

Archive Reference: 2016_esch_STOS_13

Interviewer

Interviewee

Interviewee's wife

So my name is Joshua Adams and I'm recording for Eastside Community Heritage on the Stadium of Stories project. Do you maybe just wanna introduce yourself and tell us your name?

My name's Steven Maynard and I was born in East Ham and, um, I lived there for thirty years, sorry I lived there for more than thirty years I was married for thirty years there but I was born in nineteen forty eight and I moved over to Romford where I am now in two thousand and two however West Ham's my life they're, um, they're second to my family sometimes my wife questions that but they're, um, they've been a big part of my life West Ham and they still are and, um, I'm, I'm pleased we're moving to the Olympic stadium 'cause I feel in the rest of my lifetime this is the one chance to have got to win something and, uh, I'm all for it and, uh, I just hope that, that we do and, um, I think the club's really doing their best to make older, old supporters like me happy and the new ones coming into the club which will keep the club going for years and years, um, I'll get, I can get very emotional about the club 'cause obviously my dad took me from four years old and I lost my dad at, forty four years ago

Yeah?

And, um, I was about twenty two then and, uh, it still, still hurts 'cause I think back a lot when we used to go over there, he took me from four years old as, as a young lad and, um, uh, I still have constant flashbacks when we used to go over there and obviously the last game against man united at the Boleyn ground very emotional, uh, for me loads of memories, uh, of my dad but I know life has to go on and you have to go with the times and I really believe that I think this move is gonna be really good for us, for the supporters and for the club and the main thing is West Ham 'cause I want the club to go for years and years, um, when I'm not around, um, so, um, fingers crossed it all goes well for us I'm sure it is and I'm really looking forward to the start of a new season I've even got my wife a ticket and, uh, we're really gonna enjoy it, enjoy and, um, hopefully we kick on and have a great time

Mmm so just to rewind there a little bit to go back to yourself, um, what was your, well what is your date of birth?

I was born XX XX nineteen forty eight

Mmm

And I, I think my dad started taking me from about f', f', four about nineteen fifty six, fifty seven I can definitely remember nineteen fifty seven season when we was promoted to the First Division and I, I can remember, um, we drew with Liverpool and I think that more or less clinched it we still wasn't home and dry and I can remember we drew one, one with Liverpool away from home and I can remember me dad and meself we was dancing round the living round in our little house in East Ham and, 'cause, uh, we thought, my dad was saying we're nearly there now, we're nearly there and when we clinched it, I remember that we beat Middlesbrough there one away from home and, uh, my dad and I we was over Charlton watching their last game 'cause obviously West Ham was away in Middlesbrough and, uh, Charlton only needed a point against Blackburn who needed two points to follow us up in the First Division and Blackburn defeated them four two and I, I can remember at half time and there were seventy two thousand at Charlton I can remember looking up at the half time board and we was winning three one at, at Middlesbrough and, uh, I can remember I was sitting on one of the stanchions and I can remember us jumping up and, jumping up and down but I do remember games from that year I can remember seeing Malcolm Allison, I couldn't tell you much about his game but I remember seeing him and all those old players Johnny Dick, Vic Keeble, uh, they was a pleasure to watch Mike Glice [?], uh, Malcolm Musgrove watching them, uh, Ken Brown he came in at that time, centre half, because I think he replaced Malcolm Allison who, who, uh, had an illness so that's where Ken Brown got his chance and, uh, we had John Bond and Noel Camberwell as the two full backs and our goal keeper was Ernie Gregory who had years at West Ham and, uh, even after he'd played, finished playing, um, everyone knows Ernie Gregory I remember all them players and, uh, it still gives me a buzz

Mmm

Going back to my childhood thinking of that, that, that time and, um, I can still get emotional over it obviously 'cause it includes my dad

Mmm so are all of your family members West Ham supporters?

Um, uh, well I was the only child so it was me and dad, mum'd always want West Ham to win and, uh, she absolutely idolised Bobby Moore but, um, but my children, I've got three children and, um, the oldest girl and my son, um, they're not football fanatics like I am but obviously, obviously they take interest because they want West ham to win for me because they know how much it means to me but my second girl Jenny she's West Ham through and through she loves going over there when I take her, uh, there and she get, I used to take her with me when she was little over there and, um, her favourite player was Tony Cottee and, um, she, she loved him so much when she was a little girl she even, she even wrote up to Jim'll Fix It [laughs] to try and meet him in a way I think it was lucky that it never came off I think

Yeah [laughs]

But, um, yeah, but my daughter and my grandch', I got four grandchildren and, um, they're, they're not as fanatical as, as I was as, as a child, uh, but, um, I think my, my enthusiasm rubs off all the, all the family my wife likes going over when I take her and, um, now I've been going obviously I've had different t', uh, friends I've gone with over the years obviously dad, dad was first I went, went with him for years and then when we lost him I go, went with

friends and, um, used to stand behind the South Bank a lot but I think I've been everywhere in the ground and, um, and now it's just, I've been going with the same people for a good many years with season tickets and, um, and I shall keep going until the end of, well while I'm still fit enough to, to go, uh, there

Mmm did your dad go to, um, to see West Ham before you were born?

Dad went every game he used to take me every game and, um, and it, and it was funny down our old turning Bonny Downs Road it was called, um, we used to, obviously as kids we used to play out, um, always kicking a ball about and I used to get friendly with this man and this, uh, wife that I used to go and get little errands for them round the corner shop, you know, obviously today you can't do things like, like that but in them days

