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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 and tell us your name?*

Hello my names Stacey Housego

*And how do you spell that?*

[Laughs] it's S-t-a-c-e-y and then 'house' with 'go' on the end.

*Okay then let's start with West Ham*

Hmmm

*How did you get into supporting West Ham Football Club?*

I think it's er a family side it wasn't any choice really. I come from Wanstead well really the nearest team was Leyton Orient but er we were a West Ham family. I think because dad was I think he was erm born in West Ham I don't think he was raised there. Mum was born in Stratford but raised in Ilford and so it was very much a family team though we weren't a sport orientated family so it's my brother really who is just all West Ham and it was West Ham only. So I can't remember never not supporting them at all every, I just know it was West Ham and that was it.

*Hmmm, so how come you didn't support Leyton Orient then?*

I think it's because of the family connections erm its one of those family stories that you don't actually know how true they are.

*Hmmm*

You know they're kinda when you think or I think this happened and then the next person with the story goes this happened and then the next person with the story goes this happened

*Yeah*

Is er great grandad and this is one that's quite common, he worked on Tower Bridge when it was being built and he fell into Thames and that was kind of [chuckles] grandad stories erm but he worked for Thames Ironworks which is where the factory from which the West Ham team originated. So er he didn't play for them or anything like that. But er he worked in the factory

*Yeah*

So it goes back to that but how accurate that is or whether it was one of those 'I wish we had a relative working there' I don't know. I've tried to find out but I've kind of hit a brick wall because it quite hard finding the names of the people who worked there. But that would be where it comes back too.

*Yeah do you know much about Thames Ironworks?*

Bits about it I know about Arnold Hills and erm its quite...its quite a man of today really if you look at what he was doing and er he didn't want it going professional and that's why he detached himself from the Thames Ironworks and West Ham then proper West Ham you might say was born and brought up. I went on a tour bus not long ago by someone who is a West Ham historian not the West Ham historian that they have erm and he took us on a walk. A few of us on a walk around and said this where they signed the original contract above this, I think it was a café

*Hmmm*

At the end of I can't even remember what it was...somewhere and erm we just walked around and shown the area. So I know bits about it but not masses.

*Yeah, so your support of West Ham Football Club is quite intergenerational really because*

Yeah I think so

*Because your grandfather, did your grandfather*

Great grandfather

*Great grandfather*

It's alright [laughs]

*So did he ever pass down stories to his son and vice versa?*

No this is the only one falling in the Thames when he was working on it which is kind of hahahaha kind of story that you know dad told, but that's as far as it went. But really both of my grandfathers had died by the time I was born as well. So didn't have those stories it was

only kind of grandmothers who were around and probably didn't feel so fondly about, he was probably drunk

Yeah

*You never know*

But erm no they are the only stories. And really out of the family I am the only one who goes to the games. I got brothers and so erm and I am the only one who is into all sports at school

Yeah

Erm there were more cerebral artist type and I was the one into the sports so erm er and I would say I one well I've got a season ticket now so I go a lot

*Yeah did you father every share any stories?*

No none no and its weird these things I can remember with shared experiences of the erm football games was not being able to see the World Cup final on t.v. so trying to see the World Cup final in 66 was a bit tricky because everybody else was in the way. So I was kind of peering over everybody's shoulders er because it was a West Ham, we didn't win it but it was very much

Yeah

[Laughs] Erm thing in it and my brother the one who is the West Ham...loved it erm and he went out into the garden I think we'd beat Argentina. I can't remember I think it was the quarter finals I think one nil and I think he went out to do a re-enactment of it in the garden and he didn't come in for quite a while and he went looking for him and he he just went and had sprained his ankle and he was kind he was in a corner in the front garden and erm it was quite funny really, but he didn't think it was very funny

Yeah

But erm yeah he was reliving the moment but erm no there weren't really any I can't really remember any I think it comes from my friends more my West Ham connections now days certainly

*Do you remember what the atmosphere was like around the 66 world cup?*

No I think it was it was just genuine excitement. I remember that and it's like the old days of the FA cup when you used to do, the day was planned oh your going to go around, one person talking ti though. Like with West Ham and the FA cup it was always Trevor Brooking not Billy Bonds because he didn't like talking to camera. So erm I don't remember that but it was like planning your day around the football on the telly

*Hmmm*

And erm how that you know just...and for me to remember it from so long ago it was a significant event.

*Yeah*

And I don't remember masses from ling ago but I don't remember

*So you said it was like an event based thing watching it on T.V, did you ever go to a friend's house or another family member's house to watch it on T.V?*

No erm if erm are you talking about the World Cup?

*Just games in general really*

No I go to them so I go to the football games. So if West Ham are on and there at home I am there. If it's away I've been going to more away games recently erm but if it's away I'll certainly find somewhere to watch it.

*Hmmm*

Whether it's online

*Yeah*

[Coughs]

*Yeah cough cough*

Cough cough erm online or I have been to friends. You do go the pub but people aren't looking at the game and a lot of people 'go yeah' and I thinking I am looking at the game I don't really want to...are you really focussing in the game? So I've been around to friends we do occasionally do that with some games yeah

*So what was your first distinctive West Ham memory then?*

Distinctive West Ham memories as a club [laughs] was erm I where I went to junior school erm infant school going to the juniors you had to wear a uniform, you couldn't in the infants but you could in the juniors. And there uniform was a grey skirt erm light blue shirt, claret pullover and claret tie with light blue stripes and I was so excited. I mean I was I must have been about six going on so that's my first actually West Ham memory

*Yeah*

Was 6 going on 7 because I couldn't wait to get there so I could wear the West Ham colours that is just so weird really that that's all I wanted to do and I and a prefect as well at school and I can't find it I but I did get a prefect badge which was claret with perfected sky blue on it which was great loved that badge. I think my brothers got it the who's West Ham I think he's got it. He's got my Blue Peter badge as well

*[Laughs]*

Yeah I've got one of those I think he's got that as well so erm that my first true memory of West Ham

*Hmmm, what about your first game?*

First game I this were my friends come in. It was friends at school who I am still friends with and her dad took her me and her bother to Geoff Hurst's testimonial against a European 11 in 71. And I think was something like 4 all I think the referee as well or something it was one of those testimonial games were everybody just got in with it, it's no rules really and it's a laugh and I that was the first I...we've always supported West Ham and followed them but actually going to watch a game with the crowd around you standing in a terrace because where else er I am not saying it was something I realised at the time but I at the last season at West Ham when erm my friends seasons tickets who erm we sit next to each other he couldn't go. I took other friends and I took someone who had' never been before

*Hmm*

Because her brother was West Ham so I took

*Yeah*

Her and her brother and she just loved it because she had never been to a football game so I did have to explain various things with and it was we went to Ken's Café beforehand because it was part of the ritual and we get the salt and peppers and said right what do you need to know beforehand. I said do you want to know about offside

*Hmmm*

And she and I said to her and it's not only the atmosphere but were else can you scream and shout so loudly and just support a team and just even stand up and say not abusive things you know kind of disagree with various things. I am not saying join in with the referee songs which are too

*Yeah*

Echo around quite a lot which are funny when you watch it on the tele and they haven't turned down the volume erm but erm were else can you go and show such passion for something in a crowd of people. It's quite tribal thing as well you know where your getting

together and this is your tribe this is who you are there for and your community that's not done necessarily by area but by local like-minded people brought together by something they all love. So I think yeah that's what kind of keeps going back and I think from going to that first game and standing there. I still remember where I stood and that's where we used to stand when we used to go along, so we started going after that we started going regularly. It was me my friend and her brother [laughs] Saturday games kick off at 3 o'clock we started off in the North Bank and there was a little gate just to the right side of the goal. And we used to stand that was our place, because you had your space you had your place and erm we moved onto the West Stand and we used to start queuing at quarter past 11 in the morning to get in for a 3 o'clock kick off. Quarter past 11 and when that is just every Saturday, it didn't matter we were there at that time and it was nothing to do because that was the time we were just dropped off that was convenient but because there was always one set of people in front of us who had their space on the wall

