

Transcription of an interview conducted 9 April 2019

Interviewee: LIONEL RANDELL (LR)

Interviewer: JAREK ZABA (JZ)

New Malden, England

Transcription: JAREK ZABA

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**[00:00] JZ: Erm. So we'll just start with er the formalities. So are you alright to just say your name - your full name, erm, your date of birth and your place of birth if that's alright.**

LR: Date of birth, my goodness, OK.

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: My name is Lionel Randell. Er. I was born in Dorking. Err and erm [pause] 27/3/48 is the year I was born. So I'm getting on a bit. [Laughs] It's fair enough. But other than that erm I've been in Kingston since 1977. When I returned from Canada. Erm. Otherwise I've spent er what ten years in London. And the rest in Surrey where I was born.

**JZ: Mm-hnn.**

LR: So I am a Surrey man. [Laughs]

**[00:48] JZ: So erm - so yeah. So erm - so yeah you've been in-in-in the Kingston borough since '77 did you say?**

LR: 1977 yeah. April 1977.

**JZ: What first brought you to the borough? [01:00]**

LR: Erm. I'm a Surrey man. And I was just actually looking for a house. I was going through Richmond. And saw an estate agent now and thought well I'll try there. And he had - he said I've got a cheap one. Er we had come here from Canada, we had a good amount of money for a deposit. I think £6,000 in 1977 was a reasonable amount for a deposit. [Laughs] So he was very interested. And he showed us this one. Er not this one. The - the in Tudor Drive I first bought. And it was original 1938 and erm we've repaired it all up. And eventually I ended up here at 6 Willow Road. So I have been regular here all the time. My daughter was born here. Erm. In the hospital. Erm. And she now lives in Ham. **[02:00]** And she's quite happy over there. [Laughs]

**[02:04] JZ: And erm. How about your interest in gardening, growing, the outdoors - w-w-where did that originate from?**

LR: Ever since I was tiny I've been involved in gardening some way or the other. My mother used to tell me a story of - she used to operate the - the railgates in Betchworth which is a tiny little town at the bottom of Barks Hill. And erm she was gardening. And she decided to weed the carrots. So being probably in my family's blood, gardening, I helped her. I pulled the rest of the carrots out cos they looked like weeds to me so since then I've always been gardening. [Laughs]

**[02:46] JZ: So were your parents big gardeners themselves?**

LR: My mother was born in the country, her father was a farmer so yes she's always been involved in

farming. My father erm - he worked at British Rail [03:00] but *[noise of phone]* his erm - his grandfather used to work at Deepdene looking after the gardens there. For British Rail so yeah gardening's always been in the family.

**JZ: [Coughs] Erm.**

LR: [?] it'll stop in a minute.

**JZ: [Coughs] Yeah.**

LR: Hopefully it's not Mr Policeman.

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: No no because I'm expecting a call because we've got a bit of a problem down in the allotment.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: With Pamela and a man there, anyways we won't go there.

**[03:32] JZ: Right OK, yeah yeah yeah. That's fine. Erm. Yeah so sorry just going back to your sort - childhood, was it erm a case of growing your own food in the family? Did you -**

LR: Yeah yeah, mum - my - I went to live with my grandmother from the time I was five til I was ten, was in a small town called Strood Green which was an abandoned council estate. She moved in with her three boys and her grandmother and a long story short I ended up living [04:00] with her cos she wasn't gonna allow me to go into a - the [?] Bernado's home. So her husband Percy was a second time around. And he was an avid gardener. He showed us all - all us kids basically gardening - he used to tell us silly things that we just used to think was a joke but it wasn't. Why would you run your hand around - finger around an onion. Loosen the soil. You wouldn't would you but he says expand. Well I done the - done the test on that and he does actually work cos the soil compacts around the onion. And it's soft skin so it can't really expand. And it's one of them old like - well wive's tales. But it works.

**[04:44] JZ: So sorry you put your finger in the -**

LR: Yeah.

**JZ: Soil itself?**

LR: Yeah if that's it - you just go and loosen the soil around it.

**JZ: Right I see.**

LR: So it's loose.

**JZ: Yeah yeah yeah. Huh. Huh. That's interesting. So erm - so yeah did you have - w-what-what sort of things do you recall [05:00] being grown when you were - when you were growing up, was it -**

LR: Erm when I was growing up it was just basically cabbages. Erm. You have to remember it's a different era of time, they didn't have none of these fancy stuff. No such thing as celery in gardens and stuff. It was - you would grow tomatoes, you would grow lettuce er - potatoes. And potato variety was generally erm King Edwards. And that was it y'know. Erm. Er brussels, cabbage and cauliflower, that would have been about it really cos that was your staple diet. Fruits - we used to get from the forest, y'know the blackberries and the wild plums and stuff like this. Damsons - you ever heard of damsons?

**JZ: I've not actually.**

LR: Make a - it's like a bitter - bitter plum. And it's - makes excellent jam and good in chutneys. So everything was put in the larder - there was no fridges or anything like that.

**JZ: Mm-mm.**

LR: The only time I didn't do much gardening was when I went to live [06:00] in London. From April '59 til I left London in 197-67. Erm.

**[06:10] JZ: Did you find yourself missing it all when -**

LR: Erm not really because I was - in the 60s, the very early 60s, it's probably my generation's fault why we are today. [Laughs] So motorbike mad. Y'know going everywhere on motorbikes. Having lots of fun in general. But we used to maybe throw few beetroots in-in with the flowers. Because they got a nice leaf. And they look nice. And if you let them go to seed you get this f-nice little flower on the end of it. But most people don't do that. But erm -

**[06:47] JZ: And w-would your erm - would your parents been the sort of Dig for Victory generation?**

LR: N-erm. My - no, living in country - my grandfather was a farm labourer. And his children was all born [07:00] like 1930, '32, er, or one of them was born at the end of the war. Erm. So there was no such thing as Dig for Victory cos he was working on the farm.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: But all the kids used to eat eggs on a very regular basis. They had milk on a very regular basis. There was no such thing as erm rationing as such like was known in the towns. When the city kids used to come down, when there was all evacuated, they didn't wanna go back to London because they knew there weren't gonna get - my nan used to make all the fresh bread. Everything like this. So there was never a shortage for them. So they didn't have anything to do with Dig for Britain or anything like - Dig for Victory.

**[07:47] JZ: Sure sure.**

LR: [Coughs]

**JZ: So when is the erm first time you remember sort of having a little plot of your own or erm growing your own -**

LR: Erm.

