

[0:00:00]

Kieran Connell: So Trevor I was going to ask first then, you were at Warwick doing your undergraduate?

Trevor Fisher: Undergraduate, yes.

Kieran Connell: And then so how did you end up at the Centre to do your Masters?

Trevor Fisher: Well first of all I wanted to get back to Birmingham and secondly, I didn't want to do any kind of conventional degree. I wanted to do something different from – I'd done History and Politics and obviously I knew Thomson and I knew Stuart Hall vaguely because Thomson and Stuart Hall had worked on the *May Day Manifesto*, firstly in 1966. So I was familiar with that and I knew Richard Hoggart's work and I thought, "That's kind of the next stage for me. I don't want to do Sociology or anything conventional". Cultural Studies brings together a number of things and it's something which I think would be interesting and Stuart is obviously an interesting guy. So, Stuart – every time I've done a degree, it's always been a central character – in the case of Warwick it's E P Thomson and in the case of the Centre it's Stuart Hall and for my MA I went to Keele to do it with Tim Brighouse. So that's the kind of attraction. I didn't get any money for it, so I then had to try and find a way of actually surviving which is another story in itself.

Kieran Connell: So what was the difference between doing History at Warwick with someone like Thomson and then coming to the Centre, which was – there was all this emphasis on theory, like how did you find that transition?

Trevor Fisher: Well first of all you need to understand that Edward never really got involved in the teaching undergraduates and rather resented it when he had to. And so we actually did the special study in the final year which was the only time I ever saw him. And it was a strange experience with Edward because he clearly didn't like undergraduates and in fact he once said, "You're not a historian until you have a degree", so we all sat around thinking, "Oh thanks very much" (inaudible 0:01:44) that's a great idea! (Both laugh) And he was a mandarin and, but he was very hands-on. He wasn't as bad as Ralph Miliband; I mean a friend of mine did the undergrad with Miliband and Miliband used to have you sitting round in a half circle and saying, "You start first. What do you think?" and then he'd go around and by the time you were the last person in the half circle, you were shitting bricks (Kieran laughs). Thomson wasn't quite that bad, but he really was somebody who demanded an incredible amount of work - he made us read "The Prelude", we were doing politics and poetry in the French Revolution which was Blake "Songs of Innocence and Experience", Wordsworth, "The Prelude", Godwin, "Political Justice" and Edmund Burke, "Reflections on the French Revolution" and you had to read "The Prelude" in a week, which is the longest poem in the English language, in a week. And for preparation for the Centre, we have to do an even more ridiculous amount of reading. But he was very empirical, and although he was coming out of the Marxist tradition, he basically is a Cambridge historian of the old school, you have to know your texts and if you don't know what a particular phrase means from any particular Blake poem, you will go away and find out. So that was an intense experience. Everybody else at Warwick was all very young; I mean it's a new university; '65 it opened, so I was the second undergraduate intake and of course you had the whole Warwick Files Affair. Do you remember the Warwick Files Affair?

Kieran Connell: Can you elaborate for me?

Trevor Fisher: Well we're about to try and re-publish the book. Really Thomson didn't get involved in university politics, but in February 1970, there was a sit-in which I didn't take part in, because it was bad for the student university which we hadn't got. And I assumed that the university was far too savvy to let anything – there were all kind of rumours going on about the relationship of the university for local business, particularly Rootes. I mean to this day, the central camp was dominated by the halls of residents, funded by Rootes Motors and they're still called "Rootes Buildings" to this day. So we knew there was a close link and didn't quite know what it was. I assumed that there would be nothing in the registry when we occupied – when they occupied rather - unfortunately they'd left letters lying around, which I still find utterly incredible to this day. And so we had a massive

occupation and we decided to break down the Vice Chancellor's door and go into the Vice Chancellor's speal because we requested a sort of deal; basically leave the outer properties open, we'll occupy the outer properties, have a symbolic two day occupation and then we'll go and we'll continue with what we do. But the students actually broke the door down and go in; after that it got very, very heavy. So we had to find some way of staying out of prison, because they put a High Court injunction against us, apart from anything else. And do Edward said, "I can get a book published by Penguin" and Penguin gave us six weeks to write this book and one of the reasons why we didn't get put in prison was because we had the press on our side and Brian was absolutely crucial at keeping me out of prison.

Kieran Connell: What was – ?

Brian Homer: I don't remember this! People keep saying, "Well you were instrumental in doing this that and the other" and I've often forgotten, but I think I put you in touch with W E Hall -

Trevor Fisher: W E Hall.

Brian Homer: - who was my best friend at the time's father, who was the -

Trevor Fisher: Deputy Editor of the Birmingham Post.

Brian Homer: - Deputy Editor for the Birmingham Post and he was an old fashioned Liberal journalist, so he wasn't really left wing in a conventional sense, but he believed in truth and justice I suppose.

Trevor Fisher: What we were about to discover, to cut a long story short, was clear evidence of collusion in the university and local employers, to turn the place into a business university basically. But also they'd actually broken their own statues, because we discovered they'd discriminated against students on the grounds of politics and statues say you couldn't. And they'd also employed the Rootes Motors Industrial Espionage Unit to spy on lecturers and what triggered me was when we found a letter about a meeting done by a guy called David Montgomery, who was a visiting lecturer from America who was doing American Industrial Relations with Edward. And that letter was one that actually got me up into the registry. And so we discovered all this stuff and we had it, and then the High Court injunction comes out and of course immediately you know, you give back anything you'd taken, because obviously you'd stolen it. We were very naïve. So we had the High Court injunction and so the only defence is the public interest defence and the Law Department tells us exactly where we are, and we're in deep, deep do-dos! (Laughs) So the only defence is the public interest defence and so they said, "Get some stuff in the Press" and we sent all the stuff to Fleet Street. Nothing appears. So I thought to myself, "Well Brian knows this bloke who's the Deputy Editor of the Birmingham Post" and on Sunday I came across with all the documentation. We'd had it photocopied by a socialist worker; the only time the trust has been useful to me, they photocopied all the stuff. We took all the stuff round to all the Fleet Street newspapers. And we were told later, the reason why it hadn't in fact gone out, was that the university had put the High Court injunction on the Press Association of Teleprinters and once the lawyers had seen it, "You can't touch this" because of the High Court injunction. But as I said, Brian knew W E Hall, so he got an interview. So I took the stuff across to Edgbaston and he just looked at it and said, "Hmm, interesting, leave it with me". And the following day -

Kieran Connell: (Laughs) There it was.

