**Transcribing clevedon interviews**

My name is XXX

I’m a Clevdonian born a bred.

 You are ok for using what you are going to say for our research

Yes I am yes

Would you be ok with the BBC using it?

Yes fine yes

Thank you

Can you tell me what you remember about the pier?

Yes my 1st memories of the pier: my friends and I who had not long left school , I think about 1958… 59 –to 60 …we heard there was this wonderful thing at the end of the pier called a juke box . and this sounded… we must go and see this. (laughs)

So we went to the end of the pier (and ) to see this wonderful jukebox … to the strings of Elvis Presley of course [giggle] and we were allowed to dance in a little pavilion at the end of the pier … we were allowed to dance which we did do and there was a little counter to sell coffee and cake, that sort of thing, and something I shall always remember … because it was such a wonderful, wonderful experience. So I shall always remember this and [ehm] so the next little thing to say.

Could you just tell me about the jukebox ? what type of place was it in? was it not similar to what it is today then?

Oh nothing like it is today!

So what did it look like?

It was sort of a little pavilion. I believe it was a Nissen hut. I believe it was. I would not be a 100 % sure but I’m almost sure it was a Nissen hut.

On the end of the pier?

On the end of the pier. To the left. To the left side. It is long gone [ laugh]. But it served the wonderful purpose for what we needed it for. [ laughs]

So that was the kind of…. coffee bar?

Yes. That’s right yes.

All right, and how many people used to go to there?

Oh a lot of Clevedon people! A tremendous amount. Yes. Tremendous amount. We used to go into Fortes [ name of place? ] first for a coffee, a little crowd of us, which was on the seafront, which is now gone [ehm] and then we would always go on the pier. And dance and have a wonderful evening.

Fantastic. And was it just in the evenings?

I believe so. Yes. Yes I believe it was just in the evenings, yes.

And what year was this again?

Well, I left school in 1958 so basically 58, 49, 60, yes. Yes. And of course this was all new. Brand new to everyone. The jukebox. The popular music from America, Elvis ect, So it wasn’t just the pier it was just a new phenomena wasn’t it? yes yes….

Great

Yes

So a little bit about the pier itself: the struts of the pier are actually railway lines. [uhm] and originally, let me see… Brunel was going to do a railway in Cardiff or that area, anyway, and these (?) rails were made for the purpose but they found that the gauge was the wrong gauge and so a company bought the rails and so the pier bought them and the struts of the pier are made of these rails. Which makes it very very interesting and very unusual. Yes.

Olu and Archie interruption…

Ok.

Olu and Archie interruption…

And John Beecham absolutely loved the pier, he was really thrilled with the pier and he used to come to Clevedon quite often. And he said that clevedon was the jewel in the crown of Somerset. Isn’t that wonderful?

Yes it is

Yes absolutely wonderful. I always remember that.

I remember the pier collapsing. I wasn’t there on the actual day but we all went down the next day and it was very very sad to see it. very very sad indeed.

What happened to it?

Insurance purposes. They put huge weights on and of course it collapsed. It couldn’t take the weight.

Do you know that for a fact?

Yes absolutely yes.

How do you know that?

Well I just remember…[laughs]

It was in the papers of course. Yes.

Illegal of course?

Yes of course. It wasn’t a storm. A lot of people think it was a storm but actually it was the insurance and the weights put on to test it and of course it was too heavy.

So the insurance was testing it?

Yes they were.

It wasn’t the pier owners trying to…?

No no it was a proper insurance company and they put weights on the pier you see at the end, to test it , but it didn’t hold unfortunately. So it wasn’t actually a storm. But it was terribly sad to see it because we have seen it go through many storms through the years…. And very very sad indeed but over the years we collected money to have it restored. Im so thrilled with that. Im so pleased. There aren’t many piers left. I had a map at home of England and all around the map there were so many piers but now very few. Mmm.

So what does it mean to you today ? tell me what day were on today.

What date? What is the significance to me today?

