

## ORAL HISTORY RECORDING TRANSCRIPT

### 'Fighting for our Rights' project

<b>Surname</b>	Lawrence
<b>Given name</b>	Jane
<b>Date of birth</b>	1944
<b>Place of birth</b>	Ripon, North Yorkshire
<b>Date of interview</b>	13 June 2017
<b>Length of interview</b>	01:01:29
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<b>Name of interviewer</b>	Jen Kavanagh
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Q: So this is an oral history interview with Jane Lawrence by Jen Kavanagh on Tuesday, 13 June 2017. The interview is taking place at Jane's home in Surbiton as part of Kingston Centre for Independent Living's Fighting For Our Rights project. So thank you very much, Jane, for being interviewed--,

JL Okay, I'm glad--,

Q: Could we start with you stating your full name please.

A: Right, my full name is Eve Jane Lawrence.

Q: Oh. And what is your date of birth?

A: [REMOVED] 1944.

Q: And whereabouts were you born?

A: I was--, this is where we get complicated. I was born in Ripon, North Yorkshire, and I stayed there all of six weeks.

Q: Oh right, okay.

A: But my father was attached to, erm, well, the environment--, environmental services and he was being moved around a lot, so when my brother and I were born, during the war, we were being shifted all over the place and my poor mother had to cart two little ones, so.

Q: Where else did you move to?

A: Well there were all sorts of places, I've got a--, I've got a synopsis of--, well I've got a, you know... what do you call it? A, erm, synopsis of where I've been and where--, but because he was--, because he worked for who he did my earliest memories are of preparing to go to Germany straight after the war. We

were--, my family, my mother and my brother and I, were in the first batch of forces families to go to Germany after the end of the war and my father had always also--, had been there for six months. So we joined him and then after that he was posted to Singapore and so I really wasn't here for the horrible stuff at the end of the war when the rationing was on and so on and so forth, I have no memory of that at all and my--, my childhood was lovely. But--, so--, so it was all over the place.

Q: What were your parents' names?

A: My parents' names were Jack and Muriel, and Gumby was their surname, er, G-u-m-b-y, and they stayed together until they died, so we were pretty lucky really.

Q: How many siblings have you got?

A: Just my brother.

Q: Okay, yeah. And is he older or younger?

A: He's three years older, so he's 75 coming up--, no, he's 76 coming up--, 77 coming up. Oh my gosh, that sounds awful. Oh dear.

Q: [Laughs]. You can afford to forget a few years [laughs].

A: Yes, I'll forget that. No wonder he's always telling me he's old.

Q: [Laughs]. So whereabouts did you go to school?

A: Right, I started school at five in an RAF school in Singapore, in Changi. My mother taught at the school, she was a qualified junior teacher, and--, but when we came back to England in 1951 she taught me at home. So I was self--, I was home taught for three years, and I hated it. And then, in order to take the Eleven Plus, which you had to do then, I went to the local village school in Cornwall--, we were in Cornwall by then. It's very varied, this. And, erm, I took my Eleven Plus there and I was lucky enough to pass it--, I was disabled from birth by the way, so things weren't always easy for my mother. And I went to the grammar school for a year and the grammar school then threw me out because it wasn't possible for them to keep me in an unadapted building. So then the Cornwall social services sent me to a special school on the south coast, and that's where I stayed for six years.

Q: Was that a boarding school?

A: Yeah.

Q: Okay, yeah. And so what age were you when you finished your education?

A: Eighteen.

Q: Right, okay. And what did you then go on to do?