Mmm

Never entered anybody's head that there was anything funny in it but, uh, anyway I remember his name was Harry, the guy, and, um, I introduced dad in a kid like way and he, uh, to Harry and they become lifelong West Ham friends whilst they was both living and, um, uh, Harry came along as well with us for years and years and, uh, when West Ham was away, if Charlton was at home, to, to Charlton but once we lost, um, once, once we lost me dad then harry, his friend Harry that was it he never went no more he said he couldn't face, um, going so, uh, then after that, um, yeah, I, I, all different types of, I've got so many different types of memories and celebrations, uh, highs and lows and dancing and singing, uh, but the highs I think of them more than the lows, um, I could go back to certain games and, uh, the high points, uh, I think going back early was nineteen, apart from the promotion to the First Division what I said, was in nineteen sixty four the first year we won the FA Cup and we went up to Manchester United and, uh, my dad couldn't go 'cause he worked Saturday's on the newspapers and, uh, what we done I was, used to go to a youth club and the, the warden, used to call him warden Mr Boyd I believe his name was he, he had a van and he took about six of us up there to watch the game, him and another warden and, um, it poured with rain the whole day and, uh, I had a blue Mac on and I couldn't take it off but I was wringing wet and we was in the open end and, uh, Man', Manchester United was the odds on favourites to win it this semi-final and the week before they, I believe they beat us two nil with their reserve team in a last, in a League game, I think it was a last League game, it was in a League game near the end of the season and we went up there and we, and we played them off the park we played fantastic that, that game and, uh, Ronny Boyce got two goals and Geoff Hurst got one and, uh, Bobby Moore done his trademark and dribbled past a player like the World Cup goal, Geoff Hurst his final World Cup goal and, uh, and, uh, that was before that World Cup goal never did, did we know what it would do for the nation but, uh, it was fantastic game and I remember when we got home my, my dad couldn't rest 'cause of me travelling and he wasn't with me and, uh, when I got in and got changed I dropped me jeans off and I was blue the dye just come through me through all the rain, um, and I remember him saying "Get yourself dry!" but, um, yeah that's, that's a great memory, uh, there and, um, obviously we've had some lows there but you just brush yourself down start all over again and your team's your team and, uh, you still, each season comes around and you, you think you're gonna win the League or you think you're gonna win a cup but, um, when I was younger it used to hurt, used to stay with me a bit when we did lose or big games but obviously where I'm older now it still hurts but I, I, I can live with it easier, uh, now but, um, but as I say, um, that, I would still love us to win something more in my lifetime and I think I would have a good

celebration and the people I, I, I go to football with that would be great but, um, there are some, so many, the eight six when we came third in the League I went to all the home games for that and that was a fantastic year to think that we had a chance of winning the First Di', uh, First Division? Can't, can't think if it was First Division or Championship or, or Premiership, I think it was First Division then and, um, end up Liverpool won it Kenny Dowie got the winning goal Chelsea but up until that last, well second from last game we was still in with a shout and that, that still a great feeling now when I think about it and, uh, I remember my daughter when Liverpool won one nil, Jenny the one that loves football, she cried her eyes out 'cause she really thought West Ham was gonna win the, the League that year but, um, it's, uh, I know we didn't win it but it's still a great season to think, think back on and, um, also the other Cup Finals we won when we beat Fulham and, uh, Arsenal the Arsenal one that's, that's a good memory 'cause we wasn't, we was in the, uh, Second Division then and we wasn't supposed to have had much chance against them but, um, we really played a good game John Lyall had a, uh, had a plan how for the team to play and, uh, it paid off for them as well, uh, they all stuck to their game and we got the early goal which gave us confidence and, uh, that was fantastic feeling when, when we won that game when the final whistle went and I remember, I remember my old mate John and I think we was both so emotional at the end when they was running round with the cup but, um, that was the last time we won a tournament we went, um, played Liverpool in the Cup Final that was a low, yeah with, with the Liverpool game that, that still hurts now, um, I went to Cardiff with the, uh, the West Ham team, my team I go and watch the games with, uh, we, we all went up there and we played such a great game and I remember I videoed that, that game before I went and, um, we, well history tells us we lost it in the extra time but I've never been able to watch that video I just couldn't watch it if they show summat on the tele with Steven Gerrard's last kick when he scored I have to turn me head away 'cause it, that still hurts 'cause I think that should've been our final but that, that's like, um, it still doesn't take away what I feel about, about the Hammers it's not just me all the supporters they had their highs and lows, um, I met David Gold not personally but I seen him talking at the, uh, Friends of West Ham and the, uh, biggest compliment that I can give to him is that he comes over as like me, as a West Ham supporter with the same feelings as what I've had with them over the, over the years and I, I, I was very impressed with, um, you know how down to earth he was with the, with the team on business point of view I think, uh, the two, the two David's and Karen Brady are, I think they've done brilliant for, for us when I think how we was under the Icelandic and money was being thrown away here there and everywhere and that's not the West Ham way and I never did like it but, um, I must say since the, uh, since the two David's with the help of Karen Brady and all the people who work for West Ham I think our club's in a nice position now and I'm very happy with how it's being, being run

Mmm, just going back to the football matches there, do you remember what your first game was?

The, the first game was in, I can remember was in...fifty seven, um, I can remember we beat Stoke five nil and, uh, I can remember the goal keeper bouncing the ball and went to kick it out and Vick Keeble put his foot in front of the goal keeper's as he went to kick it and the ball went like a bullet in the net and it, it counted in, it was one of the five goals today I don't think that would be allowed, be allowed earlier but the first game I know, I remember a few of that season but the actual first game I went to I can't remember but I remember I used to sit on me, we used to sit in the old, um, the old Main Stand, not sit stand int eh old main Stand and, uh, I used to sit on me dad's shoulders and, uh, I was always saying to him when

we gonna score? When we gonna score dad? And he'd go "In a minute, in a minute" and if we never scored I used to, I used to be moaning walking home, um, with him and he said, he used to say "Oh they'll make up for it next time, they'll score the, uh, next, next game" and I can even remember one day walking home I was absolutely mad I used to love getting the paper read, seeing the half time scores and I can remember I was so in', engrossed in reading them I walked straight into a tree down Central Park Road and I can still feel the bells now [laughs] going in my e', in my head but, um, I can remember cup game I think that might've been about fifty eight when Fulham beat us three two, uh, in, uh, in the FA Cup fifth round and they had a goal keeper called Tony Macedo and I remember being on the front of the pitch watching and he done some fantastic saves I remember that and, uh, Johnny Aimes [?] playing I can remember our first year back in the old First Division in fifty eight our first game was away to Portsmouth and I believe we on two one and I think we, uh, we beat Wolves two nil in the first home game I can remember queuing up for ages and ages to, to get in for that first game and, uh, I can remember the, uh, adults pushing, uh, carrying children over the line to get them in, uh, there 'cause, 'cause it was quite a, quite a heavy crush going on round there and I remember seeing Tom Finney, uh, I remember seeing him but I was very young so I, I couldn't sort of understand their, their types of games they played but Stanley Matthews I've seen

