(Re)constructing Bretton Hall College: Students as the ‘Spaces in Between’
Sir Alec Clegg’s impact on the creation of a community of practice.

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A thesis submitted to the University of Huddersfield in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

The University of Huddersfield in collaboration with Yorkshire Sculpture Park

19th April 2023
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For Eric Woodward, my friend. I loved spending time with you, I will always value it.

To Rachel Haworth, an unexpected and joyful late entry to proceedings! I will forever be grateful for your generosity and kindness. Your time is now. Thank you.

And to all of the voices from the West Riding, what jolly good fun it was.
Abstract

This thesis explores the impact of Sir Alec Clegg during his tenure as Chief Education Officer of the West Riding Education Authority. It assesses Clegg’s influence at Bretton Hall College (Teacher Training College for the Arts) and on the students who attended. Founded in 1949 by Sir Alec Clegg, the College was a showcase for the West Riding Education Authority for teacher training, developing a strong community of practice that attracted students from around the country to the rural campus. This research seeks to provide a critical lens on Sir Alec Clegg’s role at Bretton Hall College, through collected narratives gathered from a sample of students who studied at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. The thesis sets out to discover if a direct impact of Sir Alec Clegg on the students is visible through their recollected memories and stories, or if the community of practice that was created at Bretton Hall College emerged out of the students’ own making, with a specific focus on their spatial behaviours at the campus.

Sir Alec Clegg provided a condition of possibility for the students at Bretton Hall College, based on his beliefs in arts in education and child-centred education. The college provided a test ground for educational development and was pioneering in its approach to generate a pipeline of specifically art and design trained teachers to work in the West Riding Education Authority schools and wider. These teachers would take with them a fundamental experience that became part of the legacy of Sir Alec Clegg. This research suggests that the students at Bretton Hall College were the *spaces in between*: the spaces in between Sir Alec Clegg’s beliefs, the timetabled curriculum, and the physical architecture. By engaging physically, mentally, and emotionally with the architecture and spaces of Bretton Hall College on a daily basis, the students become the spaces in between these formal structures of the College. These spaces in between (the students) constitute an environment in which a community of practice emerges that belongs to the people who created it, not the person who founded the structures that might once have facilitated its development.
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List of Publications

The following publications draw from research undertaken for this thesis and were published during the period of study:


A complete book chapter, peer-reviewed by co-authors.


Conference presentation, collaboratively developed with leading supervisor.


Conference presentation, delivered by me in person.


A journal article written by me as lead author, co-authored with supervisors.
Chapter 1: Introduction

He who is not alight, cannot fire others.

Bretton Hall College motto

I was at Bretton Hall from 1952 to 1954, I came straight out of the national service… and I came straight to Bretton Hall…driven back through the fields, out to Bretton village, down the drive, into the college… Stable Block area was a bit like a Roman ruin… I now know what a wonderful place I’d been brought to… It was ours.

Bretton Hall College student, 1952
(Contributed to this research)

1.1 Aims and purpose of the thesis

This thesis aims to explore the legacy of Sir Alec Clegg at Bretton Hall College during his time as the Chief Education Officer of the West Riding Education Authority (abbreviated to WREA throughout this thesis) between 1949 and 1974, through the voices and experiences of the students who were at Bretton Hall College during this period. The WREA was the second largest Local Educational Authority (LEA) outside London at this time (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2022, p.5) and under Clegg’s leadership, ‘was regarded highly for its practice and approach to education and the way in which it enriched and improved the opportunities and lives of individuals and communities’ (Wood, Pennington, Su, 2021, p.314). Bretton Hall College was established as a teacher training college in the WREA in 1949 and, under Clegg, quickly became known as a pioneering centre for training in the Arts. This research sheds light on Clegg’s influence at Bretton Hall College and seeks to define his impact on the community that emerged from the College. In particular, it examines whether Clegg had a direct or indirect impact on the students at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. The research also sheds light on the extent to which this
impact was felt by the students at the time or subsequently. To explore this question of impact, the thesis focuses on the students themselves and on how this community of new teachers and arts practitioners was created, by analysing specifically their use of the campus in which they created their practice.

The focus on students in particular drives the investigative methods of the thesis. The research set out to capture the experiences of a range of students from Bretton Hall College who studied during the aforementioned period. This involved a series of semi-structured interviews conducted with a group of six students, which I recorded in 2014-15. Capturing the narrative experiences of the students enables this thesis to address the gap that exists around the history of Bretton Hall College as the student voice has not hitherto been recognised or recorded; and to shed new light on established narratives and analyses of Clegg and his work in the WREA. Previously published work highlights Clegg’s visionary leadership as an innovative educator who was committed to human-centred and child-centred approaches and the benefit of arts education. However, the link has not been made between Clegg and his leadership of the WREA, the founding of Bretton Hall College within that context, and the experience of the students who studied there. The thesis aims to analyse the ways in which these students constitute the missing voices within Clegg’s legacy: their experiences of an education system established by Clegg can reveal how he had both a direct and indirect influence on their development and practice. In the context of this thesis, direct influence or impact is conceived as the ways in which Clegg’s values and philosophy informed the training that students received and the curriculum that they followed. Indirect influence or impact then describes how these values shaped the broader conditions of possibility which generated an environment
that empowered the students to explore and experiment within their own community of practice.

The purpose of this thesis is to acknowledge and incorporate the stories of the students as an evidence-base for assessing the legacy and impact of Clegg on the community of practice at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. In addition, it explores the ways in which, at Bretton Hall College, we see Clegg’s commitment to: policies of social justice; opening up of access to educational opportunities; the fostering of artistic expression in children and young people; developing creativity, logical thinking, analytical skills, collaborative working, and flexibility; and a desire to pursue lifelong learning (Wood, Pennington, Su, 2018, pp.313-4). As such, the thesis will question how Bretton Hall College can therefore be considered an educational hub or nexus through which Clegg’s policies and values were channelled and instilled in students trained at the college. The research seeks to uncover the extent to which this was the case, by creating a space for the hitherto unheard voices of these students. Recording their lived experience stories of day-to-day life at the College sheds light on the extent of Clegg’s impact and of the ways in which the students are living embodiments of his legacy.

The research addresses a significant knowledge gap in the existing literature of Bretton Hall College and Clegg, as little is known about the lived experience of the students between 1949 and 1974 nor about how Clegg’s influence was manifest at the College. Furthermore, the research addresses a current gap in the literature of the history of Bretton Hall College: the history of the students in this period acts as a
bridge between the Bretton Hall Estate family history and that of the Yorkshire
Sculpture Park, which was established on the site in 1977.

This thesis contributes to knowledge by capturing and analysing some of the
unheard voices of the students at Bretton Hall College. It is crucial to this research
that these voices be presented verbatim so that the students’ narratives are
accurately recorded in the way that they want to share them, preserving the
authenticity of the narratives. Because these narratives have not been shared or
recorded in this way prior to this research, the thesis provides vital qualitative data
regarding the student experience at Bretton Hall College. This begins to reveal the
nature of the curriculum at Bretton Hall College, the ways the students responded to
it, and the impact of their training on their own practice as educators and artists. This
curriculum was shaped by Clegg’s philosophies for arts and education. There is
therefore a direct correlation between Clegg and the student experience at Bretton
Hall College whether directly acknowledged or not. However, the student narratives
also reflect on the ways in which the students belonged to a community of practice
that embodied many of Clegg’s values, which came about thanks to the conditions of
possibility that his approach to education and training engendered. In this way, the
research contributes to our understanding of Clegg’s impact by addressing the gap
that currently exists around Bretton Hall College in Clegg’s legacy. The students’
narratives and my analysis within this thesis reveal for the first time the impact of
Clegg on the students at Bretton Hall College and shed light on the ways in which he
influenced educational training policies and practices within the WREA in the post-
war period.
1.2 Defining the research question

On 25 September 1949, the first 56 students arrived at Bretton Hall College, teacher training college for the arts. Three years later, in 1952 and whilst the College was still in its infancy, a student straight from national service arrived at the site and found a world surrounded by fields, with Romanesque-like ruins, and felt like it was theirs. This feeling of belonging and knowing that Bretton Hall College was a wonderful place permeates the story of the College that the students collectively tell. Seventy years after the aforementioned experience of wonder and belonging, this research begins in the abandoned campus of Bretton Hall College. To understand the life and legacy of this wonderful site, it seeks out the voices of the students who studied and lived there, in the place they called their own. This thesis then presents six exemplar narratives from the Bretton Hall College students, as a way of furthering our understanding of the history, influence, and impact of this site within the broader context of arts in education in the post-war period in Britain.

This place would become pivotal not only in the lives that the students lived during their time at the College, but also in shaping their whole existence. This becomes clear from the positive memories and nostalgia for the experience that permeates the students’ narratives. And what emerges from this narrative is a sense of recurrent experiences and similar stories, pointing to a type of collective experience of the site. This thesis interrogates this experience and illustrates how the students of Bretton Hall College built and have subsequently maintained a community of practice to which they all belong. This community existed firstly within the walls of Bretton Hall
College campus but can subsequently be found in the students’ custodianship of their narratives of experiences as the creators of this community.

This community of practice together with the site of Bretton Hall College are situated within another legacy: that of the Education Authority of the 1940s, 50s, 60s and 70s in the WREA, the legacy of Clegg. Clegg was the Chief Education Officer of the Authority from 1947 to 1974 and founded Bretton Hall College in 1949. It is for this reason that this date constitutes the starting point of this. Clegg was a human centred administrator and a believer in the child as an individual agent of change, capable of self-development under the right conditions of practice. He is seen to be a man situated in the literature of his time with regard to arts in education and child-centred approaches, as well as a charismatic and transformative leader. Indeed, he created and contributed a significant legacy to arts in education and child-centred education in post-war Britain. Although geographically situated in the WREA, his reach and influence during his working life extended not only nationally but also internationally. Becoming known as the ‘conscience of the ministry’, Clegg carried his position and responsibility to the children and teachers that he influenced with care, passion, and a desire to highlight good practice wherever it was.

Indeed, even today, Clegg remains a foundational figure for child-centred, arts in education approaches. During his time as Chief Education Officer at the WREA, Clegg wrote and contributed to books, articles, and scholarly publications. This work now forms part of a collection housed at the National Arts Education Archive located at the abandoned Bretton Hall College campus. It also includes his own administrative documentation, donated by one of his children. Clegg’s work and
impact remain of interest to scholars today: further books have been published about him since 2000, and by drawing on this archived documentation in particular, are able to provide an overview of Clegg’s life and to conclude that he was a kind, effective education administrator. Two key texts, both written in 2000 by former employees of the WREA, have been drawn upon as this project’s main sources of scholarship about the collected ideas and practices that Clegg engaged with and implemented. But articles and blogs, think pieces, and reflections on Clegg have continued to be produced, since his death in 1986, which discuss his work and legacy in the WREA.

What is missing from these histories is the 57-year history of Bretton Hall College and, crucially, the voice of the students who made up the community of practice at the College over this time. The influence that Clegg had on the College and its approach to teacher training is overlooked, and the impact that such approaches had on the students and their community of practice remains unacknowledged. This thesis therefore seeks to fill these gaps in our understanding of the legacy of Clegg and of Bretton Hall College by providing a space within which the students’ voices and experiences can be heard. The student narratives collected for this research project become a means through which we can explore a hitherto neglected aspect of Clegg’s work, both from the point of view of his influence over a centre for teacher training and his impact on the teachers who were trained.

In 2021, Bretton Hall College was acknowledged as being part of Clegg’s legacy in a new book, *Education through the arts for well-being and community: The vision and legacy of Sir Alec Clegg* (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021). The volume
brought Clegg’s legacy into the 21st Century, by providing a framework for contemporary key areas of development and concern and introducing well-being and community into the legacy building of Clegg. It was my chapter in this collection, entitled ‘Bretton Hall Teacher training through the arts’, that started to shed light on the College’s role in Clegg’s legacy by discussing its formation as a teacher training college for the arts and its early beginnings (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021 pp.121-133). The essays in the collection collectively present the well-defined work of Clegg, and reveal his legacy, which is clearly still relevant in the educational landscape for new generations. However, it is still possible to identify that aforementioned gap in the legacy building of Clegg: the volume largely overlooked his role in the founding and development of Bretton Hall College and what impact he had on the creation of a community of practice within the landscape of Bretton Hall and by the students who inhabited it. This research seeks to address this gap by exploring specifically how Clegg’s role at Bretton Hall College was one of indirect legacy on the students who studied there.

There are then clearly further gaps, or spaces in our understanding and appreciation of Clegg and his work in the WREA, and of Bretton Hall College as an educational centre. When we think about the College in its heyday, these spaces were filled by the students. This thesis seeks to interrogate the spaces in understanding by focusing on the students. By placing the students of Bretton Hall College back into the spaces of Bretton Hall College, in both figurative and literal ways, the students in this thesis become the spaces in between. That is to say, the students of Bretton Hall College are the spaces in between Clegg’s vision for Bretton Hall College and the site itself and the education and training that it provided. This thesis explores
how the students’ own spatial behaviours filled and continue to fill these spaces, in a way that created and subsequently sustained the specific legacy and community of practice established at Bretton Hall College. These behaviours generated a sense of place and belonging that extended far beyond educational requirements. The thesis thus provides a widening of the conceptualisation of the legacy building around Clegg to include Bretton Hall College Teacher Training for the Arts. Through its focus on the student voice and narratives and its narrative inquiry approach with grounded practice, this thesis also contributes to our broader understanding of communities of practice in education and training, revealing in this case how fundamental a community of practice is, as well as the ways in which it influences on its members.

The decision to focus on capturing the voices of the students at Bretton Hall College draws on Clegg’s own approach of storytelling and sharing parables to situate his own narrative and explain his philosophy. Using this approach in this research project sheds light on where influence sits for individuals, who in this case are the students of Bretton Hall College. The narratives together allow for the identification, analysis, and interpretation of Clegg’s direct or indirect influence on students. In this way, the students also become part of Clegg’s approach, by becoming the storytellers of their own story. In the way that Clegg’s storytelling gave strength to his narrative and vision, so the same strength of personal ownership of narrative shines through in this research project from the students’ narratives. This methodology was deliberately chosen for this research project not only because it mirrors Clegg’s own approach but also because it reaffirms why Clegg used such an approach to communicate his own narrative and garner engagement and impact on his audience.
Moreover, by collecting narratives directly from the students of Bretton Hall College, from people of the WREA who knew Clegg directly, and from Clegg’s family members, this thesis makes an original contribution to our understanding of the man by entering into his legacy the points of view of those who knew and trained under him. These narratives have deliberately been included in this thesis verbatim. This approach to the sharing of the data collected here places the ownership and attention back onto the individuals who are sharing their experiences, thereby using Clegg’s own philosophies as a research methodology to underpin the thesis and bring the narratives that offer different perspectives of Clegg together in a way that sheds new light on his legacy and impact. This is therefore the central research question of this thesis: What impact did Clegg and his approach to education have on the students and environment at Bretton Hall College?

To answer this question, the research has five specific objectives:

1. Critically analyse the role of Sir Alec Clegg as Chief Education Officer of the West Riding Education Authority between 1949-1974.
2. Determine how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created.
3. Analyse the significance and value of the collected narratives through a critical lens of narrative inquiry.
4. Evaluate the significance and impact of place (environment) within the collected narratives.
5. Critically analyse the impact of Sir Alec Clegg directly and indirectly, to the culture building at Bretton Hall College between 1949 – 1974.

These objectives are addressed across the different chapters of the thesis.
From this section, four key terms have emerged: impact; legacy; community; and practice. These are the four themes that underpin the analysis of the thesis. It is therefore important to explain and define these terms and demonstrate the extent to which they are modified and limited in their application to this study.

1.3 Defining the key terms of the thesis

1.3.1 Impact
Impact is the influence or marked effect that a person or organisation or initiative can have on another person, organisation, community, or initiative. We can define impact as the benefit, positive change, or good that a certain action can have on the recipient (Reed, 2018). As far as Clegg’s impact is concerned, previous research highlights the positive influence of his leadership, and of the WREA under his guidance, on: educational and educating policy and practice, as well as organisational structures; the implementation of child centred pedagogy and progressive approaches; enriching and improving the opportunities and lives of individuals and communities in the West Riding of Yorkshire; and the development of social capital and communities (Wood, Pennington, and Su, 2021). This research uses interviews with formers pupils, teachers, officers, and other members of the WREA as a way of establishing the extent of Clegg’s influence and impact on these aforementioned areas. However, and significantly, one particular area is missing from this research: Bretton Hall College.

The thesis uses the term ‘impact’ to refer to the influence of individual behaviours that lead to a change in thinking, and the shaping of values on a wider scale. In this thesis, the individuals and wider scale in question are the students of Bretton Hall
College and the changes in thinking and shaping of values that are identified as being a direct or indirect result of Clegg's philosophies and activities.

Impact can be seen as being direct or indirect. To ascertain examples of direct impact, I explore the extent to which the students of Bretton Hall College explicitly acknowledge Clegg and his philosophies as they discuss their experience of studying at the College and of being a graduate of that institution. As far as indirect impact is concerned, I analyse the ways in which students unintentionally exhibit behaviours and values that have come about as a result of Clegg's philosophy and approach to teaching training and education, as manifested at Bretton Hall College.

The thesis thus contributes to debates around impact in the context of educational practice. It also seeks to broaden our use and understanding of the term, by tracking firstly, Clegg's impact on individuals through the created culture and daily environment in which they were situated at Bretton Hall College during their period of study; and secondly, the ways in which this impact is carried forward throughout an individual's life, often through specific reference to the persistence of the identity of being ‘a Bretton Hall College student’. The aim is to analyse how this constitutes examples of the direct and indirect impact of Clegg, and of his work as the founder of the College and the Chief Education Officer of the WREA.

1.3.2 Legacy

Legacy is then the long-lasting impact that an individual’s actions and values can have on others, on society, or on the landscape. Legacy is dependent on impact and suggests the accumulation of impact with the possibility of looking back and
assessing the total impact that an individual might have had. As far as Clegg is concerned, Wood, Pennington, and Su draw together a series of observations about his legacy that are informed by his impact (examples of which are mentioned above). His legacy, they suggest, is demonstrated by the ways in which specific elements of his practice and values have relevance today and suggest two particular elements:

The value of strong local institutions which open opportunities to harness resourcefulness and capacity in communities and bring social and economic benefits. [...] And Clegg’s focus on the vital role of the creative and expressive arts with potential to enrich lives has an abiding importance for education today, in view of the pernicious effects of a dominant ‘measurement’ culture and the ‘squeezed’ place of creative and aesthetic endeavour in the curriculum.

(Pennington, Wood, and Su, 2021, p.322)

In a similar way, this thesis uses the term legacy to refer to the long-lasting impact of Clegg’s philosophies and practice, as demonstrated by the students of Bretton Hall College during the time of Clegg’s leadership of the WREA. It explores the impact felt by these individuals after their experience of Bretton Hall College and, often, after their careers in education and the arts. Whilst it is clear from the aforementioned research that Clegg’s legacy is far reaching in how he shaped educational practice and policy, this thesis seeks to address a gap in our understanding and analysis of this legacy constituted by that of the Bretton Hall College students. Analysis of his long-lasting impact on this group of people sheds light on Clegg’s practice and approach, and thus on his legacy in this particular context.

Furthermore, this thesis unpicks the notion of whether Clegg’s legacy is direct or indirect in the context of the Bretton Hall College students, by seeking to address if a community can be built that is unknowingly shaped by the direct and/or indirect
impact of an individual. To do this, it explores the extent to which the community of
practice created by the students was independent of the ideas or philosophies of
Clegg, or whether Clegg provided conditions of possibility with which the students
could engage, and from which emerged a community of practice. The thesis
therefore provides a widening of the lens of the legacy building of Clegg, creating a
space within which his legacy at Bretton Hall College can be acknowledged and
interrogated.

1.3.3 Community

Michael Pardales and Mark Girod note that “community” is becoming a major part of
educational discourse today’ (2006, p.299). They highlight community of practice,
learning community, community of learners, classroom community, and community
of inquiry as terms within educational discourse that employ the term ‘community’. In
these contexts, ‘community’ refers to a group of like-minded people who are joined
together through the same interests or inquiries. Inquiry and the pursuit of knowledge
is a core activity for these types of communities: communities of inquiry, ‘are
modelled after scientific communities of inquiry where the explorations of ideas and
reasoning are publicly displayed and scrutinized. This display and scrutiny eventually
lead to the creation/construction of knowledge about the self, and the world’
(Pardales and Girod, 2006, p.305). Community thus becomes a mechanism through
which learning is pursued and achieved and involves all members of that community
in this endeavour.

This thesis uses the term community specifically to refer to as one student-based
and student-constructed community of people, all of whom were studying at Bretton
Hall College between 1949 and 1974. The thesis discusses this community as being situated primarily in the geographical campus of the College. The term is also used to refer to the culture that was created by the students and which was separate from the imposed regulatory framework of the College. However, what is important to underline here is the way in which this community (the group of people and the culture they created) facilitated learning and the broader exchange of values and ideas.

The thesis also demonstrates how this community has remained prevalent throughout the lives of the alumni students of Bretton Hall College. It tracks the extent to which these students feel they still belong to this community by shedding light on the roles they play, as self-appointed custodians of the former Bretton Hall College campus site. The community’s long duration and influence is also identifiable in the students’ shared memories of the community that they built, which is evidenced through their correlating recollections and a common sense of nostalgia, as we will see. Pardales and Girod acknowledge that:

> If we mean by the term ‘community’, something more than a loosely associated group of people, then ‘community’ might be something to strive for yet, something that is not immediately attainable in a classroom setting. A community that works together, has mutual respect and concern, and a recognizable and agreed upon set of assumptions and procedures is something that takes a long time to develop.

(Pardales and Girod, 2006, p.308)

This thesis demonstrates how the Bretton Hall College community of students became more than a loosely associated group of people, who instead have a shared set of assumptions, mutual respect, and concern: a community that not only took
time to develop but which also has a long lasting, and in some cases, lifelong impact on its members. The thesis sheds light on the long-term benefits of communities that go beyond the opportunities to acquire knowledge.

1.3.4 Practice

This long-term influence of the Bretton Hall College student community on its members was arguably possible due to the type of community that was established: this thesis thus refers specifically to this learning community as a community of practice. It takes the definition of community of practice proposed by Jean Lave¹ and Etienne Wenger² (1991) as its starting point. Such communities are ‘groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly’ (Wenger and Trayner, 2015). In an expansion of the original definition, Wenger explains that there are three characteristics that are crucial for a community of practice:

1) the domain: a community of practice ‘has an identity defined by a shared domain of interest. Membership therefore implies a commitment to the domain, and therefore a shared competence that distinguishes members from other people’ (Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. 2015).

2) the community: this element suggests that ‘in pursuing their interest in their domain, members engage in joint activities and discussions, help each other, and

¹ Jean Lave (1939 – present) is an American social anthropologist who led the work on communities of practice with her student Etienne Wenger.

² Etienne Wenger (1952 – present) is a Swiss educational theorist recognised for his work on communities of practice working with Jean Lave, who was his professor.
share information. They build relationships that enable them to learn from each other; they care about their standing with each other’ (Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. 2015).

3) the practice: ‘a community of practice is not merely a community of interest […]’ Members of a community of practice are practitioners. They develop a shared repertoire of resources: experiences, stories, tools, ways of addressing recurring problems—in short, a shared practice. This takes time and sustained interaction’ (Wenger-Trayner, E. and Wenger-Trayner, B. 2015).

This thesis identifies as the domain for the Bretton Hall College community of practice the campus itself. The joint activities and discussions that helped build relationships were the curricular and extracurricular activities in which the students took part. It was through these activities that the students became practitioners within the community of practice. The interviews demonstrate the shared repertoire of resources that the students created. It also becomes clear that the community of practice constructed by the students at Bretton Hall College was a community built of practice together. The act of building the community of practice was a practice in itself which reinforced the continuing existence and made possible its long-term influence on its members. This is an important distinction to make as regards Wenger and Lave’s conceptualisation of communities of practice: the students created their own practice as a community; the community of practice did not emerge around a specific activity of learning on the curriculum. Rather, the mutually supportive, discursive activities of the community in the spaces and environment of Bretton Hall College constitutes the practice itself. The practice in this instance
consists of the building, co-creation, and enacting of a community, which can be traced in the non-curricular activities of the students.

There is, however, an additional key theme that runs through the whole of this thesis: Sir Alec Clegg. It is therefore necessary to introduce this figure in the context of the broader post-war educational landscape in Britain and the more familiar discourses of progressive education and teacher training. Chapter 2 of this thesis then provides more detail about Clegg’s specific philosophies and values, which make up his legacy as an innovative educator.

1.4 Sir Alec Clegg and Bretton Hall College in context

To appreciate the contribution of Clegg to the post-war educational landscape in post-war Britain, and the place of Bretton Hall College within this, it is necessary to situate both against the educational philosophies and reforms of that period. This will shed light on the extent to which Clegg was embedded within the broader changes in education that marked the period and acted as a conduit for other established ideas which came to the fore during these years. It will also reveal how Bretton Hall College was one of many institutions established in this period that responded to the dearth of teachers post-war and embodied the changing nature of the educational landscape.

Indeed, the post-war educational years in Britain are often referred to as a golden age that capture the Zeitgeist of the moment in terms of economic growth and social transformation (Lowe, 2012, p.xiii). During this period, children and young people were the direct beneficiaries of the 1944 Butler Education Act that made progression
to secondary education without fees possible and prompted the creation of a series of new Universities throughout the 1960s, adding to social mobility opportunities. The Act sought to make education accessible to all, with subsequent government policies in the late 1940s seeking to “remodel [the] educational system according to the new law” [in reference] to the supply of an adequate number of teachers and of school buildings, and […] the “encouragement and improvement of primary schools” (Lowe, 2012, p.8).

The move to make education available to all up to the age of 16 is one example of a series of initiatives and transformations that fall under the wider umbrella of progressive education which became a vehicle for educational change post-World War II. According to Peter Cunningham in *Curriculum Change in the Primary School since 1945: Dissemination of the Progressive Ideal*, the practices of progressive education are often child-centred and informed by an inherent respect for the child as an individual (Cunningham, 1988). The theories and themes of progressive education focus on: a reduction in the authoritarianism of the teacher, including harsh punishment methods; breaking down the barriers between subjects; a commitment to finding alternative pedagogies to inform classroom teaching; an emphasis on creativity and wellbeing over traditional subjects; and encouraging pupils to become self-directed learners (Cunningham, 1988).

In *Education in the Post-war Years*, Roy Lowe (2012) has demonstrated the different ways in which educational reform and transformation came about during the post-war period, tracking the key politicians, practitioners, and activists who drove these progressive changes. He points out how, because of the ‘permissive nature’ of the
1944 Act, specific individuals were crucial to such action because ‘a few local authorities were able to strike out in new directions – Leicestershire under Stuart Mason and the WREA under Alec Clegg are the most notable examples’ (Lowe, 2012, p.18). Lowe quotes Asa Briggs, who observes that “continued educational progress and the implementation of the ideals of the Act depended to a large extent on its implementation on the spot” (Lowe, 2012, p.18). It is therefore important to remember that whilst Clegg was clearly working within a particular moment of reform and progression for education in Britain, he was also an important catalyst for changes within the LEA that he led. Bretton Hall College manifested these changes.

Progressive education was also influential in teacher training throughout the 1950s, as a result of the reforms of the 1944 Act. As part of this reform came the development of teacher training colleges to address the lack of sufficient numbers of teachers. Initially addressed through an emergency training scheme, institutions were established that widened participation to older age groups, as at Forest Training College: Emergency Teacher Training College in Essex, which operated between 1945 – 1950 (Barden, 2021). The programmes that these training colleges offered were intensive and often delivered by ‘practising teachers in the schools, most of whom have never had any experience of training others for the profession’ (Wood, 1947, p.85). The training colleges provided an immediate increase in the work force and then maintained a steady number of newly trained teachers, ready to enter the profession (Wood, 1947, p.85) Institutions like Bretton Hall College emerged out of this landscape.

These newly established institutions embodied many of the principles of progressive education, and particularly the focus on the individual and their potential as a learner.
This had radical implications for the UK art school curriculum, for example, with the emergence of Basic Design as a new approach to training in art schools that revolutionised art education across Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. Key teachers included Roy Ascott, Richard Hamilton, Tom Hudson, Victor Pasmore, and Harry Thubron (Tate, n.d.). Such changes shaped the experimental activities and progressive approach to teaching art and design that was present at institutions like Hornsey College of Arts and Crafts (1955-1973).

More significant for Bretton Hall College, however, were the implications for teacher training that were driven by this commitment to child-centred education. The nature of teacher training in Britain developed in this period, to incorporate a learner-centred approach that embedded specific progressive ideas and methodologies. For example, the Leicester University gained a reputation for as a ‘progressive’ institution in this period for its Education Department courses thanks to the teaching methods adopted and the introduction of subjects like history of education, educational philosophy, and child development. There were self-discovery groups, where students were encouraged to criticise their course and the methods of teaching employed by the staff (Keating and Sheldon, n.d.). In a similar way, Bretton Hall College employed learner-centred methodologies to promote child-centred learning.

The philosophy of the College was that “all students were to be recruited to train not only to teach one art but also through the arts generally to contribute to the total curriculum and life of a school” (Friend, n.d., p.5). The aim was to “train teachers of music, art and drama” (Friend, n.d., p.5) and the programmes on offer were as follows:
[a] one-year course for musicians on the assumption that there existed a pool of older musicians, with some years of training and experience, and wishing to train to teach in schools, for whom no suitable courses were available. For the one-year course for artists it was suggested that many students, having spent two or more years in a college of art, and having passed the Intermediate Examination and then left, would welcome the same opportunity to train. It was expected that the two-year course would fill with students with special gifts in art or music straight from school or national service.

(Friend, n.d., p.6)

This shows that the students who came to Bretton Hall College did not come to be trained to be artists. They had already been through that educational journey or were gifted in the arts; they came to Bretton Hall College to be trained as teachers of art who would work in schools.

This is where the distinction lies between other schools of art, where students were trained to become artists and practitioners, and Bretton Hall College as a teacher training college for the arts. The majority of students who attended had already been to a college of art, and were seeking to become teachers of art. They were exposed to the idea that “the expression of the creative spirit can be a powerful factor in the development of a child’s self and that such development is encouraged when the individual is part of a community built up on the same principle” (Friend, n.d., p.5).

John Friend, Bretton Hall Colleges’ first Principal, is saying here that the aim was to train teachers in the arts, and not to produce solely art practitioners; students were there to learn skills as educators through the discipline of the arts. Painting was no longer what students were trained in; rather, they would use painting as a vehicle to facilitate the development of creativity in others. Pottery was similarly no longer the focus; rather, students used pottery as a route into the facilitation of self-expression in others. This was, as Clegg would call it, the ways in which they were to develop
the spirit of the child’s self. This was how students at Bretton Hall College were trained to be teachers under specific principles of child-centred, progressive, and innovative ways of teaching, as advocated for by Clegg.

This approach to teaching was informed by two key figures who would shape the thinking of a generation of progressive educationalists in Britain, including that of Clegg: John Dewey and Herbert Read. These men were theorists, philosophers, educationalists, anarchists, art historians and artists, and they influenced how progressive education in post-World War II Britain took shape. These were figures that influenced educational leaders who would go on to become Chief Education Officers across Britain during the 1950s and 1960s.

John Dewey (1859 – 1952) was an American educator and philosopher who led the progressive education movement and pioneered social reform in America. He advocated for children to be able to engage with their own experiential learning, believing that the individual child should be at the heart of the learning experience and be enabled to engage with all aspects of the learning environment. In this way, Dewey maintained, the educational experience is built and directed by the child themselves, who enquires and refines as they go. At the heart of Dewey’s philosophy was the commitment to providing children with the opportunity to take ownership of their learning and seeing how these attributes of self-responsibility and enquiry played a role in a democratic society outside of the classroom.

Herbert Read (1893 – 1968) was an art historian, poet, philosopher, and a leading voice in Britain on art education, although he was perhaps best known for his
anarchist activities largely manifest through his writing. Read’s perspectives on children’s art shaped many educationalists’ thinking, including Clegg. In his book *Education through Art* (Read, 1943), Read argued that art should be ‘valued for its transformative impact on a subject engaged in art activity, as opposed to a spectator that is transformed by it through “passive” contemplation’ (Kozlovsky, 2010, p.701). He also ‘advanced the notion that art could be used to construct a more balanced and stable personality [and] sought to revive the Greek conception of aesthetic education’ (Kozlovsky, 2010, p.701). A call for reform was taken from the pages of Read’s book and implemented by educationalists in Britain not as a curriculum per se but as a way to reveal the whole child through experiential learning.

These two leading voices collectively shaped what is seen as a philosophy of the ideals of progressivism, or a framework of engagement as outlined by Cunningham. Together they are acknowledged as thinkers who advocated for the creation of a space for students to participate and play an active part in their own learning, all through the prism of democracy. Students would thus direct their own ways of learning (Dewey). Their writings shaped educationalists’ thinking in the ways of progressive education, which would function not as revolution but rather as reform (Read).

This is the background against which, during the 1950s and 1960s, there emerged a landscape of ‘creative administrators’ (Brighouse, 2022, p.11) who would shape educational policy through Local Education Authorities (LEA). As Sir Tim Brighouse states, these “few great Chief Education Officers […] influenced and created developments in music, the arts, and sport in and out of school and college, and their...
writ ran from nursery through infant, junior, secondary, sixth forms and the youth service to further education colleges, adult education, teacher education and higher education” (in Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2022, p.11). Indeed, ‘the few great ones laid the foundation of what we now recognise as outstanding provision’ (Brighouse, 2022, p.12).

These few great Chief Education Officers were all male, which reflected the time, and the group was comprised as follows:

1) Sir Alec Clegg, as lead of the West Riding Education Authority (WREA) between 1949 and 1974, when the WREA was the second largest LEA outside London (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2022, p.5).

2) Sir John Newsom in Hertfordshire, where he initiated the School Loan Collection that mirrored the Schools Museum Service ran by Eric Woodward in the WREA under Clegg. Newsom ‘believed education should be life-long and that it mattered both on a personal and spiritual level and for the sake of positive democratic interaction between communities and different nations. […] He] was interested in “unity”, the renewing of broken lives, buildings, and opportunities’ (Hoare, 2017, p.412). Moreover, Newsom was ‘convinced of the potential significance of the built environment in enhancing an approach to teaching and learning with the creative arts at the core’ (Burke, 2009, p.424).

3) Martin Wilson in Shropshire who in 1963 was described in the following way:
   Shropshire's education programme has been quite outstanding over the last ten or twenty years, and there is not one person in the county who lays any
criticism. Indeed, perhaps one of the greatest secretaries for education that Shropshire has ever had has been Mr. Martin Wilson. The mark he has left on education in the county will go down in its history. He has been honoured for his services, and I commend his work (UK Parliament, n.d.)

4) Stewart Mason in Leicestershire who mastermind *The Leicestershire Experiment* which was a framework for a comprehensive pattern of education first introduced in 1957. The *Experiment* was the division of children by age range horizontally, this was a similar approach to the middle school system, which saw children divided into three schools (1) age 5-9, (2) 11-13, (3) 14-16), designed and advocated by Clegg in the WREA. The difference being that the *Leicestershire Experiment* was only concerned with the 11-19 age range, reducing the large-scale comprehensive school experience to that of smaller tiers within the overall school.

5) Alan Chorlton in Oxfordshire, who was committed to the importance of creative arts within teaching and learning, as well as to the development of the school ‘from the inside out’. Indeed, ‘his approach was in line with a strategy developed during these years which argued that the best way to encourage and bring about change was not to impose it from the outside but to encourage growth from within’ (Burke, 2009, p.424).

6) Henry Morris in Cambridgeshire, who led on the development and introduction of the ‘village college’, a concept that would render education a community activity and an articulation of local democracy. Hopkins explains that ‘Morris did not view education solely as something that occurs in childhood and adolescence in preparation for adult life – he had a very strong notion of education as a lifelong
process and the village college as the centre within which a variety of community activities and pursuits would take place’ (Hopkins, 2020, p.1100).

7) Sir Lionel Russell in Birmingham, who would champion lifelong learning at the end of the 1960s. The Russell Report, published in 1973, acknowledged the necessity of ‘a great development of non-technical studies [...] vital to provide the fullest opportunities for personal development and for the realisation of a true conception of citizenship’ (Stanistreet, 2018, p.15).

8) George Harold Sylvester in Bristol, recognised in the 1967 Birthday Honours list, whose contributions amongst many was the article The Essential Contribution of the Schools to the Preservation of the Arts in the Journal of Educational Administration, 1963 where he wrote:

All young people should have the opportunity of being introduced to the world of culture in a way that used to be the privilege of a select few. This is important not only for the education of the child, but, in the long run, for the preservation of the arts. Some school systems are setting out quite deliberately to foster child interest in the arts. For example, Bristol makes special efforts in the fields of music, drama, painting and sculpture. The education authority provides specialist music teachers, sells musical instruments on hire purchase and makes substantial block bookings in groups of seven or eight seats to enable children to attend “adult” concerts. It provides a library of drama parts, a selection of “props” and costumes, supports a Children's Theatre Association and consults with the Old Vic in choosing its repertory. The schools also provide direct employment for musicians, actors, painters and so on

(Sylvester, 1963, p.26)

Finally, as Brighouse says, ‘their minder Sir William Alexander at the Association of Education Committees’ (Brighouse, 2022, p.12).
Collectively, this group of ‘chief education officers were national figures and thinkers in their own right’ (Ross-Smith, 2012).

It is important to acknowledge that Clegg was a member of a group of likeminded men who together made significant contributions to the overarching landscape of education of the period:

West Riding initiatives reflected a wider trend in the ‘spirit of the age’. London County Council’s ‘Patronage of the Arts’ scheme (1957-1964), like Hertfordshire and Leicestershire, inspired by earlier ideas and policies of Henry Morris in Cambridgeshire, advocated aesthetic values in the design of new school buildings and acquired works of modern art for the school environment, to redress a relative cultural impoverishment in urban and rural areas….. Mason in Leicestershire followed this path with particular emphasis on supporting a new generation of young artists, especially those working with abstraction, buying their sculptures and paintings for schools. At the same time, he encouraged instrumental music in the curriculum, school orchestras, public concerts and even international tours. 

(Cunningham, 2022, pp.79-80)

However, it was the WREA under the leadership of Clegg that spearheaded the group with Clegg being recognised as pre-eminent amongst the group’s members (Brighouse, 2022, p.11). The reputation of the WREA when under Clegg’s leadership saw it become a mecca for teachers from across the country: “To be a West Riding teacher, head or adviser was to know that you were part of a great enterprise and associated with something generally acknowledged as very special and at the forefront of educational practice” (Brighouse, 2022, p.12). This was thanks to Clegg’s presence; indeed, as Martin Lawn writes: ‘his public and national engagement with educational issues in the state schooling during the 1950s and 1960s was matched by only a very few directors of education at the time. He was a significant champion
of education when most CEOs were quietly dutiful in their bureaucratic efficiency’ (Lawn, 2022, p.28).

The aforementioned CEOs were clearly the product of the post-war Zeitgeist in education, as their championing of arts education and lifelong learning demonstrates. But as far as Clegg is concerned, we must acknowledge that keeping the company of likeminded CEOs was not the only influence on his approach to education. Martin Lawn has suggested that in addition to Clegg’s family background in education, it was early influences in Clegg’s own education and career that shaped his leadership in the WREA (Lawn, p.28). For example, as an undergraduate Clegg worked voluntarily for Henry Morris, Director of Education in Cambridgeshire (Clegg, 1980, p.138), and the influence of Morris’s approach to art in schools on Clegg is clear. Furthermore, working as an assistant administrator in Worcestershire in 1942 Clegg experienced summer schools organised by the preeminent HMI Christian Schiller. Alongside Robin Tanner, an HMI of schools during the 1930s until the 1960s, Schiller established a framework that enabled an innovative way to think about creativity and the arts more widely in the lives of children. This framework was a new way of thinking that moved through literature, visual arts, and the performing arts. It invited teachers through summer schools to engage with both the first-hand experience of the disciplines, and also serving as a means to enthuse their pupils in what could be achieved. Additionally, it placed these experiences into a reflective prism for the teachers, thereby demonstrating how and why “progressivism in practice required critical philosophical reflection by teachers”, according to Peter Cunningham (in Brighouse, 2022, p.7).
It was during this same period that Clegg encountered Arthur Stone, a tutor at one of the summer schools and who Clegg would later invite to the WREA. Stone's work at Birmingham LEA demonstrated how LEAs could be pivotal in the life opportunities for children in less affluent parts of the country. Pre-World War II conditions for many children in less affluent parts of the country meant they were situated in mass poverty including educational poverty of access to education and fit for purpose, safe, inspirational school buildings. The work by both Stone and Schiller would inform Clegg's approach to children and his commitment to their whole educational experience.

It is arguably this that makes Clegg stand out from his peers: his genuine enjoyment for teaching, his belief in the endless possibilities of children's capabilities when given the opportunity, and his commitment to seeing teaching and learning as a partnership between the school, the teacher, the child, the parent, and, as far as Clegg was concerned, the LEA. His approach to education has been described by Martin Lawn as “an educational amalgam of creativity and social critique” (in Brighouse, 2022, p.28), and this would inform Clegg’s approach to his role as Chief Education Officer of the WREA. In particular, it would shape his perspective of viewing the child in the round. For him, the wellbeing, character, and education of a child were not separate; rather, they were inextricably linked. And for Clegg, the whole child warranted his attention. This viewpoint set him apart from his contemporaries and placed him at the forefront of progressive education. This then meant that for the Authority that he was leading, as Cunningham explains, “progressive principles, such as child-centredness, curriculum reform and concern
for the school environment, ran through his administration guiding its development and innovations” (in Brighouse, 2022, p.7).

Martin Lawn says, “Education Authorities had the wind of change behind them and could innovate if they had the will, the budget, the leadership and the expertise” (Lawn, p.33). Clegg effectively harnessed all four of these elements and drove the WREA to become globally acknowledged as the leading LEA for progressive education. As Cunningham writes:

> In a post-war context of social reconstruction, however, we recognise advocacy of progress for positive change in extending democracy, social or economic equality, and improved well-being of a population. Clegg’s West Riding provides evidence of progressive interest in liberal education for personal development and for community cohesion.

(In Brighouse, 2022, p.73)

Clegg was clearly a progressive educationalist, and his progressivism is multifaceted, encompassing child-centredness, curriculum reform through the arts in education, the school environment, his teamwork approach to his administration leadership, the progressivism approach to in-service teacher training, and Clegg’s “gift of communication [of] progressive pedagogy” as Cunningham defines it (in Brighouse, 2022, p.78). This multi-facetedness begins to explain Clegg’s desire to build a network of experienced individuals who could contribute to the progressive approach at the heart of the WREA. For example, Cunningham explains that within the WREA “Clegg appointed as art advisers Basil Rocke, who had worked with Franz Cizek\(^3\), international pioneer of children’s art, and Ruth Scrivener, whose

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\(^3\) Franz Cizek (1865 – 1946) was an art education reformer instigating the Child Art Movement in Vienna in the 19th Century
pupils’ art at Bedales School illustrated Read’s book” (in Brighouse, 2022, p.73).

Furthermore, Clegg would invite Herbert Read to address the staff and students of Bretton Hall College in the 1950s, making Read part of the progressive network at the heart of the WREA. These examples show how Clegg worked as a conduit for the theories and theorists of arts in education, and child-centredness, by bringing contemporaries like Read and their progressive ideals together in the WREA.

It is in this context that Clegg established Bretton Hall College as a direct response to the need to bring together the visual, performance and creative arts as a whole. We must acknowledge that Bretton Hall College as part of the WREA followed a long tradition of educational opportunities beyond childhood schooling. As Peter Gosden and Paul Sharp argue:

Clegg attached importance to improving both institutional and continued education of teachers. Circumstantial factors assisted him in this: a well-established precedent in the Riding of in-service provision through the Annual Vacation Course, dating back to 1912 and traditionally overseen by the executive; and the Ministry of Education was very supportive of his efforts at setting up new training colleges after the war

(Gosden and Sharp, 1974, pp.101-115).

The College thus became a physical manifestation of Clegg’s progressive interest in liberal education for personal development and for community cohesion and a nexus for the progressive network of ideas, theorists, and practitioners that Clegg was establishing in the WREA in this period.

1.5 Chapter Summaries
To explore the impact of Clegg during his tenure as Chief Education Officer of the WREA with specific reference to Bretton Hall College and its students, the thesis provides an overview of Clegg’s life through the verbatim retelling of his story from the point of view of his family. It also explores the context within which he operated, as well as the scholarly literature about Clegg and ideas of impact, legacy, and communities of practice. The thesis then presents verbatim the narratives collected from students of Bretton Hall College, who studied there during the 1950s-1970s. These narratives are analysed to shed light on the formation and maintenance of the student community of practice at the College, and of the direct or indirect impact that Clegg might have had on the students’ behaviours and attitudes.

The thesis is split into three parts. Part 1 introduces Clegg, his background and family, and the position he held at the WREA from 1947-1974. It also provides an overview of the landscape in which Clegg was working in.

It is Chapter 2 that gives the overview of Clegg. It provides an account of the literature that has been published about Clegg providing an insight into his legacy as an innovative child-centred educator. The chapter then draws on writings by Clegg to highlight how his philosophies have fed that legacy. This ‘official’ legacy is then brought into dialogue with recollections of Clegg from his family. The verbatim narrative that these family members share refocuses our attention on understanding the whole Clegg. The chapter sheds new light on how we can think about Clegg’s legacy and the impact that he had.
Setting out the educational landscape with which Clegg was most engaged, Chapter 3 explores the origins and implementation of the arts in education and of child-centred education through the literature. It examines the philosophy behind each approach and how Clegg developed and shaped the West Riding of Yorkshire’s educational environment to become not only nationally recognised but also internationally important.

Part 2 of the thesis then outlines the broad areas of literature surrounding Clegg and the literature underpinning the research project’s design. Extensive literature about Clegg is held in archives; this is presented in the first part of Chapter 4 as ‘Retrieval’ literature to highlight the history of the documents, that they are archival, and that the process of engagement with these documents was that of retrieving them from a past time and reengaging with them through the lens of Clegg and Bretton Hall College.

The rest of the chapter explores the literature surrounding Clegg and is positioned as Retrieving Clegg. This section positions Clegg within his own literature, making reference to the papers that he wrote, and his notes and letters that were donated after his death firstly by Lady Jessie Clegg, Clegg’s wife, and latterly by one of Clegg’s three sons. Professional documents generated by Clegg at the WREA are part of the collection held at the National Arts Education Archive alongside his own published works and are also examined here.

Chapter 5 then presents the methodological approach used, explaining the tools of narrative inquiry through grounded practice that are deployed in the thesis. It
explains that I place myself as the researcher into the space of serendipitous information seeker (Williams, 2021). This section provides an overview of the scholarly literature around narrative inquiry, which are at the heart of the research project’s design and provide the framework for the thesis methodology and analysis. The chapter also discusses the ways in which the direct and/or indirect legacy of Clegg is unpacked and the narratives collected are situated in the spatial behaviours of the students. Finally, it outlines the approach taken to collecting the student narratives.

Part 3 of the thesis examines how a community of practice was established and created at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974 through collected narratives from a sample of students who were there during these dates. It uses their narratives to (re)construct Bretton Hall College from their memories and experiences of their time living and studying in the physical spaces, thereby exploring how the environment of Bretton Hall College impacted their creation of a community of practice. The narratives are analysed using Narrative Inquiry mapped to the key areas of practice that Clegg is well documented to have shaped and influenced:

- Educational Policy
- Influence on those around him
- Creating a culture
- Educational space
- Leadership style

Where the narratives do not link Clegg to the key areas of his practice, they show the gap where Clegg has or has not had a direct impact on the community of practice at Bretton Hall College.
Chapter 6 uses the collected narratives to identify an emerging picture of the community of practice that was formed. It engages with the methodology of the research design and addresses the question through the narratives of whether Clegg’s impact on the creation of a community of practice at Bretton Hall College was one of direct or indirect legacy. The chapter also begins to demonstrate how spatial behaviours by the students informed their narratives collected for this research, and form the basis of the physicality of their engagement with the site of Bretton Hall College.

The sample narratives collected are presented as the spaces in between, which are the voices of the students at Bretton Hall College, in Chapter 7. The chapter presents the analysis and interpretations of the narratives and shows the absence of Clegg from the students’ memories and experiences of their time at Bretton Hall College, revealing the indirect legacy of Clegg. The chapter uses Narrative Inquiry to draw on memory and nostalgia, which is framed by the working practices of Clegg.

Chapter 8 then focuses on the significance of this community of practice and its relationship to Clegg. The findings of the collected narratives reveal the storied lives of the participants intertwined with art in education and child-centred philosophies and the community that belonged to, was created by, and is perpetuated by the students. It also identifies how a secondary function of their experiences is to provide a framework for their lives, embedded in the sense of belonging generated at Bretton Hall College. This happens without the participants’ awareness of this happening. By outlining these findings, the analysis shows how Clegg is excluded from the students’ memories and experiences of Bretton Hall College. The community of
practice and culture they created feels intensely personal and remains so: the
narratives were collected many decades after attending the College yet the need for
the students to be in the physical space again has an overwhelming appeal to them.
2.1 Introduction

_I think dad did it in a particular way, which was probably a bit different from most authorities. But that was the way authorities were organised. I mean, my uncle, for example, dad's brother-in-law, was the chief education officer for the North Riding._

(Clegg family member, excerpt from interview, Appendix 2)

Sir Alec Clegg (1909-1986) is a pioneering figure in English education of the twentieth century. In the context of this thesis, Clegg's educational philosophies and their shaping of his “particular way” of doing things in the West Riding Education Authority (WREA), between 1945 and 1974 (Clegg’s tenure), are of particular interest, because of the ways in which they influenced the type of education and teacher training that was provided by Bretton Hall College during the same period.

This period of activity coincided with “a more interventionist approach by the state in most areas of social life and it was perceived that education could address society’s inequalities and problems” (Forrester and Garratt, 2016, p.12). This potential for education clearly underpinned Clegg’s philosophy. Indeed, scholars have argued that Clegg’s:

_Vision was informed by a commitment to social justice and a belief in promoting access to educational opportunities to enhance the lives of working class children, enabling the ability and potential of ordinary children from modest and poor circumstances to be realised. He recognised the role of aesthetic experience in a rounded educational experience and the ‘growth of a child as a person’. _

(Wood, Pennington, and Su, 2021, p.308)
Within the literature surrounding Clegg, scholarly accounts discuss why Clegg held these beliefs and the focus of his work through an educational lens is often situated at the time of his work; we see this through his writing outputs and how this was used as a tool for influence within his own Authority, nationally and internationally. Clegg’s beliefs and work have also been written about through a reflective lens by employees of the WREA (Darvill, 2000, George, 2000).

However, and as we have established, there are gaps in this literature about Clegg, including recollections of the man from his family. This research project has collected these narratives as a way of addressing this gap. This allows for a re-examination of Clegg’s impact regarding his educational philosophy and practice, which has been well established by scholars, through a siting of Clegg’s activities in a domestic context. This also sheds light on the contradictions that are in fact present in his legacy, but which have to date often been overlooked. This chapter explores precisely these contradictions, by showing how family members remember Clegg and speak of his educational philosophies, and thus seeks to demonstrate the richness and nuances of Clegg’s legacy. The quotations provided in italics are taken from interviews with Clegg’s family members and the full transcription of these interviews are included in Appendix 2.

The reason for gathering this information becomes clear from the interviews themselves. For example:

_I was his son. And so that’s a bit different from working for him, I suspect. [The Peter Darvill and Nora George books] [neither] of them really go into the sort of details of, personal details much._
The above statement shows how the family narratives collected for this research reveal the other side of the known stories which are shown through the literature of Clegg, including the dismantling of the WREA. But more than this, what the literature does not show is what the family narratives do reveal, that is the lived experience of Clegg during that time, and the impact it had on his family observing it.

The importance of acknowledging this lived experience as part of Clegg's wider legacy is illustrated by the following statement:

*The stress that... I remember the stress that he had when they were splitting up the West Riding; and that was absolutely appalling. 'Cause he was also going through prostate problems at that time as well.... And he did have angina, which was diagnosed and he could take pills for it. And then later on he obviously got Parkinson's disease, and that's what he died from. But I remember the stress. And there must have been a lot of stress. I remember when he was first diagnosed with the angina... which of course, you could just keep in check by medication, so there was no real problem, I don't think. But I think it was probably all stress induced. I was brought up..., it was natural to recognise that my father worked for four or five hours on Saturday and Sunday. You know, that was sort of par for the course...*

The toll of Clegg’s commitment to his work is illustrated here and in particular, the effect of stress that was a result of his work. This level of discourse is not part of the official legacy of Clegg as recounted in scholarly literature. It is argued here that only by including the accounts of the lived experience of Clegg and the impact that had on his families’ formative years, that the whole of his legacy can be situated fully.

More recently the publication *Education through the arts for well-being and community: The vision and legacy of Sir Alec Clegg* (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021) reintroduces Clegg and revisits his role within arts in education and how he shaped and led the WREA.
Additional scholarly papers, thought pieces, newspapers articles are many; these discuss Clegg during his time and after, and reflect on his public standing and profile as the Chief Education Officer of a powerful and influential Local Education Authority. Collectively, and as this chapter will illustrate, this literature provides a consistent picture of a charismatic figure exploring educational approaches which would support the child and the educators through child-centred approaches. This support is seen in his investment in the educators through professional development delivered in house at Woolley Hall, and his introduction of innovative ideas influenced by John Dewey. His pursuit of the opportunity to work with Herbert Read is another example and is evidenced by Read being invited by Clegg to Bretton Hall College and Clegg drawing principles from Read’s seminal text *Education through Art* (Read, 1946) as a theory that enabled practice throughout the WREA.

A consistent picture presides of Clegg who worked hard, tirelessly, and with humour and compassion. He had a strong moral compass that reflected his Quaker upbringing, which shaped his practice in addressing both the spirit of the child alongside their educational engagement and opportunities. This consistent picture produced and reproduced through the literature is not disputed in this thesis; rather, Clegg was all of these things that have been well researched, evidenced by employees and colleagues of the WREA, and accepted as the professional and public identity of Clegg. Thanks to the literature, Clegg's legacy as a transformative and compassionate agent of change is secured.

However, as Clegg himself would think about the *whole* child (their spirit, their experiences, their opportunities, their ways of being), what do we know about the
whole Clegg? The private Clegg? What do we know of the whole legacy of Clegg?

Furthermore, where is that information and knowledge situated? This thesis argues that to examine Clegg’s legacy and impact, his whole person must be addressed. Not just the official legacy, which is well read and well known, but also the gaps in this official legacy which exist, including those constituted by the Bretton Hall College students, as well as by Clegg’s lived experience and his position as a family figure. Our understanding of how the familial framework in which Clegg was situated in, and which shaped his own family is missing from his legacy, as is how Clegg’s legacy is seen in the round by his family. This thesis therefore collected this primary data from Clegg’s family, to further our knowledge and understanding of the whole legacy of Clegg.

2.2 Tracing Sir Alec Clegg’s Legacy through Scholarship

2.2.1 Scholarship about Sir Alec Clegg

Much of the literature about Clegg focuses on his tenure at the West Riding Education Authority and on his impact on educational policy and processes there and beyond. For example, Peter Darvill’s biography, *Sir Alec Clegg: The Man, His Ideas and His Schools* (2000) charts the career of Clegg using predominately documents from the WREA. An administrative culture is presented where post-war rebuilding was necessary and was reflected around the country. The book uses statistics and government agendas to explore the work of the WREA. As far as Clegg is concerned, Darvill makes use of Clegg’s papers to present a largely known version of the story of Clegg that is derived from information in archival documents. This suggests that Clegg’s writings also play an important part in the ‘official’ conceptualisation of his legacy and our understanding of it. It is for this reason that
the next sub-section of this chapter seeks to synthesise some of Clegg’s most significant works from the point of view of how they contribute to our understanding of the man as a pioneering educationalist of his time. However, what is lacking in Darvill’s biography is a consideration of how the work of Clegg has resonance today. This makes it necessary to look at other sources in order to better establish Clegg’s legacy and potential impact on educational policy and values today.

Nora George’s *Sir Alec Clegg Practical Idealist: 1909-1986* (2000) again presents an account of Clegg at the WREA based on his papers with some supporting literature from other sources. The account is positioned around George’s own experience of working in the WREA and so provides information about Clegg from the point of view of a memoir. However, this publication provides more comment on Clegg’s work and allows conclusions to be drawn about his legacy and impact. For example, in a review of the book, V.A. McClelland describes the work as “illustrating how educational policy-making in the West Riding rested upon the visionary enterprise of a man who never lost his desire to be seen regularly in schools and to become acquainted at first hand with the varied needs and aspirations of teachers” (McClelland, 2000).

George’s narrative shows how people-centred policy is fundamental to understanding Clegg and his approach to his work. She positions him as a trained teacher and demonstrates his ongoing commitment to continuing that training, showing how his weekly visits to schools contributed to his understanding of how education worked and how it looked ‘on the ground’, day in and day out. This approach worked in Clegg’s favour because he never lost the ability to communicate
effectively with his staff. He made himself accessible and part of the learning journey of the schools, teachers, and classrooms on a regular basis.

Clegg moved into educational administration early into his career, after only three years of teaching. This experience coupled with constant engagement with staff and students provided the basis for mutual trust and respect. George states:

“Administration became a search for ways and means to achieve a humane educational plan which would work for the entire youth population” (George, 2000, p.1). She shows how Clegg recognised that to have widespread influence and the power to change educational structures, he would need administrative influence coupled with knowledge of the classroom. This was how he was able to successfully disseminate the work of the WREA classrooms and demonstrate the positive impact on education that the Authority was having.

George argues that “Alec Clegg’s commitment was to the children: he recognised one common commitment – the upbringing of the next generation. It was essential, he said, if not in Christian charity (which it should be) then from plain common sense and common humanity, that all the children should be educated” (George, 2000, p.21). As far as Clegg’s approach to this education is concerned, George explains:

“He was adamant that the overriding aim of teaching must be the personal development and social competence of the recipient. He argued that real learning begins when words are about experiences, ideas, and interests” (George, 2000, p.32). This highlights Clegg’s approach to education and his overarching philosophy as an educator. Chapter 1 demonstrated the ways in which these educational values have become core to our understanding of Clegg's legacy, seen in particular in
Pennington, Wood, and Su’s article and in their claim that ‘Clegg’s focus on the vital role of the creative and expressive arts with potential to enrich lives has an abiding importance for education today’ (Pennington, Wood, and Su, 2021, p.322). This is an important aspect of the ‘official’ narrative about Clegg and his legacy: his commitment to educating every child and to learning through experiences, ideas, interests, creativity, and the expressive arts as a way of enriching lives and providing learning experiences that were lifelong.

However, what George fails to acknowledge is the wider environment of the post-war educational landscape in which Clegg was operating, where optimism and driving forward the development of the country were national agendas. Chapter 1 demonstrated how Clegg was part of and influenced by the Zeitgeist of the moment. Indeed, he was one of several influential and pioneering Chief Education Officers of the period in Britain. Yet much of this context and the potential interconnections and influence of key thinkers and educationalists of the moment is not foregrounded in George’s account of Clegg’s legacy. She also does not focus on how Clegg’s work might have resonance today. Rather, her narrative highlights Clegg’s educational values and his commitment to people-centred leadership and his own ongoing training as a teacher.

The wider environment and Clegg’s place and influence within it is discussed by Catherine Burke in her 2018 article, ‘Humanism, modernism and designing education: exploring progressive relations between Australia, New Zealand and the West Riding of Yorkshire 1930s–1970s’. She traces Clegg’s professional connections with educationalists in Australia and New Zealand. In focusing on the
1930s to the 1970s, the article pays attention “to the impact of modernism and to the efforts of individuals who argued for a change of attitude towards the place of the arts in education and about the value of the arts in individual development and in strengthening democratic society” (Burke, 2018, p.258). Burke argues that “this strand of thought was essential to what later came to be called the revolution in primary education that Clegg described and, to a large extent, led” (Burke, 2018, p.258). It was during the 1960s and 1970s that this revolution was at its height, as “the English primary school was then considered to be the most advanced in the world in [...] developing an educational experience that might be enjoyed in an atmosphere of freedom, humanity and openness” (Burke, 2018, p.260).

The article acknowledges that Clegg was one of several educationalists who pioneered the development of such educational experiences through a focus on ‘education for living’ and ‘education through art’ (key concepts in progressive education of the period and part of a common vocabulary to which Clegg was drawn, according to Burke (2018, pp.261-2)). But Burke demonstrates how:

There was enormous respect, not only in the UK but abroad, for the guiding educational values provided by Alec Clegg, who had an acute regard for the influence of aesthetics and design in schools and would tolerate therein only, ‘things most likely to influence the growth of the human spirit’.

(Burke, 2018, p.266)

She illustrates how Clegg was a leading voice in the findings of the Newsom Enquiry of 1963, which concluded that:

What was needed was a recognition that those parts of education less easily measurable were as vital to the individual and society as those that were. This was an education of the spirit: that part of humanity that defies measurement.
In particular, Clegg drew attention to the role of the expressive arts and their impact on other basic skills.

(Burke, 2018, p.266)

Burke’s analysis underscores fundamental elements of Clegg’s legacy as far as the ‘official’ narrative is concerned. Clegg is rightly remembered for his commitment to educating the whole child through learning experiences and the expressive arts, and for creating opportunities that would facilitate the education of the human spirit.

The work of Clegg was revisited through the funded project *Sir Alec Clegg Revisited* (University of Cambridge Arts and Humanities Research Grant, 2016-17) at the University of Cambridge, led by Professor Catherine Burke, another teaching alumni of Bretton Hall College. The publication from the project, *Education Through the Arts for Well-being and Community: The Vision and Legacy of Sir Alec Clegg* (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021) situates the work of Clegg and his beliefs and philosophies for education through the now well-established lens of arts in education, focusing on its benefit for well-being and community. The aim of the book is to revisit Clegg who is seen as “unduly overlooked by educationalists and policy-makers today” (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021, p.5).

The book underlines how Clegg’s work hinges on educational reform through the arts as the priority, which is achieved through child-centred well-being and an unshakeable belief in the teacher as an agent for change. The Burke account is a positive revisitation to Clegg’s role and legacy as a visionary leader whose reach was far beyond the WREA, and who acted as a beacon to all progressive schools. This is not to say that the account is not critical: it allows, for the first time since the
Darvill and George accounts, an opportunity to explore Clegg in his context and view his contribution from a 21st Century viewpoint. This still has resonance today. Clegg’s legacy and values as recounted through Burke’s account remain solid, unerring, and Burke always recounts the best of what education can provide through the Clegg lens. Clegg’s legacy is grounded in the opportunities which education affords a child, and the account provides a reflection of these opportunities in light of the fiftieth anniversary of the Plowden Report of 1967. The report and Clegg’s input therein highlight his stance on education for the spirit, the whole child, the school environment, the lynchpin role of the teacher, and what is now recognised as well-being (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021, p.5).

Although the current educational landscape moves ever further away from Clegg’s ideals, the book shows how there is an alignment in how current policies, policy makers and Governments meet the needs of education today, just as Clegg did in post-war Britain. It opens this conversation by revisiting Clegg’s ideals to explore how he used people-centred methods to share and spread practice throughout the WREA. This focus on people is another element of the Clegg legacy.

The reaffirming of Clegg’s work and place in educational and societal history is timely from Burke and adds value to current debates on education and the role of well-being in the individual, demonstrating important aspects of Clegg’s legacy that other accounts do not obviously foreground. However, what the account does not add to the narrative on Clegg is the wider perspective on Clegg as a family man.

Lady Bridget Plowden (1910 – 2000) is most remembered for the Plowden Report of 1967, she was an educational reformer with a particular focus on primary education in Britain.
Furthermore, it does not show how Clegg’s role as a father overlapped or was separate from his role as Chief Education Officer of the WREA.

Tracing Clegg’s legacy through the scholarship about him demonstrates the way in which his legacy is situated in his values, which drive his behaviour. The sources well-document Clegg’s career and provide evidence of the depth and breadth of his administrative role where the full extent of his people-centred policies is presented. The global stretch of Clegg is also evident, and his hand can be seen in the governmental landscape of the Newsom Enquiry. What is evident from this scholarly literature around Clegg is that a consistent figure emerges, who is reliable and dependable in thought and action. Furthermore, the literature demonstrates how Clegg’s values and philosophies are at the core of what we might term his ‘official’ legacy.

2.2.2 Sir Alec Clegg’s Scholarship

The aforementioned published sources provide an in-depth overview of Clegg’s philosophies and values, which often draw on his published writings. To avoid repetition of this scholarship about Clegg drawn from his publications, this subsection refers to documents drawn from Clegg’s correspondence, notes, and speeches to examine Clegg’s philosophy in his own words. These documents are housed at the National Arts Education Archive (NAEA), situated at the Bretton Hall College site (now Yorkshire Sculpture Park). The aim is to shed light on Clegg’s thought and the way in which this informed the actions he took and the approaches he embraced, which in turn shape the impact he had and his resultant legacy.
These documents together reveal Clegg’s commitment to what we might call mental and spiritual learning. This is clear in a speech delivered at Mexborough Grammar School in 1951 for their Prize Giving. Here, Clegg references many human achievements, establishing the passing of time and how far human endeavour has come. In the conclusion, he brings together the mind and spirit, suggesting that the speed at which life is advancing needs to be tempered with wisdom and foresight. Additional clarification of Clegg’s understanding of mental and spiritual learning is provided in a speech Clegg delivered in June 1960 at the Royal College of Art, entitled ‘Visual Arts in a County Education Authority’. However, there is very little about visual arts in it. Instead, Clegg takes the opportunity to clarify what he means by mental and spiritual education, making a clear delineation of spiritual as not being related to faith or religion and instead being aligned with the spirit of the individual as a motivation and joyful, catalytic starting point. This commitment to ‘spiritual learning’ was one of Clegg’s enduring core beliefs, and informs the way in which he is remembered, as illustrated in the previous sub-section.

Another aspect of Clegg’s philosophy that clearly emerges from his papers is his belief in child-centred support and education. For example, in a set of notes entitled ‘The “Easy and Difficult” part of Education: The Difference between Mind and Spirit in the Classroom’, written in 1974, Clegg provides a series of examples and clarifications of what is characterised as mind and what may be seen as spirit. These reveal Clegg’s understanding of how to create the culture and educational model that a child needed to thrive. These clear definitions of what the mind or measurement may be and what the spirit and emotion may be reveal the corner stones of Clegg’s philosophy. One is not ever in isolation with the other and nor, he argued, should it
be. The document ends with the handwritten addition of “The creation of exhileration [Author's spelling] by success in some and depression by continual failure in others” (Clegg, 1974). The context of this comment reveals ongoing concerns about an individual’s wellbeing, and about how one child may flourish and another flounder depending on the focus of either mind or spirit.

Clegg’s commitment to the holistic support of children recurs in another set of papers from February 1974. The paper ‘The Technician’s Job and the Professionals’ brings together Clegg’s policy, culture, and education model. Here, Clegg reflects on how all children are constantly learning and how this should be supported holistically. Giving examples of learning to talk, Clegg argues: should children only be taught to speak one at a time? Or by one syllable? He suggests ways of approaching the individual and of using grouping where needed to support the child, and reflects on the usefulness of “family grouping” (Clegg, 1974), where older children help younger children. Clegg's commitment not only to a holistic approach to a child’s education and, more than that, the trust and belief in a child to help another child through community is apparent. It is worth including here the opening paragraph which demonstrates succinctly and with clarity the mind and spirit coming together:

We cannot alter the age or intelligence of a child but we can at school affect: his confidence; his ability to get on with others; his pride in achievement; his imagination; his ability to express himself; his happiness; his capacity to make a choice or judgment; his initiative, his honesty and integrity.

(Clegg, 1974, AC/PL/639)

These are the values in education that Clegg embraced and sought to embed in those he worked with, and which informed his approach to education training and
policymaking. We can clearly see here Clegg’s emphasis of the importance of the child as an individual learner and of supporting and developing both the spiritual and mental learning of that child. These are elements of his philosophy which have naturally become part of his legacy, given the ways in which they informed his actions and thus his impact on the educational landscape in the West Riding of Yorkshire and beyond.

2.3 Approaching the Family Narratives of Sir Alec Clegg’s Legacy

Clegg’s legacy is one of commitment to child-centred education, holistic support, and the education of the human spirit through experiences, creativity, and the expressive arts in a way that never lost sight of practice and teaching in the context of the classroom. His visits to schools and his approach to administrative work facilitated the creation and development of a community whose members benefitted from his thinking and who were encouraged to develop their own approach to holistic education. However, and as this thesis seeks to demonstrates, there are gaps in this legacy. The development of a community involved the establishment of a teacher training centre at Bretton Hall College, yet the voices of the Bretton Hall College Alumni (1949-1974) remain as yet unheard as far as their interactions with Clegg and their awareness of the impact of his philosophies and values on their practice as teachers and arts practitioners.

Recognising that the unheard voices of Bretton Hall College are seminal to our understanding of Clegg’s influence and impact, provides the framework to examining his legacy from multiple perspectives. Legacies are constructed in many different ways and by many different people but if all stakeholders in that legacy are not heard
or recognised, then the legacy is incomplete. As a result, this thesis demonstrates how the current understanding of the legacy of Clegg is not in fact the whole legacy of Clegg. It is a partial construction of Clegg and his work and beliefs, which is not complete. By incorporating the unheard voices of the Bretton Hall College students throughout this thesis, and the unheard voices of Clegg’s family as this chapter does, the thesis allows a fuller picture of Clegg’s legacy to emerge. By situating previously unheard voices within the legacy building of Clegg and acknowledging how these unheard voices contribute to that process, this chapter and the thesis more broadly shed light on the multifaceted nature of legacy building and on the contradictions that the resultant legacy can embody.

However, engagement with family narratives which are directly discussing the legacy of a family member holds a specific set of problems. In this research project, the person being discussed is Clegg, a high-profile individual, an influential and a charismatic figure who was eminent in his field, and who was also a father. It is the role of being a father which the family narrative primary data predominately focuses on and which inflects the recollections of Clegg’s work as an educationalist. However, Clegg’s standing was more than an educational administrator; it sometimes borders on the celebrity, and his official legacy is perpetuated through the lenses of change maker, innovator, and leader. The family narrative reveals that for some, Clegg’s standing is all powerful:

_Ian McMillan_⁵. He was at Bretton. And he publicly, every now and then, still, whenever he’s on radio, he says, ‘Of course, I went to Bretton Hall, and there

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⁵ Ian McMillan (1956 – present) is an alumnus of the WREA having gone to school at Low Valley Junior School and Wath Grammar School during Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure. McMillian still lives in the West Riding of Yorkshire and is a poet, playwright, and broadcaster in Britain.
The reported deification of Clegg by McMillan demonstrates an element of Clegg’s that is not acknowledged by the literature: the assertion that Clegg was God places the educationalist on a pedestal and suggests that his philosophies and values should be followed and emulated (as religious followers would do). The description gives Clegg a superhuman quality and places him beyond everyday humanity. The family narratives provide a counter to this by outlining Clegg’s quotidianity, and his domestic life. This helps to bring Clegg back down to earth.

This in turn demonstrates how a legacy is multifaceted, and how perceptions of that legacy are similarly different, and sometimes contradictory. In the context of family perceptions of a legacy, family bonds that tie a family together produce ownership on a fundamental level and feeds a desire to create and own a specific recollection and legacy of a lost family member. This can create a contradiction with other, established elements of the person’s legacy, which can be problematic. Writing about posthumous celebrity, Joli Jensen sheds light on precisely these contradictions,

[…] fans, critics and journalists generate a variety of conflicting stories of legacy. The struggle to ‘own’ a celebrity, especially after death, foregrounds the problematic differences between personal and familial claims, fan desires, and critical commentary on who can constitute the star’s legacy.

(Jensen, p. xviii)

This struggle to ‘own’ the significance of a posthumous celebrity or, in this case, the legacy of an educationalist is played out in the juxtaposition of the family’s
contribution to the legacy and memory of their family member, Clegg, against the landscape of an overwhelming public ownership of the legacy.

It must also be noted that the primary data collected for this chapter reveals that whilst a largely shared and remembered narrative from Clegg’s family members about Clegg exists, there are occasions where recollections diverge. These contradictions are to be expected from the point of view of posthumous celebrity narratives, and also as the accepted norms of oral history data collection. This is demonstrated by Burke, Cunningham and Hoare when they write about the primary data collection process for the most recent work on Clegg:

This oral history research elicited some conflicting and controversial first-hand memories and interpretations. Criticism of Clegg as a person or of his philosophy of practice was rarely articulated, though recent research has challenged the extent of some change in schools.

(Burke, Cunningham and Hoare, 2022, pp.8-9)

2.4 Analysing the family narratives about Sir Alec Clegg

The interviews conducted with Clegg’s family do not on the surface reveal contradictions with Clegg’s established legacy as a child-centred educator for living and through art was committed to creativity, experiences, and the creative arts as means to grow the human spirit, and as a people-centred leader who sought ways to support the community he was leading and was committed to his own continuing development as a practitioner. The interviews talk about growing up with a father figure who ruled with an authoritarian style, who is nonetheless remembered kindly, and this family context is situated within broader memories of village life and the domestic rhythms of childhood days.
However, there are moments in the family narratives where the family’s recollections differ from Clegg’s ‘official’ legacy that is perpetuated in the literature. A well-known example that is challenged by the family is that of Clegg citing Michelangelo to praise the best of people, but this is questioned by the family recollection:

_I think he just had this very straightforward belief that there was a really good, there was good in every child. And I think lots of people didn't in those days, you know. And also, he had a passionate belief that, that there wasn't enough time and effort devoted to creative education; that it was all facts and... I mean, he spent a lot of time [reflecting on] the way he was taught, and his father was taught, and all the rubbish that people drilled into kids. And he was always a very anti-drilling... you know, it was the pot-filling versus fire-lighting thing......Well, I don't think education officers went round to see their schools. And secondly, he probably was... you know, his attitude generally was: 'Let's get the best out of this person by praising them.' And there's that Michelangelo quote If you praise me, you'll get the best out of me. Which I don't know where that comes from. I think it's maybe fabricated. I can't believe he'd say that._

The family narrative does not think that Clegg would have said this. Clegg most definitely sought to praise people, as is well documented in the literature around Clegg. But the fact that this family member believes that Clegg would not have cited Michelangelo in this way, and that the episode is probably fabricated, raises the question of how much of the _whole_ Clegg is known through the published literature. By exploring the family narratives, we can begin to see the extent to which Clegg’s professional reputation was built by others’ opinions of him, rather than the words he would use about himself. This is important because this thesis is seeking to establish how we can evaluate Clegg’s legacy by listening to the voices that have not been listened to and incorporated thus far. What this example also shows is the complex fabrication process that is involved in the production and maintenance of a posthumous legacy, and the ways in which different voices contribute to that
production process, sometimes with inaccurate information. When we do not listen to voices that have hitherto been excluded from the fabrication of the legacy, we are only able to partially understand and appreciate that legacy.

However, and as we can see in the above quotation, the family narrative does not necessarily challenge all elements of Clegg's legacy. The focus on an arts-centred education is particularly prevalent in the narrative. One particular recollection provides insight into Clegg's commitment to the arts and creativity as a means of educating and engaging children in learning, and to education for all regardless of background:

What else did I want to mention? Yes, the pictures. I mean, he used to... he was a sentimental person, my dad. You know, he was very, he was strict about, you know, the family, and he was strict about himself and hard-working and all that kind of thing. But he was sentimental, because he used to burst into tears when he used to look at those pictures. I mean, I'm exaggerating. But I mean, I'm sure there were occasions – well, he used to talk about it – when he'd go into a school and see children producing... It was partly to do with the idea of artistic expression, which he, that was, formed [at] the centre of a lot of his educational thinking over the years. But also, it was to do with the idea of poverty... you know, he wrote that book [with Barbara Megson, Children in Distress]. And I think that idea... I don't quite know where it came from. When I think of the ideas that drove his education, his educational thinking, one was the idea of poverty, and children overcoming all kinds of barriers to make a success of their education. That was one thing. And the other is the importance of the arts in education, and of artistic expression and of expression in English, expression in dance and in art. And I think one of the reasons why it used to move him to see those pictures was, those two things come together in those pictures. Don't know where, I don't know where either of those ideas came from. His own father... [Samuel], he was a headteacher in Long Eaton. And I mean, a man of a lot of distinction, apparently, in that community, the arts were extremely important in that school. I'm sure that that played an important part in the way my dad then came to think of the arts in education. And the thing that he was absolutely passionate about... you know, I remember he would get out and show us all these, all those paintings that are down in the archive, particularly Mrs. Pyrer's thirty-six paintings. Well, I remember that..... also, it's kind of interesting, isn't it, that he was, come to think of it, that he was passionate enough to bring them out at home and
The pictures in question are a collection of thirty-six children’s paintings that Clegg would take with him on school visits around the world (as discussed in Chapter 4). We gain insight here into the significance of art as a vehicle and means of expression for all children, which is equally accessible to all. Clegg harnessed the medium of art both directly and as a pedagogical approach through his commitment to bringing the arts into education, and this behaviour in turn illustrates his strongly held belief in and commitment to social justice. The significance of the body of 36 paintings should not be underestimated. On the surface, they are used as a tool by Clegg to showcase the work of the children at WREA schools. However, they are also a symbol of social justice when viewed through the Clegg lens of child centred values because they illustrate his strongly held belief that, in the right conditions, all children could overcome their situation in life, their barriers, and achieve, even excel.

The family narrative also reveals Clegg’s thinking on poverty and that it was one of the ideas that drove his education, his educational thinking. This theme of poverty can be seen throughout Clegg’s time at the WREA, and his writings into retirement. It was not tokenism from Clegg: we can see this not only through the recurrence in the literature about Clegg of instances of his scaffolding the raising up of children through their poverty, but also in how this permeated Clegg’s family life. The family narrative shows how the two sides of Clegg, private and professional, continually overlap and blur, and yet are still values driven. The reflection he was passionate enough to bring them out at home and show them to us, his kids? Yeah, ‘cause I wouldn’t take my work home and show it to my kids, interestingly.
values he upholds in the workplace are the same values he is raising his children with.

Furthermore, the 36 paintings were acknowledged by Clegg as his own learning tool for child art (Chapter 4). This significance is recognised by the family of Clegg who reinforce the level of feeling and emotion in Clegg: *But he was sentimental, because he used to burst into tears when he used to look at those pictures.* This provides us with insight into the private Clegg, who was emotionally invested in the work of the children, which was viewed also in the home environment with his children. This narrative is important because it shows the *whole* Clegg, with blurred boundaries between private and personal, yet with the same value system firmly in place. This builds on our understanding of Clegg’s legacy as it reinforces the values that have been identified as at the core of his ‘official’ legacy and allows a veil to be lifted on both sides of Clegg who is thus revealed as an advocate for justice, driven by his values, which also simultaneously shape the way he raises and interacts with his children.

Another part of the narrative points specifically to the expectations that Clegg had for his family:

*Well, I think it must have been a big thing that, you know, he had four older sisters, and he was the youngest and a son. And, you know, huge, huge expectations, just as my father had huge expectations of me, I suppose. But sort of had expectations of all of us, I think. You know, it’s, it was... I think we were both driven by parental, by paternal expectation.*

Significantly, Clegg’s values appear to have driven the expectations he had for his family members:
So, I think his own father had a strong idea of the idea of the arts in education and the role of beautiful things in education. I can see where his ideas about painting came from, because they would have been important in his father's school.

But it was, I think it was very deliberate. And it sort of went into all of us. It was, became sort of background to our lives. And so, I think all of us are particularly interested in classical music now, all three of us......and know quite a lot about it. Not because we ever talked about it. It'd be on all the time. And, and he didn't go to too many concerts with us. But I mean, all of us, we used to go to concerts at Leeds Town Hall. But it was just a way of teaching you about music without ever actually talking about it.

Here, the memory again demonstrates the significance of the arts for Clegg, but this time, for the ways in which it might educate his family. The observation that it was very deliberate. And it sort of went into all of us reveals how Clegg’s values and philosophies around an arts education permeated his whole life, both domestic and professional. We have here an example of how the expressive arts can be used to promote growth of the human spirit but interestingly, the students in question are not school pupils but Clegg’s own family.

Another narrative talks more about how Clegg set his expectations at home:

[...] from my point of view, and from my brothers' point of view – but from my point of view, he was extraordinarily authoritarian, in a very nice way. You know, there was amazing moral authority that he drove the family with, you know. I mean, if you imagine, persuading three teenage boys they all had to get up at seven-thirty to practise musical instruments... You know, you had to persuade them, persuade us to do two hours of gardening every Saturday morning. You know, and we just did it. And you, the values were there, good, solid left-wing values. And if you, but if you went a bit too far to the left, you were in dangerous territory, you know. I remember my father... the one thing that he did... he did have this way of saying, applying huge pressure very lightly. He would say things like, 'You know, well, I don't really have to worry about you, because I know you always do your best, you know.' And you kind of think, 'God, I've got to do my best. Jesus Christ, you know. Raise the game, yeah. But the fact that, 'I know you will do your best...
The above memory reveals the way in which Clegg managed his family and set his expectations for his sons' behaviour. He is described as extraordinarily authoritarian, in a nice way, showing how Clegg was able to use his authority to command respect and ensure his expectations were met. The family member recollects how Clegg had this way of saying, applying huge pressure very lightly, suggesting one of the demonstrable ways in which Clegg ensured his authority would not be challenged and his will would be adhered to. These observations begin to provide an insight into Clegg’s leadership style, something which is not often discussed in the literature about his legacy.

For example, this sense of applying huge pressure very lightly can be seen in Clegg’s hand throughout the WREA, as the narratives collected for this research being to illustrate. This kind of behaviour thus straddles both Clegg’s personal and professional lives. This can be seen as Clegg is acknowledged for his leadership and community building within in the WREA, where staff feel honoured and chosen when Clegg visited their school. The narratives also recall visits to the Clegg home:

(Family member 1) when he was at home, he just wanted to relax at home, and never... you know, we very rarely sort of had guests round or visitors round or whatever, but he also worked a lot at home, you know.

(Family member 2) The other thing that I remember, when they all came together... it's interesting, 'cause I was saying we never had people round, but obviously we did. We had these bloody Secretaries of State round. And every year they did have a garden party, my dad had a garden party, at which basically all his staff, and all the staff's partners... I mean, they weren't all men, but a lot of the wives. But also... a lot of them were female spinsters, in a sense. So, they were all, they were all invited. And I remember those very, very well, because there was a lot of, good humour. And they were a really interesting bunch of people. And we had this big garden.
These two narratives reveal what we think we remember and what may have actually happened. It was revealed through primary data narratives collected for this research project (Appendix 2) that Clegg held social occasions at his home for staff of the WREA. These narratives recall these occasions as happy, joyful events with a feeling of privilege for the staff invited at being given access to a private family space and being welcomed as part of that community. The above recollection is seen from the eyes of a child, who at the time may have not seen the extension of a family event to work colleagues as acceptable, or even understood that the event was not a family event even if it was held at the family home. The visits took place because Clegg was building a community of practice, which he did through events like garden parties, and hosting Secretaries of State, which was viewed by one family member, from a child’s perspective as not enjoyable, and from another child’s perspective as having *good humour* and being *a really interesting bunch of people*. This insight starts to provide a different lens on Clegg’s legacy, by acknowledging the family experiences of growing up around this important figure and his activities that sought to build a community through social get-togethers. This reveals how the family of Clegg bore witness to the community building of Clegg and brings to his legacy all experiences and elements of the people involved. We will return to the importance of the domestic setting for what it continues to reveal about Clegg’s legacy shortly.

The visits to schools and the inviting staff to his home for social occasions collectively produces an image of man who is held in high esteem and that individuals want to please. Clegg not only visited schools, but he also highlighted the good work happening within schools and places a spotlight on this thanks to his own, quasi celebrity status. I would suggest that this celebrity is enjoyed by his staff, if not
by Clegg, who seek his approval of their student education practice. Thus, by applying huge pressure very lightly within his role as Chief Education Office of the WREA, as Clegg did within the domestic sphere, Clegg was at once expecting respect and providing the conditions for respect to take place.

More insights into Clegg's leadership style emerge from the family’s memories. For example, an additional family narrative refers to the ending of the WREA as follows:

*His own education department, you know, that was where he was king…. he was a collaborative monarch… What had happened was that he had actually reached retirement age before that happened, but they asked him to stay on. Yeah, and he just presided over the dissolution of his empire.*

The words *king, monarch, and empire* on the one hand support the ‘official’ legacy around Clegg as an important educational leader, presiding as he did over the second largest Local Education Authority outside of London at the time. On the other hand, these terms suggest the level of power and authority that Clegg had, and the way in which he ran the authority: the fact that he was in charge of ‘an empire’ leads us to question the practical ways in which his people-centred policies and approach played out on a daily basis. Kings and monarchs have absolute power and control and give instructions that members of their kingdoms or empires must follow unquestioningly. The vocabulary reflects the almost God-like status that Clegg had achieved, which perpetuated in the ‘official’ legacy. But we are also left with questions about how Clegg managed the success of the Authority, at least as far as the perceptions of the family are concerned.

The aforementioned recollections about visits to the family home also reveal another side to Clegg’s legacy which is often overlooked: they introduce an understanding
and awareness of the domestic and private sphere into Clegg’s public and professional legacy. The observation that *when he was at home, he just wanted to relax* reveals that Clegg was not just a pioneering educationalist: he was also a family man. An awareness of the private side of Clegg’s life expands our understanding of his legacy and allows us to appreciate more fully the whole man. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the domestic and private side of Clegg are of particular importance to his family and their recollections. As the family members talk about him and share their narratives, they often seek to place their recollections in the broader context of family life and family history. For example, there is speculation around Clegg's own relationship with his father and the impact that may have had on Clegg as a father himself:

*I don’t know about this, but I imagine there was a very good relationship between him and his father, but also a very ambivalent relationship. Because he obviously didn’t do well in his father’s school. And, and I’ve always thought, or maybe even, maybe dad even used to say, it was because he was in the school in which his father was headteacher. And I think at one point – I’m pretty sure about this – that his Aunt Belle talked to his father, and said, ‘Look, Alec has got to get out of your school and go to another one.’ And he did. He took him out, and he sent him to Bootham in York [Quaker School] Where he did far, far better. And so, I think there was obviously, you know, as in families, you know, relationships are ambivalent. And I would have thought, I think it didn’t do him good to be in his father’s own, his father’s school. I vaguely remember my Aunt Belle, but, you know, she was obviously a perceptive woman, and made a good point. And it changed his... I think it changed his educational career, because he may not have made it if he’d stuck in that school.*

The family members here reflect on Clegg’s status as a pioneering educationalist from the point of view of where his journey in education started. They are aware of Clegg’s personal education history, and are able to comment on the impact that a different educational experience as a child had on him and his career.
They are also able to provide insights into the family environment:

You know, it was quite a formal family. We had breakfast together, and conversation over breakfast was about politics and education. And, that sort of engagement – he did engage with us. I played the flute, and he played the flute, so we used to do duets together. My brothers played the oboe and the clarinet. And we used to sort of play as a little group together. In his own way, he was trying to recreate what his father did. Because he talked about his... I think it must have been his sister playing the piano, and my uncle, my Uncle Fred Attenborough, and my father, my grandfather, you know, having singsongs round the piano and that sort of thing.

The recollection here illustrates the presence of the arts and music in the family home, and the environment in which Clegg grew up (he lived with the Attenborough family, including his cousins, Richard and David, from 1930, following the deaths of his parents whilst he was at college). But these memories about the family are also significant from the point of view of legacy building as they show how important the private and domestic aspects of Clegg’s life are to his family. These stories provide a counterpoint to the ‘official’, professional legacy and provide an opportunity to remove Clegg from the pedestal on which he is often placed. It is therefore crucial to our understanding of the whole legacy of Clegg to listen to these stories and to acknowledge the private alongside the professional as a way of more fully appreciating and evaluating Clegg’s legacy.

Creating space for the private within Clegg’s legacy also affords the opportunity to learn of anecdotes that shed light on how Clegg behaved and how his values and philosophies informed his everyday actions. For example, when reflecting on the way in which Clegg managed the WREA, the family narrative compares his leadership style to that of Frank Barraclough⁶, head of the North Riding at the same time:

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⁶ Frank Barraclough was the brother-in-law of Sir Alec Clegg. He was the Chief Education Officer of the North Riding of Yorkshire running concurrently with Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure at the WREA.
I think dad did it in a particular way, which was probably a bit different from most authorities. But that was the way authorities were organised. I mean, my uncle, for example, dad's brother-in-law, was the chief education officer for the North Riding, Frank Barraclough.... I think other people didn't do it [his way], either. The other chief education officers, you know, they didn't... I mean, 'cause my uncle was Frank Barraclough, who was the head of North Riding at the same time. He was terribly opposite. He was very much the opposite, you know. He was a good administrator that sat in his office all day. I mean, apparently, my father used to go out every Thursday, used to go out to a school. And, you know... his secretaries and PAs..., desperately trying to find him, stop him going off to visit more schools, you know. But he kind of liked, he just liked being there and finding out what was going on.

The family occupation of educators continues through marriage of Clegg's siblings, and the differences in style are evident to Clegg's sons. Frank Barraclough is not one of the few greats: his style is more that of a strait-laced educational administrator, and this is aptly summarised in the family narrative:

[...] My uncle was incredibly pompous... there was a bit of my dad that couldn't stand him at all.

The narrative demonstrates how the family members were clearly aware of the different approaches to and styles of leadership that Clegg and Barraclough demonstrated. Even if they remember through the lens of family, their memories nevertheless demonstrate Clegg's commitment to people-centred practice and to his own ongoing engagement with practitioners and development as one. The recollection sheds light on how Clegg behaved as the Chief Education Officer of the WREA and how his approach to administration, which was also people-centred, played out in practice.
Another story again reveals Clegg’s values in practice. This time, the recollection is of a story told by Peter Newsam:⁷

Actually, there’s a nice story that Peter Newsam tells... about him finding my dad in the little shed down by the lake. So, when Peter Newsam [on], his first day working for my dad as a deputy, deputy chief education officer. He turned up, and he said they didn’t seem to have much for him to do. And I think my dad took him round and introduced him to various people. And I can’t remember what he said he used to do. And then he disappeared off. And later, Peter Newsam came out to Bretton the same day, and he found my dad in the little rowing shed down by the lake, writing a speech. I think maybe he said, ‘I’ve got to go and write this speech,’ but he didn’t say where he was going. He went down to the rowing shed. So that’s a very nice story for Bretton, isn’t it, really? And I think there is something about this that is, you know, the embodiment of old West Riding. And I think… you know, it’s interesting, isn’t it, that it’s the only bit that’s left, ’cause everything else has been hived off.

This shows us that of course Clegg visited Bretton Hall College, even if not recalled in the narratives collected here from the Bretton Hall College students, and it also illustrates how Clegg was more visible as an active Chief Education Officer than Barraclough. However, this family narrative reveals more: it shows that whilst on the campus of Bretton Hall College, Clegg was mirroring the students’ use of the campus (as we shall see in Chapter 7), finding ways to make it his own, to occupy the site in an informal way, in a domestic way. Clegg could have written at a desk inside the Mansion House, and arguably not have been disturbed if requested; however, Clegg chose the rowing shed down by the lake. It is therefore suggested that Clegg at times becomes part of the Bretton Hall College student’s domain (Wenger), reflecting the student’s community of practice behaviours. Clegg may have provided the conditions of possibility for the Bretton Hall College students to create a community of practice, but the family narrative reveals how he also became

⁷ Peter Newsam worked with Sir Alec Clegg and went on to become the Chief Education Officer for the Inner London Education Authority, 1975-1981. Newsam has written about his experiences of his career, including with Sir Alec Clegg in his book An Autobiography of Education (Greenlea Books, 2014)
a part of that community of practice. We see here the ‘private’ side of Clegg’s values in practice: the recollection begins to fill a gap in the legacy around how these values that the ‘official’ narrative champions actually shaped what Clegg did on a day-to-day basis. Our understanding of Clegg's legacy is enhanced by creating a space within that legacy for previously unheard voices to speak of his values, philosophies, behaviours, and practice.

2.5 Conclusion

This chapter has brought to the fore Clegg’s official legacy by tracing it through the scholarship about and by Clegg. These sources consistently reveal a values driven figure, a child-centred educator and administrator, a believer in the teacher as agent of change, who provided unrelenting support for the teachers with whom he was working. A figure who embodies positive morals and who seeks to spread this by maintaining a visible presence throughout the WREA schools predominately, as well as building a wider reach globally. His legacy reveals how Clegg was a supporter and visionary enabler of creativity and expressive arts throughout the school journey of a child, and how he sought to train teachers to deliver this type of education. But the legacy also illustrates how Clegg was a master of people-centred approaches, always putting the person at the heart of any activity. This approach would be used as a scaffold for growth for the individual. This approach was the catalyst of culture creation throughout the WREA, and produced a culture that championed the growth of the human spirit to achieve a whole person not just an academically able individual.
Viewing Clegg through his own scholarship reinforces this official legacy: his values are genuine and acted upon, to the benefit of all. His own scholarship provides the detailed nuance of his message, revealing the layering of his own practice. In his work, we discover stories from which learning can be taken and that we can be inspired by. In a way, the stories help to motivate achievement by *applying huge pressure very lightly*. This is part of Clegg’s legacy.

By incorporating the family narrative of Clegg into the ‘official’ legacy of Clegg, a reinforcement of the importance of the arts as a tool and as a pedagogy, including in the home, can be seen. Clegg is always values driven: this was clear to see in his professional life but is also now seen in his domestic life. This is particularly evident in the recollections of how Clegg sets the bar for his sons through domestic chores, and weekend routines, and he shared his ‘work’ (the 36 paintings) with his children, and was reduced to tears. The recollection of such moments raises the question of how Clegg carried his authority both at work and at home. Clegg being reduced to tears seems maybe unlikely in a work environment, yet the same set of paintings renders him emotional at home, sitting with his own children. This allows for a different perspective of Clegg to develop as part of his legacy, as it allows for Clegg to be seen as human. Not God like, or a King, or presiding over an empire, the story allows us to get to know Clegg as a *whole* person, when his guard can be down and formatively shaping his children. This in turn allows a further reading of Clegg, to see how his values informed his own day to day practice as an educationalist which is also be rooted in his own private life.
By bringing together and analysing the narratives provided by Clegg’s family against the backdrop of the official Clegg narrative, the chapter highlights and interrogates the ways in which the two narratives of legacy (official and familial) reinforce, expand, and sometimes contradict one another. Taken collectively, they contribute to a broader understanding and appreciation of Clegg’s whole legacy.
Chapter 3: The Contextual Landscape: Arts in Education and Child-Centred Education

3.1 Introduction

To understand Clegg’s educational philosophies and values more fully and to ascertain their impact on the Bretton Hall College students, it is necessary to situate Clegg’s work within the broader educational landscape of the period. This chapter therefore explores the origins and implementation of the arts in education and of child-centred education in Britain in the post-war period as a way of setting out the educational landscape with which Clegg was most engaged. It examines the philosophy behind each approach and how Clegg developed and shaped the WREA’s educational environment to become not only nationally recognised but also internationally important. This approach begins to shed light on the specificities of the Bretton Hall College experience for its students, and to demonstrate Clegg’s direct and indirect impact on the College.

To establish the landscape within which Clegg operated, the chapter focuses on the post-war arts in education context. However, this context is informed by the backdrop of developments in education and the resultant government policies and initiatives from the following dates:

Table 3.1 Contextual Chronology of Arts in Education in England

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Key development and Clegg’s involvement as appropriate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1870</td>
<td>Elementary Education Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1902</td>
<td>Education Act which established Local Authorities</td>
</tr>
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### 1926 and 1933
Haddow (provided a foundation for the 1944 Secondary Education Act)

### 1938
Spens Report

### 1943
Norwood Report

### 1944
Butler Report and Secondary Education Act
(signifies a shift from education purely as an authoritarian framework to an emphasis on physical wellbeing which included the holistic school environment encompassing improvements to school buildings)

### 1944
McNair Report

### 1946
The Barlow Report

### 1959
The Crowther Report
(Clegg part of committee)

### 1960
Beloe Report

### 1963
Robbins Report
(Concerned with future of higher education)

### 1967
Plowden Report
(Clegg part of committee)

### 1968
Newsom Report

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### 3.2 Sir Alec Clegg, Charismatic Writers, and Practitioners of the Post-war Period

Mirroring and drawing on the stance of Mike Fleming (2010, 2012), to provide a context of the arts in education and the contextual positioning of Clegg against this...
backdrop, it is necessary to consider the developments of the whole of the twentieth century, which were in turn informed by the 1870 Elementary Education Act. As Fleming comprehensively states:

In the first part of the twentieth century there are two contrasting narratives to be considered. One is concerned with official reports, education acts and publications and the other with the work of individuals, charismatic writers and practitioners whose passion for the arts was intense….the post war period from the 1950s onwards saw an expression of interest in the arts in education when ideas influenced by progressive educators (in the tradition of writers like Rousseau, Froebel, Pestalozzi) which had been developing since the turn of the century started to take hold.

(Fleming, 2010, p.9)

Clegg is situated in amongst both narratives as his work was guided by official reports, education acts, and publications, and he also contributed to such official reports and publications through his own philosophical lens. Moreover, Clegg has been established as one of the charismatic individuals that Fleming identifies here: Clegg had an intense passion for the arts in education that was manifest in his career throughout the West Riding Education Authority (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021).

Alongside this framing of governmental and educational policies, and philosophical ideologies, Clegg was situated in the creative art in education literature of the post-war period. For example, the work of Franz Cizek, a key figure in the development of child visual art (Fleming, 2010), influenced Clegg. Indeed, Cizek would be befriended by Clegg and would become a voice in the WREA under Clegg. The works of Weitz

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8 Morris Weitz (1916 – 1981) was an American philosopher writing about aesthetics and the theory of art.
(1956), Slade⁹ (1954) and Way¹⁰ (1967) also informed Clegg’s thinking. John Dewey’s creative philosophy, which influenced thinking through the arts, was evidently a key influence on Clegg, as Clegg drew on Dewey’s teachings repeatedly in presentations and talks throughout his educational career. Morally, Dewey appears to have been a cornerstone for Clegg in his work: he became a conduit for human-centred approaches in Clegg’s many public addresses to schools, teachers, children, and politicians alike (Sir Alec Clegg Collection, National Arts Education Archive).

Herbert Read, an established figure in the arts during the 1940s and 1950s who had strongly held views about the arts in education, was another influential and key figure to be befriended by Clegg. Read would become a visitor to the WREA, and his involvement with the Authority would even include delivering a speech at Bretton Hall College. I would even argue that Read’s work and seminal text, *Education through Art*, influenced and contributed to Clegg’s own shaping of the WREA. As George Woodcock writes in *Education Through Art* (1975):

> At the time of its first appearance in 1948, the reputation of *Education Through Art* spread far beyond Read’s normal audience of anarchists and arts lovers, and indeed influenced [...] many of the people he most wished to reach – the teachers, and their teachers in the colleges of education.

(Woodcock, 1975, p.1)

⁹ Peter Slade wrote about drama in education which encompassed the creative expression of the child which used their imagination based on individual emotions.

¹⁰ Brian Way wrote *Development Through Drama* (1967) he was part of the creative movement which advocated for children’s drama in education. Way founded the Theatre Centre, London in 1953.
Clegg here can be situated as a teacher influenced by Read’s educational philosophy following Woodcock’s summation that Read’s “ideas were absorbed into current educational theory” (Woodcock, 1975, p.1). This is because Clegg employed Read’s philosophy through his own lens throughout the WREA.

Woodcock then presents an interesting viewpoint of the text and of Read’s own reflection on it:

What Read wrote as a scenario for revolution had in practice been taken as a text for reform; he became sadly aware of this, recognizing it as a kind of failure, and in the last year of his life, writing in *Encounter*, he remarked that few people had understood “how deeply anarchist in its orientation a work such as *Education Through Art* is and was intended to be,” and added that it was “of course humiliating to have to confess that its success has been in spite of this fact”.

(Woodcock, 1975, p.1)

It is this landscape of revolution and reform in education against which we can situate Clegg. We can furthermore suggest that Clegg in fact took the educational philosophy of *Education Through Art* and enacted it as both revolution and reform. This can be seen through his revolutionary child-centred and child-led approach to the teaching *and* teachers, both in-training and in-post, within the WREA. And it is argued here that Clegg did indeed see ‘how deeply anarchist in its orientation Education Through Art was intended to be’, as Clegg boldly incorporated the progressive approach in his own educational philosophies, none more so than at Bretton Hall College.

As Woodcock situates Read into the anarchist rhetoric, it becomes clear why the impact on Clegg of Read is so fundamental:

Earlier anarchists were aware of the importance of education. They had criticized the authoritarian structure of existing systems, and had recognized the need in their own vision of society for a form of education that would
change human character as we know it by removing the patterns of constraint that had characterized traditional ways of learning. (Woodcock, 1975, p.2)

These are the elements of Read’s vision on which Clegg drew: the desire to be a part of and contribute to the leading of children and teachers to create their own vision of society… that would change human character is recognisable in the Clegg’s work during his lifetime and in his legacy. Clegg would become and be remembered as a charismatic leader who believed in child-lead approaches in their own vision of their own society, leading to change in the human character which would enable liberation and freedom through the arts in education for individuals in post-war Britain. And such an approach was possible thanks to the philosophical influences of Read on Clegg and his thinking as regards education and the individual.

For example, Read’s approach to the education of the aesthetic sensibility was to incorporate all modes of self-expression – visual, verbal, and aural (1948). This appealed directly to Clegg’s ideals of humanistic, child-centred learning, which provided the same opportunity for each individual child’s voice, character, and personality to be heard and seen. By situating Clegg against the grounding arts in education frameworks of his time (like those created by Read, which Clegg also situated himself against), we can establish a clear foundation from which to understand Clegg’s approach to art in education in his own time, which ultimately sought to instigate wider social change.

We can also argue that the influence of Read can be taken further by examining the development of the WREA by Clegg. Woodcock suggests that:

The most a democratic philosopher can hope to do is to inspire a sufficient number of effective fellow citizens with his idealism – to persuade them of the truth of his ideas. The effective among his fellow citizens are those who are
organised into corporations or associations for a functional purpose, and in our particular case, this would mean the general body of teachers and administrators of the educational system…..Read clearly presents “education through art” as a libertarian strategy aimed at revolutionary changes in society, which he claims to be better than the outdated strategies of violent insurrection; it is to be carried out by those who, if they wish, can be society’s most influential group of workers – the teachers.

(Woodcock, 1975)

This reading of Read sheds light on two specific aspects of Clegg’s work that were influenced by Read. Both were men of their time, inspired to effect change by championing the individual. In this light, Clegg as an educational administrator embodied the idealism of the ideas of arts in education presented through a Read-lens. But he also sought to found and enable a framework at Bretton Hall College that was revolutionary in its approach to the training of teachers of art for the future. This contextual background of the changes that were taking place in the arts in education at the very beginning of Clegg’s educational career, is evident in Clegg’s early buy in to the value and belief system purported by characters such as Read. Such a system emphasised the importance of art in everyday learning, and acknowledged the individual as an agent of change, and the ability to create change in the human character. These were the fundamental values and philosophies that underpinned Clegg’s approach to education.

3.3 Sir Alec Clegg as a Progressive Leader against the 1940s Policy Landscape

The wider governmental policy landscape and the great reports (Clegg, 1980) that Clegg worked under and contributed to, through his own reports and collaborations with policy writers and working groups, provide the authoritarian and regulatory frameworks in which Clegg operated. Understanding this broader context helps us to develop a better sense of the landscape to which Clegg belonged.
Between the introduction of the 1870 Elementary Education Act and the 1944 Butler Report: Secondary Education Act, there is a predominant drive for education to deliver a foundational, knowledge-based experience (Fleming, 2010, Sir Alec Clegg Collection, National Arts Education Archive) with little focus on the arts in general from a governmental perspective. The 1870 Elementary Education Act had a remit to raise standards of teaching and schools, not a remit of arts-based learning. Providing clean learning spaces, basic knowledge and educating the masses was the aim of the Act. The five reports published between 1870 and 1944 then all provided steps to the 1944 Butler Education Act (George, 2000). Collectively the reports covered compulsory school aged attendance, and all of the reports sat within a Conservative Government with Prime Ministers Stanley Baldwin, Neville Chamberlain and Winston Churchill respectively reflecting the order of the reports.

The Hadow Reports of 1926 and 1933 provided a foundation for the 1944 Education Act to come into being, not least because they pointed to a greater desire from parents for more creative input into the school experience. (Fleming, 2010). The Hadow Report of 1926 was concerned with changing from all-age schools to a delineation of schooling; this was to be achieved through the splitting of schools when a child reached the age of 11. This would in effect become primary and secondary schooling. The subsequent Hadow Report of 1933 was concerned with nursery and young children’s education. Together, the two reports covered infant education to the beginning of secondary school. These reports were followed by the Spens Report of 1938, which focused on secondary education. This was followed in 1943 by the Norwood Report, which investigated the school curriculum and examinations and where together with creative arts, the curriculum and examinations
were collectively part of the focus (Veever & Allison, 2011). The Norwood report provided a way into art in education for the curriculum, which in turn constituted a foundational background for Clegg to utilise, as Fleming explains:

By 1943 the discussion of arts subjects in the Norwood Report (Secondary School Examination Council, 1943) had a more contemporary flavour…Art, music and handicraft were discussed as a group.

(Fleming, 2010, p.22)

Fleming goes on to quote from the Norwood Report:

They [arts in education] have not received the attention in schools which is due to them. They were received as late-comers; when they were taught, they occupied a place outside the regular curriculum and were taught as ‘extras’ or spare-time activities. The right teachers were not easy to find; the rooms and equipment demanded have not always been available; and the subjects have therefore lacked a good tradition in the schools.

(Fleming, 2010, p. 22)

For a man like Clegg, who wanted to celebrate children and their learning, support teachers both through training and once in the classroom and provide the opportunity for learning to take place through spirit, self-realisation, and experiential learning, this landscape provided the pillars he needed to transform the WREA. His desire to place arts within the regular curriculum and to source the right teachers, rooms, and equipment would influence the Authority’s future direction and place it on a solid footing in terms of providing arts in education that was underpinned by a governmental supportive backdrop.

This approach has specific repercussions for Bretton Hall College. Clegg embedded and elevated the idea and approach of creative, child-centred arts in education, which then rapidly became self-actualised within the staff and learners of the WREA. The pipeline of teachers that Clegg envisaged would shape the post-war WREA was
underpinned by this vision and became manifest in the approach to education and training that was adopted at Bretton Hall College: Teacher Training College for the Arts in 1949, a mere six years after the publication of the Norwood Report.