A: Erm, that's the bitterness of my life really, the small bitterness that stays with me. I wanted to be a teacher like everybody in my family, all the women in my family are teachers and it's hard put to find one that wasn't--, of my generation. And I--, my mother, who was extremely supportive of me, spent hours and hours writing to every training college--, because it wasn't university then, it was two years training college, and she found one in the Midlands that would take me regardless of my results. But the school doctor put his foot down and said no. So I was forced against my will--, I'd taken the A Level by then, the first person in the school ever to do an A Level and I was quite proud of that because it was awful teaching, I mean they

were all retired women, spinsters who really hadn't any imagination about them. And the school was incredibly divided into two, there were the children who had severe learning difficulties and there were the children with physical difficulties and obviously I fitted into that category. And we were left pretty much to learn what we could and it was--, it was difficult. And when I left school then eventually I got a place at Queen Elizabeth's Training College and did shorthand typing which I hated. And I did it until I was made redundant from the company I was in, in 1990.

Q: Oh gosh, okay.

A: So, I worked right through. And then I built my own company here, office service work and bought the--, with my redundancy money, bought the equipment that I needed and went on from there. And then finally finished in 2000.

Q: So when--, when did you first come to this area--, to Kingston?

A: Oh, in 1980.

Q: Right. What brought you here?

A: My husband was also in a wheelchair and we were in a very small flat in Ealing and we couldn't really cope with it, we were there for nine years and they were the same employers--, sorry, not employers, landlords there that were here, so we asked for a transfer and I suppose we waited about four years for it. But, erm, nobody's shifting me now.

Q: No [laughs]. Can you explain what the nature of your disability is?

A: Yes, I can. It's called spinal muscular atrophy and it's pretty rare in somebody of my age. I think--, I have done a bit of research, and I believe I'm the oldest survivor known to the medical services.

Q: Gosh.

A: So I'm pretty pleased about that, I brag about it a bit. And my--, one of my best friends is the second oldest [laughs], so that's interesting I think. But it is a form of atrophy which you could liken to muscular dystrophy which most people know about, but it isn't the same, it's a different stream.

Q: Okay.

A: And it's progressive and when I was able to--, well, I wasn't ever able to walk properly, but I was able to weight bear till I was about 13, so, erm, that was--, I don't know what else you need to know about that.

Q: What age were you when you were diagnosed?

A: About 12 or 13.

Q: Oh really, okay. But it had presented itself earlier in your life I presume?

A: Oh, as soon as I started to try and walk it presented and my parents spent--, because it was before the National Health Service and my parents spent a great deal of money trying to find out what was wrong with me, both in Germany and in England. And, you know, carting me around from place to place trying to--, trying to discover the truth. But--, so I had lots of very weird and wonderful private doctors, suggesting very odd things for me to do that would cure me, they would absolutely cure me, which of course they didn't. But they were expensive. So that was that really. And I never took a great deal of interest in the

home cures, as it were, I just got on with my life, and after I was 18 I didn't go back home again because I didn't like being controlled and I felt I could cope. And I got a place in a hostel in Isleworth, which is now the Crown Court and you see it on television quite often and they haven't altered it. All the dormitories are now court rooms [laughs], so it fitted well with their planning.

Q: Oh. So when was it that you first, erm, first became--, well, can you sort of explain initially what sort of assistance you were receiving I suppose, when you were living by yourself and with your husband?