Well the same I still love the pier, I still absolutely love the pier. I don’t live in clevedon now, I live in (??) outside Weston super Mere but I come here a couple of times a week - not always to go on the pier of course – but I still have these memories and I still love the pier and on a nice day still go there and read or look out at the view [ laughs] and I believe there is going to be a café or restaurant when they have finished the new building which will be absolutely wonderful of course. Yes.

Do you know there is the community shares issue today?

I didn’t know but I know now yes. I wasn’t sure no .

Here is one last question for you : why do we love piers?

Maybe we will have memories of them and the boats of course used to dock there as they did here in clevedon yes. I think it is probably the memories because they were build so long ago. And with children of course on holiday they all love a pier don’t they? [laughs] yes.

Thanks v much XXX

Pleasure

Can I ask you first of all both to tell me your names ? and confirm that you are happy for us to make this recording and to use what you say (in research)

I’m XXX

And yes im happy for you to make the recording

And my name is XXX

And I’m happy for you to use my recordings

So you have been chatting to Nick…. Tell me about your memories of clevedon pier .

All right then. My memories are for fishing. We used to make our own little fishing rods and bits of knot string and fish mainly directly after school. Go home. Mother made some sandwiches and normally they used to be egg and marmite . anyway we go down there and in all sorts of weathers and fish until it was dark to come home. Sometimes during the weekends during the daytime and but fished for a couple of years and never caught a fish.

Ehm, my other memories really are to do with by boating sort of time. In cleavdon there used to be some two or three pleasure boats. Two pleasure boats that would take people up just a few, a couple of miles up the coast or down the coast whoever way they wished to go. And I used to help on there and …

Do you remember what they were called?

One was called ‘Why not? [why knot???]’ that was the biggest pleasure boat and then there was a smaller one which used to be called ‘The Elizabeth’.

That was owned by and run by ‘the Elizabethes’ by a Mr Fry who lived locally and ‘the why not’ was run by Derek and …there was 2 brothers the bird – Derek bird and I cant think of his brother’s name…

And what did you do there?

What did I do? I used to help go down to … cause it used to go down at the (pill ??) at the end of clevedon , used go down and well tidy it up bring it up to the slip way steer it, start it all up, but there I was only a young lad. And generally helping people on and off the pleasure boat and then well I’d say drive it on occasion… at the time when – the real summer time – if the tide was in during the morning we used to you know do pleasure trips but then we would (woudnt) go all the way back down to the pill to moor up again cause the tide was on its way out – we used to tie up at the end of the pier and climb all of the [ sorry? ] at the far end – tie up there and then climb all the metal up the steps and on to the pier and when the tide has come back in again and suitable to go back to the slipway we’ll back out and do the reverse.

That was one of the original purposes of piers wasn’t it?

 These were really small pleasure boats and other pleasure boats that used to be run by the while funnel fleet I think it was know as Cambells - they used to have three big paddle steamers that came across, came down from Bristol and they used to do trips from , well they are still doing them now, they used to go down as far as Lunde and Minehead across to Penarth , sometime Cardiff but I don’t think very often there but there used to be Penarth used to do a Sunday run. They used to come across, the Welsh people, because as far as I understand it the pubs were closed on a Sunday, they used to come across on the Cambells across to here and all go into what was the pier hotel. There was a pub and a hotel that has now been converted into flats. It think you could hardly ever get into the pub.

X1: your parents…

X2: Yeah, my parents as I think I’ve said they only lived about 500 yards away from the pier and occasionally when on a Sunday my father had his own little private hire business self employed and he used to come on a Sunday, come back to my mother and say come on get some food out together and we are going to go out down on the Cambells down to Lundy and that was never planned it was just sort of all of a sudden and we used to do that quite often . There we are.

That’s a great thing about here isn’t it?

Yeah, there is the pier and you don’t really find it nowadays do you, you got the Balmoral now that … again that was a follow on from the Campbells. They are doing it now again after a 3 year lull. And they have started it back up again .

A to J: and can ask you about your memories?

X1: As we were talking about the Campbells - when we started to go out together, it was my 1st experience of on going on them was with your parents wasn’t it.

Whole families(??) used to go on them then.