Yet the 1944 Education Act was still concerned with the “basic issues such as literacy, school attendance and physical health. The implicit assumption of course is that arts are seen as more of a luxury than a basic right” (Fleming, 2010, p.16). This assumption points to there being potential to rethink the provision of arts education as more than just a luxury: it was this rethinking that characterised the early work of Clegg, thanks to his decision to take an arts approach to education and make it a basic right. It is worth stating at this point that Clegg himself became part of an early arts in education movement, within the progressive Education Authority at the West Riding, which would provide a fertile ground for his ideals. Indeed, Marian Richardson and Nan Youngman were both leading progressive voices in “arts-based approaches to education” (Fleming, 2010, p.20) in this period and both have connections to the WREA before Clegg’s time at the Authority.

The planning for what would become the 1944 Education Act began during the Second World War in 1940 by the Board of Education (Maclure, 2000, p.xix). The bill’s purpose was to decide what would need to be implemented in the post-war period and it thus had a vast stretch and scope (Maclure, 2000, p.xxi). The subsequent Act positioned the Local Education Authorities as powerhouses and

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11 Marian Richardson (1892 – 1946) worked in the field of child art during the two world wars exhibiting children’s work. Richardson’s approach was to use visualisation where she would encourage the child to use an image and their inner eye, which developed children’s confidence and abilities to self-express themselves through creative work.
enshrined the notion of “equality of opportunity” (Maclure, 2000, p.xxi). Such a policy reflected the spirit of the time and provided a cohesive step towards the rebuilding of the country in a forward-looking manner. The vehicle of social mobility that the 1944 Education Act provided benefited many, and we can see how this new landscape would be appealing to Clegg.

This is because this new educational landscape held many opportunities to make a positive difference to the lives of many families. This can be seen through the ethos of education for all, and the investment not just in the idea of education but in the experience of education. The prospects and opportunities for individuals, families, and Britain were thus there to be shaped. Clegg’s contribution cannot be underestimated: his reach was vast and during this time, he also shaped government policy through his vision for the WREA with the formation of middle schools. The 1944 Education Act did not accommodate for a three-tiered system, yet this was the suggestion from Clegg (Newsom Report, 1963). As we have already seen, the Act only allowed for a primary school and a secondary school. As Newsam says, “No other form of school could lawfully exist” (1963). Nevertheless, middle schools would become part of the education landscape thanks to Clegg, thereby demonstrating the direct way in which Clegg shaped policy. The 1944 Education Act is the backdrop to much of Clegg’s work in the WREA, because the schools that would be affected by this Act were the biggest division of the Authority and thus its key area of focus. But it was the education of children that drove the thinking of the Authority as regards staff development, bringing together a team of likeminded people, and through the training of teachers. In this context, we can argue that Clegg was creating a new framework for a new world; its potential reach and impact was informed by the fact
that it was grounded within child-centred, progressive education. and this is where the idea and foundation of Bretton Hall College starts to come into view: the College could provide a proving ground for this new framework and for the training of teachers and likeminded people whose educational practice would be child-centred and progressive.

In this post-war landscape, Fleming draws attention to:

three key issues in relation to the arts in education in the post-war period:
- the continued spread of progressive ideas
- the discovery of child art as a distinct phenomenon
- emphasis on creativity largely in terms of self-expression.

(Fleming, 2010, p.25)

Clegg’s interests and philosophies sit firmly across all three of these key issues. Indeed, not only did Clegg play a vocal role in the debates taking place in each domain but he also provided progressive leadership in all three areas, using the WREA as what could be describe as a playground of development.

To be able to provide this leadership Clegg educated himself in these three key issues and became the embodiment of them, but his approach was always coupled with his own beliefs and ideas for personal development. In terms of understanding Clegg’s tenure at the WREA, Fleming provides a useful overview of the philosophy of curriculum direction that would underpin Clegg’s approach:

The 1950s also saw a recognition of ‘child art’ and ‘child drama’ as separate entities worthy of recognition in their own right. This represented a culmination in the thinking which had its origins in the naturalistic ideas of Rousseau. This shift in value was less in terms of skills acquisition and more in terms of personal development. A key aspect of this thinking meant a change in perception of the role of the art teacher from instructor in craft and technique
to facilitator and ‘friendly guide’. Non-intervention by the teacher became a virtue and was central to some of the more general educational ideas.

(Fleming, 2010)

This provides crucial insights into how Clegg approached the curriculum in the WREA and the training of teachers at Bretton Hall College, and tangible ways of being that he introduced. In particular, the recognition of child art in its own right and of personal development where the instruction is in the form of a friendly guide are representative of this approach. Clegg, I think, would have positioned himself as a friendly guide, learning from the philosophers, theorists, and idealists of arts in education, from the guiding principles of governmental frameworks, and from his own staff, who were often handpicked by Clegg because they also believed, supported and embraced this way of being in the new post-war world.

As a progressive educator, Clegg brought together a variety of different strands into a new approach. Firstly, there was the desire for self-actualisation through child-centred, arts in education approaches. Then as a keystone, the ideal of what Herbert Read describes thus: ‘that man should be educated to become what he is; (Read, 1958). This was an approach that John Dewy would concur with, and which sat at the heart of Clegg’s teachings, Finally, there was the provision of environments and friendly guides that would allow individuals to embody self-expression in their learning.

3.4 Navigating the Policy Shifts of the Post-war Period

The Barlow Report came two years after the 1944 Education Act, and its purpose was to address the industrial needs of the country through the provision in education for science and applied sciences (Shattock, 2012, p.4). The term “Scientific
Manpower” (Shattock, 2012, p.12) became the framework in which the report sat. This mapping of disciplines, which would be referred to as STEM in contemporary frameworks, was part of the post-war landscape and impacted the WREA as it did nationally. The impact was felt at Bretton Hall College, too, because it had been established as a college of the arts and incorporated science. It is worth remembering also that Bretton Hall College was a teacher training college and not a pure higher education institution. The national context in which Bretton Hall College sat was one of a mass teacher shortage following the Second World War, which continued into the 1950s and 1960s (Maclure, 2000, p.10). The college was therefore also impacted by the work of the McNair Report of 1944, which directly related to raising standards of teacher training and the status of the profession of teaching (Maclure, 2000, p.12). The McNair committee was concerned with bringing together the teacher training colleges with universities, and Maclure (2000, p.12) argues that this happened with a “loose connection” developing amongst the institutions themselves. The summation here being that Bretton Hall College was part of this landscape and moreover, that as an institution it was able to develop its approach to education and training largely independently.

Clegg was also heavily involved in and affected by this changing landscape. As Chief Education Officer, Clegg sat on many governmental committees, including the Crowther Committee, which addressed the education of children between 15-18 years old. The report brought into focus the school leaving age, part time provision for eighteen-year-olds in colleges, and an increase in supply teachers (George, 2000, p.20). The focus on ongoing provision and on the right availability of teachers aligns with the values with which we associate Clegg.
The Beloe Report of 1960 then saw the introduction of the Certificate of Secondary Education and the General Certificate of Education (George, 2000, p.25). As both George (2000) and Darvill (2000) intimate, Clegg felt that “Beloe would be frightful”. This shows the changing landscape again in which Clegg inhabited and provides an insight into his feelings about the examinations being imposed (he was after all against the examination of children). This was followed by the Robbins Report of 1963, which was concerned with the future of higher education. It claimed that more people were capable of “benefitting from higher education” (Barr and Glennerster, 2014, p.xvii) and this changed the educational landscape. The report provided the backbone for a new generation of universities, for new campuses and a new possibility for many to attend higher education. The changing social landscape (Maclure, 2000, p.11) provided steps forward for a new generation of young people who, in their coming of age, wanted their brave new world. Yet the impact of the Robbins report was clear in that it quickly became evident that money needed to be rapidly saved (Barr and Glennerster, 2014, p.xvii), as the utopian notion of higher education for all was not aligned to an unlimited resource of finances.

The Plowden report of 1967 arrived in time for Clegg to be a leading voice in it. The report promoted child-centred, progressive education and self-expression (Ed. Burke, 2021) and stated that at the heart of the educational process lies the child (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967). Clegg was part of the Plowden Committee, and thanks to his 20 years of experience of shaping and progressively leading the WREA, he was able to provide what can be seen as pilot projects on a large scale for child-centred learning. These projects demonstrated how the
individual, creative, self-actualised self had been given precedence over the standard factory curriculum experience of early times. Clegg’s voice of experience that he brought to the Plowden Report started to position him as more than just a supporter and friendly guide of these ideals. Instead, he moved into the role of creator of environments of possibility. Clegg had for 20 years been bringing together advocates, practitioners, philosophers, and theorists into a melting pot of progressive educational ideals under the banner of the WREA. By 1967, Bretton Hall College had been in existence for 18 years and was part of that melting pot. Its provision addressed many of the ideas in arts teacher training which the Plowden Report proposed and demonstrates how Clegg had become a man ahead of his time in terms of his educational vision.

The 1968 Newsom Report was called ‘Half our Future’ (Darvill, 2000) and Clegg again sat on the committee. As Darvill (2000, p.116) states, “Newsom prompted Alec Clegg to think deeply about English Society and he looked back to John Ruskin12”. The influence of past theorists and philosophers is a predominant hallmark of Clegg’s thinking and work. Here, his drawing on Ruskin informed his belief that enjoyment of an experience and not just the experience holds value for the individual, and we can see this approach by Clegg in his underpinning alignment with the art in education ideals. The report addressed teachers’ payment and the less abled student in the secondary school, in a way that reflected Clegg’s on-going concerns about overlooking the less abled in education (George, 2000, p.20). In Clegg’s own words, the Newsom recommendations included:

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12 John Ruskin (1819 – 1900) was a philosopher, art critic and writer who wrote widely including key texts The Seven Lamps of Architecture (1849) and The Stones of Venice (1851 – 1863). Ruskin taught William Morris in the 19th Century.
[...] better buildings, better staffing ratios...we asked that more attention should be paid to speech, that the child's environment and his experience should be made to contribute more to his education – in this way the curriculum should be revitalised. The less able children should have more, not less, choice than the abler ones, and we ask for a generous use of arts and crafts. Homework of a new kind should be introduced, the lines of curricular and outside activities should be blurred, and experiments tried with a three session day. We asked for a revision of RI syllabuses with a view to basing them on what a child can be expected to understand, rather than what adults think he ought to know. The status of older pupils should be stressed and group responsibilities in the service of the community used to emphasise the moral responsibility that each adult owes it.

(Clegg in George, 2000, pp.36-37).

Running concurrently with governmental reports, the arts in education narrative continued. Stuart Macdonald’s *The History and Philosophy of Art Education* (1970) sits within an established art and design educational literature window of the 1960s and 1970s, which coincides also with the tenure of Clegg at the WREA. Whilst Clegg was active and situated within the literature of art in education of his time, he was also active as the history of arts in education was being written. As an historical perspective, Macdonald presents a view that Clegg would have recognised, and provides a platform for the recognition of child art and the alignment in thinking of a greater interest in modern art that provided a new progressive environment of its own (Fleming, 2010, Macdonald, 1970).

3.5 In Conclusion: Sir Alec Clegg as Progressive Educator and Leader

This chapter has explored the art in education ideals and governmental initiatives in education of the post-war period and has demonstrated that, where we find these working in tandem, we can find Clegg. Clegg enabled an implementation of thinking brought about by government reports and progressive educators, and provided a bridge between the two, in a way that brought together all aspects of his humanist,
self-development, and child-centred approaches. These come to the fore in the WREA, with literal and figurative collaborations with figures such as Frank Cizek, Diana Jordon, Marian Richardson, Rae Milne13, Hebert Read, Rudolph Laban14 and Lady Bridget Plowden. The chapter has sought to build on our understanding of Clegg as being situated in the arts in education literature of his time. Instead, it has provided an in-the-round viewing of Clegg’s practice by shedding light on how Clegg enacted a co-operative of practitioners from all aspects of society who held child-centred and arts in education ideals as a core educational route forward in post-war Britain.

Clegg was not an arts practitioner, artist, designer, or craftsperson: he was a progressive educator of his time, open to new ways of educating that were grounded in child-centred, humanist approaches, which built on his own moral compass. And this I feel positions Clegg not as a purist in terms of interpreting only one way of using child-centred and arts in education frameworks, but rather as a progressive leader who sought to provide as many ways into education as possible, within the frameworks of child-centred education and arts in education. As a conduit to learning, Clegg created routes into learning that also provided a way of being for the learner that led to self-development of not just the intellect but also of the spirit. As a progressive educator of the whole person, and with a belief in the transformation of the individual, Clegg often quoted the following:

If thou of fortune be bereft,

13 Rae Milne worked at Bretton Hall College leading Primary Education in the 1950s
14 Rudolph Laban (1879 – 1958) was an influential dancer and choreographer, he developed and founded the Laban Movement Analysis. This work eventually led to the founding of the Laban Art of Movement Guild in London, UK. Laban’s work was foundational at Bretton Hall College where he worked as a visiting lecturer.
And of thine early stores have left, two loaves,
Sell one, and with the dole
Buy hyacinths to feed the soul

(Whittier, c.19th Century)

The poem is often credited to the Quaker John Greenleaf Whittier and reflects Clegg’s own Quaker upbringing and his admiration of Dewy, in that the spirit of a person was of equal value to their intellect and must in the same way be nurtured.

Clegg led the WREA with his head and his heart, knowing that:

Different art forms and even different art works frequently have different intentions and effects; they can enthral, move, enlighten, inform, inspire, amuse, challenge, entertain or provoke … [and that the] development of creativity and imagination, [of] understanding of the human condition, problem solving, and the development of empathy [all feed the soul].

(Fleming, 2010, p.59)

The transformative power of education under the leadership of Clegg is evident in how he appears to stand back and allow teachers and learners to self-actualise their own ambitions, guided by their own self-directions. I would argue that this is the greatest form of progression for the individual in Clegg’s child-centred, arts in education landscapes.

Indeed, Clegg sets this type of scene himself when he says:

I was the education officer of one of the biggest and most diverse authorities in the country, and for those of us who were education officers in those days, it was a golden era. Education was going to put the world to rights.

(Clegg, 1980. p.vi)

At the start of Clegg’s career, there was a “mood of buoyant optimism which characterized the 1950 and 60s, the years of expansion” (Richmond, 1978, p.8). As
his career came to a close, this was “replaced by one of profound scepticism, not to say sour disillusion” (Richmond, 1978). The vast opportunities of post-war Britain had been firmly grasped within education, although as the 1970s dawned, support for continual educational reform was waning (Richmond, 1978). During Clegg’s tenure, the reframing of educational reform was taken up by Margaret Thatcher, first with her role in office as the Secretary of State for Education and Science, 1970-1974, and ultimately as Prime Minister, 1979-1990. Thatcher positioned reform as equality of opportunity (Richmond, 1978): if one child is more successful than another, so be it. Clegg on the other hand was a believer in and of the innate ability of the child, a view at odds with the latest reform landscape. And as his retirement loomed the political landscape would shift once more.

Clegg said his career was during “the period of the great reports” (Clegg, 1980). He summarised them as:

Crowther (1959) looked at the schooling of youngsters of fifteen to eighteen years of age, Newsom (1963) at the slow learners of thirteen to sixteen, Plowden (1967) at children in their primary schools, and Robbins (1963) at the universities.

(Clegg, 1980).

Six years before his retirement, Clegg addressed the North of England Conference in 1968 with a theme of the Newsom Report and its aftermath:

But here my optimism, or if you like, complacency ends. The whole essence of the Newsom Report lies in three words which occur in the introduction. We asked for a change of heart toward the children with whom we were concerned. It has not come about… If this change of heart does not come about I personally believe that in the next 50 years, we shall run into social difficulties which will make those of the last 50 years trivial.

(George, 2000).
Fifty-four years later, the Britain has the highest numbers of children living in poverty, the NHS and social services are underfunded and with limited resources to support the needs of a twenty first century population. It would sadly seem that the change of heart asked for in the 1960s has not come about.

But Clegg remained undeterred. At the time of his retirement in 1974, he wrote a series of articles for The Times. In the last entitled ‘Much to worry us’, it is clear that his visionary wisdom had not deserted him in retirement. There article demonstrates that there is still much to learn from his beliefs in and approach to progressive education, especially from his child-centred ideals situated in arts in education that require the support of and belief in every child that has the right to learn and grow through their educational experiences. These visionary and progressive philosophies and ideals would inform the Bretton Hall College approach to teacher training, and shape the students who studied there, as we shall see.
Part 2: Methodological Outline: Literature Retrieval and Research Design

Chapter 4: Retrieving Sir Alec Clegg and evidence of his impact from the Archive

4.1 Introduction

As a public figure, Clegg received coverage in news sources and media during his career extensively about his work in the West Riding of Yorkshire through the WREA. This work had a global reach (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021). The coverage largely consisted of thought pieces by Clegg and commentary about his work, in addition to educational commentary of the day, rather than scholarly literature written about him. My aim in this chapter is not to singularly engage with this literature; rather, my process involves retrieving him. Retrieving Clegg involves accessing information about the man and his philosophies through the archival records that are held about him. The first part of the chapter outlines my methodological process for accessing archival materials about Clegg from the Archive. The second part then builds on Chapter 2 Section 2.2 and explores Clegg’s published writing (moving on from his correspondence and speeches that were examined in Chapter 2 Sub-section 2.2.2) to create a fuller picture of the man and his philosophies and values. This builds on our understanding of his legacy, which is the focus of Chapter 2, and widens the lens to enable us to appreciate his broader approach to teaching and training, which would have informed the establishment of and curriculum design at Bretton Hall College and thus his impact there.

4.2 Accessing the Archive to Retrieve Sir Alec Clegg: Methods and Overview of Materials Gathered
Clegg’s archived papers include administration documentation from the WREA. This collection includes personal correspondence from Clegg to his employees, handwritten notes from Clegg to colleagues, and notes for his own reference, his speeches and those of visiting academics, artists, and staff. These are all held at the National Arts Education Archive (NAEA), which is located on the site of Bretton Hall College at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) and provide a literature framework for this research.

The NAEA collection is directly derived from Clegg’s time as the Chief Education Officer of the WREA. It provides a wide range of materials, including papers as the vast majority of the collection, as well as slides and audio records. The collection is not curated other than into numbered boxes of large amounts of original documentation; this leads to blurred boundaries as regards their functions. This is problematic for establishing the narrative through the documentation, as all donations have been accepted to the archive. For this research, navigating this documentation was fundamental to understanding Clegg through his own words, through his colleagues’ view, and in the context of the world that he created and in which he operated.

In addition to the Sir Alec Clegg collection, there is a much smaller collection about Bretton Hall College (National Arts Education Archive, Bretton Hall College). The Bretton Hall College collection consists of ad hoc documentation that has been donated largely by alumni staff who worked at Bretton Hall College. There is no documentation that points to the presence of the students who lived and studied at Bretton Hall College, which, and as we have seen, leaves a gap in our
understanding of what kind of experience, events, activities, and life was lived by the students during their time at Bretton Hall College.

There are much smaller donations that have been made to the NAEA under the banner of Bretton Hall. However, they are all uncatalogued and provided little context for this research project as they do not hold any information related to the students’ experiences between 1949-1974 (National Arts Education Archive, Bretton Hall Centre for Sculpture, Bretton Hall PGCE Work). Additionally, there is the Bretton College Textiles collection that was inaccessible at the time the research was carried out. There is also the Bretton Lakes Nature Reserve collection, which was outside the scope of this research project.

Additional collections have been used in this research. These are also held at the NAEA and provide wider context for the research in terms of geographic location, key individuals, and the contextual art and design education and its educators. These collections are:

- Child Art
- Frank Cizek
- Margaret Dunn\textsuperscript{15}
- Rae Milne
- Ruth Mock\textsuperscript{16}
- National Exhibition of Children’s Art

\textsuperscript{15} Margaret Dunn OBE was a dance educationalist and a founder member of the West Riding of Yorkshire Movement Study Group at the time of Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure.

\textsuperscript{16} Ruth Mock was an Art Advisor at the WREA during Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure. Mock wrote \textit{Education and the Imagination} (1970)
All of the collections enabled me to rebuild the world of Clegg and revealed his hand moving through the lives of the WREA staff and how they interacted together. A vision of a world built in partnership emerges through their voices, with an eagerness to share practice and celebrate children and their learning, within a collegiate community. What this set of literature does not do is reveal the role of Bretton Hall College beyond describing its basic function of operation. The people and community of Bretton Hall College are not part of the history that is revealed through these documents. This began to shape how the research project would develop, by informing the aim to fill the gap in the information available about Bretton Hall College by engaging with the community that once inhabited the site.

The NAEA provides an additional and unique opportunity for research to take

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17 Muriel Pyrah was a teacher of art in the WREA, Sir Alec Clegg championed Pyrah’s method of asking out which allowed the student voice to be heard.
18 Basil Rocke was a practicing artist and Senior Art Advisor for the WREA during Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure.
19 Nancy Smith worked in the West Riding Education Authority as a Headteacher during Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure and after Sir Alec Clegg had retired.
20 Eric Woodward worked in the WREA leading the Schools Museum Service and was appointed by Sir Alec Clegg. Woodward worked during Sir Alec Clegg’s tenure and after Sir Alec Clegg had retired.
21 Derek and Margot Andrews were students at Bretton Hall College in the 1950s. Derek Andrews later worked at Bretton Hall College.
place in the form of access to private collections of both archival documents and
donated books, all of which have been drawn upon for this research. The NAEA is
staffed by volunteers, the majority of whom worked for the WREA as teachers,
inspectors and for the Schools Museum Service. Many of the volunteers have a
personal knowledge of Clegg either through working alongside him, or from working
in the Authority at the time that he was active. This volunteer network provided a rich
resource that has supported the research.

Additional archival collections of Clegg’s work have been retrieved and utilised for
this research. These materials are held at the Brotherton Library at the University of
Leeds and at the West Yorkshire Archive Service (WYAS). Both collections hold
similar, overlapping documentation, but without the personal connections through the
volunteers of the NAEA which is situated at Bretton Hall College. This geographical
location adds an invisible layer of context and community: as the researcher
retrieving the documents, I read them at the NAEA, the site where many decades
earlier the speeches and lectures that are part of the collection had been delivered
between 1949 and 1974. This connects the past with the present in a tangible way.
Resurrecting the past with new eyes through myself as the researcher, to map the
community of practice of the Bretton Hall College students, constitutes the missing
voice in the archives that this research project sets out to address.

4.3 Retrieving Evidence of Sir Alec Clegg’s Impact on Educational Philosophy
in his Writing
It has been established that the NAEA holds the largest collection of Clegg’s
personal papers, notebooks, and correspondence. Beyond the administration
processes and records of events that they hold, there is scant literature about Clegg in the written form, with little historical material written about Clegg until 2000, as illustrated in Chapter 2. Two recent texts, one by Nora George and one by Peter Darvill, were discussed in that chapter and are revisited later in this chapter, to provide additional information about Clegg’s impact on educational philosophy.

However, we must remember that Clegg did write scholarly literature about his work at the WREA throughout his career between 1964 and 1974 and into retirement, between 1974 and 1980 (Clegg, *The Excitement of Writing*, 1968, *The Changing Primary School*, 1972, *Recipe for Failure*, 1972, *The Final Ten Years*, 1974, *About our Schools*, 1980). The focus of this scholarship was always drawn from his experiences within WREA schools, and occasionally the colleges, and with teachers, advisors, and students from his Authority. References to his early years in teaching were nearly always drawn upon, yet the source material was always situated in the WREA.

This material provides insights into Clegg's beliefs, values, and philosophies as regards his approach to education and learning. It is this approach that informed the way in which Bretton Hall College sought to train teachers and to embed a learner-centred educational experience in its curriculum. An overview of Clegg’s philosophies, as illustrated in his own words, is therefore necessary to ascertain the nature of his impact as far as Bretton Hall College is concerned.

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22 Alongside Bretton Hall (1949), Lady Mable College (Wentworth House) (1949), Grantley Hall (1949) Woolley Hall (1952) (George, 2000, p.122)
The Excitement of Writing (1968) is a celebratory catalogue of children’s’ writings from the WREA schools. This sits firmly within Clegg’s approach to situating the children and their achievements at the fore of the Authority’s work, clearly evident in the decision here to publish their achievements to a wider audience beyond the West Riding of Yorkshire. We see here how Clegg perceived the work of his Authority as being of publishing standards. Moreover, this feeds into Clegg’s belief in the child as an agent of change for their own self-development. Few adults and fewer children would have been authors and contributors to books in 1968 from the West Riding of Yorkshire, so to provide this condition of possibility for the children of the WREA allows us to see how Clegg was a progressive educator who enacted his philosophical beliefs into reality.

Clegg builds on this work in 1972 with the publication of The Changing Primary School: Its Problems and Priorities. Here, the focus is on the teachers’ viewpoints and personal reflections. The book arrives two years before Clegg’s retirement, and it provided him with the space to reflect on his own career and to focus his own narrative, which he weaves as editor by again positioning the voices of the children at the centre of the book. This time, those voices are mediated by the teachers’ voices of the WREA. Again, we can see Clegg returning to his cornerstone philosophies of child-centred education, in every meaning of the word, as we see Clegg steadfast in his beliefs of the child and the power of the teacher.

About our Schools (1980) is the closest to an autobiographical account that we receive from Clegg. Clegg states in his own words that the book is almost a memoir and, reflecting his other texts, he draws on the work of the WREA throughout. Clegg
is again consistent: his message revolves around child-centred education, the arts in education, the child as an agent of change, and the power of self-development. Clegg’s passion and compassion for the children who were in his care is never failing. He is always striving to show the best of the child, the school, and the Authority. However, we see here a retired Clegg, looking back on the creation of his community of practice of schools, teachers, and children. Comparisons could have been made to the community of practice created at Bretton Hall College, as revealed in this thesis, but are absent, suggesting perhaps that Clegg did not see himself as part of the Bretton Hall College community of practice even if he firmly places himself in the wider WREA community of practice. This concurs with the Bretton Hall College student narratives collected for this research project: Clegg was an absent figure for the students at Bretton Hall College, and their community of practice was theirs alone.

Clegg’s own contribution to the literature also provides a window into day-to-day life events and the underpinning principles that they reveal. This aspect of his work is discussed in Chapter 2 through the lens of his family. To readers and scholars of the time, the works cited here together provided a contemporary view of post-war education; now, the same works provide historical insight into the philosophy that Clegg cultivated and shaped, and on which the WREA was founded. By reengaging with Clegg’s own literature through these texts, the process of retrieving Clegg from the literature in his own words and discovering what he did not address provides the basis for this research project to develop.
Along with his own scholarship, Clegg often edited or wrote the forward to books written by his own staff (Clegg and Megson, *Children in Distress*, 1968, and Foster, *Knowing my Bones*, 1976). Clegg would position his staff at the interplay of teacher and scholar, teacher and co-creator, and teacher and community builder.

Development of the Authority’s teachers is evident in the support he provided to his staff, who document their own experiences of post-war education in a context informed by Clegg’s vision of education. Clegg provided the same conditions for engagement with self-development, education, and life improvement that he aimed to give students, and inspired his staff to provide the same for the children in the WREA (Clegg, *The Excitement of Writing*, 1968, *The Changing Primary School*, 1972, *About our Schools*, 1980).

In *The Changing Primary School: It’s Problems and Priorities: A Statement by Teachers*, published in 1972, Clegg writes in the Acknowledgements:

*This book is first and foremost an expression of the wisdom and experience of West Riding teachers and I would like to thank all who submitted contributions, whether or not they eventually found a place in the printed text.*

(Ed. Clegg, The Changing Primary School, 1972, p.5)

Here, the recognisable characteristics of praise, belonging, and the self-effacing nature of Clegg can be seen throughout his approach with staff. Clegg brought to his practice not simply an administrative prowess; he was an excellent administrator providing far-reaching leadership qualities, but also a continual engagement with his own human-centred approaches, (National Arts Education Archive, Sir Alec Clegg Collection). His grounding in Quakerism, which was the result of attending Bootham school in York during his own childhood (Darvill, *Sir Alec Clegg*, 2000, and George,
Sir Alec Clegg Practical Idealist, 2000) points to the relationship between what he did and who he was as a key component of his driving motivations in the WREA. This Quaker grounding in spirituality with a focus on individual conscience as a guiding force is in complete alignment with the comparison made of Clegg many years later, when he was described as the “conscience of the Ministry [of Education]” (Edward Boyle, Conservative Minister, 1965, at the time of Clegg’s Knighthood).

Clegg as ‘conscience’ meant that he was perfectly placed to develop experiences and education to meet the needs of post-war children’s lives (Clegg & Megson, Children in Distress, 1968, and Clegg, Recipe for Failure, 1972). Clegg enthused about his admiration for the abilities of children and how their achievements impacted his own learning. This became part of his literature contributions and lectures (The National Arts Education Archive, The Sir Alec Clegg Collection at the National Arts Education Archive, The Basil Rocke Collection at the National Arts Education Archive).

For example, a recurrent story that Clegg told recounts the work carried out by Basil Rocke. Rocke was a Senior Art Adviser in the WREA appointed in 1946, staying for 20 years (Devonald, 1989). Appointed in part by Clegg, Rocke would come to shape not only the art education of the Authority over this time, but also Clegg’s understanding of children’s art education. Rocke had worked with a teacher in a South Yorkshire school where the children had each produced a painting, 38 in total. The quality of the paintings was described by Clegg as sensitive, which appears to have been his own personal response to the paintings (Devonald, 1989). For several years, they were taken by Clegg around the world, the farthest to Australia and New
Zealand where he would lecture as an invited guest to schools, colleges and education authorities about the work that was happening in the WREA (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021). Such actions show how Clegg disseminated the work of his staff and children throughout his career at the WREA, always situating the success of the work in the hands of the people that he served. As years past and Clegg continued to take the same series of paintings with him to lectures and conferences, Rocke challenged him, asking why he did not take more recently produced works and arguing that even better work was now being produced by the children. Clegg responded by saying:

“What he [Basil] did not see was that these paintings had given me something of his faith; they had been the instrument of my education.”

(Devonald, 1989, p.7).

The sense of continuous and co-creation of learning not only of the children but of the staff and Clegg himself is a hallmark of the WREA and can be seen here in this example. Clegg’s human-centred approach was a value that was embedded into all aspects of his practice (Newsam, 2008). It is seen in his own engagement with the 38 children’s paintings and provided a channel for Clegg to continue to provide conditions of understanding not only for himself but also for the community of teachers and children of the WREA.

What this level of engagement with the work of the children and schools of the WREA does not reveal is why this was not extended by Clegg to the literature and experiences of Bretton Hall College. It does not explain why the same examples of learning and co-creation, and environmental factors were not drawn upon to add to
the body of literature about the WREA. Throughout the literature, Clegg presents his Authority, the staff, and the students in a way that shines a light on his wider vision for education. We see Clegg constantly positioning the WREA in a way that always aligns with his core child-centred, arts in education approach as seen through his literature, cited above. But the light does not shine on Bretton Hall College. The reasons for this, it could be argued, stem from Clegg’s love of children’s education and their learning (Woodward, 1991), from his child-centred perspective (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021), and from the middle school infrastructure (Hargreaves and Tickle, 1980; Gosden and Sharp, 1978). This shows that at the heart of Clegg’s work are the children and an integrated approach to his staff. This integrated approach to staff informs the nature of the teacher training at Bretton Hall College, which is situated in a constantly progressive stance. We must remember that post-war Britain had a shortage of trained teachers (Gosden and Sharp, 1978; Newsam, 2014) and the development of Bretton Hall College as a teacher training college for the Arts addressed this need (Friend, n.d.). In turn, it continued the progressive nature of the WREA in leading the way not only in delivering education but also in shaping teacher training arts educators. This is where Bretton Hall College has a way into this literary landscape, yet Clegg does not take it, as his lens is firmly on the school experience. This creates a gap in the literature not only of Bretton Hall College and of Clegg’s work in the WREA but also of Clegg himself. His writings do not reveal what his role was at Bretton Hall College, if he had a role beyond that of founder, and how he viewed the community of Bretton Hall College. He used his voice widely, yet it is distinctly absent in detail about Bretton Hall College, especially in contrast to the several books written by him and co-written with his staff about the WREA as presented in this chapter, and his hundreds of lectures, speeches and
articles written for newspapers and educational journals (collected at the National Arts Education Archive in the Sir Alec Clegg Collection).

Prior to 2021, which saw the publication of the edited volume *Education through the arts for wellbeing and community: The vision and legacy of Sir Alec Clegg* (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021) with a chapter contribution that I made (Mills, 2021), there had been only two other specific texts written about Clegg. *Sir Alec Clegg: a biographical Study* by Peter Darvill and *Sir Alec Clegg: Practical Idealist 1909 -1986* by Nora George. As key literature sources about Clegg, they are discussed in greater detail here as they reveal a lack of information around the Bretton Hall College history and instead place an emphasis on Clegg’s work in the rest of the Authority.

George presents an account of Clegg at the WREA based primarily on his own papers. The account is positioned alongside a secondary narrative woven through the book of George’s experiences of working in the WREA, which included different levels of responsibilities across the Authority throughout their career. What emerges in this text is how people-centred policy is fundamental to understanding Clegg and his approach to his work. George positions Clegg as a trained teacher and it is suggested that continuing to engage with schools by visiting them weekly contributed to his understanding of how education worked and how it looked, day in and day out. Being seen regularly as the Chief Education Officer carried much more weight than observing and interacting as a member of school staff. This approach worked in Clegg’s favour: he never lost the ability to communicate with his staff at all levels and in person. He made himself accessible and part of the learning journey of the
schools, teachers, and classrooms on a regular basis. This insight provided a web of knowledge that utilised and implemented, which arguably advantaged the WREA thanks to his way of working.

Clegg moved into educational administration early into his career, after three years of teaching. This experience coupled with constant engagement with staff and students provided the basis for trust and respect. George states, 'Administration became a search for ways and means to achieve a humane educational plan which would work for the entire youth population' (George, 2000, p.1). Going on to suggest that Clegg ‘built into his philosophy of education a second tenet – those who teach should train, and first training is only the beginning’ (George, 2000, p.3).

This foundational belief of Clegg’s approach to education, that those who teach should train, and recognising that training is only the beginning, is manifest in Bretton Hall College. This aligns with the idea of community that emerged out of Bretton Hall College yet is not addressed within the text. George presents the philosophies that underpin Clegg's values as being embedded in his family background of educators, arguing that this was the fertile ground for his approaches to education. However, George does not acknowledge the wider environment of the post-war educational landscape in which Clegg was situated, this is discussed in Chapter 3.

George's account of Clegg goes on to highlight the ability that he had of being able to adapt his language to be accessible to all. Using formal, professional language when discussing and debating educational matters and issues is evident in his reports and letters. However, when he wrote books, his language was more
Clegg’s commitment was to the children, and he recognised one common commitment – the upbringing of the next generation. It was essential, he said, ‘if not in Christian charity (which it should be) then from plain common sense and common humanity, that all the children should be educated’ (George, 2000, p.21).

This again shows the gaps in the literature around Bretton Hall College as this is an opportunity to bridge the education of children and the training of teachers in the Bretton Hall College community. This commitment to children’s education was also manifest in the training of teachers at Bretton Hall College and is evidenced by the data collected for this research, yet in the literature, this element is absent. George states:

He [Clegg] was adamant that the overriding aim of teaching must be the personal development and social competence of the recipient. He argued that real learning begins when words are about experiences, ideas, and interests, then the language is not sophistry.

(George, 2000, p.32)

What George does not challenge here is Clegg’s position on the personal development of the teacher, who is the conduit of learning for children in this context. It is evident that Clegg believed in the value and worth of the teachers (National Arts Education Archive, The Sir Alec Clegg Collection) yet George in the literature does not address the work being done at Bretton Hall College.
The other main text written about Clegg is *Sir Alec Clegg: a biographical Study* by Peter Darvill, written in the same year as the Nora George book. The Darvill text is a dense publication that charts the career of Clegg using predominately the documents from the WREA. An administrative culture is presented, in which post-war rebuilding was necessary and which was reflected around the country. Weaving together statistics and government agendas, the work of the WREA is highlighted, but again with the scant reference to Bretton Hall College. For example, Darvill refers to a ‘damning report by HMI Inspectors on Bretton Hall College’ (Darvill, 2000, p.73) and points out that ‘Bretton Hall College could provide flowers for County Hall’ (Darvill, 2000, p.138) but no other mentions are made.

Together, Darvill and George provide superficial references to Bretton Hall College, with Darvill merely citing how a damning report from HMI ultimately started the transition of power to the University of Leeds. However, Darvill and George also provide a picture of Clegg as: a grounded figure situated in progressive child-centred learning with a heuristic philosophy, with a belief of individuals as agents of change; and as a character who challenged the academic measurements of success through the testing of children, together with an underpinning framework of the value of art for every child throughout their lives. These are all aspects that are recognisable as Clegg’s practice (Brighouse, Newsom, and Brundrett, 2008). This viewpoint is reiterated through the data collection for this thesis and aligns with the work that Clegg developed, not merely as a theory but as a practice of education. The love of teaching and the transformative power of education was integral to Clegg’s beliefs, and these two core values of love and transformation can be seen throughout the
literature and concurs with the evidence collected for this thesis (Brighouse, Newson, 2008).

### 4.4 Conclusion

The literature thus creates the picture of a known figure, a leader and a human, and a caring person (Darvill, 2000, George, 2000). The works of both Darvill and George are informed by the extensive collection of papers that Clegg provided, which are held at the NAEA, and the narratives have a grounding in his own words and work. This thesis positions itself as moving this narrative forward and adding _others’_ words into the legacy of Clegg. The _other_ words are those from his family (as outlined in Chapter 2) alongside those of the students at Bretton Hall College.

It must be acknowledged that the books by Darvill and George and much of the literature presented in this chapter constitute a subjective positioning of the man and of his work. Clegg’s reach encompassed the entirety of the West Riding of Yorkshire as the Chief Education Officer of the largest education authority in the country. Many of the authors of these sources either knew Clegg personally, worked alongside him, or worked in the WREA (Darvill, 2000, George, 2000, Foster, 1976, Jordan, 1966, Woodward, 1991). This results in a certain subjectivity in the literature that does not move beyond what Clegg did and the ways in which he acted. The literature presents Clegg as a thoughtful, involved leader, caring, and engaging with as many parts of the Authority that he could. This is not being questioned in this thesis, as this depiction of him is also evidenced by the data collected. However, this picture of him does not question any more deeply the words he said or the context of post-war Britain in which he said them and does not address what he does _not_ say. There is
no critique or rationale provided as to why Clegg does not cover in any depth the work of Bretton Hall College. Furthermore, any critique in the literature of Clegg through his own words or the words of others, remains at a level of known attributes, discussing his approach interwoven with his own documented collection of literatures.

References to the development of Bretton Hall College are scant. They appear in the administration documentation for the Authority more as a record of events, rather than as a significant contribution to the WREA portfolio and as a leading teacher training college for the arts in its own right. This review documentation, which was produced each decade that Clegg was leading the WREA, was unusual in that it was latterly produced as a series of books (Clegg, 1954, 1964, 1974). Yet the community and work developed at Bretton Hall College is not included in the same way as the rest of the Authority is recorded; rather, it is mentioned often as a side note, or as a place where summer schools were held for WREA Staff (Clegg, 1974, Gosden & Sharp, 1978). It is not seen to be part of the core transformative nature of the work that took place at the WREA, even though the College was deemed to be leading in its approach to teacher training for the arts. (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021). This is a puzzling omission, as the impact and influence of Clegg’s practice have much to inform our understanding of the role that Bretton Hall College had during his time at the WREA. This can be seen both in the nature of the community established there under Clegg’s guiding hand, as well as in the realisation of a College that provided a pipeline of teachers taught with an underlying ethos cultivated by Clegg and delivered through his handpicked staff, (Darvill, 2000), Yet the opportunities to showcase the achievements of the Bretton Hall College students in the same way as
the children in the WERA schools is not taken. None of this is present in the literature of Clegg. The present research thus addresses the missing literature of the community that was built at Bretton Hall College by the students themselves, as a voice that has yet to be heard.
Chapter 5. Research Methodology

5.1 Introduction

This chapter explains the methodological approaches that have been used throughout this research project and which have informed the collection of the Bretton Hall College students' narratives and shaped the analysis of these experiences. Given that the approach to the research is grounded in narrative inquiry, shaped by storytelling, and focused on capturing the individual's experience in a way that places that individual at the centre of the process, the chapter adopts a narrative approach to explaining this methodology. It begins by revisiting the site and history of Bretton Hall College, which provides the context within which the research project is situated, and which has shaped the research questions that underpin this thesis. It then revisits the project’s research objectives to explain the methodological approach to analysing impact and legacy and presents how the data collection process was informed by these objectives. This collection has also shaped by my own grounded practice as reflected in serendipitous information seeking and snowballing. Finally, the chapter explains the methodological lenses that inform the analysis of the data collected (the students' narratives), as follows: narrative inquiry; spatial behaviours and storytelling through architecture; and the navigation of belonging.
5.2 Bretton Hall College as Background to and Inspiration for the Research

Design and Methodology

The 18th Century Bretton Hall estate is home to Bretton Hall College, a college for the training of Teachers of Music, Art and Drama that now sits in the grounds of Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) in West Yorkshire. According to the website, YSP,

[…] is the leading international centre for modern and contemporary sculpture […] YSP’s driving purpose for 40 years has been to ignite, nurture and sustain interest in and debate around contemporary art and sculpture… It enables open access to art, situations and ideas.

(YSP.org.uk, 2021)

Founded in 1977 by its Executive Director, Peter Murray, an alumnus of Bretton Hall College, YSP grew out of the creativity, ideologies, and life at Bretton Hall College.

In 1948, much of the Bretton Hall estate was sold to the West Riding County Council following war time requisition (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021, p.59). In 1949, Clegg, Chief Education Officer for the West Riding of Yorkshire, founded Bretton Hall College as a teacher training college for the creative arts, “seizing the opportunity to instigate a specialist college for training teachers of art, music and drama” (Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021, p.59).

Clegg writes about the beginnings of the college as the opening to a great adventure:

In the West Riding in the late forties there was a team of people who were very much alive to these excitements and enthusiasms, but how could we

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23 These excitements and enthusiasms were for human movement, beyond dance and a new form of ballet. It also extended to children’s art and wanting to expand music to become more broadly incorporated into the curriculum.
introduce them to the schools? We decided we must have our own college which would have as the basis of its studies music, art and drama. We could not build, there was at the time a crippling shortage of money, labour and materials, but we could use and convert existing buildings. We acquired a number 24 of these amongst them Bretton Hall set in a beautiful countryside enriched by lakes and woodlands. We brought together a gifted team who were expert in their fields which we wanted to develop.

(Friend, n.d., p.4)

Bretton Hall College was a college reconstructed out of necessity for two reasons: firstly, there was no money, labour, or materials to build a new college; secondly, because of Clegg’s fundamental belief in the role of the arts in children’s education and life experiences, the college needed a conduit from teacher training in the arts to teaching arts in the classroom. The original Bretton Hall College campus was comprised of the Mansion House, stable block and smaller buildings located around the Mansion House.

In 1964, the College undertook a physical expansion and grew to include the Principals Residence, College Hall, Music block, Tutorials, Dining Hall, Gymnasium and Student Accommodation. In 1985, the purpose-built Lawrence Batley Centre was built on the Bretton Hall College campus, in between the Principal’s House and the Library, which with it was interconnected. This building now houses the National Arts Education Archive (NAEA); this national organisation has a collection that comprehensively covers arts education from 1870 both in Britain and globally (Artsedarchive.org.uk) (YSP.org.uk). With core archival bodies of work from the West Riding of Yorkshire, it has contributed substantial secondary source material to this

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24 Alongside Bretton Hall (1949), Lady Mable College (Wentworth House) (1949), Grantley Hall (1949) Woolley Hall (1952) (George, 2000, p.122)
PhD research. The collection includes children’s and arts practitioner’s work in addition to contributions from arts education enablers, administrators, and theorists in the widest sense. This is the context into which the work of Clegg has been incorporated, making it part of a wider, more substantial collection. Donations were made by his widow Lady Jessie Clegg and latterly by one of his three sons. At the time this research was being carried out, the archive was manned by volunteers who were former workers of the WREA in some capacity (see section 5.2.1.2 Collecting the narratives for more information). In some small capacity this collected body of volunteers provided a window into the former WREA, displaced by time, as they continued to care for the work produced by and for children and promulgate the belief in the value of arts in education. Clegg retired as Chief Education Officer of the WREA in 1974 when the boundaries of Yorkshire were remapped. This date thus provides the end of the research project’s parameters.

In 1977, YSP had become part of the landscape on the Bretton Hall Estate, wrapping around the Bretton Hall College campus. In 2015, I was granted access to the empty Mansion House. From the vantage point of the roof, YSP’s buildings and outdoor sculptures cannot be seen. Bretton Hall College is still a presence on the 500-acre estate. It provides a window into a once lived environment by students of the arts training college. This site visit became one of the driving catalysts for the research methodology for the PhD. From this geographical and architectural viewpoint from the roof, the only world visible was Bretton Hall College. It raised the following questions: how did the students use this space? What did they bring to it? What do they remember of it? And what is the students’ legacy to the site? If Clegg was the founder and creator of Bretton Hall College, what impact did he have on the
students? And was this impact clear to the students themselves? At the time or now? How could this experience of Bretton Hall College be captured? Where was this history? My visit to the site prompted these questions, which would become the research questions at the heart of this thesis. The answers to these questions were not present in the existing literature about Clegg and Bretton Hall College. This thus created an opening to a new pathway of inquiry within the existing field of research into Clegg and his legacies.

The research project aims to answer some of these questions and provide a better understanding of Clegg’s legacy through the case study of Bretton Hall College and its students. It seeks to discover what impact Clegg and his approach to education had in particular on the students and environment at Bretton Hall College in the period between 1949 to 1974.

To do this, the research gathers and uses the students’ narratives as data as a way of filling the gaps in the literature around Clegg and the College. Given the nature of the landscape and physical environment of the site, discovering how the students interacted with the college environment is a key component in establishing these new insights into Clegg’s impact and legacy. Such interactions shed light on how a student community of practice was built at Bretton Hall College in the period from its foundation in 1949 until the remapping of the Yorkshire boundaries in 1974.

The collection of data from the students who attended the College in this period is necessary because the students’ experiences of Bretton Hall College through the environment of the college have never been captured and are also not represented
in the literature about the WREA or in Clegg’s work. Additionally, there is no
literature that engages with Clegg’s impact on the students of Bretton Hall College
during his time as Chief Education Officer of the WREA. Providing a space for the
collection and sharing of these narratives is thus a crucial element of this research.

5.3 Revisiting the Thesis Research Objectives to Contextualise the Research
Design and Methodology

The thesis’ research objectives are restated below, in order to contextualise further
the research design and methodology:

1. Critically analyse the role of Sir Alec Clegg as Chief Education Officer
   between 1949-1974.

2. Determine how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was
   created.

3. Analyse the significance and value of the collected narratives through a
   critical lens of narrative inquiry.

4. Evaluate the significance and impact of place (environment) within the
   collected narratives.

5. Critically analyse the impact of Sir Alec Clegg directly and indirectly, to the
   culture building at Bretton Hall College between 1949 – 1974.

This section now examines objectives one and five, which seek to examine Clegg’s
role and his impact on Bretton Hall College. It explains the methodological approach
to examining impact and legacy, and the reasons why the collection of student
narratives is so crucial to this research. It also outlines the methods for this data
collection. Section 5.3 then outlines the methodological lenses through which
objectives two, three and four are analysed.
5.3.1 Interrogating Questions of Impact and Legacy

The impact and resultant legacy of Clegg are vast and well documented, and provide a cornerstone of educational practice throughout post-war Britain. The story of Bretton Hall College and the role of Clegg within it is part of this impressive body of work, as will be outlined in Chapter 6, and yet the experiences and contribution to that legacy by the College’s students are not part of that story. This research seeks to shed light on the extent to which the educational practice of this influential man, which has had such a great impact on post-war Britain influenced the practice of individuals in concrete and measurable ways. The case study is the students of Bretton Hall College, and by ascertaining Clegg’s impact on this group, the thesis explores how we can measure his direct legacy from when he was in post as Chief Education Officer. This provides an opportunity to re-evaluate the way we conceive of impact on educational practice and draws attention to the different ways in which we can think about impact in this context.

This research sets out to discover what impact Clegg and his approach to education had on the students and environment at Bretton Hall College. As Chapter 1 explained, impact in this research project is understood as impact on an individual through the culture and environment they are in; it is an accumulative experience which is encountered daily and is carried forward throughout an individual’s life. Legacy is what is created after impact, and often comes about as a result of the impacts generated. We must also consider if that legacy is direct or indirect. Is there clear mapping between the individual and the policies, individuals, and processes on which they had impact that can point to direct legacy? Equally, is there a different
kind of mapping that points to indirect legacy? Finally, what do direct or indirect impacts look like?

As we have seen, the work of Clegg was grounded in progressive child-centered learning with a heuristic philosophy. He believed that individuals are agents of change. He challenged academic measurements of success through the testing of children and supported the value of art to every child throughout his life. These are recognisable as Clegg’s practice (Darvill, 2000; George, 2000; Brighouse, 2008; Newsam, 2008; Brundrett, 2008). At the start of his career, he attended the London Day Training College and was introduced to the notions of teacher education, literacy in schools and adult education (Burke, Cunningham & Hoare, 2021, p.7), all of which were to shape his future work. This research project considers if these beliefs and practices were visible to the students of Bretton Hall College, at the time they were there. Where beliefs and practices are not visible, this might still constitute an example of indirect impact, which would feed an indirect legacy even if this evidence can be hard to see at the time.

This suggests that it is necessary to consider attitudes and experiences from both the past and the present when seeking to ascertain the nature of impact and legacy. In *Doing Narrative Research*, Molly Andrews describes one participant’s view looking back as “being in the midst of life”:

> When you look back, you see the path or paths that you’ve taken. The path would obviously not be so clear when you’re groping up and finding it, would it? I mean it’s rather like going up a mountain, you’re sort of looking that way and that track and it looks too steep and you’re going round another one. Whereas when you’re high up you can look back and see and it sort of stands out much more clearly, things you didn’t realize at the time.
If, as Andrews suggests, when an experience is happening in the moment or a series of moments, we do not know its future impact or the indirect legacy that it will have. If applied to Bretton Hall College, we can suggest that the students would have been unaware of the impact that being at Bretton Hall College would have on them throughout their lives. This past and present re-telling of experience speaks to the indirect legacy of Clegg and the College. By speaking to these students, and listening to their stories, this research seeks to bring to the fore experiences that are linked to Clegg’s ideas and practices. Through an examination of Clegg’s impact on Bretton Hall College through conversations with student alumni, narratives about the indirect legacy of Clegg and his philosophies are mapped.

These aims and the aforementioned questions about the nature and measurement of legacy inform the research design of this project. To answer these questions, individual and collective narratives from Bretton Hall College alumni have been gathered. They are analysed using narrative inquiry methods to discover if there is clear mapping between the students’ experiences of Bretton Hall College and the role of Clegg at Bretton Hall College, in order to discover where direct and indirect legacy occurs.

5.3.2 Collecting the Bretton Hall College students’ narratives: methods and justification for participant selection
There is the potential for the depth of these narratives to be far-reaching, given that the aim of the research project is to discover what impact Clegg and his approach to education had on the students and environment at Bretton Hall College. However, the aim of collecting these stories is always to ensure that we hear a perspective on Clegg that is fully situated within the students’ personal experiences. To do this, I sought to speak to alumni students who were studying at the College between 1949 and 1974. This was the period during which Clegg was leading the WREA. As such, the alumni students would be well able to speak to the experience of studying at Bretton Hall College under Clegg’s tenure at the WREA, and to shed light on the extent to which they were directly exposed to his philosophies and values in the training they received, and indirectly exposed to a way of thinking about education that was informed by Clegg’s approach.

My gathering of student interviews emerged from my experience of working in the National Arts Education Archive at the start of this project. I visited the Archive once a week over a 2-year period, working in the collections room and strong room that held the majority of the archive material. This working pattern provided me with the opportunity to work with the staff at the Archive, many of whom had worked for the WREA, at Bretton Hall College or at YSP. Over time, they shared their networks with me. This began the process of snowballing when seeking to recruit participants for the research study. The staff made recommendations in terms of active members of the Bretton Hall College alumni who might be willing to speak to me about their experience at the College.
I had an additional opportunity to recruit participants in 2015, when the NAEA curated the exhibition *Herbert Read & Alec Clegg: A Revolution Realised*. I was invited to speak to a group who had come to visit the exhibition. I approached the talk to present my research so far, and as a serendipitous information seeking opportunity. In a serendipitous encounter, the information seeking is often highly visual (Williams, 2021, p.10) and so an exhibition and its audience therefore constitute fertile ground for such an encounter to take place. The encounter led to additional snowballing of participant recruitment as the group was from the Bretton Hall College Alumni association, a group that meets annually at the site to be once again amongst the architecture and environment, their memories, and stories.

Speaking with the group, both formally and informally, revealed time-capsules of experience, if not people frozen in time. The group were now retired people, having worked in education since their time at Bretton Hall College. Yet how they spoke about their time at the College provided an insight into their sense of belonging to the place and their memories of it through “collaborative telling or co-narration” (Herman, 2010, p.48) became apparent. Herman describes this co-narration as a process where a group [a] “social unit often gain a sense of cohesion or shared group membership through processes of co-telling or co-rehearsing already well-known narratives, which are co-narrated precisely for this purpose of signalling or confirming membership in the group” (Herman, 2010, p.48). In coming together physically, the Alumni all demonstrated their well-known narratives, which signalled membership. This insight allowed me to witness first-hand the community of practice that the students had created during their time at the College. It still existed in their narration and held greater resonance when being retold at the Bretton Hall College.
This project collected a selection of these narratives through longer, semi-structured interviews with a range of participants.

Participants were contacted by way of invitation through the snowballing method and were selected to take part in the research project based on the dates they attended Bretton Hall College, in order to provide coverage between 1949 and 1974. Dates can be seen in the table below:

**Table 5.1 Typical case participants by dates of attendance at Bretton Hall College 1949-1974**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Participant Number (Anonymised)</th>
<th>Attendance dates at Bretton Hall College</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 and 2</td>
<td>1952-1954</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1965-1969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>1969-1970</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 and 6</td>
<td>1969-1972</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

I deliberately chose alumni students who would speak to the full period in question, and who could therefore shed light on the continuity of experience and of the community of practice.

As the participants would be alumni students from between 1949 and 1974, typical case sampling was used. Typical case sampling allowed for a cohesive data set that would still work across the 25-year time scale covered in the research. In gathering the data, I was guided by the work of Greg Guest, Arwen Bunce & Laura Johnson and their research article ‘How Many Interviews are Enough? An Experiment with
Data Saturation and Variability’ (2006). Here, they define how many interviews are required to reach data saturation: they deem this to be six participants and therefore this limit was set for data collection.

Data collection took the form of semi-structured interviews. To ascertain the effectiveness of this approach, a sample interview was conducted with a participant who volunteered at the Archive, had worked closely with Clegg in the WREA, and knew the Bretton Hall College site well. This participant had provided workshops and delivered lectures at Bretton Hall College both during the time of Clegg and after his retirement in 1974. The semi-structured approach allowed me to gather memories and reminiscences in an uninterrupted way that privileged the voice of the interviewee. This was important for the collection of the Bretton Hall College students, as collecting their unheard stories was crucial to the research project.

All the semi-structured interviews with alumni students were then carried out face-to-face, except for one remote occasion. Most interviews were held at the NAEA. The site was used as a prompt for experiences, with participants often using the location to navigate their narratives, along with photographs supplied by the NAEA for photo-elicitation purposes. Using a semi-structured interview framework for the narratives provided three recurrent elements within the data collection: firstly, the participant’s guiding narrative; secondly, the environment of Bretton Hall College itself as a prompt; thirdly, my own role as reflective research practitioner in the process, to which I will return in the next sub-section.
All participants were made aware of ethical consent for the research project and all participants agreed and signed a participant consent form before any data was collected. Agreed participant consent confirmed detailed information about the nature and aims of the research and that participants had been informed of this, as well as their right to withdraw from the research at any time and the right to withdraw their data. Permission was given to be quoted directly and the right to anonymity was guaranteed. This ensured that no information which could reveal the identity of a participant would be included in any report or publication resulting from the research.

As the research data was collected, the decision was taken to anonymise all participant contributions due to the personal nature of the narratives being shared. The only information recorded for each participant was the year(s) of attendance at Bretton Hall College.

There are both benefits and limitations to my approach to data collection that must be acknowledged. I have been able to privilege the voices and memories of the participants in a way that starts to address the gap in the literature about Clegg and his influence on Bretton Hall College and the people who studied there. However, because the participants were recruited through a gatekeeper network of contacts (with the NAEA volunteers acting as gatekeepers in this instance) and through attendance at a particular exhibition, the information collected is arguably not fully representative of the student experience of all students at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. This limitation suggests that it might be beneficial to conduct further interviews to expand the materials collected. However, as per the work of Guest, Bunce and Johnson, the saturation point achieved through the typical
case sampling of representative voices from the same group allows significant and pertinent conclusions to nevertheless be drawn.

5.3.3 Acknowledging the Presence of the Researcher in the Data Collection Process: Serendipitous Information Seeking and Practice Grounded in Site Visits to Bretton Hall College

My role in the research has always been from an arts educator’s perspective, having been to art school, and worked as a curator nationally and internationally, and latterly in arts higher education. I began the research with an understanding of both Clegg’s role as administrator and the student’s role as learner and explorer. My autoethnographic positioning was self-explanatory, expanding to a form of ethnomethodology in relation to “how participants [myself in this research study] display their understanding of an ongoing interaction precisely by making particular kinds of contributions to the course of the interaction itself, and thereby jointly construct it as the kind of interaction that they understand it to be” (Herman, 2009, p.46).

My approach to data collection was informed by serendipitous information seeking, which I was taught at art school and is also how I had taught students in art school. Laura Williams (2021) discusses “serendipitous information seeking” (Williams, 2021, p.10) in relation to how students of art and design engage with specific art and design pedagogies. Bretton Hall College was firstly a place of education, secondly a teacher training college, and thirdly focused on music, art and drama, and the creative arts. By collecting the alumni students’ narratives, and looking through that
lens at Bretton Hall College, this study provides an entrance into how students sought information and from this, knowledge about how meaning was made. Williams describes where students “stumble upon and serendipitously encounter information” (Williams, 2021, p.10) as a way of demonstrating how art and design is accessed and explored, often working in conceptual landscapes or ideas (Williams, 2021). William’s stance reflects Clegg’s philosophy of experiential learning, which would often occur in a non-linear way through conceptual, progressive ideas of what education can be. In this way, Williams’ approach also mirrors the idea presented in this research that Clegg facilitated the conditions of possibility for the community of Bretton Hall College. He provided a conceptual landscape alongside the physical landscape of Bretton Hall for the students to explore, inhabit and shape, through serendipitous encounters. In this context it is suggested here that the students of Bretton Hall College accessed and explored art and design in the widest possible framework by engaging with their studies of creative practices in and through the environment of Bretton Hall College.

By working with a conceptual framework of serendipitous information seeking, I was able to reveal the gap in the history of Bretton Hall College and in Clegg’s left by the missing student voices. Adopting this role of serendipitous information seeker allowed the participants to achieve a shorthand with me in the data collection of their narratives. We were all from the same conceptual school of thinking about information finding, and collectively reinterpreted and retold the story of Bretton Hall College and Clegg.
I also became part of the landscape because of my regular attendance at the Breton Hall College site over a 2-year period. I regularly walked around the site during my visits and accessed the site in three-dimensions. As a result, this research is not just about the existing literature around the WREA and Clegg. In the absence of comprehensive literature about Breton Hall College, I used the site itself to engage with what had once been there. This became the basis for an article I wrote for a guest-edited issue of the Journal of Writing in Creative Practice ‘That which is not yet there’ (Mills, Power, Bailey and Walker, 2014). The article’s starting point was a 1964 Breton Hall College campus map, produced for the building expansion that opened in the same year. Transposing the map onto the existing landscape to produce a juxtaposition of spatial narratives that once were and are now, provided an opportunity to reflect on Breton Hall College campus, which was earmarked for development after remaining abandoned since 2001 when the University of Leeds, then in control of the College, had closed the doors forever. The 1964 buildings were to be demolished and all physical traces of this part of the Breton Estate would be lost. In this respect, the physical framework for the basis of this research project was also documenting an architectural site that may soon be repurposed for redevelopment.

The physicality of situating myself in the landscape provided the beginning of my grounded practice when engaging with the site. I had become part of the site’s continuing history, adding to the literature, and capturing what once was there and was soon to be erased. This grounded practice approach sat within my serendipitous information seeking, to inform my own role and route through the research project, as well as the overarching research design.
5.4 Methodological Lenses for the Analysis of the Student Narratives

To analyse the alumni student narratives that were collected as part of this research project, three methodological lenses have been adopted: narrative inquiry; spatial behaviours and storytelling through architecture; and the construction and navigation of a sense of belonging. This section introduces each of the lenses in turn and explains how they are applied to the analysis to come.

5.4.1 Narrative Inquiry

As the student narratives had never been previously recorded, captured or analysed, it was important in the design of the research methodology to use an approach that would allow the richness, depth, and breadth of these stories to be revealed and retold. Indeed, the narratives are multi-faceted and engage with personal experiences now situated in memory (Ochs and Capps, 2001). They are rich in detail and cross timescales spanning the 25 years between 1949 and 1974. Furthermore, the research also documents the lives of the students in question since their leaving Bretton Hall College, and how they have been impacted by this educational experience. All the narratives begin with education, and the starting point is the selection to study at Bretton Hall College. To capture the complex stories and non-linear nature of memory, narrative inquiry was chosen as the methodological framework. This approach is often a natural vehicle for educational research.

When using a narrative inquiry method, it is necessary to define what we mean by narrative. Michael Bamberg explains that,

When narrators tell a story, they give ‘narrative form’ to experience. They position characters in space and time and, in a very broad sense, give order
to and make sense of what happened—or what is imagined to have happened. Thus, it can be argued, that narratives attempt to explain or normalize what has occurred; they lay out why things are the way they are or have become the way they are. Narrative, therefore, can be said to provide a portal into two realms: (i) the realm of experience, where speakers lay out how they as individuals experience certain events and confer their subjective meaning onto these experiences; and (ii) the realm of narrative means (or devices) that are put to use in order to make (this) sense.

(Bamberg, 2012, p.86)

Capturing narratives is a way of capturing experiences, and documenting the narratives of the Bretton Hall College students allows for the acknowledgement of their experiences at the College, as well as the meanings they derived from these experiences. As they tell the stories of these experiences, they can put into their own words what occurred and make sense of what happened. Given the stories of the students have not been heard until now, giving space for these narratives allows this research project to validate the student experience and elevate its importance: this experience (explained and normalized through narrative) becomes part of a wider narrative about Clegg, and acknowledges the crucial role the students play as stakeholders in establishing his impact and legacy.

As far as the narrative enquiry method is concerned, Jean Clandinin and Michael Connelly are authorities in this area and their work is grounded in John Dewey’s approach, looking at the theory of experience. They explain that:

People shape their daily lives by stories of who they and others are and as they interpret their past in terms of these stories. Story, in the current idiom, is a portal through which their experience of the world enters the world and by which their experience of the world is interpreted and made personally meaningful. Viewed this way, narrative is the phenomenon studied in inquiry. Narrative inquiry, the study of experience as story, then, is first and foremost a way of thinking about experience. Narrative inquiry as a methodology entails a view of the phenomenon. To use narrative inquiry methodology is to adopt a particular narrative view of experience as phenomena under study.
The focus on experience is fundamental to this research project: allowing the alumni students the opportunity to talk not only about the facts of their time at Bretton Hall College but also their experience in turn reveals the ways in which Clegg had an impact on that experience. By narrating their experience, the students are explaining how they reacted to moments of direct impact, where they encountered Clegg, and indirect impact, where they responded to the conditions of possibility that Clegg’s philosophies and approach enabled at the College. Moreover, the narration of experience provides an opportunity for the students to explore who they were and who they are now as a result of their time at Bretton Hall College, and so to reflect not only on their own identity (a crucial element of communities of practice, as we shall see in Chapter 6 Section 6.3.2), but also on how they related to one another, another important aspect of narrative inquiry (Clandinin and Caine, 2012).

Furthermore, the use of narrative inquiry as a methodology involves an ongoing reflexive and reflective process; as Jean Clandinin and Vera Caine elucidate, “Because narrative inquiry is an ongoing reflexive and reflective methodology, narrative inquirers need to continually inquire into their experiences before, during, and after each inquiry”. (Clandinin and Caine, 2012, p.171). This is important to this research project for two reasons: it acknowledges the researcher’s own position and involvement in the data collection and analysis process. The need to inquire on an ongoing basis before, during, and after each interview creates space for reflection, analysis, and comparison. In the context of the alumni students’ narrative, this reflection enabled me to highlight recurrent patterns of experience for the individual
that pointed to a shared experience of the community of practice. However, reflection was also a key element of the students’ act of telling and retelling their experiences through narrative: they reflected on their time at the College whilst sharing their narratives, and so revealed their own interpretations of the community of practice and its impact on them whilst at the College and beyond. This started to reveal the non-linearity of their experiences of the community of practice and the way in which that community transcended the Bretton Hall College campus.

The choice of narrative inquiry as methodology is also informed by Clegg’s own approach to narrative. When reviewing the literature about Clegg and through archival literature at the National Arts Education Archive, it became apparent that Clegg was a prolific public speaker and often used stories and parables in his presentations and writings (Darvill, 2000; George, 2000; NAEA, Sir Alec Clegg Collection). This use of narrative underpins the research methodology of this thesis. Clegg’s use of the familiar tools of the storyteller to make his message understandable demonstrates his flair and ability to engage his audience, and points to the richness of storytelling and narrative as a research tool. This thesis therefore uses narrative inquiry as a method for interacting with Bretton Hall College Alumni, which can provide a platform through which to capture and analyse the rich stories of the students’ experiences of Bretton Hall College, which in turn can bring to a new perspective to and understanding of the history and legacy of Clegg.

This methodological approach enables me to contribute to scholarship in two original ways. Firstly, using narrative inquiry as a vehicle for gathering the recollections, memories, and stories of Bretton Hall College from the perspectives and experiences
of the students who studied there constitutes the first data collection of its kind. Secondly, it addresses a gap in the legacy building of Clegg. This is because the first-hand stories and experiences of the students living and studying at Bretton Hall College, together with the stories’ ability to reveal how Clegg was directly or indirectly part of that experience and history, provide new evidence of an unrecorded history of Bretton Hall College. In this light, using a narrative inquiry methodology allows for personal memories to be both individually and collectively gathered from Bretton Hall College alumni. The tool is broad enough in scope to include memories of the environment and landscape as part of the students’ experiences at Bretton Hall College, allowing also for an exploration of the extent to which the environment impacted their memories. The purpose of using narrative inquiry is to bring a framework to the narratives that allows the discovery of deeper levels of meaning making to emerge and contribute, in this case, to the legacy building of Clegg (Ochs and Capps, 2001; Gottschall, 2012).

Given the rationale outlined above of a two-aspect approach of gathering narratives from the Bretton Hall College students and the desire to remain mindful of the power of Clegg’s approach to using storytelling as part of his own practice to engage audiences, the decision was made to use Clandinin and Connelly’s approach as this provides the widest framework possible for capturing the narratives. Moreover, the focus on the experiential, reflexive, and relational aspects of narratives that this inquiry method provides, begins to illustrate the need to engage with verbatim narratives and unedited interview data within this thesis. As experiences are reworked through the retelling of a narrative, changes in details and elements must be acknowledged and preserved. Opportunities for reflection that the telling of the
story prompts need to be included. The ways in which the students related to one another and to the broader community of practice are embedded throughout the narrative and ultimately shed light on how Clegg had a direct and indirect impact at Bretton Hall College. Because these elements permeate the entire interview, I therefore reproduce the narratives in their entirety and without editing. More information about this approach and justification for the inclusion of interview data in this way is found in Chapter 6 section 6.3.3.

5.4.2 Spatial Behaviours and Storytelling through Architecture

Bretton Hall College sits in 500 acres of parkland, surrounded by West Yorkshire countryside. During the time of Clegg’s tenure at the WREA, the College campus extended to over 20 buildings and numbers of students studying at the campus gradually expanded beyond capacity to reach levels that surpassed what the site could accommodate. In the design of the campus, Bretton Hall College was not unusual: the site provided an educational environment comprising of several large buildings each with different purposes, as well as outdoor social spaces often accompanied by living spaces. However, in 1949, Bretton Hall College was a brand-new learning space; it was at the start of a new pathway and route through education. Throughout Clegg’s leadership of the WREA, Bretton Hall College established and introduced new ways of being in teacher training in the arts that were based on Clegg’s beliefs and philosophies in arts education and child-centred education, as discussed in Chapters 2 and 3.

This context therefore provided a unique position for the students of Bretton Hall College during this time. In 1949, the first cohort of students ever to be part of
Bretton Hall College arrived, to live and study onsite. In contemporary education, this rarely if ever occurs. Educational institutions merge and become new organisations, but newly created physical spaces of learning are rare. In post-war Britain, on the other hand, new schools and colleges were built and did emerge (Jones, 2016; Gosden and Sharp, 1978); however, the role of being the first students in these new educational spaces is significant, and with it comes a responsibility not recognised at the time. This is because a new model for student engagement needed to emerge and be created, mirroring the new physical space. This culture of engagement was beyond the academic curriculum. A curriculum of learning that is structured to develop knowledge and engage learners provides an intellectual culture. A culture of engagement moves beyond the curriculum of learning and co-creates a culture of lived experiences. This can only be created from physically, emotionally, and mentally inhabiting what are the blurred boundaries of living and studying in an educational and domestic space. In the case of this research, Bretton Hall College provided both types of space for its students. The geographical and architectural spaces of Bretton Hall College became a hybrid environment of work, home, and playground for the students. There was therefore the potential for the co-creation of a culture and a practice with each other, informed and shaped by Clegg’s guiding vision, even if the students were unaware of his hand in the background. The first students at Bretton Hall College had the opportunity to shape a community of practice not only for themselves but for future generations of students.

Moreover, because the students lived and studied at Bretton Hall College, it was both their place of work and home. They explored the buildings and the expansive site and created new friendships in the foundations of the college, both intellectually,
and spatially in the bricks and mortar of the college. The students were the *spaces in between* these elements. The students occupied the emotional and personal facets of the environment. They created a culture of their own and inhabited it. This research thus refers to the students as the *spaces in between*, the silent voices in the legacy of Clegg and the WREA. The cement in the walls without which the (legacy) building would not stand. This strength of the student voice as expressed in the stories about their experiences and culture creation at Bretton Hall College provides new insights into how the environment of the campus was shaped by the students and how the students shaped the environment of the campus. Their ways of being contribute to what Bretton Hall College was and became. Therefore, the *spaces in between* provide the narrative of engagement between 1949 and 1974 from lived experiences (Ochs and Capps, 2012; De Fina and Georgakopoulou, 2012).

Architecture then provides the landscape in which lives are lived (Kimber, 2010), a shelter for its inhabitants, and an ever-expanding time capsule where stories of lives are woven into the structure (Molinari and Bigiotti, 2014). Kimber writes: “A building is more than a constructed environment for the corporeal and should respond to more than just the needs of the body; it must stimulate the mind as well as the senses to be truly sustainable” (Kimber, 2010, p.2). Buildings provide fertile ground which goes beyond the physical to a visceral experience (Hollis, 2013; De Botton, 2006). For this research, the students’ narratives are set within a specified time frame; however, individually, they are not linear: the narratives move back and forth in time as the memories are retold, situated in the architectural site of Bretton Hall College. The narratives being situated in the architecture provides the framework for
new meaning to emerge, as Kimber further states: “The ability of a work of architecture to remain relevant is only enabled through its acceptance of new interpretations, much like how a story will remain within the collective consciousness so long as it is reinterpreted through new applications of narrative” (Kimber, 2010, p.3). In a similar way, this research brings together the narratives of the spaces in between and, through narrative inquiry analysis, renders reinterpretation possible. Furthermore, as Kimber explains, “In the retelling, the story gains new meaning and reinforces its immortality as an idea” (Kimber, 2010, p.4).

The research is therefore not simply a timeline of events at Bretton Hall College: it is a retelling and reinvention of a story of education through experiences and encounters of personal growth within the architecture of Bretton Hall College.

A spatial language is needed to tell the story of a particular place. If a spatial language is developed, it is possible to tell the appropriate stories – stories of the people who inhabit or have inhabited a place, the cultural history of a site (Wallace, 2007, p.7).

For a spatial language to develop, it will be informed by spatial behaviours. This research therefore places spatial behaviours before any development of a spatial language. This research project is concerned with how the students occupied the buildings, used the buildings, owned the spaces, and evolved the purposes of the buildings: in this thesis, this is conceived of as spatial behaviour in action. When these actions are brought together, the by-product of those behaviours emerges and is representative of the culture that has been created.
This thesis prioritises looking at spatial behaviours as a way of unpicking the spatial language and thus stories that the students tell of Bretton Hall College, as a way of shedding light on their culture and the actions and behaviours that informed its co-creation, as shaped by the environment and landscape.

5.4.3 Navigating belonging

YSP suggest on their website that “The main focus of the College was the mansion house that is at the centre of the Estate. The creation of the College opened this beautiful house to students who were able to draw inspiration from the historic buildings and landscape that surrounded it” (YSP, 2021). In 1949 when the College opened, the Mansion House was the hub of the College campus and was the College. The students would go on not only to draw inspiration from the historic buildings and landscape, but also, to add an emotional, and new cultural element to the site as the campus was so much more to the students than the 18th Century Mansion House in its physical appearance. The students at Bretton Hall College inhabited the site physically and imbued it with their own presence. They created an entire culture at the site and in this process co-created a sub-culture of Clegg’s legacy. The students participated in the environment largely unaware of Clegg’s philosophical intentions; however, in the narratives collected in this research project, they did provide evidence of how Clegg provided a condition of opportunity for learning, well-being, and self-development at Bretton Hall College, which was invisible to the students at the time and has remained so since. Chapter 6 presents the case study of collected narratives.
Clegg’s ambitions for the College were to create a community of and for teacher training for the arts. This was physically realised at Bretton Hall College, but it is the community created by the students themselves that aligns most directly and obviously with these ambitions. The indirect legacy of Clegg becomes apparent when the collected narratives are brought together and analysed through narrative inquiry. Chapter 8 discusses this analysis.

There is another aspect to the culture that was built at Bretton Hall College: that of a self- and self-fulfilling legacy by the students. This aspect of legacy culture is different to the first two strands of culture taking place at Bretton Hall College. This is the legacy that was to become the students’ personal legacy of undertaking a creative practice throughout their lives, and of anchoring that to the culture of belonging that they had created when living and studying at Bretton Hall College. This culture of belonging is what draws the alumni students back to Bretton Hall College, accessed through their experiences and memories. Many regularly make pilgrimages back to the now abandoned site and reawaken it through the co-creation of narratives (Herman, 2010). This maintains and sustains a culture of belonging to a past life.

It is therefore suggested that there were and are 3 strands of culture taking place at Bretton Hall College at the time and since:

1) A culture at Bretton Hall College created by the students at the time aligning unknowingly with Sir Alec Clegg’s philosophies;

2) A contribution to the legacy building culture of Sir Alec Clegg;
3) A lived culture of a created legacy of belonging.

The alumni student narratives reveal the extent to which a sense of belonging to all three of these strands permeates the community of practice to which students belong and which still influences their identity. These themes will be analysed in more depth in Chapter 6.

5.5 Conclusion

To shed light on the methodological approaches adopted in this research project, this chapter situates Bretton Hall College in its historical and geographical context, from its founding in 1949 to the remapping of the Yorkshire boundaries in 1974 and the opening of YSP in 1977. This context is important for understanding the design of the research methodology for this project: an approach was needed that would reflect not only the depth of the site but also the participants’ role in the history of the site through their time at (and after) Bretton Hall College. Narrative inquiry was therefore selected as an analytical method that would provide enough depth and breadth to include co-narration of the collected narratives (Herman, 2010).

The chapter has explained how positioning the students as the *spaces in between* provides a way of navigating through this silent history of Bretton Hall College and legacy building of Clegg. The student stories collected for this project are told through the architecture and environment of Bretton Hall College and express spatial behaviours locked in memories and co-culture creation. To understand better the gap in Clegg’s legacy, the methodology of narrative inquiry allows me to position myself in a form of grounded practice through serendipitous information seeking with
serendipitous snowballing. This enabled engagement with different types of narratives and shed light on the ongoing impact of the co-created culture of engagement generated by Bretton Hall College students. It also illustrated how crucial it is to navigate belonging within this project. In this light, three strands of inquiry have been identified as the focus points for the analysis of the students’ narratives.

Chapter 8 analyses in more depth these three strands through a close reading of the collected narratives and broader findings from the research project.
6.1 Introduction

This chapter places the physical Bretton Hall College campus into its familial history through its inhabitants and provides the contextual history of the site. This history has not until now, been mapped to the creation of the community of practice by the Bretton Hall College students. Steeped in memory and situated here in this chapter in the work of Wenger and Bourdieu, what is revealed is the physical social body that the community of practice became. The term community of practice is also defined and interrogated. This chapter also presents the rationale for using verbatim quotations of the Bretton Hall College student narratives.

6.2 An 18th Century Landscape and Architecture of Bretton Hall College

The Bretton Hall College students undertook their education in a landscape rich in history that was ever evolving, and which encompassed many changes over time. Reflecting architectural fashions, each family that inhabited the estate buildings made their mark on the vast space. Each iteration of the estate included human interaction with the landscape. Each generation of inhabitants was thus in conversation with the architecture and geography of the site (De Botton, 2007; Hollis, 2013) and this included the College students, I would argue. Indeed, De Botton and Hollis both argue for the value of architecture and its meaning in multi-faced perspectives, revealing how the way in which we move through a space provides a
new translation of the environment. This in turn reveals the Architecture of Happiness (De Botton, 2007) and the secret lives of buildings (Hollis, 2013) both from a fictional and factual stance. These are both texts that approach buildings and their usage from an emotive stance in addition to how we engage with buildings as 3-dimensional structures over time. These frameworks inform my reading of the conversations I had with the Bretton Hall College students: they shed light on the relationship that the students had with the architecture of their environment and geography of the surrounding landscape, and the role that this environment played for their community of practice. This is because the idea of the Architecture of Happiness reveals the nature of joy in engaging with architectural spaces and Hollis’s theory about the Secret Lives of Buildings sheds light on how architecture can be both transitory and permanent when situated in the memory of emotion. Both are crucial to understanding how architecture and geography, shaped, informed, underpinned, and influenced the College students’ community of practice.

Placing the estate in its historical context provides not only a grounding for the 20th Century playground that the students called home, but also the architectural engagement of past generations with the Estate. This includes how they interacted with the landscape and changed it. As a private family home, the Bretton Estate provided the backdrop to a personal history; then, as a place of educational philosophies, the Bretton Hall College became home to a family of students.

The work of Leonard Bartle is drawn on here to provide a clear and informative depiction of the Bretton Estate. This is the most comprehensive and detailed literature covering the earliest beginnings of the Bretton Estate. Bartle is a volunteer
at the National Arts Education Archive (NAEA). The work he has carried out to document the history of the families that inhabited the Estate and has provided a contextual scaffolding for uncovering the range of perspectives and hidden voices of the Bretton Hall Estate, which began over 700 years ago and, with this research, now includes the voices of the Bretton Hall College students.

The Bretton Estate has been home to three families over 700 years. The Dronsfields (1261-1407), the Wentworths (1407-1792), and the Beaumonts (1407-1792). Each family shaped the estate which was to become Bretton Hall College in 1949. The 18th Century Palladian mansion house has always been at the epicentre of activity on the 500-acre estate. This is in what is now known as West Bretton, in West Yorkshire. West Bretton was originally two hamlets that were brought together: Bretton and West Bretton. The Domesday book in 1086 records West Bretton being held by the King's Manor of Wakefield, West Yorkshire. The Bretton township that included Bretton Hall, which is the mansion house, is recorded as belonging to the Norman Lord Ilbert de Lacy (Bartle, 2000, p.3). Following the Norman Conquest, the de Bretton family came to live at Bretton: through marriage they joined with the Dronsfield family and together they cultivated the Bretton Estate from the 13th Century. The Dronsfield family would go on to become the Lords of the Manor of West Bretton and continued to develop the estate over the next 140 years (Bartle, 2000, p.3).

In 1407, Sir William Dronsfield died, leaving no male heir; it was thus his sister Agnes, and her younger sister, Isabel, who became heirs to the Bretton Estate. When Isabel married John Wentworth, the Estate switched hands and would remain
with the Wentworths for the next 385 years. The Wentworth family were “part of a group of kinsmen who were the great landowners during the heyday of the English landed gentry” (Bartle, 2000, p.4). Three generations later, Sir Thomas Wentworth would become a Knight Marshal to King Henry VIII. Thanks to his newly gained status, Sir Thomas was able to build a “new timber house and furnished it with richly carved hangings and furniture” (Bartle, 2000, p.4) at the Bretton Estate. This timber house is the beginnings of the Mansion house. Between 1637 and 1641 the Bretton estate had a quick succession of four heirs in the Wentworth family: Matthew Wentworth, George Wentworth, William Wentworth, and Thomas Wentworth. By 1646 Bretton Hall “was then a timber-built house with 37 rooms. There were 8 parlours and 12 chambers” (Bartle, 2000, p.5).

Following the reformation of the Monarchy, Thomas Wentworth the son of Sir Thomas Wentworth, Knight Marshal to King Henry VIII, was himself knighted becoming Sir Thomas Wentworth II in 1660, later becoming a Baronet. In 1675 Sir Thomas died with no children, and so Sir Matthew Wentworth, his brother, became heir to the Bretton Estate. Sir Matthew’s grandson, Sir William Wentworth, would then inherit in 1706 and it was Sir William Wentworth who built the fashionable Palladian mansion house “in small blocks of limestone, creamy in colour” (Bartle, 2000, p.6).

Sir William Wentworth thus provided the recognisable Bretton Hall that is visible today. A man of his time, Sir William Wentworth went on a Grand Tour of the Continent, becoming friends with Lord Burlington, a student of Andrea Palladio’s architecture. According to Bartle:
In 1720, six years after his return, Sir William married a rich heiress from Northumberland, Diana Blackett, and the wealth brought to him by this marriage enabled him to design and build a new house for himself in the Palladian style. The marriage also moved the Wentworth family into a position which ranked them with the rich and powerful gentry of northern England.

(Bartle, 2000, p.7)

It was Sir William Wentworth who also built the Chapel at Bretton that can be seen today, which replaced the medieval Chapel built by the Dronsfield family. He was then buried in the Chapel that he had built at Bretton in 1763. His son Sir Thomas Wentworth was the last of the Wentworth line at the Bretton Estate. Sir Thomas Wentworth III continued to evolve and update the Palladian mansion that his father had built by creating an office wing, kitchens stable and farm (Bartle, 2000, p.12). Moreover, the Bretton Estate that is recognisable today and that formed the foundations of the landscape for the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) was developed by Sir Thomas Wentworth III. He created “Bretton Park and its gardens, probably to a design by Richard Woods of Chertsey, very much in the style of “Capability” Brown. This was completed by the creation of two artificial lakes from the dammed River Dearne” (Bartle, 2000, p.12).

Sir Thomas’ daughter Diana became heir to both the Yorkshire and Northumberland Estates following his death in 1793. Diana married Thomas Beaumont in 1786 and a new family became resident on the Bretton Estate. Diana and Thomas would invest heavily in the Bretton Estate for 40 years: this included remodelling and enlarging the Mansion House significantly. Notably, it is the estate which Diana and Thomas created which the Bretton Hall College students would most recognise. Following the
instructions of the Beaumonts, in 1720, Architects William Atkinson and Jeffry Wyatt built,

[...] a new suite of rooms, dining room and other apartments. This almost doubled the size of Bretton Hall. His most imaginative addition was a vestibule in the Hall which ascends from the ground floor, through the full height of the house, to a large octagonal lantern.

(Bartle, 2000, p.13)

This time of expansion also included the building of the Camellia House, the two lodges at the entrance to the estate, and the bridge spanning the two artificial lakes. Following the deaths of Diana and Thomas, their son Thomas inherited the Bretton Estate in 1831, and was known as “the richest commoner in England” (Bartle, 2000, p.14). Sir Thomas, like his parents, came to invest in the Estate adding new stables and a coach house: these buildings would become known by the Bretton Hall College students as the Stable Block and the Kennel Block. The dining room in the Mansion house became more ornate with the addition of a Rococo ceiling. Sir Thomas Beaumont died in 1848 and his son and heir is also buried in the Chapel at Bretton with his Great Grandfather, Sir William Wentworth.

Great grandson of Sir Thomas Beaumont, Wentworth Henry Beaumont and his family were the last family to live on the Bretton Estate. Wentworth Beaumont had a long-standing role with the royal family: at the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II, he was a Garter Knight, holding the canopy for the new Monarch’s anointing (Bartle, 2000, p.16).

After a long line of family ownership spanning three families, the Bretton Estate was sold in part. During the Second World War, Bretton Hall had been used by the War Office; in 1948, the then 3rd Viscount of Bretton Hall sold 260 acres of the estate to
the West Riding County Council. The sale included the Mansion House, the lodges and the two artificial lakes. In 1958 the 3rd Viscount of Bretton Hall sold an additional 4,000 acres of the Bretton Estate to the West Riding County Council (Bartle, 2000, p.16). Bretton Hall College had been on the site for 9 years at this stage. Wentworth Beaumont Viscount of Bretton Hall was the last family member to be buried on the Bretton Estate (Bartle, 2000, p.16).

6.3 A Fresh Start: Repurposing the Estate to Create the College

The purchase of Bretton Hall by the West Riding County Council is discussed in subsection 6.2.2, when it became a college that would train teachers in the arts. Central to this training was the landscape in which the college was situated, which would not only inspire the students but also provide the capacity for creation. The previous section discussed the man-made landscape which the Bretton Estate was, a created natural beauty for pleasure and domestic living. This 18th Century landscape therefore made the perfect environmental situation for inspiring and engaging the creative practice students. As Peter Cunningham writes in *Education through the Arts: For wellbeing and community: The vision and legacy of Sir Alec Clegg* (2021):

> The aim to prepare highly qualified teachers, especially for creative, expressive, and physical development of children, was realised in notably visible premises! Prestige was to be earned by the quality of teachers produced and their influence in schools, but these grand buildings might be seen to symbolise their importance to educational quality and teachers’ professional status.

(Cunningham, 2021, p.59).

Cunningham is succinctly describing the impact that architecture and environment can have in education and the suggested intention of prestige, by linking the student
teachers’ practice to the grandeur of the architecture as the ideal framework for the study of creative, expressive, and physical development for teaching.

The Bretton Estate was ideally placed to provide an inspirational environment through landscape and architecture, drawing on its characteristically English country house history as discussed in section 6.1. Yet the pivotal role of the students at Bretton Hall College has been overlooked in the history and creative use of the Bretton Estate. As Claire Booth-Kurpnieks writes in her PhD thesis ‘Does YSP make you happy? Investigating situated narratives of wellbeing at the Yorkshire Sculpture Park’ (2020), “an idea of wellbeing has perhaps always been implicit within the development of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and going back further, the Bretton Estate. This is frequently positioned as intrinsic to the particular environment of YSP” (Booth-Kurpnieks, 2020, p.141). The extensive research by Kurpnieks about the Yorkshire Sculpture Park and Bretton Estate provides no information about the Bretton Hall students, or the transition from the Bretton Estate to Bretton Hall College, to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. Whilst researching for this project, I found no mention in any literature that could be sources about the Bretton Hall College students and their direct experiences of being a student at Bretton Hall College at the time of Clegg’s working life.

This raises further the possibility and potential of reading the Bretton Hall College students as being the spaces in between, which are posited here as being the spaces in between the history and legacy of Clegg, and as the creators of a culture at Bretton Hall College, who enable us to start to construct the hidden history of Bretton Hall College. However, from Booth-Kurpnieks’ positioning of the Bretton
Estate and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, the Bretton Hall College students can also be seen as the spaces in between the physical landscape. The Bretton Estate is the third factor in the culture creation and legacy building of Clegg. If Bretton Hall College had been a purpose-built College, the same experiences of interaction with an historically family home, pleasure garden landscape and inclusive community would not have taken place. The extensive layered history of the site is situated in the continual repurposing of the landscape. With each iteration, the landscape provides both historical continuity and the possibility of new histories to add to it. Each footstep on the land created by the 700 hundred years of private domestic dwelling, with pleasure gardens and family events of births, deaths, and marriages, provided a blueprint of domestic living which leant itself to the creation of a home and playground to the students at Bretton Hall College.

6.3.1 From War Office to College: The Re-Establishment of the Bretton Hall Site as a Home

In 1946, when Bretton Hall was still in the ownership of the Beaumont family and occupied by the War Office, the Post-War subcommittee received a memo from the WREA which read:

Music and art are almost invariably taught as isolated subjects despite their common purpose which is to stimulate and train the child’s sensibilities, furthermore the training in each subject, particularly in music, is apt to be somewhat narrow. For this reason, it is suggested that any training college containing students specialising in music should also include intending teachers of art, and possibly also specialists in drama, in order that each student may leave the college with a wide conception of the arts generally and their effect on the education of the child and possibly some experience of combining music, art and drama in school functions or performance.

(Bartle, 2000, p.19)
Two years later, Bretton Hall was purchased by the West Riding County Council. As Peter Cunningham writes, “Bretton Hall College near Wakefield … was sold to the County Council, when Clegg seized the opportunity to instigate a specialist college for training teachers of art, music and drama” (Cunningham, 2021, p.59). Yet the building also embodied a family history that provided a picture of domesticity over a 700-year period. People lived in the spaces and added to the estate, changing the architecture. Underlying it and living in it, were the families. From this perspective, it is clear why the Bretton Hall Colleges students interacted in the spaces in a way that constituted them not only as a specialist college but also as a home. Because the Bretton Estate had always been a home. Engaging with the buildings and landscapes in this way thus continued throughout its history. What the Bretton Hall College students brought to the Bretton Estate was the same thing that every person living on the Estate had previously brought: life, and engagement with the site as a living landscape which made it a home.

At the time of purchase by the West Riding County Council, the groundwork for continuing to perceive the Bretton Estate as a home had already been laid and the new triumvirate of stakeholders would further enable this perception. The WREA provided the physical space of Bretton Hall. Clegg brought his ethos and philosophies of education through the arts to the College in a way that provided an intellectual home for the students. The students at Bretton Hall College then brought a new dimension of home and life to the Estate and a new type of ownership of the buildings and the landscape which was not through purchase or inheritance. They created ownership through a community that they built, which cemented their sense of the Bretton Estate as home.
John Friend, the first Principal of Bretton Hall College, recalled the first day of the new college in his self-published book *Community and Creativity in the Education and Training of Teachers: Bretton Hall*:

> On the afternoon of September 25th, the first fifty-six students arrived, just after the beds, and before the dining room chairs. Everyone was lost, misdirecting everyone else; furniture was being whisked into bedrooms just ahead of the students, while excited chatter and the sound of pianos being played filled the house with unaccustomed noise. That evening we sat down to our first meal together; everyone felt the excitement of being in at the beginning of a new education experiment.

(Friend, n.d., p.20)

The sense of new beginnings and coming together, and the excitement at the time can be seen in the quotation from Friend. People being lost in the space, then filling the space with their furniture and belongings, the impromptu music and then coming together for a meal, all provide a tangible feeling of camaraderie and *being in it together*. Each person is already occupying the space, bringing their own new beginning to the space.

More broadly, the Bretton Hall College students provide a theoretical bridge for the Bretton Hall Estate: they bridge the privately owned family home which moved into Government jurisdiction for the duration of the Second World War and then through the students, the Bretton Estate is returned and made new by the Bretton Hall College students. The following quotation from Friend, when framed as a moving in day suggests just that: that the Bretton Hall College students had moved in and with them, a new beginning:
So by 3pm on Thursday, September 25th, 1949 a group of 56 men and women had gathered at the main door of the Mansion waiting to be admitted as the first students of Bretton Hall. They had been arriving since mid-morning but could not be admitted as preparations for their reception were not yet completed. They were a very mixed group with ages ranging from eighteen to forty, musicians and artists from many parts of the country. When it was finally possible to open, they found their way around the Mansion, sought out the pianos and soon the Hall was full of music. We seemed almost at once to have created an exciting community.

(Friend, nd., p.7)

6.3.2 The Hidden History: The College and its Students as the Bridge between the Estate and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park

The Bretton Estate and its history is less well known than its protégé and later addition of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP). The impact of YSP on visitors with particular reference to their wellbeing and situating YSP in the lavish history of the Bretton landscape, “the Bretton Estate bears all the hallmarks of the pleasure ground of this period [late 18th Century] with its vistas, lakes, grottos and temples” (Booth-Kurpnieks, 2000, p.142).

Booth-Kurpnieks cites the work of cultural geographer Denis Cosgrove in Social Formation and the Symbolic Landscape, and uses his argument of the landscape being an “ideological construct” (Cosgrove, 1985) to explain the lack of access to Estates like Bretton as a matter of class:

The landscape of the country park, conceived by Cosgrove as a projection of landscape painting into the “working countryside” (Cosgrove, 1985, p.212), is seen to symbolically represent the landed gentry as stewards of the countryside. Access to the public, as well as those who work the land, is closed off while giving the owners and their guests uninterrupted views across the managed, yet seemingly natural, landscape. The Bretton Estate is itself an exemplar of this type of landscape, in which, through the close management and “improvement” of the estate and its farmlands, “all nature [becomes] a garden and thus a place of recreation under exclusive control” (Cosgrove, 1985, p.212).
Booth-Kurpnieks continues: “The establishment of Bretton College on the site in 1949 by the radical educationalist Sir Alec Clegg to some extent overturned the function of the estate as a private place for recreation, described as a “progressive, idealistic move in post-war Britain” (Murray, 2008, p.7) (Booth-Kurpnieks, 2000, pp.144-145). Yet the narratives in this chapter will demonstrate that this overturning of the function of the estate as a private place for recreation arguably did not happen. This research instead suggests that a once private place for recreation and a home that was the Bretton Estate were made private again by being placed into the hands of the Bretton Hall College students. The Bretton Hall College landscape and architecture was their private home for their time of study and as this research will show, beyond that time, as they took a self-appointed custodian role of the site.

The Bretton Hall College students were the bridge between the privately owned family property and the public access of YSP. The Bretton Hall College students had full access to the Bretton Estate as their own private place for recreation. The Estate thus provided a hybrid model of a private place as Bretton Hall College continued to be a private place for recreation. And the ways in which the Bretton Hall College students approached and engaged with the estate brought about a new culture which crossed class, history, and encouraged educational mobility.

Booth-Kurpnieks uses the work of Peter Murray, the Founder and Executive Director of Yorkshire Sculpture Park and a Bretton Hall College Alumni, to further argue that:
Over the years YSP has taken over the management of the 500 acres site seeking to reunite the historic Bretton Estate. The move from an "eighteenth century park created for a privileged minority" to "open access" was motivated by both the “spirit of this richly layered landscape” and the “desire to leave a positive mark on this land” (Murray, 2008, p.8). The space of “retreat” and “refuge”, once the domain of the landed gentry, was now open to the public.

(Booth-Kurpnieks, 2000, p.145)

The narratives presented here show that for the Bretton Hall College Students, they also felt this privilege when they lived and studied on the Estate. The “open access” of which Murray speaks did not begin wholly with YSP: there was partial access with the Bretton Hall College students. Indeed, access had begun in 1949, and arguably an element of this even came when the War Office took over the Mansion House.

Murray’s final comment regarding the desire to “leave a positive mark on the land” is arguably appropriate when positioned from a visual arts and sculptural perspective of the 21st Century. However, positive marks had been left on the land by several generations of the Bretton Estate. Neglect of the investments in the Estate through architecture, landscape, and culture, as discussed above, is to ignore this history and is to erase its presence. Moreover, in the context presented by Booth-Kurpnieks, Bretton Hall College Hall’s presence and contribution to the Estate is completely overlooked. Architectural investment in the Bretton Hall College estate was made by the West Riding County Council and extended to an in-house County Architect Department where they employed their own West Riding County Architect, Hubert Bennett. The first additions at the campus were made between 1948 and 1953, just before the Bretton Estate was opened, followed with significant additions between 1960 and 1963 opening in 1964. My exploration of the Bretton Hall College campus, which presents the 1964 building additions, is discussed in Chapter 5.
To erase the positive marks on the site that the Bretton Hall College students made is to ignore this cultural contribution to the Estate that bridged the private ownership and the beginning of YSP. And it condemns the history of Bretton Hall College and its students to a footnote about education rather than acknowledging the rich contribution of culture, influence, and spatial interaction that the students brought.

In this context, the Bretton Hall College students were and remain the spaces in between. They provide the overlooked and hidden narrative of the Bretton Estate history. Mark Girouard in *A Life in the English Country House: A Social and Architecture History* (1978), presents the changing roles of the country house and estate, which provide insights into the culture of country houses and how they were lived in. A leading voice in British architecture, and an authority on the English Country House, Girouard presents a philosophical framework through which we can read the changing life of the Bretton Estate and how it secured longevity through education. Bretton Hall College moves the country house landscaped culture forward, creating a new form of country house culture created out of necessity. The Mansion House had already been identified by Clegg as the new College that would house and teach the students. However, the students created their own culture within that space, which evolved and adapted to each new generation. The narratives collected for this research show that the students at Bretton Hall College created a culture that was cyclical and fluid and was passed down to future generations of students who attended the College. This mirrors the function of lineage from the Bretton Hall Estate families, passing to the next generation. Furthermore, the stories reveal how the students have moved from the creation of a culture to a nostalgia. This is demonstrated in how they identify as custodians of their
own making and design. With no further lineage to pass the Bretton Estate to, the students act as custodians of the space that provides a physical environment to which they to keep returning.

The hidden history nostalgia has driven the narratives for this research, and the opportunity to re-enact this history with a new audience, has allowed the participants to recreate and rebuild their experiences framed in nostalgia. However, they are not aware of this act. It is not nostalgia for them, it is their lived lives which are continuing. They do not talk of their time at Bretton Hall College as history but as a present-day influence. The Bretton Hall College students have become custodians of their own design. This is significant because by self-appointing themselves as custodians of Bretton Hall College, which in effect is the Bretton Estate, they continue to keep their experiences relevant. As their stories have not been recorded as part of the Bretton Hall College history, the WREA history, or Clegg’s legacy, through their self-appointment as custodians, the students make their stories part of this wider legacy. This reflects their knowledge of the site, their feelings of ownership from living on the Bretton Estate as a home and monitoring the changes that take place on the site now. This research has for the first time sought out the Bretton Hall College student’s legacy and placed it at the heart of the College’s history contributing to the legacy building of Clegg.

6.4 The Student Narratives as part of Bretton Hall's History: Capturing and Analysing Stories and Experiences about Creating a Community of Practice

6.4.1 Memories and Experiences as Evidence of a Habitus and a Community of Practice
The student voice situated in the history of Bretton Hall College, being re-told for this research project, is framed in memories and experiences of their time at Bretton Hall College. The student narratives reveal cultural and spatial behaviours that led to the creation of a culture at Bretton Hall College which can be situated in the literature of Etienne Wenger and Pierre Bourdieu. Wenger talks of the work of Bourdieu which has been drawn on and frames the work of this research project, and for this reason, it is presented here in the same way.

Wenger states:

Pierre Bourdieu… has developed the… concept of the habitus, a set of cultural principles that generate in a coherent fashion the modes of activities, the life-style and tastes, and the interests of a group, usually a social class. It is for him the determinant factor in the way people shape their sense-making.  

(Wenger, 1990, pp.150-151)

The students of Bretton Hall College it is suggested here created their own set of cultural principles as a determinant, which enabled them to shape their sense-making of their experiences at Bretton Hall College.

Wenger goes on to say:

Habitus differs from the notion of community of practice… as an emerging property of the social world… the social forms we construct locally as we engage in practice and in reflection on practice [lend themselves] to the day-to-day mechanisms of co-participation in practice, of construction of the self in perceptible communities that give it local coherence through shared practice.

(Wenger, 1990, pp.150-151)

Wenger is suggesting that in moving beyond the notion of Bourdieu’s habitus which is “mostly located in the family; the habitus is acquired in early childhood and
becomes an inescapable, closed lifeworld. In short, the habitus has a social realm, but it does not have a social body” (Wenger, 1990, p. 150. In the same way, whilst the narratives of the students of Bretton Hall College reveal an element of habitus through their own set of cultural principles, this is based in a social realm. What the students of Bretton Hall College created was a community of practice that moved beyond a set of cultural principles to become enacted into a social body, i.e. a community of practice. And it is this community of practice which is embedded now in memory as it is recreated through the act of retelling. It is now necessary to define what we mean by a community of practice.

6.4.2 Defining a Community of Practice

In the Introduction to this thesis, a Community of Practice was defined as a group of like-minded people who are joined together through the same interests or enquiry, where ‘community’ becomes the mechanism through which learning is pursued and involves all members of that community. This thesis uses the term specifically to refer to as one student-based and constructed community of people, all of whom were studying at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. The term is also used to refer to the culture that was created by the students and which was separate from the imposed regulatory framework of the College. This thesis identifies as the domain, as characterised by Etienne Wenger, for the Bretton Hall College community of practice, the campus itself and that the community of practice constructed by the students at Bretton Hall College was a community built of practice together.
In their seminal work *Situated Learning: legitimate peripheral participation*, Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger explore processes of learning in groups of apprentices and examine how these groups function as communities where practice and participation are crucial to the learning process. They explain:

> It crucially involves participation as a way of learning – of both absorbing and being absorbed in – the “culture of practice.” An extended period of legitimate peripherality provides learners with opportunities to make the culture of practice theirs. From a broadly peripheral perspective, apprentices gradually assemble a general idea of what constitutes the practice of the community. This uneven sketch of the enterprise (available if there is legitimate access) might include who is involved; what they do; what everyday life is like; how masters talk, walk, work, and generally conduct their lives; how people who are not part of the community of practice interact with it; what other learners are doing; and what learners need to learn to become full practitioners. (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.94)

The learning that takes place in these contexts is as a result of participation within the community. As Lave and Wenger explain, “the learning curriculum in didactic situations […] evolves out of participation in a specific community of practice engendered by pedagogical relations and by a prescriptive view of the target practice as a subject matter, as well as out of the many and various relations that tie participants to their own and to other institutions” (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.95). Bretton Hall College is an example of this: the students’ community of practice comes about because of a didactic situation and is initially engendered by pedagogical relations. These relations reflect Clegg’s educational philosophies and ideals. However, the Bretton Hall College community of practice starts to transcend this didactic environment because, although Clegg’s methodologies provided the conditions of possibility for the establishment of this community, the students were not forced to respond to these conditions in a way that would promote a sense of
community. Rather, they chose to respond to their environment by wanting to co-create a sense of place and identity. In this way, the relations that tied participants to one another become the primary driver for this community of practice and the learning that took place within it.

As far as their definition of community is concerned, Lave and Wenger then state:

In using the term community, we do not imply some primordial culture-sharing entity. We assume that members have different interests, make diverse contributions to activity, and hold varied viewpoints. In our view, participation at multiple levels is entailed in membership in a community of practice. Nor does the term community imply necessarily co-presence, a well-defined, identifiable group, or socially visible boundaries. It does imply participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives and for their communities.

(Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.97)

A community of practice provides a template for exploring learning that occurs amongst practitioners in a particular social environment, for this thesis, the students at Bretton Hall College are the practitioners, and Bretton Hall College is the particular social environment. However, this is not fixed to one set of practitioners (students), to one particular cohort in time, because the students were constantly moving through the social environment on a three-year degree programme throughout the time of the College’s existence. As new students arrived at Bretton Hall College they became new members of the community of practice and were constantly replacing those who had completed their studies and moved away from the area. The community of practice therefore encompasses the student body at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974 under examination in this thesis, and beyond. Participation is crucial to the community of practice and to the learning that takes
place because these interactions provide opportunities for practitioners to share and improve their practice.

To shed light on how the students learned a culture of practice at Bretton Hall College from the conditions of opportunity Clegg provided, shaped, and defined by his ideals and values of progressive education, which were more broadly manifested in the WREA, we must consider two aspects. Firstly, how did the students absorb a culture of practice at Bretton Hall College? To what extent did the students actively take on the practices created and displayed at Bretton Hall College by fellow students, including their predecessor students, and make these practices their own, thereby learning through absorption? Secondly, how were the students absorbed into a culture of practice? That is to say, to what extent were the students who were surrounded by a particular environment, that of Bretton Hall College and set of values, ‘passively’ absorbed into this way of thinking, doing and being, thereby, absorbing without their active choice to enact a way of being? In this way, to what extent does the community of Bretton Hall College become a way of life? This analysis in turn reveals the nature of Clegg’s impact at Bretton Hall College: the conditions of opportunity that his approach created gave students a choice as regards their engagement with those conditions. His impact can therefore be seen as indirect in this context. However, and as the student narratives will reveal, there were moments were Clegg directly intervened in the educational experience and learning of the students. Analysing the student community of practice thus sheds light on a hitherto unacknowledged aspect of Clegg’s legacy as far as his influence and work at the College are concerned.
Since the publication of Lave and Wenger’s work, there have been criticisms of their definition of ‘community of practice’ and its implications. For example, health trainers and practitioners Li et al explain that:

Although the hierarchy of power between experts and novices is relatively clear, Lave and Wenger offered little insight into the potential for conflicts among experts or among novices. Furthermore, although they stressed that CoPs cannot be purposefully formed by organizations, apprenticeship programs and clinical placements can be formally developed for mentoring new health professionals and trainees. It is unclear whether these programs still fit within the concept of CoP.

(Li et al, 2009)

The first apparent limitation is relevant to this study in particular, given the way in which the Bretton Hall College community of practice was renewed. In any given academic year, the community of practice would be made up of ‘expert’ students who had been studying at the college for at least two years, and ‘novice’ students who had just arrived to begin their studies. The narratives that the students provide shed light on the construction of this community of practice, and the analysis in this chapter will reveal, where relevant, the potential for conflict and its repercussions for the community and its practice.

Wenger followed up his initial work on communities of practice in *Communities of practice: learning, meaning and identity* (1998). Here, he expands on the above understanding of a community of practice by outlining how they are built on the premise of “learning as social participation. Participation here refers not just to local events of engagement in certain activities with certain people, but to a more encompassing process of being active participants in the practices of social communities and constructing identities in relation to those communities” (Wenger,
The focus on the construction of identity as an element of the practice of the community is an important element that applies to the analysis of the Bretton Hall College community of practice, as I will explain further in this chapter.

