



Speaking for Ourselves: An Oral History of People With Cerebral Palsy

Barry Morgan
Interviewed by Anne Austin

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Interview Summary Sheet

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Tape 1 Side A [Track 1]

I'm Anne Austin and, I'm interviewing

[whispered] Barry Morgan

Barry Morgan, at my home in, in Selly Oak in Birmingham, and it's Monday, January

[whispered] 24th

24th ...Right well thank you very much for coming over Barry; it's very kind of you to come over to see me. [laughs]

You're very, you're very welcome.

[interviewer laughs]

You're very welcome.

It makes it much easier for me.

Well you know I, I, I sort of, thought that myself when I agreed to do this. I thought well, it would be much easier for me, than it ...

Yeah [both speaking]

... probably would be for you so, that's right.

[both speaking]

Aah, that's very kind, yeah: and as I was just saying, we'll probably look at it sort of chronologically ...

Yes, yeah [both speaking]

...to begin with: the, the early times, do you remember? What do you remember about your birth, about your parents, and being away from home? [both speaking]

I can re..., I can remember, I, I was born in 1945, and, my mother had problems when I was born and, consequently, I was born what they call 'a cripple' in them days, and the early times were not easy for my parents, to be truthful with you, because they, doctors said to my father that I would never ever walk. My father was, a, a, a, an army man and he was a Sergeant Major, and he said to my mother, 'I am not going to push him round in a wheelchair for the rest of his life' and, he bought a horse on four wheels, and a set of reins, and he stood me behind this horse, and my mother moved my legs forward in the walking position, and eventually I started to move my legs myself: and, of course, there was times when I was falling over and things like this, and the old lady next door to where we lived, told me that she was going to get in touch with the cruelty man, because, you know, I was forever falling over and bruising my knees and things like this: [laughs] and, of course, you know I, at the end of the day, the moral of this is, is, is, that my Father did not give up: and by the time I was seven, I was walking. However, I wasn't walking, sort of, brilliantly, but, apart from falling over kerbstones, I was okay [laughs], but, of course, maturity brought it forward to where, I was actually being taught to pick my feet up [laughs], you know.

Do you remember this process? Do you remember when they were...?

Oh I remem..., I remem..., I remember all this, because, for the simple reason it, it will never ever go away from me, because, for the simple reason is, is, you, it's something that I always remember because, I always, all my life have said, 'If it hadn't of been for my father, I would have never walked.' I would have been pushed around in a wheelchair, and I would have lost out on the independence that I've got.

So they were very determined?

They were, yes, they were very determined, but as life went on, they were more determined than ever to make sure that I did live an independent life. My father sat down with me and, sort of, you know, didn't give neck. He, he made me sit, and he showed me how to write, and read, and various other things, and when it became time for me to go to school, they said that I would have to go to a special school for disable..., well, well, for crippled children, in them days. I 'ate the word 'crippled', but that's what it was: and my father said, 'I am not going to have my son put away in an institution,' and he never did. He told them that I could go to school, with my younger brother, and that would be acceptable to him and if I needed some help, my younger brother could help me out: and he was the fore..., my dad was one of the forerunners of the mainstream school education, and I was very lucky that, he found a headmaster that was prepared to give me the opportunity of going to a normal school, which I went to a normal school, which was on the ...

Do you remember how you felt about, going to a special school or going to a normal school?

Well, it would have been a bit horrendous because a) I had the security of my mother and father, and b) you know, in those sort of places, there isn't any, love given or anything like this. It's very sort of regimentaled [phon.] and things like this, and, of course, my father wanted me to have, as normal a life as possible: which I, I, I, I will always remember, even at my age I am now [laughs].

And, and do you remember, how it was at home in your life, your early life?

We, we, we, we were [laughs]... my early life was brilliant because my father... he worked for the local authority and, my mother was a cook, in a hospital, and it was brilliant really because for the simple reason is, is, is that, we, like, having two brothers and a sister, I was never without, anybody to be with me to help, to play and

things like this, and the beauty of what my parents did, was that they never treated us any different, to the others. If one had it, the other one had it. I remember, when my father bought us bicycles for Christmas, he, he, irrespective that I wore a calliper on my leg and I had a problem with my one hand, he bought me a three-wheeled bike for Christmas and... all the other three had a bike as well. I come off mine a couple of times, but, nevertheless, he, you know, I was never treated any differently, if I, if, if there was good hidings going I was given a good hiding [laughs].

Right: so fairness and equality were...

Oh [both speaking]

...were important

Oh yes! It was important that, you know, there was no distinction made, between me, and the others. My dad says 'I've got as good a brain as them and I can, I know what I'm doing the same as them.' [laughs]

And how about, your brothers and sister? Two brothers, is it?

Two brothers yes and my ...

And how did you... how did they feel, or how did they treat you?

They were brilliant because, my brother, my one brother, Dennis, he always used to, when went out on our bikes he always followed me around, you know, you know, and it was a pain in the head sometimes, because for the simple reason is, is I was off with other friends and he'd follow me, [laughs] but nevertheless that's the way it went you know... We had our arguments. I, the, the one thing that distinctively comes to mind, was, my mum and dad used to buy comics: we used to have a *Topper*, a *Beano* and a *Dandy*, and they were all delivered on a different day: and this one day, me and our, my brother Dennis, we were arguing like no, like goodness knows what, about who

should read the comic first: so this was great. My mother ripped it in half and her says, 'You read that half, and you read that half, and then when you've read that half, you can change over,' which, I, I, which to this day, I, will remember it, you know. But I tell you this, we never argued [laughing] again, you know [laughs].

[Interviewer speaks] [inaud]

It was it was really brilliant, you know what I mean? There was lots of things that, happened like, for instance, going back earlier, my, we had a building set, a brick building set, each. Wooden they were in them days with the, window frames, door frames and things like this, and you could build a house with it, and the problem I had was coordination with my, one hand, and I kept knocking the bricks down and they scattered, you know, and we were playing in the garden one day, me and our Dennis was, and, our Dennis got up, went upstairs, got some plastiscine and put the plastiscine between the bricks, so that when I, put them on top of one another, they didn't fall over or anything like this and, that has been the way things have been in our family, you know. We, we, we've always sort of, helped one another out and things like this you know and, I ...

So your brothers and sister sort of looked out for you and...

Oh yes [both speaking]

as well?

Oh yeah you know the thing is, is I would never be, sort of lonely, never be on me own. Even today, I'm not lonely [laughs] now. We, we've, we've kept our strong ties, you know.

Where you the oldest?

I was the oldest, yeah

Umm [both speaking]

Yeah

Do you think, just to go back, do you think that, your birth had a, had a, a big effect on your parents?

Yes, it did have an effect on my parents, because for the simple reason is, is, is, prior to my birth, my mum lost a baby ...

Ummm

... and I was the second one, unfortunately: well I say 'unfortunately'; it's no, no way unfortunate but, I was born, with a disability, so I think that there was quite a lot of apprehension within my parents, when it come to having other children because, they weren't, they didn't know, how things were going to... turn out...[laughs] you know, but the thing is, is, is, it had, it did turn out and it turned out great, and, I believe that it made my mum and dad, sort of saying, 'We're very lucky to have the family, that we've got. We have got strong ties and strong, you know, feelings for, each other,' and I believe that, that is the way it was. I believe that, with the two kicks that my mother, my mum had, I do believe that it made us stronger, rather than weaker.

Yes, you sound like quite a united, strong, family.

Oh, yes we are...

Umm

Even today.

What about, I mean you, you, you said you had arguments over the, the Beano

[both speaking]

Oh yeah we had, we, we had arguments. I mean, I had the best one with me sister, you know [laughs]. You did some wicked things in your life, you know. You did some wicked things in your life, you know. We, we, my sister, w..., was naughty really: she was, I was, we went to Rhyl for a week, for a week's holiday: and we only had one bucket and spade between us, and my sister wouldn't let me have the bucket, so when I eventually got the bucket, I buried it... and we never found that bucket [both laugh]
You know [laughs]

What was discipline like? I mean you've told me about your Mum taking ...

Oh we had a good hiding. I mean, you know, I mean the thing is, is, is that, that [laughs] my mother used to say, 'I'm gonna tell your dad about you', you know, and we used to say 'All right fair enough,' you know, and cheekily. She used to, if we played up when we came home from school, she put us to bed, without any tea: and her says 'You wait until yer dad comes home now' [laughs] and we were put to bed: and we had our tea upstairs, and we were seen and not heard until, the next morning. The next morning, you would hear the radio on and you'd hear the announcer say, 'Lift up your hearts', and me Dad would be off to work and we'd be able to come down and, have our breakfast and that. But we were, very much disciplined if we, if we were really, you know, out of, order, we were, certainly you know, told to go upstairs and stay upstairs, and if you were cheeky you got a slap behind the earhole!
I...

And you as much as the rest?

And me as much as the rest. I can tell you this, it wouldn't have been, allowed today, But I had my, my dad's fingerprints on my behind [laughs] before, many times, you know, because I was naughty, and our Mother, used to run us down the road, yo...,

with the sweeping brush, if we were cheeky, and things like this. It, it was [laughs] fun, but, you know, when you think about it, it was funny.

Ummm. What about...? You said you went to Rhyll: what about other, special events ...

Oh we went, we ...

[inaud] birthdays and so on?

Well, we, we, we used to have a birthday party, and our, the, the girl next door that I was rather fond on, she used to, come round and play the piano to us, you know: and, we had jelly and things like this, and we used to have a, bit of a dance in the garden and things like this, you know. We were very lucky, because we used to have, a radiogram you see. Sort of, I'm going back to when, it wasn't sort of, you know, [laughs] the big thing, you know, to, to sort of have records and radiograms, and we did have them: we were lucky in that respect, you know: and [laughs] we used to go and, do the hokey cokey round the b..., round the garden, like you ... in them days the, when we had a birthday party, all the mums used to come, all the kids used to come, and it was a right shower at home, you know.

Sounds great. And what about, I mean, would you say you were, closer to your mum than your dad? Or...?

Not really. I think that you, you know, when it turned to closeness, neither one, you know, took over the other. I mean, I loved me mother: I loved me mother more than anything in the world, but I, equally I loved my father as much, because, as I said earlier in my conversation, I wouldn't have walked if it hadn't of been for my dad's - iron ... doggedness that to say, 'Well, I'm gonna make my son achieve something,' if you understand me and, I owe that to him, so, when it comes to love, I love him, you know. Me mother, well I love, [laughs] I loved me Mother to bits, you know...

It sounds, quite an important achievement that your father pushed you.

It was, it wa... it was, the beginning of me life. He could've so easily and so simply sort of said, 'Oh that's all right son, I'll push you' and, I would have never, you know, sort of, had the independence that I enjoy today because for the simple reason is, is, is that, you know I would have lost, several years of, muscle development and things like this because basically what it was, was muscle development that, sort of, you know, got me, so that, at the end of the day I stood up and walked, whereas, you know, if he hadn't of done that, I wouldn't have ever been able to have, had the independence that I've got.

So that's, I mean he was one of the most influential [inaud]

[both speaking]

Oh yes, I mean, my, my father, my father was very influential in the way the family were run, you know, as I said, earlier, when it came to school, he insisted that I was brought up as an equal per... as an equal person in my own rights. If I needed help, my brother'd help me; keep it within the family, if you see: my father worked it out that Dennis could show me at home. If I come unstuck at, school, when we got home, our Dennis could show me, so that, when I went to school the next day, I knew. And... it went on from there, but ...

And did you, did you? I mean, you know, your Father set that up...

Oh yeah

Did you ...

Oh yeah. [both speaking]

Did you use Denis's help?

At times. When, when, when it was initially, [laughs] as you might say, doing joined-up writing... I had, problems with it: problems identifying, the different shapes of letters. Our Dad showed me how to do A, B, C in capitals, and things like this...but, then he, he, then, you know, sort of, as stages developed, I needed the backing, of our Dennis who showed me how, the different shapes of different letters and things like this and, and, consequently, at the end of the day, you know I can write as good as anybody else now, and, and sort of, you know where, [laughs] arithmetic and things like this that, Dennis sort of helped me with, and things like this, but, also helped me, to ha..., to, to join in games and to enjoy, you know, different things, and we found out way, different ways round things...and I think that's one of the amazing things of our Dennis, is, is, is he did, he did seem to, you know, look at things and say, 'Ooh I bet our Barry could do this, this way, or do it that way' you know: like for instance, he taught me how to tie my shoelaces, how to put a tie on: things like this that, that, that, you know, are so easy, but there are things that help you live an independent life. I don't have to rely on somebody to tie my shoes up, I don't have to rely on somebody, to put a tie on for me, and things like this, and, it's that type of thing, that Dennis was very important with me: very important if you understand me. We ... sort of how can I put it? You, you know, you wash your hands and face the same time as one another and, our mother was probably busy with me sister, and me other brother. And Dennis would sort of say, 'Well, this is how you tie your laces' you know, and he'd show me.

So he was again an influential person in your development...

Well yes, and you, you, you know, this is something that doesn't happen today.

Umm.

This is something that should happen today... y'know, brothers and sisters don't react the same way as we used to.

Did you... you, you said you, you played together and you...

Yeah [both speaking

- *got on okay together?*

Oh yeah, we fought like, we fought like ... I mean, you know, one minute we could be arguing, the next minute we would be, you know, sort of the best of pals, particularly, when our mother says, 'Right, bed! The pair on yer!' We were in the same room as one another, and we had no choice but to [laughs] but to sort of, suffer each other [laughing] as you might say... [pause]

What about grandparents: are they there in the picture?

No, actually my grandparents didn't figure in the picture because for the simple reason is, my grandparents died at young ages, so we, we didn't have grandparents.

So you don't remember any of them? [inaud]

Well, I can vaguely remember, my grandfather, who was a painter and decorator, but I, where...he had very little to do with my upbringing. My aunties did. I remember me Auntie Daisy. They were the wealthy side [laughs]. They, they used to go all over the place, on holiday, and things like this, you know, and they always used to bring us presents back you know: we, we thought we were really well off when we had these presents, you know. I remember a mechanical Muffin the Mule [laughs]. You know, and, then at Christmas they, they, they would have a party and invite us over, for

Christmas you know and it was pretty well, you know, we, we... there, there was, Beryl and Jennifer they was me cousins, and they used to, you know, sort of ride our bikes, and we used to ride their scooters and things like this, and I always remember Beryl's Triang scooter. It was a posh effort in them days cos, it was big crown one with a wooden platform on, and it had got a brake and mudguards and things like this, you know, and we used to swap: her used to have my bike and I used to have her scooter, you know. [laughs] [inaud]

So they lived ... your Auntie Daisy was your ...

She ...

Mother's

My, my Mother's sister ...

Sister.

[both speaking]

Yeah. Yeah, she, she lived just, well, about a mile away from us, you know, but we used to see them quite often and that you know. Yeah.

[both speaking]

Yes, so, were they involved in your upbringing or is it [inaud] -?

Well they looked after us, sort of, you, you know, sort of Mum and Dad might want to go out in an evening or something like that and, they'd look after us, or, or, you know, Beryl and Jennifer'd sort of, who were older, they used to stay with us and, look after us, and things like this, you know. Ummh yeah...[pause]

What about you? You talked about your, you said something about your neighbour?

[Barry laughs]

You've gone [inaud]?

Oh the o..., oh the, oh yeah, she was a right old dear. She, she, she lived until she was a hundred, you know, and she used to talk to me, sort of, how can I put it, when I was 16 and 17, and tell me what me dad used to get up t, and it was amusing to hear some of the things that she told us, you know. She used to say, 'He used to get a good hiding' you know, for this, cos like, you know, for throwing bricks and things like this.

She had known your Dad when he was...

When he was...[both speaking]

Younger.

A young man yeah, and of course, you know, sort of she'd seen us, like my mum and dad, you know, and she knew, the traumas that, that, that had happened, you know, when my mum lost her first child: and, of course, she remembered in 1945, when I was born, my... I cried from when I was born [laughs] until my dad came home from prisoner of war... right that is: and soon as my Dad walked through the door, I stopped crying. That's right. [laughs] Funny that yeah.

Tell me a bit more about your Father as prisoner of war?

'e was shot! [laughs] 'e was shot. He was in Arnhem, and he had Red Cross parcels and things like this, and he had a book of poetry from the Red Cross... and, he, there were, I can't recite the poem, cos I don't know it all, but there was one poem that I always remember that he use..., he could recite it all; I can't, but it was *Mad Carew*: and, till I, till I die, I always remember our Dad could recite this poem, from start to finish, and it was the one poem I think that, he read all the way through [laughs] his, through his captivity: and, also about, about him, killing a dog. A dog attacked him and he, he had to you, know, to either let the dog bite him to death or kill it and he, he, he, he had, he split its front legs and stopped its heart, you know. But he was put, in solitary confinement for that, you know: and, I always remember him telling us about,

the dressings they had to 'ave: when, when he was prisoner of war, they didn't dress the wounds they just sort of wrapped them up in tissue paper. Umm, you know, so. He had a very hard time when he was a prisoner of war.

How long was that for, do you know?

Three years. Yeah. A long time: but, when he came home you know, he, that was his, you know, life begun I think [laughs]

You don't remember...

No.

...that bit?

That's as far as I can go back, that is...

Umm

... you know, but a lot, some of the things that, you know, you sort of get told in your life, you know and, sort of as you get older, people tell you things and you think to yourself, 'Well goodness! Heavens to...' [laughs] you know, you know but yeah...Umm

Umm so that's, that's quite a, significant early start isn't it?

Oh yes it was yeah. [both speaking]

Quite, hard times for your folks and for you?

Well it was, it was, I think it, I think it was, not really hard: I think what it was, was that there, there was, lots of other things that had to be taken into consideration. You

know, sort of, you know, it was either, we all muck in together, as a family, or we fail as a family: and that, that, that, that is the difference. [pause]

You told me about some of your early memories. Do you remember the, you know, what the house, the house, and the rooms and...

The house? Yes.

Looked like?

The, the very first house we had was my grandfather's house: and it was one up and one down, and toilet in the back garden and it was a community toilet, as you might say. And I always remember this, I do know this, I can go back beyond this: I always remember it. There was a, an old, an old, an old Auntie Gertie lived with us, and I had to share the bedroom with her. Anyway, our Dad decided to decorate our bedroom and, I don't know whether it was done deliberately or not: I can't tell you that, I don't know, and this is true, I don't [laughs] know. but he put some wallpaper on with flour and water, so, the walls went mouldy. The, I can remember this, I can remember the walls went mouldy; and they had the sanitary inspector come round and he says, 'There is no way, you can live here'. Now, at the time my mother was expecting Dennis. Anyway, what happened was, they found us, sort of, it was sort of after the war, this is going back to about 1951, they found, they were building some new houses, so they had the offer of this new house; and I always remember moving. I do. Put all the old bits and pieces in, in the van and everything and anyway, we couldn't take the wardrobes cos they'd got woodworm, so we had to leave them there, and, and I remember us going up this, in this old truck. This old truck [laughs] to the new house, and we got there and our mother thought she was in heaven because it had a), got a bathroom upstairs, in the kitchen it'd got a cooker and a boiler and, and all this sort of thing, and nice big through lounges and all this sort of thing, and, three bedrooms. Anyway there, there, there, our Dad set about setting the garden and everything like this and turned it over and put a big play area in it and that and, for us and all that sort of thing, you know, and it was brilliant. [End of Tape 1 Side A]

Tape 1 Side B [Track 2]

[inaud] Yes

Yeah.

You were telling us about the new house.

Oh yes: our dad set the garden up, and all this sort of thing and, sort of, as I say, made a play area: and, of course, at the time, the estate was still being built, and it was an absolute jewel in the crown for us, because we played on the building sites and things like this: and of course, I made new friends because, for the simple reason, having moved, Dennis joined in with other people, and I joined in with them and things like this, and, of course, building bricks and things like this, it was wonderful, you know. We built, we built cars, we built dens, we built all sorts of things, you know, and, got in right states, I tell you, with sand and cement and things like this. And, anyway, just down the road was, a farm, and there were some horses in a field, and we used to go over the farm, and sort of, you know, have a look round, cos there was a brook.

[laughs] Anyway this one day, the farmer wasn't a very nice man, and he set the dog out. Anyway, Barry here, sort of, you know, could run, but not run really fast, you know. Anyway, the dog caught up with me, and, sort of, got hold of my trousers and ripped my trousers. So when I went home, I had a good hiding and put to bed.

[laughs].

So this is all up in [inaud]was this?

Yeah.

Yes.

Yeah, yeah I mean. Oh dear, at the end of the day, I used to get into some scrapes, but, at the end of the day, I was just brought up normally, you know, which was, you know, a, a great thing, you know.

Yes, you weren't treated delicately...[both speaking]

No I wasn't, no, no, no ...

[inaud]

No I wasn't. [pause]

And do you remember... so you, you had a new house and you were all in a new place. Remember things like, mealtimes and foods and ...

Oh yeah, it was, it was great, to actually sit round a table all together, because, with having the new house it had a nice large kitchen: and, of course our mum and dad bought a nice table and chairs, and things like this, and we used to sit down all together and have our meals together. But in them days, you weren't allowed to sort of ... you know, in, you, you sat down and you ate a meal, and unless you were spoken to, you don't speak to, you don't speak at all, you know, and that's the way it was, you know and, you sort of, used to have to say, 'Please may I leave the table?' and there was no sort of just, getting up and walking off, you had to sit there, eat your meal, and if you finished before everyone else and you wanted to move, you could say, 'Please could I leave the table?,' but otherwise you were sat there, you know. There, there was that certain amount of discipline, when it came to, that type of thing, if you understand me. The other type of disciplines were that you had to have your shoes blacked and polished. My dad and mum never blacked our shoes. We had to do it ourselves: and, sort of, you know, every night, before we went to bed we used to get the black boot polish tin out, and the brushes, and we used to have to clean our shoes before we went to bed. Wash our hands and, comb our hair and went to bed...

Umm.

... and, you know, there was there was a certain amount of discipline within the household, you know. Sort of, you know, you, you were expected to look after your own hygiene and things like this. I mean your mother, my mum and dad sort of taught us how to be ... hygiene and things like this, but, at the end of the day, it was up to you, and if you didn't do it, then they would certainly tell you, you know, and, and, and make sure that you did do it you know. Yeah and, you know, as I say it was one thing that we were very much taught.

What about other, sort of jobs around the house, or were you ...

Yeah [both speaking]

[inaud]

You, you were expected to clean up and tidy up. If you, if you sort of had stuff out, you, you were expected to put it away as you found it: you know, sort of like, you were, we were allowed to sort of have a biscuits, or what have you or some sweets, but there was a place for them, and that was it. They had, you could have them, I meant you, you'd have to put them back where you had them from, if you understand me, you know, and things like this, you know.

Put things away.

Put things away yeah.

What about your sort of, and this might be bit earlier even, you, your first books or your first toys?

I remember *Toby Twirl*... *Rupert the Bear* and *Toby Twirl, The Eagle*. We used to have books. Early toys, as I mentioned earlier on, I had a building blocks set. I had a

train set. We, we, we all had toys and things like this. The other thing that I did have and that my dad wanted me to get used to doing, was a Mobo [phon.] to..., spinning top. I don't know, whether, Anne, you remember them, but do you remember the tops? And you pushed the top, and it went, and it hummed... I, I don't know whether you remember it but I, I do: and my dad, aft..., I had an operation on my arm when I was younger, and, [clears throat] my dad said to me, that I had to learn to use it, if you understand me. I had the muscles turned round: I won't go into details about that, but my dad sort of said, 'I'm gonna get you to use it'. Now, he bought me a bed, and it was a metal bed. It wasn't your fancy wooden headboards and things like this. It was a metal-ended bed: and I used to, every morning, have to make the bed, and I had to go to the foot of the bed, and pick it up 15 times with my bad hand, and, it developed the muscles in my hand so that I, I got some use with my hand. I could pick it, pick things up and things like this and hold things with it: that was important. But, he got me this spinning top and I had to pump this spinning top up and down things like this, you know, and all these things sort of, you know, as I keep on saying it, it bought home in - my own independence. You know, I mean, I can, if it hadn't of been for that, I wouldn't have been able to peel a tater: like, you know, sort of looking after my own wellbeing or, sort of how can I put it? Spread a sandwich, you know, make a sandwich and things like this, you know, where you, you have to have a certain amount of two-handedness, you know. So ...

How did you feel about it at the time though, do you remember? I mean did you [inaudible. Talking together.]

I was glad, I was, I was glad really, because I'd had this operation, and, of course, I, I'd got to the point where, I was beginning to take in what people said in their conversation. Like you know, you remember, the conversation that the specialist had with my father at the time when I was in hospital. He said that, we must exercise it as much as possible, and where the bedstead thing came from was that, in the hospital, they, the physiotherapist at the time, had got me doing this. [coughs.] It was picking the end of the bed up so that, you know, a, a, a couple of times, and, of course, obviously, my father had seen this, and he thought, 'Ah, I'll get our Barry a bed like

that and I can have it, do it at home,' you know: so, you know, they, they, they, you know I, I, I quite accepted it, because it was part of the treatment.

And you could ...

You know. [both speaking]

And you could go with that.

Yes, yeah, because obviously I wanted to do it. It was something that I wished to do. It also made it so that, instead of holding the handlebars of me bike with one hand, I could hold it with two hands: and, you know, sort of how can I put it, it made me feel probably, more normal. Putting it bluntly, it probably made me feel, more normal, to be able to put my two hands on, the handlebars rather than have my one hand down by my side: you know?

But you managed to, and so you managed to steer a bike that way?

Yes, and I. and I also developed the skills of being able to put me arm out for the left and the right [laughs]

So you, you, you played on your bike, and...

Yeah.

...and you said that your dad fixed the garden so there was a play area [inaud].

Oh yeah, yeah we used to have a tent. [laughs]

We had ... well, it was a, it was an old... whatsaname, what do they call them? Old tarpaulin sheet; and we used to have a ... cane at the one end, a cane at the other end, and it, it, it was, it was just, you know, it was just a den, you know, we used to play

about in it and things like this, you know, and, of course he used to lay the garden, you know, for vegetables and things like this, and shallots and all this sort of thing: and, you know, flowers in the front garden and things like this. He, he used to enjoy a garden you know, and, but there again, it was important that we had a grassed area where we could play and, and do things like this. If our Mother didn't want us to clear off out the way. You know, she wanted us to be within sight. We had that, and, oh, there, there was, you know, plenty of room, like, to do that, you know. Later on, it developed into a shed. We had a shed up the top of the garden, where we were allowed to keep all our comics and things like this. [Clears throat.] And we had a wind-up gramophone. That was brilliant, that was: we had a wind-up gramophone: and I always remember *Albert and the Lion*. We, we had these old records give us at the same time and it was *Albert and the Lion*, and *How Much Is That Doggy In the Window?* And I always remember that we used to, cos we used to have this gramophone in the shed you see, and we used to drive the neighbours barmy, because we would sit down for hours and listen to *Albert and the Lion*. You know, the story of *Albert and the Lion*, and it was quite, amusing really, you know, and we had a, we had a nice old chair in there, and we used to sit on it and read comics and books and things like this: and, it was great when it was raining, and we don't want to stop in the house, we could come up the shed, you know: so, you know, we, we used to have some, some good times [laughs]. Mind you, me younger brother, he capped the lot. Because we had this shed, and it was brilliant, you know, for this particular purpose: and, we decided that we was gonna have a stove in it, to keep us warm, so me younger brother decided this and he got a stove. It was fine because, me Dad made sure that, where the chimney went through it was asbestos... well bes'... sort of a, a fireproof square, and of course, me brother'd gone into motor bikes, and he put a can of petrol on it and left it. And obviously it burnt the shed down. End of shed. {laughs} But you know that, that, that, that really did put the cat amongst the pigeons that did, me brother doing that you know. He was, never allowed to have another motorbike round the house [laughs].