*Hmmm*

So they used to go to their space and I did wonder, I remember thinking once if we actually beat them in one day would we go and nicked their place on the wall. It's that kind not quite marking your territory like cats do, but it's that kind of thing erm but we used to sit no stand should I say and we were originally in the North Bank as I say but when we were in the West Stand when these people used to que in front of us they stood by the home team dugout we then went stood by the away team dugout so that was our place that was where we were. And at quarter past 11 now that's a long time to get there

*Yeah*

But neither my friend nor I are blessed in the height department and I would say we're short. It was the only way we could see the game because it only kind of came up to kind of your shoulder height so...well the wall erm people used to come in sometimes with their kids says 'ah can I put him up on the wall for the game love' 'no got here at quarter past 11 so I can stand next to...sorry mate'

*Hmmm*

He would kind of go off and try and find a place for his child on the wall

*Yeah*

Which is great you do that for your kids but we got there at quarter past 11 so we can get this place, we could see because I did go in the chicken run a few times when it was a terrace with friends and erm no all I was saying was what happened you know and I was bouncing up down because I couldn't see a damn thing. Because I am just too short so erm standing on the wall does have its benefits and then obviously when the seats came in

*Yeah*

Although I am okay now I am fine. Although it can be challenging if somebody's got a really tall body that sits in front of me it can be quite you know its always me they come and sit in front of and that's when there's usually a shuffling as two swapping seats. But erm I would say from that first game we then went regularly for that year after that was it we were there the whole time.

*Do you remember how much the tickets cost around about that time?*

No I don't, I found not so a long ago my 1980 cup final ticket

*Yeah*

We were at the tunnel end and erm I remember I went with my friend erm her brother and her then partner who she married, but she was trying to say to him because he wasn't into football 'you don't realise what a privilege it is for me to let you have this ticket' it was even her fiancé at the time 'to me to let you have this ticket you don't realise' so erm I think he loved the day but he's never really been back since and I found the ticket and it was £3.50

*Yeah*

I did buy a season ticket in the west stand lower when there were seats erm so I don't know what banding it was but I had to give it up so I am talking early 80's that was £110 but I only had it for one season because I got a mortgage the next year

*Hmmm*

And once you get a mortgage that was you know that wasn't a cheap thing to do so that was a lot of money I seem to remember. But I when talking about prices of things I was going from 71 regularly and I worked in Marks & Spencer's in Ilford on a Saturday and we picked my friend and I-she was there as well so that meant we couldn't go to all the games because you see we were it was more evening so that was probably mid 70's and erm because you had to work, I couldn't not get a job because it meant I could then buy thing for myself because I really didn't get much pocket money or anything like that and if I wanted a pair of fashionable shoes you dad you know if I wanted a pair of shoes I wanted to buy more expensive ones that were fashionable, this is the prices of them because I can still remember the grief associated with it was Freeman Hardy Willis Ilford High St

*Hmmm*

They were 5.99 this was for a pair of pukka enormous flat forms

*Yeah*

And thick heels 5.99 but I had to put 2 pounds towards the cost, a third I had to pay a third

*Yeah*

So I had to work you know but my friend and worked in Marks & Spencer's that rather than BHS that was next door but one to it because it had air conditioning because we don't like the heat so we were

*Either do I*

Awww I hate the heat so it was air conditioned so it was like heaven because it was the first air conditioned I even knew probably. Erm the pay was good it was excellent it was 6 pound 10 pence for the day, I've still got my payslips which just show you how bad it is but I am not very good at throwing things away as you can tell. Erm so 6 pounds 10 pence for the day so that shows you know much things were. But today's salary to get a pair of shoes is a bit scary really isn't it. But if you were sick a day you got sick pay for a Saturday 4 pounds thirty but that's how much how much prices were those days. So probably about 5 years later you'd pay 110 pounds for a season ticket. It was a chunk of money

*Yeah*

Especially when your talking about mortgages as well. So erm yeah that was quite a step. So yeah.

*So obviously erm the type of people that go to football games now has completely changed, erm did you feel like the odd one out maybe a little bit when you went to games being a woman?*

No because I went with a female friend and her brother erm, no no I didn't really. I wouldn't say there were lots of women but I didn't notice how many women there were or weren't there

*Yeah*

Didn't know didn't notice I remember talking to someone who was one of the stewards erm about football because they were starting up a women's side erm a lady's side and Pat Holland one of the West Ham players was going to be the coach and he asked me why don't you try out for it and I said 'oh no I can't not only have I got bad knees I was at college at the time in south east London so it was a bit of a trek to get to erm if it would have been coaching during the week to do homework

*Hmmmm*

And stuff and then travel out back over the river again it would have been a nightmare so I just said no. So that was the first time I remember a women's club so your talking about mid 70's late 70's there was women's football being played there, but I never there being women. We weren't cause it was my friend and I we didn't have...it was quite an isolated West Ham existence because we had friend who were West Ham but we didn't go as crowds and we were never and I am not saying this in a dismissive way or any other way we weren't ever people, we drank we used to get drunk



*Yeah*

When we were your young but we've never been drinkers we've never been...I don't go to pubs because I don't drink she doesn't drink either now, her brother doesn't drink we just don't and it was never part of our...we did at school sometimes because I remember the erm 6<sup>th</sup> form head master..teacher of 6<sup>th</sup> form coming and find us in the pub once

*Hmmm*

And you did get drunk, I've been drunk I've been well drunk and so badly drunk I've never drunk again because it was oh grim and the room was spinning you know and that kind of 'woahhh' we didn't drink that much after that at all. But it was never part of our lets go out lets go to the pub let's have a few drinks lets go to the game and lets go back to the pub again. Because it wasn't us so missed a lot of that because I think that's were some of camaraderie comes in

*Hmmm*

Because you meet up in the pub have a bevy and then go off and then, but its then meet here after the game and you either say how brilliant it was or how crap it was and if you want to talk about the England game from last night

*No [laughs]*

No [laughs] it was just yeah okay. But that's where you would kind of commiserate with your buddies so we didn't really, it was more her family and friends my brothers didn't go it was just weird and never wanted to go really erm so it was with her family more that I went to the football. It's only in recent years I would say that the community has changed for me in that erm I go on a West Ham blog more the past 6 years and I go on and they don't know I am a women, they didn't know I was a women. So they didn't know so I was chatting to them about football

*Hmmm*

And there was no sexism there was no comments 'you're a women run away what do you know your talking about' things like that because you can be anonymous. Avatar can be anything you want it to be your name can be anything you want it to be and so you can do it quite anonymously. And erm it its its all about West Ham but it does chat a lot this blog and erm we were chatting once on Friday and we were saying 'oh we should meet for a drink' and thinking 'yeah yeah like that's going to happen' [laughs] thinking do I want to keep my anonymity and erm we did meet up for a drink and this one person said just couldn't believe who I said I wash he said 'your husband in the toilet he couldn't make it so you came' instead I said 'no its me' and they wouldn't believe I was the person they were chatting to online

*Yeah*

And you can see them when they found out it was me thinking to themselves 'what have I said to her?' you could just see the thick kind of subtext going through 'oh my word' I mean I never I would have a laugh and a joke so I've got no real it was only if they were kind of aggressive or anything like this, there have been other women on site and I've sometimes defended them when I thought someone was out of order and so they think I am bloke wading in to tell them they're out of order

*Hmmm*

Er but that doesn't happen very often erm but erm it was interesting and it was when I met and there's someone who's quite chatty online, chatted to a few times you now you chat and just...I've never seen anybody so surprised and what struck was silent which was quite an achievement I think

*Yeah yeah*

Out of anything else erm because always got an opinion, everybody's got an opinion and erm it was quite quite funny really and it is amusing but one of the things I said 'don't tell anyone I am a women' if you can keep that respect if you can keep that please. So they've managed to keep that quite but it's quite funny you can have a few jokes with those who know you're a woman you can have a few jokes when you know I won't repeat necessarily for here but erm er a few jokes were you do have a giggle because they know I am a woman but many other people do

*Hmmm*

But I don't notice they can be a bit dismissive attitude towards women I haven't played the game really but I understand I don't understand the game as well, I've learned more by being online and speaking to people who do. So erm I've come on a lot