In terms of a community of practice, Wenger identifies that there are three dimensions to consider: mutual engagement, a joint enterprise, and a shared repertoire. Mutual engagement is a characteristic of practice in this context because, as Wenger explains, “practice does not exist in the abstract. It exists because people are engaged in actions whose meanings they negotiate with one another” (Wenger, 1998, p.73). A joint enterprise is the result of the process of negotiation that is at the heart of mutual engagement, and Wenger observes that “the enterprises reflected in our practices are as complex as we are. They include the instrumental, the personal, and the interpersonal aspects of our lives” (Wenger, 1998, p.78). Because of this individual aspect, a joint enterprise does not require homogeneity or mean that all members are in agreement. A shared repertoire is the result of mutual engagement in a joint enterprise, and Wenger explains that this joint pursuit “creates resources for negotiating meaning” (Wenger, 1998, p.82). This repertoire, he explains,

 [...] includes routines, words, tools, ways of doing things, stories, gestures, symbols, genres, actions, or concepts that the community has produced or adopted in the course of its existence, and which have become part of its practice. The repertoire combines both reificative and participative aspects. It includes the discourse by which members create meaningful statements about the world, as well as the styles by which they express their forms of membership and their identities and members.

(Wenger, 1998, p.83)

As the student narratives will demonstrate, mutual engagement and joint enterprise are important aspects of the practice at Bretton Hall College. Wenger's analysis of a
shared repertoire is then of particular significance for the Bretton Hall College community of practice because, and as will become apparent, the narratives shed light on the resources this particular community of practice generated to navigate meaning, create identity, and establish values and beliefs.

This means that Wenger’s explanation of the reificative and participative aspects of a community of practice’s shared repertoire is also pertinent to this research. These aspects are rooted in ways of remembering, an approach that is fundamental to interpreting the narratives in this chapter because they are the students’ memories of their experiences at Bretton Hall College. For Wenger:

Reification is a source of remembering and forgetting by producing forms that persist and change according to their own laws. In particular, the combination of malleability and rigidity characteristic of physical objects yields a memory of forms that allows our engagement in practice to leave enduring imprints in the world. The persistence of these imprints focuses the future around them. The process of reification thus compels us to renegotiate the meaning of its past products, in the same way that a scar keeps bringing a past foolishness or heroic deed into conversations.

(Wenger, 1998, p.88)

As far as Bretton Hall College is concerned, the reificative aspect of the community of practice’s shared repertoire is seen in how the members today remember their activities. The narratives reveal a non-linear process of remembering where fixed ideas and memories about the College and the students’ experiences co-exist alongside new interpretations generated by the process of retelling the story or revisiting the site.

Participation on the other hand, Wenger continues,

is a source of remembering and forgetting, not only through our memories, but also through the fashioning of identities and thus through our need to
recognise ourselves in our past. Our brains convert our experiences of participation into replayable memories, and we subsume these memories and their interpretations under the fashioning of a trajectory that we (as well as others) can construe as being one person. Our interpretation of memory in terms of an identity is as important as marks in the brain in creating continuity in our lives.

(Wenger, 1998, p.88)

For the Bretton Hall College students, their identity as a student whilst at Bretton Hall College and whilst active on site in the community of practice emerges during the retelling of the experience, and merges with the present-day identity of the speakers. This demonstrates how memories about the College and the community of practice are subsumed into a trajectory that is construed as being one (non-linear) person: the interviewees demonstrate how they are both their present age and also eighteen as they talk about their experiences. The Bretton Hall College community of practice thus creates continuity in its members’ lives and its existence is iterated in the retelling and sharing of the memories of participation.

When we think about the Bretton Hall College student narratives, understanding reificative practices reveals how physical environments and locations in this case become vehicles for a community of practice and allow for that practice to leave ‘an imprint in the world’. The ability to revisit the past by revisiting or caring for the Bretton Hall College site becomes an important process for the Bretton Hall College student community of practice. On the other hand, understanding participative practices reveals how the members of the community of practice fashioned identities for themselves through their practice, but also, and perhaps more importantly, how remembering experiences of participation in the community of practice helps to bring that identity back to the surface and to demonstrate its longevity and impact on the individual members. It is for this reason that it is so crucial to this thesis that the
voices and memories of the Bretton Hall College students be listened to and recorded verbatim: the process of remembering itself sheds light on the community of practice and its impact in the past and in the present on the members and on their identities.

6.4.3 The Student Voice

This sub-section discusses how this research project has captured unheard and hidden histories of Bretton Hall College by recording interviews that illustrate how students at the college used the spaces. This provides new insights into the culture they created at Bretton Hall College through a community of practice (Wenger, 1998). Analysis reveals the direct and indirect impacts of Clegg on the culture of Bretton Hall College, thereby building on Clegg’s legacy.

Because Bretton Hall College student voices have not been heard in the 52-year history of the College, they have not been directly linked to the culture built there. Moreover, the insights that the students’ experiences bring to the history of the WREA have not yet been rendered visible. It is therefore important in retelling the stories of the students at Bretton Hall College for the first time here that they are their original words for two reasons. Firstly, it is crucial to portray accurately their words and experiences and to reinforce that what they said matters in the way that they said it. In this regard, the thesis pays particular attention to the work of Robert Emerson, Rachel Fretsz and Linda Shaw in Writing Ethnographic Fieldnotes (2011). They advocate for an approach to ethnography where “The author, [researcher in this thesis] however, should be very conservative in editing direct quotations, carefully balancing the reader’s need for clarity against a commitment to providing an
accurate rendering of people’s actual use of words” (Emerson et al. 2011, p.225).
This research therefore attempts to record the actual voice of the students at Bretton Hall College, and thus an accurate rendering of the *spaces in between*, by using their words verbatim to record the stories in the students’ own words.

Secondly, in seeking to (re)construct Bretton Hall College through their words and stories, it is vital to be accurate in what they said. The analysis of the narratives provides meaning through narratively coding their words (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000, p.131). However, their words must be recorded in the way that they wanted to contribute them to the research, or their stories would remain unheard in their own words. As Annette Simmons states in *The Story Factor* (2006), “we are defined by the stories we tell” (Simmons, 2006, p.221). Furthermore, the research of Anne Corden and Roy Sainsbury in *Using verbatim quotations in reporting qualitative social research: researcher’ views* (2006) present seven purposes for using verbatim quotations. For this research project, two of these purposes are relevant. Firstly:

> Presenting discourse as the matter of enquiry: in conversation and narrative analysis the spoken words and discourse are themselves the matter of enquiry. Reporting findings usually depends on textual representation of excerpts from transcripts of the conversation or narrative account alongside the researcher’s own interpretation and commentary on those excerpts. Showing the interviewer’s words is often as important as the respondent’s because for researchers working within the narrative tradition, the interview is a process of joint production of meaning. Typically, a fairly long excerpt from the transcript (sometimes full pages) is offered to the reader, and the researcher’s narrative then attempts to unpick the meaning, within the theme of the research.

(Corden & Sainsbury, 2000, p.11)

The second purpose for using verbatim quotations can be characterised as “using spoken words to enable voice: commitment to giving research participants a voice
[is] a priority for the researcher working within a participatory paradigm” (Corden and Sainsbury, 2000, p.13). This is a particular priority for this research project because the spoken words and discourse are the matter of analysis. The contribution of the students has thus far been overlooked in the history of the Bretton Estate and not given the same value or depth of enquiry that other aspects of Clegg’s work and that of the WREA have. The direct words of the students at Bretton Hall College must therefore be heard in their own voices, and not paraphrased or reduced to soundbites sitting outside of their wider contribution. The full transcriptions are in the Appendices. Using the full narrative which includes my words as researcher is also important as it shows the steps I undertook as a serendipitous information seeker (as discussed in Chapter 5). As an arts educator-researcher, my role is informed by my own encounters, experiences, and stories of arts education, from student to teacher to researcher. I thus draw on ethnomethodology to construct jointly with the participants the interaction (Herman, 2009). The shorthand which was established quickly resulted in my sentences being ended for me by participants, as can be seen in participant guiding narrative one where the narrative was informed by a collective knowing of the arts education landscape. This was enhanced by my architectural knowledge: I have an undergraduate degree in the History of Design and Architecture, which gave me the visual depth and language needed to engage with and understand the geography of the Estate.

Clandinin and Connelly describe the process when the researcher and participant come together thus,

[...] the search for patterns, narrative threads, tensions, and themes that shape field texts is created by the writers’ experiences as they read and
reread field texts and lay them alongside one another in different ways, as they bring stories of their past experiences forward and lay them alongside field texts, and as they read the field texts in the context of other research and theoretical works.

(Clandinin & Connelly, 2000, p.133)

The researcher and participant as one is how this research has been co-created, to enable the voice of both the students and the researcher in the documenting of the spaces in between at work at Bretton Hall College. This is because such an approach both values and valorises these voices and stories that until now have remained overlooked.\(^{25}\) Indeed, the key role the students at Bretton Hall College played is vast and yet has not been engaged with in the same way as other areas of Clegg’s work as well as that of the WREA. The reasons for this are unclear. Despite this, these more well-defined research areas provide the parameters of the present project, which engages with life at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. These are the dates that Clegg was the Chief Education Officer for the WREA and is therefore the period in which the influence of Clegg and the WREA was most visible. However, Bretton Hall College would remain open until 2007, when the University of Leeds made the decision that the College was no longer financially viable (The Guardian, 2004). The closure was not welcomed by staff and Alumni of the College\(^ {26}\) and details of this time are vague, although this period does sit outside of the parameters of this research project. However, when I was granted permission by the West Riding County Council to access the Mansion House and abandoned building in 2015, eleven years after the closure, the interiors still had filing cabinets, furniture,

\(^{25}\text{There is an active Bretton Hall Alumni website who have provided a repository of experiences (www.bretton-hall.com)}\) This Alumni community will be discussed in Chapter 8 Research Findings. However, this website has not been the subject of in-depth research as part of the wider work that has been undertaken about Clegg and the WREA.

\(^{26}\text{Whilst researching at the National Arts Education Archive, anecdotally stories and memories of the time around the College closing were provided. These recollections did not form part of the data collection for this research project and are not presented here other than anecdotally.}\)
menus, and lesson plans remained on a teaching board. There were therefore visible reminders of the community that last inhabited the space. However, it is speculative to assume that any disagreements about the closure of the College have impacted the recording of the Bretton Hall College history.

Booth-Kurpnieks’ research into wellbeing at YSP brings an additional interesting perspective to the analysis of the hidden Bretton Hall College narratives that have been collected and analysed for this research project. Citing the research of Saskia Warren, Booth-Kurpnieks explains:

> As Saskia Warren notes in the close of her thesis, the meaning of YSP is “shaped by a range of facets including cultural memory, familial history, and the human experience of being within and practising the land landscape through work and recreation” (Warren, 2011, p.206). She recognises, albeit using different language, that the “sense of place” of YSP is produced through the active, meaning-making processes that are enacted everyday, both individually and collectively, by the multitude of people, both visitors and staff, that use the site.

> (Booth-Kurpnieks, 2000, p.168)

The missing step in this dialogue around YSP is that the Bretton Hall College students were the forerunners of this type of cultural creation and memory once the Estate moved from private ownership. In a way, the Bretton Hall College students created a familial history of their own in the architecture and landscape of the site. And they thus provided a blueprint for “the human experience of being within and practising the land landscape through work and recreation” (Warren, 2011, p.206).

Furthermore, the Bretton Hall College students take the “active, meaning-making processes that are enacted everyday, both individually and collectively” to a new model of engagement. All of the narratives collected talk of returning to Bretton Hall,
which is now within the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. With each visit made to the Bretton Hall College site, the students are re-enacting individually and collectively their experiences lived on the Bretton Estate. In this way, they create a new model of engagement that shows itself through pilgrimages which are based on their experiences from decades earlier. This is manifest in the constant verbal and physical re-enactment in which they engage. The students are in a constant *lived state* of being, in which they hold themselves by reliving their time at Bretton Hall College in an activity process of remembering, nostalgia and reconstructed memory.

6.4 Conclusion

This chapter has discussed the history of the Bretton Hall Estate, placing the family history at the heart of the landscape. This provided the framework for the creative environment for a teacher training college of the arts. The chapter shows how the Bretton Hall Estate moved from private family ownership to private student ownership, and thus produced feelings of belonging and lifelong ownership in the student community. By situating the student voice and memories in the frameworks of Wenger and Bourdieu, the theory behind how a community of practice is created comes to the fore, being based in a social [collective] body and just in a social realm. The chapter then provides a definition of a community of practice, which will inform that analysis of the student narratives in the next chapter. These are reproduced unedited and verbatim: the justification for this approach is also provided in this chapter.
Chapter 7: Recording and Analysing Student Narratives: the Emergence of a Community of Practice

7.1 Introduction: Methodological Framework for Analysing the Participant Guiding Narratives

This chapter presents and analyses the six Bretton Hall College student narratives, as a way of shedding light on the establishment of a student community of practice that flourished thanks to the conditions of possibility facilitated by Clegg. The narratives are referred to as guiding narratives, to reflect the fact that each alumni student guided me, the researcher, through their memories and experiences of the College and of the community of practice therein.

Each participant guiding narrative starts with an introduction to the individual journey by each participant and draws the reader into their story. The narrative inquiry was prompted by starter questions in a semi-structured interview. This begins the process of recollections of experiences, which function to document the community of practice that emerged from the creation of a shared culture. This was shaped by the students’ spatial behaviours in the environment and informed by the architecture of Bretton Hall College. There are three key spatial behaviours that are used in this research project to establish how the students interacted with the College (this framework is discussed in more detail in Chapter 5). The three spatial behaviours are:

1. How the students used the buildings
2. How the students owned the spaces
3. How the students evolved the purposes of the buildings
The spatial behaviours are identified in the colours relating to that behaviour in the participant guiding narrative below. From the spatial behaviours, narrative codes or themes become apparent (a result of the narrative inquiry method: see Clandinin and Connelly, 2000). By analysing the words that demonstrate or describe the spatial behaviours more specifically, a theme becomes apparent. The narrative codes can be categorised as the beginning of the spatial language created by the students at Bretton Hall College, which evidences the existence and significance of the community of practice. These interpretations are presented in Chapter 8.

Finally, the narrative codes are mapped to key words derived from the legacy legacies of Clegg to determine if his impact on the students at Bretton Hall College was direct or indirect. The key words were determined by the literature search, the results of which are outlined in Chapters 2, 3 and 4. His analysis sheds light on a co-created narrative of the culture of the students at Bretton Hall College, as the spaces in between, and of Clegg’s philosophies and ethos. In this way a reimagining of Bretton Hall College emerges that has been (re)constructed through the untold storied lives of the Bretton Hall College students. Furthermore, as Marsha Harrison writes in Interpretation of Storied Lives: Fitting the Pieces Together (2002), “sharing our stories helps us to define and understand who we are” (Harrison, 2002, p.63). In attempting to understand who the students at Bretton Hall College were, hearing their untold stories is fundamental to seeking a definition of their contribution.

The verbatim narrative is mapped to spatial behaviours of the participant. Where text has not been highlighted mapping to spatial behaviours, the text has been included to show the holistic activity which contributed to the building of the community by the
students. This further evidences their co-creation of Bretton Hall College through memory, feeling, and recollection. By recounting their experiences for this research project, the students re(constuct) Bretton Hall College for the first time through their own voices (thereby situating the analysis in the work of Ochs and Capps (2001).

The dialogues between me as the Serendipitous Information Seeker and the *spaces in between* (the student) show our shorthand of understanding achieved through a shared pedagogy of art and design training and teaching. Sentences that are finished for one another during conversation and question prompting evidence this shorthand of shared knowledge if not shared experience. My dialogue has been kept to a minimum: this further reflects the decision taken to present, in the first instance, the collected narratives as they were said as much as possible. The shared pedagogy of art and design carries the narrative forward when needed, allowing the participant to guide their narrative through whichever memory, experience, or recollection they wanted to share. The prompt questions are consistent throughout the narratives. This provided an area of potential analysis and facilitates a building up of a holistic impression of Bretton Hall College through the narratives.

Each section of narrative is followed by a summary of serendipitous information seeker interpretation. This considers the interpretation of the narrative holistically whilst starting to search for spatial behaviours. This “interpretative commentary” (Emerson, Fretz and Shaw, 2011) reflects my role in the research project as ethnographer, as I reconstruct the narratives and seek to shed light on the community of practice at Bretton Hall College and how Clegg had a direct and indirect impact on its establishment, development, and significance.
7.2 (Re)creating Bretton Hall College: Narrative One: 1952-1954. Detailed experiences, self-directed learning, bonding, and use of space to (re)construct the community of practice

Participant One’s guiding narrative was recorded in their home. They were surrounded by visual arts objects, predominantly paintings from their own practice. The interview used photo elicitation as a method of visual memory prompting. Documentation, photographs, and additional paintings were prepared by the participant ahead of the interview to be shared. The care and value placed upon the objects and in the preparation and importance of the interview itself reflects the value placed upon the participant’s experience at Bretton Hall College. Participant One was engaged and eager to share what their role had been and the contribution to the culture that the Bretton Hall College students created.

Participant One met their future spouse (Participant Two) during their time at Bretton Hall College and during the interview both Participants One and Two contribute. Both participants gave separate interviews in addition to this. The interaction between them when recollecting and recreating their lives at Bretton Hall College shows the depth and breadth of memory and experience. Indeed, re-creating their well-known story with one another means that the story is rebuilt over again each time (Herman, 2010). Anna De Fina and Alexandra Georga kopoulou, in Analyzing Narrative (2012), investigate “narrative as performance” (De Fina & Georga kopoulou, 2012, p.56), which suggests that narrative continues to build on the shared knowledge. This is evidenced in the narratives presented here.
I was at Bretton Hall from nineteen fifty-two to nineteen fifty-four. I came straight out of the national service, having done it a little bit early in order to get into teacher training sooner, save wasting a year somewhere else. And... they let me in, out of the army about a month early, and I came straight to Bretton Hall. I... at Wakefield station, I arrived on the day appointed. I was met by a minibus, driven by a little, plump little man, who turned out to be the principal. He was on the bus duty day, collecting incoming students from Wakefield station. So I thought that was... well, I thought it was normal of course, 'cause I didn't know anything else. I'd never been in... I'd not had a higher education, so coming back into a college, I didn't know what to expect, really. But that's what happened. Driven back through the fields, out to Bretton village, down the drive, into the college area. Some of the college surprised me, because Stable Block area was a bit like a Roman ruin. Because it had this, the colonnade and pedestal... not pedestal. Pediments of the arches and things. But they were building the new hall on the third side of the block, so there was lots of rubble about. It didn't seem very wonderful there. But going round and into the college, we were met by existing students from the previous intake. And they were sort of... I was met by a lady called, a girl called XXXX. And she just showed me the ropes. This was this room; this was that room. But how can I remember it? I don't know. I... because I now know what a wonderful place I'd been brought to, I don't know that I wonder... I probably expected it to be special, 'cause it was a college, and I was going to be trained to be a teacher..... And so I was coming out of the army and... but while I was still in the army, I'd got brochures. And there was Bath Academy, Bretton Hall and Trent Park, I think, were colleges that specialised in training art teachers.

There was a brochure. I think I... I didn't keep it, but I did have it for quite a long time. And I think I just put that down and said, 'I'd like to go there.' So I was interviewed by Mr. Friend and Shauna Robertson, who was in charge of the art then, at somewhere I think like the Goldsmiths Institute in London. 'Cause I was stationed in London. They made it easy for you. Interviews in London for anyone in that area. So I went to the Goldsmiths Institute, I think, was interviewed and accepted. So amazing, really, because I only had school certificate. In those days, they were so desperate for teachers, they took people who had just got school certificate without any further... I suppose I didn't expect anything, apart from what was in the brochure. I knew there was going to be a lovely park. I knew what a student room looked like. And they... I mean, they were big. A lot of them were gracious rooms that were subdivided, with this what's-his-name-designed furniture. Gordon Russell wardrobe and bedside table. So it might be six in a room. Yes. Now that's the furniture we were talking about.... Gordon Russell. It was quite, well
it was good wood you know. Just a little bit dark, I think stripped pine took over didn’t it really?

And, but that’s a single room, isn’t it?... There weren’t many... I had a little single room, through XXXX and XXXX double room, in the stable block for my second year. But I think nearly everybody else had at least two people in the room.

It was ours. A little thing about that: I, I thought it was wonderful that oiks like me could turn up and live in a place like that. It sort of compensates for the fact that it was really built for people with loads and loads of money, and they kept everybody out, probably. But we were allowed in. It was for our use. And this was... I think this was a bit where Alec Clegg’s thinking came in: that we buy these stately homes and make them into places where everybody can be. Not everybody, but more people. Enjoy the beauty of the place and...yeah.

Participant One’s guiding narrative recalls specific details about travelling arrangements and a description of who met them at the train station. A picture of rural life begins to be created during the journey to Bretton Hall College and immediately the landscape and architecture become part of the narration, as do the building work happening around them, and the interior descriptions of the rooms, with their Gordon Russell furniture. The rich detail provides an opening scene of a new beginning not only for participant one but for the Bretton Estate.

From this initial narration, the ownership and belonging is apparent in the statement ‘it was ours’. Being one of the first students to attend Bretton Hall College may account for this and attending Bretton Hall College during the physical changes may have also contributed to this feeling; however, it is felt throughout all the narratives collected for the research by all participants. This suggests that the geographical location, privacy and possibly isolation from the local village and surrounding area generated a feeling of inclusion and belonging.
This interview also used photo elicitation, as follows:

Well, I have a photograph. You may have seen it. That was taken in the nineteen fifties of one of the boys'...Leonard Peg. Oh, is that who it is? That's Leonard Peg. Apparently, that was when they were in the mansion house. Yes. Some of the boys' dorms. Yes...And, you know, he's got a window over his bedhead, which shows how they had to sort of pack them in somehow. Yeah. I think this is... it's the dormitory. It's not the dorm. It's the...Common room. Yes. It's meant to be the common room. This is obviously...John Friend. This is supposed to be Monty. Yes, Monty came and asked if we had lessons in, lectures in morale and discipline. And I think John Friend gave him some answer, but the answer, true answer was no.

Here, Participant One is finishing my sentences in a way that jointly constructs the interaction (Herman, 2009). The eagerness to contribute and provide clarity, correcting or confirming details appears to be key to the participant for recording their contribution to knowledge about Bretton Hall College. The desire to be clear in the community that they were building, through accuracy about the people, the spaces and what took place, is evident here.

A second photograph was shared:

Is [Sir] Alec’s a familiar face or not to you? No. No, that's what we said earlier, that we didn't see him. We only knew of him. And I was not even aware how important he was to, to... Wasn't till after we'd left, and we read, and reunions and things like that. We went to one reunion –where Mrs. Clegg... he'd died, but Mrs. Clegg came. Somebody gave, we gave appreciations of him. And so it's much later that I realised he was an important person. Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? No. Can you remember him ever being at Bretton? No. He may have been at my interview for all I know.... But I don't think he was. I think it was, I think Ezra was there for my interview. Was John Friend more a face of the college for you? Yes. Oh, yes. He lived in the rooms above the Bretton, the Bow Room. They had a flat there, didn't they, at first? Oh, it was very strange, 'cause you could see when they went to bed through a glass sort of partition, you know. And I think XXXX had a room in that section. Yeah, some of the staff were in the same corridor. It was only a shadow, but you could see the movement as they went up, you know, from room to room. [They] took [their] turn patrolling the college and the grounds before we all... make sure everybody was in the right quarters. They used to do that. Do you believe it? Member of staff would always patrol, patrol the house, make sure...And locking up....that the ladies went that way and... The little... above Pillar Hall, portico... no, portico. I'm getting mixed up. Anyway, the one that led
into the dining room. There's a little, halfway up the main staircase, there's a little ledge. That's where we all used to sit, last thing at night, and share our cocoa and things like that. And then at ten-thirty, we were supposed... The women's staircase went up that way and the men's staircase went up that way... That's where we used to sit and drink our cocoa before we were sent in different directions. But, you know, the women's rooms were mainly on the next floor up. They were much more elegant. Yours were servants' rooms, and a rather lot... And we were right up in the attic. A lot of men in one room. But this, this what's-the-name went right through both floors, didn't it? With lovely murals. Yes, yes. You know, Italianate, weren't they.

Neither participant recalls meeting Clegg: it is only through subsequent reading and revisiting Bretton Hall College that they are aware of him. This suggests that Clegg was a figure that they never knew whilst they were at Bretton Hall College: he only became visible once they had left the College. Co-narration continues throughout the narrative and storytelling reveals how they evolved the purposes of the buildings.

The recollection of sitting on the balustrade to drink cocoa together before going up to segregated rooms suggests a replication of a familial home scene. Consuming hot drinks together before bed and sharing the day's events changes the proposed purpose of the environment and therefore transforms it spatially for their use. Such acts in turn creating a community outside of the curriculum.

This was the response to the third photograph:

Now, this is... what room is that? We called it, I think we called it the music room, and small recitals took place in it. It's the room to the front of the house, to the left of the... Portico. Yeah. The room was sort of next to it, if you face the college, to the right was our dining room, and that became a common room. When we came back, that was a common room, wasn't it? Yeah. May have been staff common room. It was later on. That's where we did concerts. Everybody did a concert. If you're going in at the small door – not the big portico one – you're in Pillar Hall, aren't you? Yeah. And then just to your left is this room. You came in through that door. That led into... Had a nice view over the lakes, really, and...
The navigation of the spaces contributes to the vitality of the rebuilding of the spaces during the narration. Providing direction around the Mansion House as they used it again replicates how a home may be used and involves positioning oneself in a space and recalling the activity which took place in there. The nature of the narrative when looking at photographs mirrors the navigation from Participants Five and Six, as we will see, firstly in the attempt to recognise the building or room and the name that they gave it, followed by what happened there and its geographical location. This type of narration provides insight into how the students moved around the spaces, how they are recalling their names for the spaces and the wider environment in which they were situated, for example had a nice view over the lakes. This reveals the extent of detail that the students recall which contributes to the sense of ownership, in recalling very small details it provides evidence of the student situating themselves holistically in the space. There are also elements of nostalgia that start to appear here, the fondest in which the narrative is given and the joy in recreating the environment for me as the serendipitous information seeker, is clear in the small details which provide an understanding and knowing of their story.

The fourth photograph featured the music room:

*Oh, well, it's Bow Room, isn't it? It's the music room, with the little stage-y... there's the stage-y thing. Yes, I think the stage-y thing's through there, through... 'Cause that's the ceiling of that big room. Yes. Okay, I now remember... if that room is, if the stage, music room with the little stage is through there, then this is the room we used as... it was the student common room. We had two common rooms when we were there. One was in the main... And it was a sort of, more of a formal place. The other door that was in that picture, that's the library. Oh, really? But we had a lot... the big, the room you're calling the music room with the stage was really the communal room, where we had main weekly lecture and so on, isn't it? Yeah, college meeting. College meeting. It was our... Well, the music room was where we... it was Benjamin Britten that we played a lot. That... when Daphne Bird [Staff] was queen. That was on the front of the building. Yes, yes. That was... That, I think, is what would be the library. Yeah, that's the... was library. It's described as*
library in, in... Yeah, anyway, that was, that was made into the library. I'm sure it was, it was the library in, in the olden days, shall we say. And this, that's looking back down that room, so the library's behind us to our right. Yes. And I think...Fireplace Yes. That goes back into Pillar Hall. Yes, exactly. Yeah. This is the right-hand room. That's right. Everything took place... because they hadn't built that hall yet. They were still building the, the main hall for performance. You were there at a time when a lot of building work actually was still happening. Oh, yeah. So when...None of the little practice rooms were there. That little table was made out of scrap off the heaps of rubbish that the builders were... [points to table] 'Oh, there's a piece of wood. Piece of wood.' Oh, I love that. In the pictures of, where there's... I've built a stage set for, for The Flies, that we produced in that room that we've just been... which I said was a common room. That was also a room that we used for performances. And we did The Flies by...Sartre. Sartre. Jean Sartre. It's Sartre's, it's Sartre's version of the Greek... That picture where there's a god in the middle. Yeah, XXXX was Clytemnestra. I was the tutor. And I built the set, which was a set of steps that went up against the fireplace. All built of scrap off the builders. Because we didn't have a budget. Didn't have money to buy stuff.

The narration continues to recreate from memory maps through the spaces, creating a back-and-forth co-narration between each participant and me, which recreates and rebuilds with each description and recollection. There is a shared rebuilding between us of the spaces that begins the process of a third (re)construction with me as serendipitous information seeker, who contributes fresh eyes to their stories. This provides an interesting perspective when we think of Herman's idea of serendipitous snowballing (2010, see Chapter 5). By the participants co-telling their already well-known narratives to confirm membership in the group, and by allowing my contribution to the narrative through serendipitous information seeking, it is possible to suggest that the participants are allowing me to become a member of their group.

The participants draw on the physical space, the people in it at the time, and even pieces of furniture that they made from the building materials left over from construction work at Bretton Hall College, which they are using as a prop in the narration. They also refer to the curriculum of the time. But by moving their narrative
through time, in a non-linear direction, back and forth through time, objects and
activity, a holistic entry point into the narrative is provided, which taps into several
senses at the same time, to recreate the rebuilding of the memory, through retelling
it.

This type of narrative recurred multiple times. For example:

*Flower arranging. Flower arranging. It was the wine cellars, wasn't it? There
was a table big enough to... And a very nice David Leach bowl that XXXX was
fond of. And the laundry... ...was down there. We didn't, I mean, we didn't
have washing machines even, did we? There were big, several big sinks, and
drying racks; and we did our own laundry down there, didn't we? You did
flower arranging. Wasn't there a chapel down there? Did, Mrs. Friend make a
little chapel? I just remembered that. I think he was really Methodist, and she
was very Church of England, wasn't she?*

There is evidence here of the evolving use of the spaces not just by the students but
the staff also. Mrs Friend was the wife of John Friend, the first Principle of Bretton
Hall College. There is a Chapel on the Bretton Estate, which adds further layers of
personal worship, beliefs, and ownership to the site.

Participants One and Two also remembered aspects of the curriculum during the
interview:

*What was your actual course called? Well, we were the art group of teacher
certificate in education. We did art and drama. So did you specialise in a
particular art? Well, eventually, yeah. We had taster sessions in the first term,
where we did a bit of pottery, bit of sculpture, bit of painting. And then we
chose, I think after, in the second term, probably. No, no, no. Second half of
the first term. Can I correct that? We did, you and I both did painting as the
main thing. We did the tasters as well as painting, but everybody did painting.
Everybody did painting for a while. And then the second year you chose. You
chose... Sculpture. Sculpture. I chose pottery, because I'd done a lot of
painting. But you could choose painting if you wanted to as well. And textiles. I
think textiles was one of the choices. Yes. But the interesting thing was that
XXXX was one of two who chose sculpture, and there was a course for them
on their own. Yes, two of us in Stable Block, and XXXX. And that was [their]
job: teach us. Well, only for a short part of the week. And so we didn't have
that long to work on our main subject, did we? No, I think it was... 'Cause we*
all had to do English, we all had to do education, we all had to do movement of some sort, which... XXXX tells a story which isn't exactly true. She said, 'I didn't like it because it was too airy-fairy. And I gave up when I was told to do short, sharp movements with my nose.' And I was a bit abashed by that. That's Margaret Dunn taught all that. And she said, 'I then opted for cross-country running. And I don't think I did cross-country running, either.' But yeah, but it was, that was a revelation. You know, you go from army drill to doing, being a tree and all that.

But, but Martial [Staff] was appointed to do drama eventually. But we didn't do it till our second year. There was a drama course in the second year, but it was movement until... So that's fifty-one. Fifty-two to fifty-four. No, fifty-three the drama department as such started.

And Martial's interest was quite a lot of medieval things, you see. And we all charged off to see the York Miracle Plays out of doors. And Martial at that time was doing his work on collecting together and resorting, really, and to do modern... Translating. Translation, in a way. While we were students. So we did The Second Shepherds' Play, didn't we? It was a reading more than, so on, where they... you've stolen the sheep, and you pretend it's the baby in the cradle. Little bit of The Second Shepherds' Play. So that was in that room we've talked about, with the little hint of a stage. Yes. ...it was produced at Bretton. But we went to see... It was professionally produced in London. So we went to one of the smaller theatres in London to see it. So it really, you know... review at bottom of the Guardian. The thing is, it's, sometimes it's difficult to separate... being at Bretton was all your life. We sat around in these beautiful rooms as common rooms, but there were things going on in addition to the course. So somebody started up some ballroom dance lessons. They did that in, you know, in the evenings. There was a drama group that was their leisure time... Club sort of thing. The studios were always open. So that's where I learnt to be a potter, was not on the course, but going into the studio afterwards. And [another student] might have been there anyway, which was one draw. And the other was to make pots. And some, another student taught me to throw my first pot, not a member of staff. And our lives were sort of music, art and drama, and conviviality the whole time. It's... you know, how do we separate out what was the course and what we did out of our own accord and...? We didn't... I had thirty pounds a term for travel, a grant for travel and books, materials. And mother sometimes pushed a pound note in a letter. But I didn't borrow money ever, you know. And did a little holiday job and so on. But we didn't go anywhere else. We didn't go to the pub. One boy had a car. An ex-serviceman had a car, and one or two of his mates used to go off to the pub. Jester Tearooms in Wakefield on Saturday afternoon, perhaps. We did go to Leeds to buy the engagement ring, didn't we? Yeah. But that was all. But a younger generation, and I think it still happens – she went to Warwick University and was terribly disappointed that there was no social life. Everybody was always going to see their mates somewhere else. Yeah, And I think the students entertained the staff. That funny one with bibs. What was all that about? That photograph with bibs and... That was a cabaret. It was a cabaret sort of thing.
There is a vivid description of the curriculum here, and suggestions about the number of students at the College in the 1950s. All students took part in certain parts of the curriculum, effectively to make up the numbers and in the process contribute to community building. It should be noted that participants one and two provided the most detail about the curriculum. The clarity with which they described the movement lesson and how they felt about it, is also not as clearly evident in other narratives collected for this research. What is nevertheless clear in this narrative more broadly are those references to movement. Movement was a corner stone of Clegg’s curriculum in the WREA and was significant for other practitioners in the Authority. Clegg wrote the preface to *Knowing in my bones*, (1976) by Ruth Foster, who worked for the WREA and cites A.R. Stone from the WREA and also Rudolf Laban as influential in her work. Fosters’ understanding of how movement impacts emotion underpins the text, feeding into the positioning of the WREA in its approach to movement.

Foster also highlights what was lacking in the contemporary practices in education of the day, assessing how measurement, pigeon holing and segregation take place as a form of support. In not accessing the whole child through all of their being, whether that be physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual, the links between them cannot be supported and seen for what they are, which is a blueprint to that child’s being, and enabling them to know themselves. Foster shows this clearly and provides examples of how a child’s behaviour is manifest through not knowing themselves and how this links to the outward behaviour of the child.
In 1966, Diana Jordan\textsuperscript{27} wrote *Childhood and Movement*, in which she presented the work of childhood movement in primary schools during the 1950s and 1960s in the West Riding of Yorkshire. The teaching of movement is explored in engagement with physical activity and mapped to self-expression (Jordan, 1966). This approach was supported through staff and through bridging theories with implementation becoming a key characteristic of the WREA.

Jordan argues that the holistic approach of movement though accessing self-expression is beneficial to the child and this value system is at the heart of the WREA. Jordan positions the integral value on the whole child when addressing physical, emotional, spiritual, and intellectual expressions as positive. She had been the Warden of Woolley Hall, another of the colleges in the Authority, and Dance Advisor to the WREA. Such activities demonstrate how movement was integral to a child’s education within the WREA. For the students at Bretton Hall College, movement was less clearly mapped through the narrative, yet the wider WREA curriculum can be seen here.

The comment *being at Bretton was all your life* is revealing and confirms how the students’ experiences have shaped them: they have carried them throughout their lives, which shows an emotional ownership from the impact of attending Bretton Hall College and the lifelong impression it has had. Participants one and two take this further when they ask how they can separate out what they did on their course and what they did of their own accord. This provides insight into how intertwined their

\textsuperscript{27} Diane Jordan OBE worked in the WREA recruited by Sir Alec Clegg and was the Warden of Woolley Hall. Jordan was the Godmother to two of Sir Alec Clegg’s children.
lives were with the whole experience of being at Bretton Hall College and with the wider experience of being part of the WREA, even if they were unaware of that. It establishes an authentic community and way of being emerging.

This community-building is clear in the types of activities that the participants recount:

What was the weekly important lecture called? College meeting. Usually on a Friday morning. Yes, that's right. And each tutorial group would take a college meeting with what, under whatever subject they cared to do. And sometimes it was poetry and sometimes it was a little performance. The great recitation of Dylan Thomas. Oh, yes. Memorable one for me was, there was a black visiting African student working with the bursar. He was presumably learning to be a college bursar. I don't know. Or administrator. But he came into a college meeting, and he handed round all these jam jars and sticks and peas and so on. And put peas in a jar, and you've got to make a sound. Sticks you could bang and so on. And he, it was just... African music. African music, really. Broken down into about six groups, I think, if not more. You had to do this rhythm. Duh-da-duh-da-duh-duh-da-duh. And this, somebody else has to do duh... (Claps three times) And so on. He taught each group, and then he conducted it. All made, turned into this wonderful... not, wasn't a cacophony. It was music. It was percussive movement. Yeah. The lecture I'm thinking about, I think it was arts in education lecture that was every week, and it could be psychological and so on....did a talk about La Tempesta, Giorgione, and also all her theories about the mother goddess that recurs through culture and so on. And one of your lectures was Laban, wasn't it? I think Laban himself came. Yeah, Laban came and talked on corrective exercise for people working in munitions factories, which is one of the things he... As chief of dance, you know, he was the key man for dance. They used him during the war to make sure that... One of the rooms, and it was off the common... what I've just identified as the common room. But it was the, the next one along towards the main entrance hall. It had all these... Adam Room. The Adam Room we called it. And a group of students stayed behind one holiday and painted all the, coloured in all the decorative moulding in a way that they thought was Adam-ish. Anyway, I think that was later painted out.

The co-narration continues between the participants as they relive and rebuild the learning and lived experience in music and dance. They speak of Rudolf Laban with a slight inflection of who he was, arguably without appreciating the enormity of the contribution that Laban made internationally, or without an awareness of the
infrastructure of Clegg’s WREA: his shaping and leadership of the Authority was the reason why Laban was present at Bretton Hall College.

The details of the students painting what they called the Adam Room shows further evidence of the students evolving the purposes of the spaces, using the Bretton Estate as a canvas to create their community within. It is suggested here that in the creation of a community of practice that the act of staying over during the holiday period, points to the strength and commitment of that community and lead to further bonding. Moreover, the terminology used of ‘Adam-ish’ suggests a shorthand of art history understanding with the community and could provide a deeper sense of shared knowledge and in hindsight, gatekeeping. By remaining in the College throughout holiday periods and taking ownership of their environment by painting it, a key insight is revealed into how the students operated in the environment of Bretton Hall College.

The impact of the College environment in general was an aspect that this research set out to explore:

*Were you aware of the environment that you were in having an impact on you or on your practice? I don't know. Yes. Well, it was pointed out to us, 'cause I think it was there that we got this: 'Only the best is good enough for children, and only the best was good enough for people who are going to teach children.' It was that sort of philosophy behind it. Of course, occasionally there'd be letters in the Wakefield Chronicle or some such paper, and these people who were aware of this place outside town. And we were accused of being an ivory tower. 'What are they doing, teaching these teachers out in this little ivory tower, where they don't know anything about real life?' Ignoring the fact that all our teaching practise, we were out in the mining villages. We were seeing the sort of environment that we were gonna be teaching in. I think Allie's almost asking you whether you got a sense of wonder and surprise and how marvellous it was. And I think that would be true. I mean, we knew we were, it was special, and... I knew it was special, because I thought...Did it
become a norm, you're suggesting. Well, I hadn't been to many other institutions to make a comparison with. So I probably thought all educational institutions were like this, you know. See what I mean? You were very young when you came. Yes, I hadn't even... I'd been in the army, but that was about all I had done. It's like, sometimes we talk about what it was like during the war, you know. Shortages of this and... Well, we didn't necessarily know there was this... we heard about shortages, but we weren't very aware, because we hadn't known plenty before it at our age, or my age, anyway. So the shortage was normal, normal. It was normal that you saved every piece of... There's a piece of paper without anything on it there. We'd save that. And so the specialness of it probably didn't really hit me till afterwards. I would say that.

This part of the narrative provides a clear mapping to Clegg's aims in children's education, also highlighting the value he placed on children. It also demonstrates the pipeline of talent that he wanted to create at Bretton Hall College in action, whilst the students remained aware that it was happening. The narration starts to show the direct impact of Clegg on the students at Bretton Hall College without their awareness of it happening. For example, when the student says Only the best is good enough for children, and only the best was good enough for people who are going to teach children, this points to one of the foundational cornerstones of the WREA under Clegg's leadership.

Participant Two contributes directly when they suggest an interpretation of what I was asking. This intervention then provides the opportunity for both participants to comment on the specialness of Bretton Hall College. It is evident that in recollecting and rebuilding their lives at Bretton Hall College, and through the process of retelling, they did not realise fully their experience at the time. This supports the conclusion that Clegg's vision for Bretton Hall College, which was part of a suite of educational provision of the WREA, was not overtly evident to the students living that vision at the time.
Both participants continued to reflect on the environment at Bretton Hall College as follows:

_Do you think that maybe Bretton then set a very high standard in some ways, following that?_ Yes. Because you’d go to other colleges... another place I taught in was... it was a sixties-built concrete and steel building, with glass. Not particularly special in its architecture. And it was all a bit sort of, you know, makeshift, really, compared... So I, that’s when I realised that Bretton was more special. Because a purpose-built, utilitarian, down to a cost sort of environment... Not saying we didn’t do a good job there, but the environment itself wasn’t as stimulating as Bretton. And we did spend a lot of time wandering through the grounds. I would do sometimes song. And XXXX did primary education, which wasn’t in a very big room. And they spent a lot of time on nature study. I mean, they had to learn to teach arithmetic and other things as well. Rae Milne did that as well as the textile work. But XXXX spent a lot of time in the woodland thing, didn’t they? And there was skating on the lake one year... XXXX sent home for some Fen skates, which are the sort you strapped on your boots. And I’d got my old army boots still. And I strapped these skates on my boots, and we tried skating on the lake. ’Cause it was very cold, and it was well frozen. And I think I did about three skids, and twisted my ankle, didn’t I? That was the end of my skating career.

_We admired [a student] Oh, yes, XXXX skating backwards was a wonder to behold (Laughter) [They were] one of the first drama students. Had a great sense of drama in [their] appearance..._

_That room there... Oak Room. I slept in there for the second year. Oh, did you? it interested me, because there’s filing cabinets, and they’re just left. There were a few chairs. There was a waste-paper bin, beautiful room. Yeah. I must say, there was a bit of competition to get a place in that room. I bet there was. It’s beautiful. It’s a beautiful room. I think it was a question of getting back, back to college early for the next year. But my impression, even on my return, I think a lot, more and more rooms were being taken over for administration, as they built more and more specialist studios and specialist rooms for music and so on. But there were one-year students who had to live out. And our friend was one. [They] didn’t like it. And [they had] made friends with XXXX and myself. And Miss Dunn just let her put an extra bed in our room, you know. It was always flexible and... Yes, wonderful place. No, I know I was privileged._

The appreciation of the architecture and wider landscape starts to become apparent within this part of the narrative as both participants talk about the woodland, lake, and College buildings. There is also an awareness that other Colleges were purpose-built and yet were not found to be stimulating as Bretton Hall College was. Self-
reflection is evident here regarding the level of teaching they received, but this provides an insight into the impact of the environment on the students and their teaching practice.

The students evolved the usage of every aspect of the Bretton Estate that they could access; this included the lakes, which they used for skating. This evolution of use raises interesting questions, as ice skating was not formally part of the curriculum; however, using the Bretton Estate to engage with movement and the environment reflects Clegg’s ambitions as regards the education of children. We can suggest that here, the students at Bretton Hall College are manifesting Clegg’s hopes for the teachers they will become, without realising that this is what they are doing. This in turn suggests that Clegg has provided the conditions of possibility for the students to grow and develop as educators and practitioners. As we will see, a similar type of evolution of use is recounted by participants five and six, who recall sailing on the lake in the 1960s.

This narration also demonstrates the detail of the community that became established, as participants remember who slept where, staff names and student names, recalling all of them with ease. This type of recollection demonstrates the exclusivity of the emergent community: you needed to be a member of the community to really understand the significance of the referencing of people’s names and character traits. The recollection only scratches the surface of what these people represented within the community and what this reveals is how tightknit and long-lasting this community is.
The environment in fact constituted the starting point for this research project, as this conversation demonstrates:

*That's up on the roof. That's a good one... and looking back over. So we've got, the Stable Block. Yes. And so the sixty-four buildings are down here, the student ones, and the archive building's over here. Yeah. When I stood there, I thought, 'I can't see the Sculpture Park.' People tend to go obviously to see the Sculpture Park. And when you're up on the roof of that Mansion House, the Sculpture Park doesn't exist anymore again. No. So it was a bit like being back in time. Yes. Mm. Of course, whenever we've gone there, we've tended to focus looking at the college in, a) when it was still a college, and b) even after. So now, you go there, and you sort of have to arrive at the Sculpture Park, don't you? Not much choice. Sorry.*

*There's one picture, though... and they're all the sixty-four student... Yes, yes.... I think it was a bit controversial that they put anything in front of the mansion at all. It's very interesting, because some people who went to Bretton, especially I think the students who spent their time in those hostels, are very connected to them; they don't want them to go at all. No. But there's other people that say the Mansion House was there long before, and that they shouldn't be there. Shouldn't have been there. So it's a real mixture. There was a little communal kitchen, you see, on, on each floor. And that must have meant that you either had to get on and so on. I mean, you did have your main meals in... Didn't have to cook the main meals, so it was refreshment rather than the rest. But... no, I think it's a funny place to put it, really. There are some people who would like to see them be listed buildings. Because, I suppose a bit like you did, they met their partners there, and, and their life together started there – which makes it incredibly personal. Yes, that's right. And they don't want them to be demolished. No. Well... It's little music practise rooms, which were marvellous. Because, you know, they were insulated so you can hear from one room to the next, I suppose. And then the new dining room going back. And there was a new gymnasium, wasn't there? And then... There was a dance studio, wasn't there, sort of raised up above...? The principal's bungalow, principal's bungalow going back. And the... Don't know what... Then there's the Victor Passmore Studio. What's happening to that? It was newly built especially for painting. And then the little place that became the student...*

I had shared a photograph from the roof of the Mansion House from where the Yorkshire Sculpture Park (YSP) cannot be seen due to dense trees. This began the research process of asking how the students felt about their time at Bretton Hall College and how it might have looked when they were studying and living there.
before YSP emerged in 1977. Both participants appear sad about how they now *have* to access the Estate which they feel is theirs. This can be situated again in the idea of nostalgia, as changes have taken place to the Estate it means that the Bretton Hall College students, cannot ‘return home’ in the physical way that they used to. This starts to explain the sadness they feel about the changes that have been made to the Estate.

It is interesting to see the juxtaposition of their limited knowledge about 1964 buildings in comparison to their rich descriptions of the Mansion House when they were at Bretton Hall College in the 1950s. This suggests that the changing environment, which each generation of students evolved, may transcend their experiences. The building blocks of the experiences that took place began to shape them into a community, yet the feelings of ownership and belonging remain with each separate generation that belongs to that community. This suggests that the students created a community of practice which is then handed to the next generation of students with a thread of the *spaces in between* running through it.

7.3 (Re)creating Bretton Hall College: Narrative Two: 1952-1954. Building identity, engagement and enjoyment through education, and feeling to reveal the community of practice as a way of life.

The guiding narrative for Participant Two moves through events, people, places, and experiences much more rapidly and in part less clearly than some of the other guiding narratives. There are parts of the narratives that can be mapped to other guiding narratives in the research, which suggests an accurately remembered
memory. The overall narrative is deeply layered, bringing in several aspects at once. At times, this narrative is also rich in description and provides clear details about the environment, experience and feeling at Bretton Hall College at the time. But it also presents a more challenging narrative, where sentences and thoughts are not completed, and memories go off on a tangent.

Participant Two begins by recounting how they arrived at Bretton Hall College:

_I went to Bretton in nineteen fifty-two until nineteen fifty-four for… to take part in the arts department._ Why did you choose Bretton? _Well, I finished at Slade and I went to talk to the art advisor for Cambridgeshire, who was Nan Youngman, who was, had quite a good reputation having been appointed by Henry Morris. And she’d done a Pictures for Schools Exhibition every year and headmasters could go and choose pictures for their schools. And she said, “Qualerton College, Cockerill, if you want a short one, but if a longer one, would be Corsham or Trent Park or Bretton Hall. And I don’t quite know why, I thought Bretton Hall would be interesting. I think she must have talked a little bit about the philosophy and, so I applied and that was that, but I don’t think there was any deep serious reasoning behind it…. the college was for students, for music, art and drama, but I chose the art course. I’d been interested in the Slade, but I really had got rather tired of eternal life drawing, and so on. It was high windows, very cold weather quite often in London._

Participant Two had already attended The Slade School of Fine Art in the early 1950s with recognisable influential figures. The philosophy of Bretton Hall College appears to have been discussed when deciding to apply, which is distinct in the narratives for this research project. No other participants demonstrate an awareness of a philosophy of Bretton Hall College before or after they have left. Participant two’s aesthetic language is established before arriving at Bretton Hall College and could be interpreted as demonstrating their prior knowledge about the architectural environment that they were entering. It is suggested here that whilst the students came from all walks of life, it is possible that these differences were subsumed and even erased by the community of practice that they joined. This means the identity
as a Bretton Hall College student or educator, or practitioner starts to emerge as the most important aspect when these participants talk about their experiences at the college.

They also recalled the College admissions’ process, which sparked other memories:

*Do you remember your interview? It’s a little bit dim, but it was, I think, in the City in London. John Friend and Shauna Robertson, [Staff] whether anybody else was there, I don’t really remember. We had, it was in a hall, but it was a stage, not curtained, but we sat on the stage. And Shauna Robertson, I remember her asking me, what I thought boys were interested in, and I said, “This and this,” and I think I forgot football, something or other. (laugh) So, I didn’t feel I’d quite penetrated the masculine mind, having been at a girls’ school and girls, a girls’ family; three girls in the family. So, three sisters and so on, but I don’t think I remember much more, but I think I had been very well educated in Cambridge, so, I think that came through, you know…. And my parents were not particularly ambitious for us, but they really did… my mother particularly, minded very, very much that you enjoyed your education, as well as working hard and so on, and I did work hard. I was a swotty little girl in lots of ways, as well as playing tennis and loving picnics and wildflowers. So, no, it was fitting in, rather than changing my way of life, I think, ’cause I’d had the beauty of Cambridge buildings and joined the Exploring Cambridge Society.*

This part of the narrative provides an insight into how Bretton Hall College was a continuation of the participant’s childhood experiences. Outdoor engagement with the natural environment is brought together with architecture. The ethos of participant two’s mother also shows an ambition for enjoyment through education: this is very much in line with Clegg’s approach and would have presented at Bretton Hall College as a pleasing option.

The significance of the participant’s attitude towards the outdoor environment might reflect an individual and then community engagement with the Bretton Hall College campus. The narrative raises questions around: is this participant trained to think a
certain way? Would they bring this approach to the community? The narrative reveals the notion that the community relationship with the environment could have developed as a result of the environment being accessible on a continual basis to the students. The training the students received at the College enabled them to develop an appreciation for the environment, which is situated within Clegg’s philosophy. This highlights the coming together as a community of very different people, some of whom already knew how to appreciate or articulate the appreciation of the environment. It then suggests that the students learned from one another’s life experiences.

I asked participant two to recount their first impressions of the College:

*Well, I think it was the drive, coming down the drive and majestic building, but the absolutely stunning autumn, you know, September, the lakes and everything were very, very beautiful. And then really, it was XXXX and getting to know her as, as a room mate, because she was very excited with life. I think she’d just got engaged and “XXXX said this and XXXX said that,” and so on. So, he was by her and her keenness too, she was funny, loved being a student. No, it was poise and the grandeur and the welcome really. I don’t remember with Mr. Friend, met us from the station in the minibus, but I think he did, you know, he was going to and fro’. That’s his role, when on the day students arrived. But, no, I was brought up a wartime child near Grantchester Meadows, you know, just south-west of Cambridge, where we picnicked and punted and all that kind of thing as children. We hadn’t been on holiday for four years, so, that was all, you know, it was a world of beauty, I was, I was used to that all right, I wasn’t short on that.*

This poetic narrative highlights the grandeur and environment of Bretton Hall College upon first arriving, as Participant Two also positions their own childhood as preparing them for such beauty. It is suggested here that the input of participant two together with that of other students, contributed holistically to the community that the students built at Bretton Hall College. They provided individual languages of engagement and
collectively built on these to create their own lives in the environment of Bretton Hall College, thus becoming the spaces in between. The juxtaposition of different student backgrounds in itself shaped the community into one of equality of opportunity. The idea and notions of communities of practice are well established (Wenger, 1998), where individual voices and experiences merge to produce the collective voice and identity of a community. However, what is emerging in this thesis is the role played by the individual and collective engagement with a particular environment, which is shaped and developed by an educational context that encourages innovated relationships with environments to be experiences through an arts in education lens.

The students’ experiences of the College also feed into the shaping of a community that brought people together:

Was there a type of student that came? Well, there, I think there was a bit of divide, between the ex-service people and the others, not unfriendliness, but a little bit more worldly wise. Was there a typical day at Bretton? Waking up pretty early, west facing... east facing room and the birds...that was what... very noisy, so, that I think they probably woke us up a bit. But they didn’t wake XXXX up ’cause XXXX was really a lark... an owl, rather than a lark and, then dressing and it wasn’t a great worry as to what we were to wear ’cause there wasn’t much choice, you know, but perhaps slight variation of jumpers. And for some reason I used to sew a white collar round the neck. Mrs. Friend, long after I’d been in college, she said, “I always thought you were a Quaker,” (...) and, and so on. So, dressing wasn’t difficult, but I’d always loved school uniform really ’cause I hadn’t had the bother of deciding what to wear. So, I wasn’t particularly dressy and then washing’s down the corridor and breakfast. I think, had to be collected our plates at breakfast, I don’t know, but we did, I think, actually somebody had laid the tables. And certainly the main meals of the day, they brought the food to the tables. And we did find early on that it was a particular little group of friends that we sat with. So, circulate, circulate as they say. We’d do it for a little while, but we were inclined to go back to our own group. And then days were summer in feeling really, but I think the main, your main subject wasn’t tremendously dominating. But there was English with Paul Heffner [Staff], or, Martial [Staff]. But you looked forward to it immensely, ... and you never, you didn’t feel too enclosed. I think the men on that top landing were enclosed. The ceilings were lower and so on. You just felt open, sort of freshness, you know, you could have people who lived like that or people who lived like that, but Bretton gave you a feeling that extensions. Coffee break was sitting around but not
sitting necessarily. A trolley came and you’d get your coffee, drink, and the post was in alphabetical order in little racks. And I, I’ve always liked writing letters, so, I think I had time to write letters to aunts and old friends and particularly to mother and father.

A clear description of the start of the day, appearance and eating are provided here, revealing the time of study at Bretton Hall College through social norms and the sense that such experiences were common to all students (as evidenced by the use of ‘we’ and an implied plural ‘you’ in the narrative). There is mapping to participant one’s narrative in the recollection of the ways in which students were encouraged to circulate. This is interesting, as it reveals an element of co-creation by both the students and staff of the community. John Friend, the Principal, encouraged students to circulate at mealtimes, thereby creating opportunities of engagement with one another. This in turn contributes to the creation of the whole community.

The narrative of participant two also maps to that of participant four with recollections of how the environment felt. The narration provides descriptions of waking up, dressing, and social interactions, but it is the feel associated with such activities that is presented so clearly. This is clear when participant two says Days were summer in feeling and that you just felt open, sort of freshness … but Bretton gave you a feeling that extensions. In the creation of a community, I would argue that how it feels is key to its success and longevity. The vivid description of how it felt to be at Bretton Hall College provides an insight into how appealing it must have been to be a member of that community and environment and starts to explain why the feeling of belonging to this community of practice has lasted to this day amongst the participants.

Feelings were also part of the education the students received:
How were you taught to teach children? Well, I think that’s where XXXX would say that it was left to your instincts quite a lot, that there wasn’t any... there was to value children and child development we were told about, and certainly we knew about children’s imagery, you know. That you didn’t say, “This is the way we draw a face or this is the way we do it,” and then all of it. There’s a lovely Victorian picture of early photography, I suppose, of every child in the class doing a certain shape of a leaf, you know, you know that one? Mm. Well, you know, we were very much that. I think it may have been later, but... a headmistress of a primary school said, “The changes...” I think this is education through art world, in the way she was drawn by children from the age of five upwards, she said. “Five year olds make me round as I am, and counted the buttons and got the buttons right. By seven, they’d learned tact and slimmed me like everybody else,” you know, it was a warm-hearted work. (laugh)... I remember writing a child’s study for Miss Dunn. That’s movement study, I think, the child’s expression and movement and so on. So, it did come out of observation.

This narrative maps also to that of participant five when discussing how they were taught in an instinctual and open way. It is suggested through the narrative that there is the outline of an arts education, which functions as a reminder that Bretton Hall College was not teaching art per se but was teaching students how to become teachers of art. What comes through is how the students were being taught to teach children, and how that is linked to Clegg’s WREA curriculum. However, in participant two’s narrative, it is not recognised that the students were receiving a curriculum that was informed by Clegg and his underpinning philosophies, thus revealing an indirect impact of Clegg on the students of Bretton Hall College.

Clegg’s indirect impact on the students is also seen in this discussion about being valued:

Did you feel valued as a student? Oh, yes, I felt very valued. It was, in fact, perhaps over, overvalued. It was, I don’t know why, but I think everybody was, but no, I think any quality I’d got was, was a good thing.
As a student at Bretton, did you feel you had a say in what happened? How do, were the students listened to? Oh, yes, yes, I think so. I mean, it was a little bit through the student committee, as it were, and their ideas would be asked for, or your tutorial group… but, no, I think we were just left free rein so much really… we could be fancy free and go out of doors. There was usually a point to the thing… So, it was purposeful up to a point, but I can’t remember ever anybody saying, “I’m without ideas; will you tell me an idea?”… I think it came up that the only rebellion was that some people didn’t want to wash up on Fridays. [The] staff didn’t have to work Friday evenings you see, and so, there was complaints about that. And I wasn’t having that ’cause it didn’t do any harm and it was quite fun to get to know people in a different context so, it really didn’t take more than ten minutes, and so on. (laugh). So, that was the biggest student rebellion I can remember.

The narrative presents an interesting perspective that maybe the students of Bretton Hall College were too valued. This may show an insight into how the students were praised by staff in their work and were encouraged by staff to work with one another. This is another example of community co-creation and that notion of being valued, which were important to Clegg, as discussed in Chapter 2. His ethos was centred around the idea that children should feel valued and therefore so should the teachers teaching them (Ed. Burke, Cunningham, Hoare, 2021).

The final section reveals an insight into how the staff and students lived together and the extent of rebellion by the students in the 1950s. This differs from the narratives from the 1960s when students appear to have moved with the times and their rebellions are displayed as changing social behaviours, for example, having mixed sleeping areas. There is a sense of equality that comes through in each narrative, here showing that students did not see why staff should not wash up on a Friday night. This research project thus reveals how, when analysing communities such as Bretton Hall College, their practice, and the way in which they were established, we have to read them in the context of the historical moment in which they emerged, otherwise the socio-cultural trends of the time are not situated authentically.
The community that was cultivated at Bretton seems really quite important to Bretton, kind of even… Well, it was partly no money to go anywhere else and distance. That set the scene for it, but it was (...) you see, it was good, because you don’t need too many references all the time, do you?...You got to know your surroundings and your people quite well, quite well.

This small narrative reveals an important role the isolation and lack of money had on the building of the community.

When reflecting on Clegg’s impact on the training that they received at the College, participant two said:

Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? Clegg, no. I don’t think so. Herbert Reed came and possibly he might have joined in on that occasion. You were very aware of him and you knew he was sort of there, but I’m, I’m puzzled by that 'cause (Participant One) says the same as me, he can’t remember. We were at the lecture that he gave that, that, that pamphlet, we were there. But didn’t meet him. No, not one to one, but no, I think we were very aware that he’d, he’d made the world, I mean, God had made the world as it were, you know, but the structural world, but the possible situation was his. I remember we were very, very aware of that, that he’d made it all possible.

Would you say that John Friend then was really the face of the college for you too? Yes, yes, definitely. He was a, very much the core and so on and his personality did seep through and to admit (...) and so on, but it was... He was so caring and interested, interested in us all by what we were doing and so on, and opening new doors for us. He wasn’t telling us what to do, you see, but it opened new worlds; we always did get on with it on our own really, I suppose. I was about to ask you, how did he lead, and you’ve maybe just answered that in a way, in a sense that it feels that he, he knew he had a job to do, but that you were very much, were all kind of moving along together and… That’s right. Oh, it’s, it’s a brave new world sort of thing, as he was making a, a good new, new world and we were part of it. Not key to it necessarily, but we were just… no, it was, and education of the senses as well as the arts, you know. And the senses are helped by good sound, good touch and so on, and it helped us work with children of limited ability; you’d look for their responses and then we’d build on that, I think. Yeah, Herbert Reed said that emotional development thrives when you’re in harmony with your environment. That’s right. And I think that, that can be said of Bretton as well. Yes. And I do then wonder how much of that actually gets passed on, down through your teaching? I’ve never read completely, I’ve got it out just,
you know, thinking of things that might be relevant to talk about Art and the Child, you know, what I mean?

Participant Two maps to Participant One’s recollection of never having met Clegg and reinforces the idea that they were aware of him but never met him. However, they did hear Clegg give a lecture: the implication is therefore that they never met him personally, but they did see him at Bretton Hall College and listened to his lecture. Indeed, Participant One provides the clearest acknowledgment of all the participants that Clegg had provided the conditions of possibility for Bretton Hall College to exist thanks to the ethos and philosophy that he introduced to the College. For Participant Two, this can possibly be mapped back to their early education and experiences of beauty in the outdoor environment, architecture, and their mother’s feeling about happiness in your education.

This thesis is arguing that the environment was key to understanding the community of practice that the Bretton Hall College students created. This is married to the idea of the spirit as reflected when participant two reveals much of the spirit of Bretton Hall College when they state education of the senses as well as the arts. This highlights the wider spectrum that Clegg believed was necessary for all children, for all learning: that how education feels, and is accessed, matters. All of the senses are needed to engage and stimulate a child and holistic education is important not only for success at school but also beyond. This narrative provides the opportunity to reflect on the research objectives for this project as outlined in the Introduction and Conclusion: the narratives continually propel the directional focus of the research, and through their storytelling, they reveal how Clegg engaged with Bretton Hall College and how the students created their community of practice in this framework.
This is what is missing from the legacies of both Clegg and Bretton Hall College, as well as a consideration of what impact this all had on the culture which was created. Participant Two unveils the juxtaposition of knowing of Clegg but being unaware of his role within their own practices.

Participant Two provides detail about the staff at the College and the contribution that they made to the environment:

**What were the staff like at Bretton?** Well, I think they, they felt the richness of the brave new world very strong. It was very soon after that war and it hadn’t been dead easy for their generation more than ours. I think my, I was ten when the war started, so, we were being protected quite a lot. But people who had been touched by it had a much more difficult time. I suppose it was dominantly women still. Daphne Bird [Staff] was interesting. She was very loquacious and very knowledgeable, the facts about musicians and what they did and illustrated, she played records and music and so on, analysis, some very, very clever, but perhaps a little bit lonely. She’d got a cat that she was fond of called Pi, and we always, a little black cat and we always admired Pi if we went to see her, and was very much part of her world. No, they always had talents in their own sphere, you know, they were chosen for their talents, but also, I suppose, that they’d join in and presumably, Mr. Friend was in on the appointment of each individual one, and met them, I think. I think John Friend probably went through the list, and so on.... They were very good, and a few slightly more mechanical than the others... The religious bit, that came quite strongly through and, you know, Mr. Friend managed to get the chapel restored, but again, when there was very little money around. So, he must have been very persuasive and so on. So Mrs. Friend... the Bishop used to come to do early morning, for anybody who got up early to go to the chapel, fairly often. And so, he’d stay to breakfast with whoever. I think I went to communion quite a bit. XXXX did as well, and XXXX was a Catholic at the time, so, he didn’t come and join in on that bit; he used to go off to Barnsley to the Catholic church. But I’d say the Christian teaching, love your neighbour as yourself and all the good stuff, you know, would be very, very, keen.

The narrative here evidences the co-creation of the culture by the staff with the students. The detail of domesticity reflecting the former initiations of life at the Mansion House, providing the background to a home for the students and staff.
This construction of a sense of home and thus belonging provides the insight again to nostalgia and the familiar feelings of the known memories that the students carry.

Participant Two continued to reflect on the ethos underpinning education:

_The Bretton motto was, ‘He who is not alight, cannot fire others. That’s right. I think, I’m absolutely sure that’s true, that’s… Yes, me too. My school one was (par undus per agros?), sow the sea and know her lands, so the influences spread, you know. But whether that was a missioning or whether that was, just, you know, don’t close yourself in your own nest, you know, find adventure, have adventures thinking. You all are these little parts of a fire. The people I know, definitely have, very, very definitely and no, you can call it inspiration or, it becomes part of your being really, it’s not a superficial thing at all, it’s a way of life. And we are worried about the new ways of doing things. I like the idea of the Chief Education Officer and the, somebody specific who parents can refer to. I don’t like it that it may be people making money out of education; putting money in and then wanting to pick the best to work for their business or something or other. I’m appalled by that. I think, ‘Well, it’s not really to do with business.’… You sometimes think that a machine has taken over in lots of ways, and, and some of the human, nearest to nature sort of things, are, are, are being, are being lost._

There is further evidence here of the longer-term impact of the experience of Bretton Hall College on Participant Two, as they describe the impact of the Bretton Hall College motto, the participant links this back to their school motto and describes how this shaped their way of being and became _part of your being really_. The participant then goes on to state that is not _superficial_ but for them, is in fact tangible and described as _a way of life_. This reveals how there is arguably a direct link to how the students used the spaces, how that use impacted how they felt, and, in turn, how that impact is not just on the surface. Rather, the influence spreads and a way of being is created.

This reflection continues:
The early decades of Bretton do seem to be like a golden age of Bretton. Why do you think it was so special? Well, I put the age of hope as the, the key thing. But and hope for the success of hope as well, you know, it wasn’t just the hopeful. I think it, all things were possible, and that was, and the enrichment, I think, most of all. But I think Bretton was to do with understanding, rather than mechanics of thinking.

Alec’s written about how, sometimes it wasn’t the end product that a child produced, it was really the experience the child was having, how the child engaged and, and he became quite… What did you teach? You taught experience. It’s see what happens if, rather than, this is the way you do it, isn’t it?

Participant Two is voicing Clegg when they say you taught experience. A direct impact can be seen on participant two, yet they do not link Clegg with their practice directly, pointing to an instance of indirect influence. The spirit of the age is harnessed through participant two’s narrative when they talk of hope and links this to the idea of understanding rather than intellect, which is how it is interpreted here.

The impact of Bretton Hall College on participant two continues to be articulated clearly in the research conversation:

Do you know how Bretton influenced you? Did it influence you? It’s become part of me, definitely, but I don’t think it was as pinpointed as it was for XXXX, but he was really much more deprived and he told you about evacuated and changing schools and, you know, and really quite rough, really. And no ambition for him, and so on. But I had the Henry Morris influence, I found very strong in Cambridgeshire schools - beautiful buildings, adult education mixed up with song, a billiard room along a corridor for men to come or anybody to come and play billiards in the daytime. That, I was on my dad’s shoulders when the first Village College at Sawston was opened in nineteen thirty-two, you see, so, I was a baby, was tiny in thirty-two. And that was in the village that my mother was brought up in. And then I spent a lot of time when they did their May Day celebrations and things like that and the village library was in the school, so, you went to the school to the library with my aunt and so on. So, I think that, I will have to admit to be, perhaps the stronger influence, a Miss Nan Youngman, who was our art advisor (…) for a long time. Sybille Marshall talks about her sparking things off with her and coming and seeing what she was up to when they were all sitting out of doors under beech trees, you know. You know, and liking it, so, it’s not quite as only Bretton. Bretton
was a continuation, an enrichment rather than a fundamental change of lifestyle. What's your overriding memories of Bretton?

Well, it was delights and the friendships and the paintiness and just funny, lovely, funny bits. And one bit that I learned from, which I still do, was that we caught Paul Byrd one Saturday afternoon sort of, we’d left a mess in the arts room and he was quite amiably just sort of, idly sort of sorting things out. He said, “I put things in rows, you don’t have to put them away, but if things are in rows, they’re all right” and that’s jolly true, isn’t it? I don’t know whether you, you ever do it…. You think the cupboards are full and you don’t want to bend, you just do that, and so, this sort of, funny sort of order thing, order thing. It’s a rhythm isn’t it, almost really, again?

The prose here is lyrical presenting a story of being a small child on my dad’s shoulders and how family celebrations were held and then bridging this to Saturday afternoons at Bretton Hall College which provides insight into the different family backgrounds and routes into Bretton Hall College. This connection links to the idea that community building generates a group identity that supersedes individual identities and backgrounds. There is a sense of continuation of a way of life for participant two which was not present for participant one. In the present case, Bretton Hall College and the people there constituted an entirely new way of being and of experiencing an environment. Participant two has led an extraordinary life of artistic value, through family, influential creative practitioners and experiences, and there is still the firing burning within them. A true satellite of Clegg and Bretton Hall College whilst also revealing the indirect impact of Clegg, the exploration of which is a research objective for this project.

7.4 Joint Guiding Narrative: Demonstrating the continuity and longevity of the community of practice through memory retrieval

In addition to their separate narratives, analysed above, participants one and two also recorded a specific joint narrative. In the account below, the comments from
participant one are coloured in pink, participant two is coloured in blue and I as the researcher (serendipitous information seeker) in black.

The conversation began with recollections of how the participants remembered their time at Bretton Hall College:

And didn’t you have to keep a journal when you were at Bretton? An art journal, it’s very scribbly, but XXXX thought you might like to see it 'cause it does say what the thinking was at the... you’re beginning to think well it's... Did you have to keep this every day? No, no, in fact we really coughed it up at the last minute a bit. Anything you were thinking about. XXXX done one of... And did you... was it literally to record what you were seeing and feeling and doing? It was just a diary. And if you wanted to do pictures in your diary to explain... some architects and of course anything… Anyway, if that's interesting, but it says a little bit... we went to York community plays.

Both participants kept an art journal whilst they were at Bretton Hall College, and whilst participant two has kept theirs, it was not shown or shared as part of the narrative collection. It appears that the journal was a mixed media journal of art and thoughts. However, when participant one starts to say that it shows the thinking, it is implied that they are referring to the thinking of how Bretton Hall College worked, its philosophy, and how that was manifest in the students through the impact on their individual arts journals. This starts to address research objective 2 in determining how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created and research objective 4 in evaluating the significance and impact of place (environment) within the collected narratives.

They also remembered the spaces and environment in detail:
And then this picture, I think this is the Camellia House. Yes, this is outside the painting studio really, so while we... everybody was doing three dimensional stuff there. And I think that would be the garden studio. But it was just the weather was nice so let's be out of doors and stuff, I think there...That's more doing carving isn't it, it's not clay really is it? So that's interesting, as I say you only... we all did a little bit of carving, I think, nothing too much but... In the, so extreme that they let two of them work with one teacher. The move and the people doing the job (...). Now that is I think probably exactly as the old house was. And this was the library as we remember it, yes completely. And I spent a lot of time there, because I'm really quite bookish. And it was easier to work there than in your own room, really. Rotten sitting on a bed and I think we had a little table, something or other. But no, it was well used. And not busy. Mrs. Friend wasn't there all the time; she was enthroned a bit. I think she worked three mornings a week or something or other. I think she'd get stuff for you, but... We didn't do a lot of... we did this long essay. I chose Virginia Woolf for the English thing, but I think I got my own, don't think I relied on the books in the library. And it was done, the nucleus of it was done during the holidays. And I know I nearly read the lot. So I'm reasonably good on that period, whether it's the pictorial stuff or the films and so on.

That's that, the dining room. And those alcoves, there was XXXX the dancer and his chief pal was somebody who'd been an art student somewhere else... And he did paintings for both bits of those. And he also painted three Friend girls, for portraits for, and so on. And yes, that was this room, the servery I think. And so people who were waiting on us would come from there. I think that was high table. And we were scattered the rest of it. These ones... this is one of the boys' dormitories, and XXXX recognised him when they were in there. In the mansion house. So not quite sure why the picture's maybe taken in his striped pyjamas. Funny (...). Perhaps that was a diary to show his mum what he looked like.

This sculpture isn't in the grounds anymore. But I have been into the Yorkshire Sculpture Park archives, and they do have it.... It ought to be in position really, because that's looking to the future, through glasses to the future and so on, isn't it? Yes, completely. The vision, a new vision. It's music out of doors isn't it, really? Yes. The music was very important, and I think Mr. Friend... I don't know that he was particularly good on visual arts, but he really minded about the music.

The life being lived by the students in the spaces both internally and externally comes to the fore here, with sculpture at the Camellia House, the library, and the dining room being linked to the painter and then integrated into the social life at the time. The narrative shows the depth of experience as it moves back and forth and through the recollection. This suggests how community building can happen through
memory retrieval and through the sharing of recollections with someone, in this case me as the serendipitous information seeker. This brings to the fore the awareness needed of how the past and present mingle to create the sense of a past community in the present and whilst you can’t disentangle past from present, in this research this in fact reveals the influence of the past on the present. This rich detail of memory of moving back and forth between the past with the present, all reveals how strong the community was and is, and how impactful the experience at Bretton Hall College was which can be situated in the underpinning ethos of Clegg even if the students didn’t realise it at the time, and even if they still don’t realise it today.

The Austin Wright sculpture provides participant one with the opportunity to interpret their feeling about it: they explain that the image appearing like a pair of glasses should be facing out from the Mansion House, as it originally was, to show the future, the vision, a new vision. Here, the participant links this vision with the wider vision at Bretton Hall College, however, an understanding of the vision talked about here can be inferred, it is not explicit. The participant does not offer an explanation, so it is hard to evaluate what exactly it is that the participant understands.

The conversation continued to reflect on the impact of the environment:

*When I walked round, and I shouldn't have expected to see, but I did, I expected to see the college, because that's what I'm looking at in my head. Picture what's going on. But it is a mansion house, because all of the fixtures and fittings are still there. And my overriding thought was 'Wow, this is a beautiful mansion house.' I suppose it satisfied our aspirations to be posh…. If we'd got them, you know, made us walk a little taller because the room was high.*

This description of feeling physically taller by participant two is significant as it can be seen to demonstrate the impact of Clegg’s ambition for the students and children in
the WREA. As discussed in Chapter 2, Clegg’s aim was that the environment in which we learn be inspirational and aspirational and encourage a growth mind-set.

I also had the opportunity to share some of my impressions of the environment with the participants, which in turn elicited another set of recollections:

_This is from the roof. This is looking back out, there’s the stable block. And the student hostels are down here, and the archive’s this side. I was saying to XXXX on this picture, I realised as I stood on the roof, that you can’t actually see the Sculpture Park. So it’s a bit like going back in time, because the Sculpture Park didn’t exist. No, that’s right. When Bretton was there, and now people go for the Sculpture Park and not for Bretton. But it was a little bit like going back in time for ten minutes, because you couldn’t see anything. It, the Sculpture Park was the early morning walk. And either you usually thought about going round the bottom lake or round the top lake; you didn’t do the two together…. Because you ought to be in lecture at nine o’clock, and so on. But you weren’t very aware of the road, you know, the end one. But you were a little bit if you got onto High Hoyland bit, of one of the last coal mines….Because we were collecting wool for learning to spin and home dye things. And we got to hedges and what not, barbed wire fences, and carefully collected what we thought was the white wool from the, white sheep’s wool from the black sheep’s wool. We washed it and it was all black sheep, the white sheep wool really. Because it was coal dust, you know….You didn't, very difficult to picnic sitting down without having something to sit on. There was that film of black everywhere. And we went back, I think I was in the doctor waiting room once, and somebody said ‘How often… you come from the south. How often do you wash your nets?’ I thought ‘Well we don’t actually have nets, but... Wash curtains about every two years.’ And absolutely, you know, that sums it up, you know, that we have to wash ours once a week._

The narrative here echoes the reasons for beginning this research project: it points to how the invisibility of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park gave a brief glimpse of what the students at Bretton Hall College may have experienced, which led to questions about their missing contribution to Clegg’s legacy. What is interesting in this narrative is that participant one immediately responds with how _they used and owned_ the space that is now Yorkshire Sculpture Park. It was their early morning walk route, and the narrative outlines the path to navigate to the bottom lake. The ownership is
evident in how participant one links the space to their use of it. The narrative continues to provide a vivid image of the geography of the Bretton Estate, as the even the wool on the sheep was black because of the coalmine pollution and the impact on the domestic homes of the area, the direct depiction of the dirt and the need to wash curtains is really striking. This makes the memory really feel lived, of the memory of the coal dust, the dirt, the grime, this indicates how people inhabited the space locally in the West Riding of Yorkshire and how they were impacted by it, that it was dirty, so they had to live differently.

The ways in which the staff and students used the space, and the environment was illustrated in the discussion about the planting of a coronation tree:

And that's your coronation tree – nineteen fifty-three. Maybe not your tree. No, but we've got a picture of our tree. The Principal went to every tree and put his... like the royals do, did a little bit of a... did a little bit of... Well done Mr. Friend ... the planting. I sat on the top of the steps, portico. 'I declare these trees well and truly planted.' 'Cause we weren't near televisions or anything for the coronation so it was about the right time I think.... That was one of the first prospectus photographs. That's right. Just like that, these sliding doors on the... that each set of wardrobes would form a partition for the next one. Probably the new hockey field, staff team. Yeah, we got all those. Poppa could let his hair down a bit. He played tennis with Martial, didn't he? He liked playing tennis; he was quite a good tennis player. Oh you know, they all played nicely together. The thing about XXXX [Staff] is that you talk to him now and he's not critical. He thinks of it as very happy time, doesn't he? Yes.

The co-creation of the community can be seen here, with the Principal presiding over the coronation tree planting to mark the ascension to the throne of Queen Elizabeth II and the students’ involvement in this activity. This act shows how the community together took part in wider societal events and adds to the tangible sense of community building.
The final sentence is interesting as there is an implication that looking back, the time at Bretton Hall College was happy but possibly not at the time. This perspective is from a staff member who will have been involved in a different role at the College to that of the students this contributes to answering research objective 2 of determining how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created.

Community was an aspect that permeated the conversation in multiple ways:

*It talks about living in the community. And I think that was the main outcome for us, was that we were community; even if we weren’t teaching, we were community orientated. Do you think that you ever..., because you created another community through the pottery, in a way. Do you think that sense of community at Bretton then...? I think it inspired it. Yes, it did. Yeah. That you had such an enjoyable experience. Yes, yes, that would be feeling, the feeling for community would come through because of that, because of that. How beautiful. And I do just see Bretton. That’s why I wanted you to see it. But I think it’s a continuity, a sort of growth that is certainly not... and then... I know exactly what you mean. Deep influence I would say.*

The narrative here is discussing a book written by the participants about the pottery they ran after their teaching careers. The links between the community built at Bretton Hall College and the community built at the pottery are stark. The participants wanted to include the book and the discussion as part of the semi-structured interview. This gave the opportunity to talk of the *continuity* of the experience of community building at Bretton Hall College and also of how it influenced their lives after leaving Bretton Hall College, which they describe as *deep influence*.

The ongoing influence of Bretton Hall College was discussed in relation to the influence of Sir Ken Robinson:
I've never heard of Ken Robinson before. Says here might have achieved international acclaim for his two thousand and six TED talk..... Viewed by an estimated three hundred million people worldwide..... That's wonderful news. If his message is what I think it is... Because it's reassuring, because sometimes we think all that we were, that we're talking about with Bretton Hall, has got completely lost and forgotten and you know. But if he's saying what I think he's saying, it's a new version of it, a new, a development of the ideas. He talks more, not about reforming again, but transforming it...... No, but it's in a new form. That's fine. Was important – it's essential really. What says... what Clegg says on the front of that pamphlet, that there’s a little quotation in, right in the beginning there..... it just says if you're a good teacher, when you're first a teacher, you can be a good teacher. But if you don't change, you'll become a bad teacher. I think that's sort of summary of what he's saying. Listeners thinking, the listeners thinking. “Let me take change first, and I do so because if you continue to teach after five years in the profession, as you teach... as you now teach, you'll almost certainly be a poor teacher. If you teach after ten years as you do now, you will certainly be a bad teacher. Two reasons: there's one that you're as much beginners in your chosen trade as is an apprentice joiner, butcher, builder, gardener. Second is that times will change, and if you don't change with them, you will be bad teachers.” That's putting it. I'm so pleased you kept all of these things. When I first started to look at Bretton, there’s very little... Not nearly enough.

Sir Ken Robinson is a global influence on creative education who also studied at Bretton Hall College and is the context for this narrative. What is of interest in this narrative is that participant two quotes Clegg directly, which prompts a conversation between both participants about listening. Both participants understand what Bretton Hall College was for, and Clegg's direct impact can be seen here. Whilst participants one and two did not know who Robinson was, participants five and six did remember him, as we will see, as they studied at Bretton Hall College at the same time as Robinson. There is joy in feeling that their time at Bretton Hall College will not be lost and forgotten is clear. This is compounded at the end of the narrative with the feeling that not nearly enough evidence of what they experienced at Bretton Hall College is recorded or available. This further supports this research project in presenting the experiences of the Bretton Hall College students for this time.
Narrative three differs from other narratives collected here as it is very descriptive in nature. Participant three attended Bretton Hall College between 1965 and 1969 and their account focuses on their own experience of Bretton Hall College without referring to other students. References to staff are made as part of their experience. In the following reconstruction of the conversation, participant three is coloured in blue, and my contribution to the conversation is in black.

The conversation began with clarification of the programmes of study in the mid-1960s:

*When did you go to Bretton?* Nineteen sixty-five. [For] Four years. Four years, yes. I was in the second intake that did the B.Ed. The year before me was the first year that they did the degree. So I was in the second intake for that. Although in those days, you signed up for the certificate course, which wasn't a degree; and then, if they thought you were good enough and you were matriculated, you could opt to do the... what's been actually just said: a bolt-on extra year, which was run by Leeds uni. And you got your degree.

Participant Three studied for four years at Bretton Hall College, the longest in the narratives collected for this research project. This is significant because despite studying for the longest time alongside other students, Participant Three does not refer to these other students from their time there in their narrative, talking instead only about the staff. This presents an interesting perspective on community building and its interpretation, as participant three still reflects pleasure in going to Bretton
Participant Three explained how it was that they chose to study at Bretton Hall College:

_Why did you choose Bretton?_ Ah, right. Okay. Well, what happened at my school... my school was pretty good in some ways, but it was pretty awful at giving things like careers advice. We were pretty much left to it. I remember the form teacher coming in and saying something like: 'It's university application time, boys. Here are the forms.' Right? So, and I thought to myself, 'I don't think I'm good enough to go to university.' And I thought I wanted to teach, anyhow. 'So I'll, I'll apply to teacher training colleges,' or colleges of education as they had recently been renamed. And then, when it was about a week before the deadline for university deadlines, my, my form tutor said something like, 'You haven't handed your university application form in.' I said, 'Well, no. I'm not going to university. I'm not, not bright enough,' or something like that. I can't remember what I said. He said, 'Get it filled in.' So I filled it in very hastily. And I received a lot of rejections and... Although York said they would put me on... I think they... can't remember what they called it, but they would look at me favourably for the following year. Well, that... I didn't want to do that, because, you know, popular university: it filled up quickly. So I went ahead and did my... I'd already done my teacher training application. My English teacher was very much wanting, encouraging me to apply for Goldsmiths. But I didn't want to go to London. I just, in those days, you just wrote off and got a whole stack of prospectuses, you know. And the Bretton one, the Bretton one made it look pretty nice. And I was brought up in a, in a mill town just this side of Manchester. So the prospect of moving from a very frankly unattractive urban environment to an environment like that was very attractive. I also read... it might have just been from the prospectus itself, or I might have read somewhere else that it was, that Bretton Hall was very good on the creative side. And I thought, 'Oh...' And especially, you know, and I was very interested in drama. So I thought, 'Oh, right. That would suit me, because I'll be able to do English and drama.' And that was really, really what I wanted to do. So I mentioned this to my English teacher. He just went kind of, he just kind of sniffed a bit and said, 'Oh, yes, I'm sure you'd be very happy there.' He said, 'Yes...' So he kind of gave me the blessings. And it was really just, like, the pictures and what they said about things like art and drama. Not so much the music side. So particularly the drama. So that's what made me go for Bretton. And when I saw the place... well, I remember, when I went for my interview, just walking down... I'd applied for a few other places as well. I just, when I was walking into the place, I just thought, 'Well, I want to come here. I don't want to go to Coventry or Goldsmiths or anywhere like that. I want to come somewhere nice.' That was basically it. It was very much, very much its physical situation that, that was important for me.
Participant Three’s narrative here shows an awareness of the changing educational landscape during a time of renaming teaching training colleges (which is recounted by participant four also, as we will see). There is significant dialogue showing the steps to Bretton Hall College, including being rejected from other Colleges and trying to find the right course and environment. The architecture and creativity appear to have played a role in deciding to apply. The decisive wording of *I want to come here… it was very much its physical situation, that was important for me*, reflects the importance of the geographical positioning of Bretton Hall College for the students in leading to the successful creation of a community. The statement reveals the importance of geography for this student, but it does not reveal that this was important for all students. I would suggest that this experience is representative of the majority of students but not all.

Participant Three then recounted the admissions and interview process:

*Do you remember your interview?* My interview? Yes, I can remember a few bits of the interview. The first thing was, I had applied to do English main and drama subsidiary. And I found myself sitting in, sitting with this group of people that had all come to the interview for drama. And then John Hodgeson called me in, head... he was head of drama... and he wanted me to stand on a chair and do some public speech like I was at Hyde Park Corner or something like that. So I said, I said, 'Fine.' I said, 'I would have thought that I would have had the English interview first, as, you know, that's, like, my main subject.' He said, 'Oh...' He'd got me down as main drama. So he said, 'Oh, I'm very sorry about this.' So he very quickly arranged for... I can't remember who it was. A woman from the English department, to interview me. And I don't remember anything about that. And then John, John Friend interviewed me. So I had two separate interviews... I remember just one thing about the John Friend interview: that he, he asked me to, to read something, and then he basically gave me an oral comprehension test on it. And I remember quite distinctly that I couldn't explain what the word eulogy meant. And he seemed very disappointed in that. I remember that. And I remember, after the interview, that my headteacher called me in. And he said, he said, 'We've had
this, we've had this letter from Bretton Hall,' he said, 'and they're willing to accept you if you get one A Level.' 'And they have given a stipulation that you...' I can't remember how it was put, but that you, you pay some attention to your, to your speaking. He said, 'So I have written back to them, telling them that a couple of months ago you had won the school prize for speech.' (Laughter)

The interview is remembered with mixed feelings and shows a level of detail in terms of remembering the locations, the people present, and what they were asked to do. John Friend was still the Principal of the College at this time and was present at participant three's second interview. There is an overriding implication from the head teacher that Bretton Hall College is not the hoped outcome for the student.

Participant Three also spoke about the type of student that the College attracted:

*Was there a type of student that came?* Well, lots and lots of types. I mean because of the music, art, and drama… A lot of people were fairly artistically inclined in some way. Although they did have… one of my best friends there did science…The entry qualifications in those days – you only had to have five O Levels to get in on a certificate course, the three-year course. And a lot of the people that went were people like I thought I was: that is, not good enough to go to university. Maybe people who’d just got one A Level, or they’d got A Levels that weren't very good. They, they would accept people with fairly weak qualifications if, on interview, they showed some artistic spark. And I thought that was great. So, so if you want a type, that was a fairly, that was the type of person that was probably a student at Bretton, that possibly was, you know, more represented than in other institutions, I would say.

There is a thread that runs through the entire narrative of the participant that reveals that they did not feel good enough to be at Bretton Hall College, from the point of view of academic ability. This is evident in the parts of the narrative recounted thus far. I would argue that the fact that the student was nevertheless admitted to the College reflects Clegg's philosophy and approach to education, and specifically his belief in the whole person and not just their academic ability. However, the narratives
do not show an awareness of this type of selection process, instead revealing how
individually, the participant felt that they were not good enough to attend. In this
case, whilst Clegg’s impact is evident from an outside perspective, it would appear
that it was not always evident or empowering to those studying under his ethos.

The conversation then turned to recalling what studying at the College consisted of:

**Was there a typical day at Bretton?** Well, the timetable was divided up so that
we did two days on our main subject, two days on education and one day on
our subsidiary subject. And the education bit might include going out to
schools. That happened quite a lot, actually. It seemed to happen quite a lot.
And then there was the teaching practice, of course. And... which was, you
know, there right from year one...Oh, and there were, there was a period of
something called movement, educational movement.... Which I loved. I
thought that was great.... A bit like creative PE, you know. Lovely. And I'd
already done a bit of that kind of thing before, because, because I was
interested in drama at school... So... there were the occasional lectures,
where they packed the whole year in to hear somebody talk about, about
things like... Oh, what's that Margaret Mead book? Margaret Mead was a big
favourite of Caroline St. Leger, one of the education lecturers. So she talked
about Margaret Mead's kind of stuff, which is basically anthropology. So there
were... It wasn't mainly lectures. It was mainly seminars that we were taught
in. So, the English cohort that I was in, there were just twenty-four of us, so
we'd mainly be together.

**In the first year,** there was quite a lot of going out into nature and, finding stuff
to come back to paint and play with, and, you know, that kind of thing. There
was a fair bit of that in year one...It became more formal, you know, in years
two and three.

**But in the first year,** there was a fair bit, in the two days that was classed as
education, that was very exploratory in nature. And, you know, we all had to
do some maths, I remember, it was like they were encouraging us to play with
these bricks and things the way that five-year-olds might, to kind of have the
experience of discovering number and volume and things like that in the way
a child would. So there was a lot of encouragement for us to try and enter the
child's world.

**It was essays, definitely essays.** I would still have some somewhere...but
there were, also projects, which might involve a bit of performance or...
Obviously that was true on the drama side. But on the English side, there
might be, like, group presentations. And I remember another part of our
presentation was,... we stood at the entrance of the dining room with a big box
of Corn Flakes and a sign saying 'National Quorn Fake Week'. Quorn Fake.
So, as people came in, we said, 'Please have some Quorn Fakes. It's Quorn.'
So we did fun things of that nature. But yes, there were, there were essays, there were presentations. Half a day a week we spent... I think it was my first year. Or second year; I'm not sure. The, the Gregory poet in residence one year, or for a couple of years, sorry, was Peter Redgrove – who is a damn fine poet. And so he came over from Leeds for... and he worked with us half a day a week. And the normal method of presentation for that was, we would write, he would, he would get the stuff printed up, and then people would, and then people would basically do a seminar on... You know like you would do a seminar if you were, you know, studying a poet? You would talk about the poet's work. But we were doing exactly the same thing, except that the poetry or whatever it was – it wasn't just poetry – was written by us. Each in turn would do a presentation, you know. That was the way we worked. So again, you know, stressing that creativity side. Because they were pushing, you know, we were going to be English teachers and we, you know... The big thing at the time was about getting kids to write, and getting kids to talk, you know. And in fact, my, B.Ed special study was about oracy. Which was quite ironical, bearing in mind what John Friend had said about conditions of going there.

We all had a personal tutor, who was also, was from the education department. We would have a weekly tutorial, I think. And especially in the English department, because, for example, you know, they were encouraging us all to write, some of the tutorials would be quite long ones, looking at writing development on a one-to-one. There wasn't a college magazine, but some of us put together a creative writing magazine, which I contributed to. Sorry, I say... I was not a major player in that. It was people like Roger Hutchinson and... Anyway, there was, there were a few little magazines produced during my time there of that nature. But not a general magazine.

This narrative is the most detailed in recalling the curriculum at Bretton Hall College and demonstrates how students were taught and what they were taught. There is some detail from Participants Five and Six, but within those narratives, the focus is social activities. There is further mapping to participants one and two recalling movement and the key role this played throughout the WREA curriculum. The recalling of poetry writing by the students can be seen as an example of them experiencing Clegg’s educational philosophy as a way of training them to go out and teach children in the same way in the West Riding of Yorkshire schools. This approach to creative writing can be mapped to Clegg’s own celebration of children’s’ writing in his 1964 book The Excitement of Writing, showing the continuum of
philosophy throughout Clegg’s approach. This directly provides evidence of Clegg’s indirect impact on the students of Bretton Hall College.

An insight within this narrative is the detail around play. Participant Three talks about entering a child’s world and how the child might interact, elements that constitute another cornerstone in Clegg’s beliefs in understanding children from a child’s perspective. This provides a way into Clegg’s approach to training at Bretton Hall College, which was a child-centred, arts in education approach. As such, this narrative to another instance of Clegg’s indirect impact.

The community of students remains in the background of Participant Three’s narrative:

*They [the students] used to call John Friend ‘Poppa’. Yeah, we called him that. How many students were there? Six hundred when I was there. Six hundred. The first year – I was rather disappointed with this – they put me out in lodgings in, in a, with a former miner and his wife, in the village of Kexbrough, which is near Darton. And so... there were quite a few of us out there, and we used to get this rattly old bus that the college had chartered in. We used to have breakfast and then get this bus and go in. And we would arrive there just in time, sometimes, to slip into the dining room and get a, get a second breakfast – just basically toast, you know, and tea or something, you know. So, and then, then there were two buses going back in the evening. I can't remember what times they were, but one was fairly late: about ten-thirty. And the other one was something like, I don't know, eight-thirty or nine o'clock. So we basically, you know, those of us that were in the lodgings... Which the college provided, you know, the college found for us. They told us where we would be going. So we basically kind of spent our days at Bretton Hall, and our... and we just went back out there to sleep, or, if we got the early bus, we'd go down the pub, you know.*

The narrative reveals here possibly the reason why Participant Three does not refer to other students in the same way as the other narratives do: their first year was spent living outside of Bretton Hall College. This may account for a missed bonding
process to take place. However, as the narrative goes on to reveal, the feeling of belonging remains with participant three throughout the whole narrative, and their role in co-creation is still evident.

There are still indications of the inclusivity of the community and its culture at Bretton Hall College:

*If you had to describe a culture at Bretton, what would you say? I'd say it was quite introspective, in that, you know, I was there in nineteen sixty-eight, when there were big student uprisings in places like Paris and throughout Europe. And that more or less went by the by, you know. I mean, we were just living in our own little world, really... I mean, I spent two years living in and two years living out, right. Especially when I was living in, it was almost as though the outside world didn't exist. It was a little community to itself. So that, it strikes me, was very much... it was like a little village, really.*

This narrative clearly shows the holistic, inclusive nature of the culture that had been built at Bretton Hall College by the late 1960s. The references to a little community to itself and it was almost as though the outside world didn’t exist mirrors the life always lived on the Bretton Estate as discussed in Chapter 6. This sense of inclusivity raises the question of Clegg’s potential to have a wider impact outside of the communities of practitioners he either directly or indirectly influenced and if that would be possible. This reveals that in community building inclusivity can also breed exclusivity in that people can be and do get excluded from the community in some way. Participant Three has situated themselves it seems on the edge of the community, as they talk about the students as numbers, *six hundred when I was there. Six hundred. The first year...* possibly suggesting that participant three realised that the experience was inclusive more so than the participants who have contributed to this research, because participant three felt excluded at the start of their time at Bretton Hall College.
The extent to which Participant Three felt valued within the community was also discussed:

In the fifties, because there were smaller student numbers, sometimes the whole college would be involved in a production. Oh, right. Yes, yes. I can remember... I mean, one of the things that happened in my second year was, we... I say we. There was a production of the Wakefield Cycle of Mystery Plays – the whole, the whole cycle. With Martial Rose [Staff]– he was the head of drama very early on. Oh, right. Yes, I thought I knew the name, yes. Yes, that's right. So that... I'm not sure how many people were involved in that. But I mean, it was far more than all the drama students and all the English students. So it was, it was a huge cast. And that involved music as well. So it did bring together the different kinds of students and got us working in ways that we wouldn't normally do.

Did you feel valued as a student? Absolutely. Very much so. I mean, I mean, basically, yes. You mean by, by the staff? Yeah, I suppose by, by the other staff, by the way you were treated, by the whole experience, really. Yes. The staff were very... on very good terms with... I mean, one of my tutors was, standing for the council, right. So I, I was canvassing with him, right? So that, that kind of relationship. My girlfriend's... she did art, but her personal tutor, we would very often babysit for them, you know. So it was that kind of relationship. I wasn't the big party person, but I occasionally went to parties thrown by the staff, the ones that lived in, you know. And they came to ours. Some of them did. Some of them. Sir Alec also looked after the schools in the West Riding of Yorkshire. And part of my question in asking you about feeling valued is that he really valued the children. And I'm getting the impression that, if you went to Bretton, kind of you were valued, in that, you know, you would be teaching these children, and this sense of value passing up and down. I think that was very much the culture. That was very much what their intention was. I get the impression that, you were the people who would be teaching the children; so if you felt valued and if you felt that you were important, that actually would filter down to the classroom. I think that's actually very much, that was the ethos, yes.

The curriculum facilitates the creation of a community here: by taking part in the activities, students have the opportunity to create their own community. But a secondary community model is at play here, too. Clegg had provided the conditions of opportunity (as highlighted by participant two). This is arguably an example of direct legacy. Furthermore, the educational community formed through the
curriculum and the personal community cross over in spatial time from two communities running concurrently (Kimber, 2010).

When asked directly about Clegg, participant three said:

*Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg?* No. He did come... I didn't meet him personally. He did come to give a talk once. And he didn't talk for long, because he'd got... oh, who was it? He'd got hold of somebody else, who was very well up in the education field. So he talked and then... I can't even remember who it was. And then the other guy talked. But I never spoke to him personally. And I can't remember what he said when he talked to us.

*When I spoke to some of the students from the early fifties, they said that the person that they kind of saw as I suppose the figurehead of the college was John Friend.* Oh, yeah. Yeah.

*On the ground, week to week, month to month, the person that, that was in charge of course was John Friend.* It was... yes, it was his... I mean, it's definitely John Friend. And his manner was everything that we've just been talking about, you know.....I was just about to say, I mean, presumably he either chose or had a part in choosing John Friend. And John Friend's leadership very much made it what it was. So if he'd chosen somebody different, then, then it would have been a different place. And then I assume he also had a hand in choosing Dr Davies as well, you know.

Clegg was clearly at Bretton Hall College during the students' time there more than they recall. Participants One and Two remember Clegg giving a lecture and again here, a talk by Clegg is remembered. However, the students do not clearly identify Clegg as being instrumental at Bretton Hall College and to their own experiences. There is room here to question the community created, which is finely balanced between what did happen (i.e., Clegg attending Bretton Hall College regularly) and what can be agreed by all of the students who attended Bretton Hall College, a golden time for them all. And we can also identify where the blurring of events happened. Clegg was clearly instrumental in appointing staff, including John Friend as the first Principle of Bretton Hall College, and gave lectures and talks to the
students of Bretton Hall College. What is interesting here is the gap between the role that Clegg played at Bretton Hall College and the role which the students at Bretton Hall College think he played in their education. The narrative presented here suggests how powerful perceptions can be when trying to recall what happened at the time, rather than a remembering. The reference to the appointment of John Friend, the first Principal of Bretton Hall College by Clegg sits within Clegg’s leadership style whether the students of Bretton Hall College are aware of it or not. We know that Clegg would set up an environment where people could grow and develop, and then take a step back and not seek to be instrumental and ever-present in that growth and development (see Chapter 2). This narrative therefore helps us to analyses the Clegg’s direct or indirect impact on the culture building at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974.

Do you know how Bretton influenced you? Did it influence you? It must have influenced me. I mean, how could it not? How it influenced me, I don’t really know. I mean, it certainly influenced... I mean, I became a teacher when I left, and it definitely influenced the way I taught. I mean, there’s no doubt about that. I think, as a teacher, I had to learn, really, how to be a good teacher – which I eventually became, but I wasn’t when I started.... Right. I think one of the things that... Right. Something... I know that when I met my old school friends, that had gone to different kind of institutions, and we talk about the way, you know, our experience, our experiences... I’m talking also about after I’d left and talking to other people. And, and it became very clear to me that, that Bretton Hall’s way of managing my learning was to push me in the general direction and tell me to explore it, rather than force-feed it to me. ...And I got the impression from people I talked to that they were more force-fed. So I think that... And I will say this: that certainly, you know... I mean, I spent... how long? I spent, fifteen years in schools and then I moved into further education. And certainly the ethos in further education – this would be during the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties – was very much about that kind of: teach people how to learn; don’t teach people what they have to learn. Right? So, so that, that meant a lot to me, in that that’s the way I was taught myself at Bretton. Wasn’t the way I was taught at school. Different.
The narrative here maps to that of participants one and two, who share the feeling that when talking to other students who went to different colleges of education, it becomes apparent that the environment and curriculum at Bretton Hall College were more influential on them as people and on the type of teachers that they became. Again, we see here Clegg’s hand in determining the exploratory nature of learning that the participants were subject to; they were not force-fed learning but rather were provided with routes into learning. This reflects the type of community that the students built, they were a ‘try it out, test it, find out what works’ community, and seemingly this was an approach that came directly from the types of things they were learning. Subconsciously, they were trying out these routes into learning as they learned how to be with other students.

The long-lasting influence of Bretton Hall College on participant three is clear:

What's your overriding memories of Bretton? (Pause) Hmm. If I were to kind of think about... yeah. Right, okay. Being with like-minded people, often working in groups, very intensively, in our own rooms. And the division between work and play, as it were, was very loose. So, so social gatherings would be, would often turn out to be something artistic or something like that. There was always, always some kind of performance going on, whether it was musical or dramatic. And I was, I did a number of the... So the drama students had to do things like, they had to produce plays as part of their course. But there would be other little experimental dramas that people decided just to have a go at. So a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot of involvement in that kind of thing. That's it, really. When you come back to Bretton, what do you feel now? Yes. Well, I told you that I, for some time I kept up a, a kind of friendship with Joe Breel. [Staff] I would go back to him, just would call in on him. I used... for five... six years, I lived in Barnsley, so it was quite close. And I, and I knew, I still knew a few people that were there. So I would go, just socially, including to some of the plays and that kind of thing. So that was in the early days. And then, the only time I... and then... I mean, I never lived very far away, really. First of all I lived in Barnsley, then I lived in Leeds, and then I went to live in Denby Dale, which is just a stone's throw from... I lived there for quite a while. And so when the Sculpture Park opened, I was going there right from the start. And took my kids, and they loved it. It was our favourite place to go, really.
This narrative shows the community at work during and after participant three’s time at Bretton Hall College. The blurring of work and play as it is described here is particularly significant, showing almost familial relationships with the staff. Participant Three then situates their own children into the landscape of YSP, embedding the notion of belonging and ownership of the site, as a place that they can visit whenever they want to, like a family home. Moreover, participant three situates their place in the YSP landscape as *going there right from the start*, suggesting that they were there first. The lived experience presented here reveals the mechanisms through which the individual joins the community of practice. It is suggested that once you have lived the experience, the result is you join the community, and then perpetuate that lived experience that others then live through, thereby also becoming members of the community.

The references to returning to Bretton Hall College even once it ceased to be the College can be seen in each narrative. Indeed, the pilgrimages that are made weekly, monthly, and annually (as seen in the narratives) continue to play an important part in the well-rehearsed co-curated narratives (Herman, 2010) used by the students at Bretton Hall College, and in the continuation of the community of practice.

**7.6 (Re)creating Bretton Hall College: Narrative Four: 1969-1970. Self-directed and social learning, and the shaping of identity in the community of practice**
As Participant Four studied at Bretton Hall College for only one year, this narrative provides an interesting segue into the other collected narratives for this research project as the decision was made not to stay at Bretton Hall College. The guiding narrative provides a picture of comparison of Bretton Hall College to the “local college” where the participant studied at next. Participant Four was concerned that because they studied science and not art that they wouldn’t be able to provide relevant information for this research project. The implication here is that Participant Four felt that Bretton Hall College did not focus on science in the way that it did with the creative arts. In the reconstructed conversation below, participant four is coloured in blue, and I as the researcher am in black.

The conversation began with Participant Four recounting when they were at Bretton Hall College:

When did you go to Bretton? 1969. I went in September, well October, and then I left in the December of nineteen seventy. So that I did a year and a term. I left at Christmas nineteen seventy. Science. Well it was called biological science. So it was biology and physics, which was a bit of an issue for me, because I’d come from a secondary mod, and we didn’t do physics, because we were thought too thick to do anything like that. I was a science student, not an arts student. So I don’t know whether that’s relevant. Also, I was only there for a year and a term, because I actually left early and transferred to a college locally. So I finished off my training at a local college….. And the college I transferred to, it was an awful shock when I went there, because it was like going back to school. We were sat in desks, in rows and we had to be top of the class academically all the time. Which I mean, was okay, because I was able to hold my own. But quite a few of the students were struggling. But at Bretton there was none of that. Certainly in my first year that I was there, none of that at all. Why did you transfer? Various reasons. I wasn’t happy with my main course, and I found the institutional living quite difficult at the time... I was getting no sleep. I was exhausted, and my work was suffering, so...
The opening narrative reveals Participant Four’s lack of confidence in their abilities academically, which reflects also narrative three, as we saw above. It also points to a self-identified barrier to belonging in that they studied Science and not Art. This barrier also meant that they were concerned that it would affect their inclusion in this research project and suggests a wider sense of not belonging to a teacher training college for the arts. Whilst Bretton Hall College expanded to include Science later in its development, this was not the case at the end of the 1960s.

The narrative also highlights the environment of Bretton Hall College and the difference in learning styles that Participant Four discovered once they had moved to another college. Participant Four clearly appreciated the learning styles at Bretton Hall College, which were founded on Clegg’s lens of child-centred, arts in education approach. This appreciation became clear once Participant Four saw other styles in use at the College they subsequently attended. This hindsight helps to highlight Clegg’s impact, even if the participant did not know that Clegg was behind Bretton Hall College’s approach.

Participant Four had clear reasons for wanting to go to Bretton Hall College:

Why did you choose Bretton?
Well, because my brother’s friend was there as a music student. And I went up to visit one weekend, and I just fell in love with it as soon as I saw it. So when I was applying... in fact it was my second choice, because my mum thought I ought to choose another college instead. And I went to an interview at this other college, which I hated, and I didn't get in. And I was that relieved because I wanted to go to Bretton. So, yeah. But you see, in my day, Bretton was a million miles away. It was a long journey by car. The motorways, in fact the first time I went up there the M1 only stopped at Barnsley. Yes, so, but when I actually began as a student, it then went past, past Bretton. But going through Birmingham was horrendous, because I live in Worcestershire, was
horrendous, because there was no M40, M42. So it was the other end of the world basically, in the sixties.

