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*Okay, that should be fine*

*Can I start by asking you to spell your name and your date of birth?*

Pam P-A-M Beech B- Double E - C - H and it’s the twenty fifth of April 1933

*Where were you born?*

In Barking

*Did you go to school in Barking?*

Yes. Yes.

*Which school?*

I went to the Manor School round in Sandringham Road, I don’t suppose you know local at all do you?

*A bit*

Yes, yes

*And what was school like?*

Oh. Fine. I mean I’d only been there a little while when the war started and so it closed for a little while because lots of people were evacuated but I stayed at home [laughter] my mum didn’t want me to go I think and I didn’t so but then they opened the school again so that was all a bit sort of higgledy piggledy bit strange. But no I quite enjoyed school. I mean because of the war though my mum had taught me to read, you know, because I wasn’t going to school so that was that.

*So you were home schooled in a way?*

For a spell, you see, until they opened the school again. Because they closed the school because of the evacuation but and then you know we had to, in the school grounds we had brick built shelters if it was an air-raid we used to have to go into the shelter [laughter]

*So did the school re-open in the middle of the war, it wasn’t that it didn’t open until the end.*

Oh, no. In the war, we went. I think it was that people started coming home and there were more people that hadn’t gone so then they obviously had to start school again so that we all knew where we were. But no, so that was but I mean it was a long while ago. I do remember it but not that well.

*Are there anything that you particularly liked or disliked about school?*

No, I just liked school I think you know, it was um I don’t know I think you had to go and so you got on with it, I think, you know, in later years people “oh didn’t like school” and all that sort of thing but I think because it was one of those things that you’ve sort of just got to do you just accepted it or I did anyway, I just had to go so

[PHONE RINGS]

[exits the room]

[tape paused]

No then well I sat the eleven plus and then went to the South West Essex Technical College which was at Walthamstow for a year because there was no room in this one, now where they’re building the houses in Longbridge road which was the South East Essex Tech and then it changed to University.

*Okay*

So I went there you know when I was eleven or whatever. So, I’ve always been in Barking [laughter]

*How old were you when you finished school?*

Sixteen, I left at sixteen and went to work in a bank

*Okay, how did you find it having to leave school to then go into working*

There again I think it was just one of those things I think you’ve got to do, you know you had to leave school, well some stayed on but I wasn’t terribly bright and you know there wasn’t quite the same situation where by people stayed on and unless there was something you particularly wanted to do which needed more education you general rule you left school and went on to work. I think I was terribly green when I went to work, when I think about it now I was still young and I can’t imagine really. It’s appalling to think that I was so naïve but there you go. I’m sure we all were, or lots of us were.

*I think that’s quite a common thing for people to say*

I think so yes.

It was you know, I went into the bank and stayed there until I got married and then started my family.

*So what were you doing at the bank?*

Oh, just on the machines you know. Um. There was nothing. Oh no they were electric that was something, I think first of all we had them with handles you know and you put it all in and you pulled a handle but then we did have slightly more modern ones. Huge things you know nothing like computers and things that they do now. Just got on with it and I quite enjoyed it.

*Going back to what you said earlier about how you were at school when the war broke out how was growing up whilst there was a war on.*

Oh yes, well I don’t know we just sort of took it for granted I think, and we had an air-raid shelter in the garden you know if there was an air-raid we got into the garden and went down into the shelter and um the bombs dropping and hearing the aeroplanes going over but I suppose because I was, what was I, I was six when the war started it sort of almost became part of life. When I went to the senior school we used to go on the train from Barking and we used to see the flying, what we called the flying bombs, didn’t have pilots you know they were just XXXX things, I don’t know but they were following the river, trying to get to the docks I think you know to bomb the docks. And we used to sit in the train and watch these things going along. When I think about it my mother must have been terrified that I was only eleven and having to do that and go out every morning and you know during the war sort of thing. But I think we just had to well there was nothing else you know we didn’t know anything else really. For being six when it started you know but then it went on you know it was peace time and things changed but the more I think about it now you know life was different but I just think my mother must have been so worried really seeing me go off, you know, to that big school and watch the aeroplanes

*Especially if you were telling her about watching these things go past, if one of them had veered off and hit the train or anything*

Yes, it must have been really quite frightening for her. I think we just thought it was a bit of fun really but there you go we didn’t know any better.

