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*Alright could you just ask why…I mean could you just start by telling me your full name please?*

Irene Lillian Sydes

*And…like could you tell me your date of birth please?*

1941, the 8th of June

*Ok erm can you tell me where you was born?*

Erm Barking hospital, Upney Lane

*Ok erm what did your parents used to do?*

Erm…Dad was a painter and decorator and mum was a machinist

*Erm did they do that like erm all the time or did they change jobs?*

No it was mostly all the time

*Ok did you have any brothers or sisters?*

Yeah one sister

*Ok erm where did you go to school?*

In the infants and juniors was erm Dawson school Ellerton Road, and then I went onto Biffron in Bromhall road

*Ok erm where did you grow up?*

On Becontree estate [Laughs]

*Erm did…did you enjoy school?*

Yeah it was quite good really yeah it was nice

John: what about prefabs

Yeah what about prefabs? No well you know, I was born here wasn’t I, so I lived, I’ve lived here all my life haven’t I? And erm…what else…what did you say after…

*Erm I was just going to say did you…enjoy school*

Yeah I enjoyed school yeah

*What subjects did you like?*

Erm I used to like science and that history, geography weren’t bad at any of them really

*Ok I was going to like ask…was any of your family evacuated during the war?*

Well we did for a month but we come back [Laughs]

*[Laughs] where did you get evacuated?*

Bury St. Edmunds

*Alright where’s that?*

Where’s Bury St. Edmunds John?

John: Suffolk

Suffolk way

[Clock chimes]

*Ok I’ll wait for that to go [Laughs]*

[Laughs]

*We can wait for to go…ok now it’s done [Laughs]*

John: three, four

That’s your lot

*Ok erm so what erm when did you leave school?*

When I was fifteen

*Did you have to do like any exams before you left?*

No we didn’t do them then, much then did we? We just went straight to work [Laughs]

*[Laughs] so erm what did you do after you left school?*

Erm started at the bookbinding at James Burns at Farringdon Road

John: four year apprenticeship weren’t?

Mmh it was three year I did

John: oh three year

Three years apprenticeship

*So did you have to do there?*

We used to collate the books, sew them and bind them

*Ok*

Well the men did the binding, the women did the collating and sewing and men did the binding

*Ok what did you do after that?*

Well I got married didn’t I, in…erm 1961

John: ‘61

Then I had Tony in 1962, and your mum Angela in 1965 [Laughs]

*So erm where did…where did you meet granddad?*

At work

*Oh ok*

At work yeah [Laughs] he lived at Chingford [Laughs]

[Laughs]

John: when I came out the army

Yeah

*So, so how long did you date for before you…*

Four years weren’t it? Yeah about four years

*Erm…erm trying to think now [Laughs] erm so where did you move to after you got married?*

Erm I lived in Cannington Road, then I moved to…Goresbrook Road, from Goresbrook Road we moved to Porter’s Avenue and then after…we lived with mum for a little while and we got a house round in erm Cornworthy Road

*Ok*

And then from Cornworthy Road, we moved to Gales Street

*Ok*

So how long have you lived here for?

What in here? Twenty eight years ain’t it? Twenty eight years…

*Ok*

John: 1983 we came here

1983 we came here so its twenty nine years ain’t…no twenty eight years cos we’ve got another two years and then it’ll be erm 2013 twenty eight years yeah

*Ok so when, when was the first time that you went to the Park…Barking Park?*

Well I used to go when I was little…you know sort of like…eight, nine, ten with my mum and then we used to take Tony and Angela over then when they got bigger, that’s when we went on the miniature railway…used to go from the front gate of the park to the back didn’t it?

John: yeah

Just a straight one it was, it’ll go from the front right to the back of the erm Park

*Oh ok*

And then you’d get off of there and have a walk round the boating lake…you could have a go on the boats, the paddle boats they had there weren’t it?

John: yeah

Used to have all the swan and that there, then it used…all the ducks and then from there, there used to be the swings, they had a nice little swing park where you could go in, you know…sort of like a bit further, used to go in there and go on them swings

John: yeah a cafeteria didn’t you’re?

A little cafeteria you could you know a tea or whatever you wanted, and then right over the back towards erm…what’s that road what goes down…is it Water Lane, no it’s not Water Lane is it? You know the one that goes near the bus garage

John: Fairlop

Eh?

John: the Fairlop

Well Loxford Road, Loxford near there, there used to be the erm…at the other end of the park there used to be the outdoor swimming bathes, it used to be nice that…

John: it’s still there it is

Well…yeah it’s still…used to…I don’t know if they’ve knocked it down but there used to be

John: they’re renovating it

They’re renovating oh well, used to go in there, you could go in there it’s nice, when it was nice and warm in the summer

*I was just going to ask quickly erm when you was little what kind of games did you used to play and that?*

What sort of games oh…used [Laughs] knocking down ginger weren’t it?

*What’s that? [Laughs]*

Well you tie the cotton on the door knocker and go and hide and pull it

*Oh [Laughs]*

And then you used to…what was that erm…what was that high jimmy knacker weren’t it?

John: yeah

And you used to do the leap frog weren’t it?

