

# THE PROMENADE, ROBIN HOOD TERRACE & CAMPBELL GROVE ORAL HISTORY REPORT

CHRIS MATTHEWS  
& LAURA SUMMERS



Nottingham  
City Homes



THE PROMENADE,  
ROBIN HOOD TERRACE  
& CAMPBELL GROVE  
**ORAL HISTORY  
REPORT**

**CHRIS MATTHEWS  
LAURA SUMMERS**

The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace & Campbell Grove Oral History Report  
by Chris Matthews & Laura Summers  
Editorial support by Dan Lucas

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## FOREWORD

It gives me great pleasure to introduce this Oral History Report, accompanying the Heritage Report on the Promenade, Robin Terrace and Campbell Grove. The project team, along with local residents past and present, are to be congratulated on their efforts to record these thoughts and memories for posterity, and on having achieved this despite the very difficult practical constraints created by the Covid 19 pandemic.

These accounts bring together a wonderful collection of personal stories ranging from childhood war time memories, growing up in the 1950s, recollections of the impact of the reconstruction of much of St Ann's in the 1970s, the renewed vibrancy of Hockley in the 1980s and the more recent regeneration of Sneinton Market. There is much to learn from these interviews with just a few of the many people who have called these streets home over the years. I hope this also helps inspire others to record their own history too, as the story of Nottingham is the story of the people who have lived in our great city.

Thanks are again due to Nottingham City Homes for their work to support this venture, and to the National Lottery Heritage Fund, who have generously provided the resources to support this project and to produce this report.

**Cllr Linda Woodings**  
**Portfolio Holder for Planning,**  
**Housing and Heritage**  
**Nottingham City Council**





# 1. HERITAGE PROJECT

← The former beer-off  
on the corner of the  
Campbell Street and  
Campbell Grove, August  
2021.

—  
Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews



↑ The Promenade  
sometime after the  
General Improvement  
Area refurbishments of  
the 1970s. Notice the grey  
and brown paintwork  
by the council. This was  
before individual owner  
occupiers began to paint  
these houses the bright  
colours that we are  
familiar with today.

—

Courtesy © Mr S J Best  
& Picture Nottingham

## Project completion

This second publication is a collection of oral history testimonies for the Promenade Heritage Project. It is partly a response to an initial heritage report, which was published in spring 2021 and featured archival documents and photographs. It marks the completion of the project and it hoped these publications will be enjoyed for years to come.

The first heritage report underlined the important facts and changes over the course of a 160 year history. However, such documents do not give us an impression of the thoughts and feelings of the people who have lived here. This collection of oral history accounts addresses this imbalance and enriches the heritage of these homes.

## Oral histories

During the spring and summer of 2021 we worked with a group of volunteers to collect a series of oral history recordings related to this area. Training was conducted by the East Midlands Oral History Archive and we made 16 recordings and received 5 online submissions. These recordings have been transcribed and edited to suit the limitations of this printed publication, while the original audio recordings will be lodged with the East Midlands Oral History Archive at the University of Leicester. These will be obtainable to anyone who may want to listen to them. Similarly, this publication will be freely available online and within the local library service.

## How the project began

On the 100th anniversary of the 1919 Addison Act, which paved the way for large-scale council housing, Nottingham City Homes completed a programme of refurbishment to 16 listed council houses on The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove. This sparked a renewed interest in the history of this area and so a successful bid was made to the National Lottery Heritage Fund for a project that celebrated the history of these houses.

In 1973 The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove were officially designated as a General Improvement Area, which saved these streets from the wrecking ball. This endowed the City of Nottingham with an impressive heritage that now spans over 160 years and gives insight to some of the city's most debated historical issues.

Today these streets are a distinctive and popular part of the St Ann's and Sneinton district of Nottingham, though their history has not often been broadcast. This heritage project, made possible by money raised by National Lottery players, is an opportunity to tell this story.

[www.thepromenadeheritageproject.org](http://www.thepromenadeheritageproject.org)







## 2. ORAL HISTORIES

← Rex Coker's sister Glenys,  
outside 29 Campbell  
Grove, c. 1963.

—

Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews



## THE CONSERVATION OFFICER

**“A cursory glance at the buildings from the front elevation tells us they were solidly built; 9” walls laid in Flemish bond.”**

Online Submission from Toby Ebbs  
August 2021

← From left to right,  
numbers 22–24 The  
Promenade, August 2021

–  
Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### Listing status

Historic England, the government body with statutory power to care for the historic environment, designate buildings at listed status either for their architectural or historical significance, or both. The houses built at The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove are not architecturally outstanding examples of their typology. They are fine mid-nineteenth century buildings, but much of their significance derives from their historical narrative as some of the first houses to be built on the open fields following the 1845 Enclosure Act. It is only when further consideration is given to the buildings' historic significance that we begin to better understand the importance of the architecture.

### The 1845 Enclosure Act

The 1845 Nottingham Enclosure Act has long been a subject of considerable interest to urban historians. The Corporation (Nottingham City Council as we know it today), under the leadership of hosiery merchants and Freemen of the Borough, held the power to enclose the open fields around the old town to release land for development – but had resisted pressure to do so since the late eighteenth century. This led to spiralling population density and some of the worst slum housing conditions in the country. The government's 1842 report on the 'sanitary conditions of the labouring population of Great Britain' exposed Nottingham's awful record on housing and forced the Corporation into submitting a bill for the enclosure of Nottingham's open fields in 1844, receiving royal assent on 30th June 1845.

By 1845 there was no national codified set of building or planning regulations in Britain. The control over the construction of buildings was established (enshrined in law) through either local 'Building Acts', 'Improvement Acts', or in the case of Nottingham, 'Enclosure Acts'. To avoid the construction of poor-quality slum housing, a strict set of building regulations were established through the Nottingham Enclosure Act. It is worth repeating those most relevant to our story in full:

1. Each house shall be provided with an attached yard or garden and shall not be enclosed on more than two sides
2. No w.c without a trapped soil-pan and sufficient supply of water to cleanse the same
3. Houses to be two bricks thick with the ground floor 12" above ground and laid hollow
4. No noxious or dangerous trades such as blood boiler, bone-boiler, offal collector, manure dealer, tripe boiler, slaughter of cattle, gun-powder maker, detonating maker or other violently explosive compounds
5. Every dwelling house shall be constructed with and possess at least three distinct bedrooms above the ground floor thereof.

How well intentioned were these Corporation building regulations? We shall never know. There is historiographical debate around the possible nefarious intentions of the Corporation; some historians allege the strictures of the building regulations, particularly the obligation to build houses with a minimum of three bedrooms, priced out the poorest inhabitants and kept them trapped in slum housing that may have belonged to 'the vested interests'.

What we can be certain of is the build quality of the new houses at the Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove; they conformed to the high standards set by the Enclosure Act and there was never any chance of the properties being used for blood boiling or making violently explosive compounds! A cursory glance at the buildings from the front elevation tells us they were solidly built; 9" walls laid in Flemish bond (a late example, as English bond became more popular post-1850s); air bricks at sub-floor level provide evidence of well ventilated rooms laid on suspended timber floors (not laid directly onto earth); large two/two paned sash windows allowed for floods of natural light (smaller casement windows were ubiquitous in more humble properties); dog-toothed eaves on Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove supported cast-iron rain water goods. The dog toothing is mysteriously absent from the Promenade, perhaps deemed not 'polite' enough for this very late example

of Palladianism, with its restrained classical proportions?

### Palladian

The Promenade was clearly intended as the centrepiece of this development, clearly visible from public view, sited on land overlooking the new cricket ground laid out for the Corporation. The Palladian style reminds us of the elegant rows of Georgian terraced houses found in any provincial town or large city in Britain, built between the years 1750-1840. After this period, British domestic architecture for the higher classes often employed a more 'eclectic style', with the heavier ornamentation of gothic and classical motifs very often combined. This was not the case at the Promenade – built 1856 onwards – which could easily and incorrectly lead us to date the buildings as Georgian. By the time the Promenade was built, Queen Victoria was firmly on the throne and the loose moral transgressions of the Georgian era were a thing of the past.

### Aspirant workers housing

We must be careful to avoid overly associating any of the houses at The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace or Campbell Grove as 'high status'. Recent research has shown, through interrogation of the earliest indicative ground plan, that the original intention had been to sell lots for the building of larger, probably detached properties.

The land was being sold by the Trustees of the Freeman (seeking compensation for their loss of 'common rights' following enclosure) and, like all developers, they wanted to maximise profit from the land. Unfortunately, the mercantile classes chose to live elsewhere; the area was not to become the salubrious suburb the Freeman hoped for. This does not mean it was to become slum housing, as the building regulations for all new housing on the enclosed land strictly forbid it.

Instead, attention turned to attracting a lower class of resident; skilled (rather than unskilled) workers. This explains the higher density of terraced properties and smaller footprints. There are occasional double fronted houses found along the front row of The Promenade – the flagship properties – but the overwhelming majority are narrow



in width, lack hallways, open up directly into the living rooms and feature steep, uncompromising staircases to access the upper floors.

These modestly scaled houses, well-built and affordable to an upwardly mobile class of skilled workers, were some of the very first to come onto the market in Nottingham's former open fields. The builder John Holloway, who had taken the land from the Freeman's Committee on a 99-year lease, took care and attention in the articulation of the front elevations.

There is a carefully composed and balanced rhythm to the alignment of doors and windows across each façade. The craftsmanship of the brickwork can be seen in the tight, precise mortar joints. The round arched window and door heads, also in brick, are the most distinctive feature of the restrained Palladian style; the clay is moulded and shaped into individual elements before they are fired, so the bricks form an arch, although they are not the finest examples of 'rubbed' and 'gauged' bricks as can be found on earlier Georgian townhouses in Nottingham's Lace Market and around the Nottingham Castle Estate.

As we move across each elevation, we find such examples of high-quality craftsmanship delivered on a tight budget. Brick window lintels along the Promenade are rendered to appear as stone, but still feature decorative chamfers with moulded stops. The quality of the brickwork, beyond the window and door arches, is varied in texture and colour, lacking the finesse of higher status town houses, where the process of tempering the clay (extracting the impurities) has been more vigorously applied.

### Changing styles

By the time of construction in 1856, the more primitive methods of brick manufacturing are still in operation here, although the more precise production techniques of wire-cut clay extrusion and regulated kiln firing are just around the corner, as seen in striking contrast to the later arts & crafts style properties located on the adjacent Harcourt Terrace, built in the late 1870s – early 1880s.

The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove are built just over a decade

earlier than Harcourt Terrace, yet the two styles could not be further apart; by the late 1870s, the words of social critics John Ruskin and William Morris had captured the British architectural imaginary. The terraced house builder was now making use of every available material brought in by the railways to articulate the new arts and crafts style; Staffordshire blue bricks, terracotta panels, perforated ridge tiles and decorative barge boards. These materials were not so easily available to John Holloway in 1856 and the early Victorians, untouched as yet by the domestic revival style, had no demand for them.

### Legacy

Such is the architectural legacy of the Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove. They are listed at Grade II for their historic and architectural merit. They provide a fascinating insight into the world of mid-nineteenth century property speculation, following the passing of the 1845 Enclosure Act and the ensuing 'gold rush' to develop on Nottingham's open fields.



## REX COKER

**“Winter, it was sliding and sleighing. The summer, it was cricket and football and we really enjoyed that park.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
June 2021

← The back yard of number 29 Campbell Grove, c. 1950. Rex Coker is on the left, next to his cousins Hazel (centre) and Barrie (right). Behind them is Ritson Terrace, with a factory at the back.

—

Courtesy © Rex Coker

## Family

I’m Rex Coker and I’m living at Bestwood Park Estate at the moment. All the family came to Campbell Grove. I have worked it out and done the family history, and they must have moved about 1913, because my grandparents, they were married in 1904 with my grandmother coming from Canada.

And then she was actually born in Nottingham, and then went to Canada and then she came back again. And I don’t know when she came over, but she married in 1904 on a Christmas Eve of all times at St Ann’s church. And then lived at Leicester Street on the 1911 census with her parents.

My two uncles were born there, and one aunt. Now, the aunt died as a baby and one of the uncles died as a baby. So when they moved to Campbell Grove which was about two years later, they had lost two children already but they’d got two survivors from there, and that was aunt Alice and my uncle Fred. Fred was the first of the lads of four boys, the other three were all born at Campbell Grove and I have a photograph taken in 1915 and it has my grandmother, my uncle and my great-grandmother, my Aunt Alice and a cousin from Canada on it that was taken in 1915 by my grandfather, two days before he went off to the First World War.

Now, next thing after that, my father was born in 1915 and he lived there until he got married, which was 1938. And after marriage, he moved into a house, two doors down from my grandmother, number 32 until number 29 became empty. And then him and my mother moved to number 29. So now we got two houses.

My uncle Stan got married and his wife who had come from number 15 in the Grove, the Sherwood’s, they got married and they lived at number 8 Campbell Grove and later their firstborn child, Pat, when she was old enough, she moved into number 10. So we’re now taking over four houses in the Grove and one, which was my cousins, my mother’s relatives. So it left us with quite a Grove full for a very long time.

## Bonfire Night

The main thing we used to do and every year, this was every other house in the Grove in the front had a tree in it, nobody ever trimmed the trees, only the night before bonfire night and everybody was out with the children, up in the trees, trimming them back again and all of it went to the big bonfire which was held in Scarborough Street. Right outside our back gate and we had a massive one every year.

## The community & local area

And in all, it was a good community, these two shops at the bottom, the greengrocers one side, the grocer's and beer-off the other. So they did very well.

Right opposite me on Scarborough Street, there was a Terrace. Richmond Terrace. Now there's ten houses in there and at the end of the back of it there is a really big factory.

Now at the moment I can't remember what factory it was but two of the floors in it were owned by Boots, one by a hosiery company and part of one was owned by an electrical contractor. Who in later life I worked for a short time, delivery, that was quite good.

But most of the children around there went to Bath Street school, but no longer a school now, and we had to go down through the side of the park there. We used to call it Parkside, across Bath Street, into school. So we're only a couple of moments away from it.

And the local park there, facing The Promenade. We all usually played on that all year round. Winter, it was sliding and sleighing. The summer, it was cricket and football and we really enjoyed that park.

## As Children, playing

And of course, as children, we played all around there and our favourite thing was, we'd go up onto what we used to call the arch, which was, I think it was a printers works up there between Robin Hood Terrace and Harcourt Terrace and we used to go up there if it was raining when we're playing in the back street. And if we were not being very good, we used to carry up around the back, down the side of the gardens of Robin Hood Terrace and climb over the wall and play in the cemetery as it was then.

But I had good friends in Robin Hood Terrace as well, they had a front garden, there was an alleyway here and all around it, around the back and everything. We used to call it part of the backs. And you go to my friend's back door and go through the arch, turn left and to his house from the back. It was good fun.

But I think it was a lot better than it is now to be honest. Now, the church is gone, there used to be a coal yard, that's gone. So they've just got a big car park there now.

## The Methodist Church

It was a Methodist Church. They did have Sunday services in the evening but we'd go to Sunday school and we used to go downstairs. Now, the main body of the church for services was upstairs. So it was like three levels and it was a nice place. It was run by a family called Vinard.

And one of them, Brian, he was a councillor, Councillor Vinard, and his dad, he ran that church. He wasn't an ordained minister for a long time, but [on some occasions] they got one from Carlton, he came down to run the service, but it was a nice chapel very, very good.

And one of the things we used to do. We had coal from the coalmen. I think they were the Norths. They use to bring the coal up. Of course they could carry it from the yard to the houses because it was just up the street and every house on Campbell Grove had got a cellar and they used to lift the grate and down it went.

I went to the chapel. But when I was old enough, I joined Cubs, Cub Scouts, and I went to St Catherine's Cub Scouts. They were the nearest and I started going to their Sunday School. We had to go every so often with the Cubs because we were part of the church ... and I waited till I went into the Scouts and I packed it up then.

There was the two shops in the bottom of the Grove, there was one on the corner of Hawkrigge Street and Lamartine Street. Opposite the corner there was a bread shop, we called it the cob shop, and on Robin Hood Street down the other side of the block starting from Campbell Street, you got the Colin Campbell Pub on the corner. Next to that was Booties ice cream makers.



## Doing things at home

My grandmother, used to do some lace work. A lot of people did in the area. My aunt, they all did the same. My mother didn't, but she wasn't in the best of health. My mother passed away quite early. She was 49.

## War stories

At the end of the war. They had a big party and that was done in Richmond Terrace with tables set out along the houses each side and all the children in the area had a big party down there. Some of the parents and older ones had a good drinking party as well. But there were good families all around.

I can remember a couple of instances when I was very young. And I'd still got a pram or a pushchair or something, but it was when we were still at number 32 while Dad was in the Army. And I remember my mother ... [had] been hanging washing out, she put me down and dived across the top of me and a plane went over the top, German plane with a machine gun.

But I believe on the cemetery, there was definitely an anti-aircraft gun on that one, and guns down the gun factory, and the plane was brought down just over the toll bridge in the field. I can remember that one very well.

## What were the people like?

Well they'd got all kinds of jobs. There was quite a lot of elderly people that seemed to be in the Grove as well. My uncle Stan, he was in the printing trade, which follows from what my grandfather used to be in. My dad worked at the post office, Arthur was in engineering, which I ended up in after the post office.

## Friends

John Wood was my mate. But John Wood used to go on a motorbike all over the place and there's another friend of mine as well, Ted Collins. He was older than me, but we both were motorcyclists. So we used to go about together. There's the Allsops, Bob Allsop. He was a good friend. One of the gang if you like. And it is funny how you say they were gangs or in different areas at that time. We were the Scarborough Street gang but all used to get together and play as well. We all went to the same school so it's quite good.

## Colin Campbell pub

I went to the Colin Campbell. That was my local when I was old enough and my mum and dad went there. Perhaps once a month. They weren't really drinkers but I used to go down to that one. Used to play for the darts team down there.

As a pub it was very nice. There was a local lad, another friend of mine, went to school, John Glover. And he lived actually on Robin Hood Street and he used to go in there because he could play the piano. You know, he was so young, but he played by ear and any music, it was amazing. And he used go in there when he was old enough, you know, and play piano while we were having a good evening.

