

Archive Reference: 2016_esch_STOS_17

Interviewer

Interviewee

Interview Details

Name of interviewee: Mandy Bathe

Project: Stadium of Stories

Date of interview:

Language: English

Venue:

Name of interviewer: Joshua Adams

Length of interview: 142:08

Transcribed by: Sami Pontin

Archive Ref: 2016_esch_STOS_17

So my name is Joshua Adams and I'm recording for Eastside Community Heritage on the Stadium of Stories project, if you just want to... Introduce yourself for the sake of the tape?

Yeah, I'm Mandy Bathe.

And how do you spell that?

It's Bath with an E on the end, B-A-T-H-E...

Hmm, and whereabouts where you born?

I was born in Northamptonshire in a cottage hospital in Brackley, err... I lived there for three months of my life but then my Dad he got a job up in London and I've lived in London ever since, and err... Yeah we lived me and Mum, so it just, all it was in London was me and my Mum and my Dad, we never had any family, all our family was left back in Northampton, or in Sussex where my Mum come from... So... Yeah...

So let's start with your grandparents then, erm... Do you know anything about your grandparents?

My grandparents, I didn't know like my Nan, I never knew my nans, but my Grandads I did know, and they used to come down to see us in London, or we'd go up to see them, err... And I had like Aunts and Uncles that lived back where my Grandfathers live, like my Grandad's lived... Err... But other than that it was quite sort of, living in London with no family was quite lonesome at times, cos' I used to say to my Mum when I got older... 'Oh I wish we 'ad someone we could go and see, we ain't got no one', you know like, on a Sunday afternoon... 'Oh can we just go 'an see someone?' But there was none of that, even though we 'ad friends, no it would 'ave been nice to 'ave 'ad family around us in London, yeah...

So... Do you know what your Grandparents did for a living at all?

I don't, even though I was like about nine or ten when they died, I, I didn't know, even though I went and visited 'em, do you know what? I've never thought about that until you said that, I never knew what they done for a living, no, I wouldn't know... I wouldn't know what they done for a living...

How often did you visit your parents, your grandparents?

Say, perhaps about two or three times a year, we'd go down 'an see 'em, one of 'em lived in Hailsham, which is near Eastbourne, that was my Mum's Dad, and then my Dad's Dad, he lived in Brackley, which is where I was born, and we'd go 'an see, we'd go 'an see 'im, but I don't really know, I don't know at all what they done for a living, don't know...

How did you get to your grandparents was it train?

Train! We used to go by train, yeah... Used to, I think it was actually a steam-train, might 'ave been a steam-train yeah, that's how old I am, it might 'ave been a steam-train, we'd always go by train down to see 'em, so we'd go to train, to the train, go to the local, like the station nearest that was where they lived and one of our aunts or uncles would come 'an pick us up and take us to Brackley, or Hailsham, yeah...

What was the area like then that they lived in?

Err... Very quiet, yeah very quiet, err... I always used to say to my Mum when we went down there, especially where my Mum was born like, where she came from... 'Oh Mum why can't we live 'ere, I'd love to live 'ere...' You know? Because it was so, I just loved the country life, you know? I just wish I'd, I'd 'ave, could 'ave lived there, and there was even one time when I was with me Mum and we was walking down the road and she even said to me 'see that, see that house there?' I said 'oh yeah', she said 'we was gonna buy that at one time', and I said 'Aww I wish you had 'ave', because I really wanted a, to live there because there was a time when my, like when my Grandad passed away my Dad got some work down in Eastbourne so we went and stayed in like Hailsham for a few months, and I went to the school there, and I loved it 'cos it was so different to going to a school in London... But no, so I've lived... We've stayed 'ere, we've never gone back to the countryside, but yeah...

What would you say the main differences are between, what is it...? Hailsham and London...?

Err... It's just like the space, you know? Like the countryside, you know like? When we were like, I used to walk to school in Hailsham and it was nice going through the fields 'an that, and it... But in London I just lived about two minutes away, I just lived around the corner to the school, because I went to Portway School, so I only lived around the corner, but I just liked... I just liked the freshness of it you know? The trees, the smells as well, because I can still remember there's like... The smells of the pine trees and that when I was going to school, and I also liked it that I 'ad family there to go 'an see, it was really different to living in London... Yeah... it was really different... I just liked it, I s'pose the main thing was like 'aving family there to go 'an visit, like my Mum's cousins, my aunts, my uncles, you know? So... Yeah...

Have you ever been back since?

Since my erm... Mum died I 'aven't, no since my Mum died I 'aven't been back there, no I often think about going back there to see what it's like, and I recently joined a page on Facebook about Hailsham, so I'd be interested to see what it was like, 'cos when I was young I'd go on holiday there, 'an err... I got a little job in the err... They 'ad a farmer's market once a week, 'an I used to go in there and 'elp... Like they 'ad like little stools and you know? I used to go 'an 'elp on that, but when we, when we used to 'ave, like we'd go back err... I'd go an stay with my Mum's Brother, we'd go for two weeks, we'd say 'can we stay for another week' 'cos me 'an my Brother 'cos we loved it down there... You know? We was a lot, it was a lot freer for us down there, rather than what it is in London, you 'ad... You know? We couldn't move out the road in London, we 'ad, we 'ad to stay in the road, you know so our parents could see us... Whereas when we went there we could go up the town 'an you know? We was much more freer...

Yeah, seems like a completely way... A different way of life doesn't it...?

Yeah... It is just totally different, 'an it's, you know? I hope when I retire that I'm gonna go 'an live in the countryside again... After living 'ere like all my life... Get away from the madness... (Laughs).

Yeah... definitely, I think we can all relate to that kind of thing in London can't we... Erm... So... How about your parents then? What were your parents' names?

Oh, my Dad's is David Bathe and my Mum was Catherine Bathe, she passed away when I was like twenty-eight, err... And my Dad he's eighty now... But he like, he lives in Thailand some of the time... Yeah he lives in Thailand for six months and he comes back to, to England for six months, err... Erm... Yeah, so my Dad was an electrician all of 'is life, my Mum she 'ad a few different jobs, she worked in Clarnico's which was over Stratford, she worked in the sweet factory there, she also worked in the matchbox factory Lesney's, and we've still got little cars in doors what she, what they used to make there... She worked for err... In Silvertown for Standard Telephone Cables, then she worked in like err... A clothing factory at Aldgate, the last job she 'ad was for the Royal Bank of Scotland, she'd 'ad quite a few jobs, yeah...

Very typical East End jobs... Particularly in Stratford, erm... Did your Mum ever share any memories or stories of working at places like Clarnico's, or the matchbox factory? Or...?

Err... Not... I can't remember she might 'ave done but I can't remember, but I remember 'er bringing us home little bags of sweets 'an that from the, from the sweet factory, and bringing home the cars, and like... Getting my brother like err... Some, some cars for Christmas, now the little, the modern ones and that... But she didn't really say... She didn't really tell any stories, she might 'ave done but it's too far back.

Do you know how your parents met?

They, they met at err... A dance, they met at a dance 'cos my Dad was like in the, in the... You know like an RAF like a little like a tea boy, something like that 'an they went to a dance 'an it was in Hailsham, 'an she met 'im there... My Mum used to... And another job my Mum 'ad, and I actually 'ad a photo indoors, she, she worked in the Co-Op, 'an it's just... it just like a little... You know like a sweet shop you go to know, like just the counter with all

the bits 'an... Just like a tiny shop, 'an I think that was 'er first job she 'ad working in the Co-Op... Yeah...

So what happened after your parents got married then?

Err... They got matched, well they got married 'an err... I think I was born within about two years... 'An then that's when they would 'ave come to London, yeah...

So where did they very first...

They lived on, oh they lived with my, my Dad's Sister in err... Brackley, but I don't think my Mum liked living there with my Dad's Sister, I get that feeling that there was some friction there between my... Err... Dad, Dad's Sister and my Mum... Because when we used to go back 'an visit... I always used to go 'an see this particular Aunt, and err... I, it's like my Mum didn't really want me to go 'an, go 'an see 'er, 'an they never... Even though she lived with 'er, you know you'd be... You'd think you'd be close with someone 'an they didn't seem that close, so I don't know what, what the situation was... But then they came to London, then they came to London, and err... Yeah they was it they just come to London... He got the work up 'ere and he stayed up 'ere... There were times when we was growing up he would so 'oh I'm gonna move, we're movin' out', and I wanted to move out and he, and he didn't... Cos' we 'ad a local pub near where we lived an' he was sort of... You know? It's a bit like EastEnders, he was in there 'an that was it was it... We used to say 'oh you don't wanna leave the pub do you? It's not that you... You know you're more interested in going in the pub...' 'Cos he was... my Dad was, he was like... He'd go to work... As we got older when we... He'd go to work 'an wouldn't come straight home, he'd go straight in the pub, yeah... When I was young I very rarely ever see him when I got in from school at night, he would go straight to the pub, come home, go to work, straight to the pub... I very rarely see him...

I think that was quite a common thing...

It is yeah... When I say to people, 'cos I say to people all like, like certain people how like my Dad was never at home with me you know? And err... They say 'oh that's, that was like that for quite a few, few of us like...' Yeah but he spent a lot of time in the pub, yeah a lot of time...

Yeah, so... Your parents primarily moved to London for work...?

Yeah, 'cos of my Dad's job, yeah...

Yeah, so what businesses do you remember erm... Your Father working for?

Err... He worked for, I think it was Lund Roberts, is it Lund Roberts? Yeah there was one called... I'm sure it was called Lund Roberts, err... I know he was in the 'JIB', 'JCB' or something or JIB, some electrician, electrical union... But I don't really... I'm sure he was working for Lund Roberts, but I can't remember any other ones... Yeah...

When your parents moved down did they originally rent or did they... Just buy?

Yeah they... Well... This is where, they, they rented a house... What is was, we lived in two rooms in Maud Road, so it was like one of them three storey houses, so, so we, we, we rented... They had rented two rooms... 'an then what happened, the house that he lives in now, and I live in there now as well, they bought it with a sitting tenant, so there was a lady living upstairs... So that when she moved out, that house was my Dad's and my Dad... I think he, he paid like £1700 for that house...

That's amazing isn't it...?

A terraced house... 'An I know recently a house two doors away from him went for £636,000...

It's amazing how, how much the prices have moved on... On all these original sort of East End houses with all the kind of typical looks about them...

Yeah...

Because a lot of people paid £1700 a month for rent, some people so...

Yeah, that's right... That's what, and that's what he paid, 'an it's like err... It's a terraced house, so it's got like you know? Like... Four rooms downstairs, 'an four upstairs... And a bathroom, and a massive garden, 'an my, my house where I lived actually backed onto the school that I went to, 'an I could go into the classroom and wave down to 'em in the garden if they was at home... Yeah...

Yeah, so just moving onto you a little bit... Whereabouts did you grow up?