John: yeah over the back

Yeah erm I think that was high jimmy knacker weren’t it? And then we used to play with tops, you know…and marbles

John: and sticks

And erm gobs…gobs, what do they call them?

John: XXXX

No, gobstops you know when used to chuck do you remember…no you don’t well I think we used to play it with you when you was little, you get five stones…that’s what it was called five stones and you used to have five stones…well like little square blocks, you used to buy and you used…push it up and catch it on the back of your hand

*Ok*

And then you catch it up, pick how many you could up with the stones and that weren’t it?

John: yeah

And we used to call it five stones and that...yeah and what else did we used to do?

John: XXXX

Eh?

John: XXXX

Oh yeah no not them…games that you played erm…used to just…usual girlish things you know dressing up and things like that…get you mum’s clothes out [Laughs] and dress up in them…cos I lived in a banjo you see so there used to be a few…and we used to play in the banjo

*Alright*

Down Cannington Road, it’s sort of at the bottom and there to be a few children there and we used to play dressing up and that you know…hopscotch, hopscotch weren’t it?

John: mmh

We used to play that a lot, got into trouble for drawing on the floor [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

And erm well all just kiddie things really, you know girls things with the prams and that and shops, play shops [Laughs] and all like that, it…so

*What was I going to say…what is your first memory of Barking Park, what you can remember?*

Well I suppose really…it always was that…I mean it did stop but I suppose it was the little railway really and the house at the side with all the flower beds outside the erm…I don’t know if it was the erm caretaker’s there

*Ah I think it was like the lodge house because like erm…*

Yeah it was like…well the house is still there ain’t it?

John: yeah it’s still there

The house is still there

*Well one of the people that like has been interviewed before like her dad used to be the gardener*

Yeah it used to be beautiful erm

John: flowers round the bandstand

*She used to live there for…*

Did she?

*I think so; she’s already been interviewed for the erm…*

Oh well no well I remember that cos it was nice and erm colourful the flowers and the park was nice, used to have like…used to seem to be more trees there then it is now, I don’t know if it…you know and the lake used to be nice

John: football pitches over there ain’t they?

Yeah, yeah used to be…you know the tennis courts…it has got the tennis courts there ain’t it?

*I think…yeah*

And I think it was just mainly the open space you know what I mean the erm little railway that was erm…novelty, everybody used to like going on that

*Yeah*

Didn’t they [Laughs] I think it was about **thrupenny a ride weren’t it?**

***What…was the erm the train like that when you was like younger?***

**Yeah when I was…about…you know the things you remember as you know the train and that...you know**

***Erm I was just going to ask erm was the lido there when you was younger?***

**It’s always been there**

***Alright did you used to go in it a lot when…?***

**Well it was only summertime you could go cos it was erm…you know**

**John: from May to September**

**It was…May…it sort of open air in the winter you used to have go to the one in Barking**

***Ok***

**Behind the law courts there used to be a swimming pool there didn’t it?**

**John: yeah, XXXX**

**Well that was all the year round that one**

**John: yeah…that was a bathhouse weren’t really**

**Yeah…no it was a swimming pool**

**John: yeah you used to have a swimming pool, didn’t they used to…**

**No you’re talking about, you’re thinking about down Popular behind the baths**

**John: no used to…**

**No they didn’t have baths**

**John: no, no as I say I’ve been in there swimming**

**Yeah they used to have like it was an old Victorian XXXX with the where…you could go upstairs and that, but the open aired one that was open during the summer**

***Ok***

**It was too cold to go in the winter [Laughs]**

***[Laughs] I was just going to ask you like erm do you have memories like of any park keepers or like lido lifeguards or like stuff like?***

**No not really**

***Ok***

**They only used to pass through parks weren’t it?**

**John: yeah**

**You never sort of stopped and spoke**

*Oh ok*

They used to sort of patrol round

*Yeah*

You’d see them going round and that

*Was they kind of like you know strict keeping off the grass and stuff like?*

Mmh keep off the grass, used to have notices on there keep off the grass [Laughs]

*[Laughs] I was going to say erm…do you have any like erm…memories about going on the…boats or anything?*

Yeah on the paddle boats yeah they were good yeah weren’t they?

John: yeah

Used to in there you used to sit in…and run [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

You know what I mean; they were nice they call you in when your time was up ‘come in’ [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

Ain’t it?

John: mmh

Well like over when we’ve been over to erm…we’ve been over to the one at Ilford, what’s the name of that park?

*Valentine’s Park*

John: XXXX

What?

John: Valentine

Yeah well they have the little boats there you know what I mean where they…it was like that we’ve been on them yeah

*Ok how long did you get to go onto the boats?*

Oh it wasn’t very long was it John?

John: no

About quarter of an hour weren’t it?

John: yeah, half an hour

About half an hour, fifteen, half hour something like that, wasn’t very long you didn’t…about half hour really ain’t it?...yes, yes Irene

John: yes Irene

*[Laughs] I was going to say erm…did you used to go on the rowing boats as well?*

No I can’t row [Laughs] granddad rows

*Oh well obviously you got him like just row it like…*

Yeah [Laughs] let him row, I can’t row

John: used to be in the sea cadets didn’t I?

