goal although he was a very good goal keeper. So there's all those memories that people can't take away. Hopefully there'll be lots more memories at the new stadium. I'm just a bit worried about people that have been members...er supporters for a long time who look like they're not going to get into the ground next season because even sixty thousand tickets, I believe fifty-two's sold to supporters and with the com.. with the tickets allowed for visiting players, visiting supporters and complimentary...er...tickets, it looks like...it's going to be like gold dust. It's a shame. It couldn't have been a seventythousand stadium...perhaps we'll get round that and some of the supporters who can't get in now will get in because some of them are life-long supporters. Some people didn't have the money at the time because you had to pay apparently two seasons up front for a season ticket although having said that the season tickets are very reasonable. They haven't over-priced on that. I think the web-site is inundated with calls and they're not answering the phones as quick as some people would want and some people are saying they're paying premium rates while they're hanging on, so what is the point of having cheap season tickets when you're paying it in phone calls trying to inquire about a ticket but that's life. Even with the premier rate telephone calls and what they're charging for season tickets, it's still good value for money and no one can take the Upton Park, the Boleyn ground erm memories away from the people like me that have put years and years of it but I'm.. I'm sure that there's going to be a lot of happy memories in the past for people, this magnificent stadium...

Mmmmm. Do you think the atmosphere has changed over the years...in regards to the Boleyn Ground?

Well there was a...there was a period in the Seventies like other...other ground, it wasn't just West Ham...where there was an element of...of violence where they thought it was Ok to go around in gangs and attack anybody that wore a scarf of a different colour to the club. I...I would never condone that. I don't think...that's not what football's about...but there is family enclosures with women and children that don't need to be terrorised as it's only a game of football after all. I don't mind the banter, the teasing, reminding them of



embarrassing. Embarrassing FA Cup exits by minnow, a lower XX team. We've all got that that can be thrown at us but in the Seventies had the ICF. Some people admire them. I'm sure they were great supporters but I don't condone for any reason attacking people simply because they've got different colours on, so I think that was a low for West ham. It didn't do the club any...and good reputation-wise. I'm sure the club didn't condone it either. But I...I...it's nice to see that that's been abandoned now...er there's less violence. There's just banter- that will always happen but I'm so glad that those Seventies years where there was...I mean I...when I worked for the club I couldn't get out the ground once in my West Ham car. They told me not to cos it was dangerous cos the West Ham and Manchester United supporters were fighting all the way down Green Street from the ground right up to the station there was van loads of riot police there and I felt almost ashamed to see what I was seeing...the...the amount of violence and I...I had to look away...I couldn't...it was so sad...I...I thought I hope somebody's not killed. This is all about a football game for goodness' sake so I'm please to say, I think things have changed in .that direction. There's less of it. You will always get an element in every club- it's not just West Ham but it's...West Ham don't need that bad publicity because a lot of supporters do a lot of good for the club. They've got two joint chairmen that have invested a lot of money in the club when West Ham was struggling financially, two very successful business people that are life-long West Ham supporters, cos I remember when I was young, David Sullivan as a 16 year old working out of an office in Forest Gate, selling second-hand programmes. It's recently been announced that he's actually a billionaire now. So these are proper businessmen, David Gold who's a...a., er, director of er Anne Summers that one of his daughters run and his other daughter runs Knickerbox, very successful erm companies, proven businessmen because erm football is a business, and you've got to have business people there. It's very...it can be lucrative but you can lose a lot of money, so I think it's in safe hands. I mean they're in their seventies now, going on sort of forties. They're very young at heart...er their heart's in the right place. They're...they're definitely West Ham people, which is good erm but I...I think that one day...erm either there's their family.. I know Jack Sullivan's quite...erm...involved...erm...David Sullivan's son with his Twitters every day and er and loves the club and maybe they may get an offer that they can't refuse from erm a wealthy overseas person like Manchester City have...Erm I would like to think that the Sulli', that the two David's would be there and pass it down because of their roots. I believe David Gold was a youth team player at West Ham and he started initially with a button stall selling buttons with his mother on a stall opposite the ground, so both him and David Sullivan have come from humble beginnings- no silver spoons for them- and now they're using their expertise and moving the club to a next stage and I think that it's probably the most exciting period of the club's history and erm I'm glad that I'm alive long enough to see it.

Mmm. So just going back onto football atmosphere there. What do you think kind of prompted that shift...in the Seventies?

Erm I don't know I think a lot of other clubs erm were doing it as well and they...they thought if they're going to come to our ground and push us around, you know it's a bit macho that . We can't be pushed around, we're going to get our own team and we're going to call them the InterCity Firm because what we'll do, we'll go out without the colours on sort of undercover, go on the cheap Intercity rail...er to keep the cost down and anybody looks like they want a fight, we'll have a fight with them and I think...we do a lot of things when we're younger because we mature, But I was just amazed at some of these people were getting on in years and I would have thought you would mellow and realise that it's all pointless. It



doesn't warrant that. It's a game of football- eleven against eleven and sometimes you win, sometimes you lose. I've never been to a ground and been so angry when we've lost that I feel that I want to attack somebody. It's never entered my mind. Erm in fact I've spoken to rival supporters on the way home and have got mutual respect for each other, talking about the game so I'm glad that we've moved on from the Seventies because not just at West Ham that sort of behaviour doesn't do the club any good whatsoever. West Ham have in the past because that sort of thing had a...a ground closed to spectators and have had to play a European game behind closed doors because of that and of course they lose all revenue so if you loved your club you shouldn't jeopardise their...their livelihood. They've got wages to pay, extortionate wages for some people um and some people just get paid in one week what some people don't get paid for year's work. They can't afford to have the ground shut, they've got the overheads erm...there's no need...there's no need for violence whatsoever un', un', unless you're protecting yourself of course and because that was sort of around about the Seventies and it seems to have fizzled out and that's a good thing because I don't think it does any club any good to have that reputation. It's, it's not clever.

Yeah. Do you think a club like West Ham is losing its sense of roots...erm particularly in the sense that the Premiership, you know, there's... there's so much commercial gain there now and so much business...?

