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*Ok so this is Claire Days interviewing for the Barking Park Oral History project, erm the date today is the ninth, of November…I think [Laughs]*

Yes it is yeah

*About right*

XXXX

*Oh crikey erm wrong way round, but erm…brilliant, and can I ask you to say your full name and date of birth please, if that’s ok?*

Right erm my name is Martin XXXX Pierre, I was born on the 15th of the fifth 1964

*15th of the fifth 1954?*

‘64

*’64 sorry*

XXXX

*[Laughs] sorry about that erm and can I ask you where you were born please?*

Forest Gate

*Forest Gate, erm was that in the maternity hospital down there?*

Yes

Brilliant

*And can I ask what your parents did for work?*

Erm my dad…worked in Marsh Lane in Stratford…near; quite near the roundabout…to do…I can’t remember if…what the name of the company was…it was to do with steel

*Oh ok…and did your mother work at all?*

Erm my mum has worked…erm last time she was working; she was working as a erm…in a nursery

*Ok, and that’s a children’s nursery not a XXXX one?*

Yes children’s nursery

*Ok…and can I ask what schools you went to if that’s ok?*

Yes I went to…erm first…primary school was…XXXX St Luke’s I think, it is in Canning Town…and…then we went to St Helen’s school in Canning Town…and my secondary school was St Bonaventure’s in Forest Gate.

*St Bonaventure’s, I’ve heard of that one [Laughs], it’s always nice when you hear about one you’ve heard of isn’t it, and did you have any brothers and sisters?*

Yes I have three brothers…and erm three sisters, well one’s passed away…

*Quite a large family you have there, isn’t it? Wow and what was it like for you growing up, are there any sort of memories that stand out in your mind from your childhood about the area or your schools or your family?*

Erm…my memories of Canning Town…I think, cos we used…we used to live in Forest Gate, used live Atherton Road, which is right next to the swimming bathes.

*Ok*

Erm I don’t remember so much about…that place because I was a lot younger then, but erm…moving to erm…Canning Town erm…at the time there wasn’t that many black families there, but erm…it was welcoming, erm…we had a sort like a playground, just in front of us, cos…like it was erm…flats, but sort of like erm…maisonettes…type flats and erm…we got on with all our neighbours and erm…and remember as children, we used to play things like run outs erm tin can alley erm…bit naughty knock down ginger

*[Laughs]*

Do that and we just used to mess about at the estates and…you know erm…black and white children just playing with one another…and you know I think all the children in…in the area knew my mum and my dad, but…’you alright Mrs Pierre?’ and before they’d ask…ask us if we could play out, they’d always ask my…my mum because erm it’s down to her whether or not we did [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

Depending on how we behaved and erm yeah, I mean even up to today, there…when my mum…she’d be minding her own business, she might go to a function and somebody say ‘oh Mrs Pierre, how are you?’ she wouldn’t recognise the person, but it’s from childhood, when they still remember her, so…

*Yeah*

Yeah, that was…Canning Town, it was good and when I was about thirteen erm, my guardian who was my godmother, she…she and my mum were raised up as sisters…back in the West Indies…so at the time, she had my little cousin and she wanted a bit companion for him, so she asked me to come over for…holidays, the six weeks holidays, which I done, and at the same time she…erm had a conversation with my mum and said if it’s ok if I could stay there the…to be a companion to her son, because although she had children, other elder children but they had already left home and stuff like that and…again because my secondary school was in Forest Gate, it was in walking distance and my mum said ‘yeah she doesn’t mind’ and so from the age of thirteen I went to live in Forest Gate with my guardian…and erm

*How was that going from quite a large family to suddenly living to just your godmother and her youngest?*

Well it…the thing is being…the nature of our family…erm although she wanted me to be a companion for my cousin; you’re never really left alone because families were always visiting one another, so…you’re always seeing different family members, you’d met family members you wasn’t even aware of…family members who you wasn’t aware of so there was always that dialogue, and erm…connection with family members, I suppose erm…XXXX our company you know, when erm…there’re times when if they wanted to go out, if I was there…you know, they didn’t have to worry about him so…but because we had this close nit erm…family network…it wasn’t an upheaval because we was always seeing one another anyway

*Mmh*

And erm…you know, most weekends I would see my real brothers and sisters, my mum and dad so it wasn’t…erm much of an upheaval… erm I suppose personally for me, it was at least I can walk to school, I didn’t have to worry about getting buses and so on, and so forth

*[Laughs]*

So it wasn’t too bad

*Yeah*

You know, and erm again, its’ getting to meet new people as well, erm meeting new people on the road…erm I mean even some of the children went to my school…and XXXX went to neighbouring schools around the area erm…cos there was Forest Gate school, there was Stratford, there was St Helen’s…not St Helen’s, St Angela’s, and then…then there was ours…a bit further down then there was Lister school and…yes so there was quite a good network, so you tend to see some of these different…erm school uniforms, people within the area because they was quite close…so it was nice

*It sounds really lovely, it sounds you know like you proper big extended family as well*

Yeah

*Which is lovely, you don’t really see a lot of that, these days do you?*

No

*Too much*

Well, my opinion on is erm…I…my personal opinion, I blame the government on that

*Right*

And I tell you the reason why I blame the government...number one; when the government decided they were going to stop teachers…headmasters’ disciplining children, you open a doorway…now number two, you then said parents could not discipline their children, now I understand…erm where…if parents are abusing their children, you throw the key at them, but if parents are disciplining their children, you have got to allow that to happen, because from…erm the reason why I strongly say this, I remember when…in my school, we were going…let’s say field trip

*Mmh*

And we’d outside Forest Gate station…not Forest Gate, Upton Park station with some of my other schoolmates, and the teacher was there and straight away, I saw my auntie…I wasn’t doing anything wrong, but I just had to find a way of making sure, right you’re not doing anything wrong, because you had so much respect for your elders, and it wasn’t just your direct family, it was any…any person…you know and…in a way as…coming from a black community…you don’t know how, but if you saw one black person, for some reason or another, no matter where they came from, they knew your family.

*[Laughs]*

They knew your parents, so if you were doing anything wrong, it would get back to your parents…so I think from the moment…the government decided to take away…erm discipline from authority members of society, you then opened a gateway for erm children to stand up to their parents, to stand up to the teachers, now I mean even in schools…erm teachers can’t even look at pupils too strongly because they stand up in a firm way towards them ‘what you looking at’ so on and so forth and it’s the same thing at home with parents…that’s why we’ve got a broken down society where children having children…you can see…erm mother and son or mother and daughter or you vice versa with the fathers, and you would not know which one’s the child, because they having children at such a young age, I know back in the day yes there were times then erm…young ladies fell pregnant, due to…could have been one off situation or they maybe promised, you know we’re going to be with you, and then obviously, because of the way...erm…families felt shame, they kept that child away from the boyfriend or at the same time they’d move to a different area, so on and so forth, I understand…that part of how things was then, but now it’s so far out of control, that you know even in Barking there is a high level of teenage pregnancies…now I believe if we still had those disciplines that we had, erm…back in the eighties, we wouldn’t have this situation, you know and…sometimes, yes it’s good to have governments, but I think they need to think before they act, and also what they need to do, rather then just saying ‘right, we’re going to do, what we think you want us to do’ they should ask questions…and that’s why we’re in the situations that we are today…that’s my personal opinion.