*Yeah*

And it's like a whole different community I am now part of because erm it was just with my friend an association and I started going with another friend and its erm a friend of my brother he was decorating around he does my decorating and stuff around the house and he we're just talking West Ham and he said 'should we go to some games' and we started going to games and I said to him do you want to get a season ticket and erm he said 'yeah why not' but I said to him you need to ask your wife you can't you know you need to check with your wife that she's happy with that because I would feel. I am not saying you need permission but can you just it's alright it's alright she's Arsenal so yeah I know

*So it was a no*

[Laughs] I think it probably was to start off with but I think it was I am going to West Ham it was more of a statement but they've got girls and a son and it was a case of the son what happens with a boy will he be West Ham or Arsenal and I think he was allowed, there was a

discussion you know so it was allowed to be West Ham so he came to games when he was 8 and he was bored to start off with because pfffff

*It's hard to follow*

It is because they've got commentary on the tele and its really kind of you know you haven't got that when you go and your thinking 'ohhh' got great seats well did have don't ask about the new stadium but great seats erm backrow of the chicken run and its 8 rows up brilliant 6 rows up but erm he was a bit probably with his first 2 years but he went because it was a thing to do with his dad and he's now West Ham through so it was about 5 years ago

*Yeah*

Erm but what we did at the time we went to a few games and then when we got season tickets it was a case you know of well it's not cheap so I got a season ticket my friend and he I said 'do you want it' its pricey and also he worked on Saturdays self-employed Saturdays he works. So he couldn't have every 19 Saturdays out so I said 'if I found friends to share with you would that be okay?' he said 'yes' so I went out with alternating people erm I told them what games I handed out what games do you rally want to go to 'oh I really want to do this one' or they alternated first and last away games of the season so you would try and make it as fair as possible and erm the seat next to me come up on my left. So we said 'oh there's this one' so we bought that one as well and a friend then went to that as well, three of us she can go so then it became my friends son the 8 year old it's his ticket so that's now his season ticket. And erm we've all got we don't share anymore there our seats but we will you know are coming down or we can't get to a game then we'll let someone else have it obviously because you don't want any empty seat to be there

*Yeah*

So erm we'll just have to wait and see

*So we've just been talking about the stadium there erm how's the stadium developed over the years?*

Well I don't remember it with the wooden terracing in the chicken run but I remember it being standing in areas and I love the standing cause the thing is when you've got seats now and this is the difficulty erm it was when you've had a seat allocated to you that's your fixed position and if your friends then start coming along obviously they can afford tickets or whatever and they're doted about all over the place. So and it's hard to get together with your mates which is what you can do in the terrace you can just say 'I'll see you there' because the North Bank at West Ham I am sure if you've been doing quite a few of these you have heard the North Bank had a bar inside the bank inside the terrace so I was down the opposite corner of that erm but if you wanted to drink you just ambled up to the bar then ambled back to your space again.

*Hmmm*

And that just weird because that's just gone obviously with the standing but you still loose that because you move around the crowd as well and even though going to the new stadium means you can get people together and you can get friends together you can group them together. The same things going to happen again were you going to have people to wanting to then come along and they can't because of the space around you is filled up and you can't allocate be allocated out so I can see you'll probably get friends of people, I chat to people around I don't know erm were not necessarily sitting next to each other when we move but you chat to them because West Hams you know 'have you heard what's happening?' 'well I've heard so and so is injured etc' so you chat about everything and 'I hear we're buying so and so' etc but erm its then fixed to that but I think it will be interesting to see what happens again but it is, I still like standing I think there should be standing even though as long as I am standing on a step

*Yeah*

In front of me where I can move around a bit it's okay and I've seen the safe standing in Germany and how they do it because you are still allocated a seat almost but it's like slots up and down it's on a erm a stand were it can be locked up or down

*Hmmm*

And I hope people will be able to move around a bit more that way whether we'll have that the Olympic stadium I don't know because it's not out stadium and the cost of putting that kind of seating in I don't know because West Ham have paid to have the seats changed to West Ham colours and that wasn't cheap, I think it was something like 3 million but erm so heaven only knows how much it cost to put safe standing in and they'd only been doing it for football events and if there's only going to be 19..25 the maximum a year then there not gonna want to put it in so West Ham would have to pay to do it

*Yeah*

So yeah I don't know if we'll ever see it there in the short term erm but I think it's a...part of me is pleased with moving because I can see the benefits of it and increasing the stadium size, but part of me regrets especially since the bus garage closed at er West Ham I think it was East Ham erm by the ground meant the Priory Road why we couldn't rebuild the East stand because we haven't been near to the pitch for years now, not like we used to be because I've built stands it's all moved a little further back. And there's always a gap now and when they built the West Stand which I think was the last one they built erm the 'rio stand' as they called because the money was from Rio Ferdinand being sold erm I think it was 18 million or something. Even though the money didn't go towards the stand we've been told but everyone was yeah okay erm it was the rio stand the pitch moved and because the pitch moved and they ripped up the pitch and obviously they put draining underneath it which is kind of standard these days. Erm we are just further away than we used to be so there was no way near as, I remember hearing conversations on the pitch in the old days you know I remember Ray Stewart erm Frank Lampard was having a go at him 'XXXX Frank' [29:11] you know it's like this so you can hear them chatting and chatting to each other and shouting to each

other which is yeah. Crowd is different these days and the atmosphere because you not in a crowd your not standing your seated down so there's a kind of formality in sitting down and behaving yourself if your sitting down rather than standing up and shouting

*Hmmm*

But because we were in the backrow of the chicken run we could stand and we weren't supposed to stand but we did

*Hmmm*

And I made sure during the last season I stood the whole time because I thought I am never going to be able to do this again ever ever. I used to say to my friends son 12 13 year old stand while you can because you won't be doing it for much longer because its not going to happen

*Hmmm just for the sake of the tape can you explain the chicken run was?*

Oh right yeah of course erm the chicken was the east terrace and it did have I think chicken wire over it as one stage, it was wired but erm it was a really basic stand and you were so close to the players and I think it was a wooden stand at one stage before they cemented it all over and I know I remember erm who was it erm Ian Bishop because he had long hair as well so I always thought he was a bit kind of you know a bit suspicious they can kind of pretended when there was a throw-in along the chicken run and it hadn't been going so well and they kind of went 'oh god I 've got to tie up my shoelace' I don't want to go near there because of the abuse they used to get and they didn't know they were so close you could get their hands on you

*Yeah*

And because he had long hair he always thought he was a bit more of a threat than a lot of the others so erm that was erm and it known as the side you didn't really want to go on you really didn't want to go near and that was what I think with Upton Park with the atmosphere that was there and they talk about it in the last season how the atmosphere and I say its nothing like it used to be because with the standing as well we had 40 plus thousand in there erm heaving number of people in there shouting and screaming and I think I remember noise much more in those days that I do in these days. Although we've had good games were I can remember the atmosphere and I can remember certain games because it was unique experiences being there it was different I remember those games. But erm the chicken run was the bit they didn't want to run near

*Yeah*

Opposition as well hated it which was lovely

*In terms of atmosphere do you think it's just the change from standing to seating and that formality that's changed the atmosphere over the years?*

I think it has as well because your not with your mates as well probably because you've got your seats you know there dotted around because it's usually mates that get together especially XXXX [31:49] there louder and you've got certain areas which are known so you've got er the end of the chicken the east stand towards the north bank the north bank being now the Trevor Brooking stand erm because that were the away fans are. Far more people they stand there now and that's quite an active shouty area

*Hmmm*

Because it's next to the away and also the other side of the away fans erm in the Trevor Brooking low when I started off my erm north bank attendance career erm but that's where it's curved around [laughs] its actually called chavs corner

*Yeah*

So er I know someone who sits not quite there but we say to him he sits in chavs corner and he always corrects us, it's just like one of those jokey things that he thinks you've got to say to him because he gets upset he says 'no its not I am in Trevor Brooking lower' 'yeah that's right chavs corner' and he carry on talking and he would sit there 'but I don't sit there' and we know he doesn't sit there but we can't help but say he sits in chavs corner. It's quite funny, if he laughed and went 'yeah' we would stop but he won't [laughs] so you have to carry on. Erm but I think it's because you don't get together with your mates generally. It will be so interesting so see what's going to happen because in the new stadium because the children are now mixed in there's no family seating area because it was the upper north bank upper sir Trevor Brooking which is where the away supporters are in the corner. Probably because you've got the children and adults above with the family above probably be saying there not going to throw things on top of them

