

Emma Wright

24/07/2015

Interviewer: Katy wade

Interviewer: I

Respondent: R

00:00 I Could you please tell me when and where you were born?

00:04 R I was born in 1975 at the what is now the Women's Hospital, so Birmingham Maternity Hospital, as it was, which is the sort of pre-Elizabeth hospital.

00:16 I Can you tell me a bit about your parents?

00:18 R Yes, erm, sorry. So my mum and dad are both from Birmingham originally. My dad lived in Yardley and my mum lived in, well she was born in Balsall Health, but she lived in Rubery as she grew up. When they met and got married, they lived in Swanshurst Lane, so that's where I lived after I was born and that's where I grew up. My dad worked in the wholesale market. He ran a company that specialised in bananas. And my mum didn't work when we were little but then she did admin work, she was a secretary.

01:02 I Can you describe what your house was like back then?

01:05 R So we lived on Swanshurst Lane, which is mostly sort of 30's semis. Some of the bigger houses are up the other end of the road, but we lived near the bottom of the road. So it was a traditional 1930's semi, a lot like this house actually, which is probably why I bought this house, because it's very familiar to me. It was three bedrooms. Yes, I don't really know what else to tell you about it.

01:31 I And what were your neighbours like?

01:34 R Well, when we were little, we knew all the neighbours by name, by sort of Mr and Mrs names. So we lived next door to Mr and Mrs Hughes and on the other side there was a really elderly lady called Miss Flynn. I seem to remember that she was like 90 when I was little, so she must have been about a million by the time she died. And then across the road, Bernard and Diana Fagin, they still live there actually. So we knew probably two or three houses each side and we knew the people that lived opposite, mostly white people when I was little, but then as we got older – so sort of mid to late 80's, new families started to move in. Mr and Mrs Hughes had died in the early 2000's and then a Sikh family moved in next door on that side. I can't

remember his name, because I had pretty much moved out by then. And on the other side an Indian family, a Pakistani family, and again, I'm sorry, I don't know their names, but they were all lovely. So lots of families; lots of people with children our own age. Yeah.

02:56 I Can you tell me about the first school you went to?

02:59 R I went to Hall Green Junior and Infants. Well, first of all I went to playgroup on the Church of the Ascension on School Road in Hall Green, which I still have quite vivid memories of, which is weird, because I must only have been two or three. I used to go there with my friend Richard, who lived down the road. He lived on Bibsworth Avenue, which is just off Swanshurst Lane. And we sort of grew up together; we call each other brother and sister now because we've known each other for so long. I've got really vivid memories of Nana picking us up from playschool in the old Cortina, or was it an Escort? A white Ford car and Richard diving for the sweets in the glove box.

03:46 R So yeah that's where I went to playschool. My first school was Hall Green Infants, so we used to walk up from Swanshurst Lane, it must be about a 20-minute walk, but it didn't really feel like it when we were little, erm, and then Hall Green Juniors. We used to walk to and from school up Colebank Road, which is quite a big hill, but there would always be other people to walk with, so Richard, or another lad that lived down the road, Stephen. How much detail do you want, all the detail? So we used to walk home from school and we used to walk round the college. As a child, you sort of get into routines of things that happen on your journey home, so it was like, "we need to walk along this wall and then we need to pick up stones at this corner because we're going to go past the river and when we get to the river bridge, we'll throw stones into the river." And this was like, sort of, I just remember day after day doing exactly the same things with my friends and there were these games that we played on the route to and from school. I can't remember anything about school, I just remember the walks to and from school.

05:01 I Do you remember any of the teachers at all?

05:02 R Yeah..erm.. Yes, she says... I can't remember the first, Oh Miss Elliott was the first one in reception class, and then Mrs Venetia, which was very hard to spell, as a six year old, Mrs Warren, Jenny Warren. I think she might have been Welsh, I don't know where I've got that from, but I have a vague memory. She was my favourite actually, top infants, because I was quite good at spelling, so she used to send the kids over to my desk. If she'd got a big queue of people asking how to spell things, she'd say, "Go to Emma's desk." So I used to be the sort of deputy teacher in that class, so a massive teacher's pet.

