

## Lyn Ricketts (& Peter Ricketts)

Interview conducted by Christian O'Connell on Wednesday 14 November 2018 at Lyn Ricketts' home in Cheltenham.

Transcribed by Tom Adams, undergraduate student at the University of Gloucestershire.

### Key

**I:** Interviewer Christian O'Connell

R: Lyn Ricketts

R2: Peter Ricketts

**I:** **Ok, so if we can just start, if you could tell me your full name.**

R: I'm Lyn Ricketts

**I:** **And where were you born?**

R: Townsend Street.

**I:** **How long did you live there?**

R: 21 years.

**I:** **21 years.**

R: I was born there. I was actually born in Townsend Street. I didn't go to the maternity at all, born.

**I:** **So when did you leave the area then?**

R: January 1971.

**I: On this project we've talked to lots of people about their earliest memories of growing up or childhood in the area. What things stand out for you, if you have to recall your childhood growing up in Townsend Street?**

R: Being able to play ball with my sister. Going around to Gas Green, that was at the back of us, playing against Gas Green Church, kicking the ball. Awful if you think about it now, but we did. And of course there were no cars, so we knew we were free, and there were a couple of friends that lived there, and her mother used to come up and bring us toasted teacakes.

**I: Okay.**

R: Such a treat.

**I: Is it true that on the bottom of Townsend Street there used to be ... a place used to make, some people have talked about a place that used to make dripping cakes that were really ...**

R: Townsends. Fabulous.

**I: Yes?**

R: Well we used to go down there, I would say sometimes, but not often, because we lived very close to it, at 7 o'clock in the morning, before they opened, you could go to the side door, knock on the side door and they'd open it and you could go and buy your bread. And it was hot, and it was so hot, because it wasn't the cut bread then, it was a whole one. You'd come up and prance up and down because the bread was so hot in your hand. But the dripping cakes were wonderful. I don't think I've ever ever had ... they make dripping cakes now, I think in Cirencester there's someone does it, but I know when my brother lived, he didn't live here, and I used to go and get a couple of dozen dripping cakes, I used to go and see him in Northampton and I used to go and order them and take them there, because he loved them so much.

**I: Wow.**

R: And they were beautiful, they really were beautiful.

**I: Yes, I mean the reason people keep mentioning them, I think, obviously so ...**

R: Yes, I think the Cirencester one's very good, quite close to it.

**I: Okay.**

R: Whiddetts, I think they're called now, are as close as you're going to get.

**I: So, you were born in Townsend Street, so what did your parents do?**

R: My father worked at the Co-op and my mum was at home. Then when we grew older she did a part time job in Wards, where Peter's father, they knew each other in Wards, and she did a little bit of work at the top of The Strand in Co-op again.

**I: Okay. So were they from Cheltenham?**

R: My father was, my father was from Fairfield Avenue in Leckhampton. My mother was Welsh.

**I: I see, okay. And what do you remember about the families, people living on Townsend Street growing up?**

R: They were lovely. Well, because we had the one end and Mr Gun shop, the coin shop, what's the coin shop, what's his name? Kesterton. Mr Kester was on the corner and he had a coin shop and he was there for ever and ever until he was assaulted one day, my dad found him on the floor, somebody had knocked him out and he left soon after that, but he was always there. Looking through the book now, I knew two thirds of the people. And where we lived, we knew everybody of course, from Ketterton's down to the Swindon Road, just knew everybody.

**I: Okay. So yeh, you get the sense that on these streets pretty much, they're almost like self contained communities.**

R: Yes, they were. I'm sure everybody would help out, I don't think we ever needed help, fortunately enough. But I'm sure people would be there if you needed them.

**I: So do you remember what the people did there for a living, that lived in the ...?**

R: [*unintelligible*] because he was the only the only one with a car, Mr Woodman, the only one with a car.

