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Perception of Landscape
Interview by Stuart Bowditch with Terri Bowditch

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Stuart Bowditch - Okay. So I'm recording now, so we're just going to have a conversation. So if you, just introduce yourself, tell me who you are and what you do or have done.

Terri Bowditch - Oh, well, I'm Terry Bowditch. Um, I consider myself to be a housewife. I know that's looked down upon these days, but it is what I am, really, I'm married to the house. You know, I do the house, do the work, look after it, care for it, love it. So, yeah, a housewife. I have been doing that for 56 years, which is a long time, but it's gone very quickly. I've had two children who are my biggest, proudest, thing that I've done, really, I love them dearly. I haven't really made any other mark on my life, I don't think, or anybody else's life other than the Townswomen's Guild. But, you know, work wise, I've never gone out and had a full time job after I had the children. Part time work, cleaning people's houses mainly, which was horrid, but we needed the pennies. So yeah, it got me out of the house, and the people I worked for were generally very nice. So yeah, basically that's me.

SB – Do you want to say a bit more about the Townswomen's Guild because I think you accomplished quite a lot there.

TB - I like to think I did. I joined because somebody just needed somebody to go to the meeting with her. Lillian. You remember Lillian. Um, and because it was going to close, the guild was going to close. It wasn't very old. And I just went down there for one meeting, and at the end of the meeting, I was on the committee because she said, do it, do it. Um, and that's really how I got into Townswomen's Guild and stayed with them, because I've got to thank Anne (Terri's daughter) here said, don't give it up. You obviously like it, just keep doing it. Go, go. And then different opportunities come join the Federation, the Federation like it was a group of guilds within part of Essex. They had, I think it was 28 guilds at the time, joined the committee, which was completely new experience for me. Met lots of different women and they were all, community orientated, um, which is something I hadn't really experienced. But once I had, I loved it, you know, and it was for women. And also what I liked about it and I didn't realise until quite some while why it also enabled me to have a voice, to be me, my own person. I have never had that before. I was always doing things for other people, things that people asked me to do. Um, you do it, you know, but once you realise that you have got opinions and you're not shouted down for voicing those opinions, completely different scenario for me. And I absolutely loved it and I miss it. It was...it didn't matter if you thought something different to somebody else sitting across the table, at the end of a committee meeting or end of a meeting, you were all friends. But the different opinions, the different thoughts is what made life, made the community happen. Fantastic! I went from there, I went to National, which broadened my life again. I met so many amazing women, did amazing things. There was, I think, 80 something year old lady who absailed down this huge building to raise money for her granddaughter's medical something or other. But she was 80 something. She was a little frail lady, and she was, I mean, that's the sort of thing, you know, I would have missed out on, you know. Met royalty, met lady...can't think of her name now, but, um, patrons of Townswomen's Guild, who were titled people not necessarily born into it, but earned it. And they become patrons of TG. Princess Anne is now and has been for a very long time, very active patron for Townswomen's Guild. Amazing woman. And, you know, to actually speak to her as I'm speaking to you, having a laugh and a joke. Well, you don't think that's going to happen ever. And you just, you know, afterwards, you think, did that really happen? You know, I was actually no curtsying or anything like that. It was just talking in a group of people discussing different things that we've been doing, that she'd been doing. She'd already been to two meetings that day for different associations. And and to laugh and joke about things was just, oh, I miss it. It's just it was just fantastic. So yeah. So Townswomen's Guild, it changed me again. It made me aware that all of us are capable of more

than we are aware of. I got there around about a bit different, you know what I mean?

SB – Yeah, and I can see from, you know, not the outside, that's the wrong way of looking at it, but I could see that, you know, it sort of transformed you as a person. Gave you more confidence.

TB - Oh it did.

SB - And, um, you know, it gave you a purpose as well, I think. You know, not instead of other things, but as well as well as.

TB - Definitely. Yeah. It made me realise that, um, I couldn't hold things back, you know? Things are happening. We got to progress, you can't look back, and I think sometimes everybody is, um, celebrating the word things that have happened in the past. And we mustn't always be looking to the past. I know at the moment they're all discussing the 80th anniversary of the end of the war. Well, that's that's fine. That was a a big, big thing. But sometimes we're always looking back at little things that have happened instead of trying to work forward for bigger things to happen. And I kept trying to push that around the committee meetings, Things,, for Federation. I was told not so long ago when I was Chairman of the Federation, we had more things happening in a year than they'd had in the last Chairman's whole six years in office. So it was getting us into the public eye. We had more membership. We opened, I opened six Guilds. I just I just feel so proud about that, you know? And these guilds didn't just have 4 or 5 members, they had 30, 40, 50 members, all from that little first meeting. You know, it was just just stunning. I just thinking back on it, made me aware how much I miss it. Yeah, yeah, sorry about that.