*I think it’s definitely a fair point, and it’s something a lot of other people say as well*

Right

*So you’re definitely not alone in thinking that way, so that’s a good thing; and…and so…can you remember your discipline at school being quite a lot harsher then it is today then?*

…

*Not harsh, but harsher*

When I was going to school…erm the pupils had respect for the teachers…erm in some cases the pupils had fear of certain teachers, because one erm…it’s like, if a teacher told you to do something, you done it, if you didn’t do it, number one, there were some erm teachers, who would take matter in their own hands, but there’d be some teachers, right letter’s going to go to your parent, this that and the other and it’s like…like erm a phrase which my wife always uses…and we’ve heard it on various TV programmes, so on and so forth, it takes a village to raise a child, therefore if one parent is going to…erm…discipline the child, the whole village would discipline that child, so you’ve got a family of network erm with ours, if, if, if I’d done something wrong…my aunt would know, my uncle would know, my aunt would talk to me, my uncle will talk to me…there’d be so many people telling me where I’m going wrong, so I don’t repeat those mistakes and we, we haven’t necessary got that…now, I mean…if you look in terms of the erm black…black community in erm absent parents erm I know it happens in the white communities as well

*Mmh*

But when you listen to news, it’s mainly focused on the erm…black single…parentage and…I think…where we were concerned, we always…there was always somebody we can talk, talk to about certain things, now what they’re saying we’re looking for role models

*Mmh*

Role models this, role models that…it’s good to have role models, but I think…growing up, the firs…your first role model should be your parents…unfortunately because of the nature of how erm society has changed, how rules have changed how rules have changed, regulations…not a lot of children will look at their parents as a role model, not a lot of parents have got that mentality or maturity to be parents, they haven’t got much to offer to the child, and I also think, it’s good to love to your children, but if a parent raises their child for that child to say ‘yeah, my mum , my dad they’re like a friend to me’ your parent is a your parent, it’s not a friend and if you start treating your child like a friend, then you’ve got to do friend things, and if you’re going to do friend things and then it comes to you to erm firmly discipline your child, you child may have no respect for you…because what they can say and get away with from a friend, that’s exactly going to say and try and get away with, with a parent…sound like I’m ranting [Laughs]

*[Laughs] well no, no it’s good and it’s really interesting so…I mean obviously your views are shaped by your upbringing and it’s kind of interesting for younger people to hear that*

Mmh

*And you know see which direction, they will then go in*

Yeah

*So it’s good to hear these views definitely*

Yeah well I think it’s important because erm…you know sometimes erm…we expect a lot from the younger generation, but even as adults what do we offer them? You know erm sometimes, somebody…erm child needs to spoken to, needs to be directed. It’s all XXXX throwing a play station, throwing a erm…Xbox at a child, but you’re suppose to be teaching that child, you know erm, I go back to…back in the old days, when we didn’t have all these computers and so on and so forth, there was computers but they were for business

*Mmh*

Bow we’ve got all these things as toys erm as play things, there’s not a lots of connection, verbal connection with parent and child, erm now the…all these game consoles, so on and so forth, they’re the new babysitters…you know and parents yes understand…work is hard to come by, you’re trying to do what you can for your family, but erm as it’s been pointed to, even by my wife, there’s only so much hours I can put in at work

*[Laughs]*

You still got to have time for your family; you know because when a child grows up erm and they…if they had to explain about their parents well I didn’t see much of my parents…oh yeah my dad come home every night…my mum came home every night, but then they was on the PC, then they was working here…erm by the time I saw my parents, I was walking out the door, going to school, and…you just have not got that, that link, you know parent by name, but not parent by nurture…so you know I think [coughs] as adults we’ve got a lot to answer to as well…and even the older generation, you know you hear tales of erm…children haven’t got much respect, but adults…the more mature adults, they’ve got a lot to answer to…you know…Britain, England…the UK was renown for it’s patience and queuing up, now…the mature adults they…they just brush right in front the queue and then they do this…if somebody is erm…has a disability, so on and so forth, by all mean you show that respect, you let them go forward…if someone’s older then you, you show that respect and let them go forward, but if they just barrage forward, how are you expecting to get respect from the younger generation, if you ‘re not showing them respect at the same time…you know, every now and then…erm I hear these things on radio talks and so on and so forth…but in this current climate you just have to be very patience with people because you know it’s so easy to, out of a fit of anger, to say something which can land you in a lot of trouble, you know, you may not be looking for that trouble, but based on what comes out of your mouth…can land you in a lot of trouble

*And I’ve have some very feisty pensioners in bus queue as well, so I completely understand, where you’re coming from there*

Yeah, mmh you know so…yes that’s my erm [Laughs]

*[Laughs] that’s great thank you, thank you for sharing that, erm I was going to say…after you finished school did you go to college or did you go straight into work?*

Erm well…then it was erm YTS

*YTS, what was that?*

Erm Youth Training Scheme

*Ah ok*

And erm…I worked for a company, at a training scheme, called Target, they used to be in erm…between Bow, Mile End and it was erm in Gunmaker’s Lane which just…on the outside of Victoria Park, so going there…you learnt erm metalwork, carpentry, there’s lots of other different things they done in there, office work and so on and so forth, so…while I was there, I done some carpentry and some metalwork…and…after doing that, there wasn’t a lot of erm…of that industry…for me, I do remember when I did apply for erm an apprenticeship, but this place was so far in…somewhere in North Anglia, that even they said to me ‘you know we appreciate that you’re requesting for the position, but we feel that, you know, your age, where you live, it’d be too much for you to get to’ which erm…disappointed, I was disappointed, but I agreed and understood that, so from…while I was erm at the Target training, they also looked to see what jobs were available…put you to erm interviews and so on, so on. So I then went to an interview for a delicatessens company in erm, in Mile End and you know…they, I don’t think I’d wrong in that they supplied delicatessen products, all around the world

*Wow*

You know, all different, various different salads, even things like caviar, so they were a well established company…and from there I went to work…erm in a erm…bedding company in…Custom House erm…I cant remember what they’re called now…Spirolinks, I think they were called Spirolinks, I think they were called Spirolinks, they no longer existed over there, whether or not the business has gone else where I don’t know…erm it used to belong to a Jewish family, and used to make anything to with beds, from the erm…the legs, the headboards, the…the springs, and all the rest of it, and erm…I was based in the area where they done…mostly with the wood, cutting and drilling, and so on and so forth, so…it still kept a link with carpentry…doing that…

Excuse me something dropped, how do you like your tea?

*Oh erm, white no sugar, please if that’s ok, thank you*

Do you want a cup XXXX?

Erm no I’m alright, thank you…so erm I done that for several years, then after that erm I erm…applied for a position for a company in erm Leyton

*Mmh*

Erm, they were Radio veneers, and again still the theme, still keeping a link with the wood and what they tend to do was put veneer panels…veneer…erm veneers on a bit of hardboard, chipboard and…once they done that…we had to put it through a machine, get it sanded and it would go to…furniture companies to make all different types of furniture’s, cupboards, dressing tables, wardrobes, erm even doors as well, so

*That job sounds quite artistic; do you think that was more creative?*

Erm

*I suppose it was more precise then XXXX*

It, it was precise to the sense of…erm how it worked out, you had these big machines where you had to mix the glue

*Mmh*

Right, which was power and some other liquid and you, had this big press, heat press erm…the chipboard or hardboard went through a roller system…going through that roller system, then the resign, the glue would go over the…erm evenly spaced out…top and bottom…erm as it’s coming through the erm…erm…coming through the press…the conveyor belt, you then got your, one sheet of veneers, the veneers consist of erm oak erm rosewood erm teak, so many different names of different types of layers and it was probably about…I say one to two mm thick and you put a sheet that…one the erm…flatbed erm which was about…you know four foot by eight foot and then, there’d be two people who then as it’s coming through the erm conveyor belt, you just get it…pull it in the air, lay it on top, once it laid on top you made sure that you had enough of the veneer sticking out, all four sides then you put your top on, then it would just… em go through the conveyor belt go under the press machine and that’ll press it down, it’d stay there for x amount of erm minutes comes out and then you trim it around the side, pack it up so, it wasn’t…erm artistic in the sense to say you had to cut out anything