**JZ: Fruit or veg?**

LR: I got married to a girl from California [08:00] who thought fresh vegetables er always came in plastic. Like y'know it's the Californian way. And we moved to a town called Wetaskiwin which is in Northern Alberta. And you've got a very short growing season there but the - the earth is so rich everything goes really quickly. And erm she had never seen anything grown. So I used to grow things like tomatoes and er - w-we rented a house and t-the garden was probably same width as this. Er but down to the house. Long. So I used to grow sweetcorn. Tomatoes. And potatoes and stuff like this and she was absolutely gobsmacked at these things. She'd never seen them before. Y'know so that was probably when I got back into gardening. I would have been about 22. Yeah, about 22 years old. A while ago. [Laughs] And er [09:00] then we came here. And I eventually got a job on the - it wasn't council, but it was council erm contractors.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: So I done the - the gardening then. But not much vegetable gardening. But it was always just gardening, like shrubs and stuff you can see I've got lots of shrubs in me garden. All come out there. I got t- there's colour in the garden year around. Even if it's only grey, there's some form of colour.

**JZ: Mm-hmm.**

LR: And then in 1994 friend of mine said - he said when, when - while you're working why don't you just go over and get yourself an allotment. So I did, I went over there and I had one - the one I've got now - I've now got three plots as such. Er since 1994. So I've had allotments since then. And because [10:00] of my job again erm I-I learnt a lot about allotments because I used to sell them to the punters er - er - I-I used to run the borough like the parks, the open spaces, the allotments. And er the wayside gardens, they all come under my way remit so I was generally erm [pause] quite up on what was going on. The people used to come to me so I had to find out - plus I had it all in my mind a bit about tomatoes and whatever. So now people just come to me and say i-is - all it is is just what I used to do - used to go see somebody else old and learn from them. Now they're learning from me, I'm just passing on some knowledge.

**[10:46] JZ: Sure. Erm is that er a titled job is it within that council that you - that you -**

LR: Yeah I was the contract supervisor.

**JZ: Contract supervisor.**

LR: Yeah for the whole borough.

**JZ: Right, right.**

LR: So this is why I say earlier I used to go all around the borough. [11:00] I'd go from - Worcester Park, like Manor Park over there.

**JZ: Yep.**

LR: To Surbiton, to Victoria. To Fairfields. To Hawker Centre. I used to cut the bowling greens, look after the cricket. Y'know so I've - most as I say was general it - the gardening - the allotment side of it, I've only been on a very very regular basis since '94.

**[11:27] JZ: So being as familiar as you are with the - with the green spaces across the borough erm - are there any particular favourite spots for you?**

LR: Er it - there's erm - one of the allotments, Moor Lane, has got the river. The erm tributary of the Hogsmill.

**JZ: Sure.**

LR: Running by it that - it's in the Hogsmill Valley so it could well be the Hogsmill but erm it - it was always nice being able to go down there cos I could get behind the hedge and walk along the river. And it's just a nice stream, it's like - there's erm - [12:00] there's an area called the Bonesgate and the pylons run through it all the way through, it's such a lovely walk cos you can hear the river running along. Now when I first started you could see the river. Y'know but as cutbacks it stopped the flailing and I suppose some of it come down to health and safety, they were worried about people falling in the river and stuff like this but it - there's probably - my favourite park is Alexandra. Erm. For just - i-it's just a nice place. It's - it's smack in the middle of everywhere, it's easy to get to, it's got all the sports facilities for everybody. Plus it was close to the allotment. Me favourite park I would say is Beverley. Because it's the most - you could get to what we could call a nice park, it's got er herbaceous borders. It's got nice rose gardens. It's erm - Victoria, i-it's just there. [13:00] I think Victoria is one of them areas that was erm - I can't remember if it's - belongs to Tham-to erm Elmbridge. Or the er - the park over the back, the next one over, I can't remember the name of it. Erm. There's a swapping sort of thing.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Y'know it was - so it was never really a - one of my bits - good ones sort of thing. The - used to do the cricket. And the football down there. And w- tried with a lot of the managers to get things improved but their idea of health and safety - er there used to be a helter skelter in there. A long time ago. And it was very very popular.

**[13:49] JZ: This Victoria Rec?**

LR: Victoria Rec yeah. Or Balaclava Road as some people call it.

**JZ: Yep, yep.**

LR: So the erm it - when it **[14:00]** was too much to repair they decided to remove it. And they put in a slide that was 12 foot long. I mean it's - it was ridiculous. People used to moan - I used to get blamed and I said don't blame me y'know. I was for it. Erm. But the only reason there's the longest slide in Kingston is now at Malden Rushett in the park down there. It's right on the edge. The kids love it cos they can look through the fence as they see sheep and donkeys and cows. At different times when he's moving them around. But the - the slide is probably about 20 foot long cos they got a mound there. A mound is man made. And it was probably made as part of the erm fortifications because there was tank - y'know these tank blocks? Down there.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Well that - that was expected to be a major route up because it was on - not far from the A3 sort of thing. **[15:00]**

**JZ: Right.**

LR: And er but this - this big mound. The slide comes all the way down it. Now the kids can't hurt themselves cos all they can do is fall off and roll down the hill which they're doing anyways. So that's the best slide in the borough.

**[15:13] JZ: [Laughs] In terms of the allotment side specifically are there ones that you think are particularly good er for - for growing vegetables or just in terms of -**

LR: The borough's divided up more or less into clay areas and sandy areas.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Er the - the clay ones are in Chessington. And around that particular area is - there's the clays is very very high. It's London clay so it's yellow clay. And it's good for making bricks. And over the years people have had to - to break it down with manure. And stuff like this. So it's - they grow quite successfully. And in - up here, up our neck of the woods it's very very sandy because it's **[16:00]** mostly reclaimed - it - just about every park up here is - was part of that Dig for Victory that you were on about.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Erm I think generally there's been allotments in Kingston since about 1895, '98, somewhere around there. And over the years they've all either gone into private or voluntary management. Er I think the council still own - there's about 28 allotments in the borough. Possibly more. But now the council only responsible for about four or five. Cos the rest have gone to self management. Which is actually what the council want. They want all allotments to go because it's just another drain isn't it on their finances.