Trevor Fisher: - three or four pages of the Birmingham Post are the internal documents for the University of Warwick. At which point Thomson stopped being snotty, because we'd had this breakthrough with the Birmingham Post, one of the principal newspapers. That put the university in do-dos. But he said, "Let's try and get a book out of this. You're now national news". So we put together, "Warwick University Ltd" in six weeks, published by Penguin. It still stands up, although done in the middle of the confrontation, so there are whole debates about whether we should publish the book as it is, or whether we should put addendums and stuff like that, which I'm in favour of. It may come out if we can get a publisher. But then Thomson starts talking to us. And that's the only time really he'd ever started a conversation with undergraduates. He really was an elitist; he was a total mandarin.

Kieran Connell: It's almost like you'd proved yourself in that kind of -

Trevor Fisher: Yes, that's right, he actually said – and to be fair to the bloke, I mean this is a guy who'd fought at Monte Cassino at 19 years old Edward Thomson's – they're making a film out of Monte Cassino of course; it's the battle of the Second World War. And I understand why somebody of his generation, he always used to say you should join the Young Communist League, be forced to enter the Young Communist League and then you'd learn discipline. I thought, "Oh right, thanks Edward". So there was all that kind of stuff going on at Warwick and so I come to the Centre. Stuart is very laid back, but he runs it as a collective, and really – to me, it was run by the PhD students. Edward had been a very remote figure. Stuart is there, he is in the seminars, he's very much the Director of the Centre, but he gives the postgraduates a lot of freedom. And the only thing you had to turn up for was the Monday seminar. I was trying to earn a living at the time. And on the Monday, everybody gets together and you have a particular theme and they gave to me the way of making the news working class, which is fascinating because I did my thing and I referred to the postscript in the Penguin edition, the paperback edition. And I'll never forget the look on Stuart's face because Stuart had read the hardback edition, he had never bothered with the postscript. He'd never heard of it, he never even knew there was a postscript in the second edition he just thought it'd gone in paperback. Edward had written a reply to his critics in a postscript and the only time I ever got one over on Stuart Hall was I'd actually read something he hadn't read! So that was quite funny (laughs). But on the whole it was a horrendous experience, because you had a whole day – well from 10am to 4pm, when you had to defend your thesis against the entire ranks of the PhD students. If you were an MA student, you were made very clearly aware that you were a lower form of life. So I got to be a lower form of life with EP Thomson because I hadn't got a degree and I wasn't a historian, a lower form of life for the Centre, because I was an MA student who hadn't done an MA! (Laughs).

Brian Homer: There's a certain irony about that isn't there, that this is a Centre dedicated to challenging the norms about interpretation of the way society is and you know particularly gender and class and race. And there he is demonstrating to a certain extent some of the old school values of the academic hierarchy.

Kieran Connell: The hierarchy. Did you – was there a kind of attempt to break down those kind of hierarchical - ?

Trevor Fisher: Yes, I'll tell you in a moment, but you've got to look at – I was at the Arts Lab meeting that you were at, the Flat Pack organisation, so I said this as you probably remember. Roger Shannon stood up and said that ten years later it was different. So I think you've got to talk to people who were later. And my experience as a political –

Kieran Connell: So you were there what year, sorry?

Trevor Fisher: '71 to '73. My experience is particularly soured because I was not inclined to take this kind of rubbish. And it all came to a head the weekend that I had to read – the reading list was, three books by (Herbert) Marcuse; "One Dimensional Man", "Soviet Marxism" and the other I can't even remember. I didn't even try to read it. So I spent all Saturday reading "One Dimensional Man", the Sunday reading "Soviet Marxism" and then I thought, "Bugger this for a bunch of soldiers!" (All laugh) I couldn't remember it, you can't speed read Marcuse, it's just absolutely impossible. It's like trying to remember a railway timetable. So I went out on the Monday, I complained bitterly and all the MA students were saying, and I was saying; "This is ridiculous - I spent the entire weekend on it and my brain's going". And so they all said, "Yes Trevor, no problem at all, we'll back you up on this" and of course when it came to the crunch, I made this formal complaint and Stuart said, "Well let's see what everybody else –" and of course everybody else just sits there on their hands and so I thought, "Bugger this!" (Kieran Connell laughs)

Kieran Connell: So was that pretty kind of, was it a pretty hard environment then?

Trevor Fisher: Very much so. And they also went away – the first weekend we went to Wales and it's all kind of collective and stuff, so we had this farmhouse in North Wales, plotting the year ahead. It was democratic in the sense that everybody does have a voice. And of course the first year MA students don't know what the hell's going on, so we just keep our mouths shut. But you observe what's going on and it's very clear, and I'm not going to name names, certain people are – it's Orwellian, every

animal is equal but some animals are more equal than others. And you'd need to talk to other people to see if they got the same sense than I had. But I thought, "Right, you, you, you and you are the guys who really run this place, because all your books and topics get on the seminar list; other people don't".

[0:12:18]

Kieran Connell: Did you have like a perception of - ?

Brian Homer: I'm not sure I did really because I mean – it's sort of being peripheral kind of picking it up, you know lots of people like I know that I've worked with like Trevor went there. And so there is – for me I suppose I've got a more romantic dimension of it, because it sort of seems to me that a lot of people that I respect and whose work and attitudes and approach and philosophy I'm in synch with, went there. So I kind of have a more – if you like, a more rose tinted view of it.

Kieran Connell: What were you doing then at the time that Trevor was - ?

Brian Homer: Well '71/'72 I was working in the Electricity Board, you know.

Trevor Fisher: Yes I went in 1970. I graduated in – the Warwick Files Affair is February to April. Then we have to stop and do our university finals and so I graduated in 1970. '70/'71 is the era when I was there and we had all the confrontations after that and that's two years old, so basically doing my MA, there by research. So it's '70 –

Brian Homer: Yes, so in 1970 I'm still working at the Electricity Board. Trevor and I did some kind of community newspaper back then in a sort of slightly -

Trevor Fisher: Light hearted way.

Brian Homer: - tabloidy fashion. That was when we thought that –

Kieran Connell: What was that called then? Can you remember?

Brian Homer: I'd have to look it out.

Trevor Fisher: Yes, that doesn't leave much deposit I must admit.

Brian Homer: No it doesn't. I do remember doing it and I've got copies somewhere. Then – so I mean the interesting thing was I never did any of this sort of academic study and yet I was very interested in this sort of stuff at a kind of – what's the word – at a –

Trevor Fisher: Watching brief.

Brian Homer: - yes a kind of common sense attitude to it, that I could see what synched with my politics even at that time and so therefore – like I remember talking to you about some stuff and you said, "Have you read Richard Hoggart?" And I said, "No" and you said "Well – " (overspeaking 0:14:22) It was like I had sort of symbiotically absorbed a lot of this stuff and synched with them about stuff.