*Mmh*

It was pretty straight forward

*Ok*

But…after that, it’s sanded the reproduction of it looks very nice

*Mmh*

You know, you can, although we didn’t do any varnishing we just done the, the base layer of sanding it down, but you can see the beauty…beauty in things like rosewood in, in things the oak…the…looking at the grains on it, it was…you know it’s very pretty, if I can use that term

*Lovely*

You know and from there erm…I went to the present company that I’m…at now…which erm…still a connection with wood, it’s a company that deals with fine art and textiles…and erm I’m the manager at the warehouse which we have in erm North London…and erm…

*Would you like to say the name of the company, if you able to, if you rather not…please, please don’t*

I don’t mind saying the name of the company

*[Laughs]*

Erm it’s called Russell and Chapple

*Ok*

And I think this company has been in existence since about 1770

*Wow*

So, you know erm…they used to be based…in erm XXXX Street, just round the corner from Covent Garden…erm…and I’ve been…I’ve been there so long I can’t remember how long I’ve been there

*[Laughs]*

Over twenty years…so and erm what we deal…deal with is a lot of erm…art products…erm in the warehouse itself we deal with the erm…canvas…we’ve got canvas, linen…prime linen, un-prime linen, prime canvas, un-prime canvas, calico, muslin erm…there’s natural furnishing fabrics, there’s so many different things that we do there, it’s a pretty diverse erm, erm fabrics we use there and of course although, it’s aimed at the art, but there’s other fabrics there that people find different uses for erm for instance we have dyed cotton ducks where erm…people use that for erm, they do use it for national furnishing fabrics, they do use it for erm XXXX and also some people use it for clothes and even to make hats out of as well, so it’s…erm a quite enjoyable company to work for, I’ve enjoyed my time working there anyway…and we also do a lot of XXXX, XXXX are let’s say erm, four pieces of erm wood, which have erm got certain cuts in it, you put the…wood together, which forms a frame

*Mmh*

You then erm…get…either canvas linen and you stretch, stretch it round it and once it stretch round it, then the artist is ready to paint on it. Be it XXXX or could it…canvas itself could be primed and erm say for instance it ended up something like the pictures behind you

*Yeah*

So

*I’ve got a couple of friends who are artists*

Ok

*So I'm quite familiar with them stretching their canvas*

Right, yeah

*They tend to make their own…*

Yeah, yeah

*But it’s a fascinating process it must be quite an interesting job for you to be working in that environment*

Yeah it is, I mean…erm it’s good to…meet people who…keep getting the same stock, time and time again and it’s almost like going through stage, learning more about the person, you know…especially in this day and age, it good to see people still doing it, because…to be erm…from what I’ve…what I’ve seen, to be erm…an artist it’s not…an easy thing because unless you’re already established…there’s a lot of expenditure just to get the raw material together and product, so its’ good to see erm some of the clients who…some who, who can say are associates, who are still doing it and…you know, you just wish them luck and just…not just to keep getting the business, but…it’s like you’re growing with them and you know, there’s sometimes even now you get people who used to be at XXXX street, who used to buy their…who sometimes come down to the warehouse and…just something about them that you remember and then through conversation they remember you as well so you know, it’s pretty good

*It’s nice to have those relationships with your customers as well isn’t it?*

Well it is yeah, yeah because erm it’s…the shop is now in Drury Lane

*Right*

So erm we’re you know, no longer at XXXX so…that’s where people go…go now and, but where we are is the erm the warehouse which holds our, our stocks of canvas and linen, and so on and so forth…yeah but I’ve enjoyed myself

*Good*

And still enjoying my time there

*[Laughs] which is the most important part I suppose, that you still enjoying it*

Yes, yes

*Ok lovely and when did you move to Barking then, is that why you’re in this current job or was it before?*

No, no, no erm it’s a progression erm it’s erm meeting my erm wonderful wife

*Ok*

Then girlfriend, and it’s just a process of erm moving on in life and erm we moved here in erm February ‘91

*Ok*

And erm

*Was your wife from Barking then originally or was she…?*

No erm my wife was from Manor Park

*Manor Park ok, and what made you both decide on Barking as an area?*

You know I tell you what [Laughs] you’re going to laugh at this

*[Laughs]*

Erm council tax

*Ok [Laughs]*

[Laughs] it was at a time when erm…council tax at the time when it’s not something…the British public wanted to pay

*Mmh*

And certain areas, I mean…we…we were both in Newham…the cost of the council XXXX way were the cost of in Barking

*Ok*

I mean, we looked around in erm…Ilford and we looked around in Barking and erm…we looked at a few properties and we liked…liked this house erm made an offer and the erm…it was accepted and…we moved in

*Lovely*

And we were still friendly with the previous owners erm…they moved further down into Barking bordering Redbridge and erm I think eventually they moved out of Barking and we did used to keep in contact with them…so yeah XXXX yes

*And what were your first impressions of Barking then, did you know the area reasonably well before you came?*

Not really erm, erm my knowledge of Barking before I moved into Barking, it was well where I played football, there at certain times we meet at around about the erm Barking station

*Mmh*

And from there we just went to our destination wherever the game was being played erm I think when we moved in Barking either Vicarage field was just being built

*Ok*

Or was coming to XXXX I can’t quite remember all the details of it, but erm I mean in that period of time, in now Barking has changed itself…erm…when we moved into Barking there wasn’t…erm…it was so diverse as it is now erm…I think…over the years it’s become more diverse and every now and again you see different erm nationalities, cultures moving into the area which I personally feel is good because you’ve got erm obviously you’ve got…white English, you’ve got erm…black British, you’ve got erm…eastern Europeans, and it’s good to know that when you do go around at Barking area there’s all these little shops which, which cater for different nationalities, but at the same time anybody can go in there and purchase…you know goods, erm I think we’ve got Turkish, we’ve got Polish erm we’ve got African erm…those are the nationalities that I know for certain and erm, yeah…I just like the diversity of it, you know

*It’s certainly one of the big advantages of living in east London isn’t it?*

Yeah

*That diversity and the fact that you can buy…you know you can eat African one night, and you can sort of Mediterranean the next night*

Yeah, yeah

*And you know it’s wonderful*

And Indian and Chinese

*Yes*

Cantonese

*[Laughs]*

You know and not forgetting the chicken shops [Laughs]

*Good old KFC [Laughs]*

You know fish and chips, yeah you know, so it’s, it’s…I think…for sure if you’ve got…let’s say erm…if you’ve got two pounds you can eat

*Yeah*

You know, so there is a different in terms of obviously of pricing but if you’ve got two pound you can eat a meal

*[Laughs]*

Erm…and…as we’ve just discussed there’s lots of takeaways, lots of hairdressers

*Yes*

Erm…there’s not too…although there is two or three pubs within the same facility…erm in the town centre, but…from my surrounding of XXXX there’s a few pubs, I don’t think it’s too…erm too congested erm…I’ve noticed there’s a lot more betting shops now and it’s funny because when you think you’re in a area that is erm obviously since erm Fords have closed down…well not…there is a small part of Fords within the area, but for the…what it used to employ it used to be the biggest employer I would have thought in, in Barking erm you could say turn round and say in Essex

*Mmh*

And obviously

*I think it was something like thirty thousand people employed at one point*

Yeah, yeah so and once that cut down, because I think, is it just an engine plant, they keep

*Mmh*

I'm not quite sure, it erm…obviously changed the…the outlook on employment within the area…and I suppose in a way that started to put a lot on the community and in a certain degree a lot of white British started moving out of Barking