Mmh

*What I was going to say erm did you to play tennis in the tennis courts?*

No

*Ok*

Used to go over Parsloes Park and play

*Alright*

It was nearer weren’t Parsloes Park for that

*Yeah erm I was just going to ask erm…so erm did you use to take mum and Tony to the park a lot?*

Yeah well in the summer didn’t we?

John: yeah

We used to take them over and that

*What did you used to do like when erm when you went over the park?*

Used to go on the train and then they’d go on the swings, have a look round the erm lake and if they were thirsty get a drink and that, and just walk round and, you know let them have a run round

*Yeah*

Run wild [Laughs]

*Did you used to go to the park a lot when you was younger?*

We used to but not, not a lot…cos I had to get on the bus didn’t I to go there

*Yeah did you just like used to go in the summer?*

Yeah

*Ok*

Not the winter much, too cold

*So erm what did you do apart from going in the lido and like that?*

Well used to go on the swings, you’d take some sandwiches didn’t you?

John: yeah

And that and have some sandwiches over and some lemonade or whatever you had water, whatever you took with you

*Did you ever used to like go fishing in the lake?*

No

John: no

I don’t think you was allowed to fish in there

*Because a few people have said like they used to like fish for tiddlers like…*

I didn’t think you was allowed to fish over there did you?

John: no I don’t think you can

*Erm a lot of people said like they used to get like erm…*

Nets, fishing nets

*Nets, fishing nets from like the shop like outside the like the park*

Yeah, yeah but I never did that…I used to do that over matchstick island, but not in Barking Park [Laughs] I didn’t think you was allowed to do it over there

*Where’s matchstick island?*

Down the roundhouse

*Ok yeah*

Mayesbrook Park

*Oh*

Yeah

*Did you used to play games in the park when you was younger?*

Well mostly ball games weren’t it? Throwing the balls and cricket or that you tennis…you know on the lawns, not in the courts or that

*Yeah*

Just on the grass you know you just sort of played with the balls and that

*Erm I was just going to ask erm do you remember because a couple of people have said like that there used to be a giant chess set in…Barking Park*

John: yeah there was a big chess set

Yeah

*And like only adults could play [Laughs] so I was just going to ask if like you…you remembered that*

Well yeah it would be only adults, they wouldn’t let the kids run riot on that would they [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

John: no big ones, used to pick them up and put them…

Yeah move them yeah, yeah I never touched…

John: I couldn’t play chess

Eh?

John: couldn’t play…

Couldn’t play chess so I wouldn’t touch them [Laughs]

*Do you remember when that was like what kind of year that?*

That was…when the…beginning weren’t it?

John: what’s that?

When they were there, it was in the sixties, early seventies weren’t it?

John: yeah

About sixties or seventies I think

*Ok*

End of sixties, you know into the seventies yeah

*So you was like saying erm there used to be restaurants…*

Yeah there was a little cafeteria there weren’t it?

John: yeah

It was quite nice; you could go and get a cup of tea and that

John: I think you could get ice-cream and all there

Yeah ice-creams and that

*Alright*

Yeah it used to be…erm half way in the middle XXXX of the park, it was you know I don’t think that there now is it?

John: XXXX

No that’s gone yeah between the lakes and the boats…

*I think, I think like they are going to doing a new…*

A new one

*New café area*

Yeah

*Like in there once it’s done up*

Yeah

John: they’re building over now aren’t they?

Yeah

I think there’s a bowls place over there, it used to be…not when we were young

No

John: but they built it…

They built a bowls….

John: in the eighties or something

Bowls you know…

John: I think so I don’t know…

Have we still got that one over Parsloes Park, the bowling green…we used to have one over there…

John: no they used to have…I think they used to have some…blokes on the papers used to go up there one of the blokes used to play bowls I think I don’t know

Yeah

John: it was an indoor one I think, I don’t know

I don’t know about that [Coughs] yeah

*Erm I was going…to erm ask anything about the wildlife in the park?*

Yeah used to have a lots of swans and ducks and things like that and a lot of…think used to get squirrels over there then, didn’t you and that

John: mmh

You know general sort of things and birds and that were loved weren’t they?

*Yeah what kind of birds were there?*

Well…

John: bluetits

No…you know sort of…blackbirds and…just your average birds, you know blackbirds and things like that well the ones that I could recognise anyway [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

Do what?

John: the common birds like sparrows and starlings

Yeah all things like what we would recognise you know

John: magpies

Magpies yeah

*Erm I was going to say erm a few people have been saying about erm…there was a swan…in the park called Henry the swan and people used to…and he used to try and like attack people*

Oh

*I wondered whether, wondered whether you remember*

No [Laughs] I never see him

*Ok so he didn’t try and attack you then?*

No, no he didn’t attack me, I was safe

*[Laughs] do you remember like erm was there like loads erm…flowers and trees…*

Yeah there seemed to be more trees then there is now and that didn’t it? It used to seem as if there was a long…walkways and that, there don’t seem to be many you know sort of like it was it was and there used to have nice flowers yeah I would admit that, there’s nice flowers, I like the flowers

*What kind of flowers were there?*

Well it all depends what season it was if you know it was the spring, you’d get all the spring bulbs and the erm…primulas and that weren’t it and the pansies and things like that and then when it came to the summer, all the wall flowers, you used to get all the wall flowers and that cos they…all the springs one you used to get, then when it come to the summer you’d get the roses and all that coming out

*Ok*

It was nice

*Erm I was just going to say erm…if you remembered any like kind of carnivals or circus or fairs in the park?*

Yeah well we used to have a carnival every year didn’t they? And that

John: XXXX circus

We did have a circus once didn’t we?