I grew up in erm... Well East Road, which is in, off Stratford Road in Plaistow... Err... When I was young I always wanted to be in the, erm... E13 Postcode, it's funny that's a strange thing to say, 'cos I was in E15, I wanted to be in Plaistow... All me friends were from Plaistow, but now I'm older I'm pleased... I like saying that I'm from E15 'cos it's like, you know like Stratford and where West ham are gonna be going and that, so... Yeah... So I lived in err... I lived down East Road so I grew up around Plaistow and that...

And what was it like growing up in Plaistow?

Oh, I loved it, it was brilliant, it was really good... Down like Beckton Lido, dunno if you've 'eard about that, that's over near err... Prince Regents Lane we used to all go over there in summer, it's like an open, outside swimming pool, over there... And we'd go down the sewer banks, walk along the sewer banks and there used to be this place in Bow 'an it had big, massive err... Concrete tunnels and we used to play 'hide 'an seek' in there... Jumping from one to, to next then I had West Ham Park at the top of the road, so I used to go over to the park, and in the summer they had like a, like a bandstand there, they'd 'ave events there, but erm... No, I 'ad one particular best friend that I grew up with 'an I'm still friends with 'er now actually, no I loved it, I love living round there... I loved it growing up, and I'm still in touch with some of the people from you know? Facebook, I met up with 'em, yeah... You know? I loved growing up round there...

What else did you do for fun in Plaistow...?

For fun...? I used; I used to go, what in Plaistow?

In Plaistow yeah...

In Plaistow, so I'd go over the Park, we had a local club like the (Beta Club), which was down Stratford Road, so we used to go in there on like a Saturday night, they'd have a group in there, erm... What else... I 'ad a little park just in Chadd Green that I used to go and play in, I used to go round there, down there quite a lot, and then there's a park that's still there, it's, it's just by Plaistow Station as you walk down the steps... We used to erm... Go in there a lot, so that was mainly we'd just go to the parks... There was a youth club 'an all in err... Stratford Road was... Which was underneath the bottom of the flats, but that's, they're, they're all gone now... So yeah, it was really, it weren't like going off out of Plaistow, it was making the most of what was in Plaistow to do... Going there with my like friends 'an that... Yeah...

Did you ever go along to places like the Greenway at all, or...?

We did yeah, that's, that's the sewer bank; you know when I said the sewer bank? That's what we used to do, we used to do that a lot on a Sunday, we'd go down the sewer bank... So we'd go round, right down by the River Lea, then we'd go down to the erm... You know? Them tunnels I was telling you about, used to walk down there, see how far we could go... But we mainly used to go the way towards Stratford; very rarely would we go up towards... Because they used to call it Beckton Dumps, and over there they used to 'ave 'em on the motorbikes, they used to do the motorbikes over there... But we never really used to go that way... It was more towards Stratford that we'd go that way... Yeah...

What was the err... Shopping like...in err... Plaistow...?

Can I just tell you one thing and all?

Yeah sure.

Yeah, it was when we used to go along the sewer bank you know the one from Hermit Road, there's like a place there it's called Devil's Canyon, so what is it's like... It's like an archway, and we used to go down the side of it... 'An when you go down the side, there's like an arch 'an you go in a tunnel, and there's all broken gravestones in there... 'An so we used to say 'oh shall we go down Devil's Canyon', but it was quite frightening down there yeah... Yeah it was quite frightening; I think it's like an old railway tunnel or something yeah...

And that's still there now...?

That's still there now, that is still there now... Dunno if you've seen it, you know if you walk along the sewer bank? There's like a brick wall, and you got the cemetery the other side, and it's like a little brick wall... But if you, you can walk down it either side... And then you just climb over the wall and then you walk... you go underneath, and it's the... Devil's Canyon, 'an that's where all the gravestones are in there...

Yeah...It's a bit eerie that...

It is yeah... Yeah it's not very nice in there... It's not somewhere I'd wanna go... I dunno what it'd be like now, but... When we was kids it was like 'come on let's all down Devil's Canyon shall we'... It was a bit of a fright... it was frightening but it was a bit of a thrill as well... Yeah...

Okay, so on Plaistow again... Erm... Growing up there, what was the... Main high street like? What was the shopping like?

The main high street was on erm... Stratford Road 'an it was like... There was a hardware shop, a betting shop, there was a little grocer's called Edward's, there was err... Like a food shop... You know? Like how sort of... There was a food shop called Edward's, there was a hairdressers, there was a... Err... A magazine shop, they used to save me a copy of 'Shoot' every week, 'an I used to go up there and get it, you know? The football magazine 'an that... 'An they 'ad an off license, a laundrette, err... A shop, a wool shop, 'an they 'ad a fruit shop as well, so that was like a little you know? Like a little local street of shops, 'an then if need be you'd go to like East Ham or Stratford... Yeah, but no clothes, it was all like you know? Just think you might need...

So did you have to travel out of Plaistow quite a lot for things like clothes or...?

Or we'd go to Upton Park Market (Queen's Market), that was... We'd go to the market every week... We'd go to Upton Park Market, or East Ham Market, but Upton Park Market was the main one we'd go to, yeah... That was like we'd go down there to get clothes or... But when we was young you know? Like people 'ave got loads of clothes now, it didn't seem as if we 'ad so many, so many clothes like... I remember 'avin the same clothes on all week... You know? Going to school, folding 'em up and wearing 'em the next day, whereas now everyone changes every day, the majority of people...

Yeah... Did your Mum make your clothes?

My Mum did make my clothes yeah... She used to make, she used to make my clothes, and she used to, and she used to knit as well, err... Yeah she used to make my clothes I remember she... And I've still got it indoors, the Singer Sewing Machine... That she used to make my clothes with, like dresses 'an that... She used to make for me, 'an like little boleros, she'd crochet me like little boleros, 'an she's sort of, she, she taught me to knit 'an crochet, 'an I like that because I teach it to the children 'ere now... So it's something that I've been taught and I can pass on... Yeah, yeah... She made my clothes but... Not all of 'em some of 'em... But nothing for my Brother, it was mainly me... She used to make my clothes, because she'd go down to Upton Park 'an get the material, down the Market for the clothes...

So on Plaistow as well, erm... Have you seen, or was there any shops that you kind of miss that were once there? Any landmarks that have kind of disappeared...? In Plaistow over the years...?

Erm... Like... Yeah like, they 'ad like a wool shop, I used to like the wool shop, 'ad a chip shop there... Little off license... I s'pose all of 'em really to be honest, because they was nice little shops you know? I just miss, I mean, I mean, so I miss all of 'em, and perhaps... The one thing, the place I really do miss is the pub... The local pub, we had the 'Libra Arms' that was our local pub... And then the... there was the (Beta Club) just along... So there the one's

I'd say, they're the things that I really do miss... The thing I miss the most out everything that was there is the Libra, the Libra Arms... I mean 'cos I met loads of people in there... And as I got older it's somewhere I went every weekend... And err... When it closed, even when it closed a lot of the people we know from there we're still in touch with 'an that... Now we 'ad a lot of good times in there, a lot of good times...

Are there any funny stories to share from your time going there...?

Yeah a lot... yeah we used to 'ave like... Fancy dress err... Halloween fancy dress... And I remember one time I dressed up as a nun... 'An like I'm going in there regular, and the bar... 'An the landlady came down and she didn't even recognise me, she actually thought I was a real nun like... Sitting in there, yeah no... They used to 'ave erm... On a Sunday they'd 'ave like, a man 'Plonker John' his name was and he used to come in 'an play the piano 'an all that... Err... I'm trying to think of some other funny stories... Yeah, it was just good you know? Really good in there... And I'd like it when they'd lock you in... Like they'd have 'lock-in', you know? So it should be shut, but and they'd just... turn all the nights off and they'd just have like an after's thing say... 'An that was better than the drink you 'ad when it was open 'an that, as I said they 'ad things for like Halloween... Or birthday parties... 'An, no it was really good, Christmas Night they'd 'ave a party for all the regulars in there... Be really good... Yeah...

So... On the case of Plaistow again... Erm... Do you think the changes in Plaistow have been a positive change and... You just mentioned a lot of these businesses closing down... Why did they close down?

I don't think it's a positive change... You know like when I've lived 'ere all me life, like from the age of three months and I've... Like, people 'ave... Like I say to people like 'why do you live in, why do you come to Newham to like work in the school?', and they say 'cos of the jobs', and they said... 'We love it round 'ere'... I said 'you love it round 'ere?' I said 'you should've seen it years ago, this is... It's, it's totally changed, it's totally changed', you know? Look at what's gone... The pub's gone... You know? All these big supermarkets that have been built up that's taken away all the trade from all these little local shops... You know? I, I, I've lived there all my life 'an I'd say down where I live, I know about two or three people, and the street I live in, like there are people... It's like... It's not like a family-house... They're renting rooms, they're in rooms... There's a lot of like, all... Or, or like people live in the upstairs or the downstairs... There's rubbish all down the street they chuck their furniture in the street... So, it's I... It's changed for the worse; it's changed for the worst, but... I will say it has changed for the worse you know? It's dirt... You know? It's a lot dirtier and... You know? You can just go out and you don't know anyone... I still know the man over the shop but... I don't... You know? Other than that, there's about two or three people down the road... I don't know anyone else... You know? I liked it when I used to go out years ago 'an... I'd see people, you know? You can have a chat, but you can't do that now... You can't do that... But, you know? Like I've lived, where I live... I've noticed lately that there's a lot of different type of people moving in, because what they're doing is they're doing up the houses, you know? More like middle class, and I've... you know? I've noticed it at my workplace as well, there's more middle class parents coming along, it seems like the area I think with what's happened with the Olympics you know? The change that it's done over Stratford, I feel that that's gonna be coming out to where I'm living, you know how it was at Canary Wharf?

Yeah, it's becoming gentrified...

Yeah, look at that... What that was like years ago... I think the same's gonna happen around in Plaistow, because it you know? Where I live you just walk... It's two or three minutes' walk to the Station, 'an then you've got a park up the road, it's all central to where you need to get, 'an I've noticed a lot of the houses are being done up... You know? So... I think that it may, that it might even go back to how it was... but you know? I've said the people, you know? They've not liked the area; they've got fed up with it and moved out... I've said 'well if you hadn't have give up on it, it wouldn't have gone like that, if you'd have stayed we'd still be... You know just cos' there's something you might not like you're, you've moved out and we're all... We're all left 'ere like... But I say we're left 'ere like... As much as I would like to move out if you've got a job in London it's getting into London... My job where I am, I just walk to where I am, whereas if I go up to the West End on a train... I think phew, I couldn't do that every day, so... You know, there's pros and their cons...

On the matter there of transport... Has, has the transport links in Plaistow developed...

I'd say, yeah I think there's much, there's much more yeah... The transport links are better... Because all you had was the underground and the buses, and mean now you go, go to West Ham you've got the Jubilee Line, you've got the Docklands Light Railway, erm... I'm not so sure about you know? The trains that run from Barking I don't know, I don't know how long they would've been running but no, I just remember it as Plaistow Station 'an like you know? The err... Buses, but you know? Like these cab firms, lots of cab firms I don't think there was many of them around years ago, yeah... So I'd say it 'as, it 'as changed, there's more, more options to get around...