Trevor Fisher: That book was so widely available and read that I think it did get into the culture but most of the stuff didn't get into the culture. The use of literacy was a major influence on a lot of purposes -

Brian Homer: And I did read it shortly after that.

Kieran Connell: Did you have that relationship to the political, because obviously there was an intellectual part of the Centre, but there was also this notion of - I don't know how much you'd agree with this Trevor – but a sort of notion of radical politics and a commitment to a Marxist philosophy.

Brian Homer: Yes, I mean I don't think I was really connected with organised politics at that point, other than- well with Trevor, we'd both been in the Young Liberals together. That's where I first met Trevor, in the Young Liberals, when they were somewhat to the left of the Labour Party as I remember.

Trevor Fisher: Very much so.

Brian Homer: That's what it felt like, a very libertarian left kind of philosophy. That's when Peter Hain was in the Young Liberals. And I actually stood for the Liberal Party in '66 and '68 I think in Quinton for the local elections. So we had the political and we ran the Young Liberals in the Edgbaston constituency together. And so we had a – that was how we got to know each other and what we were doing at the time, you know, other than work. And so I suppose that was the kind of impact of it. So then I was kind of coming to the end of the period of being able to carry on. I mean I don't know really to this day in many ways, why I became a trainee electrical engineer (laughs) it didn't make a lot of sense, but I suppose –

[0:15:51]

Trevor Fisher: Because your mum says it's got a pension at the end of it.

Brian Homer: Yes probably – (Laughs)

Trevor Fisher: It's the sort of thing your mum would have said.

Brian Homer: I think I was a classic case of someone who went to a grammar school and who didn't – I was the first in my family to get – in my part of the family to go to grammar school, passed the 11 Plus by some weird anomaly and then ended up in an environment where I didn't feel at home. I wasn't particularly academic, I wasn't sporty and I wasn't a complete failure. And if you weren't one of those three things at my grammar school, then you got ignored basically, so it was quite – and because I was the first one in my family to go, I'd proved how good I was and therefore my parents thought they couldn't get involved. So I was kind of on my own in an environment that I didn't clock at all and felt like a fish out of water. So I guess I went with whatever sort of in a sense fitted at that time, which was – I'm quite technical so – kind of –

Trevor Fisher: Oh, no, amazingly technical! I'm about to talk to you about this blooming website yet again, because I don't understand anything about it! (Laughs).

Brian Homer: So I was still working at the Electricity Board and I think by that time I'd probably got to the lowest rung of general assistant or fourth assistant engineer. And – but it was clear I wasn't really concentrating (laughs) on that part of life and increasingly I was doing things outside. And by 1971 I was spending – that's when we launched Grapevine.

Kieran Connell: So what was the motivation behind launching Grapevine in '71?

Trevor Fisher: Trying to do a "Time Out" for Birmingham.

Brian Homer: Yes.

Trevor Fisher: I mean I'd already got pissed off with the Centre. And essentially the – started in September of 1970 and by March 1971 I'm pissed off.

Kieran Connell: Is it pissed off primarily because of this – you having to read Marxism in a weekend or any other reason?

Trevor Fisher: The internal politics for me. I mean I was sold on this idea that it would be a New Left initiative with Stuart's connection. But it was incredibly detached – I mean you'd have to talk to other people, but I can recall Dorothy Thomson, so I knew both Dorothy and Edward by that point. And Dorothy organised – because Dorothy knew Stuart from the New Left from the May Day Manifesto. So Dorothy organised a joint seminar with the Centre on Victorian crime because Victorian crime and a lot of the work that had been done at the Centre related very much. And so all the historians came

up. We're on the fourth floor of the Arts building. History is on the third floor. Dorothy came up with her research people, had a lovely day, a smashing seminar, loads of ideas generated. We went back down again; never reciprocated. The Centre did nothing – and Dorothy years later would say to me, "Can you ever remember the reasons why they didn't come back?" I mean just checking out, but I mean I know Dorothy was really pissed off as to – maybe there's some good reason why they couldn't go there, I don't understand it, but Dorothy didn't understand why, having gone up the stairs to the fourth floor, the fourth floor couldn't come down to the third floor. And that just was bizarre and I felt the same way about it.

Kieran Connell: So detached kind of like in terms of - ?

Trevor Fisher: Inside the university, yes.

Kieran Connell: Do you think it was detached in terms of the relationship outside the university?

[0:19:15]

Trevor Fisher: There are loads of individuals who did loads of work. I mean Charles Critcher, I mean to fair of Charles Chritcher, he was actually out there. He was doing something in the community and there were a fair number of people there; some not particularly consequential. One guy played in a jazz band. I forget his name and so (inaudible 0:19:29) and he knew all the jazz people in the city. So we weren't entirely in an ivory tower. But the Centre – I don't recall the Centre ever contributing towards the extra-mural department. The extra-mural department at that time was a fantastic successful part of the university; now been closed down obviously. But I don't recall them ever doing any lectures or having workshops or anything with the extra-mural department. It was the place on the top of the fourth floor of the Arts building of the University of Birmingham.

Kieran Connell: So by '71 then, you were kind of, for all those reasons, fed up.

Trevor Fisher: I wanted out.

Kieran Connell: And then so how did Grapevine and - ?

Brian Homer: Well it was – because we'd done this community work, the community magazine before and I was you know – by then I was very interested in notions of challenging the existing media. Because at that time – now things are a bit different aren't they, media is not quite as clear-cut. Then you'd definitely have, you know apart from the great example that Trevor's talked about with the Birmingham Post publishing the "Warwick University Ltd" stuff, on the whole the Birmingham Post and the straight media, the national media and the local media were very down the line, they didn't really deal with community issues in a very strong way at all. They certainly didn't deal with any difficulties communities had with the authority – with Authority in broad terms. So I think that was the idea that we'd do something similar to Time Out, that combined if you like the news that wouldn't get in – it's like a news from nowhere idea isn't it, so it's – it's news that wouldn't get into the local press. Feeling that that probably wouldn't sell on its own, so putting it together with a "What's On" guide. So really copying to a large extent or taking the Time Out model. And you know that's what we did. I mean first on a reasonably small scale and gradually built it up over a – I think we did it for five years in the end. And at the best, it probably sold 3,000 a month, 2,500/3,000 on a good month. Very hard work.

Kieran Connell: Were you doing that full time or were you doing that - ?

Brian Homer: It was varied, I mean there was usually – well it was a group of volunteers, I mean if you look back through Grapevines, I mean I can't remember all the names now. Some of them -

Trevor Fisher: No.