John: yeah

Yeah did have one once, I remember when the kids were little weren’t it?

John: yeah

I can’t remember…

John: Zippos

What?

John: Zippos

Zippos, Zippos I think it was yeah

John: it was called Z-I-P-P-O-S

P-O Zippo there was a you know a carnival…

John: circus

Erm circus there

*Ok*

And that but erm there used to be the carnival every year and then that…as well you say there was September the beginning of October sometimes weren’t it?

John: erm September

Mostly September

John: end of July, September

No it weren’t end of July

July: September

September I think

John: yeah had all the floats, used to go round

They used to do the floats over Mayesbrook Park and then they used to make it’s way up to erm…Barking Park

John: Barking Park

*Oh ok*

But…one minute…I think it used to be…having said that I’m saying the beginning of October I think it was near enough when the kids went back to school

*Ok*

Weren’t it? About the first, second week in September, you know first…beginning of second week…when the kids used to back to school about the seventh of September it’ll be about the second week I suppose

*Ok*

Yeah it used to be…

*Alright erm, erm did you used to go there a lot to the…*

Yeah used to go watch the thing…well used walk into Mayesbrook Park watch them do the floats then we’d cut through into Upney Lane and walk round and get the bus round and go into Barking and watch the erm carnival there

*Ok*

Yeah

*What kind of like floats did they used to have?*

Well they used to have them like the…mostly like…

John: Fords

Fords you know the industries that used to be round here then weren’t it?

John: yeah

And you’d have it like for the youth clubs and erm…the erm…sort of different activity groups…dance groups and things like that…used to like dance groups and…

John: beauty queens

Youth clubs and erm then you’d have the erm Ford’s floats and it’s be another sort of erm float for another erm sort of industry and that and you used have erm…the kids used to make the floats up, different…you know Caribbean thing or something, all different floats they used to do, you know…and that, there used to be quite a long carnival didn’t it?

John: they used to have all the…

Dagenham Girl Pipers

John: yeah

Then we used to have a different cadet bands, weren’t it from the air force and the army

John: yeah

And the navy, XXXX used to go didn’t they?

John: yeah sea cadets

And that, used to have all of them march behind, you know you’d have the erm floats then a band then the floats then a band you know what I mean?

*Yeah*

It was all the youngsters mostly, the cadets, the sea cadets and…

*Yeah*

Things like that, they used to…

John: get the beauty queens from different XXXX come

Oh yeah all the different beauty queens from Southend, Canvey Island weren’t it?

John: yeah

And all around like that, they all used to come in to the erm precession and then you’d have your own beauty queen and that in there

*Yeah*

All going along

John: and marching bands weren’t it?

Eh?

John: the marching bands

I just told you that didn’t I?

*[Laughs]*

John: yeah

Keep up john, keep up [Laughs]

Erm I was just going…

John: yeah and all the ones with the XXXX what are they called?

What? That’s Dagenham girl pipers

John: no do the bleeding whirling with the stick

Well she’s the one that whirls them in the Dagenham girl…oh they used to have them, some little kids used…to do it sometimes where they twirl the batons you know…what do call them batons?

*Oh yeah erm…yeah trying to think I don’t know what they’re called*

Yeah they’re something they called them [Laughs] but I can’t remember it

John: XXXX or something

*Cos like, I remember like in*

Marionettes?

*I know in another interview like…in another interview someone was saying about it, and nobody can remember what they’re called*

No…oh I…they were the Dagenham girl pipers weren’t it…and oh god…it was it Marion…not the marionettes was it? Was it the marionettes?

John: might be marionettes yeah

It don’t know if it was the marionettes, something like that and they used to do the twirl the sticks, you know

*Yeah*

In their fingers and throw them up and catch them and that yeah

*How long did the carnival used to last for?*

Oh it was quite, quite a good one weren’t it? It’d take about an hour and a half wouldn’t it?

John: hour and a half, yeah

Hour, hour and a half to go by

John: to go by

Yeah used to have all the people selling the flags and the erm…them things you blow you know and that

*Yeah*

[Blows] what do you call them tings that curl out?

*Erm…*

I don’t know what they call them?

*How long did like the whole like thing used to last for?*

Well go by used to by be about an hour and half

*I meant the whole like the whole carnival as whole like how long did that used to last, like be in the park for?*

Oh I don’t know I…used to be by the time they sort of went from Parsloes Park and by the time and by the time they got into the other park what about an hour and a half weren’t it?

John: yeah

Then I suppose it’d be another half hour when they crown the…queen and that and then they all used to go to the town hall for a…their dinner or whatever…lunch whatever it was

*How long was it there for, a week or…*

Oh two weeks

*Ok*

The fair weren’t it? Two weeks

John: yeah

*Ok alright, so what kind of like stuff did it used to have in there?*

What in there? Well they used to have the dodgems didn’t they? Erm the octopus, you don’t know what that is do you?