**JZ: Mm-mm.**

LR: They still remain responsible for the fences. And the water. So erm. **[17:00]** As for favourite allotment areas I would say - well obviously I'm quite partial to Tolworth Main.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Y'know erm it's a big site. And it's easily accessible. Accessible. Er by bus. Bike. Anything. Cars. Got a good car park in. And I used to be able to get lots of good manure when I used to do - when I was in charge. I used to - it was part of something that I would look at it and say right they're paying some money for their - for an allotment, they get nothing else so I would get the boys. Truck - tractor would go down and trucks and tractor would go to erm Malden Rushett. With the farm down there. Erm. Can't remember her name. Jo. Joanne. And we would dig in and [18:00] get some high quality manure. So - but now cos since I stopped they won't do it anymore. Idverde won't do it. Without payment. Now nobody's gonna pay for it. Politics anyways.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: Erm. So again I've managed to get manure from a contact - this all leads back to the privatisation area. Her name is Gloria Wallis.

**JZ: Yes. We've interviewed Gloria.**

LR: You know Gloria?

**JZ: Yeah, yeah, yeah.**

LR: Gloria is a gem.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: I love her to bits. And cos I've dealt with her for the last 20 years or since KFAG started up.

**JZ: Yep.**

LR: And Dudley. I d-I don't think Dudley's around anymore. I don't mean passed on. He's just not as involved -

**JZ: Yep.**

LR: - with it anymore like he used to be.

**[18:49] JZ: Yeah so we've interviewed Gloria and we interviewed Joan both from - both from KFAG. And erm they were talking to us about this idea of -**

LR: Joan?

**JZ: Joan McConn.**

LR: Yeah she's got -

**JZ: I think she's [19:00] secretary perhaps of the - of the KFAG. I think.**

LR: Yeah. Wouldn't surprise me.

**JZ: Erm and yeah -**

LR: She also runs the one down at Clay Hill.

**JZ: Right. Right. OK. Yeah, yeah, yeah, that's right, yeah. Erm. Clay Hill - clue's in the name there isn't it? [Laughs]**

LR: Yeah. Yeah.

**JZ: Yeah no - but yeah - talking about this idea of voluntary management versus council run. Erm I - do you have erm any views on which is preferable? Is it - does it depend on the site?**

LR: I think it depends on the site. Erm. Elm Road is a huge site. And it seems to run very successfully but I never had anything to do with it. Other than going in to doing - working there. When it - before it was self managed. But again this all came down to er - I think Gloria and Dudley used to get finance from the council and probably helped them out and get it all going. [20:00] At the moment I-I think they still get that but it's only for their self managed sites. Or whatever. They got a wonderful set - shed down at erm Kingston Vale. Have you been down there?

**JZ: I haven't actually no.**

LR: They've got a really nice site down there because it's their headquarters. Erm. There's another nice little allotment over the back. Erm. On the Triangle. Er. It's still there. Tiny little thing it is. It just used to be nice to go down there y'know and work. Again that's another one - can't remember the fella but a big beard. Always had the hat on. Er but - erm. [Pause] The Tolworth Main has been there since about 1898. And was closed for four years. Even during the war it wasn't closed.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Yeah. It used to be on - private land like at one time it was all private land and the [21:00] er - the park used to be in on Alexandra Drive. And the allotments used to come down King Charles Road. Now it was y'know where the - where the hut is now sort of thing.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: So er - got pictures of them or - cos I belong to a site. Erm. Kingston and Surbiton and you get - there's loads and loads of old pictures on there. And I've managed to find some of the aerial views - y'know taken in the 20s, looking down on the sites and you can see them - all the allotments as they've expanded.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: Erm. The - V-Alexander was used as I would imagine most of them were. The right hand side was your now dog free zone was community bomb shelter. And the other side was dug up for Dig for Victory.

**[21:55] JZ: Right, I see.**

LR: So.

**JZ: But in terms of [22:00] erm sort of present day way it operates I mean erm - so y-y-you obviously would be very familiar with the various contractors like idverde. And -**

LR: Oh yeah - they're the ones I used work for.

**JZ: Right, OK, OK. So how does the relationship work between them and - and plot holders - is it - is it -**

LR: There isn't any relationship at all. Erm. With all due respect to Mark, much as I like him he has no interest whatsoever in the allotments. We had a problem a year ago - er the police suggested that the man should be removed. He wouldn't remove him. So -

**JZ: Mm-hmm.**

LR: - anyways but that's been looked into again. For another reason now. Besides the point, but idverde erm - th-they have to run the contract. I believe they've lost 26% of the value of the contract from when they started under [23:00] quadrant services. And they - council deep down in their hidden reserves are the - they want all allotments to go self managed simply as another cost. As er outsourcing everything and eventually some - they will try - well they've tried once - Gloria was involved in it with a woman called Anna Cunningham - Cunniham. She's er - used to work with a woman called erm Mary Taylor. They tried to get a meeting going to get Tolworth Main to become self managed. But there was too many people down there against it. It will always be there like that because it's too big a site and nobody wants to be divided up. [24:00]

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: That was how they - they said well what we'll do is we'll get four parts of this and i-it's not gonna work. Because nobody's gonna wanna say y'know I-I don't wanna be part of that one. Y'know w-what does this mean y'know, it's just one site, it's been there since 1898 I think.

**[24:20] JZ: How many plot holders are there on Tolworth Main? Do you know off the top of your head?**

LR: Paid for probably about 120.

**JZ: Right. Right.**

LR: Y'know because again this came down to Dudley. He was quite adamant that due to the popularity of allotments - this was ten, twelve years ago - he was saying there aren't enough in the borough. So what we should do is all the full plots which are now modern language 100 square metres is a half plot. And a full plot is 200 square metres. Or rods and whatever. So **[25:00]** he pretty much got most sites to take - divide em up. So this is why there's so many down in Tolworth. When it was rebuilt in 19- between '92 and '94. The council spent all this money on it, they rea-really really nice job on it. And all new grass pathways. And there was a car park. It was all set there. And it is - it just lost it. Lost the plot. They started losing interest. Y'know the Dudley was the one who said right most of the sites have got to have erm half plots. And I-I stood up at floor - I said listen there's many people come from the north of England who are used to working and they would demand full size plots.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: So anyways there's - there's - it was never really resolved but management had decided to - to get more income. And go half plots. Didn't work **[26:00]** because people come down erm - it used to annoy me, they - they see television programmes and they're in - indoctrined to want to eat fresh produce. Which is fine, it's good. But you need - they need to explain there's far more to gardening than just putting it in the ground.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Y'know man come down - he says where can I hire a rotavator? I said why would you want to rotovate your soil? He said get rid of the weeds. I says no, you're actually cutting them all up.

