### 2012\_esch\_BaPa\_17

### *Ok, so first of all if I could ask for your full name?*

### Right, it’s Victor Arthur Gibbard.

### *And when were you born?*

### Errm 20th July 1941.

### *And where were you born?*

### Here.

### *And err were your parents from here as well?*

### Yeah, yeah.

### *So when did they get to, come to Barking?*

### Errm….that is a bit more difficult to answer errm this house was built by one of my Great- Grandparents…errm…and it’s a little bit vague the times around there but my mother came from London, some can you remember? Not Putney was it? Err…

### Janet Gibbard: Lambeth?

### Lambeth, yeah probably Lambeth area. We don’t…we know very, very little about that time.

### *Hmm.*

### Errm…my father I don’t know, I imagine his parents had been round cos they owned houses, down the road in those days, errm two or three different houses were involved with them. And err how long they’d been there or their history, we haven’t really been able to trace back, so we lose account of them back there. But errm I’ve been here seventy years…so I go back a little way. [*laughs*] And err I’ve one or two stories, not a great deal but these like these two photos that err, two or three altogether? How many have you got do you remember?

### *Errm I think it was two.*

### Just two photos?

### *Yeah.*

### Yeah, that probably was it then. Errm I know one of them was of the two sisters, standing together by the boat house and the other I think was just one of them in at the boat house.

### *Yeah.*

### The old original boat house, not the one that’s recently been pulled down but that was an old wooden one…and err I can remember that fairly clearly.

### *What the original?*

### Yeah, well I say original, I assume it is original but it was a wooden boat house, which I remember quite well, I also remember coming through with an aunt, the one that was in the photo, doing the err rowing.

### *Hmm.*

### Belonged to the rowing club. And err her husband, I don’t know where we’d been but we were coming back home, past the boat house and this end of the lake and it was err frozen…errm frozen well over and there was a lot people on there skating.

### *Oh wow.*

### With ice skates. I went on the ice but err…errm I went on the ice, as I say but I was all over the place, I didn’t have skates, just in me shoes and I don’t think I could keep on me feet very well [*laughs*].

### *So was that kind of a, that wasn’t a usual thing then, not..?*

### No apparently not, it was quite a regular thing.

### *Oh right.*

### When the lake was frozen over, you don’t see that now. Well I haven’t anyway.

### *No, I guess people would think it would be too dangerous now.*

### No, they used to have lights round the boat house then, coloured strings of coloured lights. I can’t remember how far up the lake they went, I think they went a little way but not very far and it was quite a nice scene.

### *Hmm.*

### Seeing all the people on the lake and these lights on.

### *So when was this, when was the ice skating?*

### Oh, well obviously it had to be winter time, errm….it couldn’t have been very long after the war, probably a year, two years or so after the war.

### *Hmm.*

### The end of the war. But err I can’t remember, I know I was quite young then but err…old enough to fortunately remember it.

### *Hmm.*

### And it was about that time that I remember the train being at the back of the lake. And people have asked the council in the past about this, cos for a while I was driving the errm train, where it is currently now. It belongs to a club now but the chap who owned the boat house, who’s a ex- fireman.

### *Hmm.*

### And err he had the train and I was driving it for him for a while.

### *Oh right.*

### And people was coming up to me, all sorts of different things and one of them being that they’d heard the train used to run at the back of the lake, just at, it’s only….six/eight foot wide this strip between the actual stream and the lake itself.

### *Oh right.*

### It used to run the whole length of the lake, it was a lovely ride.

### *So you remember, you actually rode the train then?*

### Yes cos we had relatives, the other side…of the park to us, errm and err we often, we used to walk, well say walk over there, we’d start walking and the train was running, we’d go and get on the train and have a train ride and if it’s still running when we came back again, we’d get a train ride back home [*laughs*]. But err that was a lovely experience that…but err it was moved after some years, to where the track currently is now, well that’s a different track now, different gauge but errm that was the old nine and half inch gauge railway and it was a lovely one. And that train errm, I did have a magazine but I don’t know what happened to it, I’m hoping one day I’ll still find it, err with a bit of a story about the triain.

### *Oh right.*

### Because it eventually went from Barking Park and….it supposed the story is that went up to erm…what’s the railway Jan?

### JG: Bressingham.

### Bressingham. And it was on the rose garden railway for some while and I believe it was sold from there on but I don’t know to who or where it went.

### *No. So errm what was the train like, like can you describe it?*

### Errm it was green [laughs], err it was a nine and a quarter inch gauge, I can’t tell you much more about it, the type of engine it was errm I don’t know, I’d have to find that magazine.

### *Yeah.*

### Errm to prove that or establish that. Err I know, I believe it changed colour when it to Bressingham and I think it was a red, orange or reddy colour then but over the park it, it was quite a few years it was there and we used to run up and down, errm the whole length of the railway, it had a little bridge cos there was like slu skate halfway down the lane, err I don’t know if you can see it now, it’s still there but it probably won’t see it because of all of the overgrowth there and errm, you used to have a little bridge over that and the train used to go straight on right up the far end.

### *Ah wow.*

### You used to get off, level roughly with the end of the lake, so that was the whole length of the lake, which is a fair run.

### *Yeah.*

### But errm when they changed it and moved up to where it is presently, errm cos it’s only probably half the length…now that it runs, which was a great shame.

### *So why did they move it?*

### I think the reason given at the time was..errm because of the availability of it, more people came in the park up by the lodge and that’s where it used to run from down to the lake and err more people used that route, whereas along the back of the lake, errm far less people used it I believe. But that was what we was led to believe at the time.

### *Hmm. So do you remember like the kind of year where it changed position or not?*

### Err vaguely yes, I mean at that time I never used to go to the park all that much and I knew it had moved but I didn’t see it for a while after it had moved.

### *Ok.*

### Because the steam train had gone by then and they had err Little Nan was the engine that’s been there ever since up and till quite recently, when the err, the boat house was taken down, the newer boat house, the brick built one.

### *Hmm.*

### Errm and err the fella that run the boat house, Alec he, I believe he’s retired.

### *Yeah my colleague interviewed Alec.*

### Yeah, uh huh.

### *And errm yeah he doesn’t run the boats or the train anymore.*

### No, no he’s gone. Nothing to do with any of it.

### JG: That train was there where it is now, in the fifties.

### Yes.

### JG: In the fifties because I used to go on it, as a child.

### *So when were you..?*

### JG: So the train was where it was then, I never went on it over the back, so it was it was early fifties.

### Yeah, well between the war and the early fifties…

### JG: Yeah.

### It was on the back lake. Err whether it was there during the war, probably not used but whether it was there then, I don’t know. I don’t know when it actually started up and this, this fella I was talking to when I was running the other train, Little Nan over the park, came up to me and he was asking me about it, did I know anything about the train, a steam train running at the back of the lake? And I said, ‘Yes’ [*laughs*], ‘I certainly do, I rode on it, quite a few times’ and he said, well he’d been to the council, to try and find out he was told that that is rubbish, because there’s nothing in print, nothing to say that the train ever run at the back of a lake. But I can assure everybody it did. I ran on it a few times. And as my wife just said, she went on it as a child as well.