*Hmmmm*

Erm I think it will be interesting because there's no designated children family area so children are going to be everywhere. I don't know how they put people or how it's probably informally this is where we stood before we are gonna stand in that place again and we are going to sing and that's probably the biggest thing is how to get the atmosphere kicking off in the new stadium I am on the supporters advisory board and er there was discussions about the first meeting I went to about 4 years ago I started so is after we got the Olympic Stadium erm the working party I was on was for the match day atmosphere what's it going to be like. Because to me you're are the 12<sup>th</sup> man

*Hmmm*

If it's there and I've been to games were we've been the 12<sup>th</sup> man the last one being the last home game. Because that was that was just amazing I just you know the atmosphere there and when another one was erm 2004 semi-final play-off against Ipswich Alan Pardew was really into getting the crowd whipped up and he things going off an cannons and flames and stuff before the game you know and that the place was just rocking absolutely rocking and then there the games I it would be so interesting to see how we get the Olympic Stadium rocking

*Hmmm*

And I don't know yet how that, you've got to make sure it's not too contrived. So if it's too contrived you just you people are going are not going to play a long why would I want that, you know like in erm some stadiums they play music when a goal is scored

*Yeah*

I hate that you know no I really don't want to see that so I am hoping I know there starting a supporters advisory board you've got to re-apply again which I will do because I'd still like to be involved with it. So erm especially with erm match day experience because I think that is the key I do think it can be the 12<sup>th</sup> man.

*Hmmm*

The atmosphere those two games in particular and we played Man United as well in the 70's we had to beat them to stay up not an unusual experience for us, I think that's been I wouldn't say 50 percent of our time but a large chunk of the time we must beat them to stay up

*Yeah*

Erm I've never been to a game as packed as that at Upton Park and we actually we stood for once I think probably to get a better view it was my friend brother and her dad came to that one as well and we stood in front of the bar north bank bar probably not the best of moves erm but there was barrier there and it meant that there wasn't many people and people moving around us but I have never known a crowd so up for it, it was like a moving mass, just you were locked into this crowd and if one person moved and a few people moved somewhere everybody had to move because you were so packed in. The atmosphere was brilliant we won 4-2 so it meant we were relegated a couple of years later there you go. Erm but that was kind of the 70's which is when I think most of my and that's where all my kind of hero's comes from Trevor Brooking, Billy Bonds, Alan Devonshire. You know it's all of those so erm that atmosphere is the thing you go for that's the thing you go for. Not only to see good football and hope you see good football you know what that's like

*Yeah*

You know it's great if you win as well but I its but I don't go to see us win I go to see us play good football and to experience the atmosphere



*Hmmm*

It's not nice when you lose but sometimes you lose because you weren't as good and you were the better side and the other side will play better than you and though yeah okay they played the pants off. I am not Iceland England or anything like that but you know they played the pants off so respect to them

*Yeah*

Erm but there are some teams you just so want to beat and even if they did beat you and they were better than you your not going to admit it your not going to admit it Liverpool being one of those. And I think erm the crowd get up for certain teams your playing against as well and it's like this thing were you have teams that are lower down in the division were you just never know what it's going to be like because it's not quite a cup game but they know there going to play out of their socks against certain teams and that's why I think players from abroad come into the Premier League haven't experienced that necessarily before and that well not taking them by surprise it's like Payet playing for France and he said he's become a better player playing for West Ham because he says every other week every week more or less your playing high important high important game were you just don't know what it's going to be you've just got to go out and play the whole time and I don't think you have so much in France certainly, Spain certainly not Italy I don't know probably a bit more but not as much I think it's those games which get the atmosphere. Which comes first it's the chicken or the egg is it the good you get the atmosphere or it is the atmosphere and you get the good game. I think the atmosphere is far improved when you've got a good game and this is where the difference comes in for me between watching this season and previous seasons like with Allardyce because I appreciated him coming other it was the right move

*Hmmmm*

Erm because I think we were total mess it just needed sorting out we were desperate time and it was case of who wants to come join this while we are in the Championship we've been relegated what going to happen now. So erm but the football you know when your just used to seeing Trevor Brooking and you see that commitment and passion and flair on the pitch, I still remember Brooking with those passes he used to put through where he just kinda cuts through a defence. I am not saying Iniesta's...

*Yeah*

But it's that kind of, did you see that pass from Iniesta going through were they kept playing it again and again

*Hmmm*



And they had to keep playing it again and again because your just looking at it think 'I can't quite believe he threaded that through' because it just went though. Brooking used to do things like that and Devonshire used to dink his way around er it was just lovely. When you watch things like that seeing Payet come back this season and do things like that your just going it's a joy to watch and okay we've come away with a draw but always think to myself I always sort of I am not saying I respect a point quite Allardyce style but I do think that kind of [tuts] I go in never thinking we are going to win because that's like bad luck and I don't want to presume that and I never go in thinking we are going to lose, so I go in thinking okay it's a draw, how disappointed...what do I think the results are going to be, I won't admit a loss even though I might be thinking it, but I'll never say it to anyone. I might frown because it's a draw but I will think what do I think it was going to be at the beginning of the game and what was it at the end and okay the play makes you think we should of actually won that but when you see the play and you've watched it and see Payet you kinda of just go...and the other Lanzini and Antonio, Cresswell and others play as a team Kouyate Noble inside as well it's just been a joy to watch and it's when you see things like that the crowd is much more up for it this season probably because it was the last season, but also because of what they're watching and that makes such a difference.

*So inside of the stadium which part of the stadium is best for Atmosphere? Which stand do you think?*

I would say near the away fans whichever side that is so your probably talking about chav corner lower Trevor Brooking which is the east side cause the away fans are in the er lower Trevor Brooking north bank as we used to call it and erm the end of the chicken run or the end of the east stand erm that's probably were it's the most vociferous west stand not so much because erm that's where the corporate areas are more

*Yeah*

And I have been over to the corporate sections there and there's no way it's like it is in the chicken run where your up and down and up and down the whole time and you know the atmosphere that's much more like a terrace. It's near the corporate and that's why one of the decisions of when we moved to the Olympic Stadium or were we sit is because we don't want to be near the corporate stuff because we think once they've...I am not saying it's the prawn sandwich brigade

*Yeah*

But there gonna come out might be a bit late don't know but just hasn't got same scene and having experienced that we thought do I don't want to be there which is why we are in the east stand again

*Hmmm I suspect there will be a lot corporate seats at the new stadium in Stratford*

Well they only they says there's only 3000 so that's not actually that many when you look at the whole size of the stadium. I don't how accurate that is mind you but because I do

remember things it might have been the planning to this, but I don't think it's as massive as first thought but if there in the areas because with corporate as well and you've got a box say 6..10 I don't know how it works or you've got a few because of your business your taking quests a long when you take quests a long that they're not going to be the fans that go week in week out who are up. They know everything they know all the details they've got all the gear they've got all the do you know it's just not going to have that

*Yeah*

So I once went to a corporate box at Tottenham...that was hard we lost one nil as well. And we were in this box you weren't allowed to wear any colours you couldn't drink in there erm you couldn't certainly sit there with a glass in the front row of this box, it was covered in front the glass box things erm it might get on the tv cameras and look like you might be drinking. I had a glass of water but I couldn't drink it there so I wasn't allowed but the most brilliant little box because it was slap bang above the erm tunnel the exit of West Ham so when obviously West Ham are leaving we were like kind of stuck on toys glued to the scream hellooo erm but erm yeah I don't think that went down very well because everyone else was Tottenham everywhere but your not allowed to do those kind of things, you have to behave yourself to a certain you know...because your there as a quest of someone as well your not going to go bonkers even if want this business

*Yeah*

[Laughs] turn into a drunken rant at some stage so erm I think there just generally more behaved I think its I don't know where the atmosphere is going to be south west corner is where the...the away fans are to be so you'll probably think it's going to be on the south bank south west so yeah the south banks is probably going to be more so there going to be in the corner with the corporate erm west ham fans so I am so I don't know what its going to be