**I: So he must have been quite envied by some of the others?**

R: I don't know really, I think it was a Morris, I can see it now, with the ladder on top. Do you know I ... one worked for the railways, Mr Cowley worked for the railways. Isn't it strange, you know, I just don't know. Because we didn't get involved, we knew who they were parents of, but we still called them Mr and Mrs, even my parents called .... they didn't know them by their Christian names, only one, the German lady, opposite. But even my parents called them Mr and Mrs. It wasn't Joe, John or anything then, it was ... But they were lovely, everybody had the same as everybody else, somebody didn't have more, it didn't feel ... Like today, or you've got to have Vans, you've got to have Jack Wills or something, you didn't, because we didn't have the money. Everybody was in work except we had a widow, no, two widows where we were. But everybody else ... yes.

**I: You mentioned ... I was going to ask you about this later on, but seeing as you mentioned it, you said a man with a coin shop was attacked.**

R: Yes.

**I: Now one of the ... the area now suffers from a bit of a bad reputation ...**

R: Never, never.

**I: ... but back then, did it have that same reputation?**

R: No, no. There was a murder there, but I'd left home and I'd come back, so we're talking 80 ish? And there was a murder across the road. No, nobody, it was just a very pleasant safe place, can't think anybody ever getting ..., oh there was one chappy, in the Adam and Eve.

**I: So that pub was there back then?**

R: Oh yes. Oh yes, and the Forresters. The Forresters have gone now, they've got a sign there but they've got flats . And there was another one, the Cross Keys at the very end, which ... they've gone. There was someone had done Christmas savings, and he took the money.

**I: Oh right.**

R: Unbelievable, because I know who he was and was really unbelievable and he went to gaol.

**I: Right, so he was caught?**

R: Yes, but looking back, yes, and he was going to be caught.

**I: Because yeh, that thing ...**

R: You'd just think, you would talk after it happened and you think ... then it happened and I thought, well he knew and he was super, a lovely lovely man. One of those things, but no, that was the only thing. Just ordinary working class people, really kind.

**I: How did it feel being from that area, you know, compared to other parts of Cheltenham, because one of the things that you get a sense of, that people living from that side of town were always fairly separate ...**

R: Didn't no.

**I: No?**

R: Didn't no, not at all.

**I: So do you ever remember going to The Promenade, for instance, for the first time?**

R: Yes, yes. But that was home, that was all part of home, we'd go to Brenners, we'd go to ... that was, we used to go on a Saturday to Brenners, we always had tea and coffee at Brenners. We shopped on the Prom, we used to go to the Prom, we used to go to the (ph

07:55) Carv to get different things. There wasn't, didn't feel class, I think it's different now with class, our grandchildren have got to have Vans and all that lot, we didn't. Everybody was the same. We went to Dunalley's School, which was quite close. I cannot think of anybody I thought, oooh, they're different. A lot of people came from St Paul's, around that area. Some came from ... we were on St Peter's side of the road, 52, the other side of St Paul's, but we always thought we were St Paul's and you had a few people down Swindon Road, they came in to Dunalley and we were all the same. We didn't know anybody lived differently from us.

**I: Okay.**

R: We didn't have a bathroom until we were 13, an outside loo.

**I: So that would have been early sixties, mid sixties?**

R: Hmmm, we were born 1948. And I can remember my mother saying 'would you rather go on holiday or would you want a bathroom?', well it wasn't a choice was it really. And we had a bathroom and we had a kitchen.

**I: Okay.**

R: Kitchen, bathroom, which was fabulous, because we'd never had one before. And we're sitting here now and we've got two actual bathrooms and three loos in this house. And I know how lucky I am because we never had it.

**I: Yes.**

R: ... realise where I am now, how lucky we've got what we've got. Which is quite a good thing in a way, because if I'd always had it, I wouldn't appreciate what I've got now.