The relief stated here at not getting into a different College because they wanted to go to Bretton Hall College is linked to emotions: *I just fell in love with it as soon as I saw it*. This maps back to the implied grandeur of the Bretton Hall College campus discussed by Participant One and Participant Three. The environment has played a key role through the narratives for this research project from their first impressions. The narrative here talks of Bretton Hall College being *a million miles away*, it suggests that Bretton Hall College is another world for this participant, the distance and location is what marks Bretton Hall College out as being from another world. I am also suggesting here that in being so far away from what they knew, in the isolation of Bretton Hall College campus that the students created such a strong community of practice out of support for one another.

The admissions process was discussed:

*Do you remember your interview?* I *do remember it, yes. What was it like? Brilliant. When we got there, we... Miss Hale [Staff] had organised a group of students to show us around. So as soon as we got there, we were welcomed immediately. We had students coming to talk to us in, I think it was the portico, I can't remember. I think it was portico. Anyway, we sat and we talked and the students from the year above came and chatted to our parents as well. It was really nice. Then they took us on a tour round the grounds. I mean, it was really nice, and talked to us. And then I think I had... I think there were two separate ones. I had like a subject interview and like an education general type interview, you know. But very relaxed, very friendly, lovely – really nice.

The community at Bretton Hall College is evident here: the prompting question referred to the participant’s interview, yet the response was about the environment and spaces. This is intertwined with the people. Participant three recalls specific details of the rest of their interview and feelings of inadequacy linked to school.
However, here, it is the environment and people that are the focus. They are described as brilliant, really nice, relaxed, very friendly and lovely. All of the senses are at play here and these multisensory memories override any recollections of the formality of the interview. These arguably feed into the creation of the community of practice at Bretton Hall College and show how valuable these collected research narratives are for shedding light on the significance and impact of place (environment) on the community.

The impact that Bretton Hall College made on participant four was clear:

What were your first impressions? Well, just the surroundings, the environment, because I'm a country girl at heart. And everybody was so friendly. I mean, when I went up just for that weekend, it was fantastic, you know, everybody was really nice. And then when I went the first day, I was terrified, as you are as an eighteen year old, and it's the other end of the world. And we got there and we were greeted by the student union, and they were just so nice. And later I heard all these horror stories of when students started at various colleges, they had to go through the initiation ceremonies, where they were put in a bath, you know, dirty water and all sorts of things. Nothing like that at Bretton. It was absolutely fantastic. So first impressions - I was just amazed that it was so wonderful. And when I got there, that the there were several students like myself, that were supposed to be thick because we'd been to a secondary mod, and we were all, you know, very well qualified and, you know, it was great, so... equally.

Because there was the deputy principal was Miss Hale. Don't know if you've heard of her – Daphne Hale. [Staff] Yes, yes, yes, I have. I loved Daphne Hale. A lot of people didn't like her, but I loved her. And when I got there, I was actually one of the better qualified students. Because a lot of... in those days you only had to have five O Levels to become a... to train to be a teacher. Well I got over and above that, 'cause I've got several... I got eight, eight... let's think: I got eight O Levels, three CSE ones, so I don't know whether you can count them as well. They don't do CSEs now, but they counted as an O Level. And I'd got my A Levels as well, two A Levels. So when I got there, I found I was, like I say, one of the better qualified. So that sort of boosted me. But when I was leaving, I had to speak to Miss Hale, and she was ever so good, and she said 'We don't go on academic ability; we go on personalities. So we chose personalities that we felt would be best for the teaching job.' So, which clarifies what you just said, doesn't it? [Choosing the person not just ability]
Again, the narrative here describes *friendly* and *really nice* people and environments, which were *absolutely fantastic*. This is interesting because participant four left Bretton Hall College after one year, yet their memories are very positive. We might have expected their memories not to be positive, and so it could be suggested that it was the environment and holistic culture for both students and staff, that has contributed to the favourable feelings about Bretton Hall College. In fact, participant four still returns to Bretton Hall College and is active in the alumni. This provides evidence which addresses research objective 2 in determining how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created.

The discussion of value and culture was particularly revealing:

*Did you feel valued as a student? Um, no, I don't think I did really. Because I was a scientist; I wasn't an artist. Bretton was originally opened as teacher training for the arts and music, and science did come later. Yes. I mean, I didn't feel undervalued, but I didn't... I felt that I wasn't one of the elite, as it were. Yes. What type of culture existed at Bretton when you were there? Ah. Need to be careful what I say here. Very free and easy. A bit too free and easy, yes. Yeah.*

This narrative is the only one to say that the participant did not feel valued as a student at Bretton Hall College: all of the other narratives collected for this research project recall a feeling of being valued and even over valued (Participant Two). The reason given for this is because participant four was a scientist and not an artist. This can be substantiated when we look back historically. Bretton Hall College was intended to be a teacher training college for the arts, with a clear rationale. It may be fair to assume this focus was felt more by the art students than by the science students who joined later and may have led to feelings of not being as valued. The recollection of the culture at Bretton Hall College may also be linked to the time
participant four was at Bretton Hall College. This is reflected by Participants Five and Six, who studied just after Participant Four and these narratives support the investigation of research objective 2 to determine how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created, and research objective 3 to analyse the significance and value of the collected narratives through a critical lens of narrative inquiry.

I deliberately asked participant four about Clegg:

*Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg?* No, no, nothing to do with him at all. All I ever heard was everybody at the time telling us that the West Riding was the best authority to work, or to be in, you know, it was the best in the country. So, which I thought was great, but I mean yeah. But apart from that, no, no influence at all, so...

The narrative shows a clear statement that Clegg had no influence at all on participant four or on their experiences. The previous narratives have also displayed a similar response; however, their narratives then go on to discuss an area of practice, a memory, or an aspect of the curriculum which directly links back to Clegg’s philosophies in children’s education. What is not clear from the student’s recollections and stories is that they can see the direct links and impact on them from Clegg. What has remained with participant four is the experience of daily life at Bretton:

*Was there a typical day at Bretton?* Yeah. There was always something on as well. The students’ union... the student union were very good at organising things. There was something on every night, if you wanted it. And the very first time I arrived... the first day I arrived, obviously terrified, the student union took us up to our room. That, it was Thursday... I remember it so clearly. Thursday night they put a disco for us in Kennel Block. And on the Friday we had a film, in the film... in the hall where you used to do film shows on a Friday. And on the Saturday there was a dance. But on the Friday morning we all had to go into the hall. And I remember that so clearly – we were all sat in the hall. Everybody was terrified. And some of the drama students got up on the stage. I mean, these were brand new drama students. Got up on the stage, and were pretending to be the tutors. I mean, in front of us, yeah. And then the tutors came in, and they quickly sort of sat down. And it was just so funny. It was just brilliant, that first day, yeah, yeah.... Yeah, clearly. I remember it, yeah, yeah. And I remember practically every day. Everybody
always says 'How can you remember that?' But it was just such a wonderful experience. Good old Alec Clegg then, that's all I can say.

Participant Four states clearly that there was a typical day at Bretton Hall College, yet it is all social activity, with no recounting of lectures or the curriculum in the memories shared. Indeed, participant two provides rich detail of daily activity from clothes to dormitories, lessons, daily walks, and the curriculum. Other narratives also recall curriculum detail beyond social activities. Participant four earlier recalled a free and easy culture at Bretton Hall College and here, the memory is only of a social culture. This may suggest that perhaps the learning experience was not rigid enough for them, or perhaps they needed more structure also in their social life.

The narrative ends by giving credit to Clegg; this raises questions of direct legacy, as Clegg is spontaneously mentioned. It also suggests that because of Clegg’s ethos in community of practice building, that this would extend to also shaping social activities as those would have been just as important in valuing the individual and instilling aspirations and promoting personal growth. The credit from Participant Four is for a full social life and not for education.

The impact on participant four of their time at Bretton Hall College is clear:

*Do you know how Bretton influenced you? Did it influence you? Yes, yeah. I always wanted to go back there, yes. It was a big happy family. It really was very nice. And yeah, I mean, even after I'd left early, I still wanted to go back. And even today I still want to go back there, because it was just such a lovely place to be at the time. So influencing my personality, yes, yeah. It gave me confidence, which I lost when I went to the other college. But yeah, it, after having, like I say, as a secondary mod child, so I was Eleven Plus failure, having been told for seven years I was stupid and all the rest of it. Went to Bretton and I was equal; I was equal to everybody else, yes. So it was nice, yeah....Oh yes, yeah, it was a unique experience. And I mean, the ex-students all have got... say about the uniqueness of it. And we all wanted... you know, have kept as good friends and happy to meet up with people, yeah,
yeah. So it was special. I did ask somebody the other day what made it so special. And they said that it was part of them, it was just part of who they were.

Yeah. Yeah, I was going to say because in those... I was actually in mansion in my first year, in a broom cupboard, with a brick wall outside of the window. Which is another story. But because we were a little community on that landing, you know, there was always somebody there. There was always somebody to go and talk to; there was always somebody about. And everybody was everybody's friends, you know. Don't remember falling out with anybody, you know. It was really nice. Just being equal. Equal to everybody else. The happy, friendly place. Everybody was everybody's friend. Don't know what it was, it was just unique. It was just... it was just like a big, happy family. There was always somebody there for you, you know. And the tutors were brilliant as well, so... a camaraderie as such. There was, yes, yes. It was lovely, yeah. Quite different from anything I'd experienced before or since in fact, yeah. Quite... Yes, yeah.... It was so brilliant at the time, yes.

Because for me, as I say, it was... suddenly I was the same as everybody else, you know. I was not this person that was, just really didn't exist, you know. I was the same as everybody else; boosted my confidence no end, yeah. It was brilliant, yeah.

This whole narrative provides an insight into happiness at Bretton Hall College and maps to other narratives collected for this research project. Participant Four recounts feelings of inadequacy again but then links their confidence to attending Bretton Hall College. They attribute Bretton Hall College as influencing their personality. This is significant as it points to the shaping of a person through engaging with an educational experience. They go on to describe the experience as unique and special. The retelling of the little community on the landing, can be linked back to the narratives of participants one and two when they were at Bretton Hall College in the early 1950s and had cocoa on the landing between the women and men’s dormitories. We thus see here the stories and life of Bretton Hall College in plain sight being passed down through generations of students. In a way, the creation of a community which transcends time is visible here (Wenger, 1998).
This research project is revealing the mechanics of how the community of practice was not only built but how it transcended time. This shown through the older students demonstrating behaviours, which younger students take up and reproduce, and so the cycle continues as students’ progress through the College. This situates the students in what Wenger describes as being part of a ‘social body’ (Wenger, 1990, pp.150-151). The narratives collected for this research project inhabit the notion of a social body that is not fixed but fluid over time. The thesis thus reveals this social body of the students of Bretton Hall College through their actions in their own words. This once again shows how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created, as well as the significance and impact of place (environment) within the collected narratives.

Participant Four then reflected on the experience of Bretton Hall College and the extent to which it was ‘of its time’:

What's your overriding memories of Bretton? It was brilliant. I think it probably wasn't the same in later years, but in those early years, yeah. And also you've got to remember there was a need for teacher training. There were hundreds of colleges around the country, you know. And as I say, there was a need. But I often think back about it, that they put us in... we lived in as well, you know. I mean, I don't know why they made us live in, but we lived in as well, you know. But maybe that was part of the whole person as it were. I remember the first summer one girl described it as a holiday camp, as we sat down by the lake sunbathing. She said ‘It's like a holiday camp’. We just go up for our meals. Do you think that we could have a Bretton today? I don't think so. It's a different society today. I think things took a downturn in the eighties, didn't they, and everybody was out for number one, rather than you know, generally. I don't, I can't see it happening again. I don't know. You know, because it's all university these days; it's all degrees. You've got to be academically brilliant. I mean, even if you go for a job for teaching, you've got to have a good, a degree or whatever. And that's not what it's about. So I don't... I can't see it coming back, no. Sadly.
Participant Four demonstrates their awareness of the changing educational landscape from when they attended Bretton Hall College, in a similar way as participant three did. The narrative maps to Participant Two’s comments about how the days were summer in feeling, with the description offered here of it’s like a holiday camp. This rich detail shows how it felt to live and study at Bretton Hall College and provides an insight into how the environment made them feel.

7.7 (Re)creating Bretton Hall College: Narratives Five and Six. 1969-1972.

Bridging differences, the community of practice as folklore, and ‘being Brettonised’

Participants Five and Six gave a joint narrative and their guiding narrative is presented here. They did not use photo-elicitation in the same way as participants one and two in particular; rather, they spoke very fluently from memory recalling and reconstructing the physical space. Participant One is coloured in blue, Participant Two in pink and me the researcher in black.

The conversation began with both participants recounting how it was that they came to study at Bretton Hall College:

I came here in September sixty-nine, and left at Easter seventy-two, for... because I was naughty and I'd... to do a couple of extra terms. I'd started on a three-year course, converted to a two-year course. But as I say, I didn't really pull my weight. But because of Joe Breel and Alyn Davies seeing something in me that was worth continuing, they gave me another shot at it. And I left, qualified in Easter seventy-two.

I arrived at Bretton in nineteen sixty-nine, I did a two-year art course, art with drama as a subsid. And I left in nineteen seventy-one, when, from then on, I taught till I was fifty-nine. So did you meet at Bretton? Yes. On the first day. First day. At the other side of what you're calling the refectory, that we would refer to as the dining hall. I had a friend at Brighton called Phoebe, who was a real character. And she turned around to me one day and said, 'Oh, I've just
been to this wonderful place, and it's called Bretton Hall. Write it in your diary. Write it down. Write it...' And she gave me the address of it. And it was weird, because I actually forgot all about that. But she said, 'It's marvellous. It's a wonder. You must go there.' I think she'd been for the weekend. Anyway, as time went on, I was sort of in a little bit of a: 'Oh, I don't know what to do with my life.' And I went to Spain, and I went... One of the tutors at, at Brighton was, had retired to Spain. And I went out and did some work with him. And I met a girl when I was in Spain who said, 'Oh, I do my work, but I've got a teaching certificate. And it means what I do is, I go and teach at home for a while, save some money, and then I go abroad. And I keep myself going by doing conversational English lessons, and then I carry on doing my own work abroad.' And I thought, 'That's what I'm going to do. That's what I want to do.' So I left. And I um-ed and ah-ed. And my mother, who was really fed up with me by this time, sort of said, 'Oh, when are you going to do something decent working in, going to art colleges and...? You know, lowest of the low.' And she said, 'Why don't you do something nice like be a teacher?' And I thought, 'Well, actually, that's what was in my mind.' So I contacted County Hall in London, 'cause I lived in London in those days. And I told them that I'd been to art college and I was thinking of teaching. They said, 'Well, there's only two colleges you can go to. One is Trent Park and the other one's Bretton Hall.' And I thought, 'That name rings a bell.' So I thought, 'Well, I'm not going to Trent Park,' because it would have meant I had to live at home. 'So I'll go to Bretton Hall.' So I applied. And then I found it all in my address book, all this information that Phoebe had given me. I thought, 'That's really weird.' I'd just come back from... Germany and Italy and Austria.... I was at York School of Art, and the idea was to be an art teacher. But instead of going on to the next stage, which was gonna be Sunderland, I found that I could get a job and make loads of money. And I just went from job to job to job, until, at the back end of the sixties, I was working in my old school in York as a lab technician. And the head said, 'Well, what are you gonna do long term? I'll give you day release, you can get a couple more GCEs, and decide where you want to go for teacher training, if you want to teach.' I said, 'Yes, I do.' And I think he as much as anybody got me in here. And I came, came here because... Now, XXXX reckoning Bretton and Trent Park. But to my way of thinking, from what I'd heard, if you applied... There were two: Bretton Hall and Enfield...But I also realised that, if you wanted to get into Bretton, it really had to be your first choice – in the same way as, for the services... But, yeah, so I chose Bretton first choice, Enfield second. Came and had an interview with Daphne Hale and Theo Olive [Staff]. And Daphne Hale was very perceptive. Saw right through me. But again, must, must have seen something worthwhile there. And Theo was very nice and... And that was it, and I was in. And it was such a breeze in those days, because York paid me seven pounds a week. They gave me three hundred and sixty-five quid grant. I lived in Swithen [student hostel] for the first year, and ate in the dining hall, and drank in Kennel Block, and just had enough room to manoeuvre anywhere. There weren't the worries about student loans to be repaid or... It's just a completely different set-up. Perhaps too easy. Perhaps too easy for students then. But it certainly gave students the opportunity to focus on what they were doing, rather than having in the back of their mind: 'How am I gonna pay for this? How are my parents gonna pay for this?' Because it was
something that local authorities did for the students that had been accepted. 
And I think that's, that's how it should be.

Participant Five opens with a statement that maps to the narratives of Participants Three and Four, by expressing a feeling that they were not academically sufficient or were somehow inadequate to attend Bretton Hall College. There is thus a common feeling of being undervalued before they started at Bretton Hall College and as the narratives continue, the feeling of confidence and, as expressed by Participant Two, even feeling overvalued. This feeling arguably comes from the joint experience of the community and environment at Bretton Hall College, as well as the learning experience of the teacher training that valued the individual and promoted personal growth.

Both participants also remembered the admissions process:

Do you remember your interview? I was trying to think about that. I do remember, it must have been... it was March, and there was snow. And it was... sort of looking back now, being a southern girl, I had no idea what snow meant. I mean, we have snow in London, but you'd sort of... I don't know. You'd need to get the snow off loads of walls before you could make a snowball. And I remember arriving at Wakefield station, and I must have got a taxi or something to come here. And I think... who was... was he Tony, the pottery man? I'm trying to think. I've a feeling it was him. Reeve. Oh, Reeve, yeah. I've not got any real strong memories of the actual interview, because it was the weather that overtook everything. Because they suddenly turned round to me and said, 'I think you ought to stay the night.' 'I can't do that. I've got to go home.' And they said, 'Well, the roads could be closed, you know. How, how are you going to get into Wakefield?' And it was, it was such a shock, this weather thing, that that has overtaken everything else about my interview. It was this weather, and that's all I seem to be concerned about. 'This is weird. I've never had this before. Why can't I go...?' You know, it was that, rather than, 'Oh, I'm scared because of the snow.' It was more like, 'How dare it?'
The narrative here from Participant Six shows the change in culture already engaged with by living in a different part of the country. It is the sense of difference, which is of interest of here, as the culture creation has begun through noticing the differences which need to come together. This narrative is linked to participant three when they talk of Bretton Hall College being like another world. Such experiences help us to determine how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created, and the significance and impact of place (environment) on that community.

The environment at Bretton Hall College continues to be an important theme in the narrative:

**What were your first impressions?** Just took it for granted. Really did just take it for granted. The, the amazement and the wonder and all of that came after it had gone, and thought... and now... Because as I say, I come here two, three times a week. I was walking round Top Lake last night, and thinking, 'Oh, wow.' Because the other thing was that it was ours. There was a serious, serious belief, with all of us, that Bretton... And I still feel that. I can't... I think that's one of the... when I walk round, I own this place. This is mine, and it will always be mine. And I think it's just an acceptance... it was an acceptance that this was ours, and this was sort of like our playground and so on and so forth. And, but there was never that sort of: 'Oh, aren't we lucky?' Never thought that at all. Just accepted it. It was...

We felt unlucky, in some respects, that we were a bit isolated. But I was all right: I had a car. And I think when I arrived for my interview, I drove down the drive, parked in front of mansion, walked in through the front door, was directed to the staffroom door, and, and that was it. It was just, yes, you own the place. Once you're here, you own the place. And you really do: you own the place, from Ray Kelt the ranger's cottage, to down at the bottom, that's another car park now; from the chapel to Kennel Block – the lot. Yeah, just owned the place. And there were certain places that, they weren't... There were no no-go areas, but there were places that were, that belonged to particular, shall we say, cliques, cliques.

But the whole place... The music people up there... well, that was theirs. But we were...

We were art. You were art and drama subsid. I was art and drama subsid. We did our art in those studios above the boiler room. Yeah. And then later on we operated up at Kennel Block with Reggie Hazel. And this, this is why it's, it's
very difficult to accept that the place is... it isn't falling down yet, but it does need a few million spending on it.

The narrative starts by echoing participant one’s belief that it was ours. The ownership from the very beginning. The exact same words are used here by participant six, the last narrative collected: it was ours. This feeling covers the whole timescale of the research project, suggesting that the feeling created moves through the experience and is not limited to one generation of students at Bretton Hall College. This is further reiterated by the statement you own the place, and detailed navigation is provided evidencing an intimate knowledge of the environment, suggesting ownership. There is greater insight here revealed about how the students determined the community of practice at Bretton Hall College, research objective 2, and how they situate themselves in the environment, research objective 4. It reveals the fluidity of ownership at the time the students were there and also the permanence of ownership, situated here in not a material ownership but in an emotional and custodian ownership not only of the physical environment but of the culture that they created within the environment of Bretton Hall College.

Reflections on students and spaces became intermingled during the narrative:

Was there a type of student that came? All types. I think all types. There was everything from the real intellectuals, people with brains that’d run rings round other people – and unfortunately some of those who knew it. There were the pseudo-intellectuals, who would love to have been in on the intellectual scene. There were the, the drama types, sporty types... Ezra Taylor knitters. Ezra Taylor knitters? Yeah. You know Ezra, you know Ezra Taylor? Yeah. The knitters were up there. And they were: the knitters. They used to... we used to call them the... The knitters were upstairs, and we’d see them as we went to do the laundry (...) on their knees. There were the sporty types, who would use the sports building, you know, next to that pond. Dance-y theatrical people, who’d be with Sam Thornton or whoever in that... What was that hall called? On that side of Stable Block.
The Gymnasium was named after Ezra Taylor, the Chairman of the College’s Governing Body, and became known as the Ezra Taylor building. It is this building that provides the name for the knitters. This narrative highlights how the students created their own communities and sub-communities in the existing spaces, in a way that provided a sense of identity within a wider community. The rich description of people, places, and activities so vivid in the retelling by the participants reveals the emotive role that memory can play in community building. It is evident throughout the whole of Participant Five and Six’s narrative, that their memories of Bretton Hall College provide a route into their lived experiences which cannot be found anywhere else. By uncovering this richness of detail and lived experience, this research begins to fill the gap in the legacy building of Clegg and reveals for the first time here the unheard narratives of the Bretton Hall College students.

The richness of the lived experience is clear also in how the participants described their daily routine at Bretton Hall College:

*Was there a typical day at Bretton? Typical day. Might start in the middle of the night, with Joe Breel [Staff] turning up and saying, 'The fire alarm has been going for the last half-hour. You have been incinerated. Get outside.' You'd go outside, and there'd be people there in, in their pyjamas or nighties, with a coat on, freezing to death. And it'd just be a fire alarm test. So that, that's an early start to the day. And then I suppose breakfast and... Eggy bread. Eggy bread. French toast. Eggy bread. Eggy bread. And that cheese that you absolutely hated. Ugh. When I didn't like, when I didn't like what was the main, the main food, I would pretend to be... well, I'd just say, 'I'm vegetarian.' And inevitably it would be this cheese that... I ate so much of it, I hated it in the end... Then you'd go back to your room, get set up for the day. And Mrs. Wood'd come in to me, or Mrs. Westwood'd come in to you. Mrs. Westwood. And Mrs. Wood'd come in and say, 'Can I clean your room?' You'd say, 'Yes. Thank you, Mrs. Wood.' And, 'Ooh...' I'd say, 'I'm sorry it's a mess.' 'Oh, don't you worry about that. My gentlemen don't, I don't mind if they make a mess. That's what I'm here for.' And Mrs. Westwood was*
nice. But I think Mrs. Westwood wanted to know what was going on, didn’t she? Oh, yeah. She, we used to have lots of chats. Yeah. I think that was, that was definitely one of the things here, that all the staff, you got to know them.... And the thing is, I can remember the faces but I can’t remember the names of these guys. And did we know them as mister or as first names? Who was that tallish guy with steel-rimmed glasses? And he used to get you coloured bulbs for... Make my room more lively.

The narrative hear shows the interactions that contributed to culture building, which took place between the staff and the students. Although the recollections are of functional activities, including, for example the fire alarm test, what food the students ate, and the cleaning of their rooms, what they show is how those interactions have been recalled describing a typical day at Bretton Hall College. They are also social interactions, not curriculum interactions. They show the fabric of the day to day lives of the students, which translates into memory. What this research project has revealed is that the role that memory places in community building is fundamental in the recreating and retelling of a lived experience. Moreover, what is being uncovered in this thesis is a community whose nature and activities have possibly been recast through the positive lens of nostalgia. That the retelling of their community of practice is situated in positive nostalgia which I suggest frames the students' whole approach to Bretton Hall College. Like the abandoned buildings of the Bretton Hall College campus, their memories are covered in the shroud of overgrown trees, protecting what once was and can only be truly accessed through memory.

There were some recollections of the curriculum:

What were you taught? For art it was... Get on with it...do what you like. 'Cause... yeah. Do what you like. 'Cause you’ve had your art training; get on with it. Which was nice, because you did your own thing, and it was, it was really, really nice. Did some hideous stuff. I decided to go in the boiler room and paint the boiler room. We did do some life drawing, though. We went to a school...where we did drama. Pretended we were trees and that sort of... Quite nice. But, yes, generally speaking, it was, we were very much left to our
own devices. And that was, I felt more or less that all the way through. There
were lectures that you went to. And the big bone of contention: exams. Oh,
yes. We arrived, and we were told that it would be... No exams. Continuous
assessment. There won't be any exams. Yeah, continuous assessment. So I
went into a paddy about having to do an exam, and... A lot of people refused.
They said, 'No, no. You said there'd be no exams, so we're not doing them.'
Hid in a caravan with another student so we didn't do the exams. But curiously
enough, this, this... Now, it's curious. You've got this place, which is a haven
from towns, cities, whatever. But Cawthorne and this caravan site was also a
haven that... strange as that sounds. A haven from, sanctuary from Bretton. A
bloke came out of the next-door caravan with a pack of cards in his hand. He
started doing card tricks. And he got a bit of string and went... There was a
knot in it. And he went like that, and there was no knot in it. And he got a big
pack of cards. And we were walking round him, and he was doing all these
magic tricks. And we were just... 'He's good, him. He's really good, yeah.' It
was Paul Daniels. But that was before he was known as... Paul Daniels.

After the first year here, with you in Grasshopper, the one down at the bottom,
next to the... Key, that's gone.....key of knowledge, which has gone
somewhere else – a piece of sculpture. There was a piece of sculpture that
was there in nineteen sixty-four, an Austin Wright piece. Yes, yeah. I'll have a
picture of it. Supposed to be the key of knowledge, we were always told.
Looked more like a pair of spectacles with a blacked-out...Lens. Yeah. Well,
we saw them taking it away, didn't we? We said, 'Where you going with that?'
They were going up to Deer Park Lodge with it, weren't they? They were,
yeah. Deer Park Lodge, that was another one. Yeah. Our drama tutor lived in
Deer Park Lodge, in... as you'd face it, she lived in... as you face it from the
road, she lived in the right-hand side. That looks like King's Head. Yes. Can
you see the thingy there that looks like King's Head? No, that's... that was...
oh, Vanessa lived there. Allendale. There was Allendale and...Beaumont.
Beaumont, were those two that were along that way. Oh, the two long ones
that faced...Yeah, which would... what you'd have seen through that. King's
Head was round the corner. Grasshopper was there. Next to the fence to the
fields across to the chapel was Grasshopper. Up the hill from that was
Swithen. And then the one above that was Litherop. And above that was
sickbay. And above that was Joe Breel's cottage, bungalow... You've all these
different parts within the campus and beyond. Like Banks Hall in Cawthorne –
it is Cawthorne, effectively, isn't it? Oh, yeah. And I can't remember when,
because it's forty-odd years since we... There've been the changes. But all
these things are, they've all got some sort of significance. Like, I did you that
run up the hill to Joe Breel's cottage. Now, behind that, there was something
called Back Path, which cut the corner off from coming down to the main
entrance. It was haunted. And then going straight on to Kennel Block, or
turning right and coming down to mansion. If you went Back Path, a) you
would be scared. You'd be really... You might see the grey lady. You might
see the grey lady, or you might get the goats jumping up on the wall at you.
And they really do scare you. They do make you jump, or they did do. And,
but the grey lady apparently lived in mansion. And we'd, we'd a few ghost
hunts. Oh, you... I never did. But you're sort of making me think now about
why, why was it as it was. And I'm just wondering if... Most people lived in, the
first year. Which I think gave you a grounding, possibly, and made you... and obviously, that's when you made your friendships, or you started to make your friendships. Then that feeling... you said you were all right because you'd got a car. And come to think of it, there was sometimes that little bit of feeling: 'Oh, I've just got to get out of this place.' And so to be able to escape was good. But if you then lived out... and it gave you a focus to come back in. And you'd got all the home comforts. 'Cause another little thing that's just reminded me... Monty Python. Monty Python started while we were here. And there was a television room in Stable Block.

*It was in Stable Block, at this end of Stable Block.......And it just packed. We all stood there like this, because we couldn't move because we were so many of us packed in to watch Monty Python. And it'd just started. It was... here were two... And it was a colour set. It was a colour television. And it was a fair-sized screen. Wasn't an enormous screen, but it was a fair-sized screen. And in this reasonable-sized room, with comfortable chairs, you could watch colour television. So I would say the most important programmes to be watched for people in this place, being of the type of students they were, was Monty Python and Disco 2. Oh, yes. Disco 2. Which was the... that came before The Old Grey Whistle Test. It was called Disco 2. Because it was on BBC2 and it was, it was pop music.... And there was some seriously good stuff on there. But it... before Whispering Bob did The Old Grey Whistle Test, that's, that's what it was. And those, those were the two particular ones that we used to watch. But you'd to make sure you got there early.... To get a seat. And after that, you'd be up to Kennel Block. 'Cause there was, there was, there was a story, because... Bretton stories go back down. But when, when it was Mr. Friend. And it must have been Daphne Hale [Staff]. And it was all to do with students being in the wrong room and all of that sort of thing. And I'm not going to remember this very well, because, as I say, it's not my experience; it's something that was told to me, and we did have a laugh about it. And it was that... I think there was something written down about fining people. Was it fining...? Oh, right. You must ask someone who was here at the time if they remember the incident where there was... I'm sure there was something written down about anyone found in, in the, in the wrong room at a certain time would be fined so much. And somebody had sort of changed it all, and said that according to, Daphne Hale says that to spend the night in your girl's room was seven and six or something like this, you know. And it was... I don't know. It was just... apparently it was really... I think the early days, and you must know this better than us, were much more strict than when we were here. Because we'd got, we'd got the lovely Alyn Davies, who really was... he was lovely. Yeah, as principal ...a lot of people... I personally think that when we were here, our particular area, were even more special. It's easy to say that when it's... 'Oh, our group were even more special.' There were more people from our era turned up to that event. And a whole host of them got into the music centre and had a jamming session for the whole afternoon. And it was absolutely brilliant. And everywhere you turned, there were people from our year groups. In that area... There was a telephone exchange, and there was a rota for operating the telephone. And I think Bretton's telephone number was Bretton 192. And I think somebody in the village had the number Bretton 208. A three-digit number, with a prefix of where it is. That was the telephone. So if you were on... You did telephone
exchange. And it was plug pushing and: 'Hello, caller.' And one night, I was in sickbay because I'd done a, I'd done a play…. Oh, you hurt your foot, didn't you? Tripped on a weight, sprained my ankle – did the play, but did it with feeling, because of pain in my ankle. So that was good. But I ended up in sickbay. And in the middle of the night, or quite late on, I heard this: 'Help. Help. Oh, God, will somebody please help me? Oh, help, help.' And I got downstairs, got on the phone, said, 'Who's the tutor on duty?' And it was Giles, and it was in Kennel Block. And I said, 'Look, there is somebody somewhere in real distress. It's a girl, and she's screaming for help.' 'It's all right; we'll look into it.' And I'm thinking, 'No, this is something bloody desperate, and I can't move 'cause I've sprained my ankle.' It turned out that this girl had had her duvet hanging out of the window during the day to air it, had come back from Kennel Block, couldn't haul it in through the window – and she's there, hanging onto this bedding or whatever, screaming for help. And it really sounded like someone in the middle of a serious crisis, but that was... And it's those sort of things that stick with you. And things... like you say, one of the caretakers or staff might say to you, 'Where have you been today, then? Have you been round the lake?' 'Yeah.' 'Did you see Ray?' 'No.' 'He'll have seen you.' And, you know…

This extended guiding narrative provides insight into how the narratives weave back and forth and link to additional aspects of the participant experiences. An initial question is asked about the curriculum and the answer moves rapidly into how the students lived, who they lived with, and interactions with staff, thereby revealing the building of their community. Again, we can see the power of memory and through the positive lens of nostalgia, the recollected community is recalled and rebuilt as if they still lived there. This is a recurrent thread in all the narratives collected for this research project.

The narrative begins in a similar way to that of participant one, in that it was less structured than expected. The description is once again intertwined with social activity and the acknowledgement of the freedom they had in what they did academically, self-directing a lot of their learning. The detailed navigation around the site through their recollections is rich and reveals the real feelings of ownership which are present in all of the narratives collected for this research. The familiar
language of *round the corner* and *up the hill* points to a known landscape, recalled in minute detail. The narrative around the Austin Wright sculpture maps to that of participants one and two, providing a landmark within the navigation that is non-linear through the narratives. Ownership is again evident when participant five questions the deinstallation of the sculpture and asks where it is going. The implication is that the buildings and landscape are theirs, and they have the right to ask where the sculpture is going. This again suggests a belonging to the site and wider environment, and a clear ownership over both.

Participant Five then states *but all these things are, they've all got some sort of significance* which positions the whole experience as having meaning for them. All of the experiences have value through the personal impact which Bretton Hall College had on participant five. Meaning has been made from every memory and as such contributes to the continued community building of the Bretton Hall College students.

Participant Six talks of living in for the first year and *the grounding* this gave. This helps to support the supposition that Participant Three did not have the same grounding as they lived out of the Bretton Hall College campus for their first year and that this grounding contributed to the building of their community. There are rich descriptions of how the students evolved the spaces, and the recollections of the camaraderie of watching a colour television set and being packed in together. These descriptions have clear similarities with domestic and family life and reveal how such a feeling was duplicated at Bretton Hall College, and how such shared experiences resulted in the building of a strong and close-knit community.
The narrative continues with participant five recalling a story, and their recollection reveals a certain beauty in how the story is relayed with an interweaving of memory and description. It shows an element of folklore from the remembered experiences at Bretton Hall College and how they have been passed down to future generations of students. Such experiences inform a network of stories that adds to the students’ own legacy building of their time at Bretton Hall College. The students are perpetuating the stories themselves even if they are not being recorded anywhere else, in the way that an oral history is passed down through family stories shared repeatedly. It is suggested here that there may be a chance that if each individual student is the teller of their Bretton Hall College story, they keep ownership not only of those memories and the community that they belonged to, but also of the College, as they feel that they belong to and own the Bretton Estate. Each participant in this research was keen to share their memories, their stories. This, it is suggested here, enables them to retain ownership of their experience. However, in sharing their stories for this research, the students can claim a validity of their experiences and ownership through the transparency of sharing.

The discussion continues to shed light on the student experiences of the environment and buildings at Bretton Hall College:

*Ken Robinson came to Bretton too… We know Ken. He was with us. Oh, we can tell you Ken’s story (Laughter) Yes, out here, out here. In those days, Ken had an invalid carriage. An AC. Pale blue. It was pale, pale blue. Fibreglass. Yeah. And it was meant for one person, because, you know, because he had this problem with his legs. And he used to see how many people he...* ‘Where you going?’ ‘Kennel Block. Give us a lift.’ ‘Give us a lift.’ Yeah, he used to charge around... And there’d be I don’t know how many people just hanging onto this thing, while Ken drove up to Kennel Block. And of course, by the end of the evening, you’d need a lift back. Well, yeah, coming back over. So you’d (…) down the hill (Laughter) My goodness. He’s just written another book,
Ken Robinson. And he’s dedicated it to Bretton. Good. We were a bit cross with him, because he, he suddenly forgot his roots. Well, the way... Now, this has, this has obviously got to be a Brettonism, because there was a lot of... all those of us who were at Bretton at the time with him, that we still know and we... ‘Did you...? Ken’s been on the radio, and they asked him where... and he said he went to Leeds University. How could he? He went to Bretton.’ And I’m glad he’s devoted... yes. It says, ‘To Bretton and all who sailed in her,’ and then the dates [he was at Bretton] I like that: ‘Bretton and all who sailed...’ ‘Cause I’ve spent many a happy hour on that Lower Lake. Oh, yes. We did sailing. Really? Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Along with another type: the sporty types. There are the sporty types, who would spend their Wednesday afternoons kicking shit out of each other playing rugby or whatever. And there were other students, who... I’ve no idea what they did for studies, but you’d find them halfway up a stone wall on... And you’d think...And I think they were the first... What’s that new thing that they do? Urban... Oh, when you kind of jump from... That’s what they did. They climbed all over these buildings. But they were free in these buildings. Yeah. You think, ‘Well, there isn’t a finger-hold there; there isn’t a toe-hold.’ But they did it. But they did it, and this was the challenge. Which, it was like: ‘Which face are we doing next?’ on Frogget or Stanage or, or whatever local rocks. These were their local rocks. Wednesday afternoon. And that’d be until somebody saw... ‘Get yourselves down from there.’

The narrative presents a window into how the students used all the space at Bretton Hall College, in many different ways. Firstly, there is the reference to Sir Ken Robinson, an alumnus of Bretton Hall College and advocate for creative education. Participants Five and Aix remember Sir Ken in a social capacity very clearly and demonstrate how upset they were by his lack of acknowledgement of attending Bretton Hall College and instead calling it the University of Leeds. The pride that all the participants have in attending Bretton Hall College is visible in each narrative, and Sir Ken not appearing to show the same pride angered them. This taps into the deep-seated sense of belonging and ownership the students felt and have continued to feel about Bretton Hall College. It also suggests that there is the impression that Sir Ken had left the community and the participants do not feel happy about that.

I also asked Participants Five and Six about Clegg:
Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? No. Were you aware of him when you were at Bretton? Only by name. Only as a name. Only name. Only as a name. Definitely heard of him. Definitely was talked about. Oh, yes, certainly heard of him. And I know that there was this liaison with Wakefield education in Bond Street. I wonder if... I mean, it would be... will you find out how much of an input he actually had in, in setting this place up? Because that would be interesting. Because if he, if he was sort of, I don’t know, conducting from a distance, or just sort of, having put something in place, then was happy to stand back and let it, see it develop – that would be really, really nice to know. I think his, his... his biggest influence in the area where I worked, which was Wakefield, where I spent most of my teaching, was this creation or involvement in the creation of middle schools. And that was something that I really wasn't totally in agreement with. Because I’d come from a system which was primary, secondary, further, higher. I taught first at Crofton High. My first kids were from Walton, Sharlston, Crofton, etc. Whole variety of kids, and they came in at the age of eleven, and they were just totally lost. And within two years, they’d got to the third year, present year nine, I think it’s referred to, is it?...They still refer to it as year nine. Up to year nine. And they were established in that school. And they, and you could put to them the idea that they really ought to be thinking about a) what they were gonna choose in the way of subjects and have a think about careers through years ten and eleven. Now, if you get a kid coming from middle school in year nine, to my mind, they’ve been kept in this junior school environment, and they don’t, they only have the one year to make the transition to secondary school and to get themselves established as somebody in this big school, which... And the schools were going for bigger numbers back then. ...And for some of them, easier to get lost, because they’d not been brought on gradually. And I think any change, any break in continuity in the child's education, is not necessarily a good thing. It doesn't work for kids of people in the services, or for whatever reason. I think a bit of continuity, all the way through, so that they've time to feel a sense of belonging. And that's the only thing I have against what Clegg introduced, and that's the middle school. And the reason it’s not good is because some of the middle schools are very much primary-oriented, and some of them are very much secondary-oriented, and some of them have that period to make the transition. But there’s that change that they’ve got to make when they go to middle school, and then another change when they go to... It's an extra upheaval in their school life.

Both Participant Five and Six did not meet Clegg, yet both show awareness of him. Interestingly, participant six asks how much input Clegg had in setting up Bretton Hall College and would be interested to know more, yet at the same time they do not link Clegg’s role to Bretton Hall College, only to Wakefield. This shows a clear indirect impact of Clegg. Participant Five continues with scepticism about the middle school system, which Clegg was responsible for nationally. This provides an
interesting juxtaposition. Clegg was the driving force behind all the education in the WREA between 1949 and 1974, which participant five benefitted from, enjoyed and was shaped by during their time at Bretton Hall College. However, once they were employed as a teacher, they were critical of Clegg’s support of the middle school system. This shows an educational ethos at work in the round: a student who went to Bretton Hall College and thrived may not agree with the whole ethos but has nevertheless benefitted from the part of the ethos they were trained in. It also suggests a rose-tinted student education experience compared to the realities of a working teacher experience.

The overall influence of Bretton Hall College was discussed by Participant Six:

Do you know how Bretton influenced you? Did it influence you? I think the influence has probably been through all the people that I have met here and that I continue to, to know. I think that’s got to be one of the main things. But also... I don't know. Maybe opening my eyes to, to nature, so to speak – if we’re sort of taking it from that point of view. But I think it's huge. I think maybe I am what I am because of Bretton. I do. I think... to actually sort of say, 'Oh, it's because of this...’ But it was, it’s everything. It is: it's everything. And the fact that it means so much to me, and that I'm still living it. Yeah, I am still living it. Because the people that I met here, and that I continue to meet... Because so many of my colleagues, and really, really good friends, are ex-Bretton. The ones that I really, really clicked with are ex-Bretton. Week after next, I'm going out to France, where one of my ex-colleagues from the last school I taught at, who... she was the deputy. She’s got a house in France. And she's also ex-Bretton. And we're going to spend a week. She’s writing; I'm painting. So we're still living the Bretton. We're still living it. And I think that’s...I think maybe we've all been Brettonised.

This entire narrative credits Bretton Hall College and Participant Six’s experiences there as having shaped them on a profound level: I think maybe I am what I am because of Bretton. Participant Six continues to clarify that it was not just one thing, but everything. The whole experience, how it felt to them, and that I'm still living it.
This maps to Participant Two’s recollections: the community they built at Bretton Hall College remains alive in the students still. The final sentence summarises all of the narratives collected for this research: So we’re still living the Bretton. We’re still living it. And I think that’s…I think maybe we’ve all been Brettonised. Each participant has presented their stories and memories not only of their time at Bretton Hall College, but of the lifetime impact of attending Bretton Hall College. The community they built, the people they met, and the experiences they had have together shaped the participants’ entire lives.

The discussion concluded with both participants reflecting on what Bretton Hall College means to them now:

*When you come back to Bretton, what do you feel now? Part of our lives. It really is. And it's because of the memories of the whole area, from Ray Kelt the ranger's cottage, to... Yeah. It's the ghosts ...the post office that used to be in the village. Post office and shop, and the butcher's next door to it. Excellent pork pies. No pub, of course, but that was... Allendale,...due to Allendale. Kennel Block. Drinking upstairs. The studio downstairs, run by Reg Hazel [Staff]. Sports there. Roger Burrell [Staff]. And you could be out there sailing, and you'd think, 'Oh, this is the life.' You'd just be sitting there in a boat, twiddling a bit of rope with your feet. And there'd be this voice from the bank: 'Where's your life-jacket?' Or up Top Lake, by the... what's it called? Greek, Greek theatre. It's, it's the summer house. Greek amphitheatre. Yes. It's ghosts, I think, it is, for me, it's, it's ghosts. When I walk in front of mansion, I'm reminded of the very first educational lecture I had on that bank, learning how to swing a golf club.... That was the first... it was, it was... Having, having come for my interview in March in the snow, the September when we started here was beautiful. It was still hot. It was really lovely. And so we were outside swinging golf clubs. And I'd never swung a golf club in my life. So there was... Top Lake last night, walking round Top Lake, I, I do remember xxx ... And we were in a boat. I don't know how we got a boat onto Top Lake. We were in... I've got in mind a rowing boat. And he was playing... Yeah, Top Lake. He was playing a wind-up gramophone, or he'd got it on a... some, some Siegfried or something like that. No, I had the wind-up gramophone. I know you had a wind-up gramophone. But he had some kind of musical thing, and he was playing me that. And then I had a tree that was beside the lake, which is now... they've cut it down, and they've put a, a sort of crazy-paving path in red stone. It's in that particular area. And I used to spend ages going and drawing this tree. Eventually I painted it. And it's all that. Every time I go, at some point that thought flips through my mind. Absolutely.*
Outside, outside Grasshopper, on May Day morning, that... You'll probably remember her name. There was: ‘Fa-la-la, fa-la-la’ – girl, with a ring of flowers, doing a May Day dance all on her own. I opened my curtains to see this girl. And thinking, 'What on earth is she doing?' She was bringing in the May. So, just crazy, but silly. And thinking about swimming on that... when you get to the other end of the lake. We used to swim in Bottom Lake. And there was a raft on the water. And we used to go and swim up there, and sunbathe on the bank, and all those sorts of... Yeah. And... well, was it April, when all the boats were brought up? First of April, were they all brought up to the dining hall? And John and I put a cauldron on top of the... Yes, April Fools' Day ...on top of the clock on Stable Block...there's doors and stairs, and then you go on the outside and... used to be able to climb in those days. Used to put an orange... There's, there's an obelisk with, like, a world, and they used to put an orange on the spike. Totally irreverent. Totally. But, yeah, everywhere, there's some sort of memory. You see, for me, I've a memory of Bow Room, and Alan saying, 'Would you like a drink? Now, I know you like, I know you like dry sherry.' And I said, 'Oh, well, yeah. Don't be awkward. I'll have a dry sherry, too.' And wherever, I can think of things. And even now, at the chapel – it's good to go down to the chapel. Oh, yes. Joe's... Two weddings there. And Joe's buried there. Joe’s grave’s down there, and Daphne Bird’s is down there. Yes. But I went down there one day, and I thought, 'Where is Daphne Bird's gravestone?' And it was so overgrown with moss, just... not moss, but it was so green and shabby and... I took an old scrubbing brush and a couple of bottles of water, and had a walk down there, and just gave it a scrub one day. Because of the staff, and because of the care the staff took of everything: the grounds, the buildings, the boiler. I mean, the, the guy who ran the boiler, I said to him one day, 'Can I use the boiler?' He said, 'Yeah.' And he showed me the boiler. And I did my painting down there, or rather I finished it off in the studio above. But all these different people with their jobs. When the Sculpture Park first opened, I remember feeling quite resentful. Because it meant that people were coming into my Bretton, ordinary people. Oh, and it really, really hurts. Somebody said something to us last week or the week before. We were here, and we, we... we wanted to go somewhere in the Sculpture Park. And, and they said, 'Oh, no, the public can't go that way.' And I remember saying to you, 'Public! I'm not the public! I own this place.' And... Yeah, yeah. Because West Riding was proud of being West Riding. Based in Wakefield. And they had their monthly bulletin, their...Which was on... it had the West Riding... it had the white rose at the top. And it was just a single-fold-out broadsheet, effectively, on beige paper, with comments on education. And this was in staffrooms and around. And, yeah, it was something to be proud of. It's... and you think, and suddenly think, yeah, I was privileged to have gone there, privileged to have worked in the West Riding. Well, I worked in the West Riding initially, when I was at Darton. And then it became South Yorkshire. And you notice differences straight away, don't you? Yeah. But I think Wakefield was pretty good. Now, whether that came from Clegg and what the West Riding was, I don't know.
Part of our lives, it really is, is how the narrative begins, followed by a rich navigation of ghosts. Beautifully recalled with minute detail mixed with feelings and activity, the narrative shows community building in action. The depth of feeling still linked to their time as students at Bretton Hall College is also evident. Life on the lake and the feeling of summer maps to the narratives of Participant One, Two and Four, and points to a shared life and shared memories lived at different times. The weaving back and forth of this narrative through events, people and activity provides a window into how the environment provided the framework for the students that went far beyond the curriculum. They shaped a life which reflected a family. Participant Five talks movingly of visiting staff graves at the Chapel on the Bretton Estate and cleaning them, caring for them in way that a family member would. The Bretton Estate Chapel has many generations of the families who owned the Bretton Estate, as discussed at the start of this chapter, and participant five shows the same belonging and ownership of the ‘family’ graves for those of the Bretton Hall College staff. This act of returning to care for the graves of the staff displays fundamental ownership not just of the experience, but of the Bretton Hall Estate.

The narrative continues with Participant Six describing how they remember feeling quite resentful when the Yorkshire Sculpture Park opened, and the feeling of being hurt when a member of Yorkshire Sculpture Park staff implied, they were public. Participants One and Two began the narrative collection for this research and were some of the first students to attend Bretton Hall College, Participants Five and Six attended nearly twenty years later, yet their narratives map across one another several times in recalling the feeling of being at Bretton Hall College. There are resonances also in the descriptions of how when the Yorkshire Sculpture Park
opened, it provided access to the public, and whilst providing continued access for the Bretton Hall College students to the site, it also meant that the students became the public. These complex emotions demonstrate how key the students’ role in bridging the Bretton Hall Estate through the WREA to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park is to understand how the Bretton Estate has evolved through history. Denying the students their continued feeling of belonging and ownership has silenced their history. Their pride in being part of the WREA is evident and their role at Bretton Hall College contributes to the history of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, as the YSP emerged from the work of Bretton Hall College. The Bretton Hall College students are the bridge between the private ownership of the Bretton Estate and the YSP, as discussed in the previous chapter. But the Bretton Hall College site will always be theirs in experience, memory, and culture creation. This research thus adds the students at Bretton Hall College, the spaces in between through their own voices, to the history of the Bretton Estate and to the legacy building of Clegg.

7.8 Conclusion

This chapter presents the narratives collected for this research project as the spaces in between, which are the voices of the students at Bretton Hall College. The collected narratives have been presented verbatim to allow the voice of the students to be heard for the first time. Participant guiding narratives are accompanied by a serendipitous information seeker interpretation: this is my role as arts educator, practitioner, and researcher. The analysis and interpretations of the narratives show the absence of Clegg from the students’ memories and experiences of their time at Bretton Hall College, revealing Clegg’s indirect legacy. The chapter uses narrative inquiry to draw on memory and nostalgia, framed by Clegg’s working practices.
This chapter moves the research argument forwards as the narratives have revealed their value in exploring how the community of practice at Bretton Hall College was created by the students who studied and lived at the time of Clegg’s tenure as the Chief Education Officer of the WREA. Revealing spatial behaviours show the mechanics of community building, and the richness that these memories contain, such as the vividness of drinking hot chocolate on the landing which separated the male and female dormitories, an activity which passed from generation to generation of Bretton Hall College students. This small tangible activity that the students created, maintained, and perpetuated reveals how they created their community of practice.

The significance and value of the collected narratives seen through a critical lens of narrative inquiry has revealed the depth of memory and the lens of positive nostalgia which all the participants displayed. This was even more telling in the participant who transferred to a different college and yet still situates their memories in the same framing of the rest of the community. The impact of place is also foregrounded in all of the narratives, as both a place of study and as a home. The narratives suggest that the domestic role which the campus held for them was pivotal in creating their own sense of belonging.

Finally, they demonstrate the impact of Clegg directly or indirectly, to the culture building at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974 is evident in every narrative, and we see that this impact moves fluidly through the memories of the students of Bretton Hall College.
Chapter 8: The Bretton Hall College Community of Practice and Sir Alec Clegg’s Legacy: Analysis and Interpretations

8.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the analysis of and findings from the student narratives in terms of their spatial behaviours that generated narrative codes. These are constituted of particular words that demonstrate or describe the spatial behaviours more specifically and from these, themes of ownership, belonging, custodian and nostalgia become apparent. The narrative codes are the beginning of the spatial language created by the students at Bretton Hall College. In the chapter, these codes are mapped to the key words associated with and derived from the legacy of Clegg, in order to determine if his impact on the students of Bretton Hall College was direct or indirect. As a result, a co-created narrative of the culture of the students at Bretton Hall College, *the spaces in between*, and of Clegg’s philosophies and ethos is created. In this way a reimagining of Bretton Hall College emerges, which has been (re)constructed through the untold storied lives of the Bretton Hall College students.

A secondary function of the students’ experiences is also revealed in this analysis: we see that a framework was created at Bretton Hall College by the students, which became a framework for their lives. This lifelong blueprint and way of being happened subconsciously and with effortless ease. In outlining these findings, it also becomes apparent that there is an exclusion of Clegg from the students’ memories and experiences of Bretton Hall College. The narratives presented in this research were collected many decades after the participants attended Bretton Hall College,
and after Clegg’s death. Yet the narratives recount the familiar journeys the participants make throughout their lives to return to the physical space of Bretton Hall College, and to re-enact and relive the community of practice which they created. The Bretton Hall experience is thus revealed as a constant pillar in their lives.

I resent the analysis and interpretations of the Bretton Hall College students’ narratives in this thesis as the spaces in between. These act as the theoretical bridge between different aspects of Clegg’s legacy. The experiences also begin to fill the gaps in that legacy that exist around Bretton Hall College and the students’ creation of a Clegg-inspired community of practice, which has thus far been unrecorded. By analysing and interpreting the narratives in this way, the spaces in between reveal their key role in establishing and developing Bretton Hall College as a place of belonging, not only for the students at the time, but also for posterity. As a result, this thesis has addressed the gap in Clegg’s legacy that results from the missing information about his role in and at Bretton Hall College.

As far as the students’ spatial behaviours are concerned, this chapter builds on the research presented in Chapter 6, which situated the students at Bretton Hall College in the landscape of the Bretton Estate. The chapter argued that the students themselves were the bridge between the privately owned Bretton Estate and the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, bridging the gap in the historical narrative of the site between that which we know about the privately owned Estate, through the post-war years, to what is now YSP. To address the omission of the students’ voices is to address not only the gap in the legacy of Clegg, but also the gap in the legacy of
Bretton Hall College. Using the students’ own narratives verbatim was crucial to filing this gap. Their words and experiences were missing from these legacies and are presented in this thesis as participant guiding narratives that allow the students’ voices to be heard for the first time.

This chapter then analyses further and interprets these narratives by building on the mapped spatial behaviours of how the students used the buildings, how they owned the spaces, and how they evolved the purposes of the buildings within each narrative as presented in Chapter 7. The framework of the students’ spatial behaviours is presented here as the most effective framework to analyse and interpret the students’ creation of a community of practice at Bretton Hall College, as it authentically reflects how they interacted at the campus and how meaning was created for them and by them. Narrative codes generate themes that map to the key word legacies of Clegg. As a result, Clegg’s direct and/or indirect legacy is revealed in the lives of the Bretton Hall College students. Moving beyond mere resonance with Clegg, the aim here is to provide evidence of how the students created their own community of practice that came about as a result of the conditions of possibility that Clegg facilitated. This methodology will allow new interpretations and meanings to emerge through the (re)construction of Bretton Hall College as the participants tell and retell their stories and experiences. In this way, the gap in the legacies of Clegg and Bretton Hall College is bridged through the analysis and interpretations of the students’ narratives, which establish how the community of practice was created at Bretton Hall College by the students there.
8.2 The Bretton Hall College students as the *spaces in between* who unveil Hidden Histories by becoming a Bridge

Chapter 6 section 6.3.2 presented the Bretton Hall College students as the bridge from the Bretton Hall Estate to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. This positioning suggested that the Bretton Hall College students were not just the *spaces in between* the history and legacy of Clegg and of Bretton Hall College but also the *spaces in between* the history of the site. The students inhabited the site in a way that no other group had, as they were not born to inhabit or inherit the site and neither were they incidental day-trippers, visiting Yorkshire Sculpture Park and viewing sculptural forms that had been deliberately placed in the landscape.

This pivotal moment in the history of the Bretton Estate and in the legacy not only of Clegg but also of the WREA, has been overlooked and undocumented. As such, the history of the students at Bretton Hall College has been hidden. Revisiting the landscape of Bretton Hall College through the narratives of former students bridges a gap in knowledge about arts education at the site before Yorkshire Sculpture Park formally opened in 1977. The analysis and interpretations presented here provide, for the first time, an insight into how the students created their community of practice.

8.3 Unpicking the Meaning of the Students’ Community of Practice

The mechanisms through which the community of practice was created are revealed through the collected narratives for this research project, and the analysis and interpretation shows a shared sense of ownership on the part of the students of the physical site and of the memories created. This was shared across year groups and then shared with me as the researcher for this project. In this process of sharing,
shaping, and re-enacting the life at Bretton Hall College, a community of practice emerges and has clearly endured throughout the lives of the students.

This active community of practice was created by and for the Bretton Hall College students and the narratives demonstrate that it continues to perpetuate amongst and define those community members to the present day. The narratives collected for this research reveal storied lives retold to me as the researcher, positioning me as the serendipitous information seeker and using our shared understanding of arts education pedagogy as a way to unpick the meaning in these storied life narratives and thereby filling the gaps in the legacies of both Clegg and Bretton Hall College.

Through the analysis and interpretation of the collected narratives, there emerges the clarity of ownership that the students feel not only about the physical Bretton Hall College campus in a geographical manner but also of their experiences of their time spent there. Moreover, the students have become self-appointed custodians of the site as it lay abandoned since 2007, waiting for its next re-invention. This custodianship extends beyond the physical site of Bretton Hall College and into the ownership of the students own collective narratives. Whilst the narratives were shared with me as the researcher, there is also the sense that they are not being given to me. This is evidenced by the recurring themes of ownership, belonging, custodian and nostalgia within their narratives, that are so embedded in knowledge of the site and in lived experiences. As the researcher, I was allowed access to the students’ memories and granted permission to retell their stories as an extension of their community of practice. However, despite their willingness to share their storied lives and community building experiences as framed here for this research, the
students were not willing to let their stories be taken from them, as this ownership feeds their enduring community of practice and their belonging to it.

This is evidenced further through their narratives in the sense that it appears that if the students of Bretton Hall College, positioned in this research as the spaces in between, were to relinquish their hitherto unheard stories to anyone except other generations of Bretton Hall College students, they would be relinquishing their self-appointed roles as custodians of the Bretton Estate. This would in turn dilute their experiences and their role in creating, developing, and maintaining Bretton Hall College, not least as components of the history of the site. It is suggested here that there may have been a deliberate choice on the part of the students to not share their stories and narratives of Bretton Hall College until now because, if their contributions to the creation and culture of Bretton Hall College were to be formalised through recording them, in this way moving their stories away from being thought of as mere recollections with friends, it could be suggested that there would be no need for their roles as custodians of Bretton Hall College. It is as if the act of committing their experiences to history in a formal manner removes them from being able to identify as the only people who can tell and share their stories. We must also acknowledge that all the participants who took part in this research are now retired, which perhaps suggests that they could have an awareness that if they do not share their stories now, that they may be lost forever. This seems to have been a key factor in the decision to contribute now to this research. The sense of ownership, belonging, and community created by them through their lives at Bretton Hall College is so fundamental to their identities that to not provide any evidence that Bretton Hall College existed in the way that they created it, and in which they played a pivotal
role, even in hindsight, to this history, would mean losing these values, experiences, and memories. If the participants had not shared their stories, then the specificities of the creation and impact of a leading post-war teacher training college for the arts would have been lost forever. Moreover, this thesis constitutes the first research project to record and collaborate with the students at Bretton Hall College in co-creating a history of the College, using a shared understanding of arts education pedagogy to interpret their stories and roles that only they could play in the broader legacies of Clegg and Bretton Hall College. This now provides for the first time the opportunity for the legacy of Bretton Hall College to be known, through the people who inhabited it, shaped it, and were shaped by it. This in turn allows us to situate this legacy within the gap in the legacy of Clegg in terms of his role and impact within the WREA and on the training of teachers and educators in the 1950s, 60s, and 70s.

8.4 Narrative Codes

As discussed in Chapter 5, the spatial behaviours of the Bretton Hall College students presented in this research project demonstrate how the students used the buildings, owned the buildings, and they evolved the purposes of the buildings around the College site. By describing these spatial behaviours, the students become the *spaces in between* (as explained above), but the narrative codes created by the students also become apparent. These are the words which demonstrate or describe the spatial behaviours of the Bretton Hall College students. From the codes, specific themes emerge. The narratives collected for this research have revealed two sets of code words. The first are the code words from the spatial behaviours of the Bretton Hall College students *at the time* of living and studying at Bretton Hall College. The second set of code words derives from the spatial
behaviours which are *re-enacted* (Herman, 2009) through nostalgia, seen in the participants' caring for the Bretton Hall College site since leaving the College many years earlier and through this, acting as self-appointed custodians. This is demonstrated in Participant Guiding Narrative 5, when the participant cleans the grave of a past teacher buried in the Chapel on the Bretton Estate. Through the analysis of these kinds of examples, a set of narrative code words for the culture creation at the time emerges, alongside a set of narrative code words for the re-enacting of this culture. Together, they form and reflect the non-linear nature of the narratives, which move back and forth through time and memory in a way that creates the storied lives of the Bretton Hall College students.

The verbatim text extracts are presented with the same spatial behaviour colour coding as in Chapter 7, (Re)constructing Bretton Hall College. These are as follows:

1. How the students used the buildings
2. How the students owned the spaces
3. How the students evolved the purposes of the buildings

The spatial behaviours identified emerged through the repetition of these behaviours in the collected narratives. All the participants talk about these three aspects of behaviour, and analysis of these types of behaviour as presented in this research is a way of demonstrating a narrative code and its significance for the participants, their experiences, and the contribution that these make to the legacies of Clegg and Bretton Hall College.

**8.4.1 Narrative Codes for Creating a Culture and Practice at the Time**
The six participant guiding narratives in Chapter 6 were examined for spatial behaviours at Bretton Hall College, and serendipitous information seeker interpretation followed each one. This process began the analysis of how the Bretton Hall College students used the buildings and environment at the time they studied there and how they remember the architecture and landscape. Each narrative provided insights into how the students created a culture at Bretton Hall College. This culture creation culture was manifest in how they used the landscape and architecture of the site, and this intimate knowledge of the environment led to navigations through their experiences and lives at Bretton Hall College.

What emerged first from the clear and detailed retellings of experience was that the participants' interactions with the site were anchored to specific parts of buildings and often linked to specific actions. This was in tandem with the impact of the natural environment of the Estate on their ways of being. This can be seen in participant guiding narrative two where it is recalled that the net curtains in local houses needed to be washed once a week because they were black with coal dust.

Once the verbatim narratives were mapped to spatial behaviours, they were re-analysed collectively searching for narrative codes. These narrative codes provided the next stage of analysis in providing a spatial language which led to interpretation to unpick the meaning. The approach adopted is that discussed by Corden and Sainsbury where typically… fairly long excerpts from the transcript… is offered to the reader (Corden and Sainsbury, 2000), as used also in Chapter 6.

8.4.1.1 Verbatim Text Extracts re-analysed for narratives codes.
This subsection reproduces the verbatim text extracts from the interview with participants, and includes indications of the narrative codes that emerge from the stories being told.

*It was ours. A little thing about that: I, I thought it was wonderful that oiks like me could turn up and live in a place like that. It sort of compensates for the fact that it was really built for people with loads and loads of money, and they kept everybody out, probably. But we were allowed in. It was for our use. And this was... I think this was a bit where Alec Clegg’s thinking came in: that we buy these stately homes and make them into places where everybody can be. Not everybody, but more people. Enjoy the beauty of the place.*

Narrative Codes: Ownership, Use, Repurposed

*There's a little, halfway up the main staircase, there's a little ledge. That's where we all used to sit, last thing at night, and share our cocoa and things like that. And then at ten-thirty, we were supposed... The women's staircase went up that way and the men's staircase went up that way….That's where we used to sit and drink our cocoa before we were sent in different directions.*

Narrative Codes: Home, Repurposed

*I think we called it the music room*

Narrative Codes: Redefining

*The thing is, it's, sometimes it's difficult to separate... being at Bretton was all your life. We sat around in these beautiful rooms as common rooms, but there were things going on in addition to the course. So somebody started up some ballroom dance lessons. They did that in, you know, in the evenings. There was a drama group that was their leisure time...*

Narrative Codes: Holistic, all encompassing

*We did spend a lot of time wandering through the grounds.*

Narrative Codes: Grounding in the environment
And then days were summer in feeling…. You just felt open, sort of freshness, you know, you could have people who lived like that or people who lived like that, but Bretton gave you a feeling that extensions.

Narrative Codes: Joy, Alive, Possibilities

It, the Sculpture Park was the early morning walk. And either you usually thought about going round the bottom lake or round the top lake; you didn’t do the two together…. Because you ought to be in lecture at nine o’clock, and so on.

Narrative Codes: Access, Ownership

We were just living in our own little world

Narrative Codes: Own world, insular, inclusive

Because the other thing was that it was ours. There was a serious, serious belief, with all of us, that Bretton… And I still feel that. I can’t… I think that’s one of the… when I walk round, I own this place. This is mine, and it will always be mine. And I think it’s just an acceptance… it was an acceptance that this was ours, and this was sort of like our playground and so on and so forth. And, but there was never that sort of: ‘Oh, aren’t we lucky?’ Never thought that at all. Just accepted it. It was...

Narrative Codes: Ownership, Continuity, Permanence, Play

It was just, yes, you own the place. Once you’re here, you own the place. And you really do: you own the place, from Ray Kelt the ranger’s cottage, to down at the bottom, that’s another car park now; from the chapel to Kennel Block – the lot. Yeah, just owned the place.

Narrative Codes: Navigation of the landscape, Ownership
Ezra Taylor knitters. Ezra Taylor knitters. Ezra Taylor knitters? Yeah. You know Ezra, you know Ezra Taylor? Yeah. The knitters were up there. And they were: the knitters. They used to... we used to call them the... The knitters were upstairs, and we'd see them as we went to do the laundry.

Narrative Codes: Repurposing, Redefining, Social, Making

After the first year here, with you in Grasshopper, the one down at the bottom, next to the... Key, that's gone....key of knowledge, which has gone somewhere else – a piece of sculpture. There was a piece of sculpture that was there in nineteen sixty-four, an Austin Wright piece. Yes, yeah. I'll have a picture of it. Supposed to be the key of knowledge, we were always told. Looked more like a pair of spectacles with a blacked-out...Lens. Yeah. Well, we saw them taking it away, didn't we? We said, 'Where you going with that?'

Narrative Codes: Custodian, Ownership

It was in Stable Block, at this end of Stable Block.......And it just packed. We all stood there like this, because we couldn't move because we were so many of us packed in to watch Monty Python. And it'd just started. It was... here were two... And it was a colour set. It was a colour television. And it was a fair-sized screen. Wasn't an enormous screen, but it was a fair-sized screen. And in this reasonable-sized room, with comfortable chairs, you could watch colour television. So I would say the most important programmes to be watched for people in this place, being of the type of students they were, was Monty Python and Disco 2. Oh, yes, Disco 2. Which was the... that came before The Old Grey Whistle Test. It was called Disco 2. Because it was on BBC2 and it was, it was pop music....And there was some seriously good stuff on there. But it... before Whispering Bob did The Old Grey Whistle Test, that's, that's what it was. And those, those were the two particular ones that we used to watch. But you'd to make sure you got there early.... To get a seat. And after that, you'd be up to Kennel Block.

Narrative Codes: Domesticity, Non-curricula, Community

8.4.1.2 Analysis of Spatial Language and Narrative Codes

The following table summarises the key themes that emerge from the narratives presented above, under the broad umbrella of creating a culture. I then offer an
interpretation of the spatial language and narrative codes here, as a way of identifying precise elements at work in this culture creation.

Table 8.1 Narrative Codes and Spatial Language Interpretation linked to Creating a Culture and Community of Practice

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Codes</th>
<th>Spatial Language Interpretation</th>
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<tr>
<td>Ownership, Use, Repurposed</td>
<td>Make one’s own, re-establish and recreate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home, Repurposed</td>
<td>Creating a domestic environment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Redefining [space]</td>
<td>Make one’s own, re-establish and recreate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic, all encompassing</td>
<td>Whole person engagement with the experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Grounding in the environment</td>
<td>Engaging with the external landscape as well as the internal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Joy, Alive, Possibilities</td>
<td>The conditions of possibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>Access, Ownership</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
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<tr>
<td>Own world, insular, inclusive</td>
<td>A created condition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ownership, Continuity, Permanence, Play,</td>
<td>A playground forever</td>
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<tr>
<td>Navigation of the landscape, Ownership</td>
<td>Ownership and belonging to the site</td>
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<tr>
<td>Repurposing, Redefining, Social, Making</td>
<td>Make one’s own, re-establish and recreate</td>
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<td>Domesticy, Non-curricula, Community</td>
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<td>Creating a home, a sense of belonging</td>
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The narrative codes revealed through the students’ spatial behaviours here show how key words and ways of being emerge in the participants’ conversations and can coalesce into a suggested spatial language. Culture creation here is linked to how the students used the buildings, owned the buildings, and evolved the purposes of the buildings over time. This takes place in two phases: when the participants were studying at Bretton Hall College, and when they had left but remained part of the community of practice. This in turn fed the creation of a community of practice. Using the lens of a serendipitous information seeker, I used the framework of reference of arts-based pedagogy that I shared with the participants to analyse the narrative codes and form the spatial language interpretations. In terms of creating a culture and a community of practice, the following words were regularly repeated in the narratives: ownership, redefining (space), repurposing, redefining, social, and making. All these terms suggest that the creation of a culture, and so a community of practice, at Bretton Hall College involved behaviours, actions, and beliefs that required students to claim the site and make it their own, thereby enacting a type of direct ownership. The significance in this context is that a sense of real ownership emerges through the narratives, which is passed from generation to generation of students as a result of the community of practice and the way it transcends one specific group of students. This ownership is at times directly stated by the students in their narratives, and at others is indicated by their non-verbal actions, here described as spatial behaviours.
Following this spatial behaviour analysis method for the additional narrative codes, the words holistic, possibilities, domesticity and community were interpreted as a whole person engagement with the experience, the conditions of possibility being made available to the students, and of creating a home and a sense of belonging. Collectively, the spatial language interpretation of this analysis is that the narratives together reveal the freedom to build a community together, the conditions of possibility for which had been gifted to them by Clegg — and this without the students even having knowledge of this gift from Clegg. Clegg’s leadership style, which was outlined in Chapter 2, provides an insight into the framework that he instigated at the WREA for his staff and how he worked in a transparent way. It is suggested here that Clegg provided the same framework from afar for the students at Bretton Hall College, which gave them the physical and mental space necessary to create their own culture. In this instance, however, Clegg worked from afar and had much less influence and control over the culture that was created by the students at Bretton Hall College.

8.4.2 Narrative Codes for Re-enacting the Culture and Practice Now

Herman (2000) talks of the collaborative telling of a life story as a method of presenting a well-known narrative, and argues that, due to the familiarity and repetition of the telling of the story, it has been and is constantly co-rehearsed by the group who is retelling it. I discussed this process with reference to this particular research project in Chapter 5.

This process results in a re-enactment of the experience and each time it is retold, the group reshapes and strengthens the narrative. The narratives collected for this
research have revealed a second set of narrative codes that demonstrate this re-enactment by evidencing the importance of the impact of Bretton Hall College and its community of practice in the lives of the participants since they left the College. They recount visual memories of having once lived at Bretton Hall College. This is seen, for example, when the recalling of a room requires a detailed description for a person who was at Bretton Hall College at a different time to when the participant was there. There recollections included detail about what rooms looked like, and precise information about what the participant would do in that space. The scale of the re-enactment moves the narrative beyond recollection; rather, it presents a rebuilding of the memory in three-dimensions.

The re-enacted narratives are strongly linked to the participants’ realising what they feel about having attended Bretton Hall College after they have left, sometimes, in the case of this research, several decades later. There is the realisation and acknowledgment that their experiences were unique. Even though they felt that it was fun and enjoyable at the time, the gravitas of their experience and their contributions to the history of the Bretton Estate and to the legacy building of Clegg are only just being felt.

This research has highlighted another element to this narrative capture. In the retelling of these narratives so often to each other and across generations of students who attended Bretton Hall College, the histories and experiences that are shared have now moved beyond being solely the personal stories and recollections of the individual narrators. These collected narratives now belong to the stories of the Bretton Estate and the WREA, and to Clegg’s legacy. As the Bretton Hall College
students from the early days begin to pass away, and as memories start to become lost forever through old age, this re-enacted culture that comes into being through the retelling of experiences provides insights into the lives once lived at Bretton Hall College from the source material themselves, from the Bretton Hall College students.

The second set of the narrative codes further reveals the impact of Bretton Hall College on the participants that has been evident throughout their lives by shedding light on their attitude towards the current site. This is seen in their difficulty in accepting the poor state of repair of the campus, the regular returning to the site through YSP, and the network that the Bretton Hall College students have maintained since it was formed at the College. Through the process of re-enactment, the (re)building of Bretton Hall College begins again and again, as many times as the students’ stories are told and re-told. It shows the impact of the educative experience on the individuals involved, and how the aesthetic experience of the site shaped and moulded them: such an impact is part of Clegg’s legacy and comes about as a result of his philosophies and vision that were discussed in Chapter 2.

8.4.2.1 Verbatim Text Extracts re-analysed for narratives codes.

This subsection reproduces the verbatim text extracts from the interview with participants that are to do with the re-enacted culture of Bretton Hall College. Each extract is followed by an indication of the narrative codes present here.

The people I know, definitely have, very, very definitely and no, you can call it inspiration or, it becomes part of your being really, it’s not a superficial thing at all, it’s a way of life.

Narrative Codes: Custodian, Influenced, Shaped
Using Photo Elicitation

Well, I have a photograph. You may have seen it. That was taken in the nineteen fifties of one of the boys'... Leonard Peg. Oh, is that who it is? That's Leonard Peg. Apparently that was when they were in the mansion house. Yes. Some of the boys' dorms. Yes... And, you know, he's got a window over his bedhead, which shows how they had to sort of pack them in somehow. Narrative Codes: Geographical navigation displaying ownership

I knew it was special... specialness of it probably didn't really hit me till afterwards. I would say that.

Narrative Codes: Nostalgia, Recognition

Whenever we've gone there, [YSP] we've tended to focus looking at the college in, a) when it was still a college, and b) even after. So now, you go there, and you sort of have to arrive at the Sculpture Park, don't you? Not much choice. Sorry.

Narrative Codes: Displacement of ownership through YSP

Well, I put the age of hope as the, the key thing. But and hope for the success of hope as well, you know, it wasn't just the hopeful. I think it, all things were possible, and that was, and the enrichment, I think, most of all. But I think Bretton was to do with understanding, rather than mechanics of thinking.

Narrative Codes: Recognition

Well, it was delights and the friendships and the paintiness and just funny, lovely, funny bits.

Narrative Codes: Nostalgia

It talks about living in the community. And I think that was the main outcome for us, was that we were community; even if we weren't teaching, we were community orientated.
Narrative Codes: Creation of a community

And so when the Sculpture Park opened, I was going there right from the start. And took my kids, and they loved it. It was our favourite place to go, really.

Narrative Codes: Returning, nostalgia

Just took it for granted. Really did just take it for granted. The, the amazement and the wonder and all of that came after it had gone, and thought... and now... Because as I say, I come here two, three times a week. I was walking round Top Lake last night, and thinking, 'Oh, wow.'

Narrative Codes: Returning, recognition

And this, this is why it's, it's very difficult to accept that the place is... it isn't falling down yet, but it does need a few million spending on it.

Narrative Codes: Custodian

But I think it's huge. I think maybe I am what I am because of Bretton. I do. I think... to actually sort of say, 'Oh, it's because of this...' But it was, it's everything. It is: it's everything. And the fact that it means so much to me, and that I'm still living it. Yeah, I am still living it. Because the people that I met here, and that I continue to meet... Because so many of my colleagues, and really, really good friends, are ex-Bretton. The ones that I really, really clicked with are ex-Bretton. Week after next, I'm going out to France, where one of my ex-colleagues from the last school I taught at, who... she was the deputy. She's got a house in France. And she's also ex-Bretton. And we're going to spend a week. She's writing; I'm painting. So we're still living the Bretton. We're still living it. And I think that's...I think maybe we've all been Brettonised.

Narrative Codes: Holistic, all encompassing, life shaping, nostalgia

Part of our lives. It really is. And it's because of the memories of the whole area, from Ray Kelt the ranger's cottage, to... Yeah. It's the ghosts …the post
office that used to be in the village. Post office and shop, and the butcher's next door to it….. Yes. It's ghosts, I think, it is, for me, it's, it's ghosts. When I walk in front of mansion, I'm reminded of the very first educational lecture I had on that bank, learning how to swing a golf club…..

Narrative Codes: Nostalgia, Remembering

8.4.2.2 Re-enacted Culture

The key themes to do with culture re-enactment that emerge from the narrative extracts presented above are presented in the table below. I then analyse the narrative codes and post-spatial language in this sub-section, to shed light on the mechanisms through which the Bretton Hall College culture is re-enacted by its students.

Table 8.2 Narrative Codes and Post-Spatial Language Interpretation linked to Culture Re-enactment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Narrative Codes</th>
<th>Post-Spatial Language Interpretation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Custodian, Influenced, Shaped</td>
<td>Non-linear belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographical navigation displaying ownership</td>
<td>Part of the history/landscape</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia, Recognition [of experience from being at Bretton Hall College]</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Displacement of ownership through YSP</td>
<td>Loss of physical space</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition [of experience from being at Bretton Hall College]</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>-----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia</td>
<td>Lived/Storied lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creation of a community</td>
<td>Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning, nostalgia</td>
<td>Lived/Storied lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Returning, recognition [of experience from being at Bretton Hall College]</td>
<td>Lived/Storied lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Custodian</td>
<td>Ownership and Belonging</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Holistic, all encompassing, life shaping, nostalgia</td>
<td>Lived/Storied lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nostalgia, Remembering</td>
<td>Lived/Storied lives</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

The above narrative codes revealed through the students’ spatial behaviours once again allow key words and ways of being to emerge and coalesce into a suggested spatial language. A second set of code words becomes evident from the above spatial behaviours of the students, which were, as Herman calls it, *re-enacted* (2009). This re-enactment takes places through a lens of nostalgia and is situated in their continuing self-appointed custodianship of not just the physical site of Bretton Hall College, but also in their assumed role as what can be described as the gatekeepers of the memories and culture of Bretton Hall College.

As with the first set of narratives, these words are situated in the spatial behaviours of the students. This time, however, they are defined as post-spatial language interpretations of the students’ spatial behaviours. This approach reflects that this
second set of behaviours is situated at the intersection of nostalgia and memory with present-day custodianship and activity.

From analysis of the narratives, the recurrent words that emerged here were: *custodian, influenced, shaped, and the Creation of a community*. For this set of words, the post-spatial language interpretation given to them is of belonging. The other key words that emerge are: *nostalgia, returning, recognition [of experience from being at Bretton Hall College], holistic, all-encompassing and life shaping*. The post-spatial language interpretation given to these words, through the same lens as the first set of codes, that of a serendipitous information seeker, is that of *storied lives*. The non-linear experiences that move back and forth in the students’ narratives, recollections of experience, and the ongoing living nostalgia that the students appear to inhabit, all suggest ongoing storied lives with Bretton Hall College at the centre of them.

### 8.4.3 The Narrative Codes from at the Time and Now in Dialogue

When the Creating a Culture and Re-enacted Culture sets of codes are brought together, they provide a non-linear experience that is cyclical in appearance and nature. This cyclicity mirrors how the community of practice in this non-linear interpretation is re-enacted and co-rehearsed by the students at Bretton Hall College, as discussed in Chapter 5. The narrative code interpretations of spatial and post-spatial language interpretations allow us to move beyond personal memory and provide evidence of modes of ownership and belonging that derive from and are modelled by the students’ community of culture and practice that they created at Bretton Hall College. Together, the codes reflect the non-linear nature of the
experiential narrative that is being shared, which moves back and forth through time and memory to create the storied lives of the Bretton Hall College students.

8.5 The Place of Sir Alec Clegg in Narratives about the Community of Practice

As far as Clegg is concerned, it has become clear through the collection and verbatim recounting of the narratives for this research that Clegg was not often part of the narratives shared by the students unless questions directly prompted a participant to think about Clegg. This happened on two occasions: firstly, participant one referred to Clegg as figure who had a role in education but provided no contextualising information about Clegg's contribution to Bretton Hall College. Secondly, participant five explicitly stated that they had never heard of Clegg. Furthermore, they were surprised to hear that Clegg was the founder of Bretton Hall College. As a result of hearing this information, participant five stated that they would now be interested to know what Clegg's role had been at Bretton Hall College at the time they had been there. The verbatim text extracts presented in this chapter here are mapped to key legacy words of Clegg from the research objectives, discussed in Chapter 5. This is significant because without a prompt, the participants would not have discussed Clegg. These extracts of the student narratives are so clear and so explicit that narrative codes are not needed in the same way as above. This section therefore maps the narratives directly to Clegg's legacy words identified from the literature and that are present in the research objectives for this project.

8.5.1 Verbatim Text Extracts that speak to Sir Alec Clegg’s impact

This subsection reproduces the verbatim text extracts about Clegg from the interviews with participants. I then provide an indication of the mapping of these
extracts onto the key legacy words to do with Clegg and point to how these recollections constitute evidence of Clegg’s direct and indirect impact on the Bretton Hall College students.

Using Photo elicitation

Is [Sir] Alec’s a familiar face or not to you? No. No, that’s what we said earlier, that we didn’t see him. We only knew of him. And I was not even aware how important he was to, to... Wasn’t till after we’d left, and we read, and reunions and things like that. We went to one reunion –where Mrs. Clegg... he’d died, but Mrs. Clegg came. Somebody gave, we gave appreciations of him. And so it’s much later that I realised he was an important person. Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? No. Can you remember him ever being at Bretton? No. He may have been at my interview for all I know… But I don’t think he was. I think it was, I think Ezra was there for my interview. Was John Friend more a face of the college for you? Yes. Oh, yes. He lived in the rooms above the Bretton, the Bow Room. They had a flat there, didn’t they, at first?

Key legacy words: Influence on those around him, through John Friend, appointed by Clegg. This is an example of indirect impact.

Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? Clegg, no. I don’t think so. Herbert Read came and possibly he might have joined in on that occasion. You were very aware of him and you knew he was sort of there, but I’m, I’m puzzled by that ‘cause XXXX says the same as me, he can’t remember. We were at the lecture that he gave that, that, that pamphlet, we were there. But didn’t meet him. No, not one to one, but no, I think we were very aware that he’d, he’d made the world, I mean, God had made the world as it were, you know, but the structural world, but the possible situation was his. I remember we were very, very aware of that, that he’d made it all possible.

Key legacy words: Educational Policy, Influence on those around him, Creating a culture, Educational space (all four). This is another example of indirect impact.

Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? No. He did come... I didn’t meet him personally. He did come to give a talk once. And he didn’t talk for long, because he’d got... oh, who was it? He’d got hold of somebody else, who was very well up in the education field. So he talked and then... I can’t even
remember who it was. And then the other guy talked. But I never spoke to him personally. And I can't remember what he said when he talked to us.

Key legacy words: Educational Policy. The above constitutes an example of Clegg's direct legacy.

Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? No, no, nothing to do with him at all. All I ever heard was everybody at the time telling us that the West Riding was the best authority to work, or to be in, you know, it was the best in the country. So, which I thought was great, but I mean yeah. But apart from that, no, no influence at all, so...

Key legacy words: Influence on those around him. This is an example of Clegg's indirect legacy.

Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg? No. Were you aware of him when you were at Bretton? Only by name. Only as a name. Only name. Only as a name. Definitely heard of him. Definitely was talked about. Oh, yes, certainly heard of him. And I know that there was this liaison with Wakefield education in Bond Street. I wonder if... I mean, it would be... will you find out how, how much of an input he actually had in, in setting this place up? Because that would be interesting. Because if he, if he was sort of, I don't know, conducting from a distance, or just sort of, having put something in place, then was happy to stand back and let it, see it develop – that would be really, really nice to know. I think his... his... his biggest influence in the area where I worked, which was Wakefield, where I spent most of my teaching, was this creation or involvement in the creation of middle schools.

Key legacy words: Educational space [through schools]. Here we have examples of Clegg’s direct and indirect legacy.

I remember practically every day. Everybody always says 'How can you remember that?' But it was just such a wonderful experience. Good old Alec Clegg then, that's all I can say.

Key legacy words: Influence on those around him. This is another example of Clegg's indirect legacy.
8.5.2 Revealing Sir Alec Clegg’s Direct and Indirect Impact Through the Student Narratives

The above excerpts from the verbatim narratives show directly when the participants either discussed Clegg or when the prompt question was used. Interpretation is needed here as although participants are saying that they never met Clegg and that he had no influence on them or their experience whatsoever, what the participant then goes on to recall points explicitly to Clegg’s philosophies as regards child-centred education and their influence on the training and educational environment at the College. Or they reveal Clegg’s hand in the background, selecting staff, and thus creating and shaping educational policy that directly impacted the students at Bretton Hall College. We can therefore argue that the Bretton Hall College students as the spaces in between make an important contribution to Clegg’s legacy and shed light on how Clegg had both a direct and indirect impact on a specific community of practice, not only in terms of how that community came into being, but also on the beliefs, ideals, and actions of its members.

8.6 Conclusion

This chapter has presented the analysis and interpretations of the narrative codes that were created by the spatial behaviours of the Bretton Hall College students. These behaviours and codes were situated firstly in their memories from living and studying at Bretton Hall College in a specific time period and are presented here as spatial language interpretations. Secondly, they are also to be found in the participants’ nostalgia for and self-appointed custodianship of Bretton Hall College in both a physical and remembered way, presented here as post-spatial language
interpretations. The two sets of narrative codes sit alongside a separate mapping of Clegg’s key word legacies, which point to Clegg’s hand at work within Bretton Hall College, its culture, and the community of practice that was created by the students who attended.

This analysis more broadly has shed light on the mechanisms by which communities of practice are created and re-created. The longevity of the Bretton Hall College community has arguably been achieved thanks to the strong feelings of belonging and ownership that the students felt during their time at the site. These feelings have translated into actions of custodianship and gatekeeping that have perpetuated the community of practice and its values, which were and are so intrinsically bound to the environment of Bretton Hall College and the students’ aesthetic experience of it. But this creation and re-creation was arguably only possible thanks to Clegg’s influence at the College and his educational philosophies that informed the educative experience that all the students enjoyed. The focus on the individual that lay at the heart of Clegg’s vision is clearly visible in the individual narratives of the students, which collectively provide proof of the impact of this educational approach. But this focus has also informed the decision to reproduce verbatim the individual narratives of the students who were directly and indirectly impacted by Clegg, which has in turn enabled us to learn something new about the Bretton Hall College community of practice and Clegg’s ongoing legacy. In a way, this thesis, and the analysis it offers constitutes a further example of Clegg’s indirect impact and his enduring legacy today.
Chapter 9: Conclusion

9.1 Researcher Reflections on the Research Process

On first approaching the Bretton Hall College campus through the Yorkshire Sculpture Park, I was first struck by its quiet beauty, the sense of peace and a strong sense of place. As the road wound down through the park, seemingly never to reach a destination, there appeared on the right-hand side a two-storied, flat roofed building with big rectangular windows of 1960s design. Then I saw another, and another, until I was passing several of these buildings, many overgrown with foliage, which stretched up to the roof and across the windows, shrouding the buildings in nature. As I started to try and orientate myself in the landscape, looking for the Mansion House, which I had at that stage only read about, the road took me further down and curved to the right. There in front of me stood an 18th Century stable block, elegant, timeless, majestic in its presence, and juxtaposition against the foreground of the modernist buildings. As the Autumn sun broke through the clouds, it glinted brightly and drew my attention to a building on my left-hand side. There on another 1960s building emblazoned in gold lettering was the following inscription:

If thou of fortune, be bereft
And of thine earthly store hath left, two loaves,
Sell one, and with the dole
Buy hyacinths to feed the soul

Across the top of the building, again in gold lettering, was written 1949 Sir Alec Clegg Foundation. I had found the overgrown home of Bretton Hall College. Yet although I was surrounded by a myriad of architectural styles of buildings, some 18th Century, others 1960s and then from the 1980s, I was yet to find the Mansion
House. The atmosphere was deadly silent, a distant crow could be heard, no sign of human inhabitants, all the life here was from mother nature. Making my way around the overgrown site, I navigated around the exterior of the buildings and there, revealing itself around a corner, silently sat and undisturbed, were the undeniable traits of an English Country Mansion House. Doric columns, highly pointed pediments, tall soaring windows with many panes of glass, a vast structure of wealth and history, now devoid of human life.

But this now silent stronghold had once been teaming with life, as the site of Bretton Hall College. And as Clegg’s name provided a sense of legacy to the library tucked behind this great Mansion House, it started a thought process in me. I wondered: what did the students think who came to live and study here when Clegg founded Bretton Hall College, teacher training college for the arts in post-war Britain? In an isolated and majestic corner of West Yorkshire, the question I was asking myself was: what was lifelike here as a student of Bretton Hall College?

This question would start an inquiry into ways of (re)placing the narratives of the Bretton Hall College students back into this landscape, through their own words. As discussed as in Chapter 5, my exploration of the Mansion House sometime later would take my questions further, as the view from the roof of the Mansion House revealed no trace of the Yorkshire Sculpture Park; as far as the eye could see, all buildings and landscapes were of Bretton Hall College. An immediate sense of what the campus must have looked like, and the cosseted, enclosed, and distinct environment which it had been was palpable.
This feeling was not evident for me inside of the Mansion House where I conducted some of the archival work which informed this project. As result of immersing myself in the literature and papers of Clegg at the National Arts Education Archive, housed in the Lawrence Batley building adjacent to the grand Mansion House, I had created in my mind a living and breathing picture of Clegg's post-war education Authority. This is what I had expected to encounter inside the Mansion House. But I did not.

Instead, and as I wrote in an article about that experience entitled ‘That which is not yet there’ (2015), I found an empty building, long devoid of life and left to decay. It did not become clear to me until I reached the roof of the Mansion House why I did not encounter the life I was expecting to see within the interior. It had nothing to do with an empty building into which I was trying to transpose my knowledge about Clegg at the WREA. It was because of the fact that in all of the literature I had explored about Clegg, present in his many boxes of papers at the Archive, in the post-war literature of the time, in the texts written about Clegg and in the numerous collections housed in the National Arts Education Archive, there were many references to Clegg in conjunction to the West Riding of Yorkshire and the WREA, or to debates about child-centred and arts in education, but no mention of the students of Bretton Hall College. No mention of their experiences, of their lives there, or of how they came together to form a community which belonged to them, but which must have been facilitated by Clegg’s philosophies. The reason why I couldn’t find Clegg in the Mansion house was because he wasn’t to be found in the literature.

The only way therefore to situate Clegg in the legacy of Bretton Hall College and to restore the College to the legacy of Clegg was to discover that missing history by
speaking to the people who had been there at the time, the students. In documenting these narratives, I set out to fill the gaps in our understanding of Clegg's legacy, the place of Bretton Hall College within that legacy, and the impact that Clegg and the College had collectively on the students who studied there. Because the students’ narratives start to fill these gaps, the students became for me the *spaces in between*: the missing voices and experiences in between Clegg’s legacy, the history of Bretton Hall College, and the wider impact of child-centred, arts in education training.

9.2 Revisiting the Aims and Purpose of the Thesis

This thesis therefore aimed to explore the legacy of Clegg at Bretton Hall College during his time as the Chief Education Officer of the WREA between 1949 and 1974, as evidenced by the voices and experiences of the students who were at Bretton Hall College during this period. The project sought specifically to shed light on Clegg’s influence at Bretton Hall College, as a way of defining his impact on the community of practice that emerged at the College and was created by the students. In this way, it aimed to examine the extent to which Clegg had a direct or indirect impact on the students at the College during this twenty-five-year period, and whether this impact was recognised by the students either at the time or subsequently.

To explore this question of impact, the thesis focused on the students themselves and on how they generated a community of practice during their time at the College and thus became ‘Brettonised’ (to quote one of the alumni students interviewed), by analysing specifically their use of the campus where they created this community, a culture, and their practice. This research fills a gap in current knowledge and
literature about Clegg: whilst much is known about his educational philosophies and values, and his approach to managing and Education Authority, Bretton Hall College is rarely mentioned in histories of Clegg. Yet the College was situated in the WREA and subject to Clegg’s visionary leadership and commitment to child-centred learning, creativity, and arts in education more broadly. Histories of Clegg also neglect the Bretton Hall College students, despite the fact that their experiences of learning at the College have the potential to reveal Clegg’s politics and philosophies in action.

The overarching purpose of this thesis was therefore to acknowledge and incorporate the stories of the students as an evidence-base for (re-)assessing the legacy and impact of Clegg through the lens of the student community of practice at Bretton Hall College, as described by students who were there between 1949 and 1974. In so doing, the thesis would shed new light on established narratives and analyses of Clegg, and understandings of his impact on educational practice and of his legacy.

This is the one of the fundamental significances of my research: this thesis collects and shares the lost voices, stories and narratives that constitute the spaces in between Bretton Hall College and Clegg’s legacy. The research has focused on these gaps in the history and impact of Clegg that are represented by Bretton Hall College and, more specifically, its students who inhabited that space. They were educated according to Clegg’s philosophies, created a community of practice inspired by Clegg’s ideas, and had the potential to go on to become living embodiments of his legacy in terms of their attitude and behaviours as regards both
the arts and education. The fact that their voices and stories have not featured as part of Clegg’s history and legacy until now reveals a gap in our understanding of the impact of this foundational figure. By collecting and sharing the students’ narratives, this thesis sheds light through the spaces in between of Clegg’s philosophies and impact, and on Bretton Hall College as an educational site that embodied and enacted Clegg’s values. It reveals that the students’ stories and experiences can fill these gaps in our understanding because they demonstrate the extent of Clegg’s direct and indirect legacy by helping us to identify additional tangible ways in which Clegg influenced and impacted the arts and education landscape in the UK in the post-war period.

A crucial element of the collection and sharing of these stories and experiences is their verbatim presentation in this thesis. As discussed in Chapter 5, I decided to include in the words of the students the stories of Bretton Hall College that they wanted to tell. I did this to preserve the authenticity of the narratives. However, as the conversations developed, I became included in the storytelling process: the participants wanted to recall and retell their stories to me as a serendipitous information seeker, a term and approach which situated both myself and the students together in a shared understanding of an arts education pedagogy. This also provided a shorthand to our shared experiences of arts education as students and then arts practitioners. The decision to capture and share these stories in their entirety and to include my narrative as part of the research process brings value to the project. My appreciation of and respect for the whole story, narrated by the individual, demonstrates an approach to research that is informed by Clegg’s own beliefs and underpinning philosophies of putting the individual child (the learner) at
the centre of the experience. In this case, the individuals at the centre of the research experience are the participants, who stories enhance what we know about Clegg, me as the researcher and learner, and the reader who also becomes a learner through the experience of reading and immersing themselves in these shared narratives. The focus on the individual is thus crucial and becomes both a research and analytical lens as well as a practical tool that have together informed my research. What this approach does is help us better understand Clegg’s legacy. But it also reveals ways that Clegg’s philosophies and values can still be used as lenses and methodological frameworks, this time as tools through which we can interrogate communities of practice and their impact on individual and group behaviours.

9.3 Summary of the Research Findings
To understand the contribution made by the Bretton Hall College students, it has been necessary to examine Clegg’s vision and wider impact. Part 1 of the thesis provided this research context by introducing Clegg against the backdrop of what has been established as his legacy as a visionary philosopher of education (Chapter 2) and of the policy landscape of education in post-war Britain (Chapter 3). This approach enabled me to critically analyse the role of Clegg as Chief Education Officer between 1949 and 1974, as well as to shed light on what is conventionally accepted to constitute his impact in education and his legacy. Whilst this information provided the context against which Clegg’s influence at Bretton Hall College would be analysed, the two chapters enabled me to also evaluate Clegg’s legacy. Chapter 2 provides an in-depth analysis of that legacy from two, sometimes-contradictory perspectives: Clegg’s legacy as established in scholarship about him and through his
own writing and correspondence; and in recollections about the man from his family members. These narratives were collected for this research and are reproduced verbatim in Appendix 2. The analysis revealed the individual experiences and perceptions of Clegg that have remained overlooked in the published literature about the man. The narratives enabled the speakers to state in their own words and for the first-time what Clegg was like as a private man and how this informed his visionary leadership and management of the WREA. Moreover, they show how important it is that all stakeholders in a legacy have a voice in its construction, thereby reaffirming how crucial it was to capture, record, and analyse the students’ voices and narratives as regards Bretton Hall College and Clegg’s direct and indirect impact there.

Part 1 of the thesis also provided contextual information about the landscape in which Clegg was working. Chapter 3 explored the educational policy frameworks of post-war Britain. It highlighted how Clegg was situated in the arts in education and child-centred literature of his time, and how he created a hotbed of opportunity within the Authority to bring together philosophers, theorists, educationalists, and artists to create an arts in education experience for the staff and children of the WREA, in various tangible ways. This analysis shows how Clegg was part of a much broader network of innovative educationalists, and how his leadership style in the Authority worked to create conditions of possibility for his staff. This helps to characterise Clegg’s approach to influencing and shaping policy and practice, and suggests that his impact at Bretton Hall College was likely to be of a similar nature.

Part 2 of the thesis then focused on the methodological approaches and frameworks that have been adopted. Chapter 4 discussed the archival work that was conducted
in order to access information about Clegg through a process of retrieval. It also revealed, through an analysis of published literature about Clegg (which complemented the analysis in Chapter 2), that there were gaps in the history of Clegg as regards the place and contribution of Bretton Hall College. The aim to fill these gaps would become a driving force in this research project. The literature landscape was predominately historical in its content, with reference to the two key texts written about Clegg published in 2000. An up-to-date investigation of Clegg and his impact and relevance for today was published in 2021. This book was part of the Sir Alec Clegg revisited research project, led by Professor Catherine Burke of Cambridge University. It revisits Clegg by exploring his continuing relevance to and impact on education. I was invited to contribute a chapter based on this research and its exploration of the hidden voices of Bretton Hall College (Mills, 2021). It must be noted that my contribution was the only direct inclusion of Bretton Hall College, which prompted the rewriting of the conclusion of the book to accommodate my themes and acknowledge my work.

Chapter 5 then outlined in detail the methodological frameworks for the thesis. It outlined the ways in which Clegg’s impact and legacy would be interrogated in the thesis, through an analysis of student narratives that spoke of the experience of being at Bretton Hall College, an educational environment situated in the WREA and therefore subject to Clegg’s philosophies and preferred pedagogies. As a result, to truly allow the hidden and silent voices of the students of Bretton Hall College to emerge, it was necessary to situate them back in the landscape and history of Bretton Hall College by revisiting and re-enacting their remembered stories. These were shared with me and then presented verbatim. The inclusion of the narratives in
full allows this thesis to explore the students as *spaces in between* who in fact filled the spaces at the College by creating a culture and community of practice, and to give space to the narratives as the students intended them to be heard (Chapter 6 expands on this rationale). This approach allows me to remain true to what would emerge as the students’ self-appointed custodianship (through membership of a community of practice) of Bretton Hall College and its legacy.

The chapter also explained that to capture and analyse the student narratives, the methodological lenses of narrative inquiry, spatial behaviours and storytelling through architecture, and notions of belonging would be employed. The emphasis in narrative inquiry on experience was crucial to ensuring that the students’ contribution to the history of Bretton Hall College, and thus our understanding of Clegg’s legacy, was fully captured. However, the focus on experience through narrative retelling and remembering also sheds important light on the student community of practice that emerged at Bretton Hall College during the twenty-five-years under consideration. The experience of the places and spaces of the College were equally important for this process. And what would emerge from the narratives was a sense of belonging generated through different interactions with the College, its architecture, and other students, which would come to permeate the community of practice and continue long after the students’ periods of study were complete.

Part 3 of the thesis presented the analysis and interpretation of the Bretton Hall College community of practice as revealed in this research project. Chapter 6 provided the precise context of the history of the site, against which the students’ experiences were analysed. It argued for seeing the students as a bridge that
reaches across the gaps in Bretton Hall’s history as well as fills the gaps in the legacy of Clegg. It is for this reason that the students are conceived of as the spaces in between. The chapter showed how Bretton Hall College was (re)constructed through the students’ narratives of their untold storied lives and how this constitutes an omission in the legacy of Clegg. Because the narratives also reveal the blueprint framework of the lives that the students created at Bretton Hall College through a community of practice, the chapter defines precisely this terminology.

Chapter 7 presents verbatim the guiding narratives of the alumni students who participated in the research project. Their narratives have both distinct and overlapping themes, which begin to reveal the nature of the culture and practice that the students engaged in, the type of student community that was to be found at the College, and the ways in which their community of practice came about. Ultimately, the chapter shows that this community of practice was constituted through a focus and acceptance of feelings and emotions; learning that was self-directed, experiential, creative, and social; a reclaiming of the spaces of the College in a way that created the sense of being at home; and acts that claimed ownership of the site and the activities therein. Whilst Clegg is hardly referred to in the narratives, certain elements of practice that the participants describe have resonance with Clegg’s philosophies and approach to education. This is particularly apparent in the ways in which the participants talk about self-directed, creative opportunities for learning, their exposure to child-centred teacher training, the feelings of being included and valued, and their sense of enjoyment of and through education. This shows how Clegg had an indirect impact on the students: his values informed approaches at
Bretton Hall College and created conditions of possibility in which the community of practice was able to thrive.

The narratives also reveal that, as far as the participants are aware, it was their own inhabitation of the campus that created their experiences: they remained unaware of the conditions of possibility that Clegg provided. This analysis is presented in Chapter 8. Nevertheless, these conditions were manifest in the beliefs and values that the students espoused. However, it is important to recognise the significance of the students' spatial behaviours at the College. Chapter 8 thus analysed the ways in which participants speak of the creation of a culture and practice at the time of their study, and of an ongoing community of practice to which they belong. The language that they use reinforces their sense of ownership of the Bretton Hall College site and reveals a sense of custodianship that persists in the present. This begins to reveal that, for the Bretton Hall College students, their community of practice did not cease to exist once they left the College. Newly arrived students would join the community of practice by adopting the spatial behaviours of then current students, and students who graduated and left the College would take with them an engrained value system that is reawakened and reconstituted when they revisit the site.

The mechanics through which the community of practice was created by the students of Bretton Hall College are revealed in Chapter 8, and demonstrate that as a result of the community, they also have a sense of ownership of the campus, which was not only their place of study but also their home. Furthermore, since their time at Bretton Hall College, the students have acted as self-appointed custodians not just of the physical site but also of their shared memories of the community of practice.
that they built. This ownership of the community of practice is then retained by the students, as they re-enact and retell their stories with one another over many decades, sharing their experiences as a select group. This thesis presents for the first time the sharing of these narratives. As the researcher, situated here as the serendipitous information seeker, I was invited to be a part of this community and to share their legacy. These discussions begin to shed light on how communities of practice are formed, perpetuated, and sustained.

To summarise, by presenting the Bretton Hall College students as the *spaces in between*, the thesis recounts for the first time the full scale of the students’ contributions to the legacy of Clegg and of Bretton Hall College. This is because as the spaces in between, they provide a bridge between the theoretical educational ideals and philosophies of the Authority under Clegg to the physical and community building of the campus at Bretton Hall College. Tracing and shedding light on this bridging activity begins to fill the gap in Clegg’s legacy at the WREA. Overall, this thesis explores the impact of Clegg on an exemplar community of practice that has hitherto remained overlooked in his legacy: that of the Bretton Hall College students. It argues that Clegg’s impact on the creation of this community is indirect but at the same time integral to the experiences of the students who lived and studied at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. This research demonstrates that Clegg’s work and impact, although widely acknowledged in the education sector at the time and since, was not felt by the students at Bretton Hall College in the same way.
Clegg sought to provide an educational landscape that centred around the arts in education and child-centred education for teacher training, thereby facilitating a condition of possibility for learning to take place. However, this thesis demonstrates that it was the students of Bretton Hall College who took this further, by creating the community of practice that embodied Clegg’s ideas. They appear to have done this without knowledge of those ideas or of the philosophy of Clegg. But their actions took place within a physical and philosophical space that Clegg had founded. The result was arguably a model of practice that Clegg intended, thereby providing evidence of his indirect legacy at work at Bretton Hall College.

By interrogating the role and impact of the students of Bretton Hall College as the spaces in between Clegg’s educational philosophy, vision for Bretton Hall College, and the College itself, this thesis has investigated the ways in which this specific community of practice came into being. I contend that it was through their own spatial behaviours that the students created the specific legacy and community of practice established at Bretton Hall College. This generated a sense of place and belonging that extended far beyond educational requirements. We can see these aspects as being part of Clegg’s indirect legacy. This thesis thus provides a widening of the conceptualisation of the legacy of Clegg to include Bretton Hall College Teacher Training for the Arts and, crucially, its students.

9.4 Contributions to Thinking about Impact, Legacy, Community, and Practice

The thesis has four key terms that pervade the analysis of Clegg, Bretton Hall College, and the College’s students. These were outlined in the Introduction and are: impact; legacy; community; and practice. It is useful at this point to revisit these
terms to demonstrate how the thesis contributes to and advances our thinking about them. This section also explains the extent to which the terms have been modified and are potentially limited in their application to this study.

**9.4.1 Impact**

This research project had a central research question: what impact did Clegg and his approach to education have on the students and environment at Bretton Hall College? In this context, impact was conceived of as influence, benefit, positive change or good that actions (in this case, of one man) can have on a recipient. In the case of Clegg, his impact on the educational landscape in general and on the WREA in particular has been well documented and is framed in terms of impact on educational policy and practice, on enrichment of lives of those living in the Authority, and on the development of social capital and communities (see Wood, Pennington, and Su, 2021). Evidence for this impact has been collected by researchers from, teachers, officers, and members in the WREA and all speak of how Clegg and his philosophies were an inspiration and resulted in positive changes in their own professional development or education and in the communities in which they lived and worked.

Impact in this context is clearly evidenced and would be defined by the parameters adopted in this thesis as direct. That is, there is explicit acknowledgement of Clegg in having established and led ways of working and initiatives that directly benefitted those being interviewed. In the case of the Bretton Hall College students, there is little mention of this type of impact in the rare moments that Clegg is discussed. Mostly, Clegg is absent from the recollections. However, the ways in which the
students talk about the child-centred teacher training, self-directed and creative learning opportunities, and how they felt valued as individuals point to a condition of possibility that permeated Bretton Hall College, which also facilitated the establishment of the students’ community of practice. The philosophies and values that the students speak of are those of Clegg: his approach provided a condition of possibility for the students of Bretton Hall College. This was situated not only in his own approach to creating communities of practice, as shown through his leadership and management of the WREA outlined in Chapter 2, but in his being embedded in the particular educative landscape of post-war Britain, which allowed him to develop a specific approach to child-centred, arts in education frameworks. In this instance, Clegg’s impact as revealed through this thesis is one of indirect impact. The students, often unknowingly, came to espouse his values and approaches, as demonstrated in the community of practice that they created.