### *Yeah there’s, you know there’s been a lot of people that have, that can confirm, that are saying the same thing as you, so you know it must have happened.*

### And during those days it was said to be the best park in the country because we had so many things at one point going. We had the train over the park, errm the boats, they had motor boats, errm the tennis courts, we had the indoor err sorry not indoor, outdoor swimming pool over there, they had a paddling pool, err the toilets, a cafeteria, so many things that were going on in that park and it, because of that it was the best one, supposedly in the country. And being here all me life [*laughs*], I’d like to think that was true. But sadly [laughs], they’ve virtually all gone, the boats have all gone now, the swimming pool’s gone, the tennis court’s gone, oh putting little golf course thing there, that’s gone, cafeteria’s gone. Errm..

### *Yeah it’s a shame.*

### Yeah.

### *So how do you remember errm like the boats and stuff, did you use to go on them a lot?*

### Err I wouldn’t say a lot, err cos money was hard in those days, just after the war but err occasionally used to go on them.

### *So was it quite expensive?*

### Errm…I don’t know, I was a bit too young to realise prices in those days but errm…I had been on there a few times. But err what the prices were then, I imagine it was expensive for the times, because just after the war everything was rationed and money was very short.

### *Hmm.*

### But err you know quite hard times. But err as I say, I remember the park well, for so many different things that used to go on. Few times I went swimming over the, the pool over there.

### *What was that like?*

### That is- a very nice pool, always seemed to be busy to me but…it was closed down for some reason and..it was a great shame.

### Hmm.

### But all the other parks that had them in, seems to have been the indoor or outdoor pools that was in them, they’ve been closed down.

### *I think they thought they were spread of polio?*

### Yeah, that was a thing and this we understood was why the paddling pool, the children’s paddling pool that used to be over there, was shut but cos polio has been gone a long, long time.

### *Hmm.*

### And never reopened sadly. I think they’re gonna have some sort of a wet area for children over there, in the future [sound of dogs barking], errm they’ve got plans to go ahead with this but err where it will be or what it will be like [laughs], remains to be seen.

### *Do you have any kind of good memories of the pool, like specific memories?*

### Err no, not specific memories, I remember going over err, I think I went over there once with the school. And err I’d been over there as well, with me friends, when we were young and err I can also remember the old nissen huts that used to be over the park…

### *What were they?*

### just after the war. Err they had gunning placements there, err during the war and errm they had this big arounded metal sheds, corregated iron sheds that were curved, errrm where they I suppose used to keep all the ammunition, probably where the people that used the guns fired them, they probably lived there.

### *Hmm.*

### So that they were to hand, you know when the err planes come over and started bombing us. But err, obviously it was before the end of the war but I remember them quite clearly [sound of door shutting] for a number of years after the way, they remained there and they were done up as housing units and people lived in them.

### *Oh right. So they were quite big then?*

### Err a fair size yeah and they were quite nice inside too but err I had a friend that lived over there…but err

### *So..*

### -so many different things that happened. And there’s another little story which you may or may not have heard, now this came, in fact the woman in the photo err Mrs. Frietag.

### *Hmm.*

### Well one of the women in the photos, err husband cos they used to leave across the road here, at number 35 for many years and her husband…was in his young days went over the park and there was a group or groups of people, re-enacting the invasion of the Vikings.

### *Is this in the park?*

### Yes in the park [*laughs*], errm I don’t know when it was.

### JG: Something festival wasn’t?

### But it was obviously before my time.

### *Hmm.*

### It was in his young days and he just happened to go over there and I believe they, they got boats from the boat house and err a team of them got on the boats, at one end or one side of the lake and they rode across and attacked another team [*laughs*] on the other side of the lake. And they was all dressed up in Viking clothes and err apparently that was a very good day.

### *So would that have been, I dunno the twenties? Maybe earlier than that?*

### Now, oh…er it obviously wouldn’t have been during the war, it have to be before the war.

### *Hmm.*

### But errm….very difficult to put a time on this.

### *Hmm yeah.*

### Err….19…late twenties? Early thirties?

### *Yeah.*

### No, it might be later than that, it might be later than that. I- I’m really not sure.

### *No that’s fine.*

### But I know he was, he was young cos he, he died a few years ago but err we can’t even confirm any of this or get any dates on it.

### *Hmm.*

### But err that was one story he told me and I also read in a magazine years ago, how Barking Canival, cos we used to have a fantastic carnival years ago.

### *Hmm.*

### A big fair in Barking Park, which was said to be one of the biggest in the country, errm much, much bigger than it is today, errm and the carnival procession use to go round nearly every street in Barking and that was quite a feat in itself and that used to be going on I believe from early in the morning till quite late at night, when they more or less had a sort of torch light…errm procession…

### *Oh wow.*

### After dark and went on till quite late, so all day long somewhere in Barking this procession was going round…

### *So what was the fair like, like what would be going on?*

### Errm…similar to what it is today, they used to have the dodgems and err the old ‘Screaming Lizzie’.

### *What was that?*

### Which was….oh dear errm it was like two big boats, side by side that used to swing backwards and forwards, steam driven and err they had like a netting all over the top, nobody could fall out [*laughs*]. And it used to be quite a hectic ride, I think it is the ride of the day, you know you dare to go on it, but err it was quite an experience that.

### *So did it use to go upside down?*

### No, no.

### *Oh ok.* [*laughs*]

### Not like that do today, they weren’t quite that hectic then but they used to go up a fair way.

### *Hmm.*

### And in those days it was quite frightening…but er good experience, good fun. And err ooh they had loads and loads of side shows all the way round and err, must have been hundreds of them, which you don’t get nowhere near as many nowadays and all the middle was filled up with all sorts of rides, children’s rides, little trains and all sorts of things.

### *So would that be annually or was it..?*

### Yes, yes, yes that was annually. Now it always used to be in…about September time, late-ish in the year and it was, as I say it was said to be one of the biggest fairs in the country, I can’t confirm that [*laughs*] but that was what was always said.

### *But that kind of that you used to be the highlight of everyone’s year, like everyone would go.*

### Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah because all the streets were, even up to fairly recently…sort of I don’t know ten, twenty years ago, we used to have a very good procession, every company virtually in Barking and around Barking used to put their vehicles in it and they used to dress them up and dress people up and they had very good floats on there, really excellent. But err something I’m afraid that’s largely died out now…lots of bands they used to have them in every year, quite a number of bands.

### *Hmm. What kind of bands?*

### Errm.. sort of territorial army I think, the air force cadets, errm anybody that they could get hold of. [Phone rings] There was no sort of rules as to who was in it and who wasn’t, but err you know anybody that wanted to join in, they just had to apply to the council and that was it.

### *Hmm.*

### And as I say, in the very early days it used to go virtually every turning in Barking and I don’t think too many people would remember that…I don’t remember too much about that.

### *No.*

### I got all that from my parents and my relatives that lived around here. [coughs] But err quite exciting times.

### Hmm. [Hear JG talking on phone]

### *Cos errm was there like a bandstand at the park, do you remember that?*

### Yes, yes it was quite a nice bandstand and they used to have bands I imagine, probably a Salvation Army or any other band that wanted to play there.

### *Hmm.*

### Would be given the opportunity [Hear JG talking on phone]. But err often I, I won’t swear to you but I would think probably on a Sunday, you’d often get bands over there playing cos that’s long since been gone. But err there’s not much I don’t think of Barking Park left [laughs] now, apart from the park itself.