*I think I’ve seen similar stuff yeah*

They go up and down

*I’ve seen similar one like*

Yeah they were like them but they were little tiny…only held two and it used to swing round on the end of these arms that went up and down, didn’t they? Erm what else did they have John? Used to have you know all them little side bits where…roll your penny down the chute…

John: helter-skelter

Helter-skelter and you used to have like a wooden thing [Laughs] and you put your penny in and you used to roll it and you tried to get it…used to be all little compartments of how much it was, used to get you money [Laughs] and try and get your money in one of them, so you’d win your pennies back

*Yeah*

And that and erm the duck where you fished them out…used to have all the erm hot dogs stands and the ice cream, candy floss and that and erm…I’m trying to think what else was there…used to have the caterpillar the one that goes up and down you know, the different names to what you have…the same…

John: used to have thing, used to go round…give you your ticket…

The aeroplanes

John: and then they used have erm…used to have lights and different names on the boards and lights used to go up and down

Oh yeah used to call it lie horse racing or something like that weren’t it and you’d get a ticket say of a horse and it used to go up and down and if it stopped on your thing you won and that

John: down…lights and it sort of go over like a...something like a disco light and then all of a sudden it would stop on one

On one

John: if you got your name on your ticket, you’d win a prize, you know what I mean

Them swing chairs like you used to go on, they used to have them, the little roundabouts for the little ones

*Yeah*

John: boat swings

Yeah what do they call them? Boats swings, I thought they weren’t aeroplanes, oh I don’t know

John: no they were boat swings where…

And then they used to have one called…big Lizzie

John: that’s it

Remember it was like a big…well it’s about oh…about the size of this room and little big longer, not quite so wide and they used to have big Bertha, that’s what they called it, what…

John: big Bertha

And they used to have these seats and you all sat in it and it’d go up and turn upside down, then come back and go up the other way like that

*Yeah*

Used to have two of them side by side didn’t they? And they used to have that thing where you hit the thing and it hits the bell…erm…didn’t used to that…no didn’t have that there no it was just general fairground but they’re mostly you know what I can remember

*I was going to ask, you was like saying about the carnival queens*

Mmh

*And you was like saying about celebrities used to crown them*

Oh yeah…used to have well they was like…we have Anthony Steel, Pete Murray wasn’t it?

John: mmh

Barbara Windsor

John: Nicolas Parsons

Nicolas Parsons anyone else you can remember?

John: well I know this chap, but as I say he died

Yeah, yeah

John: he got murdered actually

It was quite…you know it used to really have erm the erm top class ones weren’t it that come down and that

John: yeah

I have got a picture of Anthony Steel coming out the bandstand somewhere, if I find I’ll erm…

*Ok*

You can what’s name it…ain’t it? Got a picture

John: the bandstand in Barking Park

*We can always just like scan it and like…*

Yeah that that was when I was little that was…Jean got that picture, that’s when I was little that was, he was there weren’t it?

*Alright, yeah*

Or little, not little little

John: they used to pick out the beauty queens

Yeah

John: yeah

Yeah you know they, you know they was there and you used to have…

John: crown them ain’t it?

He used to crown them, but you used to have two erm…runners up, I suppose they were they used to be maids of honour

*Oh*

For the beauty queen weren’t it?

John: yeah

On the float, she used to sit at the top and they used to sit below, it was like on a erm…just like an open back thing and they used to do it up with the thrones on it and that

*So after they like were crowned again, they’d go on the float again?*

Well once they go to the park it’d all disperse the floats and that but once she’d been crowned…I don’t think…whether they got in a car, but they used to go to the town hall and have their lunch

*Yeah ok*

Well like a little banquet I suppose, don’t know nobody got into see it [Laughs]

*[Laughs]*

John: have the fair opposite

Eh?

John: the fair opposite weren’t it?

Pardon?

John: used to have a fair opposite after

Well the fair was…well the bandstand was near where the fair was weren’t it?

John: was yeah

You know what I mean and that, and they used to go back…which is now the law court which used to be the town hall was were they used to go and have their banquet or whatever you call it after the carnival weren’t

John: yeah the back of there used to be swimming…

That was…at the back of there was the erm…

John: covered up swimming pool

Covered up…you know the indoor swimming pool, used to be at the back of the town hall

John: Victorian, Victorian

*Ok*

But it’s gone now that ain’t it?

*Yeah*

Everything’s gone

*[Laughs]*

There’s not much left of Barking how it was

John: well you got…swimming pool but that outside there now ain’t it?

No that’s gone over, that’s gone over…it’s built the new one was over the other place, that’s nothing to do with that one…there was one behind the town hall

John: yeah I know that

But there’s none behind the town hall now

John: oh no, no

It’s over by the pub over the other side

John: yeah, yeah

What’s it…that oh some pub, some pub over there that used to be over here

John: the barge ain’t it?