So you were saying there as well about the different people moving in and people moving out, do you think there's been maybe kind of a loss of community in the area...?

Oh yeah, course there as yeah, the old community's gone, the whole of the community's gone... There's no, there's nowhere I know... Where I could go, actually there is, but they're people who used to live there, you know? There's nowhere, nowhere really to go like the pub... That's where we all used to go and meet and see each other I mean I do go to the Black Lion, but there are, you know? There are people you live in, Newham but they're not where I live, but I know 'em from, from years ago... And, or they might 'ave lived where I was and they, they moved away and they still come in there, but there's no like community, like we 'ad the community which the (Beta Club) was like a community centre, and then you 'ad the pub where you could go there? But there's, there's none of that now... The youth club, that's gone...

Do you think it was...? These changes are irreversible or...?

Yeah, I would say they are 'cos of the people that have moved in now, 'an the people that move in might not stay long 'an then move out again, I, I find that you, you know... People might be... You see a lot of house changing 'an all, where there's loads of furniture out on the road where people 'ave moved out, and the next day you see someone else moving in... So, I don't think it 'ad been, it'd ever come to back to be built as a community, there's so many different people from different countries... You know? I dunno how many languages people speak in the road that I live in... You know? How we gonna get to build a community

like that? Because if you can't speak each other's language... Then you know? I walk down the street and people look like very wary... You know? They sort of look at you as, you know? It don't take much to say 'morning', or 'hello', or... You know? People are sort of wary of each other because they don't know, you don't know who's living next door to you... Like the house next door to me I don't know who's living in there... Whereas before you did you know? You don't, you know? You don't know anyone and you... There's nowhere you can go, to get to know anyone, because there's not a place where you'd get all different cultures going to, they tend to most probably go out into their little you know? Like cliques so to speak...

Yeah... So where do you think all these people who are living in Plaistow moved to then...

Essex!

Out of London...

Yeah they've gone out of London, they're in Essex, the majority of people that I know who lived in erm... Plaistow 'ave gone like, they go Hornchurch, Billericay, Chelmsford, err... Yeah, Chelmsford yeah...

Do you know what the appeal is of moving to Essex?

Like people say they go there for their children's schools 'an that, I dunno what they... I don't know what the appeal is... I mean a lot of people don't like being in a multi-cultural... Whereas for me it don't bother me in the slightest... You know? It don't bother me, I work, I work in a school you know? You know? I just get on with it, but it's, and it's also I think in London it's too crowded whereas when you go out, out, out there's much more space... It's, there's... You know...? In like... In London as well, or these like a lot of... There's not much respect for people, I don't find people to be respectful towards each other, you know? Whereas... When I've been out to them areas it don't seem like you've got to worry about walking down the street or... You know? You know? You'd be more relaxed in them areas than being in London...

Seems more safe...

Yes, it is safer yeah... 'Cos something 'appened on the way home when I was going home the other night with these young lads, one of 'em went to kick me, and I said something 'an I, 'an he looked at me and I thought 'just walk on'... Because you don't know he might've turned on me 'an... I told my son 'an he said 'why do you stay there?' You should get out of London...' I said 'it ain't that easy, it's not that easy to get out of London... Especially if you work 'ere 'an that...' Yeah...

I know from moving into London how hard it is to move back out because so many different jobs, going on down here, erm... So yeah, again on Plaistow, do you think Plaistow's now a good place to grow up or not...?

No...

...As opposed to when you...?

I wouldn't no... 'Cos if I 'ad, like me when my children were growing up I didn't want 'em to stay there, I wanted 'em out... I said 'don't you, don't you stay...' No you wouldn't, I don't think it's at all, like years ago they'd always be kids out on the streets playing and meeting up and... I never see that... Never see kids out on the... I say never... There's a couple over the road, but other than that... Like I go, you go up... You don't really see any children playing out at all... 'An years ago there was loads of kids playing out... In the parks, I think another thing is they've got all this technology and they're sitting in doors on the... Playing the computer, or on the laptop... But it's... I, I, I wouldn't want my kids growing up in Plaistow...

Do you know how the area can maybe change that?

Is it the area, or the government...?

It could be everything really couldn't it...?

It'd take a lot of changing 'an it's not just, I think it's London... I feel like London's a melting pot, it's like a melting pot, but I feel like in years to come London will just be for people who work... Because it's gonna be that expensive, but it's like a melting pot, I feel that most probably what it's like in Birmingham and Manchester and... Everyone comes there to go work; everyone comes to London to work, 'an they you know? If they can't afford to buy an house they rent a room... So can you imagine a house that years ago that might've 'ad a family in... 'As most probably got about ten or fifteen people in... And it's... You know? That's why it's most probably, well it is... So overcrowded...

So on that, has there been no recent developments then in Plaistow for housing, or anything else...?

No, not that I know of no... There's not enough houses in this borough, or any... All over the country, there's not enough... You know? I've not seen any new like buildings or... Or anything like that at all... No...

Yeah, so just going back onto your erm... Childhood there, so you grew up in Plaistow... Do you want to maybe talk about the schools you went to?

Right, I went to Portway Primary School, which was just round the... Round the corner to where I lived, yeah and I really loved that school, it's still there now... I really liked that school... Yeah I went to the Infants, I went to the Infants and there's one thing I want to say... Can I say it...?

Yeah you can say what you want yeah...

Well, what 'appened, I went to school, err... I was in the err... Infants School, and I'll never forget it, I was in the playground and a black boy, there as a black boy just one black boy in the school, and I was scared of him, because I'd never seen a black person before, so you know? And then I remember what happened, erm... When we went into class, no one had... I remember his name, his name was 'Sunday' as well, and nobody would sit next to 'im and I was the only one in the class that would sit next to 'im... But originally I was frightened... Because it was all... Everyone was white... So I... I'd never seen a black person before...

But no I ended up sitting up next to 'im in the class, err... 'Cos no one wanted to sit next to 'im, but err... Yeah I really liked that school, and erm... Then I went to my secondary school, which was Plashet Girls School which I hated with a passion, I couldn't... It was all like it was all girls... 'An I didn't like it, and I used to ask my Mum... 'Can you move me out...? Can you send to Eastlea School...? I don't wanna be... I don't wanna go to that school'... I, you know? I used to bunk off school... I used to bunk school and I'd go over to West Ham Football Ground, 'an I'd see the players off when they was going to they're away matches... Yeah... So that's what I used to do... But no, I didn't like my Secondary School...

So what was it about the secondary school that you didn't like?

I, I, I think it was 'cos it was all girls, 'an they're quite bitchy 'an all that... Yeah, 'an 'cos like also when you went there it's much bigger than your Primary School, so I've gone into this new school with, I dunno... Say there was six-hundred in there and you're put in a class with perhaps one other person from your school... 'An you don't know anyone... 'An it's you know? A bit daunting... And... I just did not like it, 'an it was like with my Primary School I could walk round the corner whereas my secondary school was in East Ham... So it was a bus ride away every day, a bus there 'an a bus back... So when I was... When I sort of started secondary school I was sort of in the big wide world... You know? I'd been in my little area, in Plaistow, walking round the corner to school, next minute I'm off to East Ham every day and I didn't like it from the start...

What were the teachers like?

Very strict, yeah they was quite strict yeah... Cos' the year I went, the year before... It was the year it changed to a Comprehensive School... Prior to that it 'ad been a Grammar School, 'an also what the school was... It was like, there was two sides of it, so the... So it was like the year 7 'an 8 on one side, then all the other years where on the other side of the school... Yeah... But I just didn't like it, 'an then as it got towards the end I never, I never really used to go that much anyway and I will say I did really, when I got over the other side I used to play up all the time, just didn't like it at all... Did not like it... At all...

Did you not have any particular subjects that you liked at all...?

The only... The subject that I really liked was Drama, I loved Drama, 'an that's 'cos when you get to a certain year you pick options of what subject you want to do 'an for me, I just thought I'm going to do the easy ones, you know? Ones with no writing 'an that, so I picked Drama, 'an I used to like cookery... But we... But Drama was my, my best one... 'An that's the one I got the best result in out of me exams... I loved, I loved... 'An really like the teachers as well... Yeah, I really loved drama,

It always helps when you've got good teacher's doesn't it...?

Yeah, Mr. (Trayvon) was the man teacher and Ms. Blake was the lady teacher, it... Aww... What, I'm just thinking about it now... I loved it, I loved Drama...

Did you ever get a chance to play any football or anything?

Nah, we did things like... Oh I did, I did used to play in the little team but that weren't from the school that was something I used to do like on a Wednesday night... They used to run a club at the erm... At that school and I used to go there... But other than that it was things like badminton, hockey, netball which I didn't like... Err... Gymnastics, 'an that yeah...

So what did you do after secondary school?

So after secondary school... I left Secondary School and within a week I had a job down in Baker Street, 'an I was working, it was called the Imperial Society of Teachers of Dancing... So what it was, it was like this err... Place was where we organised exams for you know like... Erm... Ballet schools, all over the country, so we'd organise exams, get the certificates, people would be members of the society, and err... I was an office junior there... So I worked there for about two or three years, yeah... I really loved it there; I loved it at that job...

What did you do after that?

'An then after that, I went to err... Canning Town, I worked in Canning Town... I worked in Tipple Rowe, which was a really old steel stockholders, so I worked in there doing like the invoices 'an that, but I mean I loved it, whatever job I've had since I left school, I loved it, I've loved all my jobs, I love all my jobs that I've been in, because I feel like if you don't like it, if you don't like work, don't go to work... What's the point of going to work and being miserable all day, yeah so they're the only... Them two jobs I had and then this job here where I'm working now... Because I 'ad my children and then I came... And I went, as I say... Because my children came to this school, once they came to the school I worked in the school...

So how did you get this job at the school then?

Err... Because my children were here... I used to like go in and volunteer and do reading with the other children in the school, and erm... One of the other ladies who used to work as a Teaching Assistant she was leaving and so the Head Teacher asked if I'd like to do the job and it was a two 'an a quarter hours a week, 'an I loved it straight away, 'an I used to work say twelve 'an a half hours a week, so I was getting paid for two 'an a 'alf, but I stayed for all morning, every morning, because I loved working in with the children, 'an then after that she said erm... Because when I was working as a Teaching Assistant, one day this boy came into the class 'an he really 'ad bad like behaviour problems and I thought like... 'Oh I couldn't work with that boy', the next week I was working with him because she rung me up, 'an said 'we've got this boy, would you like to work with 'im', 'an I said 'well yeah', so I was doing Teaching Assistant in the morning, 'an a Learning Support Assistant in the afternoon, and then after that there was a new job that came in 'an it's called, there was like 'learning mentors', it was a new, new job 'an err... She asked me if I wanted to apply for that, so I said well I will as long as you advertise it, you know? I'm not just gonna do it because you err... So I went for the interview, 'an I got the job, so I was the learning mentor in there for ten years, 'an I loved that... I loved doing that as well, I really loved that you know? Working with children with like behaviour problems, social 'an emotional problems, 'an sort of supporting the parents, 'an then like this building that I'm working in now... Was just like 'an old shack, 'an it got done... It was gonna get done up, and she said to me 'Mandy you know when that building's done?' She said 'that's gonna be yours', I said 'I'll believe it

when its done', 'an so, from then on, once it was done I just came over here and I've been doing this job... For six years...