That would be a bit later perhaps, I think?

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

So what are your feelings, when you think about, looking back on your home, and when you were young?

I had a good life. Had a good life in my day. Much more fortunate than other people. You know I, people that I, I knew. You know, we had a, a good life really because, you know, I think it was being close, family close, close family, if you understand me, and sort of, you know, being able to sort of all get on together. Yeah. I was lucky in that respects.

Umm.

It could have been very, very different. Yeah, could have been very different. You know... [laugh and cough]

You talk about your father, insisting on you going to the same school, going to the communal school [inaud]

Yeah, that was, that was, that was important ...

Ummh

...to my, my Dad. In fact, it caused quite a lot of, aggravation in, at the time because my father wasn't allow..., wasn't prepared to let me go to school, initially: and, at the end of the day, they had the Truancy Officer round, telling them that he would be summonsed. My dad says, 'Well, you can summons me, because there is no way, am I having my son, taken away from his natural family: and I'm not having him put in an institution'. [coughs]. Later in life, we asked, you know sort of talking later in life, the reason for that was because, he remembered his prisoner of war days, of how, you know, he was saying, how lonely and dejected he felt, and he was not, me as his son, was not prepared to let me be, feel like that, if you understand me and resent, because,

sort of, you know, you were asking how my father felt about things. My father did resent things, you know, to a degree, about, being a prisoner of war and hated this and that and the other, and he didn't want us, as his family, to have to go through that particular type of thing you know, and he probably, [coughs] he felt that, if he'd, if I'd have gone away to a diff..., a school, and I only seen them probably once every three months or something like that, that there would be no bond, and that, that, you know, I would probably wind up resenting a lot of things and the love, that I had for them wouldn't have been there, you know. That, that is, that was a very major thing with me dad, you know, because, you know, sort of, how can I put it? And I think that is why we were so close and why things were like that, but, you know, he had a hell of a game, sort of getting somebody to listen to what he was saying: and a man named 'Mr Howells': he was a headteach... he was a headmaster, at Greenrock School, he accepted me: the, the situation that he would accept me brother, and he would accept me to sit with me brother. It meant that I was in a lower class but nevertheless, it worked out handsomely, because for the simple reason, this is from the educational point of view, I had somebody with me that, you know, my brother would look after me, and make sure that I wasn't bullied or, or shoved over or, you know, that I was okay: and it worked, yeah, but, if it hadn't've been for me dad sort of saying, 'Well, my son's not going to be left out and he's not going to be', I would've been.

Was that the only thing that was being offered, a residential school?

Yeah.

Otherwise.

Yes. Mm. They didn't, they didn't ... the only reason they offered a residential school, was because for the simple reason is, is, is it was a medical thing, that they felt I shouldn't, run around with other kids, and shouldn't, you know and, when you think about it, my Dad proved totally the opposite that, yes, this is the way it should be, you know, and it, it has influenced my own thoughts, in later life, of how I feel about people, which is, you know, I consider to be, pretty good. [laughs]

Yes I'm sure it was a...

[Barry Morgan coughs]

[inaud] *for you, to be able to go. Can you remember what it was like when you first went, when you went along with your brother?*

Yeah there was ... [both speaking]

What kind of ...

... this teacher [laughs]. A woman teacher. Wilkin..., Mrs, Miss Wilkinson, a music teacher. She was a stern lady and I didn't like her [laughs]. I didn't like her, neither did our Dennis, you know, and we tried to avoid her as much as we possibly [laughs] could.

Was she your class teacher? Or was she ...

Yeah, we tried [laughing] to avoid her as much as we possibly could: and anyway, I don't know whether this is a bit premature, but I always remember this, that we were in the orchestra, the school orchestra, and in them days they had proper musical instruments. They didn't have recorders and things like this. You had ... you could play a clarinet, an oboe or whatever you, or whatever, or the drums, or a cymbal or things like this... Anyway, she gave me a French horn... I will never forget it: our Dennis had the, a clarinet, and I had a French horn: and you know you put your fist in, in the French horn? Well muggins here went and got his fist stuck. Of course, they used to... teachers in them days used to put the fear of God into you. And I will never forget she, she says, 'Oh I'm very sorry,' she says, 'but I'm gonna have to come and get the fire brigade to cut your arm off', and I cried, and cried, and cried. I do remember that.

You didn't realise she was joking?

No. Of course, you know, I mean, the thing is, is you're so young them days you know, you, you just, you just don't realise that that they're pulling your leg, you know, and she says 'I'm going to have to go and ring the fire brigade'. Anyway she went out the room, didn't she, and what she'd gone to do actually was [laughs] to get some soapy water, but I wasn't to know that, and of course I thought, 'Oh, she's gone to go and get the fire brigade' [laughs]. But I remember that. I can remember that, you know. It was so awf..., you know. [laughs] It was horrendous that was, and I got home. Anyway when I got home, Dennis told me mum and me mum went up the school the next day, and her says, 'You mustn't do that to Barry', she says. 'He, and he was in an accident, but you mustn't frighten him and upset him like that, you know'. Course, she accepted that, you know. Anyway, they d'ain't [phon.] take me out of the orchestra: they d'aint, they, they didn't do the, you know, it warn't as easy as that. Weren't as easy as getting out as that. She put me at the back with a triangle [laughs]

That's wonderful.

You know, I always remember it, you, you know, and, and I always I think that's why my taste in music is so [laughs] diverse. You know, when you, when you see these people, playing the French horn and things like this, it just makes you [laughing] cringe.

So you never made it with the French horn? [laughs]

No, no, no, no, no.

What strong mem..., well you've told me about one strong memory with your early school ... days or early school years ...

Yes, climbing, you know, being able to climb up onto these frames and things like this, and, PE: I remember PE [laughs] you know PE was a blooming nightmare,

because I didn't move as fast as everybody else, you see: and, they used to put us on these balancing bars. Our Den, our Dennis'd be standing up against the wall on his, on his hands, you know, and there was me, looking at him and thinking, 'Ooh I'd love to do that!' you know, but I couldn't do it, you know. But, PE was one thing that, I remember, you know, because, you used to have to do a, a country run and things like this, you know, and in them days, you did it. Not like today, if you've got a physical disability you dain't [phon.] do it. You, in my day, well, mind you, there again, I did it because I was allowed, because, you know, I was meant to do it you know. If you're shoved in at the deep end, you've gotta swim. Um.

Do you think that was partly coming from them, or partly coming from you?

Part... [both speaking]

[inaud] *you got to do [inaud]?*

... It was partly, I think it was partly from both, you know, that, they said, 'Righto, if you're gonna play cricket, you'll play cricket; if you're gonna play football, you'll play football. If you get kicked you'll get kicked, you know.' You know, I had to take the same knocks as any other kid, you know: and I did [laughs]. You know, I did. Mind you, I must confess, I was a big lad for me age, if you understand me like, you know I mean. I think it was that we were well fed [laughs]. You know, you know what I mean. I always remember us, you know, what I mean when we went to school, we had chocolate éclairs and things like this which is, that kids didn't have, you know, and, yeah. We were a bit of a show-off really.

If you did, you know, if you did something well at school, did you, what kind of ...

[Barry coughs]

... what kind of rewards were there. Do you remember anything about [inaud] what kind, what kind of [Inaudible. Talking together.]

You mean, you mean in school? Yeah I had ...

[both speaking]

[inaud] *Yes*

I had a book I had a book for write, write, pen, 'penmanship', it was called in them days. It was writing. I remember, on ... I got presented with a book, and, I got a cup for putting the shot. Cos you see, being, using one hand, my one hand was very powerful and I put the shot very well, and of course, you know, I got a little cup for it and things like this: I still got it somewhere. All sorts of things. you know. There, there were little things that you got, you know, sort of, you know, you might get an orange [laughs]. In them days, it, sort of, how can I put it, you, know sort of, an orange, to have an orange was a big thing you know. To have an apple and a pear and things like this, it was it was a bit thing, sort of, you know, so ...

A big reward.

... 's a big reward you know, because, sort of, your parents, well my parents did but, there were parents that never gave the kids oranges and pears and things like this, you know, and sweets as well you know. I mean, we were lucky; we had one and six a week [laughs].

For your pocket money?

Yeah, [laughs] you could go everywhere with that. We used to go to the pictures [laughs] and, it was on a Saturday afternoon. They used to have, sort of, you know, a kids' matinee on a Saturday afternoon, and, we used to, sit there and watch the film and everything like this and we used to come out, the pictures: and we used to have to save milk bottle tops to, to raise enough money for, for a blind dog, you know, and things like this, you know, and, sort of, and when we went to the pictures there was

entertainment and all sorts of things you know, besides the films: and, when we come out, we used to go down the road, and we used to go to a bloke named Skeet's fish and chip shop, and we used to have a penny piece of bread and butter, and I ain't kidding to you the bread was about three inches thick, with butter on, and we used to, walk home, eating this piece of bread and butter, all the way home and that we used to leave our tea [laughs].

Sounds like quite a treat.

Eh?

Sounds like quite a treat.

Oh yeah, you know, we used to do this, you know, and, the films we used to watch: *Davy Crockett* [laughs] *Dan Dare* and all that sort of thing, you know, and, sort of, you know, just generally, normally enjoyed it, you know.

Umm.

You know.

And the worst bits of school that that ...well, you've, you've spoken about the French horn [laughs]

Oh...

What were the worst moments, for you??

I think the worst moments was actually being told... off: you know, sort of, I was the same as every bother kid, you know, I used to be in, get meself into trouble, you know, and, sort of, the teacher used to say, 'You're not doing that right, you're not trying hard enough to do that,' you know, and, 'You'll never be any good, Mr

Morgan' you know. The teacher used to say things like that to you, you know, and, sort of, how can I put it, at a young, impressionable age, it used to, sort of, you used to think, 'Well, you know, I ain't gonna be any good,' and it used to take away, the fighting spirit out of you. You know, you used to think well, you know, why bother, you know, but, there again, you know, you live through it. Yeah. There were, another thing was, was that we had a rotten teacher, for PE. He used to slap you behind your behind with the cricket bat, you know: if you d'ain't move quick enough: if he says, 'Move!' if you d'ain't move quick enough he used to hit you with a cricket bat, on the behind, you know, and he, he hit you with it, you know. They don't realise, people don't realise: today, that teacher would've been hung, drawn and quartered, but we had to put up with things like that, you know, and it it's very difficult, you know. Yeah, very difficult, to, sort of, you know, was it a good thing? Did it give you a complex and things like this, you know? I don't think it gave me a complex, but I think that, there are other kids that it did give it: like, when I say that there are other kids that it gave, I think that it did give a complex to, there are men today, that I knew when I was at school, that have got complexes about different things, if you understand me: particularly, you know how can I put it, there is one person and, I shouldn't really say this, beat his wife terribly and went to prison. Now was that due, I mean, you know, you can sit and analyse was that due, to something that happened at school? He was given a good hiding many times for, particular behaviour, and, you know, did this affect his later life? We never know that.

But do you think the school was... was there a lot of punishment in the school?

No, if you were, you, you know, if you were naughty, you were naughty. If you broke a window, you broke a window, and you got a good hiding for it, you know ...

So it was corporal punishment?

Oh, oh, yeah. It w... you know, y..., I mean. I had the taws. I had the taws I did. It was all through sort of, being cheeky to a teacher, and the teacher says 'I'll wheel you up the office' and I said to him, 'Well, get your barrow out then,' and he took me up the

office, grabbed my arm, dragged me up the office, and, of course the Headmaster gave me three of the best, on the rear of me behind with the taws, which was a leather strap with, three fingers, and you used to get it across your behind.....

Tape 2 Side A [Track 3]

As I say, I know, I know fellas today that, I sometimes think well, has it given people a complex? There are people that, I think that their early upbringing has given them a complex about, the way their conduct their lives in some respects: and, you know, I, I think that, it is, it all comes down to how they were treated at school, how they were treated at home. I do believe that it does influence people's later life and, you know, as I say, I've been very lucky but, you know there are people that I do know that I went to school with that, have not been so lucky, you know, even, even though I've got a disability, I certainly, consider that I've done better in life than some of the people that I know. You know. I certainly do.

Despite...

Despite having the disability, yes.

Yes.

You know?

What about the other children, did you ...

Oh we had ...

Have friends? [inaud

Oh yeah, I had made friends the same as everybody else... and I mean, the thing that, that, that you don't see today so much is, is, is that, they accepted me for what I was. They didn't sort of, you know, say, 'Ooh you can't do this' and or 'You can't do that' like, you know, sort of, play cricket, one-handed.

They accepted that I would play cricket one-handed. This is, course, when I was younger, and, you know, sort of, it was accepted. You weren't called a 'cripple' or, or anything like that you know. Kids didn't do that. It's even, it's in fact the same today: kids will muck in with each other, if you know what I mean, but, you know, it was very relevant that, I was accepted by those ...

Umm

...youngsters that I grew up with. [laughs] By, you know, I had just as much fun as they did in a way, because for the simple reason is, is, is that, you know, I'd got up to all sorts of ... the same things as they did, you know. Had the good hidings and [laughs] had, had all the things that they had you know [laughs]: you know, and, and you know, I was brought up no differently, you know.

It sounds very... you know, when you when you said just already, you know it sounds very ...very happy and almost idyllic ...

I wouldn't say it was ... I wouldn't say it was idyllic, I mean everybody has their regrets with things, you know

Yes, I mean what, what kind of things, do you ... look back on with regrets?

Well, I regret sort of, how can I put it, some of the daft things I did, like burying me sister's bucket and things like this, you know. But they ain't exactly enhance our lives [laughs]. You know, you regret, sort of, not getting married and having children of your own. I mean, I, I could say that. I mean, you know, it would've been nice for me, I mean, you know, to have had a wife and have children, but unfortunately, nobody ever really took to me [laughs] you know.

And I mean you, you must have had difficult times, not only as you've, you've mentioned being in hospital...

Yes

You haven't talked about how that was difficult for you: do you think it was? [pause]

No, I think, y..., you know, sort of, how can I put it, it was sort of something that I was told: as I said, it was explained to me mum and dad, in my presence, what was going to happen and why they were going to do this operation; and I think that, you know, I accepted it, because, when we got home, obviously me dad would, say, well, talk to me mother about it and say, 'Well, what do you think?' you know, and, she would say, 'Well I hope he'll be all right' you know, 'and what happens if it goes wrong?' and all this sort of thing and I think, you know, at the end of the day they put their faith in, what the doctor'd said to them, and, when it came to going in the hospital it was a bit of a mini-adventure.

You treated it like that? [both speaking]

It was a bit of a mini-adventure, because for the simple reason is, I was going away from home and, you know, and, and, and, I was gonna be special for a fortnight or so you know... and, of course, you know, they, they came to see us and things like this, and of course, I had bags of sweets and things like this, you know, and all this sort of thing you know, so ...

Did you get lonely? You don't remember being...

No, I don't know the lad next to me; this was, this was in what they called 'The Woodlands Hospital' in Birmingham here, it, well I don't know whether it's still there, it used to be the, the old...

It's still there yes.

There, it was a mini-adventure, coming over here, you see, I mean, because for the simple reason is, is, the other thing was, was that, you had to do school work, and y...

you had... and, sort of, they had, they had a film on a Saturday night and things like this, and we watched that, you know, and, so, you know, there was, there was plenty sort of, keeping you occupied, as you might say. You know, I don't think you really give, give much of a thought [laughing], you know, to, to what, to what was happening, you know: and, sort of how can I put it, when I came home, I had to have my arm, in a sling and everybody was saying, 'Oh what a poor little lad you are' and things like [laughing] this you know, and, aunties making a fuss on you and things like this, you know: and, it's the way it was, the way it was, you know, and as I say, that, that, that I, I can't really say that I was lonely. The worst time was when I had me tonsils and adenoids out. I didn't like that experience for one bit because, you know, it was very upsetting because, they put me... this was, sort of, the local hospital, not the Woodlands, but this was another hospital in that they put me in a man's ward, you know, they didn't put me in a, a children's ward because they didn't have, you know sort of, I was, I think I was about nine or ten at the time.

Why was that?

And they put me in a man's ward. And of course, you know, it was terrible really.

Umm.

But I was only in there for, a week I think that's, and I went home, and I had to suck on bananas [laughs]. You know I couldn't eat anything... hard like, you know, like my favourite sweets or my favourite chocolates, you know.

Bananas were a bit special at one time weren't they?

Oh yeah, they were, yeah, they, you know sort of ...

Been treated were you? [both speaking]

You know, I was treated; yeah, I ate bananas and ice cream, you know, things like that, you know.

What kind of things were you, going back to school, were you good at? What, and what kind of things, what subjects did you hate?

I hated PE.

Umm.

I hated PE, because for the simple reason as I say, teachers didn't, the teacher didn't exactly enhance himself to us because, you know, you were going to be chased about and bullied, you know. That, that was the one thing that really, really ground at me because, he bullied, you know, and I hated that. I liked doing 'sums' as we called it and, writing, but I also liked painting you know art; well, it's 'art' today but it was painting in them days, and, you know, sort of, going out school outside the school, and doing some bedding plants and things like this. We used to do, that, you know, and sort of, you know, we used to enjoy doing that, you know, and mixing with all the other, kids like, you know, and doing that and, sort of playing in the playing ground, you know. Ball games and that sort of thing you know. Getting into trouble and breaking windows. You know.

Did you have any trips? Did you go on any school trips?

Yes we went, yeah we went to Llandudno [laughs]. I always remember going to Llandudno, me and our Dennis. Our Dennis was sick as a parrot, you know. He suffered terribly with car sickness and he's, he's sick as a parrot, he was. Anyway, we got to the Horseshoe Pass and of course we had all these Midland Red coaches in them days, they were the posh ones, and we all got off at the Horseshoe Pass, and of course, we were feeding the sheep weren't we? This is devilment at its best, this is. Me and Tony Taylor decided we was gonna make a pet of this lamb, so we took this lamb on this coach with us... and we put it under the seat, thinking, 'Oh well, we'll

take it home with us and we've got a pet lamb' [laughing] Anyway, we was, halfway to Llangollen and, and, sorry, Llandudno, not Llangollen; Llandudno: we was halfway to Llandudno, and the teacher all of a sudden heard this 'Mmmaaa. wwwaaaaa'. Anyway the teacher says, 'I can hear a lamb,' 'cause, of course, me and Tony just sat there. Anyway the teacher went up the bus and he says, 'What's that lamb doing under there?' you know. So we had to go back...

Ummh.

and take this lamb back, but that's the sort of roguery that we got up to, and got into trouble for, you know, and things like this. And of course this teacher told us, you know, says, 'Oh you, you shouldn't do that,' and explained to us why we shouldn't do that. We didn't get a good hiding or anything like that off him, but we were told why we shouldn't do it which, you know influenced us, you know.

I was going to ask what punishment did you get but ...

We didn't. We didn't get any, we were just given a good talking to, you know, a good talking to, and he, he, he sort of, really made it, sort of, you know, made you understand that you shouldn't do things like that, you know. [sniffs.]

So you talked about that lot, the gang, the friends at school.

Oh yeah, yeah, yeah.

Yeah.

But of course, in, in later, I'd like to talk about, about, if I can come again, is to talk about a bit later on in me life, if you understand me, as...

Oh yes.

... from 16, and, you know, ...

We can take as long as we like and I would like to...

Yeah, yeah [both speaking]

...say to move on to that.

I mean, this is just the early parts of my life, this is ...

Yes.

I mean, you know. As you say I've had, I've had regrets, in my life the same as everybody else but, you know, as I say, it's not that difficult. But, you know, as I say, we had a fairly re..., decent life, you know, I did [inaud] generally well looked after by my parents, you know, and the rest of the family.

Yes.

That's how I find it. You know: you saying 'idyllic', I don't really go for that, if you know what I mean. I mean

No. Perhaps that's too ...

... you know. [both speaking]

extravagant.

It's not, you know, we, we had our difficulties and things like this, when ...

[both speaking]

Of course

...when I was ill. I mean, you know, [talking together]

Yes.

the thing is, is, is that, as a youngster, I suffered with the mumps and all these sort of things and, but it affected me worse, because of the psychological side of my brain, was finding it difficult, to understand what was happening to me, if you understand me, where, where a kid can get mumps today, and, and, and, you know, they, they, they can understand it, in my day, when I was younger, I found it a little bit difficult to get me head round: 'Well, why I have I got this great big swelling on me face?' and all this sort of thing, you know: or all these spots all over me body and things like this, I found those sort of things, difficult to come to terms with, if you understand me. Then, and if you ...

More difficult than, than the rest of the family? Or...

Yeah, that's what I'm trying to say. That's what I 'm trying to say to you, this ...

Yes

...when our Dennis had, mumps and things like this ...

Yes

... he just, sort of, you know, took no notice, as you might say, you know, whereas me, I was wondering, 'Well, why have I got this great big lump on me face?' Or when I had the chickenpox, 'Why have I got all these ..., you know?' I think I got over-anxious about these ...

Yes

...that type of thing.

It made you, it made you feel anxious... any illness.

Yeah. Yeah: and so, you know, well, you say 'idyllic', it wasn't, you know ...

No

You know.

No... let's close there

[End of Tape 2 Side A]

Tape 3 Side A [Track 4]

Hang on. It's, February 7th Nine ...2005, and I'm interviewing Barry Morgan. This is the third tape.

Second [Whispering]... Sorry.

This is the third tape. My name's Anne Austin and we're in Selly Oak in Birmingham. Right Barry, it's good to see you again.

Thank you.

You know, it'd be quite good to go over, perhaps some of the things we talked about last week.

Yeah, sure, yeah, yeah.

And what I, the kind of questions I'd like to ask are, [Barry coughs] to do with, you know, your awareness of having cerebral palsy and so on. Perhaps you could start with, how old you were when ... and you probably don't remember this... how old you were when your parents got a diagnosis, about you having cerebral palsy.

I was very young, in fact to be very honest with you, I couldn't ever remember going to see the doctor so, what I am saying is, what my parents, family told me of, the events that happened.

Ummm.

Of course, when they found out that I was born with c.p. [cerebral palsy], I had to see a specialist at The Woodlands Hospital in Birmingham, and this specialist in them days said to my father that I would never ever walk. He said that in fact, that, it would be very doubtful that [coughs] I would ever use my hands either. Now, I can't

remember the exact things that happened but, I do know that my father found it very difficult to accept the fact that I would never ever walk. I did cover this that, my father ... I think I was about three and there was no sign of me walking. They were still sort of feeding me at that age. I hadn't learnt how to feed myself and things like this [coughs] and my dad one day, decided that he would put me behind, a horse on wheels. He got a pair of reins, and put me behind, the horse and made me take some steps with my mother's help. There was a lot of hassle about it from, the neighbours, because I kept falling over and of course, falling over, [laughs] I cried and screamed and kicked, and all this sort of thing. But eventually, I started to walk and, it was not very well either, because, although I started to walk unaided, I tended to fall over quite a lot, and I didn't pick my foot up, my one foot up, properly, and I tended to drag it. Of course, I used to have to go to a clinic every three months, to see a doctor, to see how I was progressing and things like this, and they decided, that they would put me, give me, a calliper.

What sort...

This calliper...

I'm sorry. Can I ask what sort of age you were at that time?

I was about, five then. This... I was about five then. This calliper had a sprung ankle so that, when I put my foot down, my foot sprung back up. That helped quite a lot, and, of course I, it meant that I had to wear boots and, and things like this. Not as today, where you can pick any types of shoes, you had to wear, what you were given [laughs]. And of course, I started to walk much better, and, of course, you know, the next thing was my arm. I had quite a lot of X-rays on my arm, to see whether there was anything that could be done about my arm to, to help me to use my hand. And, I was about seven, and I, I know I had to have time off school, and it was quite a daunting experience that, for my parents and for me, that I wasn't able to cut my meat up and, and, and feed myself, as a normal child would, and this concerned my parents. And particularly that they wanted me to be as independent as I possibly could be. So,

there were approaches made by my mother to, the specialist to find out if there was anything that could be done for my, with my hand. They initially tried physiotherapy and I used to go to physiotherapy about once a month to, to see... had different sort of tasks to do with my hand but, unfortunately I wasn't very successful at it. A, I think it was something that, something that I couldn't grasp within my own mind. I was a bit too young to actually, grasp it in my mind and of course, been as what they said then that... and [laughs] this a horrible term, but they, they, they said that I was 'subnormal', because my brain obviously didn't pick up things as quickly as... a, and my development was somewhat, backward if you like, and of course, consequently, my mum and dad had this worry that, you know, that I wasn't going to develop, and, of course, they sort of talked to the doctors about my hand and things like this, and the doctors, sort of, had me in The Woodlands Hospital, and, I can't tell you what the medical term is, but, this specialist turned the muscles over in my arm so that, it turned my hand, round so that instead of it being 'back to front' as I call it, it was the right way round, and, of course, afterwards there was extensive, physiotherapy, to get the strength in the muscles. I had to pick ... as I explained, my dad bought me, a hospital-type bed and I had to pick it up 50 times in the morning, and have a ball and squeeze it in my hand, and things like this. It took quite a, a lot of... how can I put it? ... cajoling me, by my parents to actually get me to do it, because of the situation that I was in that, you know I, I wasn't doing very well [laughs]. Of course, that, that, that's my early recollections of it. It was very hard going for me, and it was very hard going for my parents, and a lot of it had to do with me, not understanding what they were trying to do, and why I was having to do it. I was too young for one thing, and the other thing is, is, is that, with the, well as I termed it, [laughs] with the disability that I had, you know I found it very difficult to, to, to understand it, and, of course, nevertheless that was the way it was, you know.

What were your feelings about it, can you remember?

Well I mean, obviously, I mean, I made a lot of noise about it. I was crying and, you know, I didn't want to do it, you know, the same as any other child.

This was...

[Barry inaudible]

... when, at what stage was this?

This was about six and seven you know: I mean, I didn't want to do it, you know, and of course it affected me, in school, because for the simple reason is, is, is that, you know, how can I put it? There had to be a cut-off point of people saying, 'No we're not going to do it for you no more. You do it yourself,' if you understand me, like, I was always, as you might say, pampered, 'Oh, yeah, we'll,' you know, I mean, 'Yeah, we'll do that for you,' and 'Oh yeah' you know or 'Don't worry son, we'll do this for you,' and of course, there was a complete change of attitude, that me mum and me dad said: 'You'm gonna do it yourself. We ain't gonna do it,' you know: and of course, consequently, you can imagine that, there was tantrums and there was, you know, [laughs] well it, it, it just made you really annoyed, [laughs] you know, I mean, as, as, as any child is today. I mean, even children today, if parents say 'No' they cry their eyes out: well you can imagine, I would give my mum and dad a screaming fit and say, you know, and of course, I think me mum and dad were so strong-willed, that they says 'No way, you,' and, and of course, consequently, as I've developed, as I developed, so I got into the position, well, of saying, 'Well, I ain't going to rely on you to do that for me,' [laughs] and did it meself. Me brother was there. He sort of, helped me sort of if I needed to tie my shoelaces, he'd help me tie me shoelaces. Now, he spent quite some time with me. It affected him as well as me, if you understand, my brother's, only a couple of years younger than me, and it affected him, him, his life, because he had to show me, how to tie my laces and how to put a tie on, because, when I went to school in them days you had to wear a tie, [laughs] a collar and tie, and of course my mother had, my sister and me other brother and so, he had to muck in, so it did affect him, and I think, sort of, how can I put it? My brother sort of spent time with me and I think that made, a lot of difference, was that, I'd got someone more or less my own age, and not sort of saying, 'You've got to do this,' but sort of saying 'Well, this, look, Barry, this is how you do it. Look.' Sort, of sort of saying... I

can imagine, I can't say that this is true, but I can imagine me brother saying, 'Well look, this is how you tie your shoelaces,' and him, sort of, how can I put it? Showing me and showing me and showing me and then sort of saying, 'Well, you have a go'. Sort of undoing it, and saying, 'Well, you have a go,' and that's how we progressed, and it probably was better, because there was no tantrum involved for a start off. Had it of been me mum and dad, I'd've probably throwed a wobbler, because they'd have just says, 'Here you are, this is how it's done.' Now, me brother, probably n..., for some unknown reason, probably would show ya ten or eleven times so therefore it would eventually, twig in me brain that this is how it's done. The same with me tie, you know, 'You put your tie on, this is how it's done,' you know. Putting your shirt on, you know sort of how can I put it? If you wear a long-sleeved shirt, fastening the one sleeve first and then pushing [laughs] your arm through, you know. The only thing I ain't mastered is, putting cufflinks in [laughs]. But, you know all these things, and I think it was me brother that sort of, how can I put it? Having me brother, who was younger, a little bit younger than me, showing me, 'Well, this is how you tie your shoelaces.' 'This is how you clean your shoes.' Now in my day, when I was a youngster, we had to clean our shoes of a night-time before we went to bed. Now, not only me and me brother, we used to've to clean our shoes together. Now he dain't sort of clean them for me, I had to clean them meself, and he sort of taught me how to do this, you know. But of course, after the operation, I could use a knife, to cut my food up, which made a lot of difference. You know, whereas I wasn't relying on somebody cutting my food up and things like this. I could now do it myself, and of course, that was another thing, was actually teaching me how to use a knife, if you understand me, and to sort of, cut meat up and things like this and, put butter on bread and things like this, you know, which, which is all, which is somethink that I'd never done. You know, [laughs] these sort of things that I had to learn as I went along.