## Leaving

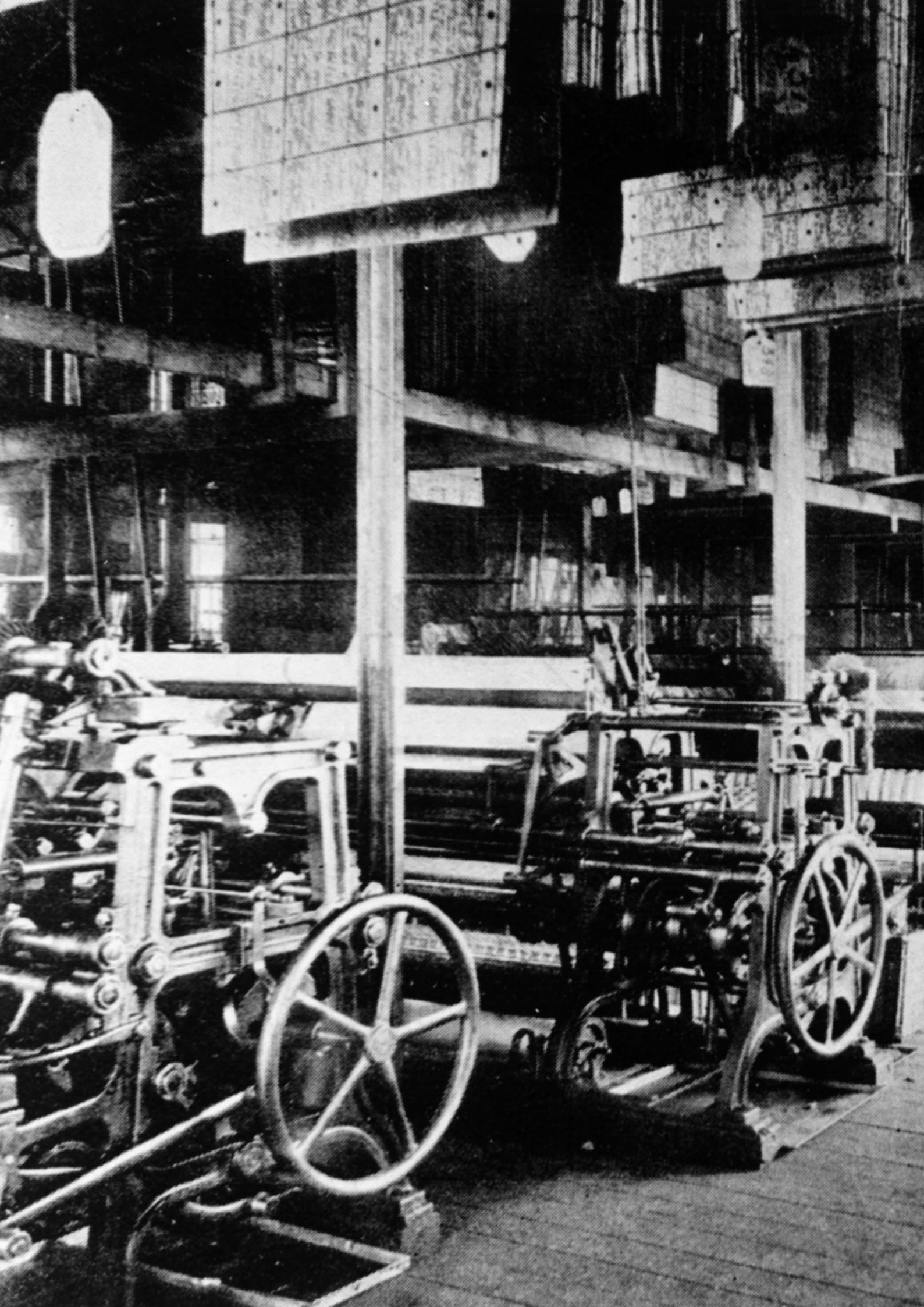
The first time I left was when I was about 22 and then I came back when mother was very poorly. So I'd been away for about two years at the most, I lived at first in a flat in Bridgford. Then I went to live with a friend at Long Eaton. Then I moved back down to Campbell Grove when my mum was bad and she was in hospital, and was there all the time from then on.

Then we'd get a house, renting, decorated, on Union Road. We got married in 1965.. We were there four and half years and then we moved up here. And we moved [to Bestwood Park] in 1969.

Well, we had to leave Union Road, because they were going to start demolishing and that's when we moved up here. They started on St Ann's about 1970, well, they wanted us to move and they found us this council house here because mine on Union Road wasn't a council house.

But the council said they want you to move, but they will find you a house and they did, they showed us one to start with ... it was horrible and we told them we're not having that one and they said we've got you one more you can have and they gave us this one and I says "yes please".

And then we moved up here. There's nothing wrong with the old St Ann's, they got some wonderful shops up there.



## DENISE CREASEY

**“John Fountain was now working as a lace machine builder.”**

Online submission  
April 2021

My Father Kenneth Fountain lived with his family at 19 The Promenade, although at the time of the 1939 census he was not listed there as he had been called up to the forces. I thought the following information may be useful for the project. I have included some background information which illustrates some social history of rural people moving to industrial areas in the late 1800s/early 1900s.

### 19 The Promenade Nottingham (1930s - 60s)

John Albert Fountain was born on 22 December 1884 in Long Sutton, Lincolnshire. His father, Frank was 27 and a blacksmith and farrier of at least four generations. His mother, Sarah, was 23. They moved to Nottingham in the late 1800s when farming was becoming mechanised and presumably for work in the lace factories. They were living on Chaucer Terrace in 1901. John worked as a bobbin & carriage lace worker and married Jennie Beale Turpie in 1908. They were both living on Hawkrigde Street but by 1911 they lived on King's Lynn Terrace, moving back on to Hawkrigde Street by 1918. They had five children in 12 years. Sometime after 1922 they had moved to 19 The Promenade where they were living in 1939. John's Brother-in-Law (John Turpie) was also living with them at this time. John Fountain was now working as a lace machine builder. His wife, Jennie, passed away in 1942 whilst still living at 19 The Promenade, where John remained with his family until he died on 8 August 1962 at the age of 77. The family moved soon after.

← Lace machines belonging to Pratt, Hurst and Co. These are the type of machines which John Fountain would have been familiar with.

—

Courtesy © Picture Nottingham and Nottingham City Council







## IAN DEAN & MARK TANSER

**“I think there’s a great mix of people. There’s a community spirit, there’s an active Residents’ Association that look after the interests of everyone in the estate.”**

Recorded by Alison Maiden  
July 2021

← Promenade houses 24–19, giving some indication of the sociable nature of the front gardens enjoyed by Ian Dean and Mark Tanser. Photograph taken August 2021.

–  
Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### How long have you lived on The Promenade?

Mark Tanser - We bought this house almost exactly two years ago now... It was the 20th of July, 2019. We’ve lived in this area since September 2018, just around the corner.

### Would you like to explain how you first came to live in your beautiful home?

Ian Dean - We were looking at a property... called The Fruit Market down there, it was a new development. We’d been looking at it for some time and we even put a deposit down and it never really worked out... One of the properties we did see was 25 [The Promenade] and we went to look at it... We liked the look of the area [but] we didn’t think we could afford it at the time and then a property came up on Robin Hood Street at the bottom... We bought that, but... because it’s on the road there’s quite a lot of noise. It was two doors down from the corner shop, so people would be outside... being quite rowdy...

Mark - It wasn’t the environment that we expected because we were off The Promenade. We made a decision one day, when this house [on The Promenade] came on the market that we’d try for it and luckily – and we do feel very lucky – we managed to secure it and move round the corner... It’s like a different world around here... Before we even moved in, once we had the offer accepted, we had picnics out the front here, and people came from all around and sat with us out the front...

Ian - We met a lot of the neighbours that day... we couldn’t wait to get in the house. We got a massive picnic mat and we sat it right in front of our house. And then before we knew it, all the neighbours came around with bottles of wine...

Mark - It was so nice and it’s so surprising around here how many different nationalities there are just living in this small area. We’ve got Canadian friends, Irish, we made Australian friends, New Zealand, German... Dutch... Italian. There’s a massive melting pot of different nationalities and cultures... in the area and everybody pretty much gets along with everyone else...

Ian - I think some of the older tenants that have been here for quite some time, they

seem to think that we think we're above them, or something, but that's not it at all. We actually really like the difference and the influence we all have on one another.

**Do you think that's something about Nottingham, or do you think it's specific / more concentrated in this particular area?**

Mark - Everybody says that, that lives here though, it's an environment and it's an atmosphere that they've never experienced before... Quite a lot of people have not lived many other places than here but some others that have lived here for many years say that things now are better than they've ever been. Quite a few of our neighbours have lived here quite a lot of years, and 10 to 15 years ago it was quite a different place to live.

Ian - It would be described as quite rough.

**I was interested in the fact that it was so different just moving a few hundred yards around the corner.**

Mark - The environment out here is totally different with the park out the front...

Ian - You always feel the park is part of the house. Like this is a big front garden. I call it my kingdom... but it's not just the park.

Mark - The weather was stunning from the beginning of lockdown for about 10 weeks... and I used to bring my laptop down here and work on the table out here... People would walk by, going to the shops... or come in the front garden and we just met so many people and chatted to so many people during that period... Obviously there's a great feeling of everybody was in it together at the time as well. And it was a really special time because there was no traffic. This background noise that you can hear now just wasn't there. It was so peaceful. And all you could hear was birds singing and it was really special. And people went for their daily exercise... [They would] walk down here, up to the fence and stand and chat for half an hour or whatever because you weren't supposed to go out unless you were exercising... And when restrictions started to ease, it was fantastic because people would come and sit outside around here and we'd have barbecues.

**So where were you before [moving here], was it very different to this set up?**

Mark - We were living in an area of Derby called Alvaston, in a modern house... It was a totally different atmosphere to here. We probably only spoke to one neighbour there on a regular basis.

**Is there much of a turnover of houses in this area?**

Mark - Before this year, ours was the last house to sell... There's been two [sold] this year but that's quite unusual. Although there was a period, three years ago, when four sold...

Ian - We've got a few things going on with the Residents' Association as well right now, because they're planning to build a lot... of student accommodation in this area and people are quite concerned about that. I'm not particularly concerned about student populations, but I am concerned about a massive building going up in Saint Mary's Rest Garden, which is the next park over, and casting a massive shadow in the park. And so we're all getting together and doing campaigns to try and persuade the council to see sense.

Mark - We had a picnic... [We] marked out an area... where the shadow was going to be. And we did a picnic in the area and lots of neighbours turned up... and we were on the telly.

Ian - We had ITV, BBC, Notts TV...

**What did you like about the house in particular?**

Ian - That's a tough question because... we didn't like much in reality because we lived in a house in Derby before, and it had a lovely big kitchen diner, which is how we'd like to live. But obviously, this has a front door straight into the lounge, which is completely alien to us. But I've kind of got used to that now, I don't mind that.

Mark - I think this space helps... When the weather's fine, this is your new dining room... That makes it bearable. But I've heard stories that a lady bought up eleven children in this house. And I don't know how... bearing in mind, when she brought those eleven

children up, they probably didn't even have a bathroom. There was a toilet in the bottom of the garden... No extension on the back with the utility room in.

### **Changes made to the house**

Ian - One of the first things we did was... a lot of the bedrooms slope down onto the house... In this bedroom in particular... it was five inches lower on one side to the other. So we decided to... level the floor up... I figured after a hundred and sixty years, five inches of settling had probably finished.

Mark - The problem with these houses is that a lot of houses in Nottingham are built on very soft ground. These have got cellars on the back, but nothing under the front. So it tends to be that the back of the house that was sat on the cellar hasn't really moved much, but the front has settled, so there tends to be a bit of a slope... The top floors have lime ash floors. So, they're almost completely different floors on the top floor. We believe it was to do with them having machinery up there to stop the vibrations.... They used to do frame knitting... on the top floor. There's also a trapdoor from the top floor down to the first floor, like an escape route, or maybe they used it for lowering something down.... The trapdoor is still there in all the houses.

### **So you have a front room and a kitchen?**

Ian - Yes and a small utility at the back.... Two bedrooms at the front of the house, but there's also a bedroom at the back, which we use as an office.

Mark - Because we both work from home now... we've got a really nice office... These houses, on The Promenade particularly, have got quite a big third bedroom. But some of the others on Campbell Grove, you couldn't really get a bed in... There's only so much you can do with these houses. Obviously, with them being Grade II listed as well, you have to be careful what you do. Everything needs planning permission.

### **Do you feel like the future's bright for The Promenade?**

Mark - Our future in this area is very bright. I think there's a great mix of people. There's a community spirit, there's an active Residents' Association that look after the interests of everyone in the estate. Ian's now

the chairman, so his stated aim is that we don't ever in-fight with people that live in the area... That's a separate thing. If you want to talk about problems, go and do that with the authorities or whatever you need to do it with, but we don't do that in the Residents' Association. So everybody is included.

Ian - There's been a few moments in the Residents' Association where people have been complaining about ... residents in the area ... And it's just... anti-social behaviour is one person's perspective, the other... perspective, it's just living. So there's just this unnecessary in-fighting as opposed to us working together...

Mark - There's some things that you have to expect are going to happen if you live in what is effectively an inner city area. I mean, it's lovely, with the park and all that, it's beautiful, it's all green... but you're still living in the centre of a relatively large city with all the issues that come with that. There's people around here who have nothing. And there's people around here who have a lot and everybody has to get along. And some people like parties and some people like smoking different substances... or making noises or fighting between themselves... But it's just part of living in a place like this.

Ian - We're going to have a picnic, I think, because we don't know what's going to happen with the [Covid] rules... plan a light-hearted picnic in the park, everyone comes along, bring your own food. It doesn't take much to organise that sort of thing... ... When we were kids we had a massive campaign of 'Keep Britain tidy' and I don't think that has been drummed into the new generations... We need to get everyone involved in that, that's one thing we want to do...

Mark - There's a few of us that go around with the Clean Champions kits, with the litter pickers and the bags on a fairly regular basis and pick stuff up. But there's a lot of stuff that gets left lying around... We want everyone to appreciate, really, what they've got because this is a pretty unusual location. I don't know anywhere else like it. Obviously those of us that have moved here... the people who have lived here all their lives probably don't see it as anything exceptional, but I see it as incredibly lucky to be able to live here.







## FRANCIS DORE

**“We set up a Tenants’ and Residents’ Association.”**

Recorded by Lauren Sisson  
July 2021

← Looking at central row of houses on The Promenade from Victoria Park. Numbers 15 and 16 are on the right. Photograph taken August, 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

**So if you don’t mind telling me, what’s your name?**

I’m Francis Dore and I was resident in The Prom from 1994 up until 2010.

**Okay, and if you don’t mind sharing, what year were you born in?**

1974

**Whereabouts in the area did you live? Can you describe it?**

Yes. I was at 15 Promenade. So slap-bang in the middle of the terrace, overlooking the park, which was a lovely location because we had a very small garden owned by the house, but then a giant front garden which was the park.

**And you said you lived there for 16 years.**

Yes.

**And how and why did you come to live in the area?**

I moved to Nottingham, to University, and my mother was born in Nottingham and my grandparents were still in Nottingham when I moved up. So I spent a while looking around at different areas, Radford, Hyson Green and The Prom just at the bottom of St Ann’s and I moved in as a student and then sublet the house to other students as well. So I was after a reasonable sized house at a cheap price which St Ann’s afforded. So I was very fortunate to end up at The Promenade.

**What sort of people lived in the area when you first came to live there?**

There was quite a range of people. The Prom is a very different feel to Campbell Grove and Robin Hood Terrace. The Prom had a feeling of slightly more sort of artisan in some ways and slightly more professional people and lots of the neighbours on The Prom were working, or students, and there is still quite a few students there now. Campbell Grove, without sounding snobbish about it, [is] sort of working class and people on benefits and the same with Robin Hood Terrace. Lots of lovely people there but a very different feel because Campbell Grove was front to front with the houses, whereas The Prom overlooked the park, so it’s got a much lighter airier feel, and all the neighbours, especially during the summer, were out in the front

gardens so you got to meet the neighbours and get to know them really well.

And we did quite a few joint picnics out in the park. And also when it came to the Victoria Leisure Centre, there was quite a few of us who petitioned particularly hard for the council not to knock it down and redevelop it. But in the end I got involved in that with [nearby resident] Matt Anderson ... and worked with the council and worked with various other associations to try and save it. But the council has done a very good job at redevelopment fortunately.

And also we set up a Tenants' and Residents' Association as well. And also with Matt Anderson, myself, and quite a few of the others working with the council, the police, and various other agencies, trying to gradually improve the area and make it into a more pleasant environment for all the neighbours.

### **What kind of work did that involve with the association?**

Lots of it was dealing with antisocial behavior in the area and tackling the roots of it. Behind the end of Robin Hood Terrace and behind Campbell Grove there was an area of wasteland. That was just an area for dumping and burnt-out cars and drug taking. So, we worked with the council and actually had that converted into a car parking area so it was tarmacked over because we're short of car parking and there are also some brick planters up there that were never planted and just got in the way of everything. So the council provided us with sledgehammers and tools and assisted us in removing them and paving it over. So it could also be used as parking and just stopped a bit of a blight in the area.

### **So what really motivated you to get involved with that and to set it up?**

It was Matt who was the driving force behind it, but worked closely with him on it because we were, and still are, in touch with them, a small community there, and we wanted to improve the area for everyone. We knew we were in a very privileged place actually being on the Prom, over-looking the park because we're so close to the centre of Nottingham, yet had got this great big area of parkland the council maintained to the front. So it was nice

to give everyone more pride in the area and work with the police, work with the council, the council agencies, trying to improve it for everyone.

### **So the houses were painted by the 1990s. Could you describe the colour of your house?**

When I moved into the Prom, number 15, which shared a common entrance with number 16, so if you didn't know, it look like one large house but it's actually two, with the central [entrance]. It's still the original York flagstone corridor between the two houses. When I moved in, it was pretty much a bland battleship grey frontage, and during my time there, with a good friend of mine - who was my best man when I got married and I was his best man when he got married - in agreement with a neighbour at number 16, we painted the front of the house what can only be described as orange and gave it an Oxford blue front door. Now we started painting the front of the house when we were sober, not enjoying standing on step ladders to do it. By the time we'd finished, we'd got through a crate of beer the neighbour had bought us, and fully painted the house and neither of us had managed to fortunately fall off the ladder.

But the house did quite well. Although it's Grade II listed, the council generally had the view that as long as the house appeared and looked the same, they weren't too concerned about the listing. Because the listing should really cover the interior as well, but the interiors had all been gutted by the council during their period of ownership of the entire block. So all the original features had gone. So over the years it took time to open up some of the fireplaces and try and restore some of what would have been the original features to the house, and open up a few of the chimney breasts and had a log burner in the upstairs room by the time I left ... Over the years lots of modifications were done to the house.

### **How did it affect the things that you could or couldn't do in your house, because it was a historic house? You mentioned it was listed, even though the council were relatively flexible.**

They appear to be reasonably flexible. It limited what you could do with the property but it's a mid-terrace Georgian house with a

postage stamp of a front yard and a postage stamp of a back garden. So there was very little I would have wanted to do to that house that I could have done anyway. Although being listed limited what you could do with it, you weren't limiting much because there wasn't much option to do anything with it.

So knowing that history behind it, I was quite happy it was listed and limited in what we could do with it, to keep the feel of the area. And the council did invest a lot of money with new fences at the back of The Prom and also railings along Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove to try and give it back some of that period feel. So the council was appreciated by the vast majority of the residents there for the effort they put in.

**So on the whole, the council / resident relationship was pretty good, not antagonistic.**

The general relationship with the police, the council, the residents, all the other, some of them charitable agencies with Framework, were on balance, all very good. And a good working relationship, apart from when a wet centre was opened on Campbell Street. That was a centre for drug and alcohol dependent people as a drop-in centre, which certainly we then as residents, noticed there was an uptake in drug and drink related issues in the neighbourhood. But dealing directly with the police, the agency, which I think was Framework, but I may be wrong there, and the council, over a year or two, I think they changed location for that centre. And as neighbours we then saw the same fall-off in drug and anti-social behaviour we'd seen increase.

**Was there anything you didn't like about the area?**

There was anti-social behaviour generally. Some of it from Campbell Grove and Robin Hood Terrace, but it was one or two known households and I certainly wouldn't tarnish the whole street with it. But we did get anti-social behaviour coming in from further into St Ann's if they strayed out of their usual territory. I had four tyres on the car slashed, a windscreen put through. Various neighbours had damage to cars. There were occasionally burglaries.