Brian Homer: There would have been lots and lots of people volunteering; probably a core of six to eight who on the whole stayed fairly steady with some changes. And then a lot of people who came in and out and did bits and bobs, or did a bit of selling or whatever. And it was, I think at the time – I left the

Electricity Board in '71, having been kind of rumbled really. (Kieran laughs) I was just about to resign when – I went to see – I had two bosses, so by '71 I was playing them off against each other. So when one thought I was with the other, I was actually doing Grapevine or something (all laugh). So in late '71 I thought, "I can't go on" and I resigned. And when I went to see one of the bosses, they said, "We were going to have a word with you – " (Trevor laughs). And then of course things were much more relaxed. I mean there was never a lot of money but you could sign on with reasonable impunity, there weren't great checks, apart from signing on once a week or every other week. So we tended to kind of do it where I signed on, I don't know whether you were signing on at the time - ?

Trevor Fisher: No I was teaching part time and -

Brian Homer: So I was signing on, so I was working pretty well full time on it, but then sometimes, if the money got a bit better, there were a few short periods when I was paid by – (?Brumidging 0:23:00) Press Ltd. We were going to call it (?Brumidging 0:23:14) Screwdriver which as you know is a hammer but -

Trevor Fisher: I've always wanted to use that name (Kieran laughs). I've always wanted to use that name.

[0:23:20]

Brian Homer: So that's the way it went. And we started off with a little A5 thing and gradually built up to a substantial A4 magazine.

Kieran Connell: I mean it seems like some of the things that you were just describing there, like that kind of desire to get out into the public domain the kind of things that the mainstream press weren't covering, in a sense is quite a political rationale.

Trevor Fisher: We were very political. We weren't party political. I mean we got pissed off with the Ultra Left, who would just spend their time selling newspapers. But we had a mutual friend who was staying with us in a flat called Lisa. I don't know what her second name is and Lisa was a member of the SWP and she'd come from a – I'd better not say any more than that to identify her. But she was in the SWP and she'd go off to Longbridge which is a big car factory in the South of Birmingham, every Friday morning at 6.30am to sell the paper. And that was her politics. As long as she got down and sold her quota of papers, she'd come home and she'd spend the rest of the weekend dancing the night away (laughs). And I thought, "Well if that's your politics, we want a bit more than that". So we had to get something which was a bit more engaged. So – and what Brian was saying about the dole. The guys at the Arts Lab were saying this as well, that in those days, you could actually work for the Arts Lab and draw the dole. So it was a much more freer situation in that sense.

Kieran Connell: Did your – at all did your experience at the Centre, but also at Warwick, politically or intellectually feed in in any way in your life – the rationale behind wanting to establish Grapevine and the kind of work that you were doing at Grapevine?

Trevor Fisher: There was a strong community ethic at Warwick and I think also at Birmingham, but I didn't get involved in the Birmingham stuff because I wasn't an undergraduate and postgraduates are very dissociated from the university. But there was a real sense in the 60s, you had to put something back into the community.

Brian Homer: When did we go to see Raph Samuel when we did that tour in Oxford?

Trevor Fisher: I can't remember, I mean the History Workshop is very important. I mean Raphael Samuel always gets marginalised in all these debates. But I think Raphael Samuel's History Workshop for young historians of that era is really, really crucially important and somebody should do a book on Raphael Samuels. I recall going to a Workshop at Ruskin where Samuel was working and he went off with (Anna Dalvegne) who was at one point married to the son of an FRS whose name escapes me – Luke Hodgkin. She was married to Luke Hodgkin and then she went out with Raphael Samuels and Warwick and Ruskin, there was this link. And the workshops there, 200-300 people having ferocious arguments about history and Marxism. That's been forgotten.

Brian Homer: But also though links with, if you like, oral history and the notion that – I mean I think that's quite interesting actually because I think you know you've got this notion which I suppose – what was that project from Sussex whose – I always forget the name of – the one, you know, from the 30s where they interview your local – people interview –

Kieran Connell: Oh kind of like the People's History stuff.

Brian Homer: Yes, what was - ?

Trevor Fisher: "Mass Observation"?

Brian Homer: "Mass Observation", so you know you'd got this movement of in a sense oral history movement and quite often – and of course later it was Ken Warpole, Hackney, and – but it was quite un-academic. Although people with academic qualifications often took part, there was a notion that it wasn't necessarily a down the line academic study. And in some senses I think what's happened is – so then you were able to sort of, if you like, anybody could do it and I think that's very important. But now to a certain extent, it's being re-academicised and so oral history has now been sucked back in to being mainstream academic work, which is – I think, you know, to a certain extent, a bit of a shame because I think things like the Centre, in theory, open up the possibility that this stuff isn't just about the academic study. And I think that's always the problem I had with some of the sort of sociological stuff and academic stuff at the time, is that it starts generating a language that is at a distance from ordinary people. And therefore you miss a real opportunity then, because then you start to talk about people, rather than talk with people.

[0:27:45]

Trevor Fisher: And I think this is one area where you need to talk to the later generations of people in the Centre, because I think Richard did try and do that. And Stuart I think had a real concern with theory which colours – I wouldn't say "taint" – colours everything. I mean he was very much involved in getting books out. I think he had a deal with Hodgkinson at one point. And they were very concerned about their academic status. And I did hear a rumour that somebody had done a study of the Centre's journal – because we had a massive journal, and it was rated as being the third hardest journal of its era to read, in terms of its linguistic complexity. You could find that study. I mean I never saw it –

Kieran Connell: It's pretty dead to me, it's pretty dead stuff.

Trevor Fisher: It's phenomenally dense, really dense.

Brian Homer: But I think that's quite an interesting thing because I suppose, the way that I've just been trying to summon up a semiotic kind of way of discourse and you know I always felt not that sympathetic to, because of that way in which it distances you from what's going on in the world, I think, to a large extent. And means that then, in a sense, you're saying that, "We are the only people who can have the key to understanding this", when actually I think – and when you look back at feminism, about not only gender politics, but race politics, the important thing is that progress gets made when ordinary people are able to do something for themselves, not just when academics say, "What's going on?" And so I think you could draw a parallel with, in a sense that's what we were trying, I mean I wouldn't have made too many claims for what we did, because you know, it was still very compromised and quite hard work to make it work, you know. But what we were trying to do was talk to ordinary people and have a discourse with ordinary people, at the same time as people like the Rodgstein Alternative Press and other – there was a whole community press movement. And of course that's the time when the Plain English Campaign – what's her name? Chrissie Maher is it? -

Trevor Fisher: I can't remember.