The barge ground or something, something over there but there’s…they built the swimming pool there

*Yeah*

Indoor swimming pool, so that went

*Did you ever used to go in the small paddling pool in the…in the park?*

Yeah there was a little paddling pool, but I didn’t used to go in that

*Oh did you used to take mum and Tony?*

They never went in there either [laughs]

*So just the lido then?*

Just [Laughs] yeah just in the lido yeah, used to just go and have a look

*I was going to say…*

John: Jackie got her foot caught in there

Yeah Jackie…oh she would

*[Laughs]*

John: little hole and fall over…

It’s a great big blinking…erm like erm like you walk from the dressing rooms to the swimming pool part

*Yeah*

Great big like veranda weren’t it? And she finds a little hole like that and puts her foot down it and scratches it all Jack

*[Laughs]*

It can only be her can’t it [Laughs]

*Erm I was going to say erm in, in the carnival did they, did they used to fireworks?*

At the…not at the what’s name, they did when it ended

John: in the evening, the evening

*Ok*

You know when it ended and that weren’t it?

*Did they like have like any other stuff going on at the end of the carnival or did they just have fireworks? Did they have like a…*

Well they used to have the carnival and then after that, the fair opened up so people would go into the fair and then the last night that’s when they had the fireworks

*Ok*

Weren’t it?

John: yeah

They used…as soon as the carnival was finished the queen and that would all go wherever they went and they used to have the Lord Mayor and all that in the cars and I suppose they used to go back to the town hall and have their what’s name, then the fair would be going and ordinary people would go there and then after…the end of the two weeks that’s when the fireworks went off

*Ok*

Not on the day

*Oh did…how long would the fireworks last for?*

An hour, not all that long was it?

John: I don’t know I can’t remember going over there

Well I only remember went over once to go…it wasn’t all that long

*Oh*

It weren’t sort of like a big display

*Yeah*

Just a few of them and that about a hour and that was it

*Ok did erm, did they used to play music in the bandstand at all?*

Well, when they were marching?

*No just like general like did they used to play any music or anything like in the bandstand or…?*

Yeah they did, didn’t they? They used to have…used to play it on a Sunday and that

*Alright what like during the afternoon or something?*

Yeah

John: Brian Poole and the Tremoloes there

What?

John: on the bandstand, do you remember that time?

Yeah

John: Brian Poole and the Tremoloes played up there

That was on the bandstand, they used to…it was mostly

John: they came from around the corner here, do you know that? Brian Poole and the Tremoloes, round the corner

Well the bass guitarist used to live round in erm…Thicket Grove

No Rusper Road, he used to live in Rusper Road, the erm…bass guitarist, I think he came from Barking Brian Poole didn’t he?

John: yeah Brian Poole and the Tremoloes

Yeah…I don’t if it was Barking he came from…but I know the bass guitarist Alan something used to live in there, but erm ah…as I say used to…used to Sally Army used to play in it didn’t they?

John: mmh

You know some…I don’t know if it was every Sunday but…you know used to play in the band…it was a big bandstand as well, not a small one wasn’t it John?

John: no I think we got a photograph of it when

I have with Anthony Steel, I’ll have a look and find that for you, I was going to have a look earlier on and I…I don’t know if it’s in with mum’s photos, I’ll have a look

*Well you can always give it to me another time [Laughs]*

Yeah I’ll have a look you know over the weekend, and if I find it I’ll give it to you, and you can erm…what’s name it

John: take a photo of it

*Erm you was talking about like erm like the lodge house…you was saying about the nice flowers…*

Oh yeah it always had lovely flowers in the front and it was a nice house you know what I mean I think that took you eye when you went in cos it was…quite, quite a big house really ain’t it?

*Mmh*

And that it was quite nice there and that was nice and it had lovely flowers in the front and that it was nice

*Yeah I was going to say erm you know like in the carnival and the fair did they have any animals or like…like any…*

No did they?

John: I can’t remember

Used to have people dress up as clowns and walk along and things like that and…people dress up and ride bicycles , all for charity you know what I mean they rattled their buckets like they do, but I don’t think they had any animals no I can’t remember having any animals

*Ok was there any circuses like did any circuses…*

John: Zippos

Zippos…but it wasn’t when the carnival was on; it’d be at a different time

*When did that used to come to the park?*

Oh

John: round about bleeding August time

Yeah, no what year time?

*I just meant…*

John: about August, May

No not the…not talking about that, talking about 1967 or

*No, no I meant what time of the year did it come to it?*

Oh

John: August

Oh yeah August

*How long did that used to last for?*

John: about two weeks

It was only a couple…yeah two weeks, everything’s two weeks staying here

*[Laughs] so what kind of stuff did they have there?*

Well…don’t know cos we never went there, did we? Because I didn’t like circuses

John: I think your dad took you there to bleeding

Yeah dad took you I think

*Oh I can’t remember*

When you was little

John: yeah the horses and that all riding round

They’d have horses and things like that…I can’t remember…

John: I think your dad took you once

I don’t…

John: when you was little

It’d be horses and things like that, clowns and general things

John: there wasn’t no tigers

There was no animals like big animals there or that, I don’t think there was any elephants neither was there? Nothing, it was just like horses and…dog acts and things like that, I don’t think…I can’t remember they having any tigers or that there or anything like that, nothing dangerous you know

John: like lions

No nothing like that, it was just

John: horses and that

Weren’t it and they just did the…trapeze artists and the tightrope ones like that weren’t it?