A: Erm, right. We didn't have any 'cause we both worked all day. So we got up, went to work, came home, I cooked the food, he did--, put the washing on or the Hoover round or whatever, same as most couples. And it stayed like that for many years, until my husband contracted cancer and died in 1993, so it was a long time ago. And then, I knew as soon as he died that I would have to have help, so I knew Ann, I was then chair I think of KCIL, I think I was, I'm not sure if it was then that I was chair--, yeah, it was--, yes, I was chair. And so of course I knew all about the independent living scheme because Ann and Jane Campbell had really fought to get it going and we were quite an early borough--, in fact I think we were maybe the earliest, but I'm not sure about that, Ann will know that. And--, but long before that, as soon as--, as soon as I was, er, away from home, I was very aware of the lack of facilities for anybody using a wheelchair, that was--, that was my stage because I had a manual wheelchair and I couldn't get anywhere, so I had to buy a car otherwise I couldn't have gone to work. So, you know, things like that you don't realise how much bearing they have on you until you are older and look back. And I remember that going to the cinema was a huge undertaking because every cinema manager used to say no, we can't have wheelchairs 'cause of the fire regulations. I don't know if you've had that from any of your other--, but it was a big thing, going to the cinema, 'cause they took your chair away, you had to get out of your chair and they took it away because it would've been a fire risk in the corridor. So you were going to be the first one to be burnt to death anyway, I learnt that very early, that being disabled meant you went first and, erm, I suppose really it's quite funny looking back. But that was one of the things that we campaigned about, was access to public buildings. I've honestly campaigned on so many things in my life and now I feel quite distraught that my life has been in vain because so much is disappearing. And--, and I'm going to say it on record, a Conservative government is not for a disabled person and never will be. It's--, I say--, I'm say erm a lot but you'll just have to put up with that. I found that and getting around--, I was very caught up with the disabled drivers' association and I chaired that, was national chairman of that for three years, and I found that very worthwhile to do, because things were opening up and we were actually getting interviews with Cabinet Ministers and properly being recognised for what we were trying to do, and there were a few people who were listening to us. And therefore, to see it go backwards is very hard--, very hard, so.

Q: Going back to when you first accessed the independent living scheme--,

A: Yeah.

Q: Do you remember what year that was, when you first accessed it?

A: I think it would be '94, I think it was the year after my husband died.

Q: Okay.

A: So that's--, that's how I can--, I knew about it but I only had the need of using it regularly when he died, 'cause he used to help--, we used to help each other, you know, so.

Q: And how did being in receipt of that--, or work for you...?

A: Brilliantly--, absolutely brilliantly, and still does. So I have--, it's never easy to find staff, but when they're around it's brilliant. So that's really what I would say. And I mean that's a long time and I have no regrets from it at all.

Q: Have your sort of needs changed, I suppose, since you first accessed it?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh yes, yes. They have, unfortunately the hours don't--, don't grow. But my needs definitely have change to, erm, being reliant on staff to do nearly everything really now. I can get--, I can travel but I can't do things physically, so I need somebody for getting up, dressing, washing, toileting, bathing--, well I don't bath, I never bath, I'm against it. And going, you know, and going to bed, all that sort of thing, so I don't know where else we're going with this.

Q: Have you, erm, had any particular challenges throughout the years when it comes to accessing the scheme, has there been anything--,

A: Accessing the scheme?

Q: Yeah.

A: Erm, no, because I'm quite--, if I can manage something myself I'll cope with it, if I have a problem--, I've only ever had a couple of problems with social workers who have to do their job, admittedly, but can sometimes be very awkward. I have a really superb social worker at the moment but it's the first time I've been allocated one since the '90s, I've always been what they call a duty so, you know, you want to ring up about my--, you want to ring up about my ILS programme--, or my direct payments or whatever you call it now, and they go oh, well you're just duty, we'll see if we can find someone, so that used to get me down a bit. But you can find your way eventually. I don't have a problem really.

Q: So you--, so you said you were already involved with KCIL or KADP as it may have been back then--,

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: When did you first come in contact with them?

A: Well, interestingly, when I came here I looked for Ann, I went up and banged on her door and said if you want any help I'm very happy to volunteer and she totally ignored me for a while [laughs]. She won't believe me--, she won't believe me now, I've said--, I said this to her the other day--, a few months ago actually, she said no I--, I wouldn't do that, I said well you did, there's no doubt about it. So I thought well I'm not needed so I'll look for something else, so I didn't really look for anything else, I joined it as a member and then became quite heavily involved in what was going on at the time, which was the restructuring of the one way system round Kingston and the relaying of everything, you know, all the, erm, street furniture, every--, absolutely everything and I got quite heavily involved in that. But I was still working so it was quite--, it was quite awkward--, tricky to fit in the meetings with the work. So I used to come home far too quickly because I was working in Brentford, my husband would be sitting holding on for grim death 'cause he didn't like driving and I did so I did all the driving really. And then I'd shoot out into my chair and rush off to a meeting. But I also had the disabled drivers' association and their meetings were always in Euston, so it was really like a big jigsaw puzzle, my life, and, erm, of just doing whatever I could fit in.