Yeah...well I think erm.. yes there is so much business because you get so much money for er out the twenty clubs in the Premiership. If you finish bottom they give you a million and if you finish top you get eighty-eight million and so...and pro rata all the way down so the higher you finish, that's welcome money. The TV, if you're on the TV, the money from TV is quite lucrative. I... I believe I put a chart on my Facebook group with the money that West Ham got last season and they were sort of halfway up the league.. erm they got quite a few million from TV and of course people saying that now we're in the Eur'...Europa Cup, it's not the Champion's League, and it's pretty Mickey Mouse and we've got to jeopardise our players getting injured...erm but on the positive side, it's extra revenue for the club. They need it.. The two joint er um chairmen have invested a lot of their own personal hard-earned money in the club. They want to see a return on it. That's what business is all about...Erm but the erm the good thing about the Europa, it gives them a chance to give a chance for the abundance of fabulous talent, this conveyor belt of erm from the West Ham Academy. West Ham have at one time produced more youth internationals than any other club in the country, er, i.e. home grown Geoff Hurst, Martin Peters and Bobby Moore, didn't cost a penny. Erm and then erm so when we're in the Europa Cup, because we'll be stretched, we've got Juventus going there on the 7th of er July, have just won the Italian league five years running and so they're formidable opposition, I'm sure they'll get lots of people there, good...er...opener for the ground. Now they've got the predicament, now they've got into the Europa Cup, cos Manchester United won the Cup and we've just sneaked in in seventh place, we've not had some bad refereeing decisions er.. this past season...erm and if the decisions have been made correctly and that have been TV coverage of it, CCTV, perhaps West Ham could have finished second or third, but that's all water under the bridge now but now with the Europa Cup, the younger players like Reece Oxford, Reece Burke, Jos Cullen.. Fabulous, erm, players. I mean there's rumours that Manchester United and Arsenal are making a ten million bid for er Oxford who's just turned 17... er made his debut against Arsenal, the first game of the season that's just finished when West Ham beat Arsenal on their own ground and Reece Oxford was a sensation. He was 16 years of age, just a kid, fresh out of school, so the Europa Cup will give them a chance to give these younger players a chance to shine against



some international clubs that are not at West Ham's level and they can afford to take the chance and put them in and give this wealth of youth talent off of this never-ending conveyor belt of talent- because players cost a lot of money- £30,000,000 plus these days- it's going to save them a lot of money if they can get some more Bobby Moore's, Martin Peters and Geoff Hurst's from that conveyor belt.

Yeah, so do you think players now, because of all the money-like you've just said there's a teenager you know being offered so much money by say Manchester United...erm...do you think the players now are completely different to the players back then?

I think some players, not all are pretty mercenary. They go to the highest bidder but having said that they would probably say,"My career's over mid-thirties. I've got to manage some.. I mean I've got in a black cab once and saw Alan Dickens was my driver that played for West Ham and Chelsea but he had to drive the cab to pay his mortgage erm there wasn't the money about then. Johnny Haines that played for England and Fulham- fantastic player- that would have cost you £40,000,000 now driving a black cab. I got in his cab once, said, "Are you Johnny Haines?" "Yeah and I'm still working- I've still got to pay my mortgage." Today they're millionaires after one season. When you're offered... erm.. huge wages like £100,000 plus a week or in Rooney's erm case at Manchester United it's said- I don't know how true it is that he's on about £1,000,000 a month, if somebody says, "Well I'll double that, "they've got to seriously consider it cos they've still got a family to keep. Their career's over in their mid-thirties and they've still got to carry on and you know for the rest of their life, but having said that I'm sure there's players like Mark Noble, West Ham's captain, been at the club since he was about 12, born in Canning Town, one club man, gave all his testimonial money to three charities, didn't keep a penny of it. Erm I'm sure they would have put the West ham shirt on free of charge if they had sufficient money to see themselves through and I would have done...er and felt honoured to have played for that club, but some people are not from the West Ham area as mark Noble was and I was. They're from further afield, they're journeymen and they...it's a job to them and they've got to pay their bills and they'll...they'll they'll give their all, but their heart isn't really with the club because it's not their roots and understandably. So I think there's some players can be mercenary and I think that a lot of the players' agents that make a fortune, strike (?) the club up and West ham pay millions out to agents and I'm not sure if agents are a good thing because they set rumours out about players that...that are not true to alert to other clubs that they might be available so that they can get their percentage out of it and cause unrest and bad feeling. So yes, some players are mercenary, some players have got agents that are er...erm...er...a, a...doing things for their own ends so I think a lot of erm chairmen would rather not deal with agents but it's a necessary evil.

Mmmm Do you think there's a disconnect between footballers now and the public as opposed to back then, because I've been told stories in other interviews of say players like Bobby Moore and they're very localised. You know, they're not kind of tucked away somewhere in a very secluded area. They kind ofer...interacted with the public

Yeah

Whereas I think footballers now seem to have kind of you know...they are inclined less to do that.



Well erm Bobby Moore erm lived in Ilford and lived amongst working class people. Lots of people went to matches on, on the train or on the bus and you could sit next to them, now they drive around in very baby Bentleys and things like that. I don't begrudge it erm but erm you could mix with them more because you would see them on the train and the bus on the way in but now they've got prestige cars and drive there and go in the cark park. Erm but if you look on my er Facebook site erm you'll regularly some people in my group proudly putting pictures up with Mark Noble hugging them in the carpark and erm er Payet who's freely do a erm er, er mobile phone erm picture next to somebody and, and quite happy to do it so I don't think there as readily available as they were before because some of them used to walk into the ground erm and people would wait for them and walk in beside them and talk to them, but because it's the 21st century now and people have got expensive cars they just drive into the carpark and you haven't go the access you used to have erm and I suppose it does get a bit trying when your mobbed all the time because as a human beings it can be a bit frightening sometime when loads of people converging on you but no I don't think there's a closeness but I was fortunate when I was at the club I was invited to erm Christmas do's for staff and players that although I was self-employed erm I was still invited to it and I would sit with the players erm and I would get to talk to them about get many pictures done with them in the past and it was nice to think I could sit at the same table as my heroes who treated me with respect as I obviously did them. So I don't think you've got as much access to them erm as you did years ago a lot of them lived locally a lot of them would literally walk into the ground and there was easier access to them but. But the answer to your question is, it's not so easy I think the majority of the players are given the opportunity if it's convenient will mix with the supports and have pictures done, sign autographs and I am glad that they do because without supporters there's no revenue and you haven't got a job. They, they contribute towards their wages and I am glad that most of them if not all of them are happy to be friendly with supporters when it's convenient.

Yeah and also with the move erm to the new stadium in Stratford. Obviously footballs a big part of the area, what do you think is going to happen to all of the local businesses erm that are around there now?