*Mmh*

Probably going further into Essex erm because obviously if there’s no work you’ve got to find work somewhere and erm once the money runs out you know, you is going from people just buying a property and then all of a sudden right work’s no long there…and erm I think again that’s a another thing that opened a doorway for the diversity for different minority of people coming in and also I think Barking is one these boroughs’ that caters for a lot of erm…XXXX what we have to do in the EEC part of erm asylum seekers, refugees, so on and so forth, so you know it…Barking does it’s part…in it…in a system, in that…erm quota, which I suppose all EEC members the…erm…yeah

*That’s wonderful, and it’s one of the things I love most about Barking as well, that it’s so diverse so*

Yeah I mean…this is why…I’d like to think…not that I’ve experienced it, but different...people have experiences that’s what I don’t think that erm racism will in Barking in itself because…where you’ve got a diverse amount of people, if you…you know if ever you’re walking around Barking, if you look and you can see the different inter…interracial relationships, you know…I think that’s’ what helps people to get along within the area and…in order for people to accept people, they need to understand people, rather than because you don’t understand somebody, you start taking a dislike to them and, you know obviously in terms of when it’s to erm voting time then you get all the propaganda starts with the BNP spreading malicious rumours, trying to erm…if you like whatever erm…say for instance the labour party at the time when they had the power, it was the labour party, they’re giving flats to black an ethnic minorities, I mean it’s all a lot of propaganda and obviously erm…when erm Mr Griffin had his opportunity to show how beautiful his party was obviously he fell flat on his face, but erm I think…not just…in Barking itself, I think in general diversity is something that’s going…it’s going to be here to stay because…if you think about how we get around the world…erm let’s face it, you don’t even have to leave your house, internet, facebook, twitter erm signed-in or whatever it’s called there’s the linked in

*Mmh*

There’s so many different ways of communicating with people, you can talk to somebody today, never meet them before…in your life and say ‘yeah why don’t you come over, next time you’re XXXX pop in’

*Yeah*

Before you know it, they’re around

*[Laughs]*

So you know erm…

*Are you regretting being so friendly online? [Laughs]*

No well…the thing is I’m erm so creative in that way, but erm in general I…I believe I’m a peoples’ person, so I speak to anybody anyway, erm but just saying in terms on how…if you look at the positive sides of diversity, that’s how I see…that’s how I see racism can’t overcome diversity because of how people communicate, get along with one another and you know people…different nationalities, different colours, different cultures will have relationships

*Mmh*

And you know, you’ve just got to accept it, you know forget about your prejudices, try to get to know the person, and…you just may find out you might learn something

*Mmh, I like to think that a lot of that will start in the schools as well with the children*

Yes

*You know just getting along together, just being children basically*

Well the funny thing is sometime they are like in school; it’s when they come out of school that’s when you know, it all depends what your parents are teaching you at home

*Of course*

If your parents are telling you know it’s alright to talk to that black boy, it’s alright to talk to that white boy, it’s alright to talk to Asian boy, that Chinese boy or girl, if you’re telling your children that, then your children will not have a fear of a different culture, different nationality and it will not be problem for them to associate themselves with, with people, but if you, if you keep one little prejudices, one little bit of racial erm content in your body and you put that onto your children is going to act XXXX as what you do, you know and it’s not going to act for the better, it all acts for the worst, you know, and you know the funny thing is in…as far as race is concerned, I don’t think it’s been told any different but the oldest…erm skeleton they found, was found in Africa

*Mmh*

So therefore the affiliations with Africa runs deep, so whether or not you’re black, white, pink

*[Laughs]*

Whatever get use to it…

*I studied archaeology so I know exactly what you’re talking about*

Ok

*XXXX, if you’re interested*

[Laughs]

*But erm yeah so if you know everyone’s from Africa essentially anyways so, ok…well if…that’s fabulous, if that’s ok with you, if we can go onto Barking Park*

Right, right my knowledge of Barking…which is not a great lot

*[Laughs] Could you tell me your earliest memory of Barking Park if that’s ok?*

Erm…my earliest memory of Barking Park is erm…when…I’m sure I played football there at one stage in my, my teens

*Right*

But I can’t remember a great deal of that side of it, but I do remember myself and erm my wife, we, we took walks from here walked all the way down Longbridge Road and into Barking Park and…from the outside you don’t realise how big it is, I mean I know there are other bigger parks, but it’s, it’s quite in depth because you look from, from erm Longbridge Road, but it’s actually when you go in and then you’re walking around the park erm…I think my favourite spot around that park was around the lake area where the swans, the ducks and…you know there’s a little island where if you’re lucky you might see them walk onto that erm people feeding the erm…throwing bread into…feeding them…erm…I can’t remember if I ever saw…got…saw fishes in there, but I would assume there may have been fishes in there, but you know walking around that…that area erm and then that takes you out onto erm…I think it’s Forest Lane

*Erm, I think South Park Drive I think is the other side isn’t it? Is it South Park?*

No I'm talking about the part that leads…Ilford Lane

*Oh right yeah sorry*

Yeah leads you onto Ilford…Ilford Lane erm…I can’t remember…about the flower garden, how vibrant it was, but I know when you erm walk around, around the lake I’m sure there was flowers around that side as well erm…now I'm sure there was…obviously there were trees there and so on and so forth, I can’t quite remember what type of flowers there were, but erm…coming away from that…erm say a few years later, then I did played…play football in there erm…in the 90s…and…

*And was that for a team or was that just a group of friends getting together?*

No that was playing…I can’t remember which team it was but, when I was playing for a team…I would have been probably…early twenties then…and even at the time I didn’t actually realise that erm it boarded onto erm I think the annexe part of erm…XXXX what’s the name of the school that boarders onto erm

Barking Abbey

Yeah Barking Abbey, yeah so they’ve got a nice facility there having that park there

*Mmh, they actually use the park for their games and things, sometimes for their PE sessions and things like that so*

Yeah, well you might as well take advantage of it yeah; erm and I do remember one time that myself and wife, we took our niece to a firework display there

*Ok*

Erm and…I think it was her first firework display and…it was nice to do that because we hadn’t experienced a firework display before…and to see all that colour, the sparks, and erm a large mass of people, everyone trying to get the spot they can get to, to see what’s happening you know, the Catherine wheel going around and just seeing all the sparks coming out and…you as being England at that time, yeah obviously it was cold

*[Laughs]*

And making sure you’re wrapped warm, and erm

*So when roughly was this firework display, then do they every year or?*

I think it’s done every year

*Ok*

Martin: Year yeah erm, I think when we went, that probably…that was in the 90s wasn’t it?

Possibly late 90s yeah

Martin: Yeah probably about ’98 something like that

But it is every year

Martin: Yeah

*Ah right ok*

Yeah they do it every year

*Ok*

Erm

Had the fairground on as well

Yeah they do fairground there as well

*Ah*

Martin: Erm did we go to the fairground one time?

It was the same time, when we went to…

Martin: Right, yeah had a combination of the firework display as well the fairground so erm, we may have taken her on a few rides as well, so but, it’s well utilised and its good cos…at time we have these big open spaces but it get’s lack of use

*Mmh*

Martin: And you can tell when park not’s been used because none of stuff get replaced when it erm ages erm I mean from here we’ve got a park called Greatfields Park and erm…they have fairground in there…ever so often, not every year, but…yeah they’ve had fairground in there yeah and erm when we got married, that’s where we had our photos taken

*Ah ok*

And that was in 1993…and you can see they spent erm spent some money in putting new rides, redeveloping the park and it’s a park I can its well utilised

*Mmh*

Martin: You know with adults as well as children and erm families going in there and erm even every coming, coming close to the six weeks holidays, when the summer starts, you have park rangers in there, that take activities into the park, into that park, so that’s’ erm…that one that is good because it’s…it’s XXXX it’s around and it’s open to the public bring your children you know they have erm paddle go karts, they have erm drums erm you can play games like erm tennis, football erm I’m not sure if they do rounder, either rounder or baseball and you know erm face painting…you know for a little park they do hold a lot of activities in that park and erm…

*Do you ever take your activities at Barking Park, cos they have erm sort of like nature rambles and things like that?*

You know we haven’t done that…

They’ve done that with the school

*Oh they have through the schools*

Yeah

The schools, erm our youngest child is participating in the school?