### *Hmm.*

### But err great shame.

### *Do you remember the steamboat?*

### Oh yes, yes I’d nearly forgotten that [*laughs*]. Err there was two steamboats in time, The Phoenix one and I was told, I would imagine it was the second one cos they weren’t real steamboats, I take it you know that.

### *Hmm. Errm they weren’t, they didn’t have…*

### They had the paddles on the back, well one of them did anyway, the big paddles on the back like a steamboat but it actually had either petrol or diesel engine in it.

### *Oh ok.*

### And they done sort of things, they had like err a tin or jar of nuts and bolts attached to it, to give the sort of chuffing noise of a steam engine. And err there was a small jet of water used to spurt into the chimney, to give steam off instead of just the exhaust of the petrol engine, whatever was in it, errm to make it look like a steam engine and as a child, I always believe it was. [*laughs*] It was that good.

### *Yeah.*

### It was really was a lovely boat. But I know it changed over, had another one and in the end, that was getting a bit…sorry for itself let’s say, a bit run down and it was bought by some group that errm…in one of the reservoirs somewhere, not too far away but err I can’t remember which one and they bought it up and it was taken away on a big lorry and it was propped up at the side of the reservoir, all ready for renovation and err some children went along that night and set fire to it and that was the end, I think it was the Phoenix II?

### *Oh.*

### So..

### *Oh what a shame.*

### We never had a big boat after that and that was a lovely boat, very, very popular. Very popular. Yes I remember that well.

### *So did you use to go on that a lot?*

### Yeah, yeah. Cos that, that was cheaper I think than going on probably most of the boats, but of course you wasn’t out for half an hour or an hour, you just had a trip round the, the lake and they used to on the boat up errm Ilford Lane end of Barking Park, just along the side there as you’re walking from the gates down, about halfway down. You get on the boat there and they take you round a couple of the islands and then back again, to the start [*laughs*]. That was a lovely ride, really was good, with the steam train and the boast, you know really was a lovely park.

### *What’s errm your earliest memory of the park?*

### Err…the earliest I would think will probably be the steam train, cos I was…I mean I was only four at the end of the war, errm but I can remember it, errm fairly soon after that. Cos as I day I had some relatives that came back from err abroad, the husband was err, an engineer for Shell and he used to go all round the world laying pipe lines, or he’s in charge of it all. And errm he used to go around the world, well he eventually they came back in England and settled down and errm they had a house over in Chadley Crescent, which is err just the other side of the park to us. And errm that’s the people we used to visit, quite often of a Saturday or Sunday, we’d go over the park or through the park, get on the train and visit these people and then when we come back errm, you know if the train was running, we’d get it coming back again.

### *Hmm.*

### But it was their children, they had two daughters and those daughters are still alive now and that the eldest of the two daughters, is the one that supplied the photo-

### *Oh ok.*

### Of her Mother and err one of the sisters, another sister, errm who used to live across the road to us, you know in the rowing club.

### Hmm.

### Before they got married I believe that was…

### Errm do you remember any of kind of sports that were played at errm Barking?

### Not really no, because I was never a sporty person, unfortunately, errm but I- I don’t remember them actually being in the rowing club.

### *Oh ok.*

### Or seeing that, errm but I’ve seen the photos and of the boat house, which I recognised, that, that must have been, I would think very soon after the war, very soon after it. Because I’ve got memories of that time, errm even to see an aircraft going over on the bombing raids.

### Hmm.

### And I can remember being in this room here with a mattress just down here, when the air raids went off.

### *Hmm.*

### And err…

### *So you weren’t evacuated then?*

### I was at one point, yes. I can’t remember the evacuation but I can remember being on this mattress, just on the floor and the air raids going off, errm I remember thinking to myself, ‘Oh am I going to hear the all clear or will we be hit?’

### *Hmm.*

### And that is…a very young child.

### *Hmm.*

### But err, err I can’t remember much more than that [laughs]. I remember going down to the air raid shelter, a few times but err cos we was all knocked unconscious.

### *Really?*

### In there, yeah. Cos err a doodle bug landed on a house over in Loxford Road, errm the very end one and the mother, I think the father was at work or whatever he was doing, errm the mother had popped out to one of the shops, that used to be round the little triangle then to get some cigarettes, she was only gone a few minutes but when she got back, there was no house, no children she had twins in a pram, they never found them.

### *Oh my God.*

### So errm why were you only evacuated for a short period?

### Err, I suppose, I mean we weren’t directly bombed here, all though there was a lot of, whether they was stray bombs cos they weren’t that accurate in those days, errm there was quite a few places bombed out, errm that being one of them. That was one of the closest that we had. And err, I think it blew the doors in on our air raid shelter, which was a massive thing, it had eighteen inch thick, solid concrete walls.

### *Hmm.*

### And err it stood up to that bomb, which was probably only about…err couple of hundred yards away from it and err it was just directly over the back, just to the right slightly and errm…that isn’t so much, the actual bomb I don’t remember too much of err, we was all knocked unconscious for a few minutes and err but we all survived, we came to, ok.

### *Hmm.*

### Perhaps that’s why I’m a bit stupid now. [*laughs*] But err you know, all memories, when we were young life was so much different. Our fun, although we had the park over there, which we went in occasionally, errm we spent most of our time, well I did as a child, the boy next next door who was near enough the same age as me, my brother was a few years older, about six/seven years older, errm and the boy next door his brother, well one of his brothers, was six or seven years older than him. So the two older brothers were mates and the two of us were mates and we used to play down the stream, down the bottom, it’s a, it wasn’t a culvert then, it was a natural stream and I have been told by my parents, that they used to have a punt down there, the grandparents more than my parents.

### *Yeah.*

### But they used to have a punt, they used to go up and down the stream on it.

### *Wow.*

### But I never remember that.

### *No.*

### That was before my time. But as I say, we used to play along there for hours on end, in the stream catching tiddlers [*laughs*], errm wading up and down the stream, falling in it but of course at the, at the height, very high tides, the spring tides err it used to come up and flood our gardens.

### *Oh right.*

### And because we’ve had that almost up to the house and garden’s what? About a hundred and twenty odd feet long [*laughs*], it’s quite a distance.

### *Wow.*

### But err it was all fun, you know it wasn’t computers and that in those days, you had to make your fun.

### *Hmm.*

### And we did, I know the two older brothers they had a rope up in one of the trees and you used to swing across the river, errm till one day the, I think the rope had rotting through and he got half way across and the rope broke [laughs].

### *Oh.*

### Straight down into the stream.

### *So was the stream quite deep or…?*

### Not normally no, it was just a small stream but err on high tides yes it could be quite deep. I would think probably at least six foot deep on the very high tides.

### *Wow.*

### Cos as I say, it used to err flood our garden [*laughs*]. And the bottom of our garden was a good three foot..underwater.

### *Wow.*

### But err after the war we had ducks and errm chickens, all sorts of things.

### *Oh in your garden?*

### Mmm yeah, in their cages, until the fox got eventually got them.

### Oh.

### Or say fox, we come out one day and all the cages were broken open, the wire meshing was ripped off of it and all the rabbits were dead…strewn about the lawn. They weren’t eaten or anything, they were just dead.

