

**Name:** Diane Sutton and Dave Humphreys

**Date of Birth:** 1951 and 1952

**Date of Interview:** 13<sup>th</sup> April 2021

**Interviewed by:** Mel Jeavons and Roger Kitchen

**Duration:** 00:13:30

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*00:00:00 Today's date is the 13<sup>th</sup> of April 2021, my name is Mel Jeavons, and I am interviewing for the Homeworld Project. Can you each give me your name and the year you were born please?*

Dianne Sutton: Dianne Sutton, 1951.

Dave Humphreys: Dave Humphries, 1952.

*Mel Jeavons So how long have you lived at your house?*

Dianne Sutton: We've lived here since September 2012 when we moved into Homeworld.

*And why did you move to Homeworld?*

Dianne Sutton: We weren't actually looking to move house, but we saw that this was on the market, came and had a look and were absolutely delighted to see that it had got some features such as the mechanical heat recovery ventilation system, which we had actually retrofitted into our previous home. So, we came, had a look, walked outside, looked at each other and both said, "I want it!" So, we just turned round to the Estate Agent and said, "We'll offer the asking price. Please put our house on the market!"

Dave Humphreys: Just to put it in context, that my previous work was actually as an architectural technician in sort of energy saving houses. So, the idea of what was an energy efficient house to see how well it ages, you know, what more could you possibly want, you know, as a technician, to actually understand how the materials have aged and what benefits it still has.

*So, what did you already know about Homeworld before you moved in?*

Dianne Sutton: This is going to sound really odd but because I was born in Milton Keynes, in what is now Milton Keynes, yeah, I'd never visited

Homeworld. I knew about the three exhibitions, Homeworld, Energy World and Future World, but Future World was the only one I had visited. So, it wasn't until after we moved here that I actually realised what a fantastic place Homeworld was and as a local historian I got really interested.

Dave Humphreys: Yeah, but, strangely enough, at that time in 1981, I actually lived in London, and I was looking for a house and I went to the Ideal Home Exhibition and they were offering free coach trips out here. And so, I hopped on a bus and I can remember actually coming up Coleshill Place and actually seeing the A-Frame, and in those times, it is a little bit more subtle now, if you look at the A-Frame from that direction you can see a pattern put into the tiles, which I thought was wonderful; it was very sort of continental.

And even a few years ago, when I was actually in an Artex office people were saying, "I've walked around in your bungalow!" "You know ... when it was in 1981!"

*So did you come around here?*

Dave Humphreys: Yes, yes, I went to the Exhibition and went through the houses. I can't remember this one, strangely enough, but I do remember the World House, because that is quite an extraordinary thing! But yes!

*And so, in the forty years that the house has been built do you think it has stood the test of time and...what sort of changes have you made to it and what?*

Dianne Sutton: All that we have done is added solar panels and we have had to replace the glass in just one of the windows. But it was built forty years ago with some triple glazing and the rest of it double glazed, but it had been very, very well maintained. It was a very, very high-quality build originally, it had been very well maintained and so we've done very little to it.

Dave Humphreys: Yeah, yeah. And if you look at the developer's leaflet on it, it actually publishes new values, heat loss calculations, in 1981! I mean, the closest we have is an EPC that we have today and that itself came sort of, Homeworld, Energy World Exhibitions.

(00:05:00) *Can you tell me what EPC is?*

Dave Humphreys: EPC is Energy Performance Certificate, which is something new-build houses, and when you sell or let a house, you have to have an up-to-date EPC to actually see how much CO2 you use and possibly, how much it costs to run the house; because obviously, you want to know when you're actually...especially if you've got tight on cash.

*And have you been aware of the continuing interest in Home World?*

Dianne Sutton: Yes! Our kitchen is at the front and it looks out over the square and we frequently see people walking around and particularly standing there looking at World House, because it is so different from anything else that you find in Milton Keynes. So, what we tend to do if we see people walking around looking, we'll go out and start talking to them and telling them all about it, yeah.

Dave Humphreys: Strangely enough, we have been having...I think it was a couple of years ago, we actually had somebody from New Zealand, and they had actually come here to take photographs of New World. We've had a French student who was a dissertation on Milton Keynes and so we started talking to her and she came in and we showed her all the information. Never knew how she got on, but I am sure it was okay.