In this context, then, this thesis proposes that impact can be conceptualised as indirect when there is evidence of resonance, similarity, and espousal of philosophies and beliefs whilst those who are being impacted show no overt acknowledgement or even awareness of this process. Proving this indirect impact can be challenging, as it can be difficult to prove without a shadow of a doubt that an individual’s change in thinking results from a set of actions or approaches that are at a distance from them. This is the case with Clegg and the Bretton Hall College students: his actions were at the level of an Authority, in which the College was established. His approaches informed the nature of the curriculum and the type of educational environment that the College offered. The students then arrived into that environment, or condition of possibility, and were free to respond how they wished.
Yet the response through the community of practice reveals an internalising of Clegg’s approaches and philosophies, even when the students were unaware of his hand at work in the larger Authority. In this context, it would be useful to speak to more students, and also to expand the nature of the conversation to establish awareness of other educational theorists of the period, for example, as a way of determining the extent to which Clegg indirectly impacted the majority of the student body, and whether the Zeitgeist of the period and the changes in the educational landscape as driven by other key thinkers also had an impact. This is one of the potential limits of this study.

Nevertheless, this thesis has demonstrated a potential model for the assessment of impact that stretches beyond the direct. It has shown how impact can be more widely defined and how, by examining resonances and the unwitting espousal of values, indirect impact can be identified. The establishment of conditions of possibility, and the response to these, is one particular lens through which indirect impact can usefully be assessed.

Furthermore, the methodology used in the thesis has demonstrated how productive a qualitative approach to measuring impact can be. The Bretton Hall College students move through their recollections and memoires in a non-linear remembrance, they move backwards and forwards through iteration of re-telling the story of their live experiences, and by each visitation to the Bretton Hall College campus, where they are self-proclaimed custodians. The use of the narrative inquiry method to collect evidence of indirect impact accounts for this non-linearity reveals how impact can carry forward throughout the recipient’s life. This suggests that,
when thinking about impact in the context of educational practice, we should not simply collect data that speaks to one particular moment in an individual’s life. Rather, we should look at the amalgam of experience, and, as Clegg would have it, engage with the individual’s whole life and identity (thus putting the focus back on the value that the whole person can bring to understandings about education and its impact on shaping identity).

9.4.2 Legacy

Legacy has been defined in this thesis as the long-lasting impact that an individual’s actions and values can have on others, on society, or on the landscape. It is the accumulation of impact that allows us the opportunity of looking back and assessing the totality of the positive changes that an individual might have made. As far as Clegg is concerned, his legacy has thus far been defined by his contributions to educational thinking, and his commitment to child-centred education and learning through creativity. The importance of this for today is argued by Margaret Wood, Andrew Pennington, and Feng Su, who explain that ‘Clegg’s focus on the vital role of the creative and expressive arts with potential to enrich lives has an abiding importance for education today, in view of the pernicious effects of a dominant ‘measurement’ culture and the ‘squeezed’ place of creative and aesthetic endeavour in the curriculum’ (Pennington, Wood, and Su, 2021, p.322).

This potential to enrich lives is what has been demonstrated by the student narratives in this research. During their time at Bretton Hall College, under the conditions of possibility provided by Clegg, participants felt valued, encouraged to pursue creative outlets, and supported in self-reflection and self-directed learning.
The narratives show how these feelings became the core of the practice within the community and were reinforced as the community renewed itself through the welcoming of new students to Bretton Hall College.

The longevity of the community of practice and its continuing impact on the students demonstrates why these narratives need to be acknowledged as part of the legacy of Clegg and of Bretton Hall College. We see how these groups of students took on the philosophies purported by Clegg, and became a living legacy to Clegg, albeit without their direct awareness. They embody the care and empathy that was at the core of his values, and knowingly and unknowingly enact his philosophies of child-centred education, of the arts in education and of community building through their lives. This is particularly evident in how they did and do behave and interact with others.

As far as understandings of legacy are concerned, the aforementioned findings demonstrate why, as with impact, we need to consider different ways in which to collect data that reveal a legacy at work on the recipients. Using data that focuses on the recipients’ whole lives and identities is a way of revealing elements of legacy that can sometimes be overlooked. This is why it is important to ensure that all stakeholders have a voice and are represented when a legacy is being built. Chapter 2 illustrated precisely what happens when not all stakeholders are included in the legacy building process. In the case of Clegg, recollections from his family members reveal another side to the man that shows how he was values-driven in all aspects of his life. The memories show the importance to Clegg of valuing the individual and of acknowledging and expressing emotion, elements of his daily practice as an educationalist that were rooted in his private life.
Therefore, as far as legacies are concerned, it is important to acknowledge that they are multifaceted and often contradictory, as different stakeholders generate a variety of conflicting stories of legacy and struggle to ‘own’ the legacy and claim its significance for their own purposes. For Clegg, his legacy has tended to be examined from the perspective of post-war education and arts in education. His significance is thus defined by his contribution as an educationalist. By widening the scope of stakeholders who can contribute to the legacy and its significance, this thesis has revealed that Clegg’s philosophies were not part of a work persona and rather were part of his identity and belief system.

Furthermore, the narratives of the students show how the totality of positive changes that Clegg facilitated at Bretton Hall College has an unexpected longevity as the students now act as living legacies and embodiments of those positive changes. That element of the legacy can be categorised as indirect, in that the students do not often make the connection between Clegg and their behaviours and worldview. There are resonances and similarities that show the ongoing impact of Clegg’s philosophies. These continuing positive changes also suggest a continuing legacy where additional levels of potential significance are yet to manifest. Revisiting these significances in the future is clearly beyond the scope of the current project but it does demonstrate how we need to think about the potential of legacy to continually evolve and develop.

9.4.3 Community
In the context of this research project, ‘community’ has been defined as a group of like-minded people who are joined together through the same interests or inquiries. The community in question here is one student-based and -constructed community of people, all of whom were studying at Bretton Hall College between 1949 and 1974. The geographical location of the campus of the college is important for this community and at the core of the community-building activities that the student narratives recollect. Participants recalled their living quarters in the College and the domesticity of drinking cocoa together as a group of students before going to their segregated bedrooms, for example, revealing how the community of students emerged not only as a result of the students being together in classrooms but also sharing domestic space and routines. Chapter 8 then showed how the campus became ‘ours’, according to the alumni student narratives, through a variety of different spatial behaviours that resulted in a sense of communal ownership of the site as well as a sense of community amongst the students. These spatial behaviours often reveal the community’s activities outside of the imposed regulatory framework of the College, the community thus had its own culture and practice. However, what this thesis has demonstrated about community is that we need to think both about the group of people and the culture they create when analysing how communities come to be, and facilitate learning and the broader exchange of values and ideas. This is core to understanding a community of practice, which is what the student community at Bretton Hall College became.

Commenting on communities in education, Michael Pardales and Mark Girod explain that a community as more than a loosely associated group of people can be unattainable in the classroom environment (Pardales and Girod, 2006, p.308). The
Bretton Hall College community of students supports this assertion as it was largely through activities outside of the classroom that the community became established. Moreover, Pardales and Girod point out that ‘A community that works together, has mutual respect and concern, and a recognizable and agreed upon set of assumptions and procedures is something that takes a long time to develop’ (Pardales and Girod, 2006, p.308). The prevalence of the community and ongoing membership in the lives of the alumni students of Bretton Hall College demonstrates that this more than a loose association of people. Members share respect and concern for one another, as well as a recognizable and agreed upon set of assumptions and procedures regarding roles and values. This is clear when the alumni students speak about how they still belong to this community by acting as self-appointed custodians of the former Bretton Hall College campus site.

Furthermore, their attitudes towards education and the arts in education speak to a shared set of assumptions and values that, as we have seen, have their root in Clegg’s philosophies and values. The fact that the students’ recollections correlate also underscores the persistence of a community and their continued sense of belonging to it.

Due to the relatively small data set analysed here, it must be acknowledged that perhaps not all students will have had the same experience of the community and may feel a weaker sense of belonging now that they are alumni. However, the data saturation point speaks to the point at which patterns and correlations emerge from data. This suggests that the existence of a community, a shared community identity (of having been ‘Brettonised’, as one participant puts it), and a persistent sense of belonging to that community is something that pervades this group of students and
alumni. It speaks to the strength of the values with which they were instilled at the College, values that governed the condition of possibility that facilitated the emergence of this very community and of its practice.

9.4.4 Practice

In the Introduction to this thesis, I argued that one of the primary reasons for the longevity of student community and of the indirect impact of Clegg on its members was its practice. If we think about the community as a community of practice, we begin to identify the different characteristics of the College community of practice that allow us to define it as such. Drawing on Jean Lave and Etienne Wenger's definition, we can identify:

1) the shared domain of interest as being that of Bretton Hall College. The geographical campus plays an important role in distinguishing members of this community of practice from others. In this way, the domain becomes a physical space that differentiates this group of students from others at different colleges in the same period.

2) the community is identified as the students at the College, and the physical space of the domain facilitates engagement in the joint activities and discussions that are necessary to build relationships and care between community members.

3) the practice that is shaped by the specificity of the domain and the activities that the community pursues therein. In this case, students at Bretton Hall College would use the spaces and places on campus through which would develop a shared
repertoire of experiences and stories. New students would be inducted into this shared practice upon their arrival to campus, thereby continuing the community of practice, and students who were graduating would take membership of this community and the shared repertoire of experiences and values with them.

Crucially, the Bretton Hall College community of practice quickly transcended the didactic environment. The interviews reveal that the domestic, creative, and social activities in the spaces and places of the College constituted the practice and thus the community. And the shared ways of enacting these practices was passed from one group of students to the next through experiencing the campus space as a group. In this way, the practice at Bretton Hall College in this instance consisted of constantly building and re-building, and enacting and re-enacting a community. After all, as Lave and Wenger highlight, what is crucial for a community of practice is ‘participation in an activity system about which participants share understandings concerning what they are doing and what that means in their lives’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991, p.97).

What becomes clear from the student narratives is how the community of practice generated shared resources to navigate meaning, create identity, and establish values and beliefs. The way in which the participants talk about the activities at the core of their practice within the community reveals a sense of a ‘Brettonised’ identify that is informed by similar values and beliefs. These values and beliefs have resonance with those of Clegg and reveal his hand in providing the condition of possibility in which emerged the community of practice. And as I have already established, belonging to that community of practice, and adhering to these values
and beliefs are things that have stayed with the members long after leaving Bretton Hall College. This reveals how the analysis of communities of practice might beneficially include opportunities to revisit members as time passes, as a way of examining how the community of practice and the identity it generated have continued or changed over time. It would also be interesting to explore in more detail the impact of nostalgia and the passage of time on how the precise nature of communities of practice such as this one can be re- and mis-remembered by members with the passage of time.

In the case of Bretton Hall College, the community of practice was iterative, in the sense that it passed from year group to year group of students present at the College between 1949 and 1974. But the community of practice remains iterative in the sense that those who were members can re-enact and revitalise it by remembering it. This thesis has revealed two ways in which this re-enactment can take place: through verbal recollections in conversations with non-members; and through visits to the site that allow members to re-visit their experiences. This reificative aspect of the community of practice allows members to experience it in a non-linear way. And the participative aspect then helps to create the continuity of the community of practice in the lives of its members, whose identities were and are shaped by their belonging to the community of practice and by recounting their experiences. This is another element of the iteration process and is crucial to understanding the long-term implications of a community of practice, as well as tracing influences that shaped and continue to shape a community of practice and the identities of its members. This is why this thesis has highlighted the ‘then’ and
‘now’ of the community of practice at the College: together, they reveal the impact of Clegg at the time as well as his continuing legacy that is embodied in the students.

9.5 Limitations of the Study and Potential Avenues for Future Research

As far as the present study is concerned, the thesis is limited in the scope of its reach in so far as a data set of six participants was used (see Chapter 5 for the rationale regarding this data saturation point that allowed for a solid foundation to be used for interpretation and analysis of the data). However, it is acknowledged that with a larger data set even greater insights could be made. Six participants is representative of the chronology of Clegg’s tenure at the WREA, but the data sets do not provide a full view of the community at Bretton Hall College. More research is therefore needed to collect additional student narratives to establish the extent to which the experience of the community of practice remains consistent for students studying between 1949 and 1974.

To examine the impact of the conditions of possibility more fully at Bretton Hall College, it would be useful to collect data from the Bretton Hall College staff alumni. This would provide an additional perspective on the environment there and widen our understanding of Clegg’s legacy to include the staff narrative. This would be placed in dialogue with the student narrative as a way of exploring the notion of co-creation through the staff/student relationship. This set of data collection would differ from the student narratives collected for the thesis, not least as the staff were older than the student’s and therefore many of the Bretton Hall College staff have died, making this data collection set more difficult to collect. However, it might be that documentation has been retained, in the form of personal journals and curriculum
documentation, for example, that could shed light on the staff community at Bretton Hall College and on Clegg’s impact in this context.

The research also sits within the limitations of the student teacher narratives from the students of Bretton Hall College. Whilst these narratives clearly fill the gap in the legacies of Bretton Hall College and Clegg, there was not the scope within the remit of this research project to take the inquiry further. The next stage in filling these gaps in legacy would be to capture the narratives of the pupils who were taught by the student teachers of Bretton Hall College, in order to capture their experiences and so explore further the indirect impact of Clegg on pupils’ lives through the practice of their Bretton Hall College trained teachers.

More broadly, additional research that could usefully be undertaken in the future is the collation of a network analysis which would demonstrate the interconnectedness of the key influential figures of both the post-war educational landscape and the shift in arts education in higher education in Britain. In this way the trajectory of developments could be mapped through the lens of the few greats, the Chief Education Officers who (as demonstrated in the Introduction to this thesis) collectively held the responsibility of children’s education and spearheaded innovations across the country. This would provide an evidence base from which to situate local authority governance, and in the ways which this approach established a post-war educational landscape.

9.6 Situating the Research in the Broader Context of Arts and Education
We have seen that Clegg’s educational practice and leadership at Bretton Hall College and in the WREA are situated within the larger landscape of post-world war educational shifts. Other contemporaries of Clegg who were active in introducing innovative arts in education policies and opportunities include Henry Morris and Stuart Mason. Morris pioneered the village college in Cambridgeshire during the 1930s; these institutions “offered a way forward from the perceived marginalisation of modern rural life and culture” (Hopkins, 2020, p.1100). The aim was to establish colleges as centres where different community activities could take place, in line with Morris’ view that education was a lifelong process. His view was that “as the community centre of the neighbourhood the village college would provide for the whole man [sic] and abolish the duality of education and ordinary life. It would not only be the training ground for the art of living, but the place in which life is lived, the environment of a genuine corporate life” (in Hopkins, 2020, p.1100). Stuart Mason then sought to champion child-centred education with an emphasis on creativity and the arts (much like Clegg) in Leicestershire. As the Chief Education Officer there during the 1950s and 1960s, he was responsible for the Leicestershire experiment: the introduction of ‘an alternative two-tier solution [to secondary education … where] the country’s secondary modern schools, re-named “junior high schools”, should recruit all the pupils from the primary schools within their catchment area. Pupils would remain at the junior high school for a minimum of three years before either transferring to a grammar school (or “senior high”) or continuing for a further year at their present school” (Crook, 2002, p.250). It was judged a resounding success and fed into discussions about the comprehensive system during the 1960s. Under Mason, the county also pursued a commitment to contemporary art in education. In addition to ensuring an ongoing emphasis on the creative arts in the curriculum for
pupils, many of the schools that were built in the 1950s and 1960s followed progressive designs and incorporated works of art internally and externally.

The examples of the work and careers of men like Clegg, Henry Morris, and Stuart Mason demonstrate the widening of the educational lens in Britain during the post-war period and the embracing of progressive and arts-driven education. If we return to Herbert Read, who was a key influence on Clegg, Morris, and Mason, arts-driven education is defined thus:

It must be understood from the beginning that what I have in mind is not merely ‘art education’ as such, which should more properly be called visual or plastic education: the theory to be put forward embraces all modes of self-expression, literary and poetic (verbal) no less than musical or aural, and forms an integral approach to reality which should be called aesthetic education – the education of those senses upon which consciousness, and ultimately the intelligence and judgement of the human individual are based.

(Read, 1944, p.7)

Read is setting out the blueprint for progressive education in Britain that would be driven by the arts and would invite the whole learner to engage with all modes of self-expression. It is this approach and framework that Clegg manifested for art education in the WREA, and therefore at Bretton Hall College. But this framework for art education and arts-driven education was becoming established across Britain at this period. Clegg and the approach at Bretton Hall College that trained staff in this arts-driven, creative, child-centred approach to education was part of a broader trend in this period and reflected the Zeitgeist of the period and the commitment to rebuilding and improving society after the Second World War.
Read continues to shed light on how the framework of arts education provided a pathway through social reform into the education of an individual who was part of a community:

The purpose of education can then only be to develop, at the same time as the uniqueness, the social consciousness or reciprocity of the individual. As a result of the infinite permutations or heredity, the individual will inevitably be unique, and this uniqueness, because it is something not possessed by anyone else, will be of value to the community. It may be only a unique way of speaking or of smiling – but that contributes to life’s variety. But it may be a unique way of seeing, of thinking, of expressing, mind or emotion – and in that case, one man’s individuality may be of incalculable benefit to the whole of humanity.

(Read, 1944, p.5)

The focus on the individual, their experience of learning, and the value of their contribution to the community in which they belonged is clear. It is this that provides the cornerstone of the approaches to education that shaped the work of Clegg, Henry Morris, and Stuart Mason. As far as Clegg is concerned, we can see here the foundations for a community of valued individuals whose uniqueness is expressed through arts and creativity that this thesis has demonstrated were at the centre of Clegg’s practice and which shaped the visible ways of being of the students at Bretton Hall College.

The work of Herbert Read is a cornerstone when situating Clegg in the broader context of arts education and arts-driven education that informed many of the developments in educational philosophy in post-war Britain:

Read’s (1956) *Education Through Art* was first published in 1943 and in the post-war period became a seminal text. It is seen by some commentators as the epitome of progressivism and self-expression in art.
Educational thinkers and practitioners like Clegg and others were shaped in their ideas of arts education and the potential of the arts in education by Read’s ideas and beliefs. In the case of Clegg, as we have seen, we are talking about a figure who was not an artist, a philosopher, or an art critic: he was an educational administrator, whose own moral compass of humanistic and child-centred approaches was influenced by ideals of social reform. Art education through the lens of Read provided an educational framework that aligned with Clegg’s ideas. It allowed Clegg to discuss the spirit of the child, the whole child, and allow a freedom in education to be experienced under the auspices of art education.

The current landscape of the arts and arts education in the UK has a somewhat bleak outlook due to underfunding and the closure and withdrawal of many routes of provision around the country. This is the case across compulsory school environments through to higher education. If these conditions of possibility are not made available to children and young people now, the pipeline of arts educators and the principles of the arts in education will be lost forever. This thesis has demonstrated how the WREA was a powerhouse for the pipeline of educators through the arts in education via Clegg, evidenced through the student narratives presented here. But the thesis has also been written at a time where it is crucial for policymakers to revisit the models of practice within the arts in education and arts education landscapes. There are models that can work to sustain and encourage the arts as a way of redressing the balance and re-opening access to effectively create and engage communities of practice. After all, this is what Clegg enacted in the WREA during his tenure, and the approach was taken up by and enacted through
the students of Bretton Hall College. We need to bring back the much-needed vitality and empathy embodied by Clegg and the students of Bretton Hall College to how we think about arts in education, thereby refocusing our attention on the individual and their potential to fill *spaces in between* for the future.
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Appendix 1: Informed Consent Forms Part 1 & 2

Section 4: FORM 3

University of Huddersfield
Art, Design and Architecture
Ethical Review Procedure
For Research and Teaching and Learning

Research Participant Information Sheet

You are invited to take part in a research study. Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve. Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others or a university representative if you wish. Please ask if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information. Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

Who will conduct the research?
Allie Mills
University of Huddersfield
School of Art, Design and Architecture
Queensgate
Huddersfield
West Yorkshire
HD1 3DH

Title of the Project Research
To analyse the influence of Sir Alec Clegg’s leadership and its impact on education policy during 1945-1974 and determine if the ideologies can be used to develop a sustainable model for 21st Century Higher Educational leadership in art and design.

What is the aim of the project/research?
To record an un-captured narrative of Sir Alec Clegg through Bretton Hall College.

Why have I been chosen?
Participants have been identified through their relationship with Sir Alec Clegg using Intensity Sampling. There are a maximum of six participants in this sample. The entire research project will contain 24 research participants.

What would I be asked to do if I took part?
A face-to-face interview will take place which will be recorded, there will be some set questions to prompt the dialogue however the participant’s narrative is key to the research study and this will lead the interview. Photo-elicitation will be used as part of the interview which entails using photographs to support the dialogue. If any issue is sensitive to discuss, the participant can request at any time to move on and/or pause the interview.

What happens to the data collected?
The data will be used to answer the research question (please see the Title of the Project Research above). All data will be analysed using Narrative Analysis and form part of the research study. All data collected maybe asked for Archive donation, all participants would be asked for their consent prior to any donation being made.

**How is confidentiality maintained?**
All data collected is held on the researcher’s personal devices which are password protected and are not shared devices. No personal details will be given out by the researcher about the participant without the participants consent.

**What happens if I do not want to take part or if I change my mind?**
It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. If you do decide to take part you will be given this information sheet to keep and be asked to sign a consent form. If you decide to take part you are still free to withdraw at any time without giving a reason and without detriment to yourself.

**Will I be paid for participating in the research?**
No payment is made for participating in the research.

**What is the duration of the research?**
A one to two hour face to face interview will take place.

**Where will the research be conducted?**
TBC

**Will the outcomes of the research be published?**
Yes, all Ph.D thesis’ are published and available within the public domain.

**Contact for further information**
Allie Mills
[Allieworkinghard@aol.com](mailto:Allieworkinghard@aol.com)
07989 923 626
Section 4: FORM 4

University of Huddersfield
Art, Design and Architecture
Research Ethics Review

TITLE OF PROJECT Ph.D Research Project – Sir Alec Clegg

NAME OF RESEARCHER Allie Mills

Participant consent form

Please tick

I have been fully informed of the nature and aims of this research by reading Form 3 and I consent to taking part in it.
I understand that I have the right to withdraw from the project/research at any time without giving any reason, and a right to withdraw my data if I wish.
I give permission to be quoted.
I understand that any visual, audio documented material will be held in accordance with the University of Huddersfield’s data protection policy.

Declaration: I, the participant, confirm that I consent to take part in the research and hereby assign to the University all copyright in my contribution for use in all and any media. I understand that this will not affect my moral right to be identified as the “participant” in accordance with the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988.
I understand I have the right to request that my identity be protected by the use of pseudonym in the research and that no information that could lead to my being identified will be included in any report or publication resulting from this research.

Name of participant

Signature

Date

Name of researcher (please delete as applicable)

Signature

Date

Two copies of this consent form should be completed: One copy to be retained by the participant and one copy to be retained by the researcher.
Appendix 2: Anonymised Family Narratives

This appendix presents the transcript of the author and members of the Clegg family, which took place during 2014-2015.

Family Narrative One

A: Your professor sort of person or whatever – who's in charge?

Q: Doctor XXXX XXXXX is my main supervisor; and then Doctor XXXXX XXXXXX, who I think now sits on an advisory panel for the archive.

A: Okay.

Q: And then Doctor Martin Walker, who sits in the School of Education.

A: Oh, right, okay.

Q: I have three.

A: Gosh, lucky you. So what's your, what's the date?

Q: It's the tenth.

A: Right.

Q: Thank you. Thank you for seeing me. What I'm looking at is your, is your dad, ultimately.

A: Right.

Q: And when I... it was a scholarship that I responded to, specifically looking at Sir Alec Clegg. And...

A: So it was a scholarship. What do you mean? It was...

Q: It was advertised. A scholarship was advertised.

A: Oh, I see. Right, okay.

Q: Yeah. To look at Sir Alec Clegg and, and his work, really. So when I got to the archive and started to read and look at stuff – there's an awful lot of stuff about the work that he did with schools, and a lot of stuff about him generally. And of course, a PhD, I have to add to knowledge: I need something new.
A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And I sat at Bretton every day, old Bretton, and suddenly kind of thought: I'm really missing something really obvious here. There's not much about Bretton in the archive. There's not much there. And so I started to piece together where Sir Alec fitted in, or didn't fit in, to Bretton. And that started to really interest me. And of course, Bretton is up for redevelopment at some stage. And so I started to look down the route of Bretton Hall College, and your dad being the founder, and, and if I could find any links about how he did things and the way he did things. Which has started me on a path that I'm very interested in your dad, about who he was. I know a lot about who he was at work. I know a lot about what he did and a lot about what...

A: Probably know more than me.

Q: He was a great administrator, and there's lots of... he left an awful lot of great documentation – about schools, mainly; not so much about higher education. But I'm very interested in who he was. The people I've spoken to so far have been people who were at Bretton Hall, mainly in the nineteen fifties and nineteen sixties.

A: Who have you spoken to?

Q: Margo and Derek Andrews were there in nineteen fifty-two, live in Ely. I'm speaking with Martial Rose, who worked...

A: Oh.

Q: I've spoken to Martial already, and we're speaking again on Friday. Martial's, he was the head of drama in the nineteen fifties.

A: So he's... how old is he?

Q: Ninety-four.

A: Whereabouts does he live?

Q: He's in Winchester.

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: He's amazing.

A: 'Cause there's, we did the Martial Rose Library.

Q: Yes. Yes, yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: He's a feat. And yesterday I was with Eric Woodward, and Eric Woodward...

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, was the librarian.
Q: Yeah. Schools Museum Service.

A: Schools Museum Service. How old's he?

Q: Eighty-eight.

A: Right.

Q: And tomorrow I'm meeting with Nancy Smith, who you may or may not have known. She was the head...

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: ...mistress. I don't know how old Nancy is. I haven't asked. It seems...

A: Whereabouts?

Q: The school she was headmistress?

A: Yeah.

Q: I can't remember off the top of my head.

A: It rings a bell. I don't know why. I mean, yeah, he had all these favourite headteachers and teachers and things that he used to talk about and... but I can't, I don't remember where that, where she was. But anyway, that's good.

Q: I think Nancy worked with... I want to say with him, but maybe not with him, to do the Plowden Report. I think they were both on an advisory meeting.

A: Okay, yeah, yeah.

Q: And I think he pulled her in for that.

A: Yeah, that probably makes sense, yes.

Q: Still a very formidable lady.

A: Is Barbara Megson still alive? Have you heard of Barbara Megson?

Q: I don't think she is. She may be, but she's not on my radar. And Sir David Attenborough.

A: Yes.

Q: I wrote to him, and he's written back and said, if I can send him something written, he's very happy to answer some questions.

A: Funny, isn't it? Education system.
Q: From another point of view, really.
A: Yeah.

Q: So I suppose I'm interested...
A: Why do you want to talk to David? Well, I mean, that's fine.

Q: I suppose to find out... I'm interested in what drove your dad. A lot of... when I spoke to Eric yesterday, and I kind of asked how he had, how your father had influenced Eric. And Eric found it really hard to answer. But then he said that when he applied for his job in nineteen fifty-six, that he saw Alec Clegg, to work for Alec Clegg, and he wanted to work with him. He kind of had heard what he was doing, and he wanted... And Eric described your father as a magnet, as people who wanted to be there. And here I am. And when I read about the scholarship, I wanted to know about him. I wanted to know who this man was, in probably, in a historical way, for me. And so I'm interested in who your dad was.
A: Okay. Well, I mean, there's two, there's...

Q: Dreadful question, probably.
A: Well, I haven't thought about it for a long time, 'cause he died, what, thirty years ago now.

Q: Yeah.
A: The interesting thing about the magnet – I mean, if we start with that. One of the things that you'll have realised is that he became chief education officer of the biggest county in the country at age thirty-six. Was it thirty-six? I think so.

Q: Yeah, yeah.
A: In nineteen forty-six. Which was a complete sort of... He always used to say it was not a fluke but it was just extraordinary stroke of luck. Because he, he was appointed as deputy, and then... can't remember. I think the existing guy died, did he, or something?

Q: Yeah. In nineteen forty-five, was education officer.
A: Yeah, and then forty-six, became chief education officer. And so he obviously made quite a few friends and influenced people during that year, in order to get, in order to be appointed to that... you know, age thirty-six, to the biggest job in the country in education, in local authorities. And local authorities then had huge amounts of power. And he always described his role quite sort of modestly, as actually just getting the best people to work for him and pointing out best practice in schools – and that's all he was interested in doing. So he brought in... I mean, you'll have, I mean, you've probably read... there's various not-very-well-read, well-written books. Have you read the...?
Q: Yes.

A: XXXXX... what's his name?

Q: Darvill. XXXXX Darvill.

A: XXXXX Darvill, and the other one.

Q: Nora George.

A: Nora George, yeah. So there's those, which aren't very well written. But my perspective was that he was, you know, thrown into this job, got an extraordinary stroke of luck, but also, was actually quite, quite charismatic and in his element. Sorry.

Q: It's okay.

A: Switch that off. It's off anyway. You know, in his element in an educational world, really, where he was... you know, he's coming up north from Cambridge and London, and with good educational credentials, but also had... the experience in Worcester that he had put him in touch with – and Birmingham – put him in touch with really interesting people. He was always very good at picking out the most interesting people and getting them to come and work with him, right.

Q: Yeah.

A: So Diana Jordan came from Worcester, Arthur Stone came from Birmingham. You've, you know all these people?

Q: Yes.

A: I always knew him as Stoney. And Diana was my godmother.

Q: Goodness.

A: Rae Milne was another one you might have come across. Margaret Dunne. Lots of women, and Stoney was the only bloke, and he was gay. Which, of course, a problem in those days – but that's not, you know, it's not what your subject is about. But he surrounded himself with really, really interesting people, from a really exciting arts background. And arts in education was what really captivated him, I think. And he was hugely influenced by those people, particularly Diana, I think. And Vy Bruce, who was another one of those people. She was, she was, I think, someone down in Leicestershire, who was an educationalist – maybe county council inspector or something. And, and Ruth Mock. Have you heard...?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Education and Imagination. And Rosemary Devon, old Rosemary Rocke, who was another person...
Q: Yes, married to Basil.

A: Basil, originally. And you might go and see her. She's still alive and kicking and down in Bath, near Bath.

Q: Okay.

A: So, interesting that they're all women.

Q: Yes.

A: Interesting that he formed very close working relationships with them. I mean, and there was nothing else other than that, 'cause they were very good friends of my mother as well. But, you know, it was, it was part of, part of his philosophy was that he just, he just thought: 'Well, show me the best kinds of education, and show me how you get the best quality of education, and I will draw attention to it.' And, and that was, that was, it's a very simple-minded thing. That was the, that was his philosophy, you see. And so it started with all those women, who were largely primary school-based women. And that led him to kind of think through the whole idea of middle schools, I think and try to get some of the thinking of the primary schools up towards the middle schools. He was interested... because he was absolutely convinced that quality teachers were the answer to quality education. Not, interestingly, anything... he wasn't interested in buildings, which is interesting from my point of view. He was very dismissive of buildings. He always thought, well, the great thing about... You know, he was, he would love showing people round, you know, some of these schools in South Yorkshire, where the rooms were leaking and the... old Victorian schools, and, and showing that it was the quality of teaching that counted. And those were some of the best schools in the country. Some of the best results were coming from the worst schools in the country. He had no problems at all with that, which is interesting.

Q: Yeah.

A: And mostly they were primary schools.

Q: Yes.

A: Which is where he then got, I suppose, and again, got interested in Plowden, which is primary school-based report. And, and mostly to do with creative arts being the basis for education. And I think the middle school thing... I mean, he's, interestingly, he's sort of credited with that now as an initiative. I don't remember it as, him being that, as being that significant as, you know, sort of part of his legacy. I thought... maybe 'cause it never really took off, I don't think. He built them in certain areas, and in certain areas they still survive; but, you know, it hasn't really, you know... It would have needed a major transformational change, I think, for it to continue. So, I'm just rabbiting on. Is that all right?

Q: It's completely fine.
A: As a, as an individual, he was, you know, he had this... his, his father was... my grandfather, who I never met, 'cause he died in nineteen twenty-two, was a, was a, an extraordinary teacher, I think, an extraordinary person – and obviously, again, quite a magnetic person. I mean, I never sort of thought of my father as having much magnetism, but he obviously did. You know, as an individual, you know, I mean, he was very... he was, he spent time with me, but... you know, and he was a good father – as good as he could be considering the pressures on his life, I suppose. But he was, he never seemed to be very gregarious. He never seemed to... you know, when he was at home, he just wanted to relax at home, and never... you know, we very rarely sort of had guests round or visitors round or whatever. He just, he was, he was... but he also worked a lot at home, you know. Just, he created a study for himself at home, and just quite often secreted himself in it and... You know, the, obviously the educational work was his life. And I suppose the other thing that he grew interested in as a result of the primary school, involvement with primary school teachers was how to get better teachers. And of course, one of the... this is where this place came about, isn't it? Because in the, in the fifties, they just suddenly discovered that this baby boom was upon them and they didn't have enough teachers.

Q: Yeah.

A: And so he went around and had a lot of fun buying up places like this and making teacher training colleges, as did the local authorities generally across the country, so that was nothing particularly new. But, but I think this one and Woolley, across the road, Grantley Hall, Wentworth Woodhouse, Ilkley – all of those were run as teacher training colleges. And this one was founded as a teacher training college, with I think quite a unique sort of vision, I suppose, of bringing creative arts into primary school teaching initially and secondary school teaching later. So I think... and Woolley... I mean, interestingly, Diana Jordan was taken on then to run Woolley Hall. And he did spend a lot of time at Woolley Hall. He used to spend a lot of time on the courses doing, doing his introductions to the courses, and nurturing the teaching. And I guess gave, you know, probably... I mean, he really enjoyed that, because he was enjoying the process of stimulating teachers, and he enjoyed, I think, that sort of environment – wherever he could get teachers interested in good quality teaching, or, or educationalists, or, you know, the ministers. You know, I mean, it's very interesting. You know, Shirley Williams came to stay the night once. Which is odd, really, isn't it? Because in the, in the fifties, they just suddenly discovered that this baby boom was upon them and they didn't have enough teachers.

Q: No.

A: And he managed to get that sort of, establish that sort of relationship. 'Come and stay with me, you know.' And that was quite interesting. She was great; I remember her. And Boyle. And Crossland came round. You know, so he was obviously, he had the ear of the ministers through the department. And then, you know, then got Margaret Thatcher, who didn't come and stay the night, but...

(Laughter)
A: You know the story, presumably, about my aunt, my great-aunt teaching Margaret Thatcher, do you?

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: With the very famous: 'If thou of fortune be bereft...'

A: Yes, that's right, yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: What you say about, that he enjoyed speaking and to kind of motivate teachers – that comes through a huge amount, when I've heard him, when I listen to him, and when... and I've read all of his speeches. That really comes through. There's a real passion, and there's a real... You can imagine being incredibly motivated by him, and very inspired by him, this value that he was kind of putting into these people, and kind of saying: 'Raise your game.' This is fantastic.

A: Well, yeah, it is, it is interesting. I think other people didn't do it, either. The other chief education officers, you know, they didn't... I mean, 'cause my uncle was Frank Barraclough, who was the head of North Riding at the same time.

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: You probably know. He was terribly opposite. He was very much the opposite, you know. He was a good administrator that sat in his office all day. I mean, apparently, apparently, my father used to go out every Thursday, used to go out to a school.

Q: Yeah, Eric says that, yeah, yeah.

A: And, you know, he obviously used to... his secretaries and PAs or... you know, desperately trying to find him, stop him going off to visit more schools, you know. But he kind of liked, he just liked being there and finding out what was going on.

Q: That comes through in his writing.

A: Yeah.

Q: That comes... He just...

A: Have you heard, have you got a copy of the... I've got an audio copy of the talk he gave in, in nineteen seventy.

Q: I don't know. There's a few at the archive, but...
A: There's a... if you haven't got one, I'll give it to you. I'll send you a copy. He gave a talk...

Q: Thank you.

A: The sort of peak of his career, I suppose, was when he was chosen to give a talk, the keynote address, celebrating hundred years of private, of public education in the UK, eighteen seventy to nineteen seventy, at the Central Hall in Westminster.

Q: Don't think I've heard...

A: So he gave, he gave this talk, which was, you know, about the sort of, his standard stuff about, about... in that case, it was not so much art and education; it was kind of, the challenge of education is dealing with the under class, with the people who are... It's easy to teach the top ten percent. And it's easy... Well, you know, when kids end up in borstal, they get looked after. But it's the ones that haven't quite made it to either end, you know. Really it's the, it's between, it's the bottom twenty-five percent or whatever that haven't yet ended up in jail. So that, you know, and that was... I suppose that message is still quite relevant, really.

Q: There's a lot of what he wrote and said that is scarily relevant.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And you come across... He seemed to genuinely care, to genuinely want to do something to make a difference. And I don't ever get the impression that he was trying to leave any type of legacy. I just get the impression he...

A: No, he wasn't interested in...

Q: No.

A: No. He was interested in... he was just, he thought of himself as a promoter of high quality teaching, I think. And when he could get an audience abroad... you know, later on in life, he went to Australia and Canada and the States and whatever. And, you know, he was interested in promoting the best quality education – which, to him, was not the measurable stuff; it was, it was to do with creativity.

Q: Yes.

A: Which is also interesting, 'cause I don't know that he was necessarily... he wasn't terribly creative himself, really.

Q: No. He said... he's, he's very self-effacing. He'll often say exactly what you're saying. And he says, 'This isn't me. This isn't even just me. This is a team of people.' And he saw himself as kind of... I wouldn't say unimportant, but really not, like, the top dog in any way, of any of it. Which... there's a lot of humour in him as well.

A: Yeah.
Q: There's an... I came across in one of the bits, he'd written this letter to Basil Rocke. Well, it's a note, really. And I just love the idea of it, really. I have no real idea what it's all about. I can't find any other reference to it. But I just love that sense that he's there with this huge job to do... And to me, that speaks of friendship and, you know, an ease...

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, definitely.

Q: ...with staff and with...

A: Very interesting, though, you know, he wouldn't, he would... we're in the pre-Christian era.

Q: Yeah.

A: 'Cause he would have talked to him, even though it wasn't a... That's not, that's not being jolly. That's...

Q: No.

A: That was the way he would refer to him.

Q: Yeah. Eric showed me a letter yesterday that said: 'My dear Woodward.' And he doesn't say 'my dear' to many people.

A: Oh, right.

Q: There's only a few that I've come across that seems to be a genuine personal...

A: Yeah. I don't know what that was about.

Q: No. But I just like it. I like that he's really obviously had a bit of a, a laugh and...

A: He's found something...

Q: Yeah. But then equally, I found something else, which could be read in two ways, I suppose. And it's the last little bit, again – which, I find that quite witty, but... yeah.

A: 'Missing letter.'

Q: I love that last line, which can be read in different ways. But from things that I've read from him...

A: The missing letter – you know what the letter would be?

Q: No. Can't find...

A: No, well, that's... Yeah, it was, that's his, that is his sort of turn of phrase humour.
Q: Yes. Which is humorous. You know, when you're sat there, going through boxes and boxes of educational...

A: So that's seventy-one.

Q: Yeah. And this one, I think, was sixty-five.

A: Sixty-five, yeah.

Q: And so when... because of course I, I never knew him, and I am finding out about him through what he's left and what he's said. And so there's this side of him that is the very professional, the work side of him, like the man in a suit, giving his talks, doing his job. And this is still doing his job, but with a real quality about it. I mean, I can imagine, if I got a letter like that, it would make me smile.

A: Yeah.

Q: And it'd make you warm to this person. And I do think that that, that probably then attracted people to him. Eric said that when he'd started his job in nineteen fifty-six, about six months in, your father asked to see him, just to ask how it was all going. And Eric was really quite... Eric was twenty-nine when he started his job. He was really quite... 'Oh, crikey. I'm going to see Alec Clegg, and I haven't really done anything, and everything's a real mess. I don't know how to tell him.' And he did, and just told your father. And your father just said, 'Okay, let's sort it out, then. Let's just do something about it.' And it's that, it's that sense of, he was held in high esteem. And that's why he was the boss, let's face it. He was the boss.

A: I think the key thing is that, is that thing of, you know, when you start out, when you're given an opportunity of getting new staff into an expanding authority, when you're thirty-six years old – so you bring in all of these people who are all about your age. And suddenly you've got a local authority run by people who are in their thirties and forties rather than fifties and sixties. I think you can make transformational change there. And I think, you know, I don't think... I mean, he didn't... I don't know quite the people that he replaced or the... I don't think he was coming into an organisation that had a lot of dead wood, for instance, you know.

Q: No, no.

A: And I think he was able to get a young and enthusiastic staff around him. And, you know, the fifties and sixties, after all... You know, I mean, we've been doing, doing work on the South Bank Centre at the moment, you know. That was sixties through to seventies. But, you know, the Festival of Britain, that spirit that was around then was extraordinary.

Q: Yes.

A: And the power. You can't believe the power. You know, to be able to come and buy this place for eleven thousand quid.

Q: In nineteen forty-nine.
A: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

Q: That, to me, is like... The army, the military were still here. It's a completely different time.

A: It is a completely different time. But you've got to imagine, you know, there's a panic in terms of providing teachers – huge panic. Have you read the, have you read the four, the three Decade books?

Q: Yes, the Final Ten Years.

A: Ten Years of Change, yes.

Q: Yes, yeah, yeah.

A: So it's difficult sort of to imagine that, that... Well, having said that, you know, we now need four hundred schools within the next five years, and I don't think anybody's twigged that yet, you know. But because we've got another similar population explosion. But it was all, it was all that post-war population explosion. Plus the fact that in many, many areas you had people of, much, much younger in charge, and thinking... you know, it was a kind of can-do scenario.

Q: Yes. A lot of them said, when I've spoken to people, mainly anecdotally, about Alec kind of... that spirit of the age. Because we had just come through a war...

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And this is very simplistic, I realise. But there was a country just trying to rebuild, and trying, in that bigger sense, to pull together and just... We'd won this war. There were lots of children. You've got to kind of do something with that victory. You can't just...

A: And also, you had a good, you know, there was, it was infant socialism that was working really well, you know. I mean, I think twenty, thirty years later, the local authorities... by that time, the local authorities had turned into enormous bureaucracies that weren't working very efficiently. But when it was starting, you know... I don't... it would be very interesting to know how many staff he had in nineteen forty-six.

Q: Yeah, I need to try and find that...

A: And what the rate of increase was. Because, you know, I imagine that it was a relatively tight-knit bunch of people, who had a great time together, who were a really... you know, there's great camaraderie. And they're still... a lot of them stayed right the way through. Reg Isles, who was... have you heard of that name?

Q: Not Reg, no.
A: Reg Isles was... he took over at Wakefield after the split up. He was great. And Jim Hogan. XXXXX Newsam.

Q: Yes.

A: Have you been to see XXXXX Newsam?

Q: No.

A: You should go and see XXXXX. 'Cause he was a late appointee. He only came in in the late sixties, but obviously recognised... I mean, he's written, he's written a chapter of his book about working with dad.

Q: Yeah, I've read, I... yeah. He's part of some of the stuff... I've cited him, the stuff that he's done. But yeah.

A: Right, right. And he... so he was coming into a place, a thing that was already established, really. I think the exciting bit must have been the fifties, where they had huge tasks to get through. They had, they had all kinds of problems: failing systems, failing kids, failing... You know, and if you look at the statistics... I won't go into it in great detail, but some of the statistics of how the West Riding was performing in the, in those, in the first ten years – it was pretty appalling. I mean, it was not doing very well as an authority. It was way, way down the list if they were doing these comparative studies. And the, there was not... and I didn't... I was trying to, I was just glancing through it the other day. And it didn't seem to me that he'd made much, much change or, you know, things didn't necessarily get hugely better.

Q: I've seen photographs of the schools around that... just coming out of the war period. I mean, they're frighteningly horrendous. They're horrendous. And you, and then... it's when you physically see it sometimes, isn't it? And you think: This man had a mountain to climb. If you look at the facilities... We call them facilities. They weren't. It was a hole in the ground for a bathroom, for a toilet. Just... So, yeah, I know what you mean. When you read it...

A: We had that. I went to the local village school, and there was a wall to pee against. You know, that was it.

Q: Yeah, yeah. And that literally was it.

A: And then there was an Elsan for...

Q: 'Cause I sometimes wonder if he must have kind of gone home and just thought, 'Crikey. How do I do this?'

A: Well, I think he... I think the fact is that you, you... There was money, through the rate support grant, through the education... He was, you know, there was, there was increasing funding, through social programmes, through educational programmes. So there was always the, the opportunity for you to rebuild the system. And they did rebuild... they rebuilt it with extraordinary... I mean, they built rubbish schools, but very, very fast, and very, very low cost, you know. And all the buildings down here,
you know, sort of built by... I mean, that was the other thing, you know. The architects department. He... and the, and the finance department. I mean, he talked about... That's interesting, 'cause he talked... He obviously, his own education department, you know, was, that was where he was king and... But he was, he was a, you know, a collaborative monarch, if you like, you know. He talked about the people in the finance department. The... I can't remember what they were called in those days. But the guy in charge of the money for the county, you know, as people that he had to deal with and had to have a good working relationship with. But obviously they were much more conservative, and obviously they were... I can't remember his name. Broughton or somebody. Used to talk about... they were much more difficult for him to deal with. And the, and the county architects, you know, churning out the schools, I think he thought were a bit flash and he thought were a bit sort of, different kind of person, you know. Ken Evans, who was, I knew as the county architect. And before him, Hubert Bennett, interestingly, who built the buildings here, and then went down to run the LCC.

Q: Oh, I didn't realise that.

A: Oh, yeah. So he built the Royal Festival Hall.

Q: Goodness!

A: No, sorry, he didn't. He built the South Bank Centre. Which is when he was... yeah, nineteen sixties. And became Sir Hubert Bennett and did extraordinary stuff. So, you know, and people did go off all over the place. Martial Rose. I'd forgotten about that. So it was a good breeding ground.

Q: Yes.

A: And, yeah, I think, by the time he retired, you know, he'd got protégés in a lot of the counties, a lot of the counties and...

Q: I think you're right about that fifties period as well. When I've spoken to people who've been to Bretton, and then thinking of Bretton history – that seems like a real golden age of Bretton, the fifties and sixties. Like a real... I mean, and I see the people who went there, many of the students, they're like little satellites. They were taught to do something, and they went out and did it, and it's been their career. And they're still very creative people, and very alive people. And it seems a... 'Cause really, my research ends at seventy-four, when he retired: that's like my cut-off point. And then Bretton does have a different life as well, West Riding. And when I spoke to Eric yesterday, I said, 'It must...' Obviously think what, what did your father think about, about all that reorganisation. And I've written somewhere and had to write something for my doctors, saying he had to dismantle what he'd built.

A: Oh, it was horrendous.

Q: Yeah.

A: It was absolutely horrendous, yeah. It was painful.
Q: Yes.

A: And he fought against it and lost. And it was a political move. And he... you know, he always had to balance out what he said, because he had political masters he had to be... I think he got on very well, generally. That's the other thing: he always used to say that, throughout the time he was in the West Riding, you know, his political masters, the elected members, varied between Labour and Conservative – as they did in the West Riding, because there's quite posh areas and quite poor areas, and there's change in the political winds. And he was, he was very good at, I think, dealing with both, and had very, very, very good relationships with both. And in fact, XXXXX Newsam talks about the last of the political leaders, who was... what's her name? He dwells about her in his text. What was her name? Lady somebody or other. She was the, she was the... what would they call her? The elected member in charge of education. The head of the Education Committee, I suppose, chair of the Education Committee, yeah. So basically, that's who he was responsible to. Very powerful woman, who was the last one that both XXXXX Newsam and...

Q: Don't know. I'll have to look it up.

A: …my dad had to deal with. And he obviously had a really good relationship with her as well, you know. And throughout the, throughout the ages, going from Labour to Conservative... Jessie Smith was one of them, Lady... I remember that. There was a miner, Yorkshire miner who was the head of the Education Committee at one stage. I can't remember his name.

Q: He seems to have really... people wanted to be loyal to him.

A: Yeah, they did.

Q: Some of his staff... This is Eric. This is, this is a transcript from Eric. But that little paragraph there sums up an awful lot, I think. Eric's talking here.

A: 'Referred to as disorganisation...' Yeah. Absolutely.

Q: That seems... there's so many people I've come across, mainly anecdotally at the archive, and they say this. They were fiercely protective about what your father had created, about where they worked. This attitude that, you know, up to seventy-nine. And again, you shouldn't, should you? But I love the fact that she's using West Riding paper, and she will not accept, she will not accept that a) your father's retired, and that b) the West Riding's no longer. And that doesn't seem to have been in other authorities quite so much. He seems to have...

A: Well, I think that's because he was known for having a sort of, if you like, a bit of a common touch, or certainly getting out into schools and, and... I mean, his, his philosophy was always, was always to praise the best. Now, maybe he avoided the worst. Don't think he did, necessarily. I think he probably was okay at doing, you know... he must have had to fire a lot of people over those years.

Q: Yeah.
A: You know, his philosophy was certainly to just find the best examples and offer praise and support. And I think that did mean, did mean that he got out into, you know... You can always find a decent teacher in any school.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And he would always, you know... it must have been quite a strange and interesting experience for the chief education officer came round.

Q: Yeah, it must have been. There's lots of pictures of your father as quite an elderly man, the same one. And again, I don't know where this was taken, but I came across this picture of him as a much younger man.

A: Oh, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Q: This is before he was at Wakefield, I think.

A: Yeah, that must be...

Q: There's no reference on the back of it. But again, and that made me look at things very differently. I found that awhile ago, when I started my research. Because there's, there's lots of photographs of him as an elderly man. And, you know, very accepted image of him. But of course... And I showed Eric that picture as well. Because that's who Eric kind of remembers, in a way.

A: Well, I think this must have been when he was still teaching, right?

Q: Yes, yeah, it must be.

A: So it must have been... is it Clement Danes school, in London?

Q: It's around that time. Nothing's on the back, but it... if it wasn't there, I don't know where it was.

A: I think he only ever taught at one school before he went into administration. God knows how he managed to get into administration.

Q: But again, I look at that... 'cause he played football, didn't he?

A: Yeah, he did. He was very good at football.

Q: So they used to play tennis sometimes, and badminton. So he must have been quite a fit young man.

A: He was. He was interesting. Yeah, I mean, he always, he played football... he captained his college team, and he played football in, for a, for a... Corinthian Casuals, I think they were called, in London. Which is a very posh team. And I think he was, yeah, he was very good. And he was... I was always a bit of a disappointment, in that I didn't do much sport as well as he did. I remember having, having to try hard and doing soccer. I was okay, but I wasn't good enough. You
know, he was... I mean, he went to Bootham School in York, you know. And it was very, much, much smaller school than the one I went to, which was Tadcaster Grammar School, where two thousand kids, you know. So I couldn't get into the first team, but he did.

Q: I did read, though, that... about his own father, that he said that he – and this is me paraphrasing – but that his own father must have been pulling his hair out because your father didn't knuckle down at school. And then a geography teacher came along.

A: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Who was quite pretty. And your dad kind of perked up a bit and did some work. He's written that somewhere.

A: Is that right?

Q: Which again, you know, just that...

A: Well, it was Aunt Belle, who taught Margaret Thatcher, who said that you've got to get Alec out of your school 'cause you're not getting on with him. Alec out of Sam's school, Sam Clegg's school. So that's when he was sent to Bootham.

Q: Your dad felt it. As I think, like, a teenaged boy, he somehow felt this... It's what he's written. That he must have been like... Like, it must have been cringe-worthy for his dad, that his dad was this fantastic guy, this great teacher, and his own son was really not pulling his weight.

A: Yeah, yes. I don't know. I mean, you know, teenaged boys and whatever, you know, they... it's just really difficult, isn't it? You always go through a phase of rebellion. And they, and he had...

Q: I think that's this. I think this is...

A: That's Sam.

Q: Yeah.

A: And that's Alec, yeah. So this is, that's Sam. That's Mary, that's his wife. And so this is Barbara, my Aunt Barbara, who was married to Frank Barraclough.

Q: Oh, I didn't know that.

A: So Frank Barraclough and my father were brother-in-law. And so North Riding and the West Riding were brother-in-laws. It's interesting.

Q: Yeah, very.

A: That's... I think that's Mary. That's David's, David Attenborough's...
Q: Yes. I see the Attenborough boys in your father's face there.

A: Yeah, sort of, yeah.

Q: There seems to be a resemblance.

A: Well, he's like Dick.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah, definitely.

A: Don't know who this is. I mean, this must be Mary... Barbara, Mary and Margaret. Maybe that's Margaret. There were three, there were four of them. There were five; one died. And there were four. Margaret, Margaret, Mary, Barbara... Nicey who died. Maybe that's it: there were just four of them.

Q: That's the only picture I have. The other, the other ones I have... That's not a great shot. Is that one, and I think that's probably you.

A: Yes, that's right. That's me.

Q: It's not a great picture itself. And then of course, that was the day that he was knighted.

A: Yeah, that's right. Yeah, we went to the palace.

Q: How did he feel about that?

A: How did he feel?

Q: Yes.

A: I think he was very... I think he was fine with it. He wasn't, you know, he wasn't so overtly anti-royalist or whatever, or socialist, that he wasn't... No, I think he, he would accept it on behalf of his staff and everything. That was... I can't remember what he said about it, but I'm sure that's what it was all about. And it was one of those... I mean, I don't wish to belittle it, but, you know, the... well, his... it was the previous person hadn't got a knighthood, had he?

Q: No.

A: Knighthoods quite often went to the biggest authorities that were run well by... And that is belittling it probably. But, you know, there was Sir Arthur Binns, there was Sir Jack Longland in Derbyshire, there was... You know, you would have, you'd have got a gong of some kind. My uncle got a CBE, you know. But, you know, it is... yeah, I think he was very honoured on behalf of his, on behalf of his crowd that he worked with, you know. That's what he would have said.
Q: Eric was awarded an MBE, and Eric... a long time ago now. And Eric said he can't see why he got it over anybody else. And the guy, whose name escapes me, who was the head caretaker – I think he got... did he get an MBE as well?

A: Probably. Well, that was my dad probably putting them forward, you see. In those days, that's...

Q: Yeah. Eric doesn't understand kind of, in a way, why he got an MBE over anybody else. He just doesn't... But I think, I don't know if that's to do with their generation as well. It's...

A: Well, the award system is funny, isn't it? It's not, it's not necessarily corrupt. Well, it is a bit. You know, I'm sure it's who you know. And these days, you know, I mean, like XXXXX here – you know, ran a campaign to get a CBE. Which I don't think is what he did. I mean, so in those days, you never did. You didn't...

Q: No, I know what you mean. I do know what you mean. It was said of your dad, when, when he was at the palace, that he was a man who converted ideals into realities. And I...

A: Who said that?

Q: It was written in the paperwork about him. I don't know who said it, actually. Oh, I do. It's written on there. T. H. B. Hollins. And he talks about...

A: Gosh, I never read this. T. H. B. Hollins.

Q: This was what was said, apparently. I don't know if you would have heard that or not, actually. But this, that's kind of...

A: That's... oh, it's Boyle that said that. The conscience of the ministry, yeah. I think that's the biggest honour.

Q: I think that's a lovely phrase, actually. That's, that's something to be rightly proud of.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And I think it describes him very well.

A: Yeah. Yeah. Collections of creative, creative writing, yeah. I'd forgotten about that. And of course the artwork as well, yeah. I don't know who Ugo Betti is. I don't know.

Q: No.

A: But no, the conscience of the education department. I mean, you know, they're a tough lot down in London, and they tended to be very conservative civil servants. Sir William Alexander – I remember meeting him once. And they just, they didn't sort of get it. And I suppose they needed someone who was actually out there on the coal
face and, you know, in a very, had a very different perspective on things. You know, my... for instance, I remember, you know, going out to dinner. 'Cause I was at Cambridge, and my, and William Alexander's son was in the same college as me, right. So he is the chief secretary, chief civil servant in the Department for Education, right.

Q: Okay.

A: And Bill Alexander was a great friend of Barraclough's, my uncle, Uncle Frank Barraclough. And so we all went out together to dinner, you know. So these two very pompous people... My uncle was incredibly pompous. He couldn't, and my... there was a bit of my dad that couldn't stand him at all. And Bill Alexander was terribly conservative gent, you know. And I was there with my long hair, and sort of representing an alternative sort of approach to life. And I remember them, both of them really kind of saying, 'Well, you know, the problem with Alec, he's always telling us how bad this is, bad things are. You know, he's always telling us that children are failing and schools. Why doesn't he go and sort them out, you know?' To a certain extent, he brought bad news.

Q: Yeah, I've come across that as well.

A: Yeah.

Q: And this sounds quite crass, but actually, your father just seems like quite a genuine, nice man as well.

A: Yeah.

Q: And so I think that... I don't know if he, with kind of, you know, much spirit of gusto, was like: 'This is all rubbish.' I think it was, he seems very measured, when you hear him speak. I think Eric said that he wasn't, your father, he wasn't kind of flappable, in a way; he wasn't excitable when he spoke. He knew what he wanted to say, he knew the message he wanted to give, and stuck to it, really.

A: Yeah.

Q: Eric, again, was talking about the 'If thou of fortune being bereft' saying, which of course is down there, and how he's talking about wisdom and learning together and all that stuff. And some of me, I think, has come to think of that a bit like how your father actually was, in a way. He was balancing. He seemed to balance a very human person, who was trying to do something good, in probably confines as well, and how to make that work.

A: I think he just had this very straightforward belief that there was a really good, there was good in every child. And I think lots of people didn't in those days, you know. And also, he had, he had a passionate belief that, that there wasn't enough time and effort devoted to creative education; that it was all facts and... I mean, he spent a lot of time... you'll have read the stuff that he dredged up about, you know, the way his, he was taught and his father was taught, and all the rubbish that people
drilled into kids. And he was always a very anti-drilling... you know, it was the pot-filling versus fire-lighting thing.

Q: There's one speech where he gives examples of what his father was taught and what he was taught. And it is like a foreign language.

A: Yes, exactly. I think he gave something about me as well.

Q: Oh, I don't know.

A: I think there was something that I was, I was taught.

Q: Yes, you're right. I'll have to... yeah, you're right; that rings a bell now. I'll have to find it out. But yeah, you're right. When you read, you can kind of, you can hear in his voice when he's either quite cross about something or quite...

A: Well, it was just, you know, he was just pointing out: 'Why do we tell, why do we teach kids so much rubbish in schools?' And, you know, get them... And the thing that he was absolutely passionate about... you know, I remember going, you know, at home, he would get out and show us all these, all those paintings that are down in the archive, particularly Mrs. Pirer's thirty-six paintings.

Q: Yeah, I've got something about that. Yeah.

A: And the fact that there were thirty-six of them... Was there thirty-six of them?

Q: This is when, when Basil Rocke died, and your dad spoke. And these are exactly about those... It's really those two paragraphs. And I'll just check how we're doing.

A: Thirty-eight...

(End of recording)
A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: So that bit kind of... because until I read...

A: Well, I remember that... see, I remember... also, it's kind of interesting, isn't it, that he was, come to think of it, that he was passionate enough to bring them out at home and show them to us, his kids?

Q: Yeah, yeah. And there is something in that obviously, that that was about his learning.

A: Yeah, 'cause I wouldn't take my work home and show it to my kids, interestingly.

Q: Yeah, well... yeah.

A: And he would also, you know, a lot of the... Interesting, isn't it? A lot of the... a lot of the discussion at home was about his work, was about education. Which must of him, been him being passionate about it, really. You know, so we had, we had... it was quite a formal family. We had breakfast together, you know. And conversation over breakfast was about politics and education, I think, you know, quite a lot of the time. And, you know, that sort of engagement – he did engage with us. And, you know, we all, we all used to... we had to get up half an hour before breakfast to do our music practice. You know, I played the flute, and he played the flute, so we used to do duets together. My brothers played the oboe and the clarinet. And we used to sort of play as a little group together. You know, so he was, in his own way, he was trying to do... and he was, that was trying to recreate what his father did. Because it was a very... you know, he talked about his... I think it must have been his sister playing the piano, and my uncle, my Uncle Fred Attenborough, and my father, my grandfather, you know, having sing-songs round the piano and that sort of thing.

Q: Yeah.

A: And Sam Clegg was extraordinary, you know. He was looked up to by the whole community in his, of Long Eaton in Derbyshire, where he lived. You know, he was the... I mean, not only because he was the headmaster of the local school, which was a great success for Long Eaton 'cause it was the first school that they ever had. But also, he was regarded as the authority on art, you know. And so, you know, people would come and ask him to invest in art for them, you know, the business people of the area. And he amassed his own extraordinary collection of books and paintings and whatever, you know, even though he had no money. He was always in trouble with his wife. You know, so he was... I think from my grandfather, he'd sown the seeds of an interest in, in arts and culture, you know. And it was all William Morris, John Ruskin, etc.

Q: Yeah. How did your... did your mother play any role in...? I don't know. I mean, I suppose, as a wife, you become a sounding board by nature of being a wife. Because again, people remember your mother really fondly.

A: Yes, they do, yeah. And she outlived him, obviously, by twenty-five years, and led a completely separate life. Not separate life, but, you know...
Q: Yeah, different life.

A: Different life, when he died, and so... But kept up with a lot of... You know, one of the things that they used to do was the... yeah, I don't know whether you've heard about the, the dinners at Whitlock's in Leeds.

Q: No.

A: After the seventy-four, when everybody got dispersed, you know, all the, all his key deputies and heads of his departments in the old West Riding, he used to keep up with them; and every, every few months, they would go and have a dinner at Whitlock's, which is this sort of slightly posh restaurant in the middle of Leeds. And when, after dad died, they let mum go and honour him...

Q: Fantastic. I went to, I went to Saxton.

A: Oh, right.

Q: Where they're buried, and saw their headstone. Which was very, is very elegant and is very understated. It was actually quite poignant. It was a day a bit like today, and of course, it's next to a school. And there was children playing and...

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And I'm pregnant again myself, so it all becomes quite poignant, about who these people were.

A: Well, that was the school that we went to.

Q: Oh, was it?

A: Oh, yeah, that's the, the wall they used to pee against. Or if you were really, you were really young, you could pee over the top of the wall.

Q: It was really lovely. I just... as you do, I suppose, when you're doing research. And it was just, it was really lovely to go and see, and it was very poignant.

A: Yes, I designed the headstone.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yeah.

Q: It's beautiful, and it's very, it's... your parents, your dad stands out for me anyway. He's a huge figure in my head, and he's been my world for the last two years, and will be probably for the rest of my days, really. There's an awful lot I'd like to do past my PhD. But it just, it's just... he's a very big man in my head. But it's just kind of there, and it's just very elegant and quite understated, and just... as I kind of maybe see him, in a way, as a man was.
A: Yeah, yeah. Well, that... yeah, it was packed. The church was packed for my dad, obviously, 'cause...

Q: Yes.

A: It was, that was very poignant. And then when my mum died, again, it was quite... David came along, came... David came and gave a little, gave a very nice little speech.

Q: Yeah. They were very well respected, but they were liked. They were... and they're fondly remembered. As in, nobody I've come across and spoken to... Because there's lots of people come back to the archive, just, just to say hello to old friends. There's not a bad word. And like you said, there must have been times when your dad had to go: 'I'm in charge here.'

A: Yeah, I didn't hear much about that. It's interesting. The stress that... I remember the stress that he had when, when they were splitting up the West Riding; and that was absolutely appalling. 'Cause he was also going through prostate problems at that time as well, which actually... you know, so he didn't have prostate cancer or anything, but he, you know, he had an enlarged prostate, which was incredibly painful and all that sort of thing. And he did have angina, you know, which was diagnosed and he could take pills for it. And then, you know, then later on he obviously got Parkinson's disease, and that's what he died from. But, so I remember the stress. And there must have been a lot of stress. I remember when he got, when he was first diagnosed with the angina... which of course, you know, you could just keep in check by medication, so there was no real problem, I don't think. But I think it was probably all stress-induced.

Q: Yeah, must have been.

A: And he used to, you know, he was... I mean, he was a different build to me. He was a lot chunkier. And I think that was probably, possibly because he had, you know, he was incredibly fit when he was younger.

Q: Yes.

A: He used to wear this extraordinary thing, which... you know, he had hernia when he was playing football. And he used to have this... you know, with hernias, in those days, they gave you these belts.

Q: Yes. Kind of hold it in.

A: Hold it all in, yeah. So he used to have to wear one of those for...

Q: Goodness.

A: Eventually he gave it up. I'm not quite sure. But it was this extraordinary contraption, which he used to play in when he was playing football as well, used to wear when he was playing football.
Q: He must have carried, carried a huge amount over his career.

A: Yes, yes, yes, you say that, and I'm just kind of thinking about the evidence of stress and worry. And... I don't know. I suppose I was, I was brought up... it was, it was natural to recognise that my father worked for four or five hours on Saturday and Sunday. You know, that was sort of par for the... And I do that, you know.

Q: Well, yeah, think we're all a bit guilty of that.

A: You know, but I mean, he... and I think... I mean, this is interesting, because this is a very well-written bit of testimonial, isn't it?

Q: Yes, it is, yeah.

A: Typed out by... I can't remember her name. His secretary. Delightful secretary. And he would dictate this.

Q: There's a little notebook in one of his boxes, that's his notebook, where he's numbered his speeches. And there's, there's just, like, the initial thought, when it isn't quite formed. Which obviously delighted me, because that was his book he's written. And it's lovely to see those ideas evolve and take shape and become things like this. You can start... And often, he doesn't change his main message or thread. He knows what he wants to say, and then it becomes often beautiful prose.

A: Well, I think he used to, he used to stress over writing. Not maybe... I mean, he used to enjoy it, I think. But it was a burden that he... I mean, he didn't need to do it; it wasn't part of the job. But he used to enjoy formulating thoughts and writing speeches, and had very good command of... he was a very good public speaker.

Q: Yes.

A: I'll send you this... if you haven't got it, I'll send you a CD of the, of this eighteen, nineteen seventy speech. Because it really is... it's kind of interesting hearing his voice as well, you know.

Q: The first time I heard his voice... because it was quite a while, because the archive has... The archive is an absolute gem. It needs a bit of help. And so there wasn't tape recorder that worked to listen, because it was all on tape.

A: Oh, it's on tapes, yeah.

Q: Everything's on tapes or videos. And so I just, I just bought a tape recorder, which is very hard to get these days. And when I did, when I first heard your dad, there was nobody at the archive, just me. And again, because I feel I've come to know... I respect your dad. And I heard it, and I was quite goose-pimpily, to hear his voice at Bretton. And he has a command of himself. But he's not, he never seems to be kind of in your face. There's not kind of like: 'Listen to me.' There's just this real presence of him. And people listened. There was...
A: No, they did. And I think, you know, he... I think... I don't know where, quite where that came from. I don't remember... he never talked about union or debating societies or anything like that, or... But I think he probably enjoyed... And, you know, it's a kind of, slightly a power thing, isn't it, in...? Or some people can use it as a way of kind of getting... And he must have enjoyed, he must have enjoyed public speaking in a way that I certainly don't. But also, I mean, it's interesting that he did write everything out, and they are very metic’... Whereas if I give a talk, I will write notes. Very occasionally I write the whole thing out, but only very, very occasionally.

Q: He's got... obviously because... and one of your brothers gave books of your father to the archive. I think it says XXXX Clegg.

A: XXXX, yeah, yeah. Yeah, that's right.

Q: And there's things in there, like original copies of the Plowden Report for teachers, where your dad has... I mean, really, like a piece of homework, has – and again, I suppose it's part of his job – but he's really gone over it, and he's written the kind of, what does this mean? How does...

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: There's a, you know, he has spent a huge amount of time engaging and formulating his arguments, like a very good scholar. You know, he's read it and gone through it. And again, which, for me, just is absolutely... is thrilling, actually, to see how his head's worked and how his head's working.

A: Yeah. And I think that's... it is interesting, 'cause it's something, as I say, that he didn't need to do but obviously enjoyed doing. And when he gave up the West Riding, he did all these tours of... Well, actually, even before then he was... I guess there's certain things that he really, he did enjoy the idea that he was invited to the States or to France or to Australia or whatever, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: And there was a sort of... I guess he, he probably did enjoy fame. Yeah, he did, I guess.

Q: I wonder sometimes if, if he just, as happens, if he grew ever more confident in his voice. Because he was listened to. And it sometimes comes... it does come through, even from very early speeches, this...

A: I don't (...) get all these speeches. From when do they date, then?

Q: From early days. There's quite a lot... there's an awful lot in the nineteen seventies. An awful lot in nineteen seventies. There's a lot more hand-written stuff from earlier days. And the Brotherton Library holds some things. I haven't had any audio from Brotherton.

A: Where's that?
Q: At Leeds.

A: At Leeds.

Q: … Beckett now, I think we have to call it.

A: Oh, yeah, that's right. Oh. It's not at Leeds, the main Leeds library, no?

Q: No. It's the special collections at Brotherton Library.

A: Oh, right.

Q: But again, it's a lot, there's a lot of... the West Riding authority paperwork, there's a lot that sits there; where your father's personal, more personal papers, I suppose – not personal personal – are held at the archive, really, as well. But yeah, I do wonder whether... 'cause... our voices, in terms of...

A: Yeah, I don't know whether... it'd be interesting to hear his voice from earlier years. Do you know how... what's the earliest? Can you remember?

Q: The earliest I've come across is mid- to late sixties. I haven't come across anything... but they didn't seem to... They weren't recorded. It's not our world, is it, now, where...?

A: No. No, I mean, it's still... yeah. So I think, you know, it would have been a mature voice by then, you know. I mean, he got his gong in sixty-five, didn't he?

Q: Yes.

A: And so he would have, in a way, reached the height of the profession around then.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And then from then on it was actually, he was... life was difficult. He was fighting against. And the last five years were pretty appalling, really, I think. And I do think... I mean, it's interesting, this business of the, of growing up around a young culture of people, I think.

Q: Yeah, yeah. When I spoke to Eric yesterday, and I said, 'You know, you were twenty-nine. You took on a big job.' His post had been vacant for two years.

A: Really?

Q: Yeah. There was no Schools Museum...

A: Extraordinary.

Q: Officer, I think he was called. It was vacant for two years. And when Eric went through and interviewed, then he got back for a second interview. And so when he
got the job, the desk had two years' worth of letters unanswered and unopened. And again, I, I said: 'But you were twenty-nine. You know, that was a big job for you.' And he said, 'Yeah,' he said, 'but then...' And I said how old Alec had been at the time. And he said, 'But I think we were all that type of age.' Which is what you're saying. 'Cause Eric has written again somewhere – he spoke and I've transcribed it – but where he said, Eric felt that he was surrounded by another generation at one point, when all these new people were coming in that your dad was appointing.

A: Well, that's right. That's right. And the whole thing... that's why I'd be very interested to see, see the trajectory of employment and the size of the authority.

Q: Yeah.

A: See, I always have this vision... I mean, when they built, for instance, when they built the office, his building – you know, which has now got a blue plaque on it.

Q: Yes, it does, yeah.

A: Apparently. I haven't seen it. Maybe I'll go and see. But when they built that, I remember that. I remember going up the stairs, and I remember him telling me that he always climbed the stairs rather than take the lift, even though it was eight storeys, because at that time he was worried about his fitness.

Q: Goodness me. Eight storeys!

A: And he must, that must have been sixty-four, -five, I suppose.

Q: Yeah, there was a big... 'cause the Bretton buildings, extensions, whatever you want to call them, they were in sixty-four. There was a lot of work around that time.

A: Yeah, that's right, yeah.

Q: I've just written a paper about that, actually.

A: Oh, have you?

Q: Coming out soon. Yeah.

A: Oh, that's interesting. Can you... so you've dated those buildings, have you?

Q: I have. I...

A: What have you...?

Q: I was asked if I wanted to contribute to the Journal of Creative Practice. And I, I didn't want to just regurgitate something I was doing for my original thesis. And then all this in my head... 'Cause I come here every Tuesday. Well, I go to the archive. This feels like somebody else's world. Go to the archive. And the Bretton Estate, as it was, is meant to be developed if, when, how...
A: I know all about it as a trustee.

Q: Okay. You'll know an awful lot more than I do. And so I sat there thinking, 'Hang on a minute. How long is this going to look like this?' And Margo and Derek Andrew had a nineteen sixty-four... it wasn't even prospectus, but this document about Bretton. And in the centre pages was a map of the new buildings. And so I decided to use what's now called psycho-geography, and walk the nineteen sixty-four route, while you still can. And I contacted Wakefield Council, and they gave me access to the mansion house and access to some of the sixty-four buildings. Which was fascinating. My undergrad was history of design and architecture, which again just appeals...

A: Whereabouts?

Q: Teesside University. So it just appeals. So I was taken to the mansion house, and very, very naively and stupidly... These people, this world is very alive in my head. And I wanted to walk into that mansion house and feel Bretton and... And I didn't. Of course I didn't. I saw a mansion house – quite decayed in places; smells damp; quite ghostly by yourself in October.

A: Absolutely, yeah.

Q: And I got, I was taken up onto the roof, which was... 'cause YSP doesn't exist from the roof. It's just Bretton. Down in the cellar. But I, I didn't find what I thought I'd find. Why I thought, I've no idea. I went into the nineteen sixty-four hostels and the refectory, and of course the library. And that's Bretton Hall. You can smell student. Everything about it. And so really, my paper is setting the scene...

A: That's very interesting. That'll be really interesting.

Q: But then how... and it's really my, my narrative about what I found walking this site. And it isn't what I thought I'd find. And it was interesting, because a PhD is what a PhD is. It's very reading-heavy; it's book-heavy. And you start that big, and it has to be this tiny by the time you add to it.

A: Do you know what you're going to focus on, then?

Q: I do in a broad sense. The more I learn about your father... I need to be objective. I like your father. And I need to be very objective about it. It's who he was. In a very simplistic way, I'm very interested in who he was and how he did what he did. This is a man who was very respected from a very young age and at a very early stage of his career. And it endured even past retirement. And this loyalty he built in his authority is still there today. I remember a few years ago, sat at my desk... 'Cause I lecture normally, is what I do. I say normally, but I've kind of paused it.

A: What do you lecture about?

Q: I helped... I worked at Newcastle, and I helped students in what they call creative industries, undergrad year, third year, to kind of get into business: to not just be a hobbyist photographer or a hobbyist textiles... It's about, okay, where's your funding
come from? How do we get you into practices? And so I did that for about seven years. And I sat at my desk one day. I remember writing down, as you do, "Where are all the great leaders? Where have they gone?" Something just tick, tick, ticked for a few years. And I had my first baby, did my MA on my maternity leave – and was still tick, tick, tick, ticking. Went back to work after my baby, and this scholarship came up with your dad's name on it. And something appealed...

A: So this is through, this scholarship... who's funding it, then?

Q: University of Huddersfield fund it. And it's kind of... I think it... I call it a partnership with the archive.

A: Is it... it's not the Sir Alec Clegg scholarship?

Q: No.

A: It's a scholarship to research...

Q: It's about... I think the history of it, Anna Boreman said to me, was Ron George at one meeting suddenly said: 'Something else needs to be done about Alec.'

A: Have you been to see him?

Q: No, I haven't seen him.

A: I saw him yesterday, a few days ago, at... he lives down in Bath now.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah.

Q: Well, apparently it was him who just, who said: 'Something needs to be done about Alec.' And I saw this, and something about this... I'd ticked over for years about where are the great leaders, in education, in our country. And I was sat at the coal face, you know, with... I had about two hundred students and about six staff. And I love teaching. I love the dialogues. But you get quite, like... the red tape and everything about it. And this came up, and I thought: 'This man interests me. I want to know more about him.'

A: Oh, well, that's great. I think... have you seen what Ron George wrote for dad's... what was it, the event? Oh, God. I think it was... was it the opening of the archive?

Q: It might well be. I know Ron's written something about the opening of the archive.

A: It was a performance, piece of performance art. You know, Ron's a funny bugger.

Q: Yeah, that's what I've been told.

A: No, well, I mean, he's just... you know, you know, I mean, he was almost jailed for, along with the other two guys here, for dubious activity but wasn't. He then went
down to Bath and became head of school, the art school there, at Newton Park, at Bath Spa University. And everybody, you know, everybody thinks, oh, he's very... But you see, Ron actually, he did this most extraordinary thing, for a celebration of my father's life at Bretton, which was performed by the Bretton students, written by him.

Q: I don't think I've heard about this.

A: And performed by the Bretton students. And had people... It was a fantastic gala performance. My, my cousin Dick Attenborough gave an after-dinner speech, which was absolutely amazing.

Q: I don't think I've heard about it. I don't think I've heard about that at all.

A: And Ron, Ron wrote, wrote this performance, which... it was part biography, interspersed with works of, you know, dance and drama and stuff.

Q: Wow.

A: It was really great. And he, you know, I thought it was really fantastic thing for him to do. And I said, 'Can you give me a...?' I've got a, I've got a transcript of it, if you want.

Q: I would love...

A: Yeah.

Q: Again, unless, unless it's been donated to an archive, I haven't seen things like that.

A: No. See, I don't think it has, you see. And I think, you know, so he's, there's sort of two sides to Ron. I mean, he... on the one hand, he's terribly, terribly generous about my dad, and, you know, I thought this was a very courageous and very... Not courageous, but a very creative thing to do. He got all kinds of people there. It must have been a celebration of Bretton as well as the archive, maybe. 'Cause Colin Welland... does that mean anything to...?

Q: Welland rings a bell.


Q: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

A: Was that Colin Welland?

Q: Yeah.

A: Or was that the other guy?

Q: Oh, I thought Chariots...

Q: Just, just out of my...

A: No, no. That's right. But they were... who the hell, who was Chariots of Fire again? I think it was Colin Welland.

Q: I think you're right.

A: And there was a dancer, very famous dancer who came through Bretton. There were various people who gave little speeches interspersed with this about how...

Q: Goodness.

A: And Alyn Davies, Alyn Davies came along.

Q: Yeah. I haven't come across that.

A: Okay, I'll see if I can send you that.

Q: Thank you. It's very interesting, 'cause again, I remember saying once, one day at the archive, I said, 'Where's the paperwork from Bretton? It was here for sixty years. Where is it? Where is, where's curriculums? Where's...' There's nothing. There's nothing. And I, my research does stop very firmly at seventy-four. And I know that the ending of Bretton was not brilliant, and how it went. And there's a lot of bad feeling still. There's a lot of bad feeling. And somebody at the archive actually just said, 'We think the staff just kind of took it.' Like you do, I suppose, when you've taught as well: you take what you think is your work with you, don't you? But I can't find anything.

A: It's interesting that the alumni keep coming out of the woodwork. You know Mark Steel? Do you know Mark Steel? Comedian on Radio 4.

Q: Oh. Oh, you're right.

A: Visits various places.

Q: There's lots out of the woodwork.

A: Ken Robinson.

Q: Yeah.

A: You know Ken Robinson?

Q: Ken's just written a book, another book.

A: Yes, he has.
Q: He's dedicated it to Bretton.

A: Yes, that's true, yeah, yeah.

Q: Which I loved. Which I... He never really talks about Bretton.

A: And there's a nice little bit at the back about my dad.

Q: Yeah, I read that.

A: He's coming to Bath next week.

Q: Oh, is he?

A: Yeah, he's giving a talk in Bath, which... I haven't met him before, but he's obviously... it's a very nice book. It's very... I'm reading it at the moment.

Q: Yeah, me, too.

A: I've got a copy.

Q: Me, too.

A: It's interesting.

Q: I love that he dedicated it to Bretton.

A: It's very, it's an interesting style, isn't it, that he has? It's just extraordinarily simple and readable.

Q: I was reading his other book, which has now fallen out of my head. His last one. I remember sat, with my first baby, being in hospital. And she hadn't been born. And I took his book to read. I was in there for a few hours having a blood transfusion. And read one of his books there. And it was the perfect thing to take.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: 'Cause he's got this... and if you're into education, it's the perfect thing to take. But he has a real way about... you're just instantly with him. Well, I am. You're just having the conversation with him.

A: The other person you should go and see is Ian McMillan. Do you know Ian McMillan? Yes, you do. The Verb on Radio 3.

Q: Oh. Goodness. Was he at Bretton?

A: He was at Bretton. And he publicly, every now and then, still, whenever he's on radio, he says, 'Of course, I went to Bretton Hall, and there was this bloke at Bretton Hall called Alec Clegg, and he was God.' I mean, he literally says that.
Q: There's a guy called... I can't remember his name. It'll come to me. In two thousand and seven, when Bretton closed, he did a documentary for Radio 4. He'd been at Bretton. I can't remember his name. And he walked round... And I contacted him very early on, asking for a copy of his radio documentary. He contacted me about two weeks ago, saying that he's proposed another documentary to Radio 4, for the twenty sixteen/seventeen schedule, about Alec Clegg. He got his dates all wrong about seventy years anniversary. He's missed that. It was very wrong. Anyway.

A: So he's, he's doing a documentary for...?

Q: He's, he's kind of, his company... he's based in Sunderland. He teaches at Sunderland; he's based in York. And he's trying to get an idea, a synopsis together to sell it to Radio 4 to do something about Alec Clegg. And he says that he's got Sir Ken Robinson to narrate. And he's asked if I would be, if I'd contribute. Which I would happily contribute to it.

A: Well, they should get Ian McMillan involved, because he is...

Q: Can't remember this guy's name.

A: Yeah, well, that'll be interesting if... Let me just make some notes of things that I've got to send you and you've got to send me.

Q: And let me just... I'm very aware... I don't want to get you locked in. It's twenty past six. I was told we had till about half past.

A: Okay, fine. I mean, I'm not doing anything. Fine.

(Pause)

Q: Get you some space.

A: (...) on the back of this. So...

Q: Oh, I can't remember his name. I'll email it to you. That's so annoying. It was... he did, I think, the... in two thousand and seven, he did a documentary about when Bretton closed. And I think it was called something like The Final Curtain.

A: Oh, right.

Q: For Radio 4. I know he teaches at Sunderland and his business is based in York.

A: I mean, you could get a lot of very interesting people, you see. It was actually, Ian McMillan was on Desert Island Discs when he talked about that guy being God.

Q: Really?

A: It was very interesting.
Q: Your dad, interest... I'm fascinated by your dad. People... 'cause I, I want people to know about your dad, and I don't think people do. And then, and then little things come up like that, that people say... and these little nuggets that make me go, 'You knew about this man. Say it a bit louder.' 'Cause I do see these people of Bretton, and these children that were in his authority, as little satellites. I did read... 'cause the guys from The Extraordinary League of Gentlemen, the Steve Pembertons and... Reece Shearsmith and Steve Pemberton.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Is it Mark Gatiss? Gaytiss?

A: Yes, Mark Gatiss, yeah.

Q: They, or two of them went to Bretton. But I remember reading something by Steve Pemberton, and he said he was reading something, sat in Bretton... And he was quite derogatory about Bretton. And I have to be objective. 'Cause in my head, I was like, 'Don't want to talk to you.' Because he kind of... but then he was here in the kind of nineties. And from what I've heard from staff...

A: It had gone.

Q: It wasn't in a great place.

A: Well, I mean, it went through a terrible time with... well, I mean, John Taylor... I mean, I get on very well with John Taylor. XXXXX Murray doesn't: he thinks he was appalling. I mean, Alyn Davies was the one that I remember most, and he was here in the sixties, I guess, was he? Sixties or seventies. And he was the one that came... you know, when they had, when Leeds University did this appalling thing of closing it down, and they had a celebration of the end of Bretton – and it was a really, it was really appalling. But Alyn Davies was the one that brought it to life. But the guy from Leeds University, he talked about my father as Sir Alex Clegg.

Q: Goodness me.

A: And everybody winced, you know, around the... and there were hundreds of people there.

Q: So disrespectful. When I went round the mansion house, and then the refectory – the only way I can describe it: it sounds as if Leeds did a runner. Because literally, in some offices, there's filing cabinets. There is furniture. In the refectory, there is, there's crockery left. I mean... and this is from two thousand and seven. It just... the whole taste of it is nasty. And I purposely tried to go: 'Stop at seventy-four.' Because, you know, I have a very tiny amount of time to do this. But all of that side of it, you don't even need to know, I think, that much about it to know something very not nice happened down there. It literally feels like they left in the night.

A: Yeah. I, I think it was a purely financial decision, wasn't it? And it was... I mean, I don't know quite why they took them on to expand their, you know, certain aspects of
their curriculum, particularly, I suppose, the educational side. They weren't interested in the fine art side at all. And, and they just were quite ruthless.

Q: There's the building with 'Sir Alec Clegg' emblazoned in gold, and the: 'If thou of fortune...'. When I went inside that building and looked it over, it's really abandoned. And it didn't sit well with me that his name's on there. Because it's there.

A: It was that, it was that bit, that bit of writing, the opening of that, the unveiling of that was this...

Q: Oh, the Ron George...

A: The Ron George thing and Dick Attenborough thing, yeah.

Q: Oh. How interesting.

A: I remember there was this big meal and a big celebration. So it must have been... I think it was to do with my... it was obviously to do with my father rather than Bretton, yeah.

Q: It's really odd, because I'm here every Tuesday at the archive. And when I drive down to there, and it's beautiful, and I see your dad's name – and I think, 'Yes, that's my man; that's my, my Alec.' And I come down. And when I'd then been inside the building, it really sat uncomfortably with me. I didn't want it to be abandoned. I didn't want it to be unloved.

A: Well, it's... something'll happen but it won't happen... it'll happen in the next five years, I think. I mean, the thing is that the, this organisation has become, you know, the YSP has become globally famous, arguably more, much more famous than Bretton Hall ever was, you know. So that's great. And it's just the, I mean, the politics of this situation are that the... someone, someone's got a, an option with Wakefield to turn it into a five-star hotel.

Q: Yes, yes, I know that.

A: Which could be okay.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But personally, I'm not... Well, this is all terribly confidential. I don't think it's the right person. And I think it might, you know, there's gonna be lots more arguments around it.

Q: When I went round the mansion house, and it wasn't my Bretton Hall College... And it's in a state of disrepair. And, and the guy took me up on the roof. And it was literally like: 'Just step where I step.' And it was before I was pregnant, I hasten to add. I wouldn't have been up there... And I did think... 'cause before going in, I thought, 'Nobody can touch this. It's in a bubble in my head.' If nothing happens to that mansion house, it will just rot. And it had a life before Bretton Hall College.
A: Yeah, definitely.

Q: But it will just rot and die. And that somehow feels even worse.

A: Well, it won't, because it's a Grade 1 listed building.

Q: Well, yes, yeah.

A: But...

Q: Do you know what I mean? That ideal.

A: I know, I know. Yeah. And in fact, I've seen worse Grade 1 listed buildings. So it will, something will happen, but it will take... and it will become something completely different.

Q: It will.

A: The only thing is, hopefully we can keep it...

Q: But again, I thought, I thought, what would your dad think of it now? Would he look at it... 'Cause I sometimes... there's a guy with security and his dog. And I've sometimes, you know, snuck into the campus. And it's like Narnia. It's literally overgrown and it's...

A: I wonder what it was like when he first went there.

Q: Beautiful in many... There's people now, the students who are there now, who are trying to save those sixty-four buildings, and people who think the sixty-four buildings are an eyesore and get rid of them.

A: The students are trying to save them, are they?

Q: Yeah.

A: That's interesting.

Q: I don't think there's anything official, but ones I've spoken to... Because for a lot of people at Bretton, they met their partners. It's when you're a student for the first time. It's all of that involved.

A: I mean, I think they're interesting buildings. I think they're... you know, I mean, I, I deal with, do lots of work with existing buildings and listed buildings and whatever. And I think it would be very difficult to put a case for keeping them, because they're really cheaply built and everything.

Q: They are. I mean, again, being...

A: They're spirit of the age, but it's, you know, all it's telling you about the age is that it was done on an absolute shoestring budget.
Q: But I think as we all are, you become rose-tinted about parts of your life. And they come back and they remember, you know, being here at this fantastic time. Because of course, before sixty-four, students lived in the mansion house. So the people I've interviewed from the fifties, the sixty-four building's nothing.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's the mansion house that means something to them. But it is... when I'm there on a Tuesday, and I think, this is...

A: That was the great thing about, about buying places like that, that you could get students in next year.

Q: And I said to Derek Andrews, who came straight from national service in fifty-two, and he just said he couldn't believe... I said, 'What were your first impressions of Bretton?' He said, 'I couldn't believe they'd taken me. You know, I'd come to this, to this stately home.' And you have to be in that mindset, don't you? Going, 'Crikey.' You know, he came with his short back and sides to, to teach, and to this stately home. And he was allowed to live in it.

A: Oh, he came to teach in fifty-two?

Q: Well, he came to be taught to teach, I suppose.

A: Oh, I see, right.

Q: He was a student.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. Because I think before then, as I remember, I mean, basically, they were looking for... they were teaching, they were training teachers in schools. You know, they were doing evening classes in schools and...

Q: Slightly ad hoc, in a way.

A: It was incredibly ad hoc, you know. Because they, there was this desperate need for teachers. And, you know, just... it was that whole thing, I think: the exciting thing of turning a country around.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it must have been great. If you, if you had the opportunities that he had in the fifties and sixties, you know, the enthusiasm and excitement must have been palpable.

Q: Completely. Derek said he came from national service, and he met his wife here. Both still alive. I went to Ely to interview them.

A: Oh, right.
Q: But Margo Andrew came, she came from Slade, trained at Slade. Nan Youngman had advised her to come.

A: Oh, right.

Q: And so, and even Derek said, like... and both of them said Bretton in the fifties was slightly... the group of very well educated, lots of knowledge about art students, and national service, which is, obviously government policy was getting people in to teach.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: But there was never them-and-us mentality. They all just kind of got on. And again, I think that must... there's something to do with spirit of the age. But again, how they were taught, and how the staff were. And they had dinner together. Everybody had dinner and... It really feels like a golden age.

A: Well, I think that was the sort of camaraderie, you know, that actually was characteristic of that era. I mean, of the West Riding in that era. I don't know whether it existed across the other, other counties. Probably did in some counties. But the other thing about Woolley, you know, the thing that I remember him spending a lot of time talking about was going to teach the caretakers at Woolley.

Q: Yeah.

A: Do you know about that? I mean, that's fascinating.

Q: I know pockets of... there's something... again, he talks, and Eric talks about... actually, Eric talks about there. That Alec set up a training centre for school caretakers.

A: Yeah, in the stable block at Woolley. I don't know whether it's... I don't think anything's still there.

Q: No.

A: But that was... I can't remember his name. Not Bill... Bill Bielby was the, the bee-keeper.

Q: Oh, yes. I was talking about that yesterday with Eric, that they kept bees, and Eric and...

A: Because that was part of what you did as education officer. Because during the war, they needed to produce honey. And the government just said, 'Okay, who have we got to produce honey?' And the only... they thought the best people to do it would be the rural science departments in schools. So they, so after that, all the county education officers were in charge of all the bees in the country as well as all the kids.

Q: I love that. I love all those little...
A: Yeah. And my dad was a bee-keeper.

Q: Yeah. I was talking to Eric about it yesterday. And then Eric kind of went slightly off on a tangent, and he said, 'Alec did come here once.' And he said he remembers you as a very small boy.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And he... I don't know if you'd been to Eric's house. Maybe you had. But he said your father had come for dinner, must have been with your mother. And then Eric and your dad washed up. And... because for a long time, your dad was a very distinguished-looking man in a suit.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And then you get to know this man and get to know... those little...

A: He used to wash up, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah. Because Eric as well... Eric's very...

A: Yeah.

Q: I think Eric's probably quite... Eric's eighty-eight but probably about forty in his head.

A: Yes.

Q: And he's on the button. He's really on the button. And he likes to still be challenged intellectually, and he likes to really grill you and all of that stuff.

A: The other thing that I remember, when they all came together... it's interesting, 'cause I was saying we never had people round, but obviously we did. We had these bloody Secretaries of State round. And every year they did have a garden party, my dad had a garden party, at which basically all his staff and all the staff's, and all the staff's partners... I mean, they weren't all men, but a lot of the wives. But also the, the... a lot of them were female spinsters, in a sense. So they were all, they were all invited. And I remember those very, very well, because there was a lot of, there was a lot of good humour. There was a lot of... And they were a really interesting bunch of people. And we had this big garden. I don't know whether you've... did you go and see our house?

Q: No.

A: No, you didn't see the house at Saxton. I mean, it was a funny old house. But it was an acre of ground that they bought, you know. I assume, when he got this job, you know, having been elevated to a very, reasonably high salary, you know, he could afford to buy an acre of land on the outskirts of Saxton, and built a really ugly house in nineteen fifty, with a beautiful garden, you know, and brought... you know, he brought the... I mean, the county education officer designed it, or someone of the
junior people. It was paid outside, you know. It was properly paid. But the county horticultural advisors to schools came along and planted the garden with my dad. I remember a woman called Molly Schooling, who came with this other county horticultural advisor. And Bill Bielby came and delivered some bees and, you know...

Q: But then my head goes, why wouldn't you do that? If you're in his position, why...

A: Well, I think the whole thing about getting... I think those were very important things, actually. It looked, it felt... probably a little bit felt a bit sort of lord of the manor type thing, entertaining people. But I mean, it was, it was great. It was good fun. It was, they were... and they were very jolly people, a lot of them. I got to know quite a lot of them quite well, you know. Reg Isles particularly, and his wife is still probably around.

Q: I wonder if some of those staff as well, though, if that made them feel... I don't know if the word is special. But if your dad's there going, 'Come and do this. This is in my personal life; this is my home; this is my garden.'

A: Absolutely, yeah. You know, he did... yes, very much that, yeah.

Q: So that kind of building of a relationship. Which doesn't... whether there isn't the time to do it now or, goodness, the million and one reasons, but that doesn't seem to happen today in places where we work. There seems often to be delineation always.

A: No, that's true, that's true.

Q: And there isn't that...

A: It's interesting, isn't it?

Q: Yeah. That you tend to do your... I remember saying once, years ago, to colleagues, 'You know, I spend more time here than with my husband and with my... which will be children. I spend more time with you. And there's got to be something in that that... those exchanges have got to be the best we can make them. Because you don't get them again.' Is it time to go?

A2: Didn't know you were recording.

Q: We can wrap up.

A2: Yeah, yeah. I've just been to see the security guard.

(End of recording)
Q: And, yes, I remember saying to some colleagues, and then to some students, actually, 'You know, when you get into that world of work, try and make those exchanges good. 'Cause you don't get the chance again. And if you've driven to work in a bad mood, that's nobody else's fault. You have...' You know, it's kind of trying to present, trying to present your best when you're at work, because you spend more time with those people.

A: Well, I imagine that he was very, you know, he was probably much better than I am at actually making small talk with people and communicating with people. And, you know, he was probably, he probably did feel that that was his sort of role, in a kind of patriarchal sort of sense.

Q: When I first spoke to Nancy Smith, who I'm seeing tomorrow, who again is... I mean, I'm very impressed by these...  

A: Who's Nancy Smith, she...?

Q: She's Miss still. She's still a spinster. Miss Nancy Smith. And she's a headteacher. And... I've forgotten the school she's... It's fallen out of my head. But again, I mean, very impressed by all of these... all faculty very well presented. Very living and breathing West Riding as was. When I first spoke to Nancy conversationally, and talked about your dad, and literally, like, her face lit up. And, and I said, 'He seems like he was very charismatic to me, Nancy.' And she said, 'Yes. To work in one of Alec's schools...' And you could see that she was, there was a real sense of: 'I work for Alec.' And she liked that. And there must have been a charisma and a something that, you know, they were happy and...  

A: Well, I think... Yeah. I think, firstly, I don't think education officers went round to see their schools.

Q: No, I think you're right.

A: And secondly, he probably was... you know, his attitude generally was: 'Let's get the best out of this person by praising them.'

Q: Yeah, yeah. Yeah, completely.

A: And there's that Michelangelo quote.

Q: Yes.

A: You know the Michelangelo quote?

Q: Yes. It might have been here, actually, but...

A: Which I don't know where that comes from. I've been trying to... I think it's maybe fabricated. I can't believe he'd say that.

Q: Well, I described... Last year, I had to give a presentation at my university to progress on to the next year of study, and have I done enough, do I know enough.
And I described your dad as a bit of a parablist. He seemed to use stories and anecdotes to make his point. And the Michelangelo, you know, where if you praise somebody – Michelangelo said, 'If you praise me, you'll get the best out of me.' And I think that's how I see him a bit. He was very... And Eric said he and another guy would send quotes to your dad, and your dad would use them to great effect. It wasn't just like he threw it in. He really used it.

A: He had his book of quotes definitely. And he had... he used to reel those off to us as well. And he loved... he actually really got into the history of education. He loved the history of education.

Q: He quotes Thring, Edward Thring...

A: Edward Thring was big.

Q: ...a lot.

A: Yeah. And, yeah, and who else? Michael Sadler, who's...

Q: Yes.

A: Who also thought... Michael Sadler knew my grandfather quite well.

Q: Oh, right.

A: At Long Eaton. And wrote, wrote his obituary, actually, my grandfather's obituary.

Q: Goodness.

A: And then he came to Leeds, didn't he? He was a professor at Leeds, I think.

Q: I don't know.

A: And who else? There was an amazing guy, who used to work, who was the headmaster of Wakefield Grammar School in the sixteenth, seventeenth century, called Charles Gould.

Q: Oh, yes, yes, yes. 'Cause that's... Eric... I think this is back in the nineties.

A: He used to have all of those.

Q: Well, Eric put this together in ninety-one. Now, these are quotes that your dad used a lot. And this is, this is Eric's contribution.

A: I see.

Q: Eric needs a bit of something about him, actually, as well. But these are things that, that your dad used.
A: Yeah. You know about when, you know about the story about when my dad did meet Margaret Thatcher?

Q: No.

A: Oh. Well, she... this is, you know, this... My great-aunt Belle...

Q: Yes. When they were children, and they... I know when they were children, as in they were taught... is that right? They were taught by your great-aunt Belle, or there was something...

A: My great-aunt Belle taught Margaret Thatcher at Grantham Girls' School.

Q: Right, right.

A: And she was a ferocious woman according to my father. But she did have this on her wall, you know. She was a, she was a ferocious spinster teacher. And she taught Margaret Thatcher. And when he eventually met Margaret Thatcher, when she was head of, when she was Education Secretary.

Q: Crikey.

A: Milk-snatcher.

Q: Yeah. Think she probably snatched my milk. I was born in seventy-four. I was born the year it was all...

A: Oh, right. Oh, it was all happening, yeah.

Q: …disorganised.

A: Yeah, so this must have been about sixty-nine or something, I think. Or something.

Q: Probably.

A: Anyway, so, and so he said to her, you know, 'Good evening, good evening, Mrs. Thatcher. I gather you knew my great-aunt, my aunt.' And she immediately said to him, 'Yes. I think she had very different ideas on education to you, Sir Alec.' And that was it.

Q: Goodness.

A: That was it.

Q: She was a force.

A: She was formidable herself.

Q: Yeah, wasn't she just?
A: So this is interesting. Oh, yeah, Thring was Uppingham, wasn't he?

Q: Yeah.

A: Can I have a copy of this? Have you...

Q: I can send you a copy, if you want.

A: Have you got it on, digitally?

Q: No, there's very little digital at the archive currently. I, actually, I could, I can scan it for you and send it. I can try and get it to you digitally.

A: That'd be really interesting. Oh, this is... oh, Robert Lurie, yes. God, I remember all these things.

Q: I'm not sure where... 'cause this, Eric's put this together. There isn't always a reference to where they're always from sometimes. So the context isn't always there.

A: Robert Lurie and payment by results.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Yeah, he could have, he could have written a lot more comprehensively about architectural, the history of architectural... of education, the history of education than he did. I'm just, I'm just writing a book about school design.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yeah. So I'm quoting a bit about, a bit about him and Tadcaster Grammar School, and a bit about my grandfather, Sam Clegg.

Q: I think you may have met Doctor Catherine Burke, who's at Cambridge.

A: I know her quite well, yeah, very well.

Q: She was at the archive a few weeks ago.

A: Oh, was she?

Q: And I started to talk to her, and she asked, you know, what I was doing.

A: Yeah.

Q: Which is really hard to say a PhD in about two lines. So I said what I was doing, and she said, oh, that she was looking at something about... maybe classroom design.

A: Probably, yes. She was...
Q: She’s put in funding for something postdoctoral, and so she gave me her card.

A: Oh, right.

Q: And so I said, 'Keep in touch, then, please.'

A: Well, we did a, we did a little thing with her. We helped her with some research into two of the post-war architects of that era, for David and Mary Medd.

Q: Yes.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes. I did look for... 'cause Mary Medd wrote a book. Did she write a book, or was it written about her? Quite a famous book.

A: She was another one... that was very... You know, sometimes I think, with these women that my father met, there was something a bit more. It was very odd, 'cause I met David Medd. He must have been ninety-four. He's now died. They've both died.

Q: (Coughs) Excuse me.

A: And I, when I met him at Oundle, which was his school, posh prep... because we did a job there. And, and I said, 'Did you know my father?' He said, 'Well, it was Mary who really knew your dad. Mary was very close to your dad.' Okay.

Q: 'Cause there's, there's a book... I don't know whether it's a book that Mary wrote or was written about her. I looked on Amazon. Amazon's a good stomping ground for old books that nobody really wants. And it's about a hundred pounds. This book is really... It might have been the book that Catherine... did Catherine write the book about Mary?

A: She might have done.

Q: I've got a feeling it's the one that she wrote.

A: Yeah. We helped her with a bit of research for one of the primary schools.

Q: Because again, with my undergrad was, as I said, history of design and architecture. And then I got very interested in learning spaces and how we learn. And my husband actually works – this is an aside – but works at University of Hull. And he and I looked at technology in learning, how we actually use this and maybe not replace a teacher, and that dichotomy, and that this is a classroom, and all of those things. But yeah, very interested in... and when I started PhD, I didn't know if that's where I'd end up, in schools with Alec. But then you of course then... I have to add something new. I can't just regurgitate what he did.

A: Well, it'd be great if you did something better than what's been done so far, which is not going to be that difficult.
Q: It's the two books, mainly. The Nora George and XXXXX Darvill are quite hard reads.

A: They're just all over the place.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they haven't quite grasped...

Q: When I first started, very early on, I read, got XXXXX Darvill's book, and I just thought, 'If this is what it's all going to be like, I can't do this.' 'Cause you think: 'Crikey.' And then you do... and then I think, actually, in a way... and it did feel like: 'Oh my goodness. If this is the literature about, about Sir Alec... oh my goodness.' And then you realise, actually, that's a really good obstacle, because it made me just really try and unpack what I wanted to do, and that I had to and wanted to find some, something... as I've put, like, there's an, there's an uncaptured narrative about Bretton, about Bretton in its own right – which, again, is beyond my PhD. I would, and I will keep...

A: Has anybody done a history of Bretton, then, of the college?

Q: Not really. Not of the college. Leonard at the archive...

A: Bartle, yes.

Q: Bartle. My brain... sorry, my memory's dreadful today. Has written, written... something like this, about Bretton as a house, its history from year dot.

A: Yeah. I mean, that's... yes, that's kind of interesting. And the garden buildings and stuff.

Q: Yeah. But there's nothing per se about...

A: But someone should do a history of Bretton Hall,;Bretton and its contribution to arts education.

Q: Yeah. Because my... yeah, my PhD, in many ways, is a toe in the water. An eighty-thousand-word thesis is a toe in the water, really. And I have to be very specific, because I'm in the framework of an educational hoop. I have to meet certain...

A: Yeah, no, that's right. So I know you have to be very clinical about it.

Q: Yeah, actually. But in terms of my methodology, I've looked at using storytelling and narrative. Which is why this today isn't me asking a question, you answering. Because I didn't... I think, I think your dad was a bit of a parablist, and there was much more... and that's how I wanted to approach this.
A: It's interesting, yeah. Yeah, he was a storyteller. He used to enjoy... he had a few entertaining stories. And I was just, I was thinking, you know, the... I mean, the people that, the people... when you talk about charisma, it's my cousins who have... you know, Dick and David both... I mean, Dick had. They have oodles of charisma, you know, and they are such nice people, or were. I mean, David... you should go and meet David, because he will, if you, if you talk to him nicely about my dad, and say you want specific answers... I mean, he... 'cause he, you know, he knew my... he stood at the funeral of my mum and said, 'I've known this woman more than...'

Q: It's fine, it's fine. It is emotive stuff.

A: So, so he knew...

Q: I did write to David, and he wrote back to me, handwritten letter – he took the time – and just said he would be... beautifully worded, you know. Delighted to answer any question if I could write something to him. I'm assuming he's just very busy.

A: Well, he is very busy, and he's also getting a bit old now.

Q: Yeah. Well, crikey, isn't he about eighty-eight?

A: He's eighty-seven, eighty-eight, yeah. Yeah, and still working full time.

Q: But again... and I think it might... I need to get my reference on this, but he's written a forward in one of the books that I think your dad had written. And he, he refers obviously to your dad as Uncle Alec. And there's something about a memory he has of your dad on the beach, 'cause... as quite a young man. And that...

A: He used to live with them.

Q: Oh, I didn't know that.

A: Yeah, because his parents died when he was at college.

Q: Oh.

A: They both died in nineteen thirty, when my dad was twenty or twenty-one. So he was at Cambridge, and he didn't have a home all of a sudden.

Q: Of course.

A: So when he went back from university, you know, during the holidays, he used to go and stay with the Attenboroughs, because they had this big house and, you know...

Q: 'Cause even then, the way that it's been written by David... and I suppose, as you are when you're a child and you have aunts and uncles that are older than you, even he writes in a way that – and these are my words – but as if they're slightly hero-worshipping your dad. He was this young, fit, athletic uncle, who was fun, and on the beach and...
A: Oh definitely. Because he, he was... you know, there is... I mean, David tells that story very well – you should try and get him to tell you first-hand – of... The thing is that he was, my dad was halfway exactly between David's age and his father's age. And so he was... and he was this, you know... So when David was ten or something, my dad was twenty-one or something. And so there are all these, you know, there are all these things about bringing girlfriends home and introducing them to the family; and, you know, he talks fondly of meeting my mum and thinking how gorgeous she was.

Q: Well, that picture...

A: All these three boys, just kind of...

Q: I imagine.

A: And, you know, turning cartwheels on the lawn.

Q: That picture of your dad as a young man.

A: Yeah.

Q: And that, and you think, that must be a slight reference point to David and...

A: Yeah.

Q: To have that type of person in your life, who was just full of life and full of... must have been attractive. And to think, 'Wow, that's my uncle.'

A: Yeah. Because their father was... I mean, it's funny, isn't it? I mean, father-son relationships are very different from everything else, aren't they? I mean, it's evident from what I've been telling you as well, I think. But, you know, I always used... I didn't know my Uncle Fred very well, really. But I think to them, to Dick and David, they, he was, he was a bit of a fierce old bugger, you know, Fred Attenborough. Whereas my father was, you know, allowed them to break the rules and things.