And then in junior school it was Mrs Hammond for first year, Miss Nash for second year and not many people liked Miss Nash, but I liked Miss Nash. She was very blunt; she was very sort of direct with people and that appealed to me. It was a bit harsh for some people. And then in third year we had a woman called Miss Bolshaw who was a bit sort of punky, if I remember rightly. She had a bit of a punk hairdo and she was very sort of right on, and I didn't really get on with her at all. I sort of found it all a bit – I don't know – it made me nervous. She made us write a letter to Greenpeace one time and I think she was trying to get us to be activists, but that wasn't my thing when I was ten. And she once made me not go to, she told me off for whistling and I hadn't whistled, it was Nigel Homer, and she made me stay out of PE lessons. She wouldn't let me go to the PE lesson, which was fine by me. She said, "You've got to do mainline English," which was English comprehension, but I bloody loved English comprehension and she didn't even notice that. So I had a lot more fun doing lines; I didn't want to do PE.

And then in fourth year it was Mr Klee and he was lovely. And our classroom was up the stairs, which was like, fourth years got to go up the stairs in Hall Green, so that was my favourite class. He did lots of art and lots of story writing and that was my thing, so I loved that.

07:38 I Can you tell me about what subjects you liked in the lower school?

07:43 R English and Music and Art. I learnt to play the flute when I was about 7 or 8. We used to play the recorder because everybody plays the recorder at school and I turned out to be quite good at the recorder, so, they let me have a go on the flute. Well, just the top bit of a flute at first to see if I could get a note out of it and I did, so three of us went on to learn the flute. I can't remember what my flute teacher was called, but that was nice to have sort of an extracurricular thing to do at school. Yes, I loved Music and I was in the school orchestra in junior school as well. And we played the town hall once, big news. It must have been some kind of school proms thing because there were lots of other schools there and lots of different types of orchestras which I'd not known about before. So the people that were on just before us were all playing sitars and Indian instruments, which I'd never seen before, but it was fascinating as a sort of 10 year old to see all these instruments that I'd never seen before. I loved music so I was really interested in that. That's it, sorry.

09:00 I Would you say that your classmates were quite diverse, or were they all quite similar? Were they white English, did you get people from different backgrounds?

09:06 R There were a few Indian kids in our class. So there was a Sikh lad and there was also a Chinese guy that came in third year, called Eddie. Erm and he, I remember there was a supply teacher that was teaching us that day and

she said, "So which part of the world are you from?" And he said, "Leamington Spa." That was just hilarious because she was quite old and didn't really sort of realise that people that live in Birmingham are from all over the world, including Leamington Spa. Erm, so yeah, it was mostly white English kids, but I had a friend, Bina, who was Indian descent. There were maybe two or three Indian people in the class and one Chinese.

10:04 I What did you do outside of school at that age?

10:08 R Erm, road around on bikes a lot. So my sister is three years younger than me and we used to ride our bikes basically anywhere that you didn't have to cross a road. We'd go down Swanshurst Lane, down Wake Green Road a bit and up Thirlmere Drive, which is like lots of little roads on an estate and it's on a hill, so that is really good for bikes. You can cycle all the way to the top and then throw yourself down the hill. And also in that part of Thirlmere Drive, you used to be able to – it's got a proper entrance now, but you used to be able to climb through a fence to get to Moseley Bog. In fact, I think the bit that we used to go to is still closed off, but we didn't call it Moseley Bog. We called it Black Hills, but I don't know why, because it wasn't black and there wasn't a hill. There was a massive ditch in there with some water at the bottom. In the summer it was dry though, so we used to ride our bikes down the ditch and out again and that was terrifying, but that's what we did. "Coming up Black Hills."

11:22 R Most of the kids in the area used to end up there, so on summer afternoons we'd sort of go up Black Hills and then find all the other kids riding their bikes in the ditch. But when there was water in it, it was a bit more scary, so people used to build rafts and be highly dangerous and I'm sure their parents never knew. And when we got a bit older, if we weren't going to Black Hills, we would go the other way and walk down through the Dingles, which is just off Brook Lane, sort of, that side of Sarehole Road. And that's a nice little trail to ride your bike through as well, especially in the summer. Mum and Dad used to want to come with us when we went there because it's a few roads to cross.

12:13 I Did any of your family go to church or anything?