From clevedon?

I’m originally from XXX (?) but I’ve lived here since I was 8 so I am Clevedon.

But my memories of the pier were the rock’n roll days on the end with the jukebox. We used to just live on there every evening we would go down. And well just loved it! just paid our admission, I don’t think it cost us any more money. We may have had a coke out of a coke machine or something but that was about it.

Describe it to me. What it looked like what it felt like. Walking down the pier.

Well , I can tell you that I ruined loads of shoes going down there because my heels used to get stuck . as did other girls’ . our stilettos got stuck betwang the, between the planks and my father used to go mad about that he used to say ‘another new pair of shoes! – ruined’ and no they were just lovely lovely days you know.

What was it like down there what is lit up ?

They used to have coloured lights didn’t they going across.

X2 : they would have on the arches

X1: the arches going down they used to have coloured lights because we used to get these lads who used to come over from Weston and start smashing them – not all the time but it sticks in your memory that that happened.

What about the structure with the jukebox?

Well it was just a room to us but now you’re sort of looking back it was just a metal roofing – but a proper room.

X2: like an old fashion sort of large caravan but just the shell of it not the inside. The inside was just a plain floor area.

X1: that’s right.

X2: there were a couple of seats in there, wasn’t there? I can remember sitting, I never danced, but I used to go down with my friends, we used to go down just to be inamongst there and sit in a little recess and just watch everything – watch the world go by really. But… watching the girls and boys dance.

And did you meet in the [dance hall]?

No we met – although we knew eachother from school time – but really we met coming off the pier and me sometimes coming out of the pub but a bit before drinking age… but anyway we used to go over to the small café opposite [the pier? ] and which was called ‘The Express’ …

X1: yes it was called the express then it is called Scarlet’s now.

He used to come in with his 3 mates and we used to.. we were all at school at the same time and I used to in there with a couple of girls and you know we used to just look at these lads playing on the pin ball machine a lot of the time weren’t you?

X2: yes they didn’t have a jukebox did they? No, because that was at the end of the pier and we would just come in there for a coke or a coffee or something.

X1: Us girls used to sit there all evening. In the winter a hot orange juice with… made with hot water – I couldn’t drink it now…

X2: I wonder (?) why the proprietor allowed us to stay because we didn’t spend any money really.

X1: well we might have a plate of chips between us. Or something like that you know. Nice French fries they were. They were lovely the people in there.

Who organised the kind of caravan style of room at the end of the pier? And why?

X1: I really don’t know that’s always been there I just don’t know this is what we were trying to think about earlier on was it back when the Campbells first started coming in was it a room for passengers to sit in?

X2: we don’t know the reason for why it was there. And it must have there for you know many a year before our time, but it was the pier master, he and his wife, a mr and mrs Faraway [?] they I think tried to get people onto the pier like they are doing now really, in a simpler way, and what could they do? It was the start of jukeboxes and dancing and people getting together.

X1 but really there was NOTHING for the younger people in Clevedon and there was that and I think it was probably when that finished, I’m not sure, that they opened up the dancehall down on the seafront. Franks’ [??] down Saltdeans end.

X2: there was a big building down at the salt house fields. On the edge of… which used to be like a big theatre in a sense but again that was quite a similar sort of building..

X1: similar sort of building . Yes a funny sort of little building.

How important was Clevedon pier then to your lives… growing up?

X1: Very important to mine! As I became a teenager and that, because we were always down there. I probably never went on it before then apart from when on the Campbells but then we wouldn’t go on them then. Because that was later when we were 17 when we started [going out?].

X2: Mine were really for fishing. And the boating. But we used to go for swimming on the pier or off the pier down to the marine lake – you know whichever the tide was on. And really that was what my life was like – the social side of it - was down on the beach. And you know adjacent places.

X1: He only lived up the road you see. And with 5 children you being the youngest boy weren’t you there was a younger sister butt hey all used to congregate down on the beach from what I’ve heard over the years.

X2: yeah

I don’t known if there is any anecdotes you haven’t told me?

Tell me finally why do we love piers?