John: mmh

And as I say the clowns, Zippos he was a clown weren’t he Zippo?

John: mmh

And that so…it all that sort of stuff

John: trapeze, what do they call them?

Eh?

John: what do they call them on the erm…

Trapeze

John: not…well you said the trapeze, the other one

Tightrope

John: tightrope that’s it

I said that to

*[Laughs] so erm…did you used to go to like the carnival when you was younger or did you…?*

Yeah, I used to go when I was little and when you know when Tony and Angela was

*Oh ok how different was it like compared to when you went like when you was little to when you took…mum and Tony?*

Well…it, it was alright

John: up to eighteen…when Ton…just before he, that September weren’t it?

It used…well it was alright ‘til about…I suppose

John: ’65, ‘64

No, no, no it’d be after that, I should say…

John: ’95, ‘94

I should say up to about the late eighties and then it gradually dwindled off and then it went…and then it came to…what was it, some…some day weren’t it?

John: yeah

Erm…Barking Day not Barking, someday it was and

John: that was the last one is ’94, when Ton was ill that time weren’t it?

Yeah, yeah well that’s the last time we went there, I don’t think…and it gradually dwindled and dwindled so there wasn’t many…floats and that you know what I mean

*Yeah*

It just went didn’t it? And then they had it…I don’t know what they called it, some day they called it…and I don’t think they have anything now, I never see anything

John: only go over Central Park don’t they?

Yeah we only have that Dagenham Town Show now

*Yeah and I think like you know like…the thing where Sapphire went to like the Barking Park*

John: yeah Central

What did she go to?

*You know sometimes when like the rides there like the erm*

Oh it’s

*The fair*

Just the fair

*Yeah*

Yeah they have the fair there yeah and that but they don’t…it…there’s no carnival

John: it was separate in Barking Park…and in Dagenham Park

It was no erm…

John: Dagenham Show and they had…Barking was separate

It was Barking carnival and it was Dagenham Town Show that’s what it used to be, but Barking carnival gradually dwindled by the end of the eighties, there was nothing left…early nineties…I don’t think they did anymore, it was just like…some day they called it, I don’t know it was stupid

*Ok*

But they don’t have it no more do they?

John: no ’95, ’94 it finished was the last one

Well you don’t…but that was the time we see it and it wasn’t much good then

*Ok*

There was a few floats; it wasn’t like it was before

John: cos they had the Odeon…were I worked you see, they had a float in there didn’t they?

But they yeah, they used to have a lot of erm…as I say you have a float, a couple of floats then you’d have a band, there used to be loads of bands didn’t there? And the Dagenham girl pipers and all that, but you don’t get none of that now

John: and that film called, film called Speed, I don’t know if you’ve ever seen it that

Yeah she knows, that’s nothing to do with the park

John: no but as I say XXXX in the carnival

They had a carnival about that film speed, well that’s you know

John: they had a special American coach they hired that it’s it…

*Erm I was going to say erm…how much was like erm the train like how much was it to go on the train when you was little?*

Oh it was only about **thrupenny weren’t it?**

***What about when erm Tony and mum used to…***

**How much did we used to pay when Tony…wasn’t all that much was it?**

**John: no**

**A couple of bob weren’t it? Half a crown something like there**

***Ok***

**Eh?**

***It’s ok***

**John: four and a half pence**

**Twelve and a half pence it would have been then, but it was two and six pence it was to us**

**John: half a crown**

**Something like that it wasn’t a lot you know just little ride sort of thing Shillings really weren’t it? Used to go on it, it…well** it wasn’t a very long ride but it was nice weren’t it? Took you from one end…from beginning to the end of the park [Laughs] you know straight line

*Yeah ok*

John: and back again

*I don’t think I can think of anything else so like*

No I don’t think…

*Unless, unless like you want to say anything else*

I can’t think of anything else, can’t you? Eh?

John: no not really

Not really, that was it

John: XXXX just sit over there weren’t it XXXX

Yeah they used to have the what’s name…used to sit and listen to the people play didn’t they?

John: yeah

In the summer

*Wait what how to do you mean?*

Well you know like you see them sit around and listen to the band

John: the bandstand

By the bandstand

*Ok what so did they used to have stuff like every summer or…?*

I don’t know about every Sunday but it used to be on a Sunday mostly didn’t it?

John: yeah

And that but I don’t know about every Sunday

*Ok*

And that

John: [Yawns]

But erm…you know you…well I never went every Sunday so I wouldn’t know but…when…if we’ve been there they’ve had them ain’t they?

John: yeah

And that yeah, it’s quite nice

*Alright unless you want to add anything else I can’t think of anything*

No I can’t think of anything else [Laughs]

*Ok*

About the rest of my recollection you know what I mean

*Well I think we’ve got enough anyway*

You think you’ve got enough, you can XXXX Paris

*Well because like…because really where it’s only talking about Barking Park so…*

Yeah

*We’ve talked about a lot anyway so I think that will be fine [Laughs]*

Yeah

*Unless granddad wants to add anything…add anything*

Do you want to add anything John?