*When you, after you worked in the bank you said you got married, what year was that in?*

Um [counts] 1956, yes 1956 I got married [laughter] I can’t remember now. Um yes so and I had three children and you know you didn’t go back to work in those days you stayed at home and looked after the children so that’s what I did but, yes, it was 1956. It was a long while ago but I’ve been a widow for um well my husband died in 1989 so I’ve been a widow for a long time. But life goes on and you get on with these things.

*Again if we do touch on anything you don’t particularly want to talk about just say and we can pause*

It’s been such a long time dear, I don’t want to say I’ve got used to it, but you know yes you just. That’s life I’m afraid. As I say I had three children but my eldest son died when he was twenty five he had a heart attack in 1982 so you know, these things happen and you can’t cope with it at the time well you do, you’ve got to cope with it at the time perhaps I couldn’t of talked about it at the time but I can now because you know you get older and you realise that that’s life and life’s got to go on. But no, it’s one of those sad things but you have to accept that that’s what life throws at you.

*Yeah, so what did your husband do for work?*

He worked for Plessey’s who were an electrical company in Ilford and um he was an electrical engineer but um he’d been in the air force, he’d had to go and do his national service but he’d signed on for extra years but while he’d done almost five years in the air force his father had then died so he came out of the air force then to be with his mum and his sister but um then he went to work for Plessey’s but as I say he was an electrical engineer so he was local you know. None of us have moved very far.

*Not like these days*

No no, but I’ve got a daughter that lives next door to me so she hasn’t gone very far although life will be changing for her but that’s by the by and that’s her son up there, yes in his cap and gown but he got his degree and then his masters. I had somebody come down, well the fellow who came down to take a blood, you know, sample and he thought they were twins but no it’s the same boy just a few years apart but yeah so that’s my very boring life really.

*How old were you when you had children, you said you had three*

Um yes so twenty three, twenty four and twenty six, something like that so yes. Life is different now but um yes, you start thinking about things then don’t you

*If we move on to the park*

*So what is your first memory of Barking Park?*

Well I suppose it was being taken there by my mum and dad we used to walk around the park and feed the ducks and that sort of thing, you know usual sort of things that you did. Um. But yes I mean I suppose that was perhaps as we got older I remember more because they had the barrage balloon in the park in the war so you weren’t allowed to go certain places in there and keep out of the way but yeah you know and they always had, well there’s a fair up there now [laughter]

*Yeah*

I couldn’t believe it when I went past this morning with my daughter in the car, oh dear how many years have we been having a fair in Barking Park? I can’t imagine! But they always had a this time of year, September time I think we always had a carnival and parade and park the fair in the park, it went on for years and years [laughs] but of course once I had my children then you start it all over again going to the park and going to the swimming pool well I did when I was younger and then the children then I think I went through it all again when my daughter went back to work and I looked after this one, he’s now thirty three so that was a long while ago as well we used to take him over there and feed the ducks and thing and later on we used to go over and watch him play cricket because he used to play for the school and he went to the Abbey School next door to the park and they used to have their games in the park so I used to go over and watch him after school.

*At the end of the war when you were allowed to go places that you hadn’t been able to before did that turn into a bit of a game that people would suddenly be able to explore all these bits that, because obviously with the war starting when you were six you wouldn’t of been able to do that before because of the age.*

Oh yes! You did more things and went out and had outings and that sort of things but at the same time of course um well my parents didn’t have a car or anything and you know there wasn’t enough money to you know do too much you know you had to be a bit frugal I suppose but no the park was quite a meeting place and quite a place to go to see, you would often see quite a lot of people on the Sunday all going for a walk around the park and taking the children out with their bats and balls and that sort of thing but yes.

*In terms of staffing within the park what was that like when you went to the park as a child and post war compared to when you took your daughter because people talk about a lack of staff these days but*

Oh yes, yes there were always park keepers and people who were looking after it and working in there and because they always had people one or two of them were on bikes and they used to ride around and then we had the greenhouses up there where the men used to work and grow all of the plants for the borough so there were always people keeping an eye on everything, wouldn’t let you go mad or anything.