*So with the stadium itself do you actually prefer calling the Boleyn Ground or Upton Park?*

I prefer calling it the Boleyn erm probably not so much this season but it used be one of those pub quiz questions I think it was who wants to be a millionaire questions once as well I think was one of the questions once as well I think it might have been one of these important. I don't know if someone won a million or something and it was one of the questions

*Yeah*

But erm I probably called it Upton Park in its youth erm but I've been calling the Boleyn more recently because that's its proper name and I wanted to give it more respect for when I was leaving it. So I made sure I was calling it the Boleyn from then on and it was just Upton Park tube station that I went to

*It's quite interchangeable isn't it the two names?*

It is and I think it was about the location and I think I don't know generally I think it most people call it Upton Park to be honest. But I've called it the Boleyn most recently because I just thought we're not going to be doing it for much longer so let's call it the Boleyn. It's like the erm ground at the Olympic stadium the east stand which is the same as the Kop like stand which I don't like that expression being used because that's Liverpool

*Yeah*

But somebody was saying the I don't know how you pronounce Spioenkop was from er the Boer War and it was about a ground a feature of the land and a particular battle that was fought. And because of the staging of it so it was picked up the kop was picked up from that name erm it it is a legitimate term you can use for something like that. I would really like to call it that if it was so I wouldn't mind calling that stand something like the Boleyn like that just to give it a nods and pass because a lot of these names aren't the ones on the outside of the chicken run. You wouldn't know it's the east stand

*Yeah*

But it's called the chicken run.

*I think more people are calling it the the Boleyn Ground because there's that sense that there's a loss of heritage incoming*

Yes yes I think it was, it's funny because I was erm talking to someone with the who did some of the design work for the farewell season and everything. And I was talking to him about it and erm he was about one of the banners ere you've got the farewell season and you've got the spikes and everything like the gates and everything around it and I said to him that I thought the typeface looked quite Edwardian Victorian Edwardian typeface so it was actually a kind of a nod back to that time

*Yeah*

Because you're talking about the Edwardian times 1904 and so he said he said 'not many people have noticed that' but it was one of the things they went for because it was like a nod back 'hello this is our past this is where we started off' and I to me I like that acknowledgement even though we did go to other grounds in 1904 I can't remember were we started the memorial grounds I think

*Yeah*

And I think it's because we started there but this were we've been most of our time.

*Hmmm so when your in the stadium as well what songs do you sing? What do you wear? What's your inform what's your battledress so to speak?*

[Laughs] I didn't used to wear my colours because I live in Kent so travelling to the games meant going through New Cross and Millwall territory

*I used to live there in New Cross*

Did you?

*Yeah*

Yeah so I do remember because I used to go to South East London College and it was when erm there was a fight on a train and a Millwall a yeah a Millwall fan was thrown off at New Cross and was killed by a train.

*Hmmm*

And er I still wore my colours in those days, how mad is that I've just never you know and my knitted scarf as well I used to wear even going through New Cross I thought 'No I am West Ham why should I?'

*Yeah*

I can't believe I done that, today I would never have done that but I think when your young you don't realise the consequences of your actions so much you think your impervious to everything. As you get older you realise your not and you realise if I do this this happens. Erm a bit like the referendum really people are like I voted for leave, but I am beginning to wonder why I did it and I am thinking you had two choices

*Yeah*

Make up your mind don't moan about it now erm and I think erm so I never wore my colours but I wore them properly more recently erm obviously got the scarf I am very much the claret and sky blue and not the claret and which is more of turquoise colour they've opted for now which is the colours they've got now

*Do you prefer the retro kits so to speak?*

Yeah I think so and I like I think it is the erm I like the 1980's erm FA Cup final white one that's lovely but it's the light blue which was the it was a nod towards it I've bought the kit I never bought the kits because I just don't think it looks right on a girl and a lot of men as well, it just doesn't look quite right. Buying t-shirts with stuff on it is a bit different but erm I've never bought myself a shirt ever and this season was the first time I bought one and I bought the away kit because I loved because that was my favourite sky blue with two dark claret hoops

*Yeah*

Loved it. And that was such a true nod to that and a really stylish I thought their kit last season was simple stylish unfussy, nod to the past, loved it. And erm the claret and sky blue are really quite difficult colours to wear you know they're not kind of you know of fashion choice of the day hmmm I am going to wear claret and sky blue to work you just don't do that. So erm they're not easy colours because I am not very they are not colours I can wear anyway because I am...brown hair fare skinned it doesn't yeah fit me very easily. Erm er and it was more turquoise that shirt last season the away shirt. So I though woah I'll have that so I remember I bought that so I wore that a few times then I wore the black farewell away kit I don't have a uniform but this time but this time I wore the same t-shirt. I did wash it I hastened to add I did have things underneath it I hastened to add but I wore the same t-shirt the whole time er I did wear it and we lost but that was a cup game but I've kind of excluded that erm but that was the Man United cup game so that was the only one I wore it to. Otherwise I wore it not the whole season erm because I wouldn't have worn it if it had been the beginning of the season because we lost at the beginning but I thereafter erm but erm I've got I've actually worn it today I've got this ring. I went to this designer fair thing because I like looking around at the modern stuff and she said that things and she had a ring that similar kind of colours in it, so erm I had these two [shows ring]

*Oh yeah*

A garnet and a XXXX a Swiss XXXX [51:34] which I think it is which is claret and sky blue

*Hmmm*

Just put in this modern type ring erm so I wear that so erm I don't have lucky underwear or anything or socks but things change erm...I don't have any rituals but the ritual thing I did because I thought aw I can't not wear that because we on last time

*Yeah*

And I am not used to us winning as much as we did last season so you really don't want to break anything. It's like I can never ever say online particularly 'I think we're going to lose' I can't say that I can't because sometimes by giving it by actually speaking out loud your giving it form your giving it presence and I don't want to do that I don't want to give it that

*Yeah*

That gravity so I will never say we'll lose erm and erm I'll never say we'll win so there is that yeah which is quite middle of the road type things

*So what sort of songs do you sing then inside of the stadium?*

We don't sing a lot where I am I wouldn't say I am the youngest – which is saying something erm but erm its been good this season because there's been more for the people to sing about so there is the Payet song which came up and it was brilliant because that started off at Crystal Palace it isn't a West Ham song it was sung by Newcastle to Cabaye

*Hmmm*

When he was splaying for them they started up there I think and it was about – he was going I believe

*Yeah he was*

So I think erm they sung it to him it was then picked up by West Ham by Payet at the away Crystal Palace game and when I went to the supporters advisory board which was just after that game and they were talking about something somebody said something about him and they said he has never had a song sung about him he can't believe it he just never had his own song and he just thinks it's great and he obviously can't get enough of it. The ground was just ringing with it and I recorded from online from the Crystal Palace and I downloaded it and it was my ring tone. God that was so irritating.

*[Laughs]*

And I downloaded it to my friends as well and he couldn't work out how to get it off and I think it took his son to get it off. But it was really good and you could really hear it but oh my god so sang that. I don't sing massively because it's nice to sing when people are singing around you and it's probably just me singing. Bubbles obviously sign that and there are some other songs which you kind of tune into and you go what are they singing because it is more from the end of my stand because we were kind of mid middle of the stand in the east stand. And so it's the people down the other end and in the chavs corner ish area erm 'what are they singing?' your just trying to tune in to what they are singing because I've been going to more away games awful lot more song and it's something more party atmosphere when you go to an away game it's like we've got to enjoy ourselves we've got to sing. Got to have a few bevvies before it

*Yeah*

And erm we've got to join in with this so you get a lot more songs the Lanzini one they were trying to put forward that it'sy bitsy tinny winny super talented Lanzini. I can't remember what it was but they then found another song for him which you do hear. It's the Antonio one and it's different songs you do here but something like that happened. I do remember it was the funniest one I saw recently which we all laughed at was at the Mark Noble testimonial because it's obviously a relaxed game and he missed a sitter goal which [mumbles] he missed it and there was something about you don't know what your doing song and he's rubbish and get him off and everything so he then two finger saluted the crowd thank you very much for that, which was really funny it's nice when everyone laughed and they heard the song going around and everyone join in and sometimes it's song that go around that you join in but I would say Payet has been the most recent