Q: Yeah. I watched a documentary, lots of documentaries, when Dick died. And again, a lot of them are quite – they were done in the seventies – were quite, seemed quite dated, 'cause he's done a lot since then. But there was a shot of Dick in his study, and if he... there was a picture on the wall of his dad, of Fred.

A: The governor, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And even that, the language just... and you think, crikey.

A: Well, Dick particularly used to call him the governor. Don't think David called his father the governor. But, you know, it was just... and he was really scared. I mean, he was... I think he had a difficult, very difficult relationship. Because I mean, he was, well, he used to talk about his always failing his father because he never got, went to... never got into Cambridge.
Q: Yeah, he said that in one of these interviews, that he must... and he, he, he says it as if he's really carrying it, that he's somehow really let his father down.

A: Yeah, yeah, that's right. And I wonder whether there isn't something about that thing, you know. Because I think my father let his father down. You know, I never, I never let mine down.

Q: No, no.

A: Well, I mean, it's kind of interesting that... Although he was never that interested in what I would do. But he was, he was... from my point of view, and from my brothers' point of view – you should probably go and talk to them if you want as well – but from my point of view, he was extraordinarily authoritarian, in a very nice way.

Q: Yeah, I can imagine that.

A: You know, there was amazing moral authority that he drove the family with, you know.

Q: Yes.

A: I mean, if you imagine, you know, persuading three teenage boys they all had to get up at seven-thirty to practise musical instruments...

Q: Good luck.

A: You know, you had to persuade them, persuade us to do two hours of gardening every Saturday morning.

Q: Crikey.

A: You know, and we just did it. And you, you know, the values were there, good, solid left-wing values. And if you, but if you went a bit too far to the left, you were in dangerous territory, you know. And, you know, I remember my father... the one thing that he did... he did, he did have this way of saying, applying huge pressure very lightly. He would say things like, 'You know, well, I don't, I know I don't really have to worry about you, because I know you always do your best, you know.'

Q: Yeah.

A: And you kind of think, 'God, I've got to do my best. Jesus Christ, you know.'

Q: Raise your game.

A: Raise the game, yeah. But the fact that, you know: 'I know you will do your best...'

Q: Yeah. So built in: you just can't let him down.

A: No.
Q: Yeah.

A: And it was, it was a little bit manipulative, I think. But, you know, but he never laid a finger on us. I remember, actually, I remember once he kind of lost his cool and laid a finger on me. But it was just so weird and extraordinary. He was obviously under huge pressure.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: But the other thing... interesting that all these things are coming back. At one stage, I did something – I can't remember what it was, but I'd been a bit naughty and gone out and... I can't remember what it was at all. But it was something that I'd done that was naughty. I didn't turn up to do some gardening or something. I don't know. It seemed to me pretty minor. But he said to me, 'You know, I'm never gonna forgive you for that.' You know...

Q: Oh.

A: 'I'll always love you, but I'm never gonna forgive you for that.' And that was... I thought, 'Jesus Christ,' you know. And I think this was when... I didn't think that, you know. But that's, I think... I mean, I remember the power of that. And I remember when... you know, he was, he must have been under a lot of pressure, 'cause it was a really kind of uncharacteristically mean thing to say. And I remember when he did, you know, he was just about to go to, off to Australia, and he did, you know, we did have some tears. He said sorry.

Q: Yeah, yes. Because, yeah, the, the pressure that he must have carried and who he was...

A: Yeah.

Q: And even, that doesn't change today. We all need some valve. We all need... whatever that might be. And unfortunately, when you have children, you snap.

A: Yeah, you do, yeah.

Q: And then you, and then afterwards, you're like, 'Why did I say that?'

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. But he did: he hung onto it for two or three days. And I know that my mother had to sort of intervene and say, 'You know, he's miserable. You've got to go and...'

Q: Yeah. As you have got older, and have a very successful career yourself, do you, do you see parts of your dad in you?

A: Oh, God, I don't know. Uh... partly, but not really. I mean, you know, I have a sort of grandfatherly role in a large practice now, you know.

Q: Yes, yes.
A: And they do, you know, they, they look up to me for various things. And I, you know, everybody tells me that I have a lot of unacknowledged sort of power and... but not power, but... I mean, not charisma, really. But, you know, an ability to actually influence people without doing that much, just by being around. So they just say, 'Well, just be around and talk to us, you know.' And one of the things I don't do is, I don't go and talk to people enough, and round them up round my office. If I spent more time just going and talking to people, the place would be better, so I'm told. Not that that's... you know, it's, it's fine.

Q: Yeah.

A: So I think there's, you know, there's a little bit of acknowledging that sort of influence. And someone told me the other day I had... what was the phrase they used? I was completely without ego. Which is not true, really. But I think, I think my father didn't have much ego.

Q: No, I would completely agree with that. Because I... as very outside eyes, I do think that you both had and have... there is a drive or there's an ambition.

A: Huge ambition, yeah.

Q: Whether it's like a fire...

A: Yeah, there's huge ambition.

Q: Yeah. To... and maybe it doesn't need to be more defined than that. But there is something within, I see in both of you, to achieve something, to keep moving forward, to not just go: 'Right, I've done that, and I can be on my laurels now; I'll be remembered for whatever.' Both of you have got something.

A: No, I think that's right. And I don't know how... I think for a lot of people who have ambition, they also have ego. I think that's the thing.

Q: Yes. Yeah, yeah, I think you're right.

A: You know, and I think, and I think probably... and it's the same with the Attenboroughs, you know. You can't imagine a nicer, less egotistical person than David. And, you know, there's something maybe in the genes that we don't have to, we don't have to have all the praise that people want to shower us. We don't do it for the praise; we do it for some... we do it for ourselves, really.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, that's the thing. I... when, you know, when... my ambitions are, are to do buildings that I think are amazing. They're not really to do buildings that other people think are amazing, you know. Which I think you would need ego for, right?

Q: Yes.
A: And you'd need to sort of bask in glory and stuff. And I don't, I don't really have that need, I don't think.

Q: And I don't think your father had that need.

A: No, I don't think he did. I think it was purely... I mean, he did, he liked, he really liked being liked, I think.

Q: Yeah, yeah, I could see that. I think, I think he wanted to do a good job.

A: Yeah.

Q: That sounds slightly crass, but I think he wanted to do a good job. When I've tried to... again, 'cause, you know, I, I have to be objective. Because I like this man. And it's very, a lot of it's actually quite emotive as well. But trying to then put clinical PhD eyes on it. I'm gonna reform the PhD next, I think. I tried to go, 'Okay, so we have, we have kind of a Clegg set of values, and he went to a Quaker school in York. And then we have the Attenborough set of... but this is one extended family.' And I suppose a bit of what you've been saying, trying to kind of... there seems... and this sounds quite crass, actually. But, like, something in the genes. There's something about you all. And you're all men from, interestingly, on this point of view.

A: That's right, yeah, yeah, yeah. Well, he was the only... he had four sisters, and his father had four sisters.

Q: But there isn't, I wouldn't describe any of you with the word ego in it. But you have all really achieved, and are still achieving. And that's, I think that's quite unusual. 'Cause you're right: ambition and achieving goes hand in hand with having a big... And then people become their ego, don't they? I remember seeing Tony Blair the day after he'd lost the election – going back now a few years – coming down the stairs on a BBC interview. And the guy from the BBC News said, went to say 'Prime Minister.' And he paused, and he said, 'I don't know what to call you.' And he said, 'Call me Tony.' And it's like the job title had gone. He was just Tony. And that stuck with me as well. As if, had his, had... whatever we think of his politics, had his ego... He was Prime Minister, and then... he went to bed Prime Minister one day and woke up the next day and wasn't.

A: Yeah, yeah. Well, he was always a good one for a quip, Blair, wasn't he? He was very clever.

Q: Yeah, very clever.

A: I think the, the genes probably go back to Sam Clegg, really. And I think... you know, who died twenty years before me, before I was born. And I've always been fascinated by him, and he's the reason I became an architect, in a way. 'Cause he designed his own school.

Q: Yes, yes. I do remember reading that.
A: And I think, I think he was... I don't know quite what it was about him, but it was partly his relationship to that particular community. Because, you know, there is this extraordinary book called Cooperation in Long Eaton, which is, you know, about the history of Long Eaton and the cooperative at Long Eaton, which, after Rochdale and the pioneers and whatever, you know, was actually... So there was that sort of thing. And I think if you go back further than that, his, you know, his father was a Baptist school, primary school teacher – who was, seems to be an extraordinarily boring, very... I mean, terribly principled, in a very religious way. But, you know, used to write a diary. I've still got all his diaries. And every day, it was just a standard entry, you know. 'Thank God for this and this,' and thanking God for this and that, you know. And it's all...

Q: Crikey.

A: …very weird. So, and I think Sam Clegg was a rebel, and was a, was a community leader, I think, and somehow... and, and was... I don't know where he got his passion for the arts from. Couldn't think anybody did.

Q: No. 'Cause often, when I've read things by Sam Clegg, and then I suppose trying to, trying to, in a way, transpose that onto what, things that your dad said, about how your grandfather influenced your father. And I think some of that does come back to that father-son relationship thing.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Which I don't... not being a son or a father – whether, as one gets older, whether that becomes less important or more important. Because, you know, we tend to reflect back, don't we, again, and...?

A: Well, I think it must have been a big thing that, you know, he had four older sisters, and he was the youngest and a son. And, you know, huge, huge expectations, just as my father had huge expectations of me, I suppose. But sort of had expectations of all of us, I think. You know, it's, it was... I think we were both driven by parental, by paternal expectation.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Did you come to Bretton very often as a child?

A: Not really, no. No, not at all. I'm just kind of thinking. We used to go to Woolley, because my godmother was there, you know. She was, we used to go and see Diana at Woolley. And we used to go to Grantley Hall, which is, you know, the other one. I used to go to the music, music courses there. No, we didn't come to Bretton that much at all.

Q: When I spoke to Margo and Derek Andrews, who were students in, in fifty-two to fifty-four, and they talk, I mean, lovingly of Bretton, and of John Friend, who was the first principal.

A: Oh, yeah, yeah.
Q: And I said, 'Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg?' And they just said, 'No.' First off, point blank no. And then as the day wore on, and then Derek said, 'Actually, we went to a lecture that he gave us. We were in an audience.' And I said, 'Are you aware, when you were... were you aware who Alec was?' And he said, 'No, not really.' And I said, 'So who, for you, was the figurehead?' And they said John Friend.

A: John Friend, yeah.

Q: Which then obviously, 'cause I'm looking in some ways about policy as well, about how your father was, was a policy-maker in many ways. And again, it's about choosing... 'Cause John Friend writes about, he was surprised to get the job.

A: He was the first director, was he?

Q: Yeah, first principal, yeah.

A: In the fifties, yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And he came, and he talks about how he had about... his old employer wouldn't let him leave his job early, so he had about two weeks to get in post. And there's a lovely quote that I've used...

A: Do you know where he came from?

Q: I can't remember. I should... I do know. Where he talks about, the students were arriving on the first day of term, and literally beds are being put upstairs as, as children, as students are coming in through the door. And this real 'we're all in it together' atmosphere.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Of staff, of students, of it just all being in. But again, it's really interesting to hear some of the students... And actually, Margo at one point, she said, 'You'll have to tell us about Alec. You have to fill us in.' And so I kind of said, 'You know, really, it's not his work with schools. I'm really looking at Bretton.' But I suppose talked sweepingly a bit about your dad. But I found that fascinating as well.

A: That they didn't know him?

Q: Yeah. Because I suppose my then very academic eyes on this are kind of... they've had this, for them, they've had this fantastic career; they, they see Bretton as a real starting point – and that's down to your dad. In many ways, he's the founder of Bretton. That was down to this man. And they don't, they don't...

A: I think he would probably say, 'Well, we just had to do it, you know.' And that, like all local authorities around the country did it, you know. They set up teacher training colleges.

Q: I think it's how he did it. This, I suppose, goes back to the start of our conversation. He chose, he chose very well.
A: Yeah, he did, yeah. No, he was a great delegator as well – really good at delegating.

Q: Yeah.

A: Interesting, I think I'm probably pretty good at delegating as well.

Q: That comes through when he writes... And I think that comes again back to he's very self-effacing. In some ways, he seems quite reluctant to take the praise, to go: 'No, no, no; this person did this.' But he, he's behind...

A: I was talking to... I can't remember her name. Behind the shop. The person that runs the shop. The older woman that runs the shop.

Q: I don't know.

A: Anyway, she, she's always very jolly. I always, we always have a chat. And she said she met someone the other day who knew John Friend very well. And today, someone today came in who knew John Friend very well.

Q: People are slightly, it's like they make pilgrimages back here.

A: Yeah, they do, yeah, yeah.

Q: They really do. And again, when I talk to people, and I talk to them... it's just anecdotal, really, but about YSP. And they're just kind of thrilled that it's here. But they come back. It's like a pilgrimage. They just like to be in the environment and... But I'm astounded by the people. I mean, very elderly people.

A: It's interesting that no one has written a book about... I mean, given, given its achievements...

Q: Oh, yeah.

A: Maybe I'll talk to Ken Robinson about that. Maybe we should do something about it.

Q: Something really needs to be written about it. I've spoken to one of the... Jeanette Ayton, who was a volunteer. She worked at Bretton towards the end.

A: Right.

Q: And she didn't come back to Bretton for about seven years. She wouldn't come back. I mean, really bad experiences. And she also was a union rep, and I think she then carried everybody else's. But she's talking to some of the people who were at Bretton. And I will pass my PhD and want to do a lot more about all of this. And there needs to be something about Bretton, at Bretton, for my money. There needs to be something there, where these... When I first started to look at interviewing, what I'd like to do, I literally one day went through a list of people where you just put a line
through their name: they've just died. There is a period of time to capture this data, capture these narratives.

A: It's... oh God. Richard. The last head of, the last of the heads of the broken-up communities, the broken-up counties, was called Richard. He was head of Wakefield.

Q: Don't know.

A: He had Parkinson's disease in the end as well. I thought he was still alive, though.

Q: I don't... A lot of, I suppose... I don't want to say a lot of information, but a lot of things I kind of know, often it is anecdotally.

A: Yeah.

Q: People don't realise what they know. Or they'll go: 'Such and such lives there.' Again, I was talking to... and I've got to know Eric over the last, the last two years, really.

A: Where's he live?

Q: He's at Woolley.

A: Oh, is he?

Q: Yeah, he's still in the house they built in nineteen fifty-six.

A: Oh, really?

Q: I went yesterday. It was a lovely day. You realise, though, how elderly and, how elderly people on their own live. And living in immaculate... I think his wife Joan died about three or four years ago. And just living in a capsule.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And he made lunch for me, and was just very grateful to have somebody to eat his lunch with. 'Cause of course, I, I see him every week, but I... we're in an environment.

A: What do you mean, you see him every week?

Q: At the archive.

A: He comes to the...?

Q: Yeah.

A: Eric goes to the archive?
Q: Every Tuesday. We both go every Tuesday. He volunteers. Often look at a lot of your dad's papers, sorting through stuff.

A: Oh, gosh. I should come and see him, shouldn't I?

Q: You should. And I come and I...

A: Well, say hello to him, because I...

Q: I certainly will.

A: Yeah.

Q: He...

A: And I, if I knew him better, I'd go and, go and see him.

Q: Well, this is a complete aside. We got to last Christmas... 'Cause one of his sons lives in America; another son lives in Cambridgeshire. And I said to have a happy Christmas, and he didn't have to be by himself. And I said, 'Look, just come to our house.' And I... I just thought, 'I can't let you be by yourself.' And he said... I live in the East Riding. And he said, he said, 'Oh, can I have your address? Where do you live?' And I said, 'Yes, you can.' Anyway, the last minute, he said, 'My son said I can go there.' 'Cause he drives and everything, and it just... and then of course seeing him yesterday... And I suppose we've developed a friendship. I started my career in museums, and he was a museum officer. But he's everything. I mean, sharp as a tack. Questioning me, you know, about your knowledge. And it is quite... you need to know your stuff when you talk to Eric. And had a lovely day with him. But yeah, he lives in the house they built. He said they were the first people there, and they built, and they planted their garden – which is of course now huge – and then houses have grown up around where they are. And actually, you'd probably... his house is very, very of its time.

A: Fifties.

Q: Yeah.

A: Light-rendered or something.

Q: It's, it's wooden-clad.

A: Oh, is it?

Q: Everything's wooden. And inside, like...

A: Who designed it?

Q: Don't know. It looks very, it looks slightly... it is very fifties, but it's very... Like in the seventies, when everything got cladded...
A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Everything, everything. It's a lot like that. But I mean, you know, immaculate.

A: I... yeah. I don't... I tried to snoop around Woolley Hall a few years ago.

Q: Did you?

A: But you can't get in.

Q: No, I've had no joy. I had... I did get into the mansion house, but again, it was going through the council and slight hoop-jumping. Which I can, I can see a little bit. But you just want to go, 'You know, I'm just... I'm not out to kind of do anything.' But yeah, it's hard to get into any of it, really. But then again, a lot of it... I suppose 'cause I'm finding... I don't innately know this. I'm learning about it. And sometimes it's the... people make snippets of conversation. You kind of catch it and you think, 'Crikey. What was that?' And get, and get to, I suppose, a very interesting place, for me. But Eric's in Woolley, and every Tuesday at the archive.

A: The other thing that you might be interested in, if you've got an architectural background as well, is that English Heritage have written a draft of a study of about... it's post-war schools architecture of about half a dozen counties, including the West Riding.

Q: Really?

A: Mm. I can send you a copy of that.

Q: Yes, please.

A: There's a guy called... I think he's called Geraint John or something, at English Heritage. Anyway, I'll forward that to you.

Q: Yes, please.

A: And it, it talks about, talks about my school, Tadcaster Grammar School. Talks about middle schools. It talks about dad quite a bit.

Q: Goodness.

A: So what they're doing is, they're going round, you see, this is... and sort of catching up with the listing. Because they're going to start thinking, 'Well, okay, where are the best examples of nineteen-fifties schools that haven't been bastardised or...?' And actually, Tadcaster's probably one of them, Tadcaster Grammar School. You probably don't know it, but it's just...

Q: No. I literally drove through Tadcaster to get to Saxton.

A: Oh, right. Yeah, yeah. Well, there's, the new school was built out of town, at Toulston, Toulston Lodge. It was another one of these things: taking over an old
building, buying it for a song and then just building a school in it. Yeah, I'll send you, I'll send you a copy.

Q: Thank you. What do your... I don't think I've asked you this. What do you think he would think of the redevelopment of Bretton? Do you think he would... As in, it having... 'Cause he brought a new life to Bretton. And equally, that's what's gonna happen: another cycle of life will come to Bretton.

A: I think he would think probably what I think, in that it was an absolute tragedy that the place was destroyed, you know – in the same way that the West Riding was destroyed, and lots, a lot was lost. But more was lost at Bretton, in a sense, I think, than... You know, the education kept on going everywhere else; but here, you've got the place mothballed. But, you know, we are where we are. And I think the best thing for it is to give it a new life in some way, and to give it a new life associated with the Sculpture Park, which is what we're kind of talking about, in terms of kind of thinking about... you know, rather than this developer having, having ownership of the buildings, it would be great if YSP could get ownership of the buildings, and then develop it in a way that was an extension of everything the YSP stood for. Because YSP has come out of Bretton anyway, you know...

Q: Completely.

A: Yeah.

Q: Completely. I think...

A: Yeah, he would, he would think that was an amazing transformation.

Q: 'Cause I'm in a bubble of nineteen forty-five to seventy-four, and I know I am. And before I went in those buildings, I would have firmly said, 'Just don't touch it. Just leave it.' And then having been in and around...

A: Oh, no, you...

Q: It has, it needs a new cycle. And there's a bit... I was talking to Eric yesterday, and a bit of me said... I'd love to be able to say to your dad, you know, 'All was not lost. There are people out there; there's a legacy out there that exists, really.' Because I think he must have, it must have felt hard, that ending. And it's ironic: it's the year I was born, actually. But, and again, it's... all of it's beautiful. And being at Bretton, being at Bretton every week is quite special. It's empty, so it feels like your place.

A: That's interesting.

Q: But it's quite ghostly as well.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And I feel I am... and I am technically a historian, I suppose, by trade. But I feel in that history. I feel part of that. And in...
A: Well, it is the last bit that... You know, there ought to be, there ought to be a blue plaque on this, I suppose, in a sense.

Q: Yeah.

A: I mean, he was... Actually, there's a nice story that XXXXX Newsam tells in his... about him finding my dad in the little shed down by the lake. Did you read that?

Q: No.

A: So when XXXXX Newsam first, his first day working for my dad as a deputy, deputy chief education officer. He turned up, and he said they didn't seem to have much for him to do. And, and I think my dad took him round and introduced him to various people. And I can't remember what he said he used to do. And then he disappeared off. And later, XXXXX Newsam came out to Bretton the same day, and he found my dad in the, in the little rowing shed down by the lake, writing, writing a speech. I think maybe he said, 'I've got to go and write this speech,' but he didn't say where he was going. He went down to the rowing shed.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: So that's a very nice story for Bretton, isn't it, really?

Q: Yeah.

A: And I think there is something about this that is, you know, the embodiment of old West Riding. And I think...

Q: Yeah, most definitely.

A: ...you know, it's interesting, isn't it, that it's the only bit that's left, 'cause everything else has been hived off and...?

Q: It is. And there's that thing that... and I keep saying this, but being here every week... Because the YSP feels very separate to me when I'm at Bretton. I never really come up here. I spend my day at the archive and have my lunch and I go home again. But there is something... it's architecturally, physically, it's still intact. It's there. And then because all of these people, a lot of people still live locally, or make these pilgrimages back. And it's huge for them in their life, or the West Riding was huge for them. But as I said, I started, at the very early stages, to go... I do sometimes actually talk to your dad, I must say. And I used to kind of, you know, kind of go, 'Come on, what do I need? I need something here.' And I remember looking, and there was so much about schools and so much about middle schools. And literally, like, you know, sledgehammer in your head, Bretton's just there, and there's... not to my knowledge. Haven't really found anything on it. Not anywhere. Not just at the archive here. There's...
A: Well, I mean, you know, I, I would have thought that there's more material around teacher training through the West Riding that got then embodied into Bretton, than, you know... in terms of a subject for a thesis, it might be more interesting.

Q: I have about twenty PhDs I could write out of this.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: If I'm honest. Part of my job with the PhD, as ever, in anybody's job, is to do, is to do the best I can and be objective. But way beyond the life of this PhD, I'm just pretty hooked by... I need to get, I need a job at the end of this. And my plan is to go back into lecturing, really. But, but I... there's just lots I want to do about your dad, actually, and about Bretton, and about who was at Bretton, and before it feels like it's too late to do anything. Because these people won't be here forever, and the buildings won't.

A: No. You'll probably find that now is the best time for that, really, because the... you know, as I say, you've got these... I don't know how old Mark Steel is, but... forty-five, isn't he? Ken Robinson's fifty-five. And all these, you know... Ian McMillan's probably getting on for sixty. You know, and they're all, they're all really interested people, interesting people who have a huge, acknowledge a huge debt to Bretton.

Q: And I think it's those bits... Because it's very multi-layered, this story.

A: Yeah, it is, yeah.

Q: And there's bits of me that I even know now will not make it to the thesis. I have eighty thousand words, which sounds huge and it isn't. It just isn't, by the time you've got a methodology chapter and a literature review and all the rest of it. But there is, there are huge swathes of layered knowledge and history about this story that, for me, I would just love to see it be explored and unpacked and be out there. Whether it's just... 'cause when I wrote, when I wrote the paper using psycho-geography... because it's about the environment, and that was a very, about a physical experience with the environment of Bretton. When some of this is slightly...

A: Can you send me that?

Q: Yeah. I think it's published this month.

A: Oh, is it? Right, okay.

Q: It was, it was...

A: What's it published in?

Q: It's the Journal of Creative Practice.

A: Who runs that?

Q: I don't know, if I'm honest. It was a guest-edited issue by the University of Huddersfield, and that's why I was approached.
A: Right.

Q: And I'm pretty sure it's June. I just had to do the final proof on the text and the images. Yeah, I'm pretty sure it's June. But yes.

A: Okay. Well, look, I'd better, better leave you to...

Q: I know.

A: Better...

Q: Thank you so much for your time.

A: So I'm gonna send you a copy of the, of the nineteen seventy talk.

Q: Thank you.

A: A video copy... probably a CD.

Q: I can get a copy of this, or digitally get this.

A: Yeah, that'd be good, yeah. I'll send you Ron George's play.

Q: Oh, yes, thank you.

A: And have you got this, have you got XXXXX Newsam's chapter?

Q: I thought I had, but I think I might be thinking of something else.

A: Sir XXXXX Newsam, who was head of, head of ILEA, Inner London Education Authority, he left before the break-up.

Q: Yes.

A: And then he went on to head up the Institute of Education in London.

Q: He wrote... I'm aware of the...

A: He's writing his autobiography. That's what...

Q: Oh, is he?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: I'm aware of a paper that he wrote talking about your dad.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I think that's maybe what I'm thinking of.
A: Yeah, this is, this is unpublished. It's... he sent me a chapter about dad's... It's his autobiography, and it's the chapter which deals with his time in the West Riding.

Q: I'm glad he's writing it.

A: Yeah, it's good. It's funny. It's sort of... It is interesting, isn't it? 'Cause it's a sort of self-indulgent thing, really. It's not what my dad would write at all.

Q: No, there are times, when I first started this... 'cause you spend the first year just being in the dark, going, 'What the heck am I gonna do? How do I get through all of this, all of this literature and all the rest of it?' And then I did find myself at times thinking, 'Alec, if you could have just written something yourself, other than having...' 'Cause I'm trying, you know, I suppose, to make meaning from professional documents, and to find out who this man was. So I did at times just think, 'Alec, if you can have something that is just, you know, delivered to me fully formed, that would be great.'

A: It's difficult, isn't it? I mean, I know that...

(End of recording)
Family Narrative Two

Q: ...with Huddersfield University, in partnership with the Sculpture Park, and mainly with the National Arts Educational Archive at the Sculpture Park.

A: Oh, okay.

Q: And I lecture, normally, in art and design. And in twenty thirteen, there was a call for a PhD looking at Sir Alec Clegg, very broadly at Sir Alec Clegg. And I got the scholarship for the PhD, so I started at the archive. And I hadn't actually heard of your dad, if I can confess that.

A: What... the archive provided the money, did they?

Q: The university did. Huddersfield University.

A: Oh, the university. Okay.

Q: Yeah. So I went there; and of course, a lot of his papers are there, so I started to read about him. And I kind of thought, 'Hang on, I've got to find something new to add to this story.' Which was quite challenging, 'cause there's a lot, a lot there. So one day, I walked around Bretton – 'cause of course, that's where the college, Bretton Hall College was – kind of talking to your dad, as I do in my weird way, if I'm honest, kind of saying, 'Help, help me find something.' And then I thought, 'Hang on, you know, I'm at Bretton. What happened here?' So I went back into the archive, kind of looking for the Bretton box of information – which of course, I couldn't find. I couldn't find anything about the students who'd been to Bretton, or the staff, or any of the documentation that was there from your dad's career as a whole. So I started to talk to some of the volunteers; and of course, lots of them had either worked at Bretton or been, you know, within the West Riding. And so I started, I suppose, down a journey of talking to people about their experiences of either working in the West Riding, or had they known your dad – which got me onto a really lovely kind of path of finding people who had been to Bretton, in the fifties and the sixties, and staff who had worked there. And from reading a lot of your dad's papers, I kind of was thinking, 'Hang on, this man is a bit of a parable-ist. He tells stories.' And that really hooked me in about him. And so what I've done is, I've been able to chat with some people who worked with him, people... I don't know if you know some of these people. XXXXX Woodward, who was the Schools' Museum Officer.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: I saw XXXXX yesterday, and he sends his best on to you. He's ninety now.

A: Oh, interesting.

Q: And XXXXX Smith, who was a headteacher who worked for your dad.

A: Right.
Q: XXXXX Rose, who's ninety-four now. He was head of drama in the nineteen fifties at Bretton.

A: Goodness.

Q: And so I've spoken to these people, just about... and just let them chat about what they remember about your dad, what they remember about Bretton. And I've chatted to some of the students as well, from fifties through to the sixties. And so all of these kind of uncaptured narratives about your dad through Bretton, is what I've been doing, really. And I got to speak to XXXX, your brother...

A: Oh, good.

Q: …as well. I've had a year out, 'cause I've had my second baby. So I spoke to him last summer. And then it was Mel Dyke who I was put in touch with.

A: She's very good, yeah.

Q: Yeah. And she'd kind of said that she chatted to you. And that brings me to where I am today, talking to you, really, through Mel.

A: Okay.

Q: So, really, all I'm looking for is, if you're happy to, is just to kind of... I don't have any set questions as such.

A: Okay.

Q: I've got some prompts if you need them. But just about what you... what was he like? What do you remember about him? Because I feel that I've read about this, this man and what he did. And I've seen lots of images of your dad as an elderly man, a lot of the images put out there. And I found an image of him when he was teaching, when he was a young man. And quite obviously then, very naively, it made me look at him very differently. Because I was used to seeing him as an elderly man; and of course, he wasn't always an elderly man.

A: No.

Q: And so I'm interested in who he was, and what drove him, and... and yeah, and what was he like as a dad? That type of thing.

A: Okay. Just before we go on, I wonder if you've talked to Peter Newsam.

Q: I haven't, but your, your brother XXXX, again... I don't have any type of contacts for Peter Newsam, but he'd mentioned him as well.

A: He's... Peter Newsam is very good, and he's still alive, and he's still active, and he writes to the papers. And he's written... In preparation for this, I was trying to look for things that he's written about... well, he's written about education and his own experience of education, but also about my father. And I, I got, I found a link to, to an
article that he wrote about my father, but I couldn't get into it. You probably can get access to it, as an academic.

Q: Okay.

A: I'll send you the link.

Q: Thank you.

A: And I would like to read it, 'cause I've never read it. I can't tell you what's in it, but I mean, I think anything that Peter Newsam would write about my father would be very interesting.

Q: Yes.

A: And very informed. And I couldn't get into it yesterday, 'cause, you know, I don't have academic access to these articles, but you might.

Q: Yes.

A: So I'll make a note of that. Also, he has written... again, I noticed yesterday that he's written a book about his own experience as an educator. It's obviously... if it contains anything about my father, it would probably be restricted to a small part of it. But there may be something in there. Again, I couldn't get access to this book, because although it's listed in Amazon, it's un... what do you call it? You know, it's, you can't get it. It doesn't seem to be available.

Q: Is it due to be published soon, do you know?

A: Sorry?

Q: Do you know if it's been published yet?

A: It has.

Q: Okay.

A: But it's just... Amazon lists it as unavailable. So does Waterstone's. I mean, again, from my own point of view, I'd have liked to have got hold of that as well.

Q: Yeah. Let me see if I can get hold of anything.

A: I think that was published quite recently. I think the article about my father was published in something like two thousand and eight.

Q: Yeah. And I think, talking to your brother XXXX , he said that Peter Newsam had been writing or was writing something, which makes me wonder if that really is quite a recent publication.

A: Well, the book, I think, is, like, two thousand and fourteen, fifteen.
Q: Okay.

A: It was a bit odd that I couldn't, you know, that it was unavailable. Again, I haven't... I'm trying to get hold of XXXX and XXXX, my brother XXXX, to see if they've got, you know, a phone number for Peter Newsam, so I could find out from him... or an email address, so I could find out from him myself about these articles; but I haven't been able to contact either of them about that yet.

Q: Okay.

A: He lives somewhere in North Yorkshire. He'd just be an extremely good contact, I think, to follow up.

Q: Well, we move house to North Yorkshire on Friday, so I might just have to...

A: Oh, do you?

Q: We might just have to hunt him out.

A: Whereabouts are you?

Q: We move on Friday. We move to Easingwold, just outside of York.

A: Ah, right, okay.

Q: So, yeah, I'm surrounded by boxes and...

A: Okay.

Q: You know, I have two tiny children, hence high chairs and all sorts.

A: Big deal.

Q: Well, you know, you just have to get on with it, don't you, really?

A: Yeah, you do. But I've got, I've got links to both these publications, and I'll send you them this morning, after we've stopped talking.

Q: Thank you.

A: And the other... Mel Dyke, you've talked to her. My brother XXXXis good on these things. His memory's better than mine. And you might like to talk to him.

Q: If he would like to, I'd love to talk to him, yes.

A: Yes. I'll send you an email address.

Q: Thank you.
A: He'd probably be good. Also, all the papers that we have about my father are with him, as opposed to XXXX or myself. So he would have access to those.

Q: I know at the, at the archive at Bretton, there are some books – I think that it was XXXX who's donated them. There's... which I think was obviously from your, from your father's collection as well.

A: Okay, okay, yeah.

Q: When I was at the archive yesterday, Doctor Catherine Burke was there, from Cambridge. And she sends her best. And she said that she has three books of yours, and nervously laughed that she needs to return them.

A: Okay, yes. She... I have talked to her, and I've met her. I can't think, I can't remember for the life of me what she's actually doing. Is she writing about my father?

Q: She is. When I saw her yesterday... (clears throat). Excuse me. I met her again about a year ago, just before I went on maternity leave. And she's got some funding, a year's funding to look at your father through the Plowden Report. It's...

A: Oh, okay.

Q: And that will be for next year. And so they're trying – and I'll be part of that – people who are looking at Sir Alec Clegg from different points of view, and kind of revisiting what he did; and hopefully then all of those kind of talks and lectures and seminars will come together in a publication.

A: Right.

Q: So that's twenty seventeen.

A: Oh, okay.

Q: Which makes me happy that there's more, more things out there about him.

A: Okay. Well, where should we start? What would you like to...?

Q: Well, I... when I spoke to XXXX, I started by asking him how would he describe his father. So, could I ask you the same? How would you describe him?

A: Oh, okay. Well, he, he was, he was fairly strict kind of father, in the way he used to sort of, you know, the rules of the home and the rules of the family. But not really particularly strict person. I mean, he was very, he was very relaxed person. He was an affectionate father. He liked to joke. He, he used to... I mean, he had, he had a good sense of humour, and that used to extend to his work. I mean, he always used to enjoy the funny part of work, like when he would visit schools or visit headteachers. And he used to have a thing called a funny folder, you know, which he would use to... he would just stick lots of things in there – things that people might have written to him, or events that might have happened in a school, things that were...
funny. I mean, he just had a good sense of humour and he liked that kind of thing. I think XXXX may have this funny folder.

Q: Yesterday, when I was at the archive, I was looking at a folder that he's called Kind Letters.

A: Ah, right.

Q: And in it... it's from mainly March nineteen seventy-four, so just before his retirement and before the reorganisation. And it's from his headmasters, or key people within the authority, that had just written to say they were sorry that he was retiring, and all of the kind of... what was happening with the reorganisation, and giving kind of quite nice, you know, kind of thanks to him. And he'd written personal letters to everybody, with often very little funny anecdotes in them. But I love that he's called the whole collection Kind Letters.

A: Yeah.

Q: And that seems to me to be the man that I've come to know through, through the papers that I've found. So I can well believe that, yes, he'd have a selection of kind of funny things as well.

A: Yeah. And also, I mean, you know, what you say... you know, you used to see that in his, his professional relationships with, especially with headteachers. Because he used to get on well with his headteachers, and I think they got on well with him. And he treated them particularly with respect. I think he had a lot of respect for the headteacher, the job of the headteacher in a school. And he used to get on very well with his headteachers. So it's not surprising that there's a whole folder of letters coming back from them when he retired. And I think, also... I got the impression, although I knew nothing about this, really, but I used to get this impression... you know, there used to be a meeting of, of chief officers, education officers and deputies, who had worked in the West Riding and who... And they used to meet after the, after he'd retired and after the reorganisation. I don't know when it started, but it was still going on long after he died. And they used to go and have lunch in a place called... Oh, God, what was it called? It was in Wakefield. I'll remember it. I can't remember it now. And they used to have lunch... How often did that happen? Several times a year, I think. Anyway, towards the end... And it was all the chief officers. And after he'd died, and maybe even before he died, they'd invite my mother. So even after he died, my mother would go along there. And they used to just have lunch and natter about what it used to be like in the West Riding – you know, retired chief officers.

Q: Yes.

A: I'll try to remember the name of the restaurant, because it's a well-known one. And in the latter years, before my mother died in two thousand and ten, I used to go along to some of those. And you can just tell from the way they talk that they, they had a good time in the West Riding.

Q: Yes.
A: And I think part of the reason was, they got on well with each other; but also, I think they enjoyed working with my father. I think he was probably a good person to work with, in the sense that they had a lot of fun together. That's the impression I got.

Q: Yes. When I've spoken to people like XXXXX Smith and XXXXX – and XXXXX's become quite a good friend, really – and they both talk about, before they'd met your father, that he seemed like a magnet, and they wanted to work for him. And then XXXXX in particular said that, once she'd started...

(Break in recording?)

Q: …as much as, you know, people do get to know your employer, in that sense – she said that they wanted to please him.

A: I see.

Q: Because he was looking... he always wanted to look for best practice. If something was being done well, he praised it and he passed that on. And so, as the teachers within the authority, they wanted to please him, they wanted to, I suppose, get his approval maybe. Those are my words.

A: Yeah.

Q: But they've talked a lot about how he was a magnet, and his... there was a charisma about him.

A: I see.

Q: That they just kind of wanted to be around. And that's come through... several different people that I've spoken to have said the same thing.

A: Yeah, that's interesting, yeah. I think probably... I mean, if you can get hold of Peter Newsam – who I imagine, I don't know, but I imagine would be willing to talk to you and interested to talk about my father – I think you might get some more examples of that from him.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. At home, he was, he was like that. But he was always quite, he was also quite strict. I mean, you know, you didn't, you didn't want to cross him; you didn't want to get on the wrong side of him, you know. So that was slightly... I mean, he wasn't... I was gonna say it sort of counteracts the idea, but it doesn't, really. I mean, he was both. He was very both affectionate and fair, but also, he was strict. I mean, on, you know, on weekends, he just, he just used to sit round the breakfast table and organise the work you had to do. He said, 'Well, you'll do that, XXXXX, and you do that, XXXX' – in the house, and then in the garden. Because he used to be a great gardener. He used to spend a lot of time in his garden. An awful lot. Probably both, you know, both Saturdays and Sundays, he'd spend a lot of time in his garden.
Q: Yeah, brother XXXX remembered a very similar thing, and about work in the garden. And he said that boys... as boys, you all played an instrument, and that often before school...

A: Played the flute. And you got up, or he got you up, at half past six, and you used to practise between half past six and seven o'clock, different parts of the house. And that was just, you just did that. That was just, you know, that's what you did, and there was no getting out of it. It was good for us all in the end, but I mean, that was fairly, you know, that was fairly strict.

Q: Yeah.

A: But also, he was... I was thinking yesterday about this. He was a good, he was a sportsman. And he used to play football. I hardly ever saw him playing football, because I think he gave it up once he got into his profession, or probably once he got into the, into education administration. But when he was young, he used to play for a semi-professional team in London.

Q: Yes.

A: Corinthian Casals.

Q: Yes. XXXX...

A: So he was obviously good.

Q: Yeah. And XXXX Woodward said that, when he then, when he was working, that they would play tennis at Woolley Hall.

A: Yeah.

Q: And that sometimes after work they would have a game. And he said one day XXXXX had gone to play with your father, and I think some... maybe it was a doubles. It must have been a doubles game. And XXXXX had worked till five o'clock, and your father and whoever they were playing were already there. And your father said, you know, 'Come on, come on. We're already here.' And XXXXX said, 'Well, I didn't dare finish work early, 'cause that was my boss. If I'd been there too early...' But your father was really keen to get the game underway.

A: It's interesting. I mean, I didn't know that he played, that he played at work, or after work. But he certainly, I mean, he built his house, the house that we lived in – he must have built that in nineteen forty-eight. And he put a tennis court in it. So...

Q: Oh.

A: …intended that we should all do a lot of tennis. And we did. As kids, we did. And he enjoyed it. And he used to play with his friends as well. So he was good at that. He was good at football, good at tennis. He was also a good runner. When he was younger, he was a good long-distance runner. So he was good at sports. And also, he was... 'cause we didn't used to... They were both... my mother and father didn't
want to get television till... I don't know. Until I was about fifteen or sixteen. 'Cause they thought it would...

(Break in recording)

A: …card games in the evening. Probably, probably most at weekends. So we did family things like that. We played, you know, all kinds of different card games. And after we got television, we just watched telly, of course.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: And my dad found that he used to like the telly. Certain things on the telly he would like.

Q: Yes. A lot of the people I've spoken to also very fondly remember your mother.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I wondered then the role that she played. Because... and I'm a wife. And, you know, my husband will sometimes come...

(Break in recording)

A: ...sure he did. And she always knew what was going on. And after he died, she kept in touch with a lot of his colleagues. And I think she knew what was going on, but I'm a bit hesitant because I think she... don't know, really, whether I ought to say this, but I think she felt that her education as, her teacher education, her education as a teacher, as an infant teacher didn't really enable her to talk to him about work on the same kind of level. I'm slightly reluctant to say that. But, no, but they certainly, she knew what was going on, and they did talk about it. But basically, she... I suppose she did what a lot of women at that time did – you know, we're talking about the fifties – which is give up work and be a mother.

Q: Yes.

A: And just ran the house. Partly in order, partly in order for him to do what he did professionally. I mean, to achieve what he did professionally, it means that you do... you don't do that on your own, you know. I'm sure I don't need to tell you that, as a woman, and certainly not in those days. And I think, you know, a lot of her work as a mother and an organiser of the family enabled him to spend a lot of time doing his work. And he did used to spend a lot of time. And he was out late a lot, came back late. He often didn't come back till about seven o'clock. He was often working in his study after dinner. He might have been working in his study part of the weekend. So, you know, he was, he spent a lot of time. He took... in a way, he took time... I don't know... it wasn't a selfish thing to do, but I mean, he took a lot of time... he took time away from his family in order to do his work. It doesn't mean to say he wasn't there enough for his family. But I don't think he would have been able to do what he did unless my mother had been the way she was, you know, as a... in that very traditional role that women still used to fulfil in those days.
Q: I think that's very fair comment. Again, from the people that I've spoken to, he seemed... they felt very invested in by him. And for him to have been able to do that must have taken time.

A: Yeah.

Q: So he must have... trying to constantly be balancing at one point three young children and a big job.

A: Yeah.

Q: 'Cause when I was speaking to XXXXX, again – XXXXX, you know... at very young ages, these men had really big jobs.

A: Yeah.

Q: And were, you know, young men, starting families, and having to really, you know, climb mountains. When I hear XXXXX speak, you know, they did, they did huge things. They had responsibility on their shoulders. And that, if you are successful, that doesn't just happen: that takes a lot of work and a lot of effort. I've read a lot of the papers, your father's papers, and he's very, he's very self-effacing. He often... he never really takes the credit. He's always saying, you know, 'I did very little. This is a team of people.' And he seemed to be very... Which I don't agree with. But he seemed to be very good at picking, surrounding himself with people who were good at what they did. And he could...

A: I think that's true, yeah.

Q: He could see people that enjoyed their work, could, could give something, something back to their work. And I get the impression he, he enjoyed that. He enjoyed being around people who were passionate about what they did.

A: Yeah, I think that's right. I think they were... it was probably... again, it's difficult for me to say, because I wasn't aware of what happened in his work. But I think he probably did choose a very good team. They were very highly motivated, and as you say, probably partly motivated, you know, to do good things for my father. But I mean, he used to work like crackers.

Q: Yes.

A: And he had a study, and it was full of piles of papers, you know. And it was just... he just used to be in there all the time.

Q: I think the, when you talked about his sense of humour – very early on, you pick that up in his letters. And he has quite a dry sense of humour.

A: Yes.

Q: Which has been an absolute joy. When there's days when, you know, you do feel like you're wading through an awful lot of stuff, and trying to piece together
sometimes things that aren't pieced together – only linked maybe because they were written in the same year or in the same month, and trying to find kind of patterns, and trying to build an idea of a person... But he's written... Basil Rock, who was one of his art inspectors...

A: Yes.

Q: There were some lovely letters going back and forth at one point. Because there, there were a series of paintings of...

(Break in recording)

Q: …work to show. And your dad had said that: 'You miss, you miss the point, my dear Basil.' He said that those pictures were my education. They were as if they were his epiphany: that he then saw what could be achieved by the children in the West Riding. So he continued to take the pictures round to schools, and to Australia and to AmXXXXXa, much to kind of Basil's frustration, because he wanted to show more stuff. But it's all something that could have been, like, loggerheads with each other, wasn't. There was a lot of humour. There was a lot of, I think, friendship coming through.

(Break in recording)

A: …just to call.

Q: Yes.

A: And I don't know how well she is or how old she is. She must be getting on. She's been in a wheelchair for a long time. I don't know well she is. I don't know how able or willing she would be to speak to you. But she's good, and she did work... because she met Basil in the Riding, I think.

Q: Yes, yes, I think you're right.

A: And she went, then went on to teach – 'cause she's an art and design person – went on to teach it at Bath. Do I mean Bath? Whatever the training college used to, you know, used to be called. But she might be somebody you could talk to, or somebody might be willing to talk to her, to you, simply because, you know, she knows about art.

Q: I know. And I'm very aware that a lot of the, a lot of what I'm looking into is timely, in the sense that some of these people are very elderly.

A: Yeah.

Q: And I do, I feel... I mean, I'm starting the writing-up of the thesis, and I'm miles from where I started, miles and miles – 'cause you find so many things. But the one thing that I found that I wanted to capture, to use academic language, is this narrative of people that knew your father. That isn't written anywhere. That... I mean,
there's two books that, you know, that were written about your father. Peter Darvill book...

A: Yes.

Q: And Nora George. And both of them... When I first read Peter Darvill, I did think, 'Crikey.' 'Cause it's quite a challenging book, the way that he's, he's written it.

A: Yeah.

Q: And again, Nora was a teacher in the West Riding, and has written it from that perspective. And they're quite just chronological: Alec did this then Alec did this.

A: Yeah.

Q: But the richness of these people... And I feel incredibly lucky, if I'm really honest, because I've spoken to people that are amazing people.

A: Yeah.

Q: That, you know, have led amazing lives, and have contributed to a richness in education. And I just feel that I want to record that, to...

A: Yeah.

Q: You know, naturally, the meat of my thesis, that's where I am. So I'm finding out about your father through the voices of these people. So people like Rosemary – they're very valuable to me. They're very valuable.

A: Yeah. I mean, that's the reason why I mentioned Peter Newsam. He... I mean, he's still very much on the ball. I don't know how old he is. He must be...

(Break in recording)

A: …then went to be... he was, I think he was director of education at the ILEA, and then he was director of the Institute of Education in London. And I think, in fact, the library there is called the Peter Newsam Library. But I mean, he... a) he's on the ball, and b) he just knew a lot of stuff and a lot of people. He's probably, in that sense, one of your best bets as, as somebody to talk to.

Q: Yes.

A: But I'm just thinking also, thinking back to life at home. The other thing that dad used to like was music. He used to listen to a lot of classical music. Or he didn't used to sort of listen to it, but used to put it on in the background at the breakfast table. So you never used to be actually listening to it, but it was just on all the time.

Q: How interesting.
A: And, and that's one of the reasons why I think the three of us like classical music
and know quite a lot about it. Not because we ever talked about it. It'd be on all the
time.

Q: How interesting.

A: It is, it is. And, and he didn't go to too many concerts with us. But I mean, all of us,
we used to go to concerts at Leeds Town Hall. But it was just a way of teaching you
about music without ever actually talking about it.

Q: Yes. Again, when I spoke to your brother XXXX, and I'm paraphrasing now, but
XXXX was kind of talking about, that... when you played instruments. And whether
that was maybe your father's way... he was maybe learning about how children
learn, or within schools, or about his own way of trying to incorporate that maybe into
your lives, maybe... Which is quite interesting, I think. And again, as parents, you
know, how we try and expose things to our children, and how we do... That's quite
interesting, really.

A: Yeah, yeah, yeah. No, I think that's right.

Q: I came across, again, the people that I've spoken to, a word they use over and
over again about your father is loyalty. And they were very loyal to him.

A: I see.

Q: And your mother, and the West Riding. And I found something from nineteen
seventy-nine. 'Cause I'm really looking at ninety-four to seventy-four, 'cause
that's when your father retired. But I found some paper of nineteen seventy-nine, and
there was a teacher... I can't remember her name. There was a teacher, and she
was so loyal to the West Riding that, in nineteen seventy-nine, five years after the
reorganisation, she still would only use the old West Riding letterhead, and she
would...

(Break in recording)

Q: …real, they really felt that they had been part of building this authority; and your
father had, had kind of given that sense to them, that they were... he didn't do this by
himself: they were part of this. And that loyalty, five years after it no longer existed...
They were very loyal to him. And she did that until she retired. Which I imagine, you
know, you would get into huge amounts of trouble. I mean, if I did that, I would get
into huge amounts of trouble. But they just were so loyal to your father, it somehow
felt kind of slightly disrespectful to them if they didn't keep, keep using it. Which I
found really interesting.

A: Yes. I think he did have a lot of loyalty. I don't quite know what it was about...
We've talked about that part. Don't quite know what it was about him that inspired it,
but he did get a lot of loyalty. I think also, you know, you get that kind of loyalty by
treating people well. And I think he did treat his colleagues and his headteachers
very well.
Q: Yes.

A: And his advisory staff as well. I think the advisory staff were very important. I don't know if you've any... God, they must be all dead now, I should think. The advisory staff – they were crucial people. I mean, they don't really exist any more now, do they, advisory staff?

Q: No, not at all in the same way.

A: Yeah. But they were terribly important. And he appointed very good... I mean, like Basil Rock and Rosemary, and my godmother, Diana Jordan, and... gosh, I'd have to remember them all now. I'm just thinking of key advisory staff who used to advise on, especially on English, movement and dance, and art and music. And they were crucial people, in the sense that they... he appointed them because he thought that they embodied the kind of principles of the role of art in education that he believed in, and they then went on to spread it through the authority.

Q: Yes. Again, when I spoke to your brother XXXX... because when I get towards the nineteen seventies and when he retired, and of course, you know, the reorganisation, from about nineteen seventy-two, a lot of the correspondence from your father – it's quite, there's a different tone about them. And I think to, to... he had to dismantle his work, is how I see it. It's as if he had to dismantle the West Riding. That must have been an incredibly difficult time.

A: I think it must have been, yeah. I think it must have been. I can't remember it, to be honest, and what effect it had on him, but I think it must have been. Mind you, he was approaching retirement.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: I think it must have been hard. I imagine his colleagues would have more to say about that.

Q: When I read some of these kind letters yesterday, some of them were just teachers in the authority who wanted to thank him; and he sent back, you know, a letter that would say, 'Thank you for your kind thoughts of me, you know. I've enjoyed working with you.' But then there were other letters, people that he'd grown to know over decades. And he's put things like, 'It's been a very difficult few days.' And this was kind of, you know, mid-March nineteen seventy-four.

A: Okay.

Q: (...) did say things along the lines of, you know, 'I have much, many concerns about the authority.' And you can... there's a heaviness to his voice. Which is inevitable. Which is inevitable. But it must, it must have been a really... I don't know if we would ever go through anything like that, because we, you know, we don't live in those times any more, where you maybe have, you know, thirty year kind of... where you've built something from scratch, in some ways.
A: Yes. And very... we don't have very... what's the word? Sort of powerful chief officers any more. I'm thinking of that bloke who used to work for Birmingham. What was his name, you know?

Q: Yes, I do.

A: Very famous chief officer. Used to be... I think he was then chief inspector, wasn't he, for a while?

Q: Yes. I can't remember his name. It's interesting you say that. Because I started the PhD in twenty thirteen, and I was teaching in Newcastle. And I remember being sat at my desk one day, and I had two hundred students, and I had six staff. And I remember, sat there, and just having kind of one of those days. And I thought: 'Where are the great leaders? Where are these, you know, where...?' And I didn't know him. But where was the Alec Cleggs? Where are these figures? And I think that's what really motivated me and what attracted me to the PhD. And that's been something in my head through the last three years, is we don't have these people any more. We don't have these characters, these individual people, who are making real differences. And again, when I spoke to XXXX, your brother, I wanted... I would want to be able to kind of, you know, say to your father that all is not lost. Because I think that, when he finished, that he must have thought, you know, 'Crikey. What has, what will happen?' And from the people that I've spoken to, and especially the people who went to Bretton, who were students, who became teachers of art and design – I see them as little satellites of your father. And there's a lot that your father did, and it's out there, and it's happening, and I would want him to know that: that what he did was not lost, that it has made a real impact, and it's there today. I did go to Saxton, to your mother and father's grave a while ago; and it was a really lovely... it was quite poignant on the day that I went. And I was heavily pregnant. And as I walked round the church, the children were in the school yard, and they were playing outside; and the children were laughing and running around as I went to their grave – which is a really beautiful headstone: very elegant, very understated.

A: When was that?

Q: Would have been last year, when I was pregnant.

A: I see. Okay.

Q: I went to see... 'Cause I, I need to be very objective when I write this PhD, 'cause I like your father. I've grown to like him a lot and respect him a lot, and I need to, you know, write something objective and not subjective, really. But that was interesting for me as well, and it was very poignant, it was very... to hear the children in the background, in the village where he lived.

A: Yeah.

Q: And for me, for this great man, and what he has... and the legacy that he's left, really.

A: We all went there. We all went to that school.
Q: Yes, XXXX said. He said that that's the school that he went to as well. And then did you go to Tadcaster?

A: Yeah, we all went to Tadcaster.

Q: Yes.

A: Which was a grammar school for two years before I, when I started, and then it became a comprehensive in something like nineteen fifty-nine. Or whenever. I don't know when it was. Yeah. What else did I want to mention? Yes, the pictures. I mean, he used to... he was a sentimental person, my dad. You know, he was very, he was strict about, you know, the family, and he was strict about himself and hard-working and all that kind of thing. But he was sentimental, because he used to burst into tears when he used to look at those pictures. I mean, you know, I'm exaggerating. But I mean, I'm sure there were occasions – well, he used to talk about it – when he'd go into a school and see children producing... It was partly to do with the idea of artistic expression, which he, you know, that was, formed the centre of a lot of his educational thinking over the years. But also, it was to do with the idea of poverty, and that poverty... you know, he wrote that book with... what was her name? Meg... What was her name? You know he wrote Children in Distress?

Q: Yes.

A: What was the name of that woman? His co-author.

Q: Yes, it is. I can't remember either.

A: I can't remember.

Q: I can see the book in my...

A: Megson.

Q: Yes.

A: Barbara Megson.

Q: Yes, yes, yes. Well done.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: And I think that idea... I don't quite know where it came from. I mean, when I think of the ideas that drove his education, his, you know, his educational thinking, one was the idea of poverty, and children overcoming all kinds of barriers to make a success of their education. That was one thing. And the other is the importance of the arts in education, and of artistic expression and of expression in English, expression in dance and in art. And I think one of the reasons why it used to move
him to see those pictures was, you know, those two things come together in those pictures. Don't know where, I don't know where either of those ideas came from. His own father... I don't know if you know much about him.

Q: Samuel?

A: Yeah. I mean, he was a headteacher in Long Eaton.

Q: Yes.

A: And I mean, a man of a lot of distinction, apparently, in that community.

(Break in recording)

A: ...follow this up. I don't know if you do. But I mean, the arts were extremely important in that school. I'm sure that that played an important part in the way my dad then came to think of the arts in education.

Q: I'd agree with that. I think the things... there's some times when your father's written a speech, and he will refer to his own father and his own schooling. There's one, again, typically humorous story that your father has written in one of, one of his speeches, where he said that he felt that – and I'm paraphrasing – but he felt that, your dad felt that he must have given his dad kind of some real headache moments; because your dad didn't apply himself at one point at school, and, you know, just didn't kind of stick in. But then there's a few lines where your father said, but there was one very pretty geography teacher, and suddenly your father became very interested in geography and did quite well. Just the way that he's written it, and you can... I can imagine him saying it, and then suddenly his dad saying: 'Oh, well, you know, the boy may have, have, you know, have something in there that might be working.' And your father's kind of laughing to himself because it was the pretty geography teacher that had kind of inspired him...

A: I see.

Q: ...to do well.

A: I think also... I mean, I don't know about this, but I imagine there was a very good relationship between him and his father, but also a very ambivalent relationship. Because he obviously didn't do well in his father's school. And, and I've always thought, or maybe even, maybe dad even used to say, it was because he was in the school in which his father was headteacher. And I think at one point – I'm pretty sure about this – that his Aunt Belle talked to his father, and said, 'Look, Alec has got to get out of your school and go to another one.' And he did. He took him out, and he sent him to Bootham in York.

Q: Yes, the Quaker school.

A: Where he did far, far better.

Q: Yes, yeah.
A: And so I think there was obviously, you know, as in families, you know, relationships are ambivalent. And I would have thought, I think it didn't do him good to be in his father's own, his father's school.

Q: No. And I think his father as well probably cast quite a long shadow for him. If you're walking in the shadow of somebody who is, you know, is very successful, however we define that...

A: I think that's true.

Q: That's probably quite hard to carve out an identity for oneself. And so I can imagine that was probably very good advice, to let him under his own steam.

A: Yeah, I think it was.

Q: Because I...

A: I vaguely remember my Aunt Belle, but, you know, she obviously, she was obviously a perceptive woman, and made a, made a good point. And it changed his... I think it changed his educational career, because he may not have made it if he'd stuck in that school.

Q: I would agree with that. I've seen footage of your dad, mainly BBC footage, where he's been recorded talking to children. And there is... he has a real connection with children. The way he talks to them isn't as, you know, in the confines of what his role was. He's asking them as a person. And there's just a connection that he feels, and he comes across as a real teacher. I know that sounds a kind of nonsensical thing to say. But when, again, I've spoken to people, another word they use over and over again is that he genuinely cared about the children. He cared about their well-being and their social welfare. And it was, it was nothing to do in a sense with getting the best marks and all being the best in English or the best in maths. There was this real sense of, he cared about the child. And the people I've spoken to, that came through really strongly in everything that they did, and that he was saying to them, 'We have to care about these people, about these children.'

A: Yes, yes, I think that's right.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. There's an issue... I'm thinking of... I'm still thinking of the arts in education, in his father's... His father was involved in art in education, and wrote about it; and XXXXX will have books that were written by Samuel Clegg about the arts in education, I think. I think I'm right about that. And I think, also, he designed his own school, or got somebody else to design it – and there were classrooms with big windows where you could do art, you know. So it's obviously important. And also, I think there were – again, XXXXX would know about this from an architectural point of view – there were rooms with, classrooms with friezes round the top of the classroom, round the top of the wall, near the, near the ceiling. And I think I'm right in saying that they've been painted over, which is a huge shame. But I mean, they were, they were beautiful
classrooms. So I think his own father had a strong idea of the idea of the arts in education and the role of beautiful things in education.

Q: Yes. And again, when I've read... whether it's a speech or an article your father's written, he talks... the environment of the classroom. And again, at Woolley Hall, where they had, you know, training courses for the caretakers.

A: Yeah.

Q: And this real sense of value of environment that the children were in. And it did matter, and it did make an impact. And I, again, wonder how much of that started from his father and what he'd seen his father do.

A: Well, it's interesting. I mean, if you ever do talk to XXXX, XXXX might have a view about this. But also, I remember, there was a thing called the Schools' Museum Service.

Q: Yeah.

A: You probably know more about it than I do. But I mean, it used to... the only, the only way we used to see it as kids in school... you know, I used to sit in that primary school in Saxton, and a great lorry would turn up, and it would have pictures in it. And the pictures would go on the wall. And they were just things like, you know, Bruegels and that kind of thing. They were, you know, famous paintings. But the idea of the Schools' Museum Service was partly to deliver a lot of pictures to schools and hang them on the walls.

Q: Yeah. That was XXXX Woodward's department.

A: Was it?

Q: Yeah. And again, XXXX... and I have become friends with XXXX, and I'd love to write something about... as an aside, I'd love to write something about XXXX. Because again, in a slightly similar way to your dad, his collection that he built up – it's just been dismantled. You know, it just was kind of thrown to the wind. And he spent a lifetime collecting up object-based learning, as we would know it today. And even his home... he still lives in Woolley. XXXX lives in Woolley.

A: Does he? Does he?

Q: Yeah, in the same house that he's been in since about nineteen fifty-four, I think. And his house, you know, is of its time. It looks like it could be part of the museum from the School Museums Service. But yes, again, he has a rich, a rich tale to tell of things that we just, we just don't seem to have any more at all, just don't seem to have. Bretton Hall now, the campus, as it were, the mansion house is obviously being redeveloped. I mean, it's in the very, very early stages. And on the library building, of course, it says Sir Alec Clegg in big gold letters.

A: Yeah.
Q: And his dates. And the loaves and hyacinths kind of is written up there. And again, XXXXX one day said to me, he said, 'I don't think that Alec would like his name there, in gold, you know, emblazoned.' He said he never kind of looked... the language we would use now – he never looked for celebrity. He never looked for recognition. And that stayed with me as well. And the days that I'm at Bretton, you know, 'cause the sun glints off these great big letters, and thinking, you know, I wonder, then, if Alec really wouldn't be comfortable with that, if he...

A: That may be true. It may be true. Yeah, I remember the day when that was unveiled. In fact, I think my mum did it. She did. That's right. It was a huge reunion of all the people, all kinds of people that had been to Bretton. And I remember all the... You're probably too young to know about Z-Cars, are you?

Q: Well, I was born in seventy-four. I was born in the year he retired.

A: It was, it was, you know, it was a police thing on the television. I don't know if you...

Q: Yeah, I know of it. I wasn't born while it was on the TV.

A: But I think quite... What's the name of that bloke, that actor with the very loud voice?

Q: I don't know.

A: And he was in Z-Cars. He's famous. What the hell is his name?

Q: I only know Brian Blessed who's got a great big voice.

A: Say it again.

Q: Brian Blessed.

A: Brian...?

Q: Blessed.

A: Yes.

Q: Was that Brian Blessed?

A: That's right. And he was in Z-Cars. And he was there, and a couple of others, you know... What I'm saying is, you know, a lot of famous... as you know, a lot of famous people who went into the, into television and the arts were at Bretton.

Q: Yes.

A: And it was a very good day that, when that thing was unveiled. But you may be right: It may not have been quite up his street.
Q: I've last... two, two years ago in October, I got permissions to go inside the mansion house, because of course it's been closed for years.

A: Okay.

Q: And I wrote a paper about it. But I, the day I went into the mansion house, it was not at all what I was expecting. Because your father's very much alive in my head, and this world... I've been in this world for three years, and these people and what they did. And I walked into the mansion house very naively expecting them somehow to be there. And of course...

A: Oh, I see.

Q: It's a very, it's an abandoned building, in a bad state of disrepair. And I went down into the cellars, and, you know, and one classroom – there's still, like, a lesson on a whiteboard that hadn't been cleaned, and there were empty filing cabinets.

A: I see.

Q: And I got taken up onto the roof, which was the best part. Because on the roof of the mansion house, you can't actually see the Sculpture Park; you can only see the Bretton campus. Because of course, lots of people know of Yorkshire Sculpture Park, but don't actually really know about Bretton. And they often...

(Break in recording)

Q: ...is where Sir Alec Clegg is emblazoned. It's very abandoned inside. And that didn't sit comfortably with me. Then I felt I didn't want his name on the front, in all this glory, when it's been abandoned in such a way.

A: Yeah, yeah, it is a pity.

Q: It is. And there was, inside there were some plaques on the wall, when it was opened, with your dad's name on it. And so I asked for them to be removed and put in the archive. And they have been.

A: Oh, okay.

Q: Because that marks when this site, in nineteen sixty-four, you know, was redeveloped and achieved some fantastic things. Which did make me wonder, and I wondered what you thought, about what your dad would think about the Bretton site being redeveloped again. Do you think that he would see that as a...?

A: I don't know, actually. I'm sure he'd be, he would like the, you know, the fact that the Sculpture Park is on that site.

Q: Yes.
A: And I imagine that, you know, the, the archive is very important. I don't know what he would think about the development of the Bretton site. I mean, I don't know if you have connections with the Leeds School of Education, because they... I don't.

Q: No, I don't.

A: But they did... they bought up Bretton, didn't they? And then I think they sort of asset-stripped it and sold it. But they, they did create their own school... Didn't they create their own school of education?

Q: From what I know, because my research stops in nineteen seventy-four, but Leeds effectively bought Bretton; and it closed in two thousand and one. And again... and that isn't the focus of my research, but speaking to people who worked there, I think that last maybe ten, fifteen years, maybe a bit longer, was a very difficult time at Bretton, and the way that it closed. And you're right, you know. When I went in the mansion house, the only way I can describe it: it felt as if somebody had kind of done a runner.

A: Yeah.

Q: As if they'd just literally stripped it and shut the doors and gone. I went into the refectory, and there was still crockery, and there was a menu. I mean, it literally felt as if they'd stripped it and locked the door and gone. And so it was a very... the way that it started doesn't... well, the way that it ends doesn't reflect how it started; and that feels quite sad, in some ways. But I think that happens a lot with a lot of things. But Leeds did kind of... I mean, I think there's a Sir Alec Clegg memorial hall and a lecture theatre as part of Leeds, which...

A: I think there is. Because I remember... again, my memory is not good, but I remember going to Leeds and my mother opening something there. And it must have been, it must have been after they bought it and sold Bretton. And now, what would it have been? Is it a library? Is there Alec Clegg library there?

Q: I think it's a lecture theatre.

A: Is it?

Q: Yes, yeah.

(Break in recording)

Q: …collections. They do have mainly West Riding papers in their archive.

A: Okay.

Q: Not as... and I've seen some of them. There isn't, I think, the personal, as many personal papers as there may be held at the archive at Bretton, but they do hold some of them, yeah, at Brotherton.
A: Yeah, yeah, okay. Are you... I don't know if you're interested... I don't know whether it's still going on. Do you know whether it's still going on? I mean, the reason I mentioned it is... When I think of the, you know, the photographs – and again, my brother XXXX would have all these. If you want photographs, he probably has a lot. Well, I know he has a lot. It might be useful for you to talk to him, actually, because he has all these documents. When I think of photographs of what goes on in schools that my dad used to have, and he used to have a lot of photographs, a lot of it was of pictures, but more of it was of kids doing movement and...

(Break in recording)

A: And movement and dance was a really important thing, especially in primary schools – probably also in secondary schools – in the fifties, sixties, and up to the end of the West Riding. I don't know whether it continued. Probably, probably sort of... I don't know whether it died out or not, or whether it still goes on. But an awful lot of movement... there was an awful lot of movement and dance in the curriculum. And, and my, my godmother, Diana Jordan, who used to be the warden of Woolley Hall, was first appointed as a movement and dance advisor; and she was very closely... she knew Rudolf Laban.

Q: Yes.

A: Actually, I wonder if the Laban people in London, you know, wherever they are... Where is that? They're attached to one of the universities, aren't they, the Laban school? Whether they have anything about my father. But I mean, she, there was a close connection between Diana Jordan and Rudolf Laban; and there was a very good picture of her dancing with Rudolf Laban in the, in the grounds of Woolley Hall.

Q: Wow.

A: It's a lovely picture, actually. It's a lovely picture. And another friend of the family, Vi... Oh, God. Violet Bruce. Vi Bruce used to do movement and dance at Leicester University after she left the West Riding. She was very crucial. And also, Margaret Dunn.

Q: Yes.

A: I mean, there were a lot of key, key advisors in the West Riding who did movement and dance, and made it into a big issue. And my father thought of it as a very important thing. I don't quite know where that came from in his background.

Q: Was your mother a dancer? Am I right in...

A: My mother was a dancer, yeah. She was a big time... she trained as a dancer. She would have gone onto the, you know, onto the stage, but her own mother said, you know, 'You can't make a career out of that; you'd better go and be an infant teacher,' so she did. But she carried on doing... She met my father... when she met my father in Birmingham, she was crackers about movement and dance. She'd be going to the Birmingham Mechanics Institute, you know, two or three nights a week to do movement and dance. And it was all influenced by the sort of European
modern dance movement, led by people like Laban, and also other people whose names I forget, but crucial people from the European, you know, school. And she carried on doing dance through the Yorkshire Movement and Dance... what was it called? Organisation. They used to meet at Woolley. It was really teachers. It was dance teachers. And they mainly... there were some men, mainly women. And it went on all her life, and may be still going on. I don't know. I don't know if you know about it.

Q: I don't. Not so much. It's not, not my area as much, the dance.

A: There's a booklet about it: Yorkshire... History of Yorkshire Movement and Dance. Little booklet about it. But I mention it because, you know, the things that, the sort of, the key pillars of artistic expression in the curriculum for him were, were writing – and he used to reproduce those books about children's writing – and art, pictures, and dance.

Q: Yes.

A: And I don't know if you know a book by, by... Stone. What was his first name?

Q: Oh, Arthur Stone.

A: The Story of a School.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: He was a key advisor. He was an absolutely key person. And that book is an extraordinary piece of writing, which not many people know about. But it is... Have you seen the book?

Q: Yes.

A: It's a really, really good book. What was his first name? I can't remember.

Q: I think... is it Arthur?

A: Sorry?


A: It could be Arthur. The thing is, the reason why I don't remember it was that, you know, like, in those days, they used to call people by their surnames.

Q: Yes.

A: You know, people used to say, 'Clegg says this,' and, 'Stone says that.'

Q: Yeah. The way that your dad writes some personal letters, he'll say kind of, you know, 'My dear Rock.'
A: Yes. Funny, isn't it?

Q: Or, 'My dear Woodward.'

A: Yeah, it's funny.

Q: Yes.

A: But that book is important. And he brought Stone up to the West Riding from Birmingham.

Q: Yes.

A: And he became a key influence in the development of movement and dance in the West Riding, in the West Riding education for... well, until he died. And I think dance... my dad... my mother was certainly, you know, big time dance person. My dad used to dance. But I think... the only thing I remember about it is the way, you know, because they used to go... when they used to go out together, they'd go dancing at the Hammersmith Palais or something like that, you know. And doing I suppose... What kind of dance would it have been? I don't know.

Q: Crikey, yes.

A: But they used to have, they used to have patent leather shoes, you know. Shiny patent leather shoes he used to wear when he did his dancing – when he was a young man.

Q: I think they must have been a very striking couple. Your mother was very beautiful. I came across a photograph... And your father was very striking as a young man. And then I found a picture on the day that he was knighted; and there's your mum and your dad, and XXXX... I'm not sure if it's you or XXXX– it's a black and white picture – with top hats on.

A: XXXX and XXXX, I think.

Q: And again, I mean, very striking couple. So I imagine, in their day, dancing, they probably cut quite a figure together.

A: They probably did. They probably did.

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. I don't know... I mean, I can see where his ideas about painting came from, because they would have been important in his father's school. Where his ideas about dance came from, I don't... But it was a crucial thing, the idea of movement and dance in education. I think it's much less... I don't know what role it plays now in school, school curriculum. Probably not too much.

Q: No. I know in... I have a four-year-old who's started school. And they have, you know, I suppose a version of that. But I know, as you move through school... Some
schools, in secondary, they have dance as kind of a module, as an option later on; but it's, it's few and far between, even the schools that... in secondary schools, that appear to offer it. So it's very, very changed.

A: I mean, if you ever want to follow this up... I don't know what the focus of your dissertation is. If you want to follow the dance part of it up, I can look out a few of these documents about dance and about... I could get my hands on some of them.

Q: I think I've realised that my PhD will be a tiny amount of what I want to write, and that I now have a lifetime of things that I want to talk about your dad and write about your dad. Because I'm quite confined by the academic regulations of a PhD and what I have to do. But I've come across so much stuff that I just would like to shine a light on again and kind of have out there, really.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: To wrap this up a bit, because I've taken so much of your time – this is an impossible question, but are there ways that... How did he influence you, and did he influence you? Did his work? 'Cause I know parents, you know, of course we're influenced by our parents. But are there key things where you really think, yes, that did come from him?

A: Well, he spent a lot of time in Germany when he was younger. He did French and German at Cambridge, and he spent a lot of time in Germany; and it affected him a lot. He was imbued with things German. He used... I think he must... I've got lots and lots of letters – if you ever want to see these things, I'm sure, you know, I could give you access to them – which he wrote. He used to go to Germany and stay there for several months, in a particular family with whom we have connections. And I've got lots of letters from Germany. It's the beginning of the thirties. You're right at the beginning... late twenties, early thirties – just before the Hitler period. And so he kept on. He was always connected with Germany in his mind. And he taught me German in, at home, because we couldn't do it at school. And then later on, we could do it at school, and so I did it. Only very few people who did it. Did it in, did it for O Level, did it for A Level; and then spent some time in Germany, and did German and French myself at the university, and worked... I worked in Germany for four years, the beginning of my career. And I'm still very connected with Germany. So that all comes from my father originally.

Q: Wow.

A: And I think the other thing is... well, I went into education. I became a teacher, and mainly a teacher trainer. And most of my work has been with... a lot of it, anyway, has been in English as an additional language – English as a second language, as we used to call it – and then later English medium education in Africa. So it's focused on, I suppose, what you might call disadvantaged groups of children. And I think probably I get that from my father, the idea that it's a motivating thing to work with groups of children...

(Break in recording)
Q: …very much for your time, XXXX.

A: Okay.

Q: It's been an absolute pleasure to talk to you.

A: Good. It's been interesting. And I'll send you, I'll send you a few links, especially to do with Peter Newsam. I do think it would be... if you could get hold of him, I think it would be good.

Q: Yes. Thank you very much.

A: Okay.

Q: Take care, and we'll speak again soon, hopefully.

A: Okay.

Q: Bye-bye.

A: Bye-bye.

(End of recording)
Family Narrative Three

A: Hello. Can you hear me?

Q: Hello. Yes, I can. Can you hear me?

A: Yes. I can see you as well.

Q: Oh, brilliant. I can't see you, but that's okay.

A: I'm not quite sure what I can do to... Let's have a look at the camera.

Q: Oh, there we go.

A: Can you see me now?

Q: Yes, perfect. Perfect. Morning. How are you?

A: I'm fine, thanks. Nice to see you.

Q: And you. Thank you for talking to me. I got your contact details from your brother John; and as you may well know now, I'm doing a PhD about your dad.

A: That sounds quite interesting.

Q: It is. I've got to be honest: I've had a ball. I've had an absolute ball. I've been welcomed into this community of the West Riding, when your dad was chief executive education officer. And I've spoken to fantastic people, fantastic people.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: So kind of very officially, what I'm trying to do is find out about the leadership style that your dad had. But what, what I have come to be very interested in is who your dad was. I, I like your dad, if that doesn't sound too bizarre. And the people that I've met have shown me a side of him... I mean, they talk about your dad as a magnet, and as this charismatic man. And so I've become really interested in not what he did, but how he did it and who he was. And so that's what I'm kind of chatting to people about, really. I'm trying not to have lots of questions – just to let people kind of talk, really, and tell me what, what they remember, what they... kind of what they thought, really. If that's okay.

A: Yes, okay. Well, it's a little bit difficult for... you know, I was his son. And so that's a bit different from working for him, I suspect.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: But I can... I mean, do you know anything about his background at all?

Q: I do a little bit. I know what... 'cause there's two books written about him, isn't there, predominantly?
A: Yes.

Q: There's the Peter Darvill book and the Nora George book.

A: Yes. And none of them really go into the sort of details of, personal details much.

Q: No. I know a little bit about Samuel Clegg.


Q: And a little bit about where your dad went to school. And that's kind of pretty much it, really.

A: Okay. Yes, well, okay, so if you've covered that bit, you know that his, his... not only his father was a teacher, but his grandfather was a teacher as well.

Q: Yes.

A: Nonconformist, South Gloucestershire. He was arrested for not teaching religious education in eighteen seventy, when it became required, on the grounds that it was organised by the Anglican church, and he was a Baptist. So it's that sort of background that my father comes from. He was, you know, not a nonconformist. He was not, he was not religious at all. But he comes from that nonconformist tradition.

Q: Okay.

A: And, yeah, what else can I say? He, he got the job very early on, after not very long working in, mainly in Birmingham. And so he moved into the West Riding as deputy to start with. And then his, his senior retired, and he was suddenly given the job, the top job. And he had a lot of difficulties. I do remember, all throughout my childhood... not difficulties, but struggle to actually work with the chair people of the education committee, who were the key important people, who were powerful people. And so he had to get on with them. And I think, I get the impression that he managed quite successfully. And it was in those days when the West Riding used to transfer from Conservative to Labour almost every election, you know.

(Break in recording)

A: It was a grammar school. You see, it was one of these schools... It was Tadcaster Grammar School, fifteen fifty-seven, founded by Archbishop Oglethorpe for the children of the poor. And it had been going on... it was one of these traditional grammar schools that served the town of Tadcaster and the villages around about. And all that happened was that they started taking people from Tadcaster, but not the villages round about, who had not passed their 11-plus. So approximately half the population in my year had not passed its 11-plus. As far as I can make out, it was, it made no change at all in what they did. So, but anyway, I think it was the first co-educational comprehensive in the country, and it started in nineteen fifty-five, I think that would be. And I think there were, there was a girls' comprehensive in London that was earlier.
Q: Your dad was really young when he got the job. He was thirty-four, I think, wasn't he, when he...?

A: Yes, he was, he was.

Q: I've been speaking to Eric Woodward. I don't know if you remember Eric Woodward.

A: Yeah, I remember Eric Woodward very well.

Q: Eric's become a really good friend. And an amazing man. And he obviously knew your dad. And Eric was really young as well. I spoke to Eric about... I mean, these were huge jobs.

A: Yeah, I know.

Q: The responsibility must have been immense.

A: Yeah, yeah. And of course, people like Eric Woodward – I suspect you wouldn't find people with that sort of qualification and that sort of job in the education system nowadays.

Q: No.

A: But it was a key one, you know. I got to know him quite well.

Q: Oh, really?

A: Yeah.

Q: He's a fantastic man. I go to the archive at Bretton most weeks, over the last three years; and Eric volunteered there until very recently. He was ninety this year.

A: Really?

Q: Yeah. And so he stopped going about... probably the early part of this year he stopped going. But he still lives in Woolley, in the house that he's lived in since I think about the mid-nineteen fifties. And so I try and go and see him about every other week, and we just sit and have cups of tea and chat about things like your dad, and what they did – you know, this kind of really kind of amazing period of time in the West Riding – of what they actually did. He talks about how he and your dad would play tennis at Woolley.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: And he was telling me the other week that there was a game of doubles, and your dad was there with somebody, and Eric was playing with somebody; and Eric waited till five o'clock to finish work, and then dashed to Woolley; and your dad was saying, 'Come on, you're late.' And Eric said, 'Well, I didn't dare leave work early. How would
that have looked, if I'd kind of turned up early for this game of tennis?' But he's got really fond memories and lovely things to say about your dad, really lovely.

A: Yeah, yeah. Oh, good.

Q: It's been fascinating talking to all these people about them. I don't know if you know Nancy Smith. Nancy Smith was a headteacher, then an inspector.

A: Yes.

Q: And she...

A: I didn't know her very well. I mean, I was quite young, you know. I was... when all this happened, yeah.

Q: She lives in Denby Dale. She never married. She was a teacher all her life, education all her life. And again, I mean, these people are now, are very elderly, and they're as sharp as a tack. You've got to have your wits about you, talking to these people. They have forgotten nothing. You know, very on top of their game. A huge amount of respect for your mum as well as your dad. They speak very fondly of both of your parents.

A: Yeah. It was, you know, it was a very different way of running an education system then than now. He did manage to attract a lot of very interesting people into the team. And what strikes me, looking back, is the focus on art and music, which was, was very well developed. And you just don't see that these days. And the quality of the advisers in both art and music – they, you know, the art advisers were good artists in their own right and so on, and the musicians were musicians.

Q: Yes.

A: And so on. And they then carried out this work of advice. And when I was a teacher in the West Riding, I often saw the science adviser. Even when I moved to Doncaster, after the split up of the West Riding – I was working for the Doncaster authority – the adviser was a regular visitor to the school. I talk to teachers nowadays, and such people don't exist. There doesn't seem to be a network. And certainly dad did regard that sort of support network as key to how to develop good schools over a large area.

Q: You're spot on. And that's come through in the people that I've met as much as anything. They talk a lot about... they felt very supported by your dad. And he had this huge job. He had... you know, over a huge geographical area. But they felt that he had time. And the way that he was, and the way that he would go out into the schools... People like Nancy, again, have said to me that they wanted to please your dad: they wanted to raise their game and kind of deliver for him. And again, I think that's quite rare these days to work for somebody that you admire on that level.

A: Yeah, yeah. I think in those days it was common. I think dad did it in a particular way, which was probably a bit different from most authorities. But that was the way
authorities were organised. I mean, my uncle, for example, dad's brother-in-law, was the chief education officer for the North Riding.

Q: Yes.

A: You know, Frank Barraclough.

Q: Yes.

A: And I think that that was the way counties were organised then, and with a lot, big support teams, paid for out of the rates. But that seems to have disappeared now. The county influence is minimal, and it's administrative only, as far as I can see. None of the teaching is supported by counties any more; it's supported in other ways, I think.

Q: I was reading last night again, Peter Newsam, the book that he wrote, and there's a chapter about the West Riding. And he was saying how there was... in the West Riding when your dad was in charge, they kind of delivered... their loyalty was to the local authority and not to the government, is how he described it. And that totally makes sense.

A: Yeah. I think it's worth remembering that, in those days, it was before the curriculum came under central control. I mean, I left teaching in this country when that happened, because I... it was important to me to control my own curriculum, particularly as I was teaching kids for CSE, when we were doing Mode 3 CSE. Does that mean anything to you, Mode 3...?

Q: Well, I was born in seventy-four, the year your dad retired and the year... I was born in seventy-four.

A: Yeah.

Q: So I'm aware of some of those things. I think I was the first year to do GCSE.

A: Yeah, yeah. Well, the G... the Mode 3 CSE was, the whole examination system was in the control of the teachers, and we just worked as groups of teachers. That all went by the board when the curriculum was nationalised, you see, and it's taken out of our hands completely. And that, to my mind, was the beginning of the, of big changes, when... Before then, the curriculum was... I think the phrase was 'the secret garden of the curriculum', wasn't it? That was what one of the ministers of education referred to it as early on. And it wasn't something that they would trespass into.

Q: Yes. One thing that I have come across a lot, when I'm at the archive, and of course they hold quite a lot of your dad's papers, mainly professional papers – there's a lot of humour that comes through from your dad.

A: Yeah.

Q: Which has been an absolute joy, you know, when you're sat looking at boxes and boxes of papers. He had a really dry sense of humour. Which again, I don't think you
see today as much. Whether... I don't know whether people feel there isn't room for that. But who your dad was seems to come through, come through what he did.

A: I think it probably could do then. One of the reasons why is that, again, it's... it was the authority that was in charge of education. It wasn't, he wasn't particularly answerable to the ministry or anything like that. Incidentally, about humour – I have a file upstairs, which I've kept. It's called The Funny File. It's about all sort of peculiar things that happened in the office. I must say, reading through it, half of them I don't understand.

Q: Yes.

A: But it was one that he kept separate from everything else, and it didn't go into the collection. Perhaps it should go into the collection.

Q: There is a folder in the collection that's called Kind Letters, which is probably similar. And it's really lovely. And it's towards... well, the start of nineteen seventy-four. So they're quite... people have written to him saying thank you, and how sorry they are that he's retiring, and also that the authority was to be disbanded. But they are genuinely kind letters; and he's written back to every single person, and there's a copy of his letter in there. So, yeah, it doesn't surprise me at all that he has a folder of funny letters.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: And it's not only funny letters; it's funny things that happened, that teachers reported in schools as happening and, you know... I've kept it with a view sometime maybe to look through it and see if there's anything that's worth extracting, but I haven't had the sort of time and energy to do it yet.

Q: The one thing your dad was very good at was generating paper. There's an awful... there's an awful lot. There are boxes and boxes of things that he would... and some of them as well, people like Basil Rock he would often refer to as, you know, 'My dear Rock.' Or with Woodward, it would be: 'My dear Woodward.' But there's a letter as well – in a few speeches your dad's mentioned it – that Basil Rock used to get frustrated at your dad at one point. Because there's a collection of paintings of flowers that children did that your dad used to take around a lot.

A: Yes, I know that.

Q: And apparently, Basil used to get frustrated at your dad. As time went by, Basil would say, 'There's better pictures, Alec. You know, there's more.' And your dad had said, 'You miss the point, Basil. I learned from those pictures.' And so he kept taking them round. And Basil used to get really frustrated, apparently, because there was better work. Because of course, Basil was an artist, and that was, was his background. But you get these friendships that come through these quite professional documents, really. Which is really nice as well, as you kind of pick through the lines of it all.
A: Yeah. I mean, Basil Rock was a good painter.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, very good painter. And do you know, his wife, I think, is still alive.

Q: Yes. Is it Rosemary?

A: Rosemary. Rosemary...

Q: Yes. Her...

A: New surname.

Q: Yes. I can't remember.

A: Sadly she's in a wheelchair. But I saw her a few years ago. She lives quite near here, in Somerset. In Bath, I think.

Q: I spoke to Martial Rose as well about a year ago. Martial Rose – he was head of drama at Bretton Hall in I think... well, he was there... must have been about nineteen fifty-one, fifty-two. And Martial will be ninety-five now.

A: Yeah. Really?

Q: And again, I mean, remember huge amounts, huge amounts of what they did.

A: Yeah.

Q: Fascinating...

A: I think the drama was particularly good. What's his name? Big guy. Z-Cars man.

Q: Brian Blessed.

A: Brian Blessed was there.

Q: Yes. There's quite a... when you start to look at the alumni of Bretton Hall, it's vast. It is absolutely vast.

A: It was, I was told – dad told me this – it was more difficult to get into Bretton Hall than to get into many universities at the time.

Q: I'm not surprised. My, my...

A: Quality of A Levels.

Q: Yeah. My research really runs from nineteen forty-five to nineteen seventy-four, because that's when your dad was in charge. And of course, Bretton ran until two
thousand and one. And I think that I'm really looking at that golden age of Bretton as well. I mean, just... I've interviewed Margot and Derek XXXXXXs, and they were at Bretton in nineteen fifty. And they met there, and they married. And Derek said to me he couldn't believe that they would take him. Because it was Bretton Hall. And that was at the very start. And he couldn't believe it. And all of these people... When I talked to XXXX, your brother, and we were talking about, you know, could a Bretton happen today – probably not, really.

A: Yeah. It's... I mean, the whole... it's, it's really a product of the war. I think suddenly, after the war, there was the bulge of number of births; and the authorities had to expand rapidly, including training all their own teachers. So West Riding bought up a lot of these big old houses, which were sort of going almost free – or not bought them, but perhaps took a long rent on them. And then converted them into colleges. And they were different... there was a variety of different colleges. I mean, I think I mentioned to you the Lady Mabel College in Wentworth, which is interesting at the moment.

Q: Yes. Yeah, isn't it just? Yeah.

A: And then there was the Woolley. I went to Woolley quite a lot.

Q: Did you?

A: Yeah, along with my parents; you know, we used to go along. There's lots of things... And Diana Jordan...

Q: Yes.

A: …who headed Woolley, was a very close family friend, and used to come with us on holidays.

Q: Yes. Was Diana Jordan, was she godmother to, to XXXX and...?

A: Yes. Not to me, because I'm not christened, but she was godmother to the other two.

Q: Yes, yes. Again, I was reading the other day, again, that your dad often could be found at Bretton, down by the river, in the boathouse, writing speeches. 'Cause nobody could find him there.

(Laughter)

Q: Which again makes sense, doesn't it? You know, if he was sat in his office, he was just probably then a bit of a sitting duck to get to him. So he would be down in the boathouse writing speeches. How would you describe him as a dad? What type of father was he?

A: Very, very, very good and very close. You know, he played tennis with us. We had, he had a tennis court built at home. He bought an acre of land and built a house on it, and there was a tennis court at the back. And it was a very, it was a pretty
conventional family. My mother didn't work. And we were in this little village; and the village was my world, really, when I was a child. So, and we were sort of feral. They used to have a cowbell from Switzerland, that they rang to summon us all to a meal, you know, whenever it was ready. And it could be heard all over the village.

(Phone rings)

A: Oh, my phone is ringing. I'm going to switch it off.

Q: That's it. Saxton, wasn't it? Saxton.

A: Yeah.

Q: I've been to Saxton. I went to the grave of your mum and dad. I, I've really come to like your dad. I need to be very objective when I write this thesis, 'cause I do like him. And so I knew that... I'm in North Yorkshire, and so I went to the grave. And it was really quite poignant the day I went, 'cause I was pregnant with my second child last year. And a very beautiful headstone. And in the background of the school, the children were playing and out in the school yard. And I was kind of stood there, you know, where your mum and dad are, really. And it was, it was really lovely. It was just a really lovely moment. And to see the village that, you know, he went home to, and where you will have spent...

A: Yeah. Of course, what you were seeing is a village which is three times the size of what it was.

Q: Yes.

A: When we went there, there were only about two or three families.

Q: Yes.

(Phone rings)


Q: Yeah, Saxton probably was much smaller when you were a child.

A: Tiny, yeah. It was essentially seven farms when we moved there.

Q: Gosh.

A: Seven. There's now only one.

Q: Gosh.
A: And there were a few people who didn't work on the farms, but very few. The ones that didn't work on the farms were either working in Micklefield pit, which was, you know, half an hour cycle ride away, or Tadcaster brewery, which was half an hour the other way.

Q: Goodness.

A: But most people were working on the farms.

Q: XXXX was telling me that when you were, I suppose, teenagers, that your dad...

(Break in recording)

A: It was a sensible time of day, and I've always practised early in the morning.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah. But all of us used to sit and practise in our rooms, and then breakfast and then off to school.

Q: And then John would say... I was speaking to John the other week, and he said that often there'd be music playing at the table, or classical music as well.

A: Yeah.

Q: Which, and I said to John... and we were talking about, we wondered if that in a way was maybe your dad's way of also introducing, you know, kind of what he was... I don't want to use the word 'preaching', but he was saying about creativity and art and about children, and having it in his home maybe.

A: Yeah. I think it was very deliberate. I mean, it was in the days, you know, when, when classical records were quite rare, you know. This was the fifties. And I remember when, when we first bought a long-playing record player, which would take, take the vinyl ones. Because up till then, they were shellac.

Q: Crikey. Of course.

A: So we started off, you know, Eine Kleine Nachtmusik on a, on a couple of sides of a shellac record.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And I've still got those records upstairs. And Beethoven's piano concerto would be a whole stack of these shellac records. You could get...


A: But it was, I think it was very deliberate. And it sort of went in to all of us. It was, became sort of background to our lives. And so I think all of us are particularly interested in classical music now, all three of us.
Q: Yeah. Were you aware of what your dad did for a job? Did that come later?

A: It came later. It came later. What I was aware of... quite often, during the summer, we had quite a big garden that he created. That was his big interest, by the way, the garden at home.

Q: Yes.

A: You must have seen it if you've been to Saxton.

Q: I haven't been to the house.

A: Did you see the house?

A: No, I haven't been to the house. I know that he kept bees and that he liked gardening.

A: Yes. Well, it was an acre of land. It's the last house out to the west, if you ever go again, on the road up the hill to, to... Not the big steep hill that goes north, but to the west.

Q: Okay.

A: And it's on your right, and it's an acre of land. And he... the front garden was a big lawn with lots of trees. And after a while, he would start having office parties in the summer, where he'd invite a whole lot of people round for lunch or something like that. Lots of people on the lawn.

Q: I said to XXXX... we spoke a while... We spoke last year, XXXX and I; and I said, you know, did he remember many people at the house and kind of it being sociable. And he started by saying no. And then he started, all these different times where, where people had come round. And he said sometimes that people... there'd be, I suppose, a party, but the authority people would come round and...

A: Yes.

Q: And it was very social in that sense.

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes, that happened quite a lot in the summer.

Q: Yeah, I imagine.

A: Yeah.

Q: Yes. Your mum was a dancer, wasn't she?
A: Yes, she was.

Q: And was she a teacher as well? Did he meet her...?

A: She was a teacher of dance, and of that particular kind... You know Rudolf Laban?

Q: Yes.

A: That method. And it was very common at the time. I was thinking about it just last week because of the Wentworth thing. And even in our little village school, we used to do music and movement. And I think that was... all the schools in the fifties, primary schools, they would do sort of movement studies, music and movement. And there was a BBC programme called Music and Movement. And you'd just switch on the radio, and you'd do it during the, that programme.

Q: Wow.

A: You see. And that, I think, was... it was a national thing at that time. But it's gone now, I think.

Q: Yes, yeah, pretty much. I found a picture of your mum and dad, and I think it might be you and XXXX, on the day that your dad was knighted – a black and white picture.

A: Yeah.

Q: Your parents were a very striking couple.

A: Yes.

Q: Very striking. Because when I first started to learn about your dad, and I came across pictures, not many of them, but they were always in black and white, and he was always an elderly man. And then I found a picture of him when he was a teacher, in the very early days. And it sounds a really silly thing to say, but I suddenly thought, 'Of course, he was a young man as well.' And again, very striking. Very... So as a couple, I imagine they kind of cut quite a, you know, quite a dash together.

A: I think so, yeah. Yeah. I mean, that's not the sort of... you know, it hasn't... thinking back, I didn't notice anything like that at the time. But yeah, I think you're right.

Q: I think when, again, people... there's a huge fondness still for your parents in the people I've spoken to. And they saw them as this very charismatic couple. And I think they probably, you know, were a very striking couple. And there was humour about them, and just kind of a huge affection, which I think... 'Cause I'm very outside eyes, and I can see it. I can see why they would be drawn to your parents. 'Cause in a very different way, I feel drawn to your dad, to who he was and what he did. Do you think that your mum had any... That's wrong way to ask it. Do you think she was
a sounding-board? Do you think that he would come home and tell her about his work, or do you think he tried...?

A: Oh, I think they talked a lot, yeah. I think they talked a lot all the time. I never heard the discussion, but she knew what was going on. She knew all the people, you know, particularly when they came round to the garden: she knew who they were and what they did and could carry on conversations with everybody. So I think dad used to, really used to talk a lot about his work, particularly about the bits that he found difficult, which made him ill. You know, he suffered quite a lot from unknown stomach complaints that went on for a long time.

Q: Yes, yes. And, 'cause again, as I said at the start, that was a big job as well. The more I read and the more I learn – and most of what I read is very factual, you know: this happened and then that happened – and then you kind of get little insights into maybe what it was actually like for people to do these jobs, and the level of stress that must have come with it. I mean, we feel that we have stressful lives today, but in many ways, we also have a lot of ease. You know, we can speak today doing this, and there's no huge journey involved, and all of that type of thing. And so I do kind of think that they must have carried an awful lot on their shoulders, really.

A: I do remember he used to get particularly stressed before education committee meetings.

Q: Yeah, I bet.

A: Walter Hyman was the one that gave him real trouble, always. 'Cause I think Walter Hyman was a very difficult person to get on with. But Mrs... what was... Yes, you're right. It's...

Q: Is it...

A: I can't remember the exact name. It wasn't... It's Fitz something. I can't remember.

Q: No.

A: Yeah. But she was the, she was the Conservative. Most of the time Labour were in power, but there were times when the Conservatives were running the West Riding.

Q: And your dad seems to have navigated it. At least what comes through, you know, what's been written – he seems to have navigated it really, you know...

A: It's interesting that. I was thinking of that myself. Because it would be almost impossible job now. Because they would... every time they changed, they'd want to change everything. But I think it was... those postwar years were very different from now, in that the political parties, when they took over from each other, carried on what they were doing. I mean, the National Health Service was set up in the Attlee government, and was carried on by Churchill and so on. So there wasn't the big changes that you get now every time you get a change of government.
Q: No. And it's slightly an aside, but this year politically has been, I mean, fascinating, but crazy as well. And again, I've thought, you know... and there isn't a comparison, but in the sense of when it was postwar - and this is a sweeping statement, I'm aware - but this sense of rebuilding, and rebuilding a country. And then we have had this Brexit vote, and again, we have to build something out of it.

A: I know. Those things, that kind of thing never really happened. I think it was probably the aftermath of the war, and people were working together and so on because of that. But I remember, almost all the ministers of education at one time or another stayed in our house. When they came up and visited, dad always used to invite them, invite them along. They stayed over. So I can't remember them... I can't remember them personally. But certainly, I remember Edward Boyle, who was huge. And he was the, he was the Conservative. And then there was Shirley, Shirley Williams.

Q: Oh.

A: And all of them at one time or another.

Q: Gosh. Gosh. Again, I spoke briefly to XXXX and XXXX about when the service ended, and I see that as your dad kind of had to dismantle his work of thirty years. And again, maybe... probably know the answer to this. But I mean, did that, did he bring that home? That must have been an incredibly difficult time for him.

A: What, the...?

Q: When the service ended, when the West Riding was broken up.

A: It was, yes. What had happened was that he had actually reached retirement age before that happened, but they asked him to stay on. Yeah, and he just presided over the dissolution of his empire. And it was difficult, I think. But it all went... almost all of it went to people who had become his close friends, colleagues. You know, almost every bit of the West Riding was then run by somebody who was one of the old West Riding people.

Q: I think some of the things that have been the hardest... Again, I've spoken to Eric. And I read that the library was broken up, and it was this amazing resource. And of course Eric was the School...

A: Schools' Museum Service. All that just disappeared.

Q: Yeah. Which even now, at ninety, with Eric, that's very difficult for him. Because that was his life...

A: Now, that was a really terrible thing. The institutions like that, when they went - Woolley Hall, those sort of institutions - that was, I think, the most difficult thing.

Q: Yeah. There's a teacher, and I can't remember her name, but again, I read in one of the papers that in nineteen seventy-nine she was retiring, and she had continued to use West Riding authority stationery. Because she just refused to accept that it
had been broken up, that it was no longer there. And out of a sense of... she had a huge loyalty to your dad and what had been built up. And so she wouldn't, she just wouldn't kind of entertain the idea. Which makes me laugh. But I mean, today, you couldn't do that today. I mean, she probably was in trouble then. She probably, you know, she shouldn't have been doing it. But I think it speaks volumes about these people. Because again, in those days, you tended to have much more of a job for life, or over a long period of time. And they just, they were incredibly loyal, incredibly loyal to what they had... Your dad seems to have had this gift for people... they felt that they built this with him.

A: Yeah. Do you know, one... actually triggers one thing, one important thing. He always allowed people as much rope as possible in their jobs, the teachers. If they were doing a good job, he, you know, he just let them do it the way they wanted to do it. There was no, there were no sort of rules that... But then, you know, then you had to deal with the poorer ones. But the ones that really flowered under that, he was very proud of, and he used to take lots of visitors to them. And I remember there were certain schools that kept cropping up when he was talking. And I visited one or two of them when I was a trainee teacher, which was quite interesting. But the way he did it was to just let them go, let them do it. None of the sort of national curriculum kind of control.

Q: Yeah, yeah. When I was talking to Nancy Smith, and she said again that your dad was very... he just wanted best practice to come through. And that's really, on a very simple level, that's kind of how she saw it: that's what he was trying to do. That if something was good, and something was working, you just let it happen, and you tell people about it.

A: Yeah. There's... headmaster of Mexborough – that was my first school, incidentally. Guy called George Shield. When I was interviewed there – this would be nineteen sixty-nine – I'd passed the interview, and he said, he then said to me, 'Would you like to come and see my aeroplane?' And we went down to the metalwork room, and they'd knocked one of the walls out of the metalwork room so that it was a hangar.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And the kids were building this aeroplane in a metalwork class.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And eventually, he flew it.

Q: That's amazing.

A: He kept flying it, yeah.

Q: That's amazing.

A: Now, can you imagine that happening in, in a school these days?
Q: Not at all.

A: And that was... Yeah, and George Shield was also a sculptor, and he made, he made the head and shoulders, the bust of my father.

Q: Oh, did he?

A: Yeah. I'm not quite sure where that is now.

Q: No. I know when...

A: XXXX got it maybe, one of my brothers.

Q: Bretton Hall is being redeveloped into a luxury hotel as we speak. And about two years ago, I got permissions to go into Bretton Hall and have a look round. Which was quite an odd experience, because it's very much alive in my head, this period of time. And of course, you go into Bretton Hall, and it's very unloved and it's very damp and it's cold. And I went right down to the cellars, and right up to the roof; which was fascinating, because you look out from the roof, you can't see the Sculpture Park: you can just see the Bretton Hall campus and the nineteen sixty-four buildings. Which was absolutely magical to be in there. But when I came through into, towards the library, and on the front of it it says Sir Alec Clegg in big gold letters – which Eric once said to me, he said, 'I don't think Alec would like that. I don't think he'd like that big kind of "look at me" emblazoned across the front.' It was very unloved inside, which didn't sit comfortably, either. But there was a plaque on the wall with your dad's name on it, that talked about, in nineteen sixty-four, when the buildings had been built and extended, the student hostels and the refectory. And so I asked the archive if they could take it down before it kind of went to the developers. And so that's in the archive now as well. So there's little bits of things...

A: Oh, that's good.

Q: ...that, as I see them, I'm trying to kind of get back to the archive. Because there must be lots and lots of things, but not everything is accounted for. Trying to find them...


Q: Yeah. I read something, again, I think Peter Newsam had written, again thinking about your dad and what he'd said; and XXXX had said that when... your dad was away from his desk a lot. He would visit and he would travel. And I think...

A: Every Thursday.

Q: Yes. And I think XXXX had said that... I don't know if your dad had said this or whether this was XXXX, but that could make a chief education officer vulnerable, because he was away from his desk and what was happening. But your dad must have been abroad, and one of the schools had been set on fire – an act of vandalism. And so your dad had written two-line note to XXXX that just said, 'Can you tell me what you would do, and how many schools you would have left, if one
school was set on fire? A, B, C.' And XXXX said that was a typical Alec note. You
know, he said your dad always made you think. He always made you think about
what would he want you to figure out from that. He wouldn't just give it to you on a
plate. So XXXX said, you know, from that he took that, you know, you had to be on
top of your game: you had to know how many schools were there and what had
happened – and that possibly there should have been a report or a letter waiting for
your dad about that school incident, so he knew what was going on. 'Cause I mean,
to keep on top of anything in that job that your dad did must have been a feat, an
absolute feat.

A: His PA... well, two PAs he had always, were important people. They sort of ran
him all the time.

Q: Was one of them called Valerie? Valerie?

A: Valerie. Valerie was his private secretary for a long time. And then there was...
what's his name? Broadbent. What's his first name? The sort of head of the office, as
it were, his office. There were sort of two levels. Yeah.

Q: He's... again, Valerie's sometimes mentioned in the correspondence; and there
was one where he'd written something where... he was making a joke about
something, and he said it kind of wasn't for the ears of Valerie so he couldn't say any
more.

A: Yes.

(Laughter)

A: Oh, no, I remember. Now, it was Ben Tidswell who was his... One of his phrases
was apparently... I don't know where I read this the other day. Somebody came
round to see him, and Ben thought he was in – had a look in his office, came out and
says, 'No, he's slipped his leash again.'

Q: Yes, that sounds about right. That sounds about right. Really, my last question,
if... And this is an impossible question. I asked both your brothers as well. Because
our parents do this anyway, but how did he influence you? Can you say how he
influenced you?

A: Oh, a lot. A lot. I mean, in all sorts of ways. One was that he convinced me that I
should go to Oxford or Cambridge. And that was a hell... you know, I got in the ninth
try.

Q: Crikey. But that's a mountain.

A: And thinking back, I don't think... Well, I mean, I'm glad I went, because Oxford is
such a wonderful place, but I don't think it would have made much difference. And
then, after I'd gone through Oxford – I'd done a doctorate in chemistry – I was
working really part-time for Glaxo during the doctorate. And the idea was that I would
continue and work at Glaxo research, at the bench, research bench, at a time when
there was a lot of work to be done, 'cause it was the time of the development of the
contraceptive pill. And Glaxo were really getting into it in a heavy way, and they wanted a lot of, a big team of researchers. But I, I suddenly realised that the people that I was working with were doing exactly the same thing as I was doing; and I was in my twenties, early twenties, and they were in their forties. They were, to my mind, ancient. And the idea of growing ancient doing the same... So I decided to do a DipEd.

Q: Oh my goodness. Thank you so much for talking to me, XXXXX.

A: It was a pleasure.

Q: I've really had such... I feel very fortunate. I, you know, have been given a tiny amount of a look into people's lives, that you've all contributed so much in so many different ways. And I'm really grateful that you've talked to me, so thank you very much.

A: It's a pleasure, XXXXX. Good luck with your work.

Q: And you have a lovely Christmas.

A: Yeah, and to you.

Q: Bye-bye.

A: Okay, bye-bye.

(End of recording)
Appendix 3: Anonymised Bretton Hall College Community Narratives

This appendix presents the transcript of the author and the Bretton Hall College Community, which took place during 2014-2015.

A: Hello XXXXX.
Q: Hello.
A: Can you see me?
Q: Yes. Can you see me?
A: I can see you. Can you see me?
Q: I can. How are you?
A: I'm fine thanks.
Q: Looks like you've had a bit of a time of it.
A: Yes, indeed, yes. I'm a bit worried, because I'm not sure if I'm going to be the right person for your interview.
Q: Okay.
A: So, the reason being that I was a science student, not an arts student. So I don't know whether that's relevant. Also, I was only there for a year and a term, because I actually left early and transferred to a college locally. So I finished off my training at a local college.
Q: Okay.
A: So I don't know whether you want to carry on, or whether you'd prefer to have somebody who was there for the three years.
Q: What I'm trying to find out... my PhD is about Sir Alec Clegg.
A: Right.
Q: And Sir Alec Clegg founded Bretton Hall.
A: That's right, yes.
Q: And so what I'm trying to kind of find out is about his influence at Bretton, if any of you met him. But also through your experiences at Bretton, whether you maybe
realised it or not, his hand was kind of there in the background. And so just kind of knowing what you did or what you felt about it, actually can tell me sometimes quite a lot about him in a way.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: So that's what I'm after I suppose.

A: Yeah. Okey dokes. Right, well I never met him.

Q: Okay, okay. Did you ever hear him speak?

A: No, no, nothing to do with him at all. All I ever heard was everybody at the time telling us that the West Riding was the best authority to work, or to be in, you know, it was the best in the country. So, which I thought was great, but I mean yeah. But apart from that, no, no influence at all, so...

Q: Goodness. And so when were you at Bretton?

A: Nineteen sixty-nine. I went in September, well October, and then I left in the December of nineteen seventy. So that I did a year and a term. I left at Christmas nineteen seventy.

Q: And what was the programme you studied?

A: Science.

Q: Just pure science?

A: Well it was called biological science. So it was biology and physics, which was a bit of an issue for me, because I'd come from a secondary mod, and we didn't do physics, because we were thought too thick to do anything like that. So, yes. So I don't know, you see, whether I'm going to be any good to you or not.