**I: Yes, I mean, one of the things that is striking that most of the people that we've spoken to are people that left the areas and they move to houses that were bigger, had gardens, driveways, so of new estates that were being built around the fifties and sixties ...**

R: Hatherley, a lot of people have gone to Hatherley, because that's where [*unintelligible*], lucky I've got a garden. We had a garden, but so small ... When we were small, we thought it was large. But really it wasn't, it wasn't large. How many feet? 15/20 foot? About 20 foot? And that's all we had, but it seemed huge to us. One of our granddaughters came here when she was about 5 or 6 and she said 'grandma, can I go and play in your field?' and I thought then, to her at that stage, that's a field, to us when we were at home, we had a very large garden. We didn't, but we did have some and I had my little tatty old thing there and I grew a few bits, but now that isn't my ... our garden's important.

**I: Right.**

R: Because we didn't have it.

**I: Okay, so when you came to the exhibition a while back, do you remember seeing the poem about ... the Lower High Street poem?**

R: Yes, I did. As you walked from the left hand side, I read it. I can't remember it now but it was very good.

**I: So the poem was apparently published many years ago in The Echo and when we started the project we ... somebody, the person who wrote it I think, I'm not sure if it was the person who wrote it, but we just got sent by post, the poem. On its own. No author, nothing.**

R: Right.

**I: But it talked about all the shops that kind of served the area ...**

R: Yes, yes, it was all there. Did you put it on line? I think you had it on line because I sent it to my sister and some other friends.

**I: Yes, it's on there so you can ...**

R: Because it was so good.

**I: Yes, you can, it's on there.**

R: Yes, because all the different things, well it's all changed, because there used to be shops all the way through the High Street, now it's broken up because the Post Office ...

**I: Yes.**

R: ... um,

**I: So do you remember when they, they ... were you still living in the area when they build Paul Way, that cut across the High Street?**

R: Yes, I would have done, yes. I'd have been there then. Because friends used to live on the Swindon Road and they moved to Prestbury, because their houses were going, the houses went there um, yes it was just straight up and straight down.

**I: Okay, so do you remember ... was there a noticeable difference before and after that happened, because some people say that that kind of destroyed ...**

R: It did, it did, well it just broke the area up. Where you were all in one ... and of course it's busy, where before you walked, it all changed and you had lots of cars coming through ...

**I: Lots of traffic, yes.**

R: I think the area's changed because of cars, we sometimes go that way, but ... we didn't have a car in sight, there was just one car when we were smaller, and could play and sit on the kerb and play, I remember doing that. And the bikes, just up and down, safe, very safe.

**I: Okay.**

R: Not now.

**I: Yes, I mean, the interesting thing is that through some of the work that we've done on this project, I mean obviously the area suffers from quite a negative reputation**

**now, but it seems that if, even back then, if you speak to some ... or even if you read the newspapers from the fifties and sixties, the local newspapers, there still seems to be a bit of a negative stigma of the area , but the people who lived there ...**

R: No, no, didn't feel it. Didn't feel it at all. There was no trouble, except that one thing that happened, that would happen anywhere. Jolly nice people, solid people I'd say and there's no airs and graces, what you saw is what you had and they're the people I like. Well, we went to St Paul's Church and more friends there, well that was our second home St Paul's Church and again everybody was the same.

**I: Okay. Do you remember much more about the kind of shops that you used on the High Street, on the lower end?**

R: Iddles, the fish shop.

**I: The fish shop, yes.**

R: Now we used to queue on Easter morning, they'd open... no, not Easter, it was Friday, why we queued to get the fish, why it couldn't have been bought the day before, but we used to queue with my mother, with everybody else to go and get the fish. And we had the fish and chip shop the other side. Sabotellas, the mother Sabotella, that lovely lady with her hands, she was there, she served there, Pool.

R2: Sabotella icecreams?

R: No. Mum worked there, and dad. And her mum had her hand just, I don't know how she worked. Then we had the Asolda.