Q: So from being a member how did you then progress to being chair?

A: I suppose--, well we had elections and I suppose I showed an interest. I don't really remember to be honest, but I assume it was because I was interested in quite a lot of the groups. When I was made

redundant and I had time to go into the office quite a lot and do jobs in there and I suppose it was all part of that. But I fell out with them big time in 2000 because I didn't agree with them becoming just a centre for independent living and losing everything that KADP had done, which was access, information, education, I felt that it should all have been put together and that there should've been a centre for independent living as part of it. And I think losing the name was a great--, great sadness for me because if you go newly into a borough and you have a hefty disability you look through--, well you did then, you look through the telephone book to find something with the word disability in it, well KCIL doesn't have that. And I felt that was wrong, so I left.

Q: Were you chair at that point?

A: No.

Q: Okay.

A: Was I? Yes I was--, yes I was, 'cause I called a special meeting that angered Ann and Jane very much. So I fell out with the whole lot of them really. But, you can only live by what you believe in and they believed in what they believed in, I believed in what I did and we had to work in that way. And I don't know whether anybody else will refer to that time at all, I--, it would be interesting to me to know that at some stage in the future, but I just feel that we lost so much, we had such an active and strong access group and we used to network with the council really well and I just felt we lost all that, and partly that's why cuts came and, you know, we were cut as well. Anyway.

Q: Did any of those services go anywhere else in terms of to--,

A: No.

Q: No.

A: Not the access group as far as I'm aware, erm, I think... the best thing--, one of the best things I ever did was to employ Robert Reilly [laughs], because he's been a God send, and he still is. And he went through all that, he knows what was what and I think he deserves a huge accolade for what he's done and how he's--, he didn't want to work there and he was very grumpy, and still is, but he does such a good job. And I am told that I owe money to him, so I'll have to go and see him, I've left my membership slip. And he said to me the other day 'I always let your membership slip, Jane, because you always give us more in the end'.

Q: [Laughs]. Through your guilt [laughs].

A: [Laughs]. Yes. Oh dear, so. I don't really--, we had a lot of volunteers then, we produced our own magazine, we did it in house and, you know, did all the enveloping and the labelling and everything we did. We had, you know, about half a dozen volunteers who were regular and it--, I think it worked very well.

Q: What did you enjoy the most about your time as chair?

A: Erm, trying to make a difference in the borough, that's really where I think--, I could always--, I've never been frightened of talking to whoever it may be and putting my point across and saying what can you do to help? And therefore I think that the networking with local--, other local charities plus the council and--, well, I was on the market development committee for years and years and years and I used to go into John Lewis at quarter past eight in the morning, sit around with all these posh people and I loved it. I loved--, in the end I had to represent DD--, disabled drivers' association rather than KCIL 'cause I'd fallen out, so--, but it was all the same thing really, it was all disability. But certainly the--, my--, one of my biggest motivations is--, is, erm, movement, you know, driving, being able to access trains, taxis. When I first came

here you couldn't get on a bus, you could occasionally--, if you had a small enough chair you could get into a taxi, and that was about it because there were no drop kerbs so you couldn't go out unless you drove, which is what--, so I always drove until I couldn't drive any longer.

Q: When did you stop driving?

A: I stopped driving when--, when Michael died really. I needed to drive from a wheelchair by then and not transfer, and I just couldn't get my head round not being part of the vehicle and being in a loose--, a loose chair, attached rather than belonging to the vehicle. And I gave up and I can't believe that I gave up because it was--, I love driving, we used to go everywhere. I drove to Corfu once--,

Q: Wow!