Brian Homer: - started. And it was all of a piece, the plain English, you know, not high falutin language if you want to use that phrase. So then in a sense you could look at it then, and of course the interesting thing is I later – and we can talk about it - went on to do Ten.8 in which, again my interests in photography are about, if you like, more to do with documentary photography in the way it deals with people and

as Ten.8 developed, it became much, much more semiotic. And I lost more and more interest. It's still interesting, but to me – that's when I started to lose interest in it.

Kieran Connell: Because it starts out as being quite a kind of accessible medium -

Brian Homer: Yes.

Kieran Connell: - but then by the 90s it becomes an almost an academic journal doesn't it.

Brian Homer: It becomes a – exactly right. And becomes almost by definition something that only a certain number of people want to buy or get involved with.

[0:30:50]

Kieran Connell: How did Grapevine and then Broadside feed into – what's that kind of – what's the linkage between first Grapevine in '71 and - ?

Brian Homer: Well Grapevine – well what, I mean and this kind of reminds me of the recent stuff on social media you've seen about King Kong's statue being brought back to Birmingham – because that's, what happened was we – my view is that these voluntary things, there is a life of about half a decade when you can make them work. Voluntary is great, but you can't run something on a consistent basis unless you've got some – you need some resources. So by '75 we were struggling and it wasn't working in terms of not – Birmingham being such a smaller city, if you looked at the 1,000,000 – 8,000,000, actually at that time we were probably selling – if you got to 2,500/3,000 that was probably -

Trevor Fisher: Proportionately -

Brian Homer: - around, without advertising, because we were not business people, we weren't adept as later people starting things like "What's On" who were aware about getting advertising at a high enough level. Therefore on cover price and that number of people, you're never going to make a go of it. So we were kind of running out of steam by '75 and so what we did was we decided to do a "Guidebook to Birmingham" Brum book and actually looking back, although the production values are pretty low, it was pretty successful and nobody's ever done anything quite like it since.

Kieran Connell: So what was that then? Just literally a - ?

Brian Homer: It was like an A5 very thick, 48-60, I've got one -

Trevor Fisher: Yes, show Kieran, it's -

Brian Homer: I'll pull one out later. And so it was like a cross section of Birmingham life; football, politics, the whole – and that sort of, a bit like, I don't know if you've heard of the Whole Earth Catalogue. At that time, late 60s/70s, mid 70s, there was this sort of alternative lifestyle kind of stuff going around in which – so it's, I mean there's a section about how to decorate your flat for not much money, so that kind of stuff. And the cover was King Kong, a drawing by an artist of King Kong, which at that point – the statue was in the Bull Ring.

Trevor Fisher: With no balls.

Brian Homer: With no balls (laughs). We always felt was quite appropriate.

Trevor Fisher: No genitalia at all in fact! (All laugh).

Brian Homer: That hasn't been discussed on social media I hasten to say.

Kieran Connell: Which is a shame!

Trevor Fisher: As soon as it comes back, we'll put on balls – restore the genitalia but -

Trevor Fisher and Brian Homer

Brian Homer: I want to go back to Grapevine in a second, but yes so then we did that in the summer of '75 and then I went off for three months to America and came back and then we, by then, we were in touch with people who ran Grassroots. They were more from a housing and planning background and I don't know – they were more connected with – either then or later with the Institute of Local Government Studies, that sort of aspect.

Trevor Fisher: Yeah.

Brian Homer: Which was obviously a different part of Birmingham University. So I don't think there was anybody from there, anything to do with the Centre. And so the idea then was that we would merge the notions of Grapevine and Grassroots and that's what we came up with which was Broadside.

Kieran Connell: Broadside, so that would have been '75.

Brian Homer: That was started in '76, so there was a bit of a gap. And that ran – I think that didn't quite make the half a decade, it ran for about three years.

Kieran Connell: Trevor, were you still involved at that point, or had you - ?

[0:34:25]

Brian Homer: Did you start at the beginning of Broadside?

Trevor Fisher: Yes I was there for the first year. I was doing my PGCE, '76 to '79 I'm doing my PGCE and then I leave to go and work at Stafford.

Brian Homer: Broadside was an altogether more po-faced sort of production and it lost – it wasn't bad, but it sort of – and in some ways was best produced, but it had lost some of the –

Kieran Connell: Anarchic -

Brian Homer: - yes a bit of the anarchic stuff. And I'm just trying to think – I think it was in Grapevine when we covered the – because that's – what's interesting now is that some of the things from the 70s are being revisiting. So the library, '71/'72/'73/'74 -

Trevor Fisher: You must show Kieran the John Madin poster –

Kieran Connell: What's this?

Brian Homer: The Made in Birmingham Grapevine Issue?

Trevor Fisher: No, no John Madin.

Brian Homer: Yes but at the time it was called in "Made in Birmingham".

Trevor Fisher: Oh was it? I've never seen that.

Brian Homer: I'll go and dig it out in a minute. So we critiqued the library which at that point, was new.

Trevor Fisher: The John Madin Design Partnership was at the height of its fame and they're building their buildings all over the city. So he would discover but it had designs from different parts of the world.

Brian Homer: Yes, he is now still revered by the local architects and the local community, which I find quite bizarre.

Kieran Connell: Well there's campaigns isn't there to save the library and such like.

Brian Homer: I mean at the time, we were all not particularly – anyway –

Trevor Fisher and Brian Homer

Trevor Fisher: I hated it.

Brian Homer: What's interesting is that now – I had some debate on Twitter or something with John Bowens or somebody like that, saying, "Well this is our heritage" and I thought, "Well no, not really" (laughs).

Trevor Fisher: Well it's not my heritage. And you can tell him that if they try and – if they do try and preserve that monstrosity, I will personally go down and lay the charges (Kieran laughs) and I'm quite sure there will be enough people who hate the building to actually have a lottery, you know, "Buy a ticket to press the lever".

Brian Homer: I'll go and get -

Trevor Fisher: Shall we have a break?

Brian Homer: You know the interesting thing is the way that library story has resurfaced.

Kieran Connell: Yes and kind of similar themes that you're bringing up in the 70s are occurring now.

Brian Homer: Yes that's right.

[0:36:41]

Kieran Connell: So Ten.8, how did all this Grapevine and Broadside feed into then Ten.8 into '79?

Trevor Fisher: Well let me tell you how I get out. First of all, I've run out of money and I had been doing part time lecturing in various parts of the city and well I just ran out of money in '78. I had been living with my parents. I remember doing Brian's flat and we had this –

Kieran Connell: Where was your flat Brian?

Brian Homer: In Edgbaston, Hollow Road, yes.