Maybe expand upon the job you're doing now...

So what I do now is I run an outreach centre which is for erm... Like mainly for err... Children under-five, so from 9 till 3:30, it's activities for children under-five, so the parents come along with the children, they do things like messy play, parents and toddlers, music 'an movement, on a Wednesday I do a club for over-sixties, before school I do breakfast club, after school, I do our after school club, and then during the holidays we run a holiday club, so it's really like a community centre, yeah...

So what is it about then education in general that you really enjoy delivering and doing...?

To be honest I don't look at it as if it's education... That I enjoy, I enjoy just like being around people, chatting to people, err... Just 'elping 'em... You know? Like especially like... Babies, I'm older like some of the Mum's might say to me 'oh he's teething', 'an I'll say 'why don't you try this...?' I feel like because I've 'ad children of me own 'an I've got grandchildren, I can share my experiences with the parents, 'an I feel like 'cos I've come from the area as well, 'an I've lived 'ere all me life, you know? You know? I just feel like... You know? I just like me job, I just really enjoy me job... And I like working with the parents I work with... You know... I enjoy it... And you know... Like coming into the school as well, a lot of my, the people that work in the school are my good friends... You know? Prior to that I didn't really have any, 'an I never really 'ad a big friendship group but coming into the school, I've built up a lot of... I've got a lot of close friends in the school, a lot of close friends... Yeah...

So it's enjoyable coming to work then?

Yeah, if I didn't like coming to work I wouldn't... I wouldn't do it... I like coming to work yeah...

Yeah, so just moving on a little bit do you want to talk a little bit about your family...

My family?

Yep...

What my children...?

Yep...

Yeah, I've got erm... Four children, I've got a son of thirty, I've got a son of twenty-eight, and I've got a daughter of twenty-four, 'an another son of twenty-three... Err... I've got three grandchildren, and I've got a grandchild due in August, so I've got two grandsons, and I've got a granddaughter, one of my grandsons has got really... He's got special needs... So that's been quite difficult, you know? What he's 'ad to go through 'an all that... He was in hospital for nine months of his life... 'an err... Yeah, that was, that was a really difficult time... 'An like all of my family's life 'an that you know? Yeah...

Do all of your children live in London? Or...?

No, all my... One, my Daughter still lives with me, but one of my sons lives in err... Well no two of 'em live in... One lives in Plaistow... Err... My Daughter lives with me... Then my other one son lives in err... Dagenham, then the other son, he lives in Billericay... Yeah...

What do your children do for a living?

Err... Two of my children do their sprinkler fitting... And then my other son, the eldest one, he's like a... he's like a... A manager of the err... Those that do put in sprinklers like you know? He's, he's involved in a lot of the new buildings in Stratford, so... He's like, he goes in 'an that, I dunno what he does but he's a manager of a... Like getting I suppose, like organising the staff 'an the materials and all that... Yeah...

So what do you do now then, when you're not at work...? What do you do for recreation?

Oh well, when I'm not at work I'm a big soul fan, I love soul music... So a lot of my things revolve around going to, like I go soul weekenders, 'an I like house music as well... So I go to things like Groove Odyssey, 'an... My Soul, 'an what else do I do? Like Rivers... You know the soul boats? That's, that's what I do a lot... If I... Yeah I do a lot of that...

So you like music then?

I love music, I love it... It's something I've always loved, always loved from a young child... Young child... Me Dad tells me about when I was a baby I used to stand in the cot singing to the Beatles songs and that you know? And I can still remember the music they used to play, they liked Country & Western... 'An like the parties we used to have at the house as well, people would just say... They weren't planned parties, just drop of the hat parties... 'An they'd go in the pub 'an say... 'Oh we're going round your house tonight and 'ave a party', yeah so I love music 'an that's why I do a lot to erm... So I like erm... Music, and I go to like, to the gym, and I like taking me grandchildren out as well... 'An I like skiing as well... That's something I've recently got into... Skiing...

Do you go abroad for skiing?

I go abroad for skiing yeah...

Whereabouts?

I go to err... Andorra, Italy, France, and Austria, 'cos what 'appened, I erm... I went to a soul event, 'an I met my partner there, so, 'an he's... He's the one who...

Soulmate...

Yeah, he's me soulmate... He is my soulmate yeah... 'An he erm... He's a snowboarder, 'an he said like... We went skiing 'an he said 'you're gonna love it or hate it...' 'An I said, 'I know I'm gonna love it...' 'An I went, 'an I've just been going ever since... Yeah...

Definitely interesting thing to do isn't it?

Yeah, yeah I love it...

So on music there as well... Do you remember any particular gigs you've been to that you really enjoyed or any festivals that you really enjoyed?

What when I was young or...?

Anytime...

Oh so I remember going to see David Essex, erm... I've been to see 'David Essex', I've been to see 'Simply Red', 'UB40', they had one over at Excel when they had like about two or three nights with err... Different groups 'an that, so you I've seen UB40 over there, I've seen 'Lionel Richie', I've seen 'George Benson', err... Who else have I seen, I've seen... Oh I've seen 'Blue' the boyband... Me daughter liked them, err... I been to, I go to like Margate Soul Weekender, I go to Ibiza Soul Week... Erm... I go to Caister twice a year, that's where I met my partner, love Caister, erm... 'An this Soul Boat I started doing recently as a regular thing... Trying to think what else, I've seen in concert... Aww, I've seen... Oh yeah... I said Simply Red didn't I...?

Has there been anyone local you've seen maybe in Newham somewhere or...?

Yeah I did... UB40, over at Excel, they 'ad a thing over there... 'An I went to see UB40 there, oh 'an I see 'Rihanna' at the O2, I took my daughter there when she was eighteen, to see that... That was really good... Yeah I know I've seen more than that but I can't remember... Oh I've seen Madness 'an, the Specials when I... 'Cos when I was young I used to like... Like the Mods and I used to go up Carnaby Street, 'an like down erm... Err... What's it?

Petticoat Lane?

Brick... yeah Petticoat Lane... Stand outside the Last Resort, you know the Sex Pistols... You know that shop up there... Yeah...

So you had a whole mods and rockers thing then...?

Yeah... I was a Mod yeah, and I used to go and err... Remember 'Secret Affair', I know they ain't a Mod... I used to go 'an see them, I remember there was a pub in Stratford... Canning Town err... The Bridge House, so I used to go there on a Monday 'an watch the groups... 'An they used to play up there, Secret Affair... So it's 'The Teen Beats', Secret Affair... 'Purple Hearts'... So, a lot of me life's been around music... Yeah...

So what did you used to wear then as a Mod?

Oh as a Mod I'd wear like... I tell you what... I've seen 'The Jam' as well by the way... I had a pale blue, erm... Harrington Jacket, and one day I was down Carnaby Street, 'an I see Paul Weller, 'an I got 'im to sign the arm, of me err...

Have you still got it?

'An my Dad threw it away, can you imagine what... Because I was talking to someone about it, and I thought... 'Wonder if I've still got it...' He threw it away... So I used to wear like a Harrington Jacket on white jeans, or blue jeans... I used to 'ave like Fred Perrys, yeah that sort of stuff...

Why do you think that movement came about then? The whole Mods and Rockers thing? Because they're quite different aren't they...

Yeah because what it is, it was years ago it was out 'an then it sort of came back again... But I think it might 'ave been down to the groups that were coming out...

Like 'Scarce'...?

Yeah, like The Specials and Madness, it was sort of relating in with them, because the clothing they wore was like the Mod clothing... But I don't know why... And then you had like the Punks didn't you...? You 'ad the Punks, the Mods, Punks and the Rockers... Punks and Rockers... They didn't used to really get on did they?

No...

Because I remember went down to Brighton one weekend, 'cos they used to 'ave like meetups didn't they...?

Yeah there's that infamous fight they had down there... Yeah... So... Moving onto West Ham obviously... Erm... How did you start supporting the club originally 'an how did you get involved?

How did I get involved...? Well when I was in secondary school, I had a friend there called Carol... And she, she used to go 'an err... Watch the football, 'an she said to me... One Saturday... 'Do you want to come over there?' Now me Dad, he was one of them who was always in the pub, 'an he weren't really interested in what I was getting up to, you know? So... And I said to me Dad, about going 'an he said 'yeah' like... So I went... 'An when I come back it was one of the only times I think he'd ever paid any attention to me... You know? He was asking how it was... 'An you know, he was too busy working or in the pub... 'An I think partly, it was partly 'cos it was because I was getting some attention off of me Dad... But I also liked going, 'an then from then on... I just went every week... I went every week... For about four years, I used to go to the home matches; I'd go to the away matches... And then I met someone over West Ham, I met 'im at Stoke, at the Stoke match, and err... He was the Father of my two eldest children, but then err... So when I was about eighteen I stopped going, I might 'ave gone on 'an off to the matches, but then when I 'ad my... I got, like as I said I've got four children, 'an then once they got older that's when I went over there, 'an started erm... Like working there... But even though I didn't go to the matches, after them four years I still followed 'em, they were still my team you know? I always kept up with how they was doing... 'An that, you know? 'An another thing, as you... As I got older it got more expensive to go over there, you know? So... That might, might 'ave been another reason why I stopped going over there, but yeah... Yeah so that's how I got into erm... Going over West Ham... And err... You know? I 'ad me like, me favourite players there, I 'ad err... Billy Jennings, he was one of my favourite players, and I've, I remember he, we used to wait on after the matches to, to get their autographs, even though we got 'em, we'd

still wait to get their autographs... And I remember he came out, 'an they always 'ave a shower after the match... 'An I got a hair off of the back of 'is jacket... I've still got it indoors; I think I've still got it indoors... And I got the hair off of the back of his jumper 'an I took it home, 'an I stuck it on the front of me programme with a piece of cellotape, 'an I'm absolutely sure I've still got that now...

That's dedication isn't it...?

Yeah... 'An I remember when Billy Bond's, when Billy Bond's 'ad a little girl... 'An 'er name was Claire, 'an me 'an my friend waited after the match to erm... Give 'im... We got 'er a little present, you know them? You 'ad like these rattles that went across the pram... 'An err... So we asked, 'can we meet 'im we wanna give 'im a little present for 'is, for 'is daughter...' And err... So they let us 'an we gave 'im the present and err... Another time we met Keith Robson, we used to write the players letters as well... We got, I ain't got 'em but I think my friend's got 'em... We wrote one to Keith Robson... 'An we got a reply... 'An one to Billy Jennings 'an we got a reply as well... We used to write to... We was mad... We'd go like, like when I'd bunk off school... We'd go up there to see, to see the players going off to their matches 'an some of their of 'em even knew us by our names as well because we used to go up there, like Mervyn Day, it was like Mervyn Day, Tommy Taylor, Billy Bond... Alan Taylor, Alan Devonshire... Frank Lampard... We 'ad our photo taken with 'im, err... For a news, a newspaper... Yeah... Yeah, Billy Bond, so that was the time I was going around, that sort of...