A: Mmm. I loved it. But there you go.

Q: So when did you first get involved with the disabled--, disabled drivers' association?

A: When I was 19.

Q: Oh right, okay.

A: 1962, 3.

Q: In--, and in what capacity?

A: Just as a member of the local group, and then I--, I just got more and more interested and interested in the people. And we were a great crowd, all working for the same thing but all having a great deal of fun at the same time, you know, we--, it was good--, it was very good.

Q: What were the aims of the association?

A: Independence through mobility, that was the mantra, and remains so. It's not called that anymore, it's called--, of course everybody changes names for goodness knows what reason, but it's now called--, I don't even read the magazine anymore, so I'm--, I don't like the way they've progressed. They've stopped the--, the volunteers did an awful lot of work and paid people don't do as much, is my view. And I'm not talking about you or anybody else, but when you've got a crowd of volunteers who've given up a day's work to do something, they will do it to their nth ability. I think I get quite passionate about that and--, what were you saying, you said how did I progress. Just through the groups and through going to annual general meetings where everybody used to meet in a different setting each year. The board of governors, if you like, used to pick where you were going to be and then there were, you know, elections of various officers and the board members at the AGM, and I suppose I got onto the board then and gradually worked my way to being chair. But I can still say that I am the only woman who has chaired that organisation for a full term, so I'm happy with that.

Q: So what kinds of activities did the association do?

A: Well I'll show you, hang on. We had a hotel--,

Q: Oh, okay.

A: We had a hotel in Norfolk and our head office in Norfolk--, that's me in my--, me in my chain and that was when we opened a wing that we'd fundraised for and built ourselves. And so the Lady Bader that's there is Douglas Bader's widow--, Douglas Bader who was the flying ace--,

Q: Right.

A: Who lost his legs in a flying accident and still carried on in the RAF, so that was his widow. And various other dignitaries. But they--, we had to sell it eventually 'cause we just couldn't get enough bums in beds and so it was sold off and it was bought privately and everything that we had built onto it was knocked off. So every bit of fundraising--, see, there's another area of my disappointment in my own life, that I'd spent so many hours on the street with a collecting tin, you know, we used to have collecting parties for heaven's sake, just to make it a bit less boring [laughs], oh dear. But life goes by and it changes, and it's right that it should change but it's not right that it should go backwards.

Q: Yeah, absolutely. You mentioned earlier that you were involved with--,

A: I'm going to take that because it's precious.

Q: No problem at all.

A: Thank you. You can borrow it any time.

Q: Yeah, thank you. So you mentioned earlier that you've been involved with various campaigns over the years, can you talk me through some of those?

A: Erm, well most of it was mobility. So it was trying to get the laws changed for the building of buses and the changing of the--, oh, what do they call it, the--, the company that looks after the cabbies [sighs]. What do they call it? I've completely forgotten. They needed to be alerted to the fact that there was a need for a cheaper way of travelling in--, in your wheelchair, so they eventually introduced the taxi card and that's been very helpful for so many people. I know you don't get many rides really but it does help.

Q: Could you explain what the taxi card is then?

A: Oh, yes, the taxi card is--, is--, you are a member--, you become a member by applying, sending in your application form, it's free to join. And then they will give you so many rides per year which are at a heavily reduced rate--, heavily subsidised. So I can tell you the exact number that you get a year is 102, which means two trips a week, one out, one in, so you can go somewhere and come back on it. But, it just takes you--, each swipe--, 'cause you have a card which the taxi driver swipes into a machine and that will tell him that it's accepted and that you're a bona fide member, and if I ring the company up to book a taxi I can ask them how many rides I've got left and that sort of thing. And it goes--, the meter can run to, I think it's £11.80 on £2.50 payment, so you're saving a fair old bit. But you cannot--, and because traffic has got more and more and more, you're travelling less and less and less on the same amount of money, so in fact you might need two swipes to get into Kingston from here.