*Yeah, did you enjoy it?*

Martin: Mmh

And I went along one time that was good

*Brilliant*

Martin: And what my wife tends to do is…to get the erm…little booklet which tells you what activities are going on around so, you know we try to…always go to the one at Greatfields Park, that’s provided their not staying round, spending weekends round the family members in the holidays so…erm it’s a good line of activity over there and erm you get the other children going there, some of their school friends, so it’s, it’s really good, really entertaining, and it’s, it’s a good release for the children, cos sometimes you don’t want be coped up in doors all the time

*Especially in the summer holiday*

Martin: Yeah

*[Laughs]*

Martin: You know but its good and you…erm say for instance if it starts at eleven o’clock it may finish at three o’clock, so they do get a good run, run for it erm, yeah going back to Barking Park, there’s been a few occasions that erm…the four of us have gone over there…and erm I don’t…since it’s been redone, we haven’t been there for quite a while, I know they was doing a lot of redevelopment over there erm…because I think they got some lottery funding as well which helped to maintain it and they were working on the lake

*Mmh*

Martin: Lake there, so I'm not sure if that’s been completed now

*Erm it’s in its final stage*

Martin: Right

*This oral history project is actually part of the renovation*

Oh I see right

*So we’re going to use some of these memories to create sort of a heritage trail around the park*

Yeah, yeah, yeah

*Erm so yeah the oral history project, is part of the renovations, I think they’re kind of their last phase now*

Right

*The lake is finished*

Yes

*That’s been drained and cleaned*

Ok that’s good

*And they’re going to put some boats back on there and things like that*

Yeah they used to have a boating bit as well

Yeah

*Did you ever go on the boating part, no?*

XXXX

Boating bit

You know what’s going to happen to the lake?

*Erm well they’ve cleaned the lake out now and they’ve refilled it erm hopefully, I think what they said they are going to do, they’re going to have like a floating dock*

Ok

*And so you can sort of walk out, so it will go up and down with the levels of the water*

Yeah, yes

*And so you can get on the boats a bit easier, then trying to jump on it from the bank*

Yeah

*Is what they used to do so erm, are you looking forward to that?*

Yeah

*Yeah?*

Is it going to like…so it’s cleaned now?

*Yes, yes it’s a lot cleaner then it was*

So we can go there one day

*Yes, yes I think some parts of it is sort of fenced off a little bit erm, but it certainly a lot cleaner then it was because, I think they had motor boats on it for a while and I think a lot of the oil and petrol got into the water unfortunately*

Oh right mmh

*So they’re sticking with rowing boats this time, which is more environmentally friendly*

I think that’s a good idea

*And a bit more active as well so [Laughs] that’s got to be a good thing*

Yeah work up a sweat [Laughs]

*[Laughs] and then you’ll get a new ice cream with the new restaurant and café, they’re opening in there*

Ok that’s good

*It’ll be a nice day out when it’s all finished, I think*

Martin: Yeah looking forward to that

When is the official…do you when there is an official opening day, then?

*In my head I had April erm but I’m not a hundred percent sure on that, I know we’re having a meeting with them erm sort of the end of January, beginning of February, so they can select materials to use in a exhibition and things like that erm and then obviously that’ll a couple of months and then they’re going to do a big launch and as you’re participating in the project, you and your family will be invited to the launch*

Oh that’s nice

*So there you go its worth it just for that isn’t it? [Laughs]*

[Laughs] yeah

*So you’ll be one of the first people to see the exhibition and the new visitor centre*

Ok

*And meet all the wardens and things, yes it’s going to be lovely erm they’re building sort of a purpose built classroom, as well so they can school groups and things*

Well that’s good yeah

*Or community groups can go in there and, and meet and have coffee morning and things, it’s going to be wonderful*

Well you can clearly see just, I mean…apart from what you’re talking about, the park is well utilised

*Yes*

Because I don’t think that any weekend that I’ve driven past there, you don’t see people playing football

*Thank you*

Erm cos I think they’ve got tennis courts in there as well

*Yes*

And because at certain points you can actually drive in there as well, can’t you, I’ve seen people driving in

*There’s actually a car park erm one at either end*

Right

*There’s one at the lodge entrance*

Yeah

*Erm where you go in which mostly for the bowls club, they mostly use that, but there’s also another visitor’s one at the other end on the South Park entrance*

Mmh

*Erm which is quite a bit bigger*

Yes

*Erm and I think its where people sort of park, XXXX planning on spending the day or whatever*

Yeah

*Although I’m sure a few crafty people erm just park in there and go into the station*

Yeah

*[Laughs]*

Don’t tell the council that

*No [Laughs]*

[Laughs]

*We’ll edit that bit out of it*

Mmh yeah, yeah I’m looking forward to that

*Good*

Martin: You know because

XXXX meet up for his erm beavers and cubs meeting

*Ah ok*

Yeah outside the park

Mmh

The parade

Yeah

*Oh they did their parade from there?*

Yes

*Oh lovely*

They had their parade…church parades

Martin: And that good because you see everybody put the…publicans watching what’s happening and…

Yes

*Yes*

Martin: They have the escort as well don’t they? Police escort to…obviously for health and safety reasons, so it’s pretty good

*Are you ok?*

Erm like cos I’m into fishing

*Yeah*

Do you think you’ll be able to fish in there?

*Erm I think the only fishing you’ll be doing down there is with a very small fishing net and jam jar [Laughs]*

[Laughs] tadpoles

*Get some little tiddlers to bring home, and sit on the…you know the kitchen window seal or something, but I’ll doubt you’ll…*

Yeah

*Be getting anything…big out of it [Laughs]*

Martin: I don’t think it’ll be fair to have erm fishing in there because number one erm…when you’re fishing it’s all about the peace, quiet tranquillity and you don’t want to disturb, if you’re about to a bite, then somebody rides past, oh what’s happening?

*[Laughs]*

Martin: Fishermen don’t like that so, you know

Could you also like…in…cos I’ve noticed around our parks

*Mmh*

I remember in Greatfields Park erm, there used to be like a little pond

*Ah ok*

Yeah my dad took me down, mum took me down

*So, could you fishing at that one or…?*

No…you could go pond dipping

*Ah right ok*

Then you have to put the thing back cos that was only for the geese…

*Ok*

But there was like…and erm, will there be like, like mini activities where…cos in Greatfields Park now they have…every summer as my dad has explained

*Mmh*

Every summer they would have at least XXXX activity and trying to get people fit

*Yes*

Any age and like even parents can join in…so I think that’ll be a good idea for Barking Park

*Yes, definitely I think that’s something they’ve definitely got in the pipeline to do as well erm they recently…you know they’ve sort of taken on more park wardens and rangers*

Right

*And things as well now erm and they do a whole host of sort of programmes for children especially*

Yeah

*And especially quite young children actually which I was quite surprised about, sort of…you know mini, mini nature ramble for three year olds and things like that*

Oh ok

*Which I think is wonderful, yeah, they’re going to do things like that definitely and I think they do erm sort of…nature detective type things, over the summer and…so I mean it depends what you’re into I think, I mean I’m sure there are sports clubs and things that meet there as well*

Yeah mmh

*Erm but I think the rangers are more focusing on the educational aspects where they teach young people about the plants and the animals*

Which I think is good

*Yes, yes definitely, so that’s a great thing I think about Barking Park…like you say a lot of the parks in Barking and Dagenham are pretty good about that, I mean the booklet, that you were talking about, I actually got a copy of that, when I went to an event and I was amazed actually how much Barking and Dagenham offer, because I don’t think it’s as extensive in other boroughs*