**I: The cinema?**

R: The cinema, yes. Called the flea pit. I only went once and I think it was closed in that week, I was taken. Awful film, I can't remember what it was, but it was a dreadful film. I don't know when Cheltenham North moved in, because they're on there now, Neilsen Street, Neilsen Street? Yes, Neilsen Street. They've moved. They were in the seventies, the early seventies. Sixties, no, they were there sixties, they came in ... Cheltenham North

which was really good. There was Nelson's or Neilsen's the hairdressers on the corner of ... opposite, oh dear me, where the boys college used to be, the ...

**I: Oh, the grammar school?**

R: Oh we've got the grammar school but we're coming third from there, talking today? Used to be the school up one of the streets. Was it cookery?

R2: Where the Spark Club was?

R: The other side, no. That's Millson, the other side. Oh, on the corner, it begins with 'H'. There was a hairdressers there and then we had Coles Hardware, Chris's parents. Oh sweet shops.

**I: Was it Miss Tapps? She was mentioned in the poem, Mrs Tapp?**

R: Tapp, don't know.

**I: That's towards the ...**

R: Mudways, Mudways were there.

**I: Yes.**

R: And I think in fact he might still be there, one of the sons or grandsons.

**I: So we interviewed Mick Mudway on the film.**

R: Right. Hairdresser, hairdresser, because they lived there for years.

**I: He still owns it but he doesn't live there.**

R: Right. Yes, I think it's Mudway still over it. The Black Cat/Hat? That was there, the café was there. What was next to it, can you remember what was next to it? I can't.

R2: A gun shop?

R: Oh, Coles, Coles gun shop. That was down there as well.

**I: And was it, is it ...**

R: Oh, and the big Co-op.

**I: Yes. So the Co-op, I've seen photos of the Co-op that was there.**

R: Yes, because that's where my father used to work sometimes.

**I: So was it true to say that pretty much people from the area had everything they needed on their doorstep, more or less?**

R: Groceries, no. I don't think ... we had Macfisheries but that was further up the street. We had a chemist further down. There's the pepperpot, do you know where the pepperpot? They called the pepperpot? By Dixies, Dixies Corner ...

**I: Oh right, okay.**

R: ... by the bowling green, that was called the Pepperpot.

**I: Right, okay.**

R2: ... interrupt you, it was a public convenience [*unintelligible*].

R: Yes, well ...

R2: ... the actual [*unintelligible*].

R: And that was the Pepperpot from there down. We did have a chemist.

**I: And you mentioned also that you had a few pubs on Townsend Street ...**

R: Yes, three.

**I: ... so, one of which is still there, amazingly ...**

R: Well yes, and the other one just went four or five years ago, if that?

**I: So, do you remember much about the pubs in that area, because there seems to have been one on every corner, pretty much**

R: My father never went into it, even though we lived opposite, never.

**I: Right.**

R: Didn't. Used to go on a Friday, to put money in for Christmas. [*unintelligible*] or mum went there I think ...

**I: Okay.**

R: ... didn't go to the pubs at all, no, because they didn't go. There was The Nag's Head, knew that, and there was the Irish pub.

**I: The Shakespeare?**

R: Bill Shakespeare. I think they had the same problems!

**I: Such as?**

R: It wasn't the place to go.

**I: A place to be avoided?**

R: Um, somewhere, well I wouldn't go. It was a drinking, really drinking pub. [*unintelligible*] street, well, I don't know, because we didn't go. Did go later with a boyfriend and it was fine. No problem there. There were lots of pubs down there. There was the Irish pub further up.

**I: The Royal Oak or the Irish Oak?**

R: That was it, that's changed. There was The Nag's Head, that was okay.

**I: George's Inn, do you remember?**

R: George, no.

**I: On the corner of Millson Street?**

R: Oh well that, that, Cheltenham North, that was Cheltenham North.

I: Yes.

R: No I meant there was Cheltenham North, [*unintelligible*] place to go to. Lots down there. Oh, the place that, the chap stood at for years and years, that was a hardware store. I think he must have died a few years ago. The hardware store, and things never changed in that window. There was a yellow sheet, wasn't it? One of those yellow sheets down, that the sun didn't get to it. And I think the flies must be like 30/40 years old. Because it didn't seem that anything moved in that window. He used to stand there but didn't speak, do you remember? He leant against the door.