SB - No, no. It's good. So what I'm trying to understand is part of the Constable Ambisonic project is about, you know, how we perceive the landscape. And obviously I've thought about the way that I personally perceive landscape and what is my interest in it, or how do I, you know, how do I how does it form part of my life? Because it does through my work. Um, and that hasn't always been the case. So to understand that, I wanted to speak to you about how we came to live in Rochford, which is a semi-rural market town in Essex, pretty near the end of the train line, uh, down the end, right near the end of a dead end road surrounded...

TB - I like the way you wrote that down.

SB - And, um. So. So, yeah, I know we're looking back now, but it's to help me look forward. How how did you end up moving from north London, you and dad, to start a life where you obviously didn't know anyone, down the end of this road where there wasn't that many people there.

TB - Right. Well, when we decided that we wanted to get married, we knew both of us that we didn't want to live in Willesden. Willesden was built up there. It was what I consider now to be dirty. It was grey, um, very built up. Um, we wanted to buy our own place. We didn't want to rent, and to rent in Willesden meant that we couldn't save money. Not at the prices that it was. And we definitely couldn't afford to buy anything unless we saved money, you had to have a deposit, and we definitely didn't want to buy anything in Willesden. We didn't want a grey, dreary terraced house. So we thought, well, we were going to get married. And luckily Alan's neighbours, George and Ivy, had a flat upstairs to them which they sublet. Now, I'm not sure they were supposed to sublet because I think they rented it anyway, right. But we some we rented it at a very, very nominal rate, which enabled us to save for a deposit for a house. What we decided to do was, like, live on dad's wages and save all of mine. And I was working in a shop in Swiss Cottage, which paid very good money for shop work. I also, unusual for shop work, I got a bonus at the end of every month, depending how the shop did, and I found out that I had the biggest bonus out of all the shop staff, so he appreciated the work that we did. He was you had to work, but we learnt, me and Dixie, learnt that he did appreciate so he didn't mind working, you know. So yeah. So that was good. So that's what we did. We got married, we lived in this flat and we saved all our money that we could. Then we had to decide where we wanted to go. So we wanted to look outside of Willesden and we went east because that was it. Your dad wanted to commute to work. He didn't want to get rid of his job because his job earned good money. So we needed to be on a commuter line, on a railway line. So east was best. We looked at various places. We went to Romford. Everybody was saying to us, Romford is very good. It's got this, it's got that, it's got whatever, it's got Greyhound stadium, you know. And we actually looked at a place behind the greyhound stadium, but it didn't

have a one room, didn't have like a ceiling. It had all been, flooded or something in the ceiling had fallen through. And just walking around it was like no different from Willesden. So dad worked with a chap called Frank, and Frank said, look, you're looking this way. Why don't you come out near where we live? I live in Rochford, um, not far from Southend. Come and have a look at it, see what you think about it, and then have a look. So that's what we did. We had a break. We come down to Southend, stayed in a B&B. I'd look around, had a look round Rochford, went through some estate agents, and the prices of a bungalow were so much cheaper than a price of a Willesden house or a flat. Um, it was cheaper to do that and pay train fares. So that's what we decided. That's what we worked towards. Eventually we found a bungalow at the end of a long road. Dead end. Um, because that's all there really was at that time. Okay. But it was a nice bungalow. It had been well kept. And the fact that there was a field behind and a field at the top of the road meant we were semi-rural, which was which was nice. We didn't drive. We had to walk. Um. That's okay. You know, it's better than what we had. It was cleaner. The air was cleaner, you could feel it, you could breathe better, and we felt that would be better for any children that we had. So that's what we did and that's how we ended up in a in Rochford. And I would not regret that one little bit. It was the best thing we did as a married couple. So yeah.

SB - I mean I remember, you know, we had like a crab apple tree and you like

TB - oh yes we did. No we didn't.

SB - Oh, it was over from next door.

TB - Mrs. Davis had a crabapple tree hung over

SB - and but, you know, you were always picking and growing stuff. And I remember stomping on all the fruit to squash it, and then dad put it in the demijohns in the cupboard, and bubbling away, and that. So were you kind of imagining this, like The Good Life, Richard Briers and Felicity Kendal? Is that kind of part of your or is that just some, you know, um, something that happened whilst you were there because you had quite a big garden. Did it happen naturally.