X2: why we love piers?

A: yes everybody love piers don’t they?

X1: Yes. But I don’t know why. Because when we went to Llandudno, didn’t we. We had to go on that pier there, you know you just want to go on them don’t you?

X2: I think it’s going out to sea in your normal footwear, in a sense you know. And being able to look back, to the town.

X1: it’s like Weston pier – its nice to go on there after that [??] but never again because we don’t want all that razzmatazz it’s all right for the youngsters isn’t it, for young families to spend their money. But no I much prefer Clevedon pier it’s lovely. Yeah, and we’re just really pleased when they decided they would rebuild it, and everybody pulled together to get that back. You know, built again.

Is that what many think? [??]

X1: yes people cant always afford to just do it, can they unless you got some really wealthy person. There were people I think that put money into it weren’t there ?

X2:well they had to didn’t they. That was a big struggle for years really. The somerset council I think it was went from clevedon [??] council to Woodspring. Anyway they didn’t really seem interested in doing anything about it.

X1: its maintaining it isn’t it?

X2: they couldn’t afford it I suppose

Thank you

Anything you’ve forgotten?

X1: well there is another little bit about the fire. That was started on there but again when we were [?]. My two friends one particular evening it was that we were again down on the beach area and the top of the beach – there used to be a telephone box – anyway we used to congregate there and do whatever we used to do I cant recall but we saw sparks coming out and dropping into the sea, from the end of the pier. And of course, you know, we were a bit worried about what to do but we went running down to the pier head to the tollhouse and alerted the pier master and he obviously alerted the fire brigade . and they managed to prevent it from getting any hold, the fire. And really that’s about it.

What year is that?

X1:I recon you were only 16 or 17

X2: what would that have been?

X1: about 1960

X2: late 50s I suspect

It was before I started work and that was in 59.

So it would have been 57 something like that.

I don’t know I didn’t record it.

Thanks to you the pier still stands here.

X1: well they dis a big feature on it in the Mercury [i.e. Weston Mercury news paper?] when they were rebuilding it, this was brought up in a conversation by one of your friends wasn’t it?

X2: they must have archives in the Mercury.

X1: they took a photograph [ of fire and firemen]

X2: yeah there were photographs and things like that went on but then not another reunion but when the pier was almost completed the recent structure[?] they had a little what’s the word?

X1: In the clevedon paper

X2: yeah memories of it I suppose

X1: [picture of ]chucking bucket of water on a flame

X2: yes the fire brigade took us down there he three of us and pretended to – with a bucket of water pretended to put a fire out but that was just pretend pretend [laugh]

X1: he thinks he got a photo somewhere but I forgotten, never mind.

Wonderful

END

Interview with XXX

So tell me about going down to the pier for the dances and you were telling me about the Weston boys ….

Well you know we were all down there – all – there were loads on that night. We were all told that the Weston boys were coming to sort the Clevedon boys out. And that’s when somebody came running down the pier and said: the Weston boys are at the other end! So we all walked down and as we were walking down the big chap went up: ‘tell me what I say’ and it was going on like that, louder and louder, but when we got to the end the police had locked all the gates up and chained them up and we couldn’t get off. To get at them. And they ushered the Weston boys out of Clevedon.

What was the chant about?

It just called ‘tell me what I say’ [sings] and that was how it went.

And was that just a recognized…

Yes just recognized. There was big cheering all the time.

Would that be typical for here? Or generally?

No just here.

‘Tell me what I say’?

Yeah.

Somebody just started it. and that was it.

Who sang that? ‘Tell me what I say…’?

I don’t know. You know. That was when it was rocknroll! You can say that that pier was just rocknroll. Not what you’ve got today, standing, shaking [..?] like an idiot. You had to DANCE.

And what was it – teds?

Well not really teds as such then. Teds, really , were going out. Because the older teds if you weight it up were coming up about 53 54 and if you work it out we were, this was about 1958 then, look. Because that’s the age we were.

And we was just teenagers. Because as soon as we were like 19 you wouldn’t be on the pier, you’d stared then going into the pubs and that having a drink and listen to a jukebox down the Wagon or wherever. And that’s what we used to do.