Mmm

I, I watched and, uh, yeah I remember the first year back in, we had some really good results that year I think we came about sixth I'm not, not sure we had a really good season that first season back, um, there I remember I think once we were top of the League, we was top of the League Christmas time, December I think and we went to Sheffield Wednesday and, uh, we got beat seven nil and I think that was my first sort of inkling to be a West Ham, uh, player 'cause being a kid like I, I thought I want to cry me eyes out but, uh, it, it helped toughen me up for the disappointment of seeing in later life what we've gone through which every supporter does, not just us but, um, but there again the highs stick in my mind more than what the, what the lows do

Mmm

But I see, yeah loads of game Cardiff I can remember we, we drew one one and I was so sure we'd beat them one nil that I couldn't remember them scoring, scoring their goal and my dad was saying "Yeah it was, it's one one" so I dunno how I missed it I always think back and think how comes I didn't see that goal? But that was, um, that, I think that mainly was the fifty seventh season where we got promoted tot eh First Division I, I can remember lots of games, uh, and I remember John Bond how he used to kick a, kick a ball they nicknamed him muffin 'cause like Muffin the Mule when he kicked it and, uh, uh, yeah and just, uh, what was I gonna say? Yeah but the actual first game I couldn't put me finger on it, on that all I know is I was about four to five years, years old and I used to sit on me dad's shoulders and it was the West Stand we used to stand up in, uh, the Priory Road end and, um, but, but over the years I've been in every part of the ground and where I finished off was in the, um, between the Bobby Moore Stand and, and the Dr Martin Stand in the diagonal bit that's where my seat was and I thought it was a great view smashing view but yeah I can go through, I'd love to go through a quiz over West Ham because I think that I, I wouldn't do too, very bad you know?

Mmm

If questions came, came, I'm not very good on years but when, when they ask you a year for something I can get near it but I think I wouldn't do too bad on a, on a quiz

Yeah

But, um

So you were just saying there that you went to all of the games with your dad

Mmm

What was it like going to the football games with your dad and how did that make you feel?

Oh yeah it was like, like magic going, going over there it was just such a buzz as a kid and I remember on a Saturday you woke up so excited and, uh, we, used to just be me and dad at first until he got friends, friendly with Harry and he started coming over with us and we used to go in his car and we used to park down Central Park and I remember he giving the boys a little treat which you couldn't do now but he used to give the boys a treat to look after his car but it wasn't just dad they used to go round to

Yeah

It was a little bit of pocket money for

Do you wanna drink?

I, I'm fine thank you

Oh right

And it, pocket money for them and then, um, I remember going past the doctor's surgery and I can remember saying to dad is that where they go get looked at if they're injured? And he goes "No they don't go in there" that was at the corner of Central Park Road then we used to walk down to, uh, Green Street and you'd see, oh the atmosphere was fantastic you'd see, see a man with all the little badges, West Ham badges selling their papers with all the pictures in with the programmes and then when you went in them gates, and the gates wasn't where you finished off, the John Lyle gates as they are now they was, they was nearer to the barking Road and I can remember us queuing up in there but even the queuing up I used to enjoy it I just loved the atmosphere in there and then, um, when we got in there and the teams run out and, uh, everyone used to cheer oh it was fantastic, uh, feeling, uh, there but, um, and I know players come and go when they, when they're there the players you think of them as your, your players not that you own them but you think of them as your, your, your team they're your players and, uh, but at the end of the day they are, I gotta say nobody to me is ever been bigger than the club West, West Ham, um, this is why I hope for years to come they can get a bit, can get on the length with the five or six teams now at the top but I know it's very hard to do so how the game's gone now, um, I don't think, I don't like the game how it's gone to how it used to be, uh, there but I do understand how it has gone like that and you do have to go with the times and I, as I say I said before about, uh, the two Chairman I think the way they're going about it they'll, they're doing a grand job they're trying to keep it in at the top

but they're doing it in a fair way not forgetting their supporters, uh, there but, um, yeah but going back to them early days, yeah it was a fantastic feeling and when we won oh it was lovely, used to love going home I used to run in run up give me mum a cuddle and tell her we won and I remember her being pleased and, uh, it was great I used to sit there and I dunno what we watched on tele I think we used to have something called Sports Special on of a night Kelly Forston [?] and I used to wait for that to come on and see the football it was only about two games time did I think that I used to be hoping your team would come, come on but, um, uh, I could, there was one game I couldn't go to that was when Bobby Moore made his debut for West Ham against Manchester United and I believe we won three two 'cause it was a week night and I had school the next day and, um, I can remember my dad coming home and telling us 'cause I waited up I wouldn't go to bed until he came in and, uh, he said "I've just seen a young boy play his first game for West Ham" he said "His name's Bobby Moore" he said "he was fantastic" he said "He's, he's gonna play for England that boy"

Mmm

And that's the first, he didn't even mention his name before that game and, um, he come home full of him that, that night and, uh, well we all know what happened with, uh, with Bobby in the, with Bobby in the end and mum just absolut', my mum just absolutely idolised, idolised him and, uh, I've just been, I read there is a film out about Bobby Moore

Yes it's came out

And, um, I, I do intend to go and watch that I've heard really good reports and I'm sure it's gonna make me a little bit emotional, uh, watching it but I, I look forward to go to it anyway and, um, yeah throughout the years as I've got older I've still never lost that excitement of going and, uh, and, uh, chatting before the game seeing how we're gonna get on, what the team is, thinking we're the managers sometimes and how we'd play, who we'd play and who we like and, um, the football banter I think it's a shame now rival teams can't have the banter like they used to years ago I, I can remember we used to stand the same end as the away supporters but you could never do that now and it's a shame it's gone like this, it's gone like that 'cause, you still get the odd bits you meet up with other supporters sometimes if you go away and, uh, and, uh, they are friendly you just take it as a, as a bit of banter and a joke, you know, I been up, went to Sunderland a few years ago and I thought their supporters were good we went in a working men's club and they were brilliant in there we had a little joke with one another and, um, Southampton I think we had some jokes with people bit of banter and, uh, it's a pity life wasn't like that now but you do have to be careful, um, when, when you go but you can't fault the authorities and the clubs what they try, it must be colossal what they have to spend now on policing, uh, there but I say years ago we never had nothing, no worries, uh, like that there was never any trouble or anything but, uh, but touch, touch wood I've never come into anything like that, 'spite what you read I've never had no, no problems in all the years I've gone so it can't be that bad, um, uh, really

So just going back a little bit, um, when you went with your father did you have, like, a pre-match ritual and has your pre-match ritual changed since you've got older?