And what did it feel like, what are your memories of, you know, a, a little brother, two years younger helping you?

Well we had that sort of bond, didn't we? You know, I mean, he probably could say, he probably could see that, he'd got a brother that was different, that couldn't do

everything, but he sort of, could see the aggravations that I was giving me mum and dad, and he probably, I mean you'd 'ave to ask him about this but he probably thought, 'Well, I'm going to see if I can do somethink,' you know, and it was a bond if you like, sort of a brothers' bond, you know I mean. There's, they do say that, 'blood is thicker than water' and I would say that is true, even today, you know.

So you didn't get... frustrated with him doing it?

No, because he, he was showing me. He didn't say 'You've gotta do it.' He said, 'This is how it's done.' He, my mum and dad, you see, would say, 'Barry, this is how you do it' and they'd show yer. They'd show yer, probably for a couple of weeks, and then they'd say, 'Well, you can do it yourself. I've showed ya now, you can do it yourself,' and, sort of, me brother was a different, didn't have that sort of instinct because a) he was too young to have that type of instinct: and he'd sort of show me, if it was a hundred times, or if it was a thousand times would show me. Eventually, had been slow learning, my, my brain not picking things up as quickly as, you know, they should ... eventually, you know, my brain would twig, and consequently, I would do it once, and once I'd done it, that was it, you know: I'd, I'd mastered it, and of course, when I'd mastered these things, I thought, 'Oh' y' you know, y' know you're you're chuffed with yerself. Mum and Dad's chuffed that you, 'Well you can tie yer laces now.' 'Oh you can put your tie on now,' you know, and, things like this, you know, and, of course, I developed slower than, than, than, than you know, a, a, a, I shouldn't say 'normal', I am a normal person, but, but I developed slower, because of c.p. [cerebral palsy], than if I hadn't got c.p. My brain didn't develop as quickly as young, young people that haven't got it. It took time, for me to develop the ways round doing things which has been a lifetime thing. It hasn't just been, sort of in my youth, it has been growing up and, sort of, going to work and things like this. I have had to develop new ways round things but, fortunately, the powers that the brain has developed, so that now I have got a thinking brain. [laughs] I might not sometimes have the physical ability but I've got a, I've got a thinking brain that would think about, 'Well how am I going to get myself out of this'. If you like, if I fell into a hole, and I was on me back, and there was no ladder and I had to get out, I could do it, if you understand me.

Whereas when I was younger, I didn't have, if I fell into a hole when I was younger, I didn't have the ability to think me way out of it, because I would, all I would do is shout 'Help!' probably, whereas today I would say, 'Well you silly fool,' and I'd get in, get out meself, you know. So, so [laughs] you know.

Yes, and what about your memories of some of these doctors and physiotherapists? What do you remember about them?

They were old people. You know, they were probably young people, but, but, you know, sort of how can I put it? Like the nurses, they'd, they'd put me arm under a big arch, a big arch with electric lamps in it. Today, I couldn't even see what that would be, what benefit that would be for, today. They fitted electrodes to me, to me arm, to see, whether it would jump up in the air [laughs] and things like this, and it, it was quite daunting the fact that, you know, they'd twist your arm, they'd pull your arm and things like this, you know. I mean, it's a wonder they dain't break, they dain't get a broken arm half the time, you know. I didn't enjoy it, for the simple fact that, you know, sort of, oh, I dunno, I just didn't enjoy it, you know. I can't remember anythink very much about the doctors. I know that they looked, examined me legs, me leg, and things like this, and sort of, when they made the decision to have a calliper fitted, I remember going to the orthopaedic department of the hospital, and a very nice man measured me leg and all this sort of thing, and measured me foot for a boot and all this sort of thing. I remember that, and I remember the same man, when they'd made it, I remember the same man fitting it for me and showing me mum how it went on and all this sort of thing, and I remember that. I remember the school doctor, the, the doctor that, you know you're examined before you go to school and things like this, and he dain't know what to make on me either. He tested me eyes and said to me mother I needed spectacles, so I had to go to the opticians, and have some glasses: and I tell you what, shall I, they were the most annoying pair of glasses ever, anybody could have. They'd got wire, wire earpieces and they used to ... I've got very sensitive ears, and they used to cut into the ears, and they were horrible and I never bothered wearing them, because for the simple reason is that they used to... me ears used to come out in sores, and, you know, well sort of my mum and dad never, sort of

weren't in the position where I could go and buy a pair of private glasses, because they were very, very expensive in them days, and of course I wore them in class, but I never wore them when I should've done when I was out, you know. [Laughs] Course things change, you know. But as for the doctors I, I can't really say that I remember them a great deal about them. Sort of, it's not sort of something that readily comes to mind, I couldn't visualise them if you understand me, but I do know that they prodded me about a lot and pulled me a lot, and pulled me legs a lot and things like this and, sort of couldn't weigh up: you know today, it'd be much more technical aspect: I mean, when you compare with today, there would be X-rays taken and, and, and all the, sort of modern development that, that, that there is today. In those days, you know, unless you broke your leg you never had it 'X-rayed', you know. You, they could see by the look of it that it was a weaker leg and things like this, so I mean I s'pose they thought, just have a feel around, [laughs] you know. So, you know, in them respects it's changed a great deal. Whereas today, if I had the same operation as I had in ...1954, [might be 1952 when Barry was 7, rather than 1954 when he was 9] on me arm, if I had it today, by the time the age I am now, I wouldn't, my arm would be normal, because the advance in, surgery techniques and things like this would've, it probably would have made a lot of difference compared with, sort of, in them days. However I've got round it [laughs].

What, I mean do you remember being told about the advice your parents were given, say, about your leg or your arm? Do you...?

I only remember that, you know, I remember that the doctor, when I went to the clinic one day, the doctor says, 'Oh well, we'll' because of falling over and things like this and grazing me knees, and all this sort of thing, the, the doctor says 'well we'll put a calliper,' you know; it was the one foot dragging, it caught the footpath, and I went, flying, so, they fitted this calliper and I do remember, you know, the doctor saying, 'We gonna give Barry a calliper to see how he gets on with it and you'll take him to the orthopaedic department and get it fitted.' Now, with me, me arm, that was a different thing altogether. I had to go to The Woodlands Hospital, it's the orthopaedic hospital in Birmingham, and I went to the orthopaedic hospital and I seen a specialist

called a Dr Donovan, Mr Donovan he's, he's... sorry, and he looked at me arm, and explained to me mother that, he would turn the muscles over, so that my arm would be inside turned over and he explained to them that I would have to learn to pick things up with it and things like this, and of course this is where the bed came in that, you know, [coughs]. They didn't, they did the operation and of course, I had to have time off from school, and at the hospital they'd got a, a school anyway, it's even today: it's a school, they have school for children, there today, and of course, I had that operation, and came home. Of course, I'd only got one hand [laughs] so I couldn't... so we, we reverted back that they cut my meat up and cut my vegetables and things like this up, it was only temporary though, and I went back to the hospital and seen Mr Donovan again and Mr Donovan says, 'Ooh that's turned out very well,' he says 'it's the right way round now'. He said, 'Now,' you know, 'do some of these exercises at home. Get a ball and squeeze it in yer fist like that, and also pick up, a weight everyday and strengthen the muscles in yer hand.' Course, by then, I, I was well away, you know. It was a bit of a chore at times, you know but, the thing is that my mum and dad made me do it. You know, I used to have to sit in front of my dad and squeeze the ball, 20 times, then it went to 30 times, then 50 times, and of course the same with the bed: I had to lift the bed up, make the bed and lift the bed up, 20 times in a morning, and, you know, it, it gave me some dexterity and that in my hand.

And, I mean do you remember, I mean, having your arm done must have been quite major: do you remember their reactions to ... the idea of having it done, or were they ... quite...?

They, they were quite... they, the, my parents were the type of people that took... as read, you know, where, of what they said, it wasn't like today: you can question what a doctor thinks, or what a doctor's gonna do. In them days it was, 'Oh they think you should have this done' and they take the doctor's advice, [laughs] if you understand me: and, they took advice on, on that score you know.

Umm.

And that was it. They took advice. I mean, I cannot, sort of, you know, sort of remember ever sort of thinking myself any differently, you know. I think that I just fell in with mu... what with my mum and dad says, I had to have done.

Umm.

You know.

And do you know... I mean, when they were first given the sort of diagnosis of C.P.?

That would have been after I was born because I was... What happened was that, at my birth, I didn't breathe straight away, and obviously, the doctor informed my mother that, I would be born with a... brain... you know, my brain would be, somewhat affected. I would be disabled. Or crippled, in them days you know.

Can I ask were you premature or, I mean, I, you said that your mum had difficulties at birth?

My Mum had difficulties, with the first child. The first child died. I was the second one. I wasn't born premature. I was born seven pound six ounces. You know, I was a big 'un [laughs]. Yeah, I was a big 'un, 'cos I've seen the pictures.

Right yeah.

Yeah.

And, and do you know their, did they tell you about their first reaction? Can you, have any memories

No.

[both speaking]

of that?

There, there was there was never any. I've never been told of any reaction.

Umm.

I've always been known as their, my mother's 'special lad' [both laugh] My mother always used to say that I was her special lad.

Umm.

That's all I was brought up with, you know.

When were you first aware that you had cerebral palsy?

[Exhales] When I was about seven. When I was about seven, I began to realise that, you know, sort of, how can I put it? Being pushed around in a pushchair still, at seven. That is when you sort of, you see the other kids of your own age, running and playing about and you like, having a brother a, sort of, you know, a couple of years younger than me, and him running around, you know, and, and I couldn't, you know: that's, that's when you sort of realise that, you know, you sort of, something wrong here, you know: and you, sort of how can I put it? You get frustrated, because you wanna go and run down the road, and you scream you, you, you know, you [interviewer sighs] you know, the same as anyone else you, scream your head off to, to do it and you can't do it, you know. Yeah.

Umm.

Yeah...

When did you? You, you said ... your father encouraged you with this, with this horse...

Oh yeah, yeah.

So when did you actually learn to walk? When could you walk by?

I was about, I was, it took about six or seven months for him to get me to actually get up, stand up and walk on me f..., walk along, if you understand me. As I said earlier, I walked along, but I tended to drag my one foot.

Umm.

I didn't pick it up sufficiently and, of course, that was it you know...

[End of Tape 3 Side A]

Tape 3 Side B [Track 5]

[feedback recording noise] Ow, it's too high.

That's because I've got that on.

Umm.

Right. Yes you were... your dad, you know, you've told me about your dad pushing you a lot, getting you to walk.

Yeah.

Getting you to walk [inaud]

Yeah.

I'm wondering when you first, when, what stage that was, when you first walked, walked on your own?

Well, [laughs] as I said, it was about, it, it went on for about six months, you know sort of, I had the reins, sort of, child reins put on, and... initially, they took the pressure off my legs, so that all I really did was, do the walking motion. Of course, the second stage was to actually, put my feet on the ground [coughs]... and to make me move my legs in the same way, and of course, that took time; it, it took about [coughs] I started to walk probably unaided about six months after they started doing it, so I must have been about seven and a half before I started to actually walk. I can't remember the exact sort of time, but I do know that, by the time I went to primary school, and things like this, I was able to actually walk around. Fell over quite a lot but I was able to walk around.

And, to go back to, or to, to begin to think again about primary school, you said... you didn't go immediately obviously, when you were five...

No.

...and eventually you were, you went with your brother

Yes, yes.

Can you remember any of the... or, or what are your memories of, the kind of discussions with your parents? What they faced? Whether you were sent?

They...

Who suggested...?

Well, what happened was, was that, my parents wanted me to have equal opportunity as anybody else, although I was classed as being educationally subnormal, my parents were not prepared to sort of, have me put into a residential school, because at that time it, it was sort of how can I put it? By doctors and by social workers and things like this, the done thing for people that were educationally subnormal to be put into, residential schools, and things like this. My parents fought very hard against that: in fact, my father got quite annoyed about it, that they wanted to put me into a residential school. My...

When you say 'they' can you...

[both speaking]

Yeah well the, the doctors,

tell me a bit more about that?

The school doctor. As you know, when, before you went to school, you had to have a medical examination and things like this, and the school doctor recommended that I be put into a residential school. My parents... would not... put up with that. They wanted me at home with them, and wanted me to have a home upbringing, and, of

course, they went, that was the one time they went against it, and of course, it caused a lot of problems, particularly with the local authority; well, the council then: they were saying that, 'Well, we'll get a court order to send, send you to a school. Your son has got to be educated,' and my father says, 'Well, he's got a brother. He can go to school with his brother and he can sit with his brother'. Anyway, because I didn't go to school, the Tru..., well, well what they called the 'Truancy Officer' came to the house to say, 'Well look, we're gonna prosecute yer.' My father's immediate reaction was, was, 'Okay, fair enough, you can do that.' Now I do remember that my dad was summonsed to go to court, because, he stood his ground and said that I could go to school with my brother. After a lot of 'argy-bargy' [a verbal dispute] and it were ... I wish I'd have bought the *Walsall Observer* newspaper because it's in the *Walsall Observer* newspaper. After a lot of 'argy-bargy', we had, he was fortunate that the magistrate on the bench at the time, understood where my dad was coming from, because my dad told them, that there was no way he was going to let me out of the family unit to be bought up in somebody else's care, as an heathen [laughs] That's what he says at the time. As an heathen, and, of course, it was agreed that I would go to school with my brother. Now the school my brother went to, the headmaster was not very amenable about me going to school, at that particular school, because he was still living in the Dark Ages where, he says that we should be locked away, seen and not heard. Anyway my Dad says, 'Okay, fair enough. We'll find a school that'll accept the pair on 'em'. So, he sort of had a look round and sort of made contacts and things like this and, Mr Howell, Greenrock School, said, 'Yes, I will accept Dennis and Barry as a pair into my school,' and that was, that was it, and I went to school with my brother, and my brother sat with me and things like this. Showed me how to do this and that and the other, and at home, I mean, we used to sit at home at night, and he used to show me how to write the letters, like a, b, c, d and all this sort of thing and, one, two, three, and all this sort of thing, and, eventually I sort of mastered the art of writing, and things like this, and mastered my times table, and things like this, and that was it, you know.. There wasn't very much else I could say about that.

Umm.

I have covered it, but that was the position, that my father did actually get prosecuted for not sending me to school; but he stood his ground, and fortunately for him, the magistrate could understand where he was coming from.

Yes: and, I mean, can you remember what your feelings were, while this hullabaloo was going on?

No.

You can't remember it?

I mean I don't think that I got into it, because little boys were seen and not heard in them days.

Umm.

But, looking at it today, I'm grateful to me dad for doing that. Because, you know, I would not, I believe that things would have been a lot different had I of gone to a residential school.

Well he certainly made a stand, didn't he?

Yes.

And the school that you went to, was it, it wasn't your most local school but...

No.

...it was a fairly local primary school?

Fairly local. It was, what, about a mile away.

And a normal in quotes [laughs]

Yeah, normal, normal...

...normal school?

Normal, ordinary, no, any run of, run of the mill school

Right.

It, I would say that my father was ... the pioneer of ... mainstream inclusion [laughs]. You know, you know when, when I look at it today, you know. Because it was unheard of, and of course, at the end of the day, it was all a lot of local children that I got to know. And I warn't [ph] segregated. I weren't sort of 'Ooh you can't do this, you can't do that, you can't do the other.' I did it. I mucked in with all the other kids, and, it was, looking at it today, it was the best thing me dad did, because for the simple reason is, is, is that, you know, I, I got, I got, I got a tanning, a good hiding, the same as any other kid. I did daft things. [laughs] I threw bricks and broke windows, and played cricket in the street, and things like this, and got a good hiding, and, got chased round the block and things like this, you know. You know there, there was no sort of, 'Oh he's he's' you know 'he's disabled' [laughs] and things like this, you know.

Umm.

Well you know there, there was none of that. But it was only, it was in later life that sort of how can I put it, things changed. When I, when I left primary school, my mum and dad, [laughs] God rest their souls, my mum and dad sort of says, well, you know, they started thinking 'What is he going to do when he's left school?' You know, 'What's he going to do for a job?' and, they, it just goes to show what they was like, you know: 'What is he going to do as a job?' you know. And my dad had the daft idea... well, it ain't a daft idea, but, he had the idea that I'd become a vicar. Honestly

and truthfully, I'm not joking so, he made a couple of enquiries [laughs]. This is true; he made a couple of enquiries about me becoming a vicar. So he went to the local church and seen the priest and says, you know 'My son's' you know and he says, 'Well' he says 'it might be a good idea to send him to a church school' [laughs] So anyway [laughs] me dad says, 'A church school? Yeah, okay, fair enough,' so, it involved me going to St Chad's School in Lichfield, so he went over to Lichfield and went and seen, the diocese people about it, and they accepted me [laughs] into the school. Of course, it was you know a music school: I mean you had to be able to sing for a start off, and all this sort of thing, you know, and you become a chorister and [laughs] all this sort of thing for Lichfield Cathedral. [both laughing]. There's, I'm on the list in the great hall [laughs] So, that was an experience and a bit, I mean.

Did you have any choice within this?

I had no choice whatsoever. This is what me Mum and Dad was, hoping I was gonna do.

And what do you remember about this period? Can you remember them discussing this?

Oh I, I can remember them buying the uniform. [both laugh] We went down to 'Buxton & Bonnett's' [laughs], ['Buxton & Bonnett' is a clothes shop] went to 'Buxton & Bonnett's', the shop in the town; this is in Walsall, because I lived in Pelsall, as I explained to yer. We went into 'Buxton & Bonnett's', to go and get the uniform and it was a nice black blazer, with yellow piping round the collar, and all round, piped yellow, and I will never forget the cap. It had got a blooming tassel on it. I remember it distinctively. Grey trousers, and black shoes and a yellow and blue striped tie, and we had a, had a badge put on me, on me blazer and it had to be made, of wire. Silk wire, badge. Anyway, the first day come, and I got to school, and the first thing they did: check me head for nits [head lice] ... I thought, 'God,' you know. I'd remember that, I remember this woman, big-built woman her was. I mean I'm, I was only, I weren't all that big, big meself but, her was a big-built woman: and her'd

got this metal comb, [laughs] and her run it through yer hair, to check for nits. And I remember some of the kids: they were 'stunk blind'; that they'd obviously found nits, so they'd put Suleo [a trade name for a head lice treatment] in their hair. I remember that. I didn't have that done because my mum and dad were very particular and they kept me hair clean, and, of course, it meant that, I had to go to school on me bike, so me dad, sort of says, 'Okay, fair enough. You can ride yer bike to school and ride home at night,' so I had to ride five miles there, and five miles back every day, on me bike. 'Course, there wasn't the traffic there is today but, it was, quite an experience going to school every day: but, in the winter, I had to catch the bus 'cos I couldn't, there was no way I was going to ride me bike on the snow and things like this, you know. But I got wet, I got damp, I got soaked through, you know, in them days. But it was, it was a different kettle of fish when I was at there, because A, there was, it was a much stricter regime. At this time I hadn't got me brother with me; I was on me own, and, obviously, you know, the thing is, it was a much stricter regime, a much harsher environment, and of course, I was going through... a lot of difficulty with that, because, for the simple reason is, you know, sort of how can I put it? Being harsher: I couldn't understand why people were so harsh to me: why, you know, people were so cruel in a way, because, the other kids you know... you got yer clique of friends, sort of, at home, but at school, you sort of how can I put it? Because you'd got a physical disability, you were left out of it. You were...

Umm.

...called things. My name when I was a kid was 'fat barrel'. That was what I was called when I was at school, or 'gimpy' you know. I was called some very nasty, nasty things, and of course, it did affect me, as you might say, psychologically. You know, I didn't do as well, at school as I probably could've done, because for the simple reason is, was the psychological torment that I had, at school.

Do you...? [both speaking]

It affected me greatly, because the acceptance, by other kids, you know, and of course, they, they were ignorant of the fact that they didn't, sort of, you know, do anything you know.

And were you treated, how were you treated by teachers?

I was treated harshly you know...harshly

Yeah.

Because for the simple reason is, is that there was no leeway given: if I didn't do it, it didn't get done. You know, sort of how can I put it? There was no sort of, brother there to sort of, say 'Here y'are Barry, this is how, how it's done.' It was, I was shown, and if I didn't, and I would probably, from recollections, I'd do what I thought was right... when what I, my effort would probably look poor to, compared with somebody else's effort. You understand me and, you know

What about the teachers? [both speaking]

I was aware of this

Did they, did they also treat you harshly?

Well yes, because for the simple reason is it was an unheard of thing for a start-off, having a disabled person in the class. They weren't geared up to actually dealing with disabled people. As far as they were concerned, I shouldn't have been there. You know, I should not have been there. As far as they were concerned, but they had no choice but to accept me. You know, and that is [coughs] I think a lot of the problem that I had. You know: and it was harsh. I remember, you know, even today, you feel the pains of it sometimes, particularly when it's not affecting me, but affecting others. You know, in today's society I would say that at times, disabled people are treated as harshly, you know, by society. You know, I'll move onto that later on, but...

What kind, can you give me some memories? What kind of memories do you have of, you say 'harsh'?

Well, I remember being pushed down the passage. You know, and pushed against the wall.

So physically?

Physically, you know. Physically, you know, sort of, you know, picked on, you know, sort of, you know, sort of running about and things like this, and they'd, they'd, they'd grab hold of you, if you understand me, and pull you back, and pull you about, you know. On a country run, for instance, I got picked up, picked on you know, pushed into a mud bog and all me ... pumps and sor... and that were all, full of mud and sludge, and that, you know, and, nobody there to help you, you know. You just, you know, if me brother'd've been there, that wouldn't happen. But there again, having said that, it was a positive experience, because it made me... As I got older, I started to actually, you know, sort of realise what was going on and I said, 'No. I'm not having this,' and I started to stand up for meself. When you turn the tables, it can be a different thing altogether, and I started to sort of say to teachers, 'Can you tell me how to do this?' And, then it was totally different thing. I think what it was the transfer from... you know, it took me quite some time to get you know, the confidence to stand up and say, 'Well look, I'm here as well'. For instance, we had, a pottery class, and, of course we had to make a pot on the wheel, and of course, it wasn't so easy for me, as the others, so I said to this teacher, I says, 'I'm gonna have trouble with this, you know: putting a thing on, spinning round,' so he says to me, 'Well how about if me and you go over there, and you make one by hand?' So I didn't have the experience of throwing a ... the others, did, I didn't: however I made one by hand and that and funny enough, it turned out all right, because for the simple reason, what I did was, I rolled lengths of clay, and looped it and, and, and built it up like that, and, we painted it, and fired it and it turned, and this might sound silly, but it turned out, in spite of them doing 'em on a, on a wheel, my turned out the best. So there was a

positive from, from a negative, there was a positive made. That my pot, although [laughs] it was made by hand, when it came to being fired, and the painting on it, and all that sort of thing, turned out the best, so I was, so you know that was sort of, when you start to realise, that you kick back, that you say 'Well I ain't gonna be beat by this. If I don't speak up, nobody will ever take any notice of me and I shall be left, to suffer the way I'm suffering,' and I stood up for meself and started to sort of say, 'Right that's it: I ain't, gonna stand for it.' And...

This was roughly what age would you be at?

I would, I would say that I was about, ten or eleven, twelve, you know, at this age, you know, sort of, you know, I'd realise, and I'd been going home, prior to that and sort of, being treated so harshly, as I thought, really, really upset me and I was saying to my mum, 'I don't wanna go to school anymore,' and my mum was saying, 'You must go to school, son' you know what I mean [coughs] and, sort of, how can I put it? I was talking to me dad one night about it. [laughs] I can remember this, I was talking to me dad about it and he... I was sitting on his knee, and I was saying to him, I said, you know, 'The bigger lads, they pick on me and, the teachers don't ... do anything and things like this, you know, and I remember me dad saying to me, he said, 'Son' he says, 'if somebody picks on yer, you pick on them,' you know. He says, 'Don't you just sit there and take it.' So, I remembered this, and I remember me mum saying, 'If you, you ask the teacher' you know, and I remember the day, that I was asked to do the two times table, and I got stuck, and I do remember saying to, Mr Everitt the teacher. I says to him I says, 'What comes after times twenty?' Two times twenty..., you know: and, he told me and I think that broke the ice and after that I was, you know, I was prepared to ask, you know, and I found that by asking, they were prepared to, to tell me, but initially, it was very harsh, you know because, I didn't sort of get up and speak out, if you understand me, and I think, I think that leads in to today a bit, that I am prepared to stand and speak out ...

Ummm

... you know, because for the simple reason is that, in the past, I've been sitting there, meek and mild and gentle and saying nothing, and, you know, people sort of take... advantage of yer, whereas you've got to stand up for yourself and, you know, so ...

What can you remember about ... did the, whether the... teachers tackled this bullying?

No.

Or...

No.

...there was any...?

It was, it was never really tackled, you know. I mean, you know, even sort of conquering that: I even had people calling me names. Most, well for a good few years afterwards; but I always got this, 'Sticks and stones'll break me bones but names'll never hurt me' and, I never did really take any notice of it, if you understand me. Had I've taken notice of it I think, I would've been a very poor excuse for a person, you know, but as I say, it was very harsh, you know.

Umm.

But...

Was?

[coughs] As I got older and got more mature, and sort of, how can I put it?... you know, developed I realised that, you know, you can, you can achieve this. I mean, by the time I was 13, I knew that I, you know, I was a cocky sod. I was cocky because, I would say, 'Well I'm gonna do this,' and I sort of, did, tried to do things in different

ways, and whichever way turned out to be the best for me, is the way I did it. I got... told off quite a few times by teachers, because for the simple reason is that, I didn't do it the way they told me to do it. They wanted me to do it that way. I wanted to do it that way 'cos I could achieve the result they wanted, [sniffs] but of course, in them days, teachers were... teachers and they said, 'Well, you do it my way, you don't do it any other way,' you know, and sort of, how can I put it? It had an effect, on the way they looked at me, because for the simple reason is, is, is that they said, 'He don't do things the way we tell him to,' so they automatically put a label on yer. You are educationally subnormal. All right? Now then, I kick back at that, because they were putting that label on me, because I wasn't doing it, the way they wanted me to do it, but on the other hand, I was achieving the same result on doing it within my physical and mental capabilities. In them days it was not looked on that way [laughs]. Them days, you were subnormal, because you did summat different, you know, and that, that's another harsh aspect of education is that...