How significant would you say the pier was?

To us? Brilliant! Because we had nothing. We had nothing else to do. Not in the summer we didn’t. in the winter we did. That was how it was.

Why not in the summer?

In the winter because the pier used to close early and that but we had had the big salt house pavilion which is where flats are build now below the salt house and as I say you had the jukebox there Mondays Wednesdays Saturday nights. Friday nights you had live bands from Bristol and all around. What was his name?

Danny Clark and Jaguars, Johny Carr and the Cadillacs was THE top group around this area. And Thursday nights you went roller skating down there. So you had everything.

So you were really lucky then to have a pier?

Yeah we were at the time. To have that. To put it on there [? ] but other than that if we never had the – I would honestly say – for the youngsters of the day if we never had the jukebox on there I don’t expect we would have gone on there. Being honest.

Describe the building to me . what was it like? When you were walking from the shore end of the pier to the head those nights ?

Well it was a bit of a wreck really because it was just like an old wooden thing it was but it was bloody solid excuse my language but it was solid !

It was a solid old building. And you just went in there… [it] opened right out , it was big, big doorway that you went through. And music. You had a few old slot machines but I don’t think anybody really played there.. and I tell you what you haven’t got on there now, but what we had… and we had toilets on there !

Which you haven’t got now. And they were cast iron toilets ! [giggles]

So I dint know if you knew that!

No. And no alcohol?

No. oh nooo! didn’t have none of that. And one thing I think we were lucky for in those younger days which the youngsters haven’t got [today] well what they have got today.. you didn’t hear of drugs. You never heard of it. you never heard that anybody had or smoking anything. It was clean. You know.

And so like a perfect little youth club really?

Oh yeah! I mean…

From age starting and ending?

Well the main age of us from there was 14 til like til about 18 and then you was in the pub or something like that.

Do you remember what you might have worn on a typical night there ?

Oh yeah, we had the what was it a shirt, I had a long jacket, black drain pipe trousers, tight, and beetle crossers [?] and that was it.

The classic? what kind of look? a tie?

No I never bothered with ties. Very rare. Very rarely wore a tie.

And then as things changed, you know, changed completely. Cause the DA and all that went out. But I knew a lot of the old Teddy boys. Some of them are still alive today but of them are gone.

Hmm. That fantastic.

Two of my old mates are gone. You know.

Any other memories of the pier? Apart form the dances?

Well no not really. Cause that was all it was for us to do. Was the music. We wanted the music. Girls. As you can see, the girls, it’s obvious. And that was it. A dance and somewhere to go. And that’s what it was.

Did it make any difference to you that the jukebox was at the end of the pier? Did that add something to it?

Oh yeah! Because we just walked down there, had a laugh and joke as you went down and you had a laugh and a joke after a good night when you had to go home. And that was it. if you were lucky you might pick up a girl. Take her home. That’s it. see her home. And what have you. But it was really really good days. Good days!

Like I say I feel sorry more for the younger ones today. To what we had.

One last question. Why is it that we love piers?

Well there isn’t many about now is there? I mean how many places in this country got them ? Alright Blackpool got 3. Weston got 2, well one and a bit cause one is falling down… which is a shame. But it is just a feature of the places. But Clevedon kept its Victorian image. Weather that’s good or not I don’t know, I don’t think it is. Not personally myself. I think parts of clevedon and that keep your pier by all means old and victorian because that’s how it is that’s how it was made, so keep it as it is but a lot of clevedon could alter. Not stay so old.[?]

Thanks so much could you repeat your name ?

XXX

You are happy for us to use your recording?

Use what you want!

Cheers.

Interview with XXX

If you could state your name pleas and if you could confirm you’re ok with us using what you are about to tell us?

I’m XXX I’m ok with the recording for this purpose.

So can you tell me your memoires of Clevedon pier?