*So were they quite strict*

Oh yeah fairly strict, you weren’t allowed to ride your bikes or anything like that through there to behave yourself

*That must have been quite annoying when they were riding around on bikes and you weren’t allowed to*

Oh yes and you weren’t allowed to. That was just to keep an eye on everybody and that sort of thing and then, well years ago now, you often got the mounted police in riding around to see that there was no trouble and that sort of thing going around on their horses you know. I mean we often used to see that because they would leave Barking Park, on their horses, and ride through the turnings and on to Mayesbrook Park, you know Mayesbrook Park?

*Yeah*

Yes and so often they used to sort of come down here on their horses on their way to Mayesbrook Park so it all links you know. They weren’t there every day but you know they used to ride around so you’d see them.

*Was it that they had a day when they would tour around all of the parks just to check that they were…*

Yes, I suppose to have a bit of a look at you and I suppose yes, I can’t remember now but I don’t suppose it was the same day every week or anything like that so that people didn’t know that they would be there. I think you know, I don’t know I think because there were staff in the park, and they usually wore uniforms and that sort of thing, and I do think in those days we were sort of, not frightened, well frightened of them I suppose well certainly very aware you know you would be very, you’d watch ya, you’d watch yourselves you wouldn’t misbehave but you know it was one of those different attitudes now I think isn’t it? But yes so there were always plenty of people up, working in the gardens, keeping it all clean and tidy and watching what everyone was doing walking around the lake and making sure that nobody was drowning. We had the boats and the train and all sorts you know?

*You mentioned the nursery, was that growing flowers for the whole borough then not just the park?*

For the whole borough

*So it wasn’t just seedlings for the park?*

No, no, no. it was you know where they put them in around different houses or around different buildings you know, they used to grow everything up there then, I think they also sold somethings then you know but I can remember, you know, whether we went from school or whether it was a Sunday school outing or something I don’t know, but I do remember as a reasonably oh I don’t know perhaps twelve or thirteen something like that going round the nursery’s to see what they were doing up there with and then what was now well I don’t think they’ve got them now I suppose they all got pulled down but um they’ve got the allotments but there now haven’t they so um times change [laughs]

*With the boats and the train was that anything that you ever went on or took your children on?*

Oh yes, I took my children on and then my grandson we definitely took him on and um I didn’t take him on the boats, I wasn’t brave enough other people could do that. Um I’m not terribly keen on water, I don’t mind being in it, you know I never minded going swimming or being in water at the sea but for some reason or other I don’t like, I’ve always had that feeling that I am going to walk into it and opposed to walk along side it. Oh I used to hate it when the children fed the ducks and would walk right up to the edge and throw the bread out and I’d think ooh gosh if they fall in they’re going to drown and I’m going to have to get wet. It’s funny because I’m still the same I don’t mind being in it, well not now, but I could never walk along near it, well I didn’t like it but there you go.

*So did you go on the train also?*

Yes, yes. I mean at one time it went around the back of the pond of the lake but then it just went, I don’t know why they changed it really but then it used to go from the gate and just down to the bottom and turned around and come back again

*Was that something that your children and grandchildren enjoyed?*

Oh yes, simple pleasures. I don’t know whether the children would like it now, I don’t suppose they would they’re all too sophisticated aren’t they, they’re too old of their age but that’s me getting old but no they seemed to enjoy it because when you went over there there wasn’t a lot to do so you know you had to um you enjoyed that because there wasn’t a lot else to amuse you, you know, unless you were playing cricket and football or whatever. I’ve played enough cricket in my time so [laughs] I had two boys and my grandson so we did play a lot of cricket over there I suppose

*So did you go over there regularly to play sport with them?*

Yes, quite a bit yes especially as the children got older and my grandson got older because um the gardens were never big enough for it once they got older and bigger playing football or cricket with them the ball would end up being throw the window or two or three houses along so you know you needed to go to the park so that they could have a good slosh at the ball. [Laughs]

*With the lido, what was that like?*

It was you did have to queue up because they obviously controlled the number in there to get in but that was quite nice it, it yes some people sort of lived up there all summer, it wasn’t one of those sort of things that appeal to me to that extent but there were always things floating on it, leaves and flies things that had drowned so, you know, in that respect it wasn’t I would sooner, if I went swimming I would prefer to go to an indoor one. I mean that was nice but really I think the lidos are much more, I mean you did swim yes, but it was more if you liked the sun and I don’t like the sun and the sun doesn’t like me so um you know I never really wanted to just go up there and have a little swim then lie in the sun, I didn’t like it but one of the things to do was there were always leaves and bits floating on the top which you know are just bits that fly about anyway so but um but no we did go up there and quite enjoy it but it was one of those strange things really, but yes I think I possibly enjoyed the indoor swimming better but it was a shame really when it closed because I think people did all enjoy it you know so but it’s like everything else and it all changes don’t they so.