Umm.

... in them days, you know, unless you did it to a set way, you [inaud] that was it you know.

Umm.

Whereas today, you know a teacher will say, 'Well okay, fair enough, you haven't done it how I've said, but you've done it, and you've achieved the same result. You may have gone round the garden a little bit, but you've achieved the same result.' So therefore, you know, you're not subnormal because you do it that way. I don't think anyway.

Umm and were there some subjects that you...

Hated [both speaking]

enjoyed more ... and hated, or hated more? [laughs]

Well, I hated the ... physical, country running. I enjoyed the music. I enjoyed the dancing. Mind you, I enjoyed the dancing, 'cos of, we had the girls' school come up. [both laugh] Yeah, I enjoyed that, but that's another story, that is [laughs]. You know, I enjoyed that, and I enjoyed, you know, sort of learning to read and write, and I mean, you know, by the time I'd gone to school, I could read and write: but sort of, you know, art, drawing and things like this I enjoyed: I enjoyed learning how to repair shoes. Now that's something that we did at school was we learnt how to repair shoes. If we had to take our shoes to school, and we repaired them, if they needed repairing, which was quite a good experience, you know, and, of course we did woodwork. I made a scooter, I made a table, you know: with a little bit of help. Now that, that, that, those tutors were not, they were a bit like today, they were bought in to do a particular subject, like, you know, carpentry and things like this, and they were sort of off a building site, as you might say, and I found their attitude totally different. They would help you, if you understand me, if you come unstuck, you know, whereas, like in the academic subjects, they were a different kettle of fish altogether, you know, but like, you know, sort of repairing the shoes, I can sole and heel a pair of shoes, [laughs] you know: which was a good thing for us for us to do. I mean, you know, how can I put it? Sort of riding a bike. Now that was summat else that I had to learn, how to repair a puncture in the tyre, because going backwards and forwards five miles a day.....

[End of Tape 3 Side B]

Tape 4 Side A [Track 6]

Okay.

Ah yes, so you were telling me about ... school days.

Ooh they, as I say, you know, we used to do, the, the best part of it was, as I say, the practical side of things, you know, like sort of, shoe repairing and doing some carpentry. I mean, I mean I can repair a pair of shoes: you know, sole and heel a pair of shoes; I've got no problems with that. The other thing is, of course, carpentry paid me in good stead because, I know how to assemble things, you know, I mean, sort of it, it all worked out well, because it helped me... my independence, if you like, which was a valuable lesson.

Umm.

Dancing, sort of, you know: I'd say, about 14, I had my first experience of girls, you know [laughs]. Like there's St Chad's School, and there's the Greyfriars School as it was then, which was an all... we were an all boys' school and that was an all girls' school: and on a Friday, we used to have the girls, some of the girls from up the girls' school, come up the school and we use to do country dancing. I used to, I had no choice in the girl that was plonked onto me. I always remember 'er, ever such a nice girl and I have seen her since [laughs]. And her name was Judith Crutchley. Nice dark-haired little girl 'er was, and she was my dance partner. I had no choice in it, I was told, 'That's the girl you've gotta dance with,' and we used to learn country dancing and things like this, and, it was a good laugh, you know. I mean I d'ain't quite master it fully but, you know, it was a good laugh, and, of course, as I said, I've seen Judith since, you know, and she's emigrated to Canada now but, fond memories of that, you know: it was really enjoyable, you know.

What about the, who were the most sort of, influential teachers at the school? The ones you remember?

I think, the most the most influential person to me was the RE Education, you know, Religious Education, and the Headmaster. I think they were the two people that really sort of, influenced me in, in lots of ways. The Headmaster from a discipline, disciplinary point of view because, although I'd spoken to my father about the situations that I found myself in with the other kids at school, it got to the point where I decided that I was gonna to talk to the Headmaster. Now fortunately, the Headmaster would talk to us, and I had the privilege of actually talking to him about the problems that I was having: and him and his wife were very constructive, in giving me help, to overcome the barriers that were put in front of me. I found that staff's attitudes changed a great deal towards me, and as the staff's attitude changed towards me, so did the kids' attitudes change towards me, and it made a lot of difference, to my life to my psyche, if you like, to my outlook on other people: and it, it went through sort of, say, from about 14 till I was 16, for a couple of years. Attitudes changed, and I developed, a lot better over that, few years, than I had done in the previous years, because for the simple reason is that, people started to realise that although I didn't do things the same way as everybody else, I achieved the same way as everybody else, and it become acceptable, whereas at one time it wasn't acceptable, and I think by, I think that was one of the breakthroughs, was me, having the opportunity to talk to the headmaster, and to talk to the Reverend Salter who was the Vicar and talk to him, about, you know, laid it on the line, if you like, and them, actually as grown-ups, listening to what I said. I remember 'em, having my mum and dad to the school, and my dad, telling the Headmaster that, you know, he was aware of it because I had been coming 'home upset and things like this, and then nobody'd ever said anything because, you know, he says but, 'Give him his courage. He has, sort of come out and said summat about it, you know. Maybe of, too late now but, he has said something about it. He should have said something earlier, you know. But there again it's being slow, [laughs] you know but that...'

What, what do you, I mean, what memories have you got of friends, you made in school or were you...?

Well, at the beginning, you know, as I say, it was very difficult, and people used to sh..., I used to get left in the corner of the playground, you know. People were frightened of me. People thought I was a nutter. Basically. They thought I was mentally, you know a mental, in, sort of, mentally subnormal, and, you know, I wasn't. Of course as... we went, sort of 14 onwards, things changed, because I sort of did country dancing as I said. Judith was a good pal, you know, at school I mean, not only at school: we used to go to the youth club and things like this and, I remember taking her to see the pic... to the pictures. That was a laugh and a bit that was [laughs]. That was quite summat that was, going to the pictures with Judith, I remember that. We went and watched *How the West Was Won* [both laugh]. And, of course, she was a friend, and then there were, there was some of the lads, sort of Michael Clark and, we had a Danish lad called Kurt Jensen. He become friends with me, and a few more lads, you know. Who else? Christopher Harriman and various other lads. You know, they sort of all rode home, more or less the same way as me on the bikes, so therefore we sort of, you know, we'd sort of ride home together like, you know, and, sort of mix, out of school and things like this: they'd called for me and I called for them, and, but, you know, there was always that ... doubt in me mind with them ... you know, sort of how can I put it? You know, they, sort of, how can I put it? It's difficult to say today but, there was always that doubt that are they really your friend or are they just, you know, because I'd been treated so... that way... all that time, and then, all of a sudden, why have you all of a sudden changed, you know?

Did anybody from primary school go to the same secondary school?

No, no, no because I, I: that was it. If they'd've all gone to the church school with me, it'd've been a different kettle of fish [laughs], but I mean, I did keep me, I did keep me circle of friends from the primary school, although I didn't go to the TP Riley School that they went to, and me brother went to, out of school we all had a ... mix together and, you know, had a good time and got up to all sorts of devilment, you

know. [sniffs] Yeah. I don't think, to be honest with you, I don't think we as youths were very much different to what they are today, you know. [laughs]. Not really it was just that, how can I put it? We were more secretive: to put it quite bluntly, we were more secretive than kids of today.

Looking back, do you think that, decision of your parents ... was a good one?

... it was a brave decision.

Sorry?

It was a brave decision. It d'ain't work out, how they thought it'd work out, because they, they wanted me to go to theological college. But of course, the thing was, was that although it was a, a sort of a, an idea, it d'ain't work out that way. Our other, our dad had another idea when I left school: we'll have a paper shop, [laughs] you know, but none of this worked out because, when I left school, I went to the, Labour Exchange as it was then, and I went to see a disablement bloke, a bloke that dealt with... because we've moved on now that, it was the law that companies had to employ so many disabled people.

This was when roughly? What time?

This was about the end of the fifties, fifty, sort of the end of the fifties.

Right.

Fifty-nine fifty-eight fifty-nine. And I remember our, our Dad took me down the Labour Exchange and we went and seen this woman, and 'er found me a job, and it was with a tent company, Horleys, I don't know whether you've heard of Horleys? They make tents and things like this, camping equipment. So... I went to the firm and, it was in the warehouse, sort of, you know, just getting tents and, a hundred tents for Africa, or what have you, you know, or somewhere like that, [sniffs] and, anyway, that, that was my first experience in work.

Do you remember anything about this, placement interview or those, you know, getting you into work? Can you remember anything?

Well all, well all it was, was that they took me name, address and me, give me a National Insurance number: and, sort of our dad says, 'Do you think you can find him a nice little job?' or summat like that, [laughs] you know, and ... I mean, I remember her ringing up Horleys and saying, 'I've got a young lad that's disabled and he needs a job,' and I remember going, that very day, going down to the firm, with me dad, and me dad sat with me in the interview, and, sort of, the man behind the desk said, 'What? How old's Barry?' and all this sort of thing, and 'He's just left school' and this sort of thing, and 'We'll give him a job in the stores, you know. Ten and six a week.' So me dad says 'All right.' [both laugh] So on the Monday I'm, he sent me down the town, to Foster Brothers, and I had to go and get a ...of course, they don't supply your overalls in them days; I had to go and get a warehouse coat, and he says, 'That'll be a half a crown out your next week's pay packet' [laughs] So, that was the reality, you see, once I started to work, I had to start to contribute.

What? [both laugh]

Anyway, I went I went to work on the Monday, and I always remember Brian Davis, he was the foreman. He says, 'Good morning Barry', and he had me in the office, and told me what he wanted me to do and that, you know. [sniffs.] Anyway [laughs] I did it, I did it, you know: I did it, and I mucked in and, and sort of, 'Come on son! It's teatime,' and, of course, being a tent company, there was a lot of women there, you know, and of course, [laughs] I had, I had to fall in with the rest of 'em, you know what I mean, and of course there was a, a canteen like, you know, sort of, a proper canteen, you know, and me mother use to give me half a crown for me dinner, sort of, you know, I used to have, have me dinner and I had me dinner at work, you know, and I used to sit with Brian and all the other gangs, and of course, some of the women'd come, you know, sort of sit with us and talk to us and that, so of course, me being the youngster, I got a lot of ribbing, you know. Mind you it was, it waren't

the... nasty ribbing, it was the... sort of, you know, the... you know, you grow up and you, yer sort of grown-up ribbing, and, I enjoyed that. You know I mean me ten and a tanner a week, [laughs] you know.

That was you sorted.

Yeah and then of course I started... you know, going out socially and things like this, with some of the lads we'd been bought up with and things like this you know, and of course, I decided I'd had enough and I decided I was going to go and work for another company, and I learnt how to, I went down to a company called 'Reginald Tilsley's' you know, a car company, and I learnt how to do body work and things like this you know, and that was a craft in itself because... I decided I was going to have an apprenticeship in it, so, I went to school, went to the College of Art in Walsall for that, you know: learnt how to do, prepare all the body for the spraying of the vehicles and things like this...and learnt how to get a dent out and assemble things, and things like this, you know, and, I did that for quite some time you know.

Umm. Well I mean, before you actually started work and perhaps when you were younger,

Yeah.

your parents wanted you to be a vicar.

Yeah they, they, they ...

What was your idea?

What was my idea? I had no idea.

Right,

I had no idea.

You didn't know what you wanted to be?

I just fell in what our mother says [laughs]. Our dad had so much ... our dad, you see, was looking at it from the physical side.

Right

You know he says, 'If he can learn to read, and write, there ain't no reason why he can't be a vicar.' And I mean, you know, that, that was just that was just our dad's ideology, as you might say, you know [laughs]. The other thing was, was that, I do remember him saying, 'Well Barry, we'll have to buy a newsagents.' I do remember

him saying [laughs], 'We, well, we'll have a newsagents: you'll be able to get up in the morning and get the papers, [laughs] you know.' I do remember that, [interviewer laughs] and I remember saying 'Ooh that'd be great. I can have, I can have as many sweets as I want,' [laughs] you know as far as I was concerned, you know, but, that, none of that ever happened, you know. It was just sort of, thoughts of me dad, as you might say, me Dad's sort of ideas, you know.

And your ideas? Umm?

My ideas were never... never that, you know. I mean like, the warehouse job, you know, I enjoyed the warehouse job. I loved it. But sort of, maturing and talking to yer mates and things like this, what they was doing like, Tony Smith was, he went into engineering, and he worked for a firm making, I think it was, you know, sort of pistons and pinions and all this sort of thing for cars and all this sort of thing, and another lad went ... What was his name? Trevor. I forgot his name now: Trevor, anyway, he went into carpentry, and he did fitting for pubs and things like this. Course I was mixing with these people socially, you know, and my job was just a warehouse man, you know, and, and sort of ... it was interesting, because I mean, we

were sending tents and all the sort of thing, out to South Africa and places like that, you know, and, and the like, you know, all over the world, but I wanted summat different and, I decided to apply for this job at Reginald Tilsley's in Walsall, in the body shop. I'd become a body shop apprentice.

And so this was your decision

This was my decision. [both speaking]

...was it? Right.

This was me. This was nothing to do with me mum and dad. Of course, the money had a lot to do with it: I mean, I was on tanner a tanner at Horleys, but I could have got, I got four pound ten down at Tilsley's, as an apprentice: so, I went down, and I had an interview with a bloke named David Hoddinott. Funny man he was. And he took me round the garage and showed me on, working on the cars, and things like this and he says, 'Do you think you'll be able to manage to flatten all these cars?' You know, cos you had to, rub them down by hand. So I says, 'Well' I says, and this was me caught, talking, you know, so I says, 'Well' I says, 'if you're not sure, I'll show yer I can do it'. So I showed him I could do it, you know. So he took me back into the office and he says, 'I'll give yer a try for a couple of weeks, to see how you get on,' so I went down on the Monday, and the, the, I've forgotten their names now, I can't, I'm sorry, I can't remember their names but the foreman came, and he sort of told me what he wanted me to do and there was this old Ford Prefect, and it needed some body work doing on it so, the panel beaters'd been and done all the body work on it and everything and it, it needed rubbing down before it was painted, so I got the job of rubbing it down and everything: and that was me first job that was, I remember that. Black Ford Prefect. I think it was a 1953 Ford Prefect, I remember it. Somebody's pride and joy anyway. And I rubbed all that down, and the foreman come and rub his hand, rubbed his hand over to where I'd actually been told to rub it down, and he says, 'You've just got to rub it down a little bit more,' he says, 'now, feel that,' and he took me hand and, you know, showed me...made me feel what, what I was doing, and he

did teach me properly; you know, like, he took the time to show me how it was done. It was an art anyway: and, a sort of, he give me that job and I did that, and he was quite happy about the way I was progressing. Anyway they used to have these trucks in, that the chassis had to be painted. So I had the job of rubbing all the chassis down and hand painting all the chassis, and it were, it were, I enjoyed it, you know, and sort of body work and things like this, you know, and putting parts of cars back together like, you know putting the seats back in after they'd been repaired and things like this and, it was quite interesting, and of course, socially when I was out socially, I could say, 'Well I've been working on a Ford Zephyr today,' you know and a, and sort of, you know, it, it was it was interesting you know, and I think that's where I get me bent from a, from a lot of, from the practical point of view, you know. And then, sort of I ... had the opportunity of furthering meself again, and a job came up at Walsall College of Technology, and, it was for a laboratory technician in the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering Department. So...

And this was when, roughly?

This was in the... late, I think it was about '69. Yeah it was about '69, yeah, came up, so I applied for it, and, I applied for this job and of course, there were quite a lot of applicants for the job, and, I was in the waiting room and I thought, 'No way, I ain't gonna get this,' so I walked away from it. I walked away, and I went home. Anyway, a couple of weeks after, I had a letter from the ... Personnel, The Personnel Department, asking me why I hadn't turned up for the interview, so I explained that I didn't feel that I was able to ... do the job. 'Well why don't you come and have an interview and let us decide that?' So I went. Anyway, there was this guy named John Wilson, who was the Head of the Department. Nice man, you know and, he asked me what I'd been doing and I explained to him what I'd been doing in the car industry and things like this. He says, 'Well why do you want to change?' I said, 'Well it's a new challenge,' I says 'and besides that,' I says, 'when you work it out, working for the Walsall College of Technology, it'll always be here. I shall probably be able to have a job,' as I thought then, 'for life.' So, after a little bit of sort of, sort of thought, he says, 'What about your physical disability do you think that you'll be able to ...

pick things up and cope with it, and things like this?' And I says, 'Well, the only way to find out is to give me the opportunity picking someone up for you.' [laughs]. So he, he sort of says, 'Okay, fair enough.' Anyway, I had the job. I got the job. He says, and funny enough he says to me afterwards he says, 'See,' he says, 'if you had've stayed that day you had have been able to have started.' Anyway, I had to go and have a medical. I had a medical ex..., cos, when you worked for the local authority, because of the pension thing, you had to have a medical. You know, superannuation pension. So I had a medical and I passed that, and, anyway, they confirmed my appointment. So I went on the Monday. My God, was I proud! 'Walsall College of Technology,' I thought, 'and I'm working here,' you know, I mean. I thought, 'What a... smashing... you know, thing to happen.' So I went, I started work there, in the Electrical Engineering Department. I hadn't got a clue what were, what an Avo Seven was or what a multimeter was or anything, you know, I hadn't got a clue at that time. Anyway, me big chance came. Ivor Brown, he was the sort of course tutors, you know, like the main lecturer, said, 'You know, Barry,' he says, 'you can have day release,' he says, 'and you can learn the... electronics industry': so I've thought, 'Right-o,' so I went and seen who I called 'Tug Wilson'. I always called him 'Tug Wilson', I did. His name weren't Tug, it was John [laughs]. I went, I went and seen him and I says, 'Look' I says, 'I would really, really like to do day release, to further my ...education, you know' I said, 'because I am a thick, I am a bit thick, you know.' Anyway, the end of the ... like, you know, for the New Year, they enrolled me in the Electrical and Mechanical Engineering..., I did Radio and TV, you know, for, up to ...City and Guilds standard, you know: and I did that and had me day release and everything, and all paid for, you know, and of course, by the time I'd finished I'd got an ONC in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering. I did some part-time lecturing at night: like at night-time like, you know, when, did some part-time lecturing at night and of course it made a lovely boost to me wages, you know what I mean, and, that was it, you know, and I thoroughly enjoyed it. And of course, it gave me a lot of skills that I hadn't got, but course, I'd also learnt other skills as I'd gone along, and ...

And what was your... family's reaction?

Well, my mum and dad was chuffed pink, I mean, you know. Me brother was over the moon that, you know, I mean he sort of says, 'Well to think that, you know, you were supposed to have been uneducatable,' he says, 'and here you are, you know, working in a, working in the College of Technology and, sort of, you know, doin' repairing equipment, and putting lectures up.' I got asked to build different things for different ... tutors, you know, like tutors'd come on with a, with a, a drawing and say, 'Can you make this for me?' And w..., and you'd sort of say, 'Well what's it for?' And, by them telling you what it was for, you were advanced in ... your understanding of what was going on, and thoroughly enjoyed it, you know: it was really... something, you know, and I enjoyed it. The, the bug was, was that, in 1982 I had a nervous breakdown, and of course I had to retire, on the grounds of ill health. That was one of the worst times of me life, because, I was going home one night ... And some guys set about me, badly.

Oh!

And of course, that totally shattered my whole confidence, and it led to me being put in hospital, you know, because it affected me so badly, you know. However.

Umm. Stop? Do you want to stop...?

[End of Tape 4 Side A]

Tape 5 Side A [Track 7]

Today is... Monday [both speaking]

Monday the twenty-first.

Monday the twenty-first. Thank you, and I'm recording Barry Morgan at my house.

This is the third occasion and so this is tape five. I think that's all I need to say.

Welcome.

Hello.

It's nice to see you again.

Nice to see you too. [laughs]

Yeah. We broke off last time,

Yeah.

at, when you were talking about something that, particularly bad that had happened to you. Do you want to... tell me a bit about that ... time?

Yeah, well, you know, sort of how can I put it? This incident actually brought home to me, how vulnerable I was, as a disabled person. All, mostly through my adolescence years I'd had quite a steady life and people looked after me very well and, sort of, you know, I never got into any scrapes. And, of course, I was, worked at the College of Technology as I've mentioned before, and, I'd got my City and Guilds in Electrical and Mechanical Engineering, and I decided to go for an ONC, which Walsall College of Technology couldn't sort of, you know, facilitate: so I had to go to Birmingham Polytechnic in Perry Bar: and, I'd done my final exam, on my ONC course and we'd decided this one night, us students, to get together and have a drink so we went. So I

went over there, to Perry Bar, to have a drink with my fellow students and sort of, let our hair down a little bit, as you might say. Anyway, I caught the bus home, I caught the bus from Perry Barr into Walsall, and waited for the bus from Walsall to my home: and, got of the bus ... just up the road from my home and, these three youths decided they took a liking to my briefcase and made a grab for it. Of course, they pushed me over, and I landed on the wall, and broke, broke my collar bone. Anyway, I had to go to hospital and, the doctor said to me that he couldn't really, really do anything with it, because it was my disabled arm, and that I'd have to go to the Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham, which they transferred me to the Orthopaedic Hospital in Birmingham: and of course, with all this, the, the trauma of, sort of, what had happened and everything like this really, really, knocked a dent into my ... independence, as you might say, you know, and I started to really, really feel anxious about different things, and all this sort of thing, and, anyway I was in hospital for about six weeks, and, of course, I had to sort of, wait and see how it all healed up and everything like this, but it wasn't so much the arm, it was the psychological impact, that the whole incident had had on me. It made me, very wary of ...g..., sort of people, and things like this, and in fact, it prevented me from going very far away from home: and, of course, I was away from work for just over 12 months because it took such a long time for the thing... to heal up, and also, the other thing was that the doctor didn't consider that I was psychologically well enough to actually to go to work because of the amount of pressures that I was likely to encounter: so he arranged for me to see a psychiatrist and ... you know, to sort of try to buck me out of it and, this psychiatrist [laughs] gave me some pills. I don't know what they were the, to this day but that weren't Barry Morgan: and, of course I, I took these pills and somehow, I don't know why but they'd made me as though I was wanting to go to sleep all the time and they didn't do me any good, so, I decided I warn't going to take 'em: and ... at this time me mum and dad were a bit concerned because, for the simple reason is that, they'd knowed how hard I'd worked, to, sort of, to, to achieve, in respects to education and things like this, and of course, consequently, my dad was great because he, 'e bucked me up no end, you know, and sort of, I went back to work but, unfortunately, with the amount of injury that the shoulder break, the, the break in my shoulder, collarbone, with the break of that, it affected the mobility of my

arm. I had a, a good mobility, and I was able to do all sorts of things: pick things up and, carry things and things like this and, of course, it affected me greatly, in that respects: and it, unfortunately, meant that I was no longer physically able to do the job that I was paid to do, and, at that time, there was a reorganisation about the College coming about and they decided that they would retire me on the grounds of ill health. Of course, that really, really sort of, upset me greatly, because I had a job that I loved and I enjoyed it, and I had good work people with me and things like this and, they did look after me. It was unfortunate, but I had to take early retirement, so, I took early retirement and, of course, a lot of ... doubts had, had started to appear in my mind and, as I said to you, it knocked my ... self-confidence about a bit, all this did. Anyway I [laughs] retired on the grounds of ill health and, sort of, you know, I applied for, for jobs and things like this, but unfortunately, the physical disability seemed to get in the way. So, I thought, 'Oh well, never mind,' and at this time I thought, 'Well, I've got me pension,' and I thought, 'well, I'm not gonna squander it and I'm not gonna spend it,' so, after talking to me mum and dad, I decided to buy me own house. I thought, 'Well, that's investing my money into something, rather than just throwing it out.' So, I saved the deposit, sort of, for the house and everything like this, and me, and of course, me Dad took me to the building society and, sort of, we had a talk about it: and, I'd seen this nice two-bedroomed house that I've got now, I've been there 21 years, I seen this house that I've got now and I thought, well I'll buy that and it, all it cost me in, when I bought it was £13,000; it's worth a considerably amount more now [laughs]: and, of course, by this time, I'd got a new challenge: I'd got me own home, and I was, getting that together: and I got that together and ... sort of, did some decorating. Learnt how to decorate, me dad come across, and I seen some wallpaper I liked and I said to me Dad, I says, 'I like that wallpaper.' So me dad put the first sheet on, and I says, 'Can I have a go at it?' and I, I had a go: and I put this length of wallpaper on, and me dad says, 'You ain't made a bad job of that,' so I thought, 'Oh that's summat,' and of course, this all, sort of ... all this, sort of, how can I put it? Took away some of the, negative feelings that I was having because, it was, new to me and I'd, you know, I'd got a little bit more independence. Anyway, by this time I was 40, and me sister, I had to laugh,