12:17 R We didn't go to church when we were younger, but when I was about sort of 10 or 12 maybe, my parents decided that we should probably give it a go and go to church, so we used to go to St Agnes in Moseley, where there was quite an active youth group and Sunday school. We used to get involved with all the plays and musicals. It was quite a sort of, I wouldn't say it was happy clappy, but it was a very artsy congregation there, so we did a lot of musicals and I seemed to get roped into that quite a lot. But I was quite a quiet child, so I was in it for the music, but I didn't really like the singing and being on film. But there are VHS videos of those experiences somewhere in my mum and dad's house. But yeah, we certainly weren't a

religious family. I think church was more of a community erm, thing than a religious thing.

13:24 I Where did you go to school after Hall Green?

13:27 R I went to Camp Hill, King Edwards Camp Hill in Kings Heath. I was a quiet girl and I think that the school doesn't really favour quiet people. I think it's more for people that are go getting and going to do something amazing and know what they want, and I didn't know what I wanted, so I didn't enjoy senior school very much, especially after being top dog in Mrs Warren's class in junior school. I think moving to senior school was a bit of a trauma for me. So yeah, I didn't like it much.

14:09 I Did you have any hobbies or anything at that age?

14:12 R I've always been quite musical, so I carried on playing the flute through School, erm, and I used to go to a teacher externally. And I also learnt the piano. I used to go to Guides as well, I loved Guides actually. We used to go to Guides in St Peter's Church in Hall Green, where they – I was never a patrol leader, I was always a seconder, but I've always preferred that. We used to do lots of music there as well and plays lots of games. I really loved Guides. I can't really remember much else about it, apart from just enjoying it, so Friday nights were piano lessons and then Guides.

15:04 I What did you do at your weekends at that age?

15:07 R Weekends were normally – so Saturdays Dad would be at work, because he would go to work at sort of four in the morning because he worked in the wholesale market, so the three of us, me, my sister and mum would get up and Saturday was for cleaning the house. So we all had our little chores to do on Saturday mornings and then Dad would come home at lunchtime. And then in the afternoon we would probably go to Solihull to go shopping in Mell Square. That seemed to be quite a routine actually, Saturday afternoons were either Solihull or if there was a football match on then Mum and Dad would drop us at Nana's and they would often, sometimes, go and watch the Blues play.

16:00 R One of the first things I remember, when I was little actually, when I was sort of four or five, is waving off Mum and Dad and Dad used to get me to say, "Up the Blues." He won't remember that. Erm, so yeah, that's what Saturday afternoons were. Sundays, I don't remember doing much on a Sunday. We probably went to Nana's in the morning quite often and Nana lived in Yardley. And then roast dinner, obviously, because it's Sunday and then in the afternoon we'd be watching telly or Dad might have some sport on. My sister got obsessed with the film Grease, so we quite often watched Grease over and over on a Sunday afternoon. I'm sure we did more than that, but that's my sort of lasting memory of weekends.

- 16:59 I Can you remember the Stratford Road around that time at all?
- 17:03 R Well, yeah, because my school was on the Stratford Road, so the way that we used to walk would be up Colebank Road and then walk down Stratford Road to school, but also the Hall Green Parade was probably our nearest walkable set of shops, so because my mum didn't drive at the time, we'd quite often, when dad was at work, we'd go up to the shops. So I think the nearest supermarket to us was probably the Mack market, which was at the end of the Hall Green Parade. For some reason I've got quite vivid memories of walking around the supermarket there and listening to ABBA and all the cheesy 70's and 8'0s music that they'd put on in the shop.
- 17:50 R And I remember my sister spilling a bottle of lemonade once and they used to be in glass bottles, so it made a massive smash on the floor. And I just remember my mum being horrified. We would have been very young then. But yeah, all the shops in the Parade, I mean that would have been the first place where I would have been allowed to go, when I first started venturing out on my own, maybe 10 or 11, "I'm going to go for a walk Mum, can I borrow a pound?" kind of thing. I'd then walk up to the Hall Green Parade because they had a music shop, Midland Music, which was like an Aladdin's cave for me when I was a kid. They sold sheet music and obviously they had lots of different instruments there that I could go and ogle.
- 18:41 R What other shops? Oh, Eric Willmont's was the toyshop on the Hall Green Parade. Well I think it was a sports shop really; it was kind of in two halves. So they housed fishing tackle and men's things in one half of the shop, but then the other half had board games and toys. And at the front, under the counter were all the penny toys. God, that makes me sound ancient, penny toys. But there were the pocket money toys that you could go and pick out things like those really sticky balls that you throw at a window and they roll down, all those kind of little, tiny – marbles, we were massively into marbles for some reason. We would go and buy a bag of marbles or maybe one big marble to add to your bag. I loved Eric Willmont's, I wish that was still there. It was an amazing shop. I can't think of an equivalent that there would be now, where they would be lots of board games and – well, obviously toy shops exist, but they're all a bit pink and fluffy. This was like a proper games shop.
- 19:48 R Anyway, what else was on that parade? There was a post office. And I remember one time I walked up there and I must have been maybe 12 or 13, and there was an old lady in a wheelchair outside the post office and she couldn't get into the post office. And she just waved me over and gave me her pension book and said, "Can you go and get my pension for me?" Even at the time, I remember thinking, "Are you really going to just trust some random stranger?" but I must have just looked like a nice girl. I went and got her pension for her and it was a lot of money, to me, as a child,