### *God.*

### But we only put it down to a fox….you know, life was life then, more exciting than it is today, a lot more exciting.

### *Do you remember any other games that you used to play?*

### Sorry any other…?

### *Games.*

### Err….not really, not really it’s just what we made up at the time. Our garden slopes down and I know as youngsters we used to make up four wheeled carts, with steering, with front steering and the pathway down the garden was probably about two inches each side wider, than the car and we used to go belting down there on the slope and err used to make booby traps between the trees, that stuff used to fall on you and all sorts of things used to happen [*laughs*]. But err…all part of life, all great fun.

### *Hmm.*

### Really enjoyed our childhood then, but err as I say you only had to twitch your leg and you’d be off the path, hit the little, not a wall as such but quite high blocks along the side of the path, you’d hit them and of course you’d be upside down, under the car….in the bushes along the side [Both laugh]. But err, we survived it…

### *Errm where did you got to school?*

### Errm originally I went to Northbury School, just over the back here, probably know it.

### *Hmm.*

### And errm, when I went to Secondary school I went to Park Modern Secondary school, which I now believe is err Abbey, Barking Abbey School.

### *So what was school like? Did you enjoy school?*

### Yes, yes on the whole, I won’t say everyday but most of it, err used to play Rugby there, I never played football. Used to play rugby and being fairly big, erm I wasn’t the fastest one at it but I used to run and…plough through people [laughs]. But err unfortunately for them, but I used to come home with our…P.E kit torn to shrivens [*laughs*], to ribbons rather errm it’s just part, part of the fun again. I was never any good at rugby but you used to enjoy it, even in snow I know we played in the past. But that, that was cold. Then you’d come in and have to have a hot and a cold shower [both laugh], which you used to have in those days, hot shower first of all and then finishing up with a cold shower. Not quite sure why [*laughs*], but it used to liven you up.

### *What were the teachers like? Were they quite strict?*

### Errm..yes, they were fairly strict but as we got older towards the end, we used to play them up and err all sorts of tricks, I remember once err, one of the teachers I had, he was a maths teacher, he, he had some daffodils in a little empty jam pot, drop of water in it and a few daffodils and err being the ink monitor at the time, instead of putting water in them, I thought I’d try a drop of ink and by the time the teacher came in, they’d gone black [Both laugh]. Black daffodils, so whether I invented a new daffodil that day, I don’t know. But err…

### *So you were a bit of a troublemaker?*

### Yes [*laughs*], yes a lot of us were. Not that bad, you know we weren’t err kicking teachers and thing like that but yeah we did have our days, I don’t think much has changed over the years, I think err it’s much about the same today, kids will be kids.

### *Hmm.*

### But err you can only let them get away with a certain amount.

### *Yeah, I guess that was different you probably got punished. I guess, was the cane used in your school?*

### Err yes, yes, yes definitely, cane and slipper. Sort of anything went in those days [*laughs*], but err….I’ve had the cane one or two times while I was at school…the slipper a few more times. I remember one teacher the errm science master, he was only a little fella but if you got things wrong, he wasn’t very happy. And he used to chalk the answer on your behind, with a stick of chalk and he used to get his slipper and keep on till he beaten the chalk marks out. So [*laughs*], yeah they could be quite nasty but you look back and it’s quite amusing [*laughs*], quite funny. And he was only a little tiny fella, I was probably bigger than him then! But err, you know, you was wary of him [laughs].

### *Yeah.*

### You didn’t play him around too much.

### *No.*

### But err he was a nice fella. They used to put plays on at Park Modern School in those days and err in one of our lessons, he got all the spotlights out and err we had to service them and we thought that was great and when we’d done them, got them back to work err going again, you know still working or changed bulbs, whatever was necessary and he said, ‘Right, you’ve done that ok.’ He said, ‘Would any of you like to….’, I think they had a dance on at the time…errm and they said, ‘Would you like to come along and operate the spotlights?’

### *Oh wow.*

### And of course half the class was…up and ready to go [*laughs*]. And we had to take the spotlights up, install them, plug them in, test them and we had a very, very rough script of where you know, the lights had to be, when and where. Err…not that we kept to it that well [*laughs*]. But we did have a go and it was good fun, it was good fun.

### *Errm what other sports did you play at school do you remember?*

### Errm…sports nothing really other than that. I was no good at sports. But err, with rugby it was, I was never any good at it but I was just one of the bigger boys in the class. So of course the smaller ones, used to keep clear, so if you got the ball you used to run with it and err everybody would sort of avoid you [laughs], they’d run away instead of run towards you. Because you’d get bigger ones on the other side they wouldn’t, they’d come tackle you and bring you down and rip you shirt a bit [*laughs*] and then you’d retaliate and then bring them down later on and rip their shirt and used to come home in quite a state. I don’t know, who ever used to win but I don’t think we worries about winning, you just worried about having a bit of fun.

### *So did you play against other schools or was this just…?*

### I didn’t no, no but err as I say, I wasn’t good enough for that, I was just doing it for fun.

### *Hmm.*

### But err…I never did take any sport serious enough, to take part, one or two things I was in but I was never any good at them. But err…quickly I was pulled out of it.

### JG: Vic, What was Barking Park actually there, put there?

### Oh.

### JG: Was it all farm land, Aunt Lil used to talk about?

### I don’t know about the park, all this area was farm land, going back many years.

### JG: Cos they used to go across to the errm..

### To the farm house, when these houses were built.

### JG: And also up to the pub up there, the Royal Oak.

### The Royal Oak, yeah.

### JG: Cos your grandfather shooting with them, didn’t he? Your grandfather.

### *With who?*

### Hmm.

### JG: Cos your Aunt Lil used to say about it.

### Yeah, yeah I vaguely remember that.

### JG: About walking across the fields.

### Walking across the fields, cos before these houses on the other side were built, there was fields from there on, used to go out quite a way and all part of a farm.

### JG: yeah, but that’s what I’m wondering, if Barking Park was part of a farm?

### I would imagine so because I believe that goes back to Victorian times.

### *Errm I’ve heard that, there was pig farming over there.*

### What in the park?

### *Yeah and that, cos I think the Royal Oak used to be called something else?*

### Err The Flyover?

### *Yeah and that was to do with pigs, I’m not sure how?*

### JG: The flies, all the flies, yeah cos they did rename a while back, The Fly House and people said, ‘No, we all know it as the Royal Oak’, but I’m sure it’s always been called The Royal Oak as well?

### I don’t know, I remember The Fly House.

### JG: Yeah.

### But I was too young to go over the pubs then [*laughs*].

### JG: But I can remember Aunt Lil and Uncle Len about all that being…

### They, they used to come out with a lot of different stories, you know…but err things that happened over the years…

### JG: Back when the lane was a lane.

### Yeah, yeah, through I would imagine, all at the side of the farm. Because I think the farm went more or less from the stream along here, back that way…and across quite a way as well. So that was all before my time.

### *But Barking Park, I guess has always been like an important part of…….Barking.*

### Yeah, yeah it’s been there many, many years. As far as, well it must have been there long before Loxford Park, because if that was all farmland Loxford Park would have been part of the..farm.

### *I think it’s been there since the end of the nineteenth century. I think that’s when it became a park.*

### Hmm.

### *So like 1890s, I think…so yeah it’s pretty old.*

### Yeah.

### JG: Just trying to figure out when this was all changed, cos you’ve got paperwork but it doesn’t really…

### It certainly, it was certainly at the beginning of the 1900s because errm it was just after 1900 when this house was built, by well we’ve never been able to trace exactly who it is, but it’s one of my…Great- Grandparents…errm and he was apparently involved in the building of City Hall.