I think, um, a lot of the businesses will suffer terribly and it's a shame I'm sure the clubs are aware of it but I'm hoping, for example, they will say to the pie and mask shop come over to the stadium we will find you a site there you'll have to pay rent for it like you have to know 'cause we've got overheads how about we give you a unit, um, at the new stadium because it's traditional pie and mash for Cockney's, East Enders they love it, um, and, uh, we'll give you a unit there so they can carry on trading there because I'm sure they've committed themselves before the decision of the move and planned ahead with their cash flow forecast taking on staff and, and contracts and that but they might be severely affected because 'm sure that's a big part of their income also cafes along the way, um, pubs along the way especially the Boleyn and the Boleyn are a little bit ahead of the game 'cause I think they're getting a good response to them laying on a coach a small fee to get on it I think it's only three and a half miles up the road the Olympic stadium and they can go in there and have their drinks and go on there and get their, on this bus and be taken to the ground and even be picked up after the ground and return back to the Boleyn and they can make their way home so that was a good thing for the Boleyn because I think they will be terribly affected and it with the east, traditional going in there the other thing is the working, uh, the Porters Club next door to my knowledge and I hope I'm wrong they haven't, um, been offered relocation and of course that's been frequented by thousands of supporters over the years and thousands



of supporters been going in there and meeting up with their friends so I'm hoping, um, that the powers that be at the supporters club will negotiate with the directors of West Ham United and be given enough to sell a seat at the stadium as well I personally think that these people shouldn't be forgotten they're the life blood of the club and all part of this match day wonderful atmosphere and it would be a shame to see them go to the wall over it

And do you think, again do you think a lot of these businesses and supporters clubs are being left behind because of the commercial arm of football now?

Yeah I think, um, it shouldn't be more difficult to get to the ground it only being three and a half miles up the road and Stratford station is quite easy to get to I, I'm in Colchester and I can get a non-stop train several times a day from Colchester straight to Stratford in about thirty five minutes it's quicker than driving you haven't got any driving problems coming out to see your wheel clamped and getting parking tickets, thirty five minutes I come out I'm at Westfield's and I walk through to the Olympic, uh, Park so it's not too bad 'cause Stratford is now very, very busy station and been extended, uh, several times it's an international station now so you, you couldn't get a better station to get access to that ground so really it shouldn't be too hard, no harder than going to Upton Park and, and the walk is really about the same from Upton Park to the, to the Boleyn as it is to the Olympic Park from Stratford station there is gonna be perhaps some little bit hiccoughs and things that won't run as smoothly as they did in the past but I'm sure there'll be some pluses as well so it's all about the pros and cons and I'm hoping that two very successful business men can be flexible, open to constructive criticism and say "Hold my hands up I forgot that one let's try and rectify it", you know, and I'm hoping over the course of the first season that any oversights can be, um, put right so everybody's treated fairly and everybody's appreciated in every way that they've been, uh, involved in this wonderful club

Mmm so do you think it's important to have, like, an open dialogue, um, before the kind of affiliates to West Ham, whether they be the supporters or, you know, the clubs around the area?

West Ham have started a group I think in the last sort of twelve, eighteen months of supporters, um, that sit on meetings with the directors and put their points forward I don't know if that still exists but I believe it does I wish I'd've applied now and, um, so they do, they do have supporters to listen to what they say like spokespeople speaking for the rest of the supporters but there was a limitation for how many can be there and I'm sure there's still other people who would like to step in those shoes one day and put their thoughts forward the older you are, obviously, the more memories you've got, um, but the, the young generation today are the West Ham supporter of tomorrow and it's important that, and it's nice to think that there's no racism, Kick Out Racism was a good thing, um, I'm not a racist I don't care what colour skin you got or what religion you are as long as you're a nice person and you're not violent and you're respectful to people I think they should all be made welcome, uh, through my Facebook site I've got members in my group literally from all over the world from Austin in Texas, New Zealand, Australia, um, Canada, um, uh, Germany and they, I've got pictures of them holding the West Ham flag a lot of them fly all the way here just to see a game and fly back afterwards and they stay in the West Ham Hotel or somewhere quite local to the ground they've, they've designed their own flags their own badges I've got pictures of them with the crossed arms showing the West Ham sign and it's amazing how all over the world the sort of support West Ham have got and they, that's gaining momentum particularly



with this magnificent stadium and I feel flattered that these people that spend so much money travelling so far to see a game, ninety minutes football, um, want to come to my site and leave me wonderful messages saying keep up the good work it's the first port of call when I put my internet on you've got so much up to date information not only the first team but the academy team, the ladies team, the youth team, the recent tournament, uh, that West Ham went out in the final to Aston Villa, a running commentary of the game, the final result, lots of pictures on the day, um, and of course the ladies team that played their first game against Tottenham towards the end of the season and I think about three thousand people or more turned up and it was great to see that 'cause they've had struggles and Julian Dicks managed them for a while but now he's first team coach xxxx xxxx [Southern Bedditch?] now I've had the pleasure of meeting Julian Dicks, his two daughters are members of my group, uh, nice people his mother, uh, Carol lives in Bristol, Carol Dicks is a member of my group very nice family I've met Julian a couple of times, a gentleman a pleasure to meet and we used to have a pub in the Colchester area at one time, but I didn't live in Colchester then or I would've popped in, uh, to see him to say hello I'm glad that they've took him on full time he was, um, a manager at Whitten just down the road here in a non-league trying to get up the ladder and now he's with xxxx xxxx [Southern Bedditch?] who's also, was a great player for West Ham and xxxx xxxx [Southern Bedditch?] has been a revolution for West Ham people were so doubtful about him would he be good enough? Would we have this foreign footballer game like we had under Sam Allardyce which wasn't the West Ham way, xxxx xxxx [Southern Bedditch?] has come along we've only lost seven games out of thirty eight a lot of draws but a lot of injuries it's been amazing some very shrewd signings and if the rumours are right of some of the players that they've targeting now it's, it's gonna put West Ham on the map I think they've got every chance of finishing in the top four, um, to be in the, um, uh, in the, the bog Europe', uh, European, um, cup matches and to attract people like Barcelona and Real Madrid to that stadium, that they'll be absolutely queuing up to get in there and a far cry from the Boleyn but I still think people'll feel quite emotional even when the re-development goes on the flats and houses and shops there, they're gonna have a garden there and, and some, bit of memorabilia about the West Ham team but, it won't be quite the same but personally I don't know if I could walk through those gardens 'cause I'll be thinking I wonder where I used to sit here, what was below me? And be a bit too nostalgic I think it'd make me quite emotional but, um, I'm hoping that people will identify with the new stadium it's a stadium to be proud of and it'll be amazing with the all cover roof, the retractable seats that will come out over the running track because they have to have a month a year for athletics there, they'll be pop, uh, concerts there as well but it's gonna have a lot of signage showing the ha', the hammers, um, and, so people will be under no false allusions whose ground that is and the directors and the people who work there part of them are supporters must be chomping at the bit to get there I wish I could still be part of that club and attend that stadium and do my bit of the club, um, hopefully one day they may reproach me, um, but even if I don't, um, I've got some health problems at the moment I've had four heart operations I've got, uh, back problems at the moment I'm having treatment and I'm hoping I can get more mobile soon and participate more and I'm hoping in time I can have a meet and greet with these people who've joined my group and pass very nice, um, comments on and all respectful to each other and meet some of these people when they come over from these, these different countries where we can all meet and, and introduce each other so it's, it's the West Ham family they are one big family

So why do you think West Ham means so much to the area then?