Right

*Erm with…I mean please don’t quote me on that cos I don’t want to offend anyone, but as far as I’m aware especially Waltham Forest, I’ve never heard of anything like and that’s where I live*

Right

*So yes and you’ve got some fabulous parks in Barking and Dagenham*

Yeah

*Lots of really…and you’ve got Mayesbrook…*

Yeah Mayesbrook Park is…

Is that the one with the big…

Martin: There’s a big

*I think that biggest park in the borough isn’t’ it? So whatever’s in it is probably big [Laughs]*

Cos that backs onto erm Barking football ground

Yeah

*Yes*

That’s how…cos I like doing fishing and I want to know

Martin: You’d like to do fishing

I’ve done XXXX one

*Right*

Like I was…I want to know the best XXXX for fishing, cos like you get certain parks where you can actually fish out

*Right*

And certain parks where it’s say erm…like you can fish, you can look…but you have to put them back in

*Right ok*

Or you get fined or whatever

*I think you know more about fishing in the borough then I do [Laughs] have you ever been to…erm on the…I know that in Barking Park they’ve got like a train*

Oh yeah that train

*Has anyone ever been on the train? Did you ever go on it?*

I don’t if that was up XXXX when we was

Sometimes I go with my friends

Is that still up and running then the train?

*Yes, yeah I mean at the moment it only runs on, I think during the summer it’s opened nearly every day*

Ok

*But the rest of the year I think it only runs on Saturdays or something like that*

Oh lovely

*But I think it’s a sixty p for…*

A ride

*A, a trip on the train, so its well worth doing as well, and it’s something a bit different because not a lot parks have a light railway*

Martin: No, no, yeah XXXX fairgrounds XXXX something like

*Yeah, yes*

You know

What I was saying to one of the Park rangers, in actual fact, what would be nice is it ok

*Oh of course, oh no that’s fine, that’s fine, erm it’s quite nice actually it makes it more interactive so [Laughs]*

What I was explaining to one of the park rangers’ erm in watching the film ‘Karate Kid’ erm we saw erm you know these open spaces…park from what I could see and you had the elders doing that tai chi

*Mmh*

And their table tennis, and I was thinking, wouldn’t that be lovely to have something like that, you know all these different activities, and…they have different…erm, erm apparatus that they could do exercises and

*Yeah*

Young people, middle aged people and the children, everyone was just having fun, I thought that would be great to see that

*Wouldn’t that be wonderful?*

Funny thing you saying that…where Cassius went erm football training at star lane, they’ve got sort of miniature table tennis table

Yeah

Yeah

Where you can just play that so that’s, that’s

*Yeah, I mean I know they used to have erm a giant chess set, in Barking Park*

Right

*Which unfortunately I don’t they’re putting back*

Mmh

*But it was one of those really ones where you had to hook the pieces and move them around*

Oh ok yeah

*And erm someone was telling me a really, really funny story actually cos children weren’t really aloud to play with it*

Mmh

*I mean it was mostly for the sort of older gentlemen who’d sit around on benches all day, just sort of playing the chess, but sometime they would take pity on the children*

[Laughs]

*Who were obviously quite interested and wanted to have a go*

Yeah

*So they would have a sort of play with it and then the park rangers would turn up and all of the children would sort of scatter*

[Laughs]

*In every direction, because they were terrified of the park wardens, but erm it would be lovely to have something like back and I think that would probably work, like you say you know to have that intergenerational sort of aspect of play*

Yeah, yes

*Together and spending time together would be wonderful*

You often see a lot of people as well on their bikes cycling

Mmh

In Barking Park as well

*Yes*

You know cyclists and erm joggers and what have you so…yeah but definitely I thought that was really…quite a nice thing in the karate kid, that open space with all different generations just enjoying it

*Yeah*

Outdoor activities

*I’ll suggest that to Andy, who’s the park manager down at the park, and I’ll suggest that to him and see what he says*

I suggested it to the Greatfields Park ranger, but I don’t know XXXX it’s a good idea

Martin: mmh

I don’t know like for budgeting everything

*Yes*

If they, you know got…the financial capital to do that, but I think it’ll be great

*I mean there’s nothing stopping erm a tai chi teacher…if I can say that correctly, a tai chi teacher*

Yeah

*Erm sort of you know holding sessions in the park and everyone kicking a quid or something*

Yeah, yeah

*To, to sort of donate to their cost of their time, but that, that would be wonderful*

I think that would bring the community together as well

*Definitely*

Yeah that’s what it seemed to do in karate kid

*[Laughs]*

The whole community was just out there having a good time, yeah; there was all these different exercises, apparatus and I thought wow is that how it really is in China then?

*It could well be, I mean I think some countries really do invest a lot in their public spaces, I mean I know erm Japan, sort of quite invest, quite a lot in their parks*

Mmh

Ah

*Because I had a friend who lived out for a year erm…you know I mean the UK used to, I mean I think it kind of fell out of fashion for a little while maybe [coughs] but hopefully…*

They were selling a lot of the lands to property developers

*Yes*

But you know if…the, the trees…the even the weed, they suck out all…nasty stuff

*Yes*

To give us oxygen, so you know it’s not…we can’t tell people in Brazil, stop…erm you know dismantling the rainforest, if we’re dismantling what little forestry that we’ve got

*Yes*

You know

*It almost seems like a little bit hypocritical, to…*

Oh yes

*You know now we’ve wiped out all our own forest, we’re telling other people what to do with theirs*

Yeah

*It’s kind of not very fair*

…Two forests in Barking and Europe, isn’t it? Is Hainault in Barking?

No it’s in Essex

Well Hainault forest, yes

*Hainault’s, the London Borough of Redbridge isn’t it?*

Yes

*So Hainault is technically I suppose kind of technically in XXXX*

Yes though Barking Park comes under Redbridge doesn’t, I think doesn’t?

*Erm no it does come under Barking and Dagenham*

It comes under Barking oh right oh

*I think just off the cut off point*

The borderline yeah

*It’d be kind of ironic though to have Barking Park in Redbridge, wouldn’t it? [Laughs]*

[Laughs] yeah

*Quite interesting, how would you explain that on the erm…address*

Martin: If…if there was some kind of XXXX in there, they’d probably would, you know what lets change the boarders [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

Martin: Dunno but…yeah I’m really looking forward to…when all the redevelopments finished

*Yes*

Martin: And we can go back over there

I like to appreciate nice gardens, so when I was over there with erm our son, wit the school and erm, you know saw a few squirrels, and yeah the garden were really nice, the beds and everything, really nice and colourful

Insects

Insects, yeah and we had…

XXXX, ladybirds

Yeah

We went on like a nature reserve hunt

*Ok*

For children, so that was good

*Yeah it’s lovely*

Martin: Not forgetting the foxes

*[Laughs]*

A lot of school

Martin: Sorry?