### *Oh wow.*

### JG: County Hall.

### Oh County, sorry County Hall.

### *So where’s, where’s County…?*

### And the original railway bridge that used to be, go over to Northbury school, actually there used to be two one there and one at the end of this road, many years ago. Errm, the old original cast iron bridges and he was involved too with it, I think the design and building of that. But as I say we’ve never been able find out who it is, I’ve got quite a few Grandparents.

### *Oh right.*

### But errm we’ve not been able to trace them all. So err I don’t know.

### *So what do you mean you have loads of grandparents? Do you mean you’ve got like step- grandparents?*

### Err, yeah there was err remarriages went on and we’ve lost track of various grandparents-

### JG: 1899 Abstract of land

### Yeah, so that means the farm was being sold off before that, so it was in the late 1800s.

### *Yeah at the end of the Nineteenth century.*

### JG: Loxford Bridge and Ilford Lane…..it’s all about the land, that was around here in 18…

### *So what is that?*

### JG: 1899…it’s a will. [Shows the will]

### Testament…

### JG: Be careful..

### Oh well there’s another name isn’t it? Jones.

### JG: Yeah I, no that’s the people that owned the land.

### Oh is it?

### JG: 1906.

### Cos that was the name of my mother’s side of the family, although she was an Arlett, errm she was also a Jones.

### *Oh ok.*

### So, we haven’t got to the bottom of all of that yet.

### *No.*

### We will do one day….if I live long enough.

### *That’s interesting though. It’ll be interesting to find out.*

### And that….Who was that?

### JG: Oh that is who owned the lane here, Jones.

### Piece of history there.

### *Oh wow. It’s beautiful isn’t it?* [Looks at will]

### *So your family have been quite, you know I guess quite prominent in Ilford and in building it…*

### Yes, yes, yes. We did have some papers of a…..was it a will right? That was in the family? And err the paper that he signed of his apprenticeship, so that’s got to be earlier on in the 1800s and I don’t know where that is. Cos we did lose a lot of paper work, errm when we had this place on mortgage.

### *Oh ok.*

### And err it, all the mortgages apparently, all the paperwork was held by some party and all the unnecessary paperwork in there…

### JG: They threw away.

### Was thrown away-

### *Oh no.*

### Destroyed, which is a great shame. Because err that was all part of the history.

### *Errm so just going back to the park, errm used to bring, take your children over to the park or…?*

### Yes, yes we have done in the young days. Errm we used to take them over there fishing.

### *Oh right.*

### Get a fishing let, err fishing net from the local shop around there, I think it was Goods in those days wasn’t it? They had errm sweet shop and we used to get a fishing net in there, take an old jam jar round and they used to go fishing in the park for the tiddlers and there used to be loads at one time, none there now obviously. Errm cos they put a lot of chemicals in the…

### *Oh right.*

### In the lake or did do, to kill all the weeds off and err killed all the tiddlers off as well but errm, we was told by my grandson, he reckon he’s seen them, there was errm..

### JG: White crabs.

### Yeah white crabs and goldfish as well in there, I suppose that didn’t want them, put in the lake.

### *Oh no.*

### They’ve seen quite a few goldfish and I think koi carp over there.

### *Ohh.*

### But err I suppose since they’ve been using the chemicals in the lake, you know it’s obviously killed them all off.

### *Hmm. Yeah, cos I’ve heard that the lake’s quite dirty now.*

### Hmm.

### *Yeah. So do you not go over the park anymore?*

### Err…my Grandson does. I..very rare I go over there now, errm…I mean the train I used to drive has gone now.

### JG: And he drives the one that’s over there now.

### Err Daniel does, our grandson.

### *Oh right.*

### Errm, yeah it belongs to a club now and err they changed the gauge from nine and a half to seven and a quarter and err they’re running little diesel locomotives, taking passenger rides and they hope to be running steam before too much longer.

### *Oh wow.*

### Which should be an attraction to people but err…

### *So how did you get involved in driving the train?*

### Err…I don’t know, how did I? [laughs] it goes back to..

### JG: We’ve got a steam train and we used to do charity events.

### Yes.

### JG: And we used to do errm…Alec asked to do the disabled children, Kids Out, it used to be called, for the was it the Rotary Club?

### Err…I don’t know, how did I? [laughs] it goes back to..

### JG: We’ve got a steam train and we used to do charity events.

### Yes.

### JG: And we used to do errm…Alec asked to do the disabled children, Kids Out, it used to be called, for the.. was it the Rotary Club?

### Yeah…once a year.

### JG: And errm we used to take our xxxx.

### They used to invite errm, all disabled children, schools and that from, well a very big area originally and errm it was more, fairly local at the end but errm, it used to do it from I think pretty well the Home Counties. If they could beg, borrow or steal a school bus or any sort of…

### JG: Get the kids there.

### Passenger carrying vehicle, they were invited. And they use to come all over the place, used to have parties of deaf, parties of blind children, errm all sorts, yeah autistic, errm and we used to run the seven and a quarter gauge steam engine, which we’d been into for years, err and we used to do a lot of these shoes. And we used to do this one every year for children and errm I remember once we, we was, we had a party of children and there was one child on there, err I think it was a little girl wasn’t it? Who had errm…

### JG: Yeah, who had never spoken.

### No, no not that one. She had drips on her..

### JG: Oh yeah.

### and she was having to be drip fed fairly regularly.

### JG: Oxygen.

### She had two helpers with her and they lifted her onto the train, one was holding the drip feeds, the other one was holding the child and we took her for a ride on the train.

### *Hmm.*

### Which was what? Probably only about a hundred and fifty foot, errrm but they still loved it. They didn’t get the opportunity I suppose, of getting out as much as a normal person would.

### *Hmm.*

### And they used to love it. There was one child that err, had never spoken…err I’m not sure what his affliction was but he hadn’t spoken and…the people were quite overjoyed, because when he come back or got back, errm to his area he was saying ‘Choo choo, choo choo’ and making a train noise and they said it’s the first time…in fact we’ve still got a letter somewhere about that….that’s not it is it?

### JG: No!

### Oh, right.

### *So errm when were they, when did they stop happening..?*

### Err fairly recently, it still goes on.

### *Oh ok.*

### It still happens but not in Barking Park, apparently it’s moved to another park now, I think in Dagenham somewhere and that still goes on. Errm…

### *Oh I think it might be Central Park…*

### It could well be. It could well be. I know it’s somewhere else in, in Dagenham and it’s run by the Rotary Club. They sort of collect all year through to pay for it and they get people, like we used to have R.White’s, I don’t know where they are now but they used to be in Barking, years ago R.Whites.

### *Yeah.*

### And they used to go down there and they used to come back with a van load of drinks and that, which they gave to the kids.

### *Oh wow.*

### And err they had bits of food and err they used to have a lovely day over the park. We used to have the normal train, the petrol train over there and errm we used to run our little train, steam train and err they used to sit on there and have rides. Err, they used to have errm, bouncy castles all sorts of things. They used to have the boats open, the motor boats and err they had the golf course in the early days, didn’t it? Before that went. They used to open that on this fun day, anything they could get there, they would. They used to have a clown, Charlie the Clown, he was brilliant, he really was brilliant. And he used to go round all over the place, chasing the kids up and giving them little shows, really good day. But that as I say, that is recent times…

### *Hmm.*

### Not going back that far.

### *So when did you stop doing that?*

### Err…well must have been about fifteen years ago, about that time. We was doing a lot of fetes, errm we used to do…a few times on the err City Airport, they used to have err a day where they shut it off from aeroplanes.