Q: Oh gosh, really?

A: If it--, if it's bad traffic or bad weather and all the traffic comes out, as we know it does, or stops, then you're a little bit hampered. But it's a very good scheme, I mean it helps a lot of people to go shopping, to go to hospital appointments, to do this, that and the other, because there is another scheme, erm, which is... oh, dial a--, dial a ride, which I don't like at all. It sticks completely to boundaries and they're geographical boundaries that you may not have even thought of, I mean you can't go over Kingston Bridge for a start and, you know, it's things that you won't have thought of yourself. It's because that's the end of the Kingston Borough, but somebody who's wanting to go somewhere doesn't think where does Kingston Borough start and end before I book a ride. They won't take you to hospital appointments and they will only do, really, shopping trips, that is their forte. And it has its place but not necessarily for busy people. And you have to pre book it. And I am a very--, another proud thing I have is that both Surbiton

Station and Kingston Station have lifts, which they didn't used to have, and Ed Davey and I opened both at different times [laughs]. And the second time, which was Kingston, they couldn't find anybody in a wheelchair so I got a phone call saying are you free, can you get to Kingston Station now? Oh yes, okay [laughs]. So old--, old clothes on, not at all dressed the part, but never mind. And I got there and Ed Davey goes oh, we have to stop meeting like this [laughs]. I said no we don't, we've got more to do yet, so...

Q: Have you been involved with any campaigns recently?

A: No, not really. I haven't really had the energy. I--, I'll always put my tick in a box if, you know, if I'm pro and I'll help in that way, but no, I don't really do very much now. I do--, I chair the users' group for the wheelchair service in--, at Roehampton and I do one or two oddments like that, but--,

Q: What does that involve, that chair?

A: Well it involves, really, erm, bringing back any reports of bad workmanship by repairers, looking at new protocols, looking at new contracts if we're changing repairers and all that sort of thing. So it can be busy but usually it's not, it usually just sort of plays along on its own, so it's okay, but... What else do I do? Don't think I do very much now.

Q: What's the--, the sort of campaign that you feel that you've been involved with that's been most successful?

A: Oh--,

Q: Actually I'm just going to...

A: Mmm. I don't know. I've had a bit of pride in all of them and they've all been necessary, so I don't think I've wasted my time in any way, except now, when I see things slipping. And then I--, words fail me really when I see how much hate crime there is on disability, it's the biggest one, it's--, people will tell you it's Muslims but it's not, it's disability. And I find that very upsetting when we've done so much to help ourselves, we haven't asked for--, we've asked for help from the authorities but we haven't asked for help from our fellow person in the street, if you like, except to listen. [Both laugh]. I'm very sorry but he is a bit of a show off.

Q: No, it's quite alright, he's gorgeous [laughs].

A: So that's really how I feel.

Q: What are your thoughts in terms--, I mean you did again mention that obviously current politics is playing a role in terms of service provision--,

A: Mmm.

Q: But what are your thoughts on the current system, particularly I suppose in--, from Kingston's perspective?

A: I think it's horrendous--, absolutely horrendous. My best friend, I won't name her, but she is a senior complaints manager for children and families at the council and she has not had a rise for eight years, and I find that tough to swallow when she's my best friend and she works so hard and she has a horrendous disability herself which nobody recognises. She has severe arthritis, total body, sometimes she can hardly walk, but she goes in, day after day after day. And I find it quite cruel that... they just move her around wherever they think they will and yes you have to--, you'll have to look for a hot desk and carry your--, and carry your, erm, laptop with you and three buildings you'll have to look in, and if there isn't one,

well I don't know what you'll do, you'll have to go home and work from home. And it's the uncaringness of a council that used to be so caring. It really did, used to be a good council, it's a vile council now.