**[26:30] JZ: What does rotovate mean?**

LR: Rotovating is a machine - i-it kind of like it's - it's rotating blades.

**JZ: Yep.**

LR: That chop the soil up very finely.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: They work wonders. But you need to do it on a very constant basis. But y'know you're turning the weeds back in. But it's - they-they - some of these people - because they're television gardeners, they come down and spend the money to get a rotavator. And they come back in two weeks time and find it looks like **[27:00]** a lawn again. And there's - they - they get kinda dejected so you try to explain to them. Listen, why don't you just dig this little bit over quickly while there's still stuff, cover and do this little bit. They can't see that because they've seen on the television the man turns around and says oh, well, we did this - they forget he's got a team of 12 or so people doing all the digging for him. All the - y'know the planting of the seed. And -

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: - bringing them along. That's half of the fun. Fortunately my missus was away and I had my kitchen out there. I bought the polytunnel in from inside and I've erm - I had my seeds growing in here. And sometimes is a bit more difficult. But people put them on windowsills as - the older generation down there are the ones who are interested. The younger ones seem to lose interest. They either y'know erm have a family. **[28:00]** And think that they can bring the baby down. It's fine, nobody minds the baby



coming down. But they - these forget oh. Y'know the baby's gonna grow. And the baby should take preference over the allotment. And it does.

**JZ: Mm. Yeah.**

LR: So you get a lot of allotments on all sites not being used. And it erm - when somebody from say the council comes along they take a look at it and say oh well it's not being used. So then that's when the arguments start. With the people who are using it.

**[28:34] JZ: Sure. And sort of speaking of disputes with the council - I think someone, one o-one of the people we interviewed whose had a plot for a - for many years. Erm. Le-Leslie Green I think his name is, on - I think he's Tolworth Main. Erm.**

LR: Old Les - on Endway?

**JZ: Y-yeah I think s-I didn't do the interview myself.**

LR: I know Les.

**JZ: Yeah. Erm. But I think he was [29:00] telling us about a dispute around a development that happened back in the - maybe in the 80s? Erm. Where they wanted to essentially -**

LR: 90s.

**JZ: 90s was it? The development over - and it would have involved getting rid of -**

LR: Oh -

**JZ: - allotment plots -**

LR: Yes.

**JZ: Is that - yeah.**

LR: Yeah.

**JZ: What was - what was that story?**

LR: That - Les actually has a house on Endway and his allotments back on to - onto the allotment.

**JZ: Mm-hmm.**

LR: Erm - he's been allowed over the years to - to extend it all the way up to the road. There is a fence - their gardens are only erm [pause] probably about from here to - if you see the yellow bush out there.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: On Endway. But they back onto the allotment. And over the years people have just extended onto it because y'know some used to have a ho- er a house with their allotment. But in the 90s because there was very very few - they would - allotmenting was going through a bad [30:00] period. And there was a lot - a lot in Tolworth Main of not being - there was something like about 12 pairs of foxes. No rats. [Laughs] At the time. And they were closed. And they - there was - KFAG got up in arms. Had a fight. And they won the fact - the council had kept right to change use of the land. On the Millennium Green side. But by law - because allotments, there has to be so many allotments for the available housing around or some written strange law or the other. And on our side what is now our plots they put 60 - 60 plots - 66 plots that were sold. And then they added to the bit that used to be the - the [31:00] tree erm - it was - it was like a planting area for the tree officer. There was an area that we eventually erm we had to turn - had to show that we could improve by getting more allotments in there. So down the bottom I managed about to get erm ten more plots put in. And Les's is the last one on - on this particular strip. So if you ever go to see Les - Les's finishes on the road where it goes around the corner. And all of these ragged - only about ten years ago. Erm. Although they did originally used to go all the way down to the fence which is comes down to the length of their gardens. And they erm [pause] w-Les - there's two or three

situations there. They wanted to try and claim [32:00] squatters' rights but Mary Claire had to send them all a letter. Nobody thought about that because there was all - they all had areas that was going past that house and had sheds for their kids and stuff like this. Weren't using the allotments and some were paying and some weren't. But in the 90s there was - they closed em. And the - they were going to build on them. Which again K FAG kinda stopped that. The Millennium Green became involved. Or then they got - secured some funding from erm Charringtons I think it was, or Bass. Charrington Bass. And the - it was turned into what it is now. Which is a nice open space.

**JZ: Mm-hmm.**

LR: A useless pond. Because somebody put the wrong reeds in there.

**JZ: Oh really?**

LR: Yeah.

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: The reeds looked nice when they was around the edges. But now the whole thing is like a quagmire because no management you see.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Erm. But there's - [33:00] that's how that happened. But the council kinda won and lost. They had to - they had to keep an allotment. But they also won the rights to change of - the use of land. That was fine. But then they gave one of associations in the area a long long lease so that nothing - they can only - those people look after it.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: So the council kinda washed their hand of that area.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: But the bottom, the council still own - own the land. Or - but it's - oh it's such a crazy crazy down - nobody's interested in them. Y'know so when some of the people erm buy houses they phone up and they say where's the allotment end or starts? And they think it goes from - from their fence down to the - the council fence but it doesn't cos there's a pathway down there for everybody else. And the council won't [?] for anybody down there. They just oh - y'know [34:00] sort of what you need to do for the running.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: There's a great deal of disinterest in allotmenting in general around the borough. From council people. Er and like I say from idverde. They're not very interested in - they just want to be seen to do and what the council want. Get rid of them. And go self managed. Cos they know none of them can build on them and this is probably down to Dudley and Gloria.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: I take my hat off - I used to argue with them all the time but I love them to bits. When I - when I stopped I - there's no more manure being delivered by idverde. So [sighs] - these people used to come to me because they've all known for - from since the time - cos I rented them the plots, right. And they used to come to me and say how we gonna do this? I said you can get manure. No tell em. You can get it from Epsom. Y'know the riding stables on the right hand side. [35:00] You see you can get it from there. I says but you have to - I-I can't deliver it. There's - where we used to get it erm Malden Rushett. I said you can go down there. Jo will let you take all you want. But because they've been spoiled by getting all their stuff y'know. So I thought I know, I'll phone Gloria. And good old Gloria she's come up with two places. I-I asked her originally can you - is Wimble-is Ridgeway Stables in Wimbledon? Oh this erm - this -