Trevor Fisher: And you couldn't – I'd done my MA, I'd got my degree, I was working on this, I was teaching and it clearly was not going to be possible. As the situation in Birmingham changed and the context – you really do have to look at 1) it became more serious as time goes on and Broadside is much more serious than Grapevine. First of all the miners' strikes, the '72 and '74 miners' strike. Then the building workers' strike and we actually had flying pickets in the flat. We allowed our living room to be used for flying pickets.

Brian Homer: Some of them moved in. Johnny – and the other guy -

Trevor Fisher: Yes Johnny Marne moved in and Alan, that nutter, the psychopath!

Brian Homer: Yes, I can't remember his second name.

Trevor Fisher: We actually had a situation with one of them, we had a party and Alan got drunk and decided that people were stealing his records and so four of us had to hold him back while – he attacked his girlfriend and tore his girlfriend's dress up and so I said, "Get out of the flat". That was a nasty experience.

Brian Homer: Those were the days when I was still working in the Electricity Board. I remember going to – Johnny Marne was up a crane during the building strike and I went to a demonstration and I had to keep – make sure I wasn't being filmed (all laugh), because I was "off sick".

Trevor Fisher: The building workers' strike was when we were actually using Brian – I moved into Brian's flat in '73 I think, after I'd done my MA, because my parents were saying to me, "Well you've done your MA, you can't live here, get a job", they were working class parents. And so I thought, "Well I'll just bugger up the road and go and share a flat with Brian". So there was that – the building workers' strike, the two

miners' strikes, the Battle of Sattley Gate and the whole dimension which particularly affects me – less than Brian, is the focus on (inaudible 0:38:50) particularly in Birmingham and I was in – I knew Ian Campbell, the Ian Campbell Folk Group, who they provide the lead singers for UB40 – Robin Campbell was the manager. Ali Campbell – and no, David Jacob was the manager. Robin Campbell and Ali Campbell are the lead singers of UB40 in 1979. And so the focus is very, very political but it started to die. But the last kind of effusion of the radical communist party element in the folk scene is the Battle of Sattley Gate, where the police get overwhelmed by the strength of the number of workers coming out of East Birmingham. And that leads to a theatre group called –

Kieran Connell: Banner?

Trevor Fisher: -Banner, yes. So I was never involved in it directly but I knew all the people involved. So the context is getting much more serious, but what people forget and it has been deliberately forgotten, is the IRA bombings in '74 and the Tavern in the Town and I was actually teaching at – I was in the police cadets at Matthew Bolton College and the first person – the first couple who'd got into the Tavern in the Town was one of my students. And she wouldn't talk about it. She walked into carnage, people were dead, dead bodies all over the place. So by the time – and that weekend of the IRA bombing, I mean the feeling in the town – we had a 10% Irish population and we were very close to a pogrom. And what the police did was to arrest six anarchists who happened to be Irish, who clearly were not IRA. The IRA had come in, put the bombs and they were the two pubs closest to New Street Station were the Carousel and the Tavern in the Town; one's in New Street, one's at the bottom of the rotunda. And the bombs were timed, get on the train, they're miles away when the bombs go off. So the police – they're faced with real feeling of "Do the Irish" and we had six anarchists. They forced confessions out of them. I'm tipped off by one of the guys, somebody who knows one of the guys. I go to Winson Green prison. And did we actually publish the interview in - ?

Brian Homer: I don't remember.

Trevor Fisher: Well I'm fairly certain I did publish the interview and I was very frightened, because when I went in, it was very clear they'd actually tortured this guy. There were cigarette burns on his arms. And when I was talking to him, there were two screws – it's an armoured screen. I was talking through an armoured screen and there's a speaking tunnel under the armoured screen. There are two screws behind him making notes of what I'm saying to him, just stood there making notes of what I'm saying. And so we have this situation where we know these guys are not IRA; they have not done the bombings, but they've got to be set up. And I wrote an article which was, I had to be very guarded about what I was saying, because when I said to him, "Well what are these cigarette burns on your arm?", "I can't remember", "Ah right, I get the message". So this is much darker Broadside.

Kieran Connell: Because it was dealing in this highly political context, from the sort of '72 onwards - ?

Trevor Fisher: '71 was the miners' strike. I think the building workers' strike was in '72 again. I can't remember precisely the timing. But those two strikes, the three strikes had a big impact. The IRA bombings had a big impact. We got involved in some quite heavy race stuff as well. The Villa Cross stuff, do you remember that?

Brian Homer: Oh you mean at the front line?

Trevor Fisher: Where they actually arrested some guys and it was clear that again people just picked – there was a demonstration in Handsworth and they just picked out the first guy they could come across and so there was a massive campaign to get these guys off the charges, which won in the end. Political (inaudible 0:42:51) and we were very involved in that. So that's the heavy end of community politics, where people are actually on serious charges of affray and riot and stuff.

Kieran Connell: That would have been with you know Beanie Brown involved in that kind of thing, in the African Caribbean Self Help Organisation, like -

Brian Homer: Probably yeah.

Trevor Fisher: You'd have to look at that – So we stopped being idealists really.

Kieran Connell: So did you find that quite exhausting then?

Trevor Fisher: Oh yes, I wanted to become a teacher, I mean I had just had enough. I was – came out in 1970 of Warwick and I'd done my degree by '73. By '75 then we started Broadside in '76 and I'm thinking I had to get a job. My parents really were on my back. So I got a job at the Birmingham Inner Area of Study, which is a Home Office -

Brian Homer: Did you work there with John (?Shucwerk 0:43:43)?

Trevor Fisher: Yes. No, no, John (?Shucwek) worked for the Saltley Project.

Brian Homer: Did he? Did John – because that's the other project I – (overspeaking 0:43:52)

Trevor Fisher: And John and I had this interesting – well, I haven't met John for many, many years, but -

Brian Homer: Have you interviewed Charlie Adams and John Stevens?

Trevor Fisher: No, they're working with that lot.

[0:44:00]

Brian Homer: No, John Stevens and Charlie Adams were Inner Area of Study.

Trevor Fisher: Well in that case I did work with them, I can't remember. I can remember John Stevens going off to Great Witley one weekend. Anyway, the important thing was we had these two – the inner city areas had started to become a real problem for the government. So they started one project in the Home Office in Saltley and the other project which is run by the department in Small Heath. And I had a job with the Small Heath project on a one year contract and as I think now, I need to revisit that because I think the work we were doing was really very, very important and we actually pointed towards ways of improving inner city schools which has been lost completely with the Academy movement. But I'd come to the end of my contract in '76, so I thought I might do a PGCE and I wanted to leave Birmingham, I'd had enough of Birmingham. And in '77 I got a job in Stafford. So I can recall being in Stafford in '77 and '78 and getting phone calls when the financial crisis hits. I wasn't involved in Broadside but I do remember getting phone calls in my digs in Stafford, saying, "Where's the money?" and "How can we get sources?" and stuff and I'm just saying, "I'm no longer involved. Go away!"