obviously. So I went and got her money for her; I don't know why that stuck in my head, because it was weird, probably.

20:34 R There was a big dairy along there as well, so there were always lots of milk floats clanking about. And there was a chemist where we used to go and buy sweets, but weird sweets that you get in a chemist. So we used to buy – what are those little purple flowery sweets called, Parma Violets, and sticks of liquorice root that you just chew and they taste of liquorice. I don't even like liquorice but I really liked liquorice root, so we used to chew those, and Horlicks tablets. I was a strange child; I don't know why I liked all these really strange sweets that we used to get in a chemist. And the chemist there was a lovely, lovely man, but he had very long fingers and a long face. I mean this is my memory of him because I was a child and he was an adult and all adults were a bit weird. But I just remember him pointing at things over the counter and being really sort of, like this. I'm sure he wasn't like that at all, but that's just my memory of him.

21:45 I Did you ever go down the other end at all?

21:48 R Towards town?

21:49 I Yes.

21:52 R We did used to walk up to Sparkhill, because I used to swim in Sparkhill Baths obviously, because that was local to our school I suppose, so we used to get the coach up to Sparkhill baths and that is where I learnt to swim. Yes, sometimes we walked up there to go to – there was a hairdressers there that we used to go to at one point, Coustis.. Coustis...Cousti? Erm and I used to like to go, this is when I was an early teenager and I was just starting to discover clothes and shoes and things, so I used to go to the hairdressers and then I used to beg Mum to go into the shoe shop next door, which was Asian run, so they had quite a lot of spangly shoes in there and shoes that had blingy – we didn't call it blingy – but quite blingy detail on them. I used to like to go and look at those shoes, which is weird because I haven't grown up to be someone that loves blingy shoes, but it was something different I suppose. I did buy a pair of shoes, which had a gold bar across them, I know, really outré. I can't think of any other shops that we used to go to up there. It was really just to go to the swimming baths.

23:10 I Did you visit either of the libraries along Stratford Road?

23:13 R Hall Green library was my library and we used to go there a lot. I think there was a point at which I realised I'd read all the books I wanted to read in the sort of Young Adult section of Hall Green library. I realise now that I probably could have spoken to the librarians and got them to get more books in, but I didn't really think of that as a child, I just thought, "Oh well

that's it, I've read them all now." Mum said, "Well, you'll have to go into the Adult Section now. You'll have to start reading grown up books." I was like, "Oh no, that's what grownups do, I don't do that." But I did love that library.

23:53 R We use to go there, occasionally they would have events upstairs in the school holidays and I remember going upstairs and doing some kind of craft class where we were given enamel beads and jewellery findings and I made a hairclip that had a little – you put a bead on it and then it gets fired in a kiln and the bead melts and it makes a lovely pattern on it. It was beautiful, I never wore it, but it was good fun to do. And that has just reminded me that we also used to go to Highfield Hall a lot, I'm assuming it's off Highfield Road, but that's quite close to Stratford Road. And that is where we used to spend a lot of summer holidays, doing craft activities and art and stuff like that. That was my, my favourite thing to do.

24:43 I When you got older, did you go to any of the pubs in the area?