[laughs] me sister says, 'Well you'll have plenty of time on yer hands, ah now, our Barry,' and I says, 'I s'pose I will.' Her says, 'I tell you what,' her says, 'me and Ian'll treat you to a greenhouse.' So, for me 40th birthday, me sister bought me a greenhouse, and I had a lot of pleasure with that as well. I didn't know A from a bull's foot about plants you know, [laughs] I didn't: and I went shopping and, I thought, 'Oh, I'll buy some packets of seeds,' so I went [laughs] and bought some cucumber seeds, and I put 'em in the pot. I 'adn't got an a'porth of an idea of what I was doing to be honest with you, all I knew is I put 'em in the pot: [laughs] and I said to me... there was nothing happening and I says to my neighbour this one day I says, 'What, what do you do with these?' I says, 'I ain't got a clue'. He says, 'Ooh, you have to pollinate them'. I mean, I hadn't got no idea, so he showed me how to pollinate them, so, I pollinated them and I had six lovely bleeding, six nice big cucumbers. Anyway, me sister come across and I says, 'Here y'are' I says, 'these are the fruits of what I've ...' 'Ooh, you ain't done that, have you?' you know, and I says, 'Well I did with a, with a bit of 'elp,' you know and, sort of, I enjoyed gardening: but, as I say, earlier that ... I was looking for work, and it went on for two years, you know, and getting kicked back and things like this, and I can understand, from the point of view of disabled people, wanting to work and people not giving them the opportunity. I mean, I had an ONC in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering, and I'd worked in Walsall College of Technology for 15 years, and, at the end of the day, they just, sort of, didn't give us the opportunity to do it when, particularly, you know, you're straight with them, you say, 'Well, look I've been ... hammered from pillar to post.' So, this one day, it was a Friday, I will always remember this day: I was walking round the supermarket and all of a sudden, I could hear 'Postman Pat, Postman Pat [sings] and his black and white cat.' Don't ask me why, but it seemed to draw me to it, this coin-operated ride seemed to draw me to it, so, I did me shopping and I went over to it and there's a label on the back with the name and address, of the people that owned it: and I thought to meself, I thought, 'I wonder,' so I wrote the phone, phone number down; then I went home: and I thought, 'I wonder, whether they have agents to repair 'em and service 'em, because, being a national organisation.' So I thought, 'I wonder' and, and all the weekend, it nagged at me, it nagged and nagged

and nagged at me, it, it was as though, you know, summat was telling me, 'Go on.' So, I decided on the Monday to give 'em a ring, and I explained to 'em who I was, and what I was and they says, 'Yes, we might be interested. Would you like ... to come and see us?' Well they were based in ...Warrington, so I said to me dad, didn't I? I explained to me dad, what... he says, 'Oh I'd go if I was you,' he says, 'it won't hurt.' So I went up there and, explained to 'em, you know, that I'd, that I'd got me degree, me degree and that, and they were very interested, and of course, they says, 'Oh yeah, would, would you like to come and see the managing director?' So I went and seen the managing director and, he says, 'How do you think you'll cope with taking them apart, and things like this?' I says, 'I shouldn't have no problems with that.' Anyway, he took me down the warehouse where they store them. He says, 'Right' he says, 'that one over there' he says, 'has given us nothing but trouble.' He says, 'Now, here's the tools and the, the meters and all this sort of thing: tell me what's wrong with it'. So I got the key, undone the back, and inside, there's a big circuit board. O' course, I was in me element with that: and, of course, I looked at it, and there are a bank of switches, little dolly switches that have to be set into certain modes so that the thing'll work properly. Somebody had cocked up the way these switches were format, formatted, so all I did was format them in, put the 10, the 30 pence in, and away it went and this guy thought that was brilliant. He says, he says, 'For about three weeks, there was three different engineers, had a look at that and they couldn't find out what was wrong with it.' He says, 'You come along,' he said, 'you've sorted [laughs] it'. So, of course, he had no choice but to sort of say, [laughs] 'Okay, the job's yours.' [laughs]. So I'd, at this point, I didn't know what I'd let meself in for. You know, I had to go to different places and empty the machine and service it and make sure that all the lights were working, all the sounds were working and it was clean, and all this sort of thing: and I had about 20 of these machines to deal with and, of course, I got paid for doing it. Anyway... this is my mind working round, I tell ya. The first time, sort of, it was only sort of, you went round once a month, so, the first month I went round, and I 'ad to empty the machine and count all the money up: and... I was amazed, you know: twenty pences and thirty pences: I thought, 'Bloomin hell!' you know, it was averaging out, in one store, and I remember this; it was £219 in one, in one month: and of course, the pound, shillings and pence

lights started to flash in my eyes and I thought, 'I'm going to get a bit of this meself, you know.' I thought, 'Why do it for somebody else when you can do it for yourself?' So, I thought, I thought long and hard about it, and I was, talked to me dad and me dad says, 'Barry' he says, he says, 'if you think you can do it comfortably, you do it.' So we, I said to me dad I said, 'We'll, I'll get meself a little office,' I said, 'and I'll do some touting round and' I'd sort of built it up that, where I was, sort of, from the 20 machines, it was working out that I'd got 50 machines. This company, that I'd originally started with, started to ask me to do, servicing that nobody else could fix: they said, 'He'll fix it,' you know: and of course, consequently, they, they put more and more money on to me... more and more work onto me. So, that meant that I was accumulating, after I'd paid out me expenses of the office and everything like this, that I was accumulating, a nice little bit of money: so, I thought, 'I know what I'm going to do,' and anyway, there was this guy in Birmingham that had a, a rides company, and I found this out, sort of in the throes of the business world, that sold second-hand rides: so I thought, 'I'm gonna go over there one of them days, and I'm gonna have a look and see what he's got.' So I thought, 'I'll go over and have a look.' Anyway I, where, I come across, where was it? Yeah, Shirley: I come across, and had a look and he'd got a warehouse full of ... stuff. Anyway, I looked at some of these rides and he'd got Donald Duck and racing cars and things like this that were quite, in reasonably good condition, so he says, I says, I had a couple. I thought, 'Well I won't drum the whole lot in,' I thought, 'I'll have just a couple, and get 'em on-site and see how well I do.' So, he let me have 'em for 150 quid a piece. They, they needed some electrical work doing and, coin mechanisms putting in and things like this, that cost me 48 quid. So, I did all this and, I thought, 'Now I've got to get 'em sited,' you know so, the first thing I did was, I went to the local newsagents and said to the local newsagent, you know, me, did a deal with 'im, and, 'e said, 'Oh all right', he says, 'we'll do it on that basis,' so, of course, outside the newsagents it was, school over the road, little junior school over the road when they come home from brrrr, you know: dropped lucky. It was bringing me in, towards £190 a month... the one machine: and I thought, 'This is... really this,' is so I decided to go up the road and get a few more. Anyway, by this time, I'd sort of got to the point where I employed a young lad to do some work, because, for the simple reason is, I'd got so

much meself, I'd, it'd got to the point where, I warn't doing it all, I couldn't do it all [laughs] on me own, so I employed this young lad, you know, and sort of give him the opportunity of learning how to repair 'em and things like this and how to... you know. Anyway, it went on and on and on, and the opportunity came for Morrisons store, which totally turned it all round, and I found this out by accident, so I put in a bid for 18 Morrisons stores. So, I hadn't got a clue, I would, I'd never done any contracts, or anything like this, and our Da' our Mother was getting worried because her thought, 'Our Barry yam doing summat yo shouldn't be doing,' and all this sort of thing, you know. So I thought, 'No, I'm gonna have a go,' so me sister, she works for the Inland Revenue, and of course, my sister looked after me as far as making sure I've paid me taxes and everything else. Anyway, I've talked to me sister and her husband Ian, he's like an accountant, and we was talking to him and he'd got one or two ideas about, how these contracts are formulated, so we formulated it in what we thought and we took it to a solicitor that Ian knew: and this solicitor drafted it up, in proper format, and we went and had a meeting with Morrisons Stores and told them, and everything like this, and it worked out that there was 274 machines wanted: you know, the coin-op rides. So, of course, I hadn't got the money to buy 274 coin-operated rides, so it meant that I had to go and look for a prospective, you know, partner. So, they got wind of this, these people that I'd been doing it for, and they says, 'You jammy ...' you know, and I says, 'Well, I've got to get the finances' and everything like this, you know, and I went to a finance house. They loaned me the money: no problem, guaranteed money back anyway: partnership sort of thing agreement and everything like this. Bought the 274 rides, put 'em in the stores. I was getting ... they, they were getting 25%, I was getting the 75% of the share, because I had to repair them, service them and everything like this, [laughs] and I ain't kidding to you: it was, it, it was amazing, when, when it first started, all the rides and everything like this. I'd got a unit by this time, I'd bought, I'd sort of rented a unit, you see, on an industrial estate. And of course they were all small businesses, you know, and like, you know and ... [laughs] nothing spectacular... [laughs] on there, until I arrived [laughs]. It was, it was, it was hilarious because I'd ordered all these rides and, of course, what I had to do was I had to take all the ...details of them, like the serial numbers and everything like this and put me own badge on 'em: and, of

course, they all had to come to the unit, dairn't they? [laughs] These, these people in this industrial estate for yards around was so intrigued and says, 'My God!' [laughs] you know, and of course... I had about hundreds at time, you know, and the sort of, trucks comin' and goin' [laughs] and takin' 'em to the different places. Then, I started to think, 'Well now, I have got to get the ...' because I mean, there was Thirsk, there was, up in Scotland and everywhere. Ther't, was national, it wasn't, it was a national thing, not just sort of a local thing, as I'd been doing. So I thought, 'Right, I've got to sort this one out,' so I appointed agents [laughs] in each town, where there was a Morrisons store, there was a local agent that I rung up and says, and they would tell me, like Morrisons would ring me up and say, 'The coin-operated ride is not working,' so, I would get in touch with my agent and, and, and of course, I had to pay a percentage out to them, if you understand me: and of course, it ended up quite a, an operation. I mean I had ... I had 10 agents, in 10 different regions of the country for, so, you know: and I was running it quite well, you know. Anyway [coughs] I was doing quite well: I enjoyed it, you know, it was nice, to have that sort of challenge and, sort of, how can I put it? The negativeness that I'd experienced totally vanished, [laughs] you know. Me dad was proud of me, me mum was over the moon, you know, and, and of course, you know, it did me a lot of good, you know. Give me the, a real challenge and a buzz, you know and I thought, 'Christ' you know, sort of I just enjoyed it, you know.

A long way from... from Walsall College.

Yeah, yeah. And I was all over the place, you know, and of course, they got to know about it. Walsall College says, 'Ain't he doing well?' you know, don't, 'cause, I mean it was in the paper. It was in the *Express* and *Star*, about what I'd done, and things like this, you know, and said that, at ... fifty odd I, I, I was a credit to, to people that are disabled. It shows that disabled people can ... do things, you know: and, of course ... time went on and, it got to the point where it was getting far too expensive for me to actually run on me own, so, I thought, 'Well, I've had nine years at it. I'll cut me losses and run.' So, I mean there were plenty of takers, that took had Morrisons on, and took the contract on, and, well, I did all right out of it, let's put it that way: I ain't

saying no more, that ain't for public use. [laughs] I did all right out of it, and, of course, it more or less brings me to ... you know, sort of, now and of course I'm not totally retired. I took on a Millennium Award project for adapting toys for disabled children. It was very noticeable to me ... that toy stores and things like this, never catered for disabled kids, and I thought, 'Well, you know, this can't be right,' and, sort of, talking to parents, and parent groups and teachers and things like this, I found out that ... this was something that, you know, special needs catalogues and things like this. Having looked in the special needs catalogues, they d'ain't have Postman Pat and Fireman Sam and the Flintstones, and all these things, that, and Paddington Bear and Rupert Bear and all these sort of things. They didn't have these sort of things in the special needs catalogue, and I thought, 'Well that isn't, that isn't right'. You know, I didn't think that was right. And the other thing that I'd objected to, was the amount of money, that people charged, you know, under the badge 'special needs': and that really, sort of, how can I put it? Rankled with me, because I'd got a disability, I didn't have special needs toys and I felt that, probably, normal ordinary toys would be far more stimulating than special needs toys, if there was a way that youngsters could use them [coughs]. So, after talking to a teacher friend of mine who works in special needs... he become my mentor for my Millennium Project. I sort of, gained an insight what was required. So I went away, went in me shed, bought a couple of toys and things like this and adapted them to suit certain children, and it sort of, mushroomed from there, and I thoroughly, thoroughly enjoy being able to give something back, for the things that I've had given me in my life, because, although me mum and dad helped me a great deal there are ... I don't know whether I can mention this, but I will do, Scope for instance: their organise ... the organisation helped me a great deal, particularly in my younger days, when my Mum and Dad needed help, advice, how to cope with certain things and things like this, and of course, they were always readily there to help if they could: particularly fieldworkers, who were a very valuable asset to me mum and dad, of being able to have someone, to actually be able to talk to about a particular problem and things like this, because there were problems, and, [coughs] of course, consequently, they helped, in a way, to develop me as an individual, you know: and that's it. Do we have [laughing] to go back somewhere else now? [End Tape 5 Side A]

Tape 5 Side B [Track 8]

You've come a long way since you were talking about Walsall College,

Yes.

When, when you look back... at what those... kids did, what are your feelings now about, that and where you've come, where you've got to really?

I think, I think it's a sad reflection of what society is today. I look at it this way: my dad said something to me very, very funny, and he said this to me when he, when I was a young boy, that 'It's like having a pack of dogs, and there's one weak one: and the one weak one will always be picked on,' and I remember that: and I had to get myself out that, I was gonna be the strongest. Now I don't know what happened with these youngsters, but, the thing is that I have probably turned out much stronger than they ever, ever will, be: so I look at it that way. But the other thing is that I have a very, very deep religious conviction that the Lord does look after ya'. He's looked after me, you know, in, in lots of respects, and, at the end of the day, I think that is one thing that has sort of given me strength, to sort of say, 'Well, forgive:' as you might say: 'Forgive and forget.' You move on. If I'd've dwelled on it, as I was getting to that point when they sent me to a psychiatrist, if I'd have dwelt on it and lived with it, I would never've attained anything, because I'd've been so... insecure and things like this, it was only my mum my dad and the rest of my family and friends, that could understand where, what, how I was thinking, that I haven't got to sit down and die, I've got to get up and be strong, and that's what I did, and that's why I've achieved what I wanted to achieve, because I said, 'I'm gonna do it', basically, you know, 'bugger it, I'm gonna do it, and I'm gonna have a life,' and I've had a life. It's not the end, by the way [laughs].

By no means no. You, I mean you've come such a long way, and, you've, you have faced a lot of obstacles.

Oh yeah.

But you seem to have...

Well that, that... when, when you, when you talk about facing obstacles, it's like anyone that wants to do summat, if you, if you are determined to do it, you say, 'Right.' For instance, physically, in the physical respects, there are certain physical things that I'm not able to do... as you would do it: well... as a norm, as a non-disabled person would do it. But I watch them, then I put my own interpretation on it, whether it's wrong or right, as long as I achieve the same [laughs] goal as they've done, I've done it: you know, the instruction manual, as far as I'm concerned, it don't exist [coughs]. You can get somebody and say, 'Well, you do it like this and you do it like that, and you do it like the other.' No, the instruction manual don't exist as far as I'm concerned. I watch you do it, I watch you do it and I'll say, 'Okay, this is my interpretation on it,' and on several occasions, in my life, on several occasions in my life, I've outperformed [laughs] the... I can't say 'normal', not normal, the non-disabled person: because for the simple reason is that, I've come up with a quicker way of doing it: you know, like for instance, just as an instance: I can carry three mugs in one hand, and people are amazed you can do it: you know, they can't do it, I can: and I don't spill no ... tea or coffee or whatever it is in the mug; but other people can't do so, so that's [laughs] just an example of something, you know, where you've got two mugs, I can carry three in one hand: [laughs] you know, things like that. Sort of, how can I put it? Sort of, putting things together: now, you know, sort of, they will twiddle it with their hands, I will put it in a little clip and, you know, that that holds it for me, so that I can ... you know, I can do it just as well, it's just, you know, adapting to yer needs. And I think that, over a period of time, we and I think it [laughing] has a lot of, a lot to do with me dad, instilling these things in me and saying, 'Well son, y've got to d' find yer way round this,' you know, and, and sort of, I remember, you know, we were talking about wallpaper hanging. I never, ever, until I had me house, I never ever thought about putting ... a length of wallpaper up. I thought, you know, because I mean, you put all the paste on the one side and, sort of, you know, and I never ever thought about it, and this one day, as I say, we was

decorating the sitting room and our Dad had come across originally, to do it for me. And I said to him, I says, 'Can I put one of them on?' and our Dad was always sort of, 'Yeah go on son, have a go,' you know, and he sort of showed me how he put the first one on. Well, the next one I put on, and I got the knack on it, you know, and sort of handled it, you know, and but I, instead of holding it with me two hands, I held it in the centre, and sort of, how can I put it? You know, fiddled about with it in me own way. I d'ain' have me Dad on me back, he, he just wanted to see me do it, and ... that's what happened he, you know, and sort of, I managed to ... do it. Now, I go through the house like a, a dose of the salts, you know, I mean, you know, I strip the wallpaper off and I'll soon put it up, you know, and I say, and people come and say, amazingly, 'Have you done this yerself?' and I say 'Why, where's all the faults?' [laughs] you know [laughing]. I did have somebody come once and said I'd put it up, on upside down, you know; but that's a classic one anyway. But, you know, I, but as I say, you know, I've never let this, whole incident sort of get in the way of me wanting to achieve because, I could've gone the other way, and it would've been wrong, for me, and for my family. It wasn't just me, it was, my family that it affected as well, because, [coughs] you know, at the end of the day, they had to put up with all the ... horrible things that had, had gone on, you know, and, it wouldn't be fair, it wasn't fair on my family as well as me, you know: and I had to say, 'Well, look, you know, I'm not gonna do this.' But the biggest thing, I think that, sort of dragged me out of it more than anything, was deciding to live independently in my own house, and, sort of, lookin' at it today, it was a nice... a good investment, to put my pension into my property because, obviously today it's worth three times, four times as much as what it was when I bought it: and it...

Did you...? Can I ask whether you, were you living at home up until that point?

Yes.

With?

With my mum and dad.

Right

Yeah

Right.

You know my mum and dad sort of, you know, sort of didn't sort of say, 'Oi you've gotta go,' you know or anything like this. They actually sort of, you know, were a bit ... sort of, neither 'ere nor there about it but, they could understand me wanting to do something with the money that I'd got: and, as I say, if I had've sort of lived at home, I had give me mum some board and I'd've gone and ... done God knows what with the rest: I mean, you know: probably been very foolish, as you might say, because I'd've been at a loss what to do: but, having the house, it gave me a responsibility to.. myself and to the, you know, having a mortgage to pay, and things like this, it gave me, you know, a responsibility of, which is something that I needed: and of course it was a saving grace in a way: that's all I can say on that matter: you know..

And you've quite recently you've, I mean you you've tackled a lot of things.

Oh yeah, yeah.

Quite recently you, you've done a university course.

Yes I...

Can you tell me about that a bit?

Yeah well, I ... applied for a Millennium Award, as I've said earlier on, to adapt toys for disabled children, and I got on quite well with the parents and a school teacher friend of mine works in a ... worked in a school for ... special needs children, and I had a wonderful opportunity of going up there and, sort of meeting some of the kids

and working with some of the teachers and the kids there: with my Millennium Award project, and got ideas of ... getting off-the-shelf toys and adapting 'em for youngsters: and of course, having a shed at the back of the garden, I decided to do it in the shed at the back of the garden and, I adapted a few toys and I got talking to my friend and I said to him I says, you know 'Where, what would you' you know: I says, 'It's all right me doing this, but I want to do it... on a proper, professional level, rather than just as a rank amateur, so I said to him, I says, 'I'd like to get a proper academic qualification for the subject, you know,' and he says, 'Well' he says, 'Barry' he says, 'you got an ONC in Mechanical and Electrical Engineering so you should be able to get the teaching certificate.' So I said 'Okay, fair enough,' so I went and got the prospectus for Wolverhampton University, and I seen that they run a course, BA in Special Needs and Inclusion: so I went and seen the course tutor and talked to the course tutor and explained to them and they says, 'Oh, that's an ideal thing but, do it with engineering.' Well, I didn't need the engineering part of it, I've got the engineering part of it, you know: they wanna make money, basically. So I said, 'I'll do the BA bit,' I says 'and the, and the teaching certificate bit, but I can't do the engineering bit because I'll swamp everybody else.' I says, 'I'll lick spots off 'em,' [laughs] and he says, 'Oh you're very confident and cocky.' I says, 'Well you don't get nothing by being a shrinking violet' [laughs]. Anyway, I enrolled, to go to University, to do the BA in Special Needs and Inclusion, and [coughs] in the group I was in, there was 32 people. I was the eldest: and the course tutors were really, really pleased to have me because for the simple reason is, having somebody that's, sort of, got a, a disability and things like this, you know: and of course, at the beginning I knew quite... well, it, they start at a very basic level, and, of course, I knew all what they was on about anyway: but it was the way the youngsters really, really made me feel welcome, and comfortable with it, if you understand me, rather than sort of feeling out of place, I felt, well, yeah, you know: and it ended up, actually, to be very honest with you, that I was helping them more [laughing] than I was, more than they was helping me, you know, because for the simple reason is that I'd got the experience of actually living with it, I knew where to do the research and things like this, and, and of course I was a great help and, I was a very popular person, [laughs] you know. But, I took the BA in Special Needs and Inclusion because, I wanted to be

able to talk to people with some authority on the subject, and, consequently, this, it has worked very well with me, because parents, you know, know that what I'm telling them is accurate and sort of, you know, I can also assess children for needs and things like this, having know, knowing, what equipment is available within the marketplace, if you like; you know, that you can go and pay over the odds for or, looking at the alternatives, as I do and saying, 'Right, now then, we don't want to spend £5,000 on a communication aid. We've got a laptop computer. We'll make that into a comm... I, I can make that into a communication aid,' and things like this, you know: and, it's just showing parents how to do it. Parents are willing to give, half an hour, or something like that, of their time, so that they can communicate with their youngster: and I believe that the knock-on effect of this is that, it improves their ability to be educated; it improves their ability to be independent when it comes to ... communications. It cuts out quite a lot of frustration that young disabled kiddies have. Because a lot of the screaming, the tantrums and things like this are caused, through frustration of not being able to say, or tell a parent, or somebody that is caring for them, what their needs are. But by spending a little time, and having the ability to sort of sit, at a computer, as you might say, and making it so that it works, so that they can use it, it's amazing what you can achieve and I've seen this happen. A story: there's a little lad, that couldn't communicate, verbally, and he certainly wasn't able to move his hands, and things like this, so I set about, making it so that he could. Now, I'd looked in a catalogue and I'd seen these ... puff/blow switches. The annoying part was that they were £156 to buy. So I went up the garden shed, and I got a box, a balloon, and micro-switch and some cardboard: so I made a puff switch. Now what I did [laughs] was, I got two little electric motors and fitted them to the mouse. So you know inside: have you ever seen inside a mouse, Anne? There's, there's [talking together]

Not really.

there's two little discs that go round, when you move the ball. I got rid of the ball, and I put an elastic band [laughs] from the disc, onto the electric motor and I got two of them, so that you went up with one, and you could go across with the other.

Reverse polarity, you could bring it down, and things like this. I won't go into too much technic ... Anyway, I did this, and it worked out that he had two blow switches on a little mouthpiece so that he went [sound of blowing] and he could control it. Three months... it took us about three months, but we got him to the point where, he could sort of, take part in class, because we'd programmed the laptop computer so that, it would speak for him and we'd got it all programmed: and [laughs] I will never forget, the first day that I went up there. He... [laughs] and this is gonna sound crude, but I'm gonna tell it as it is. He said to the teacher, 'I need to get a piddle' [both laugh] so the teacher fell about laughing, and her says, 'Well' her says, 'at least he's' you know 'communicat...' and he takes part, now ... I mean he's seven now, and he's started to take part in class. He's not left, in the corner, because this is what happens with kids that have got communication problems. They get left in the corner and put to one side, and unfortunately, they don't succeed. But, I believe that they could succeed, if they're given the opportunity: and a lot of it comes down to finance or money. Today we, today, 99% of homes have got computers; there isn't any reason why kids can't have some form ... it may not be the state-of-the-art thing that, you know, that these companies market, but it is a start, you know, rather than leaving it till later, when it's too late, it's a start. And of course, I've had a lot of fun out of doing that and enjoying it, and, and it's when you see the achievements of the kids, that really, sort of, it grabs hold of you and you say, 'Well, at least I've done it.' But, having said that, it reflects a bit on myself, because, I can empathise with parents, and things like this, if you understand me: I can sort of see their point of view, you know, that, they want to get the best out of their youngster. Another thing is that [laughs] I had a young 14-year-old lad and, up until a couple of months ago, his parents did everything for him, you know; pushed him and did everything and all this sort of thing: and it was becoming very trying, you know; and his dad is into, sort of radio-controlled boats, and things like this. He says, 'Oh,' and this is what his dad says, his dad says to me, he says, 'I wish I could take Donald out, and we could do something together.' So I went home, and I adapted, because Donald couldn't, can't move his hands very well, I went I went up the shed and I adapted a radio-controlled car; so that you push it, you know, you've got push switches instead of levers, going backwards and forwards, and things like this, that he'd find impossible to do. So I adapted this,

and I took it up. Anyway, Donald took to it and [imitates car noise] all over the place. So I says to his dad, I says, 'There y'are,' I says, 'that's cured it.' Now, they go up the canal together, and have a, enjoy themselves, and it sort of makes the parent start to think on a positive note, rather than a negative note, you know; and that's what I've done. I'll shurrup now.

What do you think when you, you compare your...? What are your feelings, when you compare these kids with your own experience as a child?

I don't I think, today, I think that, you see they, they have a lot, a lot given on their dinner plate. My parents didn't: because there wasn't the funding, and it, you weren't expected to live with your parents; you were expected to live in an institution, institutionalised environment. Today, things are totally different, and they are for the better in certain respects, that, you know, you live at, with parents and things like this. With the complexity of a lot of the disabilities that are ... around today, I think that it is sad that there isn't the support that there should be. You get parents that have to fight, for the rights for their child to actually get ... help in school. You know, sort of, how can I put it? On a ... tutorial, a tutor basis. You know, you're, you're sort of given 18 hours, we'll say, 18 hours a week and in reality you only get nine, you know, because the pressures of the system are that, you know, they can only do it ... like, you know, like for instance, respite care for parents. I mean, the thing is that ... you know, that they don't get it, that, they're told that your child is being assessed that you need this sort of respite care, and all this sort of thing. In reality, it doesn't exactly work like that and that, and my view is that now, disabled people; disabled children and parents, do not get the support that they need: they are led to believe that they will get the support, but they don't.

Mm.

Quite frankly.

And do you think it was better? [Barry coughs] Or worse? Or just different?

I think it, I think it [both talk together.]

..a different story underneath?

I think it, in my younger days it was a... My mum and dad are a different culture, to today, if you understand me. As we've got richer, we've got smoother mouthed, as you might say, and I think that is where the, the, the problem lies, is that people's expectations are higher than my parents' expectations. You know my, sort of, the other thing is that I don't ... this isn't, this is genuine: I don't believe that parents are given the training to deal with it: you know. In spite of all the money that's gone in and things like this, parents live too busier lives, to actually be bothered now. When I was a youngster, my mum was at home; my dad went to work. Today, you've got Mum and Dad, working: and, consequently, they don't give the time that I was given, if you understand me, by my parents. They don't give the time to their kids, if you know what I mean, because for the simple reason is, they're too busy: they're working in Woolworths or Sainsbury's or where-have-you, you know. They've got to earn a living, to pay the mortgage, and all this sort of thing, and, they cannot give, well they could if they wanted to, but they don't ... give the time that is necessary.

Do you think in general things for disabled people are...

Better.

Or..?

No, I don't. I don't. I don't think we've really moved on from the thirties, except that we've got rid of the institutions. I don't think that there is the support there for people: you know, sort of, you have to ... there is the support, but, you have to actually fight for it. Local authorities tend to say, 'Oh, we haven't got the money to fund this, and we haven't got the money to fund that,' and consequently a lot of disabled people, go without a lot of essential things they could really do with, to advance them into the community, as you might say, you know; and, that's my view.

You know I just do not think that, really speaking, disabled people are better off: you know. I think that we are still lagging behind: very much so. But there again, we're better than America; because in the States they have, they don't let disabled people so much live within the community, they tend to have their own disability community which, I find, well, I won't say, [laughs] but I find it, you know, rather abhorrent: I think that's wrong: to segregate. It's almost like saying, 'Well, we don't want black men living in this street.' You know, where, sort of, you know on the up ... I didn't mean that disrespectfully... but, you know, they sort of say, segregate them a bit, sort of disabled people live within a community, and they don't, sort of, venture out very often to other areas, you know. Which I find wrong. But there again, we, in this country have a culture that we live, you know, sort of, care in the community. It doesn't really work very well, because, for the simple reason is, that a lot of the people that work within the care in the community business [coughs] ... how can I put it? Haven't really got the experience and the academic qualifications to do it, and of course, in a lot of respects, disabled people are very abused within these sort of environments, you know. And it's wrong, you know.

Do you think attitudes have changed or...?

I think we've got to the point where they don't care less these days...

Mm.

quite frankly. If you want my honest opinion, they don't care less, you know. This...

People in general don't?

Well, people in general don't care less, you know. They say, 'Oh well, it's a shame' and that's it, you know. It's only if ... something really, really sort of, comes up in the news, or something like that, that it's given any mention. I'll give you an instance, that I found a little bit vexing really: that there was some people up in Yorkshire that'd got a physically-disabled child, and it was found out that that child could be

better looked after in South Africa, than in this country: and they emigrated to South Africa, so that she could get the help and specialist help that she could, she could need. The reason being for that was that all the people in South Africa have trained in Britain, and have gone back to South Africa, and work in South Africa. So where's the [laughs] the justice in that, you know? It's things like that that really sort of, I would like to be able to change.

Mm.

But at the same time, I would also like, to be able to empower parents, to be able to deal, independently, with some of the problems that that they do have. I mean, you know, I can't say that I've got all the answers because I haven't, but I'm sure there are lots of ways that could be, you know, ... alter... sort of changed and altered, you know.....