*Hmmm*

And it was when he came on against Liverpool and I wouldn't say there my least favourite side - it's not to do with the 2006 cup final I hasten to add erm its not its teams you'll know what this is like teams that assume that they have a right to be at the top of the league who assume that's where we deserve to be, you only deserve to be there if you win and you play and the players that do it. Erm you er you have a right to be there that's where we should be no it's that I struggle with most of them time and er its teams like that and fans are like that [taps of desk] that's our place no its not and if we can beat them hahahaha [laughs]

*Liverpool haven't been successful for many many decades, you wouldn't know it though would you*

Listening to their fans. I mean shame they came second that time soo

*I enjoyed the Steven Gerrard slip as well as much as anyone*

I know I thought with that as well I saw, do you remember he came on he was subbed on he was sonly on for a new minutes

*Hmmm*

Because he went into two enormous lunging tackles and the thing that was circulating at the which was hilarious was erm you know they have heat maps now of players

*Yeah*

It was just a green pitch with one red line to the middle circle and that was it because he obviously went on and came off again, which was very amusing but erm but it with teams like that and when Payet came in on the crowd was just ringing and I think it was the first time he probably though because he had been off for two months because he had been injured by McCarthy played for Ireland and Everton scythed down in front of us, we couldn't believe it, we couldn't believe it wasn't booked either and it was laterally like a scissor kick scything him out erm and he came on but it was just watching it and he just danced 3 or 4 Liverpool players, it wasn't far from us going towards the south side and he just danced his away them with the ball I am not saying dance it sounds like it sounds like it was showboating it wasn't he got away from 4 players showboating is when your just doing something for effect and it doesn't actually make that much impact

*Yeah*

On what your doing well he just they didn't they were going the wrong way because of what he was doing, it was such a joy to watch and we beat them [giggles] which was even better so erm that was yeah and to me that was one of the best feeling and we beat them under Allardyce as well at Upton Park erm previous season I think it was or the season before we had beaten them and I am thinking ' I can't believe we just did that' I had such a smile on my face erm and because of the way I travel home as well I come at London Bridge and there's



usually because I've got my scarf on and people are saying what's the score and my scarf has been hidden on occasions that was just too depressing

*Yeah*

I can't even tell them how much we lost by or embarrassing that game was erm but because the time I get the Millwall fans have dissipated fortunately from my platform erm or there corralled by the police at the platform down the end

*Usually the case*

Yes so I can usually miss them erm but erm I think that's been the most satisfying and I think that's where the atmosphere is just...

*Hmmm...electric?*

I think there's something about it I think that 12<sup>th</sup> man thing and I thing with the game we played against Man United I think it probably did I don't know if they had experienced the noise like that. I mean okay theres 70 odd thousand at Old Trafford and I've been to Old Trafford, I went to the cup game up there were Payet scored slap bang in front of us one of those free kicks

*Yeah*

And erm Schweinsteiger I think bundles Randolph into the goal at the other end which meant their goal stood for some reason, couldn't quite work that one out obviously we couldn't see it because it was down the other end but yeah anyway. But the atmosphere wasn't as zinging but that was probably a hostile atmosphere for the Man U players hostile with them getting there as well that was challenging to say the least. Erm why they didn't close off Green Street there were buses going down Green Street, crowds I was there from about 12 o'clock so I knew it was busy then

*Yeah*

And how no one could really predict that crowd being like that because they were just going to be there for the last game even if they didn't have a ticket erm but that crowd atmosphere inside I think it must have thrown a few of their players...good.

*Do you think the atmosphere the outside of the stadium is reflective of what goes on on Green Street and on Barking, what's it like on match days in those areas?*

No your just walking along them, queuing for Nathan's or Ercan fish and chip shop on the corner your out spilling from the pub to the Boleyn Ground er no I don't think it does. I think the only way the atmosphere is from the pub I think probably because your with your mates your already singing because you can hear them singing sometimes as you go past and that



then probably goes in, but those people are probably singing together they probably go and sit in different seats

*Yeah*

Away from each other don't know where they go so erm I don't think it is who your playing against and what you see on the pitch and I do think night kick offs are better there's something about it. I mean your turn up from work and there's more suits around then normal gear but there something about night kick off I think as well and that why the Man United one was even because it was a night kick off as well. When I left that games because you didn't charge out because you knew it was the last when you left the game erm I got to Stratford Station my friend gave me a lift to Stratford Station and I didn't realise I was on the last train and it was about 10 past 12

*Yeah*

I didn't even occur to me the tubes would stop that early so I was at Stratford at something like 10 past 12 and they were closing down the Jubilee line and I thought 'ohhh' I couldn't believe that so I got my last train home from London Bridge at one o six at London Bridge so I wasn't home till gone 2 so erm yeah that was quite an eventful night.

*Do you think as well with the move to erm the new stadium in Stratford obviously your talking about pre-match rituals there you've got the pub you've got the pie and mash shops you've got Kens Café all these different places. Is there a worry that these might kind of fizzle out a bit with the loss of custom?*

They will I think they will although places like the Boleyn and The Black Lion which I go to as well. I don't drink but I go in with people and its nice and that's where you go and chat after the games they are organising coaches. Come her before I think they are doing a season ticket in the Boleyn

*Yeah*

Where you go there before and they';; take you all up there probably picking them up afterwards and bring them home but they'll suffer without a doubt but it they will be, culture changes but its usually quite a gradual thing and theres an impact of senior officials taking over at a company and they start changing things radically with they do to staff terms and condition's they bring erm well we're going to a new stadium and the culture is going to be slightly different there. And your rituals beforehand erm you'll just find different places for them

Hmmm

And I am going to Upton Park in a couple of weeks on a Saturday some of the people online we're meeting up we going on a pub crawl. I usually get to hold the whip. If there's a whip of about a tenner everyone starts off with. I get to the hold the whip because I am the only one

that's not drinking so erm I got to hold the money and erm we'll do a pub crawl and and just suss out were we think places are and plan our tactics for the day and what people are going to do. But I still think a lot of people will be going back to the Boleyn I mean Black Lion is a great pub but it's like 40 45 minute walk it's a bloody long walk so erm you know it's a couple of miles at least

*Yeah*

So I don't know if people will be doing that

*I've talked with a few people obviously through the interviews and there seems to be a bit of a worry with what the West Ham fans are going to do prior and after the game in Stratford because logistically its quite awkward with were the stadiums positioned. Do you know wereabouts you're going to be going before the game now?*

Well I heard Westfield won't let you in erm they're not allowing you through. Its private property so they have the right to do that and you'll see people hiding their colours to get in. Go and do your shopping and meet there but its not going to have the same kind of atmosphere your normally going to have because your not going to have people saying 'let's meet in Pizza Express

*Yeah*

For pizza er I think the places you'll be going to won't be associated with Westfield it will be Stratford and there are few pubs Carpenters Arms there's another one if you just go a few steps further out from Stratford then walk then go back to those pubs again afterwards which is what we're going to do on this pub crawl. Sussing out what's achievable what will be...I heard the rib man will be going there which will be good. I don't know how many other stalls and things because I don't know concessions are being one so there is going to be concessions inside but I understand they're not going to be served while the game is on understandably because it's not going to be like with American football were they are up and people walk in front you all the time to go and get there stuff and their drinks and there selling popcorn and stuff that's not going to happen during the game

*Yeah*

So erm I think that will be interesting it's like a new culture that's waiting to be made you've kind of got a template of what you want it to be from what you've had. Buts it's now a case of where you going to put that template down and it will obviously grow and change but where is it going to be.