To the West Ham area?

Yeah

Um, I think that at one time, you know, before you got the, the international, uh, journeyman that would come for the money, they're heart wasn't really in it, um, I would like to think like a lot of supporters I'm like a stick of rock if you cut me in half you'll see claret and blue running through me, even in West Ham were in the non-league I would never, my allegiance would be towards them they're in my heart, um, but I think there was a time when a lot of the West Ham team were local people, the people you went to school with, people who lived down your road and you could identify them 'cause all pretty local but Arsenal were one of the first teams where you couldn't really pronounce the name of a lot of their players 'cause they was nearly all foreigners, good players I'm not saying it wasn't good for the game, um, but it, they've become almost an international side not a north London side, West Ham at one time was true east end club but they had to move with the times and they signed people like Marco Boogers who behaved quite peculiar and disappeared one match days and things like that and you think oh what a waste of money that was, but perhaps he has some personal problems he's probably a nice guy, um, but the, they've had to compete with the others 'cause as you said earlier it's big business and if you can't beat 'em you've got to join them and it's all about money and when you're paying enormous wage bills out and your overheads, although West Ham have got a very good deal with the government with that saving, fabulous deal, um, it's, um, it must be a worry for the directors but they must feel good that suddenly their, um, their attendance is gonna rise by around about twenny four, twenny five thousand that's a lot of bums on seats, that's a lot of hotdogs and hamburgers and programmes and, and alcohol along with the soft drinks of course so it must be exciting it takes the pressure off of the overheads for them and if it wasn't for the two David's we could've been looking, after the Icelandic, uh, backing went down, um, we could've been looking at being in receivership and perhaps losing points and being relegated over it and it's a very slippery slope that sometimes it can take forever to return to your former glories and West ham can't afford to be on a slippery slope and I think the two David's kept 'em off of that slippery slope and, you know, people say good and bad things about 'em but I got, I've gotta be grateful that I think they saved my club

Mmm

I think they're in capable hands with them

Do you think West Ham are so ingrained in the area as well, of that sort of working class culture because of, because of their roots with, say, the Thames Iron Works and things of that nature?

Yeah there, there was also this rivalry, um, against Millwall because they were a, a dock works years ago and they were at the same level and played each other and they used to get very aggressive with each other and even to this day there's this hatred of Millwall, why? I don't have that hatred because that happened, like, nineteen hundred for goodness sake it's, it's two thousand and sixteen now why do we have to keep this up? I know they've got a bad reputation, some of their supporters, but haven't all clubs? I'm sure the majority of 'em are ok really, um, I don't think we should keep this aggressive thing up against Millwall although some supporters wouldn't agree with me but why they are so incensed about Millwall, about



things that happened in nineteen hundred well before they were born is beyond me but I think it's the Cockney rhyming slang and the actual accent of West Ham supporters it's, it's our club, it's an east end club, it's a Cockney club, proud to be Cockney, it's out DNA if you like the Boleyn and claret and blue it's a Cockney thing and we don't want, um, people outside, um, putting our club down, alright we haven't got a lot of silverware "We won the world cup for England you wouldn't have won the world cup", the captain? Bobby Moore. West Ham. A legend. Who scored the hat trick? Geoff Hurst, West Ham. Who scored the other goal? Martin Peters. You think West Ham are nothing? West, England don't pick West Ham players anymore we don't like Roy Hodgson why won't he pick Cresswell who's the best left-back in the country? Mark Noble who was playing out of his skin. Andy Carroll who's come back from a long-term injury scoring goals for fun. Why don't you pick West ham players, what's wrong with them? Because when England were successful there was always one or two West Ham players in there I mean Alvin Martin was there for example who I've had the pleasure of meeting at Southend when he was manager, um, uh, they won't pick West Ham players, all the Premiership side have got a representation in the England team but for some unknown bizarre reason Roy Hodgson won't even consider a West Ham player and there's something terribly wrong there so I think West Ham supporters are not quite so interested in England anymore because they wanted to see one of their players they're more likely to go and support France now with Payet in the side who's been absolutely sensational, they love him he's got his own song already there's rumours that, uh, there's gonna be big bids from people like real Madrid of fifty million when West Ham only paid four and a half million for him a year ago but I think he knows he's loved at West Ham I've seen him interviewed he seems a nice guy and I'm glad that he's been picked for the French squad and I think a lot of people will be watching his progress, um, with France rather than watching England games I personally have very little interest, I'm very patriotic but I'm not in a hurry to watch an England game anymore 'cause I miss the West Ham ingredient, I'm not saying they should just automatically pick West Ham players for god luck but West Ham have got a few players that really are good enough to be in the squad and have not even been in the squad and I think a lot of West Ham supporters are very upset about that

Yeah I've noticed that myself over, um, recent years so, um, why do you think that is then? That there's no representation of...?

Well I think Roy Hodgson, with all due respects to him, once to keep picking the same old players from about half a, from about four clubs, he picks anybody from Manchester United, um, anybody from Chelsea and, uh, and some of the top four, um, I mean he's put Jaden Tardie from Leicester but then they won the league I think they were five thousand to one when the season started out so if you're a gambling man you would've earned a lot of money, um, West ham are rumoured to be offering twenty five million to get through the, uh, contract clause at the moment some people don't want him they say he dives about and he's twenty nine there's not a lot of mileage in him and some people say well short-term he'll be ok, um, and if Andy Carroll regains full fitness and can score like he's been doing of late it'll be ok, um, we've got Lanzini there that West Ham had on loan and now bought his contracts and paid, I believe, seven million pound to have him there all the time, um, so, um, I just think, um, Roy Hodgson unfortunately is blinkered and he just picks from the same, certain clubs, um, and he's just very, very stubborn about the West Ham players it's not just being biased about West Ham players, even some of the football pundits that have got no connection with the club past of present say they're absolutely amazed that some of these West Ham players are not considered for the, for the squad even as substitutes so I think, um, Roy Hodgson



particularly amongst West Ham supporters is becoming very, very unpopular because I don't know how he can justify it

Mmm

Cresswell is three and a half million pound, he's absolutely fantastic at left-back better than what they've got there if you compare like for like who's in that position now and Cresswell, how many successful passes he's made and how many games he's played, how many assists he's made, um, he'd knock spots off the current one from Tottenham, um, the statistics are all there and it's such an honour to play for your country why should they be deprived because of one blinkered England manager? So hopefully they might get another manager who's not blinkered and it won't be to late for them to be given a chance because they deserve to be given a chance to play for their country even if it's only a couple of times because of the hard work that they put in and West Ham have got some fine English players and some of, some of the foreigners are fantastic xxxx xxxx [Southern Bedditch?] has bought very, very wisely he's been like a breath of fresh air to the club and the, the supporters love him I think he's happy at West Ham

So just, again, back on the West Ham there a little bit more, um, who do you say West Ham's biggest rivalry is with?