TB - It wasn't as big as this garden, but it was a big garden. And it just happened, you know? We had a damson tree. At the bottom. And it was a big damson tree. And it was more than one tree, really. It was sort of like lots of little.

SB - I used to climb up that, didn't I?

TB - Yeah. Yeah. And every other year we had this massive harvest of Damsons. And that's what we made wine out of. And that was, you know, learn as you do it, you know. We'd have a go. And the wine was really rather nice. Um, we had a few explosions in the kitchen, but that's all part and parcel of it, isn't it? So. Yeah. Um, growing things happened by accident. But looking through the family history on your dad's mom's side. the Tibbles. The Tibbles come from Berkshire and they worked on the land, so it's part of him. Okay, so. On another line on his mother's side, the Andersons, they had a nursery. They grew stuff. So your dad has always in his genes, really has got this growing thing, you know, plants. So that's really, I think, where that's come into. I mean, it didn't worry me one way or another gardening, but, um, it's just evolved. And because we had a garden, we had to have a greenhouse. I mean, greenhouses drive me mad. We've had so many. Um, but that greenhouse we had there, is the greenhouse we still have down the bottom of our garden. Um, and that's what I tell everybody this when I do my fuchsia talk, okay. Um, well, in 1976, when I was expecting Anne, drought year, your dad went to a nursery, as he did in his lunch hour, looking around, come across a pack of six fuchsias. You know how they sell them in little blocks of six? Oh, mum would like them, that's what she can do. Oh, Terri will I ike them. That's what she'll do. He bought them, and I bought you a present, right. And that's...I had six fuchsias, and I had to grow them on, which I did. We had a greenhouse, had no shading. Okay. They all shriveled up and died because I didn't know how to look after them. But it just set this little bug going in my head, you know. So we bought some more of the following year when I had more time to do it, there wasn't a drought. We met somebody down at a nursery, Paul, and they were starting...he belonged to a fuchsia club. We went to the Fuchsia Club and then we opened one in Rochford. And that is how that all started. So it's just fate. This little thing happens. This happens. It all comes together. And it

turns out I was quite good at doing them and enjoyed doing them. It was always something other than babies and housework. So yeah.

SB - Because plants and growing as a thing seems really integral to your life and then therefore mine and Anne;s as well. Um, but it's interesting that it just was a thing that It happened after you arrived, but you must have been open to, you know, letting things evolve, you know. And, um.

TB - Well, I needed things to do. I didn't have a job when we moved down. Um, I was looking for work, but I had to wait till the children were old enough so that I could go out. No, no. Just beg your pardon. This was before I had the children. I needed to get out to work. Okay. Before I had the children and I went and got a job in Tesco's in Southend. This is before I had the children. Okay. Because I had the promise of a job in Wickford from a guy I knew from when I worked in Mindle's up in Swiss Cottage. Um, he said, I'm opening a shop. I like the way you work. Oh, there's a job for you when I open. Okay. So I sort of moved down here in the, in the June I think and I went into Tesco's to fill the time in between then and I got this other job at Tesco's job was just rubbish. I mean I couldn't do anything. I had to stand around just making sure people didn't steal stuff. So I only went there for a week. Then I worked for Wickford. But there that really, was the last full time employment I had because that's when I had you in 72. And so I must have worked there for about 18 months. And then after that, I didn't have another full time job because I wanted to bring up my children. I wanted to be with them, and we could just tweak the money by doing that. It meant we went without stuff. Um, and then when I started doing the fuchsias, I did the cuttings and everything, and I could sell the cuttings down to the shop on the corner, Walkers, that brought me in a few pence. So that's how that evolved, really.

SB - So there was a financial side of it as well.

TB - All financial. Everything you do is all based around money.

SB - Well, I know that.

TB - Yeah. Right. If you haven't got any, you've got to try and work out how to make your money work best for you. You don't spend it. I mean, we never spent money. We didn't have a television until you was about two.

SB - And didn't have a car.

TB - We didn't have a car till, so we didn't have stuff. Whereas I feel today that people have all got have possessions, possessions, possessions. We didn't have a computer for you to work with at school until we could afford one. But now it's integral. You've got to have tablets for your children going to school, so life changes. But yeah, I just think it's all to do with money.