*Hmm, so what's your overall opinion on the move to Stratford because everyone seems quite divided on the issue?*

Well I am mixed as well I think if you look at the community with West Ham and how it is people who lived in the area it's their local, I don't have that association I lived in Wanstead I

travelled on the 162 in those days to get to the ground. A lot of people I know they live there their aunts around the corner if you look at the mix now of West Ham, not many for that community go to the game you can just see it. So it's not of its place now but I still would of liked them to build the east stand out because it still is even though I think queuing up at Upton Park was horrific and I used to walk to East Ham or Plaistow because I am not a queuing person but erm it's not of the area. I think it brought new business a lot of business it brought but they might also be quite happy not to experience that. It's become culturally a different place now er I our seats are so good because we just on the half wayish line within the centre circle type area backrow chicken run great staging because it sonly 6 rows back erm so great views. I don't know what it's going to be like at the new stadium and it doesn't matter how many pictures they show you because it isn't until you get a person running around on that pitch

*Yeah*

Do you know where you are and how good your seat is and I am not looking at any videos of it now I've just stopped. I did go to the Olympics with added interest I hastened to add and I also went to the anniversary games Sainsbury's anniversary games and had a good old look around trying to sus out were my seat was and I then thought 'oh god I am in the east stand, oh my god I am going to be in the sun again' that's ghastly because I had to go and hid somewhere until kick off and I have to hide again at half time erm and if you've been to the chicken run you'd know know what old football stadia are like [laughs] because it wasn't modernised in anyway. Erm there's a concession toilets I think might have had 3 a long there – woohoo 3 sets of toilets massive ques. Erm but the new stadium the key there are 2 things that are key. 1 is what's my sightline going to be and what's the atmosphere going to be like. Okay the concessions great but you can go to Stratford for food and drink you know that's not the game erm but er I know it's a full day experience there but it's what you see on the pitch whether you can see it on the pitch and what the atmosphere is like. And I don't know until I get there so I haven't looked at anything because proof of the pudding is in the eating.

*So just moving away there from the stadiums erm who have been some of your favourite footballs and certainly some of your favourite matches over the years?*

Well favourite footballers it's been a toss-up and I struggle between Trevor Brooking and Billy Bonds erm Trevor Brooking for his style play, I mean Alan Devonshire was a brilliant player as well but there something about Brooking that was just the way he played was just lovely and Billy Bonds was the buccaneer the fighter he was the one if someone was getting messed about with on the pitch erm they used to say to Billy Bonds you know Billy Jennings she was quite a slight player, I think Trevor Brooking was said to him you know 'Billy Jennings is really getting it' it didn't happen for much longer because Billy went and sorted whoever it was out that was giving him grief, so he kind of had an enforcer on the pitch. And it was the passion and the commitment you know there's a picture of him erm which most people will remember is the one with bandage over his head

*Yeah*

While he was playing because he was out there battling the whole time and Bilic as well I think erm was a battler but I think was it Croatia he playing for and he had broken his hip they thought he'd broken his hip but he still carried on playing

*Hmmm*

God people like that you know costed these players because of the amount they cost

*Yeah*

But they were probably my primary 2 players I would say. I think er Paolo Di Canio was barking I think he was nuts loved the way he played you know but I've never that that goal he scored

*Yeah*

He erm

*The scissor kick one*

Yeah that was just yeah balance and everything I was stuck in a que of traffic in Blackwell Tunnel in a traffic jam there had been an accident er in the tunnel I think it was and I spoke to my friend Steve, I can't get to the game I am stuck in this traffic jam and he said fine, spoke to him a bit later I am stuck he said 'you've just missed the goal of the season' 'yeah very funny' he said 'no we've just missed the goal of the season he was sin the Queens watching it on the tele and we missed it. And since that day I've never held someone's ticket's they've had their ticket, I post it to them I send it to them even if I am going with them to the thing I don't care, they get there tickets. I went away with a friend to the Scilly Isles who lives near me who I went to football with went to the Scilly Isles with a crowd of friends and we would meet at the local station but I give her tickets I said 'no there your tickets your responsibility' so he got the station were taking I've left the tickets home and I went 'you better go back and get them then' and because we'd left a spare train we were okay but I will not since that game I will not hold onto someone's else ticket, I was actually so annoyed that erm I was actually think I would find out who it was who caused the accident and I was going to put a claim in on their insurance

*[Laughs]*

*[Laughs]*

*You can try*

Well I was so annoyed because I was just sitting there with these tickets 2 tickets as well so erm yeah I remember missing that that was great loved that. Its funny cause erm a friend of Steve now we were in the shop the week before because I had bought some stuff in the auction I had to do it, I felt compelled. I did want a sign which had just had claret with the

letter 'P' on it with an arrow pointing to the left and I thought I would hang it outside the the loo at home but [laughs] quite good but it was pointed the wrong way so I thought don't want that really' so I thought I just bought one side that just says 'in' which as on the Trevor Brooking stand which I'll put over the I've got a porch so that's going to go I the front door in the porch, it's not kind of smack you in the face type thing and the other one was ground floor exit and its erm metal claret erm yeah it's a claret metal sign and it's got WHUFC at the top and it's got in erm sky blue as well and its erm ground floor exit

Did you buy your seat as well?

Yes I did, don't know why I thought I am going to put that in the garden and I am going to have a little kind of erm iron work these chairs made a locally smithy and I'll put that on one of the fence posts in the back garden so I can have my seat out there because it was exposed to the...I'll put that outside. And I've worked out that won't work but I was still thinking should I put it out there so yeah don't know why. I just thought there are things were you think to yourself shall or shan't I and am going to get to do this again, no needs to do it. And it was like going to Olympics I went to quite a few thing sat the Olympics and erm I remember talking to somebody who didn't have tickets and they were talking about and I said 'there's still tickets for boxing' so he said 'well I don't know' well you'll probably see some good fights then you'll say I've been to the London Olympics it's a moment and he didn't and I've spoken to him and he said 'I really wish I'd gone' because I really wanted to of said that not that you can say you've been but just so you experienced it and everything around it and I am I wouldn't I don't have many regrets and I don't really want to look back and think 'should I of got that seat or not' sod this I am not going on holiday this year. This is my holiday money er going on these things, so erm yeah and erm also got can't believe it got little stones outside you know champions place where they've got. I don't like that statue of the World Cup Statue, it's only the pose you recognise there's no way you recognise the face, [whispers] no anyway that's going up there's a campaign to hold onto it erm and we've got I've got that I've got a stone er one any my friend Steve didn't want one he said 'I am not' he's not into things like that, oh it's a chance to do it so I am going to do it. But we bought one for his son er and he doesn't know and so when he goes when we're going to first games and hopefully they'll be there by then when we go to the game we'll go and look for mine and hopefully his will be next as we bought tat the same time so hopefully we'll see his which will be great because erm it's got hammer forged in the Boleyn and then his name, hopefully he'll like that. Erm and I think he will be excited because I put his son's birthday details in the program and really to me it's like kids you've got to get kids engaged because you don't often these days it seems surprise kids they seem to be so aware of everything going on you don't manage often to give them treats or surprises so erm we got him got his name in the program with a photo of him and he didn't know and you can see him looking through the program, he always reads through it and looking and I'd seen before I'd given it to him that he was in there so I nudged him 'he's looking in the program' you could see him turning over and he's kinda 13 just turned 13 so he's kinda coming up to that age of I don't want to admit I am surprised by things, it's not quite 14,15 more so but that kind of cusp of becoming an adult and erm he froze and he looked up startled and this enormous smile came up on his face and I thought 'that's great' you know so hopefully when he sees this little stone with name on and everything it will be good. Erm so there kind of treats but erm as you

said with the games I remember my games I remember the Man United 4-2 game, I remember the Ipswich 2004 singing obviously the last game and the other game I remember and I was on of the people there though there's probably an awful lot more people who said they were there and they weren't was the one against Cambridge in the snow

*No*

It was 1977 I think it was and December I think it was near to Christmas. It was snowing I remember my friend we had a discussion are gonna go or and two so he said do you feel would you be happy driving on that 'well yes it's not that thick' 'we're going then' it wasn't kind of I would take my car out in the snow at all but then it was a case of well can I sort of break well yeah that's okay we've always got the handbrake that helps erm so we thought yeah and the roads weren't sort of bed or it did have a coating of now and we got there and we were in the west stand lower erm standing because that was the standing area and at that game there was only eleven thousand something didn't know that until afterwards when you look it all up and everything and erm I think it's because there weren't so many stewards there they moved us into the upper stand which is first time I ever had a seat. So they moved us into the upper stand and we were 1 nil down by half time. Still snowing I remember a few snowball fights taking place here and there and it was the kind were the scraped the snow off the pitch it was all white