Um, yeah, yeah we had, we had say the pre-match we'd get up of a morning I'd be asking him how long to go, uh, and, um, you know he'd just be saying answers what I want to hear and then, uh, I remember we get in the car and we go yeah and, um, it, it was, uh, the same

thing and it hasn't changed really over the years I still get excited going and, um, I like to get there nice and, nice and early I go in the, obviously I go, I always have gone in the working men's club before the game and that's like a pre-match ritual I, I, um, you see the same people in there and, um, acquaintances through West Ham you make, I've made loads of acquaintances in, in the club and it's nice you go and talk and the one thing we've all got in common is we all love, love West Ham we all love our club over there and, um, it, it's nice if I didn't have that I'd, apart, you know, I'd really miss it, everything I'd miss, I'd miss going to my club and, but I'd miss all the, all the, uh, bits of banter we have and all the talking, going in the club and, uh, I'd miss the couple of pints I have before the game and, um, uh, but no I've done the same things really over the years, um, with that, that's why I think, going back to me dad now, I think I get emotional very easy thinking about when we used to go because obviously he was my dad and I thought he was like a, he could make anything happen, uh, you know, I always thought West Ham would win every game 'cause I was with him and obviously it didn't, it don't happen like that but he always tried to explain it and he'd say "Oh it'll be better next time, we'll win it next, we'll win it next time" but, um, no as a fan, great childhood I had and it was going over there which, which, uh, helped me a lot to be as happy as I, what I was we lived down an old turning and we was, we was, uh, a lot of them was West Ham supporters down there but, um, when we used to kick the ball out in the street we was always, you know, Johnny Dick or, or Vic Keeble or, and, um, and, uh, no it was great times it was great times and, uh, but I've got great memories to look back on as I say with the football itself I've, I think about, there's loads of great games we've had the Trevor Brooking match, Iron Tracks, when we beat them in the European Final he was unplayable that night, Trevor Brooking and, uh, that, that was fantastic feeling at the end of that game, uh, when the eighty six, when we came first in the League we had a few home games, uh, near the end of the season 'cause the weather was so bad it was snowing a lot that, that, uh, that winter and, uh, a lot of games got postponed and then we, uh, so we had a lot of home games together and I believe we won every one of them and, uh, and, uh, uh, yeah we did I don't think we lost a game in them ones and it was, it was funny because we went to one, uh, before one game we went to, uh, um, a Hammers dinner before one of the games and, uh, mark Auld was, was the, uh, player there who's talking to the people there and he was one of the right winger for us that year in eighty six and, um, I said to the two sisters who I go to football with I said oh I love watching him and they said "Go up and tell him" and I said no I said I can't do that I said I don't wanna bother him and, uh, anyway they must've gone up and said something to him and he, he came over and said "Are you Steve?" and, uh, and it made my day he was chatting all about the eighty six season and I gotta say what really nice man, uh, he, he was and, uh, and that was really good to talk about one of them players and that, that season and yeah that was good, that was good experience and, uh, that, that was a good experience, um, West Ham the, uh, the Friends of West Ham last year we went to the training ground and, um, they put me with, uh, they done this walking football which I'm gonna hope to take up 'cause I'm retiring in August so I hope to take that up go, get in touch with West Ham the walking football but they put me with, um, Coyote and, and, uh, Carl Jenkinson xxxx xxxx Carl Jenkinson and another guy and, uh, we was kicking a ball around and I save and I'm in my sixties that was such a big thrill to think that I was kicking a ball about with a West Ham, West Ham player it was like being a kid, being a kid again and, um, I'm saying that day they, they was really good those, really down to earth and couldn't be more helpful, uh, mixing, mixing with you and, uh, oh I took a penalty, put a penalty past Stuart Downing and I gotta say it was a good penalty but even if it wasn't I think he would've let it in anyway

Hopefully yeah

[Laughs] But, uh, yeah that, that was a good, good experience, uh, there so, um, yeah that's, that's, so many good memories

So when you were, um, [clears throat] going to the stadium when you were younger what was the atmosphere like down Barking Road and on Green Street?

Oh fantastic, fantastic you, the Barking Road you still see people walking down there now but it wasn't like that when I was a kid it was absolutely jam packed, uh, I mean when I first went as a boy with dad we used, he used to drive his car and we would go up Central Park Road but in, uh, as years went on I got older and, um, his xxxx Harry we used to go in the Central pub, uh, on the Barking Road and have a drink before the game just, just, my dad only drunk halves, just a couple of drinks and I remember walking down the Barking Road and walking home after a game it was absolutely jammed packed and, uh, and the atmosphere down there that was not even in the ground that was brilliant but you always knew if we'd lost 'cause, uh, our faces were a bit long walking home after but, but going there yeah it was a fantastic atmosphere going back all them years, years ago, uh, but it's still a nice atmosphere now in that East Ham working men's club it, it's, um, it's a great atmosphere in there I just hope the club, that's the only thing that's, that's ok now we're going to the Olympic stadium I'm sure it will, I'm sure it will be there but, 'cause, uh, they'll still be connected with, with the West Ham football club anyway but, um, there's always, what you can say there's always been a brilliant atmosphere at, uh, round the West Ham ground I've stood outside the Boleyn when I was older, uh, and just well wallowed in the atmosphere out, outside there and, uh, I c', in the ground there is another game I can think of, I think the year we was, we won promotion back to the, uh, First Division or, First Division I think it was when, uh, we got a record points total in the, in the Second Division and, um, we played one of the games we played at home to Cambridge and, uh, we was one nil down at half time and during that half time it just snowed, the snow was really relentless and it really came down and it was freezing cold so they put, put on Mike Oldfield's tubular bells and, uh, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun, dun and I remember the crowd and I was only, also, all of us we all done it we all xxxx in the, 'cause there was gaps there then 'cause the weather was so bad and, uh, everybody xxxx up and down to it, uh, cocking their legs up and, and, uh, the crowd loved it really put them in a, even though we was losing one nil, put them in a feel good, uh, mode for the second half and we ended up winning the game three, three one and, uh, I think they come straight out and Ray Stuart put a long shot made it one one and, uh, we ended up winning three one and that's, that's a game what people still talk, uh, talk about I think alright we haven't got the crowds like the Man United's and the Arsenal's over the years but I, I don't think you would get a better atmosphere than what you would get in our, what we've had round the Upton Park not just in the ground round, round the streets and the pubs, um, round there and the good thing we do we, we do laugh at ourselves as well I don't think we take ourselves too serious, uh, with football with, we can think of funny little things what's happened in a, in a game but we can laugh at ourselves but at the end of the day West Ham supporters we do love our team, love our team and obviously we want it to go for years and years and years and, um, and, uh, how it's going at the moment I feel very happy with how it's being, uh, run...so, um, may long it continue

Hopefully yeah, so just back onto the atmosphere there why do you think the atmosphere's changed over the years then? From when you were a kid to now?