Q: What do you--,

A: And it's not just her--,

Q: No.

A: It's from other people as well, it's just I'm using her as an example because I know her so well.

Q: What changes would you like to see being made, particularly for supporting people to continue to live independently?

A: I'd like to see a realistic understanding of what our little bit of money means to us and, erm, it's--, we're allowed, just about, to pay £10 an hour and some of the work is hard, it's difficult work, it's detailed work and it's caring for people's bodies. It's not the easiest job in the world and to say well you can pay £10 an hour, well I pay £12.50 and pay for the rest out of my own money because I can't see keeping staff at £10 an hour, and I can't pay any more than that--, any more than the £2.50 that I add to it, because I have a lot of hours so it works out quite expensively. I've just about now gone through any money that I ever had and, you know, you save all your life and you do this and you do that, and then you're said well, you know, you'll have to go into a home if you can't afford to pay. And you think no, I don't have to do that, I'm an individual, I'm fairly intelligent, I understand what's going on, why--, why do you have to boss me around? And I find that incredibly thoughtless and uncaring--, uncaring is the word. I don't know what else to add to it.

Q: Are there other campaigns that you would like to see happen?

A: Well do you know I'm so bored with them now, I'm not sure. I'm not sure how successful it would be in this present climate. I mean we're in such a dodgy place at the moment anyway, but who knows what's going to happen next, I mean there could be another election next week or the week after, who knows? And we spend our lives--, I'm always being chased up by Ed Davey's office to see if I'll fill envelopes and things, I cannot physically do it, I'm sorry, but no, I won't. I'll let you in through the door system and be glad to because I support you, but I do not support any of the Conservatives. And we have a very poor council of quite--, quite nasty councillors, you probably know that without me telling you.

Q: Yeah, it's difficult.

A: Leader of the council is not--, not a nice man, Kevin Davis.

Q: So when you were involved with your campaigns, what--, what sort of nature did they take, what action were you taking?

A: Oh, we did a lot of, erm, oh, golly gee, all the words have gone out of my head, I am getting too old for this. Oh, what do you call it when you go up to the big--, the Houses of Parliament and--, lobbying--,

Q: Okay.

A: Thank you--, thank you, Jane. We did a lot of lobbying on various campaigns that I was on, so I should think I've been up there half a dozen times at least and lobbied MPs. It's--, if you can get it organised properly with enough people, it's worth it, it's much better, I think, personally than lying down in the street. I find that degrading, and I think it's degrading not only for disabled people but for anybody else who does the same sort of, erm, harsh campaigning if you like. I just--, I'm sorry, I've got a bad leg so I lean

over to try and release it, sorry about that, you'll have to cut that out [laughter]. Erm, we did a lot of fundraising not only in the street but by using paper campaigns for both--, both the big organisations that I belong to, both KCIL and the disabled drivers' association as it was then. And we've still got a group of the disabled drivers, the same group that I joined when I was 19, I still do all the transport and paperwork for now once a month, so it's still--, and that's, you know, I joined in 1963 and what is it now, 2017, that's a long time. So yes, I've done a lot of, er, not lying down on the pavement but a lot of meetings with MPs, meetings with authorities here and talking, talking, talking. I think that's probably the best way to get your thoughts and ideas through to the people who need to know, is by networking.

Q: What partnerships did you have with other organisations within Kingston?

A: We had partnerships with Kingston Association for the Blind, with, erm, what's his name, you know Francis? Yes you do, Arokiasamy, yeah, I'm sure you do. He's the--, he's the--,

Q: Oh, sorry, at the council?

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah, yeah, no, I have met him, yeah.

A: Well you've probably met Karen as well then.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: That's my best friend.

Q: I see, okay.

A: 'Cause they're always together, when they're...

Q: Yeah [laughs].