the landowner Ridgeway decided he wanted to make money cos the houses are selling a million pound a pop. So that went and then I was given Wimbledon Stadium - er Wimbledon Stables and also a number for Buckingham Palace. So this come from Gloria who got them from her contacts within the organisation.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: So it - she works, she does work.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: So now we've got [36:00] Wimbledon I can phone a fella up and he says he only needs y'know about three or four weeks cos he has other places to deliver it. And Buckingham Palace I - he brings it down in y'know three tonnes at a time. It's not brilliant because they're cleaning the horses too regularly.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: So y'know it's very very fresh but it's not good but - it will break down and I have to convince all these people - this comes back to knowing anything about gardening. They all say right I - I put a load of manure in and my carrots all come out with ears on em. They didn't look into the fact is it says that carrots need to be in I- in previously manured, not freshly manured. Cos the fresh manure makes em fork.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: So you see what we call wonky - or I think Morrisons call em wonky as well now. Wonky veg.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: And this is erm - same thing with parsnip. People - [37:00] they're like a - they show - we've got a website down there erm - that Jo, the young Jody put up. Georgie is on that. And sh-she's in - it is relatively well used down there. But people just don't understand about manure in - or gardening but. -

**[37:21] JZ: I - yeah - I-I-I'll expose my own ignorance here but er is-is the manure just to use to - to aid the growing process? Is it -**

LR: No.

**JZ: - nutrients or -**

LR: It's to add body to sandy soil which erm as I said earlier south of the borough is clay.

**JZ: Yep.**

LR: The manure there helps break the clay down into friable movable soil. In Tolworth or the er sandy areas the manure is made to make - give it body. To make it more solid so m- again friable. Instead of picking it up and it's like sand -

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: - you [38:00] pick it up and you can make a ball out of it. But that takes a while. And of course the amount of stuff that's been put in over the years is not quite good soil there. But it needs topping up. You have to - you learn like this is your plot. You divide it - potatoes, carrots, er - potatoes, brassicas. Your carrots and stuff here. And er other veg here. And you just do rotation - crop rotation. And - so certain parts get manured every year and one part doesn't. But then you have to learn alright, I've only put manure in - the properties of manure are just nothing really - all it is is it gives - th-there's some magic in manure for cabbages. My er - I've got purple sprouts in broccoli. And it's actually taller than me at the moment.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: But I use a natural fertiliser. Er - or [39:00] it's man made but it's made with - I'm no organic freak but I like to use it as much as I can. And this thing is called perlka. It's coal and it's lime, real lime. Erm. Fused with electricity. And it's nothing new - it's been - it's been around since the 1890s. But it's - it's erm - nitrogen content is very very high. Is like 19 instead of 777, this is 19 1 1 sort of thing. So you have to learn to put potash in it so you get the best of both worlds.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Gardening isn't a science, it's just something you learn. They say m-where did you get this? I said I dunno, I was looking through some site or some erm - this is perlka. Erm somebody said to me what the hell's perlka? I said I dunno so I looked it up and I thought we'll try some of this.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: And it's good. Y'know.

**[39:55] JZ: So just going back to sort of yourself personally. Erm. I think you said - did you say you've got [40:00] three - three plots now?**

LR: Yeah sort of thing. Them - I got one full plot.

**JZ: Yep.**

LR: Which is a full hundred square metres. The other one is about 85 square metres. Shrinking every year because of the - the shrub - there's bushes and the scrubs come into it so I have to keep them under control.

**JZ: OK.**

LR: And the other one was given to me by the council man at the time, Tosh Chamberlain. Who was the allotment officer. He gave me the one to the side of mine cos it's only about this wide. At the time. And the same on the other side. So now - over the years I've got rid of the brambles. Erm cultivated them. Tried to get people to cultivate them. Like s-show them y- take this one out e-because they'll be the fruiting stuff next year. Know this - they just think they know better so they cut em down and wonder why they don't. Anyways I've got this - there's - I think it's about - about [41:00] 215, 220 square metres. That I look after.

**[41:05] JZ: Are they all on Tolworth Main?**

LR: Oh yeah.

**JZ: Yeah yeah yeah.**

LR: Yeah yeah.

**JZ: So does that - does that pose er a bit of a challenge y- looking after that-that volume of er - of space?**

LR: Nah. Nah. Since - as I said since I was little erm my work ethic is - is - I c-can't sit still I need to do something.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: My allotment - if you went to look at it now you'd probably find there's only two or three others which are the same. I can do more now because I'm retired. Y'know i-it's much easier. But I've learned as I was saying earlier, once you - I do have a small rotavator but that's to make it the fran-til the seeds and stuff like this. Erm. I find I c- before the weeds start coming I - I [42:00] hoe. I say OK, this area I do today. So I hoe it or I've got a three prong cultivator. Jus-jus-just keep the weeds under control. There's always going to be weeds. Always gonna be weeds. But you just need to keep them under control now

while this time of the year everything wants to grow and go to seed. So - but I'm fighting with the man next door, I don't think he's coming back this year. He's 85 years old and got a few family issues. With his wife and the like. So I can't s- can't see Malcolm coming back. His - his plot will - I will probably strim down or something like this. Simply for my benefit. Cos in the old days I would have done it for my benefit and ease of sale. [Laughs]

**[42:46] JZ: And er what do you enjoy the most about - about - about having your own plot? What do you get out of it personally?**

LR: It's just enjoyable. Pure and simple. Erm it's - it's a great form of exercise for me. **[43:00]** Erm. Because the only time I do use the rotavator is after I've done everything y-it's just a kind of - to keep it y'know where I'm gon-like I just used it last week to make rows for my potatoes. Easier to pull out little [?] cos I'm obviously not as young, not as strong as I used to be. It's just nice down there. E-y-there's - I mean fortunately I got millions of shrubs out there. And I have lots of birds in this garden. And I love birds cos I come from the country. Y'know I was born in the country and I love the country. Erm. But the allotment is just a nice place. Erm. If I want to get petrol it's 150 yard walk and it's down there's not so bad but coming back with 5 litres with petrol in your hand, I keep forgetting it's heavier. [Laughs]

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: But it's - it-it's just a wonderful - a thing that needs promoting more. An-and Gloria **[44:00]** can't do that anymore I don't think. She - she's got everybody's emails and erm recently I haven't had any - any emails from her. I-er - she used to s-where things are, y'know, shows and stuff like this. [Pause]

**JZ: Yeah erm -**

LR: She's -

**JZ: Sorry. Yeah, go on.**

LR: No it's - she's-she's just a really helpful woman y'know.