It, it, it's soci', I still think we've kept our atmosphere over there, West Ham it's still a buzz you still get a buzz when you go in the ground and, and that everyone says it you read, I've read a lot of the player's books and they said that Upton Park was, especially a night game, makes the hairs stand up on the back of their neck and I think it must be fantastic to play out there on a night game, uh, we've always had the atmosphere there but as I say we, it, it's, um, it's a thing now in the world today is just, people wanna cause trouble and, um, you, you can't have that banter now like you used to with the away

Mmm

Away supporters and that used to be quite a bit of fun, uh, there but you have to be careful what you say now but it's a, it's a national and a world, world thing now you, you go anywhere you, you have to be frightened you have to be careful you don't say the wrong thing to someone or be in the wrong place at the, at the wrong time but, uh, but saying that even now I go over West Ham it's one of the safest places I feel, um, over there but, um, I've always been quite confident and I've always been confident over, over there I think I've always had a nice, over the years started from dad obviously he give me confidence starting off from when we used to go together and it's not just me I can remember I think most, most lads start off with their dad's and, and what better way to start your, uh, football career and, uh, and, and that, and then, um, through the years if you're lucky to have nice crowds to go with you've all got the same thing in common and, uh, that, that makes it and, uh, and the end of it is when they, even now when they, they come out and you hear Bubbles and that last game with Man United that, that chocked me up when the Leyton Silver Band I remember that when they used to, when they used to play and that was when I was always with, with dad and, uh, they always come out on the pitch and played and they done a foxtrot, uh, song but, um, but that, what I was saying that, with the Man United game that hurt me because it's, it's a thing what goes on today what happened with the Manchester United coach I think the game was a hour later starting I had to miss some of that, a lot of that presentation because it was getting home and I had work the next day I was worried about getting, getting home so I couldn't, for where we start an hour late I couldn't sit through all that presentation and it really hurt me, um, uh, that, that did and, and to me that's not football supporters what made it like, like that it's, it's, it's a national disease with, with some, how, how a lot of people are today why they act like it I don't, I don't know 'cause I don't think they've got, nobody has a bad life now hopefully they don't anyway and, uh, I missed that and I was a bit upset about that but what chocked me up and I did read it the next day and I think it was really good how they done it, West Ham, 'specially as I say with the band the foxtrot song and, uh, as, at the end they, um, Bobby Moore came on somebody came on in a number six shirt, Bobby Moore's shirt and they turned the lights off in the stadium and I thought that, that was brilliant, that was a brilliant way because, and another funny thing was his first game for West Ham we beat man United three two and the last game at Upton Park we beat Man United three two and he turned the lights off at Upton, Upton Park obviously I think of that and I think of dad, you know, so that's why I get a little bit emotional

Yeah it's a nice touch, so we went on to the stadium there a bit as well. Do you prefer calling it the Boleyn ground or Upton Park?

Uh, Upton Park I always called it but I don't mind both its, you know, I still think of it as the Hammer's Boleyn ground but I always thought of the ground as Upton Park as a kid so it just stays in ya, stays in your mind, uh, there and, um, yeah but that's right it's really called the

Boleyn ground isn't it, uh, there but, uh, yeah the old Boleyn pub I had a few years used to go in there but I haven't been in there for years and years 'cause as I say the East working men's club is, is where I went, uh, in there and, um, we was on the, I was on the, that was nice, nice for me I was on the West Ham, uh, walking football poster, um, which was put off, put up in the East Ham working men's club and, uh, that was nice when I went in one day before the game and saw that on the wall that made me, uh, made me shoulders go back chest out [laughs]

Yeah, so how has the, um, stadium changed then since you've been going? Since you were a boy to

Well obviously the modernisation, uh, of it I'm, I've always liked the old stadiums I always think they had the magic, uh, about them the old stadiums I've realised you have to have new stadiums for the health and safety, uh, now you know especially after Hillsborough and Bradford that

Mmm

Can't even, it hurts just to talk about it and, um, but you had to go with it but when it was the old stadium the old West Ham and remember right close to the pitch and it must've been horrible for the players 'cause obviously many fall, fall in the crowd, the crowds always caught, caught them there and, uh, but over the years they've gradually modernised, modernised it and, uh, the first one I remember the chicken run and, uh, when I was a kid and, uh, we, we've stood in there and I can remember [laughs] I can remember smelling of wee coming up 'cause the toilets were under but then again when you're a kid it don't really bother you things like that and then they knocked that down and built the new East Ham and that was, really that was like the first modernisation we had over there and then the two away ends that, well they was both, no the South Bank was always half covered and then they put a full roof over I believe and the north Bank was never covered but then they put a roof over there and then, um, they just gradually modernised it but the ground never lost its atmosphere, uh, there especially of an evening they always called it the Upton Park xxxx and it just seemed to generate more atmosphere of an evening but it, but it wasn't bad on a Saturday it still a great atmosphere on a Saturday but there was something about week, week games, uh, over there but yeah they've always done their improvements West Ham, uh, I can remember when they first done their floodlights I think in sixty one we played Tottenham and, uh, being, being a young boy I was about twelve then that was a fantastic thing we'll go and see the lights, going over see the floodlights and, um, yeah you, they've always done well done their best whoever's run, run West Ham the Curnzes [?] were a good family their hearts were in it with, with West Ham that was quite a big family the Curnzes [?] running and Reg, Reg Pratt was the chairman and, uh, I heard nothing but good reports about him what a good chairman he was, uh, I say the, going on from there Terrance Brown I don't really know, dunno what to say really I think he, his heart was in with West Ham I wasn't happy that he sold it to the Icelandic's people 'cause from day one I was never happy with them and when I knew the two David's were interested in I, I really wanted them to get the Hammer's 'cause, um, I read his book David Gold and, uh, the man worked hard all his life and, uh, good luck to him for all he's got out of life he deserves it but I really, I, I could tell he was a West Ham supporter and I really, and I was really pleased when they, when they got it and, uh, I say things are going well for, well for us now obviously the team's gotta keep winning it's very hard today because with the Sky television every, you, you, you, other teams can compete with the top

five or six now because there's a lot of money about so the main thing is we don't have to sell your best players, uh, be a selling club but also you can compete more now, uh, with the top four or five teams, uh, so that's good, uh, good thing and last season I gotta say I thoroughly enjoyed the football it was a joy to watch at times and away it's the best I've seen the West Ham team away from home how they used to play, uh, I, uh, and, um, 'cause, yeah very good there

When you're inside the stadium, or from when you were younger, do you prefer standing up or do you prefer the seated?