A: Because they both believe in the same things, so they go to the same sort of--, and they try and do, once a year, a day of disabled people which is the 3 December, so they try and set something up for that which they try to force the council into supporting. So--, so he was always, erm, oh--, well, he was the--, crikey, I can't remember what it was called... you're going to have to help me out, erm, oh...

Q: Was it when...

A: He was--, he was in the same building as KADP were, up Canbury Park Road, and he was the chair of the rights--, something rights, erm...

Q: I don't know. I'll have to look it up, yeah.

A: Oh. But sort of more or less what he does now--,

Q: Okay.

A: Only as a separate entity.

Q: Oh, I see.

A: So we were certainly with them and with, oh, quite a few actually--, quite a few of the different disability organisations like the MS Society and, erm, Scope. Quite a few--, quite a few locally.

Q: I know I asked you about the sort of campaign that you thought was most successful, but in terms of everything that you've done, what would you say is your proudest achievement?

A: Chairing a national organisation, which wasn't KCIL obviously, without any help at all, we had no paid help, we had no money to pay for staff. But when they sold the hotel they built the office up and set up staff, so there wasn't so much need for volunteers. But I think that probably was it, because there were between nine and ten thousand members, and I used to write--, I used to stay at work and write all the--, you know they used to write to the organisation and say what can I do, I've done so and so and so and so, my MP won't listen to me. And I used to answer all those letters by hand after work, so I did a lot of work. I'm not so proud of the KADP work because it lapsed in my view, but that's me, it's not anybody else's view, it's my view.

Q: Yeah, fair enough. I think that's all of my questions, but was there anything else you wanted to talk about that I haven't asked you?

A: I have, in my, erm... well, in my--, I suppose in my ownership, 17 old vehicles--,

Q: Oh, wow [laughs].

A: Which were collected by my husband, and I was left with the wretched things to deal with. His big hobby was collecting old three wheelers--, oh my gosh, I had a--, there was a cutting from a newspaper because it was the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Motability recently and there was a fantastic photograph outside the Palace, the Queen standing there and looking at one of these three wheelers. And it just--, it was just lovely, it was sent to me by a friend. Anyway, I have now, after all these years, managed to persuade the Science Museum to take them on. They're at the Science Museum because we dumped them there, but I couldn't get them to take them on officially, they said no, there was a moratorium--, there's a moratorium, can't take any more. And I said okay, well I'll just leave them, let you think about it, 'cause I couldn't put them anywhere else [laughs]. Oh dear, he had so many passions.

Q: Are they--, Wroughton--, at their site in Wroughton?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Yeah. Oh okay.

A: Ah, how did you know that?

Q: I used to work for the Science Museum at one time.

A: Did you?

Q: Yeah, but I never made it to Wroughton, so I'll have to make a trip there.

A: Oh, right. Oh, it's a fantastic place, well worth a visit. They usually have about one, sometimes two open days a year, but not more than that, which is sad really 'cause they'd make money. I mean the first--, the first, erm, oh, helicopter on water, you know what I mean?

Q: Mmm.

A: That's in there, and all sorts of huge things, these little invalid tricycles look very tiny. But I'm very glad that they've accepted them, so that's something I have. I also have--, and this is not--, I don't want you to spend time, it's just that that was what he wrote about the hotel, he wrote its history as a house and then he wrote what happened after we took it over.

Q: Oh, okay.

A: So that's something perhaps for the future.

Q: Yeah.

A: Maybe not. There's so much clutter in my life--, so much clutter. Ann is much more organised than I am, and I sort of envy her in a way, but she spends a lot of her hours on paperwork whereas I can't afford it, I can't afford to allow physical time to be on paperwork, so.

Q: Was there anything else you wanted to talk about?

A: No.

Q: Okay, lovely, well in that case we'll leave it there. Thank you so much.

A: You're welcome. I'm sorry, I'm a bit of an idiot really with these machines.

Q: [Laughs]. Oh no, you're fine...

**[END OF RECORDING – 01:01:29]**