**[44:28] JZ: And is there anything that you don't enjoy about it? Is there anything you wish you could do without? [Laughs]**

LR: Erm. Well yeah. Some of the people down there erm - they are [pause] i-it's - there's no need to be like they are. They're just be vindictive y'know. The - the council have done m-much that I kind of instigated. Erm. The barrier - you know these new yellow barriers? **[45:00]**

**JZ: I'm not familiar with them.**

LR: No in the parks going in to the parks.

**JZ: Right, OK. Oh right.**

LR: To stop - to stop the travellers.

**JZ: Right, OK, yeah yeah. Right OK, I see, yeah.**

LR: Now erm we used to have to keep vehicles - keep everywhere shut. And I said - I suggested this type of fence - what they've got now. Somebody will tell you that oh, man in the council come up with this idea. But I - I put it forward to a bloke called Rob Waites. Er he will tell you probably that counc-allotments are a nuisance. Because he's on the council and wants to get rid of em and it's something else - it be off of his plate because he's a super busy man since they got rid of middle management last year or the year before. So - but other than - there's nothing really, I mean weather's not a problem. Cold's not a problem. Y'know er the - because we've got the - the double gates we can keep them mostly closed, it's just we get some people can't be bothered. We don't **[46:00]** nowhere

near the vandalism we used to have. Y'know we don't get the erm s-some - some people like t-to come down to i-in the car park there's about 25 fruit trees. And they are quality trees but they're again since I've gone they haven't had any love or attention cos they're not on the contract you see. I-erm - and - but the fruits all wasted nows. Elliott - you know Elliott?

**JZ: Erm.**

LR: Elliott - I can't remember his last name.

**JZ: I'm not sure. [Clears throat]**

LR: Georgia knows him.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Elliott. Elliott. He's another - shall we say do-gooder? He likes working with people.

**JZ: Mm-hmm.**

LR: And he gets groups and they go here and he says right let's do this. And - i-he does a good job but there's a f- there's an orchard in Alexander erm f-dog free zone. And it's - it's been neglected. Y'know and it's to me erm [47:00] the fruit should be er at least offered to somebody and say listen, come and - come and pick the fruit or have a day picking fruit. But they don't seem to want to do that.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Their idea is they think people are interested in - in making something look nice. Which is nice when it's finished. But let's think about following erm the maybe one year it's exactly the same as it was because they don't get the same people to go back to look after the job they done. So.

**[47:32] JZ: Erm. [Clears throat] And is there any particular fruit or veg that you find particularly satisfying to grow? Erm whether it would be for the taste that you get -**

LR: Erm.

**JZ: - or whether it be for just the actual growing?**

LR: Well purple sprouting broccoli is - if you get the right one it's - it's kind of y-and I suppose you know what broccoli is?

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: Yeah OK. Now you normally get green broccoli and the big [48:00] head. Well these come out not much bigger than the heads like this. And it's a really really dark purple. And it's - it is a more superior taste, probably cos it's fresher than what we buy in the shops cos what we're buying in the shops has got to be up to 10 days old. Er that's why it's wrapped in plastic and that kinda stuff. Purple sprouting - I love sweetcorn. I grow about three different types of tomato. Er-er they are far superior tasting to what you get in the shop. Shop ones are forced to go green by chemical reaction. Most of them are. Erm. But the ones we use erm a-I've just given some away and I've actually got some from Georgia to give away for the community plot down at the ShedX one.

**JZ: Mm-hmm.**

LR: I shall probably plant them up for her. See what else do I like? Erm. Charlotte potatoes. That like salad potatoes. [49:00] And they are just nice. Y'know it's - the new - new potatoes as they come out. I haven't planted em yet because it's - it just hasn't been the right weather. I'll plant them this weekend. Grounds prepared, all ready to go using my perlka to-to one that's fight insects and it also adds like green nitrogen and stuff to the erm greenery. Erm. What else do I like? Er purple sprouting, said that. The purple beans. Purple climbing beans. They're - you've seen the Kenya beans in the shops?

**JZ: Er d-I think so?**

LR: They're the green pencil beans.

**JZ: Right, OK, yep.**

LR: And these are purple. And people love em because when you - when you put them in er they taste fantastic as well. But they go from being purple to green to a - to a dark green. And you can use the vegetable water to make gravy and stuff like this. **[50:00]** The people who - I mean my old gran used to do that all the time. Make gravy with the water from either the potatoes or the vegetables. When I tell people that here they say that's a good idea. They d- it's just - this is something that's so old. But why waste it? Cos that's where all your vitamins are y'know.

**JZ: Yeah.**

LR: All the goodness. But I grow maybe two or three different types of lettuce. Er beetroot. I love beetroot. Erm. Because when I lived in Canada er I spent a lot of time living with a Ukrainian family. And probably their - they use beetroot more than potatoes.

**[50:42] JZ: Do they make the borsch? The er, the soup.**

LR: Yeah. Yeah but I mean instead of having potatoes you would have beetroot. Steam the beetroot. And you would have that.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: You can eat the leaf. Er - I had a Romanian girl next to me. Er her-her digging consisting of using **[51:00]** just a mattock. Like a long handle s-er s-spade on a 90 degree angle. And it's - it's a common gardening thing over there. And she used to say when you gonna thin your beetroot out? And sh-when I - as I was thinning them out they would go in her salads. And er so. Y-you can use most - turnip. Erm. Turnip you can eat the leafs of turnip as-as a kind of a cabbage type thing.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: I don't know if you've seen parsnip - parsnip - if you let it go to seed the - the flower stem will grow maybe six, seven foot tall. And it's very pretty little thing.

**[51:40] JZ: Mm. Hmm. And is there - is there anything that you er - you've struggled with? Like th-that you've struggled getting it to grow or -**

LR: Yes. Yes. Carrots I have no luck whatsoever with carrots. It's probably cos when I was little - they're getting their own back on me ever since.