The end house on Campbell Grove did originally used to be a shop and it was still a shop when I moved in in '94. It was then taken on by the council, I think, as a community resource centre and they furnished it with computers. Which didn't last long and it was very quickly broken into on more than one occasion and all the computers looted. So it was then, after a very short while, sold back. I think it was converted back into a house and rented out again by the council. So if people knew you'd got items of value in a house, they didn't necessarily stay long. But people were aware of that and made sure houses were kept secure and securely locked.

**You've painted a really good picture of your experience in the area.**

So this is no reflection on the area, but I've just remembered, we had a small sinkhole appear in the car park behind number 6 and 7 Prom. A fairly large hole appeared fairly quickly, which then required quite a lot of the car park cordoning off. And the council spent a long time investigating that before an awful lot of concrete was poured in to it to seal that hole.

When I moved in, the council, did a lot of refurbishment in the area with the fences on the back of the houses. And at the bottom houses on the Prom, I think up to about number 13, because they didn't back immediately onto Campbell Grove, the council extended the fence line at the back and gave them all drives, or if they didn't want a drive, a large garden. But when they were doing those works, they cleared the surface of the old car park at the back, and you could see the foundations, then, of the church that used to be at the back of the Prom. And that was nice to see the foundations there as it was lifted. And you can see the church on old maps of the area.

**Anything else that you would like to mention?**

It's a lovely part of Nottingham. Very pleased to have lived there for 16 years and it's been a part of my growing up. So it's always looked on fondly and regarded fondly. I hope future generations will regard it in exactly the same way.







## THE ESTATE MANAGEMENT OFFICER

**“The manager at the time decided that we needed to be possibly a little bit more focused on who were in those properties. We weren't getting very many people applying for them, so it was decided that we'd have a special lettings policy.”**

Recorded by Dan Lucas  
August 2021

← Looking towards the  
centre of The Promenade  
from Victoria Park,  
August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

**So my first question is just to ask a little bit more about the job and the key tasks that took up most of the time in doing that work.**

My job at the time was an Estate Management Officer. An Estate Management Officer was responsible for a group of properties within a defined area, in one of the different Housing Office areas across Nottingham. The role... was to deal with all sorts of estate management issues, which included anti-social behaviour, carrying out patch inspections, doing repairs inspections and also taking care of the empty properties that were on the patch, and making sure that they were re-let as quickly as possible, working alongside the local lettings team, which were based in the housing office at that time on Robin Hood Chase in St Ann's.

I was the Estate Management Officer there... going back about 22 years... so quite a while ago and I do think things have changed a lot since then... it was towards the middle to late 1990s.

**And just to clarify... this would have been for Nottingham City Council's Housing Department, as it would have then been known at the time... Quite a lot of the properties there were council houses at that time, more than there are now, although they'd come in to the council's ownership I think in the late 1960s, early 1970s as part of the redevelopment plans for the St Ann's area... But... do you know of any reasons why you were asked to work on those streets concerned?**

The housing management patches in St Ann's were pretty much equal numbers when it came to property numbers. The patch that included The Promenade, Robin Hood Terrace, Campbell Grove and other properties in that area was, I think, seen as a slightly problematical area, possibly around the repairs-type issues with those properties. The big three storey [houses] probably were a hundred years old or thereabouts... It was quite a difficult area to manage. The properties were difficult to let, the levels of anti-social behaviour were quite high and I think there were other people who worked in the office who perhaps weren't so keen to do that area. And I think the manager at the

time made decisions to put people on patches that he thought could manage them better than others, I suppose. So I like to think he thought I was going to do a good job... There weren't many properties like those in that area in other parts of St Ann's (as most of the council homes were newer as a result of the rebuilding carried out in the area)... Quite a lot of long-standing void properties were on those streets at the time.

**So there'd been some properties empty for quite a while by that time?**

Yes... They were in a poor state of repair, they attracted some vandalism... I think that tended to put people off applying to live to there. Also, the age of the properties had an impact... I worked really well with the local Depot, because we used to have locally based Depots to do the repair work then... rather than a central works department. So it was good working with the local guys, who also knew the area, and on occasions it was finding the right person to work on the right property. The old sash windows, for example, not every joiner in the Depot had ever worked on those. It was important to get the right people working on those properties.

**In terms of the properties that had fallen empty and had been lying empty for a long time, what sort of tasks did you have to do to address that?**

The manager at the time decided that we needed to be possibly a little bit more focused on who were in those properties. We weren't getting very many people applying for them, so it was decided that we'd have a special lettings policy... Myself and one of the housing advisers who I used to work with in the lettings team, were given lists of people who'd put down a preference for living in St Ann's, who we thought could possibly move to that area. We were looking for people, potentially without young children, perhaps a little bit more mature... We carried out visits all over the city, talking to people, making them aware of what the properties were like. Coming up with a list of repairs that we were prepared to do to the properties as they took an interest in them. We made sure that they (the homes) were up to a good standard, but also we made them aware of the issues in the area as well. We didn't hide anything from people. We made sure that when they

made their decision to take on one of those properties, they knew what was happening in the area, knew what they were taking on... The people who we certainly ended up rehousing there, seemed to appreciate it once they'd moved in.

**That special lettings policy might have been a bit of a variation from the main lettings policy for council housing across the city at the time... in order to get what were houses that were difficult to let, in some cases, made available to people who would take them on as opposed to them standing empty, is that the correct way to explain the approach?**

Yes it is. We looked at some single people who had access to their children, so what we were actually getting was a tenant who was a single man that had got access to children that perhaps wouldn't have normally qualified for a house or flat with more than one bedroom. But they were prepared to take on one of these houses. And then made use of the size of the house, obviously, when they had those children visiting. So yeah, we did move away from it (the standard lettings policy). The residents there weren't big families that perhaps would have suited such a big house with two or three bedrooms, but nobody was wanting them anyway. They were just getting more and more issues around outstanding repairs, and vandalism ...

**That was a good example of bringing those back into use by being a bit more flexible perhaps with the circumstances. Were there any notable points about the character of the streets... and the [houses] themselves? Obviously they're older properties, unusual in the area by this stage.**

I think the fact that the houses were mainly three-storey did impact on some of the people with younger children. The stairs in those properties are quite steep compared to modern properties. The properties were very hard to heat. They had single glazing. The sash windows weren't perhaps in the best of conditions. And people were seeing the other local, more modern, properties being improved at that time. There was quite a lot of improvement work going on (in neighbouring areas), and these were three-

storey houses with draughty windows, not very well-insulated. Quite expensive to heat as well.

**What about the nature of the households and families and all the individuals living there... Had they typically lived there a long time or was it more mixed?**

There was a good mix... There were a good few long-standing tenants, people who'd never caused us any issues and perhaps we didn't get to know them that well until we started doing the work in the area. There were quite a few owner occupiers in that area as well, people who'd bought the houses in the past. But it did tend to be that people who did move in, the newer tenants, tended not to stay there too long before we started a more focused approach on this patch... perhaps because of the issues with the houses and possibly even the petty crime.

**Was there a Tenants and Residents' Association at that time?**

Not something that I can remember, to be quite honest... I can remember speaking to one or two of the local residents there, because they soon get to know who the guy with the green coat is who comes round inspecting the properties. Once they know who you are, they were quickly on the phone to report things.

**So they'd be reporting problematic issues in the area or things that they thought needed attending to?**

There were a few problematic issues around there, anti-social behaviour, petty crime, which at times was quite high. People tended to report things to us but were reluctant to get too involved for fear of reprisals ... We did work with the local police, both at Sneinton and St Ann's, regarding things being reported to us... the support that we got at the time from the local police... was really good. We got to know the local beat bobbies... quite well and we kept each other up to date on what we were seeing. It was quite good from that point of view.

**Did the local City Councillors take an active interest in the area, what was going on?**

We did use to get quite a bit of involvement from the City Councillors. They would have a

regular meeting with the local office manager and anything that they mentioned used to get passed down to us. Quite often... you would get a question about something. But one of the local tenants had probably already told me about it, so it was always quite nice to be able to say, oh yeah I know about that, and I've done something about it already. The local councillors in that area at the time really did take an interest in it... I remember dealing with Cllr Betty Higgins... Cllr Dave Liversidge was a little bit further over... And then, if you went a little bit further into St Ann's away from the Sneinton side, I think, was that a relatively young Cllr Jon Collins at the time.

**You mentioned that you'd been approached by someone who'd moved into one of the houses and stopped to chat to you some years later.**

I think that targeted letting strategy that we used did bring people into the area that wanted to be there. I think the majority of them settled in there quite well. They had local connections, and I think that was why they said they wanted to live in St Ann's. Having worked quite closely with the Depot as well, we actually managed to get all the repairs done that we promised. The properties were let and the people moved in. They tidied them up, put curtains up at the windows. There were a lot less boarded up windows... So I think the work that we did made it a little bit better for the people who'd moved in. It was some years later after I'd moved (to another role)... while I was in the city centre one day, one of the guys who'd moved into Robin Hood Terrace did actually stop me. He obviously recognised me and I kind of recognised him as well. He said to me that he was still there and it was one of the best things he'd done to move into Robin Hood Terrace. And he thanked me for what it had done to him as a person and... the positive relationship he'd managed to have with his son as a result of moving to this house. So it was quite nice, even though it was a good number of years later, to see somebody who'd benefited from some of that work that I had done all those years ago.

Looking back, it was hard work at the time, but... I met some good people, both colleagues and people who lived on the estates and in the houses that I used to manage.





## BOB FAWCETT

**“It was all about Jacey’s Bar at the time.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
June 2021

Okay so my name is Bob Fawcett. I lived at number 26, The Promenade I believe around 1979 or 1980. I paid ten thousand eight hundred and fifty pounds.

I remember at the time a lot of people were trying to put me off buying it by saying there’s a lot of problem families that live there because half The Promenade was privately owned and a half was council-owned, but it’s such a beautiful house and such a lovely area overlooking the park that I went ahead. And I never really looked back because apart from problem families, there were big families with lots of children.

I never had any problems really. So I was quite happy to live there and live there for five years before I moved on. I was 24 or 25 at the time I bought it. I was only able to afford it then because the times were bad in the late 70s, but I’d had an accident a few years before and I got some compensation, which allowed me to put a deposit down on the house and fully furnish it from Habitat, which I believe was in the Victoria Centre at the time. So yeah, very happy. There for five years and I only really moved on to upgrade really, to move somewhere else.

### Great memories

But great memories, great memories of the place and my uncle actually bought one lower down at number 14. I think somewhere like number 14, he was very happy. He used to work for Jesse Robinson round the corner on Sneinton Market, which were big wholesalers to fish and chip shops. So it was very convenient for him.

And I remember a next door neighbour one side was a young lad at the time called Danny, certainly a man about Nottingham these days, don’t know surname.

Very tall, very lovely bloke. I still bump into him occasionally, not seen him for two or three years, but we always have a good chat about The Promenade. And on the other side of the family, with two daughters. And one of the daughters had a gift shop on Derby Road, and I met her in the Hand and Heart opposite the gift shop about four or five years ago when she recognised me somehow, after all these years.

← Looking down The Promenade. Bob Fawcett’s house was the first door on the left, August, 2021.

So it is nice to still see them. And as I say no problems at all with anyone living there. So although you know I was warned about it a lot.

### **Where did you live before? And how did you pick there?**

I'd lived in the very centre of Victoria Centre Flats before. I loved that as well actually. I was in Victoria Centre flats. I moved to London, came back just before I was 21, moved back in the Victoria Centre flats and then got the deposit, put down on The Promenade. Promenade being really close to town and at the same time, you know, overlooking a beautiful park and also, it is quite buzzing. I remember the Victoria Leisure Centre, they used to have Turkish baths. I doubt they still got them, but it was really cheap.

I think Tuesday, afternoon or evening, I used to go there with my uncle and then go for a curry at the bottom of Hockley and it was, I can't remember the name, it began with an M I'm sure. But yeah. So that was the main thing to me was proximity to town and the bar of the time, which would be Jacey's bar, which was just below the Palais at Lower Parliament street but Jacey's bar was the place that everyone went and I could walk there in five minutes so you know as quick as we could walk there from the Victoria Centre. So to me I still wanted to be in town and I still was in town so it was a perfect situation for me.

### **So when you moved there, what was the makeup of the area? You've got Campbell Grove and Robin Hood Terrace. What were the people like?**

I didn't have a lot to do with Campbell Grove really. I walked up the front of The Promenade and you know, I've always used the front door, never really used the back door at all.

I parked my car on the bottom, Robin Hood Street or whatever it's called. And I don't know if there's any parking restrictions at the moment. Certainly wasn't at the time. So I could park there, walk to The Promenade at the front door and job done. So there was a shop at the bottom which was fine. They were very handy, very handy indeed, and I never really ventured out to Campbell Grove, only on occasion ... I knew someone that lived there, rented somewhere, for a short period,

but that's about it really. So, I was more front of house.

### **What were the people like on The Promenade?**

I think it was very much families. As I think there's only me and my uncle. There were three bedroom houses and I think, as far as I know, I was the only single person living and my uncle. Living there on our own because they are fairly big houses and three-bedroom there. I used one as an office ... and one as a spare bedroom, I had a lodger at one point, I think so, yeah, a good, a good size, very good size.

### **Okay, did you get on with your neighbours?**

Yeah, very much so yeah. They all sort of kept themselves to themselves. All having their children up and down The Promenade all the time. But they did at least have the park in front which, you know, so they had somewhere to let off the exertions.

In fact, I remember waking up one Sunday morning, throwing back the curtains. Looking out on the park and there was half a dozen people walking around with plastic carrier bags and I thought, what are they doing? It's like 10 o'clock in the morning or something. And I found out later, picking magic mushrooms. I never really knew, but they were quite intense all walking around with their nose almost touching the ground looking for these mushrooms. So it came as a bit of a shock for me, you know.

### **So you've mentioned the shop at the end of the road, were there any other shops that you used or the pubs. Or did you go to town?**

I used to mostly go to Jacey's, it was all about Jacey's Bar at the time I think. I did go in the Bath Inn at the time, which actually a friend of mine is revamping at the moment and taking it over, which is quite interesting, and the Vine which is a bit lower down. I think those are about the only two pubs I used.

The Victoria Leisure Centre had a gym and swimming pool and Turkish baths, and then, and then you could walk to the bottom of Hockley. If you went the other way, the other way to Jacey's and you know, quite a bit going on there at the time. But, Supermarket wise,



I can't even think of one actually. I don't know what I did. I don't think I shopped at Sneinton Market for fruit and veg. But Sneinton Market was quite a thing on Saturday morning.

**Did you have any sort of fond memories or funny stories?**

The seventies weren't the best times for anyone, except for music wise it was brilliant, but and then in the 80s, it became bit better and just great memories of the time and I did love living there. I was very happy. I think the only reason I did move on was because I could afford to. I sold it five years later for £18,500 and I looked on Rightmove last week. And number 26, where I used to live sold three years ago at £218,000. So I hear they are creeping up to quarter of a million now. And so, during my walk at The Promenade last week to remind myself, I was quite amazed by everyone's front garden.

Because at the time they had a small lawn and everyone had a small wall in front of the house, pathway to the door. That was it. No one really had anything growing in the garden to speak of. And now there's some beautiful plants along there and beautiful gardens.

Yeah, I noticed that was a big change because before it was just a yard, it was a front garden, a bit of grass and a bit of soil and a few flowers. But now they've certainly, everyone's got into the planting of lovely flowers, and trees, and bushes and things. So that struck me as a big difference to when I was there in the '80s.

Certainly it did look a bit different to what I remember to be honest, but never been that close. So I've always driven by on Bath Street and looked across and thought it was still beautiful. And I love the fact that they are all different colours and almost have a seaside sort of visual effect and then, and that's about the closest I've been, until last week, was driving past and thinking, oh yeah, had a good time there.



## CHRIS GIBSON

**“I used to do some sketches because I’m not too bad at drawing. And in the Rest Garden itself, I’d just sit there and look out at the views ... and you could see right across the city.”**

Recorded by Stephen Sherwood  
July 2021

← St Mary’s Rest Garden, Bath Street. This is where Chris Gibson would observe changes to the Nottingham skyline in the 1960s and early 1970s. Photograph taken August, 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### **Please tell me your name and if you don’t mind sharing your date of birth?**

My name is Christopher Charles Gibson, I’m happy to be called Chris or Chris Gibson. My date of birth is the 5th of July 1951.

I was born in St Ann’s on a nice little road, it’s called Simms Street, Number 14, the street itself was quite unusual for St Ann’s because it was in two parts. The first five or six houses were all ordinary terrace housing, looked out onto the pavement and onto the cobbled road, but as you went further up, it was a bit fenced off.

We lived in this bit that was fenced off because it had a green and there was about ten houses that looked out onto this green with trees, which was unusual for St Ann’s, which was just mainly terraced housing like you see in Coronation Street, a lot of red brick, nearly all red brick.

So this green area was quite good because there were birds, mainly pigeons and for a little lad like me I could play outside. I was quiet because at the front the neighbours were fairly elderly they didn’t like... so I could very gently toss a ball against the wall and that would be about it.

What was better was behind, access to the back of our properties which you went through the living room or back garden. But at the back of the backyard was what they called an entry. And that was a long sort of access road pathway about 10 or 15 foot wide, cars didn’t go up it, but dustbin men came that way and it was ideal for kicking a football.

The sort of thing that George Best used to do, kick a football against a wall and that was a similar thing and in a similar way, it was almost like a cricket net. So I can play with my brother, a two-person crew. One person cricket, one person bowler, one batsman, until we got out and then we’d swap over and it worked. And we were safe there, safe out the back so it was a happy place to live.



## St Ann's

I'm here to really to talk about the area more in general, nearly all St Ann's ... didn't have green spaces, but we're talking about the area around the two parks and what we were doing. We would often go that way, you just come out of Simms Street and turn to the right. We were on Hawkridge Street then and we would turn to the right again, past the corner shops, and go up Lamartine Street.

On the left was a factory. I think it was a lace factory and I remember it standing there with all them big windows, austere and I remember hearing, as a little boy, there was a siren and I now know it was an air raid siren, but they sounded it off at about 1 o'clock. I asked what was that noise, they'd always say, it was a hooter to tell people they can leave work.

## The parks

And that would take us up to the parks and you turn left for a little way, onto the two parks. I remember that's what they called Victoria Park.

Beyond that the Garden of Rest, St Mary's I think it's called, and Victoria was the park we played on and it was a bit rundown. The grass areas needed re-grassing to be honest.

It was overshadowed. If you look down below what was Bath Street and there was great big Victorian buildings on the other side. There was a playground. There was a slide and a roundabout, swings and some happy times. I think The Promenade looks out onto that park. We could never figure out how to get onto The Promenade.

It wasn't obvious how you get on it. Also, although I know a lot about the area. I would never actually end up on that Promenade area, but I remember seeing it and then playing on Victoria Park

The Rest Garden park was different, entirely different. You get a lot of sunshine. You went in a high point from there and it sloped down towards the city centre to St Ann's Well Road and there were benches and seats, the lawns were mowed and it looked very nice.

There must have been a rule that young children weren't allowed on the park because me and my dad went there and I must have been without him and I went into the park

entrance and then, "get out of here" I heard and it was the park keeper, children are not allowed here and so I scurried back to where me dad was. I must have been about 7 or 8 but I thought better be careful.

There must have been a sign that said, no ball games. So it was really designed as a garden of rest. I think it used to be an old cemetery, but all the gravestones were against the wall. We used to use it quite a lot.

## Bendigo

I mean in the garden of rest is ... a stone statue of a lion and this was in memory of William Thomson Bendigo who was a pugilist, a fighter in Victorian times. And as you go down the pathway, towards the bottom entrance to St Ann's Well Road, this lion would be on the left hand side.