*Did you ever use any of the other facilities in the park like the paddling pool or the tennis courts?*

Oh yes, yes you know well I don’t think I did particularly you know but the children did and they all went up there but then again there weren’t that many tennis courts so you sort of had to wait, wait your turn and that sort of thing but no they all enjoyed it and I used to take them up there in the paddling pool bit they enjoyed that, someone always fell over and got wet but that was life but no and there was always the pavilion then where they could have a drink or an ice-cream or something, you know, so that all helped to pass the time and give them something to do.

*You said that your grandson was playing cricket for the school in the park so did they use the park instead of having to have their own sports ground*

They had a sports ground on the other side of the road behind the garage um but it really wasn’t big enough for a well they were 12, 14, 14 age then I suppose but that wasn’t big enough so they played in the park when it was a proper match so that it wasn’t so dangerous otherwise they’re that age that they can hit the ball pretty far but yes my daughter was at work so I used to go and watch him, you know, play and my husband did when he was alive you know we did do a lot of cricket training, he did play football but he wasn’t so keen on the football really because he couldn’t wear his glasses so but I mean he did wear glasses for cricket, I’m sure he shouldn’t of done but I mean he did but no yes the school used the park, I expect they had to get permission and all of that sort of thing but there was always or often on Saturdays and Sundays there were well I presume Barking had a cricket team you know and they played over there and you know the older people used to come you know men used to play, it was used you know a lot I mean well they do still certainly play football because depending on what sort of weather it is and which way the wind is blowing you often hear them here you know playing football and calling out. I don’t know why men have to shout such a lot when they play football but they do so you think oh yes, playing football today you know but so you know it was, I think it was used a lot um well because I suppose there wasn’t an awful lot of other things to do so you know it I’m sure they’re hoping that once they get it all sorted out over there people will use it more don’t they?

*Well it’d be silly to put that much money in to it if they think people will go and do something else*

Well yes you know I do hope they’re not wasting their money but um well I’m you know I think the thing is they have got to have plenty of, plenty of staff haven’t they and make sure that it’s kept safe, I think that was a lot of the trouble you know it got the stage where the children used to go on their own and then things always seemed to get a bit nasty and so you didn’t like to let them go on their own and they didn’t necessarily want you know mum and dads or grandparents with them but you know you got to a stage where you didn’t like to let them go on their own, I mean I don’t know what I’d do now I think I’d have them wrapped in cotton wool in the corner or something but you know but I do feel nowadays, I’ve got two little boys well one has gone to senior school this year, this you know this month um but I know their parents won’t let them go out and do things on their own you know well I am sure when mine were that sort of age they did where as no I think people are much more nervous about it all aren’t they because unfortunately you do hear nasty stories about it and so you know but I think when they do get it all sorted they’re going to have to have plenty of staff over there aren’t they looking after it.

*I think they have a new team that will be looking after the park in, maybe not as strict as it used to be, but it will be well looked after*

Yeah, just for safety sake for the children’s sake and well everybody really. Well I presume they’ll still let people walk around with their dogs but that was another thing was felt that people weren’t careful with their dogs you know I think now they’ve got a lot more aware haven’t they of clearing up after their dogs and that sort of thing

*I was walking through before and there were special bins the dogs*

Well yes that’s it.

Do you have to spend a lot of time up there?

*I wasn’t sure how long the bus would take me to get down here with traffic so I came a bit early but then I was thought I’d go and sit in there, couldn’t find a bench anywhere.*

Oh well there were always plenty of benches I mean I when I used to take him for a walk and I’d walk around the park and he’d fall asleep “oh that’s good I’ll find a bench to sit down” rather than walking about with him asleep so but I mean there were but people stole them or just broke them up for you know no reason, it’s a bit like anywhere now isn’t it. Bus stops, why do they always have to break the windows? But as I say I presume that’s why the pavilion closed because people broke windows or got in an smashed it up and that sort of thing you know so very difficult to keep things usable.