Did you ever have an interesting conversations with any of these footballers?

Err... How can I, I don't know if I can really remember to be honest... I tell you what did 'appen, Trevor Brook... Trevor Brooking was playing when we was, we was, and what 'appened he was gonna leave, there was a thing that he was gonna leave and err... I rung up a radio show... And I got on the radio, 'an I asked... I said 'erm...' I can't remember if he went or he was thinking of leaving 'an then I said 'if you leave West Ham would you, would you still 'ave in your contract that you can play for England?' And in the end it was on... 'An me Dad recorded... I remember me Dad taped it... So that's one I can remember in particular... Yeah...

So you're not really from a sporting family...? You're parents weren't really into football or anything?

Nah... Nah... Not at all, not at all...

So it's just by chance that you got into West Ham...?

Yeah, it was... Me Dad went to the World Cup in '66 and I always remember that because like... You know? He'd come home and he'd bought me the programme, he'd bought me the programme it was, it 'ad the World Cup Willie on it 'an that you know...? 'An he was telling me about there's err... One team that's got the Cockerel as the I don't know if its...

Is it France?

I think it was France, he said and what they done, they 'ad one in the crowd, 'an before they met the match they rung it's neck, he went like that... I remember 'im telling me that, but you know? I, I can remember 'im coming back from the World Cup, so other than that he, we'd done... None of us were sport, were sporty in the family, it's just that I went with my friend, and err... 'An I went there 'an I liked it, and... Yeah...

Yeah, do you remember what your first game was and who it was against?

Oh my God, I can't remember that far back no, I can't... I remember where I stood, I stood in the, the West Side by the tunnel, 'cos I had a thing like when I first went, I used to stand in the West Side, 'an I remember looking up to the North Bank 'an thinking oh that looks scary up there, but then I moved round to the North Bank, 'an then after that I used to go in the South Bank, but when I was in the South Bank, there was a section in there... That used to be the away supporters... So what I always used to do was get in with the away supporters, I don't, don't ask me why I done it, but I always used to do it, 'an I remember one time West Ham was playing and err... They scored 'an I just run onto the pitch... I couldn't stand there 'an cheer in front of all these... Not on the pitch, but you know... On the concourse 'an that, yeah so... Yeah...

Did you get escorted off...?

No, no, I just jumped over then climbed into the West Side, yeah... Yeah it's not like I was sort of running 'an I just jumped over 'an jumped into the other, other erm... The West Side yeah...

Was there many erm...? Girls going to football?

Not many, nah, not many nah... Because we used to, me 'an my friend we used to go to all like... What, what 'appened I started off going with one friend, to like all the home matches... And my best friend who I've grown up with 'an known since I was three... She used to go over there... 'An then me 'an 'er... We ended up going to like all the away matches as well... 'An they used to say... 'Oh look there's only these two girls going', like the men's, boys or what have ya... No, we'd, we got to know people there you know? We'd see people, because we knew like it was the ICF used to go when we was... When I was young, that's when that was all about... And we'd see you know? We'd see them on the train, or... Like if you went on the supporters train you didn't, or, or we'd go in like with the err... On the trains with the ICF, like we weren't involved in none of that but we'd just go with 'em, but I remember once we was playing Tottenham 'an my Dad booked me and my mate a coach to go 'an I said 'Oh I didn't wanna' go on the coach, I wanna go in with like the crowd, 'an all that...' So... Yeah there weren't many girls going when we was going, not many at all, nah... Not at all...

Do you ever have a pre-match ritual before you went to the game?

Err... I used to have, I used to have this little 'Noddy' that I always used to take to, take to the match like in a little box, it was like a little good, good luck charm... But no we used to, we'd go really early, we'd be in there, it's like we'd be, we'd leave at ten and as soon as the gates were open, we would be perhaps the first one's in there 'an I remember being in there,

you know like the Winter our feet were freezing, it was so cold... But you know? We didn't have any sort of rituals, before going to the matches...

Did you ever go to any of the local businesses, obviously there's the pie n' mash shop, and there's...

Err... Nah, nah, 'cos really when, when I was young we had our pocket money and that was it; you know? My parents never said 'right get yourself something to eat', say I had 50p off me Mum, 50p off me Dad, and it was like 25p to get in when I was first started going, so... And all... And I used to have a paper round as well... So, any money I got would mainly go on West Ham, and then when I started work any money I had would pay to go away to the matches, so yeah...

So back then you didn't have a season ticket you just kept paying up at the door...

Nah, nah... I didn't have a season ticket, I didn't have a season ticket, I just paid on the turnstiles, as they say yeah... Used to pay on the turnstile... And I'm trying to think... I must have just done that when I went to the away matches as well, because I can't ever remember, oh there is one time I remember getting the ticket, you know? I used to go on the turnstile, but I remember there was one time, when West Ham played Liverpool at Anfield, we went up there, and we'd, we sent off and got our ticket, but the thing was we was one of the lucky few who got into the erm... The match yeah... But other than that, most of the time, oh that's what we used to do! I used to do as well... I'd go; I'd go with Laces you know? The coach company, there was... We used to go on the Lacey coaches... And I think we was like, 'cos we was in the West Ham Supporters Club, you'd go and book, you'd get your err... coach and you'd get your ticket in, so that was all included in one price, that's when we used to go on the coach... 'Cos they had like a supporters club... Yeah... I think they've still got that now as well...

So do you remember what the atmosphere was like then on Green Street and Barking Road? Going to a match what was the atmosphere like? Outside of the Stadium?

Yeah it was like good... yeah, you know? Like all buzzing, it was good, it was a you know? Really good atmosphere... Yeah... It was a brilliant atmosphere yeah... Everyone like you know chatting, and... Just you know? On their way to the match 'an that, you're seeing people, you'd like see every week 'an because you get to know the... Certain people, so you'd see them and that... Yeah... People going in the Boleyn, or the Queens... And... Sometimes I'd go... In the err... You know they had a Pie n' Mash in erm... In, in the market... 'Roy's', 'Roy's Pie n' Mash Shop', yeah... but no it was a good atmosphere... it was good... Yeah it was good...

Was there any markets or was any people selling programmes?

Oh there was programmes, scarfs... You got the stall selling scarfs 'an that, rosettes, badges... All that all the way along, along the road... And there was even a stall at one point in the market selling all that, yeah...

Do you remember what you used to wear, going to the match...

I'd have wore jeans... I had me scarf tied round me wrist...

Hmm... I've heard that one before... Actually yeah...

Yeah, on the wrist, rather than, not on... On your neck, on the wrist, yeah... 'An I'd 'ave me West Ham bobble hat...

And why would you tie it on your wrist?

I don't know, I don't know why they done that, but it was just... Now I think about it, it's a bit strange; yeah you used to tie it on your wrist... Yeah... So I'd always wear jeans... I was a bit of a tomboy you see, yeah... So I always used to wear me jeans and err... Sheepskin, I had a sheepskin as well, you know like you go through the fashion...? The fashion was yeah... I had a sheepskin, me scarf... Me West Ham hat, and wear it... I used to wear me hat in school and they used to chuck me out of class, 'take your hat off or you're, you've got to go outside the class', I'd say 'oh I'll go out of class' I said... Because I ain't taking me hat off, I was a bit of a rebel in school, 'cos I didn't like it anyway, that was a good excuse to get out... And I'd stand outside yeah... And they... And a lot of them knew me in school, 'cos I'd wear me hat, all the time in school, you know?

Has the stadium changed much over the years?

Oh yeah... A lot yeah... Yeah, it has, it has done... It has changed a lot... It's totally different to what it was like when I first went there, the only side that I would say that has changed is... Hasn't changed... Is the East Side, and that is one... I'm saying that but... That is one stand I've never been in... I've never been in that stand... I've never stood and watched the football, a match in that stand... I've all... I've just gone round the other three, but it's totally changed... Yeah... Totally... because it was all standing weren't it at one point? And when that happened in Hillsborough it all changed, I mean it's all seating now but... There's certain areas that people will not sit down, they still stand...

Hmm... Did you ever manage to go into the 'Chicken Run' at all...?

That, that is the East Side... I've only, I've walked through there like, perhaps when I'm working I walked through, but I've never gone in there and stood in there and watched an actual match, yeah...

So when you're inside the stadium, what sort of songs would you be singing?

Oh 'Bubbles', and err... Cor I dunno if I can sing some of 'em... Because they're a bit rude...

Yeah, yeah... I can imagine yeah...

Bubbles and like... It's like that's the song Bubbles that then what it is you've got songs for certain players, so the songs for the certain, you know they'd change... because as players come and go, they got songs for them, different you know? Players... As it is... Bubbles is the only one that I can remember that has been the same all the way through, but other than that they've got different songs for different like one's for Billy Bond, Billy Jennings, Payet,

and you know? And Ludo Miklosko, so they had different songs for different players some of those... The songs might have been... The songs when I first started are totally different from the ones their singing now...

Is there a part of the stadium that's maybe best for the atmosphere at all...?

The, the part where I... The part where I am now... That part, I love that part... Yeah... That's the part where I work, I feel that's the best part... 'Cos when I started there I sort of... Was put in different places in the ground, and then when I got there I wanted to stay there... And, and my supervisor, is my friend's Husband, so... I managed to... It weren't 'cos of that but he knew me 'an he's... You know? Yeah so I stayed... I went there one match... One game, and I've stayed there ever since, I've never been moved away... Because of you know? He likes the work we do there and we get on with the supporters there, so he... You know? He knows that we get the work done in that corner...

Do you think the atmosphere has changed at all over the years...? Particularly with the moving from standing to seating?

Yeah, I do yeah... Yeah... But, I'll, I'll say the atmosphere has changed, I mean this year just gone I've think it's been... Phwoar... It's been fantastic... but when like Sam Allardyce was there and some of the times it was so boring like... 'Cos I even thought like last year, the end of last year... I thought... I'm gonna, I'm gonna see how it goes this year... And then I might not do it no more... You know? Because it was just... it was like watching paint dry... But this year was... it's been fantastic over there... And I feel like... You know? From standing... When it was standing you was more closer to each... It was more close to eachother... And you weren't... Spaced out from eachother... But erm... No... I don't... When it was standing the atmosphere was... A lot different to the seating... And I think when it was also... It's the type of people that go now have changed... Years ago it might've been a kid with their pocket money going, the kid with their pocket money can't go now... A lot of the people who go now are from Essex, or not from Essex but... Come in... They're not like... Not many... I'd say not many local kids round 'ere go because they can't afford it... it's too expensive... Whereas when I was young, all us kids could afford it... If we was getting pocket money... It's so... It's so expensive now...