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: No I - carrots **[52:00]** I-I didn't even put any in. Y'know it's - they - some people can grow carrots and some can't. Y'know for some reason I don't have any luck it's - but I've tried using different breeds of em. I get some carrots, don't get me wrong but they - when you see these things on the television, nice long things like this. I know they tart them up and photograph them with oil and stuff like this. But it's the shape of em. I think probably because I think oh. I forget - instead of keeping a book of where everything was last year for the last two years. I just think oh they'll go alright here. [Mumbles] I like growing courgettes. Er courgettes are nice. Erm. They - their - they're easy to grow but th-they're a fight to grow. Because if you water them er on the leaf you get this downy mildew, it's when the - the **[53:00]** leaves go all grey and powdery like. And they - it's difficult you're supposed to water underneath and you don't have time. Well I do now but I never used to have time before to water just the root area. Erm you use a - what else there's rhubarb. I've been eating rhubarb now for the last month.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Love rhubarb.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Y'know it's something you don't have to do. You leave it, you put a piece in and you come back next year and you eat it.

**JZ: Right. That simple.**

LR It's that simple. And then in July you stop it. And then you start moaning about it because it's covering a load of area that you want to put something in. Rhubarb's fantastic.

**[53:43] JZ: Just wanna [clears throat] sort of er end this by chatting a little about er the role of allotments within society sort of more - more widely. Erm first of all I just wanted to ask you about erm your time in North America. Erm. Is there an allotment culture there, does th-that exist? [54:00]**

LR: Erm. I don't think as much as a s-similar to here like the Italian area in Toronto, the people have associations where there's a small area they grow but it-it's not quite like an allotment. Erm cos it's all they grow, it's stuff they want for their er - fresh stuff like erm basil and stuff like this, that's too expensive. Basil again you throw it in the ground, it grows and it'll get this big, when it gets too big you cut it down with a pair of shears and you use the leaves. Erm. But North America. A lot of people with gardens like as I said when I had the house in Wetaskiwin I-I used to grow stuff in there. But I was probably one of only two or three people down an entire street. That actually used their back garden for vegetables. And they would have been again immigrants like myself. Y'know because the native Canadian he's - it's been breed out of him. [Laughs] **[55:00]** California they're brought up with erm - well they were at the time - everything, if it doesn't come in plastic or a TV dinner it's gotta be bad for ya.

[Laughs]

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: Er.

**[55:10] JZ: And [clears throat] over here I mean obviously you've - you've er - y-you've seen things change presumably over-over-over the years. I mean how - have you noticed a difference in the kind of make up of people who are - who are er plot holders in-in-in in in this are?**

LR: Yes you see people that you don't think would be any good at it. Down erm in Tolworth there's this really nice lady. She's about five foot nothing. And she's a Yorkshire lass. And she - her plots - she hasn't weed killed the grass. All the grass is what you see elsewhere. Weeds. And it - all it is is she keeps it cut. And er it's wonderful. She is an excellent gardener but to look at her you wouldn't think - er - she's got a **[56:00]** bad back. She said I'm not gonna have - I'm not spending my life in a wheelchair, I'm coming down here. So that's how much she loves doing the allotment. You - to look at her and you think she's so frail. Y'know there's a couple of older people down there. Er one of them erm I've forgotten his name now. But he's - he's - used to work for the council and he's had an allotment for so many years he's forgotten. But you look at him and you think how in the hell are you doing it? You go and look at his plot and it's wonderful. Y'know he gets down there and he says - I do, I'll have a rest. He takes his disabled grandson down there. Teaches him something about it. Y'know. W-we've d-Tolworth Main allotment does have a great diversity of people.

**JZ: Mm.**



LR: Which is good. We got all sorts of nationalities. Erm. Whatever you want to look at it. We have men and women, couples, it - it's - everybody gets on. **[57:00]** Everybody knows everybody and we all - y-you just look at people and you've no idea what they do, you just say hello to them.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Y'know and it's just nice.

**[57:10] JZ: I think it was Gloria in her interview with us that said when she started there were much er fewer women er who-who had the plots.**

LR: Oh. Yeah.

**JZ: And she was greeted with scepticism when she'd - wh-when she started by all these old boys, who'd sort of look her -**

LR: What do you know?

**JZ: Yeah, yeah. Absolutely. And then they'd be - so erm. So yeah y-there's an increase in women erm having plots, would that - would that be fair to say?**

LR: When I left on the waiting list, of which there is a waiting list. There used to be a waiting list. I would have said about 80% of the names were Miss whatever. Y'know. So there - there is - and I would think [pause] jus-just around me in [pause] eight plots there's six women. Y'know. The - **[58:00]** it's in their name. But their partner occasionally comes down erm - one of em banned her husband from the site. She - this is my area, you go away y'know. We'll talk when I get home. Er. So that's her plot.

**[58:16] JZ: Is that because he wasn't very helpful on the plot? Or -**

LR: No no -

**JZ: - it's because she wanted to get away from him?**

LR: No she's not daft. When - when she needs something heavy lifting h-y-you see him appear. Er. But no it's just the - there is a lot of women down there. And one lady Barbara, she's only just started. Erm. But we can't see the point of what she's doing. Because she spent about £5000 with a gardener, an outside gardener landscaper to put these nice fencing up, rotovate, do everything and put a shed up and make a nice little patio. All totally against the rules of allotmenting. Y'know. Erm. It's supposed to be two separate plots but no, **[59:00]** it's all one plot now. She's just taken no notice. Cos there's nobody there like myself to say to the person doing it, this is how it's supposed to be for future. Cos when I said to them, I says you make sure there's a gap between it. Y-he has in a kind of a way. But he's been between a raised beds. Should she get fed up and decide only half, it can be d-done or whatever in the future, there's still two plots there. But she - she hasn't - hasn't done any gardening and yet she's got one of the best plots in the entire borough. [Laughs]

**[59:33] JZ: And y-and you also mentioned er there's a - there's a range of nationalities on the - on the Tolworth Main plot is there?**

LR: Yes, yes. Yes there is.

**JZ: Has that changed over the years as well?**

LR: Yes it has. We've always had erm foreign people cos foreign people I mean - I've lived away from Britain and I've seen we're basically lazy country. Man compared to us - the only people who do allotmenting, English people are the older ones. The **[60:00]** immigray-immigrant people - they - or from their parents inherited this gene for gardening. Y'know erm th-they - now we have Portuguese down

there. We got Spanish. We got American. We have a Canadian. We got the Polish people. We've got Bulgarian people. Er. Who else - we got, there's a Russian family down there. There's an Arab man down there. We have er Asian people down there. E-everybody's there - when I say - I have to say Asian because there's three or four different types of Asian people. So it is a great diversity of people. And it's - w-what you hear about all the troubles going on in the world, you wouldn't really believe it exists if you was to walk around the allotment. Y'know. It's potty.