Well they, they don't like Millwall because of this, years ago the docklands and the, uh, the, the, the rivalry of the shipbuilders when they went to Thames Ironworks and that's carried on to this day, they don't like Tottenham, um, there's a big rivalry with Tottenham and of course the season before last we beat them three times so that absolutely, was euphoria over there to say that we've beaten 'em three times, you know, like if you score a hat trick and you can keep the ball now we've beaten youse three times can we take you home and put you on the mantelpiece [laughs]? But, um, uh, Tottenham have been playing out their skin, West Ham were well above them the early part of the season and then they leap-frogged us and of course Arsenal leap-frogged them at the last match to become second and put Tottenham in third place where West ham should've been if there wasn't so many bad refereeing decisions and West Ham have had to get over an enormous amount of long-term injuries as well which has depleted their squad so potentially they should've easily finished in the top four but they've got a record number of points this season since they've been in the premier League, um, uh, and only lost seven games out of thirty eight a lot of draws, but when you look at the draws there's lots of them they should've won if there wasn't such poor refereeing decisions and that's not being biased that's relying on CCTV evidence afterwards, the referee's made some crucial mistakes and referees can cost clubs millions of pounds because of this, these bad decisions you could be relegated through being, having points taken off you, having penalties against you that shouldn't be, West Ham weren't awarded a penalty until recently, four seasons, that's unbelievable! They were poleaxed on the floor, wouldn't give them the penalty, I say what's happening with referees? Why can't we have penalties like other people do? So, um, the, uh, the revenue is all very, very important now like the Europa, although it's not as good as the Champion's League, gives you a chance to xxxx it, young players more revenue coming, um, through the club, gives you a chance to rest players and there's a lot of players out on international duty at the moment and I think people are worried that when they do get paid to play for an international team, is it going to be a Dean Ashton situation where they're gonna be crippled and out of the game because they lost the xxxx early and the training session for England and he had to retire from the game and he was



sensational and so they're worried about Payet now he's going to play for France, is somebody gonna hack him down? Are we gonna start the season without him when he's such a influential player? One player doesn't make a team but he makes a difference he's absolutely sensational so I got mixed feelings about being an international player 'cause one is it puts your transfer value up if you have to sell them if there's any unrest, um, and it's also an honour for that player and a nice memory when he gets older to show his grandchildren, to show his caps fro, uh, England but also you run the risk of them getting injured which can affect your, your league standing and of course West Ham supporters are dying to win the FA Cup again and they felt cheated at Manchester United in the first game and West Ham's goal keeper was bundled over the line and that we should've won that game and then, then lost the, uh, replay, uh, very closely but we beat Manchester United last league game of the season at home, fabulous game great, um, send-off with the fireworks and all hundred and fifty ex-players there the, the directors done them proud to have laid out that sort of money, uh, to, for a fitting send off that went on deep in to the night and the celebrations still continuing out in the streets until the early evening, um, and I'm sure again, going back to what you said earlier, that the, the local businesses still had a nice, you know, a nice turnover from, while they still can but hopefully they will relocate some of 'em I'd hate to think that they went out of business over it, it would be a shame

So you've been a, a West Ham supporter all your life, um, what would you say, or what have been your favourite football games in a sense then?

Um, I saw West, I see Bobby Moore's first game when he was seventeen for West ham against United at home which West Ham won I, uh, some of the major signings stick out in my mind when they used to come round prior to kick off and be kicking at the goal keeper and do their little keepsie upsie with the ball and run right round the goalie and off bank, um, I used to have conversations with the goal keeper, I remember having a bit of banter with the Arsenal goal keeper Jack Kelsie when West ham beat them six nil on bonfire day and he said "Oh there's plenty of fireworks over here today" and I said I think it's gonna be double figures today Jack and he said "Shut up! You're gonna jinx me!" But tongue in cheek so you could actually talk to people, um, and the memories were, people like Phil Wossner that came out and signed, um, Leyton Orient and was a sensation and watching him and thinking we've got Phil Wossner and his silky touches in the game, another Johnny Haynes type player, Johnny Byrne they signed for sixty five thousand I had the press cutting with his feet up saying his feet cost sixty five thousand a British record at the time what a player, he went to South Africa in the end and managed, um, uh, Cape Town, um, and he died out in South Africa but, um, fabulous player he didn't have a hair out of place he was a bit of a poser and people used to say I wonder if he combs his hair while he's waiting for the corner kick to be taken and the goal keeper holds the mirror up for him [laughs], um, but they, um, the crowd loved him, uh, John Dick who came locally from, uh, Colchester was a scoring sensation, um, of course Brandon Campbell at the back used to get some banter from them they used to be characters at, uh, these, these, uh, crowd in stitches, John Bond go up and score goals, John Bond, um, used to live in Colchester a stone's throw from here, uh, I've been told that recently so it's nice to know that I'm living quite close to John Bond's roots I think he lives, um, lived, he moved up to Norwich in the end but, um, I noticed that last year, um, in Cork in Northern Ireland they named a turning called Noel Campbell Way I believe it is and his wife and his two daughters attended, his son died sadly at twenty two in a car crash outside the New Inn, uh, pub in Peterborough, when I had the whole day with him there was a picture of his son on the back of the bar with two candles and I said who is that? He said "That's my