### *Oh ok.*

### And they had an open day. And err we used to run a few times at that, so if anyone saw a little steam engine running there, that was us. [*laughs*] But errm I don’t know if they still do that? But err they used to have you know the Utterly Butterly plane?

### *Oh ok.*

### They used to have that come in and somebody standing on the wings, doing the show, they used to have a few other planes, errm some were just static and a lot of them were, were flying, doing looping the loop and the rest of it, quite interesting, quite a good day out.

### *Hmm.*

### But err no actual passenger train err planes, were running.

### *No.*

### *So how did you get involved in steam trains and stuff?*

### Err…ooh that goes back a good few years. I was building a double O gauge lay up with my son, who’s forty now?

### JG: Forty odd.

### Well, just over forty, errm he was only young, still at school then and we was getting on quite well with this train layout, then suddenly one day he come home, he says ‘I’m fed up with this.’ So I said, ‘Oh yeah, why is that?’ He said, ‘Well there’s no real steam in it, there’s no real sound.’ He said, ‘I wanna get errm one of these small ones, that you can machine and make yourself.’ So I said, ‘Well in that case, you’d need to join a local club…to get the necessary advice and information.’ And he bought a little..err kit of parts, to be machined up and err..

### JG: Joined a club.

### Yeah, we joined a club.

### JG: They took the mickey out of him.

### [Laughs] That engine, it was a Rob Roy, which was a real engine in it’s time, but it was, it was never finished, errm we’ve still got the parts, it’s part, it’s half built. And errm, cos he decided then that that wasn’t big enough. Because the club we joined and at the Ilford and West Essex, they run err seven and a quarter gauge, they were fitting some track for errm smaller five inch and three and a half inch gauge trains, but never got very far with that. Errm there wasn’t that many people interested in it, so my son went more from that small gauge, which is why it was never finished off, errm to seven and a quarter. And since then we’ve built a seven and a quarter, my son bought…a batch of gear, which included a seven and a quarter inch gauge schools class engine, errm which was in pieces. It had come from a park up north somewhere and it had been stripped down to renovate it, nobody ever done anything about it , so they sold it off. There was a couple of other engines which weren’t running and errm some, a couple of coaches…one of them being a very good coach, which we still use today and errm we rebuilt this engine, needed a fair bit of work doing it, the schools class and err we’ve still got that.

### *Hmm.*

### And we’ve since got err, he’s got a half built class five engine, which we’ve yet to finish off. We’re building errm a C19, an American type engine between us, which has been hold of couple years. But err we’re hoping later on this year to get back on with it, but that engine went it’s done will be close on a tonne, in weight.

### *Wow.*

### So it’s quite a healthy engine [*laughs*]. But errm, you know it’s, we’ve always been a family that can’t sit around, we need to be doing something and err didn’t matter what it was, as long as we were doing something. So err…that’s how we, we got on with it.

### *So errm what did you, like what was your job?*

### Errm..

### *Or jobs?*

### Which one? [Both laugh]

### I was a draughtsman for quite a number of years. Errm I ended up at BT on security…

### *Oh ok.*

### But of course the job I was in, it was a very good job, very…quite well paid job. Err until BT started selling everything off and closing down and I took early retirement and it was after that, that was in ’93, I don’t know, but after that, errm we was approached by Alec to, from the park, from the boat house to err run our train on their open day, their fun day.

### *Hmm.*

### For the handicapped children, which we enjoyed doing. Errm but that fell through in the end because my son, I was getting a bit old for it and we had about two tonnes of equipment at least, which we had to load up, get over the park, unload, fit together, especially all the track and all the fencing, it was really hard work. Errm and it used to take several hours to fit up and err two or three hours to take down afterwards.

### *Hmm.*

### After the running. Errm it got, it was getting too much for me at the time and my son was working a lot at weekends, errm cos one over the park was one of the few, that was during the week, errm and it couldn’t do it anymore and cos soon after that everything started going in the park.

### *Hmm.*

### Sadly. The swimming pool, the errm paddling pool, the golf course, tennis course, the cafeteria, the boats have gone now, the boat house had gone, errm the train that’s been running over there now for quite a few years, that’s gone.

### JG: And it’s just the club one now.

### And it’s just the club now, that put a new track and their running it. Because that all depends on their members, whether they’ve got enough members to run it properly.

### *Yeah.*

### Cos there’s not many that err qualified to drive steam engines…there’s not many that can drive the err diesel ones, or the petrol engines. But err that’s how me son’s, me grandson rather has got into that. And he sort if taking over where we’ve left off.

### *Hmm.*

### But he’s err one of the engines that me son bought, which was no good, he has stripped down, he has rebuilt it, me grandson this is and errm…this year, he’s finally got the engine running, it’s yet to be tested, steam tested errm but he’s actually got it running.

### *Wow.*

### And running quite well. So he’s over the moon at the moment [*laughs*] and we’ve got to make arrangements to get it steam tested, so he’s got his boiler certificate and then he’s insurance and he’ll be able to run.

### *Ooh.*

### So he’s quite excited over that [*laughs*].

### *And that’s the grandson that does the train now?*

### Yeah, yeah. Yeah he’s seventeen at the moment.

### *Wow, only seventeen and he’s done all that.*

### Yeah.

### *Amazing.* *Errm so you said you knew Alec from the park, did you know a lot of the staff that worked over there? Like at Barking Park?*

### Err…

### JG: Only Alec.

### I wasn’t involved in much of that but errm he, I don’t know, I don’t think he had anything to do with the swimming pool, although he would liked to have taken it over, well some friends of his would, they wanted to take it over but they weren’t allowed to. Errm…the golf course, the crazy golf course over there, he run that, err I think he run the tennis courts, didn’t he?

### JG: I think so.

### He run the tennis courts and a lot of the facilities. He run the train, the boats, motor boats and rowing boats, err they did have [cough] children’s boats, canoes and that at one time. And errm, most of the facilities, I think he was, to a degree in charge of the park.

### JG: I think there was a lot of vandalism, wasn’t there?

### Yeah and he used to keep an eye on it and errm he’d be in touch with the police or whoever, you know if it’s something beyond his control.

### *Hmm.*

### But err he done quite well over the park. But err he’s virtually at retirement age now.

### *Hmm.*

### And err and they decided to close the boats and they’re going to reopen them, but it’s gonna be totally different.

### *Yeah.*

### So it remains to be seen what they’re going to do.

### JG: I don’t know, who’s going to reopen them.

### No, I don’t think they’ve got anyone at the moment that wants to take it on.

### *Hmm.*

### Quite honestly. I don’t think the boat’s done too badly but the train at the end, errm was losing money. Err, the club that’s got it now, was talking about running further round the park but I think there’s going to be a lot of problems there, a lot of problems. And personally I can’t see it happening. It is possible, errm…

### JG: No but when you’ve got…

### Cos if you got to Chingford Park, isn’t it?....It is Chingford isn’t it?

### JG: Yeah.

### Yeah, errm there’s quite a big park there and they run their train round the park, it’s a club and they run round the park.