I used to live opposite Clevedon Pier ; 1 Marine Parade. So saw the pier every day of my life in my childhood probably up to about 12 I lived there. I can remember going fishing on the pier. Lot of the older gentlemen on the pier would look after me and give me pointers as to how to cast the line. All I seemed to be able to catch was crabs not many fish. [giggle]

Are you any good now? Do you still fish?

No I’ve given up the fishing now. [giggle] but as a child me and my friends we would go down to the hut at the end of the pier play the pachinko machines [Japanese pin ball machine].

What are they?

They are old slot machines where a ball bearing would run down between pins. And end up in a cup and you’d get a score at the end, and if a sufficient score you’d get your penny back.

Inevitably at that point it would roll out of the cup holder, roll along the plank and go down the gap down into the sea, never to be seen again…. [giggles]

Lost cause!

Or alternatively we would often rock climbing from the beach coming under the pier walking along the girders and generally messing around as kids did in those days.

Was the pier a kind of focus for a lot of your childhood?

Ehm yeah primarily the fact that I lived opposite it and I had close friends nearby, we all lived along the beach so it was quite a sort of gathering point to be on the beach or on the pier.

And what other social events took place on the pier?

My reason for really coming today was that I brought along a commemorative plate which my father was given. He was president of the clevedon pirates association which was a charity organisation in the town , similar to Lions and Rotary is now.

Except they were pirates?

They were know and the Clevedon Pirates, yes.

And .. but the same sort of thing… having their functions and events to raise money for local charity and they put on a big party at the end of the pier for the centenary [ 1969]. I think I was about 10 or 11 at the time. I can remember pony and traps bringing the guests to the pier to the toll house.

What year was it?

This would have been 69. All in Victorian dress. For the centenary. The food, drink, dancing at the end of the pier. But my father just before midnight slipped away, dressed up as Neptune and one of the small boats that used to run off the slipway took him from the beach slipway to the landing stage; climbed the landing stage and made an appearance at midnight as Neptune. For the… sort of an event in the evening… but part of the evening was also the local pottery, Clevedon pottery which was Fishley Holland. He had made six commemorative plates for the evening which were presented to various people, Lord and Lady Elton of Clevedon Court, they received one , mrs Lilian Garland who was chairman of the council received one, Mr XXX who was the pier master, another one, my father who was president of the Clevedon Pirates received one which is why I now have the plate in my possession. Fishley Holland’s kept one for their show room and I believe there is one more plate but I have no idea who’s got it. This was all recounted from my mother. Before she passed away. Just for posterity really.

And what about your teenage years? Were you in Clevedon?

I actually moved out of Clevedon by then but parents had a business furniture business opposite the pier so they remained there for another 10 years so I’d still sort of pop back in to see how they were getting on in the business and be familiar with the area but not so much of detail with the pier…

And what other qualities or points of interest do you remember about the pier? Boat trips happening?

Oh yes I had a go at the various steamers we would see them coming in and go. My mother was welsh so she’d do the trip, the triangular trips, sort of Clevedon, Weston , over to Penarth and back again. For a bit of fun. We often, back in the 60s you would get the Welsh people coming over to England to have a drink because south Wales was dry, the pubs weren’t allowed to open [on a Sunday?]. and on another occasion they [parents] having a furnishing shop they also sold local pottery and bits and pieces so when the ship did come in and you’d get the tourists a few hours, they would come have look and want to buy something and a couple of women came in and looking around and picking over things and in Welsh spoke to one another saying ‘this is covered in dust, can we get it any cheaper’. My mother being Welsh and a fluent Welsh speaker replied in Welsh ‘no it’s the same price’ . they made their apologies and left without buying anything . [ laughs] so small memoires like that of the days.

And was it busy? Do you remember was it a big attraction for holiday makers?

There was the novelty of a pier and walking out on the pier but from what I can remember, of my childhood, it was mainly the fishermen, and the boat trips, I would not say it was significantly used. Probably a different age group can remember the dances on the end but I don’t come in to that bracket.

Final question, what is it about piers that we love? Everybody loves piers don’t they?