**I: Right.**

R: So he was someone who you'd remember. Yes. Fish shop, yes lots of chips, chip shops, we had the two of them.

**I: Okay, so you said you've got fairly positive memories of growing up in the area?**

R: Loved it, it was home.

**I: Yes. So what, did you notice in the years coming up to before you left and you moved out, did you notice it had begun to change in any way or ...?**

R: No, no.

**I: It didn't. Because why did you leave the area?**

R: I went to work in Germany. Well I worked at GCHQ and I wanted to change, so I went to Germany to work.

**I: Were many other people leaving the area at that point?**

R: The young ... we didn't have too many young people. The couple went to university so they moved away, I think two still in time now are round the area. No, the girl worked ... we didn't have many young people, thinking back now. They moved away, people moved away, the young people moved away. But the older people didn't. A couple there now? Must have been there 45 years? Growing up, because when I was around, moving out, they moved in this one couple and they're still there. No, I think if anyway, you just moved out and you do different things and circumstances, well I just came back home [*unintelligible*] a different type of house than I had before but I was able to do it. But no I didn't feel ... we weren't deprived of anything. We had what we wanted, we were fed. My mother sewed all our clothes, because that's what she could do and [*unintelligible*] . I had my sister, we did things together, we had friends, we had freedom, we had our bikes, we could go off and really not worry.

**I: Okay.**

R: Because there wouldn't seem anything to worry about. It was a good childhood, it really was.

**I: Okay. So I mean, how after you left, obviously, and you moved to Leckhampton, you say, which was obviously a very different area ...**

R: It was still home ...

**I: It was still home.**

R: Townsend Street was still home. And it still is, if I go past now and I look at the house, even now, to see what they've done, have they done anything with it. And it's still where we were happy, my sister and I were happy.

**I: Okay.**

R: And good memories.

**I: Do you feel that ... in terms of, Cheltenham obviously is quite a town that's well known for various things, its regency heritage, the spas, the lovely architecture, the Prom and the Montpelier ...**

R: That's where you go, depends where you go.

**I: Yes. So ...**

R: It's only part of it now, it's only part of the story now.

**I: Yes, so do you feel that for that reason areas where you grew up have been kind of left to deteriorate a bit or ...?**

R: The places look the same. When we used to have The Echo, could see things going on there, that, it was pity, got the odd name in Court cases, that had been before ... Um, they keep saying they're going to put money in, hundreds of thousands of pounds, I think it's called West End or something it's called now, it's not Lower High Street.

**I: Cheltenham West End.**

R: Yes, it's not, it's Lower High Street. All this money was going to be spent and given and everything but I can't see anything's been done, you've just got the new Honeybourne residential place up being built ...

**I: Yes, yes.**

R: Because that type of ... it's regent, regent, [*unintelligible*] or something there? Something was there years and years ago. That came down, that was there for donkeys years. So they built some on there. They haven't done anything with it, they keep saying, 'oh this money's going through', I don't what they can do with it. They've had a few extra flats going through. But I don't look at it and think oh isn't it sad.

R2: Students now?

R: Oh, students of course. Well that, yes going to the left more isn't it to St Paul's more. I think that has caused a few problems ...

I: **Oh yes ...**

R: ... think they've done a few bits, but it's the young people, they're going to live somewhere, they've got to go and enjoy themselves. It was just, we didn't have that at home. We didn't have all the young people. We didn't have the university. So we didn't have that mixture as we have now. And looking back they were all white people. No, we did, no we didn't, we had some Indian people living next door and they were lovely. Right, they were the only ones I knew, were Indians. Didn't know anybody, looking back, they were the only people. It was a white community. Not as much, this area's not, it's just we are still the same, but going to town lots of different voices in town now, lots of different coloured skins in town and that's where it's changed Cheltenham I think.