Kieran Connell: So by that point, you were still there I guess with Broadside?

Trevor Fisher: Oh Brian was yes.

Brian Homer: Yes, I mean I – yes because we – I kind of had a – because Broadside started in '76 and then by late '77, I was kind of realising that this wasn't really going to be going anyway and I was what – in '77 I was mid thirties, so I was born in '45. So I was – it was kind of getting to the stage I had no money, nothing (laughs). So I think I was starting to think I wanted to still carry on doing things in the same kind of area but I needed to think about earning some money. So at that time, what Trevor's just been talking about – the Saltley, but that was when, so late '77 we were in touch with these people, probably in retrospect with Trevor's connection with the Inner Area of Study, probably places like – I know with what's it called – Birmingham Voluntary Service Council – we had a lot of contacts in that area of that kind of stuff. And the people in Saltley, the CDP Project asked me to look at doing their final design for their project report, because they'd seen we could put stuff on – you know, we could actually do it. And so it was that which kicked me into doing that career really of graphic design and communications. So in '77, first of all, well Derrick Bishton who I later did Self Portrait with, he was working for the Post in the mid 70s; he used to come and volunteer for us while still having his job at the Birmingham Post. It was kind of like an ironic loop, given that we'd started off by being in opposition to that kind of media. And in about – in that time, he stopped working at the Birmingham Post and we effectively set up together in the Arts Lab actually on sacks of potatoes for a few months until we got chucked out and then we got the place in Handsworth in something like '78, late

'77/early '78. So by then, and we took great Broadside with us. So we started what was called Sidelines, a terrible name (laughs) because it implied we were kind of completely not interested, and Sidelines first of all moved down to the Arts Lab. Then we moved to Handsworth and then Broadside moved in with us because they came out to the Lozells Social Development Centre, so that was '78. So we were still interested in doing publishing things. So quite quickly after that, we were thinking of things. We did Movement of Jah People, we did Talking Blues, which were more than just jobs; they were sort of where we edited and wrote it in the case of Movement of Jah People were self-published and then sort of early '79, late '78/'79, we were talking to the photographer – Nick Hedges was on the photography panel, along with a number of other people and we –

Kieran Connell: Roy Peters?

Brian Homer: Yes, was Roy on the panel? I'm not sure if he was on the panel, but he certainly – we were working with Roy. And then we set up Ten.8 with Arts Council money and we got a little bit of money – not a lot, but enough money to do the Self Portrait. And I suppose you'd say they weren't necessarily direct links, but it was with people who we'd been working with – so John and John Red and Derek Bishton had both worked on Grapevine in the early to mid 70s. And it was sort of in the same spirit really of wanting to work with communities and work with you know people on the ground, rather than looking from the outside and I suppose there's been that kind of – trying to do that for a long time, you know, sometimes more successfully than others.

Kieran Connell: I mean, because even at the beginning there at Ten.8, you kept going back through some of the old issues, there was still the commitment to speaking in ordinary language -

Brian Homer: Yes like with the early stuff about community language but yes –

Kieran Connell: It wasn't academic I was going to say, like -

Brian Homer: Yes well that was because of the influence of probably John Taylor and Paul Lewis. Because, you know, Nick Hedges is a straight down the line photographer. He doesn't have any – like a lot of photographers, he doesn't have really any academic you know sorts of aspirations. But John Taylor and Paul Lewis were both Art lecturers rather than practitioners. They both started working at Stourbridge College and then later at Wolverhampton University with Nick, or in the same department as Nick, or a related department. And their interests were much more academic and the language they tended to use was more semiotic, so I don't know whether they had any influences from the Centre, those two, but they certainly – I mean at that time I also met Dick Hebdige who I think did go to the Centre.

Trevor Fisher: He did, yes.

Brian Homer: And I met him in Walsall when he was teaching when Nick ran the photography course at Walsall, which later became the photography department at Wolverhampton University, which he returned to later. So I think there would have been links there –

Kieran Connell: Well he wrote didn't he for, an article for Ten.8 on subcultures?

Brian Homer: Later for Ten.8, yes, that's right, so I suspect that there was a sort of – I don't know what the right word is – influences, that even if people like John Taylor and Paul Lewis didn't go to the Centre, they would have been influenced by that kind of discourse and that would have been seen to have been the way to talk about culture in those kind of magazines. So I guess that must have been quite a strong influence on – I would guess.

Trevor Fisher: I can't (overspeaking 0:51:42)

Brian Homer: Because in truth you see our model for Ten.8 was actually *Camerawork*, which itself was based on Stycon's [Stieglitz's(sic?)] *Camera Work* from the early part of the 20th Century. And that was a much – although they did have – people who we'd now look at and you know people like Angela Kelly who's now working in Rochester and I've been in touch with recently. They did talk – they were trained artists on the whole, who started *Camerawork* and so they would have had a grounding in

theory – in Art theory, which people like me, Derrick and even John probably didn't have, although John did a photography course, it wouldn't have had a lot of theory content I don't think, whereas if you go into – if you do Fine Art or Art History, then you obviously get a lot of academic -

Trevor Fisher: Did I (inaudible 0:52:33) something?

Brian Homer: I don't think so.

Trevor Fisher: I taught at the School of Photography for a year.

Brian Homer: Oh did you? At Darlington Road?

Trevor Fisher: Yes, I might have done, yes. Quite possibly yes.

Brian Homer: That might be why we got to know him.

Trevor Fisher: I just thought about that – is it because I've taught John - ?

Brian Homer: Because I found out the other day from Nick Hedges, that I was the reason he took photographs in Saltley in '77 or '76, because at that point I would have been doing Broadside, wasn't freelancing and therefore wasn't really in the position and people at Saltley CDP must have said to me, "We want somebody to do some photography" and I actually recommended them to Nick Hedges.

[0:53:18]

Trevor Fisher: I mean John Readon is an interesting character and he's not necessarily part of your thing, but I'd love to know the career of John Readon. Because at one point, he was the Observer Photographer of the Year.

Brian Homer: Well then he became the Observer – well he became a photographer on the Observer and he was the picture editor on the Observer. And he's famously the one photographer I know who was invited to join Magnum and said, "My portfolio isn't finished".

Trevor Fisher: (Laughs) He's one of those people who you think (? 0:53:45 you're bumping into you) – I know exactly where I finally met him; it was in Westminster Abbey for the funeral of John Smith, the Labour Leader and we kept on saying, "Yes, must keep in touch" and of course never have done.