I haven’t seen that many foxes actually

*Have you not?*

Not lately

*They mostly come out at night so [Laughs]*

True

Nocturnal

Yes, sometimes they’re a bit bold and come out during the day [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

And hedgehogs, we saw a dead one

*Oh no*

In the road

Yeah

*Wasn’t quick enough, poor thing*

Yeah

I like the way; I like Barking Park, a lot cos…I don’t play football in it but…XXXX cos I go to Eastbury and Eastbury is Barking Abbey’s rival and I guess XXXX that every time we play football on their pitch, it’s their home ground but we still beat them

*[Laughs] that’s a god enough reason as any to have that for your favourite park isn’t it? [Laughs]*

That’s their home ground, and like…when playing matches against them, it’s like kind of our home ground

*Mmh*

But I think…erm cos Barking Park is so diverse they need to…they could also think about having herb beds like…cos for some people that… include like more of the five senses, so people can’t hear, but they can smell and they can feel, some people can’t feel but they can probably smell it and hear it, so they need…maybe they should include like a little XXXX called the five senses

*Yes*

And like have things that you can smell and feel and touch

*Have you been to erm…the Valance House museum, by any chance?*

Long time ago

*Because they’ve got a little sensory garden there, where it’s all kind of different smells and textures and things and that actually would really work well in the park wouldn’t it, that would be lovely, yeah maybe you should right them a letter, I can pass it to them if you like? [Laughs]*

I’ll suggest it to them

*Yeah, that would be lovely*

The other one has a garden

*Yes*

…to appreciate the local and…like you know, as someone suggested, that would be nice

*And that’s why you know the parks in London are so important cos so many people live in flats and things like that*

Mmh

*I mean you’re very lucky here, you know to have a house and I’m sure you’ve got a garden and things yourself, but I mean, I’ve got…what could very generously be called a yard, [Laughs] if you want to, it’s literally a five foot postage stamp, so…gardens are quite important I think, and green space*

It’s nice…you know, we’re quite fortunate that it’s just across the road, well Greatfields Park, Barking Park, just a bit further down

*Yes*

But erm even not the station is getting a facelift so, you know the…Barking station’s getting a facelift and further down past…

Martin: Mmh

It’s got the facelift so it’s nice; I think it’s nice for the community as well

*Definitely*

When you go to the city…you know into London, you see their parks…you know erm…it’s well kept and everything and you know good gardens and…so it’s nice, it’s…locally that you can appreciate

*I mean like I say you know Barking and Dagenham seem to do well with their parks so erm*

Martin: mmh yeah

I think, I think maybe XXXX participated in erm the gardens…I think…I’m not sure if they participated in the Chelsea flower show

*It’s quite likely I know there’s a very big erm nursery by central park in Dagenham*

XXXX

*There’s a really big erm nursery there and they provide all the flowers and things for the entire borough*

Martin: ok

*Erm so it wouldn’t surprise me at all if they were entering competitions like the Chelsea flower show and things like that*

And also like I know, we’re talking about parks, but there’s one little place where, it could like erm like, you know the XXXX, the curly wurly where if you just go…it’s near XXXX Road

*Ah right*

And erm even that’s not a park, it could be turned into like a little family centre

*Mmh*

Not as…like building like a whole family centre, just like lawn mow the grass like throw away all the rubbish…I wouldn’t mind volunteering

*[Laughs]*

Like throw away the rubbish, I have to get consent from my mum and dad

*[Laughs]*

Throw away all the rubbish and just make it into like a little garden, but then you could have little clubs

*Yeah*

XXXX, so like you might have tennis, table tennis on one side; all sports stuff one side, maybe not football because the space isn’t big enough

*Mmh*

But like table tennis, they might have like a mini gym

*Maybe five side football though cos those pitches are quite a lot smaller five a side ones, these are all good ideas, got a future town planner here haven’t you [Laughs]*

I was thinking as well, like when you said about the curly wurly bit, is it the XXXX you’re referring to?

Yeah you know that green where you got the football…

Yeah, the open space yeah, there’s a bit of an open land and I was wondering who it, because surely they can that bit more attractive as well

*I mean, I have no idea who owns it*

Yeah

*Unfortunately*

Yeah, but it did cross my mind, I’m going to make enquires about that because I remember reading a article in the voice newspaper…a young erm boy came up with the idea to…have an attractive erm…you know open space…to make it a bit more attractive to the community

*Right*

And he applied for a grant funding…his application was successful and they did like erm…you know nice garden bed and…you know it was really, really nice

*Ah that sounds lovely*

Good for the community, like I said there’s many a parents and erm…elders who pass…cross that football to get to the other side of Ripple Road

*Yes*

And it would just be nice to have something more attractive to look at

*Yes*

When you’re going across

*Or you know just stop for a little rest or something you know*

Yeah, yes cos I think got a few benches, not too far over the other side

*Right*

So…just as you’re walking by, just to look at it, I think that’ll be nice

*Yeah, that’s a brilliant idea, I mean anything that sort of pretties up a city is kind of a good thing in my book I think*

Martin: Yeah definitely

Yeah, definitely and even the foot bridge you know Barking…this end of Barking got many foot bridges…so it’d be nice to erm have those look a bit more attractive

*Yes*

Rather then just…grey backgrounds and

*There are some erm I think it’s in South East London actually, but I’m going a bit off track here*

Yes

*But I’ll edit all this out afterwards erm but there’s a really nice erm sort of Walkway Bridge, it’s quite near the O2 centre*

Ah

*And they’ve done some really fantastic I think, I’m not sure if it was school children but it was it was obviously some sort of graffiti art group*

Martin: right

*You know young people*

Martin: yeah

*And it’s the most fabulous mural*

Yes, that’s what I thought

*I know people are a bit against graffiti but if it’s done…you know*

Martin: properly yeah, yes

You know tastefully

*Nice and it’s you know it’s in a place where it’s ok for it to be then I think it can be quite…*

Martin: yeah

*And it’s more appealing for young people I think to see that kind of art work*

Martin: yes

Definitely

*Then something a bit more*

Yeah cos everything someone does do a bit of graffiti you just see a big grey patch that you know…painted it out

*Yeah*

And I think surely you could make that bit more attractive

*Yes or even leave the original graffiti there, would have been better then a big blob*

Yeah it’s so dumb

Martin: that’s a point…I wonder…I don’t know what…if there is any erm…free space but maybe that might be an idea for Barking Park, if they can have an art wall

*Mmh*

Martin: you know and possibly say erm I don’t…probably every couple of months you have a competition whoever wins the competition

*Yeah*

Martin: they can then either paint that art work within that wall area and…

*Get the young people to do…like get involved*

Martin: yeah

*Yes and you’ll find as well if you do art work like erm that people are less likely to vandalise it*

Martin: well that’s right

*Because people, people tend to do the sort of silly graffiti on…*

Martin: yeah

*Blank walls and spaces, so if it’s already got something quite impressive there*

They’ll appreciate it more

*Yes definitely well that’s just my opinion [Laughs]*

I do agree with that yeah

Cos there graffiti, a lot graffiti in our school

*Oh is there?*

But my teacher allows it

*Right ok*

…my head teacher…cos he knows what’s it like, cos he works with a lot of young children

*Mmh*

And there’s a lot of children who…like are going thorough a hard time and like they just do graffiti, they might graffiti on the wall, right next to my teacher’s door, he says ‘ok you can do graffiti, but it has to be positive’

*Yes*

Cos

*Well that’s a really good message isn’t it?*

But also how…how like know that their work is being appreciated, not just…oh it’s just a piece of spray, it’s a spray can

*Mmh*

And different colours coming out of it, it’s just rubbish and just painting over it, they’ll actually think well this guy’s taken a lot of time…like I used to walk erm channel four…erm this little program with artists and they used graffiti and they erm…like would do it on a blank wall, like a wall like this for instance, doesn’t spray over it

*Mmh*

XXXX and…it’ll just hopefully catch people’s eyes so people would be walking and just stop and admire it

*Mmh*

And then after that if they like it they might have like…order this or you can buy…and a little price…

*Oh right so you could buy copies of that artwork you mean, ah well that’s a really good idea isn’t it? Quite often you’d sort of be walking around and you’ll see something you like and you think*

Martin: mmh

*Ah I’ll never own that, but with idea you definitely could, couldn’t you, go and get a postcard of it afterwards or something*

Martin: yeah

Yeah definitely

*It’d be lovely, is there anything else, anyone would like to say about Barking Park or Barking or anything else?*