son, he tragically pulled out in front of a bus outside here" and he, his eyes were welling up so I changed the subject but he had that picture with the candles there every day and night for him and I think it, it really upset him and his family, obviously but, um, um, he went one to, uh, he left West Ham eventually I think after about, oh nearly ten years I think, um, went on to Manchester United, club record fat of twenty seven and a half thousand pound, um, for a fall back and when on to captain Manchester United and captained them into Cup Finals so he went out at the top, um, his funeral was attended by both West Ham and ex-Manchester United players people like Bobby Charlton were there and, um, a fitting send off for him and he died at seventy three of cancer but I'll, I'll always have memories of the whole day I spent with him and spoke about so much and I came out and it was like a dream that this man that I, I'd watched and admired from afar had all that time for me and even rang Peterborough Football Club up that he had just left as manager highly recommended me to be their commercial manager but I'd moved on to somewhere else in the interim period so I couldn't commit to that but I did contact him and tha', thank him for his interest in me so the memories there, um, actually I've met some of these players, um, them coming out for their debuts and those pre-match things and see their silky skills and the little tricks they did with the ball, Alan Sealey, uh, singed from Leyton Orient who could get the ball between his heels and flick it over his head and catch it on his chest and onto his knee and shoot a goal and I thought oh I wish I could do those tricks! Um, he was a character, um, his uncle played in goal for Manchester United, um, his younger son played in goal for West Ham's youth team, um, it just, the memories are actually in my mind, like, I can relive 'em I can close my eyes and I can see these players I can, I can feel the sensation, the thrill, the adrenaline as, as, just the bubbles sign to you, the claret and blue, the excitement that I'd go in there determined to be civilised and grown up and then suddenly become like a school kid again

Mmm

And then after the game have to pull myself together and be all sensible when I came out

Yeah, so how long were you a season ticket holder for then?

Um, I, well I didn't have to be a season ticket for, holder for a long time I was only season ticket for a couple of years 'cause in them days you could just pay on the day and get in it was very rarely a full house in those early days, as I say lucky to get twenty thousand there and if it was a League Cup game there's be about twelve thousand so there was lots of empty seats and of course when I was at the club, working for them I'd get four complementary tickets for every home game, um, so I've only ever been a season ticket holder for a couple of seasons I haven't been over since I been ill 'cause I had a heart attack, um, four years ago I've had four operations, um, not completely successful I still have to attend hospital regularly I have to have blood tests every week, um, and I've got a spinal problem with trapped sciatic nerve which is affecting my walking at the moment but I'm waiting for pain injections that can last up 'til twelve months so I'll be more fit, more able to get about and get over the stadium more 'cause I'm having to walk with a stick at the moment so once I'm feeling fitter I want to get there every game I can, whether I can endure away games anymore I don't know 'cause I'm obviously getting on in years and I find it very tiring but if I had, I, I did go through a period where I didn't miss a home game for eight seasons and it became a way of life and I miss that now and particularly with this new stadium and, and the, the squad that they've got I wanna be part of it I don't wanna be considered an armchair supporter 'cause I'm not an armchair supporter it's just health reasons that have forced me to take a



back step from it but I can't just forget about West Ham I've got to be involved somehow, uh, and, and know what's going on because without it I dunno what I'd do it's been my whole life and it's been my life for wh', um, it's been my life for fifty eight years that's a long time

Mmm, yeah, so with West Ham as well [clears throat] what do you think about the move to the Stratford stadium?

I think a lot of people are, the majority of people are against it and say "Oh they're doing it just for money 'cause they wanna knock this down and make themselves some more millions and, and we're gonna lose our, our home that's been there for years and, and everything that, that goes with, revolves around it we don't wanna go three and a half miles up the road, we don't want to go up the Olympic stadium, yes it looks nice but it won't have the character, it's not the Boleyn! You're gonna take, you're gonna take the castle off of the crest, the pub crest? You can't do that! That's our club badge!" Th', they've taken it off now because there is no castle now at Westfield's, um, there's still the crossed hammers and it says London underneath it looks a bit bland to what it used to be but I think people are getting round to the idea that in business things have to be branded and have to be marketed it's not just a football club it's a business and it has to be branded and it needs to have these int', uh, worldwide networks that's why they're going on tour to America in the closed season there's a lot of, uh, American supporters there and that's gaining momentum as well and for them to pay to fly up to twelve hours to come and see a game, stay overnight, fly back the next day we gotta consider them and in my little group if ever they send me something to put on, they're latest picture of them with their crossed arms and their flag up I'll willingly put it on and I get over a hundred likes from it and I'm glad that the people in the UK appreciate their support and take an interest in what's happening out there in their little groups and they're planning now to, um, go to the Seattle Sounders ground and the other one in the pre-season and make an enquiry as to how they can get over here next season, the best place to stay near the stadium, they must spend most of their disposable income and we moan about, like, an hour's journey up the road from Essex to get their but they're, they're coming all that way that's what you call proper supporters

Mmm

They should be made welcome

Yeah, so how would you like to see West Ham Football Club moving forward then?

I want them to, um, I want them to be financially viable because they were, uh, sort of, uh, very close to the wall of going under at one stage but thank to the two David's they saved them at the last minute, um, I now hear that a club that was purchased for just over a hundred million and they took on their debts as well I think that was about seventy or eighty million, so it might've been like a two hundred thousand pound package to underwrite those debt, um, I understand now it valued at eight hundred million so in five years the two David's have, uh, tripled it's, uh, it's worth or quadrupled, uh, what it's worth I think once they get to stadium I think it'll be a billion pound business, the squad's getting stronger and stronger and stronger, their now, because of the stadium and 'cause they're in the Europa Cup and they look at the team squad players from abroad that probably wouldn't even consider going to West Ham and now they're starting to take notice, this club is a, uh, sixty thousand plus stadium, they've



got people like Payet there, xxxx xxxx [Southern Bedditch?] who commands a lot of respect 'cause he was very successful as the Croatian manager and rumour has it that he's not somebody who is mercenary and goes anywhere for money because rumour has it he accepted the job as Croatia manager for two thousand pounds a week which is peanuts in this day and age so he's not there for, just for monetary gain he's there for the love of football, um, considering he's a former defender and a very good one at that he doesn't play defensive football he's still got this attacking flair which is the West Ham way which is that they lost their way under Harold Dice [?] who used to play very defensively trying to keep clean sheets even if it had to be nil, nil at home, um, it just wasn't, didn't go down well with the West Ham supporters because years ago even rival supporters said our best home game was when West Ham visited, even when they lost they were still right to the last second coming forward trying to get that goal and to be quite honest with you, I'm not being patronising, but we look forward to West Ham coming to, uh, ground 'cause they're so entertaining they've got so much talent and it was so nice to hear that, they list the West Ham way under Harold Dice [?] and now it's back so I wannit to stay that way so I hope Harold, um, xxxx xxxx [Southern **Bedditch?**] stays 'cause he's good for the club, I hope the directors stay there 'cause they've put their money where their mouth is, um, they've increased the capacity even since they were given the stadium by another three thousand, they've organised these retractable seats which go in and out over the running track so they can pull it in when there's any athletics there, I want, um, I want the supporters to support them and be behind them and not be critical because there's ups and downs with every, um, club but West Ham potentially, um, are on the map now, um, I don't think anybody will be surprised if they finished in the next four, uh, top four next season they needn't be afraid of anybody they've beaten all the top clubs away this season, they beat Manchester City away, they beat Arsenal away, um, they've beaten all the...