SB - We're going back to landscape. And I remember, you know, I didn't think of it like then obviously, um, and I used to climb the damson tree, but I used to go over the fields and then, you know, we used to go over The Bobbin, which was a big lake and pick blackberries

TB - and we could get to that from over our back fence.

SB - Exactly. Yeah. And walk through the fields. And then, like you say, the field went round to the end of the road. And I remember patrolling that and going in there. And then I used to walk round there with one of the lads from up the road, and we used to go scrumping in the orchard.

TB - That's right.

SB - And, um, I got shot at by the farmer one time and had to leg it out of there! But I really enjoyed playing, you know, outside. And, uh, it wasn't until we moved to this house, which was on the other side of town, that I started building dens over the brickfields, which are, you know, a five minute bike ride away. Yeah. Um, and I met all the lads on this estate, well they were from school but they lived quite near, and we used to, you know, go over there after school and build dens. And they got quite elaborate in the end, like, using lumps of four by two and roofing felt that we'd pilfered from the building site, but, um, but, you know, we loved being

outside, you know, and, um, we were always over there, you know, we used to. And I think, you know, if I'd have grown up in Willesden, I wouldn't have had that. My life would have been very different, wouldn't it?

TB - Willesden was is, and Harlesden particularly, was very gang related. And my sister's boyfriend was in a gang. He nearly had his leg chopped off. He had an axe in his leg. My dad had to take him down to the hospital and I've forgotten all about that until this. But yeah, and I'm not saying this area is free of all that. I don't know, I never got that into the area, you know, but it is certainly then it was much it was freer, it was more open, there was more sky. I mean, it was lovely to come out and see. Not big, tall buildings all around. It was lovely to come out and see clouds over there. They might be rain clouds, but. nd trees over there. I mean, it was just just you could breathe, you know, it's just. Yeah, it was so much better than Willesden.

SB - Yeah, well, there was, you know, there was gangs of kids around here as well. And like, there was a kid who used to live on Ashingdon Road, and then he had like a group of mates, but they were like the bad boys and they were bunk off school. We always went to school, but what that meant was that, um, while we were at school, they would find our dens and then smash them up or burn them down, and then we'd go over there after school, and then that would we would find them and we'd be like, oh, really? Yeah. So then we'd try and find their den and do the same to theirs. But, you know, it was, it was, it wasn't like that. You know, we never got any fights or anything, you know, it wasn't like violent, physical. Yeah. And violent. I mean, it was violent in the fact that we were setting fire to stuff, but we weren't hurt anyone, you know? Yeah. Um, but really, we just wanted to play and we like that freedom. You know, just to be able to roam around, go in the woods, which were a bit scary at night or whatever. And, you know, and having that, um, ability to explore. But, you know, in a rural area, it's completely different to if you would be doing that, you know, in the inner city. So that decision that you made completely affected, you know, my life and how my life turned out. But that was one reason why you did it.

TB - Yeah. Yeah. It's good to know that, um, what? I now think if things got worse, haven't they? Now, um, the children aren't, allowed to go out and play without the parents knowing where they are. They've got to have these little, um, GPS things attached to them so that parents know exactly where they are. I think that is awful. A child can't be free. A child should be free to, to find things. I know life is different. There are more different dangers. But there was the same dangers there. When I was a child, um, we didn't have a bathroom. We had to go down to the local baths, which was at, um, the canal by the canal Brent Canal and by McVitie's biscuits. Okay. And my mum and dad used to, my mum used to say when we go down there. Now, you be careful, you don't talk to anybody, you don't talk to strangers. You mustn't do this, you mustn't do that. And we didn't. Okay. But we still by ourselves doing it. We did have freedom that way. Ahm. But as I said, it was all built up. It was by Mcvities and ?? factories, which was just down the road from where we lived. So, um, I can't I can't see how children can learn how they can grow without having that freedom. You know, you've got to be able to see things, you know, work out for yourselves in some ways, different dangers. Okay, you might fall off out of a tree and graze your leg, break a leg, whatever. That happens. So. Yeah.

SB - Yeah, well, I, uh, cut my nearly my eye on the barbed wire, didn't I, at that time?

TB - Oh, yes. Yeah, yeah. Barbed wire is a very dangerous material.

SB - And, uh, there's a lot of blood.

TB - It's supposed to be keeping you away from things.

SB - No, but you know, ever since then, you know, I'm like, you know, I learned a lesson, you know? So, um, and I think, you know, by climbing on top of the pillbox, you know, or up the tree and jumping off or whatever. And, yeah, getting into some scrapes all that time I fell off my bike or whatever, you know.