I: **Do you ever remember, is Dockham something that ...**

R: Oh, Lower Dockham. No, I don't. Lower Dockham I think, think, started at Chitsby Road.

I: **Okay.**

R: I think that was called, I think that at the Gas Works, I think ...

I: **Right, so going down towards St Peter's Church?**

R: I think, I think.

I: **So, it's not a term that you feel was used very much when you were growing up? Because it's really strange, some people really say, yes, we were from Lower Dockham, and others said no.**

R: No, not when I was there, but now I ... years ago I've heard of it. I have a feeling it was part of Tewkesbury Road, well heard of the name, yes. And I think it wasn't a name you wanted to know. I think no.

**I: Perhaps, I mean, some of the people that we've spoken to who were probably some of the older people we've spoken to were born in the late twenties/early thirties, that's how they refer to the area ...**

R: Really, round Townsend Street?

**I: Yes, or from Dixies Corner, what was known as Dixies Corner ...**

R: Really?

**I: ... onwards ...**

R: There you are.

**I: ... but not everybody agrees, it divides opinion.**

R: No, know of it, know the name ...

**I: It divides opinion.**

R: ... but like I say, no.

**I: The only thing that most people agree on is that that end of town began at Dixies Corner pretty much.**

R: What, Lower Socombe?

**I: Or the Lower High Street end of town.**

R: Yes, oh yes, I've always thought that.

**I: That was the line, yes?**

R: Yes, I always thought it split with the bowling green, and ... yes, that's up to Lower Higher Street and they call it West End, Lower High Street.

**I: So, can I ask you a little bit about your experience after leaving the area, living in Leckhampton and perhaps living here, does it ever come up that you grew up there and you've noticed that other people from Cheltenham perhaps have a negative opinion, or a different opinion about the area, or ...?**

R: No, [*unintelligible*] I come from, I'd say. My home, no, nothing, that's where I was born. And that's what's made me and that's why I do the things ... It's my home, I knew no different and I was very fortunate living here. I think my twin would say the same because she's ... they've moved and they've got quite a big house, a really nice place, and I think she'd be saying the same as I am.

**I: Okay.**

R: We were lucky, actually lucky that we didn't go without. We didn't have a car but we had a bike.

R2: I see what you're getting at, the perception from me who didn't live there, talking about, we're on this estate here, right, there's not a house less than a million quid [*unintelligible*], and the people at that time would certainly have regarded even the name, the Lower High Street, Lower, you know, wrong side of the tracks starts there. Would certainly have talked about it as the slums and the poor and all the rest of it and because of class consciousness would have looked down on people who came from there. This is what you're probably finding from a lot of people time after time. Don't you dare think that's the view of me or my parents, but that is the general way [*unintelligible*] was talked about, my father would have talked about it in that way. A gentle man but that would have been his upbringing.

**I: No, no, certainly, yes it's ...**

R: Very mixed, we had someone not very far, they've left now, they were St Paul's, the people next door council house, they came from, not around here but somewhere. It's a very mixed place here, aren't we, we've got bank managers and oh I don't know what we've got around here, we've got lots of people. They're all different, but everybody's the same. If someone actually asks, and once you've talked to them and someone will come up and say yes, bank manager, [*unintelligible*] you don't talk about what you've done. It's today and what can you do, can you help me, can you do this.

**I:** So can I ask then, you've agreed to talk to us about your memories growing up there, how important do you think it is for, for instance, the rest of the town or people may be who didn't grow up in the area, to know what that area was really like? Do you think it's important in any way? Because we've had a lot of people come forward who want to talk about it.

R: No, I don't think they'd be interested, I think life is so difficult sometimes, that people are very much dealing with what they have to deal with without thinking 'oh that was ...'. It's good the history, I'm not saying that, we've got so many books on Cheltenham upstairs, 20/30 books.