[End of Tape 5 Side A]

Tape 6 Side A [Track 9]

I'm wondering how you feel that the, the DDA, the Discrimination Act, has affected you?

How it's affected me is that, to be honest with you, it w..., it hasn't affected me, at the end of the day. It hasn't given me any more rights than, I have, I have had for years. I've had the rights, as a person to live ... as an, as I want to live: and ... the only thing that it is going to do, is, in my view alienate a lot of people, because they're gonna have to spend, they're gonna have to justify spending money, and people don't like spending money: and, I agree that transport is something that is left to be desired. I mean, like train companies and ... bus companies and things like this. Yes, taxi companies and things like this. They do need to improve their ... performances, as far as disabled people are concerned, and various other, things, but, at the same time, I think that, you know, the sort of, sort of, gonna say, 'Well, can we really, really, the amount of disabled people we get travelling with us, can we really, really justify spending X millions of pounds? You know, it does come down to the financial side of things, really. I mean, I'm all for, for it: I mean everybody should be included, but I believe that the disabled person has got to make themselves want to be involved in it: and I think that, looking at it from the a, respects of today, that disabled people are not encouraged to get involved; and I think this is where ... the Discrimination Law adds weight. You know sort of, the doorways, the ramps, and things like this will come automatically, but I do think that ...disabled people have got to make a conscious decision and say, 'I am going to be a magistrate' or 'I am gonna stand up, for election to the council' or ... and this is the only way the disabled movement in this country is going to move forward, is if disabled people say, 'Yeah, I'm gonna become a local councillor. I am going to start to make some ... noises and differences, about the way disabled people are treated, if you understand me, and, sort of, that is the way forward, I'd, and I believe that is where the ... Discrimination Act will be of some benefit. It's not the answer to all the problems, but I do believe that it would, it will be of benefit in some ways: you know. That's my view, but I believe that it's up to disabled people. It's up to us as disabled people, to make a conscious decision to say,

‘Yes I’m gonna get the academic qualifications, so that I am academically qualified, to actually become a magistrate. To apply to be a magistrate.’ Put the Government in the embarrassing situation to saying ‘No!’, so that when they do say ‘No’, you take them to court: you know, that’s me, and, you know: the same with the local authority, you know. If a disabled person stands up and says ‘Right, I’m gonna be a Labour councillor,’ and goes out and gets, gets voted onto some committee that is insignificant, you know. He ain’t put on social services, he’s put on summat else [laughs]. I believe that, you know... it’s up to the disabled person themselves to say, ‘I’m not gonna stand for this,’ and I believe that all disabled people should unite and say, ‘Right, we know what we want, we’re gonna get it,’ but unfortunately, with respects to disabled people, there’re an awful lot of disabled people that would never dream, of doing anything like that, but they have got the capabilities if given the opportunities, you know.

I mean, can you tell me a bit about your, your contract, your contact rather with... other disabled organisations, other disabled people?

Well, I’ve been a life member of Scope as you might say. Work, sort of socialising with disabled people, working on committees with disabled people and, as I said, when you talk about ‘a committee’, you know, and, and it’s made up of disabled people [coughs] they’re making a conscious decision and saying, ‘Well, I want to change things’ you know, and I seriously believe that this is where we’ve got to encourage, to say, ‘Right, you want to make changes, we will give you the ammunition to make changes,’ you know. I’m fortunate that [laughs] I’m fortunate that I can talk for the rest of the world, you know, and sort of, you know, I’m not frightened to stand up and say me piece: and a lot of people respect me for that because, I tell ‘em what I’ll think, but I won’t leave it at telling ‘em what I’ll think, I will also say, ‘Well look, let me show you why I think like this,’ and, you spend a bit of time with it. There’s plenty of people that say what they think, and they leave it at that, but I don’t: I like to be able to ... sort of, get that other person to understand where I’m coming from. I won’t say I get it right all the time. I’ve got many, many things wrong, but I’ve sucked eggs afterwards, you know: but the thing is that

[coughs] I'm respected for the fact that I've got up and spoken, and not just left it at that, you know.

What, what do you think has been the effect on you, of, of being in this position, and belonging to these organisations?

It's been good, because it's given me an insight into other people's lives, to be able to, see into other people's lives, and to be able to, sort of, how can I put it? Understand life, as a disabled person, not only from my own point of view, but, from the point of view of the other side of the coin, you know: sort of, anybody can get insular, as you might say. It's so easy to do that, and I believe that, in some respects, some disabled people are insular. Rather than stand up and be counted, they take all the rubbish that they're given, and it's time to sort of say, 'Well look, son, you don't have to take the rubbish.' I'm gonna tell you something ... There's a young lad, and he's a nice young lad, and he lives independently. Apparently, he got married and it didn't work out, and it meant him living on his own. Now he's got a disability, and he finds it difficult to get about, so, he has care ser..., he has care come in to help him every day, to getting him the breakfast, and all this sort of thing: like once in the morning, once in the afternoon: and, for quite some time he suffered in silence, never said a word, that the afternoon carer, they were ringing him up in the afternoon saying, 'Oh I can't come this afternoon. Can you get somebody else to get yer supper?' and things like this. Now instead of him getting in touch with social services and saying, 'Look, this ain't good enough,' you know, he just let it go on and on and on: and it was only by, having a discussion, not just with him but, a whole group about, care and he told us about it. Now, the care company that he's got, has been paid for his care. I said 'So you're paying them for nothing. Y'm having to pay again, for somebody else to come and sort you out. That ain't right,' you know, and this is the sort of rubbish that disabled people have to put up with. This is why I say: 'that you've got care people, that really speaking, don't care. They're only there for the money, you know: seven pound an hour, [laughs] you know.' So, you know, having sort of been able to sort of talk to that lad, and to be able to sort of say, 'Well look, let's get something done about it' has helped him, you know. He's started to stand up now, and talk, about his

feelings and about what he thinks, you know, whereas at one time, he used to sit back [laughs] and say, 'Well I can't do that' you know. 'I don't understand this' or 'I don't understand that,' but his attitude over ... the last two years has totally changed because, he's been in an environment that he's felt comfortable with, and, instead of sort of being the shrinking violet, he 'as actually sort of started to ask. He's not ashamed to ask, a question: you know, 'I don't understand this' or whatever, whatever it is, and it can be so ... how can I put it? Because of his educational standards, he can be very, it can be a very basic thing, but by sort of ... not sort of saying, 'Sit down you fool,' and things like this, which normally, people do do, he's been told, and he's been told properly you know, and he appreciates that and he's starting to come out of himself, and there's gotta be more of that, in my view, because I'll get him elected as the Mayor of Redditch; [laughs] if it was left to me. [pause]

I'm wondering, you know, how you would mobilise, or you know, what do you think is the best thing to do?

I think meself personally that, y', there is one organisation at the moment that I feel goes to the extreme. I dunno whether I ought to mention 'em but, y'know, well I call them 'Dan Amusements' DAN, [laughs] and, you know, it's all right, chaining yerself to a bus, and, sort of, putting yourself under a lorry, and things like this, but it doesn't achieve anything. I believe that, you've got in order to achieve something, you've got to be responsible for yerself, because, when you chain yerself to a bus or chain yerself to railings, or train yerself to a railway line or what-have-yer, people that are not disabled, are saying, 'Look at that fool.' It gives a bad ... name to disability, because people ... you, you can be totally innocent to s... things like that, but they'll look at you and they think, 'I wonder whether he's a lunatic?' You know, because they do think it's stupid, a lot of people do: and I think that you've got to be able to move forward, in a proper, orderly organisation. Now, Scope at the moment are running an Equality Campaign. Now I believe that this is one of the biggest things that Scope have ever done, in respects to campaigning for equal rights and ... human rights, and things like this, which I think is a great thing. And I think that, you know, Scope has got to get all the other organisations on board. Once you've got all the

other organisations on board, then I really, really think that, it will be an effective campaign. But, on the individual ... sort of, basis, I believe that every disabled person should be campaigning for equality, you know, and I very much do believe in equality, you know, and I believe that, anybody that isn't ... getting equality, I believe that they should get somebody on board with them, to get them going: you know, and I know that this can be effective, and I know this from my dealings with ... other disabled people: that, you know, you can trigger 'em [laughs]. You can trigger a person off, but you've got to be careful how you do it. You, you can't just ... you know, you got to do it in the proper manner, rather than a silly manner. It takes, you know, sort of time to do this you know. But...

What do you feel about the way disabled people are ... the image ... that's presented in the media?

[laughs] The media, it, they always, the media always seems to, sort of, pick the sob stories. They don't, sort of, you know: the equality campaign, they've given very little credence to it. Other campaigns that've happened in the past, they've given very little ... media coverage in it. And I don't think they do give the coverage. I mean, like for instance, Cancer Research, Macmillan, and Red Nose Day, and all these sort of things, they're... you know: but those are... how can I put it? The Red Nose Day ... I won't say, I can't say Cancer Research and Macmillan's because it ... they're they are, but Red Nose Day: because there's that many celebrities like the Beckhams and all these idiots, getting involved in this, they give it credence: but they don't ... give the struggles that, like me, and so many other disabled people, they don't give any credence to the work that we are doing, behind the scenes, if you understand me. The things that go unseen, you know. They don't sort of, try to ferret these things out and say, 'Look, this is what's happening,' to give it significance if you understand me: sort of, you know, to give some significance to what you're doing, and to what, what the organisations are doing: like, for instance, you know, how often do you hear Scope's name being mentioned? Very, very little: or other, or the Leonard Cheshire ... charity and things like this, you know. No, Leonard Cheshire have got more or less the same sort of campaign going on, you know. But there isn't

any credence to it. They, they'll put on the media, sort of, if somebody has difficulty in getting into a shop, they'll put that on, [laughs] you know, but what has it achieved, apart from giving the shop a bad name? [laughs] You know what I mean? You know, and people have put themselves up for that, you know. That ain't adding weight. I would I would want to sort of ... go on a step further than that, is to say, 'Well, why has this happened? And why is this happening?' you know, and, and, sort of, do some research into it and saying, 'Well, look how many other people are ...' you know, have a phone-in: 'how many other people have had the same problems and, where and why?' you know, and to take it up. I'll give yer an instance: something that I'm doing at the moment is called 'open the toy shop'. I'm having a campaign of my own: and I'll tell you how I've done it. This campaign is to open the toy shop for disabled children, and the campaign is to make manufacturers, or get legislation, for manufacturers to be compulsory compelled to put in a plug adapter on the back of all their musical and singing and dancing toys; so that they, parents, can go in the shop and get it off the shelf, and plug in their Johnny's push switch or what-have-yer, and things like this. Now, I am in the process of, getting legislation passed. I mean, organising it: let's put it like this. Now in my... sort of, project, I go around talking to parent groups, I talk to social workers, and various play groups, play group leaders and things like this. Now, I'm getting all those people on board, so that we can collectively go ... to the Government and say, 'We would like legislation that toys sold in British toy shops are ... compliant to this standard, you know: show and set the standards that you want setting. All we're asking for, is a plug adapter to be put in the back of an electronic toy, so that a big switch can be put on it for young Johnny or what-have-you, you know, and I'm getting quite a lot of, quite a lot of support for it. You know, instead of going in the shop and sort of saying, 'Well, what, what can I buy him?' the whole blooming shop is, you know, so that it's 'Open the toy shop' campaign for disabled kids. That's summat I'm doing. I shouldn't 'ave said, [laughs] but it's something that I'm doing at the moment, is, you know, but I'm doing it by going to the professional people that work with disabled kids, and parents: getting them on board, if you understand me, and I believe that, when you look at it in the context of that, is, to say to disabled people, 'Come on board with me. I'll be ya leader. Come on board, and we'll go and do it,' you know. And I believe that it is

disabled people that've gotta have a leader, you know, because, you've gotta have a leader that's prepared to go to Government officials, and talk to Government officials. Not chain yerself to them but, [laughs] you know, sort of go to them and talk to them. Listen to what they say. Let them give their reasons why they can't do it. Go away. Think about their reasons, analyse their reasons, then go back ...and shoot 'em down in flames... you know that's my way.

And how do you think that's different from how you would have been?

What do you mean?

Thirty, forty years ago?

[laughs] I don't know really... Thirty or 40 years ago, I think, when I was, well, if we go back 40 years, I was 20. I lived in a very, sort of, how can I put it? protected environment, if you like. I didn't have to worry about this, that and the other: me mum and dad was there. They did the worrying; I d'ain't. I just, you know, sort of went to work and paid me board and, went 'n' enjoyed m'self, as you might say, you know, and I think that's totally different today, [laughs] you know. But as, but it's, as I say, m... over the years, call it 'maturity' or call it 'education', I think that my total attitude has totally changed, complete circle, as you might say, you know, where, I had no responsibilities, I weren't bothered, and things like this. I think over the years, I've sort of, developed responsibility, and sort of, you know, I'm responsible for myself, and not only for myself, but, I've sort of, how can I put it? put challenges... to ... meself, Government and, and things like this, and I am prepared to sort of, you know, challenge things. Nobody's got all the answers, but I do believe that disabled people can make a significant difference theirselves: which is what we have to do. Well, that we have to do is to sort of say, 'Right, we're gonna do this in a proper orderly manner,' you know and do it right: and get it to suit us, because [laughs] nobody else'll bother...

When you talk about your disability to other people, you ... how, how differently, would you describe yourself?

Wh wh?

Now, from when you were younger. What kind of [both talk together, interviewer inaudible]

Well, when I was younger I was always told, 'Well you can't do that, you can't do this, and you can't do that,' you know: but I used to go and do it, you know. As I said earlier in my ... conversation, Anne: like, for instance, I always found other ways round it. I was always told, 'Well, you can't do that.' Like, for instance, I always remember: 'You can't ride a two-wheel bike: you'll kill yerself,' but, I used to go over the park, and there was this girl I used to go, next door neighbour's girl, her got a girl's bike. I always remember, it was a blue and cream Phillips bike. [laughs] Got a nice bell on it, and, I always remember, going over the fields, and I'd got me three-wheeled bike, and I wasn't happy with that three-wheeled bike, I tell you, 'cos it'd got a handle on the back! So, June, her said, one day her says, 'Would you like to 'ave a go on my bike and I'll 'ave a go on your bike?' So I says, 'Oh me Mum, me Dad won't let me go on these.' Her says, 'No,' her says, 'he won't know' [laughs], you know, so, she got out of the saddle of this bike, and I started pedalling it, and I was up and running and I rode a two-wheeled bike. But me mum and dad never said I could, [laughs] you know, and I, of course, after that, me dad sort of bought me a two-wheeled bike. The first time I went out on it I fell off it and I broke me leg [laughs]. But I got up and lived another tale, you know. But, you know, sort of, I've always been given ...you know, in me younger days, told, 'Oh you can't do that,' you know. 'Oh, I'd,' you know, they'll look at you and say, 'Oh, you won't be able to do that,' you know, and I've always said, 'Well, I'm gonnoo' [phon.] you know. I've sort of, how can I put it? Had the devil, and I've gone and done it, you know, and they'll say, 'Well, [quietly] bugger me!' [laughs] you know, and, you know, they sort of, 'Well, I dain't think you'd do that, our Barry,' or 'Oh well, Barry, you'n gonna hurt yourself,' you know, and I'd say to meself, 'Well, if I hurt meself, it's me own fault,' [laughs]

you know. You know, and, that's the way it's been with me, you know: I've always sort of, you know, thought, 'Well I'll do it anyway.' You know.

And nowadays, how would you describe yourselves, yourself in... your disability to other people?

Oh I don't.

You don't?

I'm not disabled. You know, physically, there are things that I can't do, but ... I don't look at meself as a disabled person. I don't look at meself as a disabled person: other people do. I get real annoyed when, you go into a place and they sort of, you know, like: I've been into a restaurant and you know how you get the tray? You know, you go, you know, the self-service restaurant? You put yer meal on, you put yer cup on, and everything like this, and the girl says, 'Oh I'll carry it over to the table for you,' and I say, 'No thanks, I can manage thank you.' Because for the simple reason is, I hate that. You know, she is saying, 'Well, you're a cripple,' or, I'm sor..., I beg your pardon, she is saying, 'You're disabled.' You know, she is saying, she's recognizing the fact that you're disabled, yes. But I like it if I ask for help. I don't like, sort of people sort of saying, 'Oh, I'll carry y..., you know: it sort of, how can I put it, gives me the impression, 'Ooh I'm sorry for yer.' [laughs] It's just, you know, it's just summat that I hate, you know. It is a pet hate that is. [pause]

I think we've talked ourselves into the ground.

Pardon?

I think we've talked ourselves [both speaking]

I told yer I'd

into the ground.

I told yer I'd talk the hind leg off a donkey.

[End of Tape 6 Side A]

Tape 7 Side A [Track 10]

It's Monday the 18th of April. I'm Anne Austin, and I'm interviewing Barry Morgan at my house in Selly Oak in Birmingham. I just wanted to... pick up on a number of things from last time, and then move on to other topics, if that's okay with you?

That's okay with me.

[laughs] *You've had quite a varied work experience, one way and another, haven't you?*

Yes. Yeah, I... done bit of mo' everything and anything [laughing]

Both, you know, being employed...

and self-employed.

And so on: yes.

I was wondering whether you could just pick up on, you know, the experience of being employed: what, what memories do you have of being employed?

[laughs]

What are the good memories, what are the bad memories?

When I was younger, I had a, I had a gaffer and a bit: he was an old, oldish man, and he'd gotta a lot of experience, and ... he didn't stand no nonsense, and he didn't, you know, sort of, shine to me, as you might say, very often [laughs]. But there again, at the other end, he shined to me sometimes.

And then you had a period of being unemployed?

That was ... very boring, dull and, you know, sort of looking for work, and being turned down for jobs and things like this was not ... very nice, you know. I've never been one for ... analysing why, but, you know, I do think that a little bit of, as you might say, 'discrimination' came into it, that the fact that I'd got a physical disability.

How far do you think your... impairment affected?

It's a visual thing ... you don't fit in, visually, you know, with, with society as it is, is, is that, if something doesn't look quite right, they don't readily accept yer. That's my view.

Mm. And what... have you, observed any changes in that attitude?

Well I just don't stand for it anymore. You know, I find that, I can hold myself up against anybody and knock spots off 'em [laughs].

And then you have also had experience of being [talking together] self-employed

That was a great experience. I was getting a little bit fed up of being turned down for jobs and things like this so, I used me initiative really. I thought, 'Well, I've gotta earn a living.' I knew that I knew technical, you know, from the technical aspect of what I was going into, I thought, 'Well, I'll give it a crack,' and I was fortunate that... a company in Warrington, the guy's gave me a chance. He asked me up into their headquarters and asked me about repairing a particular ride: and... he'd had seven engineers look at it and I went along and fixed it, [laughs] so he gave me the opportunity of working for them, on a self-employed basis. The remainder of this part of the conversation is actually, in the script of last time, so I won't dwell on this [laughs]

No, and then you went on to employ...

Yes, I employed [talking together.]

take on an assistant.

I employed a young girl for the office and clerical work, and I employed a young lad, in the workshop for workshop work, and, I also had agents in other parts of the country, so I made it into quite a reasonable-sized company.

What are your feelings about the work you're doing now?

Worthwhile. I find that, you know, that my experiences of having a disability have put me in good stead to actually advise, and to help parents to cope with their child..., and I believe, in my own view, that disabled people, such as me and others, are in a better place to advise than some of the professional people that go a lot on theory.

[pause]

So best memories and worst memories... overall?

Best memories of what?

Looking back on your work, working life, working experience?

[laughs] Working experience, I think, the best memory that I 'ave is achieving the ability of being independent, by being self-employed, and putting my two fingers up at society in general, to be honest with you. The worst thing was that, when I was running this business and the insurance companies sort of, you know, wanted an arm and a leg, and by the time I was paying the insurance out for these things, it was becoming an unviable proposition. The worst thing was that, you know, sort of, how can I put it, finishing it? You know, that was the worst was selling it, and saying, 'Well, that's it,' you know. But some way or other, society always gets yer. You know, [laughs] you have to ride above the wave, as you might say, and say, 'Well, stuff you, I've got summat else I can do,' you know.

Were they, were the insurers affected by your impairment? Were they...

Yeah. They, I mean, like for instance, they put a loading on you, because you've got a car, you've got a loading on it of about £300 more than someone else, and then, on top of that, when you go and get public liability insurance, they blooming load yer again, irrespective of whether you've got the academic qualifications or not, it's just the physical impairment that you've got, they take that into account, you know, and it, and I do really think that that is wrong. Insurance companies have a lot to answer for, for the difficulties disabled people have: because they're not readily... to give people the benefit of the doubt, or trust people. [pause]

I wanted to move on to... the course that you did at, at Wolverhampton.

Oh yeah, me BA. [laughs] Yeah. That was a happy time actually. I sort of, set my project up and, I wanted to, sort of, enhance my experience with an academic qualification so, I decided to do a BA studying Special Needs and Inclusion, and I was the oldest one in the group. There was 32 people in the group and, I was the oldest one. I was, sort of, accepted very easily and very readily, because a) I'd got a physical disability myself, and b) I've also got a lot of experience within, working within the, as you might say, disabled movement, and I knew where to get information from on the subject of, special needs and things like this, and, of course I become a good friend [laughs] to a lot of people on the course because, they were, some of the youngsters were a bit stumped to know where to look for the information and, I was approached by it, and of course, it all made worthwhile because I was included within the group, if you understand me, and, sort of, as you might say, they took a lead from me [laughs] in some respects, and it was very enjoyable.

What about the exams, or the assessments?

I had no problems with that. Particularly me writing up the, you know, the tutorials and things like this and doing ... and I mean, I was in a group of eight, and [laughs] I

was always selected: 'You stand up, and you present it,' you know, and, that was quite something, that was, and I think that, gave me an advantage because, sort of, how can I put it, until I did my degree course, I'd never stood up in public and given a talk on a subject of, you know, of, of any particular kind, and, sort of, I think it paid dividends, because now, I can stand up in front of a group, no matter what size, and I can talk about the subject, and know what I'm on about, and, it's enjoyable: I really do enjoy standing up and, [laughs] you know.

So your impairment... was an advantage, was it, in this context?

Yeah, it was yes. In this particular area, it was a big advantage because, you see, youngsters, they hadn't experienced disability themselves, because for the simple reason is that, they were okay, but sort of, I think a) my age. They knew that I'd probably got a lot of experience in that respects, and b) the fact that, you know, I'd been involved with parent groups and things like this, and I knew what sort of problems they faced, within the communities.

So, did you need any extra time, or were you given extra time for written assessments?

I could've had the extra time, if I wished to, I was told that, but I didn't need it, because for the simple reason is that, I knew that I had to buckle down to it. It was something I really, really wanted, and I was prepared to, to put the time in, and to put the research in, and, and everything else, and of course, work with my other colleague, my other students, the students that were in my group, if you understand me. We became friends, and sort of how can I put it? You know, I was never shoved back to the, back in the corner, you know, I mean we were always sort of there, you know.

How did that experience of education compare with others in your life?

[laughs] It was totally different, to be very honest with you. I think that I found it, and this may sound funny, but I found it much easier, than, than doing school work, to be

truthful with yer. I think that a lot of it relied on... life, you know; on what you'd experienced in life, and things like this. Well, half the time, the tutor, if you understand me, was telling people about particular things and showing videos and all this sort of thing. I was aware of all this already, because for the simple reason is, I had seen it, and of course, I had to sit down, and say very little, you know, until I was asked, of course, you know. So I enjoyed it, you know, from... but there again, [laughs] you know it was an experience that was an enjoyable experience, you know.

What about... your leisure activities over the years, Barry?

Well... I couldn't play... Me dad was a cricketer; he loved cricket, me dad did, and I couldn't play cricket: well I could, but not to the extent that it would've been, you know, acceptable, so, we use to play golf, me and me dad did. The first experience of that was, me dad took us up the golf range, to see how I got on with a set of clubs, you know, and [laughs] he, he was really patient, he sort of, you know, sort of got me to stand right, although I stand lopsided, [laughs] as you might say. He got to me to stand, and sort of, after a couple of months, you know, I got into it. My dad's friends, became my friends if you understand me, like, you know, sort of, even now I can ring certain people up and I can sort of say to them, 'Shall we go and have a game of golf?' and I can go up to Sutton and play golf or what have you, you know. One story about this locally, that a couple of years ago, I went up to Oxley Moor Golf Club: I'm gonna name it cos it's blooming outrageous, and because I've got a physical disability, they said that I wasn't allowed to play on their greens, because they were frightened that I might dig holes in the greens [laughs]. That went in the newspaper that did. I got them in the newspaper about that and, of course, my friend said, 'Right, you'll be closed on Sunday,' [laughs] and he did actually have a protest outside their golf club, telling the people that they wouldn't let a person play golf [laughs]. Anyway, that was that, but the other thing that, that, the big thing in my life is amateur radio. I love amateur radio, I like building radios, I like making them work, you know. Of course, it means that I've got lots of friends all over the world, you know. You can talk to people about different aspects of life within their countries, and, sort of, in our country, and, of course, being a member of the Amateur Radio Society

Great Britain is, quite a nice thing to be, you know. Got quite a lot of other friends, where, through my project, like different parent groups, and things like this. Also, [laughs] you know, sort of, how can I put it, within Scope, I've got lots of friends that, you know, sort of, have got the same sort of views as I have on different aspects of life, and things like this, and, we all help each other, you know. You can, a person can ring you up and ask you a bit of advice, or, or email me, about something or other, you know, and sort of, you know, you sort of feel valued within society, you know. Away from that, I mean, I like to go to Church, I get in Church, I get involved with my local Church, and, you know, in the community generally [coughs]. Particularly, sort of, you know, the Residents' Association and things like this, I'm involved in, so I'm a well-known character [laughs].

You spoke of... Church being important to you. Can you tell me a bit more about your experience of that? And...

Hm Hm.

how it affects you?

Well, it all goes back to school days, dunnit? You know, I mean, [laughs] our dad had the... bright idea of me becoming a vicar, so he decided he'd like me to go to a Church School. He thought, 'Well, it would be a good grounding,' and I went to St Chad's School in Litchfield which is ... sort of, the school for Litchfield Cathedral, and well ... of course, you know, you learn about Christianity and things like this and, of course, it all stems from a ...early age, as you might say, and my beliefs have never changed. I would never change anyway because it is true; it's truly what I believe in, you know, without knocking it too much because, it is a personal thing, and it's what my belief is, if you understand me. I mean, I put a lot of ... a lot of things: how can I put it? There are times when I've had, trouble or, you know, felt uncomfortable about something, and I've asked for guidance on something, and I have had it. You know, it may be, it, it may happen in a very, very funny way, but it happens, you know. Happen ... ummh.

And your disability, your impairment; does that connect with your faith?

No, because the Lord's made me this way, for a purpose, I believe. He does it for some reason, unbeknown to you, and I always remember my gran telling me that, [laughs] a long, long time ago. She says, 'You're different, but God's made you different for a reason.' And I ain't saying no more on that [laughs].

You talked of 'community' as well.

Community is important. I believe that, you know, you've got to be involved within the community, if you're gonna, move forward within the community. Anybody can live isolated. I mean, you know, anybody can live isolated, and there isn't any need to really: there is lots of things goes on into, in communities. You 'ave got to... you know, get involved within the community. That way people get to know you. It's surprising the help that, people will give you if you, if they know who you are, and know, and know you, you know; and they do it gladly. But if you're isolated, if you isolate yourself and live a reclusive life, as you might say, you know, the thing is that you become very lonely, you don't have anything to say to anybody, and, you know, you, you're shoved in a corner on yer own, and it's not very nice; I don't think.

In your immediate community, where you live...

Yeah.

Your neighbours?