TB - Oh, yeah. That was quite

SB - kind of learned from those things, don't you? And you're like, uh. Um. Yeah. It just it helps to form you as a as a person, doesn't it? Yeah. And I think if you spend all of your time living in a virtual world, that when you come to be in the actual, you know, physical, real world, you know, I don't think you've got you don't

know how to interact with it. So you don't with other people, with things that you encounter, situations or you know, and you know, as I, when I. Well, as you know, and probably you did ask me about a few times, you know, I got into heavy metal and grew long hair and had t shirts with squishy blood.

TB - Loved it.

SB - Yeah. Uh, but walking around Rochford like that, you know, we used to get loads of grief from, like, boys mainly, but, you know, like people used to shout at us and throw things or chase us or, you know. So I got I became street wise in a way, because, you know, I wouldn't walk just down the main road to go to the town centre. I'd go down all the alleyways and round the back, you know, because I didn't want to be so visible.

TB - That's a shame.

SB - Um, but it kind of told me that. No, no, it helped me to sort of be more aware of situations in the public and not all bad ones, you know. But, you know, just to. Because it was like a defense mechanism. I had to be aware otherwise, you know, things could happen. And I feel like that's how women are generally, you know, like, very aware of, oh, there's a bloke walking on the other side of the road, you know, just walking along, but could make a woman feel threatened. So I kind of understand it from my own perspective first, obviously, but then extend that to other people. There was, we were at Roach Way. We there was a big like it's not very cool is it a wargaming convention. And uh, well it lasted all week, I think I was about 16 or 17 maybe. And anyway, we hung out there for the weekend. So we went down to the all night garage at about three in the morning. And from there through. So we had to walk through Rochford Town Square and then down West Street. So this van comes along and it slows right down. There's three of us and the van slows down, and then speeds off and goes down. He had a really loud exhaust, but we could hear it drive off, but then we could hear it going round the block. And we thought, how can they come back again? Which it did anyway. So we kind of got a bit of a move on without running, because then you're asking to be chased or whatever. And then, um, the van came past us, but then slowed right down and they kicked the back doors open and they had a powder fire extinguisher, and they just sprayed us with the powder from the fire extinguisher.

TB - Oh my goodness.

SB - And it filled up the whole street with this fog. I mean, like, we just covered in all this stuff. I mean, it is hilarious, but like but like, and we can see the point of why you would do that. Because it is funny. But like that moment when you realise that these boys obviously older than us because they've got a van, they're coming back for us, you know what I mean? So, like, I was always. Especially when I was dressed like. That's why I don't dress, you know, that, uh, in any way a provocative manner. Yeah, I've had too much of that in the past. I mean, I don't I just want to be invisible now.

TB - I do remember once when you were a couple of your mates and you'd been to one of their houses and you'd come down and was waiting for the bus to come home.

SB - I know what you're talking about.

TB - Um. And I only know because three of you walked in, and they you they walked you down to the bus stop, and they were going to go back. But instead of just you getting on the bus because of somebody or something or something was happening and coming down, you thought, this is not going to be good. They're coming for us. So you all got on the bus and you all come to our house, and then dad took the other two guys home.

SB - It wasn't quite like that.

TB - No, we see it.

SB - No, no, but it was almost the same. We were at the bus stop at the Anne Boleyn. That's right. Me, Pappy and John. And we all had long hair and, you know, heavy metal t shirts, whatever. This car went past, and John, being stupid, gave him the finger, you know.

TB - Oh, really?

SB - So they did, like, this massive, like, screech of tires and come screaming back up the road. And we were like, oh, well done, you know. Again, they're like bigger boys, you know. And so we're like, you know, like so they basically stopped the car, got out and wanted to fight us. Just then, after they'd started pushing us, the bus came along. Anyway, the bus driver had long hair and he opened the door, but kept the bus moving and he went...signaled for us to jump on. So we jumped on run up the stairs, but only me and John jumped on.

TB - Oh, really?

SB - Pappy lived just up the road, so he didn't jump on. Oh, right. But then we're like, oh, no, it's just him and them. We've abandoned our friend. And obviously this was before mobile phones or whatever. So we were like, what do we do? Like, you know, the bus had driven off. So like we look back and we couldn't see him. We could just see all these lads going like, what just happened, you know? So we were like, oh, well, we'll just stay on the bus because we can't see him. So we, um, we got home to here, phoned his house and he'd got in and basically he said, oh, nice one. Thanks for like leaving me. But because he lived there, he knew all the alleyways and back streets and that. So basically he just legged it and lost himself in the maze of. And the lads obviously wanted to stay with their car and he managed to get home like stay very quiet until he heard them drive off. And then he carried on. But like for a moment we were like, oh no, we've like totally dropped him in it. But yeah.