### JG: Yeah, but isn’t their one with a high fence?

### Errm possibly?

### JG: Cos they don’t want it fenced over here.

### I don’t know, I haven’t been over since they extended it…so I don’t really know how far they’ve got now. One of these days we’ll get over there and find out.

### *So why did you think everything started closing down at, over the park?*

### JG: Vandalism.

### It’s, yeah there was a lot of vandalism, errm very difficult to control without having a lot of people over there, all the time, day and night, err which in today’s, the cost of everything today it wouldn’t just be practicable, if they had to do that I think the park would probably end up closing. But errm partly I think stupidity, because they wanted to have a pub over in the park, not that with people getting drunk, it just doesn’t bear thinking about and they go on about all the rubbish dropped in the park, just think how many bottles and beer cans you get and broken glassed you get over there.

### *Hmm.*

### But err, that was, that was dropped in the end but err there hasn’t been much else, they’ve got a lottery grant over there now and they’ve been talking about returning the park to how it used to be, in the Victorian days.

### JG: Well then it’s a farm.

### From the very early days, but they done away with all the boats that were there and they did have one, one of the old Victorian rowing boats over there, which must have been worth a few bob, I should think.

### *Yeah I think they’re restoring it.*

### Oh they are are..?

### *Yeah I think they are in the process of resorting it.*

### Oh right good. Cos I was afraid it had…erm been damaged or been thrown away.

### *So the boats that in, like in the picture of your aunt, you mean?*

### No, no I don’t, the pictures I remember there wasn’t any boats in it, they were standing up, there might have been one.

### *No, she was sat in a boat…*

### Oh, that’s one of the other photos…oh I didn’t have that one or see that one. Errm there was two of them standing up against the front.

### JG: Auntie Rose is in the boat.

### You’ve got them through have you?

### JG: Hmm.

### Cos you want copies don’t you?

### *Oh well just errm, you could just forward the email, errm and the pictures will be in there.*

### Yeah.

### *So that’ll be great if that’s ok?*

### Yeah we can do that.

### JG: That’s Aunt Lil in the rowing boat?

### Is it? Ah yes.

### JG: Because the other photos that Pam’s got is the Bank of England. Because they used to row for the Bank of England.

### *Yeah this is the one I’ve seen.*

### JG: Yeah.

### *Yeah, they’re so good. Amazing. Just like the outfits they’re wearing, they’re just so, they’ve very of the time.*

### That ages them, doesn’t it?

### *Hmm.*

### But err she only died a few years ago.

### *Oh ok.*

### Not very long at all.

### JG: Ninety- five.

### *Wow.*

### Yeah, yeah. He was a, few years younger, her husband.

### JG: He died three years ago.

### He died, just a little while after her and he was ninety- five when he died. But they used to live across the road here, thirty- five and errm they moved, now it must be…thirty odd years ago, he retired from the Ambulance service and they moved down to err Hadleigh.

### JG: Hadleigh.

### Had a bungalow down there and err they’re fun down there, till I suppose age caught up with them and they had problems, heart problems and one thing or another and err she died first of all and about three years later, he died. I think, sad to say I think he pretty well gave up living.

### *Hmm.*

### He was on his own, he had helpers going in, well three/four times a day, errm but it’s still a boring life.

### *Hmm.*

### Wherever they left him, he would still be in that position when they come back in next time, cos he couldn’t move, couldn’t get up, if he laid him on his side, when they put him in bed, he’d be on that same side in the morning, when they’d come into him [JG coughs]. So it must have been a pretty awful life, but errm it’s sad really but that is life.

### JG: They used to tell us the tales of like…..

### He was that told us the story of Vikings….

### *Hmm.*

### In the park. Never heard from anyone else.

### *No.*

### So I can’t prove that it’s true but…you’ve never heard anything like that?

### *No, I’ve not heard of it but that doesn’t mean that it’s not true [laughs], does it?*

### No, you never know. There’s not too many people around now that...remember those days.

### *Hmm.*

### Especially going back that far, that’d be…perhaps nobody now around that would remember Vikings in the park. But he just came up with it on one occasion and…we were quite fascinated by it.

### *Hmm.*

### But err a few years ago, he could have told you the story himself.

### *Hmm…that’s sad. Do you remember any other kind of big events that you were actually there to witness? Or that used to come to the park?*

### Err no I can’t, I can’t think of anything, every now and again something happens and it brings back a memory, but my memory’s going now [*laughs*] anyway, that’s why I’m glad that you’ve come round today, cos come round err next week and I probably won’t remember half of that [Both laugh]. But err…in fact I didn’t to start off with, it’s…things have come back as we’ve gone on.

### *Hmm, yeah. Well that’s the great thing about oral history, cos you get to….*

### Yeah, yeah. It’s nice to get it down…now, while somebody remembers some of it [*laughs*].

### *Hmm exactly.*

### And who knows…at the exhibition. What, any idea when this is likely to be?

### *Errm…I’m not sure, I’m, I’m not entirely sure when it’s gonna be. I think, erm soon, cos I think errm Claire’s kind of wrapping up the project now, so errm I think in the next couple months.*

### Oh it’ll be this year?

### *Yeah, yeah, yeah.*

### Yeah, we’ll have to watch out for that. Show our nose, have a look round.

### *Yeah.*

### You never know, somebody might come up with something….

### JG: Your mum used to be a piano teacher in the areas as well, didn’t she your Mum?

### Yeah, oh yeah.

### JG: When she was younger.

### She got her degrees in music.

### *Oh wow.*

### Playing the piano and so far me grandson’s the only one now, errm no-one in the family has followed her.

### *No.*

### We couldn’t be less musical [both laughs], if we tried. But err none of our children have and so far none of their children apart from Daniel.

### JG: Daniel.

### He’s quiet isn’t he? [*laughs*]

### JG: He’s telly’s not.

### No.

### *Errm what did you dad do?*

### Errm he worked at Beckton Gas Works.

### *Oh ok.*

### And errr….

### JG: Gas light and coke company.

### Yeah as it was then. But errm…he was a warden, err or lookout person during the war, for fires and bombs dropping and err he was involved in that. But err…my mother, as I say she was in music, I think at one time she used to teach music but as far back as I can remember, she didn’t. So I think, so I think errm…

### JG: It was in her younger days, wasn’t it?

### Yeah, whether she stopped when my elder brother was..born.

### *Hmm.*

### Or whether she stopped when I was born, I don’t know. But I remember we had a piano and err….err a few years ago err, a relative of ours, my brother’s father in law, he used to play the piano and err they had one when they lived over at Gants Hill and he used to play on this piano and I thought, ‘He’s brilliant, he’s good.’ But then my Mother cam along and she was eaten up with arthritis sadly, errm and we kept on at her, come on time you had a go, ‘Oh I can’t’, she said. ‘I mean, you know, my hands are stiff I can’t do it’. And we kept on her so much, we said, ‘It doesn’t matter, it doesn’t have to be good, just see what you can do.’ And she got on the piano in the end and it come to life.

### JG: He was a pub pianist.

### Yeah, well no he was a pub pianist but it’s what my Mother said, ‘He is a good pub pianist, he’s not a professional’ [*laughs*]. She knew the difference.