24:47 R Yes, so we did go to the Three Horseshoes. It was occasionally called The Horseshoes and occasionally Three Horseshoes and I can't remember what it even is now, but we would drink in there and occasionally the Bull's Head. My sister was more of a Bull's Head and I was more of a Horseshoes girl. But really I kind of drifted to drinking in Moseley, but yes, the shoes, "Up the Shoes," was definitely a thing that we did at 17..18, obviously, over 18. It was where I would meet people that I'd been to junior school with, so that was a sort of connection to my – I would go there with people from my college, because I went to Cadbury College, which is the other end. But I would quite often go to the Shoes and then meet up with lots of people that I'd been to junior school with and that was a nice way of keeping in touch with people.

25:44 I Can you describe what it looked like back then?

25:46 R I honestly I can't really remember what the pub looked like. It was a bit of a – I want to say it was a bit of a dive, but I don't think it could have been that divey because I wouldn't have want to gone there because I was a nice girl. I remember them doing it up in the '90s and then it was nicer, but yes, sorry, I can't really remember what it looked like.

26:11 I Can you tell me about when you went to college then?

26:14 R I went to sixth form college at Cadbury, which is in Kings Norton, because I didn't want to continue at Camp Hill. So I left in the fifth year, which was quite unusual. I wanted to do English Language A-Level, which was unusual, because most people did English Literature, so the school didn't offer English Language. I was more interested in linguistics and the sort of technicalities of English Language, so that's why I chose Cadbury, but also

because it wasn't Camp Hill. And yeah, that really got me out of my shell, I realised that, I sort of grew up a bit when I went to sixth form. Saying that, I was still a massively late bloomer, but yeah, I made a lot of friends at Cadbury and people that I'm still friends with now, so that's nice.

27:13 I What did you do after then?

27:17 R I didn't really know what I wanted to do. I sort of, it was assumed that I would go to university and I had assumed it as well, and then I wasn't very good at doing any work. I had a lot of potential, I probably could have done quite well in my A-Levels, had I got my head down, but I didn't, so I got quite low grades at A-Level. I think I got two A-Levels in the end, a C and an E. So erm, I sort of floundered for a bit after sixth form. I think I did a bit of temping, I think I tried to do a sort of vocational course once. I went into town and sat in a room with a load of people who wanted to be secretaries and I just felt really out of place. And we were supposed to do an admin course and I remember the first day they said, "Right, today we're going to learn about fire extinguishers" and we spent a good hour looking at the different colours of fire extinguishers. I remember thinking, "This isn't really getting me anywhere."

28:22 R So what I did in the end, and we're talking two or three years after I left sixth form, doing nothing, I ended up – I was working in charity shops. So I worked in a charity shop in Kings Heath and I realised that there were lots of clothes that were sort of retro, vintage clothes, that were coming through the shop and the old ladies that worked in the shop weren't really noticing how cool and trendy these clothes were. We're talking the 90's when the 60's and 70's was quite popular, if you know what I mean. I started collecting all the flares and big collar shirts and stuff; a long story short, I ended up opening a shop in Kings Heath that was selling retro clothing. You'd call it vintage now; we didn't use that word then. So it was a retro clothes shop and I called it Worn Again. I was not a businesswoman; obviously I was 20, a bit of an idiot. It lasted about a year, but it was massively good fun. And it did give me a lot of confidence and a lot of awareness of being a grown up, you know, running a business. It looked good on my CV for a bit, but I didn't make any money. And whilst I was working at the shop, my friend who worked in an advertising agency needed a proof-reader. He came into the shop and said, "You're good at spelling aren't you? Can you do some proof reading?" I said, "I don't really know what proof reading is, I can tell you what you've spelt wrong." He said, "That's all we need, just mark up on this," so I ended up doing a bit of proof reading for him, so I would have been 21 then.