Now, I was fascinated by it, and I remember mum would put me on it, astride it and take a photograph and I'd like to know where that picture is. I'm trying to find it but I can't find it at the minute but I must have been about five or six years.

## Dray Horses

I remember dray horses used to stop and deliver the beer barrels to the local pubs. I think there was a pub on Hawkridge Street and dray horses were huge animals. And I was about 7 or 8. And the dray horse driver, lifted me up and put me on the dray horse, you couldn't straddle it, it was incredible.

## Bonfire Night & the Salvation Army

But that reminds me about things like bonfire night. And I remember every bonfire night, at 5th of November, they did used to build a bonfire on Hawkridge Street. Maybe on several of the streets around about and it was just getting little bits of furniture. Anything they didn't want ... it was not the council to take it away, you would find it on the pile with a made up Guy on the top and it was mainly men organising this.

And it would be lit on the street, on the cobbles. And there must have been a bit of space for traffic to go by, but I'm not sure how that would go down these days. So I remember that and then of course, fireworks you'd set off in the streets.

Sundays were also interesting because of the Salvation Army Memorial Halls as you call them. Every Sunday, the Salvation Army Band would march from there to where it would march to, sometimes market square. I think we occasionally followed it, and the band music.

### Drawings

Actually, I used to do some sketches because I'm not too bad at drawing. And in the Rest Garden itself, I'd just sit there and look out at the views out and you could see right across the city. You can see the Council House and what I now know to be the Newton Building and St Mary's Church and the spires of the other churches and the really pleasant view out across the city.

Towards the late 60s, I think '67 or '68 there was a notice, scaffolding and cranes, going up and builders cranes and they were in the skyline. And I remember doing a bit of a sketch of that. Well, I wondered what all these builders' trucks and cranes were doing there of course. Well soon, I find out that they were building Victoria Centre Flats.

And suddenly, you know, once those flats went up you no longer get that view out across to the Council House. Even more recent than that, there's buildings at the bottom of the park there which are interesting I would say. I used to sit on the Planning Committee and we'd discuss the building of those. But I would call them interesting.

### Old buildings

That was how life evolved for us I think and they were happy times but towards the end of the 60s ... a lot of the buildings were quite old. Oh, they were built in the 1870s, 1880s, and a lot of them didn't have proper running water, or hot water anyway. We had an Ascot, which was a gas lit thing. We were ahead of the game. We had instant hot water. But they weren't very big and the facilities were considered to be in need of knocking down

And the council in the late sixties put plans together to redevelop the area and knock down a lot of them. Obviously, not all because we've still got the ones around the parks, but I think the plans were under discussion for a couple years.

### Leaving St Ann's

And then we got an invite to move. If we agreed to move out the council will provide us with a council house and gave us a couple options to look at. We were quite happy to do that because council housing in 1968-69 was considered to be quite desirable. You couldn't easily get on the waiting list. If you got onto a waiting list it didn't guarantee you'd get into a property.

We said, oh yes, let's go for it. And we got an invite to inspect the property at Aspley where we still are and the streets were curved and not straight. Lots of trees, lots of front gardens as well as backyards. And we said, yes. And then made arrangements for moving. It was spring of 1969. I was in my last year at school, so I was in sixth form school. When we moved, all our furniture would move in.

I remember the taxi and we made our last departure from Simms Street and I remember looking back there and looking at the place I'd lived and enjoyed for eighteen years and then went to start a new life in Aspley.





## ALEX HEATHER & BETH PEREZ

**“It’s something I like about Nottingham in general, there’s a lot of really nice buildings. It’s quite a pretty city to walk around.”**

Recorded by Alison Maiden  
July 2021

← Looking down Robin Hood Terrace from numbers 7 to 20, August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

**We’re at Robin Hood Terrace and this is Beth and Alex . Can you say how you have come to live in this particular property?**

Beth - You’ve [Alex] always lived around Nottingham, haven’t you, and I moved to Nottingham for University and didn’t leave, basically. We originally lived in a flat together and then we were looking for somewhere a bit bigger and found this place.

**How did you find it?**

Alex- Just looking through the houses available online. We were keen to shop around Nottingham and we both work here. We’ve got ties here now.

Beth - We wanted to be close to the city centre... I was, at the time, working in the middle of the city and your [Alex’s] office is in the middle of the city.

**Did you know much about the area before you moved here?**

Beth - We’d noticed the houses on The Promenade, we’d always been aware of the colourful houses there and liked those. And then we saw that one on this street was available and really liked it.

**And you’re looking to stay here?**

Beth - We’ll be here for a few more years, at least. I think if it weren’t for the fact that we’re probably going to have children in the future and need a bit more space, then we probably would stay here, very long term. But I think we will probably end up needing somewhere with an extra bedroom, probably... eventually.

Alex - There’s not exactly room to expand here, is there?

Beth - It is lovely for just us though, it’s gorgeous.

**What do you like about it in particular?**

Beth - I love the character of the house and the garden especially. For being so close to the city, we’ve got a really lovely, long garden.

Alex - I really like the convenience of being right in the middle of the city, in the middle of everything. We can go anywhere easily...

Beth - And being close to Sneinton Market as well is really nice. That’s a really nice area, a lot going on there. I like a lot of the original features of the property as well. It has

caused us issues sometimes, the stairs wind a little bit and are quite steep. When we first moved in a lot of our upstairs furniture, we had to store [it] in the lounge and then hoist in through the bedroom window because we couldn't get anything up the stairs. So anything that's upstairs has either been hoisted in through the window or was flat pack.

Alex - The doors also aren't regulation sized. Which is a bit of a pain. Getting the dog door set up was quite challenging, especially on the stairs.

Beth - But it is lovely. I like that it's quite charming... When we first moved in, putting curtain poles up and things [was funny] because you'd get it just right with the window but then it wouldn't be level with the ceiling... Just funny things like that are a bit quirky that I quite like.

### **Do you know many people around here? Have you made many friends?**

Beth - Yes... especially in the last year with lockdown, we've started to know our neighbours a lot more. The guys either side we get on really well with. And then there's a few people with dogs that we now see quite regularly and chat to, and a few people on The Promenade... It's a really nice community.

### **So you [Beth] moved here for University, and you [Alex] were already here?**

Alex - Yes, I grew up in the villages between Nottingham and Leicester, and I just started working in the city when I left school.

### **So does this have a more villagey-feel to it?**

Beth - Because it's quite quiet, it's nice and people do know each other a bit around and you know who lives where. It's got that aspect of a village.

Alex - It still feels built up though. It's not 'villagey' in that sense.

Beth - I think though when you're sitting in the garden because the park's behind it as well. You can't see any buildings, it's just tree and skies and if you sit facing away from the house, you wouldn't know you were in a city. There's no big, built up buildings around there. Not from the angle that we're at, anyway. That's really nice. Nice little escape.

### **And do you know much about the history of the house?**

Beth - We knew a little bit about the history, but not loads... I've started to do a bit more research into the history of it... and look at the area in general, St Ann's. Because I was always curious about why it was called St Ann's Well Road and then had a look into that, and that's really interesting history. I do quite like history and knowing how things came to be.

### **Apart from the sense of community, what other things do you like?**

Beth - I like the area and we have a lot of facilities nearby. We've got the parks and Victoria swimming baths. And the climbing centre is around the corner and Sneinton Market, it's a really lovely area.

Alex - There's a feeling of people wanting to invest into it. There's a lot of big things on the horizon. So much accommodation being built, a lot of plans with the market. Lots of new places opening up nearby.

Beth - And all the independent businesses in Sneinton Market... we're using a couple of those as vendors for our wedding. So there's a cake shop in Sneinton Market that's doing our wedding cake and the vegan chocolate maker is making us a few chocolates to go in our gift bags and things like that. So it's really nice that we've got all those local... independent businesses nearby, it's nice to go and support them. And the market in Sneinton on a Saturday morning is really nice as well.

Alex - There's always a lot of good stuff going on there.

### **Do you go to the local pubs?**

Beth - Yes, we go to the microbrewery at Neon Raptor and the Fox and Grapes, we go there. We're quite excited about the Bath [Inn] ... re-opening. We used to go there when it was a fish and chip shop... It's really nice as well to have the ice arena so close, we go and watch the Panthers quite a lot when it's on.

### **Would you stay in this area?**

Beth - We probably would do, but it's just having the space in the house. For one child, maybe it would be alright, but more than that I think we would struggle for space.

There's quite a lot of choice [in Nottingham], isn't there? There's older terraces like this, 1880s - 1900s terraces, but there's also 1930s housing to more modern housing, right up to brand new housing.

Beth - It's something I like about Nottingham in general, there's a lot of really nice buildings. It's quite a pretty city to walk around.

### **I've never heard it called pretty before!**

Alex - There's a lot of nice ones but there are also a lot of 1970s tower block catastrophes.

Beth - But they do tend to do a lot of regeneration and take worn things down and put new things up. But there's a lot of really nice old buildings as well, that building 'The Alchemist' is in is gorgeous. I love that building.

### **You'd recommend living here.**

Beth - Definitely, yes, we really, really like living here and like I say, were it not for the fact that we probably will have an expanding family in the future, we would stay here long term. If we could put an extra bedroom at the back somewhere then we'd definitely stay, but I don't think the council are gonna let us do that.

### **Have your relatives been to visit you here?**

Beth - Whenever we have somebody come over or even sometimes just like taxi drivers or delivery drivers always comment on how nice the area is with all the front gardens and the gates. Yeah everybody always loves it around here, they think it's really pretty. It's kind of a hidden gem because you wouldn't expect it this so close to the city.

### **Are there things about it that you don't like?**

Beth - Occasionally it can be a bit noisy but... given how close you are to the city centre it's nowhere near as bad as it could be. Obviously we don't have a main road this side but the police station isn't far over the park, so you get sirens quite a lot, but it doesn't bother us much.

Alex - Like most of Nottingham, parking can be a bit of a pain.

Beth - Yeah, that can be a bit difficult sometimes.

Alex - Fortunately we've got at least one extra permit, but they are pretty stingy. It can be difficult to get bigger gatherings.

Beth - The only other thing is, the windows at the front, while they're beautiful and I love the sash windows, it's very expensive to replace them with double glazed ones... They've got to look exactly the same as they are because the front's listed. We were only allowed certain... when we got a new front door, were we only allowed certain colours. I wanted a red one and I wasn't allowed a red one.

### **Do people speak to you across the garden?**

Beth - Yeah, we often speak to the neighbours over the garden. That side's asked if they can have a bit of our bamboo and things like that. So yeah, that's quite nice.

Alex - Except for when our gazebo blew into our neighbour's garden the other week.

Beth - We had a gazebo up when they first said we're allowed to have people over but only in the garden... we put a gazebo up in the garden, like a temporary one so that we could have people over even if the weather was a bit rubbish. And then it blew over into next door which wasn't ideal. So we had to come and rescue it.

### **Are you involved in the Residents' Association?**

Beth - No, not really. We hadn't really heard about it when we first moved in and we didn't hear much about it until we got to know people a bit better out of a lockdown and then, obviously meetings haven't happened quite as much. So we haven't been very involved in that but it's something that I would be keen to get involved in, in the future now I know about it.

### **How did you feel about the student accommodation that's going to be built on the other side of the park?**

Beth - The only issue with it is that they were planning to make it quite tall and blocking out a lot of sun to the park. But other than that... students bring money to the area around, you know, more shops and bars and things and economy to the local businesses.





## WILLIAM IVORY

**“I’ve written so much stuff that came out of there.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
August 2021

← Campbell Grove, where William Ivory lived in the 1980s. Photograph taken August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### Background

My name’s... William Ivory... I’m a screenwriter and I’m a playwright... I was born in 1963 on Norwood Gardens in Southwell... I went to London University but that didn’t work out so I packed that in, and I came back and I was a dustman for Newark and Sherwood District Council. In about 1984, I heard there was a new director at Nottingham Playhouse called Kenneth Alan Taylor who was very interested in new work. I’d already set up... my own theatre company... I sent [Ken] my script and he wasn’t that complimentary about it, but he did say, I could come and see him. I went to see him and I talked about being a writer and he really encouraged me, he was brilliant. At that stage, I had got to the end of my time on the bins... I said, do you think there might be work at the Playhouse? He... put me in touch with the production manager, and I... got some scene shifting [work].

### Moving to Campbell Grove

Eventually I started looking for somewhere to live... I heard there was a place on Sneinton Market and the Victoria Leisure Centre, where one or two of the Playhouse people used to live... I didn’t know that area of Nottingham very well. There was a pub called the Duke of Cambridge... we used to go there after football training... I then got to know the lads... Rory Murchison and Robert Jones, and they were the two main designers at the Playhouse... In 1986, I moved in with Rory, and it was really interesting because... we’re a mix of people in a way, but we all rubbed along really, really easily. Because there [was] some [that] had been there a long time... not into the arts certainly... I remember Colin who was a window cleaner, I used to hang around with a lot....He must have been about number 3... right at the bottom. Harry who had the corner shop... I used to go in there a lot.

There were quite a few gay men on The Promenade and on Campbell Grove. Which was great because there’s a pub called Gatsby’s, which was on the far side... [of] Victoria Park where Bendigo is. Then there used to be, further down the road, a club called Part Two, which was a gay club. We used to go in it a lot... all the people from the Playhouse used to go because it was open

late and you could drink late... There was also a place called the Ad Lib Club in the Lace Market... There was never any trouble at either of them.... we were all theatricals, we didn't really want to fight and everyone sort of rubbed along. And I used to feel that about Campbell Grove.... Everyone used to be really encouraging.

### Living in a beautiful house

I was with Rory and... his house was beautiful... just immaculate, and he was very particular, and... I can remember you walked in... straight through the door into the front room and... he had it all carpeted. It was lovely. Then to the left, either side of the fireplace, he just had all of his records and this amazing stereo system. Then you went to the kitchen and of course, because he was a designer, he'd done it all beautifully... I do remember coming back one night... I'd been out and had a few beers... I came back about two in the morning. The Rugby World Cup was going on... I thought, brilliant... I put the rugby on and I was looking for something to eat, and all I could get was a steamed pudding from Harry's... I put this steam pudding in, boiling away in his lovely new kitchen. And then I went round to watch the rugby. And then all I'm aware of hearing is this 'bump' in the night, this banging. I thought, what the bloody hell's this, it sounds like a bomb had gone off. I went round back to the kitchen and all the water had boiled dry in the pan with this steam pudding. Then it just exploded and all up his wall.... where his cooker was, like in a V, was treacle pudding... He had these special blinds made, these wooden Venetian blinds, and on every one of those was a layer of bloody treacle pudding. Anyway, I thought, bollocks I'm in trouble here... I think it was about four or five o'clock then, so I was cleaning like mad till he came down at eight o'clock. It was still in a state. Bless him, he walked in, I remember he said to me, "well that's not going to be looking like that when I get back from work".

The same with Robert's next door... it was really beautiful and they could see the potential in them, in the sense of these beautiful houses.

### Crime in the area

There were times where... it was a bit lively. I can remember there was one period, where... it obviously got bad. There was some terrible things happening there with shootings and things later on. But it was after I left... I was with Rory, I think, from about '86, might have been '85, till '87... Then I moved down to Kate's, and she'd already bought hers in 1988 and we were there from 1988 to '91. I do remember the odd times where, when I was first with Rory... my room was the very top room where I presume they used to have the lace making stuff up there because they had like a concrete floor. But I do remember sometimes I'd get a few cans of lager and turn the lights off. And on a Friday night, you'd wait for somebody to shout, "get me a fucking solicitor", and then you'd know it was all kicking off. Sometimes you'd just wait... have a look out to see how long it would take the police to arrive.

I've got one memory, really.... I've never written it because I couldn't write it, because you wouldn't believe it. But actually it happened... I was with Kate... We had a bit of trouble with cars getting broken into... She had a little, MG Midget sports car and the roof used to get slashed all the time because it was easy to get in. It was covered with gaffer tape. Then my dad had come to see me... I'd started to get a bit fractious about the trouble that was happening there. Dad had come to see me, he'd parked his car and he'd come up to number 5. So we weren't far up the Grove, on the left... I was seeing him off and... I gave him a kiss on the doorstep... Looked across, I could see these two lads breaking into his car, and they've actually got the back windows down, and I thought, I've had enough of this. So I said, wait there, and literally I hurdled the gate... one of the lads ran off, but I got the second lad... I said, "I've had enough of this"... But then I realised he was hopping, and his leg had come off. And he'd only got one leg... Then I've got all liberal because I've gone, what do I do now? He's a one legged thief. And I looked to my dad, and dad goes, "I'll call the police". [I said] Hang on... [We took him into the house]... There was a knock on the door, and his mate was there. He didn't say anything but he's just brought his other leg and he just plops it down and legs off again. So then it's silence - there's me,



my dad, and this lad and his leg's sitting there on the carpet in front of the fireplace... He puts it back on, I call the police, they take his name and everything... Nothing ever came of it! They charged me for assault actually, but they dismissed that as well... That was typical Campbell Grove.

But I loved it there. I can honestly say... I've written so much stuff that came out of there... I could be accused of over-romanticising it but... I know there were problems and I've witnessed some of those things and... Harry's shop had to shut and all the rest of it... And just after we'd left it did get pretty bad there, which is a shame because it was a community and we did used to all, just if nothing else, shout hello to each other. We'd see each other in the mornings.

### Memories of the area

What I loved most about it was its proximity to the city centre. And for me it was a part of Nottingham that as I got to know it more and more... Particularly, I associate it with walks... with times when... I felt like I had the city to myself... I can remember I'd go out on a Sunday morning, and especially in the summer, or spring was my favourite time and you'd walk across Sneinton Market and up through Hockley and into town...

I remember once sitting out on a Sunday night... and somebody was playing Otis Redding, On the Dock of the Bay. I sat there, I'd had a good day, I was young and I felt healthy and I just remember thinking, I love this place, I love this city... It was like it was just there for me and my benefit, for nobody else's. Then walking back through, past the Kingdom Hall on the left and... it was beautiful. That was another thing, it was a very beautiful area.

It was a really happy time for me, and the people that were there were... old Nottingham, it felt like old Nottingham, with a few interlopers that we were... and we were, but... we were made welcome, we really were. That was the interesting thing. But... it wasn't in any ingratiating way... why would it be? It was much more: 'I don't really understand that, I don't know what you're doing, but I wish you luck with it'.

### Big life changes

I got my... first commission at Nottingham Playhouse while I was... living on Campbell Grove... and then I got my first telly writing job when I was there, as well. I can remember... I picked the phone up... I remember answering the telephone and this bloke saying, they want me to write this thing. I remember I lay down... Just thinking... I was living on my own, which was quite a big thing for me because I'm quite a home boy... and I thought I've left Southwell, I'm living on my own. I'm actually writing, I've got money for it, so it must be true. It's not just I'm saying it.

I got married there as well, shortly afterwards. We married in Rutland where my wife was from... but we had at the stag do, we had both of our dos in Campbell Grove... We had a few beers, we went off separately, the hens went off... we had it the same night, and the lads went off, and then we all met back at Campbell Grove and we had a party there until the wee small hours... We were in the backyard and it was absolutely packed... people came from next door and had a few beers... it was never any problem, as long as you weren't doing it every night. If people were celebrating, nobody minded. It was fantastic... Very many happy feelings about it.

### The people

There were characters, there were a lot of characters.... That's the thing, when you live somewhere, it's not just a house, is it? It's everything about it... It's the environment as well, the whole, it was the whole sort of area that I loved. And... so many things were starting to seep into me by then in terms of work and what you write about.