I suppose it is quite a novelty isn’t it? I do like going on piers. I suppose looking down through the boards seeing the water beneath you… I suppose being away from the land and being able to look back seeing a different perspective of the beach and the land, and particularly with Clevedon it’s nice style, the pier, some are less attractive but having said that the re-building of the Weston one is quite impressive. It’s nice that there is an interest in keeping them as part of the culture and heritage.

Cause they definitely are aren’t they?

Mmm.

And seaside towns as well?

I mean particularly clevedon is synonymous with victorian times and walking the prom and that type of thing but it is classic with big beaches expanses walking the prom, and having the pier.

Thanks very much wonderful

Ok

XXX

Can you tell me your name and if were ok to use your recording?

Yes my name is XXX and I wholeheartedly support what you are doing.

Thank you.

XXX, tell me your memories of clevedon pier.

Well one of the first memories I can remember is going on the pier with my parents, and going on the Campbell steamers that used to run from the end of the pier. And this one particular day dad said we were going to go up to Portishead and back on it. and we ended up going right up to Ilfracoomb [?] staying on it all day.

What age would you be?

I would say I was about 8 or 9

And what was it like ? they pretty big those steamers?

Oh yeah we had plenty of room we had a saloon bar there and a little gift shop and you could go down and see the actual motors on the steamer, yeah very interesting.

What about the pier aspect of that I guess it would attract a lot of attention?

 Oh god, yes the pier used to be full especially when the steamers were in people would just like to go out on the pier and watch coming in and out and that.

And what else was there to do on the pier? What year are we talking about?

We’re talking late 50 early 60s I can remember once going on the pier again with my dad and my mother was in hospital, and at the end of the pier there was a jukebox and also one armed bandits but dad this particular time, he would put ‘the sound of distant drums’ on the jukebox, by Jim Reeves [ 1966?] because it used to say ‘ Mary marry me let’s not wait’ [ sings] and that was the name of my mother. And it wasn’t until after my father death and mum was getting on then and she said ‘I hated that record’ [laughs].

And also I used to be … I used to love going on the pier but I was scared I was scared that I was going to fall down the cracks on the pier. It is silly now to think of it, but when you are a little child and you see the gaps you think ‘ahhhh I’m gonna fall down…’ dad would say come on don’t be so silly you’re allright. [giggles]

Also I can remember I didn’t actually see it but I can remember it collapsed, cause they were making sure it was safe - the health and safety aspect of it – and they used to put the big water things underneath and fill them up and gosh it collapsed. We were all very very upset and even more upset with the council because they wouldn’t repair it. it took over 20 years and then the people of clevedon got together and you could sponsor a plank and I believe my family sponsored a couple of planks to help repair the pier, and I got, I know there are 2 planks there with my late sister’s name on it . and also this is a bit later on now in my life when my step grand daughter died we put a plaque at the end of the pier to commemorate her.

That’s very sad

Yeah. But it is a nice place to go and remember your loved ones because it is so tranquil on the pier and you know you can just walk out and you have your memories and also after my step grand daughter died I can remember releasing a balloon from the end of the pier with her name, you know it’s a memory of her.

Do you think it’s one of the main things about piers – like memories ?

Definitely yeah definitely, I believe so yes.

What else ? was most of your childhood spent in this area?

I was born and bred in clevedon. So of course I have grown up with all the changes and everything in Clevedon, im just so glad now that we still got the pier here.

Have you been involved in the community action?

Well I suppose we sponsored the planks but you know they used to have collections and that for it which I would give to but I would not actually been involved but my friend her father and a lot of her family were involved I don’t know if you know the Fryers [?]

No

[…]Fryer were a big family and his daughter in law was … just cant remember her name .. but she was a pier mistress for a while

yeah

why do we love piers in this country?

I um like you say you can just promenade at them and you get the sea breeze in your hair and you know the sea air is good for you and …. You can just imagine that you’re at sea, and drifting on a ship somewhere you know full of imaginations especially with young children … and that,

And if you walk out here now does it bring back lots of memories ?

Oh yes definitely lots of memories for me, yes.

Ok thank you very much

That’s quite all right thank you

XX [interview with Olu conducted in the café at the end of the pier]

Can you state your name to begin with?