*Yeah*

And the scraped it off around the white lines just like green with a white line and a bit of green it was probably mud

*Hmm*

Because it was December anyway so it was brown and erm we had a streakier at half time, well you know he kept his pullover on. Sensible..took his trousers off went on did a jiggle and a dance and the police just let him get on with it so they left him on he bowed and then the police then escorted him off er he was probably hoping they would get him quite quickly

*Yeah*

But no they just let carry on, okay your gonna brave it mate you might as well carry on. But there was great laughter and erm they did Mike Oldfield tubular something like that I can't remember it was to get us all up and dancing and the different stands were open but they moved up all into the upper seated area, I think we won 3-1 and I seemed to remember Cambridge were protesting after a while because the snow too thick about the conditions which weren't good

*Yeah*

And we got home okay but I do remember that because I just remember how cold it was and just this white pitch. I still remember the state of the road as well looking at the roads when



we got there 'oh yeah' you know kind of slippery so we totter on whereas today they wouldn't consider it, it would be too much snow

*Yeah called off*

And you know people getting there and well. So we were 3 of were 3 of the 11,000 or so but I think there was probably about 20-25,000 said they were there but they weren't really. SO I remember that game as well and there's odd other games probably not very good at what happened, you've probably had people talking to you saying 'and oh yeah and he passed it to him and he did this and he dropped his shoulders and he went around no. It's probably the events around them. I'd remember whether we in but how we played more

*Yeah*

But not the actual tactics, sometimes I can recall it but it has to be from the moment like when we were saying 'what happened there then' and I'll go so and so passed to so and so and he did this or so and so found whatever yeah instantaneous but not from that long ago, probably because I am short as well and probably couldn't see much.

*You could always buy some stilts or something?*

When I went to the FA Cup final in the 90's erm 1990 erm I did actually take my footstool from work under your desk there's a little wooden foot stool actually that with me in a carrier bag, they would never have let me in with at these days. And I stood on that..I bet they hated me behind and we found a barrier to lean against because it wasn't so much barriers you shouldn't of really stood behind barriers because you were the person that got crushed so it wasn't the place to stand but it was useful when your short because you know your not going to get shoved out of position so easily

*Yeah*

That's why I had my footstool with me as well that was quite interesting so yeah funny game with that one as well couldn't believe it because there was like a 100,000 people and there's a blow up doll being passed around oh yeah I just remember it starting on that side and coming around and then various songs and banners that went off kind of related to that as well and out of the kind of you know, baring in my mind there's a 100,000 people about 40,000 West Ham crammed down one end I can't believe it this bloke I went out with at college he's standing behind me drunk as they come but he's standing behind me and I was think out of all the people here I had to meet him, why him anyway erm so I am not saying I remember that game because of that because we were 1-0 up the goal was down the other end we knew we had scored but because we saw our white players running around didn't know who scored until half time. I remember somebody saying to me when we got back, it's disgusting all the fans singing through the national anthem I can't believe you didn't sing along with national anthem we didn't hear it, we didn't you know it was being played.

*Yeah*

Because you can't hear a thing when it's like that and that was good as well yeah and that was such a good atmosphere because we just hung on and I just remember hanging on and the other games 2006 at erm when we went to Cardiff I remember sitting down and going this is going to we're leading no sitting back and I just sat down for the last 10 minutes so I didn't actually see the goal and I've never watched it again. I never want to watch it again. My friend I actually bought the video a dvd for a friend to show his son because that was a game, that was one of the best cup finals he said but he was also proud of how we played. I said 'why would you want to watch that again' I can't because it would relive the hurt for me not the pleasure of how well we played, he hasn't shown it to his son yet but pffffff nar I just won't want to know thank you no yeah so there's certain games I don't want to watch. Erm but they will probably the ones that stick the most in my mind Liverpool away last season as well because it was erm so many gears we won well and it was to me and it was first best game Lanzini had really and because he's not a big chap, but he wasn't putting up with any rubbish because if they picked it up and they are attacking on right wing and he was having a tussle with their defender right back and he was no he went fought back for the ball crossed it we scored..result. And I thought he's going to do okay and that was kind of you don't know how they are going to cope, you don't know how they are going to cope sometimes with the physicality of it

*Hmm*

Erm and I thought no he's going to be alright you can't knock him off that easy and he's a fighter he'll go back and get that ball which is nice to see

*Hmm, so I've got final question for you as well*

Yeah

*Just to some up what does West Ham mean to you and how's it kind of impacted your life?*

Its quite funny because it's a sense of I thought about this why West Ham and why do I and I've tried to figure out why I do it as well and it is probably a sense of community about it and I've got groups of friends as a result of it if you're going online now, so we go to away games now together

*Yeah*

Which is great it's just great because I haven't been to away games much at all over the years erm so I am now going to away games but it is a sense of community and there's a sort of common nice thread running through a relationship were you've got nice things to talk about and nice and it's a joyous thing except when your talking about some games erm but erm it is a nice thing but I don't know if it is a sense of community erm which you don't experience, I won't say erm or a sense of family as well erm were you have a common interest and you just assume certain things. I don't think I take it as fare as some people that they assume if you're a West Ham fan your lovely a really nice person because that doesn't always happen. Erm so I would say it does that I would say I don't know what it's given me I must admit I've been



told by a friend, whenever I am getting work done on the house I've got to stop asking what football team they support, especially where I live as well. Because there either Crystal Palace, Charlton, Millwall..Millwall more often than not erm er I've got to stop asking people because obviously I need to feel that connection with someone

*Yeah*

As you can probably talk a lot [laughs] I don't need much encouragement but there's a connections where you can talk about things you live watching your passionate about and you can share that experience. So I think it's probably that and I will say as well I go to the because I was on the supporters advisory board I mean I genuinely wanted to go on that so I can feel like I could make I would be helpful because it's my club and I know it's this big multi-million pound company but its m football team and I wanted to do anything I could to help and to make represent supporters so if they had a beef about something I could forward to someone and say 'someone shaving this issue' blah blah blah can we resolve this please so it's like an intermediary rep

*Yeah*

But I found out when I was on it I was there after the Olympic stadium so I was involved with any of that but afterwards I thought no we're more of a focus group I think erm they probably know what they are going to be doing and they are checking through with us that's happening. They do get ideas of people and they don't have people come forward with thing because was involved with women's merchandise I don't know much involvement because I appreciate their problems now as to why they don't produce things and I was going ' oh it's okay then if you don't produce that' because I was having a moan erm but erm but there is going to be more women's stuff because they've got mote shop space now and I think it only like 10% women are season ticket holders so you wouldn't expect so many women's gear yeah and how many women would wear the west ham gear out and about except on match days

*Yeah*

So whereas men tend to wear it more I think, they wouldn't wear it work necessarily but they might when they are going out for things, especially when it's not too in your face West Ham but there's some kind of subtle branding on it erm and I think that given me the chance, I don't know how much I've been able to contribute but it makes me feel like I have. Erm I've been able to take part in helping it and I don't know if helping it is the right word there but If it's just done one thing because I feel like I am involved it's my club and I think that's the trouble these days. It must be very friend hard for them as a company that needs to make money how to associate with people who think they own it

*Yeah*

But they don't they just buy tickets for it, they don't own it but they feel they do so that's quite a hard relation to have because they all feel they have an opinion that needs to be

listened to and respected even though there's different ones and I think its they've been okay with planning I don't know what's going to happen with the Olympics stadium there's rumours to what will happen whether it's going to be sold I don't know but erm I am just going to wait and see I have no influence over that what so ever I hope no I won't it's going to happen fi tis going to happen because its big business now if you look at the money Sky's brought in

*It's too much*

Bonkers because it's actually there'll come a time when it tips over and I don't know if it's going to come up soon, with player power now I don't know if that will come and I think it will be very interesting with what will happen with coming out of Europe, what will happen with the players whether there'll more of a pressure on therefore too have teams from somewhere actually join a European league erm because the European players aren't going to come here but they can if there..I really don't know what's going to happen and I think there will be changes some changes ahead whether that will be key thing or not I don't know but it's just like its bonkers money

*Well we'll sharp found won't we*

We will won't we..yes

*Well thank you for being interviewed today*

No your welcome

*Thank you*

### **Interview Details**

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