This thing I've always said about Nottingham and its humour, which is very, very dark humour and quite sort of gallows humour if you like... It comes from a position of... I don't know what it is to do with ... it's something to do with light and shade. And I've always romantically linked it to the mines. Genuinely I have this sense of... I feel like we're encountering a place of real contrast... beauty and ugliness and I think it goes back to Lawrence and stuff like that.



## GLYN JENKINS

**“We were the first to have a bath and I had to share the bath with lots of the kids from up and down The Promenade, which was a bit surreal.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
July 2021

← Glyn Jenkins was born at No 9, The Promenade, which is the third house from the right. Photograph taken August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### Can you tell me your name and where you were born?

My name is Glyn Jenkins and I was born in 1950... I was born at number 9, The Promenade, on the settee in the front room.

### Why were your parents living there?

My father was from Wales but... he was in the Army and he met my mother at the NAAFI... and she lived in Nottingham. And after the war... they both came back to Nottingham and they lived at one other place... then moved into number 9, The Promenade. My father... did a fair job of looking after us, he was working for the Prudential at the time and I think the pay was fairly good. So we were lucky... They were all council houses at that period. To say it was a council house, we did very well... because of his job we actually had a telephone at that time which was pretty much unheard of and he was able to put a proper bathroom in. I assume he got permission from the council to do that. And so we were the first to have a bath and I had to share the bath with lots of the kids from up and down The Promenade, which was a bit surreal. But anyway, that's what happened. And then... the houses were upgraded somewhat and new bathrooms added. So the old bath my dad put in was gone and we added an extension on the back which was two storey. And I remember sitting in the kitchen... while the plasterers was there. And in his break, one of the plasterers taught me to tell the time. I think I was probably about five then.

### Where did you go to school?

I started by going to the nursery, which is at the top of The Promenade. Victoria Nursery, I think it was called. And then after the nursery, I moved to Bath Street, Victoria Primary School and... for me it was great... The nursery was really nice. I can particularly remember having a nap in the afternoon. And I can also remember [I was] caught climbing over the nursery roof and getting into the coal bunker, which obviously the nursery teachers weren't very happy about.

### Did you have brothers and sisters?

I had a sister. Her name was Linda and... when she was 17, she moved to Canada. I still talk to her, once a week on FaceTime.



**It sounds like your parents were quite generous and everybody helped each other out.**

My memories of it was that I could go... If I wanted to see my friends, I could go up to anybody's house and walk straight in. And my friend's parents would welcome me in and say... he's just nipped out at the minute but he'll be back soon. So I would sit down and maybe have a cup of tea with them and wait for him coming back... I can remember walking into somebody's house, the door was open and there was nobody in. But there was a note on the table to say, if you're visiting, put the kettle on, we'll be back at such a time. [So you'd]... put the kettle on... I was only about eight then, I think.

**Tell me about the park.**

The park for me was a magic place... I'd open my front door, close it behind me, run straight down the path, jump onto The Promenade itself... and hike myself straight up onto the top of the railings. Because I was very agile then... I was playing on the park all the time with my friends – football, hide and seek, Cowboys and Indians, you name it. And we used to dig little holes in the grass, take out a lump of grass and hide things for future [posterity].

**What things did you hide?**

We have used to have a club or a gang... and we used to make little membership cards... Then we used to bury our membership cards together in a plastic folder under this little trapdoor of grass.

**Do you think something might still be there?**

I only thought about it the other day because when I went down to... the heritage meeting on the park... I thought, I wonder if any of that stuff is still there under the grass? But I can't go around looking and digging in the grass now, it would look rather ridiculous. Nobody bothers about kids doing it, but it would have looked a bit strange, a 70 year old man digging in the grass.

We had really good times on the park. I can remember riding my bike on the park, my friend had a bike too, and we had a stick each and we pretended to be knights in shining armour on horseback.

**Do you keep in touch with anyone?**

No, because that's when they cleared St Ann's. They cleared... all of the houses. Promenade... Robin Hood Terrace and Campbell Grove was [left] in that area. I think there's another row of houses somewhere further up St Ann's Well Road that was left. Four rows of houses out of what was hundreds and hundreds is not a lot. And... all of the local pubs was cleared. So when I came back from the Royal Navy, I couldn't even go to the local pubs to try and find my friends. So, unfortunately, I felt a little bit deserted. I felt like I'd been deserted by all my friends. But, of course, that wasn't the case, they'd been moved and that was it.

There's only one person I've met since and that was my friend, Colin Wood, that used to live at 26, The Promenade. And his brother, they were twins and they were good friends of mine... It was quite a thing for me because I'd seen nobody from childhood until then.

**In those days, was The Promenade a distinct community within that part of St Ann's?**

I think it was a thing right throughout St Ann's. Although The Promenade at that particular time was classed as being in Sneinton. So I think it was the same throughout St Ann's and Sneinton, although there was a little bit of rivalry between people from our end to Sneinton. It wasn't a big thing. It was just a feeling that you're from Sneinton and I'm from St Ann's, or wherever... But in general, people got along very well. There were people in the community that stood out. Like I had a friend... his dad was pretty strict and he would spend a lot of time in the house. But when he came out, we'd play together... His dad was a rag and bone man... He lived on... Campbell Grove. I had a good friend called Trevor Jesson that lived on Campbell Grove at number 2.

Mentioning Campbell Grove brought back some things to my mind... There was a shop on the other corner of Campbell Grove which was run at the time by Mr Carlos... his son was named Robert and he was a very good friend of mine.

I can remember we got a big ball of strong twine and we tied it to the first door knocker on the right hand side. And then we looped

it... through all the knockers right up to the top. Then we crossed over and came down all the way down the other side... There was a wall at the bottom, so we took down behind the wall and then we'd give it a good tug and we knocked on every door simultaneously... The atmosphere was pretty good but you'd get the odd one or two who didn't like each other. It was one of them things, they just took a dislike to each other. So when we tugged the rope and all the doors opened, people came out and were looking around to see what had happened. Of course, they realised that some rotten kids had done this, and the ones that didn't like each other lived right opposite each other, and they would say, what you looking at? And he was shouting back and forth... Then he'd go back in again, probably vowed to get the kids that did it, but they never did.

**Did you have other relations around like grandparents or aunts and uncles?**

I've got a lodger and he's... my mother's brother's son and they lived not far from us on Alfred Street South. But my father and my cousin's dad didn't get on at all... He doesn't know, and I don't know, why, but... it was a family problem... My uncle married a German lady and then brought her back to Nottingham. And just after the war, I think people were a bit anti-German. So I don't know whether it's because of that or because [of] something else entirely different... And then my grandmother lived a fair distance from us.

**Did the women that lived around there, did they tend to work?**

My mother had a job for about four years working at a dry cleaners on Carlton Road... The ladies of the houses were doing lace picking, because I used to go and see my friends and they were all in there... pulling at this lace like there was no tomorrow...

**So they used to pull it apart?**

All of the lace had borders on, that the machinery used to pull it through. So you would just unpick this edge, and pull it, and the borders would come off... I done quite a bit of that as well. I had a girlfriend and when I went to her house, she was helping her mother with this and just to be ingratiating

with the mother... I would join in and I would pull some too.

**I guess it was all hands on deck?**

The lady that managed to get a bundle – they called them bundles – and they would go down to... It was two places. There was Windlass [or Windles] but they did yarn mostly and I think... Bancrofts did the lace. They had a big archway doorway on... Cranmer Street? Maybe, I can't quite remember now, but all the ladies used to go down with a pram... go into that archway and collect the bundle. Then they'd take that home and they'd sit there and the more they could do, the more they made. So there was a bit of subcontracting going on with the ladies that lived next door... so they would invite them in to help and give them a little bit of what they made.

**Was it a racially mixed community?**

Not so much, no... because... it wasn't until the 1950s... that people of ethnic minorities started coming to Britain. Not everybody was happy with that. It didn't bother me.

**Did anything particularly bad happen to you while you were there? Were there things that were difficult about living there?**

No, not really. Every day was pretty much another day to me, you know? We didn't have any big problems... Everybody was in the same situation. The money wasn't abundant but everybody managed and if somebody was short one week, somebody lent him something until next week. So as a community, we got on okay... I can't particularly remember anybody that was in a desperate situation. Sticky situations maybe at times for people, but not in desperate situations because they could rely on people around them to pitch in and help. Which is a great thing and it's a sad loss. People don't seem to be that way today... I have still got that... that community thing is still built into me from then.

**Is there anything else you'd like to say that you feel we should record.**

I don't think there's a lot... except... I still miss the people because I don't know where they are...





IN MEMORY OF  
WILLIAM THOMPSON  
"BENDIGO"  
OF NOTTINGHAM.  
WHO DIED AUG. 23<sup>RD</sup> 1880  
AGED 69 YEARS

IN LIFE ALWAYS BRAVE, FIGHTING LIKE A LION.  
IN DEATH LIKE A LAMB, TRANQUIL IN ZION.



## ISLA KEYS

**“Ye gone and gone into the box.”**

Recorded by Lauren Sisson  
July 2021

← The Bendigo Memorial in St Mary's Rest Garden, where Isla Keys recalls playing with her daughter. Photograph taken August, 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

**So if you don't mind could you tell me your name?**

Isla Keys.

**And if you don't mind sharing, what year where you born**

1953.

**And whereabouts did you live in the area? Which house?**

We lived at 19 Campbell Grove which was the end terrace.

**And when and how long did you live?**

We were there from 1986 to 1990.

**And can you tell me how you came to live in the area?**

Oh yes. We had married in 1985 and came to Nottingham. And we lived originally at Halifax Place in the Lace Market, but ... clearly at that stage house prices were starting to rise and we felt that if we didn't actually get on the ladder then we wouldn't be doing anything at all. And we started to look around. I was always really interested in local history, so I used to wonder about Nottingham, looking at different places and one of the places I liked the look of very much was The Promenade looking over Victoria Park.

As it happened ... my husband is director of music at St Mary's at Nottingham, big civic church and living in Halifax Place we were just up the road from the church, but we wanted to live not too far away given that we only had the one car and we had things to do at certain areas.

So we started looking around and we looked at The Promenade but The Promenade houses at that time, this is 1986, were roughly twenty three, twenty four thousand pounds. And we just felt that was too much for us. We couldn't get to that kind of height at the time. So we noticed that, down Campbell Grove, the prices were marginally cheaper because there wasn't the same outlook, and as it happened, we saw that number 19 was for sale.

It was for sale for twenty one and a half thousand and it belongs, as it happened to ... we can't for the life of us remember his surname, but he was a Reverend Jeremy somebody, not Jeremy Lewis who does the

[Nottingham] Post, but a Jeremy who worked at BBC Radio Nottingham, as well as a lot of other things.

And we thought, well, in the first instance, you know, at that time you went to an estate agents but you could also knock on the door and ask and we vaguely knew him anyway. So we spoke to him and we saw the house. And with one thing and another, we managed to scrape together the wherewithal to buy number 19 Campbell Grove.

### **So apart from Reverend Jeremy what sort of people were living in the area?**

There was an older couple who lived on Robin Hood Terrace who were very friendly. Our next door neighbours were both doctors, I can't remember their name. There were quite a lot of quite youngish people about.

Some singles, some young couples, not many children. There was one lad who was about Susan's age called Sean. And then living three or four doors down was Billy Ivory, who has, you know, has become quite a famous playwright, he's done a lot of writing for TV. So Bill lived just down the road.

### **So you're living there as a young family?**

No, we had no children when we moved there but that was one of our reasons. We knew that in the flat we couldn't have children and it was planned to have them. So sure enough Susan arrived, 1987, August, and she had eventually the little room on the Campbell Grove, the houses at that stage had been changed. They had been what I would call a 2 up and 2 down with a room right at the top which I think must have been used for working, but the downstairs we had the front room and then there was a kind of dining kitchen.

And then there was a small passageway in between the two rooms where we had the phone under shelves that we put records on. And then also, there was a stairwell that was quite steep stairs that went up to the first floor, there was our room and then opposite it was Susan's little room which was so small that we could scarcely get the door open and what she remembers about it are the folding doors that we put in as just a way of getting into her room and she had a cot in there.

She had a cot in there with a small chest of drawers, so there was very little space. And then the bathroom – which was how the

houses had been changed at what would have been the second bedroom – had been kind of chopped in half so that there was a small bathroom as well.

So that was Susan in 1987 and then March of 1989 Eleanor arrived. So that meant that we were then four of us living in really quite a small house and consequently, it was around that time that we started to, well about a year later, we thought we really need to find a bigger place. So that was what brought us to the end of our time at Campbell Grove.

### **Well what was it like as a family in the area and in the house?**

Well funnily enough, it was really nice, because we were so local to Nottingham that you could walk anywhere.

Sometimes my mum would come and stay and one of the things that we loved at that time was in the Rest Garden. There's a tomb to Bendigo of the fighter who had an Australian connection, and my mum at the time used to play games with Susan to hide round this tomb, and they used to go around the tomb and she would hide on one side and Susan was looking for her. Every time Susan turned a corner mum was going the other way because she was only about one or one and half at the time and eventually Susan just got frustrated and she just looked at me and she said, "Ye gone and gone into box". She thought mum had jumped inside. "Ye gone and gone into the box" has been a saying with us for a long time.

### **Can you tell me a bit more about the inside of your house? What was the layout like of the rooms and the interiors?**

So many of the houses that exist in that area you came in through the front door and the front door went straight into the living room. So the first thing we did was put a curtain over that door because if anybody opened it in winter it really blasted cold air in. And we had a cat that lived there, we had a piano that we got in summer. There was a gas fire, the old style, gas fire in the front.

And one window, and we just had a small sofa in there with the fire guard. And then you went through to this small passageway – which I think in some houses they have now just taken the wall away and made it much

more open – and that led through into an area where we had a cupboard and dining table.

And then beyond that, or probably in the same thing, we put shelving in between the two. There was a kitchen which wasn't very big but it was big enough and then the kitchen at the back door, obviously went out into a very small little yard outside and then upstairs, you went up this narrow twisting stairwell, up to the first floor where there was the main bedroom, which again was just the same size as the front room.

Then the other thing I've mentioned already was that with Susan's small one and the bathroom and then you end up on an even more twisting stairway to get up to the very top, which we used as a kind of spare room. We never put the children up there. We used it as a spare room with a single bed up there, but we also had, because it was the 1980s and because we were running concerts at Saint Mary's, we had a Wang. A Wang was a one of the first word processors.

So not a Wang, tell a lie, we had an Amstrad word processor up there that we could actually produce whatever stuff we needed, felt very proud at that word processor – and that was it, there wasn't anything else.

### **What kind of decor did it have? Did you like it?**

Well as I said, there was this dreadful wallpaper in the back, which I think we took off the walls, and there's a rather nice stripy one in the middle and the passageway bit, and the front was just painted a creamy colour as I remember. Upstairs, we certainly decorated our room and Susan's room.

I think we probably decorated the top as well, but it was very... it was the 1980s and everything was woodchip and magnolia it was very much that time, but that was what we wanted. So it was fine. One thing I do remember actually, was carrying Susan one day and this was, I know the time it was, it was July of 1988. And I was carrying her. She was just about, must have been about one.

Yes, that's right. She would have been just under one but I was carrying her to go up the stairs and we had a blind for some reason lying in the passageway. My foot caught on the blind and I hung on to Susan, I wasn't going to let go of her but I did fall and bang

my elbow which broke of course. So when I was going up to Scotland, a few days later with Susan and on the train, which made for an interesting journey with a baby in a pram and a case and a broken arm.

### **Do you like the historic features of it?**

Yes, I'll accept there weren't really that many. The only historic features would have been the windows. The one thing that is interesting is that the very top window which is a small one just under the eaves. Indeed, the main window used to easily be taken out. And certainly some of our stuff, we roped up the front of the building to get in because that's what you did in those days. The window would come out. So anything, which was awkward and those stairs were really awkward to get things lifted up. So you just used ropes to get it up. The front of the window was quite memorable.

### **Was it a transient community?**

Yes. There were quite a lot of young people. There were a few families because I don't know if they're still there as such or not, but there were a few houses on The Promenade and on Robin Hood Terrace. Possibly Campbell Grove as well which were classed as council houses. So there were a few families living there, but we never really knew them as such.

### **Were you happy overall living in the area?**

Yes. Our two simple reasons for moving were that there were then four of us. We knew we needed more space. In addition, there was this issue of, because we were the end terrace, we used to get people walking through quite a lot and you know there were a few drunks and things walking past that made it interesting at times and it didn't, it didn't really worry us. It was just that it was our first little house and it was never intended to be anything other than our first little house. So, we moved in 1990 and came to West Bridgford.

### **Do you think it was like a good first house?**

Definitely. Yeah, definitely. My recollection is that we sold it in 1990 for about £38,000, so it had gone up in price over the years ... You know, it was probably the right price for it.





## LAURA MCGONIGAL & ALAN PHELAN

**“One morning, Laura made me a cup of coffee because she thought I was awake. I was asleep and it turned out it was the neighbour yawning.”**

Recorded by Alison Maiden  
July 2021

← The King William IV (The King Billy) pub on the corner of Eyre Street and Manvers Street. A location enjoyed by Laura and Alan. Photograph taken August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### **This is Laura and Alan. Would you like to tell me how long you’ve lived here?**

Laura - We have been here three years... We had only been living in Nottingham for about a year before that... in Beeston. We were looking to buy our first house and I’d seen this row of houses... when I was living in London... on Airbnb... I saw it was next to a park and thought, that would be a really nice place to potentially live if we lived in Nottingham... Also, when we were living in Beeston, one of our neighbours who lives on Campbell Grove was talking about this neighbourhood and saying, oh you need to come and live there... So we also had him encouraging us.

Alan - His comment was, my neighbour walks his ferret in the park. And that actually turned out to be true...

Laura - I think his point was that it was a... young neighbourhood... a lively neighbourhood, perhaps.

### **A quirky neighbourhood?**

Laura - Yeah, a quirky neighbourhood. Which it has turned out to be.

Alan - I always use the word fetishise, because people do fetishise, I think, living on this road. Just because of the colours and... overlooking the park and it looks so pretty... We desperately wanted to buy here, based, more or less, solely on our impression of the house. Laura... wanted a period house as well, didn’t you? That was one of your things.

Laura - Yeah... anything that’s of a certain age, I find really interesting... When I saw them at first, I thought that they were Georgian... and they are quite early Victorian... We were only looking at old houses essentially. There’s a good mix of ones [here] that are... either completely refurbished or have been but in the 70s. Ours was in relatively good nick. That was the original appeal, but then the nice thing has definitely been the neighbours, really, and living in a really close-knit, little community.

**Are there downsides to that? I just wonder because everyone's been telling me how good it is.**

Alan - There are downsides but... I feel like they're just completely overshadowed by the positives... I have people who knock on my door and ask if I want to come out and play. You know, I'm 43, that hasn't happened since I was a ten-year-old. We moved here from London and it's a completely different scenario because you have to plan, what are you doing at the weekend of August 27th?... And here... someone can just knock and say, do you want to go and do something? Or you can look out your window and you can see people chatting, and you jump out and chat... It's just good fun.

Laura - Yeah, I think because of that, there is the downside of people always stop and chat. Our front garden... is essentially our back garden and it's facing onto the park. So it's lovely but everyone can see you, and everyone will stop and have a chat... But we like that more than we don't like it. There are some days where you... don't really feel like chatting with anybody, but for us, that's rare, we're quite extroverted people.