**I:** A few maps I see, as well.

R: That's what Peter put up [*unintelligible*] .

R2: You will have seen the bottom one, you've probably seen the top one, but you might not have, that one's a bit rarer.

**I:** Yes, that one is, because it's actually ...

R2: The old Post Office map.

**I:** Yes, it's the other way round isn't it?

R: Yes.

R2: It's very annoying, it's the other way round.

R: It is, it is yes. I don't think people would be interested. People that lived ... again I can't, yes, because that's where I lived. Would you be interested if you ...?

R2: Not particularly.

R: No, no.

R2: I mentioned students, I think this is a massive change. I'm not talking about student [unintelligible] because of the growth of the university and so on, I'm talking about the rented houses, the mass of students there. I think a lot of people would think of it almost in that way now, don't they? That's where the university is ...

**I: It tends to be ...**

R2: ... and you would get to know that masses of those houses are rented by students.

**I: It's predominantly St Paul's that students rent ...**

R2: Roads leading off the High Street then?

**I: Yes.**

R: Hmmm, around St Paul's I think you'll find and I think Paul Street north.

**I: Yes, so around the area round St Paul's Church is very very student, there are a lot of students that live there.**

R: But St Paul's Church is wonderful and again that was our home. It was slightly different area to where we lived, streets away.

**I: How different do you mean? That's okay, you can say, it's all in the past.**

R: Well it was difficult, in now really. They had trouble there. Put it this way then, there was trouble in that area that we didn't have in ours. So I'd be very very very gentler with this I am!

R2: That had a terrible reputation and there was quite a large criminal element living there so in fact its reputation wasn't as if ...

**I: Yes, we have heard about that. That was going over the bridge?**

R: Over the bridge, and even back in the eighties Peter, [unintelligible] trouble, even then. And quite frightening, terrified.

**I: Okay.**

R: And St Paul's it was slightly different, they did have the trouble there.

**I: But these are, predominantly the people living in this area are some of the poorest living in Cheltenham weren't they.**

R: Ummm. Well you've got sections. You've got there, St Paul's, and you've got the further up in Hesters Way, they were the three.

**I: But I think at the same time this is when Hesters Way was kind of being built at the same ...**

R: Built, because you can remember Hesters Way being built, can't you?

R2: Oh, very much so.

R: Or, being opened you said.

R2: Well I can remember Princess Elizabeth coming and opening Princess Elizabeth Way, for heaven's sake.

R: When was that? I can't remember, well, I don't suppose I was born was I? I would have been, no, I would ...

R2: It would have been prior to 1952 when she became queen, late forties, very late forties.

R: Yes, but St Paul's is still lovely, you know, the same down here, it's the people that make it. You always get the odd one that are going to cause trouble. St Paul's is a lovely, it was my second home, it was just all friends there and we knew people there, still do.

**I: Yes.**

R: We still know people from Townsend Street, somebody's gone to Spain, I still email him, and a neighbour.

**I: Okay. Yes, it's interesting that the way that, almost, and I don't know how you feel about this, but obviously Townsend Street, there was the next street parallel to it, I can't remember what the name of this street was.**

R: Let's have a look for goodness sake .... Baker Street.

**I: Because you tended to ... Did they tend to be quite separate from one another?**

R: Um, Baker Street was the back of us.

**I: Right.**

R: Where Gas Green was, but I knew people because our garden, you could look over and you could see other people, so we knew them because of our garden wall, we wouldn't of otherwise. We knew three or four people, not many houses there. I still know someone there now whose nearly 100. I still see her on occasion. But no, we didn't, it seemed to stop, it stopped at Townsend Street. I know it sounds silly but it did, because we went that way into town and that way to school, we didn't go back. So yes it all flowed that way. But as I said, it was a good childhood, very comfortable, safe. I talked to my daughter and said, she's saying about ... oh but of course you had a bathroom and we didn't sweetheart, we didn't. But you had to? No, we didn't have to. And I think that was a shock to her, I really do think it's a shock.