Q: Why did you choose Bretton?

A: Well, because my brother's friend was there as a music student. And I went up to visit one weekend, and I just fell in love with it as soon as I saw it. So when I was applying... in fact it was my second choice, because my mum thought I ought to choose another college instead. And I went to an interview at this other college, which I hated, and I didn't get in. And I was that relieved because I wanted to go to Bretton. So, yeah. But you see, in my day, Bretton was a million miles away. It was a long journey by car. The motorways, in fact the first time I went up there the M1 only stopped at Barnsley.

Q: Goodness.

A: Yes, so, but when I actually began as a student, it then went past, past Bretton. But going through Birmingham was horrendous, because I live in Worcestershire,
was horrendous, because there was no M40, M42. So it was the other end of the world basically, in the sixties.

Q: My goodness. So what, you say you fell in love with it. What were your first impressions? I mean, what did you make of it?

A: Well, just the surroundings, the environment, because I'm a country girl at heart. And everybody was so friendly. I mean, when I went up just for that weekend, it was fantastic, you know, everybody was really nice. And then when I went the first day, I was terrified, as you are as an eighteen year old, and it's the other end of the world. And we got there and we were greeted by the student union, and they were just so nice. And later I heard all these horror stories of when students started at various colleges, they had to go through the initiation ceremonies, where they were put in a bath, you know, dirty water and all sorts of things. Nothing like that at Bretton. It was absolutely fantastic. So first impressions - I was just amazed that it was so wonderful. And when I got there, that the... there were several students like myself, that were supposed to be thick because we'd been to a secondary mod, and we were all, you know, very well qualified and, you know, it was great, so...

Q: One of the...

A: (...) equally.

Q: One of the things that Sir Alec was very good at, he was very good at picking very good staff.

A: Right, yes.

Q: And his staff were very good at picking students who they knew could achieve.

A: Yes.

Q: So even though that maybe on paper they, you know, you may or may not look like a kind of a...

A: Yes, that's interesting, because there was the deputy principal was Miss Hale. Don't know if you've heard of her – Daphne Hale.

Q: Yes, yes, yes, I have.

A: I loved Daphne Hale. A lot of people didn't like her, but I loved her. And when I got there, I was actually one of the better qualified students. Because a lot of... in those days you only had to have five O Levels to become a... to train to be a teacher. Well I got over and above that, 'cause I've got several... I got eight, eight... let's think: I got eight O Levels, three CSE ones, so I don't know whether you can count them as well. They don't do CSEs now, but they counted as an O Level. And I'd got my A Levels as well, two A Levels. So when I got there, I found I was, like I say, one of the better qualified. So that sort of boosted me. But when I was leaving, I had to speak to Miss Hale, and she was ever so good, and she said 'We don't go on academic
ability; we go on personalities. So we chose personalities that we felt would be best for the teaching job.' So, which clarifies what you just said, doesn't it?

Q: Completely. Which is why it is really interesting talking to you as well. Because it's like I can see Alec's hand in the background.

A: Right, yes.

Q: So even if you maybe didn't meet him... or maybe just knew of him, but his influence came down through his staff.

A: Presumably, yes.

Q: Because there's... Yeah. Which I don't think necessarily happens today so much either. That somebody kind of has that chance to choose staff themselves for their authority, and then they'd choose their students.

A: Yes, yes. And the college I transferred to, it was an awful shock when I went there, because it was like going back to school. We were sat in desks, in rows and we had to be top of the class academically all the time. Which I mean, was okay, because I was able to hold my own. But quite a few of the students were struggling. But at Bretton there was none of that. Certainly in my first year that I was there, none of that at all.

Q: Why did you transfer?

A: Various reasons. I wasn't happy with my main course, and I found the institutional living quite difficult at the time. I won't go into details, but just found it very difficult. I was getting no sleep. I was exhausted, and my work was suffering, so...

Q: Do you remember your interview at Bretton at all?

A: I do remember it, yes.

Q: What was it like?

A: Brilliant.

Q: What did you have to do?

A: When we got there, we... Miss Hale had organised a group of students to show us around. So as soon as we got there, we were welcomed immediately. We had students coming to talk to us in, I think it was the portico, I can't remember. I think it was portico. Anyway, we sat and we talked and the students from the year above came and chatted to our parents as well. It was really nice. Then they took us on a tour round the grounds. I mean, it was really nice, and talked to us. And then I think I had... I think there were two separate ones. I had like a subject interview and like an education general type interview, you know. But very relaxed, very friendly, lovely – really nice.
Q: As a student at Bretton, did you feel valued? Did you feel important?

A: Um, no, I don't think I did really. Because I was a scientist; I wasn't an artist.

Q: Because of course, Bretton was originally opened as teacher training for the arts and music, and science did come later. Which is quite interesting actually. It's quite interesting.

A: Yes. I mean, I didn't feel undervalued, but I didn't... I felt that I wasn't one of the elite, as it were. Yes.

Q: Yeah. What type of culture existed at Bretton when you were there?


Q: The people... I've spoken to some people who were at Bretton in the very early nineteen fifties, when it opened. And then students through to when you were there. 'Cause my research stops at nineteen seventy-four, because that's when Sir Alec retired. And so that's the period of time that I'm looking at. And they do talk about how it's... their time at Bretton did influence them in different ways. Did it influence you?

A: Yes, yeah. I always wanted to go back there, yes. It was a big happy family. It really was very nice. And yeah, I mean, even after I'd left early, I still wanted to go back. And even today I still want to go back there, because it was just such a lovely place to be at the time. So influencing my personality, yes, yeah. It gave me confidence, which I lost when I went to the other college. But yeah, it, after having, like I say, as a secondary mod child, so I was Eleven Plus failure, having been told for seven years I was stupid and all the rest of it. Went to Bretton and I was equal; I was equal to everybody else, yes. So it was nice, yeah.

Q: That's lovely to hear. That's very Alec. That's very Sir Alec.

A: Yeah, it's nice. Yeah.

Q: Sir Alec of course was the chief education officer for the West Riding. So his main... well it was all of education, but he was passionate about children, and he was passionate about how they were treated. And so of course when it came to training teachers in the West Riding, he was just as kind of impassioned about that really.

A: Yes.

Q: And the few of you that I've spoken to do have that real... I mean you look back very fondly, a lot of you, in your time at...

A: Oh yes, yeah, it was a unique experience. And I mean, the ex-students all have got... say about the uniqueness of it. And we all wanted... you know, have kept as good friends and happy to meet up with people, yeah, yeah. So it was special.
Q: Yeah. That's completely... I did ask somebody the other day what made it so special. And they said that it was part of them, it was just part of who they were. Which seems to come through a lot of you that I've spoken to, and quite a lot of...

A: Yeah.

Q: Go on.

A: Yeah, I was going to say because in those... I was actually in mansion in my first year, in a broom cupboard, with a brick wall outside of the window. Which is another story. But because we were a little community on that landing, you know, there was always somebody there. There was always somebody to go and talk to; there was always somebody about. And everybody was everybody's friends, you know. Don't remember falling out with anybody, you know. It was really nice.

Q: Do you know how many students were there when you were there, XXXXX?

A: About six hundred.

Q: Gosh, that... Because again I spoke to somebody yesterday and they said that they were there probably around when you were there. And said that actually they thought there was about seven hundred when they were there. And that, but it never felt like that.

A: No.

Q: Because there was all this...

A: It didn't.

Q: … space and...

A: Yeah. I think it was six hundred. It was either four hundred or six hundred, but I think it was six hundred.

Q: Oh my goodness! What for you made it so special? Can you pinpoint that, or not really?

A: Just being equal. Equal to everybody else. The happy, friendly place. Everybody was everybody's friend. Don't know what it was, it was just unique. It was just... it was just like a big, happy family. There was always somebody there for you, you know. And the tutors were brilliant as well, so...

Q: Yeah. I spoke to, I spoke to a very elderly gentleman – he's ninety-four. And he was the drama teacher at Bretton, and he started in the nineteen fifties.

A: Right.
Q: And I spoke to him, and he said about this relationship, even then, that you had with the students, where there was just... and these are my words now, but like a camaraderie as such.

A: There was, yes, yes. It was lovely, yeah. Quite different from anything I'd experienced before or since in fact, yeah. Quite... Yes, yeah.

Q: Because I said to somebody the other day that when we go to university, it is that time of your life when you start to grow as a person, don't you?

A: Yes.

Q: You meet all these people. But this was actually teacher training, you know, this was a different experience. And yet exactly as you said earlier, there's this lovely network of you all, and you stayed in touch. And it's fondly remembered. And some of you go back literally... kind of like pilgrimages.

A: That's right, yes. It is. It was so brilliant at the time, yes.

Q: And it's so interesting as well, when you talk about them being friendly. Because everybody I've spoken to – you are all very friendly. You're all very open, you're very generous with your time, with your memories of it all. And I wonder again if that stems from just this environment that you were all in really.

A: I think so, yeah, yeah. Because for me, as I say, it was... suddenly I was the same as everybody else, you know. I was not this person that was, just really didn't exist, you know. I was the same as everybody else; boosted my confidence no end, yeah. It was brilliant, yeah.

Q: Thank you, XXXXX. Is there anything else you'd like to tell me or add?

A: I don't think so. Not really, I mean I don't know that I'm a great deal of help. I'm just looking, this is just the notes that you gave me, off the computer.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Just mentioned about science, yeah. Yeah. There was always something on as well. The students union... the student union were very good at organising things. There was something on every night, if you wanted it. And the very first time I arrived... the first day I arrived, obviously terrified, the student union took us up to our room. That, it was Thursday... I remember it so clearly. Thursday night they put a disco for us in Kennel Block. And on the Friday we had a film, in the film... in the hall where you used to do film shows on a Friday. And on the Saturday there was a dance. But on the Friday morning we all had to go into the hall. And I remember that so clearly – we were all sat in the hall. Everybody was terrified. And some of the drama students got up on the stage. I mean, these were brand new drama students. Got up on the stage, and were pretending to be the tutors. I mean, in front of us, yeah. And then the tutors came in, and they quickly sort of sat down. And it was just so funny. It was just brilliant, that first day, yeah, yeah.
Q: How lovely. And how lovely that you remember it so vividly.

A: Yeah, clearly. I remember it, yeah, yeah. And I remember practically every day. Everybody always says 'How can you remember that?' But it was just such a wonderful experience. Good old Alec Clegg then, that's all I can say.

Q: Yes, yeah. So many of you I've spoken to just remember the way that you do, and remember so much of it.

A: Yes, yeah.

Q: Because I think it must have been such... literally quite a magical place to be. You remember it so clearly.

A: Yes, yeah. It was brilliant. I think it probably wasn't the same in later years, but in those early years, yeah.

Q: Yeah. I think you're right. My research, as I said, stops at seventy-four. But, and I think that period that I'm looking at, it does seem to be quite a golden age of Bretton. There's...

A: I think so. And also you've got to remember there was a need for teacher training. There were hundreds of colleges around the country, you know. And as I say, there was a need. But I often think back about it, that they put us in... we lived in as well, you know. I mean, I don't know why they made us live in, but we lived in as well, you know. But maybe that was part of the whole person as it were.

Q: Yeah. Very immersive. It seems that you had like a genuine experience of, of not just maybe what you were studying, but actually being in that environment as well.

A: Yes. Yes. I remember the first summer one girl described it as a holiday camp, as we sat down by the lake sunbathing. She said 'It's like a holiday camp. We just go up for our meals.'

Q: Yeah. How lovely, how lovely. Do you think that we could have a Bretton today? Do you think one would happen today?

A: I don't think so. It's a different society today. I think things took a downturn in the eighties, didn't they, and everybody was out for number one, rather than you know, generally. I don't, I can't see it happening again. I don't know. You know, because it's all university these days; it's all degrees. You've got to be academically brilliant. I mean, even if you go for a job for teaching, you've got to have a good, a degree or whatever. And that's not what it's about. So I don't... I can't see it coming back, no. Sadly.

Q: I know. Thank you so much for talking to me, XXXXX.

A: You're welcome. I'm sorry I missed you the other day.

Q: Oh, it's fine.
A: Kind of bonkers at the moment.

Q: I hope that it calms down a little bit for you.

A: Yeah. Okey dokes. Now, I don't know, do you want me to fill in one of these?

Q: Is that okay? If you can post it to me, brilliantly. If not, you can always sign it. I don't know if you have a camera on your phone, because you could take a picture of it, and just send me the photograph, if that's easier.

A: Yeah. Hang on a mo', I just want to change my glasses. Just one or two things I want to go through. I just wanted to say 'anonymous', is that okay?

Q: Completely fine.

A: That's fine, yes.

Q: Completely fine, not a problem.

A: That was the main thing really. Yeah. Okay, right. I'll sign this and then I'll stick it on my camera and I'll trans'... What's your number? Hang on. (pause) What's your phone number?

Q: 07989 Excuse me. 92... Hang on, I've forgotten it, 07989 923...

A: (…) mine, look. 0798992...

Q: ... 923 626.

A: ... 626. Okey dokes. Just one thing I was going to say, I don't know whether you've got Alan on your list. Alan Parker, who's now started up the reunions. He would be an excellent person to interview really.

Q: Yeah, I've met him at Bretton a few times.

A: Has...

Q: So I'm aware of him. And I was on the website actually yesterday and he's done a lot of work on it, hasn't he?

A: Absolutely, yes. But he was the year above me, so he was sixty-eight to seventy-one. He was a music student, and very much into everything at the college for his whole three years. So he would be very good to interview, more on the influence of... Because, as I say, I was science, and left early... the influence of Alec Clegg, I would have thought.

Q: Okay. Thank you.
A: Probably a better person. And I'm sure he'd be happy to do it, you know, happy to do an interview.

Q: Thank you, XXXXX. That's really kind. Thank you.

A: All right then. Best of luck.

Q: And you. Thank you. I'll be in touch. Take care.

A: Okay. Thanks. Bye then.

Q: Bye bye.

(End of recording)
Q: Okay, XXXXX, would you mind just telling me what your name is, and when you worked in the West Riding, and what you did?

A: Yes. My name is XXXX, and I taught first in the Leeds authority. So I came into the West Riding in nineteen fifty-three.

Q: Okay.

A: And I taught at a junior school, Crofton. Then I got my first headship, which was Horbury Bridge Church of England J&I School, at the age of twenty-seven. And that, incidentally, is… that, the school, this weekend, celebrated its one hundred and fiftieth birthday.

Q: My goodness, my goodness.

A: And it is the school for which the Reverend Sabine Baring-Gould wrote the hymn Onward Christian Soldiers.

Q: Oh my goodness. Oh my goodness.

A: I’m off your subject now, aren’t I?

Q: It’s fine; be off my subject.

A: But this weekend, I visited the school.

Q: How lovely.

A: And seen all the classes. And I was taken round and told that the headmistress, who was very good, I may say, took me into every classroom and told the children that this is Miss Smith, and she was headteacher here fifty-six years ago. And they all looked at me, you know. And then one of the teachers said, “That was before I was… Oh, no,” she said, “it was before I was born, ’cause I wasn’t born until nineteen sixty-one.” So they began looking at her as well, ’cause these, these two elderly people… But that was a joy, for me to go back, because it’s doing so well.

Q: Good.

A: It’s a nice school, now an academy and so on. Now to come back to your thread.

Q: You said you were twenty-seven...

A: Yes.

Q: …when you got your first headship.

A: Yes.
Q: That makes me think. I was talking to Eric earlier this week, and Eric was twenty-nine... In nineteen fifty-six, he applied for the post of Schools Museum Service officer, I think.

A: Yes, he did. I can remember him coming.

Q: And he was twenty-nine.

A: Yes.

Q: And Alec was... I think XXXX was saying yesterday that Alec was about thirty-six when he got chief education officer.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: You were young people.

A: Yes.

Q: With big jobs.

A: Yes.

Q: Did it feel... Looking back now, they seem huge to me. Headships at twenty-seven.

A: Yes.

Q: Head of the Schools Museum Service for the county at twenty-nine. Chief education officer at thirty-six.

A: Yes.

Q: Did it feel huge? Did you feel a huge responsibility?

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah?

A: Yes, very great. But you also felt, in the West Riding schools, unlike the authority I had left, that you were supported by the very people that Alec Clegg had gathered together into his advisory and inspection service. Because they were, they were spending their time going round the huge authority, in great numbers relative to other LEAs...

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: And they were sussing out where there was quality work going on at teacher level.

Q: Yeah, yeah.
A: And that’s when they began to know which schools were doing wonderful things or new things or progressive things that seemed to produce quality.

Q: Yeah.

A: And they had then the ability, through Woolley Hall, e.g., of a way, as a means of getting that spread to its, the rest of its schools. So Horbury Bridge was my first headship. And I stayed there for four and a half years. And then I got my second headship, because I’d already been talking at Woolley. Do you see what I mean?

Q: Yes, yes, yeah.

A: And therefore, they were, in a sense, an authority that were growing their own.

Q: Yeah, yes, yes.

A: But only sussing them out first, before they knew which ones to, you know, to develop further.

Q: I said to XXXX yesterday that I, I thought that Alec had a... he had this innate sense. He just chose really well. He chose really good staff.

A: He did.

Q: And XXXX said, he said, “Yes, he did.” He said, really, his dad just wanted, he wanted to show the best; and it was kind of that simple, he said. He wanted to show the best work being done...

A: Correct. Correct.

Q: …very well.

A: Yes.

Q: And that was kind of it.

A: Yes.

Q: And so, and there must have been something in Alec that could spot, you know, a good teacher, a good somebody.

A: He did spot them. But with an authority, and I think it was around one thousand four hundred schools, he couldn’t rely on himself to suss them all out. So he had to bring in people who could. And I put on the pile there a number of books by people as...

Q: Oh my goodness. With the mark.

A: That I met, and who were brought in by Alec Clegg. Is this all right...
Q: Yes, yes, yes.
A: …to go on at this point? Here, for example, is Diana Jordan, her poems.
Q: Who is XXXX godmother, it turns out.
A: Correct, correct. A dancer, right?
Q: Yes.
A: First warden of Woolley Hall.
Q: Goodness.
A: Right?
Q: Goodness.
A: But can you see, there’s a side to her in the arts? And this is where it does relate to Bretton, first college of the arts.
Q: Yes.
A: Right? Christian Schiller?
Q: Yeah, I’ve heard of Christian.
A: And I was seconded to go and do a course with Christian Schiller.
Q: Goodness.
A: And insisted should be run with only twelve, only twelve headteachers allowed in it, and there must be no written exam. Their quality, at London University awarded, must be on their research only, right?
Q: Wow, wow.
A: Lectured all the time at Woolley Hall.
Q: Yes, yes.
A: Listened to him. Brilliant man. Brilliant man. Became, and he was at the time, the senior HMI primary. So he was an HMI.
Q: Yeah, yeah.
A: Okay. This one is one of Alec’s own books. You’ve seen that. There’s the original of the Excitement of Writing.
Q: Goodness.
A: This was the form that went out to all of our schools, right.
Q: Goodness, XXXXX.
A: They distributed it. And these are the parts where my children’s work is in.
Q: How fantastic.
A: And then it was bought, printed formally by Chatto and Windus.
Q: Yes, yes, yes.
A: You’ve got that bit of history somewhere, I’m sure, haven’t you?
Q: I don’t know.
A: You’ve not? Oh, well, it’s another subject, isn’t it?
Q: It’s okay. There’s so many layers to this, XXXXX.
A: Yes, yes. Well, this is what I wrote about my philosophy. Because you’ve, you’ve seen what he said?
Q: Yes, yes.
A: ‘Can you put together a few pieces of work?’ That’s how it starts.
Q: Yes, yes.
A: A simple question, and then you respond.
Q: Yes.
A: You don’t ignore a lovely question like that.
Q: No.
A: ‘Cause you’re proud of what your children are doing.
Q: And again, what I read into that as well is that, you know, he’s saying, “You’re up to this, XXXXX.”
A: Absolutely.
Q: But he’s saying it in such a lovely...
A: Yes.
Q: Complimentary.
A: Yes.
Q: In, in a way that you... and you want your children to shine.
A: Yes.
Q: So of course you will.
A: Yes.
Q: But he's, he's... because you're right: it's a huge authority, and he's cherry-picking.
A: Yes, he did, he did.
Q: It's as if he's maybe in his head created his own hierarchy of who he's choosing. And of course, it all filters down. Hopefully then filters back up as well. But he's cherry-picking in the nicest way.
A: Yes.
Q: He's saying, "Miss Smith, you're up to this. I want your children, if possible, to do this."
A: That's right. And then something nice happens to you.
Q: Yes.
A: And he doesn't drop you 'cause you've moved to another post. He expects you to go on doing something...
Q: Yeah. He's invested in you, hasn't he?
A: Yes, I think so. Now, this lady, he brought her up as an art advisor.
Q: Yes.
A: Ruth Mark.
Q: Yes, yes, Ruth Mark.
A: She had gone by the time I was doing my research on creativity at London, under the Schiller course. But he put me in touch with her, because by that time she was teaching art at the Yehudi Menuhin School.
Q: Goodness.
A: So, as part of my research, I visited the Yehudi Menuhin School. And amongst the small number of children they had there, they’d chosen, that year, six from three hundred applicants from all over the world.

Q: Wow.

A: And one of the little boys that I saw, and I’ve got his photograph in a book somewhere, was Nigel Kennedy, aged eight.

Q: My goodness.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: My goodness. How lovely.

A: But, but Ruth, you see, not only did she help me... and she’d left the West Riding by then. She was down there working. But she was writing this book, and so she asked me, she took me to her house and she asked me, would I go through it? And she’s thanked me here for my help in, in putting it together. And this is the book, The Education of the Imagination.

Q: My goodness, XXXXX.

A: So she’s... here he is. And here’s another person. One of the first people on the Bretton staff was Shauna Robertson.

Q: Yes. And I interviewed Margo and Derek Andrews, who were students in Bretton.

A: Correct.

Q: From nineteen fifty-two to fifty-four.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Derek went back to teach in the early sixties. And they talk about her being one of the very first...

A: She was.

Q: They know her; they remember her.

A: She was, she was. Now, she... what’s interesting is, she’s, she... this is the second edition of it. And this is a letter, a voice from the past, etc., etc.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And what I did was to contact her when I was in charge at, of the education department at the Castleford Mature Students College. I was taking a party of my students, all married, leaving their husbands and children at home. We went to Italy for a week, Venice.
Q: Wow, beautiful.

A: And I asked Shauna if she would be willing to accompany us. We would pay her hotel bill and her fare in exchange for her just being with us, so that when we went into art galleries and things, she would answer questions. No, no lectures; just be there.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: And we did. And in the end, she and I shared a bedroom, actually, as it happens.

Q: That's how it works sometimes, isn't it?

A: As it happens, we had to.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: But she came along. And she was Gregory Fellow at Leeds University.

Q: Goodness me.

A: Yeah. Another person that I have seen quite recently, a member of the English staff at Bretton, John Dixon.

Q: Never heard of John Dixon.

A: He wrote this, Growth Through English.

Q: Crikey. This is what I mean about satellites.

A: Yes, it is.

Q: All... I mean, these are books, these... you know, people have had amazing careers, you've contributed enormously, and then there's books written and there's this network of people.

A: Yes. And you can say the stem is the West Riding.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the twiglets go out and they relate to each other.

Q: Yeah. When I, when I spoke to Eric again, I asked him, as I'll probably ask you at some point, how Alec had influenced him. And he sat for a long time, and he said, “I can’t answer that.” He said, he said, “Who influences you?” And I said, “Oh, crikey.” I said, “Well, I suppose I’m on the spot. I don’t know how to answer that right now.” And I didn’t know how to answer it. But what he did say is he said, when he applied for the job in nineteen fifty-six... And his post had been vacant for two years, apparently. So when he started his job, there was two years’ worth of unanswered
letters at his desk, and he was a young man. But he said, when he saw the job advertised, and it was to work with Alec Clegg at the time, without his Sir, Eric said, “I want to work with Alec Clegg.” He said he was like a magnet.

A: He was.

Q: And I said, “That’s so interesting, Eric,” I said, because all these years later... I started my PhD in September twenty thirteen, and I remember being sat at my desk, where I was a teacher, I was a lecturer. And I had about two hundred students, and I had about six staff. I’d come back from my maternity leave. I’d finished my Masters. And it was still tick, tick, tick, tick, tick. And I saw this scholarship advertised, from the archive at University of Huddersfield, about Sir Alec Clegg – which, much to my shame, I hadn’t heard of. Because you think you know the arts and education... And I read it, and it felt like a magnet to me.

A: Did it?

Q: All those years later, I wanted to know about this man. I wanted to know, I wanted to know everything about him. And that’s what Eric... he said Alec was a magnet.

A: He was. And in turn, looking down, those schools which became what some others call the show schools...

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: Those schools acted as a magnet to people who were on their way up and wanted the deputy headships when they were advertised. So my first deputy at Netherton was an ex-Bretton student.

Q: I was going to ask you about that.

A: Donald, Donald Kray, who went on to three, two or three headships in Liverpool area. And the next head I had became a head in the West Riding, and then two headships in the Wakefield Met. Basil Peace, whose son is David Peace, the author...

Q: Oh, goodness.

A: Yeah, yeah. So you, you had a system whereby, not only did the Riding act as a target, and we got visitors from all over the world, but the individual schools then became targets for the teachers lower down; ’cause they thought, if they could say they’d been and taught at x, their applications would be looked at, for a start off, and then they would make their own way. And it worked.

Q: Yes, it did. It’s, whatever we class as best practice, it was, you were living and breathing and creating it, it seems to me.

A: Yes, yes.
Q: There... but also, in a way, there must have been huge responsibility, because of the era as well, especially when Alec started... I'm jumping about a bit. When Alec started, it was very much post-war. He was in post in nineteen forty-five. In forty-nine, he became chief, which I still... nineteen forty-nine he became...

A: Yes.

Q: Bretton opened in forty-nine.

A: Yes.

Q: And, and this is slightly simplistic, really, but it was postwar; it felt, when I've read about it, that, you know, the whole country was, was moving in one direction, was trying to rebuild.

A: Yes.

Q: Was trying to, in a way, do something with its victory – 'cause we had won, but our country was still, was on its knees, really.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And so there must have been this spirit of the age that, you know, did all these things. But again, and I haven't looked extensively at other authorities as much as I have with this, and I know there will have been, and there were, other Alecs, other chief education officers.

A: Yes.

Q: But none of them, none of them were him.

A: No, no.

Q: None of them did what he did in the way he did it.

A: No.

Q: And that, for me, makes him extraordinary.

A: You're quite right. You're absolutely right. I don't know anyone who's... I know of other very good chief education officers. I was trying to think, before you came this morning, how many chief education officers would I say I've either worked under or with?

Q: Crikey, yes.

A: And nobody stands out like Alec. Nobody at all.

Q: And it's even that...
A: And it’s all to do with style.
Q: Yes.
A: And insight.
Q: Yes, yes, completely.
A: And his willingness to appear to not know everything.
Q: The things I have read, he’s very self-effacing.
A: Mm.
Q: He’s slightly kind of like, “Oh, really, don’t look at me.”
A: Correct.
Q: And you kind of want to go, “No, let’s look at you.”
A: Yes.

Q: Because he, and he is... I said earlier, he’s... I’ve lived with this man for two years in my head, and I don't think this man will ever leave me. And actually, when Eric did ask me who’d influenced me, I said, “I can now say, you all influenced me.” I know this, this has and does influence how I am and who I am. So I know that... and it’s like you’ve... all the influence you had then is, is still there now. It’s, it’s happening all over again.
A: I think it does. I think it does. It gets weakened, like any mixture, when water’s added.
Q: Yes.
A: But a lot of people are influenced by the old West Riding without knowing that they are.
Q: Yes.
A: Because they happen to have been, worked in a school where that person once was deputy head of... You know what I’m saying?
Q: Yes, yeah, yeah.
A: And it isn’t a, a path that they recognise as influence, but it is nevertheless there.
Q: It is. And I now, from my own personal path... it’s funny how life works out. I did a PGCE in FE so I could train to be a lecturer in nineteen ninety-eight. And it was a one-year programme, validated by the University of Huddersfield, West Riding. But I did it at Darlington, and...
A: Oh, I know that college.

Q: A lady came, a lecturer came – she was an old nurse, actually – from Huddersfield, two days a week to Darlington. It was... apart from my art school years, which I loved, it was the best year of education, being taught, I’ve ever had.

A: Really?

Q: This lady... and she was retired, but she’d come back into teaching to teach. The amount I learned from this lady – the way she conducted herself, the way she behaved, everything about her. And I had this great year, and just thought, ‘Yes, I know I do want to be...’ I was twenty-three when I did my PGCE in FE, and I was told I was, I was the youngest person in the group. I was too young. But I knew I wanted to do teaching. I just thought it was this brilliant year. So I fast-forward twenty-odd years... and she was West Riding.

A: Was she?

Q: Her training was West Riding; everything was West Riding. So now knowing what I know, exactly what you’ve just said: it’s still there.

A: Yes, it is, it is.

Q: There’s something about how you all were, how you all worked together, what you all did – it’s lasted; it maintained.

A: We had the freedom, of course, which was to be creative. Which I feel, personally... I mustn’t go off on a tangent about current education.

Q: That’s fine.

A: But the teachers tell us that they don’t feel they have the, the authority to be, to break out of the mould. And that’s what we were doing, actually.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Breaking out of the mould.

Q: Yes.

A: With encouragement from our employer.

Q: Again, I listened to an interview Eric gave in nineteen ninety, not long after... the first interview he’d given after he had retired. And he said – and I love this – he was talking to a group of textile students, and he’d said, “In seventy-four, the local government reorganisation: I heard that referred to as the local government disorganisation, which a lot of the West Riding people would feel. I knew one teacher, Mary Clarkson, who’d been in the West Riding, and her school had gone into Doncaster. And she insisted upon using West Riding paper right up to about
nineteen seventy-nine, when she retired. She just would not recognise the West Riding had disappeared. She felt so loyal to it, and she kept on using West Riding paper to her retirement day.” That, for me, in a nutshell…

A: Yes.

Q: It speaks of the loyalty for the West Riding, for what Alec had created, for who you all were.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And I don’t know many people that would even feel that today, would think that today.

A: No, no.

Q: It seems such a different world.

A: I’m afraid, as well, we’ve got to recognise that the LEAs themselves have been handicapped from above.

Q: Yes.

A: And have got reduced powers to be creative.

Q: Yeah. I remember, a few years ago, being sat at my desk. About five years ago. And as you do, I think, when you’re teaching, and you’re very coal face, aren’t you?

A: Yes.

Q: You’re there doing it.

A: Yes, you are.

Q: I remember your commonplace book, and I remember writing down: “Where have the great leaders gone?” And it just ticked over in my head. And, and then there’s, again, as life works, I found myself attracted to this man, to this thing; and it feels like I have found what I was questioning.

A: Yes.

Q: Because they’re... yes, they’re leaders today. I don’t know if I’d call them great leaders – not in the way that I think Alec was.

A: No, no, no. I don’t, I can’t think of anyone. I can’t think of anyone.

Q: No.

A: But then you could say I’m not in the scene any more, therefore I wouldn’t meet them, would I?
Q: I don’t know. I think that….

A: I get my information about the present education scene from the newspapers, the television and my cleaning lady.

Q: Yes.

A: And her complaints about what her grandchildren are getting.

Q: Yes.

A: You see what I’m saying?

Q: I heard Tristram Hunt, the Shadow Education Secretary, on the radio the other day, talking about how Labour had, in our election, recent election had just died a death, through that actual process. And he started to say how he felt that Labour had concentrated on higher education in their campaign.

A: Yes.

Q: And they should have been looking at nursery children and younger children.

A: Yes.

Q: And then he started to talk about how he thinks what he was calling upper secondary schooling, fourteen- to eighteen-year-olds, you should look at that maybe differently.

A: Yes.

Q: And what he actually was starting to describe, though, to my ears, was like the middle school system.

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: And that’s when I want to go, “What do you mean?”

A: I know, I know. It’s, it’s... I suppose it’s inevitable as time goes by. You suddenly realise, half the people who are now running the show don’t know what they don’t know.

Q: Yes, yes. And that’s…

A: And you can’t blame them, ’cause they’ve never experienced it.

Q: No, no. And that brings me back, and thinking, thinking these great leaders, and thinking, ‘Hold on, if we had some equivalent Alecs, that even then knew what the Alecs were doing, this knowledge would be just out there.’ And it doesn’t feel that it’s just out there. And, and I need it to be. I want it to be. That’s me off on a tangent.
A: I, I don’t know where we got to on the influence question, but, but does it matter?

Q: No, we can….

A: No.

Q: I said to XXXXX, “How did Alec influence you?” And he couldn’t answer it. So if I ask you the same, do you know? Could you pinpoint how Alec influenced you?

A: I can do it in a few odd words, but stringing them together... and I think I may have said one of them already: appreciation of me as a teacher.

Q: Yes.

A: Followed immediately by challenge to me as a teacher.

Q: Yes.

A: And I’ll give you a good example. The first time he ever… the first time I ever met him face to face... of course, as a head at Horbury Bridge, I dealt with all the signed things, A. B. Clegg, but I’d never met him. And one day... bear in mind, we’re going back to a time when there was no communication other than… we didn’t even have a telephone, right.

Q: Goodness.

A: And in walked this figure to my classroom, ’cause I was a full-time teaching head as well. And he came in, and I’d had a visit from the representatives of publishing firms that used to go round to, with their case of books, to sell you what they had to offer. And I thought I’d got another visit from a publishing rep. And he came into the room, and I just must have looked a bit vague. And he said, “Clegg.”

A: “Oh. Oh, Mr. Clegg, how nice to...” Mr. Clegg it was.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: And he said, “Can we talk?” I said, “Yes.” And I said to the children, “You can get on with your work, can’t you? Just carry on working.” And they did. They knew they had to, ’cause we did have a lot of visitors, actually. But what he came to challenge me with was, would I consider going to Tasmania for a year?

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: To work in a Tasmanian primary school. I would then use my style in this new school in, this school in Tasmania, and I would do in-service courses for the Tasmanian teachers in that area.
Q: Goodness.
A: And I would go on my present head salary.

Q: Oh my goodness.
A: And, and I listened to all this. And, and I said, “How long do I have to discuss, to consider this?” And I have to say, within three days I realised I couldn’t lock up my house for a year.

Q: No.
A: I also checked what our salaries in Tasmania... and they were higher than ours were for, for headteachers and so on.

Q: Goodness.
A: And it was Alec doing... and he did it. He got somebody to go. He got an infant teacher to go, from Normanton.

Q: Goodness me.
A: Yes. And although I’d said no, I then afterwards received teachers from Australia.

Q: Oh my goodness.
A: So these were... his influence was by being capable of setting up links with the most unlikely people, actually.

Q: Yes, yes.
A: And then it came, they came to the Riding.

Q: It's... the word you say then, again, about how you felt as a teacher, which makes me think about Bretton as well. And it feels that the teachers he trained at Bretton – I say ‘he’ ‘cause he was the founder – but through Bretton…
A: Yes, yes.

Q: And then the teaching his Riding. He really did invest in you. It feels like he really... there was a stability he provided, where, you know, just over time, he let you become who, who you could be.
A: And if I were to put a geographical place for the bulk of such influence, it would have to be Woolley Hall.

Q: Yes.
A: Why? Because the courses were running all the time.
Q: Yes.

A: They were run... ministry courses were done when HMI used to do ten-day courses.

Q: Crikey.

A: Right. In the Whitsuntide holidays, right.

Q: Yes, yes, yes. I've read about that.

A: And it was not only, as I said earlier, caretakers up to... but he mixed the courses, especially under Diana Jordan in the early days, were of mixed people. So heads met the probationer teachers. You see what I mean? The course members were not only hearing the speakers, who were people like Schiller, Robin Tanner, etc., etc.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: But they were also listening to each other at different levels of responsibility and getting a far clearer idea of what their problems were.

Q: Yes.

A: Now, the tendency towards the end of my career, which is now twenty-five years I've been retired...

Q: Goodness.

A: It was the tendency for courses to be run for targeted groups. For example, the last talk I ever gave, after I'd retired, to all probationers, and then it was all heads together, and then it was all senior management. And so they were divided by their responsibility.

Q: Yes.

A: When, to me, it was meeting others that were in different levels of responsibility.

Q: Yes.

A: I know it sounds a bit haphazard, but it wasn't.

Q: It sounds, though, as if then you could really break down any barriers between... in a way, in your hierarchy.

A: Yes.

Q: And also, I suppose, because we've all been in that position where you get the letter from another department or the person, and you're not very happy with it; but they're often faceless. So it's somehow easier to be a bit cross at a faceless person.
A: Yes.

Q: But if you’re all there and at the same training event – that says a lot, doesn't it?

A: Yes, yes, it does.

Q: Actually, if you’re there or there on the ladder, you’re at the same event.

A: It still says: “We’re all in it together, aren’t we?”

Q: Exactly, exactly.

A: Yes.

Q: And a lot of that must have come down from Alec. It must have, ’cause that’s how he...

A: Yes, yes.

Q: …saw how it could work or how it could be.

A: In thinking about the, our meeting today, I put down a few thoughts about, that you might be interested in.

Q: Thank you.

A: And it’s just occurred to me that one of the things that he did, for example, was…oh, I’ve mentioned the one where he organised it for all the principals of all the teacher training colleges in the West Riding – which was quite a lot of places, if you think about it.

Q: Yeah, yeah, it must have been.

A: And I can remember talking to them. And on the front row sat the, the then… I was a head at that time. The front row was the principal of Bingley College, with her dog at the side of her all the time. And I...

Q: Goodness.

A: I’m not, I'm not… and so on. But nevertheless, it seemed to go down all right. But he was pulling the colleges together, who were training the teachers; and then when they were teachers, he was pulling them together, wasn’t he, at Woolley?

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And so on. But he also took a very keen interest… you remember the Plowden Report?

Q: Yes, yes, yes.
A: Right. Well, he organised, and they came to the West Riding. And in the back of the Plowden Report you will find all the schools that they visited.

Q: Yes.

A: And he asked me to give a talk, with one other man head, the night before they went into schools, so that they would have some idea of what we believed in. But then the next day they came into my school, so it was no good me suggesting anything wonderful if they didn’t see it. You see what I’m saying?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: So I’ve got, I’ve got a very nice letter, both from him and Lady Plowden, about that.

Q: How lovely.

A: But we went to a planning committee, myself and this other man head, and with Ray Milne, CCI, and another one, whose... oh, gosh, his name is... I know it as well as my own. In the Leeds flat where he lived. And as we were planning, which schools are we going to get them to? Because they’re going to be staying at Woolley. Where are they going, in which cars, and so on and so on. And Alec, Alec said, “Well, if they’re on their way to school x, and they make a mistake and they turn left, where are they going to end?” In other words, are we making sure that we are going, they are going to see the best of our schools?

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: Okay, it wasn’t random.

Q: No.

A: It was planned. And we knew what he was saying.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: So he was, he was able to sell and to buy in – and we’re not talking about money here.

Q: No, no.

A: Expertise.

Q: Yeah.

A: Sell it, buy it.

Q: There’s this loyalty, isn’t there?

A: Yes.
Q: There’s this loyalty to him because he... I think it was Eric, Eric had said, “If it was today’s talk, the West Riding might be described as a brand.”

A: Yes.

Q: And I think I know what he means.

A: It was.

Q: But for me, it somehow hangs on Alec. Between this period of forty-five and seventy-four, it’s, it’s, it’s Alec. When I have spoken to people from Bretton, like the Andrews, and I said, I asked them, had they met Sir Alec? And they said, “No.” Just point blank no. I said, “Did you ever meet him?” And they said, “No.” And then Derek, it kind of progressed, and he said, “Actually, we heard him speak once at a lecture he gave at Bretton.” And I said, “Okay.” And then Margo Andrews said, “Actually, could you fill us in about Alec? We really don’t know him.” Because John Friend, the first principal, who they called Poppa...

A: They did. Poppa Friend. That’s right. Yes, they did.

Q: That was their figurehead.

A: Yes.

Q: But Alec was the founder of Bretton, and he’s... like, just as you said, XXXXX, he’s the one behind the scenes. He’s the one, like, with them on the board. He’s the one doing it. But all these students that went through that Bretton experience, that in those early decades really seemed like it was a golden age of Bretton, they had no real idea who Alec was.

A: No.

Q: Which a bit of me goes, “Oh, no, you can’t not have known.” But a bit of me then goes, “That’s interesting about Alec as well.” He had a huge authority. He maybe couldn’t possibly have been a huge presence at Bretton.

A: No, it was quite impossible.

Q: Yeah. But it was masterminded. And he, he, he seems to have had such a hold on the authority, but delivered it with such charisma and such... well, he has... even now, people are loyal. People are loyal to his memory, and to Jessie Clegg as well, and to what he did.

A: Yes.

Q: And that doesn’t happen accidentally.

A: No, it doesn’t. I’m going to say something now which, I think it has a bearing on the effectiveness of the West Riding under Alec Clegg. I haven’t seen it or heard it
written about anywhere, but if you look at what the West Riding was, and you look at the area it covered...

Q: Yes.

A: As we all know, it was one of the largest, not only in area but in number of schools. However, Wakefield had its own authority, Bradford had its own authority, Leeds had its own authority. Take out all the county boroughs, the places where you have the most problems very often, very often.

Q: Yes.

A: Take those out. Some other chief education officers were dealing... Now, our... in Alec's eyes, our difficult area would be South Yorkshire.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Right?

Q: Yeah.

A: Quite true. But it wasn't the same kind of difficulty as some of those cities were experiencing.

Q: No, no.

A: But several of his deputies went to become chief education officers. One of them went to Bradford, right?

Q: Yeah.

A: So they found problems which they had not experienced when they were his deputy.

Q: And I wonder if they then went to those other areas, for many reasons, but if they did again think they'd been in such safe hands with Alec, with the West Riding, and that then they had... his investment in them had given them confidence.

A: I couldn't answer for what they felt.

Q: No, no.

A: One of my students, training as a mature student, was the wife of the chief officer at Bradford. And I know he went through a very difficult part, because its problems were different.

Q: Yes, yeah. I came across a picture of Alec. I'll show you. 'Cause I've seen lots of pictures of Alec. The, the image that we all see of the quite elderly gentleman... and I came across this picture as a – he's in the middle – as a very young gentleman.
A: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: And it made me think about him, very naively, but think about... Obviously he, he had been a young man as well. And this is obviously in one of his teaching days before he came to the West Riding.

A: Yes. Clement Danes, possibly.

Q: Yes, I think exactly where it is. And because, of course, he was a very, he was... he played football, and he played tennis and a bit of badminton, and he was a very active man.

A: He was a swimmer, too.

Q: When I saw that, you suddenly... when you then talk about nineteen forty-five or fifty or whatever it might be, you start to go, “Yeah.”

A: Yes.

Q: Because if that man... 'cause I saw it, and I thought: Crikey. That’s an attractive man. That’s a man who’s got something about him. And if that man is in your school, and he’s choosing you or whatever, wherever in his authority, you will respond. Because there’s something about him. Even that picture...

A: Now, you see, I think it was in the family. I’ve got a brother, who was an actor, and he has, his daughter is also an actress, has worked with Rachel Attenborough.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: You know who that is?

Q: Yes.

A: But Dickie Attenborough and, and Alec were just so alike.

Q: Yeah, XXXX said similar...

A: In, in physique.

Q: That’s a picture of Alec as a boy to the right. And I think the Attenborough resemblance...

A: Yes, yes. Unlike David. David isn’t the same.

Q: No. I’ve written to David. David’s written back to me.

A: Good.

Q: A really lovely letter.
A: Good.

Q: And said that, if I could write some questions, he'll answer them – 'cause he's very, he's busy.

A: Yes.

Q: But yes, in that picture – that's him with his, his, his parents and his sisters.

A: Yes.

Q: But in that one, again, I think the Dickie Attenborough resemblance...

A: Yes, yes. And, and you see Dickie had the same emotional lability.

Q: Yes, yes, completely.

A: Frank has played with him, worked with him, with Dickie. He’s dead now. He’s died fairly recently, and very sadly. But they were so alike. And look at them... look at the size of the things that Dickie did.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: Gandhi.

Q: Yeah.

A: And the control and the understanding. But not only that but the subject.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: Gandhi. You see, it's all part of the same basic attitude, isn't it?

Q: I agree. And I... because of course Eric... Eric. Alec went to Bootham School, the Quaker school in York, at one point.

A: Yes, he did, he did.

Q: And again, when Dickie Attenborough died, there was an awful lot of documentaries. And I watched just about all of them. And as Dickie got older, and you look at the pictures of Alec as Alec got older, and you think, 'Crikey.'

A: Yes, very similar.

Q: And then as I've tried to, I suppose, to unpack this... 'Cause a PhD is quite clinical. And I'm not. And it's quite tightly focused. Started, exactly what you've just said, unpicking: what did Dickie Attenborough work on? What... Differently, but David Attenborough – there's this huge compassion in these men. And then you look at what Alec did. And thinking about the Attenboroughs and the Cleggs, and is, you know, is there just that invisible family gene thing? Is it that some...?
A: Yes, yes.

Q: And I was talking to XXXX yesterday. XXXX thinks it went back to Samuel Clegg, Alec’s dad.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: He thinks it starts there.

A: I think it must have done.

Q: Because we get to XXXX Clegg... and I said, “But you’re very successful in your own right at what you did.”

A: Yes.

Q: And he was quite, quite self-effacing about it as well. But you’re exactly right. It’s just there, isn’t it? All...

A: It is, it is.

Q: And the projects they’ve chosen to work on...

A: Yes, yes.

Q: …give it, give it away.

A: I... yeah, there’s so much to share. But I’m trying to think of what else would I, what other language would I use about the influence question, you know? Apart from the ones I’ve given. I don’t know. It’s, it’s... oh, I think it’s an awful lot to do with just being appreciated.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I think most teachers would say that.

Q: Yes.

A: And then going on being appreciated, so that I get a nice question thrown in when I’m asked what would you... I can remember being interviewed for the tutor in charge job when Margaret Dunn retired, right?

Q: Yes.

A: And one of the questions... ‘cause it was open advertisement. And we were all at County Hall, the others from other colleges of education. And one of the questions Alec Clegg said to me was: “You once wrote to me about the nine to thirteen school; and if I remember rightly, you included a plan of what you thought the building ought to look like, didn’t you?” And I thought, ‘He’s telling the others.’
Q: Yes, yes.

A: But he’s opening for me a chance to say what type of philosophy a nine to thirteen school would have. But you see what I mean?

Q: Yeah.

A: He was not only preparing me for my answer, he was preparing them for a bit of my background, wasn’t he?

Q: Yes. And he’s, he’s being quite transparent as well, isn’t he?

A: Oh, yeah, doing it in the open.

Q: Yeah.

A: Oh, yes, he’s doing it in the open. And one of the last questions he asked me on that occasion was, “If you don’t get this job, Miss Smith, of tutor in charge, and one of the other candidates does, what effect would that have on you as head of education? What would you think then?”

Q: Wow. What a question.

A: But it was a sensible question.

Q: Yes.

A: Because if I hadn’t thought about it...

Q: Yeah. But he’s asking about your well-being as well. He’s asking maybe about how you would feel about that.

A: That’s right, he was.

Q: And would that impact your teaching or...?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And not, not many people would even dare to ask a member of their staff that.

A: I, I do remember the gist of what I said. You never remember what you’ve said, but you remember the gist. And I think it was on the lines of: “I’ve been in the wonderful position of starting a brand new college under Miss Dunn. And our relationships with our schools that we’ve built up in that period of time, where we’ve done new things differently, have resulted in excellent relationships with the schools. And that would be something I would help the new incumbent to keep going.” You know what I’m saying?

Q: Yeah.
A: But... and the point I’m making is, he facilitated my response, but he facilitated the knowledge these other committee members didn’t have of me. They got a bit more. So that was kindness.

Q: Yes. I said to XXXX, actually, I said, “It probably sounds a little bit crass here,” I said, “but I think he just, he cared.” He genuinely cared about doing a good job, and that that came through.

A: Yes.

Q: And I don’t think we could... there must be a few people out there today who could say, “I care about what I do.” But I don’t know if it’s in the same way, the same level that he worked at, at all.

A: No, no. I don’t think it is. The most recent, the most recent letter I’ve had from a chief education officer is about two years ago, when the new one was appointed at Wakefield Met. And my purpose in contacting him was to let him know that twenty-five years ago, or it was twenty-three years ago, when I retired, I’d started the Wakefield Retired Advisors Group, and we go on meeting.

Q: Oh, lovely.

A: And he needs, you know, he might like to know. And I got a very gracious letter back from him, in which, amongst other things, he said, “How interesting that you’ve managed to keep something going so long.” But later in the letter, he just said, “Everything is so different from when you were in the business, ever since market forces were the influence on education.” And that says he’s, he’s working against something.

Q: I agree. You see, part of what I’m trying to find out as well...

A: As opposed to Alec Clegg working with.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Because in a way, what I’m trying... well, maybe crudely, but can I transpose some of what Alec did and how he did it on to today? What can we learn from him?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Because I think it might have been Eric who said that the relationships with the Education Advisory Panel that Alec answered to were sometimes very political.

A: Yes.

Q: But then XXXX was saying how his dad somehow just manoeuvred through it.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: Labour, Conservative, whatever it was – just moved through it.
A: Yes. And this is fundamentally important. Every chairman of governors of colleges, you know, if the chairman was Conservative, the vice was Labour, and vice versa.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: And it stopped them being silly.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: 'Cause they have their own inbuilt counter-tension.

Q: Yes, yes. And it's things like that. It's just this... There's a subtlety about Alec, but it's plain to see. It's plain to see. But we seem to have lost it today. We... because I think there must have, there must have been monetary constraints back then, or there must have been constraints. But you still managed.

A: You did. However, I... when I was a head, in both those headships, there was a capitation allowance.

Q: Oh, yeah.

A: Okay?

Q: Yeah.

A: And in my first headship, at the age of twenty-seven, my children was one pound a head, just under, from the West Riding per annum.

Q: Goodness.

A: To buy everything. Okay, prices were different. And if your school had a play... if a primary school had a playing field, that gave you a half crown extra, two shillings and sixpence extra per head, because you were going to equip your field as well. So you had everything... And that, out of that came the caretaker's cleaning things.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: The lot. The lot.

Q: Goodness me.

A: Now, that went on way, way into recent times, even when I was having to go to some of my headteachers, senior advisors and say, "You've overspent your capitation. I'm sorry, but we're going to have to... You've overspent by two thousand five hundred. We're going to have to say next year it will be two thousand five..." So the LEA was controlling it.

Q: Yeah.
A: The minute the money went to both the colleges, FE and the schools, the potential for them getting into trouble was increased enormously. And many of them have done.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: At the same time, the money going to the LEA to correct it was reduced.

Q: Yeah, yeah. It just makes... 'cause they're different models. They're different...

A: Yes, they're totally different models. And if you think of the West Riding under Alec: we had Woolley Hall, Grantley Hall, the... what do you call it? We had Bretton Hall. We had Lady Mabel College. Both of the, all three of those are up for sale at the moment. Mabel has just gone back on the, on, for sale this last month. We had Schools Music Service. We had orchestras going round. We had the book room, where you could go and look at books, and possibly decide which ones you wanted to order for your school. You had a small orchestra going round giving live performances in schools, including primary schools, etc., etc.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: All of that was possible because the schools had a modest amount to spend and the authority had a considerable amount. So his resources are not comparable with the fact, the resources that Mr. Wilson has in Wakefield Met.

Q: No.

A: Not only because he’s smaller, but he’s got less to start with.

Q: Yeah. You see, it makes me... even with two different models, the people, you, people in the West Riding – there’s something about you. There’s something, how you felt invested and how you felt valued. The students went to Bretton said they felt valued. Derek Andrew said he’d come straight out of national service into Bretton. And I said, “What was your first impression of Bretton?” I mean, he’d come from national service, so with his kind of short back and sides and his, you know, his one suit. He said he couldn’t believe they’d let him in. He couldn’t believe he could live in that mansion.

A: Yes.

Q: ‘Cause until nineteen sixty-four, they lived in the mansion house, when all those buildings...

A: Yes, they did, they did, they did.

Q: And it’s that, isn’t it? It’s that...

A: It’s the same at Lady Mabel, you see.
Q: Yeah. And he, he literally said, “I couldn’t believe they’d let me in. Like, me.”

A: Mind you, he was a mature student.

Q: Yes.

A: He’d been, he’d been in the... yeah. And therefore, sometimes it was said of the younger students coming straight from school, and at Lady Mabel College, surrounded by all the grandeur of the largest mansion in the country, and it’s the longest frontage of any building in the whole of the country...

Q: Goodness. Really?

A: Well, they didn’t always appreciate what they’d got.

Q: No, no.

A: I think he had a slightly more mature view.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes.

Q: I think you’re right.

A: Yeah.

Q: This is a slight aside, but I’ve written a paper recently about Bretton. It will be published later this month. But I... in October of last year, Derek and Margo... I saw a nineteen sixty-four map of the campus, of when it was built. And so what I did is, I kind of pretended it was nineteen sixty-four, and I walked the route.

A: Right.

Q: And I got permission to go into the mansion house, and into some of the hostels and refectory. And it was eye-opening.

A: Yes.

Q: You’re all, you are all very alive in my head, and this period of time. And very naively, I think, I thought I would be in this mansion house, and it would just all be there. And it, and it wasn’t. It’s, it’s a very beautiful, decaying...

A: Yes, I’ve been in it whilst it’s decaying, which is heartbreaking.

Q: Yeah, it smells very damp.

A: Yes, it is.

Q: In there by yourself is quite ghostly.
A: Yes, yes.

Q: And it was, and I felt quite saddened by it. When I came out and walked across this Narnia-like campus, into the hostels, the refectory and the library – it smells of student. It’s... you can see it and you can feel it.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And that was a bit of a surprise to me. 'Cause in my head, it’s Bretton Hall, Bretton Hall, Bretton Hall. And actually... 'cause before I went in, I thought, ‘This can’t be redeveloped; this can’t be sold.’ If something doesn’t happen to that mansion house, it will ultimately somehow decay and, and, and just not be there. But then having been in the buildings that were built in nineteen sixty-four, actually, if those buildings aren’t there, I think that’s Bretton gone.

A: Yes.

Q: Because that somehow seems to represent Bretton. And when I was in the building that’s got Alec, Sir Alec’s name on it... every time I drive down to Bretton, and I kind of think, ‘Yes, that’s my man. That’s, that’s my Alec.’

A: Yes, yes.

Q: When I was inside that building, and it’s all abandoned, and it’s not cared for...

A: I know, I know.

Q: And it felt, it did not sit comfortably. His name’s on the front.

A: And it’s no time since it was opened.

Q: No, no.

A: I was at the opening. I’ve got the invitation to the opening. And it’s no time to me.

Q: And, and it completely changed how I looked at things. Because as I drive down, and you see it there... And, and I remember Eric saying to me once, he said, “Alec wouldn’t be completely comfortable with those big gold letters with his name.”

A: Yes.

Q: And...

A: Sorry.

Q: Go on.
A: No, I was going to say, I don’t know whether you know, but I also went to the opening of this. You know when Leeds University took over Bretton? Leeds University opened a studio and they called it the Alec Clegg Studio.

Q: Alec Clegg, yeah.

A: And I thought: It’s ironical, isn’t it? Say that goes on existing, and the one here doesn’t...

Q: I had the same thought. It must have been about a year or so ago, and I was googling things and looking for things, and saw Alec Clegg Studio. And you’re like, “Oh, crikey. Well, where’s this at Bretton? I haven’t seen this.”

A: No, no.

Q: And you read it, and it actually leaves a little bit of a nasty taste in your mouth. ’Cause you just think…

A: It does really, doesn’t it?

Q: Yeah, which isn't great.

A: Yes, yes, it does.

Q: In the archives, things I’ve come across... I think Alec must have had a sense of humour, a good sense of humour.

A: Oh, he had a very keen sense of humour. Wicked.

Q: Basil Rocke, one of the art educators... I found this letter that Alec had written.

A: Thank you.

Q: I'll check this.

(Pause)

Q: Isn’t that great?

(End of recording)
A: A primary advisor in Wakefield Met and she’d been an advisory teacher and a Deputy Head in a primary school in, under the West Riding and she, in her letter to me, said, 'Nobody has yet written the book about Alec Clegg's sense of humour.'

Q: How funny.

A: And she remembered, I’d forgotten, that there was a time in the, towards the end of the West Riding, when there’d been a suggestion from the Inspectorate, that they should write some of his jokes and, and Rae Milne had persuaded him not to allow it to happen.

Q: Really?

A: Yes.

Q: Why?

A: Because Rae was a very, she was a very good, but a very strict primary... what we call Senior Advisor, she was an Area CCI, County Council Inspector.

Q: Okay, okay.

A: And apparently, according to my ex-colleague, she’d persuaded Alec not to let them do it because she thought that it would demean him in the eyes of some people and it would, it would.

Q: Yeah, yes. I came across...

A: It would have eroded some of his...

Q: Yes, standing possibly.

A: Yes, that’s the word I’m after, standing.

Q: It’s the last line again, that could be read, I think, either way.

A: (pause). Who knows? Who is Mrs. Saltmarsh?

Q: I don’t know, I can’t find any other reference to it.

A: No.

Q: And so that little last line is either, well, he is being very genuine, but knowing the Alec that I’ve discovered and his sense of humour, I don’t know if it’s slightly tongue in cheek.

A: (reading notes).

Q: Interesting, isn’t it?
A: It is. It’s hard to know how to take that letter though.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: I don’t know whether it’s funny or it isn’t.

Q: I know I don’t either, but that’s that level of concern that he has in keeping everything, you know, on top of it and whether he genuinely thinks, ‘Crikey, I’ve lost this letter and that isn’t what should have happened.’

A: It could be that it... you see, the last part of this book I made for Jess, which you will find, the last part was about how he, his style when dealing with a County Council Inspector who was receiving bad reports from teachers.

Q: Oh.

A: I can’t just put my hand on it now, but he received some protests about this particular person and, and in fact, there’s one part, I’m sorry I can’t just find it suddenly.

Q: It’s okay.

A: But he’d received a protest from a group of Head Teachers that had all signed it together.

Q: Wow.

A: So, he had to take action against this CCI, didn’t he?

Q: Yeah.

A: But why he, how did he do it? He wrote to him and I’ve got the memo and he said, ‘I can’t understand, I need...’ something on the lines of, ‘As you know, I don’t know about these things, but I’m going to ask you’ (laugh) and he went on, trying to give the man, it was, the opportunity to and there’s, there’s an exchange between him and his officer. And in the end, I don’t quite know what the final outcome was. The man was not dismissed or anything, but I think if I’d received anything from Alec Clegg like that, I would have been mortified.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: And he was a fairly new appointee.

Q: Goodness.

A: Wanting to impose tests on schools. Now, it was the wrong thing, wasn’t it?

Q: Yes, completely, completely.

A: In the West Riding to try to impose tests.
Q: Yes, completely.

A: And for the least able children and in the least area where the... you see what I'm saying?

Q: Yes.

A: The southern, so, the southern area, the Heads, said, 'We're not having this from this bloke.'

Q: No.

A: (laugh).

Q: Is it, because even the way these (...), it's pure Alec, it's pure kind of, you know, 'I'm not an expert on this' and you...

A: That's right, that's right.

Q: And the number of times I've read things and I've wanted to go, 'Alec, you are' but he's... actually, he wrote when Basil Rock, when Basil Rock died, he gave an address and he's written here, I think on that Saturday morning when we met and I spoke very briefly about...

A: Yes, I remember.

Q: And it's here when he talked about those paintings that Alec would take everywhere and XXXX said that his dad took them home and showed them to XXXX and his brothers. And he's written here that, as I'd said, about how Alec didn't think that Basil quite understood it, that was part of Alec's education and that made him understand and it's all of those, it's, it's literally the way that he delivers himself, if that makes any sense.

A: Yes, it is, it is, it is.

Q: That just 'cause... 'cause I've obviously thought long and hard and it was, some of the questions that I think about and the things I need to do, when I boil it all down, this is, this is about a man, how he manoeuvres, how he, he has, from very outside eyes, a lot of charisma, a lot of humour. You want to please this man, the way that he's making his staff feel because at one point XXXX said yesterday, he said 'You know, at some point my father would have had to probably, to fire people or do something.' I said, 'Well, yeah, he probably...'

A: He did.

Q: Yeah.

A: He did.
Q: But there was still this loyalty.
A: I tell you who he… one person he had to fire was the principal of a college.

Q: You see that's a big...
A: Teacher Training College.

Q: That's a big deal.
A: It certainly is; a woman Head.

Q: And that was part of his job as well?
A: Yes, yes.

Q: That, that's part and parcel of it.
A: Yes, and in fact, what happened was, that the, the lady was removed and there are ways of helping people not to be sacked, but it amounts to the same thing. And in her place was put a CCI temporarily, called Alyn Davies and Alyn Davies made such a good job as this Acting Principal, that he landed the job at Bretton.

Q: Yes, of course.
A: And that's a very, very good appointment. Now, he was a scientist; he wasn't the Arts, so, we had an Arts College with a scientist as its Head but he was the right type.

Q: And again, I think John Friend, if my memory serves, had a Maths background. I think I've read he had?
A: Yes, yes.

Q: And, and John Friend has written how he, he again, a few of you kind of say, 'If Alec had particularly interviewed you or then selected you for things, and you couldn't quite believe you'd been selected.' So about some of you there's quite a lot of self-effacement as well.
A: Yes, yes.

Q: But again, I think this comes back to, Alec had, he just could see what, what... he could see the good, couldn't he? He could see that this person...
A: Yes, yes, he could, but he was willing to be guided by his officers.

Q: Yes.
A: All the time, you've got to say that.
Q: Yes, yes, fair comment.

A: But he chose his officers.

Q: Yes.

A: So, it was his influence that filtered through them.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Incidentally, amongst the things I've made a note of, was that Poppa Friend’s did well. Poppa Friend’s daughter did Greats at Oxford and in between that and doing her PGCE, he got in touch with me did Poppa Friend, as a Head, second Headship and said could his daughter come and spend a teaching practice with me during the period after. And she came and it was very good. She was, she spent time with all the ages, you know, it wasn’t a, it wasn’t an onerous teaching practice, not at all. But at the end, he came round, Poppa Friend, and looked to see what his daughter had been looking at and saw some work going on, and he brought me in a napkin, a load of camellias from Camellia House.

Q: How beautiful.

A: Now, do you, you see what I’m saying, don’t you?

Q: Yeah.

A: It’s the style of people.

Q: Yes, yes, yeah, completely.

A: And then another story about Poppa, I’m really off the subject now.

Q: No, it’s fine, it’s really pleasant.

A: Once I had a friend who was on the staff, she and I worked together because at Bretton, they started at one point, she was head of movement studies my friend. She and I did what we called matched work because on Mondays, Bretton decided it would do general studies and it was allowed, the lecturers were allowed to decide what they did with a given group.

Q: Wow, wow.

A: Okay and she and I decided we would do some matched work. I would ask my… I would take my children to a church. She would take her students to the chapel, okay?

Q: Crikey.

A: They would, they would write up their impressions of these places and my children were mixed ages and then what happened was, we exchanged the work.
So, the students learned what, how do primary children express the same experience and my children, we read what these adults had said.

Q: How fantastic.

A: And my children were saying things, 'Well, I think they, I think they do longer sentences than we did.' And, and, and one of them said, 'Yes, we, we put rather a lot of buts in or ands.'

Q: Fantastic, fantastic.

A: Now, can you see it's teacher training?

Q: Yeah.

A: But my children were learning to analyse what adults do.

Q: Yeah, but that's style again.

A: It's the style. Now, she and I, Miriam Osborne was her name, a dear friend, we'd cooked that up together because the system permitted it.

Q: Yeah, completely, completely.

A: And that's why my children were, I invited to go and do movement demos at Bretton and, and sometimes, the students did, a group of students did movement and then mine did some movement. And when, when, when my children wrote letters to thank the Vice Principal for giving us lemonade and all of that stuff, one of my children wrote, 'By the way, I liked your backing group.' I didn't know what the backing group meant. They meant the music. 'I liked your backing group.' But there you go, it was, it's, it was an era and an area, if you like, meaning the West Riding, where, if it was gonna work, it was permitted, but it had to prove that it was, by quality of product, including child as well as product, child's product.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: And then, Alec Clegg collecting the evidence together and promulgating it abroad completely.

Q: He disseminated, he disseminated it, didn't he, he just…?

A: Yeah, yeah.

Q: And you're right, 'cause I think, again, as I tried to just unpack everything, it, it does, like you said before, some of it comes down to words. And it is this style, there's this style that Alec was himself, which is a whole thing in itself and then allowed to be unfolded…

A: Yes.
Q: Whether there doesn’t seem to be room for it today, I don’t know. I don’t know if I’ve really formulated that yet, but there is something about this way because you’re right, this is kind of what he did and how he did it.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: But again, it’s, it’s the things that make… it’s like incidental learning, isn’t it? People don’t always write it down.

A: It’s going to… I’m, I’m anticipating this, it’s going to be… is it, sorry, this is a question, is it going to be part of your research work, to make an up to date comparison with what was and what is?

Q: Some of it is. What I would like… some of it, this is literally… you all breathe life into these words.

A: Yes.

Q: You all make it even more beautiful for me, and then some of the other people I’ll be talking to are Principals of Art and Design Colleges now.

A: Right, right.

Q: Policy makers. In terms of people… I was going to talk to Liam Byrne.

A: Who’s that?

Q: He’s Education Secretary before… yeah.

A: Oh, right, right.

Q: I, briefly, briefly met him. Again, a lot of that would be by email; they haven’t got time to actually see me.

A: Yes.

Q: But to actually find out… I want to know if they’ve even heard of Alec, actually.

A: Oh, yes, yes.

Q: But also, how do they make their decisions about policy. ’Cause Alec made policy, but some of that policy, apart from the black and white and what we describe as a policy is up for debate anyway really. ’Cause there will have been policies as a Head Teacher you had to somehow adhere to and you would have made policies yourself.

A: Yes, yes, yes, absolutely.

Q: But I think there’s a level of policy that Alec made, kind of, that was maybe implicit, rather than explicit. Maybe, you know, that...
A: Yes, you’re quite right, you’re quite right.

Q: Do you know what I mean?

A: Yes, I do, I do, yes.

Q: And I think maybe some of this is what’s more key to how, and again, I mean, there were, how, why he was successful, how he was what he was, it’s all… I think this is where I’m getting to with some of it. So, I’m off on a tangent. So, with that knowledge, and with what is or isn’t happening today, I suppose I need to come at something that goes, ‘Okay, this is what we could learn, how could this maybe be implemented today?’ And it might, the eighty thousand words sounds like an awful lot for a thesis and it’s not, with a methodology chapter and a literature review.

A: No, no.

Q: So, I’m well aware that I have, there’s lots of things I want to do, pass the PhD as well. So, I’m aware that what I finally actually conclude with, as it were, is probably gonna be very much a working practice as well.

A: Yes, it is, isn’t it?

Q: Because I, I don’t know if I’m going to have a final…

A: No. You’re not too sure what the last chapter’s gonna be, no.

Q: No, not at all.

A: No.

Q: Because there is, there are layers to this story, but I think, I think… Eric said I was looking for edges and I said, ‘In some ways I have to, I’m in a very clinical PhD cycle, I have to be in that hoop.’ Which is why after that, there’s lots of things I’d like to write and do and explore and I think the rest of my life will be Bretton related, if I’m really honest.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: But I think in terms of this, it actually comes down to not the black and white.

A: No, it’s, it’s the almost indefinable that you’re trying to define.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: Isn’t it?

Q: Complete… yeah, completely. This man was, for me, this man is extraordinary and it isn’t just because I’ve lived and breathed him for the…
A: No.

Q: A few weeks ago I went to Saxton in Tadcaster where he and Jessie are buried.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: And it was really poignant ’cause I went to, to find where Alec was ultimately.

A: Yes.

Q: And it was a day a bit like today, and so there was some sunshine. It was a bit breezy and I walked all round the church and could hear the children in the school yard. And then found, found there, where they were and it was really poignant, this very elegant, understated headstone, which apparently designed, which again in itself, tells a lot, I think, about Alec. It just seemed to be very understated, self-effacing and in the background are the children playing and they’re laughing and they’re running around and just this snapshot of a moment, as if like that, that’s exactly perfect.

A: I’ve got so many treasures, but and I’d got some of them out as you can tell. But they are kind of testimony, if you like, to him, given by different people and I’m just looking to see… oh, here, for example, somewhere, if it isn’t, if it, ask for it, if they haven’t seen it, you ought to read the Alec Clegg Memorial Lecture given on the fifth of May, two thousand and seven, when Bretton Hall was closed.

Q: Oh, yes. Is... who gave this?

A: So make a... Alyn Davies.

Q: Alyn Davies. I may have read it.

A: You, you may have read it.

Q: I may have read it. I’ll go back and look again.

A: ’Cause, ’cause it’s worth, I think it’s worth your while to do so and on that day, I took some photograph. There’s Jess, you’ll recognise and XXXX, the boy.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: The three boys are on there.

Q: Crikey. Oh, my goodness.

A: And here is similar, I’d, it was taken on my camera by somebody, you see, I asked them to use my camera ’cause I was using my camera.

Q: Crikey.
A: And so, there we’ve got Jess and two of the boys and a former Principal, before, after Alyn Davies, was John Taylor so, you can see which is John Taylor.

Q: Yes.

A: And I like taking informal pictures myself, so, there’s the style. Now, the person on the right here is Taylor, the person on the left is Alyn Davies and his wife, Margaret.

Q: Yes.

A: Oh, here’s another one of Alyn.

Q: Oh, goodness.

A: The one on the right here, the man on the right here, is John Dixon. You said you hadn’t heard of John Dixon.

Q: No.

A: That’s John Dixon.

Q: Goodness me.

A: There’s Jess talking to somebody else. I don’t know who that is and this is Jess with her three sons.

Q: Oh, how lovely.

A: And when she was buried, you know how people put up a photographic record of the person, I noticed one of my photographs they’d put up because I sent them all to her obviously. And this is Poppa Friend’s daughter on the day that Bretton was closed and she’d done her Greats at Oxford and then came to my school for teaching practice. That’s Poppa Friend’s daughter.

Q: I think she has a look of her father, of the pictures I’ve seen.

A: Oh, she does, oh, she does. She was very like him, build, build and everything.

Q: Yes, I’ve, I’ve got some pictures that I’ve seen of John Friend.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: He, he looks very…

A: Poppa-ish.

Q: Yes.

A: He was.
Q: Yes, completely.

A: One of my friends, who I’d mentioned already, Miriam, who I worked with, she was, at the time, when the student accommodation was up, you know, and Poppa Friend was the Principal. And then there was a decision made that some of the houses could be both sex, because they started out as being single sex houses. And apparently, one, one evening, Poppa Friend’s doing the rounds of the grounds and he sees a boy going into the girls. ‘Hey, you know, hup, hup, hup.’ And this student said, 'But I live here Mr Friend’ and he’d forgotten.

Q: (laugh). Oh, boy.

A: He’d forgotten that they are now…

Q: I remember Derek Andrews saying, 'Of course, when they first got to Bretton, the girls were on, the ladies really, were on one floor and then the men were up kind of, you know, like old, I mean, kind of, more or less he called them just…'

A: In the mansion, yes.

Q: Yeah. He more or less called them like the servants’ quarters, the men were up there. But again, he said he remembers Poppa Friend, there was a couple having a kiss and a cuddle and he… 'No, we have to stop that' and he really, he didn't, you know, he really wasn't having any of it, having any of it.

A: Yeah, I know. I suppose when they raised the… from eighteen to twenty…lowered it from twenty-one to eighteen, it must have made a difference for residential colleges, mustn't it.

Q: Looking at those pictures and every time I see pictures of Bretton with people there, it makes me go, 'Yes, there should be people there.'

A: I know.

Q: I’ve got, I mean, like you, I have some pictures of just, of Bretton over the years. Some of them are from the, well, actually, I think that’s probably John Friend with Monty, as in Monty, Monty (…).

A: Yes, it is, yes it is.

Q: And that day, if you move, if you move the screen that way…

A: Oh, right.

Q: You’ll just start to get, there’s pictures of, of Bretton.

A: Yes.

Q: In the fifties and when it opened. Some of them may be duplicated, but…
A: Yeah.

Q: Of, and that's how Margo and Derek remember it.

A: Yes, yeah. They used to have carol concerts, carol services in the central hall with the musicians up above and the singers down below.

Q: How beautiful.

A: You know, in the, you know where I'm talking about?

Q: Yeah, I do. When I went up there, where the portico is and the frescos and their staircase is left to right and when I went last year, it looked really quite sinister and dark and I thought, 'Oh, crikey.' And when Derek was talking about it, he said that he remembers being sat in there having cocoa on a night and the girls went up one side and the boys went up the other. And his memory, I mean, he's, he's part of a very happy memory and it's, it's and it's funny 'cause when I was there, I remember thinking, 'This is a little bit…' (laugh)

A: Yes, I know, I know. The lovely part where the children I used to take to do the demos movement, of course, is the gymnasium on stilts.

Q: I loved the gymnasium.

A: Which was an addition. It's looking very poor now, it's really, really poor.

Q: It is, I, I referred, yeah, in the paper I've written, I've referred to that and I've actually put in, I've put, interspersed what I've written with quotes from the archive from Alec and from John Friend, and when he talks about the gymnasium and it is, it's this magic with the lily pond and, and you see it today.

A: It's lovely. Yes.

Q: But equally, John Friend's house, the Principal's house...

A: I know, I know.

Q: It's awful.

A: Yeah, it is.

Q: And again, I, I walked round it, stuck on my wellies one day, snook round 'cause there's a man with a dog everywhere and walked round. And, and, I mean, literally overgrown, like sleeping beauty, literally and then I remembered...

A: Yes, yes, I know, I know it is.

Q: I read about something and I put in my, the paper I've written, it's a bit like my narrative really, where he's talked about, you know, they finally moved out of the mansion house into their house and the views they had, which, I mean, there's
nothing ’cause it’s just green. Literally the walls aren’t they, the windows are covered in ivy, quite literally?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And that’s just….

A: Yes, and because Alyn Davies lived there.

Q: Yes, Principal’s house ultimately.

A: Yes, it was Principal’s house, yes.

Q: And it’s all of those things that…

A: It’s heartbreaking, isn’t it?

Q: It is, it’s very…

A: This is the Austin Wright.

Q: Yes, yes, yes.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: It’s very… I go to Bretton every Tuesday and when I started to have to focus on my PhD, what I was actually going to write, because it becomes very focussed, I realised that, you know, I was sat in this place and I couldn’t really find anything on it in the archive really. I couldn’t really find much about Bretton, which made me think, because as somebody who teaches like you, I, you know, I’ve kept lots of things over the years and I remember saying to Anna and Leonard ‘Where’s the Bretton stuff, where’s the curriculums, where’s the class?’

A: Yes, if you’re a hoarder, you know, you hoard, but some people don’t see the value, do they?

Q: Yeah, no, they don’t. Well, none of it’s there and they seem to think that possibly individual teachers probably took some things with them.

A: Yes. Well, I think I’ve gone through probably, but as we’re talking about hoarding, I’ve been given something, last seven months ago, which I haven’t really started work on yet, but these are the originals, memos from nineteen forty-four.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: To nineteen forty-nine of memos, which came to Local Education Authorities and these were given to me last November because they were saved from a skip…

Q: Oh…
A: … by one of our secretaries who’d been a secretary in the West Riding, went into the Wakefield Met and she retired a couple of years ago, perhaps less than that actually.

Q: Goodness.

A: And on her discovering that the new incumbent of the Chief Education Officer’s role, a woman, as it was, since gone under a cloud I’m afraid, was throwing out all this stuff.

Q: Oh, XXXXX.

A: This secretary saved them and has given them to me.

Q: Oh.

A: And I am deciding what to do with them because everyone is annotated at the top with the distribution and the subjects, copies to Mr. Clegg, Mr. Hayes, Mr so and so… and, and here, there comes the point where it starts off with an administrative memoranda that start with, copies to, Mr. Binns.

Q: Oh, yes, yes.

A: The first, when Alec was Deputy, Mr. Clegg and then the rest of the circulation goes.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: And I’ve got to decide, I think what I may do with them, is to say, 'In consideration that the, it’s seventy years since the...' you see what I mean?

Q: Oh, yes, yeah.

A: Seventy years and all of these that they… and they’re random.

Q: Oh, XXXXX.

A: They’re numbered, they’re numbered, but they’re still on random topics and the first one that I’ve got here, which is in this condition, is on mustard gas warning.

Q: That’s of its time.

A: All of them are of their time; all of them are of their time.

Q: Yes.

A: And this is why I think I might use them, if you just glance at what the subjects are in order of date order. They’re in date order only, that’s all I’ve done so far.

Q: My lord. Goodness, school meals, transport.
A: And how many potatoes can you...?

Q: Goodness me, the (...) different school children’s gas masks. Ration books, of course.

A: And sixth formers, by the way, were paid to distribute ration books at centres, provided it did not interfere with their Higher School Certificate Examinations.

Q: Gosh, employment of German prisoners of war.

A: Correct, yes. All, all had to come under the Chief Education Officer's purview.

Q: Oh, collection of (roses?).

A: And on the right hand side, you can see where Mr. Binns goes.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: And Mr. Clegg then becomes the first recipient of every memo.

Q: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

A: And what I’m thinking... I’ve had a word with the most, with a recently retired CEO, who I know very well is, John McCloud. What I might do is say, ‘What are the key issues that were on the minds of a Chief Education Officer seventy years ago?’

Q: Yeah.

A: And what are the chief things that are on the minds of a Chief Education Officer?

Q: Most...

A: So, Alec Clegg did not come through the route of... he had to be creative with a whole different set of problems, some of which you’ve alluded to by the mature students coming to teacher training late. ‘Cause we were desperately short of teachers after the war.

Q: Yes, and I’ve seen some images at the archive of the conditions of schools around that time and they are, I mean, you could, you could weep when you look at some of what...

A: And the legacy of that, of course, occurred in my time, was that when they’d built all those new schools post-war and they put all the roof, the roofs were flat roofed buildings, that was the style from the Medds. You must have come across the Medds as the architects.

Q: Yeah, yeah, yes.
A: One of their problems was that they were dealing obviously, with a huge number of schools had to be built quickly, like houses had to be built quickly, with inferior materials very often. But unfortunately, they put, what’s that stuff that gives you, (tapping noise) in all the roof lines?

Q: Asbestos.

A: Asbestos. All the roof lines had the asbestos and the electricals in the top of the roof and we, in my time, were still removing old asbestos from our schools.

Q: XXXXX. I know quite a lot about asbestos, only because when I actually was eight, my dad died from asbestosis.

A: Really?

Q: So, I know quite a lot about asbestos.

A: Right.

Q: So, yeah, frightening. It’s everywhere, frightening.

A: Yes.

Q: What they did, and you’re right, it’s because they went…

A: Yes, and they just didn’t know.

Q: No, and they went up so quickly and it had to be done and it had to…

A: Yes.

Q: That’s an absolute, if and when you get round to reading it, if there’s anything you think of is of interest to me, please let me know, that’s it, yeah.

A: I would, I would, of course, but I do realise you can’t go delving into…

Q: No, well…

A: … the past, into seventy years ago, when you’ve got so much to do.

Q: Well, actually, there’s a guy, I can’t remember his… I can’t remember his name. I couldn’t remember his name yesterday, but there’s a, a student who went to Bretton years ago and in two thousand and seven he did a documentary for Radio Four about Bretton closing. And I can’t remember his name for the life of me. And I contacted him about two years ago, very early on, asking for a copy and he emailed me about three weeks ago saying that he’s trying to put together another documentary for Radio Four about the seventy years, that period, and he would like me to take part, if I would, and he’s got Sir Ken Robinson possibly to narrate it.

A: Oh, very good, he’s the right kind of retired person. (laugh).
Q: Yes, exactly and it wouldn’t be until twenty sixteen, seventeen’s schedule and I said, 'I'm really, you know, please and yes, anything, anything to raise some profile about Alec, I most certainly will.' So, it’s interesting cos he got his dates mixed up at one point and he thought it was seventy-five years and all his things and I was like, 'No, be accurate about your dates.' (laugh). But yes, that just reminds me.

A: One thing I think I ought to record for you, which we haven’t touched on and that’s to do with Bretton and me, is that, and it is what happened at the closure of the West Riding. I was Tutor in Charge of the Lady Mabel College Annexe.

Q: Yes, XXXX mentioned that yesterday, he remembers that.

A: Did he? And the time was coming up, seventy-four, to the date when the West Riding would cease to exist. And I suddenly realised that nobody had spoken to me at all from the office about the fact that Lady Mabel College would be on that given day, would be Rotherham’s Authority, whereas my college, Lady Mabel College Annexe, would be Wakefield Metropolitan District.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: And I realised, there’s no way Rotherham’s going to have any interest whatsoever in keeping a college going that isn’t even on their land. So, I went, got an appointment with Sir Alec and I explained to him that I was really very concerned about this. And he typically he said, 'What do you think we should do about it?" (laugh). And so, I said, 'Well, the only, the only thing I can think of is, Bretton Hall will be run by Wakefield Metropolitan District; I wondered whether you felt we could become an annexe associated financially only, with Bretton Hall instead of Lady Mabel.' He said, 'Talk to Alyn about it and see what you can come up with.' And we met in a pub and we talked about it and thought how it could be effected and I can remember saying to him, 'Well, we’d need our letterheads changing and I don’t want Bretton Hall College, Castleford Annexe in little letters 'cause all the post will go to Bretton. I want the Castleford Annexe of Bretton Hall College.' No problem about that. And then it was six weeks only before the close of the West Riding that Alec Clegg put it through the committee, it was all agreed and that was it.

Q: Wow.

A: Now, the consequences were, on a four year course, all my existing students were being, going through Sheffield University Institute of Education for their qualifications and every year of my new lot coming in were going through Leeds.

Q: Goodness.

A: So, I spent the last three years of my career in teacher training, formal career, dealing with two universities.

Q: Goodness.
A: Not only for approval of the exams, but external examiners and, and so on and so on and so on and it was very interesting.

Q: I bet.

A: Because I discovered that what I had sort of thought, was maybe one would be more liberal than the other and I was wrong as to which one it was. (laugh).

Q: Oh, interesting.

A: And that was because the Professor of Education in the, a good one, good in my view, was a liberal minded Prof. And he felt, he used to visit often and he would take a keen interest in the products of the work, you know, the, the students finals and all of that stuff. But he was always willing to listen to the fact that we were not doing a normal day, we were not doing, we were taking families away in Whitsuntide, to go on with their husbands and their children together. We were doing all sorts of things that great big colleges can’t do.

Q: No, no, you’re exactly right.

A: And, therefore, he was sympathetic and we did very well. Leeds have now given away. (laugh) Leeds was less, they were more rigid as to what they thought was possible.

Q: There’s something though, isn’t there about also the ethos of Bretton and how it ran and how it…?

A: Yes, but I’m going to come in straight away because nothing from the ethos of Bretton affected us and I’ll tell you why, Margaret Dunn had been the Vice Principal at Bretton. She was the first Tutor in Charge…

Q: Yes, of course, she was.

A: And there was a certain person that she would never allow to come into our Castleford Annexe (laugh) because he was too bookish.

Q: Ah, well.

A: Too not, not practical enough for us.

Q: That’s interesting as well, isn't the word practical 'cause really, Eric alluded to the, you know, 'If thou of fortune being bereft' saying and talking about, you know, wisdom and, and again, a practicality actually, you could describe some of that as a practicality maybe. And I wonder if that’s, if that also appealed to Alec and what… he had to have doers, didn’t he?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: As well as thinkers, he had to have doers that were on the ground.
A: And, and our, our philosophy at the Annexe is expressed in some of these books, for example. Oh, I meant to draw that to your attention but I don’t know, I mustn’t hold you up too, too long.

Q: Oh, don’t worry at all.

A: I’m all right for time, but here, for example, there’s… now where is it? This is the problem. I’m not too sure. It might be… have you got the last ten years?

Q: I don’t have a copy, but I’ve seen it, yes.

A: Yes, okay. This is where it’s expressed, the Lady Mabel College Annexe, the philosophy, there. It goes on over the page and it describes the philosophy of the Annexe, which was really totally new because we were the first in the country to run a four year course for people with children.

Q: Gosh. Even today… I was saying to XXXX, there’s so many things that Alec wrote and things, even these things that were kind of pulled together by different areas really. All, so much of it stands today.

A: Yes.

Q: So much, it’s as if Alec in some ways was even forecasting. You can read things.

A: Oh, he forecasted most of what’s happening today in relation to examinations, testing and the segregation.

Q: Yeah, and we still have policy makers and Government Ministers and Principals, heads in their hands as if they weren’t expecting it.

A: Yes, absolutely, absolutely.

Q: You see, even that, ‘Each student was required to undertake two major studies, many of which went far beyond what the students believed themselves to be capable of.’

A: Absolutely, that was the case.

Q: And I think Alec did that with his staff.

A: You’re right, you are right.

Q: Yeah.

A: And I may tell you that that philosophy in that school was based on my philosophy, partly, being with Margaret, the two people starting it off. You see, in my, both my schools, I allowed the children to come into school whenever they arrived, even if it was at twenty past eight in the morning. Because they started work on self-initiated tasks. So, self-initiated tasks transferred into the students and what happened was, they came in, the children came in and did the, whatever it was, it
could be any material, any subject, whatever. With the support of the teachers, of course, but not initiated by the teachers. I wanted them to be capable of starting work, not in schools where the teacher starts everything and then they respond, the opposite way. And the result was, at my assemblies, they weren’t called assemblies then; it was an act of worship. The law required an act of worship to start the school day. But mine I’m afraid, didn’t start until nine fifty because they’d all come in and then they’d worked and then at nine fifty, I started the music going and that all the classes came into the central hall and they sat wherever they wanted to sit. They didn’t have to come in, in regimented lines, so, they could sit with their brother or sister in another class if they wanted to or with a friend. And one of the CCIs, Religious Education came, new to us, new to the West Riding and he’s, and he was buried a month ago sadly, called Loosemore, Alan Loosemore. And Alan Loosemore came, saw what we were doing and then he started doing, and this is the West Riding’s method, saying to other Heads, ‘You might want to go to Netherton and see what Miss Smith is doing at Netherton.’ So, that’s how they did it, by example, largely, and I can remember one Head ringing eventually and saying, ‘It’s Miss Smith at Netherton, is yours the worship school?’ And I felt like saying, ‘Well, half of them are little devils’ but no, I didn’t. But that’s… ‘Mr Loosemore has said we should come and see it.’ And they came, and another Head on another occasion came and she said, ‘How do you get away with breaking the law ’cause you’re not starting the school day with the act of worship?’ And I do know that I said, ‘Well, I didn’t think the Lord would mind actually.’

Q: Good for you.

A: But the reason for doing it was such a good one and I said, ‘And none of the CCIs have ever questioned them, the legal side. Mr Loosemore didn’t question it, did he?’ And can you see how the philosophy of running the children at primary level can be applied equally, equally when you are dealing with married women with children, and they see the point of it with their own children.

Q: Yes, yes. Isn’t it strange because sometimes it’s kind of, it’s kind of very clever, but it’s done…

A: But simple.

Q: Yes, and it’s done in a way where those children, whether they knew it or not, must have felt in control of their day, do you know what I mean?

A: Absolutely.

Q: Because you haven’t kept them outside, so somehow, even that act of keeping them outside, doesn’t…

A: No, why do it?

Q: Yeah, and so they’ve been allowed to come in, they’re allowed just to have some control over what they would then like to do, that they’re trusted to do it…

A: Correct.
Q: And then when we’re all together and we’re all ready, we’ll go and start our joint...

A: Yes, that’s right and we come in, we come in quietly because we’re all listening to the piece of music and the name of the, the name of the composer was up on the wall. And my Deputy, every week, told them a bit about the composer and we played the same piece of music every day for a week. Why? Why? Because the first time it’s played, they’re all sitting on the floor like this, listening, by the time they’ve heard it three times, they’re beginning to do that.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: So, they’re beginning to bodily know the piece of music and know the man who wrote it.

Q: Exactly, exactly.

A: And then next Monday comes and we have a new piece of music and then we listen to music about the sea, okay.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: It’s, if you can, you can appreciate it, I can tell by your responses.

Q: Yes.

A: It’s a total approach.

Q: Yes, completely.

A: But it’s literally based on what can children or adults see the reason for.

Q: Yeah, and it’s, and it’s a bit like, there again, they’re learning without really knowing and then everything’s open then.

A: Yes.

Q: We’ve all done exams where you walk in and your head just goes, ooh.

A: Yes.

Q: Because it’s stress and it’s pressure and it’s an exam and the minute that that isn’t there, you just take everything in.

A: Yes, you do.

Q: And I was born in seventy-four, so, when I started school, which was still in the late seventies, I, I still think I had that cusp of that. I have some fantastic, very early memories of days like today, when we would be out on the grass being taught and a real freedom, just as you’re describing. And, of course, you get to, you move out and
we get into the eighties and it’s, it’s literally, with the Nineteen Eighty-Eight Education Act really, and this just delineation of national curriculum, de, de, de. And it’s as if all of that innate knowledge that worked, because it somehow, it just didn’t fit, it wasn’t so cost effective, it wasn’t going to educate our children, it was thrown out. A while ago, longer than that, I worked for the DCMS Department of Culture, Media and Sport at one point, doing some work with rural schools in Cumbria. And it’s the nearest I’ve come to modern day in that approach. I remember talking to the Head Teacher and she had about seventeen children in her entire school. So, she said, 'If we need to play football, we all play football; we don’t have a team.' They were from rural communities, from farmers and that’s the nearest thing and it was magical, genuinely magical. And you drive for miles and miles to get there and when you got there, cook... there was fresh biscuits made and a pot of tea and the children had helped make it. They’d fed the school cat and it was the nearest thing and they’re polite children, gay children. Of course, we had classes where we went from one age to another that you wouldn’t see in other schools because, because they had so many, so many children, so you know, they’re put together, like a whole different mentality.

A: Of course, that’s like it was at Horbury Bridge.

Q: Yeah, and it works and there’s happy children and they feel in control of their day. And yet, and it, well, that’s probably, over about ten years ago that was now, so, goodness knows now how it will be. And I remember her saying to me, she said, 'We have a national curriculum but it’s gathering dust.'

A: (laugh).

Q: And you think, ‘Yeah.’

A: Now, it’s ironical, isn’t it, that we’ve got now a situation where our schools are being turned into academies in order to gain a bit more freedom actually, as I understand it? I know they’ve got to sponsor, people have got to sponsor and they’re always asking for money I’m told. But nevertheless, it’s ironical that they felt so hamstrung that they’re trying to breakout. But the, the problem as I see is, that we are now being told and the general public are beginning to associate the word academy with failing schools.

Q: I was just about to say that because I saw Nicky Morgan, Education Secretary, literally say, 'If a school is failing, 'cause their, you know, their standards are failing,' goodness knows how they actually come to, how they come to, they do, 'They automatically without…'

A: Going to make them into academies.

Q: Yeah, so, doesn’t that, by…

A: Crazy.

Q: It just means academy equals failing school.
A: Of course it does, of course it does.

Q: So, who wants to send your child to a failing school?

A: Yes, and then last week or the week before, just invented a new category for schools.

Q: Oh, have they?

A: Coasting schools.

Q: Oh, my goodness.

A: Have you heard that word?

Q: No.

A: Oh, right, it's only about a fortnight old, but now, and I've written in my diary something, 'So, presume that coasting schools means, they can't decide that they're failing, they know they're not brilliant, so, they've had to invent a middle category, but if you decide somebody's coasting, whether it's a teacher or a child, you've got to have an idea of what their capacity is.' How do you know they're not working at their utmost? They might be. And how can you as an Inspector, go in and decide, 'Oh, she's coasting 'cause I know she could do better.' Not true, you don't, you can't know it. They invent the most ludicrous categories.

Q: Don't they, don't they? And it makes me think, you and Alec would write about how the very, and again, some of the language is, don't know what the right words are, but like the lowest end children and you had the highest end children, in some ways, you know where you are with those children. A huge section in between and that feels about the schools now, doesn't it, they're wanting, of course, the bottom ones they'll try and do whatever they do, the government, to make them better. The top end schools, they'll probably kind of leave well alone, but the huge swathe in the middle, they, I mean, coasting is such a...

A: It's, it's a pejorative term.

Q: Yes.

A: Because it actually means you are capable of doing more. My point is, that no Inspector going in can know that they're capable of doing more.

Q: No, and also that, surely and I'm just slightly on a tangent now, but doesn't that tie the hand of an Inspector? The majority of schools may come back as coasting then, 'cause how do you make that judgement?

A: Oh, yes, because it's like when you have a five point scale to judge them on, there's a great tendency to go for the middle one, 'Let's go for the C Band.'

Q: Of course, of course there is.
A: Yes.

Q: It's crazy, isn't it?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: I had the same thoughts.

A: And Alec Clegg was fighting that because he saw it in America, right?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And many of his talks to us and to, and in print, point to the dangers of testing and look what’s happened. He forecast.

Q: He did.

A: He literally forecast what has happened in this country.

Q: He did. When he was knighted, this is what was said about him, but there’s a bit here. He’s put, 'Sir Alec was known as the conscience of the Ministry.'

A: Yes, yes, that’s a lovely phrase. That’s a lovely phrase.

Q: That’s spot on.

A: It really is and he would be their conscience by asking them questions. (laugh).

Q: Yes, in that way...

A: Not telling, but...

Q: But doesn’t go in... XXXX and I talked a bit about ego and I said, 'I never see Alec Clegg was ego driven.' I said, 'I see him as ambitious and not ego.'

A: Oh, absolutely.

Q: And XXXX agreed and XXXX said, 'It’s quite unusual,' 'cause XXXX himself, said, he thought he was ambitious but didn’t have an ego. He said, 'Because often you find ambition and ego sit like that' and I think that happens a lot today.

A: Yes.

Q: You have to be the best and get there first and that doesn’t come, I don’t read any of that in Alec. So, again, the way that he would ask his questions quite self-effacing, I’m not the expert, I’m not really in charge slightly, and then, so, will put the other person probably at ease as well, to go, 'Actually, I know something about that. Actually, I could speak up with confidence.' All of those things, so, I think you’re right,
the questions he asked, make this... maybe he got away with because of how he did it, his style.

A: Yeah. We’re not recording now, are we?

Q: We are. I can turn it off.

A: Well, I would just mention one thing, which I wouldn’t want actually, you to use because I...

(End of recording)
Q: We’re off again now XXXX, don’t worry.

A: Yes, okay.

Q: Yes, of course, your name’s in both of them.

A: Yes.

Q: And I picked up Darvill first and I thought, oh, literally one of the first things I read about Alec, and I thought, ‘If this is it, I’m gonna struggle,’ ’cause I found his style quite difficult to get my head round.

A: That’s right, yes, yes.

Q: And I prefer Nora George’s as well.

A: Yes. She did have the advantage, of course, of having taught in a West Riding school.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: So, she was… and she had the discipline to go to papers in a way that, you know, so, she was backing up impressions with hard material, and you do know, she was, you mentioned your husband’s on the staff at Hull.

Q: Yes.

A: And she was, of course, you know that.

Q: Yes, yeah, ’cause when I tried to track down that book…

A: He isn’t in the education department by any chance, is he?

Q: No, no. Well, he, his job is, he’s a Teaching Enhanced Learner, which means, he’s working with teachers, how to use this in your classroom.

A: Oh, right, right, yes.

Q: How to use this, because, of course, digital technology, there are some teaching staff who are quite frightened they’re gonna lose their jobs because of this, and his, and he’s, he’s very good at this, and I just make it work, and I’m done, and he enjoys it and spends hours looking at how to make it work. I just use it when I need to, and he’s trying to look at how it can complement, because in a way, this is now a classroom.

A: Yes, yes, it is, isn’t it?

Q: And there are, and I’ve worked with staff again, and you must have worked with staff again, where actually, they probably shouldn’t be teachers or they don’t want to be teachers, but they’re drawing a salary and they’re complaining.
A: Yes, yes.

Q: And they are rightly frightened, I think, 'cause they think this is going to take their jobs, and it might with some teachers, it just might. But it's the world, the way it's becoming and so, he works in trying to find out what works, what doesn't work, piloting things.

A: I see.

Q: Mainly for higher education and that's what he does.

A: He does.

Q: But with Nora George, when I tried to track down that book the first time, it was the Hull university library that had a copy and then, of course, I joined up all the...

A: And they've got one, of course, at NIA haven't they?

Q: Yeah, they do, yeah, and had a look, but interestingly...

A: Have you got one yourself?

Q: I do now, yes.

A: Good, okay.

Q: Interestingly, the papers that Nora used, I went to the Brotherton Special Collection at Leeds and there's still the bundles that she looked at, which again, was of interest. But again, 'cause I have to add something new, it was a bit like, "Nora, those are just your papers really."

A: Yes, yes,

Q: But again, I think that was the last thing written about Alec.

A: She, it was and she died nearly two years ago and last December I got a message from her executors; they still haven't sold her flat in Wakefield.

Q: Goodness.

A: And it's still full of boxes and boxes and boxes of stuff and the executor said to me, "Would you think anybody would, how do, how do I get rid of some of these books?" And I said, "Well, the first place to offer them to is NIA," okay. And then I learned that they'd got some and I said, "Well, I've still got my Retired Advisors' Group, would you like to give me ten and see if there's an interest?" So, I took them to our December meeting and I said, "Would anybody...?" And I said a bit about Nora herself, you know, her background and then, of course, they all went like hotcakes, especially to people who had known the West Riding, and so, I've got two there that are waiting for people who've ordered them.
Q: Brilliant, brilliant.

A: But I hadn’t enough, I needed four more.

Q: Yeah, that’s great.

A: So, I thought, ‘Well, if they read them, even for, even for happy recollections, that’s okay,’ you know.

Q: Yeah, ‘cause some of the, the papers that Nora looked at and some of them are duplicated at the archives, so, again, a lot of the stuff I’ve read, as I said earlier, they’re very professional papers. They’re very... I’m trying to make meaning out of a professional document, which is, is more difficult to try and translate to the person. But I think, again, what, what isn’t in, in those books, is all of this grey area that I think actually, is the, is the driver and is the key to who he was.

A: Yes, and this is why I felt, knowing my connection with these two people, I’d already got my... when he died, I concentrated on putting, simply putting together stuff to do with his style, not what he achieved.

Q: We know that, we know what he achieved.

A: Yes, yeah. It didn’t do it justice. All I was using were letters to me.

Q: No.

A: But at least it was first-hand material.

Q: Exactly, ‘cause when I sat down and again, had to, I knew I had to look at Alec, and they wanted me to look at certain things. And as I started to look through things, you then very quickly kind of go, “Okay, this is what this man did, dah, dah, dah, dah, about schools and all the rest of those things that we, that’s known,” and you have that realisation that goes, “I can’t just regurgitate this; I need something else.”

A: No, no, yes.

Q: And then again, being at Bretton thinking, ‘Hang on, I can’t find anything on Bretton, Alec founded this place.’ And then just, I don’t know, I think it came from Alec in my head being a storyteller, and I remember thinking, “What’s the story then of Alec, and what’s the story of how he interwove Bretton, and I just became very interested and I liked him, do you know what I mean? I remember the first...

A: (laugh). Yes, yes, you get fond of people...

Q: Yes.

A: ... whose style you like, don’t you?
Q: I remember the first time, 'cause there’s lots of tapes, which is quite hard, there was nothing to play it on at the archive. So, I just bought a tape cassette machine and there was nobody there one day, it was just me, they’d gone to lunch and then meetings. And so, I put a tape in of Alec and the first time I heard his voice was at the archive, and again, it was really, it was quite emotive for me, and it was a bit goose-pimply to hear this man’s voice and he had such authority. He knew what he wanted to say and he said it and he was quite charming and just quite a dry wit came through, and I just thought, ‘I like this man.’

A: Yes, he had tremendous… he had tremendous style.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And, well, we’ve, we’ve, I think we just appreciate the fortune of having worked with him, for him and at the right time when he could do things. He was a ‘can do’ man.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: And if you felt it was justified, you can do it as well.

Q: Yes.

A: If you… go ahead, try it.

Q: Yeah, and I, again, I feel, I feel very privileged to be able to do this.

A: Yes.

Q: I, I feel that I’m very lucky to be able to know and learn about this man and what he did and all of these satellites. I, it feels an absolute privilege to be able to do it, which I don’t know if many people think that about PhDs and studying and all the rest of it. But there is really something special about him, and I think it’s those things that I’d like people to know.

A: Yeah, and when, when does it come to an end, your study?

Q: I have to have a complete draft in by March next year and then you have a six month period, it goes back and forth to doctors.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And then in principle, it’s next October.

A: Right, right.

Q: And then we wait and see, but we, a year ago, I had what they call a progression panel and I have to present my work to a panel of doctors, to think if I know enough, am I on track with everything. And then you pass that and I have another one on July
first, where I then present what I’ve been doing since then and have... because I’m, you’re monitored, really.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: But everything’s all on track and then I, I write it up really and then it’s some of that, but then I found... the reason that I found very interesting but I’ve got to put, I’ve been desperate to talk to people. I’ve been desperate to put some flesh on the bones. Because it, it, you can read so many things different ways, and especially when you weren’t there.

A: Yes, of course, of course.

Q: And what’s been really lovely this week, and I have had a lovely week, is everybody I’ve spoken to, Alec’s the same person, if you know what I mean, even the version of him as a dad, as a father.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: There’s all those traits.

A: Yes.

Q: They’re all... which is equating to be a very genuine man. He didn’t put on somebody at work and then left it when he got home.

A: No, no, no.

Q: This, this is who he was.

A: Yes.

Q: And again, I think that all adds up to how he was a leader. How he led people. It, it was him.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And he was genuine and he cared and things that you probably, as in one probably, you never really read that, you maybe don’t hear that about a leader, you know, you maybe want them on a pedestal, but he’s on a pedestal for the right reasons.

A: Yes.

Q: Do you know what I mean?

A: Yes, yes, yes.

Q: All of ... and that’s the things that I, I would like to be able to come through.
A: Yes, that would be so worthwhile.
Q: That's what I'm after.
A: Wouldn't it?
Q: Yeah, yeah.
A: It will be, it never would, it will be.
Q: Is there anything else because we've talked for a long time? Is there anything else you particularly would like to tell?
A: I don't.... I'm just looking at the notes, notes, ha, ha, dear me. Now you've got the final ten years. I think I... the only thing is, and I've said it in one way or another, was the capacity he had for appointing people or inviting people to come and do the message, to come and give the message.
Q: Yeah.
A: And these people I've listed here: Christian Schiller, Ruth (...), Diana Jordon, Naomi Cass, Donald Bardon Wood, Margaret Dunn, Donald Mariott, Robin Turner, Ken Thomas, etc. etc. He went out and found about them and attracted them to come. They didn't end up by a random selection, you know.
Q: No.
A: Earmarking his teachers.
Q: Yeah, yeah, completely.
A: Earmarking, yeah. I think I've dealt with the ones that you've asked me very inadequately because I could go on, I could go on.
Q: Oh, no, you really haven't. I know. I do this bit, which is why I say that, I think when this PhD's read, I probably will be back at all of your doors at some stage. I'm genuinely fascinated and interested.
A: Yes.
Q: And there just seems to be so much that, there’s so much I would like to be out there. There’s so much that I’d like... whether it is just something for the archive or to write about something else, but it’s, it, the West Riding in this period of time seems so special and what seems extra special is at the time, people kind of had that feeling that it was special. You, you don't always know at the time if something’s special. Sometimes you need the distance of time to look back, but you knew there was something special about it and that makes it extra special, I think now looking back.
A: Yes, it does, and the other authority at the same time who was, that was considered special, was Newsom, Newsom.

Q: Yes, Peter? Peter Newsom.

A: Yeah, no, that’s, that… Peter Newsom was Deputy to Alec.

Q: Yes.

A: John Newsom of the Newsom Report, Chief Education Officer.

Q: Oh, yes, yes, yes.

A: Hertfordshire.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And Hertfordshire and the West Riding were the two toppies.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: Yes. Certain other places like Bristol had a very good reputation for its primary education as well and I visited them.

Q: Did Cambridgeshire feature anywhere?

A: I can’t remember that it did.

Q: No, I...

A: But I tell you where you might have thought it, Sybille Marshall.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Was a small head in a Cambridgeshire school.

Q: That will be where.

A: And I’ve lectured with her up in the, Northumberland, for their authority and she and I were the two lecturers, and I stayed and did practical work with them as well. Because again, it was the small school possibilities that she, you know, did what she thought was right.

Q: You all have so much value, XXXXX. When I saw Eric on Tuesday, and again, I mean, you’re all as sharp as tacks, and what you did and what you do now, it’s just, it’s, it’s impressive, it’s beyond impressive.

A: (laugh) Well, it’s very kind of you.

Q: So yeah, I will be back at your door.
A: I just think, myself, for myself. I have been so lucky because so much of what happens to you in any job happens by chance, to be in the right place at the right time and have said the right thing and somebody to have heard it. (laugh).

Q: I think what... yes. I think when I was talking to XXXX when we kind of were finishing up there as well, and I, there is still a huge amount of affection and respect for Alec and Jessie and the West Riding.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And that remains.

A: Yes.

Q: There's people who, like yourself really, but people who, who still know what it did and that should be remembered.

A: Yes.

Q: That shouldn't just kind of be passed with time.

A: No, No.

Q: And then we look back and go, “What was that, what happened to the...?” That shouldn’t and can’t happen because all of you contributed in such unique ways to what Alec was doing and Alec... Eric was awarded an MBE a long time ago, I think.

A: Yes, he was, yes, he was.

Q: And he said he, he doesn’t know why he got it.

A: Schools Museum Service.

Q: Yeah, and he said, “I don’t know why I got it, why should I get it?”

A: Well, it was the first one in, the first one to run a Schools Museum Service.

Q: But again, that self-effacing, he doesn’t, he doesn’t see why he got it.

A: No.

Q: And there’s all of this. It just needs to not be forgotten.

A: Yes, that’s true.

Q: It really needs not to be forgotten.

A: I would like to feel that the National Arts Education Archive could have a little bit more influence. The fact it can’t lend things is part of its problem.
Q: I know.

A: I mean, I would borrow some of my stuff. If I were asked to give a talk now on my experiences, you know, (...) very unlikely to happen, I may say, to teachers, but other groups, I would want the children’s work to talk, do the talking and I’d have to borrow it you see.

Q: Yeah.

A: But the fact that they can’t lend it, except when they put up a special exhibition, it ought to be influencing more people. And maybe, let’s just think, ‘What if academies start thinking, we’re free to do more than we are by law bound to do, so, let’s have a look at some old stuff.’ You never know.