Alan - So [next door are] moving, if our new neighbours turned out to be terrible, it would be really rubbish because we share a path... I would hate to be in a scenario where I would have to try to avoid my own front yard...

Laura - And we're lucky, we haven't had anything like that, but there certainly have been cases in the neighbourhood where there are those situations. So far, at least, our immediate neighbours and all those around us, we get along really well with and we're friends and so it's been fine. But yeah, there's always that potential. Even just inside, you can hear everything... We can hear our neighbours when they come home after the pub and that kind of thing.

Alan - One morning, Laura made me a cup of coffee because she thought I was awake. I was asleep and it turned out it was the neighbour yawning... They're thin, those walls... I'm a poor sleeper... that does give me anxiety because sleep is important. And then because you overlook a park, there are times when... it's been scorching hot... we had our window open one night, and eventually, I had to close

it because there's people in the park drinking, or whatever, shouting... You have no control over that. So that's the downside of it...

Laura - There's all kinds of things that happen in the park. Some wholesome, some less so. But... I think because it's quite open, it feels pretty safe because you can see everything...

**Do you go to the swimming baths or Sneinton Market much?**

Laura - We go to Sneinton Market every weekend... Almost every Saturday, we'll get a coffee and a pastry... and sit in the market with our friends and neighbours. That's how we start the weekend, really... Other than our parks, we don't really use that much in the neighbourhood, other than... pubs!

**Do you go to the pub in the market?**

Laura - We go to the Billy, the King Billy [King William IV, Eyre Street, Sneinton]... A good thing about the King Billy is that it really is a local pub in that you have everybody from the neighbourhood.... It's not just young people, or old people, or certain groups of friends. It's like anyone who lives around here. It's a destination as well for people outside of the neighbourhood.... People [have been] going there for a long time, because we know the landlord, and his dad was the landlord, and so people have been going there for ages.

**Do you both work from home?**

Laura - We both work outside of Nottingham.... another reason why we moved here is because it's close to the train station so we can walk... That's one thing on the street, there's quite a few people... that aren't from the UK or who have not lived in Nottingham before. So they might work outside of the city, or they do work at the University... And one of the things that has been said, is that during Covid, a lot of those people have gone home because it's one of those times when a lot of work has changed. So... their job wasn't the same or... they lost their jobs or they just wanted to be close to their family.

Laura - We've had a lot of turnover on the street as a result of that, which has been hard, because we are really close with a lot of the people... Because you have a lot of expats... they become a little bit like your family because you're not near your family... There's still enough people that it's lovely but a few of



our close friends have left... On the flip side... I can't imagine a better place to live during Covid because... you had a lovely kind of cafe atmosphere along the street even when we were in lockdown. You weren't allowed to sit in each other's garden, but when people were sitting in their own gardens, you could say hello...

### How the area has changed with people moving in and out

Laura - The houses have changed hands a few times... Our next door neighbour, for example, completely renovated the house, and then sold it, and... did it in a nicely decorated, trendy way and then started attracting more people. There's been quite a few houses that once they started being quite sought-after, then more people sold and then there was a little bit of a turnover of people in the street...

Alan - These houses [that] are sought-after... they're comparatively expensive. Like the house just on the corner... is a hundred grand less than these ones facing onto the park. And I think that when I reference 'changed', I think that we are somewhat culpable to a mild gentrification of the area. It's definitely not something that we... that anyone [does consciously]... We come from London where to buy a house like this would be insane. When you come up and you look at the prices, it just seems really good value for what you're getting... A lot of the people that live particularly on this one road have a bit more disposable income, there aren't as many families on the road as maybe there would have been historically, and I think that's part of the reason why there's a change in atmosphere. Maybe it feels a little bit more secure because some of that element of what was historically known as a bit of a rough area, I think, has been either displaced or moved on...

Laura - There's definitely some bad to that, obviously... these houses have been council houses. They've sold the houses... that shift has been happening for years... We can only speak to what we've seen since we've been here. And yeah, some of those changes are for the positive... I think it's always been safe enough if you're from the neighbourhood. But it's certainly, if you're someone who's new in the neighbourhood, it might be a little

bit easier of a transition to move in now... When we moved in, one of the local kids smashed the window with a rock... and one of our neighbours said... "this is going to be a game now, that will just keep happening".... But we've been really lucky. Everyone's been really lovely. And we haven't had any issues. But yeah, there's some people who've been living here that have had multiple break-ins.

Alan - There is a character and a culture that goes with people from different backgrounds being in an area. And I think that's really important. What... I wouldn't like to see happen is that homogenised street where everyone has the same views on life, the same political views, from the same, economic background, the same cultural background. I don't know how sustainable that is, given what the houses are currently being sold for. I don't know how you would stop that, but I think that the houses around us which are basically the same, are more affordable, a lot of them are still owned by the council. That's really good. There are some really anti-social neighbours... but there are loads of people who live in council houses who are great fun, so I don't really have any issues or agenda.

Laura - Some people who have been living here since the 70s are a little bit like... I don't know... I don't want to say like, closed to the idea of everyone in the neighbourhood getting together. They're a little bit more hesitant because they've had some bad experiences...

### Comparisons between different parts of Nottingham

Laura - We lived in Beeston first.

Alan - Beeston is nice, but I was shocked... when I got off the tram and I walked into Hockley. Like so many city centres feel generic and... there's a Pret and a Tescos and a Wetherspoons everywhere you go. And I got into Hockley and I was like, I don't recognise almost any of these places, they're all independent or small. It had a unique feel and... like, instantly, I had the 'yes' feeling about it... I've been kind of enamoured with the city ever since. I wouldn't say love at first sight, I think that's getting a bit too poetic, but I did like it.



## CLAIR MACE

**“It’s been really nice to see all of the work that the council have done to the properties and to really invest in them and the future of these houses.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
July 2021

← The refurbishments of the former wholesale market buildings at Sneinton Market, August, 2021. A recent transformation referred to by Claire Mace.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### How long have you lived here?

I’ve lived here for 16 years... I moved in as a council tenant [in] 2004.

### What did you think when they offered you this house?

I was really scared about the stairs because I’d got a two-year-old... the steepness of the stairs and a toddler absolutely terrified me. The area had quite a bad reputation at the time and a lot of people had said, it’s not the kind of place you want to be walking around at night. So I was really hesitant when I first moved in.

### And then did it quickly change?

I realised quite quickly, there was other people with young children. One of the neighbours up the road... she had a boy of about the same age. There was another lady who lived on The Prom and it’s quite nice that all three children then went to nursery and school together...

A few of the neighbours across the road introduced themselves very quickly and they still live here now. So that’s really nice that I’ve seen their children grow up, they’ve seen my son grow up... I think my perception has changed as I moved in and when I realised the convenience of the area to town and amenities.

### What were your impressions when you first moved into the area?

How handy places like Sneinton Market were, and what a good resource they were at the time. I mean that’s changed so much over the years... [Before] it very much felt like a market for Sneinton and St Ann’s. That market [has] been regenerated as a kind of artisan vegan-type market... I think the gentrification of the whole area has been quite phenomenal over the last 15 years, and I didn’t expect that it would ever change this much when I first moved in.

### What were the people like when you moved here? Has that changed as the area’s changed?

As there’s become less social housing, and more people have bought their council houses, it’s changed the demographic... There’s always been a sense of community.



When I first moved in, when leaflets came through the door about Residents' Association meetings, it was always really handy to be able to use that opportunity to meet people... neighbours over the years have made really big efforts for neighbourhood community [e.g.] picnics on the park. Things have adapted well during Covid...

The neighbourhood and the community really came together... two times. One, I can think of when there was an incidence of a property that became a halfway house and there was significant drug dealing from that property... The community very quickly came together to work with local associations like the Police and Housing to express concerns and to get that situation resolved.

I think the other one was when they were going to close Victoria Baths... [A] councillor felt that the swimming baths shouldn't still be open... it was an old derelict building that should be knocked down. A lot of the neighbours fought really hard to campaign for a resource for a socially deprived area to be available for people that wouldn't necessarily get that... We were all very aware that a lot of school swimming lessons are done there, poverty is the biggest indicator of poor health and having that kind of resource really brought the community together to fight and campaign to keep something for the community.

### **You talked a bit about the Residents' Association. Is there still one now? Do you get involved?**

Yes, I get involved in the Residents' Association. I was the... Treasurer... for a couple of years, many years ago... It dispersed for a while and now it's been recreated and it's really nice to have it back and give neighbours a voice. Some of the really positive things [include] having the kerb outside [the] shop to make it safer for people to be walking around there without the cars on the pavement... making that [a] ... bit safer for people. Before parking permits came in, everybody used to pull up here, go to the ice stadium and then nobody could get parked. As much as that felt frustrating when they were first introduced... now it seems like it should have been something that was always there.

### **What experience did your son have growing up?**

It's been concerning in many ways bringing up a child in St Ann's, knowing that there has been lots of anti-social behaviour and prevalent drug use... Pre-school, there was loads of fantastic support networks and resources being in such a close proximity. The Salvation Army had lots of support - mum and baby groups. Sure Start on St Ann's Well Road. The Chase was a phenomenal lifeline when you have the isolation of being a young mum with a toddler, it became a really powerful support network.

[There were] organised events such as Sure Start Epic, the police ran a... youth inclusion programme. And then more structured things like having ice skating, swimming, things that we could do locally or he could do locally with other people.

### **What about your leisure time? Do you visit the shops, use the pubs?**

I never realised how lucky I was to live in the area until New Year's Eve, where you'd celebrate in Market Square, the countdown to midnight would happen, and then you'd watch this mad rush of people trying to get taxis and we'd just walk home. It felt like the pressure that other people must have, we just didn't have any, it was really nice.

Seeing Sneinton Market and Hockley change so much in terms of access to bars and pubs has been really nice over the years and it's a great thing to be able to meet people in Hockley and just be able to walk there without having to worry about getting buses or taxis. Seeing the regeneration of pubs like the Peggers, which is now the Fox and Grapes, the Bath Inn has changed twice.

### **What does gentrification mean to you and what does it mean to the area?**

Gentrification means to me that there were a lot more people that did what could be perceived as working-class jobs, or didn't have jobs at all, have now changed to people who do professional jobs with education.

I myself have done that. I moved in as a care assistant that was working on minimum wage or below minimum wage because it was a community carer so they didn't pay for your travel time. To then go through my

whole nursing degree and now be a health professional. So, I say everybody else has gentrified, but maybe it's just like myself, the area's just grown and developed through the years.

I don't think 15 years ago, the area had the market for a vegan market that charged four pounds for a cake. People wouldn't have wanted to pay that and so that market stall would never have existed. Nowadays, it's just normal that the whole market is filled with things that are more specialist... Shops that used to be really busy, like I see discounts are now much more empty and derelict, and the bars and restaurants, when they open [are] aiming for a different market. So the Bath Inn is about to reopen and is in the local paper, they've just done an article saying that they want to be the next Covent Garden.

### **Do you have any not so fond memories of living here?**

I got mugged on the back alley, a good few years ago and that left me really uncertain about coming home late at night... That wasn't very nice. A lot of anti-social noise and disruption over the years. Knife crime has been prevalent in the area... various incidences over the years have added to that feeling of... anxiety about walking around St Ann's alone, late at night when all you're doing is coming home from work or coming home from meeting friends to your own home.

### **What are your fond memories?**

I've had a lot of fond memories, of a sense of community, of being able to step out of my door and knowing that there's people there. Knowing that if the council are redecorating my bathroom, and they're swapping the toilet, that you can knock on a neighbour's house and borrow theirs because we know each other...

### **What are your thoughts about the house? What's it like living in a house like this?**

It's much better now that the council replaced the windows and the combi boiler. It's now much cheaper to live in this house than it was before all the work was done. It felt really frustrating that... homes were supposed to be... a certain standard by 2010 and it ended up being, what, 2018 when it happened.

It always felt like the area where nobody touched the houses, all of the neighbours around... such as the Stonebridge estate, got new kitchens. We'd had various people come over the years to measure windows that never did anything about it. So to have all the work done has been amazing...

Having high ceilings is really nice and adds to character. Having a really nice sized kitchen is lovely with all the storage in there. Not having access to any other storage, such as being able to stick a shed in the garden or a garage, can be difficult particularly because the cellars are so damp, you can't store anything down there...

It's quite easy to hear what next door are doing, but it's not too disruptive. The walls are certainly thicker than when I've been to other peoples' new build houses. But you do hear people going up and down their stairs. Having no road in-between means that you tend to hear people opposite much louder than you would do and noise from the top of the street seems to bounce down... as it doesn't get lost in traffic. But then it's nice not to have the noise of traffic...

It's nice to have sash windows.... I think being a house that was a shop, we've lost out on a lot of the character that maybe other houses might have. So we don't have any fireplaces or any other identifying features except the windows.

### **Anything else to add?**

It's been really nice to see all of the work that the council have done to the properties and to really invest in them and the future of these houses. They were standing long before any of the houses in the area and to have that support and regeneration that hopefully, they'll be standing for many more years is a really positive thought. Having streets which are so densely populated because the lack of roads, brings out the best and worst in people, and nine times out of ten, this area brings out the best in people.





## MICHELLE MCINTOSH

**“And it was me and my little girl and we’d moved away from London.”**

Recorded by Lauren Sission  
June 2021

← Looking down The Promenade from numbers 14 to 1, August, 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### What’s your name?

My name is Michelle McIntosh.

### What year were you born?

I was born in 1966.

### And where did you live in The Promenade area?

I lived at 12 Promenade.

### And when did you live there and for how long?

I moved in in May 1993. And I can’t remember exactly when I moved out, but it was only about three, maybe four years at the most. And unfortunately it didn’t coincide with the census while I was there.

### And can you tell me how and why you came to live in the area?

Okay, well I’m from the Nottingham area. Originally I was actually born in Kimberley, about five miles outside Nottingham and I lived at various different places in Nottingham, quite a lot of different places actually. And I’ve been to London.

Because when I finished at university, I went working in London, I was down there for about five years and then I just come back to the area. I got a job with Notts County Council and I rented a couple of different places and then I managed to get a house on The Promenade that I had always liked. I always like The Promenade as I lived in other places and been passed it and I always thought, if I did get to buy a house in Nottingham ever, then I’d absolutely love to get one there and one came up when I was actually in a position to buy.

### So it was a long-held aspiration?

Was really. Yeah. Because I always thought what a beautiful row. I didn’t know very much about the houses before I moved in there and I’ve actually looked at them and thought that you know, some houses look like they’re one great big house knocked into two and when you look at The Prom because they’ve got the blank windows, I had originally thought that quite a few of the houses were originally bigger and been knocked into one.

And it wasn't until I actually moved in and started looking into the history of the house that I found out that they were always that size as part of the design. So I always liked the look of them as long as I'd known they were there and been really, really keen not just to live there but to own one. And that was actually the first house I ever owned.

### So did you like it when you when you first moved to the area?

I absolutely loved that house. I really loved it. It was such a beautiful house and a lots of really nice things about it. I mean, I prefer older houses to new houses anyway because I just think about how they have more character, more space. Basically, like all the cubbyholes, I always liked houses with cellars. I like houses that are kind of non-standard. So the fact that it has three stories plus a cellar. I like that kind of thing.

### What do you like about them? Did you like the area?

I loved it and I lived on the edge of St Ann's, you know. You know St Ann's has a bit of a reputation as a bit of a so-called rough area but I'd lived in The Meadows and I lived in Forest Fields, both of which were the other rough areas that people say. So I wasn't really worried about moving to St Ann's for that reason.

So yeah, I mean, I absolutely loved the house, I thought it was beautiful and it was mine as well was another thing. You know, I think too that it was the first house I'd owned. And it was me and my little girl and we'd moved away from London, where I'd been in a relationship.

We moved away from that relationship, as well as moving away from London. So, that was sort of personal reasons, as well for it being, you know, our place. I loved it. I mean, I didn't have hardly any furniture because every penny I had got had gone on buying the house, I had nothing else. So all I had, I mean, I had a few things, we had beds, you know, and stuff. But so I couldn't afford to do anything for the house.

It was in reasonable condition. It probably could have done with quite a lot of things doing to it but I don't know. Just absolutely loved it but I really, really liked it. Yeah, I loved the fact that the sun came in through

the windows in the morning, that was my favourite thing to wake up in the morning and on a sunny day, the bedroom would be flooded with sunlight and because it was just me and my daughter to start with.

So they're three bedrooms I think. I had the front bedroom, she had the back bedroom on the first floor, and then the top room, I just put my books in there and I didn't have any furniture in there, but the people who had it before had this crazy striking carpet, which I really liked. So we just had some bean bags and the windows quite low down in there as well. So we'd just sit, sit upstairs and read in the sunshine, this was really, really lovely.

It was a bit dark at the back of the house, I guess. But yeah, so my partner at the time. My boyfriend didn't like the area. And so I don't know if you want me to go into this yet or what happened. But the thing that we didn't like about the area was sort of the crime and things.

So his car got broken into. And so everybody used to park in this car park and he parked right up to the back gates of the house but his car got broken into not long after I'd moved there.

And he had quite a nice car and from then onwards he didn't really like it and didn't live in the complex and that was a downside that my boyfriend wouldn't come to the house and it was a few other things. So we got a brick put through my back window. It was a really nice brick. I saved it because it was such a nice brick. Actually, I was looking for it earlier on but it I can't find that either.

And somebody tried to break in through the back door so I was a little bit concerned, bit worried about things especially if I was on my own in the house, I did get a bit scared at night, if I heard noises and things like that.

We moved out in the end. I would have liked him to move in with me. So that's the main reason why I sold it in the end because I wanted to get somewhere together and he basically wouldn't live there.

So yeah, so all sorts of downsides as well. But I did absolutely love the house and you know, still do really I mean I'd go back, really I would.

### **So it sounds like you've got like fond memories as well.**

And we had loads of space there. Me and my daughter, so it was our house and I don't think I'd ever managed to unpack all my books before, but the people who've been there before had left, it might not have been them, it might have been before them, but they got a little back [porch] behind the kitchen.

There's a little back porch, and you can use the utility room that's underneath the bathroom, and they put floor-to-ceiling cupboards in. So it's absolutely massive storage space and then there's alcoves, bookshelves and that kind of thing. And so I managed to get all my craft stuff, all my daughter's things out in these floor-to-ceiling cupboards and then in the top floor, all my books, all my books were out. It was really, really fantastic.

My daughter had got a nice sized bedroom. You got all of these things there and we got it all lovely because it was exactly how we wanted it and it was so nice and we still had space. So it was a really lovely place to be.

### **What was your experience as a small family and it sounds like quite a young family as well, living in that area and that house?**

It was nice and then we didn't really know any other families with young children and The Prom or in that area. Really my daughter was at a nursery, the other side of town.

So we had, you know, actually we only just moved back to the area. So she had nursery friends, she was fine. And I was at work, I had plenty of work people, the neighbours were really lovely, so was the lady who lived at number 11, I think is still there and she was very, very welcoming. I think she had a son. He was a bit older.

She was really kind and welcoming, friendly, and I'm trying to remember the name of the chap who lived at number 13. I think it was Sid, he lived there a long time and [he was] also really friendly and kind but we didn't really get to know anybody else really very well because I was going out to work and taking my daughter to nursery.

### **So the house was already painted by the 1990s and was yours a painted house?**

It was painted, but there were bits chipping off the paint by then. So it was rendered and then painted on top, and I remember so mine was grey because they're only allowed to be certain colours. And I remember the paint seemed to be chipping off at the top.