Martin: erm

Barking I would say is a vibrant community and its growing all the time and flourishing and it’s nice to erm…you know in Newham for example it’s quite visible…as a tax payer where the money is being spent

*Mmh*

Newham has always been very visible with that and I’m just thinking to myself now on reflection Barking is now coming up, yeah they’re not there yet in the sense of Newham

*Mmh*

But erm slowly but surely, thank god it’s not visible as to way our money as tax payers is being spent and I think that is a good thing for the community

*Definitely*

Yeah and you know new resources…they’ve got XXXX erm resource centre that they’re building and yeah I think that’s going to be good for the communities, for the young people

*Yeah*

Martin: they’re going to be extending or rebuilding Abbey sports centre

Yeah that’s going to be I think knocked down…

*Right*

Martin: Sorry

Goresbrook leisure centre is going to be going; I think they’re going to building a new leisure centre in Barking where

Martin: mmh

By XXXX street

*Right ok*

So that’s going to be a good thing for the community

Martin: they’ll probably have to build up

Yeah

*It’s all XXXX in Barking isn’t it? [Laughs]*

It is lots of things are going on, yeah and I’m just thinking I mean next year is a very important year, lots of different

*Olympic borough*

Martin: yeah

Yeah well I was thinking because …if we’re Olympic borough well I’m not sure if we’re going to be hosting anything in our borough

*Erm I’m not sure if Barking and Dagenham is actually hosting anything, but I think there are things going on here, I think there are kind of cultural events*

Martin: mmh

*And activities happening in the area*

Ok

*Erm as part of…you know as the Olympic sort of celebration*

Yes but I was thinking also the Queen’s erm…diamond jubilee celebrations

*Mmh*

Coming up

I don’t if we’re going to be having any street parties if there’s any money in the…the kitty for them to…

*Yeah*

Organise any street parties but for example I know Newham are going to be organising some and also with the Olympics coming up, XXXX there’s going to be erm celebrations going on leading up to the Olympics so, I don’t know if our borough’s going to get involved with that and also we’ve got a very good erm…our local church, the salvation army

*Mmh*

It’s brilliant, you know it’s erm it’s erm…leading by XXXX excuse me dear you can’t stand right there

*[Laughs]*

Thank you, it’s leading by example by erm…you know it’s engaging with the community from the elders to the…our generation to the children, and then they’ve got lots of different activities that XXXX and yeah it’s a lovely place to be part of, in our community, our local church

*Yeah, ah fantastic*

Yeah got some good things going on

*You do find as well, I mean I’m finding this more sort of common now especially churches are coming to be more about their community again*

Definitely

Martin: yeah, yeah need to be…

*Which I think is also one…cos it used to be the case and then it kind of all fell away a little bit didn’t it?*

Martin: right

*And it’s all…you know, I’ve been to several church groups and tings and they’ve got so many activities for their young people and their elders*

Martin: yeah

Yeah

*It’s so wonderful to see, it’s really good*

Martin: well the thing is no longer, I think…erm I think a church is somewhere, where you’re suppose to go erm fell tranquil, erm…most obviously thing you pray to erm…ask for forgiveness, guidance, protection, leadership, but…gone are the days you shut that church door and it doesn’t open again until Sunday, it has got to be a community thing so that people can see that it’s open for…it’s XXXX so that you can go there to read, you can go there to play, you can erm hold other activities and

*Coffee mornings and things, you know they’re lovely…*

Martin: well yes, yeah and not only that…bringing the, the old with the young you know getting them to erm mingle and other

Bond and yeah

Martin: bond, communicate and…you know what I do like about with the Salvation Army, there is a strong link between young and old and to, to see that’s it’s good that…old people, mature people can walk side by side with somebody whose fifty years younger then them, but still feel comfortable within their presence

*Mmh*

Martin: whereas when you listen to some of the crime that’s happening

Or the media

Martin: the media, how the media portrays things sometimes…a mature person would not want to be anywhere near a young person, but…this is the sort of thing where…with the Salvation Army, there isn’t no…erm gaps there

Barriers

Martin: everyone is as one and…you can have a laughs and a joke with one another and teach one another things, and I think where, where all churches that’s what they should be doing

*Yes*

Martin: you know don’t close your door on Sunday and say ‘right mass is finished, see you next week’ no you know

And last week we celebrate our hundred and thirty eighth anniversary for the Barking XXXX

*Wow*

So that is quite erm a good track record

*Definitely a hundred and thirty eight years wow*

Yeah you know long may it continue

*Good for them*

Yeah definitely

*Good for them definitely*

Yeah it was really nice, we had a nice…erm…luncheon you know three course…that was provided by some of our church members, so it was lovely to be part of that

*Good*

Yeah so all in all it’s very good

Martin: I think whatever happens, is going to happen to the future of Barking as far as the erm councils are concerned, whatever they do, they’ve got to make sure, they include the community erm it’s good to have outside investments coming in here, but don’t let the outside investment take all the wealth out…you’ve got to spread wealth within the community…in doing that, the area will grow more and erm where say people may have a dislike for Barking, will start to like Barking again

Mmh

*I love Barking [Laughs]*

XXXX Barking, I mean I used to work in our local community; well I still do, and erm you know many people used to say oh there nowhere nice to shop and things like that now erm…but you know, I think we have got some good tings and sometimes, it gets a lot of bad press

*Mmh*

You know

*I mean it’s kind of really hard to reconcile sometimes that people have this impression of…you of Barking and Dagenham or East London in general*

Mmh

Martin: mmh

*You know people general think oh it’s a little bit run down, it’s a little bit this, you know I’ve lived here for five or six years now*

Martin: yeah

*And I love it…like you were saying vibrant*

Martin: yeah

*Here and you know it’s diverse and…it’s kind of al little of everything all rolled into one, I love that about East London, I think it’s got a real distinctive character, which I think…*

And our local market as well, we’ve got our local Barking market which is nice

*Yes*

And erm…

*I brought some great gloves there last year*

Martin: [Laughs]

*I’ll have to go back down there again this year I think [Laughs]*

Martin: yeah I think erm Boris may have missed a bit of a step with the erm Olympics because there’s a certain part of East London which they’ve gone round

*Mmh*

Martin: I think that…if you want people to see you country, you got to let people see your country as it is and not just show the fancy parts of the country, you show how people are actually living because you never know if people can see how people are actually living the good and bad, that’s what’s going to help a country to grow, that’s what’s going to bring investment into it because somebody can go in a run down area and think you know what…I’ve got an idea where I can bring employment into this area, I’ve got a product that could work in this area, but if you’re going bypass this area, and just go to the fancy places, you could lose an investment which will bring erm…businesses and erm you know take people out of that poverty, that they’re in so…that’s one thing that with the erm…the Olympic committees when they were mapping out what areas they’re going to thorough, there’s certain parts of Canning Town, or that area where most of the Olympic steps will be going and even when they’re doing some of the marathon part of the Olympics they’ve dodged some of those area, I think they should

*XXXX they’re not doing it in East London at all anymore*

Martin: yeah well

*Which is a real shame I think*

Martin: it is

*And I think a lot of people are quite angry about that*

Martin: yeah

Yeah

*Because it was a promise, you know that the marathon would run thorough the street of East London, then end up in the stadium, and that’s not going to happen now*

Martin: which I think is wrong because…basically you’ve taken out the heart of East London really haven’t you?

*Yes*

Martin: you know

*Well it’s a bit of a slap in the face, really isn’t it?*

Martin: yeah, mmh

*You’re not pretty enough to be on camera [Laughs] to the world’s media, so therefore, you know and East London, got such XXXX I mean I’ve been working in…oh sorry I’ll probably turn the tape off actually before I’ll start rambling, but erm thank you very much for the interview, I really appreciate it*

Martin: you’re welcome

[TAPE ENDS]

**Interview Details**

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