*What was the pavilion like?*

Oh it was very nice when it was new, it got a bit run down but it was you know very nice. People in there you know it was only cups of tea or biscuits or cakes or something you know but it was kept nicely. The family down the road, the man who comes to do my garden now, but they, there was a bomb dropped on a few houses along there and there were four children in their family, he was only little I think he was only a baby when they went up there but they lived in the flat in the pavilion during the war because they couldn’t live in their house because of bombing and damage you know and they lived up there in the park so you know it was well that was a long while ago because that was during the war but it was you know so it was quite a big place, I don’t know who normally lived in the flat upstairs or if it was just rooms that were used I’m not sure. Because the park keeper lived in the little house in the gateway there you know that was, well I always presumed it was the park keeper you know

*Yeah from what we’ve heard it was always the park keeper or it was someone who worked for the park, one of the nursery workers lived there for a long time*

Yes somebody to do with the park who was always there on call if need be

*From what we’ve heard about above the pavilion it was often council workers who rented it from the council.*

Oh I see so obviously when the bomb dropped the Wiseman family moved up there, I don’t know quite how I must ask him one of these days, I’m not sure if he’ll remember because I think he was only a baby when they went up there. You forget these things.

*What about big events within the park, obviously you were born after the charter day celebrations but what about…*

No, my mother was in that she was dressed up in the pageant and an aunt of mine helped to organise it but yes that was all, yes the pageant was all to do with the charter wasn’t it? So they did do things up there, I don’t quite know what really but you know different fetes and gatherings you know.

*Do you remember if anything happened in the park for the end of the war?*

I can’t really remember no I don’t know. I mean the thing was I suppose we still had the balloon and a few guns and things up there so they probably wouldn’t of done very much um no I mean all I can remember is when peace was declared that we all went down to saint Margaret’s church for a service down there and a thanks giving of the fact that we were all still alive but I am sure they probably did but I’d have been a teenager then and I wasn’t going to do what anyone else wanted me to do I’d got a bit stroppy then I expect. But um they always had a service for the armistice you know poppies and all that sort of thing you know there was this, well I assume they’ve still got it the memorial there, there was always a service then and I am sure there must have been other things that I have completely forgotten about but anyway.

*Growing up did you ever go to the fair or the carnival?*

We used to go to the fair, I never liked the fair much um but we usually took the children to the fair and we always used to go out and watch the carnival go by which was really the same every year but you know you still went and um yes that was always the children always enjoyed the fair because I mean now we seem to have two or three a year which I never really understand but then we only had the one so it was different you know you used to go I think occasionally they used to have a circus, I don’t think they have circus’ now do they ‘cause it’s not the right thing to do to have animals and things but I am sure I went to a circus up there. But um yes the well I think the fairs, I mean obviously older people did go, but I mean I think we only went to take the children because I think Saturday afternoons and that sort of thing it would open in the afternoon so you know you’d go up there and take them in the afternoon which was better than going up there at night but um but I think the carnival just got too much and people didn’t want to do it I don’t quite know why that stopped but I suppose it just out grew itself really but no it was all floats and that sort of thing and people put a lot of work into it. But I think it was a bit like everything else, people all got too involved in other things

*It’s a shame when things like that come to an end*

Yes, it is really

But all of a sudden people could, well people had cars and they could travel and go out for days and they didn’t really want to know what was going on in their own town and I think yes we’re all guilty of that in as much as it all seemed well people all wanted to go to new places.

*Obviously for you the park was quite local but did you ever know of people who would travel from other areas to come to the park?*

Oh I think people did yes.

*Because obviously it was a nice grand park to come to*

Oh yes, it was a nice park and it’s a bit like everything else it all changes but this sort of area had quite a good name, we were, I wouldn’t say we were better than anyone else that’s nonsense but I mean at one time it was always called New Barking which always seemed ridiculous to me but it was at one time you know the address was New Barking because of the old town you know then all of this this part well I suppose from the station really was just farm land just you know, green land I don’t know what it was for but the pub was there but there wasn’t much else so I think what with the park and um all these new houses they built then you know this was always considered to be the posh end of Barking, it’s absolute rubbish you know but it was so I think people did come because there wasn’t a park in the other part of the town you know. No I think people did come because it was a nice park and they would come for the carnival and the fair and that sort of thing you know to see it and take park in it and enjoy it but no it’s all changed.