TB - So it just goes to show there is danger everywhere.

SB - Exactly. But I do, you know, on the whole I have really enjoyed living in a, not in the city. I like going to the city and I can choose to go there, which I've done for a long time, even, you know, started going to gigs and that in the late 90s (actually 80's!). Yeah. Um, but then you kind of come away again, so you get to experience it, but you choose when you experience it, and it might not have been, you know, really great thriving heavy metal scene in Rochford, but there was in Southend. So obviously when I was old enough I moved there to a town where things were happening

TB - we went back and I want to look at where we lived, where I was born in Acton Lane and where he was in Sellens Avenue, and he was exactly the same. The only difference was the shops looked smaller because we lived opposite shops, a shopping parade. And the shops looked smaller and not so many of them, but it was really they were all there. Um, the houses, some looked cleaner, some had had some work done to them and but it still looked oppressive. We could no way...no way could we have moved back into that sort of situation. It was just the best thing we did to move out into a rural area.

SB - Did it feel the same?

TB - Yeah, we felt very self conscious because we was sort of taking pictures...

SB - of the houses!

TB - So there's no, no, no. And there's these people in the shops looking at us, taking pictures of the house that I used to live in, you know, saying, what the hell are you doing sort of thing. But they didn't have the courage to ask. So

SB - I get stuck with my microphone quite a lot. If I'm in a public area, like a residential area. 'What are you doing outside my house, mate?' Yeah.

TB - a bit different way your dad lived. Because the houses opposite him were exactly the same. So nobody was curious there, but just the shopkeeper. It was quite funny, but to see the school that I used to go to that was completely different. Obviously everything was sort of in that situation, was modernised, the school definitely, but the houses grey, very grey. And down here there's colour, there's trees, there's, there's. It's different. You ask me about leaving friends. I didn't really have that many friends, and um, I had two friends. Really good friends. Vanda, she got married quite a lot younger than I did. And her and her husband, they moved down to Hove for the same. Even you know, it was better down there. They already had connections

down there...

SB - but they moved kind of near to the sea. So that sort of inspire you to do the same or...

TB - No. I had no, no, no, not at all. My other friend was Alpana Aggarwal, who was an Indian girl. Um, she was fantastic. Loved her. We really had a great rapport, and her mum and dad got on really well with my mum and dad and. But they moved back to India.

SB - Oh, right. Before you moved down here?

TB - Yeah. All around. About the sort of same sort of time my sisters moved out of Willesden. My brother really didn't to begin with, but then he did. Um, so, yeah, everybody went out.

SB - Yeah. So I've been thinking about my own movements in relation to the family movements and, you know, like your family came from Scotland or your dad.

TB - Mhm. That's a misconception.

SB - Is it. Okay. Well there is some family connection.

TB - Yeah. My dad was born in Scotland and my grandma was born in Scotland. But my grandfather, uh, William Henry, was actually born in East London, one of 11 children. And going back as far as I could get, 1760 something or other, all born in London.

SB - Right. So they moved from London to Scotland, back to London.

TB - My granddad met my grandmother while he was in Scotland, having during the war his ship got blown up. He lost a leg. This is what I can make out. He wasn't told. It's all family history research, and he was like convalescing. Met my grandmother, they married. I mean, my grandmother could never understand a word she said. So broad Scotch. But they come back to Islington for work again. They come back down here because they needed the work.

SB - And then you moved here when you had work promised. And dad kept his job. But yeah, kind of. But he was still it was still he was. So he didn't move for work.

TB - But no, he moved to be able to live, to be able to live...

SB – a better quality of life.

TB - Yeah. My um my mum was family, Hopes, they moved from Berkshire, that area. I can't remember exactly. They moved to Willesden because Willesden was a new railway town. Railways being brought up, they needed the work. Again, it's all finance, isn't it? They needed money. They needed work. So they all moved from doing agricultural work to doing railway work. My granddad, my mum's dad worked on the railway. So yeah, it's all to do with being able to live better.