30:08 R And it turned out that I was quite good at it, so I started offering my services as a proof reader to other agencies and getting a bit of work that way, as a freelancer. And then again, I was still floundering a bit because I wasn't getting much work, I didn't really know how to find work. And then

my boyfriend at the time then made me go to the job centre with him basically. He said, "You need to find yourself a job," and there was a job on the job centre wall and I can't believe this even happened. It said, "Writer, no experience necessary, feature writer, apply at this number." So the job centre rang the number for me and put me through to this man who said, "Have you got any experience?" I said, "Well, I've been doing a bit of proof reading." He said, "Oh brilliant, come in and talk to us." And it turned out they ran an advertising newspaper, so advertorial really. I went in and did an audition; I wrote, they gave me a bunch of information about double-glazing and said, "Can you sum this up in 100 words?" And I loved doing that, it was exactly like the English Language exams that I'd done in sixth form. It was exactly like the mainline English that I'd done in junior school; it was exactly the sort of thing that I loved doing. So it turned out all this time I was floundering, I was actually quite a good editor and I didn't realise that was a thing. This job allowed me to become an editor and that's what I do now. And that's what I've done ever since.

31:41 I You mentioned your boyfriend. Can you tell me a bit about how you used to go on dates, where you'd go?

31:48 R Well, when I was at Camp Hill, I was completely boy mad, so I basically fancied everybody and had a reputation for fancying everybody and being a bit weird and writing letters to everybody. And so, I didn't go on many dates, as it turned out, but I did eventually get a boyfriend when I was in fifth year. He was very, very sweet. But as for where we went on dates, we went to the cinema a lot. So we would go into town on a bus and go to either the Odeon or there was a cinema on John Bright Street that I can't remember the name of, but we used to go there. So we would either go to the cinema or we would go bowling and I think they were pretty much the only options as a 15 year old. Obviously bowling, you can't just go two of you; you have to get a big group of friends together. Yeah, I can't really think where we would have gone. We used to go into town and then later on obviously when we could drink, we used to go up either into Hall Green to the Shoes or over into Moseley and go into the Village, which was a dive. And as I sort of got to sixth form I had more relationships, obviously, as I got older. In sixth form we used to go on holiday actually, all our friends used to go camping together, so that tended, rather than go on dates, we'd all just go off somewhere and get a tent.

33:38 I When did you move out of your house?

33:42 R So I lived on Swanshurst Lane for probably 20 odd years because that's where my parents had always lived. I kind of, I didn't really move out, there was no one day where I moved out, it's not like, "I'm moving out today." I sort of drifted – I had a boyfriend when I was 21/22, and he got himself a flat in Moseley, so I started staying over there and eventually realised that I'd pretty much moved all my stuff into his flat, probably as much a surprise

for him as it was for my parents. Sol lived in Moseley in a flat for a bit and then obviously we broke up and I had to move home again. So I remember living out of bin bags for a while at home when I was 22/23. I'm trying to think how old I would have been when I properly moved out and actually rented a house for myself; it was probably not until I was 23/24, which sounds quite late. I moved to Kings Heath with two friends then and we shared a house on Grange Road. Erm, yeah, but I don't remember ever saying, "Mum and Dad, I'm moving out." It was just a drift really.

35:04 I Did you see the area you lived in change much, or your parents lived in, when you moved out?

35:10 R I don't know how much it did change, but my parents started to feel differently about the area. There was a perception that there was more crime and people cared less about the houses. And I don't think that's anything to do with who was – well, people seemed to know each other less. The older that I got, the less I knew the neighbours and the less my parents were friends with the neighbours. You know, people died and other people moved in that never communicated. So although they stayed friends with their next-door neighbours on each side, the people further up the road were less well known to them, so I think they just felt less and less comfortable.

36:03 R But as for how the area itself changed, the shops at the bottom of the road changed a lot. There used to be lots of little shops, so there was a little post office and a little newsagents and a little butchers and a little off license at the bottom of Swanshurst Lane, and those seem to have become amalgamated into a massive Spar and a chip shop now, neither of which are sort of very community oriented, I don't think. They are for the people that go there, but they weren't for my parents. So eventually my parents moved away in 2007-ish and they moved to a little village somewhere in Worcestershire.

36:51 I Can you tell me about when you got married? Or have you got married?

36:54 R Yeah. I didn't get married till quite recently though, 2010 we got married. I met Daz in 2007; we met on the Internet, again. There was like an online group for people who live in Moseley, so it was a Yahoo group. So a group of us used to chat online and there was a website called Eye on Moseley, which sort of 10 /15 years ago I used to read this website and think, "This is the funniest website I've ever seen in my life," because it was all about very, very niche, local... and the stories were just completely made up. And I thought, "If I ever meet the person that writes this website..." You can see where this is going, can't you? "If I ever meet the person who writes this website, they must be the funniest person in the world." It turned out that the person I'd been chatting to on the Internet was the same guy who wrote the website. Obviously, meeting people on the Internet, you end up,

if you live in the same area, it makes sense that eventually someone is going to say, "Why don't we go to the pub?" We started meeting up and going to the pub and that's how I met Daz. But that was only after speaking online for maybe 7 or 10 years, we eventually met properly and started going out with each other quite soon after that and then we got married in 2010.