**I: Well you know, this is one of things, one of the reasons behind this project, is because Cheltenham is kind of associated with, you know, the well to do, wealth, a story of ordinary people is often forgotten as a consequence, that there were a lot of people that weren't ...**

R: [*unintelligible*] artisans, wasn't it, they used to say artisans lived there, I think, people that worked with their hands. Well yes, you know these artisan bakers, yes, I'm an artisan, I make cakes, but I'm not I cook cakes. And all this, you know all the different words flying around. But people do move, they move on, they do different things. They make the life they can, take the opportunities that you can. My daughter ended up in Dean Close, that's where she was educated. And you just, it follows, you just ... it grows. Sometimes it doesn't, sometimes it does.

**I: And probably when you were growing up, there weren't many people from your area that went to Dean Close.**

R: It was our vicar's children, because his parents paid for them to go to Dean Close. We didn't know anybody who went there, but now it ... that's what people do if they can. So it's just ... it's just all mingled, isn't it really, we're all as one a lot of us now, we just ... Well in our church we've got somebody [*unintelligible*] Montpelier, we've got so many types of people in our church, haven't we, they're all from different areas and ...

I: Right.

R2: [*unintelligible*] summed it up. When you used to go to a hotel or a restaurant for a meal you were served by somebody, no different. Not working class but [*unintelligible*] Now when you go out for a night everybody's equalised. The person who looks after you, you're just completely equal and you have a much more enjoyable time as a result of that. That's a stupid summary but that's how life is nowadays.

R: Very funny times. But we didn't go out for meals when we were younger. I think I remember the first meal we went out, it was our 21<sup>st</sup> birthday in the hotel down town.

**I: Wow.**

R: I think that was the first time, as a family, the four of us. Oh, I remember boyfriends, I think.

R2: You're generalising but back then the only place you would have found to eat in the evening would have been a hotel, there wasn't anything until ...

R: Mayflower came in. So about sixties.

R2: Right at the beginning of the sixties.

R: Sixties Mayflower came in.

R2: The first time you could find a café or restaurant open in the evenings.

**I: You probably wouldn't find, would you find many people who worked from Leckhamturn or other parts of Cheltenham going to your end of town in an evening to the pubs?**

R: I don't know because we didn't go to ... no they wouldn't come down, no, because they would have had their pubs wherever they were.

**I: Or the cinema?**

R: No, might be cinema, because we had The Soldier, because we kept the ABC, all these ...

R2: I would have thought it was incredibly unlikely that people at Leckhampton, Charlton, Kings round here would have gone down to a pub in the Lower High Street area, unless they were going back to where they lived. Other than that I would have thought not.

R: They wouldn't be down, because you just stayed in your own area, they'd be no need. We go out different places now because we've got a car, we don't use the pub down there. [*unintelligible*] on our doorsteps, we don't go into town much we go out, if we're going out now, in the countryside. No need to stay in ...

**I: No.**

R: But that's where it's changed so much, it's the food industry, because when we were small it was, well it was called the Ah Chow, Mayflower, it was called the Ah Chow wasn't it ...?

R2: Yes.

R: ... originally, Ah Chow. Or Uncles, it was known as Uncles, that place, and that's where ... that was the late seventies.

R2: The first time I ever threw up after having too much to drink and went out there and went back home and didn't realise what I'd done until I threw in the bed in the middle of the night because the [*unintelligible*].

R: And that was the first time I started to go out really, when I was about 17, I wasn't allowed to have boyfriends or anything, until I was 17. So I started to go out and it was the Ah Chow that I'd go to. And a place called The Lotus Garden on Winchcombe Street, then it was smashed down, it was a very old place and they took everything away and [unintelligible] and it's what it was, and they I had GCHQ and friends and then that's how I started to go to different pubs, but never round where we were. Because they were on our doorstep, I don't really know.

I: **Alright. Okay. I think we'll stop it there.**