Yeah, a lot of people talk of West Ham being a family club, do you think that's the case at all...?

What do you mean? In what way? What do you mean like?

Just everyone together... From all sorts of different backgrounds... Ages...

Yeah, oh... yeah... I'd say that yeah... I'm just sort of going through my, my stand like... You know, I've been working in there about ten years... 'An on the last match of the season they're coming up 'an saying to me 'oh thanks for the memories' 'an all that you know? I would say, yeah... It is like a family club... Yeah... 'Cos I've got the same people in there every... Every week... and you get to know 'em and they shake your 'and... 'an give you a kiss on the cheek, you know? Christmas cards... Bring you, bring you sweets in 'an that you know...? And you get to know their families, like there was one particular family I knew she was... She had a grandchild... June, so we got talking about grandchildren... There's another

man, he comes from Bristol every week, so we'd 'ave a chat you know? 'You coming up this week...?' So you know? I knew a lot of people in there 'an you do, you know? It's someone you see every week... Like whereas, other people in your life you might not seem 'em every week... And you get to know 'em 'an you get to know how to talk to 'em 'an you know? If there's a bit of trouble you know what to say and what not to say... Whereas if you might 'ave other stewards in front like an agency they can... You know? Rub 'em up the wrong way 'an that... Yeah...

So just going back there to the atmosphere again... Erm... Is there particular game when you thought the atmosphere's really electric and it's been better than...?

Erm... When we play like... The London clubs, when we play Tottenham, and err... Like Man U or that, yeah... The last match of the season was brilliant, yeah... And Chelsea, like when we play Chelsea and Tottenham I, I love it, I love it over there... It's just like... Sometimes... Like I feel like it's like... Especially when they played Millwall, the night they played Millwall over there it was like going into like a gladiator's ring, you know like... It's like... It was like... You know like an erm... Oh how can I explain it? I said like, that's what I said, it's like a... You know like lions waiting for their prey you know? You know? Like how they sort of get hyped up, it was... it was, it was like that, and I can remember that night... Because it was all in the corner where I am there was a lot of trouble in there, that's the corner that I work in, but I got moved along because someone hadn't turned up... 'An I said to my supervisor... 'Why are you moving me along?' I said 'I've been waiting for this match for years'... He said 'well if he turns up you can come back', but I was pleased at the end of it I didn't, because what happened, they was all coming into erm... That area where I am because that, that was the nearest place to the Millwall supporters, but the... As for atmosphere's like the electric one's they're like Tottenham, and Chelsea, they're the big, they're the big ones, and, and err... If they play Cardiff as well... Yeah... Because there's certain teams that they really don't get on with...

Yeah...

You know? If it was someone like Bournemouth or Stoke, or that you know? But then there's other one's that are sort of giving 'em the eye and making hand gestures at 'em and...

So what is it about Millwall in particular... Because obviously you know...? West Ham are quite famous for the Inter City Firm, the ICF, and obviously Millwall have got they're equivalent as well... Erm... Why does it always seem to kick of...? Between them two clubs?

Right, I tell you this, because years ago, and I actually went to this match, West Ham were playing over at Charlton, and Millwall were playing someone, I don't know who they was playing... And there was some trouble between Millwall and West Ham, and one of their Millwall supporters got killed... 'Cos he run onto the train... I think this is right, he got on the train, and he run out the other side and a train killed 'im, and it seemed I think it stems from that... And it's like South London, East London... It's like you know? If I know people I say... Let's say they're from South London I think 'Oh... South London...' It's like you're arch-rivals you know like... South London and East London, so I think its most... I don't know if there was something before... But I know it got worse from then... 'Cos I remember like, West Ham played Millwall again after, I don't know how many years when they played, played 'em and I went to the match in, in Millwall and as you walked down the street every

step of the way there was a policeman... And then on the way home we wanted to go a certain way... They said 'no you've got to go that way', there was no getting through the way you wanted to go, they'd contained it so that you couldn't get near each other...

What do you think prompts the violence then between football fans? It's quite a peculiar thing isn't it...? Because obviously people are very passionate about it... But it's just interesting how it spills over into... Something else...

Yeah I think like now... Like now I think they 'ave 'ad... There's, there's a lot of on the internet where they, they there's XXXX traits where they arrange meets and that... Erm... Like and they go to like... There's like certain pubs... That, that they, that they'd go to... Before matches 'an that... Like erm... I dunno what, what, it's just like... I've been to Tottenham, I've been to Tottenham 'an I've been amongst the crowds going towards the trouble, it's just like they don't like that particular club, and they might 'ave done gangs like... I think Chelsea 'ave the Chelsea Head Hunters... I think they might like to get one over on each other as regards the gangs, yeah... Yeah but the Chelsea one, and the Tottenham ones I've been to a lot them, and I've worked over at Tottenham when we play 'em, 'an all, you know? I've even like... Looked at some of these men 'an I think... Look at they're facial expressions and what they're saying 'an I think 'you're fifty... You're about fifty years old... And look what you're doing...' 'Cos I think what it is as well, when, when people go to football... They get like mob mentality they all get together, and they might even be doing things at that football match that they'd never, ever do when they're outside of life... You sort of get you know? Drawn into the... You get drawn into the atmosphere... But, err... I don't know... What it is about 'em wanting to fight each other... I couldn't put my... I wouldn't want to give you an answer, but I just know that they're you know? West Ham... And Chelsea... West Ham, Millwall, West Ham, Tottenham... Because I remember when the draw come out for West Ham to play Millwall... Round this area it was like Christmas... Oh it was like Christmas... Because everyone was like just could not wait for that match... And also like... When the match was on... And I was in the ground, I noticed that there was a lot of people, loads of people there that I haven't seen for years, it's like they'd all come down for that match, and I remember like... The place that I was working there was a man there, 'an he had a broken arm... 'An he was, he was a Chelsea supporter, so he was talking to me... 'an he was like 'I'm a Chelsea Supporter', I said... 'So what you doing 'ere then?' And then after that, I didn't talk to 'im no more, so he said 'ave you stopped talking to me because I'm a Chelsea supporter?' I said 'yeah', but actually he ended up getting thrown out... Yeah so it was like he... You know? Some people like coming just 'cos of the, the trouble...

Do you know anything about the ICF or...?

Do I know...?

Or how it kind of kicked off...

I, I don't know how it started... But I do know err... I remember when I used to go to the like away matches... Some of 'em where on the coaches or the, or the trains that I went to... Some of 'em who are in the ICF still go over there now, and it's quite funny to see like 'cos they're old men now you know? They're old men now... They're old men... Yeah... Yeah... I don't know how it... I mean I know they used to say they had a calling card and they 'you've just met the ICF', and yeah...

I was looking at them online actually, their calling cards...

Yeah... Like business cards yeah... But I knew a few like who were in the ICF, yeah... I would have been able to point 'em out... That was in about the 70s, I'd say about '76, '77, that's when it was... Like and you know? They had these little back... They've got these like... Little, the little erm... ICF badges, then they've got another one, 'Stone Island', see they wear them, the ICF wear them like this particular clothing they wear...

I wear a lot of Stone Island... But, but

Are you a member of the ICF?

I'm not a member of the ICF, I'm not a member of the ICF no...

(Both Laugh)

But no, it's like a little... Yeah it's a button badge that they wear and then, yeah... Yeah, so they say they're like from the ICF... Yeah...

Can you, can you, obviously you work as a steward... Have you ever identified anyone who's in the crowd...?

Oh I, I... Yeah I've seen 'em... I've seen 'em like... 'Cos you think I went like... So as I said I went till I was about eighteen, or nineteen, then I stopped going then I started going like say about ten years ago, and I, and I recognise people in... Yeah, I recognise people who were in the ICF... Yeah... In the stand where I am, and I've also seen some of 'em outside 'an I've sort of took, you know? I've 'ad to look twice to see how they've changed... You know? How they've changed over the... Over the years...

Have you encountered any interesting stories, either as a fan, or...? Through your job at West Ham? Erm... With the crowd? Any interactions...?

What, what regarding what? As regards to what?

I don't know just anything interesting really... Erm...

Like we got some in our stand who come over from Belgium each week, but they... 'Cos they come over from... And I... Don't take 'em too long to get, to get over 'ere... And another thing is I think we're one of the cheaper clubs to visit, rather than going up to Liverpool, or... Somewhere like that... Yeah, so yeah... That 'an... I've got a man in my... Where I am he comes from Bristol every week... Yeah... Err... What other stories...? Oh, yeah...

So do you maybe want to clarify as well what you do for West Ham...?

Yeah, I'm a, I'm a steward... In the North-West corner and I've been doing that... For the past ten years... And I love, I love my job... I love it there... When I first started, err... I thought 'oh I don't wanna do this', I done about two or three matches, then once I got in where I am I just, I just love it in there, I love it... It's not just West Ham... I, I love all the

people in my stand; I've got to know a lot of 'em you know? And like on the last match of the season... they're saying 'you gonna be in with us? You gonna be in with us?' You know...? So... I hope when I... 'Cos I've got a job in the new stadium... I hope when I go over there that I'll be in the... The same corner and I'll have the same people who are with me... In my stand, like you know? People say to me... 'Oh do you know so, and so... He works... They're a steward...' I say, 'look if they don't work where I am, I won't know 'em...' Because you know? I know the certain stewards who work in my stand... My corner, where all, where all the supporters are...

How many stewards usually get in the, in a typical game...?

What in the corner where I work?

The whole stadium...

I think there's... I'm not sure if there's about three or four hundred, but then you have like, 'cos in the corner where I am erm... We got 'Redcoats' as well, so there's like me and my friend Sandra... We're the Stewards, the two in our corner... And err... Then we've got about four, or five 'Redcoats' who are in with us as well... Like you don't see the Police over there as much as you, as you used to... And another thing... When the Police are there, they seem to rub 'em up the wrong way... You know? 'Cos we know a lot of 'em... We know what to say, say to 'em... Like there's one particular one, he, he a couple of times he's tried to get on the pitch... And I've said 'no, don't get on the pitch', and I say to 'im when he comes in I wave me finger at 'im and say 'oi! No getting on the pitch... You're running out of lives' and he'll laugh... Whereas the Police might have dealt with that in a different way... Or... You know? 'An then, but sometimes we might get like erm... (Y) Stewards in... And you have to, you know? They might... There was one particular time, 'an he was you know he was aggravating a lot of the supporters and err... So... 'Cos I know a lot of them... We know how to, we know how to speak to 'em 'an deal with 'em and... Yeah...

How many people do you typically look over then...?

What in that corner?

Yeah...

I wouldn't know how many's in there... I wouldn't... I'd say... There's about, I'd say about five or six-hundred in there... That's a guess... I ain't got a clue... I ain't got a clue, it's just like a corner bit... So that's the... That's the bit we watch... And I'm right sort of pitch side... So when they score... I think I either get on the pitch you stand up and face the crowd... And then at 'alf-time you're on the pitch... But erm... No I wouldn't... That's just a guess... I wouldn't know...