38:28 I In church?

38:29 R We got married at Highbury Hall. Basically everything I've done in my whole life has been within about three miles of my birth; it's a bit lame. So yeah, we got married at Highbury Hall because we could walk home from there. In fact, actually, we didn't end up walking home because Daz was quite tipsy and I'd got a massive dress on, so the DJ gave us a lift in his trailer down the road. It was a lovely day. But I. yeah it was brilliant. Having all your friends in one place is just really weird and brilliant at the same time.

39:11 I Do you have any thoughts about the politics of the area? Have you seen any changes or do you see any strong views?

39:19 I I never really understood what politics was until I was well into my 30's and sort of... In fact, the same group of people that used to chat on the Internet were quite political because living in Moseley; a lot of them were social workers or people related to charities and social work generally. And that is when I started to get a feel for what it meant to be political and activisty. And that is when I realised that Moseley was seen as a bit of a lefty place and Hall Green was traditionally a bit more of a Tory place. It had never really struck me before. That, that. My parents bought the Daily Mail every day and I used to read it and I never thought about what I was reading. So, I'm not really answering your question, but erm, I don't think I've seen the politics change because I don't really know what the politics was to start with.

40:29 I Do you remember any big events in the area at all?

40:38 R The only big events that I can remember are more to do with things that happened in town, so I remember the Super Prix. I don't know why that's the first big event that pops into my head. But I remember how noisy it was, even from where we lived on Swanshurst Lane, we could hear the cars going round the circuit in town. And because my dad worked in the wholesale market, that seemed to be a sort of hub for the drivers and the people – I don't know anything about racing. You know, the people with the cars, so we went to a couple of events at the wholesale market where drivers were sort of walking around. I remember Mum and Dad saying, "Go and get his autograph," and I hadn't got a clue who these people were. But yeah, that's not really the Stratford Road is it? I honestly can't think of

anything that really happened in that area. I don't know whether I was just sheltered. Sorry.

41:43 I It's alright. What is your impression of the area now?

41:47 R I don't tend to go up that way very often. I still shop at Waitrose, because it's Waitrose isn't it? It hasn't changed a lot, I don't think. The shops that I remember are mostly still there; the music shop is gone, which is sad. But I think Hall Green Parade is probably still – you know, if I had a family there now, I'd probably still shop up there. I can't really think of anything that's changed. I mean further up the Stratford Road towards town I know that it's changed quite a lot because there's a lot more different communities there now. Sparkhill was always very sort of Indian and Pakistani people, but I think now it's more sort of Somalian and African people up towards that end, but I don't really go there, so I don't know.

42:46 I We're almost done now. Have you got any other memories or anything you'd like to add that you think might help us?

42:56 R No(laughs) sorry. I can't think of anything else to tell you. It's all very, very personal to me isn't it? It's not really the community as a whole. I'm trying to think if we ever did anything community-ish, but I can't really think of anything.

43:15 I Was there ever a problem with racism, in your memory, or bullying, or was it okay?

43:21 R Well, my instinct is to say no, but I think that's because I probably was completely unaware and naïve of it. I mean I was a young, white girl that lived in a white circle of people and we were interested in the kids in our class that were Asian or different. I mean in infant school I remember the Sikh boy came in with his dad to do an assembly and they taught us about – because the kids wore their hair up in a kind of handkerchief, which we thought was funny as kids, but they came in and explained why they wore their hair like that and how they don't cut their hair and sort of the relevance of things like not cutting your hair and growing a beard and carrying a knife around with you. And all the other things. But I don't remember people being racist in my childhood, but I think that's probably because I was unaware of it. I'm sure it must have gone on, but to us it was just interesting that people were different and yeah families did different things and people ate different foods and that was just how it was.

44:38 I I don't really have any other questions; so unless you want to add anything, thank you.

44:42 R Thank you.