So obviously you were born in the east end and you grew up in the east end, um, so how come you're living in Colchester now?

Well, uh, my parents, uh, sadly broke up when I was twelve and I lived at home with my mother and my sister who was three years older than me, West Ham supporter, um, we both went to the same school in Plaistow, xxxx a technical, uh, my friend there was ex-Chelsea manager David Webb, used to sit in the desk next to me and, uh, ironically David Webb's just, uh, used to sit next to my sister in her class three years older, senior to us and, um, I had the pleasure of playing against David Webb's old school before he come to us 'cause I passed the eleven plus and he passed the thirteen plus which was done when he was twelve, uh, so he joined our school shortly before I left the east end and we played his old school Three Mills, um, at Canning Town on the old cinder pitches which were cinder which used to be West Ham's pitch at one time many years ago so I've actually played on that old cinder pitch which wasn't grass so when you did a sliding tackle you had all abrasions up your legs so nobody wanted to do too many sliding tackles, um, 'cause you looked like something out of a horror film as you walked off, um, but, um, the, uh, I, I moved to Basildon in Essex and my mother got a job there at Carerers [sp?], I went to school in Basildon it took a while for me to settle 'cause I missed my friends in, in Plaistow, um, I kept in contact with them, David Webb visited me, um, when he went to Leyton Orient he went from Leyton Orient to Derby County I sent him telegrams in them days, 'cause there wasn't the internet, to wish him well he played for Chelsea in the replay in the Cup Final against Leeds and scored a goal and, um, it, he went on to manage Chelsea but, um, I went to school in Basildon and, uh, then I got a job in the City and used to, uh, commute from Basildon railway station into Fenchurch Street



and sort of had an office job there initially for the insurance brokers and, um, then I could use my railcard on a Saturday, um, to get up to West Ham, kept my costs down, to still continue supporting West Ham and made some West Ham supporter friends in the Basildon area that would go with me and in the end there would be half a dozen of us, um, going up there and we had, we had, um, uh, we had celebrate a win locally in Basildon afterwards but, um, uh, Essex isn't that far away from London it's probably more London in Essex now than what there is in London 'cause I meet lots of, um, people that, uh, originate from the east end so I don't feel like I've lost touch with it, with east enders, um, but, um, Essex is a nice place to live anyway, um, but I, um, I was, I'm sort of an ex-pat of, um, uh, in the east end but I'm very proud of my roots 'cause there's a, they're a certain breed of people east enders they call, you know, they, they speak their mind, uh, and you know how you stand with them and they can be quite loyal to you if, if you're not what they'd call a wrong-un so as long as you're ok they're ok with you, um, I'm proud of my roots I'm proud to say that I am a Cockney and I wouldn't have it any other way and my heart will always be in east London and not just West am but the areas that, I'm not ashamed to have been brought up in a working class environment, it was a good education for me, um, those hungry years, and helped me to be a survivor because I realised it's not all about being academic at school that the best education you can have is having been seen, don and heard, having lived a life and I've had some sad times in my life and I've had some very high ties but everybody has got sad stories to tell but West Ham have, have been my main, um, interest in my life and everybody, some people like to go fishing, um, West ham was everything when I weren't at the ground I was keeping scrap books, cutting things out of newspapers, writing to the club asking them to sign this and sign that I didn't go to the training ground and badger them as they went in and out I did it in the post, they wrote back i', ironically my daughter that lives in Colchester last year was dating Martin Peter's son and Martin Peter's apparently lives Shenfield and I said oh god if you was to marry him, uh, we'd be married into the family can I get, can I get a bank loan and bribe you to marry him [laughs] Peter's son I'm gonna have a photo taken with him because my, my daughter calls me Stage Door Johnny, that if there's a West Ham player somewhere I sort of photo bomb 'em and pop up and get in the photo so the thought of my daughter dating Martin Peter's son was sort of quite exciting for me but it didn't materialise but, um, yeah I, um, I, I'm proud of coming from that area I've not really lost contact 'cause a lot of people in my group still live in that area and there's a lot of people that have come back into Essex that were born and bred there, we're in daily contact I've got regular people, probably fifty, a hundred people that contact me every day on that group, lots of nice contributions from people I vet people that come in 'cause I don't want anybody who's racist or sexist or who's gonna be abusive, uh, everybody's entitled to their opinion and we should respect people's opinions and I, I just won't have anybody disrespecting they will just be erased from the group and I'm fortunate I've got over two thousand really nice people on there

So what do you think prompted, um, I know a lot of east enders moved to Essex, um, we've, we've done a project on that in the past, um, from your own personal experience why do you think that is?

Um, we, well I had to because my mother and father split up and my mother wanted to start a new, uh, away from him and to have to bump into him a lot but, um, from my experience a lot of people are seeing the east end as getting a bit run down, a bit Victoriana and they didn't want to look out the window and see some poor man who depressed on a street corner at six o'clock in the morning drinking a can of White Lightning or Special Brew because he was



depressed and needed a bit of Dutch courage to get through the day which is all very sad but it kind of brings you down as well and when I've driven through the east end, although there's a lot of things coming up like Canary Wharf there, there's a lot of lovely buildings going up and there's some really nice places to go but it, it did go through a period where it was very Victorian, very run-down and looking a bit dilapidated in areas and I think people wanted to move to new towns like Harlow, Basildon, Stevenage where, we didn't have a bathroom, um, we had a tin bath and had to fill up kettles and pour it in and we'd have to share each other's bath water, we didn't have a bathroom, uh, we didn't have, we had to go to an outside toilet in the garden, we shared a house we had the top half and another family downstairs all using the same outside toilet so suddenly the thought of going to a new town and getting your own bathroom with a proper fixed bath with hot running water and your own toilet you didn't have to share with another family was quite a nice opportunity, yes you're gonna miss your roots I think everybody does wherever you come from and nobody should be ashamed of their roots but I think people needed a better way of life, better accommodation, um, but they still want to return to that atmosphere of the east end which is electric but, um, still, some of them still wouldn't give up and go back 'cause now they're settled in Essex and as I said earlier there's a lot of the east end in Essex now but our heart is always in the east end

Mmm, so obviously you're now living in Colchester, what do you do for, um, match days when West Ham are playing? Do you watch it on TV or do you...?