Is there ever a temptation to kind of just turn away and look at the game...?

Course there is... Course there is... Because I'm side-on, I'm side-on, but they say you've gotta keep you've gotta watch the match, I'm just trying to be careful what I say... You've got to watch the match... And you've got to keep your eye on, on the supporters... I will say last year... I spent most of me time watching the supporters because it was so boring,

whereas this year... You know? And another thing that I find really difficult is when they score... I can't cheer... You know? You've gotta just face the crowd... Whereas when West Ham played the last match of the season... I just went ballistic when they scored that first goal... Because I thought 'what are they gonna do? Are they gonna sack me...? It's too...' You know? 'We're finished 'ere now...' But no there is err... Yeah...

What's the most challenging part of that job?

Challenging part? Oh it's people who are, people who are drunk... People who are drunk and... You know? There are a couple who... There are a couple in our... In our stand... Who are, who are a... Every week they're drunk, and they are a continuous problem... 'An also... Like where I work in my corner, at quarter to... Like, quarter of an hour before the end of the match the Redcoats they go up to the station, so that just leaves me and my friend err... Watching over 'em, and sometimes you try but they... When we... When we're just there they might try and you know? Push it a little bit and... So I tend to sit over on the pitch and...

What's the difference with the Redcoats?

So the Redcoats, they're the one who 'ad sort of, if there was any trouble they take 'em out the ground, so really with the Orange Coats, we're the orange ones... We're just sort of saying err... Say for instance they were smoking 'look you need to stop smoking because we got carols going on...' If your seen... You'll be... You'll end up being taken out of the ground... So we're sort of the first step and they'd be the err... Next one on... Yeah...

So what would a typical shift look like then before you start the game, before people start coming into the stadium...?

Right, so when we go in... We go in, and we 'ave to sign in, err... To say we're there... Then we get our coats... Then we get a voucher for our err... For our pie or... Burger and a drink...

What do you usually get?

I get a Chicken Balti Pie, and a bottle of water... I never get the... There was a time when you could 'ave onions with your burgers but that got stopped for some reason, then they stopped the cheese with your burger... You could get a fizzy drink at one point... They stopped that... It was just water and a...

Now you're just getting a bun...

Yeah, that's it a bun...

(Both Laugh)

I just get the meat... with no pastry, so... Yeah no I have a Chicken Balti Pie, 'an a bottle of water... And if you're lucky sometimes... You can get a, an extra voucher you know? Like someone might 'ave one floating round, so yeah... You get your voucher... Then you gotta go down... Walk along the side of the pitch... Up to the corner where we 'ave our briefing... But then I go into the Southbank 'an get me food, sit down there, 'ave a little chat with

people, you know? Like the other stewards... Then what we 'ave to do is... We 'ave to make a line up the steps... Up the chairs... And then we sweep the side that we're working... Just to check the fronts and the backs of the chairs, when we get to the other end we all sit together... And like, the ones in my stand and then we have like a briefing... Of how many supporters there are... You know? If there's any known you know? Troublemakers or that sort of thing you know? Err... What to be aware of... If there's certain players playing... Like they say... Oh for instance Paul Linz is back, and West Ham don't like Paul Linz so... They make you aware of things that may happen if you see any fireworks... or you see any flares... Don't touch 'em... So it's just going over things you need to look for... Telling you when the next match is... Telling you when you're gonna be paid... And then once that's all done, you just go... We go and stand in our corner... We make sure we've got erm... We get a bag for rubbish... Because they're not allowed to bring in cans and that... We bring some cups in, so if they bring a can in, we put they're drink into a plastic cup... We 'ave to make sure we got the loud hailer... And... Err... And that's it, and then we just wait until the supporters come in... They come in, say 'hello, how are you...?' Just you know? Just 'ave a little chat... 'An...

So even before the supporters come in there's quite a kind of security kind of conscientious thing going on, checking seats and...

Yeah checking seats... Brief, briefing about what, what, you know? What to look out for, or... Err... You know? Err... How many supporters they got coming in and all that sort of thing...

Has there been a particular event at Upton Park, or... Or the Boleyn Ground, erm... Which has been particularly quite bad, or...?

What? Not just football?

Within the ground...

Within the ground?

Yeah, yeah...

I tell you the worse thing I done over there was the boxing, the boxing match... It was with David Haye... And I said 'you know what? West Ham are pussy cats compared to these boxing supporters' it was just, it was... We run out of food in the stadium, we run out of drink in the stadium... There was just... 'Cos what it was, it's like people we don't see each week... Whereas our school... In the stand where I am we know each other so you know? You're respectful towards each other, whereas at the boxing match, they was just like lunatics... You know? So rude 'an that... So that one... Yeah... That one I'd say...

Any West Ham Football Club, than playing themselves? When West Ham have been playing...?

Yeah what...? Say that again... What was the question there?

Erm, any particular events that have been quite nasty or horrible...?

Oh the Millwall one, the Millwall one that is the worst one yeah... That's the worst one I've seen, the Millwall one... Though, though when I was young, I can remember when I used to go in the North bank, and I think we was playing Arsenal I see some... An old man he got a dart... 'Cos they had a time where they used to throw darts...

Darts...?

Yeah, and he had a dart thrown right at the top of his nose by his eye...

Nasty...

Yeah. That one, but no mainly... I'd say Millwall was the worse one I've... The worst one I've seen over there, the worst one and erm... And when you've got like the err... Tottenham and West Ham and Chelsea, West Ham, it's not really, it's not so much in the ground like it was at the Millwall match, that's, that's more outside... But err... Yeah... The Millwall one... Easily that was the worst one...

Yeah... So when you go into your shifts, do you ever get a chance to see any of the players, or the manager, or...?

Yeah, yeah, yeah... Yeah... Like even if... If it's not, like before the match... You'll get the away team come out and they walk round on the pitch.. or like recently I've had Ian Wright... 'ad me photo taken with him... Anton Ferdinand.. can't remember who the other one was.. cos they come out... what they do .. they specially this year .. there's been Ian Wright's been over there a lot 'cos they've been doing a lot of... you know like they do interviews before the game starts and all that... so where I am... that's where they u... generally stand and do the interviewing cos I'm just up from the tunnel.. so yeah....we get to see them all the time and then at the end the players come out and just like have a ball down and all that ... yeah.

Yeah

So we see them all the time.. and sometimes I see David Gold going in ...co as I go .. I go in through the main entrance to the stand I work in... you know.

Do you have any reservations about the move to Stratford? Erm within the context of your job cos obviously it's a far bigger stadium.

Oh yeah....

More people...all the logistics of it...{yeah} quite different....?

Yeah.. cos I've worked over there already... I worked over there when we had the Rugby World Cup and I didn't like it at all..[yeah] I didn't like it... and I even said to people, if it's like that when I'm working over there I don't know if I'm going to carry on doing it.

Yeah

Cos what it is...like when you go there... you don't like.... When we go to West Ham usually we go and we sign and we go off and we're doing our job but when you go there you're waiting around... you're waiting around for about two hours [yeah] before you go in to do your job. At West Ham we've got our own coat, we've got our same coat...same coat we wear every week. We go there.. we're not ... we're... we're going to be wearing anyone's coat...[yeah] you know, we're used to wearing our same coat... you know and like.. when... at the end of the match we had to go and check in all the toilets and all that ... there's a lot more checking over there than when we was .. when I'm at West Ham.. like it's much bigger . The thing... the main thing I want when I go over there is I want to be back there with my supporters...[Mmmmm] I want to be back in the area with the supporters I was with over at ...

Yeah

Over at the ...er Boleyn ground , that's what I want.

Do you know when you 're going to find out when you 're assigned to that area?

Well I... what we ...we/re waiting to hear ... we've got to do a .. we've got to go to the ground and just have a little... you know when you go round have a security check ...they're just going to show us round the ground... so we've got to do that but then once we've done that we'll be able to work at the stadium even though I've already worked at the stadium but I ... they said they're trying to keep us in the same positions as we were cos they've got... I think they were saying they need seven hundred stewards to steward that...

A lot of people....

Yeah and I've.... At the moment what I'm going to not be working..I won't be working for West Ham any more.... Over there I was working for West Ham... I'm going to be working for OCS... so you know it's ...

So it's a private contractor ...

Yeah... yeah.. they're going to be doing the stewarding over there..... but hopefully I think in a few years they'll just do it so it's just in house stewards. They'll get enough stewards.. so you've got the same set of people... you just go in ... you know.. you do your job you know where you're going... it's like when you come a work...you go work... you know where you're going. I got come a work and wait around and be told what position to go in. I find it.. I find it much easier if you go in and you know where you're going

Yeah

Yeah

Is it a paid job or is it a voluntary job?

It is a paid job yeah.... it's a paid job yeah

So what do you think from a football perspective of the move to the stadium in Stratford.

I mean it will be better for.. will be better for all. They've got a bigger stadium... er you know it's a way of developing whereas over West Ham they was there, they couldn't get get any more supporters in ... you know they're going to be like some...you know like how Man City are and Man Utd.... It's going to be .. they're going to be in that sort of .. up with the ...you know Chelsea..how that ground is ... they 've got ... they've got .. you know and it's going to be better for people coming in and out of London to get to the .. the... stadium but you know the main reason I didn' want them to move and no one 's going to listen to what I say is ... know other people felt like it as well.. is... it's going to kill this area... look at all the businesses.. I already know one that's already ..ready going to .. two.... two that are going already... you know because this is like ... they they depended on that football team.. you know on the last match of the season I was going into the match and there's a sweet stall outside of the football ground and he was saying about they're trying to get some'ink to say that they can go over and work at West Ham ..cos I was saying, what's going to happen to all these scarves and badge stalls.. are they going to be... are they going to be going over there? You know it's going to be .. it will be better for the club but it's just like.. I'd say.. cos I'm a supporter and I'm still in the area... that And I like the fact that I could walk to work you know.. whereas now it's...it's like you go till Stratford ... you think that once you get to Westfield you're there.. you're not ... you've got another twenty minute walk cos where the stewards go in it's right... you know the Orbit

Yeah

It's right up round there where you have to go into the ground... it's a long way and you know.. it may have a ... it might be that on night matches I can't do cos it's too far

Yeah

The last time I worked.. worked .. worked in there which was when.... when when Romania and France... the rugby I left there at quarter to twelve at night and I'm walking through that big ... that park on me own.. you know so go

So what do you think.. what do you think's going to happen to that area then? Cos obviously there's

This area?

There's lots of... like you just mentioned there's lots of businesses that really rely on the club

Yeah...from week to week.

I reckon some of them are even dead... they'll just fold up .. They'll just fold.. you know .. cos I like I know... I know the lady who works in the Boleyn and you know I think I spoke to her and I was saying like.. you know... what's going to happen. She goes well we'll have all the builders... but that's.... how many builders you going to have ?