XXX

My mother was a XXX [?]

I think one of ten. She has lived in Clevedon all her life I think she has hardly been out of Clevedon…

And she used to come on here well she said when she was younger and they used to go dancing on here.

Was that in the hut -what they call the hut?

Yeah I know when I was about 15 the hut was over here on this side and I can remember coming on … it was around the time when the Beatles just started and it was all their music …and a little bit before… but it was all their music and I can always remember the Waverly I think when they come in it would always bump and the record would jump – we knew when that was coming in… it was you knew , we knew everyone who was on here… they were from Clevedon and you knew everyone … and yes there used to be quite a crowd on here.

Would you go every weekend?

Yeah year every weekend. And there used to be people fishing on the side here. And over the years .. I know when it collapsed I think it was 1970…

And was it still here the hut when it collapsed? Or had it been removed before?

I think it was … I’m sure it was still there, I’m positive it was yeah positive about that. And then when it was rebuilt it was changed it all changed and I think even how it is now it was slightly.. it has been changed over the years a few times…

Yes

Yes got lots of memories….

What’s your most vivid memory of coming on to the pier?

There have been lots of times you come.. in the evening I used to come on here in the evening. I was in the fishing club … I went on and off, joined a few times, is suspect I’ve done about 15 good – 15-20 year as a member and I actually packed it in last year cause…

Only last year?

Yeah cause there’s hardly any fish!

And …but I still come on and we got a thing for our mother on the plaque down here and always come here just to say hello to her.

Yes

Polish it up….

That’s lovely

There is a lovely picture in the Salt house isn’t there – she used to work for Hells [?] wasn’t it?... when a young girl and she would be well she would have been 103 now but I think she was in her early 20s.. there was 4 of them outside with a van the Hell’s van [Hail’s??] and there are a lot of pictures of her. All around Clevedon. And it does jog your memory when you looking at pictures.

Exactly yes it does

You forget all these things … like Hill road [?] yeah Clevedon doesn’t change hardly at all down here but as a lot of things it does over the years.

We have a few pictures here I can show you [using the old post cards ]

Post cards from back in the day. It seems quite busy here with the boats and everything.

Yeah I can remember when I was five [?] when I came here and the first thing we lived up palham road just behind up here and there used to be a little boat well two boats one would go out and out and it would take you down to Pill and I m sure it was sixpence for a ride out and down and we used to come up here and down (shows on card).

Certainly it has changed I mean the lake has … lovely to see this now … cause when I was young they had …this was a tiny one for little ones they would go in… of course it was a little bit tidied [?] and you had small little paddle boats and you had all sorts the main swimming pool there was a diving board spring board there was allsorts.

How did you guys know about events that were on here in the hut? Was it just a regular e?

Yes it was just a regular thing

Announcement or poster?

Oh it was a regular thing. People just used to come on and put money in the jukebox and that was it. you know that was the life then and everyone enjoyed themselves.

Yeah

Roughly what age were you when you went there? Teenager?

I was 16 17 when I first come on here cause a little bit before my time the i boys would come around.

Yes!

Laughter

Ive been told about the teddy boys what’s the story?

There wasn’t many you didn’t see many in clevedon but

Did they come down from Bristol?

There was a few we had from Felton[?]

Gangs would come down sometimes.

And they would go on the pier? They were not trouble makers?

No. no there was a few little things but that’s young people.. a very quiet place I’d say Clevedon.

Yes

Still a nice place

It’s a lovely place

That’s why I like coming onto here. There’s a few new places but everything that was the pub.. our local years ago …. Yes its changing but everything goes and changes and that will look nice I will be glad when its finished to be able to come on and see it again. I didn’t know until a year ago there is a bungalow next to it and I’ve never seen – I’ve been here years fishing and I’ve never seen anybody in that bungalow maybe one it occurs to me now I was then told somebody obviously who got money and it’s a holiday home for someone in London.

Oh I see.

I’ve yet to see anyone.

They obviously don’t use it that frequently then…

No which I think is a bit sad.