*I suppose that happens to areas doesn’t it?*

Oh it does yes oh definitely yes I mean we were very fortunate because we had Barking Park and we had Mayesbrook Park you know that was a nice park as well you know and um so we were very fortunate to have two very big open areas near us so

*You were saying before about how your Aunty used to she helped run the pageant, are there any stories about that she told you?*

No, not really just that they. Well I think my mum used to have to do it because this aunt was the eldest of the family and my mum was the youngest you see so um I think there was about fifteen years between them so I think my mum had to do everything because her sister was doing it and she had to get on an enjoy it and take part in it. But no she did all sorts of things this aunty of mine but it was she was an organiser which didn’t go down very well with some of us as we got older. But um no I mean she just did all these things and I think everybody just did as they got told. But no I mean well I think they made their own amusements much more you know my aunt used to run the Sunday school and run a club you know they took the children out for their outings and thing, you know not far. I can remember taking my children on one or two of her outings I don’t quite know where we went to be honest but um you know she was a born organiser and XXXX she would have been very involved I think in the pageant, well she was. She put on shows and little I don’t know what you’d call them I mean they weren’t dancing shows but you know little plays or something but I don’t think she did anything in the park well apart from the pageant that was obviously there. There’s a spell in your life I think between becoming a teenager and not wanted to go up there for any reason except perhaps meeting the boys or something like that and then until you’ve got children, so I think there’s a big spell in your life where the park is just there and it wasn’t you know you didn’t necessarily go anymore because you were too old.

*Too old to play but then too young to play again*

You have to sort of realise that in actual fact you can do all these things at any age you don’t like to think that

*So before you married your husband when you were first sort of courting was the park anywhere you’d ever go together*

Oh yes, you’d go and walk around the park you know just for a bit of peace and [laughs] yes that sort of thing you know but um yes so that was a different stage then yes you did you walked around the park to pass the time to be on your own that sort of thing.

You’ve set my mind racing now trying to think of things, how many of these chats are you going to have?

*For the project we need to do fifteen I think this is seventh and I’ve got one next week with Val Shaw a couple of streets over.*

Oh yes yes I know Val, oh good. She’ll have plenty to tell you I am sure

*It’s funny when I rang her she said the same as you “oh I don’t know how much I can help”*

I enjoyed it coming and listening and talking about it down at the library and then you sort of think afterwards “oh I should of said this and I should of said that” then you forget it all again you know but no oh I don’t know it’s age isn’t it. I’m too old now to remember things. It’s been interesting.

*When we were in the session someone mentioned someone who would dress up as a cowboy*

Oh that’s right, now I didn’t remember that at all that was the lady who was sitting the other side of me no, I didn’t remember that. She must be younger than me so I suppose there must be years in between. I mean Val might be one who remembers that because she’s younger [laughs]

*We talked a little bit about feeding the ducks but do you remember any of the other wildlife or anything else that was in the park?*

Um oh you always used to take nuts over for the squirrels, my sister used to take the children and the grandchildren and she always had a dish in the hall that she kept the nuts in so that when they went up there they took a handful and put them in their pockets and feed the squirrels um and now I always think people that feed the squirrels shouldn’t do because they I can’t open my back door because they try and get in they sit on my window sill and look at me [laughs] it’s all very well they may look nice cuddly things but I’ve seen what they can do when they get into a house and that’d bad but no the ducks and the swans and that on the lake and as I say there was the squirrels around and where you get tree you get squirrels don’t you. I don’t remember anything else, I expect that there were foxes but we didn’t ever see them, see them now in my garden occasionally but I don’t think anybody well I don’t ever remember seeing anything else up there.

*Do you have any funny stories or anecdotes that haven’t come up?*

No, I was trying to think after you phoned me but no I haven’t I think I’ve decided that I was what I would now think now I would call a goody goody [laughs] I was just um too frightened to be naughty or to get into any scrapes or anything

*I suppose when the park keepers are as strict as it sounds like they were*

Yes, I suppose that’s what it was, and you were yes you were aware, I don’t know if we were frightened but we respected, I think that’s the word I want, I think like anyone in uniform then you know. You weren’t frightened of the police but you know it was oh there’s a policeman better make sure we’re behaving ourselves, not that we weren’t but you know I think anybody in uniform or in charge um I think really as a rule we were very aware to behave yourself. I think I decided I was horribly goody goody child or even a teenager

*Were the lifeguards at the lido similarly as strict*

Oh yes yes, if you miss behaved or jumped in on people you were out you know off you went. But um yes and you always got some that played about and that sort of thing but no I think the same sort of thing htye weren’t in uniform but I think anyone in charge we did have respect as opposed to fear that was the wrong word but they were special because they were in charge and you’ve got to behave yourself but times change don’t they. But yes so anyway.