Um, what I do is I go on Hammers TV which is a live stream on my laptop and I get on there ten minutes before the game and watch it on a live stream, um, I've got a new plaque to go up it was one of my Christmas presents at the stadium, the Legends plaques, um, and somebody bought it for me, um, we're supposed to know in April where it's gonna be positioned on the exterior of the stadium and they're gonna have legends like Bobby Moore with his plaque up and some people have the privilege of having their plaques around him so I'm waiting to be told in July where my plaques gonna be and obviously I wanna get down there and have my photo taken there, I'm hoping to have my pain killing injections any time now they don't do it at Colchester they closed it down I've gotta wait for an operating time in either Ipswich or Chelmsford and travel to have it done, I'm not allowed to drive afterwards so I've got to be accompanied, I'm still having, um, uh, uh, consultants, um, with my heart, um, which is arrhythmia, uh, fortunately it's not life threatening but it leaves you a bit breathless so I can't walk more than about twenty five, thirty metres at the moment without feeling a lot of discomfort so I've just got to be careful it's a bit scary the feeling, I'm hoping that in time I will improve 'cause ideally I'd like to attend every match I'd hate to be thought of as an armchair supporter 'cause that's the last thing I am but because of this health problem, and we all take our health for granted and think we'll always be healthy, can happen to anybody, my son tragically died two years ago in his forties, he'd never been ill before in his life and had a heart attack in the early hours of the morning which poleaxed me so, um, I've realised that life can be very short and very precious, um, I want to get over there again regularly and meet some of these wonderful supporters, um, but I've just got to be a bit careful at the moment so thanks to Hammers TV I can watch it live

Yeah

And of course we have a lot of activity af', during and after the game, um, within my group, um, so my aim now is to get better so I can actually get over to that wonderful stadium



You've talked a bit about your group as well on Facebook that you, that you created. What kind of prompted that to, to create it on Facebook?

Well I saw that there was a few groups there and a lot of them do a wonderful job there but there was nobody really, and things may change, outside the first team and the clubs not just the first team it's got it's under sixteen's, under eighteen's, uh, some people join the club when they're twelve, ten, uh, uh, and, and they're scouted early on, spot their potential, the ladies team so I wanted a group where I gave out regular information about the ladies team, the youth team, the academy side which is the reserve side now, not just the first team, uh, um, some, uh, transfer rumours, something like I put on the other day about, uh, Mark Noble being given the freedom of London honour and some photographs from it, Andy Carroll, uh, in America at the moment handing out goodies, big bags of crisps and, uh, cans of beer to a homeless person for the window, taking the chance 'cause you're not allowed to do that in America but stopped his ca', told the driver to stop and handed out some things to an unfortunate person because it's there by the grace of god guy I never look down at people like that it could be a crisis in their life, we could all be that man in the cardboard box in the shop doorway it, you never know what happens to you in life what you can and can't cope with, so I was so pleased to see that video yesterday of Andy Carroll handing out those things to that poor man who must feel desperate at times wondering where his next meal's coming from, I thought good for you that you can do that and not forget unfortunate people just because they're, you know, you've got a good lifestyle we should have it in our hearts to help people sometimes so, um, I just, um, I, I, just, I, uh, uh, uh Mark Noble, uh, the revenue he must've got from the sell out, uh, testimonial of thirty six thousand pounds, uh, thirty six thousand people, he didn't get any money out of that at all he could've kept it all, he could've kept part of it but he gave it to three different charities, every brass tharthing of it, I think that's wonderful when they get a reputation of being all mercenary, they're obviously not all mercenary, he's a home grown player that was there from around about the age of twelve, never gone to another club he went out on loan to places like Hull and Ipswich in his early years to give him some experience but he's West Ham through and through and obviously not a greedy person 'cause he could've kept quite a large sum of money so I'm glad that he did that 'cause that gives the players a good name doesn't it?

Yeah certainly does. So I think we're maybe coming to a close now, um, do you miss West Ham at all?

I miss it a lot, I miss it a lot I think about it every day, up my stairs there's pictures, autographed pictures in frames all the way up the stairs, um, on my bed now, all the bed, the duvet and the pillow cases West Ham United all over it, teddy bears with West Ham United all over it, West Ham United there, West Ham United up there, um, it's, uh, dressing gown's West Ham United, polo shirts West Ham United it's, it's like a little mini museum here, uh, and so I've got it all around me so I can never forget it, I wanna, I just wanna get well again and I just wanna get back to that atmosphere, the thought of never being able to health-wise depresses me I have to remain optimistic but I try to participate in the best way that my health will allow me at the moment and I would always do anything to help the club and I would never do anything to give the club a bad name

Mmm, so just to finally ask as well, what does West Ham mean to you?



It means everything to me, um, I mean I have family members that I love of course we all do but it's a big love of mine it's been a very big part of my life I've spent a lot of time privately and work-wise with the club, um, I, I've compiled those two massive scrapbooks that were stolen from me that took years to compile from the very early age, um, had so much information in it and it's a bog loss to me, um, but nobody can ever take these wonderful memories from me, um, and, um, I'm determined to get better and I'm determined to walk into that stadium, uh, and, and cheer a game, to see my idols come out and see those claret and blue shirts come out onto the pitch from the tunnel and the roar of the crowd, um, I miss it so much that words can't express how much I miss it

Yeah, well I hope so as well 'cause you're obviously an ardent supporter of West Ham and it seems to kind of run through your blood really doesn't it?

I hope you saw it on my front door as you came in?

Id d yeah

Yeah and my door bell

Yeah seen it all [laughs]

[Laughs]

I've seen it all

I wanted to play 'I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles' as you came in and I was going to put my prone cast on with the, um, the crossed hammers on there but it would've took a lot of your time up but I'm always on YouTube with my chrome cast looking at the nineteen twenty three Cup Final, black and white footage from that and, um, matches in the past of, from years gone by and it brings back so many memories, I watch them over and over and over again. I haven't got so fanatical that I sit here with my full kit on and football boots on 'cause it damages the carpet, I tried it once and realised it wasn't cost effective and that people might say he's over the top now he's crossed the line so I promise you it's only a rumour if people say I sit here with the full kit on and football boots it's really not true

I'm sure it is, I'm sure it's only a rumour, well thank you for being interviewed and it's been a pleasure listening to your story and, you know, hearing what you have to say about West Ham

Well it's been a, it's been a pleasure to be part of your project and to allow me to, to have this conversation, thank you very much for inviting me

Cheers

[END OF TRANSCRIPT]

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