### *Hmm.*

### We thought he was brilliant, he was very good, you’d just say a tune to him and he’d tinker away but when my Mother got on it, errm it was unbelievable and she did make that piano sing, didn’t she? But I know she played classical music and concerts up London.

### *Oh wow.*

### But err…we got a photo of her in her cap and gown [*laughs*], when she got her degrees. But err…

### *Wow, that must have been quite unusual for a woman to do it.*

### Yes but none of us have [laughs] followed suit.

### *She didn’t ever teach you to play the piano?*

### No, no. I tried playing the guitar once but err I could never do that…I got a guitar upstairs now but I’m no good at it. One thing me left land is useless.

### *Oh.*

### A result of diabetes.

### JG: And your right hand.

### Err right hand, see I can’t even remember that now [*laughs*]. Errm and me other hand, my fingers seem too thick, I can’t get on one string at a time, I cover half the strings with one finger but err…I just haven’t found the secret to it yet, if there is one.

### *Hmm.*

### But err…I think you need thin fingers for that [*laughs*]. So nobody’s…I couldn’t even play what we used to do at school, years ago, a comb with a bit of the old toilet paper round it [*laughs*], the old Izal…we used to play that in school sometimes. But err…I can’t even do that now.

### *Errm…just going back to the Park, you said that you didn’t remember your aunt rowing, but do you remember there being rowing there though?*

### Err…not a great deal cos I never got over the park that much, just occasionally and I don’t know when they used to row. I think it was in the evenings wasn’t so?

### JG: I think so, I don’t know.

### Mostly, one or two evenings a week, when they finished work.

### *Hmm.*

### They used to go over there. And err...they belonged to different rowing clubs, I know, my aunt err not the one in the boat, the other one.

### JG: That was the one in the boat, that’s Aunt Lil in the boat.

### Yeah, yeah of course it is. Yeah, cos Aunt Rose is the other one.

### JG: Bank of England.

### She worked at the Bank of England and she was in their rowing club.

### *Oh ok.*

### So…whether they ever won any cups or anything, I don’t know how well done. But they dressed the part anyway [*laughs*], but err no the one I remember, standing up against the door way, in the boat house.

### *Hmm...the two of them, yeah.*

### So you don’t remember that boat house though?

### Yes.

### Oh you do remember that.

### Yeah, I remember that, that’s the one that used to have all the strings of coloured lights round it? Errm…obviously it was around about Christmas time, errm cos the lake being frozen over.

### *Of course yeah.*

### But I remember walking through, I don’t know where we’d been, errm but I was with my Aunt and Uncle, the aunt being the one on the boat. Errm…me uncle’s the ambulance driver, the one that remembers the Viking display over there and err we came pass there and I just couldn’t believe how many people was on the end of the lake, skating.

### *Hmm.*

### And a lot of them had proper skates on. So err…obviously they used to do it every year.

### *Hmm.*

### But err…as I say, I got on the lake and on the ice and skating around, but I think I fell down, most of it was done on me stomach. [*laughs*]. But err come out of there fairly quick, wasn’t in many minutes and then we came back home. But it’s, as I say about that time, very very soon after at least I used to go on the train.

### *Hmm. So would you say that was your strongest memory of the park, the train?*

### Yes, yes. Yeah I’ve always been interested in trains, always liked trains cos when, when I was I at junior school, at err Northbury over the back here, I used to go round [phone rings], sorry about that and over the iron bridge, over the back and I used to stand there, I always used to be late for school [*laughs*], I used to wait there for the steam trains to go under and you’d disappear in a cloud of smoke, completely disappear, you couldn’t see the sides of the bridge, it was so thick. By the time I got in school, I used to stink of…the err steam, from the coal and the fuel and all the oils in it, but that was always a beautiful…even today that is a smell I love. Fantastic smell….and err I was terrible for doing that, because obviously I was impressed by the steam trains then. But err you didn’t have all the diesels then but of course when things did change, the bridge was taken down because it wasn’t high enough.

### *Oh right.*

### And they out the current one there in, which is a good bit higher, they’ve got a flyover down there now, so it has to be quite a bit higher, cos it’s on the start of the flyover and errr that’s changed a lot.

### *Hmm. I guess you’ve Barking change a lot.*

### Err yes, a lot of changes in Barking but I’ve also missed a lot. I’ve got books upstairs somewhere of old Barking, there’s still current books, you still get them and err it shows down Upney Lane, do you know Upney Lane?

### Oh no, not really.

### No? Err…do you know the bus garage in Barking?

### *Oh yeah.*

### Yeah, well the road that goes off down towards the A13.

### *Ok.*

### From there, that is Upney Lane. Now there’s a station three quarters of a way down for the underground, well and the C2Cs that run now.

### *Hmm.*

### And there’s pictures there of how all that length of line, from Barking there used to be. Cos we never had a bridge Barking over the railway in those days, long before my time. And errm in fact err a chap that used to live over, across the road to us, errm Mr Shave as I recall. Err I remember him vaguely and he was very, very old then, he was retired, well retired then and errm I believe he was something to do with it and he may have been…on the gate crossing, where Barking station is now of a hill and of course the train was just flat, no bridge and they had level crossing gates.

### *Yeah.*

### But err…there’s pictures of it in there and pictures of errm Upney Lane how it used to be and it’s unbelievable.

### *Oh yeah, cos that used to be kind of countryside didn’t it?*

### Yeah, yeah quite interesting to see, how it used to be. People hearding their sheep through Chadwell Heath [*laughs*], unbelievable now.

### *Yeah.*

### Trolleybuses, I remember the trolleybuses.

### *So what were they like?*

### Err…quite nice in many ways, errm they used to run down the road here, up err Fanshawe Avenue and Ilford Lane and err the triangle just up the top here, as it’s known, where errm the road comes in round the corner and joins it, it’s known as the triangle, they’ve got trees round there now, that are lit up from the ground of a night, errm the buses used to come round there and the camber always used to be against them and when they come round, if they’d come round a bit fast , they’d throw the poles off the top and sometimes they’d get quite twisted and mangled up, but err they used to get a pole out from underneath the bus and hook them down and try and get them back on the cables over heard but err…they used to shift, they used to go…those buses cos they were a lot quieter.

### *Hmm.*

### But err…yeah they were quite an experience. But err I don’t know when they first started there [coughs] but err they’ve been gone a number of years now.

### *Hmm.*

### But err…we must have had trams as well at one time, because I remember the tram lines coming down from the station …and I think they come round into this road, so we must have had trams many years ago. But err I don’t remember any of that, only what I’ve seen in the books.

### *Yeah.*

### Even I’m not old enough for that [*laughs*].

### Errm well I think I’ve finished with my questions, but do have anything you’d to like to say or any more memories?

### No, only that it would be interesting errm to hear from anybody, that can remember err any of these things.

### *Hmm.*

### Particularly the train on the back of the lake.

### *Yeah.*

### That knows anything about it. But err…no I think that’s about it.

### Cool.

### The End

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**Interview details**

**Name of interviewee: Victor Gibbard**

**Project: Barking Park**

**Date: 7.3.2012**

**Language: English**

**Venue: Interviewee’s House**

**Name of interviewer: Kara Black**

**Length of interview:**

**Transcribed by: Kara Black**

**Archive Ref: 2012\_esch\_BaPa\_17**