Standing up

Standing up?

Oh yeah I used to love standing, standing up, um, uh, because whenever a bal came over all the crowd would be doing it, a corner or something we'd all be jumping

Yeah

Jumping with it and, um, uh, it, it was a shame when seating had to go in but there again it had to be done, uh, there and, uh, but you, where I stand now I mean we still if we come over the half way line people still stand but they sit down, sit down straight after it's just the excitement of the moment but, um, you still got plenty of freedom it's liked anything you get used to it I've got used to sitting down, uh, now but, um, yeah I always loved standing

Is there part of the stadium which is best for the atmosphere or not?

The best part of the stadium? I think, uh...all the, I think wherever you stand in that sta', or sit I should say sorry, uh, now wherever you sit it's fan', great atmosphere how it was in Upton, Upton Park and it's great where I am the cheering what goes on there they're all West Ham fanatics, uh, there we score a goal, you know, I've seen people there cuddling on another who they don't even know [laughs] that sort of thing West Ham does, does for you but, um, years ago going back I think the at', it was a great atmosphere I loved it in the South Bank, the old South Bank I used to stand just to the right of the post, uh, behind the goal and I loved the atmosphere there and obviously I think back to the West Stand when I used to go with dad as a little boy and, um, I used to remember kicking, they used to have a big square at the back of the West Stand and I can remember at half time I used to go there and I used to be kicking paper cups about or a bit of paper or something thinking that was the nearest I could get to being on the real field and, uh, that, that was a great atmosphere but also the, the chicken run I, I didn't stand in there as a young boy I, I had, we went round there odd times but I remember the West Ham or, but from what I'm told always I could hear, remember hearing that was a great atmosphere apparently they took no prisoners in there so I can imagine some of the, uh, some of the banter with the players, especially the away players was quite funny

Mmm

And I'm sure the players in there they found it funny as, uh, 'cause they did they used to be, uh, they used to mix in with the crowd have a little bit of banter I can remember some of,

some of the old players so Gordon Banks talking to the crowd, uh, Jackie Charlton, uh, Bob what was it? There was a guy at Fulham once Bobby Keetch and I remember West Ham they was walking out to the cottage, we was over at Fulham and standing at the front and some, some bloke was getting load of stick 'cause he was like blonde Adonis, you know, he was walking along and giving him a lot of stick and when he come out for the second half he walked along and give a load of stick again so he looks up at, and I think it took him by surprise 'cause how he picked him out, he just looked up and he said "What's the matter mate you doing a nine to five job?" [Laughs]

[Laughs]

And I always remember the crowd just absolutely rolled, rolled up that's what it used to be, to be about they, it was great atmosphere then there was plenty of banter going on but as I say I should imagine in, when we got the promotion fifty seven, fifty eight, sixty the chicken run I should think that was a very great atmosphere

You were just saying there the banter with the footballers as well, do you think footballers now are a bit more detached from the fans and the communities that they play in?

Very, very, very, um, when it's England with our performance in, they're all great in the Premiership, um, Harry Caine he looked, I dunno how he's gone like that he was brilliant he came down to West Ham in April and we beat them one nil and I gotta say James Collins played absolutely brilliant that game they was both at the top of their game that night James Collins really worked his socks off to, to look after him and unfortunately he got injured after, after an hour or seventy minutes and had to go, go off and, um, but how, how the game gets xxxx and Harry Caine has gone to how I've seen him all season but I think where you're saying is it more detached? I think the problem was that I've seen, I've never seen such a miserable looking bunch in my life and I've said it as a, before the tournament started and, um, we played Portugal at Wembley just before they left to go to France and Chris Morely got the winning goal, uh, we beat Portugal one nil and they interviewed him after the game well you woulda thought that he'd just had all his house burgled or something I, I said to my mate watching it I said have you ever seen a more miserable looking bloke? I said all that, when your kids you dream about, he's just scored a winning goal at Wembley I said you'd think he'd be all smiles I've never seen, and I said to him I said I hope they cheer up when they go to, they never the only one I saw with a smile on his face was Fardy and I, I think that when you're saying they become detached I think that is part of the England's football problem they are detached, yeah you could say the money they get and what, whatever but they have become detached from supporters there and I think they've gotta play with a bit of a smile on their face they might have enjoyed the football out there and might've, uh, expressed theirselves better

Yeah

Um, they're saying the manager's now and I think yeah it would be nice if you could get a young guy there's plenty of talent in this country but also somebody like Harry who said that he would like to go advise, help advise and I think you need somebody like Harry to give them back a bit of swagger and put a smile on their face and ball 'em out and let them know it's not just about them

Yeah

But, but there again they are good footballers they'll come back tot eh Premier League which I'll look forward to seeing them all, uh, I don't say I won't I'll look forward to seeing them all over the Olympic stadium and it'll all be forgotten but, but we do need a bit of swagger back in our England, our England team even without xxxx they said he was a down manager but that England team was always smiling when, when you saw them during the tournament but there again we'll, we'll see what happens but in answer to your question yeah I, I do think they have come a little bit too far detached yeah

Yeah, so obviously as well the stadium, West Ham are moving to Stratford now

Yeah

Um, what do you generally feel about that?