I remember trying to... I hadn't got any of the render. I didn't know how to repair it, but there was, there was a tin of paint left in the house. And so I remember leaning out of the top window, trying to reach the bits where the render had come off, paint it with this same kind of paint. But obviously, I didn't do the same colour because it was weathered. I was painting it straight onto the brick. So sort of leaning out the window trying to paint a little bit of brick on the outside of the house. And when I sold it, the people who came to look at it, who bought it from me, made a point of it, they said they wanted something knocking off because the brickwork is rotten.

### **How do you feel like, reflecting back on your time?**

I absolutely loved the house, it was such a beautiful house it really was.

### **What made it beautiful to you?**

Everything about it really.

Not so much the location. Although, I mean, some parts of the location are really great. So the proximity to the city centre, the lovely park out in front. The fact that it doesn't have a street. It's got flagstones in front of it. You know, those bits of the location, I really liked, but it was mainly the house itself is beautifully historic.

Just a nice place to be, made me feel happy being there and so I've got a good memory of that. Yeah, so sad really that I haven't got that. Yeah we were sad to leave. I didn't really want to but at the time it was what I had to do. But I probably couldn't afford it now.





## STEPHEN SHERWOOD

**“And then, when the council took them over, they knocked the scullery down and built a bathroom. So we actually had an indoor loo and a bath. There was no more tin bath in front of the fire.”**

Recorded by Peter Russell  
July 2021

← ‘The Backs’, between The Promenade and Campbell Grove and looking towards Robin Hood Terrace. Used as a playground by children, as recalled by Stephen Sherwood. August, 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### Peter - Do you mind saying what your name is, just for the recording.

Stephen - My name is Stephen Lawrence Sherwood. My nickname is Shez, most people call me Steve, which is fine.

I was born in Peel Street Maternity Home, June 1952, and from there, when I was a few days old, mum, and dad, Mara and Harold, took me back to live at 9 Campbell Grove, which was my Grandma’s house. A few months after that, they managed to get the tenancy to number 10 Campbell Grove and moved in next door, so very handy. I lived there until 1963, just before Christmas ’63... Actually we did an exchange and moved to Clifton... it was my cousin who moved into our house because her mother, my dad’s older sister, lived at number 8, Campbell Grove, and she wanted to be near her mum, because she’s got a daughter with spina bifida... So we moved to Clifton but still kept ties with Campbell Grove, simply because my grandmother lived at number 9, my other grandma Sherwood lived at number 13.

My dad’s younger brother, Les lived at 13 Campbell Grove from the mid-1920s... until the refurbishment works that were done in the mid-70s. The house was going to be done up, so they were moved into... number 14, Robin Hood Terrace, which had already been refurbished. They liked it so much that they stayed there. My uncle died earlier this year. So he went from the 20s right through to 2021 living in that area...

### How old were you when you left?

Eleven and a bit... I went to the wonderful Bath Street School... passed the Eleven Plus, and went to Mundella [School].

Back in the day, when I was little, Campbell Grove used to have a Sneinton address not St Ann’s. They used to say the dividing line was the wall of Victoria Park, where the gardens on Robin Hood Terrace back onto.

### So apart from school, what else did you used to do when you were that age?

The Promenade, as far as we were concerned, was the bit that backed on to the park. Campbell Grove was the bit where our front gardens were. The bit in-between where we used to play was called The Backs, because it was The Backs of the houses. We all used

to play out on The Backs together... It was all cobbled, you'd fetch one of the cobble stones out to use as a [chuck] and play marbles in the street. We used to play cricket in the street. My memory of that is that if you hit the ball over the wall into anybody's backyard, you had a choice. You could have 6 then you're out or none and you stay in, but you've got to go and rescue the ball. Used to play football there. On Bonfire Night... we had a big bonfire in the middle of The Backs.

It was very much a local thing because we played there on The Backs, the kids from Robin Hood Street, Campbell Street, and the other side of Campbell Grove used to play on Salisbury Street, the street behind where their backyards are. Unless we were playing with any of them, we never went down here. That wasn't our patch. Our patch was there and onto the park. You've got your own areas even then. They talk about the gangs these days. I mean, it wasn't in a nasty way, there was no sort of animosity. It was just that they lived over there and we live over here, so why would we play with them?

### **The houses on Campbell Grove**

The houses when I was born were private landlord. It was probably when I was four that the council took them over. Prior to that, you had your sitting room and your living room, your two bedrooms on the first floor and then the attic up in the top. At the back there was a scullery which used to have a gas stove and a copper in the corner, which, come Monday, used to spark into life with the gas to do the washing. And then, when the council took them over, they knocked the scullery down and built a bathroom. So we actually had an indoor loo and a bath. There was no more tin bath in front of the fire.

[Before that] everybody had their own toilet [in the yard]... You still had to go downstairs to the end of the house to go to the loo, but at least it was inside. You hadn't got to take the lamp down the yard, trying to avoid the spiders, which we did before that.

### **The cellars**

I don't know if it's still there but my grandma, her mum was blind, and she lived in the house with them in the war. They reinforced the cellar of 9 Campbell Grove and made it into an air raid shelter... I don't know if that's

still as is, or if it's ever been ripped out and changed because of all the alterations that the council have done. Because I know in the Prom, you used to be able to get through the cellars.

### **So what do the kids do, if your mum's out at work?**

You didn't bother locking your door particularly because if anybody came in there was nothing to steal... And because everybody was related to everybody else... It was very much a family environment, so nobody really bothered [When the council changed the locks].

After the council had taken over, they'd replaced all the doors... they'd put the same lock and key on every one of the houses! So there was no point locking your door because everybody had exactly the same lock.

### **So you just mentioned about going down the shop on Campbell Grove.**

Yeah, there were two shops. As you look from Campbell Street, up to Campbell Grove, there was one on the right hand side which was nominally a beer-off... they sold sweets... cigarettes, papers, groceries, food, tinned stuff etc.

The one on the left hand side was a greengrocers. Kate used to run the shop, and Bill was a barrow man and used to fill his barrow up each day and go toddling off all over the place, into the city centre... selling out of the barrow.

### **Children went out on their own from a young age**

We would go out in the morning with a packet of jam sandwiches and a bottle of water, and arrived back in time for tea in the evening. Half past five, four o'clock... I remember borrowing a pram from somewhere and just throwing in all the sandwiches and bottles of water, and any babies and siblings that were coming and probably 20 of us would go off, looking like refugees from World War Two!

### **Moving house**

Where we moved to [in Clifton], it was a corner plot. From a postage stamp of garden and backyard, we'd suddenly got this amazing amount of ground... It was a three bedroom, modern [house]... 100 years newer than the one we'd moved out of. It had a downstairs



loo, as well as a loo upstairs in the bathroom, just luxury that was. Instead of two rooms where the front room was the parlour and you never went in, you'd got a... 21 foot long through lounge. Having been in a house with 11 foot square rooms... it felt massive...

[We moved] because my cousin wanted to get into close proximity with her mum... that was why we moved at that time, it wasn't for any slum clearance... It was just a one-off exchange.

### **It sounds like you got on with everyone.**

I think it's because nobody had anything. There were no jealousies, no petty arguments because 'you've got a bigger car than me.' I remember the only car we ever had on The Backs was my uncle Stan's. He bought this old wreck because he needed to shift some stuff around for work. He was a plumber. He bought this thing and ran it for about six or seven months.

### **You still know people that live there?**

Uncle Les was still there until this year. He was the only one that was still there...

It was very communal down there... you would go and shop at the bottom shop, unless you needed a proper shop, in which case you'd go into town or central market...

### **You must have moved out well before any demolition started.**

We moved out ten years before... My uncle moved into Robin Hood Terrace but most of the people I know who moved out did go back into their original houses. They supposedly made them very nice.

### **There's not many places in the city centre that you can live like that.**

I must admit, when you look across Victoria Park and... particularly now that they've painted the houses different colours, on a sunny day when you look across the park and you see the houses on the Prom, it really does look quite amazing.

### **So did you have your house painted?**

No they were all just brick in those days... You were so close to the city centre and all the grime... Even if you'd painted it, it would have been black within days... The pollution and stuff... Everything just had a film of black on it, that's just how it was. It wasn't something you particularly noticed.

### **Was it all coal heating?**

It was all coal fires, even when the council changed them. We had an open fire originally, and then when the council renovated and did them up and put bathrooms on, they changed the fire in the kitchen for a coal stove that heated the hot water. It had a boiler behind it... So you got running hot water, which was incredible. From the old scullery with a Belfast sink, with a single cold tap, to suddenly within three or four weeks, suddenly we've got this hot and cold running water. Wonderful. The only problem was it was so well insulated in the bathroom that the steam was terrible.

### **You had a gas cooker?**

That was originally in the scullery... just inside the door, so all they did was extend the pipe by about four feet and put a new bend on it so... as you stepped through the kitchen door, the cooker was there... That was probably from the old copper feed...

### **What about upstairs? Did you heat the bedrooms?**

No. Hot water bottle. I can remember getting up and opening the curtains, and you've got frost patterns on the inside of the glass in the middle of winter. It was amazing, all the fern-shaped patterns on the windows on the inside.

They all had cellars and a regular coal delivery, I remember sitting on the front step with instructions from my mum to count the bags as they brought them up...

### **Where was your coal stored?**

In the cellar. There was a grate underneath the front window. So they'd come up the little tiny garden path, put the coal... down the grate, which dropped straight down into the cellar.

We used to get the rag and bone man coming round as well. On his horse and cart. In the very old days, if you took anything out, he'd give you a goldfish in a bag...



## SHEILA STAINWRIGHT

**“There was a well-known saying in Nottingham that, if a room was untidy, ‘It’s just like Jacky Pownalls in here.’”**

Online submission  
July 2021

← Market stalls outside  
John Pownall’s on  
Colwick Street, 1933  
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Courtesy © Nottingham  
City Council & Picture  
Nottingham

## Pownall

The name Pownall is/was really well known in Nottingham amongst the working class. Particularly Jacky Pownall, my 2x great grandfather. My great grandfather was born at The Promenade. Any males with the name Pownall were given the nickname of Jacky.

### The original Jacky Pownall

John (Jacky) Pownall, born in Calverton 1825, fathered nineteen children in all, from two wives. Many of the children followed him into the rag and bone/second hand/scrap business and so in many parts of Nottingham they had stores but mostly around the Sneinton area. Many of the poor and working class people of Nottingham frequented these stores to buy and sell second hand goods. His main store was on the corner of Colwick Street and Cavendish Street and was eventually demolished in the 1930s. At the end of the 20th century virtually every person in Nottingham with the name Pownall was a descendent from John (Jacky) Pownall. There was a well-known saying in Nottingham that, if a room was untidy, “It’s just like Jacky Pownalls in here”

Jacky Pownall moved into The Promenade from close by on Handel Street, as soon as they were built, at number 11. Twelve people including a servant lived there for a few years. Whilst living there, he also had a store on Manvers Street. He was mostly referred to as a Marine Store Dealer in directories etc. There are many reports of him informing the police of people taking stolen goods to his store but also of him probably receiving stolen goods. Many of his sons had criminal records for stealing and his uncle John had been sent to Van Diemens Land for stealing.

Jacky Pownall organised annual cheap train day excursions to the seaside for the poor and elderly. He had tried to arrange with the Midland Railway Company to hire a train but when he was not successful he made an arrangement with The Great Northern Railway Company. On hearing this The Midland arranged a trip of their own at a cheaper price but Jacky then reduced the cost of his further. He also arranged for a band to accompany the day trippers at the station.



Jacky had grown up in a very poor environment as his father William was a framework knitter and was out of work. Jacky had been given poor relief to buy some clothing so that he could work selling clay pipes as a 15 year old. It is also reported in 1864 that he had a “Monster Christmas Pudding” made and distributed it to the poor. It was reported that it took several hours to satisfy everyone who queued at his premises on Manvers Street for a slice. It is thought that he wanted to help poor people now that he had become more affluent and influential. It was surprising however that his father died in Basford Workhouse in 1871 having moved to Heanor for work.

In 1865 there was a large fire at his Manvers Street premises but it was reported that he did not live at the premises. In 1866 he was subletting furnished properties in Eyre Street which were owned by Mr Etherington.

Early in the 1870s he moved to large premises at the corner of Colwick Street and Cavendish Street and lived above the store until he died in 1899. During his time at The Promenade he also became involved with the lady who eventually became his second wife and was confronted at her property by his wife. At the time he was summoned for assaulting his wife but it seems that the case was dropped. Jacky obviously moved into premises with his lover and was residing with her in 1871 although she is shown as his housekeeper. His wife and children were living separately to him.

### Legacy

John, his son from his second marriage, continued the Colwick Street business. Other members of his family were still trading in various places around Nottingham. They seemed to move away from the rag and bone side of the business and more into second hand goods, furniture and scrap metal. I do remember as a child in the 1950s taking a bag of woollens to a store on Manvers Street which belonged to one of the Pownalls and getting a few pence in return for it. As a child, loads of people, on hearing my surname would remark that they knew the Pownalls and they were well off and they all referred to knowing Jacky Pownall.



↑ John “Jacky” Pownall’s gravestone, Rock Cemetery, Nottingham.

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Courtesy ©  
Sheila Stainwright



John (Brooks) Pownall moved onto Lowdham Street in 1934 and continued to trade mainly in furniture. He had married into the Bromley family who were involved in furniture buying and selling. On Picture Nottingham there is a photo taken on Bath Street in 1985 of a delivery van with Pownalls on the side saying established 1870 which is about the time Jacky moved into Colwick Street.

Several of Jacky's sons continued to trade as scrap merchants for many years. Edward (Ted) Pownall who was Jacky's grandson apparently purchased the name of J McKin-tyre for £10 after his death following WW1. He was an Irish immigrant who had established a metal scrap business in Nottingham. That business thrived and was continued by Michael Pownall for many years after with a large works at Dunkirk.

† Pownall's delivery van,  
Bath Street, beside  
Sneinton Market, c.1985.

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Courtesy © Reg Baker  
& Picture Nottingham







## AARON TODD

**“They lived there until the clearance.”**

Online Submission  
January 2021

Mary Jane Todd, prior to that Mary Jane Bacon (nee Barlow). She moved into number 7 Campbell Grove in the 1920s. At that time, she was living with her mother Eliza Barlow (nee Richards). She married Joseph Bacon, a miner at Gedling who unfortunately died in an underground explosion.

By 1939 she was a widow and using the surname Bacon, whereas in the publication [the 1939 Register information in the original Promenade Heritage Report] has her as Barlow. The two other adults, Gert and John were two of her siblings (John died before I was born but I do remember Gert and John's widow, Dot).

It [the 1939 Register information in the original Promenade Heritage Report] also has my Grandfather, Mary's second husband, as Frederick. He was not a Frederick. It was just Fred (he had a brother that was just Wilf). He was also a miner at Gedling. Finding his way there after the closure of Tibshelf Top Pit.

They lived there until the clearance (I will guess at 1977 but not sure, might be '76) but I certainly remember being at their house. The two shops on the corner and seeing many other houses being demolished.

← Mary Jane Todd, a former resident of Campbell Grove, photographed on the left.

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Courtesy ©  
Aaron Todd



## JOYCE WHITE

**“We couldn’t have air raid shelters. They cut a square out of one cellar wall, and then you’ve got two cellars.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
June 2021

← The wedding of Joyce and David White, at the Methodist chapel on Campbell Street, 1949.  
–  
Courtesy © Joyce White

### Just start by saying your name.

Joyce Eileen White.

### And when were you born, Joyce?

The 2nd of January, 1927.

### Do you want to start by just talking about your family, back to The Promenade, who they were?

My father had been married before and they had one son, but his wife unfortunately died when he was a couple of months old... Later on, he met my mother. At first, they didn’t live on The Promenade, they must have lived in Bulwell... That’s where their daughter was born, Dorothy, my oldest sister. She was born in March 1925, and after she was born, they went to live on The Promenade. That must have been their first real home together.

They were on The Promenade when I was born... where I lived until I got married. We grew up there as children, and we knew everybody in every house... My mother would help anyone, anybody in trouble they always used to go for my mother, or go to ask her things... We knew everybody and everybody was so nice and kind. You could trust people in those days.

Two years after I was born, my younger sister arrived on the scene... We were known as the Mounteney girls on The Promenade... But my father and mother were quite strict with us... because we weren’t allowed to go out of the yard at the back. We had to stay on the yard, always. We could have as many children as we liked to come and play with us but we weren’t allowed to go out... I knew all the streets and around, where we lived on The Promenade.... My father used to say, you’re not to go out of the gate. We called it a gate but it was a door in the wall.

### The Methodist Chapel

The chapel was right at the back of where we lived. We went out of the back gate, and you went round the cut, the little bit of the Backs as we called it, and then it was through a little cobbled bit that led to Campbell Grove. Their back yards faced our back yards and there was this alleyway in-between called The Backs. From when I was three, I was taken to Sunday School at the chapel. I went there all my life, till I came to Beeston... It was three



times every Sunday morning, afternoon, and evening...

### At school during the Second World War

During the first nine months of the first year of the war we couldn't go to school... For a long while we were at home and then we had to go down to the Salvation Army Church, at the bottom of Bath Street... We used to go for an hour a day... We had gas masks drill first... Then it came that the Salvation Army couldn't do with us anymore... We got nowhere else to go. The headmistress from the school came down to see my parents because they knew that we went to the chapel at the back of us and they wanted my mother... to see if they could have a room there. But they couldn't because the spare rooms were being filled up with furniture [from the damaged houses].

We had a school in our front room at home... We had a coal ration given to my parents so they could light a fire in the morning. They had to move all the furniture out. They only left the piano in the room... I still to this day don't know where they put the furniture... And so we had these little desks and chairs brought down... We had 10 pupils come every hour from 9:00 in the morning till about 3:00 in the afternoon and one of the teachers came every morning at nine o'clock... We didn't have to have a gas mask drill, but we used to have to carry them about with us in a little box around your neck.... We used to have the little bottles of milk delivered... When that finished, we were able to go back to our school.

### Did you say you had air raid shelters?

No, we couldn't have air raid shelters. They cut a square out of one cellar wall, and then you've got two cellars. And then the next wall that led to next door, they did a square there. And so you could get through from one, in case a house was bombed... They said they were the safest place to be... under the cellar steps... Although sometimes we used to sit in that passageway where there was a big oak door at the front... We sometimes put chairs in there, because that was concrete. It was so cold in it though, it was not very good.

Our neighbours... They used to come into our cellar from next door. And then we had an old lady from the other side, who was in number 16. She'd been on her own for quite a while, but she used to come in every time

there was an air raid...through the end door, where the end of the passage was... And my grandmother was there, as well. She used to sit right underneath the stone cellar steps... because there was enough for two people to sit under there... And she was terrified, my grandmother was. She would say, it's a bomb! It's a bomb! We would say, no, it's just guns on the cemetery. Because there were some guns on the back of the park... The guns did used to be fired sometimes, and it was loud because we were right next door to them... They must have done [the cellars] all the way down The Promenade... The little front gardens weren't big enough to dig down and the yards were solid concrete. They couldn't have dug that up, it would have been too much.

### Mr Nicholls, the park keeper

Mr Nicholls... he had a daughter called Moira, and he was the park keeper. That park was kept lovely when we were growing up. It was always locked up at night and he used to have a little hut at the far end of the park, leading on to the cemetery bit where there was a wall, or a hedge went across to divide it, and he used to sit in there. He used have a fire going... and he was very, very nice. He used to let us go into the cemetery part... to look around at the gravestones. Bendigo the lion was there, and... we would sit on the lion. We shouldn't have done I suppose, but he was watching out what we were up to.