John: not really no I wasn’t here much…nan’s more or less…it’s only when Ton and your mum…used to take them over but that was it

*Yeah*

John: the park

*Ok*

But as I say…it was a nice park though weren’t it?

John: yeah

*Well erm did you used to take me over there when I was little or…*

We have been with your mum and that

*Oh ok what did you used to do like when you used to take me?*

Well you just more or less go on the swings and that when you was little, go over there and take…you know have something to eat and that

*Alright*

Yeah your mum used to…

*When did they close down like the restaurant in there?*

I don’t know that just sort of dwindled, it was, it was still stood but never open, but that…the lido has been

John: must have been the eighties I reckon

Yeah the eighties I reckon and that outdoor swimming pool and that ain’t it?

John: yeah, all shut down now

I can’t remember the exact date but they erm they shut it down because they said they couldn’t afford to keep it open cos it…it never…in the winter

*Yeah*

You couldn’t use it could you so it was only the few summer months where they got…it was a nice lido weren’t it?

John: last time I see it, it was full of weeds

Yeah, had all fountains in it and it was lovely and it used to have a big terrace where you could sit and sunbathe and that was nice

*Yeah mmh yeah how erm what did the fountains look like?*

Well…just…like a big like bowl and they’d have another bowl on top and it all used to come out

Ok

It was like a spray weren’t it?

John: mmh

It was nice

*So did…erm did they have any like seats like where you sit around the pool, was it like sunbeds or?*

No they didn’t have no seats, it had steps what you went up to get up to…you know the pool was there and you went them steps and you could…well you just sat on your towel or that up the top

*Ok*

Yeah

*Alright*

John: I don’t know if they’re renovating it now for the Olympics are they?

Well they were suppose…I don’t know they were going to something…

*They’re like erm redoing like stuff up on it*

Yeah

*And they’re going to build like an education centre*

John: ah

*For schools and all that*

Oh yeah

*They’re just like…they drained off all the lake*

Yeah

*And they’re putting it all back into…so they cleaned up all the lake*

Oh they cleaned it all up yeah because it did go down hill

*Well they’re finishing it next year and then like…erm…I was told that like everybody who like erm…is like…is interview like for this project get, get to be invited to the launch of it, so*

[Laughs] you get invited to see the launch

*Yeah so like I think that’s in about April time*

Oh

*So like yeah [Laughs]*

That should be nice

*So like erm I think they’re just like redoing everything up and all that*

Yeah, well it did go down didn’t it?

John: well you can see the contractors when you go by on the bus [Yawns]

Yeah

John: XXXX doing something

It wend down you know sort of, go worn out looking and that and…I suppose, well I suppose people didn’t go so much, if the poor XXXX

John: see you never had tele like you do now and that

Eh?

John: cos all you had was the cinema and that weren’t it?

Yeah but I mean no the thing is the restaurant went, didn’t it? The little train didn’t run no more did it? And then the erm…

John: we used to have a boat upside down, somewhere near the gate weren’t it?

Mmh

John: do you remember that?

Used to have an upside down boat on the side

*Yeah*

John: rowing boat so it more or less told you, you can do rowing in there

Mmh

*I think they’re doing a new a café there*

They’re doing another café, see everything sort shut down and I suppose that’s why people never went so much…and that because if you’ve got the café and that you can go early can’t you?

*Yeah*

Have something to eat and drink and then carry on the afternoon

*Yeah*

But if you…you know can’t get anything to eat and drink, I suppose people didn’t bother

John: well when you think of it I mean it’s the time have changed ain’t they?

Yeah

John: I mean never had cars and that when we was young

No

John: and married and that

No

John: yeah see and erm it’s the periods it’s changes around and people have different interests don’t they?

*Yeah*

Yeah

John: that was like a civic centre…they had erm…what’s it…they showed you on the tele once, it was over Chingford…erm they used to have a carnival over Chingford where I used to live and they had the pearly kings and it was my mate’s erm…brother Ted, you see it on the tele, he was pearly king

*Yeah*

John: Rob’s pearly king

I think…did they used to have the pearly kings and queens…I don’t know I can’t remember, but I don’t know if they used to come to the carnival as well you know what I mean

*Yeah*

John: yeah pearly kings and that

Yeah, anywhere to make money the pearly kings and queens…charities and that

*Yeah well anyway*

John: that chap outside…down Romford you see, the pearly king, old boy

*Mmh*

John: he used…he knows my…old Rob Arrowsmith, he’s pearly king down XXXX in Yarmouth way now

*Yeah*

John: yeah they were all pearly kings from XXXX, from Bethnal green

*Ok well anyway so*

So that’s it?

*Yeah I think*

John: [Loud clap]

Oh don’t clap she’s got the thing on

John: that’s it

He’s got a thing about clapping

*[Laughs] anyway I’ll turn it off then*

Yeah

*Because I think…*

I think that’s about it…if I think anymore I’ll tell you

*Ok yeah*

I don’t…can’t think of nothing else

*Ok ill stop it then*

That’s it

[TAPE END]

**Interview Details**

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