SB - So do you feel like you belong here? Do you? Where are you from? I'm trying to understand because I, you know, in relation to myself, obviously, because I've, you know, I've moved away from here, but not that far. Moved to Suffolk for a bit and back into Essex, north Essex. But I like I like the change and the opportunities that it may bring. But looking back at the family, we've always moved around anyway. So it's just part of our, you know, survival in a way. But it also makes me feel, though, that I don't really belong anywhere. And I find it, you know, I do have a community of friends, and I know communities of people primarily through music, in different places. But, you know, like, I don't really feel like I have that stronger sort of roots in any one place.

TB - Well, I can see that because I. I've lived here for a long time. I've lived in Rochford for 50 years. 53 I've lived in this house for 40 this year. But I like change. I like to do things differently. I would have moved lots of times from here. I would love.

SB - I know you have told me that before.

TB - So I'd like to experience different things. And you can't do that if you stay in one place all the time? No.

And I feel that's what TG did for me. It got me out and about. And since that's gone, I haven't had that. I seem to be shrinking.

SB - Mhm. I mean you still have your friends in different towns around the country and you do go and visit them, which is really important.

TB - That is so true. And I'm going to see Ellen in May. And they live in Hampshire. She lives in Hampshire now. She lived in Surrey. Becky lives in Hampshire. She lives in Portsmouth. And then there's Maggie, of course, who lives in Chesterfield. So, yeah, I do get to see them, but they're all getting older. We can't move about as much as we used to. Ellen's 85, so she's

SB - you know, she even likes some of my posts sometimes. You know, she's very supportive of people even from a distance.

TB - Ellen is the most amazing person. She is there at the end of a phone if she could be. She texts me all the time. Um, the last couple of years we've had a few problems. She's there texting. How are you? What are you doing? Can I help even just doing that? That is friendship, you know, being there, being able to chat if you haven't seen her. Like I haven't seen her for a year. Nearly when I was here.

SB - It's like you just pick up where you left.

TB - Yeah. Yeah. It's just just just amazing. Yeah.

SB - Yeah. So kind of not really spoke that much about the landscape, but it is more about state of mind, I think.

TB - And but then you think that is the landscape in which you are. Yeah. Yeah. But you approach it with your, your own way of being, your own knowledge, your own likes and dislikes, um, wherever you go. So. Yeah. So I always feel like I'm the same as you. I get excited by going to a new place, even if it's a new place between two places I've already been to already, you know, like walking down a different road that joins up two roads that I'm familiar with. So it might only be 100m, but it's a new place. Yeah, and I went to Bournemouth for the weekend and, um, I always think that they're quite exotic. You know, when you see the buses at the bus station and they're all going to these little suburbs and they've all got names And you're like, you've heard of Bournemouth, but you've never heard of all the little suburbs around. Yeah. And to me that's quite exotic, you know, like to someone it's just a housing estate or, you know, a place over there where there's a Tesco's or whatever. But I kind of noticed that unknown and the I suppose like I said earlier, it's like the promise of what could be and that it could be anything, but you have to be open to anything happening. If you just go and think, I'm going to buy a pork pie or do my weekly shop and come home again, that place is never going to be inspiring, is it?

TB – No.

SB - But if you went just past it and went to the park on the other side of Tesco's and had to walk around or, you know, or you took a bus to somewhere else and just got off and saw what was there

TB - it would be fantastic, wouldn't it?

SB - I love doing stuff like that, you know

TB - and I'd love to do stuff like that. Why? I think I remember was when you come down. Oh, gosh. A little while ago now. Dad was at work. Um. And you took me down to Wallasea. Early in the morning. I think it was, wasn't it? Yeah. And it was all sort of misty, and so that was fantastic. I loved that because I'd never lived here all those years, and I had never been there. And then we saw his kingfisher on a pole. And gosh, that was that was fantastic. That was just so different. It was just brilliant.

SB - Yeah, but it's like five miles away and okay, it's like you can't really go any further east, can you? Because you'd be in the North Sea. But that's the kind of the joy of it because it's stuck out there. Um, it's always been there.

TB - I know so much around here to see that I have never seen.

SB - Yeah. And like, we are blessed with a lot of history as well, you know, in Essex especially, you know, so, um, there's so much to dig into if you actually want to.

TB - Well, there is Henry.

SB - Yeah. In the battle of Assandun

TB - Yeah. Canute and and that church up there. I mean, it's got that boat hanging from the things which were gifted from Norway or somewhere. It was Norway.

SB - yeah. I went up there before I came here.

TB - Did you?

SB - Yeah. I just made a little bit of, like, a little film of me being back in my old landscape.

TB – Wow.