*I suppose now uniforms are worn for so many thing that the instant respect that they once*

It’s strange you saying that because I was only thinking the other day that everyother person who walks down the road whether they’re sweeping or what have got those orange jackets on where as at one time you would think oh gosh wonder that they’re doing I am sure half of te people wearing them aren’t doing anything they’ve just got them because I can remember seeing them on sale at the market so I though well anybody can buy one of those things so I don’t think you should be afraid but it is respect I thiunk, that’s the only word I can explain it by somebody in a uniform of some description we did respect them where as now every other person has one of those orange jackets or one of those florescent things you know I mean we had two or three weeks ago we had the sky ride there were four of them I know they were all doing a job but they had the railings up here and watching so nobody went up and down well all four of those had these jackets on you see and I thought all of the junctions going along there must have been twenty of them at least you know and I thought no it’s not the same

*I suppose that’s health and safety saying they have to be perfectly visable*

Oh yes that’s it but really and truly it’s got to such an extent that it’s gone the other way I think there’s so many of them that you sort of think well who are they? But there’s a limit I think it’s got to the stage now where health and safety has gone a bit over the top I think isn’t it in lots of thing but it’s a shame because it’s taken the fear out of things but you know it’s made it all too alike.

*Can you remember what the uniform was like for the wardens?*

I think they were just a navy blue jacket I think they had peaked caps that sort of thing but I think they were just a navy blue sort of cross between a jacket and a um tatty I think um what else can I think it was called? But they would only of been linen or cotton or something

*A blazer?*

Blazer yes, that’s the work I am trying to think of yes! But you know bot smart but not tatty they might have had a few gold buttons to make then look better but not quite a um yes.

*With the we talked a little bit about the events and things like that but did you ever to go see any of the bands at the bandstand? Obviously living quite close you probably didn’t need to go out*

Yes, no no we did sometimes because that was always quite nice having the bands in there, are they going to have the bandstand in there at all?

*I don’t think there are any plans to no, it’s something that’s come up in a lot of interviews that people would like a bandstand*

Yes to a certain extent but they I don’t know how well you know Barking but they put a bandstand in Barking, did you see it?

*The one that’s the other side of the train station?*

Yes yes well they did have a few things there I think but in the main if you walked past it was full of mostly men and nearly all of them with a can and I used to think why have barking wasted money putting that there when all it’s doing is attracting well it was somewhere for them to sit I suppose and it was covered fortunately things have changed, if they put a bandstand up there it would only be the older people who would want to see it as I don’t think the younger people would be interested particularly.

*I suppose it was quite different when you were younger and bands would play that was a big thing because there weren’t many accesses to to music and there was no way to hear that without where as people now can download an album*

That’s it yeah definitely, if you know what you’re doing,

*Maybe there wouldn’t be the draw now*

No it was nice I don’t know if it was something I was watching on the television and that was a seaside place with a band, it was probably something quite ridiculous I watch a lot of old Poirot and Marple and it was probably one of those and they were all sitting around listening to the band at the seaside and I thought oh yes I can remember doing that with my mum and dad but as you say it was there was nowhere else to go that was free to hear things like that whereas now people wouldn’t think twice about it, if I could walk up there that sort of thing I think we might like it but as a rule I mean they used to bring chairs out and put all round so you could sit out there and listen in comfort but no another thing that we’ve sort of out grown whether rightly or wrongly, it’s not always the right thing. Oh well.

*So that was somewhere that you went with your mum and dad?*

Well yes often if we were on holiday we did yes but then again that’s probably because it was free there wasn’t the money about like there is now

*Would you pay to go into the park ones or would you just sit on the grass?*

No you’d sit on the grass in the main but um yes it times have changed

*I suppose that has to happen in a way*

Oh yes definitely I agree

Somethings haven’t changed for the better but there you go that’s because I am getting old and miserable.

Well tell Val she’s got to tell you more things!

*Yes I’m seeing her on Tuesday*

Well tell her to come and see me again

**[tape ends]**

**Interview Details**

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