Mmmmm

How long you going to.... It's not like thirty.... I know they don't get thirty thousand but that's only going to be for a few years and then what's going to happen when they've gone? What people go to the pubs now? It's mainly people who go there to watch football....[yeah] ...they go to the pubs... and they go to the pie and mash... there's not local people left here who will go to that pie and mash shop... [yeah]... fish and chips... that's a cult.. you know that's a thing from years ago... you know... peop...I don't know many Asian people or Eastern European people or Portuguese people who go to pie and mash.... Pie and mash is like a trad... and East End tradition..you know

Do you think then with the moving of the club then a lot of these traditions are going to be lost?

Yeah.. cos they're shut up.. they're shut...cos we've most probably only got the... you know ...we're only there cos of the football's....

Yeah...

You know ..er...going there every week or every other week... you think how much money they make out of the ground..

Yeah

But that's not been taken into account... no way... that's not been taken into account...

Do you think that any of those businesses will move to Stratford at all..

Any of my....

The businesses?

Where are they going to go? Where are they going to go? Cos you've got like Westfields but then you've got the part.. you can't sort of randomly pop up a pie and mash shop or a fish and chip shop can you? or a sweet stall... it's like all that's gone....

Yeah

Someone said to me on the last match of the season when I was walking down there on that very last match he said..he said to me this is the final bit of the East End gone and I thought of that and I thought... yeah it is.... Cos that is the place where all the old Eastenders come and go to the match and meet and you'd meet up with people who lived there years ago who.. who you know and they know where you're coming from... this is the final bit of the East End [yeah... yeah...] gone... cos when you get to Stratford it's not going to be like... it's not... I can't see that it's going to be like that... cos it's not just going to the football match... it's going to pie and mash... it's going in the Boleyn... it's going in Queen's... it's walking down Green Street... seeing all the stalls ... you know like the.. the sort that sell flags... the overland and sea people who sell.... It's

all... it's that ... that's not going to be... I can't see that that's going to be over the ground....

Yeah....

And then I was talking to someone else and he said that he supports Arsenal and he said, do you know what, he said.. it's like that we've never not been here... you know they moved from their own ground... they've moved there he said it's like it's like we've always been here.

Yeah

Yeah... but you know I'm saying that .. but what I'm saying that may not be right ...we've just got to wait and see what happened when they go over there.

But opinion's definitely quite divided on this...

Yeah

Cos I think that everyone's in general consensus over the businesses that are going to be affected but the actual football reasons for moving to the stadium.. everyone's pretty much

It's the same ... yeah... yeah

So people don't want to

I XXX say yeah

People want to go..... people have .. you know the creative memories of Upton Park ... they're worried that they're not going to have the same sort of memories going to the new stadium...

Not... you think like erm over West Ham as you go into the ground, they've got a little cemetery there .. you know what's going to happen to that little cemetery there

Yeah

And then you've got all the bricks on the walls that they've done with people's got their names on them.. on the walls...

Yeah

You know when they built that new bit with the west.. you know the west side people put money into that and not that's all going to be... that's all gone... it's all gone..

Do you think that in a number of years' time people will pass through the area of West Ham and think West football club used to once play here?

I do that already... I do that already I walked past there it was about three or four days after the match and there was all rubbish, you know and I thought Ahhhh... you know I find it... I was really crying at the end of ... you know ..not sobbing just had tears and especially when the supporters were singing Bubbles and I could see.. I see quite few men crying in there... cos you think it's like part of your family being taken... say you lived in a house that you really loved and you'd.. you didn't want to move that's what it's like... you know it's not just the football club... like you said it'sit's.. I don't know it's just like in your... in your blood you know ... it's something in your... yeah it's like something in your blood.... Yeah... it's like... you know .. who was it something about my grandson and said oh well what was he...what will he... support or will he support. I said he ain't got a choice ... you know before they're born they're already supporting West Ham... it's sort of like a family thing... they're... they're... they're West Ham before they're born.. you know but ... I...I ... I didn't want them to move.... I know it will be better for them football-wise but it's just what it done.. cos I live.. perhaps if I didn't live in the area I might say.. oh yeah it's good ... because one of the supporters over there he don't live in the area and he said to me – what do you think about the move and I said I don't want us to go and he said oh I'm.. I'm... I'm pleased with it he said. He said Can't get a tr.. it only takes me twen... the transport but I've been over Stratford on a Saturday and it's bedlam and I'm thinking in what is it going to be like at West Ham?

Yeah I think that as well... You've got Westfield.

You've got Westfield... yeah.. look at at all the trai... at all the trains.. like you've got.. you know the Central line, the Ju... the Jubilee... all these different lines coming in and out at Stratford...they're busy enough and you're going to get an extra sort of fifty thousand people coming in and out ... what is it going to be like?

Interesting...I think

Yeah and then if it is a problem.. what are they going to do then? it's too late then in'it.

Yeah....

You can't go back to Upton Park.

Yeah... so ...

Yeah...

So do you think you'll ever go back to a West Ham game as a fan?

Erm

Cos most of the games you obviously go to now are as a

Erm... if I weren't a steward I would

yeah

I've said, if I, If I don't carry on stewarding I'll get a season ticket.

Mm

Yeah... now, now I've been going like for ten years every week you know...

Yeah

Its it's even more in, it's in me ever more you know?

Yeah

Yeah

What do you prefer going to erm when you were supporting them in a fan sense? Home games or away games?

Uff that's hard, that's a difficult one. That is a difficult one

Erm that's a different set of supporters isn't it for away games

Yeah do you know when you go t the away ones, its... it's like a party. It's really good; the away ones are really good.

Mm

They're brilliant to go to, the one... 'cos I work... 'cos I'm a steward, erm we done the erm we go on the coaches sometimes so we steward the coaches

Yeah

And then we get a ticket to go in and watch the, the match and a couple of seasons ago we went, we went down...the last match we played... I can't – Wigan I think it was, I'm sure it was Wigan. Well the last match of the season we played we went down we XXX and we went down (1:35:42:3)

Yeah

That's when they had that plane coming over, did you see it? That was that match and err oh it was brilliant

Yeah

I said to my friend, this is one of the best matches ... cos it weren't the match so much, it was the atmosphere.

Mm

Even though we went down it was a good atmosphere. So you know that's a difficult one, what one do I prefer away or ... I like the Tottenham, I like Tottenham away 'cos I go to ... Tottenham when we play – steward there. It's a ... it's a, It's a good atmosphere there. Yeah

Another thing with err supporters as well that I've encountered through the interviews is that they would rather see Wes Ham play good football and lose or draw rather than play terrible football and win

Yeah

Erm what do you think of that?

Mmm I'd rather us win

Yeah,

I wanna win all the time, god I'd rather us win, I can't say id want us to ...

They talk about the West Ham way, that's what they meant, the West Ham way of football

Yeah

Erm attacking football, that kind of thing,

Yeah

They'd rather say that then say something like XXX (1:36:45:3)

Oh he was boring,

Yeah

He was so boring. You know I could even sit on my stool and nearly practically fall asleep 'cos he was... it was so boring. You know and the amount of people that were walking out towards the end of the matches. 'Cos he was so boring

Yeah

So boring and you know a lot of the time, they'd be, they've be winning and then the other team would score. How many times did that happen?

Mm

But or I can't say I wanna win all the time, I never wanna not win you know

Yeah

Down to the way their playing football and that I always wanna win and there's certain ones I wanna win over,

Mm

I want them to beat more than, more than others you know

Yeah. What do you think it is about football that you really enjoy? Is it the football itself? Or is it the atmosphere,

It's the-

The kind of togetherness, of being with your mates, having a bit of banter all that kind of thing...

I know what it is, it's like when you – this for me when I was young it was sort of a way of reliving- it was a release you know especially when they score you just go... you just scream and you just go crazy and so

Yeah

It's like a release , it's like a ... it's like the atmosphere, it's the atmosphere as well and its sort of been in that XXX (1:37:59:4) with you know the majority of them all want the same as you and you're all cheering for that team to win and yeah.

So what do you think West Ham's meant to you then, over the course of your life cos you've been pretty much a lifelong supporter haven't you?

Oh, the thing is, what they have given me is a load of fantastic memories.

Mm

Loads of fantastic memories.

So just continuing on from what we were walking about erm, how do you maybe like to see West Ham football club moving forward now?

Yeah erm, I hope they play, like thee was playing this seasons, next season. I want them to ... you know become a much better, even better than what they are you know we got XXX (1:38:44:0) I want him to be wanting to stay

Yeah

I don't want - I want us to get a load of good players that wanna stay at the team. I wanna be back with my supporters

Mm

In the corner that I am. I just want it to be how it was. But I wanna be where I was over at Upton Park over in the new stadium but I want, and I want the team to get better

Mm

Yeah and er

Do you think west hams quite a better sweet experience for England? Last year I weren't but a few seasons ago it was yeah.

Yeah

Like you'd say I'm never going again and then the next week... it's a bit addic- well it is addictive isn't it?

Mm

I'm never going again and then you think well they might win you know

Yeah

It's something like, I wanna take my grandchildren over West Ham as well cos when it was like the large match of the season and I was thinking like oh just think when I take my grandchildren, they're never gonna have known Upton Park.

Mm

And I would have loved them to have known Upton Park

Yeah

Cos it's something you know cos of all the memories and all that what's happened over there, you can never sort of.... You can't explain it to anyone, you've gotta be in it. You know you gotta feel it.

Yeah

You can't, you can't explain it to someone. But I want what's happened ... see like how it, how it was this season at West Ham, I'd love it to be that's a main concern of mine as well cos when I when I worked there for the rugby, I thought then they're never gonna feel this grand and it's never gonna be the atmosphere it's not gonna be like it is at the Boleyn I just want it to be, still have a good atmosphere.

Yeah

Cos it good atmosphere over there. Just want the atmosphere to be there... yeah

And the memories

And the memories and I want...

But

And I want new memories to be as good as the old memories that I've got at West Ham.

You're gonna get a new set of or new generation of West Ham fans going to the stadium for the first time for a slightly new area so hopefully they will be new memories created for West Ham.

But then there's gonna be a lot that, a lot there that they've never witnessed. That seems a shame they've never ever witnessed. You know I'd love it to be like as you walked into the new stadium you know through the park there was like the stools as you went in you know

Yeah

The scarves, the badges, the programmes, the sweets, the food I think that was part of going there. 'Cos where else do you go to see a street lined up like that.

That's why it's important to do interviews like this because all that information, all those stories are kind of are held together through your experiences and you know hopefully younger fans might appreciate that and hope they won't be lost either so... but do you have any final comments before we finish the interview?

Err I just hope we carry on playing next season like we did last season and I just want the atmosphere to be there and the main thing I wanna be with my supporters I was with

Yeah

in the old stand, in the new stand.

Mm

Yeah, just sort of like I wanna be back, sort of like they're like your family you know. You get to see them every week catch up and you know what's been happening and you know and yeah so I just wanna be back with them

Yeah, well thank you for being interviewed

Yeah that's okay.

[1:42:08:2]