Kieran Connell: Never did, yes. Listen just finally though, I was going to ask you both a really broad question about the difference between that period politically and cultural, that kind of 1970s period and then where we are at now. What do you see as being the kind of – because I mean all these kind of initiatives, whether it's Grapevine, Broadside, Ten.8, they were kind of – they seemed to be very of-that-moment in a sense.

Brian Homer: I suppose my – sorry to but in, but my immediate response to that question is one of quite strong disappointment actually I think that when you think about the analysis, I mean if you think about a lot of things that were going on in the 70s, into the 80s, you know, feminism, you know radicalism, I mean some things that you could look back and say, "You know we are a less racist country, we're certainly a less overtly racist country than we were". I think there has been a lot of back sliding and I think in terms of gender politics, we're probably behind where we were in the 70s at the moment, with the way women – their position in society. We certainly haven't advanced as far as we should have done. And I think my disappointment comes from all the sort of if you like, the people who were in, you know, if you like exposed to quite radical ideas, but not necessarily completely off the wall ideas. I would have hoped for more progress in terms of a sort of – I suppose simplistically a better society and I think in many ways, we're now going backwards at a rapid rate. And the very people that in a sense you would have expected to be leaders of that, have sometimes – well either gone off to do things that were sort of – didn't sort of advance society generally, I mean into art and into other things. But also, into, if you think about the Labour Party particularly who, you know I'm actually a member at the moment, for my sins. But I feel like that's gone backwards at such a rapid rate and that – all that thinking, all those people who you might have thought were naturally – should have

been influencing the Labour Party and that just hasn't happened. The thinking of the Labour Party is now a sort of "me too" you know, "Who's voting for who? I'll have a bit of that", rather than stating a clear what you think society should be and how people should interact with each other. So I suppose that would be my overriding feeling, that there was a lot of sort of potential and that one way and another, and I wouldn't rule myself out of that criticism, that we collectively, we've not been able to make enough of a difference.

Kieran Connell: In a sense that that politics that you were a part of – not to put it too crudely, but almost like lust in a sense, or like the Thatcher Project came along and then things -

Brian Homer: Thatcher did do for it a lot, although ironically it was a Tory government that set up the CDP certainly. It may even have been the Inner Area of Study was set up by the Tories. But yes, and I mean that's not to deny that there hasn't been good work and continues to be good work, but it's kind of patchy and it depends on individuals being able to get a bit of funding and get a bit of here and there. I don't know, is that fair, is that - ?

Trevor Fisher: I think it's absolutely fair, I mean -

Brian Homer: I just need to open the -

Trevor Fisher: I think a big change has been the (? 0:57:36 Tina) agenda, which Thatcher injected and there is no alternative. And many of the areas where you could actually see possibilities for alternatives, the (? 0:57:50 training and movement) is totally emasculated. And as we were talking about the Arts Lab at the time you could actually set up things like the Arts Lab, work on the dole and still come up with your Arts Lab work; you can't do that nowadays. And there's also a professionalization of every aspect of society and the idea – if I was looking at those nowadays, the idea that people actually bought those when the production projects are pretty poor. But people were actually buying 2,000-3,000 a month and Moseley and Kings Heath – (inaudible 0:58:17) were Moseley and Kings Heath which is where the lump of the intelligentsia lives and they were people who actually did have some kind of idea of what design was all about. We never broke into the inner city; totally impossible to do. And there are things like Steel Pulse coming out of Handsworth. Now Handsworth Revolution is not just a great album, it's an expression of a sense that things in Handsworth are wrong and we should do something about it and it becomes a worldwide hit. So it's not just in this country, that message. And UB40, somebody really ought to do some serious work on UB40, because the first five years of UB40, I mean they – I mean I was in the Reggae movement at that time and you've got The Beach, you've got UB40, you've got Steel Pulse, all major bands, I mean they overrate Musical Youth, but there are some really major Reggae bands coming out of Birmingham in the late 70s. And then of course I missed on the New Romantic thing. I mean having read John Taylor's autobiography, I definitely want to get down and say, "Look John, I'm terribly sorry I didn't wear silk shirts and go (all laugh) –"

Brian Homer: Yes and the make up.

Trevor Fisher: And make up. I mean it's amazing, I mean when you think that these are two straight guys and in the middle 1970s as teenagers, they are putting on lipstick. It's David Bowie basically – they are putting on makeup and silk shirts and walking around Birmingham and they don't get – they had a couple of near-misses, but they didn't get beaten up. I mean we are a relatively (inaudible 0:59:46) city in that respect in many ways. And that era I think is still there. I mean we are (Tolwinton's 0:59:53) social relationships. But in terms of thinking there's anything other than making money, I think that has gone completely and that's what they were trying to get back to.

Brian Homer: I mean I think just to say that I mean maybe it's rose tinted spectacles, but I do have the feeling that despite what was going on inside the Centre and despite the fact that perhaps it didn't, as Trevor says, make huge efforts to be reasonably populist, that it has had quite a big impact. Because some of the ideas that came out of that and you know – are almost- have become quite – I'm not- Okay you could say that it hasn't had as much effect. Generally I'm saying, I'm not really talking about the Centre when I say, "What's going on?" that was a more sort of all of us, not just the Centre. But a lot of people from the Centre went on to do some very interesting things and I think those notions do run through some of the work they did and in a sense what you'd say is, "Where is that coming now?"

Where is that sort of if you like – what's the word, that space to discuss things? Even if it's on a reasonably academic basis. At least, there's a space to talk about ideas, to talk about society and politics and it feels now that education is more and more determined by what job you can get, not by the ideas. And I think that's a really sad development, because you do need – you need these hotbeds. You need hotbeds to kind of start getting ideas out I think to a large extent. Is that right?

Trevor Fisher: I'm not sure whether the Centre was ever a hotbed of ideas. I mean it was a hotbed of people. I mean a number of people around, who Brian knows far more than I do, who have got plenty to offer and have plenty to offer 30/40 years later as tribute to the work that they were doing in terms of educational self improvement. The Centre, I think it didn't – although cultural studies was established as an academic discipline, I think people like us want to demolish it. The very nostalgic back-to-the-future stuff which (inaudible 1:02:18) is driving through at the moment. But in terms of the people, I mean one thing I would say about the people who went to the Centre, they're all self opinionated (laughs) and extremely verbose and they actually would go out into the community and they'd take that with them. So there were plenty of people around who did make a contribution individually, but as a collective thing, I think it's difficult. I think that Stuart decided to go to the Open University and do sociology, because he thought it had shot its bolt.

Brian Homer: Have you - ?

Kieran Connell: Thank you very much both of you, that's really great.

[End of Transcript]