I know 'em all, [laughs] and they all know me, you know: particularly when it comes to sort of how can I put it, scout campaign and things like this, I go to 'em and say, 'Put your name and address on 'ere,' you know, and, and receive the campaign information and things like this, and they get involved, and they also get involved with my own toy adaption project, if you understand me. People bring me toys and

say, 'Would you like this for some youngster or other?' you know, and it's great, but if I'd 've, if I'd been on isolation, they would never 've done that, you know, but, you know, that, that's the sort of thing that goes on.

And you moved there when you

1984, yeah.

When you first moved, into your new home, I mean, how, how did that feel, having lived with your parents up till then?

[laughs] It was a very daunting experience, to be truthful with you. As I said, my dad came across and, helped us decorate it and things like this and, sort of, at the end of the day I was [laughs] doing it meself, but it was a daunting experience because, you know, the worst thing is at night, when you were on yer own: you know. Is somebody gonna break in, you know, and all these things crossed your mind. Touch wood, I've never had anything like that happen to me, and sort of, how can I put it? Over a period of time I got to know my neighbours, and they got to know who I was, and said 'Hallo' and things like this, and it wasn't long before, you know, people got to know who I was and things like this and, I got invited to birthday parties and things this, so, you know, it wasn't long before people got to know me. I'm very easy to get to know [laughs].

And [Barry coughs] your family, your, your immediate family:

Umm?

you keep in ...

Yes.

contact with them?

I, yeah, I keep in contact with my brother in Canada, and my brother that lives, well, about seven mile away from me, and my sister that lives in Telford: you know, so they all keep in touch with me and I keep in touch with them because, you know, sort of, living on me own, they sometimes try, think that, you know, if summat happened to me who's going to look after me? Now, I've got friends other than, I've got personal friends, which I've never spoken to you about, that, you know, do watch over me, as you might say. If ever I, like, when I was... not so good on me foot, a couple of weeks ago, I wasn't left on me own. I wasn't sort of, how can I put it? You know, thrown in the deep end and told, 'Well, get on with it,' you know. I mean, there's a lady that I do ... go out with. I might as well get this over and done with. [laughs] There's a lady that I do go out with, and, she lives down the road from me, and she sort of, you know, rang up and says, 'I'll bring you some lunch round, and I'll take your washing, and I'll go and do your washing,' and she looked after me while I wasn't very well, and that goes for anywen, [phon.] if I wasn't very well and I needed the doctor, and I wasn't able to get the doctor, she would do it for me, and the same as if I couldn't get out to do any shopping, she would do it for me. When I've been away, she has looked after the place for me: and she's a great per..., she's a, well, more than a great friend, let's put it that way, you know. She's lovely to me, you know. That's all that I can say [laughs].

And, and when you meet with people socially, what kind of reactions do you get, from strangers?

Well they find that I put 'em at their ease, you know, I'm just me. I just sort of say, 'How do? How are you?' and, I mean, you take the experience of you meeting me the first time: you know, that you're typical of, how people react towards me [laughs].

Have you ever had any difficulties, about friendship?

Not really. No, not really. You know, the sort of ... I'm selective in friends, but there again, I'm also, you know, open to sort of befriend anyone. Cross me and you've

done, you've, [laughs] you've shot your bolt, as you might say, you know, but, up until that point, I'll do what I can to help, if I can: you know.

What memories do you have of friends, perhaps, in the earlier years?

Oh Judith.

Down the years?

Ah Judith. Ah, I'll never forget 'er. Never, never, never, never, never. She was, at school with me: and after we left school, she, was my friend then, and we use to go out together. I tell you what, shall I? I would have married her. I would've done, it was lovely. But her Mum and Dad had ideas of going out to Australia and they emigrated to Australia, so I lost the love of my life really, cos I really, well, you know, we really did, sort of, love each other, and she was, sort of when it was difficult, as a youngster, to be accepted into ... friends, as you might say, she was the one person that said, 'You come with me,' as you might say, you know: and she was great she was. I can't ... you know, that was real happy, that was real, you know, real feeling, as you might say, you know, for Judith. Yeah, she was great. About seven years ago, we had a reunion out there, you know. Yeah, was great that was. She put me up for a month! [laughs] Yeah, she's got, she got married, of course, and she's got youngsters, she had youngsters and things like this. She's got two girls and a boy, and 'er husband and that, you know. They made a life for theirselves out there, but she, she never forgot me, and I never forgot her, you know, and we still send each other a Christmas card, you know. She's grey haired now [laughs]. When I think, when I think about it, Anne, with all honesty, she, she'd got chestnut-coloured hair; chestnut-coloured hair. She's lovely. [laughs] Oh dear. [laughs] This was some time ago that was, but I really, you know ... I better shut up [laughs].

What about your views on marriage?

Views on marriage: I feel very strongly that if you get involved with ... a woman and you, you sort of, how can I put it? You think that much of one another, you should marry. You shouldn't have children out of wedlock. I don't agree with that: but there again, that is the way society is going. But of course, I'm an old, I'm an old grumpy now. I mean I'm 60 now so, you know, my views are probably outdated somewhat, you know, but I do believe in that, you know, you should marry, you know: and I also believe that, you should keep yourself pure till you're married. I'm sorry, but that's [laughing] my view.

Well, do you think that's something you learned from childhood?

I think so; I think it was, it was sort of broad, you know: inbred in me, as you might say, you know. It was the way of life when I was a child, you know. You know, it was very frowned upon to sort of... you know, but there again today, people's attitudes are very different. It's a shame we don't get some of the values back

And what about when you look back at your parents' life?

Oh my ... in what respects?

I just wondered what meant: what... how you, how you regard that. What are your special memories of them?

My parents? Love really. My parents loved me very much, and I loved them very much. The difficulties that I had in me life, they were there: they were always there for me, and never, sort of how can I put it? Had to worry about, getting someone to help me or anything like that, because, I'd only have to say summat to me mum or me dad and they were there for us. In the hardest times of me life, they were there for me, and sort of guided me, as you might say, you know, guided me in the right direction, you know, which was something really treasureable to me: you know, that was a treasureable thing that was, you know. I was never sort of, you know ... if I mean, you know ... I did get cussings, the same as everybody else, [laughs] but, you

know, at the end of the day, they were always there for me. They gave us a good home, I was always fed well, always dressed well... never really wanted for anything, so I was lucky in that respects...

[End of Tape 7 Side A]

Tape 7 Side B [Track 11]

We were just, talking a bit, about your feelings about your parents, when you look back at them, look back at their lives.

Well, in the outset, my parents really, I mean, they realised that I had a disability, and they realised that, somewhere along the line, I had to be independent, and ... all my ... you ... life really, up until 10 years ago: no, 20 years ago, my parents were always there for me. Even after the 20 years, until they passed on, they were there for me, and, you know, supported me, in, sort of, getting myself as independent as I possibly could be. There is very little I can turn my hands at. The other thing it is, is that, they were there for me at the worst ends of life, as you might say, when I had really got problems, they were there for me. They never give up on me. It also reflects in brother and sister relationship, that my brothers and sisters were there, as well. It was the way, how our family run, was, you know, you weren't left out; you weren't left in the corner. They realised that, possibly from an early age, that I would have to be independent, and of course, today, I live independently: and. a lot of it I can contribute, contributed by, to my parents, you know, the way our family life was.
[pause] [coughs]

We've talked a bit about leisure. I'm wondering about travel, and holidays?

Oh I've been about a bit, you know. There isn't many parts of Britain I haven't been, for a start off. I go to Canada quite a lot, to see my brother. Seven years ago, as I said earlier on, I went and seen the love of my life, Judith, in Australia and had a wonderful month's holiday with her. Seeing her for the first time, after 35 years, that was quite an experience, that was: to think that somebody else had married the girl that I wanted [laughs].

Did you... find any different kinds of attitudes, either travelling or when you were in Australia?

No. People treated me okay. I didn't have... the one thing that I hate is people coming up and saying, 'Can I carry that for you? Can I carry this for you?' and things like this. I don't like that type of thing, I've got my own ways of dealing with things and sometimes it can drive you up the wall, but you have to be very nice and say, 'No, I'm okay, thank you very much,' but there are people that tend to say, 'No, I don't want you to help. Get off!' you know, and it puts disabled people in a bad light. [laughs]. That's the best [??] how I'm always very nice to people but, you know, at the end of day, it's because they may ask some other disabled person if they can be of help to them, you know. It's the same as when you go in a restaurant in this country. It really gets me up the nose [laughs]. I stand in the queue in Littlewoods, or somewhere like that, and I've got a tray with me food on, and everything like this, and you get to the cash desk, and you pay for your meal, and the girl comes and says, 'Can I carry that to the table for you?' and I say, 'I'm okay, thank you.' [laughs] It really gets up me nose, you know. But there again that comes down to being independent and sort of, you know, family sort of saying, 'Well, you've gotta do it,' [laughs] you know. I think that's what it was, was that, me mum and dad made me do things. [laughs].

And holidays? Do you remember of holidays?

Oh holidays are, as I say, I've been to Australia, I've been to Canada I've been, well I've been to practically everywhere in this, you know; sort of, Blackpool, Rhyll, Norfolk Broads, Scotland down to the South of England to Devon, Cornwall. Been extensively around Britain, more so just this last couple of years, because with my project, you know, I'm all over the place with, people, as you might say. I enjoy it: I, I love travelling. I love going taking photographs, particularly, of different things that, you know, you remember: you know, memorable, sort of, visions of a holiday, and then when you get home, you look back at the photographs and you think, 'Well, I remember that,' and it sort of sets the tone for the afternoon, as you might say: you know.

And is that ... becoming a sort of leisure...

Well yeah.

pursuit?

Well yeah, you know, I mean: you go on holidays, you'd be surprised the people you meet, and you sort of get involved with, as you might say, you know. I mean, [coughs] you know, it's surprising, the amount of different people that you get to know and get to, sort of, talk to, you know. [pause]

And when you have been out, or amongst people, perhaps when you were younger: again, what attitudes have you, did you did you encounter then?

I was lucky. I was lucky, because ... I had ... I keep going on this, but it was important: Judith was great because me and Judith used to go out together. She was a non-disabled person. She loved me: well, she, she liked me, and we went out and had a drink, and I was accepted within company. I didn't find that difficult. I don't find it difficult at all today: you know, but there again, I was lucky that I didn't have the problems that a good many people have where, you know, they were isolated. I wasn't, you know: and I do put it down to a great deal, to Judith, because for the simple reason is that, we were friends at school, and, sort of, how can I put it? After school, sort of, if you understand me, when we left school, we were still friends and sort of how can I put it? She used to go, we used to go out together, we used to go to the cinema together, we used to go tenpin bowling together...you know, and meet up with friends and things like this, in the pub and things like this, and have a drink and, sort of, you know, go to different daft dances, and things like this, so, and of course, I was also involved with the Scouts, and, well if we'd got the time, I'd tell you a story about that, but I ... it ... Well, we was involved with the Scouts, and we'd decided that we was gonna have a weekend away; so, we had, we all borrowed these tents and all the camping stuff from the school, and of course, [laughs] we went to Prestatyn, up in Rhyl, and this was the time when, they were testing the hovercraft between Rhyl, and Liverpool: and we was camping and we was watching the hovercraft go across from one end to the other, and [laughs], we met up with all these Girl Guides from

Stoke on Trent, they were on the same camp site. [laughing] Of course, you can imagine, you know. Anyway, [laughing] of course, you know, it, it sort of, you know, developed into a bit of fun really, to be honest with you, [laughing] and on the ... Saturday night, we hadn't got anything better to do, because the local landlord had rumbled us and we weren't allowed in the pub, so we hadn't got anything better to do and it was quite a warm night, so we all went skinny dipping with the Girl Guides. [laughing] I always remember that [laughing]. I will never ever forget that; you know: [laughing] but there again, that was just a funny incident, and of course, when I got home, me mum says, 'Did you have a nice time?' [laughs] You know. I sheepishly said 'Yes,' you know.

[Anne laughs]

But, you know, that, we just had fun the same way as anybody else, and I was always included in that fun so, you know, I never really sort of had ... that type of ... you know, sort of being left out. I mean, you know, if I fell over and broke me leg, [laughing] I broke me leg, the same as anybody else, you know. That was it.

What about your involvement with... Scope? Can you tell me...

Well

how that started?

Well, Scope: how did my involvement with Scope start? It was my parents, wasn't it? When I left school, then there were lots and lots of questions that my parents needed answers to. A friend, a work colleague of my Mother's had a disabled son, and they were members of the Midlands Spastics Society in Harborne: and got talking to my mum, and telling my mother about the Midlands Spastics Society, and of course, my mother was interested, and, anyway, a fieldworker from the Midlands Spastics Society came to see my parents, and me; I wasn't left out. My parents had a meeting with this fieldworker, and me, and it was decided that... it might be a nice idea for me

to go to the day centre in Victoria Road. So, I started to go to Victoria Road once a week and, sort of, you know, do different things like woodwork and a bit of this and a bit of that, a bit of basket weaving and things like this, and, it went on for about three or four months, and, of course there was an up ... in that day, they, the social workers used to, not social workers, the fieldworkers used to update on... progress, and, it was...

This was when you were about...?

Ooh,

Fifteen.

Oh, I was about 16. It was decided that I would go to, that it might be a nice idea for me to go to Sherrards Training Centre in Welwyn Garden City. Of course, you know, my mum and dad, weren't very sort of, keen at the beginning, y'know, you know that, but, after having a visit there and seeing what went on there, they decided that it would be a good idea for me and advised me to go, you know. They didn't sort of say, 'You gotta go,' they just said, 'It might be a nice idea for you to go, to learn how to use a machine and things like this, and all this sort of thing, and, of course, also in, within that, I learnt life's very important life skills, things that I sort of, you know, needed, as you might say. And, the other thing was that, it was more or less an opportunity for me to, sort of, break out and be a little more independent. You know, well I mean, my parents felt this, that it was gonna give me the opportunity, being away from home, having to fend for meself, as you might say, and fend for meself I did, [laughs] and, of course, from that point of view, it was a very valuable exercise, you know. Or that the other thing was is that, I also learnt skills that, you know, I would've struggled with, if you understand me, out in the wide, out in the world wide... out in the greater world, you know; so, it was a very worthwhile part, time of my life. There again, [laughs] I made... friends. You know, we got into all sorts of ... hot water [laughs] as you might say, you know, but it was very enjoyable: and, as I

say, it helped a great deal in respects to actually, helping with me becoming a little bit more independent of the rest of my family.

Do you think that your attitudes changed over that time?

Yes. Yes, I become more self-assured, more self-confident, you know. You know, sort of, I didn't depend on other people so much, you know. Sort of, one knew that, either I had to do it or, it never got done, [laughs] as you might say, and, and it made a, it made an impression in that way, you know, that time did. I was glad to go home, and I was spoilt rotten, but I was glad to go home, you know: and that was quite an adventure. You know, it was an adventure to be in another part of the world, another part of the country, and sort of being in that a..., being that age, you know, I hadn't been very far, you know, apart from you holidays with my parents, and things like this: I'd never been very far on me own, as you might say, and, that was quite an experience, yeah. I missed me friends you know, and, but I made new friends, [laughs] you know: yeah. And of course, I've had, I've been associated with Scope for 44 years this year. Sort of, always taken an active part in, what goes on, within Scope, and had an interest in what Scope's doing. Over recent years, I've taken a more active role, in respects to becoming on the Partnership Committee and, also, you know, sort of, been involved, in respects to, sort of, you know, being the Vice-Chair of Scope within the West Midlands, which to me is a great honour, because there are lots of things that I feel that I can do, usefully. Y'know, this particular project, for instance I feel it is a useful project for Scope, and as a minor representative of Scope, I feel that I've got to be involved. It's the same as the Equality Campaign: I strongly support that, you know, and I look at it, not from my own point of view, I look at it from the point of view of other people, that are not so fortunate as me: people that have learning difficulties, people that have no verbal communication and things like this. These type of people, I believe, can be set upon by society and I want to, if I can, help eradicate that type of thing, because, at the end of the day, rather than ... set upon these people, why not sort of say, 'Well, look, I will give you the time, to help you over these difficulties that you've got,' rather than sitting back and saying, 'Oh well,

you know, take advantage of them'. That's my view, and that is why I really, really believe that this is important. [pause]

Do you belong to any other disabled organisations, or...?

No, only Scope. The only other organisation I'm aware of is me own, [laughs] you know.

You have, you, I mean in the past, you have belonged to other clubs and groups [inaudible ???]

Oh yes, the Scouts, and all that sort of thing you know. I went through all the rigmarole of any oth... body else, you know; I was in the Scouts. When it come to tying knots, I tied some wonderful knots that nobody could undo! But, you know... I enjoyed that type of thing. I mean, even today I'm a member of a club: a social club, and I play bowls, cos I getting to the age now where you do, have these quiet sereditary [phon.] pastimes, and, you know, it's amazing that... I must tell you this: that I'm a member of the Ford Houses' Bowls Club, and, at the beginning, because of my disability, they sort of were a bit wary of me. Which was okay, fair enough, you know, they didn't know who I was, and this one Saturday afternoon, I was asked if I would play, so I said 'Yes,' and I played and I won my game! And after that I never looked back, and, you know, I enjoy, sort of, playing bowls because, you've got people my age and older, and, you know, you talk about football, you talk about world events, and things like this, you know. You get invited over for a cup of tea, and all this sort of thing, you know, so, you know, even in me older life, I've sort of, still got plenty of people round me, you know. [laughs]

In what ways, do you think attitudes towards disability have changed...

Very little.

over the years?

Very little. I still think that society does look down upon people that have got a physical disability, and I think, putting it crudely, they look at disabled people as though they've got a marley short, out of their set. They don't realise that the majority of... a great deal of disabled people have got academic qualifications: and, you know, they don't seem to accept this, that that person is able to cope with these things. They don't give 'em the opportunities, you know and I think that once you've start... these things 'ave got to be changed. This is why I say, about this campaign, 'This is what it's about, is to be accepted on an equal terms, you know.' Sort of, how can I put it? You can go to your council: how many councillors have you got that use verbal, that use non-verbal communication? None. Yet there are a good many that don't use verbal communication, that've got better academic qualifications than a lot of the councillors that are there, and yet they're not accepted if they, you know, and I think that disabled people theirselves ... have got to take some ... responsibility for it themselves, to say, 'Look, I'm gonna do this.' To apply for it, instead of saying, 'Oh no, I won't be accepted,' and, and taking the defeatist attitude, if you understand me, to say, 'Well, I can't do that, because they'll only turn me down,' you know, but give it a try: if they turn you down, they've got to explain to you why they've turned you down, and today, this, in this day and age, there are things that you can actually do, to remedy it, you know. Just think of the achievement, if you've been turned down, and they can't give you a reasonable reason why. You can say, 'Well, you've discriminated against me,' and open it up. Open the whole thing up: I mean, like I said councils, magistrates. How often do you see a magistrate in a wheelchair? How often do you see solicitor in a wheelchair? All these sort of things, you know... all this type of thing has got to be changed, because there are people out there that've got the academic ability, academic ability of being solicitors. I know people, that've studied law but they won't they can't get into practices because practices won't accept them, you know, which is totally wrong. That's my view, and I really stick by that, you know, and I fight for that. I fight that ... you know, it, when you look at it as a political agenda, it should be put on the political agenda, because for the simple reason is that it ...it's an important subject. It may be, you know, the politicians think, 'Ah well, it's a minority thing,' but it is a big subject, because for the simple reason is

that, you've got in this country, the race relations: right? Now, all these people that come under their umbrella of the Race Relations Act have fought for it: have got rights. Disabled people haven't got any: or didn't have any rights... you know, and I am glad that that there's a Disabled Discrimination Act, but I do really genuinely believe that it has to be implemented by disabled people, to say 'I am gonno... let the law live to the letter of the law, and I'm gonna take it up if ...,' you know, and it's only by then that people are gonna start to realise, you know. [pause] Sorry, Anne [laughs] Sorry.

For you then, what things have got better, and what things have got worse?

[coughs] What things have got better, and what things have got worse? Well, the Disabled Discrimination Act is one positive thing, but it has took nearly 50 years to get to this point. Public transport has improved: it's got a long way to go. You know, but the thing is that, it's took 50 years to get a Discrimination Act: now how long's it gonna be? [laughs] Have we gonna have to wait another 50 years, before the Discrimination Act is actually recognized, you know? I feel sorry for young parents, that've got severely disabled kids, and they have to fight, for services and things like this, for help and things like this, and it's only... by chance that, if Scope get involved, things considerably change, if you understand me, if a fieldworker from Scope gets involved things considerably change for that parent, if you understand me, because for the simple reason is, they've got somebody backing in their corner, and authorities don't like the idea of, how can I put it? Outside agencies being involved: and I believe that, it shouldn't have to be that way: a parent should say, 'Look, I've got an autistic child and I need help,' and, you know, and being able to access the, the help that is available there. At the end of the day, it causes umpteen marriage breakdowns and umpteen family... stress, you know, the stress levels within a family can be horrendous, you know: and really speaking, there should be the help there to do, you know, the, the ... how can I put it? Tony Blair goes on about family values, if you, if you know what I mean, well I can knock that on the head in one nail, if you know what I mean, because for the simple reason is, is, is, if he's gonna talk about 'family values', he's gonna talk about the whole of British families. He's talking about one

point two children, he isn't talking about the families that've got, a disabled child or a disabled person living within their house, you know. He isn't, he's, he's sort of, drawing the line there, y'know, so, at the end of the day, you know, we've got to change that. I'm sorry Anne. [Sniffs.] [whispering] Sorry I, I can't. [whispering]

Can you go on?

The views that I've expressed are my own personal views. I'm always on the side of the person that can't express their own views, also for families, that are important to the British, you know, British society, that are neglected at the end of the day by a lot of people, and it shouldn't be that way, so it's not so much as a personal thing for me, because I can live a fairly independent life and I don't have to, worry about... you know, sort of having to have help in the home and things like this, but there are lots and lots of people that I sort of, as you might say, am associated with that do need these services and they don't get them. And that's my view...

[End of Tape 7 Side B]

Tape 8 Side A [Track 12]

You ready then [laughs]?

Well, I'm ready, yes. It's nice to see you again.

Yeah, well I'm here. You know what they say about bad pennies. [laughs]

Is that right? [laughs] Just to record, this is Monday, the

Ninth

Ninth of May, and I'm interviewing Barry Morgan.

Again.

At my house in Selly Oak; again, [laughs] and it's nice to see you. There were a couple of things I was wanting to pick up with you, I hope that's all right?

Yes, no problem.

One, one thing that has been around, that you've talked about quite a lot, is education in its various forms

Yes.

and that's quite a sort of strong theme in your life.

Yes.

I was wondering what you felt about some moves these days, towards inclusive education?

Moves towards inclusive education, I think that, basically, it is possibly a step forward, providing that the needs of the individuals is met, because, in experiments that that have gone on, it can come out that a person may need 19 hours a week, help in an education situation, and that's fine, but, in reality they probably get something like 10 hours a week, which really speaking, doesn't really, to my way of thinking, fulfil the needs of the person concerned. If it's been adjudged that they have 19 hours, they should have 19 hours. The other thing is that I, personally meself don't think that, it has been funded correctly.

Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Well, you know, the idea, the ideas are great, in a way, but unfortunately, it all comes down to, sort of, the Government putting the funding, the necessary funding in, for this particular type of thing. The other thing is that there are insufficient people that are actually trained to deal with people that need special needs, if you understand me, particularly in the educational ... environment. A lot of teachers, also, say, 'Oh no, I'm not taking the responsibility for looking after ... a person that's got a special need,' because it isn't in their remit. For instance, you can have a child that's in a wheelchair, and they need to go to the toilet some time in the day, then the teacher will not do it, because they're not trained to do it, or, you know, they don't feel comfortable with doing it, so, before we start, sort of, mainstream education, we've got to get all this particular type of thing into place; and obviously, it's going to take funding, and it's also going to take training of staff, to actually be prepared, professionally, to be able to deal with it, and I don't think at the present time, we have got to that situation.

Right, and how do you think you would fare [Barry coughs], or a young Barry would fare in mainstream, cos you went to ... you were in mainstream?

Well, I was very lucky, because for the simple reason is that, as I explained, I went to school and my mum and dad insisted my brother was with me. I was lucky

in that respects, but, if I hadn't of had my brother, I would've b' fared pretty badly, you know. The thing is I would've been left in me, on me own, and I would've probably wound up with wet trousers... quite often, you know. My brother was there to help me and to sort of, [coughs] how can I put it? See that I was okay during the day, but, you know, if he wasn't there, I would've fared fairly badly.

And how do you think you might've fared if you were... a youngster today, in school, in mainstream school?

..I would've fared all right..., particularly with the improvement in my physical condition. Of course, my physical condition over the years, I have managed to be able to control my limbs a lot more than I used to be able to when I was a youngster. I'd've probably fared all right, the, the, you know ... I'd've probably have to been given some allowances, [laughs] but I'd've probably fared all right. There are people that probably wouldn't have fared, you know, okay.

Yes.

As I explained you know, with the help they need it's not always there.

Right, true: yeah. And... one query we had, you went to St Chad's ...

I went to St Chad's School in Litchfield, which was a Cathedral School.

Right, and I was wondering was that a private school? Or?

No, no, it's a Church school,

Umm.

it's a C. of E. it's a C. of E. school.

Umm.

No, it's not a private school.

Right so your parents didn't have to pay or anything?

Ooh no, [laughs] no.

And I wanted to ask a bit more about that: did you have the ... when you were coming up to the end of that time, did you have the option of taking exams, or?

It was automatic, you automatically went, did eleven plus and things like this, and there was no sort of, well, you know, doing it and things like this. I did the basic, sort of, you know, exams and things like this, you know: I learnt me two times table and penmanship, in them days, you ... writing.

Handwriting.

Handwriting, yes.

Oh right

And, you know, I did okay. Let's put it this way. [laughs].

And you left?

I left in 1959.

Right when you were?

That was, that was when I was 16.

Sixteen. And you went to a day centre in Harborne.

Yeah, that was in 1962. I went there in

Oh right.

1962.

Right.

I had worked ... in between

Right.

that [inaud]

Can you fill me in the bit about, cos, I've got a bit confused about the... what you did. You left school in 1959. [talking together] And then?

Yes.

And then?

Then I got a little job, as I said, you know: I got a job. My dad went and took me to the interview and that, and, it was ten and a tanner, ten and sixpence a week. [laughs] I'd better not use me Black Country accent. [laughs]. It was ten and sixpence a week and I bought me first bicycle with, out of that, and I had ... me Dad paid for it, and I had to pay me Dad back, [laughs] every week, you know, and that, sort of, made a difference, that did, you know, going backwards and forwards to work, you know.

And so what, can you tell me what led up to this going to the Day Centre, then?

Well, I sort of, lost, well, I found that I wasn't up to me, up to the job that I was expected to do, and unfortunately, they had no choice but to sort of let me go: and, of course, that meant that I had to, you know, become unemployed, and at that point my mother and father decided that they were going to seek some help, if you understand me, and at the time the Midlands Spastics Society were in Harborne. My mother got to know about them, through a work friend that she worked with, and, course, approaches were made by them, if you understand me, to see what help there was. Course, [coughs] a, what they called as 'a fieldworker', came to see us and to talk to us and, a place was found for me to go to the work, the Day Centre. It was only for a, sort of, a couple of hours a week, but it was better than roaming the street, doing nothing.

And how long were you in that?

Only about, about 12 months, before they decided that I was good enough to go and go to Sherrards Training Centre in Welwyn Garden City.

And I was wondering if you could tell me a bit more about that. Were you? Was it a ... residential?

It was a residential ... rehabilitat..., well it was residential, yes. I stayed there for three years [laughs].

And it was ... young men and young women or ... just?

Oh yes it was mixed [laughs]. It was mixed.

It was mixed [laughs].