I'm, I'm, when at first it was gonna happen obviously I was like all the other supporters, uh, we don't wanna leave Upton Park we've got our memories here, you know, and I had the, um, I've got a brick on the Stand, Dr Martin Stand of dad and I's, which I showed you on the poster, dad and I's name and I thought oh I always thought we was gonna be in history at Upton Park our name's together but, um, anyway, um, as time's gone on David Gold I've heard him speak about it and, um, I've got my head round it and I've accepted that we had to leave Upton Park and the thing I was worried about, the brick, David Gold said all memorabilia will be going to the Stratford Olympic stadium so I was really pleased with that 'cause I, I thought me and dad are going history, it's still Newham where we was born and brought, brought up and, um, so I'm really pleased about that and on a football point of view if we stayed at Upton park we wouldn't win nothing there we do need to expand more and, um, as I say I got me head round it now and I think it's very exciting I, I can't wait for the season to start and, so I've got the wife a ticket and even this Saturday just me and the wife we're gonna get the train to Stratford and we're gonna do, have a little walk around and we're just gonna, just get the atmosphere and see what, where's where and I told the people who, who we go with, 'cause we got nine seats on the West Stand the new West Stand decide where they come out but we got nine seats where we all go together and that's a five and a four it's just me and the wife's gonna go and we said we'd do a little reccy to find a decent pub or, or you know just have a look round but I did tell the wife I said we will go in one of the wine bars there and have, have a drink there

[Laughs] Be a bit of a change won't it?

Yeah [laughs] but, um, but, but I shall look forward to that I shall have a buzz I know it's not gonna be open but I'll have a buzz about that on Saturday going, going there and, um, also I come past the Olympic stadium on the train 'cause I, I work up Liverpool Street and, uh, couple of weeks ago I noticed it had all the West Ham shop logo on there and I must admit that give me a bog lump in me throat when I saw, when I saw that so yeah I can't wait, I can't wait now if we don't win anything in my lifetime, uh, it won't be the end of the world I'll still love them as my team and I'd never swap them, swap supporting them in a million years, uh, yeah

Do you think as well with the move to Stratford that there's a worry about the local businesses? Obviously there's lots of, um, businesses there that are quite rooted in the area you've got the Ken's Café you've got the

Oh yeah, yeah

Pie and Mash, Boleyn pub and you've got all sorts of other businesses

That is, that is the worry that is, that is a worry, um, yeah that is hard there's not a lot you can say about that with the work', working men's club I just hope they, they, they don't, yeah I hope they don't fold I don't think they will I think you're still gonna have people go back there after the, after the game it's not gonna be like how, how it was we might even do it ourself you don't, you don't know until the season, 'til the season pans out but, uh, I know in the week in the working men's club, 'cause as I say I lived in East Ham all, all me life up to fourteen years ago but I was still going over week nights to, uh, odd week nights sorry in the week, uh, going to meet an old mate who lived in East Ham and we used to go in there and there wasn't hardly anyone in there at all used to get about six committed people standing in the corner you might have about a dozen in there so, but I, I'm, their survival word, a guy over there Peter Bell he, he's a good man he'll try to do what's best for the club and, uh, I'm sure he'll think of things so the club is, his main priority would be for the club to carry on and if anyone can do it I think Peter with the help of his team round him he will. With the shops the pie and mash and the fish and chips yeah that is a worry because when I did go, go, especially week nights, uh, I get there about hour and a half before the kick off and, uh, the queues are colossal going in the pie and mash shop or the fish and chip and I think to meself how they all gonna get in there before kick off?

Yeah

They must do but, uh, that's gonna be a big loss for them yeah it's a worry but, but in, in life effect, everyone gets affected sometime or, or another with change and, but if you, if you didn't have change the world would stop so, and sometimes there is casualties and, um, all you can do is hope and pray that they carry on but there

Do you think the area's gonna lose a bit of its heritage as well? 'Cause obviously the focal point is the stadium and the football

Yeah, yeah I think so, I think so 'cause, um, I always remember speaking to one of the committee men one of the older ones few years ago in the club when it first came up and, uh, you know, and we was talking about when we go to the Olympic stadium and he said, he said "West Ham, uh, Upton Park and the working men's club is like the two last bastions in this, in Newham" he said "That will take it away, away from Newham and you can't say nothing else there" but as I say change has to happen, you know, there's nobody doesn't, I, I'm not in love with change but I've had to go with it in my job I had to learn to do all computers and stuff I don't like computers but I've had to learn to do it otherwise I wouldn't've had a job and, um, you have to go with the flow as I say if people hadn't over the years we wouldn't be where we are to', are today and, um, so yeah

Obviously as well the, the new stadium's gonna push the Club on commercially

Mmm oh yeah

What would happen if there was no success from the, kind of, move from the stadium?

That is a worry, that, that is a worry because every club now, I've always said there's no easy game in a Premiership you don't get an easy game 'cause every club now has got money, alright a lot of us, lot of the clubs have to spend wisely, more wisely than what some, some do I mean if, if you go talk quick bit of football way I think, um, manager Alex Ferguson I think is a fantastic manager I, um, I think he's been brilliant for the game but he let Paul Pogba go for nothing and now he's gonna go back there for seventy or eighty million, you know, that's

Crazy money isn't it?

That's disgusting [laughs]

Yeah

And, uh, but that's, you can't blame Alex Ferguson for it that's how the game's, uh, how it's gone and they're just spending out willy nilly now Man United so, but, at, like in our group the Hammer's group and got, sort of say Leicester, Leicester now we, we can compete more with them but we can't go up to their ceiling how they go and in a way I don't think I'd want to because we've always had that, West Ham's always lived within it's means from when I understood the finance side of it from when I was growing up we've always lived within our means the Curnzes [?] how they run it and, uh, so and so I'm happy how things are progressing, uh, I, I feel we're not taking too big a jump we're gradually doing it there but I think we've got wise heads over us and, um, just as I say not everyone can win not everyone can win the Premiership, can only have one winner but if we get in Europe and we see some good football embrace that atmosphere, I hope we still get it I'm sure we will I'm sure we'll get an atmosphere over there if we won something great I'd be over the moon I'd be partying and going round cuddling everyone but if we don't that's life you know I would still support my club

Do you think one of the best parts about being a West Ham fan is kind of having the, the ups and the downs as well?