**[1:00:45] JZ: And is that in any way d-do they bring any sort of er of their own culture in terms of the food they grow?**

LR: Yes, yes. Course they do. Erm and they're always - the great thing about allotmenting is you always - when you - this time of year **[61:00]** you plant too much. Right, so you want to give it away. So everybody swaps things. So this Asian fella quite often says you wanna try some of this? Yeah I'll have a go at it. You're never successful cos you don't know the secrets of it. Y'know but erm yeah every-they've brought a lot of erm difference shall we say to the allotments. In - it's not just Tolworth. I can speak about Tolworth cos I've had one down there for s-'94 quite a few years now. And all the other ones I know - and I know again the people - Moore Lane there's a - quite a number of young families down one end. But all the rest of the older generation y'know and er the - the ones - Ladywoods - they've turned Ladywood into quite a nice one. Again it's mostly people from the area cos they've been quite selective.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: But. It's - allotmenting is good.

**[1:01:56] JZ: Yeah and just finally, on that note. Erm - obviously [62:00] this ShedX project is all about celebrating -**

LR: Yeah.

**JZ: - g-growing one's own food and sustainability and all that. W-w-why do you think -**

LR: [Clears throat]

**JZ: Why do you think is it important for people in society to do this - to grow their own food rather than just go to the supermarket and - and - and buy it?**

LR: Er I think it's just indulgence really. Because the food does really taste better. All these people say it doesn't, they don't know what they're talking about. Because erm [pause] not using chemicals on any vegetables. Some people do use chemicals. I-but there's - there's way around erm beating the little rats shall we say like the insects that want to come along. You can use - instead of using a chemical for blackfly you use watered down Fairy Liquid. And they - smothers them to death like this so there's - that's a fight you've won but it didn't cost you anything cos you had this to do the dishes anyways.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Y'know **[63:00]** so erm - no it's - it's just one of them things that you - you either like or you don't. I mean when I used to go to work they say oh he's off to work - in the summer I was go straight over the allotment, they always used to say where's Randell, oh he's over in the allotment. Even now on Facetube - yep. He's down the allotment Lionel? So they know where I am now, I mean I love it down there. I mean I've still got this to do as well.

**JZ: Yeah, your own garden, yeah yeah.**

LR: That rockery down the bottom down there. I built that last year.

**JZ: Oh wow.**

LR: That's - its first year. And all those were little plugs, little spar-all plugs erm. Little tiny things like so they've all come on well.

**[01:03:40] JZ: Mm. Yeah. Erm erm and with the allotments - are they getting more popular do you think? Are waiting growing lists growing longer? Or is it changing -**

LR: The wait- the waiting lists when I left there was 30 people on erm Tolworth Main. There would have been probably less at Moore Lane. At King's Hill **[64:00]** I don't think there was any on the waiting list. But there - it's difficult to get because nobody seems to be interested in selling em anymore. Idverde aren't interested but they - cos obviously the admin officer er she's probably snowed under with lots of work. And it's - it's just people - they don't just phone up and say can I have an allotment. They want to ask questions about how much it costs, why's it cost that much and it slows everybody down - and they just don't like the allotments.

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: They're city folk, not country folk. [Laughs]

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: Plus they erm.

**[1:04:40] JZ: Wonderful. Well. I think I've got everything I need Lionel unless there's anything else you particularly want to say on the topic?**

LR: No it's just allotmenting is - needs promoting in the borough. If - if they want to be successful in erm - you take all this ridiculous amount of housing they wanna put in. **[65:00]** Where's the land coming from? Are they gonna try and steal the allotments again?

**JZ: Mm.**

LR: Y'know erm - there's this over the back over here there's two or three allotments and they are - there's one just down the road. Kingston Road allotment. The plans were when they er - they was gonna move the waterworks and to - I can't remember where they was going. Er Beverley way or something, the - there's a pipe com-not Beverley, the Beverley pub. Do you know the Beverley pub in Raynes Park?

**JZ: Errr. Y-I-I-I've never been in it but I know vaguely of it, yeah, yeah yeah.**

LR: OK that's where it mostly starts, over there. But they was going to move the allotments forward. You can't get allotments moved forward. Because number one that area is - is underneath - there's underground rivers under there. And it's all - it always floods, this is why they lost money there on the football. Erm. They wanted to build on it at one time. But allotmenting has to be promoted and there has to be areas for people to grow their own vegetables **[66:00]** if they want to look at being any kind of erm credence about helping people y'know. It's no good saying be healthy but we need to b-y'know to build on your land.

**JZ: Mm. Yeah. Yeah.**

LR: I mean. Robin - Robin had erm some youngsters come down, I think they run from Kingston. Dug for about half an hour. An-on the allotment. And they run back. So I mean yeah - we never seen them again. *[Beeping noise in background]* So that was part of their probably exercise rather than enjoyment of allotmenting.

**JZ: Right. Right.**

LR: Y'know. So. But. The girl who looks after it now. Erm. Erm. Pamela. She really really learning about allotments. And she wants to learn about allotments. So she looks after it. For Robin and Georgia. Georgia erm - I think she's only just not long started working there.

**JZ: Mm. [67:00]**

LR: For Shed - I don't know what her position is. I would imagine she runs it to a degree.

**JZ: Yes. Yeah.**

LR: Really nice girl. She - she gave us a load of seeds. I distributed them around the - the different people. Erm. She's quite helpful. She's setting up - as I say we have a slight problem down there. She's setting up erm a camera system. That I donated because I thought - I'd sooner see them use it rather than me so I've given that one to them. I mean I-I work with Robin. For five or six years, no more than that. Seven or eight years. I used to mark out all his running tracks, y'know for his events he has in May.

**JZ: Right.**

LR: Y'know. I used to sort - I sorted out access to the electricity at Claremont Gardens.

**JZ: Ah right OK, yeah.**

LR: Cos there's only the electr-electric box there.

**JZ: Yeah, yeah yeah.**

LR: I managed to get the council to put a plug in it.

**JZ: Right OK.**

LR: So. **[68:00]** I like Robin cos you know you can't trust him any further than you can throw him.

**JZ: [Laughs]**

LR: But he's a really nice guy.

**JZ: [Laughs] Yes. Yes certainly is. Great. Well on that note Lionel, er - thank you so much for your - for your in-**