Oh yeah, yeah. Made quite a lot of friends, you know when I there, and, sort of, how can I put it? It was sort of a big experience for me, being away from home, and being so far away from home. My mum and dad thought it would, sort of, you know, help

me become more independent which it did. You know, I used to see them about every 12 weeks, [laughs] you know.

And how did you, how did you feel about it? Did you ...?

How did I feel at the time? I was quite happy about it because, obviously, it was discussed beforehand, what the outcome of me going there was likely to be. The beauty of it was that they taught you various trades, and things like this, and whatever was best suited to you, you, you furthered it on: and, of course, the other beauty of it was, was that you didn't leave until they'd found you employment. They found you, in those days, they used to have lots and lots of, sort of, you know, people that they could approach, in respects to, helping you find employment, and things like this, and they usually found you a job, before you, you know, left like, you know, when your time was coming up to being, to leaving, they found you a job.

So, so you moved on to ... to?

I did car repair and ser, ser, maintenance and painting, if you remember. I helped out painting the vehicles and things like this, for Tilsleys.

Right, I'm just trying to see the name. Can you remind me of the name for that?

Reginald Tilsleys.

Tilsleys, yes, sorry, yes: and what kind of things did you do in your... I was going to say your, your free time at...

At Sherrards?

At Sherrards.

Ooh I had a great, a whale of a time [laughs].

Go on! [both laugh together]

Well, we used to go out into Welwyn Garden City, and we used to go on to the Wimpy Bar and have something to eat, and we used to go the cinema and, various other things, and of course, Sherrards itself use to have, have various things like, you know, we used to get invited to ... different clubs and things like this, and a group of us 'ould go sort of in a controlled environment, [laughs] but, we used to go... we were not allowed to have a drink. We were allowed to drink, but we weren't allowed to drink in Welwyn Garden City, so, I mean I, there was quite a few people from the Midlands, you know, and, we more or less all stuck together, and we used to go to ... a place called 'The Wagon and Horses' in St Albans. Now, my friend David Slack, I shouldn't name names but I'm going to, David Slack used to be a brilliant piano player, and he could listen to a tune and he could knock it...off by heart, and we used to go down there on a Saturday night, and this one, I will never forget this one Saturday night, we went down there, and of course, David said to the licensee, 'Do you, does anybody ever play the piano?' and he says 'No', he says 'It's ... never played.' He says, 'Can I play?' so David plays the piano that night, and of course there was a line of drinks on the top of, the top of the piano. Anyway, comes closing time, we had to hold him up, so we got on the green line bus, back to Welwyn Garden City, on the Great North Road, and [laughs] anyway, we decided we was gonna go upstairs, so we went upstairs and we were sitting there, and we'd all got our bus fare out and David says, 'No, I'll pay the bus fare,' and he wanted to pay everybody's bus fare [laughing] on the bus. I will never, never ever [laughing] forget the embarrassment of that, you know. But, you know, we used to have some fun, you know, [laughs] and of course, inside Sherrards itself there was, there was a games room, and things like this. You could play games and there was also a quiet room where you could write letters home, and read books and things like this and, you know, it was, it was a really nice place, and of course there was a nice grounds attached to it as well; you know. Yeah.

That was two years, [Barry coughs] that was for two years you said?

That was for three years.

Three years, sorry yes: and then you went into, if you like, real, real work.

Oh yeah. [laughing] Real, real work, yeah.

Can you tell me a bit about how you got on there?

All right ...you know. They, I was given the opportunities and the chances. As I said, I worked at Walsall College of Technology, and they were very, being a local authority, you know, like the College belonged to the local authority, they were very sort of, helpful to me: gave me all the opportunities that I needed, and the one ... thing that I really took advantage of, and really enjoyed was having day release, so that I could further my ... sort of, education, if you understand me, in respects to electronics, and electrical and mechanical engineering: and, of course, I did that, and it's the one thing that I would never ever regret, you know: but sort of, how can I put it? Going to Sherrards gave me the confidence, to know that I was able of doing, capable of doing it, you know. I wasn't sort of, you know, left in the corner to sort of, well, you know, 'vegetate', as you might say. I would, I knew I was confident enough to do it, and hold me own against anybody because, [coughs] sort of, I had a bloke that worked with me that was great and, you know if I needed a hand, it was there for me, you know, and 'e more or less says, 'Don't struggle,' you know, and he actually learnt me quite a bit, you know, being an older man, I mean he was on the verge of retirement, and he learnt me quite a lot, you know, and, sort of, fully supported me in respects to doing the day release, you know. Yeah.

And, did you say you also did a bit of teaching there?

Oh yes I did a ... [laughs/coughs] Well, I decided to join the Amateur Radio Society of Great Britain, because I took up amateur radio and enjoyed it, and, I sort of decided to do a bit of a course: well I was asked if I would like to do a little bit of a course on it, and I said, 'Okay you get the people, [laughing] I'll do it' you know. For a couple of hours every week, and I did it, and it was certainly an eye-opener because, the

people that came to it, hadn't got a clue, about amateur radio, or anything like this because they thought that they were joining up to repair radios and TV's, [laughing] and things like this, and, of course, I got requests from them, 'Can we repair this? Can we repair that?' and, of course it ended up that it was a great introduction for them to join the radio and television courses that were on in September and of course, you know, sort of, you sit down and you say, 'You do it like this' and explain an amplifier to them, and explain, you know and ... I did that for a quite a while, yeah.

And how did it feel to be...?

Oh it was great, I enjoyed it, you know: I thoroughly enjoyed being able to, sort of, say, 'Well I've got there in the end,' you know. You know, I got there in the end, and, even today, with my own project that I've got at the moment, it's brilliant, to be able to, sort of, do something constructive, to show people that, you know, you can do these things if you really want to try [laughs].

Just pause there.

Yeah.

[Break in recording.]

Just, a few details, Barry, please [laughs]: date of birth?

Fourteenth of the first, 1945.

Right. Your father's name?

Thomas.

Thomas. And your mother's name?

Vera.

Are you on? You're on, yeah?

Yeah.

Yep. And your younger brother was Dennis, he was two years younger.

Yeah,

Ye?

And then there's Lionel, who's me youngest brother.

Yeah, other brother: Lionel,

Yeah.

Then there's Edith, me sister,

[both speaking] And, and, hang on, how much younger is Lionel?

He's about seven years younger than me.

Okay.

Thank you. And your sister is...?

Edith.

Edith. And her husband is Ian?

Yeah.

Do they have any children?

No.

Neither of them. Does Lionel...have children?

Lionel's got... two children.

And their names are?

Samantha and Victoria.

*Probably wouldn't, it probably won't matter but... do you have much to do with them.
Do you...?*

Oh every so often, we go out and have a time out, like a couple of weeks ago we went out, as I said

Yes [talking together]

to you and, you know, and...

Right

Yes.

And they, are they grown up now or...?

Yes, they've left home.

Are they?

Left home and got their own lives now.

Oh right.

Yeah.

Did you enjoy being an Uncle?

Not really, make no difference to me. I don't see them, the girls, very often, you know.

Right

It's only now and then.

Yeah, yeah.

You know. [pause]

So that was 'yes'. And it's Dennis who's gone to?

Canada.

Canada.

And he's brilliant, he is.

He's brilliant.

Yeah, he's brilliant, our Dennis is.

Yeah?

Yeah.

What still?

He keeps in touch with me, and I keep in touch with him and, the one thing that... we, we do now is, we exchange things on the internet,

Do you? [talking together]

You know because,

Yes

Well, the internet's changed the ... sort of, the communication thing, whereas at one time, you used to be able to talk on the phone and send a letter, it used to take weeks: you know, you can sort of, you know, put things on the internet and it's there within a matter of ... moments, you know, and it's sort of visa versa, you know.

Umm.

And... you know, it's sort of, as though he's only down the road, you know: yeah.

That's nice. And you've been to Canada?

I've been to Canada, yes: and enjoyed it; you know.

Often? Or...

Well, every, about every five years I've been, you know, ever since he's been out there, I mean, you know, we, sort of, Dennis comes over here and I go over there, and sort of, you know, visa versa, and, he enjoys it over here and I enjoy it over there.

And does... does he have family?

Yes, he's got four daughters, [laughs] Yeah. [pause]

He got a big family, Dennis has.

Umm. Are they all grown up now?

Well, yeah, they've all left school. Gaynor, and Amy, and Katie, and then there's Gerald. They've all sort of ...

Gerald? Is that a, a son?

Yeah.

Mm, so...yeah. Just to check the name of the Head of Greenrock School, Mr Howell.

Mr Howell, yeah.

And it was Greenrock?

Greenrock, yeah.

One word or two words?

Greenrock was one word.

Right. So it's Howell; and, do you have any memories of him, particularly?

A little man: round-faced.

Un huh.

Very softly spoken. That's about as much as I remember of him [laughs]. But of course, I mean, you know, he'd be gone now: you know: yeah.

And how big was the school? Was it a big school?

No it was only ... about four or five classroom school. It's still standing today. Yeah, it's still standing today. It's a ...

Whereabouts is it?

At Blakenall in Walsall. Still stands today, I'm sure.

Still used as a school?

Yep. Yeah, it's a ... was one of these prefab, one of the first, I would say, pre, pre-war pre-fabricated schools. It was smart-looking, you know, and ... prefabricated, though. It was a good school...

And then spelling of, is it Skette's Fish and Chip Shop?

Oh aye, Skette's [laughs] oh yeah, that was good. Skette's, yeah.

S-K-E-E-T-S? [spells it]

S-K-E-T-T-E-S [spells it]. I'm sure they spelt it with double 't'

Oh right, so: S-K

E

E

Double T-E-S.

And it, it

Skettes

wasn't, it's not a double 'e'?

No it's double 't' I think.

Okay. [Barry coughs] And then another check: Mobo spinning top. It was a Mobo, wasn't it?

Mobo. It was a scooter, that was.

Oh, scooter!

What've you got there then?

Spinning top. What was the spinning top?

No sorry, yeah! It was a Mobo spinning top. Mobo, yeah, but they, I had a Mobo scooter as well... [pause]

I remember the Mobo... scooter.

You remember that don't ya? [pause]

And then the Woodlands Hospital ...

The Woodlands Hospital, yeah, that's the one over at S..., where is it? Solihull, isn't it? Up the road.

Yeah it's just up the road.

The orthopaedic hospital. Are these words they don't understand?

I s'pose checking they got them right. I think they [Barry laughs] personally might understand. [Anne laughs]

[Barry coughs]

And then it's St Chad's School?

St Chad's School, yeah.

In Litchfield

Yeah.

And it's not private, so tell, so could you just tell me again? It's a ...

It was a Church of England School, attached to the Litchfield Cathedral.

Okay. [pause] And the Grey Friar School was that the girls' school?

Oh that was the girls' school, that was, yes, that was the girls' school! [laughs]

And then lo and behold

Happy, happy times!

[Anne laughs]

[laughing] Oh dear.

I've got dancing partner

Oh yeah.

Judith Crutchley.

Oh yeah, yeah.

Can you give me the spelling of that: Crutchley?

C-H [spells it]

No, no Crutch ... Oh, C-H? C-R

Crutch, C-R-

Yeah

U-C ... You've got me at it now! C-H

If I show it to you, can you...? Just check whether it's right [both speaking]

Let's have a look at it, let's have a look at it. [both speaking]

About halfway down the page.

Ah!

Is it T-C-H- like that?

S, girls' school ...where is it?

Umm

Oh yeah Crutchley! That's right, yeah.

That's okay.

Yeah.

Thank you

That's right. Sorry, I was looking down the page.

And St Chad's Head Teacher, the name.

They haven't, you haven't got that have you? Mr Weedon.

W-E-E? [spells it]

W-E-E Weedon.

Yeah. D-O-N. [spells it] *Can you remember anything about him?*

Yeah, ferret-faced man. Can't put that, can we? He was thin-faced, got glasses. He was very insulting, to... youngsters. I found him very abrasive and very insulting. I always remember him saying, 'I'll wheel you down the office' and I says, 'I help you

I've got a barra,' then he got me by the earhole, and dragged me down the office.

[laughs] Mr Weedon.

You said somewhere, I think, that. .. your name [Barry coughs] is up on the boards?

Oh yeah.

Was that for anything particular or for having been there?

For actually being there. I mean the hall... every year, there was a ... students' board for the students every year, and I'm in there, on the board.

And then there was the name of the R. E. Teacher; was it the Reverend Salter?

Salter, yeah, yeah.

And he gave you some advice, didn't he? He was

Umm, he was

quite helpful.

nice bloke, he was ...Get into trouble, you could go and cry with him [laughs] Umm.

The name of some friends: I've got Michael Clarke

Oh Michael Clarke and Kurt Jenssen

Kurt Jenssen

He was he was a Dane, he was.

Umm?

Yeah.

And Christopher Harriman,

Christopher Harriman, aye. He turned out to be a rogue.

Do you see any of them still?

Christopher Harriman! I've 'eard about him. He's into all sorts, gets himself into all sorts of trouble. Kurt Jenssen, actually, he went back to Denmark, but Michael Clarke is no longer with us unfortunately.

Do you see anybody else from school nowadays?

Rarely. Rarely. Left that one behind. [laughs] Moving actually, he, like, you know, moving from, sort of, you know, with, living with me mum and dad, moving into another area of the country has totally sort of changed my... circle of friends, and I think, I've changed with that circle of friends [laughing].

Right. Yes, so you moved from ... look, can we just sort of, wait, I'll perhaps go on to that, in a mo. I was wanting to ask about, I was wanting to just do a sort of chronology with the dates and stuff. I'll do that in a moment, when we just turn this side over.

Yeah, well.

You don't mind, do you?

No.

You're not doing anything?

All right.

[End of Tape 8 Side A]

Tape 8 Side B [Track 13]

Okay, so... what I'd like to do is, just go through a bit of a chronology.

Umm.

Because we've talked about quite a lot of things and

Yes,

get some dates

Yeah,

I hadn't got you know, some of those dates, that you just told me, about where you went after school, I hadn't got them quite right before.

Right.

So, you were born in 1945?

That's right.

You went to school, primary school in 1950,

Yeah.

or thereabouts: and secondary school in?

Bout nineteen... I think it was... 1953, I think. Somewhere round that, about fifty-three.

And can you tell me... where you were living? Where were you born again? Where was the house where you were born?

I was born in...[laughs]

Doesn't matter.

Gornal Wood, actually. [laughing].

Yeah, and then you moved to a new house, didn't you?

Yes, we moved to Pellsel, in Walsall.

Pellsel.

P-E double L-S-E-L. Yeah.

Pellsel.

Yeah.

And the school was in...

Litchfield.

Litchfield, which I remember.

Used to cycle every day.

And did you stay in that house? Did your parents stay in that house in Pellsel?

Umm. Stayed, yes, unh.

Until you, till you moved right away?

Yeah. Yeah.

Okay, so then you left at about ... 15, 16. Left school, yeah?

Yes.

Your first... [talking together]

That was, that was in 1959, I think.

Right, thank you. [pause] And your first job was at Horley's warehouse?

Yes that's right I...

Yeah.

I did a warehouse job there and, as I said earlier, it didn't exactly work out, you know.

Yes. Well. And...

Yeah, that was my first job.

Ten and a tanner a week. [Anne laughs] Ten and sixpence for you Londoners.

And, it was about a year that you did, that was it?

Yeah, about that.

And then you had a gap?

Yeah.

and then you went to...

Then I went to the Day Centre in ... Harborne

Harborne: over here.

Yeah.

So that's Harborne without a 'u'?

Yeah.

I keep putting a 'u'. So that would be roughly 1960.

1960, yeah, it was about 196... no it wasn't, it was 1961, I think.

Okay.

I've not thought about dates, you know.

I know, I know it's difficult to sometimes do that: but as long as we get the sort order right, I think that's fine... And then it was Sherrards Training Centre?

Yeah. That was 1963.

Right.

I do know that.

And that was...

Yeah.

for three years? Okay. And then that lead to ...?

Working at Walsall College of Technol, well no,

Not Reginald Tilsley?

no. I worked at Reginald Tilsley, doing painting, the ... painting cars and preparing cars, and things like this for painting.

Umm umm. How long was... that was straight from Sherrards, was it?

Yes, when I left there I went into the bodywork business, you know

Umm,

and did that for a couple of years.

Right. So that's two years? So that was

Yeah.

'64, '65, '66.

Umm

'67, '68?

Yeah

Something like that?

Yeah

And you went from there, to?

I went to Walsall College of Technology at...

Walsall College

College of Technology.

I've got 1969 for that, so is that about right?

No.

No.

It would be a bit later than that; I think it was about '71.

Okay. Okay: and then, in, during that time, you studied for your ONC?

Yes, I studied for me ONC; I had day release for ONC: and, you know, worked there

Yeah

Up until...

And when did you take... retirement for ill health there?

Pardon?

When did you take...? Yeah.

Oh that was... I think that was about 1980.

Mm hm.

Umm. But of course, it was 1982,

Umm.

Because you see the thing is that they gave me two years extended sick leave, which... I was grateful for because, it was brought up at a council meeting, about it and they didn't want... Well, basically, the Principal of the college didn't want to lose me because I was... recognized as a very good employee, if you understand me, because, I did work hard there and I gave my job... I got a lot of satisfaction out of my job and, and they didn't want to rush into sort of saying, 'You're off,' you know, they wanted to give me the opportunity, of getting better, but unfortunately, I found it very difficult to get back in, to doing it... but it was with reluctance, but ...

So you, yeah, eventually you took retirement through ill-health.

Yeah.

And you bought your house in about 1984, I've got here.

That's right, May the thirtieth, 1984. I remember it, [Anne laughs] exactly to the date. With the end of this month it's 21 years! The end of this month, [laughs] yeah.

You had a period of unemployment.

Yeah, well... I had a period of time, thinking, 'Well, what am I gonna do?' if you understand me: I had to look at, and how can I put it? Age wasn't on me side... You know, everybody wanted young men and, sort of, you know, they didn't want people with ... the experience I'd got. The other thing, the other barrier that I had to get over was actually being ...disabled. I ... thought about it a great deal, and as I said to yer, I went in the supermarket that one day and it totally sort of, how can I put it, changed

my mind. [Anne laughs] I decided what I did something constructive about my thought, there and then, you know, and as I say, I ... had a coin-operated rides business for nine years so I didn't do too bad.

There was something I think you said or, that you actually... bought him out, or were more successful than he was?

Oh yeah, there was a guy, he ... was... he hit, trouble that he couldn't keep up his new, you know, he'd got a load of old rides, and he was not keeping up with the times, so I decided to ... have a go, and I sort of bought ... his sites, and his business, you know, and ... got rid of all the cr..., rubbish, I mean, listen to me, [laughing] got rid of all the rubbish that he had. I sold them to Hungary; for £150 a throw; and, of course, you know, I bought one or two more rides and things like this, and built it up, you know. At this time, at that time I'd got a hundred so, I thought, 'Well, I'm gonna make it more, you know.' [laughs].

But he was, was he the guy who wouldn't employ you before then, or...?

That's right; he wouldn't even entertain employing me, so the tables turned. You know, you've heard the word, 'the worm turned!' [laughs].

That wasn't the bloke who you saw in Warrington? That's not the same one?

No, no, the bloke that I'd seen in Warrington gave me the opportunity to actually, you know, make something of it. I mean, it was him, it all led from him that, you know, 'e, he sort of give me the round. I'd seen the ... money that was going in, and I thought, 'Well, I could make a good living at this,' so I decided to buy some, I'd saved some of the money that I'd earned and bought me own, and, of course, consequently, I negotiated with various... companies, in putting rides in their places, and things like this, and it worked; y'know. Course, it made me some money [laughs].

And then that was about nine years?

Yes, I was in that for nine years up un... from 1990, to 19... It was just the end of, the end of the '99. [pause]

And, during that time you went to Australia?

Oh been to Australia, I've been to Canada and all in that time, yeah. Holidays. Yeah.

Did you find... different attitudes? Or how were you? Were there any...

Where? [talking together]

different In either Australia or ... Canada towards

Well, in Canada, they, they,

[talking together] disabled people?

in Canada, they thought I was the Mafioso [laughs]. No; it was a joke that, you know, I, in Canada, there were very nice people. In Australia, they tended to be a little bit abrasive. Judith and her family were great; you know, but sort of, when you sort of go out, on your own, they, they tended to be a little bit abrasive, and sort of 'cocky', as you might say, you know: sort of, 'We're better than the English', you know. It was very much sort of, you know, because we'd give 'em a walloping at, you know, rugby and, and things like this and, sort of, you know... it was very sort of, well, I dunno: abrasive.

And what about attitudes towards disability?

Never really experienced it; it never came up into conversation; you know, it never came up into conversation. I think that, you know, they could see I weren't gonna stand no nonsense!

[Anne laughs] [pause]

And then in 199?

Well nineteen-

you sold the business.

I had to s..., well I sold the business: a) because insurance companies ... were not prepared to sort of, insure me, actually collecting money out of them, out of some of the machines. They wanted a colossal amount of money, and financially, it was, it wasn't a viable proposition for me to do it; so I say 'thank you', to insurance companies for ... putting me ...you know, on the sc... well: well, I s'pose if I could be downright bitter: putting me on the scrapheap, but they don't put me on the scrapheap but, you know: I hate insurance companies. [pause]

And how did you get into... oh, I think you've told me a bit about how you got into this, adapting toys and...?

Well: adapting toys. I decided that I was going to apply for a Millennium Award. The Scope were running a scheme, Give it a Go Millennium Award Scheme, so, I decided to fill the forms in and send them off; and, I'd had ideas about, adapting toys for a long time, and, I thought, 'Well, this is going to give me an opportunity to do it.' So, [laughs] I sort of, how can I put it? Sent off the application form for the, and writ all that out and everything, and sent that off, and, it was a nice Christmas present, because it was in the December they said, 'Yes, you've got the Millennium Award'. So I started to talk to parents, and parent groups and, you know, sort of used the school for a mentor; a headmaster of a school for a mentor and ... really got stuck into it, if you understand me: listened to what parents were saying, and what... the teachers were saying and things like this; and, so I decided then that I didn't just want to do it as a hobby, as you might say. I wanted to do it with a little bit of professional knowledge, so I decided to take a degree in Special Needs and Inclusion, and, of

course, I got a BA in Special Needs and Inclusion which, I was proud to, to actually do. It was one of the things I was proud to do, but, it also gave me the tools to actually... talk to parents, as a professional person, rather than as, as an amateur: if you understand me? And it make, it has made, a lot of difference, to the way I view things: you know, sort of, as I said, I'm very lucky... to the type of upbringing I've had. And I believe that there is a lot to be learnt from it, by other people, and...

You've had quite a number of times when you've... been... looked to for information

Oh yes [talking together]

or for help or

Yes. Yes.

from

The, there are, you know, sort of, going to parent groups, and things like this, parents have come to me and says, 'My son or my daughter can't do this,' and things like this and, obviously sort of working with Mum and Dad and youngster, it's amazing, what you can actually do, to change things: and in a lotta cases, it means you having to spend some time; but I find that, if parents are given the guidance that they need, in how to cope with something, it's amazing the difference it can make to their lives, and to their youngsters' lives. I had, for an instance, there was a little girl, I won't give her name because it would be wrong, but this little girl was seven. Whenever I walked into the school, her face would light up, like nobody's business. She couldn't speak and she... the only part of her body that she could really, move was her head, and, of course, I decided that, 'Well, I'm gonna get you to communicate,' so, I went home, and I sat down, and I thought, 'Well, how am I gonna get you to say 'hallo' to me?' So, making it easy, I got what you call a bathroom bag; you know, a toiletry bag, and, in this bag I put an empty milk bottle; you know, the plastic cartons they have that, have at the supermarket; a towel, some soap: but, in the side I put... you know you go

into the Bear Factory and you can get these recordable units? So I went into the Bear Factory, and I got one of these recordable units, and I put it in a plastic bag, and I put it in the side pocket. Now when this youngster moved her arm like that she pressed it, and it says, 'I would like to say 'hallo'.' And, sort of, you could record, 'I would like a drink,' 'I need the toilet,' and things like this, and that was the early type. Once she'd got... once I'd got her doing that, it was amazing how, her mum and dad sort of got enthusiastic. She's not... you know. She's no, she knows, she knows, you know, and, of course, it has developed now where, she's got a communication aid, and she can now, she is now sort of, getting to the point where she can now take part in class, and I mean she's nine now, but she's taking part in class, which is a great step forward, and obviously, you know, sort of, how can I put it? Being there when she was... a youngster, made a lot of difference to her parents, because... 'er parents thought, 'Well, she's never gonna do this, and she's never gonna do that,' but sort of ... me, living with these things, I think that I, you know, [laughs] I can see things that they, that other people don't see; and I mean like, you know, it's just amazing, what you can do: you know. You can make a big difference to, not only... the youngster's life, but you can make a difference to the mum and dad's life. It's a very stressful time, for parents, that've got a disabled child. A young lad, for instance, his father really, really resented this youngster because, the youngster couldn't talk, couldn't move, you know, made a lotta noise, made a lotta demands: and at the end of the day, his father resented him: and this one day, his father opened up to me and says, 'You know,' he says, 'it would be all right if I could do summat with him,' he says, 'but we go a walk along the canal,' he says, 'and, 'e never says anything, 'e can't say anything to me and I, and, you know, I don't feel part of it.' So, the end of the day, I developed a blow switch and I said to his dad, 'Well,' cos his Dad was into flying model aircraft, you know, the, the model aircraft and things like this, and I says to his Dad, I says, 'Well, how about if we get a radio-controlled motor launch. I adapt the control unit so that your son can use it?' and we did that. You can't keep 'em apart now; because they have found an interest. His dad, is helping develop him, if you understand me, and it just needs something like that, [sniffs] you know: so, so when, when you say 'I've helped people', I've give it a shot. But I've given it a shot because, for the simple reason is I think it's the parents, look at me and say, 'Well, he's disabled, he

knows more than I do.' Which is probably true [laughs], you know. I'll shurrup now
Ann.

*All I wanted to say, you know, you've done quite, you've been doing this for about
four or five years...*

Four years, yes.

Yeah.

Yeah.

*And... so you've had a number of change of direction. What, what kind of ambitions
have you got... for the future, Barry?*

I'm hope, I would like to develop it into... a life skills centre; if ever I could ever get,
win the lottery, or get funding for it, I would like to have a skills centre where, you've
got a centre where parents can bring their youngster to; to it, and you can develop
them into, the skills of actually, sort of, doing things independently in their home like,
having automated windows, automated doors: being able to turn the television on and
turn the lights on and things like this, if they want to do it, if you understand me.
Being able to select the music that they want to select, without having to fuss Mum
and Dad, if you know what I mean, and, and sort of, how can I put it? Developing, not
only the youngster but the whole family, so that, you know, they all become involved,
you know. I'd like to do that. But obviously it takes money, and obviously, hopefully
before I die, I will be able to do it.

Next stage in your life then? [laughing]

If, if, [laughing] if I don't do it before I die, at least it's on record that I'd had [laughs]
[Ann inaudible] Oh that's terrible thing to say, that is! [Ann laughs]

And just perhaps lastly...what would you want people to know about you? About you, and your disability?

What?

So that, so that they would have greater understanding. Is there anything that particularly stands out, for you?

Yeah, that... I'm, I've got a hand that is... slight', shorter than the ...the other, and, I tend to be one-handed; I've got a limp: me face is crooked [laughs]. Not a lot. No, I mean I'm just a normal, ordinary ugly-looking guy: [laughing] you know, I'm not, nothing particular. I suffer from Cerebral Palsy: and sometimes I'm a bit slower than I need to be, [laughs] and sometimes I'm quicker than I need to be: it depends. But I enjoy me health. That's all I've got to say.

That's great, thank you very much [laughs].

[End of recording]