SB - And that's where I first went to. Did you used to go up there for play school? Yeah. Play school? Yeah. And I took a picture of the building. So I was like, I'm coming back into my landscape. So afterwards I'm going to go to Magnolia Park and go for a little walk over to Brickfields and just to like, book End.

TB - But that's all been changed, isn't it? Magnolia Park, they've got a workout area there.

SB - Oh, okay. Yeah, well, we used to meet up over there. I won't tell you what we used to do...

TB - don't don't I'm better off not knowing.

SB - Um, but yeah, that was always a big meetup point. But then sometimes, you know, you'd just be hanging out there and then some, you know, other lads that come in, you know, and they'd be like, oh, here we go. It's going to get a bit dicey, you know. Yeah, sometimes they didn't, sometimes it did, you know. Um, so yeah, I suppose, um, to conclude, my path is just an extension of our family's, you know, trajectory. So we've always moved following work? Probably. Yeah. Or, you know, a better life.

TB – Yeah.

SB - Essentially, by working to have a better quality of life.

TB - Of course, that wasn't. Necessarily going to be that. I mean, you didn't know that was going to be a better life. It was a big step into the unknown.

SB - Yeah, absolutely.

TB - And I quite like that. Um, but it is frightening for some people. Mhm.

SB - but you've got a very positive kind of can do attitude and that, you know, when you went with your friend to support her to go to TG, you just took that and made it your own and ended up on the national committee giving those oversized cheques to Princess Anne. So like, you know, like not everyone can do that. So, um, hopefully I've inherited a bit of your enthusiasm and positivity and, um, uh, um

TB - you have you've got a lot of positiveness about you.

SB - Yeah. Try to be, you know, open to new experiences and try to see the better side of things rather than instantly thinking the worst. Um, and yeah, just to, like you say, is it could go either way.

TB - You know, you just don't know it. They say the luck of the draw, but you make a lot of that luck.

SB - Oh, I believe so. Yeah.

TB - Yeah. And I think I know you. You. And you're my children. And I'm a bit biased, I think. But I think what I am, I like about my children, what I'm proud of about my children is the fact that you do these things. You

are going out experiencing different things, with your music. You're getting out. You're meeting different people all the time. I am surprised at the sort of, um, different type of people you talk about to me and looking about your project at different people you're interacting with. You know, that is so, crikey, you know, I think because look who he's talking to. You know, what you're doing that I think is. What I hoped would happen really for my children, really that you would have the, wherewithal is the word, isn't it, um, to do something with yourselves even though it is different? It's it's awkward. It's, um, frightening? But you're doing it. You're trying. And that, I think, is good.

SB - Yeah. I think it's like, you know, life is difficult sometimes, but it is really rewarding at other times. And I think you have to, you have to chance it a bit, don't you?

TB - You do. You do.

SB - You know, you have to believe in things as well and in people. And.

TB - I think by you've got to believe in yourself.

SB - Well, that is true. I have struggled with that. I do find it easier to believe in other things.

TB - But you believe in yourself because you have got a great mindset. You've got a great way of looking at things, you know. I like your outlook, the way you talk about things, and I think you should be proud of that. You mustn't say you're, I don't know how to express it, but maybe you're better than you think you are.

SB - I think by having those interactions with other people. That helps me reflect onto myself, to understand myself better. Um, so that's. I suppose that's why I continue doing it. I suppose in a way that's a bit selfish, isn't it? But I do. It is about understanding myself. But I am genuinely interested in other people and what they do.

TB - That that is amazing. Yeah.

SB - And then I see that as an exchange. You know, whoever you meet, you've had X amount of years travelling around a planet and then suddenly you're opposite each other or sitting next to each other on the bus. Like I was the other day chatting to this guy, on, the rail replacement bus between Bournemouth and Southampton Airport Parkway. Not the most terribly interesting journey, but actually it was because I just got a chance to chat to the guy next to me for an hour. So. um. Yeah. Um, I just want to enjoy life. Have as many experiences as possible, really, not do the same thing over and over and over again? Yeah. You've like, you're going back to what you said at the very beginning, is about not looking back. I mean, you can refer or learn from the past, but, you know

TB - you mustn't forget what's happened because that....encourages you to do different things, encourages you to go away from that

SB - and build and be better than that. Yeah. Sometimes that's hard to do, but yeah

TB - it's extremely, some people never manage to do it. No,

SB - Yeah. Okay. Shall we go and have a cup of tea?

TB - Yeah. I'd love another cup of tea. Was that all right?

SB - Yeah. Thank you.

TB - It's all right.