

Name: Diane Roder
Address: Stacey Bushes, Milton Keynes
Date of Birth: 1942
Date of Interview: 18th November, 2017
Duration: 00:08:40

00:00:00

So, for our records, can you tell us the name, the year you were born and today's date?

My name's Diane Roder, I was born in 1942, and today's date is the 18th November, 2017.

So, when did you first move to Milton Keynes?

Moved to Milton Keynes in 1975. In a week's time I will have been here for forty-two years.

So, where did you live previously?

We lived near Heathrow. My late husband looked after BOAC's sports ground.

And do you live in Milton Keynes..?

I live on Stacey Bushes, which is just below the museum.

Okay. What do you associate with Milton Keynes? What does it mean to you?

What does it mean to me? I...all the trees; all the greenery; the housing estates that are set so that you do not see them from the roads; the grid system. When I first came, we had no city centre, we had no hospital; we had very little when I first came. We had a sea of mud and not much else. I used to send my children to school in wellington boots 'cause it was so muddy in November in that year.

So, what special memories do you have of Milton Keynes?

In the early days...well, fairly early when we came to Milton Keynes, we came to the museum and that's one of my early memories 'cause there wasn't very much to do when we first

came. My late husband worked for the Development Corporation, that is why we came to Milton Keynes, and there was...as I say, there was no shopping centre; if you wanted to get to the shops you had to either go to Bletchley or Northampton, 'cause there was not much else in between. But, in the first May when we were here, on the Saturday we went to a Young Farmers' rally in Haversham and on the Sunday we came to the museum; and I have been coming to the museum ever since then. So that was '76. So, in September '76, I started making corn dollies at the museum and my time here now is spent running the tea shop but I have done an awful lot of other things in between.

So, what was probably your favourite role at the museum?

Oh, my favourite role at the museum...well, I think I like...I like running the tea shop but I used to be in the kitchen here; I used to teach...talk to the children about the kitchen. I've also cooked, on the range here, on open days, but we only used to have two weekends a year when we were open, in the early days and, as I say, I used to cook...after I...originally, as I say, I did corn dollies and then, after a while, we had quite a number of corn dolly makers, so I hadn't ever cooked on a range but I offered to and so I did all sorts of things in the kitchen. And I did that for...until we had a major fire in '96; we reopened in '98 after they rebuilt everything we'd lost and, after the first season, I started running the tea shop, so I've been doing it for nearly eighteen years now.

So the children, when they came, you know, how did they react to this?

Oh, they like the kitchen because a lot of them have never seen a real fire. The children going through just as ordinary visitors, not as schoolchildren, they are able to toast in front of the fire, which they all enjoy because they don't...they've never done it at home, so it's something different but, yes, they like the kitchen. Some of them don't like the smell of the kitchen because they're not used to a coal fire but they...as I say, they enjoy toasting and that sort of thing.

But that smell of a coal fire...

...is very reminiscent of, sort of, my childhood but not of theirs, obviously.

So have you played any active role in any other organisations in Milton Keynes?

I'm involved...well, I ran the local WI market for twelve years; I baked for them for seventeen years. I'm involved with WI. I've

been on various committees and...yes, I've done a number of things.

What do you think has made Milton Keynes a success or failure?

I think it was very well...I think it's very successful because I think it was very well planned in the beginning. I'm not quite sure about the new developments they're now putting in all round the periphery. They're not planned in the same way whereas, when each estate was set up, it had a community house, it had a small shop. The community house, in my...it was useful for new people. I helped in there when we first came. I also set up a little craft group so that people were able to get together because people had come from a wide range of different areas and different backgrounds. And I think that initial planning was what's...is the main thing that has made Milton Keynes what it is. And as the various services came in and we had shops, the City Centre, all the things that are associated with that, and the hospital and so on, it's grown into a very successful town.

00:05:36

So, if you could go back in time, is there anything you would change about Milton Keynes?

No, not particularly.

What do you think the next fifty years has got in store for Milton Keynes?

Who can say? *[Laughs]* It's very difficult to see...well, as I say, there seems to have been a lot of new development all round the edges, which I don't think has necessarily been done in the same way as the original development because, although some people don't like the grid system and the roundabouts, it makes ease of movement much better than places where you have a lot of one-way streets. But that doesn't occur in...as I say, in the new estates but...I don't know. It'll probably get even closer to some of the other towns around. We'll just keep developing, I should think.

So, do you see yourself staying in Milton Keynes?

Oh yes, yes. I have no plan of moving.

00:06:42

[Break in interview to discuss technical issues]

00:07:10

Do you plan on staying in Milton Keynes?

Yes, I'm planning to stay in Milton Keynes for the foreseeable future. We have a big new development at the museum. I shall stay here for as long as I'm able and help with the new development. We should be opened by...completely, hopefully,

our new part should be opened by 2020 – there has been some delays with lack of money – but I will stay here and do as much as I can for as long as I can. (Will that do?)

I have one question. Is that all right? I didn't cover this completely; I've been concentrating slightly on the camera. Why do you think it's important to have a museum here? Could you address back to the day...[unintelligible]

Say, 'it's important to have a museum...'

Yes, I think it's very important to have a museum in Milton Keynes, particularly the sort of museum we have because it's a very hands-on museum and, by the time we have our two new galleries, it will show the whole range of history in the area, right from prehistoric times up to the development of the new city. The existing museum is principally Victorian but it's so much different from most museums. People thoroughly enjoy what they see.

Yeah, are you happy? Thank you. I didn't want to...yeah, okay. 'Cut'.

00:08:40

END OF INTERVIEW