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah

Rather than just a constant tie, like some of the, say Manchester United for example

Yeah

With its kind of continued success, um

Yeah, yeah when you get continuous success like Manchester United they had a, by their standards they had a bad season last season that must be really hard for their supporters to take

Mmm

Uh, there and you know and when they personally attack people I don't think he was that bad, their manager it was a little bit of a transitional period for them once Alex Ferguson went as I say he was fantastic manager but, uh, so it's harder for them when they're used to continuous success to accept failure, um, this is with, with Arsenal you know if, if we had

It's constant failure isn't it? [Laughs]

Yeah, if we had Arsene Wenger's record last few years at, the Hammer's being in Europe every year we, we'd be over the moon there 'cause we'd be happy, um, with that but I s'pose in today's game success breeds success and the more you get you get more, you want more but I think with the West Ham supporters yeah we have ups and downs but, but not just me people just, they love that club and, uh, and say the club will always have, we've had fantastic loyal players down here, um, and, uh, uh, yeah we've had great old players but nobody would ever be bigger, um, and a football club down there and that's still the magic to me when you say West Ham, uh, yeah still got that little bit of magic, uh, there so

We've talked to quite a few people, obviously through the interviews, and they talk about West Ham being, being a family like a West Ham family do you think that's the case?

What the crowd you mean?

Yeah just like everyone's together and

Yeah, oh yeah, yeah, oh yeah it is a big family, uh, round there as I say everyone, I, I've got to know so many acquaintances, um, uh, through, through going over there, you go in the working men's club you see the same faces you, you walk the hall you walk to the toilet there's always someone you, you know in there and it, you're always talking about your team in there and as I say we're all grown men now but we, we still get emotional, uh, about the team over there yeah it is like a family everybody's got so much in common through the football club and when I went to that West Ham sixty five, West Ham Friends sorry, it was brilliant 'cause I was probably, it was over sixty five and I, I was sixty six then and I think I was probably the youngest one there but it, it was great 'cause we all gave stories and you had ladies there who, who went and some of them they still doing walking football the ladies

Yeah

The team 'cause we still meet up now and again in the working men's club and have a, and have a beer and, uh, uh they're still doing it and I remember you had an old chap Alex he's well in his eighties and, uh, I sat down with him sometimes and he'd tell me little stories from when I didn't, before my time and it was fantastic I, I, I love, even before my time I like seeing the old magazines like the, the West Ham one what they do, um, is it ex they call it? Ex Hammer, Ex-Hammer and it goes back years and years and I buy them I've got loads of them up there and even, they do reports on players they talk to their children now and grandchildren and they go back to players in the nineteen twenties I'm fascinated by it I can just read and read

Yeah

And it's, and it's good because a lot of them West Ham players they lived round that area Upton Park, Plaistow and it said they was all like family friends and used to visit one another and some of the prices what they used to pay for their hours is, you know

I wouldn't even want to think about it

Yeah

The prices that they paid so cheap

Oh yeah, yeah it was then but it, it's a fantastic reading about the old days and some of the old stories they used to, uh, uh, used to tell in there and yeah coming home on the train and bus I always, I always take one with me and I'm, I'm having a read on the, I think they come out every three months I think

Yeah

But I always get it and there's a guy he always does a bit of writing in there he, he comes from the Romford area and I say to him when's the next one out? And, uh, yeah he always picks me out when he comes in the club with them but, uh, yeah all that crowd's like a family over there you can go, you can go in the gents and somebody whacks you in the back how you doing you alright? Yeah it's just, yeah it's a great feeling as I say while, touch wood I'm still quite healthy, while I can still go over there 'cause I'd certainly miss it if I didn't it'd be like, be like, uh, losing some, losing someone close to you

So how would you like to see the club kind of push forward then, move on?

I, I'd, I'd like to see us really be established in, in the Premiership I think if we, we can be this season like we was last season we came seventh didn't we? And that would really give me loads of confidence I think that we're becoming established, uh, Premiership side I think we're a good side now we're, we're a very good side I don't, you know, speaking honestly, uh, 'cause I'd never criticise my club but speaking honestly I don't say we're a great side but we're a very, very good side and we could kick on, I'd like to see us kick on a little bit, bit more and really established ourselves and if we could win a cup I still, I wish I was wrong but you can dream who would've though Leicester would've won it last season? You know, I, I've never seen us winning the premiership I'd love to be proved wrong I, I, I think I'd run round Newham for a day I think but, but look what happened with Leicester you, you just can't tell but realistically I'd love to see us getting Europe getting the Championship and win a cup, uh, if it happens absolutely brilliant if it doesn't don't take nothing away from what I feel about the team and, uh, and it sort of gives us a lease of life now as well it's, it's, uh, everyone's looking forward to it, I certainly am, going to the new, you have got some stick in the muds saying they're not going but there's, there's not many but, um, but they, people can't help how they feel can, can they?

Mmm, so I've got one final question for you, um, basically what does West Ham Football Club mean to you and how's it kind of impacted your life so to speak?

Well West Ham Football Club has been my life, um, apart from my family they are part of my family, uh, after wife and children mum and dad they're close, closest I've had to me

'cause they've always been, they are like my dad through them I, I'm always thinking of him and they've just been a massive part, part of life and it's like a right arm to me, um, I've never ever thought bad of them if I've criticised I've, it's always been constructive criticism 'cause I've always wanted what's best for the, for the club and I feel we're going, we're going forward now we had dark times a few years back as I say with the Icelandic's I really did worry about the club what direction it was gonna go like you would worry about somebody in your own family and, um, how it's gone now since the two David's have took over I'm more than happy I know they're supporters and that makes me, makes me happy but I'm glad their business people 'cause you can't just run a club on heart and, um, my faith is in them and it, how things are now it means so much to me to keep going as long as I can, um, over there and, um, even when I, if I can't make a game if I'm unwell or my poor mum was ill a few months back and I lost mum sometimes I couldn't go 'cause I was with her and even I, I was getting television on running to see what the score was, score was and, uh, it, it, it's just like part of life to me always will, will be and, uh, had some fantastic times watching them and I've got some fantastic times still coming up but, uh, whatever happens they're my club and I shall make some fantastic times so, over there soon as we win our first game that's what I want and, uh, and then we'll kick on from there so, um, there, uh, great football life wouldn't have it any other way

Well thank you for being interviewed

Thank you very much

Cheers

Interview Details

Name of interviewee: Stephen Maynard

Project: Stadium of Stories

Date of interview: 05/07/16

Language: English

Venue:

Name of interviewer: Joshua Adams

Length of interview: 1:17:08.9

Transcribed by: Kirsty Parsons

Archive Ref: 2016_esch_STOS_13