### Vegetable shop in Campbell Grove

[In] Campbell Grove, there was this little vegetable shop. Now, that was a family called Matthews, and they lived in the top house of Campbell Grove... She'd got two boys and a girl... when they moved down to this house, she opened that up as a vegetable shop... So then we used to go in quite a bit. We knew the youngsters that were growing up. The younger boy, Alan, he was in the war. He was something to do in the Air Force and he won a medal in the Air Force. That was really good, everybody round about knew and met him when he came home on leave.

### Changes in the area

But then the hundred year lease of those houses came up. And then the council took it all over, and that's when they started altering places. And why they did that... I never forgave them for altering the houses because

I thought... that history, they were a hundred years old, they were still built, they were still in good nick... and then they started selling some more. I think they ruined it, like they do with a lot of things. Like Drury Hill. Of course, I suppose I'm a bit biased but it is a shame in a sense because they often realise afterwards they shouldn't have done it. Because [it would have been good] for people to be taken round to look at all these old places....

They did put bathrooms in, that was good... We used to have baths in front of the fire in the living room. We had one of these big tin baths... [The living room] had a fireplace. It was cast iron... It had a big oven on the left, if I were in the middle, and then a boiler at the other side. We'd always got hot water... When we finished up, we had one of those Ascot heaters in the kitchen back scullery, so that you'd got hot water at your sink. We'd always got plenty of water for baths because you used to fill the boiler up in the fireplace. You had a big mantle shelf and a big mirror over the top. When my mother and father were there after we got married, I think they had that fireplace taken out because they had a tiled fireplace put in, a more modern one, when they were on their own. But they didn't stay. I was married in 1949 and I think they must have left The Promenade in about 1950...

All round there, we used to love it and the park was so nice. Of course, it all went down when they took the railings down in the war, because people started crossing through where the bushes and trees were to get onto the grass. There used to be notices on the grass, 'Please keep off the grass', when we were little... Some parts of it were left open so you could play on the grass, but some of it you couldn't... At the end of the park, nearly opposite the Bath Clock, as we called it, there was a little police station... That was there for some years.

And then there was Lymns, the funeral people, they were over... on the other side of Robin Hood Street. Because my dad used to know the old man Lymn, he knew him quite well. And then his children, the next one that took over the business when the old man died, they had two youngsters, Nigel, and [a] girl. Nigel was as old as my oldest sister and the girl was as old as me. So we knew them as well.

## Memories of the Blitz

There was a bedding factory in Sabina Street that got on fire one night when there was an air raid. That was horrific, all the flames and you could hear it crackling when it was burning. And then one of the nights we had a bad blitz, when quite a lot of people got killed in Nottingham... The next morning we didn't go to school... we'd been up all night down the cellar... and [mother] said, oh, you can stay in bed a bit longer in the morning. You won't go to school... And I remember going to school at lunchtime, and we got into terrible trouble... Because the teachers, they'd been in the morning... and a lot of the children hadn't turned in. So they began to think something had happened to them all in the night.

[Afterwards] there was no water anywhere. So they brought this big tanker thing into Campbell Street, opposite the chapel, and we used to go queuing up with buckets and pans and kettles to fill... We didn't have it like places like Coventry and London... but we used to have a lot of air raids. It would start off in the night and then my mother and dad would be shouting, 'Come on, you girls get up quick come on down. Get something warm on, you're going down the cellar.' And my sister wouldn't go down, she wouldn't get up and she lived in one of the top bedrooms... We were lucky with having four bedrooms, we had a bedroom each from when we were little. When my grandma used to come down in the war, she used to stay at our house, so I used to have to go and sleep upstairs with my younger sister so that she could have my room on the first floor. We had a lot of different things happen in the war, it made for a bit of excitement, although you're a bit frightened as well.







→ The little girl is Sharon Williams with her twin brothers Colin and Chris Wood, 1969.

–  
Courtesy © Sharon Williams



## SHARON WILLIAMS

**Sharon Williams has kindly donated some old photographs regarding her family life living in the area before it was redeveloped in the 1970s.**

Online Submission  
June 2021

← Sharon's mum Carol Wood, at 26 The Promenade, 1964. Sharon says "Many happy memories of living life on The Promenade".

–  
Courtesy © Sharon Williams

→ Sharon's gran Lizzy Wood (left) with Carol Wood (right), 1964.

–  
Courtesy © Sharon Williams





## JORDAN WRIGHT

**“The hard work we put in didn’t just serve my pocket but served the people in the local area.”**

Recorded by Laura Summers  
July 2021

← Number 1 The Promenade, recently refurbished by Jordan Wright and his brother. Photograph taken August, 2021.

–

Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

### So do you want to start by saying your name?

Sure, my name is Jordan Wright. And along with my wife Sarah Wright we lived at number 25 Promenade from June 2015 until roughly sometime in 2019. We were engaged at the time when my father-in-law today told my girlfriend at the time that he would happily help her out with a house deposit to which I said, it’s crazy not to go for that.

So I got looking, as I was formerly an estate agent in central London, found it rather easy to find a good deal. And after exhausting the whole of the property market in Sneinton, West Bridgford, Sherwood, different areas around the centre of Nottingham, I decided to remove the area from the search and just looked in Nottingham and up came a picture of this, pretty street of colourful houses, and I instantly knew it was the one.

It was listed at a hundred and thirty two and a half thousand pounds of which we paid exactly that. We purchased the property in, I believe it was actually August 2015 and my wife moved in with a couple of friends until we were married. We got married in California in 2016 and then moved in together thereafter.

### Home refurbishments

We instantly fell in love with the road. In my spare time I’d already refurbished the property to a standard we were happy to live in, although somewhat rickety those buildings are, we thought it was wonderful the first summer in the property. My wife wanted to go away with some friends and after doing some calculations the trip was going to cost approximately 600 pounds each to go. And I thought, well, that’s exactly what I need to spend on the front garden because you’ve got this row of terrace houses, all with this sort of dark and dingy, north-facing rear garden, and this wonderful space at the front that no one’s really using.

So, apart from the odd small rusty barbecue that was out there, no one had made use of the space and so she went on holiday with her friends. And I spent my 600 pounds on doing up the front garden with a friend, we dug out the old trees, bushes, disposed of everything which is very hard to do when you live on a road with no throughway with the car.



So my friend Reece and I, who works for Bonsers as a bricklayer, laid down block paving in Woburn Rumbled, which was the specific block paving, and once we'd done that project, I did a nice border, around about 12 inch border, and started planting plants. And even a tree in the corner, had some lovely potted plants out there, table and an old park bench I got from down the road near the Notts County ground.

There's an antiques fair happens, sort of antique market every weekend. Got this old park bench from there, put that up against the house and then even installed the light, which I'm not a hundred percent sure is ok with the Grade II listed status, the frontage can't change but I drilled a hole through the wall and installed a perfect light, all wired up properly.

So made it look absolutely stunning. And then quickly the neighbours started to follow suit. They noticed that we were out there every weekend, sat with friends, in the sun basking in the glory of what was looking on to the wonderful view and then people started to follow suit.

I remember the winter came and we started to experience many ladybirds that would be all over the windows and around the windows. And I thought goodness gracious, we've got ladybird infestation, so Googled it and found out that ladybirds are attracted to properties that are south-facing near an area with trees, green area and painted a bright colour. So it made perfect sense that The Promenade was victim to ladybirds every winter, could be summer might be worth taking up that fact.

Then, so to rewind, when we were looking at number 25, I brought a good friend over, who's a property developer and said, you know, what do you think of this property? Tell me if I'm making a mistake and spending this money on the property and he said the safest place to put your money is in bricks-and-mortar and look at this place, it's listed. No one's ever going to build here. We've got a park right here that's in a Conservation Area.

### A good buy

You're right by town. It's a good buy. And he looked as we stood on the park, looked at the roof of the property. He looked over at

number one, which at the time was painted brown, I say painted, it had been painted some years ago, brown, and was boarded up with corrugated iron and chipboard with big 'Do Not Enter' signs and the front garden that was all overgrown. There were needles.

And he said, who owns that. I said I have no idea. He said why I'd quite like to buy it. I thought that's an interesting idea and then so I sat on that idea for a while and thought, well maybe I'd want to buy it. So we looked into it and Nottingham City Council owned it and they hadn't done anything for years.

### Making a bid

So it turned out they were up for selling it and we're putting it on for sealed offers with a closing date, and I had some cash with my brother. We decided to go in on it, and we had various people come around and look at the property. I believe the history of the property was the council were using it as social housing, sort of bedsits and when it got too bad, dilapidated, they closed it down and did some figures on how much it would cost to refurbish the property, to which they concluded it wasn't worth their time.

So they boarded it up and left it to rack and ruin, left it for the pigeons. And one of the last people to live in the property was a man who lived in the attic who was a squatter, who had loved pigeons. And so he would encourage the pigeons to fly into the windows and feed them.

### Pigeons

And so when we went there, the pigeons lived there and I would say no less than 20 pigeons occupying the roof space at the time with nests and various things and it was all boarded up. You weren't allowed into any room. You'd walk up to the room and there'd be a board. So you could look, peer your head in, there was Acrow props holding everything up because the roof had been leaking for many years. All the water was coming in all over the joists all over the floor boards and it was an unsafe building to be in.

Years prior ... a local estate agent had taken a couple round and the lady unfortunately fell through the floorboards of the ground floor into the basement with her son. I believe an ambulance came, and firemen, and they dug her out and off they went, she was a bit

injured and it sort of went unspoken for a while. And so we put the offer in. I developed a good relationship the property team at Nottingham City Council as I brought round many property professionals in the build-up to our offer to really look at it. We were up against some other interesting characters who wanted to do the project but as it was a Grade II listed building I think they wanted to sell it to someone who was really going to take care of the refurbishment.

### **Work begins**

So we won, we won the property for the price we bid. My brother and I quit our jobs and our full-time job, then became site foremen. We both had work clothes, a hammer on our waist and a crowbar ... and the next month or two we spent demolishing the internals. So it went from Acrow props holding up each floor to no floors. Very few joists remaining.

And you could at one point, you could stand on the very top and look down all the way down to the basement. So, we took it back to a brick shell, no windows. We had all 17 windows removed and replaced with solid hardwood, sliding sash windows, all custom-made, lots of new floor joists, all new flooring, new insulation, everything you could imagine, new roof, which had to be a specific type of slate, as requested by Nottingham City Council's Conservation Team, and the one thing that remains is the staircase, although padded out and the front door, which we thought was too beautiful.

So we convert into four flats, two one beds on the ground floor, a two bed on the middle floor and another two bed on the top floor all looking out south-facing, looking out onto the park, which is beautiful. We rented the apartments out and still own them and we have never had a vacant flat since renting them out. So very desirable location to live in.

### **I think when we spoke on the phone previously you talked about when you were renovating, number one, somebody kind of appeared one day and talked?**

So, one visitor that stuck in my head, it was quite a profound experience. Was an old man show up on a bicycle and said, would you mind if I had a look around, I used to live here? He must have been in his 70s, if not 80s.

And so, I said, yeah, absolutely. So he walked around and he would go into each room, and he told me who lived in there and what they were like as a person, showed me his bedroom.

And we shared tears together and a hug, which was really, really special, but he was just one of the people that popped in throughout the course of our refurbishment.

### **So thinking outside of the house, what features of the area do you remember the best?**

So living on The Promenade, I believe is the best place to live in Nottingham. Not only do you have the opportunity to know your neighbours, care for your neighbours but also be cared for by your neighbours. I remember one specific neighbour, knocking on the door just to cry with my wife because something had happened in their life and that was the type of place it is which may scare some people, but genuinely it's a wonderful thing.

Yeah, I think the thing that stands out the most is the park. You know, knowing that no one's ever going to build a block of flats on it. I believe it was once a Cricket Green. It's beautiful. The trees are gorgeous. You're never questioning what season it is because you look out your front window and there it is right in front of you, if there are the leaves on the trees, or the squirrels going up.

I remember one time I was sat barbecuing with a cigar in my mouth and a glass of whiskey and Pedro (another neighbour) started shouting and I thought, what's going on here? And all of a sudden you've got everyone who's out the front of their house on The Promenade up in arms and Pedro suddenly darting across the park, trying to heard this stray deer, that had come all the way from Wollaton ... and found itself on the park. That was a very entertaining Saturday.

### **My next question was going to be do you have any fond memories?**

I think the thing I always look back and smile about is the community. The people that we met, the relationships formed and it was just such a blessing to be part of the restoration of that street and knowing that the hard work we put in didn't just serve my pocket but served the people in the local area.







### **3. CONCLUSIONS**

← The hill of St Mary's Rest  
Garden, August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews



## Conclusions

What conclusions can be drawn from these oral history accounts that span different experiences and decades of changes? Given the scope of the report, such conclusions can only be a small snap-shot of the many lives that have been lived here. Nevertheless, there are some interesting patterns to what has been expressed and how this reflects upon the history of the area.

Broadly speaking, there are different priorities expressed between those people who lived before the General Improvement Area (when the location was refurbished in the 1970s), and those who lived after that watershed moment. However there are also some shared themes between these two groups, which reflects upon the qualities of the location. It is also important to note that these experiences are not purely local but also the result of much wider forces; such as suburban migration, fluctuating crime rates and growing individualism.

↑ The Promenade in full colour, August 2021.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews

## Before the GIA

Before the General Improvement Area (GIA) there were patterns of life that had continued since the Victorian period. As Aaron Todd and Denise Creasey have shown, people worked in working class trades; such ways of life could be hard, full, aspirational and philanthropic. This was particularly illustrated by Sheila Stainwright's account of Jacky Pownall. Family and friends were very close-knit, so too were amenities, work and entertainment. Children had great freedom to play on the streets, there were few cars and jealousies were rare because 'nobody had anything'. The accounts of Rex Coker, Joyce White and Stephen Sherwood were very strong in this regard. Yet basic facilities such as indoor toilets, running hot water and bathrooms were not comprehensive. Chris Gibson could see the necessary changes that were coming, though the improvements made by the GIA were not without their challenges. People were allocated new accommodation in distant council estates and people like Glyn Jenkins lost touch with friends.

## After the GIA

After the GIA the neighbourhood appeared to be less close-knit and individual horizons become wider. This may of course relate to wider changes in society, the economy, and patterns of employment and mobility that came in those times.

Residents had more interest in the city centre and its entertainments. Bob Fawcett enjoyed Jacey's Bar and the music scene, Isla Keys associated with the music at St Mary's Church, Michelle McIntosh loved local history, while William Ivory frequented the Playhouse. These were often young home owners, established long standing families were less common, the area was more transient. References to crime increased, though this also prompted a revival of community activism. People like Francis Dore could see the potential if improvements were made. Creative thinking was expressed by clearing wastelands, improving gardens or painting houses. House prices have continued to rise and aspirational home owners such as Jordan Wright have realised that potential. Similarly residents such as

Ian Dean, Mark Tanser, Laura McGonigal and Alan Phelan now enjoy the sociability of the front gardens, while Clair Mace has seen surprising transformations over the past 15 years, which raises the debate regarding how far these changes could be considered as urban renewal or gentrification. Either way, the statement from The Conservation Officer has highlighted some inherent complexities in looking after these houses. There is also sometimes doubt as to the suitability of the houses for young families, a point expressed by The Estate Management Officer, Alex Heather and Beth Perez.

## Common themes

Despite the different experiences aired, there are also some common themes. Nearly all the accounts reflected upon the quality of the location, particularly its relationship to a park. Alongside this need for space, there is also the enjoyment of being in close proximity to other people, although the extent to which this is practiced varies. Perhaps William Ivory's account encapsulated the creative tensions of the neighbourhood most brilliantly. William felt like an interloper surrounded by old Nottingham, but he loved the contrast and dark humour. What is most conclusive however is what we already know, that the heritage and design of these houses is universally popular. At the very least this report has given people the opportunity to express the various ways in which this area is held in such high regard.





## 4. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

← Looking towards The Promenade from the path adjacent to The Clubhouse and Victoria Park.

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Courtesy ©  
Chris Matthews





† Several images from this report have been supplied by Picture Nottingham, a website with an extensive collection of photographs, postcards, glass plates and engravings from the archives of Nottingham City Council's libraries.

The collection covers over 100 years of the city's history and features the community, industry and changing architecture of the city – showing how life has changed and giving a fascinating insight into the lives of the people who have lived and

worked here over the last century and beyond. View the collection by visiting: [www.picturenottingham.co.uk](http://www.picturenottingham.co.uk)



We would like to thank the following people and organisations for their support, perseverance and patience, without whom this report would not have been possible.

Firstly the members of Victoria Park Tenants' & Residents' Association and local residents for their support and insight. It is hoped this report will support their positive endeavours.

Laura Summers was expert throughout in handling public relations, marketing, event planning, finding volunteers and interviewees, making recordings and collecting oral histories. Without her resilience the project would not have been so successful. Ceri Greenfield was similarly instrumental in transcribing the oral histories so expertly and at short notice.

The following volunteers have produced some brilliant work collecting oral history interviews which will be enjoyed for generations to come: Alison Maiden, Lauren Sission, Peter Russell and Stephen Sherwood. Similarly the contributors to our oral history collection have been kind enough to participate and allow us to publish their stories and images: Aaron Todd, Denise Creasey, Michelle McIntosh, Rex Coker, Margaret Astill, Sharon Williams, Sheila Stainwright, Chris Gibson, Stephen Sherwood, Francis Dore, Isla Keys, Bob Fawcett, Jordan Wright, Joyce Wright, Clair Mace, Ian Dean, Mark Tanser, Glyn Jenkins, William Ivory, Alex Heather, Beth Perez, Laura McGonigal, Alan Phelan.

During the course of the project we organised various events with the following people: Conservation Officer Toby Ebbs, Alexa Rees at Nottinghamshire Archives, Helen Foster at the East Midlands Oral History Archive.

At Nottingham City Homes, Nick Murphy was responsible for the initial project concept. Dan Lucas provided logistical and historical support throughout. Tim Prentice, Sam Whitworth and Lisa Allison were very accommodating with the necessary communications and marketing; whilst Jon Cass, Lisa Dawkins and colleagues from the Involvement Team supported the delivery of the project's activities. Also, thanks to Lynda Naylor at Nottingham Local Studies Library and the Renewal Trust for their help in promoting the project.

Finally, Picture Nottingham kindly helped with sourcing archive photographs.







# THE PROMENADE, ROBIN HOOD TERRACE & CAMPBELL GROVE **ORAL HISTORY REPORT**

**CHRIS MATTHEWS  
& LAURA SUMMERS**

This second publication is a collection of oral history testimonies for the Promenade Heritage Project. It is partly a response to an initial heritage report, which was published in spring 2021 and featured archival documents and photographs. It marks the completion of the project and it is hoped these publications will be enjoyed for years to come.

This project was delayed by the onset of the Covid 19 pandemic, which meant most events and activities had to be rearranged and conducted online. Despite these difficulties our volunteers, contributors and attendees have taken part in a positive series of events and helped to assemble a remarkable collection of oral history accounts.

Of course it has only been possible to record the oral history of a tiny fraction of the people associated with these homes as part of this project, but we hope that this gives a valuable insight into the experiences of a few of those who have made their home on these streets.

This project has been funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund and Nottingham City Homes, marking the refurbishment of 16 listed houses by Nottingham City Homes.

For more information visit:  
[www.thepromenadeheritageproject.org](http://www.thepromenadeheritageproject.org)