*And what about in terms of the community, about the people live here, do you all socialise, do you go into their houses? What type of thing goes on here?*

Dianne Sutton: To a, to a certain extent, yes. We quite outgoing people anyway and so we have organised every Christmas and in the summer, a kind of a party for our neighbours, but unfortunately, not last year and last Christmas because of the pandemic situation.

But yeah, there is a growing feeling amongst residents that they are very proud of living here and in general, other than the homes which were designed to be starter home, you know, where you don't expect people to live forever, you find that people then arrive and they stay, because it is such a lovely place to live!

Dave Humphreys: Yeah! And I think it is the architecture as well as just the community. Yes, it is a nice place; it is comfortable, yes?

*So why should the 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary be commemorated?*

Dianne Sutton: The 40<sup>th</sup> Anniversary should be commemorated because this is a very important part of the history of Milton Keynes. It is part of the heritage of Milton Keynes.

Dave Humphreys: And I think it is basically, hopefully, other local authorities will see it and they will do something similar in their place to actually encourage just a new look on architecture, rather than 'Lego' houses, sort of thing. You know what I mean by Lego houses.

*Do you think it is disappointing that these sorts of developments haven't just popped up all over the country?*

Dave Humphreys: Yes, exactly! Because it was aimed at people wanting to buy houses, not at developers, whereas now developers are actually market driven and anything that is market driven is to actually bring costs down. If you bring costs down you don't actually get what you need for a house.

Dianne Sutton: You don't get innovation, do you?

Dave Humphreys: You get smaller room sizes; you don't go so high on actually the quality of the build to actually make the heat loss better, or less. Yes, you get what you pay for!

Dianne Sutton: And I would also like local estate agents in Milton Keynes when they come to sell houses on Home World, Energy World and Future World, to actually realise what unique properties these are, that they are selling.

Within a week of moving in here we felt like we have lived here forever. It is just a comfortable house to live in; it has just got such a lovely feeling to it. But it has been really well designed, in that it has been orientated so that we get the sun and all the light, which makes it really, really nice to live in.

(00:10:00) And, of course, Homeworld is walking distance from the city centre, Sainsburys, the station, yeah, HomeWorld is actually very, very well located, as well.

Dave Humphreys: It's a good name.

*Roger Kitchen: Don't you think it's depressing that forty years on housing is not the modern housing is not anything like the quality...?*

Dave Humphreys Yes, absolutely! As I was saying, that professionally when I was actually working in an architects office to actually design houses that are *just* built for a price, to *just* get through building control, not to go any further than that, not to save the end user! 'Cause that is what I think this serves, is that this house actually helps the end user, the person who lives there! Whereas the large developers, or the people who actually build it and the lobbyists who actually go to government, they are building them to make a profit! You know, to actually make it, to actually squash the rooms down small enough to so that they can get enough numbers on to land! You know, it's a shame! We want to actually get to the end users.

Dianne Sutton: But just picking up on Dave's point there, on the Homeworld, in the exhibition, yes, okay, there were innovative uses of land to try and make the homes cheaper, okay...

Dave Humphreys: The starter homes.

Dianne Sutton: The starter homes: I think this was one of the early exhibitions of the idea of starter homes in the UK, as a way of getting your foot on the housing ladder, more affordable, because if they could build them in blocks they use less land. The other thing as well is, the innovative building techniques, for example, The Topper, next door, yep, okay, built by Mowlem, yep, okay... I think that was water-tight within six days of starting on site because they built the ground floor in situ and then they craned in the topper, on top of it. And this meant that the developer hasn't got their money tied up for as long because the quicker you can actually get the house finished and then market it and sell it, yes, this was good for the developer as well! So, there were a number of them, you know, where there was this innovation of building quickly!

Dave Sutton: Yeah, and a lot of these are timber-frame; this is a Danish kit-house, whereas it came more or less panellised, which you don't actually see on modern building sites. There is a building site round the corner and basically they're not as panellised as they could be; which reduces the build time.

*Roger Kitchen:* *Lovely!*

(00:13:30) [Interview Ends]