Q: Well, I said to my husband who worked at Hull and he went to art school and went through that route, and we were there a few Saturdays ago because Piers Rawson was talking about the exhibition that’s on about Philip Rawson, his, his father. And so, I went with my husband and my little girl and we went on Saturday morning and he went upstairs while I listened to the talk with our three year old and she coloured in and did the rest of it. And then, as you do, he picked up things about Alec ‘cause he sat where I normally sit and read and talked as we went upstairs and he said, “Do you know what?” he said, “I work in Education, he, I’m forty, he’ll be forty-three.” He said, “I have done this for twenty odd years. I went through the art school system.” He said, “Why don’t people know about Alec? Why don’t people know about Alec Clegg?” And I started to smile and he said, “You’ve been doing this for two years,” ‘cause, of course, I go home and talk about it, but again, he had to see it.

A: Yes.

Q: He had to see it and feel it and then I said, “So, get some of the Hull people.”

A: Yes.

Q: “Get your teacher… whatever teacher trainers or art students because it’s here,” and again, I don’t know anything about the redevelopment, but at some point something will be redeveloped on that site.

A: That’s right.

Q: And it’s about what will happen to this archive?

A: Yes, what will? What will?

Q: And where will it go and…?

A: When it was in danger of being lost, I began to say to Jess Clegg, ‘cause she was in charge of the, she was chair of the trust, you see that ran it.

Q: Yes, I’ve seen her name on meetings.
A: And then, and then it was handed over to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park to get, and I used to say, “Well, it must go to a higher education institution that still trains teachers.” But in all those higher education institutions, the number training the teachers is dwindling. It isn’t that we don’t need teachers, but why? Because people like Wakefield Met are running their own system.

Q: Yes, yeah.

A: You see, even going back to my old school the other day and loving it, I have to say, the last woman I was introduced to was a teacher in so-and-so and then they said, “And so and so is going to train to be a teacher next year.” And, of course, I said, “Oh, where are you doing it?” She said, “Here,” and I thought, ‘Well, that’s lovely because you’re lucky, you happen to be in a good school, but you still won’t get philosophy of it, you won’t get history, you won’t get psychology; you’ll get the method, which we used to call in the old, really old days, monitorial, sitting next to Nellie system.

Q: My goodness, I haven’t heard of that.

A: It goes back to the days when school masters, they always were, had monitors and monitors were trainees under the head. It later came to mean the people who give out the ink and stuff. I was the ink monitor of my junior school, but it wasn’t that originally. A monitor was an older child in a school being helped to train by the head. And at Horbury, Horbury Saint Peter’s School, the history tells us that the headteacher there in the Victorian times, would come into school with his dogs, equip the monitors to know what they were doing and then he’d go off with the priest with the dogs for the morning.

Q: Goodness me.

A: Now, I could see why the Head would say, “You’re having trouble, well, go and sit next to Nellie”.

Q: Yes, of course.

A: And so, that method was called the sitting next to Nellie method, and we’re closer to it now than we have been for many years, in my view.

Q: And you’re right, when you go back to the lady from Huddersfield University when I did my PGCE, the things that, I mean, yes, we got, you know, how to teach. But one day I remember we had a whole, we had a few days, well, one just sticks in my head, when she said, “If you can afford the time, a day a week,” and she said, “And that’s a lot of time, clear your desk, sort your office out, clear your desk, deal with things, be organised. If you’re sat in chaos, you can’t, you can’t do that job.” Very practical things, and again, she talked about, which has stuck with me and I’ve used in my teaching as how you present yourself to your students, how you hold yourself, what you wear, how you speak, this matters. I remember then thinking and I was twenty-three at the time thinking, ‘That means I’m somebody’s role model.’ And feeling that, that responsibility and quite happily so, and that’s carried me through my
whole career, and I remember saying to some undergrads that were twenty, twenty-one and you know when they kind of sit there and not really listening, whatever. And I said, “Do you know,” I said, “At some you will apply for jobs,” I said, “And I can tell a lot about you today from what you’re wearing.” They kind of looked at me. I said, “I can kind of tell if you’ve picked it up off the floor last night, if you’ve put a bit of thought into it, you know, how you’re coming across, how you’re sitting,” and they did kind of look at me as if to go, “Oh, my goodness.” But a few of them did sit up a little bit, and all of that came from my lady at Huddersfield. And you’re right because the teacher training numbers are down apparently this year, people who want to teacher train. George Osborne’s announced cuts in higher education money so, you do start to go, “Who is, what’s there?”

A: And I’m reading that one in four of them leave as well within the first four years anyway.

Q: And I don’t know how much of that is to do with, they get extra funding, they get paid a bursary if they train.

A: They do.

Q: And whether they think, this might be again, I don’t know, too simplistic, but, you know, they’ll take the money, do the training, no real intention of staying, I don’t know.

A: It’s very sad. I have, one of my great nieces is now married to a man who did a degree in theatre studies. He would never have got into the mainstream theatre as an actor, but that was his subject. So, he began to think what should he do with it. And he began on the teacher training system through the school based system where you have to go through two schools.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: The first school he went to was a private school and they used him to drive the minibus to collect up pupils from all around, so, part of his day was driving the minibus. The second school he went into was the secondary comprehensive and his mentor there was a woman. And by that time he was, he’d improved his maths by the way and he was teaching maths and so on. And she was such an unsympathetic tartar and he was hating it, and not getting good feedback and not getting support. Before he finished the year, he finished the course, he walked out.

Q: Goodness.

A: So, he’d done all that and he got nothing for it. Now, if they are so unlucky as to get that kind of deal, at least this girl at Horbury Bridge that I saw, she’s gonna get some part in a decent school, but it’s a lot of luck there, whereas…

Q: Isn’t it? It’s funny…

A: You can’t do anything about it, can you?
Q: No and I'll stop rabbiting a second, but I remember reading and I'm speaking at a conference in July, it's called BELMAS, which is the British Education and Leadership Association, and I'll be talking about Alec there. And I'm going to talk a little bit about this there, but I was reading again, in nineteen sixty-four when the extensions were made to Bretton and they talk about the dignity of teaching, and that rings every bell with me and it's, and I think it's been forgotten.

A: I'm going to find my little black book.

Q: Oh. (laugh).

A: I'm sure this is worth noting. I've got to find... I'll have to get a contents book soon, won't I? Oh, this, this one you'll like. This wasn't the one I was looking for, Albert Einstein this.

Q: Oh, yes.

A: 'If you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing it's stupid.' Isn't that a neat, isn't that a neat one?

Q: Yes.

A: Now, the one I was looking for is... oh, dear. Sorry. Ah, here we are. Now, I don't know the man, Jacquese or Jacques Barzun? 'Teaching is not a lost art, but the regard for it is a lost tradition.' Yes, true.

Q: Yeah, I agree.

A: If the general public had a high regard for its teachers, they would feel themselves.

Q: I agree, you're elevated; Bretton, West Riding, you were elevated, you held yourself differently, you were invested in. And this dignity of teaching rings every chord with me because I don't think it exists any more. And, and I hate to say this but, and again, I've known colleagues like this. Sometimes they lead to the detriment, they devalue our profession themselves and that's, I think, it's like imploding, and that's the hardest thing, I think, to get your head round.

A: Yes, it is. It is.

Q: So, I'm gonna refer to this dignity of teaching, 'cause I think Alec... that would have been....

A: Yes, yes, you would, you would have a very attentive audience too, if you did...

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A: ... talk in that vein, I'm sure you would.

Q: Yeah, that's kind of... I think I have about half an hour to speak.
A: Who is to, tell me again?

Q: It's called BELMAS, which stands for, the British Education Leadership and I think Administration Society and I sent in an abstract, 'This is what I’d like to talk about,' a bit of what we've talked about today, kind of thing, about Alec’s style really. And they accepted it and said, “Yes, come and talk,” which, 'cause again, it was part of PhD, you have to do certain things. So it's national conference and I thought, ‘Okay, this is a good platform,’ and I think that's what I’d… that’s the focus I’m going to take because I think in, in some ways, in a nutshell, that dignity of teaching, sums up an awful lot about...

A: Yes, it most certainly does.

Q: Yeah.

A: If you're highly regarded by your chief officer, by your parents, by the populace as a whole, you end up doing a better job I think.

Q: Of course you do, of course you do.

A: Right, now, I’m going to put the kettle on.

(End of recording)
A: Hello, XXXX.

Q: Hello

A: Hello

Q: Hello. How are you,?

A: I'm fine, thank you. I hope you are.

Q: I'm very well. Is now a good time to talk?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: Brilliant.

A: I got my Skype up here, and I put into and it says hasn't given me her details so, that's all.

Q: Oh, 'cause I tried again this morning, and I was having problems again with us connecting. I haven't anything through to kind of request my connection. It's very puzzling; I've spoken to my husband, and I've no idea why we can't talk via Skype.

A: Well we'd better give it up and just stick to the phone, eh?

Q: Yes. I agree. XXXXX, could you tell me... begin by telling me when you were actually at Bretton Hall College?

A: I went in September nineteen fifty-two. I was appointed head of English and drama and I left in the end of the summer term nineteen sixty-five. Took up a post in Winchester.

Q: You were there for quite a long time, XXXXX.

A: I was there thirteen years. I was head of English and drama. Then I gave up the drama and... oh no, then I gave up the English. And then in I think nineteen sixty-one, I was appointed head of education, and was made senior tutor.

Q: How do you remember your time at Bretton, XXXXX?

A: How do I remember it?

Q: Yes. Is it a happy memory, is it...?

A: Oh enormously happy. Yes, transformative.

Q: Yes. Who interviewed you, XXXXX, for your post?

A: Well, I know I took a train from London to Wakefield. And I went... my first appointment there was to the education offices, West Riding education offices. And
there was certainly Mr. Friend, and probably, now this is not sure, I think there might have been Clegg there and Ezra Taylor. Ezra Taylor was the chairman of the governors. Then I was asked to go to the college and I stayed there overnight. And there was various interviews in the college, and then there was a concert in the evening. Because there were also music tutors and there was a selection, they were singing or playing their instruments in the evening and it was entertaining and, in the event, rather tragic. I don't know whether you want to hear about that.

Q: Yes. Yes, please.

A: Well, there was one gentleman who was very gifted, and who sang a song cycle very, very passionately. And sweat was standing out on his forehead and so forth, but it was very moving. And within a week he had committed suicide.

Q: Oh, goodness.

A: Because he was due to appear at a court for abusing a youngster. He was a choir master, organ, and that was him. I remember that very vividly. And of course there was another interview for music, for music member of staff. And Geoff Laycock was appointed. And then in the evening we went for a... some of us anyhow... went for a drink in the local pub. You ever been there XXXXX, it's the Black Bull?

Q: No, I haven't been.

A: Well, you know there isn't... the Irish were building a railroad in the nineteenth century, and the lord of the manor wouldn't allow a pub in the village of Bretton.

Q: Yes.

A: And Black Bull was about a mile away, on that Huddersfield road. And we went up there and had a drink with Raymond Roberts, who was a lecturer in music, and then became an HMI. And it was a very pleasant and relaxing time.

Q: Goodness. Were you the first person appointed as head, XXXXX, for English and drama at Bretton, do you know?

A: No. There was a chap before me, and his name was Whitehead I think. And he was married and he had an affair with one of the students and he was asked to leave. So when I went there, there was a cloud over that sort of appointment and that sort of liaison. So Whitehead; he was very gifted, I gather.

Q: Mm. What were your first impressions of Bretton, when you got there, XXXXX?

A: Well I suppose it differs for the interview from when I actually moved in. Interview: most spectacular, the scene, setting was breathtaking. And of course (laughs) there were a lot of women in important places at that time. Margaret Dunn, Rae Milne, Shauna Robertson. And they held sway, certainly with Mr. Clegg and certainly with Mr. Friend. And of course what, you know, the conventional view of somebody coming from a grammar school who'd perform, you know, produced boys in plays
and told them where to move; upstage, downstage, left and right, that seemed to be abhorrent to the thinking of the Laban side of things. You know what I mean?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: Have you ever done any Laban movement?

Q: No, I haven't.

A: I see. You don't know, my dear.

Q: Oh.

A: Anyhow, I was viewed with some suspicion, because of this production element, telling children where to move; that wasn't the thing to do. But they were extremely pleasant to me throughout, throughout, and that first impression of Bretton was 'Wow.' I'm going up there, I was... I'd only been two years in a grammar school. I started my teaching when I was twenty-eight. So going up to Bretton was an extraordinary feeling. Nineteen fifty-two, okay. Got there; resident in the main block, above the principal's flat.

Q: Goodness.

A: Principal then lived, as if we didn't know, in that great oval area on the first floor. You know where I mean?

Q: Yes, I do.

A: And Daphne had a flat there, Daphne Bird had a flat there too. And on the top floor was Charlie Goode. Have you heard of him?

Q: I don't know if I have heard of Charlie Goode.

A: Charlie Goode was head of education.

Q: Right.

A: We shared the bathroom together. Bit of sort of eighteenth century... seventeenth, eighteenth century panelling up in those rooms. Well, it would be eighteenth century, wouldn't it? It was the 1721 stuff. But oak panelling – very, very lovely. We had one room you see for each of us, for bedroom, sitting room, and we shared the bathroom. And Charlie Goode had been a lecturer in one of the colleges down south in the Brighton area I think. And he'd been a colleague of John Friend's at some stage, and so they knew each other before Bretton. And he'd been appointed... he was one of the first appointments I suppose; nineteen forty-nine, nineteen fifty. Okay?

Q: Uh huh.
A: So that was Charlie. And when he retired, I took on his job; that was sixty-one. Okay?

Q: I see. When I spoke with Margo and Derek Andrews, amongst the many things that we talked about, I think it was Margo who said that she didn't really feel that there was a huge difference between the staff and the students. In the sense that you all... there's a feeling of kind of being in it together, and then you became...

A: Where have I heard that before? Probably a budget statement.

(laughter)

Q: Yes, probably. And I wondered if that's how you remembered it.

A: Um, well there was a difference.

Q: Yes.

A: But sort of delicate, difficult to define difference. For instance, I remember having breakfast with Charlie Goode and Daphne Bird over a year, and that... you have breakfast with a person, you have a different relationship with them, than if you just have coffee, drink, okay?

Q: Yes, very much.

A: And oh it was very... I mean, Charlie was this, he wanted to be distant because there were problems – family problems. Daphne didn't, was correct; didn't have that sort of reservation. And of course, could speak volubly with her mouth full throughout breakfast. But she was loving and charming and was deeply Christian. And of course, she had come from a school that I had known, and that friends had known. It's called Mary Datchelor school in Camberwell. And that was part of our shared experience. Not that I'd been at the school, but my mates had girlfriends, and I knew girls who had been there. So that was Daphne. And then I'm getting off the point.

Q: That's okay.

A: But this relationship between girls... the boys and girls and staff. Well you see, if you're dealing with music, art, drama and you're in production mode in any of those, it's almost inevitably collaborative, isn't it?

Q: Yes.

A: And then you see, when we had the music and the drama, whatever, there were the students and the staff (...) and fiddling, acting together. And that makes a difference.

Q: Yes. Did you always live in the mansion house, XXXXX?

A: No. No, no, no. I married a student.
Q: Yes.

A: And I wasn't found out until the end of the year you see. So I wasn't dismissed. (laughter) And then I lived in Wakefield for three years with Heather. And then we lived at a place called Durkar, which is between Wakefield and the college. And then in sixty-one I was given this staff flat on the campus. Tutors' flats. So that's where we lived for the last four years. And then I came here to Winchester.

Q: Was there such a thing as a typical day for you at Bretton?

A: I beg your pardon?

Q: Was there such a thing as a typical day at Bretton?

A: Which year are you talking about?

Q: Well I suppose when you started in fifty-two, what...?

A: The first year. Well, the first year I had to work out, for the first time in my life, syllabuses. That was a shock to the system. What to do over a two-year course and a one-year course in English. And then the first year drama students did not come until nineteen fifty-three. So fifty-two I didn't have the specialist drama students. They came fifty-three. But I had to work out these syllabuses for English and pretty well teach them. There was another chap in the English department then called Heffner. Have you heard of Paul Heffner?

Q: Yes, I have.

A: He was absolutely lovely, and he was an Oxford man. He was probably a little bit older than myself. He was gentle, wise, learned and a musician too; he played the fiddle. But he was a little self-disregarding, I don't know, he didn't... he wasn't a candidate for the post of head of English and drama, although he'd been there before me, you see. But we got on... he lived in, he lived in Wakefield with his wife. He had three children. And he was an Oxford man and his wife was an Oxford graduate too. Her father had been an Oxford professor. So this was a very cultured family, but under sort of financial duress. But Paul and I got on famously. He left after a few years. He took a doctorate with one of the Leeds lecturers, Arthur Cready, supervising him. His doctorate was on Spenser's Faerie Queene. And once he gained his doctorate he, I think, went to lecture at Adelaide in Australia, and then he came back as an HMI. So that was Paul Heffner. And we worked splendidly for, I don't know precisely XXXXX, I think four, five years. And I kept in touch with him afterwards too. He used to act in the plays. He was wonderful in Chekhov, and that was a great help in launching my career at Bretton, having Paul as a friend.

Q: Mm. Can you remember how many students were in your classes in those early days, XXXXX?

A: Well I can't be accurate. I imagine there weren't very many more than a hundred or couple of hundred students all together. I mean, you'll know from the statistics what the numbers were. But that was what it was like in fifty-two, fifty-three. And then
of course the numbers gradually increased. But for the plays, I did in the first term Maxim Gorky's Lower Depths, in the music room, that's the Bow Room that's called. And of course, the numbers you're talking about, there would have been about fifteen in the play and there are pictures of it you can get hold of, can't you?

Q: Yes.

A: And well of course, that's fifteen, but it struck horror in the heart of the principal, because the music room is a very elegant room; they had an organ there in the eighteenth century. Bow Room, that's where the organ was. And he thought a) it was a desecration of an eighteenth century beauty to make it into a slum dwelling, in some obscure Russian city and then of course it had a communist author. And I'll just go on with this is not answering your question, but the principal got a bit concerned. And one of our governors was the Bishop of Wakefield, Roger – Bishop Roger. And in that lent term, I went on to produce in the room next to, before you get to the music room, that large room, Sartre's The Flies, and that was by a communist. But that was one of the plays in which Margo and Derek Andrews took part. Margo was Clytemnestra and Derek was (Crion?).

Q: Fantastic.

A: And there are pictures of that too somewhere. And of course, Mr. Friend went along to the Bishop and said 'You'd better have a word with that Rose; he's just produced two plays by communists.' And the Bishop had a word with me and I think we had a laugh together. And (…) really, I did something Christian eventually.

Q: I love that. Thinking about Sir Alec...

A: Thinking about what?

Q: Sir Alec. Sir Alec Clegg.

A: Oh Sir Alec.

Q: Yes. What were your first impressions of him, XXXX?

A: Oh, he was sharp, smiling, friendly. I think holding back his judgement what was going to happen to Bretton. I think he was amazed at the end. He gave, he gave people latitude and I think hope and confidence to do their own thing.

Q: Mm. This week XXXX, I've had a very lovely week. I have met up with Eric Woodward who was the School Museums Service officer in the West Riding. And I met up with Cxxxx legg, one of Alec's sons. And I've also met up with Nancy Smith yesterday who was working in the West Riding.

A: Who was that?

Q: Nancy. Nancy Smith.

A: Oh yes.
Q: Yes.

A: I mean, she's ancient, isn't she?

Q: I think she's, well mid-eighties I think.

A: Oh she's a youngster.

Q: Yes, completely. So I've had an absolutely lovely week talking to all of you actually. And yesterday...

A: Check on Nancy Smith. Give me some of her statistics.

Q: Gosh.

A: What did she do?

Q: Well she started off as a headteacher when she was twenty-seven. She was relatively young. And she was headteacher, and she was... her school was one that Alec used quite a lot in terms of examples of teaching.

A: (...) wonder where it was.

Q: Pardon?

A: (Hedge End?)

Q: Yes.

A: Yes.

Q: I must say at this point, like yourself, Nancy's as sharp as a tack. You know, she remembers absolutely everything, and she's got an awful lot of document... She remembers you; she was asking to send her regards.

A: Oh yes, and give them back.

Q: Yes I will. XXXX was as well, when I saw XXXX. I met him at the Yorkshire...

A: Who is that?

Q: XXXX, one of Alec's sons.

A: XXXX who?

Q: XXXX

A: XXXX?
Q: Yes. He was one of Alec's sons.

A: Oh yes.

Q: I met him at the Sculpture Park and again, he remembers you, he was obviously a child.

A: It sounds like a relative of Clegg.

Q: It is. It's his son.

A: Really?

Q: Yes. And he remembers you, and again was asking to send regards.

A: Oh yes. And Clegg's missus was really influential too, and of course a great friend of Margaret Dunn and Rae Milne and Diana Jordan.

Q: Yes, of course. Because Diana was XXXX godmother.

A: Oh really? Well you see, these are the ladies with power in the land.

Q: Yes, yes. Well interesting you say that, because when I've been speaking to everybody this week, you all do kind of, you know, there was a lot of ladies who seemed to be in Clegg's kind of world.

A: Oh yes. I can tell you a few more too.

Q: And they talked about he kind, well Nancy and I yesterday talked about Alec's style, and how he delivered kind of who he was. And Nancy was saying then about there was a lot of kind of influential ladies that he had in his circle.

A: Ah, yes. (laughter) I can tell you a few more. So...

Q: Okay.

A: You don't want that now do you?

Q: Yes, yes, that's fine.

A: Well, you know he kept sending them abroad do you know that?

Q: Yes. He approached Nancy I think to go to Tasmania for...

A: Oh yes, he sent them all over the world.

Q: Yes, he approached her to go for a year. And in the end she thought about it and she said 'I can't pack up my house for a year and I can't leave my school.' So she turned him down.
A: Oh well, some of them didn't turn him down. You see Rae Milne went to South India.

Q: Wow!

A: And Hudson, who was the Vice Principal of Lady Mabel, Kay Hudson, she was sent off to Nigeria.

Q: Goodness.

A: People did great work. But it was under the Clegg banner I think.

Q: Yes. I've been talking this week as well about I think, and people this week have agreed with me thinking this, in thinking that Alec was very good at appointing good staff. And I would include you in that.

A: Mm.

Q: He seemed to have this...

A: I'm not gonna argue.

Q: No, don't. He seemed to have this innate ability to really pull out very good people because in lots of things I've read about Alec in his papers at the archive, he's very self-effacing. He doesn't really take much credit. He's constantly saying 'Oh, this really isn't down to me; this is down to my staff, and down to my people.' Which I find really interesting.

A: Yes. Well I was amazed to be appointed, you see.

Q: Really?

A: Well I only had these two years and then I was doing all this directing of plays and that sort of thing.

Q: It seems to be... Alec, Alec was a young man really; he was relatively young in his job. And...

A: He'd come from Birmingham, hadn't he?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And he brought some of the staff from Birmingham with him.

Q: He did.

A: The chap who was doing the movement, was his name Peter Stone?

Q: Arthur. Arthur Stone?
A: Arthur Stone was it?
Q: Yes.

A: Then the art advisor I think came from Birmingham too.

Q: Basil Rocke. Did Basil...

A: Basil Rocke, that's it.

Q: Yes. Basil.

A: Yes, tall Basil, balding Basil.

Q: And then Basil married... I want to say Ruth. Was it Ruth?

A: I don't know that one. Or yeah, I've forgotten it.

Q: I know Basil, I think it was Ruth and they both became art advisors for the West Riding in the end.

A: Yes, well there you are.

Q: 'Cause when I was speaking to Nancy, Nancy was appointed by Alec when she was twenty-seven. And Eric was appointed in nineteen fifty-six when he was twenty-nine. And you were in your twenties, and Alec did seem to really be surrounding himself with, you know, fresh, new people.

A: Yes, I was thirty.

Q: Well I think Alec was forty-five... in nineteen forty-five he started and then in forty-nine he became chief and I think he was his mid thirties. Which is still very, very young for such a big job.

A: Indeed. And he, from what you're saying, and I know this is true, that he turned to appointing youngsters, comparatively youngsters, for these important jobs.

Q: Yes.

A: There we are.

Q: How interesting. It's been... I've had an absolutely fascinating week talking to you all about Alec and about all of your jobs really. Was Alec at Bretton very often, do you remember, XXXXX?

A: I'm not sure that he turned up to governors' meetings. I think he came and talked to staff occasionally. And I'm sure... I know he came to some of the plays. But he went off to America. You've got this noted somewhere haven't you?

Q: Yes.
A: And this was very important for him I think, because he felt empowered and empassioned by this experience to... he probably spoke about his visit to America to all the training colleges within the West Riding, I think. You probably know this; I don't know. But he certainly made an impression when he came to Bretton and spoke about that. It had been a revelation for him to see the different attitude towards life.

Q: Yes. I recall thinking about that. Alec once said... actually, it was at Basil Rocke's funeral. And Alec had spoken, and Alec said that this is... I'm paraphrasing now, but Alec had said that he thought he used to drive Basil Rocke crazy. Because years and years ago Basil had given Alec the flower paintings that the children had done. And Alec took them everywhere and constantly talked about them. And Basil would say to Alex 'We have better work now' you know, 'put those pictures to one side.' And Alec would say to him 'But that's how I started to learn. That was my hook' as it were.

A: Oh yes.

Q: And so Alec regardless of, you know, what anybody was saying, he would continue to take round these flower...

A: How interesting.

Q: Yes. Yes, completely. Yes, I asked Eric Woodward this week how Alec had influenced him. And Eric couldn't answer the question; he found it really difficult. So if I asked you, XXXXX, could you answer how... Did Alex influence you at all?

A: No, I don't think he did. I hadn't ever thought of that. I just think what he had done for Bretton was all very influential and inevitably that was part of that.

Q: Yes.

A: But I felt that the job he had done and was going on to do was pretty profound. And when in, I think, nineteen sixty-eight we had a new theatre in Winchester, I asked him to come down and open it. And he did and I think... well I know Margaret Dunn, Rae Milne came and stayed with us and Alec opened the theatre. Certainly that was a great occasion for Winchester.

Q: Yes. Again, when I've been talking to people who either worked in the West Riding or worked at Bretton, and then speaking to students who were at Bretton, like Margo and Derek, you all... this is a sweeping statement, but you all seem to remember Bretton and the West Riding as something quite special or something quite unique. Is that how you remember it, XXXXX?

A: Oh yes.

Q: Do you know why?

A: Yes, I think so. Education started there.
Q: Mm.
A: That's what it was.

Q: Goodness.
A: Working... the books and the biographies and the exams, it was the experience. And the growing.

Q: Do you think that we could have a Bretton today? Do you think it would develop in the same way, or do you think Bretton was really of its time?
A: Actually think it's of its time. The darkest Africa stuff over again. Not funny.

Q: Yeah. We've been talking for about thirty-five minutes, XXXXX. Are you okay, or do we need to kind of wrap up?
A: Did you say 'wrap up'?

Q: Yeah. Do we need to finish off?
A: It's a very warm day here, I don't know if it is where you are. If you want to wrap up... I'll go on for a little bit more.

Q: Thank you. Well do you have any questions you'd like to ask me, XXXXX?
A: Mm, no. I just want to read what you've written at the end of all this. I mean, not about this interview but the Clegg study.

Q: Yes. When it came to how you actually taught, XXXXX, were you given a free rein in what you wanted to do? Or did you have to kind of follow a guideline?
A: Yes. I'm gonna shift my position. It's got a bit too hot here.

Q: Okay.
A: I've got to get a bit of air. Now can you still hear me?

Q: Yes, I can. Excuse me.
A: The... I'd never done any really lecturing before I got up to Bretton. And nobody told me what to do and how to do it – I was supposed to be the boss. And it was a bit unnerving. You asked me how I taught, did you?

Q: Yes.
A: I gave all these lectures on literature, as I suppose I'd heard lectures. But they were, I think, a bit different, and the students were different. Of course, there were a number of mature students there and that made a big, big difference to both the
drama and the communication. Big, big difference. And there was a number of students who could speak in the Yorkshire dialect, whose oral English was hard to negotiate. And that made a difference too. So there was... and of course, these guys had been in the war some of them. That made a difference. So you got this mixture, and it made a difference to the youngsters too you see. And I think it was an accelerated maturity that was going on amongst staff and students simultaneously.

Q: Mm. Did you feel valued, XXXXX, working at Bretton?
A: Did I feel what?
Q: Valued.
A: Oh, without doubt. I mean I was astonished, you see. Astonished to be appointed and astonished to be given the freedom to do what I thought was best for students in organising... Nobody told me what to teach or what to put on. Daphne said at the end of one of the... oh end of the lent term 'We're going to do Dido and Aeneas' would I produce it? Never produced a musical in my life. We did (...) you see. And it was, you know, a fantastic experience. With old Robeson, have you heard of Robeson? And Gabler.
Q: Oh yes, yes.
A: You see, these were part of the college – Robeson and Frost, the gardeners; we were doing this opera that requires witches to go in and out of caves, so they carve up avenues among the great rhododendrons on the terrace wall for the witches to go in and out of. That doesn't happen in many places.
Q: No. If you... could you describe the culture at Bretton?
A: Could I what?
Q: The culture... what type was it, what type of culture existed there?
A: Bliss was it in that dawn to be alive; to be young was very heaven. It was growing fast, flourishing. And that staff were friends and the students were friends with them. That's the culture.
Q: Yes. Kind of going back to the start, XXXXX, 'cause you say that you were kind of astonished to be appointed, what attracted you to applying for the job at Bretton?
A: It was the drama. I'd spent these two years in London producing endless plays for the children. And that was a wonderful experience. I thought 'This is a college; I think I've got something to offer in this drama field.' It was the drama that took me up there I think.
Q: Yes. When I spoke with Margo and Derek and I asked them if they had memories of Sir Alec and if they had ever met him, and they both said that they didn't remember meeting him. They'd heard him speak at a lecture once. And so I asked
them then who was the figurehead for them at Bretton, and they said most definitely Friend, most definitely John Friend.

A: Oh yes. No, I think that would be true of most students you see. They wouldn't have known much about Alec at all.

Q: No. Which I find really interesting, because of course the things that, you know, I've been reading and looking at are about Sir Alec Clegg. And of course all these things that he did, and that he was the founder of Bretton. But to the students, he's a very... a kind of invisible figure.

A: That's true. But what they wouldn't know is that Friend would be looking over his shoulder all the time as to what he was doing was what Alec had appointed him to do I think. Well that's fair enough, isn't it?

Q: Yes.

A: Incidentally, XXXXX, at this... Margo and Derek's sixtieth anniversary, along comes Hillary Friend.

Q: Oh my goodness!

A: Have I told you that?

Q: No.

A: Hillary Friend, aged seventy-four.

Q: Oh my goodness. How was she?

A: Hillary is the youngest of the girls. I'm still in touch with Alison, who lives near Stratford on Avon. Hillary is seventy-four. She seemed fine. Looking like her father, and proportionally so. And when she was eleven in nineteen fifty-two, December, she acted as the prompt for our staff play. We did in that music room The Importance of Being Earnest, at the end of my first term. I don't know if you know that play by Oscar Wilde, but John Friend played Canon Chasuble, Daphne Bird played Miss Prism. And of course it was a great scream when they came together.

Q: Fantastic.

A: Do you know it?

Q: Not well, not very well. But yes, how fantastic that everybody just did their parts, XXXXX, is how it seems.

A: Yes. And they all... and Reg Hazel and Margaret Dunn and Rae Milne, Paul Heffner, Reg Hazel, they were all in it too.

Q: Oh my goodness.
A: There we are. That's Hillary Friend. So I'm in touch with Alison, and here comes Hillary who is in constant touch I think with the Andrews.

Q: How fantastic, how fantastic. Really, one of my last questions really, XXXXX, is the Bretton motto was that he who is not alight cannot fire others. Which seems...

A: I'm not hearing. What...?

Q: I said the motto of Bretton was he who is not alight cannot fire others.

A: Oh yes.

Q: Which is a really lovely sentiment. Did you feel that?

A: Oh yes, we all felt the flame. Yes, indeed.

Q: How lovely.

A: Well you know; you've spoken to people who are still touched.

Q: Yeah. I feel actually very lucky and quite privileged to be able to do what I'm doing. I'm at Bretton one day a week, and I go down there and work in the archives and I can walk around the Bretton campus and kind of... it's quite ghostly now, because of course it's empty.

A: Yes. I've heard from a chap called Tony Rigby. Have you come across Rigby?

Q: Yes, I have. Yes, yes.

A: And he's doing a bit of stuff, and he's putting in reminiscences which might possibly be of interest to you. Reminiscences of staff and students.

Q: I think he's looking after the web page, the web site.

A: And he appears there, I think he goes down there sometimes to have a chat.

Q: He does. I was lucky enough... excuse me... to be able to look round the mansion house last October. Wakefield Council gave me permission to have a look round and it was, it was absolutely fascinating. Because when you, you know when you read about somewhere and talk to people who were there it becomes very vivid in your head. And of course, the mansion house wasn't... it's a glorious building, but of course it wasn't as I had imagined it in my head, because I imagine it full of life and full of activity.

A: Oh yes.

Q: And now it's a very, very big, empty mansion ultimately. But I also was lucky enough to be shown round some of the nineteen sixty-four buildings that were built – the student hostels and the refectory as well, which were fascinating, absolutely fascinating to see.
A: They are. (Didn't like?) that building in front.

Q: No. But of course it's set to be redeveloped at some point as well, the whole...

A: Do you know what's happening?

Q: I don't, not hugely. I know that they're trying to redevelop the mansion house and there's a lot of talk obviously about trying to make it into...

A: Who owns the place?

Q: The council, Wakefield Council.

A: Do they own the ground, or do some noble lords still own the grounds?

Q: The grounds I think belong to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. But the actual mansion itself is owned by Wakefield Council. So, I mean it closed in two thousand and seven, so it's been empty for a long time. And I think as ever it's just lots of red tape and just trying to find the right thing to do with it. But I was actually saying to Eric that before I went in the mansion house, a lot of me didn't want anybody to touch it. I wanted it just to kind of stay as this bubble of Bretton, but actually if the mansion house isn't redeveloped, it will just start... it will just decay. And that's actually even worse I think.

A: Yes, that would be ghastly. I do hope they pick up their socks and get on with it.

Q: Yeah, me too, me too. XXXXX, thank you ever so much for talking to me today.

A: Not at all.

Q: Take very good care, and I'll be in touch with you.

A: Many thanks.

Q: Thank you XXXXX. Take care. Bye bye.

A: Bye bye.

(End of recording)
Q: Hello, XXXX.

A: Hello. I'd just gone to get this.

Q: Perfect. I did exactly the same thing. How are you?

A: I'm all right, thank you.

Q: Good. Thank you for talking to me today. It'll take us probably as long as you feel like talking, if I'm really honest. I've got some key, key questions to get us going, but really what I'm interested in is just your time at Bretton and your memories of Bretton, really, and if any of them... I suppose if you ever met Sir Alec or if you ever heard him speak, or anything like that, really. But it's really your time at Bretton I'm interested in.

A: Yeah.

Q: So if you wouldn't mind telling me, when did you go to Bretton, XXXX?

A: Nineteen sixty-five.

Q: Okay. And how long were you there for? Did you do...

A: Four years. Four years, yes. I was in the second intake that did the B.Ed.

Q: Oh, okay. And why did...

A: The year before me was the first year that they did the degree.

Q: Right.

A: So I was in the second intake for that. Although in those days, you signed up for the certificate course, which wasn't a degree; and then, if they thought you were good enough and you were matriculated, you could opt to do the... what's been actually just said: a bolt-on extra year, which was run by Leeds uni. And you got your degree.

Q: Wow. And why did you choose Bretton?

A: Ah, right. Okay. Well, what happened at my school... I mean, basically, I was... my school was pretty good in some ways, but it was pretty awful at giving things like careers advice. We were pretty much left to it. I remember the form teacher coming in and saying something like: 'It's university application time, boys. Here are the forms.' Right? So, and I thought to myself, 'I don't think I'm good enough to go to university.' And I thought I wanted to teach, anyhow. 'So I'll, I'll apply to teacher training colleges,' or colleges of education as they had recently been renamed. And then, when it was about a week before the deadline for university deadlines, my, my form tutor said something like, 'You haven't handed your university application form in.' I said, 'Well, no. I'm not going to university. I'm not, not bright enough,' or something like that. I can't remember what I said. He said, 'Get it filled in.' So I filled it
in very hastily. And I received a lot of rejections and... Although York said they would put me on... I think they... can't remember what they called it, but they would look at me favourably for the following year. Well, that... I didn't want to do that, because, you know, popular university: it filled up quickly. So I went ahead and did my... I'd already done my teacher training application. My English teacher was very much wanting, encouraging me to apply for Goldsmiths. But I didn't want to go to London. I just, in those days, you just wrote off and got a whole stack of prospectuses, you know. And the Bretton one, the Bretton one made it look pretty nice. And I was brought up in a, in a mill town just this side of Manchester. So the prospect of moving from a very frankly unattractive urban environment to an environment like that was very attractive. I also read... it might have just been from the prospectus itself, or I might have read somewhere else that it was, that Bretton Hall was very good on the creative side. And I thought, 'Oh...' And especially, you know, and I was very interested in drama. So I thought, 'Oh, right. That would suit me, because I'll be able to do English and drama.' And that was really, really what I wanted to do. So I mentioned this to my English teacher. He just kind of sniffed a bit and said, 'Oh, yes, I'm sure you'd be very happy there.'

(Laughter)

A: He said, 'Yes...' So he kind of gave me the blessings. And it was really just, like, the pictures and what they said about things like art and drama. Not so much the music side. So particularly the drama. So that's what made me go for Bretton. And when I saw the place... well, I remember, when I went for my interview, just walking down... I'd applied for a few other places as well. I just, when I was walking into the place, I just thought, 'Well, I want to come here. I don't want to go to Coventry or Goldsmiths or anywhere like that. I want to come somewhere nice.' That was basically it.

Q: That's really interesting, 'cause I was going to ask you what were your impressions of Bretton – and I think you've perfectly summed it up, really. 'Cause I, I go to the archive, I go to Bretton once a week, and I'm down in that environment. Which is probably very different in some ways, because there's no students there now, of course: it's empty. But I personally... it's a magical place. As you drive down, as you're in that environment, it's a completely different educational experience, I think.

A: Yeah, yeah. It was very much, very much its physical situation that, that was important for me; and it did enable me to get away from, as I said, a fairly... I was brought up in Stalybridge. I don't know if you know...

Q: Just heard of it.

A: No. It's just this side of Manchester. And, yeah, it was nice to get away from that kind of environment.

Q: Was there a typical type of student that went to Bretton when you were there?

A: Um...
A: Well, lots and lots of types. I mean, because, because of the, because of the music, art and drama, everybody was pretty... Not everybody. A lot of people were fairly artistically inclined in some way. Although they did have, you know, some of the people, like my, like my, possibly my... no, one of my best friends there did science. A lot of the people that went... The, the entry qualifications in those days – you only had to have five O Levels to get in on a certificate course, the three-year course. And a lot of the people that went were people like I thought I was: that is, not good enough to go to university. Maybe people who'd just got one A Level, or they'd got A Levels that weren't very good. They, they would accept people with fairly weak qualifications if, on interview, they showed some artistic spark. And I thought that was great. So, so if you want a type, that was a fairly, that was the type of person that was probably a student at Bretton, that possibly was, you know, more represented than in other institutions, I would say.

Q: Can you remember much about your interview?

A: My interview? Yes, I can remember a few bits of the interview. The first thing was, I had applied to do English main and drama subsidiary. And I found myself sitting in, sitting with this group of people that had all come to the interview for drama. And then John Hodgeson called me in, head... he was head of drama, and proceeded to... he wanted me to... He just called me in, and he wanted me to stand on a chair and do some public speech like I was at Hyde Park Corner or something like that. So I said, I said, 'Fine.' I said, 'I would have thought that I would have had the English interview first, as, you know, that's, like, my main subject.' He said, 'Oh...' He'd got me down as main drama.

Q: Okay.

A: So he said, 'Oh, I'm very sorry about this.' So he very quickly arranged for... I can't remember who it was. A woman from the English department, to interview me. And I don't remember anything about that. And then John, John Friend interviewed me.

Q: Oh, wow.

A: So I had two separate interviews. I don't... I remember, I remember just one thing about the John Friend interview: that he, he asked me to, to read something, and then he basically gave me an oral comprehension test on it. And I remember quite distinctly that I couldn't explain what the word eulogy meant. And he seemed very disappointed in that. I remember that. And I remember, after the interview, that my headteacher called me in. And he said, he said, 'We've had this, we've had this letter from Bretton Hall,' he said, 'and they're willing to accept you if you get one A Level.'

Q: Gosh.

A: 'And they have given a stipulation that you...' I can't remember how it was put, but that you, you pay some attention to your, to your speaking.

Q: Okay.
A: He said, 'So I have written back to them, telling them that a couple of months ago you had won the school prize for speech.'

(Laughter)

Q: Lovely.

A: They were... I don't know, I think they were talking about two different things, because the school prize for speech was speech-giving, and I think that John Friend was talking about, I don't know, the way I talk as I'm talking to you, you know. I don't know really what he meant, but he wasn't very clear.

Q: When... I've spoken to some students who were at Bretton in nineteen fifty-two, when it was really very infancy, and they used to call John Friend 'Poppa'.

A: Yeah, we called him that.

Q: Really?

A: Yeah.

Q: Crikey. Crikey. How many students were there? Can you remember?

A: Six hundred when I was there.

Q: Wow.

A: Six hundred.

Q: Goodness me. And where did you live when you were at Bretton?

A: The first year – I was rather disappointed with this – they put me out in lodgings in, in a, with a former miner and his wife, in the village of Kexbrough, which is near Darton.

Q: Okay.

A: And so... there were quite a few of us out there, and we used to get this rattly old bus that the college had chartered in. We used to have breakfast and then get this bus and go in. And we would arrive there just in time, sometimes, to slip into the dining room and get a, get a second breakfast – just basically toast, you know, and tea or something, you know. So, and then, then there were two buses going back in the evening. I can't remember what times they were, but one was fairly late: about ten-thirty. And the other one was something like, I don't know, eight-thirty or nine o'clock. So we basically, you know, those of us that were in the lodgings... Which the college provided, you know, the college found for us. They told us where we would be going. So we basically kind of spent our days at Bretton Hall, and our... and we just went back out there to sleep, or, if we got the early bus, we'd go down the pub, you know.
Q: Was there a typical day at Bretton? Did you have such a thing as a typical day?

A: What, in terms of timetable and so on, or what?

Q: I suppose. I suppose a little bit in terms of timetable, and maybe kind of the... yeah, I suppose activities, what you...

A: Yeah. Well, the, the, the timetable was divided up so that we did two days on our main subject, two days on education and one day on our subsidiary subject.

Q: Okay.

A: And the education bit might include going out to schools. That happened quite a lot, actually. It seemed to happen quite a lot. And then there was the teaching practice, of course. And... which was, you know, there right from year one. And I mean, there were gaps. I mean, I don't remember... Oh, and there were, there was a period of something called movement, educational movement.

Q: Yeah.

A: Which I loved. I thought that was great.

Q: Yeah.

A: A bit like creative PE, you know.

Q: Yeah.

A: Lovely. And I'd already done a bit of that kind of thing before, because, because I was interested in drama at school, and the school had sent me on a week's residential drama course where we did stuff like that. So, so... there were the occasional lectures, where they packed the whole year in to hear somebody talk about, about things like... Oh, what's that Margaret Mead book?

Q: Oh, crikey. I know exactly what you mean.

A: Margaret Mead was a big favourite of Caroline St. Leger, one of the education lecturers. So she talked about Margaret Mead's kind of stuff, which is basically anthropology. So there were, there were... It wasn't mainly lectures. It was mainly seminars that we were taught in. So, so the English cohort that I was in, there were just twenty-four of us, so we'd mainly be together.

Q: Okay.

A: There would be kind of lectures, but they were more, they were more seminar-ish. In the first year, there was quite a lot of going out into nature and, and finding stuff to come back to paint and play with, and, you know, that kind of thing. There was a fair bit of that in year one. That kind of tended to kind of, it became more formal, you know, in years two and three.
Q: Yeah.

A: But in the first year, there was a fair bit, in the two days that was classed as education, that was very exploratory in nature. And, you know, we all had to do some maths, so we... I remember, it was like they were encouraging us to play with these bricks and things the way that five-year-olds might, to kind of have the experience of discovering number and volume and things like that in the way a child would. So there was a lot of encouragement for us to try and enter the child's world.

Q: What kinds of work did you have to submit? Was it essay-based, or what type of...?

A: Yeah, yeah. It was, it was, it was... yeah, it was essays, definitely essays. I would still have some somewhere.

Q: Goodness.

A: Oh, yeah. And... but again, you know, I remember... but there were, there were also projects, which might involve a bit of performance or, or... Obviously that was true on the drama side. But on the English side, there might be, like, group presentations. And I remember... I remember, we'd been doing something on war poetry, so the little group of us that I was with – there were four of us – we wrote a kind of war protest song and performed that, right. You know, Dylan type thing. 'Don't think about what you're aiming at, just squeeze,' for example. Right? That kind of stuff. And I remember, again, a group project that I did on the theatre of the absurd with some friends. And we, we... Are you familiar at all with Eugène Ionesco?

Q: Not massively.

A: The French absurd playwright. Okay. He wrote a play called The Chairs, which was... it's a kind of lecture to, to these chairs, which are empty. Our group presentation partly consisted of filling the room with chairs, each one of which had a caption on it, yeah? Something written, placed on it. And, and I think we had, we... so we recreated the Chairs stage; and we were trying to be equally as absurd as Ionesco, so our chairs talked to the... We made a figure, which we stuck at the front. And, and the people that came to have a look at our work kind of had to climb over the chairs; and as they went from chair to chair, they, they could see what the chairs were saying. So that was part of our presentation. And I remember another part of our presentation was, we, we, we stood at the... we stood at the entrance of the dining room with a big box of Corn Flakes and a sign saying 'National Quorn Fake Week'. Quorn Fake. So, as people came in, we said, 'Please have some Quorn Fakes. It's Quorn.' So we did fun things of that nature. But yes, there were, there were essays, were presentations. Half a day a week we spent... I think it was my first year. Or second year; I'm not sure. The, the Gregory poet in residence one year, or for a couple of years, sorry, was Peter Redgrove – who is a damn fine poet. And so he came over from Leeds for... and he worked with us half a day a week. And the normal method of presentation for that was, we would write, he would, he would get the stuff printed up, and then people would, and then people would basically do a seminar on... You know like you would do a seminar if you were, you
know, studying a poet? You would talk about the poet's work. But we were doing exactly the same thing, except that the poetry or whatever it was – it wasn't just poetry – was written by us. Each in turn would do a presentation, you know. That was the way we worked. So again, you know, stressing that creativity side. Because they were pushing, you know, we were going to be English teachers and we, you know... The big thing at the time was about getting kids to write, and getting kids to talk, you know. So there was, so there was... And in fact, my, my B.Ed special study was about oracy. Which was quite ironical, bearing in mind what John Friend had said about conditions of going there.

Q: Yes, yes. If you had to describe the culture at Bretton, what would you say?

A: I'd say it was quite introspective, in that, you know, I was there in nineteen sixty-eight, when there were big student uprisings in places like Paris and throughout Europe. And that more or less went by the by, you know. I mean, we were just living in our own little world, really. Once, once, especially... I mean, I spent two years living in and two years living out, right. Especially when I was living in, it was, it was almost as though the outside world didn't exist. It was a little community to itself. So that, it strikes me, was very much... it was like a little village, really.

Q: Yeah. The people that I've spoken to, and I've spoken to some previous students and I've spoken to some staff who were there in the very early days as well, and all of you use the word community. All of you refer back to, that it really felt like a community.

A: Yes.

Q: And I wonder if that was partly geographical, because it's slightly out on a limb; but also, everything that you're talking about is, completely resonates with what other people talked about: that there was this kind of... I get the impression that... Well, in the fifties, because there were smaller student numbers as well, sometimes the whole college would be involved in a production.

A: Oh, right.

Q: So there was...

A: Yes, yes. I can remember... I mean, one of the things that happened in my second year was, we... I say we. There was a production of the Wakefield Cycle of Mystery Plays – the whole, the whole cycle.

Q: With Martial Rose.

A: So... Hmm?

Q: Martial Rose. Martial Rose – he was the head of drama very early on.

A: Oh, right, yes.

Q: And Martial was the guy who basically, I suppose, rewrote them.
A: Oh, right. Yes, I thought I knew the name, yes. Yes, that's right. So that... I'm not sure how many people were involved in that. But I mean, it was far more than all the drama students and all the English students. So it was, it was a huge cast. And that involved music as well. So it did bring together the different kinds of students and got us working in ways that we wouldn't normally do.

Q: Did you feel valued as a student?

A: Absolutely. Very much so. I mean, I mean, basically, yes. You mean by, by the staff?

Q: Yeah, I suppose by, by the other staff, by the way you were treated, by the whole experience, really.

A: Yes. The staff were very... on very good terms with... I mean, one of my tutors was, was standing for the council, right. So I, I was canvassing with him, right?

Q: Okay.

A: So that, that kind of relationship. My girlfriend's... she did art, but her personal tutor, we would very often babysit for them, you know. So it was that kind of relationship. I wasn't the big party person, but I occasionally went to parties thrown by the staff, the ones that lived in, you know. And they came to ours. Some of them did.

Q: Yeah.

A: Some of them.

Q: Again, that seems to be something that's a bit of a, a story of Bretton as well. From the very early days, there seem to be very good relationships with students and staff. And like you say, not all members of staff and not all students.

A: No, no.

Q: But that that did happen. It's really interesting.

A: Yeah. And... oh, there was something else as well. I... you'll realise why I'm not going to go into details when I say it. But there was... there was a big life problem for me and someone else. And we were able to go to... he was the, he was the psychology lecturer in the education department. And he, he was able to sit down and basically counsel us and advise us. I mean, there wasn't a formal counselling service, but there were people available that you could go to in that... And he was very, very helpful. He was really helpful. Joe Brel, who was head of education, was fantastic. And I mean, I kept up a relationship with Joe for some years after I'd left. I used to go back and visit him, in his house, you know. He used to hold seminars for the B.Ed students in his house, with his young daughter about sometimes. So that was, it was kind of quite homely in that respect. Yes, Maggie Jowett, one of the, one of the English lecturers – she lived in York. And I remember going to visit her at her
house. Flat, sorry. Which was absolutely beautiful. She was a bit of a strange character. But, you know, she was very happy to invite me and this group of other students in. You know, we'd arranged it. You know, we didn't just, didn't just knock on the door.

Q: Yes. It's interesting that...

A: We said we were going to York, you know, for the day, you know. She said, 'Oh, come and see me,' you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Which, again, just seems to be this kind of trait that existed at Bretton. Of course, Sir Alec also looked after the schools in the West Riding. And part of my question in asking you about feeling valued is that he really valued the children. And I'm getting the impression that, if you went to Bretton, kind of you were valued, in that, you know, you would be teaching these children, and this sense of value passing up and down.

A: I think that was very much the culture. That was very much what their intention was.

Q: Yeah, I think that comes, it comes through. Because of course, we're talking about Bretton. We're not talking about the schools per se. But I get the impression that, you know, you were the people who would be teaching the children; and that, so if you felt valued and if you felt that you were important, I think, that that actually would filter down to the classroom.

A: I think that's actually very much, that was the ethos, yes.

Q: Yeah, yeah, that seems to come through. Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg?

A: No.

Q: Did you ever...

A: No.

Q: Go on.

A: He did come... I didn't meet him personally. He did come to give a talk once. And he didn't talk for long, because he'd got... oh, who was it? He'd got hold of somebody else, who was very well up in the education field. So he talked and then... I can't even remember who it was. And then the other guy talked. But I never spoke to him personally. And I can't remember what he said when he talked to us.

Q: No. Again, it's quite interesting, 'cause Sir Alec founded Bretton Hall. And again, people I've spoken to, students I've spoken to, this huge alumni that you are, none of you ever really met him. Which, again, I find really interesting. Now, when I spoke to some of the students from the early fifties, they said that the person that they kind of saw as I suppose the figurehead of the college was John Friend.
A: Oh, yeah.

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah. Sorry.

Q: Yeah. Which again, because I suppose my eyes are coming from very much Sir Alec eyes; but actually, on the ground, week to week, month to month, the person that, that was in charge of course was John Friend.

A: It was... yes, it was his... I mean, it's definitely John Friend. And his manner was everything that we've just been talking about, you know.

Q: Yeah, yeah. Did you have... I suppose you've said you had more things like seminars than lectures. Did you have things like tutorials, like we would have today?

A: Yes, yes, definitely, yes. Sorry, I forgot that. Yes.

Q: That's okay. And did... Go on.

A: Yeah. Definitely tutorials. We all had a personal tutor, who was also, was from the education department. We would have a weekly tutorial, I think. And especially in the English department, because, for example, you know, they were encouraging us all to write, some of the tutorials would be quite long ones, looking at writing development on a one-to-one.

Q: Okay.

A: Yeah.

Q: And was the college magazine up and running still when you were there?

A: There wasn't a college magazine, but some of us put together a creative writing magazine, which I contributed to. Sorry, I say... I was not a major player in that. It was people like Roger Hutchinson and... Anyway, there was, there were a few little magazines produced during my time there of that nature. But not a general magazine, no.

Q: Yeah, okay. I suppose this is a question I should ask a bit later on in a way, but do you... what's your overriding memories of Bretton? If you could try and sum it up, how do you reflect on it?

(Pause)

A: Hmm. If I were to kind of think about... yeah. Right, okay. Being with like-minded people, often working in groups, very intensively, in our own rooms. And the division between work and play, as it were, was very loose. So, so social gatherings would be, would often turn out to be something artistic or something like that. There was always, always some kind of performance going on, whether it was musical or dramatic. And I was, I did a number of the... So the drama students had to do things
like, they had to produce plays as part of their course. But there would be, there
would be other little experimental dramas that people decided just to have a go at.
So a lot, a lot, a lot, a lot of involvement in that kind of thing. That's it, really.

Q: How did Bretton influence you? Did it influence you? Did it influence who you are?

A: It must have influenced me. I mean, how could it not? How it influenced me, I
don't really know. I mean, it certainly influenced... I mean, I became a teacher when I
left, and it definitely influenced the way I taught. I mean, there's no doubt about that. I
think, I think, as a teacher, I had to learn, really, how to be a good teacher – which I
eventually became, but I wasn't when I started.

Q: I don't think any of us are.

A: So... I'm sorry, I can't think what else to say there.

Q: That's okay. Maybe this is same type of question, but Bretton seems to have been
a special place, if I can use that word. The people that I speak to, it's fondly
remembered. You, you know, it's kind of held quite tenderly, I suppose. Why do you
think it was so special, or why is it remembered in such a special way?

A: I would... I mean, I could put a similar question to you. I mean, I don't know where
you were educated at that kind of age. But the chances are that you, that it
influenced you quite strongly. I think that higher education does make a big impact
on people. It change... it changes people. I mean, my, my step-son is just two years
out of university; and between him going and leaving, he was a very, very changed
person. So... some of the answer about, about impact and that kind of thing goes
back to what I was talking about before, about... I mean, I used the word intensity,
didn't I? Which I think was, was, was, was actually a part of it. I suppose, I suppose
especially, you know, in my twenties, I was... I suppose I was a fairly intense person.
Which I'm not now, really. By the way, if I seem to be moving, it's because it's a
rocking chair.

Q: That's okay.

A: Uh... What was the question again? Sorry, I drifted away there.

Q: I got lost in that as well, actually.

A: It was something about, about, about impact and influence.

(Pause)

Q: About... I suppose 'cause you were saying about... And I agree. I think when you
first go to higher education... 'Cause I went to an art college for two years, then I did
my, my undergrad, then I did my teaching course. My two years at art school, at art
college are still with me, are still... And I went there over twenty years ago. And then
my teacher training as well is still very much with me. And I think you're right. It's
partly to do with your age and that time of your life and the people that you're
meeting. The people I speak to that went to Bretton, though – it seems just that little bit extra. And I suppose I'm trying to figure out, is Bretton of its time?

A: Right. I think one of the things that... Right. Something... I know that when I, when I met my old school friends, that had gone to different kind of institutions, and we talk about the way, you know, our experience, our experiences... I'm talking also about after I'd left and talking to other people. And, and it became very clear to me that, that Bretton Hall's way of managing my learning was to push me in the general direction and tell me to explore it, rather than force-feed it to me.

Q: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

A: And I got the impression from people I talked to that they were more force-fed. So I think that... And I will say this: that certainly, you know... I mean, I spent... how long? I spent, I spent fifteen years in schools and then I moved into further education. And certainly the ethos in further education – this would be during the nineteen eighties and nineteen nineties – was very much about that kind of: teach people how to learn; don't teach people what they have to learn. Right? So, so that, that meant a lot to me, in that that's the way I was taught myself at Bretton. Wasn't the way I was taught at school.

Q: No.

A: Different.

Q: No. That's fascinating. 'Cause I've actually, I've got written down here: 'Sir Alec talked about learning through experience and then going to books, to enjoy discoveries for oneself.' And as a note to myself, I've kind of put: 'Was that ethos at Bretton?' And I think it clearly was. I think that sense of not just that rote learning that I think we went through at school, but that sense of discovery, that sense of experience.

A: Yes, yes, that's right. I'm not sure about this, but did he write the introduction or something to a book by Margaret Langdon called Let the Children Write?

Q: Yes, I think you might be right, yeah, yeah.

A: Might have. But Let the Children Write was, was very much about creativity and exploration by writing, rather than learning the mechanics of writing. And I think that he must have, he must obviously have approved of her. It was on our reading list, so...

Q: Yeah. He wrote a book himself in the sixties called The Excitement of Writing.

A: Oh, yes. Yes, I read that, yes.

Q: Yeah. Which again, I think from that, even that stage, you can see that it is exactly what you've just said. It's not necessarily the mechanics of writing. It's about writing as a form of expression, of engagement with children, of kind of maybe
finding where they are as well. And it's a lovely book. It's a really, really lovely book. Did you teach in...

A: I'll have to have a look at that.

Q: Yeah, do. Did you teach in the West Riding?

A: I did, yes.

Q: Whereabouts?

A: My first three years were in the West Riding. Unfortunately, it wasn't in... it was in a little what I'd call dark corner of the West Riding, that hadn't really been Alec Clegged. It was at Cudworth Secondary Modern School.

Q: Okay.

A: Which was just a few miles away from Grimethorpe, which was a great kind of... And Hemsworth. Which were great Alec Clegg-y kind of institutions. And I'd dearly have loved to have worked in one of those two kind of places. But as it was, I got a job in a place that was rather a bit of a throwback.

Q: And I suppose as well your teaching career started on that cusp of the reorganisation of the counties. Because of course, in seventy-four the West Riding was reorganised, for want of a better word, and we were, it was divided up as well. And then of course, Sir Alec, he retired in seventy-four, coincidentally. So there's a real watershed, I suppose. And then of course we get into the eighties and a whole different, a whole different world, really, as we move on to teaching. Do you ever go back to Bretton?

A: Yes. Well, I told you that I, for some time I kept up a, a kind of friendship with Joe Breel. I would go back to him, just would call in on him.

Q: Yeah.

A: I used... for, for, for five... six years, sorry, I lived in Barnsley, so it was quite close. And I, and I knew, I still knew a few people that were there. So I would go, just socially, including to some of the plays and that kind of thing. So that was in the early days. And then, the only time I... and then... I mean, I never lived very far away, really. First of all I lived in Barnsley, then I lived in Leeds, and then I went to live in Denby Dale, which is just a stone's throw from... You know where that is?

Q: Yeah.

A: I lived there for quite a while. And so when the Sculpture Park opened, I was going there right from the start. And took my kids, and they loved it. It was our favourite place to go, really.

Q: Yeah. Again, when I've spoken to mainly students that went to Bretton, a lot of you go back. Some of you that, you know, are now far-flung corners of the world
sometimes – it's a bit like a pilgrimage. They, they go back, to just be in this environment again. And again, that, you know, makes me think about, is this to do with that special time of your life? But also, of course, Bretton closed officially in two thousand and seven. And as you say, the Sculpture Park wraps around it now. And so I wonder if it's, if people feel they maybe can go back, in a different way than if it was still open.

A: I don't know about that. I don't know.

Q: Okay. Those are kind of all my questions, as such, really, XXXXX. Is there anything else that you would, that you remember or I suppose you'd like to add?

(Pause)

A: You were talking about how, how it's treated and valued. And I was talking about relationship with some of the, the staff. Well, I'm still in touch with one of them. He's... You know, only by email, I might add. I mean, he's, he's something like eighty-six now.

Q: Can I ask who it is?

A: John Dixon.

Q: Oh, somebody mentioned John Dixon. Because I've been interviewing some very elderly...

A: Oh, if you can get hold of John Dixon, do. John Dixon was very, he was a great guy. And he was, he wrote, he wrote a book which was very influential. Sorry, he wrote some English textbooks, and he... I'm getting mixed up now. That were quite influential in English teaching in the, in the sixties and seventies, really. But, and he was also quite a leading figure in NATE, the National Association for Teachers of English. So he, he was... so he... yeah, he was, he was, he was a national figure, who worked at Bretton, in the field of English teaching. So he would possibly have interesting things to say.

Q: It's fascinating. Last week, I was lucky enough to speak to Martial Rose, who's ninety-four.

A: How old?

Q: Ninety-four.

A: Oh, right, okay.

Q: And of course, that again... I mean, it's fascinating. It's absolutely fascinating. And I got to speak to a guy called Eric Woodward. And Eric is eighty-eight. But Eric ran the Schools Museum Service, which sometimes crossed over.

A: Yeah.
Q: But apart from... there's quite an illustrious Bretton alumni. All of you, you know... the majority of you went into teaching or went into what you were kind of, I suppose, trained to do. And the same with the staff. I mean, there's... it's incredibly impressive, I've got to be honest. All the people I've spoken to, that you all... I suppose I see you all as little satellites of Bretton. You were kind of trained to do these things, and you went and you did them, really.

A: Yeah, I think that's right, yeah.

Q: Yeah. Thank you for talking to me, XXXXX.

A: Okay.

Q: It's been lovely to hear from you. What I do now is, I transcribe what we've said – and I'll send it to you so you know what we've been saying. And if you're happy with it, and if then there's bits that I'd like to use, I will let you know.

A: Yeah.

Q: If I'd like to quote you in any way. And that will be... it's kind of over the next kind of months to come, really. That won't be immediately. But I'll get that to you. That's the next thing that I'll send to you.

A: So what is the title of your work?

Q: It's a huge title, really. What I'm looking at, ultimately, I'm trying to analyse Sir Alec Clegg's leadership. And Sir Alec Clegg was the founder of Bretton. And I go to Bretton every week, 'cause the National Arts Education Archive is based there.

A: Yeah.

Q: And as I started to look through all of the archive from Alec, there's a huge amount about schools and about children, but there isn't that much about Bretton. Not very much at all, either from Alec's perspective or from Bretton as a college. And I literally went for a walk round the campus one day, and I just thought, 'I think I'm missing a trick here; because there's this huge campus here, that has a story to tell, and I have Alec; and there's nothing that joined up about Alec and Bretton, either.' So that's what I wanted to explore, really. Whether, whether Alec had any type of presence at Bretton. Was he more a behind-the-scenes man? You know, how did, how did his influence, if any, how did that come through? Because... Go on.

A: I was just about to say, I mean, I mean, presumably he either chose or had a part in choosing John Friend. And John Friend's leadership very much made it what it was. So if he'd chosen somebody different, then, then it would have been a different place. And then I assume he also had a hand in choosing Dr. Davies as well, you know.

Q: It's very interesting. Sir Alec was... he seems to have this innate ability to have chosen staff very well, to have chosen staff that he must have felt could carry out what he wanted to be carried out; and then that was filtered down to the students as
well. And I would put John Friend definitely in that category. And Sir Alec did interview him and did appoint him. Of what I've read about John Friend, his previous post to Bretton – this is kind of going back to nineteen forty-nine – wouldn't, wouldn't free him up quickly to start Bretton. So John Friend arrived weeks before the first students did at Bretton, and John tried to kind of find his feet and kind of cultivate Bretton. But I think you're spot on: John Friend cultivated an awful lot of Bretton, but he was selected by Sir Alec. And it's those things that really interest me. Thank you, XXXXX. I've really enjoyed it.

A: Good luck with the rest of your work on that. That'll be...

Q: Thank you so much.

A: …interesting to see, see the publication, if it ever gets to that stage.


A: Okay.

Q: Take care, XXXXX.

A: Okay, bye.

Q: Bye-bye.

A: Bye.

(End of recording)
Q: Okay. Do you mind just saying for me, XXXXX, what your name is and when you worked in the West Riding?

A: Yeah, it's XXXX. And I was appointed in May nineteen fifty-six, and I was working for the West Riding until nineteen seventy-four, when local government reorganisation came along and the West Riding disappeared. And then I continued in the same job, but it was run by Wakefield Education Authority, shared by seven of the new authorities.

Q: Oh, I never realised that. That must have been very different.

A: It was, because each authority was represented on a committee by an elected member from that authority, and also an officer from the authority. And each authority was contributing to the finances of the service, the School Museum Service. And each authority wanted to ensure it received its fair use of the service. And how do you measure that? It was... tell each authority how many boxes of things they borrowed in a month or a term or a year. But it didn't tell you anything about how well they were used, those things. So it gave you quantity, but nothing about quality of education.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And so I tried to ensure that that was covered by... as I had been doing in the West Riding, involved in courses at Woolley Hall, where the School Museum Service things were used and exhibited. And I gave talks there. And also by visiting schools. I was probably, in a week, I was probably three days in a week out in schools.

Q: Wow! I don't think I realised it was that much. I think Alec was out quite a lot in schools as well.

A: One day a week I think he had, I'm sure he was out in schools.

Q: Do you think that was something that... Did Alec encourage you all? Or was that mainly your particular role?

A: Well that was my... expected of the advisory staff. And the majority of advisors spent virtually all their time in schools. Yes.

Q: Yes. Your job must have... you had the same job, but it must have changed hugely.

A: What, after seventy-four?

Q: Yes.

A: It did in one respect, in that there was a committee that had to be, you know, answered to. Whereas previously my... the service came under the Assistant Education Officer for Primary Education. That was purely for administrative purposes. And after reorganisation, there was so much money allocated to the School Museum Service. Whereas before, it was... the service was financed from, I
think it came from secondary education. But I was never given a particular sum of money that I was expected to work within.

Q: No. I was listening to a talk you gave in nineteen ninety to some PGCE students and textile students about some of your work. And there’s something you said which I loved completely, but I think it says a lot about the loyalty about the staff, because you said in seventy-four the local government reorganisation, but you’d heard it referred to as the local government disorganisation, which a lot of the West Riding people would feel. And knew one teacher, Mary Clarkson, who’d been in the West Riding and her school had gone into Doncaster, and she insisted upon using West Riding paper right up to nineteen seventy-nine, when she retired. She would just not recognise the West Riding had disappeared; she felt so loyal to it. And she kept on using West Riding paper to her retirement day. I loved that. For me, that says so much about what, how she valued the West Riding. And even after the reorganisation, or disorganisation, which I also really like, that she continued to use the paper. And I just think that says something about the staff who worked there, and also the changes that took place for lots of people must have been, I mean, very difficult to get their head round. Because I think the things that I’ve read about Alec, and it’s mainly read about him so far, and you will know this better than I, he seems such a large figure within the West Riding. And he seemed to... there seems to be a sense of continuity that he brought – I don’t know if that’s right or not but it...

A: Yes.

Q: … in what he did. And then it seem... when you read about it, it’s very different, but it seems like it just overnight went. By the time we got to I think April...

A: Well he retired, don't forget, in nineteen seventy-four.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: So, as a figurehead, as a leader, he was no longer there.

Q: Was he ever around? Did he, I suppose his role would be very different. Well he wouldn't have a role in that sense. But did he still visit places or...? Was he ever invited to take part in anything?

A: Do you mean after seventy-four?

Q: Yes.

A: His health declined very quickly after seventy-four.

Q: Yes.

A: First signs of Parkinson’s disease appeared.

Q: Okay. ’Caus e it does... and that maybe explains some things as well, because when you do read about it, it does read as if he left, and a door was closed. And it must have felt so different to work...
A: Well that happens. I mean, when you retire you can't continue it... I mean you'd be accused of interfering, wouldn't you? You kept coming back as it were, when you retired. And he had retired as well, don't forget.

Q: I think you're right. I think, I think our attitude to retirement is different. Which is a slight tangent. I think we need to look at retirement differently, because there's so much knowledge that people carry with them, and it's as if we kind of go 'Oh go and enjoy your retirement; put your feet up.' But the knowledge is still there. And I think, driving over this morning, I heard on the radio about Tristram Hunt, who's the Shadow Education Secretary, on about the mistakes Labour made in the recent election. And he said how he thought that we should look at what he was calling 'upper secondary school', ages fourteen to nineteen year old. And I thought 'You're describing the middle school system. You're describing something that we know how to do.' And that then makes me think all of these people that have knowledge, it's as if a door is closed and that doesn't feel right to me really. Which is a slight tangent, but that's kind of where it is. So your role was in the School Museum Service, and did you, were you responsible for the department?

A: Of the School Museum Service?

Q: Yes.

A: Yes. I was responsible for its administration, its running and its development.

Q: And you were twenty-nine?

A: Yes, when I started.

Q: Which is very young.

A: Yes, it was. And don't forget Alec Clegg was very young when he became an education officer.

Q: It is. I actually, I came across a photograph of Alec. All the photographs I've mainly found of Alec is of an older man.

A: Yes.

Q: And I found this image of him at the archive, which I think is before he maybe came to the West Riding. And it made me look at him differently again. And I wondered if...

A: Was that when he was teaching (...)?

Q: Yes. Because I'd never seen a picture of him as a young man. And it sounds really naïve and quite silly.
A: Yes he was... he became Education Officer in nineteen forty-five. He began his career as a teacher in nineteen thirty-seven; at the age of thirty-five was the youngest Education Officer in the country.

Q: ... in the country. Do you think in some ways...

A: You see a lot is... in that introduction to the...

Q: Oh yes, in His Own Words.

A: ... His Own Words.

Q: Yes, I have a copy here.

A: There's a lot compressed in that. You see between nineteen forty-five and seventy-four, he became an influential... most influential speaker, not only in the UK, but also abroad. He was frequently seen on television. Spoke on the radio, and regularly addressed national conferences of education and teachers.

Q: Do you think because of his young age when he started, he... I don't know what the word is... but he was keen to employ other young people? Or whether he thought...

A: I think he just identified himself with younger people. Yeah.

Q: Yes.

A: Mind you, I was appointed in nineteen fifty-three... fifty-six rather, so how old was he then? He was born in nineteen o' nine... fifty-six... My maths are slow.

Q: Would he be about forty-seven?

A: Forty-seven.

Q: It's not terribly old.

A: No. Most of my colleagues in the, other advisors and inspectors were ten years or more older than me, you see. So I...

Q: Yes. You'd put something here again, in that same interview. You talked about the job had been advertised at the West Riding and it was a much broader than one subject, and that appealed to you. And you decided to apply, and you were very lucky, because you were twenty-nine, and you said 'I found most of my colleagues seemed much older. They were of another generation.' And so I wonder then, you and Alec probably seemed a similar generation (...).

A: A similar experience.

Q: Yes, yeah.
A: Of being appointed when young.

Q: Yes. And quite big jobs, I think, from my eyes looking at what you did, and what Alec did in different ways. Big, responsible jobs. Because this was in the... for Alec, he started in forty-five, but when you started as well, we were still in that post-war...

A: Yeah, I think the biggest authority regarding numbers of schools and teachers would be ILEA wouldn't it in nineteen fifty?

Q: Yes, I think you're right.

A: And then I think the next biggest would be Lancashire. And then the West Riding.

Q: Yes. Which is huge. I mean, those are big...

A: In the West Riding there were something like, I'm not sure, about one thousand two hundred schools.

Q: Yeah, I think you're right.

A: I think a lot of his philosophy is expressed in that, those lines hung on the sitting-room wall that he often quotes, 'If thou of fortune be bereft.' The difference between knowledge and wisdom. And how education can test knowledge by examinations, but it doesn't assess wisdom in the same... it can't in the same way. Now, that thing I gave you, the story of Fred, that expresses again Sir Alec's sympathy with that philosophy of learning through experience.

Q: I sometimes think when I read that... and again, the more I've read, I sometimes think if that's how Alec kind of conducted himself actually. Because he, I know, and again from I've listened to you speak before, he used quotes, quotations to kind of make his point. And he was using kind of examples of wisdom in a way, to make his point. And I wonder if that, if that “If thou of fortune” also is maybe how he conducted himself. He had a very... there was a lot of administration; his job largely, but he wasn't just administrator. How he did that, I think he did that with a lot of wisdom, actually. I think he did that with a lot of compassion, is what comes through to me. And so I think those four little lines for me have started to, in some ways, be a bit about Alec himself.

A: There were the leadership... let's just say he was trying to examine what leadership means. It's in a way setting an example, isn't it?

Q: Mmm hmm.

A: That others are impressed by and respect.

Q: Yes. I would agree with that.

A: And then it also means allowing the people you're leading to give of their best.

Q: Yes.
A: And encouraging those who you have on your staff, wanting to give of their best. That might mean recognises something that you didn't realise, that was there in that member of staff.

Q: I agree with that, because again, when I was... I listened to this, the interview you gave in nineteen ninety, I think it was the first interview you gave after you'd retired as well. And you say 'I remember going to Alec Clegg and saying “Until we are re-housed, we are hypocrites. We've been asked to set up a service which will set standards for schools, and yet we house this service in a dump.” And Alec agreed.' And again, that for me is about, as a member of that team, that staff, you had the room to see what actually was happening...

A: Well again, it's searching for truth.

Q: Yes.

A: You see, the thing that bothered me, when I was appointed I had no idea how the service was housed.

Q: And wasn't it...

A: It was in a slum street, behind County Hall.

Q: And the post had been empty for two years, hadn't it?

A: Yeah. And it had become run down, and it wasn't respected. Even application forms weren't dealt with immediately. When the clerk who was there said that he kept the applications until there were sufficient to deal with.

Q: Goodness.

A: That's an awful way of dealing with things. So it was tough.

Q: Yes, yes, it sounds it actually when I've read about it. Do you think that... 'cause I think what would Alec have thought of that? What would Alec think that there was a post vacant for two years, and that part of his authority wasn't really functioning? And in my head, I've thought would he, would some of him be thinking... would some of him be thinking because there was maybe no value put on it at the time as much as it should have been, was it kind of there and he was here, and he was constantly aware of it? Would he be frustrated at it? I don't think, I don't see him as the type of man that would just kind of block it out and wish that it would go away. But I have thought what would Alec have thought of it at the time, and I don't know.

A: I don't know of course who applied, other than the people I happened to meet on the day I was interviewed.

Q: Yes. Who did interview you, XXXXX?
A: Well the first interview was Sir Alec... well he wasn't a Sir then, Alec Clegg. And the senior art advisor, Basil Rocke.

Q: Oh was it?

A: Those two interviewed me initially.

Q: What was your first impressions?

A: Well, I took with me children's work that I had from my experience as a teacher in a secondary boys' school in Liverpool and also work that was done in... in my first year I worked in the infant and junior school on the ground floor. And the secondary modern school on the first floor of the same building. So that gave me the experience of seeing what happened to children going from one school to another. And as you will know, often children of eleven, twelve, thirteen start thinking that they can't or 'I can't draw.' They have decided that art isn't for them in a practical way. So there was that experience. And I described the work I'd been doing in the schools. In the second interview, when I was shortlisted, because by the education committee... whether it was the full education committee I wouldn't have thought so, but certainly the chairman of the education committee was there, and Alec Clegg. And there was the... I can't remember the name of the people. But there were about six people who interviewed me on the shortlisted interview.

Q: Wow. That's quite a big panel of people.

A: Yeah.

Q: But then I suppose if the post had been vacant for two years, and they were going to appoint, they had to appoint the right person. You must have stood out, because for it to be...

A: Yeah, I don't know. You never really know, because you haven't heard the other people interviewed have you? I only met one of them afterwards and that was, he was the head of a primary school. And he'd been a local historian really. And his experience was in history, rather than the arts.

Q: Mm. I've read it as well, and this comes... sometimes not even explicitly, more implicitly, that Alec selected staff very well. He chose staff that he, he knew what potentially they could contribute and what knowledge they would bring to it. And so he surrounded himself with very well selected people, and sometimes... and I read again, about Alec again, sometimes explicitly and sometimes implicitly, has kind of said you know 'This isn't all about me. You know, there's some really great people.' And Alec says how he kept learning, and he learned from his staff. And I think that comes back to that leadership question and trying to define leadership. That he never, he never seems to come across as the kind of know-it-all. He seems to kind of come across as saying 'What are my staff doing? What can I take from them?' And has enough about him as a man and a person to kind of say 'That, I never thought of that. That's a really good idea.' Let me see – it should be okay, but let me check. Thank you. (pause) Yeah, we're still ticking over. Thank you, though.
A: Okay. These two books... they are about...

Q: Yes.

A: They give a lot of information about... they were produced, they weren't... they were put together from different people – contributions. And they will answer some of the questions that you posed in that paper you gave me. But then the other one, the key words 'environment, staff, students, sculpture and climate' a lot of those are in that, aren't they?

Q: Yes.

A: In the... With, even with those headings.

Q: Yes. I never thought of it like that actually.

(pause)

A: I mean, I'll give you some references from that. On the environment, His Own Words, page twenty-one, the school environment.

Q: Yes. Alec seemed to quote Edward Thring quite a lot in things that I've read.

(pause)

Q: When Alec used quotations, XXXXX, I sometimes, I think of him sometimes a bit like a parablist; it's like he used parables to describe something or to make a point.

A: Yeah. And then in education, the nineteen fifty-four to six reform, page one hundred and thirty-eight. Not in that, in the...

Q: That one, okay.

A: That one, those two. And the final ten years, page fifty-nine again dealing with the environment.

Q: Thank you. Again, when I heard you talk, and I'd heard this somewhere else as well, but you talked about the caretakers.

A: Yes. Ernest Peet.

Q: Yeah, and you talked about 'A training centre for school caretakers. Alec Clegg was very, very keen on schools being in good condition, well cared for, and that concern was expressed by the supervisor of school caretakers running courses on the care of schools.' And that, for me again, seems quite important about how Alec led, how he directed his authority, that even the, how the school looked, to how the school felt, was as much, again maybe implicit about learning.

A: You know where that came from? His father.
Q: Samuel.

A: Yeah. Because his father, Alec Clegg says somewhere that he wouldn't let... his father wouldn't let anything... he wanted everything that came into the school to be beautiful.

Q: Yes, yeah. Which reminds me of John Ruskin when Ruskin talks about only kind of have things in your home that make, that you feel are beautiful and enliven your spirits.

A: And also, don't forget, he was, he was at Bootham School in York – a Quaker school. And I think a lot of his values would have come from his experiences as a boy at that school.

Q: Yes. It was a Quaker school – it still is, isn't it, I think, Bootham?

A: Yes, it is.

Q: Because I remember reading as well that Alec had said once that he felt he must have been kind of a real, and I'm paraphrasing now, but a bit of like a real headache to his father. Because Alec wasn't really applying himself as a young man, and that he'd got to what, a stage in his school where he'd had a very pretty geography teacher, Alec, and he'd kind of paid attention. And then his kind of grade had improved. And again I love that little... I think, I think there must have been a great humour to Alec, which he expressed through his work. Again, I came across, I came across this, that Alec had written in nineteen sixty-five, to Basil.

(pause)

A: Yes, I don't know (…).

Q: No, I don't know what the context is. But I love the fact... and there's a few things like that, that I've come across, that there's a real sense of humour. There is a real... that he's pulling Basil's leg about something. And it sounds to me like Basil's maybe got agitated or slightly cross, and so Alec's kind of, you know, been really pulling his leg. And that for me, for a man in his position, and in nineteen sixty-five I think that is, that he, that he still...

A: Yes, May sixty-five.

Q: ... he's still kind of being him. He's bringing to the job a sense of humour. He doesn't... he must have had so much on his shoulders, but to still have those senses of humour. And again, this could be read in a different way, this one. And I don't know who Mrs. Saltmarsh was. That one's from nineteen seventy-one.

(pause)

Q: And again, I don't know whether I... you could read that two ways, couldn't you? You could read that, that he is being sincere. And another little bit of me thinks 'Is it Alec being slightly tongue in cheek by that last sentence?' And I just, I like that, that...
that's nineteen seventy-one, so three years before he's retired. And when he... and I wonder then if he must have known something was changing within the authorities. But this sense of humour that he brings to his job is very... it feels like a very human quality and a bit cheeky. I, and from, of course, very removed eyes, I sometimes feel if it was those qualities in him that people maybe could approach him, or feel that he was somebody that wasn't like in an ivory tower.

A: Yes, you reminded me of the story of the alpenhorn. You know that?

Q: I don't think I do.

A: No. Where's that? I think it's in... Oh dear. (pause) Can we just stop that for while I search for this alpenhorn story?

(End of recording)
Q: Yes, so, and the talk you gave in nineteen ninety, you talked about when you were looking at how to, how to present the work in the museum service. That was really quite important you said, in the West Riding. And I loved a bit you said here about how to travel from the central store, and repacked again by the schools, we got our own workshop set up, so we could design and make boxes ourselves. The suitcase and cardboard box technique was being used by Derbyshire, but we used boxes. And I love this bit that you said, you said 'But we wanted teachers to almost gasp with pleasure when they opened the box. The children would be excited; their sense of wonder would be there.' Then you've put 'With children it usually is. As people get older, it tends to die a bit more.' But I loved that in your head you wanted the teachers to almost... a bit like a Christmas present.

A: Yeah.

Q: And that if the teacher was that way inclined to see it, then the children would be. And it's those little nuggets for me. Because you remind me of elements of Alec. I have to say, I think there's crossover, and I don't know if that's just to do with you and Alec, or other people who worked in the West Riding. But it's that, how you viewed the world; how you have viewed how a teacher would see it, to how a child would see it. And I see that as... I see that as quite a magical thing actually. But I don't know if that came from who you are as a person, or the influences you then maybe had within the West Riding, that that's how you wanted it to be.

(pause)

A: Things are open ended. I think time puts edges on things.

Q: Maybe, maybe.

A: I, that's okay, but I can't put edges on things. Things are more fluid.

Q: Bit more organic.

A: Yeah, they're not as... they don't necessarily come out tidy.

Q: Yeah, yes.

A: Sometimes it's not possible to analyse things and particularise things.

Q: No, I need, I have to... my current set of eyes, I somehow have to do that for a PhD, but I know exactly what you mean.

A: Why do you have to do it?

Q: Because I suppose I'm then in the confines of another academic...

A: Why can't you say that these confines are restrictive?

Q: Well I may. I may well say that, because I suppose... I'm looking...
A: You see, it's terribly difficult to describe a person, isn't it?

Q: Yeah. And as well because... yes, because the image I saw of Alec here, when he was a young man...

A: When I say describe it, I don't mean his appearance, I mean...

Q: No, no.

A: … the character of a person.

Q: Yeah, I know. And because this was Alec as a very young boy, with his family. And I think there's an Attenborough resemblance I think.

A: Yes, he still looks like a Clegg, doesn't he, even as a boy?

Q: Yeah, completely, completely. And I think... and then if I skipped... and then that's when he was knighted, with Jessie and two of his two sons. And for me, I'd only ever really seen pictures of Alec as that age. And so to see him younger, as a child, and then as a young teacher... And I know what you mean, it isn't just about describing somebody physically, but we change, we ebb and flow through all of those different stages. So yeah, so my job as it were, in this, some of it maybe is to find some edges, but you're right – there's an argument there that there aren't edges as well. Because of how we live our lives really. Do you think, I don't know if you could answer this, because maybe it's too big a question or maybe it's the wrong question. Did Alec influence you?

(pause)

A: I don't know.

(pause)

A: I don't know.

Q: No.

A: Who's influenced you?

Q: Crikey!

A: Hard to answer isn't it?

Q: Very, very. I don't know if I could answer that right now, without a lot of thought. Because I suppose you pick, well you ebb and flow don't you? So you pick up and take in as you go. And maybe until you actually have to really sit and think about... and I suppose which parts of who influenced which parts of you as well really. I don't know if I could answer that then, not really. Did you have a personal friendship with Alec, as well as a professional relationship?
A: Well it was mixed. Again there weren't edges on that. Once a year he used to have a staff party at his house, to which I went. I can only remember him coming here for a meal. That could have been when... I don't know the circumstances, how that happened. But it was when Sam and Paul were young children, and I remember him doing a trick where he took a penny out of his nose, or something like that. Or his ear. With one of the children. And I can remember him helping, he came to help to wash up.

Q: Isn't it funny, because I said earlier I've come to like Alec, I've come to respect this man. But everything I've read, and it's been read because it's historical, they're all about him in a suit at work, and what he did. I remember you once vaguely, you saying I think they kept bees at Woolley. Did they keep bees? And again, I remember thinking... and Alec... I don't know if you and Alec had been there, but something about Alec and bees. And thinking 'Well yes, this man wasn't just a man in a suit.'

A: Well his wife kept bees.

Q: Oh did she? And he played football. I remember he wanted to play...

A: Yeah, and he was very keen on tennis. I remember we played tennis together. Woolley Hall there was a grass court.

Q: Yeah. And I suppose it's those things, and everything has a purpose.

A: And badminton we played together.

Q: Gosh! Because the books that are written, they're very efficient books.

A: When I say together, I don't mean he and I were on the same side as it were, we may have been opponents. But playing in the same game.

Q: Yes. Because the books, like the books are done at the archive, or the papers, of course they have a certain purpose. A lot of it is paperwork that Alec kept, and then Jessie kept. And that has a real purpose. But Alec wasn't just a man in a suit. There was a, we've said, it's not that neat and tidy. And yet there's nothing that I've really come across that talks about who Alec was as a person, as a man. Because I think some of that, in all of us, that does drive who we are at work. That does drive who we are in other spheres of our lives really. And so I suppose it's those bits that I've come to be really interested in about Alec, about who he was; not what he did. Because you can read about what he did. But who he was. And that maybe for me comes back to my interest actually about objects and who made them, and what was their thought process. So I think I'm at that stage with Alec, in my relationship with Alec in my head, about who he was as a person. A few weeks ago, I drove to Tadcaster, to where Alec and Jessie are buried at All Saints' Church. And so I went and I found their headstone and where they are. And even that again felt like a different part of Alec. It, I thought the headstone is quite simple, quite elegant but quite simple. And it has his name on and his, the dates that are on it. But it seemed very unassuming. Again, I don't in my head, because for me right now, the last year and a half...
A: This is his, the grave, Alec Clegg's grave.

Q: Yes.

A: That's at Saxton.

Q: Yes, yeah. Because for the last nearly two years now actually, and the next year to come, Alec's a very big figure in my head, because it's what I'm doing. And so he's a big figure for me. But when I saw the headstone, it seems very unassuming, very, very quiet if that makes any sense.

A: Yeah, there's something that has occurred to me that I think is probably important. When I was interviewed, I can't say I remember why I did this, but I referred to Albert Schweitzer in the interview. Now in nineteen fifty-six a huge fear was atomic war. And Schweitzer had done, with Bertrand Russell and others, had pleaded for disarmament, nuclear disarmament. And I remember at a conference, I can't remember where it was, but at question time, I raised this question. It was a big audience, and this question of the atom bomb bothered me a lot. (pause) And he refers doesn't he, to the atom bomb in His Own Words?

Q: Yes, he does.

A: So I think that was a terribly important fear that we all had in the fifties and sixties. I can't remember when the Cuban crisis took place, when Kennedy and Kruschev...

Q: No, I can't remember the dates.

A: ... but we were on the brink of an atomic war. And Russia was sending missiles to Cuba. And that was only, went away, I mean, I remember going to bed one night wondering whether there was going to be a war, atomic war, because of those boats on their way to Cuba carrying missiles. It only stopped when Kruschev turned the boats round. And that fear went away.

Q: Goodness. Different world.

A: Now, I think it might be important to refer to that in your thesis, that... I remember too, I was... heard a lot about Schweitzer at the time. Nineteen fifty-three I was buying Schweitzer's books such as The Decay and Restoration of Civilisation, Civilisation and Ethics. And My Life, which was an autobiography that Schweitzer did. And that was before my interview, that was when I was still teaching. And when you say who impressed me, it was people like Schweitzer who I thought were so important. Sadly, they have been ignored and... well not ignored, but... still nuclear competition is going on. But that book, the Schweitzer album.

Q: I may have this book. You showed me, I think, this book.

A: Did I?

Q: And I then bought a copy.
A: Great book.

Q: Again, quite hard to get hold of.

A: Did you get it through Amazon?

Q: Yes. And so...

A: Well... Sorry, go on.

Q: Just to... and absolutely fascinating. Absolutely fascinating.

A: Well I gave a copy of that to Sir Alec and it's interesting, I don't know what that says about him. That's the thank you letter. 'My dear Woodward...' that's strange.

Q: Yes. And that letter he wrote to Basil, I think he says 'My dear Rocke', but there's only certain of... there's only some of you who he refers to as 'My dear...' and then your surname. And you're one of them.

A: See what he says: 'What a charming and to me most acceptable gift.' (…)

Q: Always fascinated me. I...

A: … suppose (…).

Q: 'I quoted him from time to time and I'm sure that from now on, I shall quote him more. Sunday evening – I have an hour to get myself...' not sure, something, weekend.

A: 'I have an hour to myself.'

Q: … to myself. 'We can have hideous activity...'

A: Oh after a weekend, after...

Q: 'A weekend of hideous activity.'

A: 'And I'm going to spend some of this hour...'

Q: 'Many, many thanks.' And again, that's on his personal notepaper.

A: Yes it is. That's true.

Q: There's not many that he hasn't written to.

A: Yeah.

Q: Again, but nothing that I've come across that's on his... It's funny when you talk, when I asked you had Alec influenced you, and you had asked me who'd influenced
me. I think actually through this process of the last few years, people like yourself have genuinely influenced me. People that you've shown me, like that. I know from now actually have started to influence how I think about certain things. And where I will go after this part of my learning as well, and where I'll take that as well.

A: Bertrand Russell, he did a book called Has Man a Future?

Q: Mm, haven't heard of that.

A: That was because of the nuclear arms race.

Q: The world seems so different in some ways.

A: It is. The only thing that raises the question of nuclear arms now is Trident.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: And that's looked upon as a necessary expenditure. I think it's ridiculous.

Q: Yes, yes. Part of what I'm looking at is to do with policy at the time. And even policy is a word that can be unpacked a million times. Because Alec will have written policies for the West Riding. Was that anything that ever came into how you carried out your job? Were you ever kind of told you were working to a certain policy? Or anything of that nature?

A: No, never.

Q: No. 'Cause Alec was also a policy maker on one level, because he would have been responsible for writing policies for his authority. Also adhering to them from government as well.

A: Yeah. The, I think at least once a year, might have been twice a year, there would be a day at Woolley Hall when all the advisors and inspectors... the word 'inspector' went out eventually. Only became area advisors, senior advisors and advisors. The area advisors had a divisional area. But at that one day conference at Woolley Hall, which Alec Clegg and other administrators like the assistant education officers were all there. And it was at one of those meetings that the idea of a middle school materialised. And an act of parliament had to be obtained for middle schools to be established. The question of whether they were successful or not didn't arise of course. I mean there have been criticisms of them since, haven't there?

Q: Yeah, there have. But I think again...

A: But you see, that was policy in the making by those conferences.

Q: Yeah. 'Cause I wonder again how much influence Alec had on the policy makers above his head. And I think actually at times it was probably quite...

A: But who have you got in mind when you say above his head?
Q: I suppose I'm thinking government …

A: Oh right, okay.

Q: ... rather than a particular person.

A: Yeah, but the education officer, like Woolley staff, are answerable to the education committee, the elected members of it.

Q: Yes. I think that Alec... like again, when I've heard him speak, he had a real presence about him. He knew how to get across what he wanted to say. And I think that that... his way of being probably held quite a lot of sway at those meetings. I think he probably could put forward a very good case, which ultimately would influence policy.

A: I think one of the... he wasn't excitable.

Q: No, no.

A: He was always calm.

Q: Yeah. Again, and I can't remember the reference, but I've heard him speak, I think he was talking to somebody from the BBC, at around about nineteen seventy-three I think, towards the end of his tenureship. And Alec, he seems quite... but he probably seemed quite determined, but I think he's feeling a bit ruffled from the questions. Because I think it was about the reorganisation. And that's, because you're right he always... there was a real... he just, you know, this was delivered. There wasn't this kind of, you know, up...

A: (Excitable?).

Q: Yes. He always seemed very in control of what he wanted to say. And at times, his voice... in this particular interview, he'd kind of say 'Hold on a second.' And make his point. And that was towards the end of his tenureship. And so that... one of the only occasions I've heard him be slightly more, maybe passionate actually. But quite determined in what he wanted to say. But yes, you're right – not excitable.

A: I think a continuous big concern of his was, and I've said this before to you, to the gap between knowledge and wisdom. That's not a new thing at all. Schweitzer talks about that. About how technology has progressed, but the wisdom of how to use technology. And we've still not learnt that.

Q: No. And I think actually right now in today, twenty fifteen again, that's an even bigger issue.

A: Yes.

Q: And quite a frightening one. Because nearly just about everybody has some type of device, where opinions, opinions can be given without maybe much censorship or
editing or thought potentially. And so yes, it's how to use the technology in a way that's actually productive, not harmful.

A: Yeah, you see, this is a huge danger that the introduction of computers and the internet and the speed with which information passes between nations and people in nations. And you even get now computers having a huge influence on the stock market, and share values. And computers being entrusted to operate the financial world. It's almost as if we've handed over ethics, or we've dismissed them. And it's now simply a matter of profit.

Q: Yeah. Within teaching again, there's a lot of... I think it's actually fear from teachers, and all levels, whether it's higher education or within schools or further education, that there's a worry that this technology will replace the teacher. And I think to an extent maybe some of that fear is very valid for them, I do. But I wouldn't ever want to see the day when this person...

A: Yeah. But I've not heard anyone say, point out that computers don't cry. They don't have emotion.

Q: No, no, they don't. They become the... they become like a carrier of other people's emotions by the way that...

A: Well the emotion goes, disappears altogether. It's simply numbers isn't it? Is all.

Q: Yeah. And interestingly I think, from a teacher point of view, I have questions and concerns about technology. From a parent point of view, I do hugely, of very little children, about the role that it plays. Which is a slight tangent. Was Alec, did Alec go to Bretton very often, do you know?

A: Well he must have gone. It depends what you mean by very often.

Q: I suppose my question comes from, Alec, you know, is credited with founding Bretton Hall and being part of that. And that's really what I'm looking at as well. When I've spoken to people who went to Bretton, and in the nineteen fifties as well, quite early days of Bretton, they don't recall ever really seeing Alec. Somebody's remembered him attending, they attended a lecture Alec gave. And they're quite well documented, when he was at Bretton. But as of yet, a lot of people, students at Bretton, don't recall Alec being a presence. They recall John Friend, the principal, first principal as being the person that shaped their experience of Bretton, but not Alec. And I found that quite interesting as well, in the sense that he's credited as being the founder of it, but the students who went there within those early years and probably early decades, don't really have any knowledge of Alec himself. And maybe that's as simple as very busy man, lots of things to do.

A: You see, the West Riding set up... there was Woolley Hall, an in service college. Now, I don't know whether any other authority in the country had anything similar.

Q: Not that I've come across.
A: Now there was Lady Mabel College. There was Ragley Hall. Bretton Hall of course. Have I left others out? I'm sure...

Q: Is... were there five? Because that's four. But then I'm saying five – I can't think of a fifth.

(pause)

A: No. But you see, in the end what it means is that Sir Alec had put something to the education committee, and the education committee said 'This is a good idea. Let's do it.' So that's how it worked, and it wasn't, in a way Sir Alec didn't set up Bretton Hall; it was the education committee, who was prompted by Sir Alec.

Q: And I suppose then you could ask the question then, because yes of course you're right, Alec could go to the committee, and he would need their approval as such. Which either means... well you could read into that either the education committee were very happy to be led by Alec or they thought they were really great ideas, and chose to go with it.

A: Or could be both.

Q: Yeah. And we probably will never know. Yeah. Because it was interesting speaking to two of the former students of Bretton, who were there in nineteen fifty-two, and really have no, have no real memory of Alec other than they speak.... But they don't really know anything about him. And yet, they are very... were art teachers, then set up a pottery. But are very, what I would think, they've got that kind of West Riding stamp. Who they are, how they are as people, what careers they had. And actually, some of that must be owed to Alec, for whatever ...

A: I'm sure he was a sort of magnet, who attracted people. I mean, Arthur Stone for instance, Story of a School.

Q: Yes.

A: Came to the West Riding as an inspector. Diana Jordan, she came to Woolley Hall.

Q: Yes.

A: And they were attracted by work... I was attracted to, I wanted to work in the West Riding because of Sir Alec. I read a talk he'd given at the National Art Education Conference, and that speech he gave there, and thought 'Gosh, he'd be a good chap to have as a boss.'

Q: How interesting that you say that, because I was attracted to this PhD by Sir Alec.

A: Yeah, he had a magnetism about him, yes.

Q: And this is, this was in, let me think, twenty thirteen. Must have been early, February/March twenty thirteen I came across this scholarship, and I was attracted
to Sir Alec then. I wanted to know more about him, and who he was. So that huge gap in time, when you wanted to work with him, and I wanted to know more about him – we were still attracted to the same person. I think you're right, there is... and maybe there is not an answer to why people were attracted to him. Maybe not something we can completely tangibly...

A: Well it's probable isn't it that you have similar ideas. And you think 'Oh my ideas match his ideas. Perhaps we could work together.'

Q: Yeah. Maybe, maybe. But then I think sometimes...

A: And then somebody who disagreed with his ideas wouldn't want to work with him, would they?

Q: No.

A: They wouldn't have applied to get a job in (...).

Q: No. But it seems to have lasted. He still is a magnet, and that doesn't always happen.

A: That's probably because the values he had were good. At least in one's own assessment or judgement (...).

Q: Yeah. I think I told you, I'm meeting with XXXX tomorrow to talk...

A: That's good.

Q: … to him about his dad. Which seems, you know, which is different again. And also Sir David Attenborough wrote back to me and said if I wrote to him again with some questions, he'd reply. Which made me... obviously I've thought about...

A: Be interested to hear how you get on with those.

Q: Yeah. And I've thought... I'll let you know. I've thought about that of course, and the Attenborough part of the family, because Sir David Attenborough and Sir Richard Attenborough of course. And their father was a teacher. But they went on, seemed to have a huge compassion about them as well, as people. And it does make me think if there is something about this family unit, of Cleggs and Attenboroughs, about values. Going back to Bootham School, about Quakerism even – I don't know whether I'm trying to join something up that isn't there. But whether there's something as family units.

A: You see with Richard Attenborough, he obviously had a huge respect, admiration for Gandhi. Because he put an awful lot of time and money into...

Q: Yeah. Huge.

A: ... getting the film made. And took big risks to getting that film made.
Q: It looked gruelling. I remember watching the documentary and I've read about it. And it seemed quite a gruelling film, to make.

A: Yeah, it's an incredible film. Now the reason he did it was that Richard Attenborough's values he admired, Richard Attenborough admired the values of Gandhi.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: That's why he took such big, to us, risks.

Q: Yeah. There just seems a huge...

A: One of the sort of, how can I put this? One of the, for me, a penalty of success is stardom. And we live in an age of celebrities. The television is (...) concerned with this. And they're not always celebrities that you can respect really. It's simply the fact that they get on television and become famous.

Q: They're famous for not doing anything. I think it was Dame Judy Dench I read about, and she wasn't angry I suppose, but she said 'I'm not a celebrity. I've worked really hard to be an actress. I've worked really hard at something. I'm not in this to be famous. I'm not a celebrity.' And I think...

A: I'm sure there's...

Q: And that for me is exactly what it's about. There's a lot...

A: I'm sure Alec Clegg didn't want to become famous. To become a celebrity as it were.

Q: No. Do you know how he felt about being knighted?

A: I don't know.

Q: No. Again, it's something that's never really written about.

A: It's very difficult that. You know I got an MBE?

Q: Yes, I did.

A: I found that's, well a big surprise to start with.

Q: Why?

A: Well you don't expect it, you...

Q: Well yeah, mm.
A: It's... and then I've never in a way, it's been so badly used, hasn't it, honours? People who were given knighthoods or awards of some kind or another, they let it down, don't they?

Q: Yes, I know what you mean.

A: And you wonder 'Well why did they get it?'

Q: Yes, selection process.

A: Yeah. Interesting, you see, I'd wonder 'Well why didn't others in the advisory service get an honour?' The only other person I know was Ernest Peet who got an MBE, the supervisor of school caretakers. Who, I'm not quite right – Diana Jordan, the principal of Woolley Hall, she got an OBE. Now, you wonder why people like Arthur Stone didn't get an honour.

Q: Yes, yes. Because I, and I don't know enough about the selection process either then or now, probably to...

A: I mean, you're not told why you're getting it for a start.

Q: Yes. 'Cause I think you're right when... I don't think Alec ever sought out recognition maybe. Or didn't...

A: The trouble is the honours system is a scrambled egg, isn't it?

Q: Yeah.

A: There's good and bad in it.

Q: Yes. I can't imagine him, he doesn't often... when he needs to, he refers to himself as Sir, but not very much. There's still lots of documentation after he was knighted, where he puts 'ABC', his initials. Not often where it's 'Sir'. But again, it'll be interesting when I talk to XXXX tomorrow to see if he maybe has another perspective or knows something else. Because I suppose he was, it was in his house when... it was his dad. So he must have, you know.

A: Yeah. When you get a letter telling you that your name is going to be put to the pri'... does the letter say?

Q: You have to kind of...

A: They're going to recommend to the queen.

Q: Yes. And you have to officially accept, don't you, or decline?

A: You have to reply by return of post, whether you will accept or decline. And you mustn't confide in anyone else that...

Q: Yes, it's quite secret, yes quite secretive really.
A: So the only person who knew was Joan you see.

Q: Yes, of course.

A: There's a photograph of Joan by the way up there.

Q: Oh!

A: Have a look. It's the top one.

Q: Is it here?

A: Yeah. And then when she was older.

Q: Gosh! She's lovely.

A: Then the bottom one when, the year she died.

Q: Goodness. Still tell it's her. Where did you meet her, XXXXX?

A: Well we grew up in the same village.

Q: Oh did you?

(End of recording)
Q: Let me see if I have any more questions or anything else that you would like to say, and then we probably can wrap things up. One of the questions I'd written down was ‘Could you give an example of his leadership in action?’ I don't know if that's... It's one of those questions you can't answer, XXXXX.

(pause)

A: Well it applies in various ways. It wasn't just one. He was on, I'm pretty sure he was on the Arts Council at one time.

Q: Yes, I think you're right. Yes.

A: You need to check that. But he was concerned about the quality of the furnishings of Woolley Hall. And Gordon Russell, he would have known, who was President I think of the Arts Council. Who I met, by the way.

Q: Oh did you?

A: I met him after he'd retired and he was living in Chipping Camden. Or I think that was the village. And he gave the opening speech at a, the (...) course which was held in first week in August. Oh, and it was on design. And we'd put on a pretty big exhibition of relevant material on design.

Q: Think I've read this. I think I've...

A: And I used to get the smaller items that had won design awards of the year to go into the own collection. And the biggest thing we got was a Milton bicycle. You know, the folding bicycle, Milton design.

Q: Yes.

A: And I was showing Sir Gordon Russell and his wife around this exhibition with Joan. And he said come and see him if we were ever near his house. And we were on our way to camp in the New Forest and called to see him. And that was an interesting afternoon.

Q: Yes, I imagine.

A: But I mention that because of Sir Alec's concern about good design in furnishing. Again, that comes in the His Own Words. I think it, I think you need to look... you probably already have done, but have another look at His Own Words.

Q: Yes, I will.

A: And I think you'll glean a lot about his attitudes to all sorts of things.

Q: Yeah, and I've read it quite a few times. I will go back to it again.
A: The pressure of society on our schools for instance, page twenty-six. Students, under the heading children, page six. Inspectors, advisors, administrators, page twenty-three. Do you want to keep this, these references?

Q: If I can.

A: Of course you can.

Q: Thank you very much. Thank you. I nearly called you Alec then. It's because you said his name so many times. Do you think that Alec enjoyed his job? Is that a question that...?

A: Some days he did I should think. On the whole he did. He must have done, mustn't he?

Q: Yeah.

A: Because an unhappy man wouldn't be a good leader, would he?

Q: No. When he retired, which... I mean, did that coincide with the reorganisation?

A: Yes. I saw him within two or three weeks after his retirement at his home.

Q: Without putting words in your mouth, was he angry about the reorganisation?

A: He must have been hurt...

Q: Yes.

A: … by it. I can remember saying to him… not a very helpful thing to say really, but I said 'Well the seeds you've sown will grow.,'

Q: They have; you were right. You were right.

A: Well it's not very evident in (government levels?) is it?

Q: It is in... No, I agree. But the people... and again I'm looking at Bretton really... for the people who went through the Bretton experience, whatever you want to call it, those seeds are out there.

A: Well that's very true.

Q: And then they went on to teach. Or they went on to write plays or... And you were right, as a forecast you were right. Because I can remember when I first started to look into Alec and I had to write a piece for my professors, my doctors back at the university. And I remember then writing that it wasn't just an authority that he built up; he ultimately saw it be dismantled. And that must have been incredibly difficult, to just...

A: Yeah, I mean same thing happened to the School Museum Service.
Q: Yes, yeah. I read your collection, I've been through your collection, which is fascinating.

A: So I know how it... I've been hurt very much by it, to see how that has been dismantled.

Q: Yes. I think the... equally things in my head like Alec must have felt, and maybe you did about your work, it was a bit like throwing a baby out with the bathwater. It was as if... I don't know, it all, it feels all of this work was done over this thirty, forty years period, and it just instantly was somehow dismissed. It seem the way...

A: It's the politicians, at government level that... they either, at best they haven't understood. At worst they've deliberately closed things down that was going to take away from them their privileges.

Q: Yes. 'Cause when I've read about, and my research ultimately stops at nineteen seventy-four. It stops when Alec retires, for the purposes of this. But I wonder if he felt redundant in more than one sense of the word. Whether he just, he'd retired, but he then, he didn't... he couldn't do anything.

A: Yeah. You see, I find you can't take politics out of the debate on education. I've probably mentioned the book called The Spirit Level.

Q: No.

A: I strongly recommend it. It's got a subtitle 'Why equal societies have almost always done better'. And it's written by...

(pause)

Q: Thank you.

(pause)

A: An equal society you probably know is where the gap between the well-to-do and the poor is not great. But where the gap is great, society has all sorts of social, medical, criminal problems, caused by inequality. But it not only applies to countries... individuals in a country, it applies to the gap between the well-to-do countries and the not well-to-do countries. And we can see the, partly the... probably largely due to the inequality that we've got refugee problems with people trying to get across to Italy, and drowning. Or coming to this country and being accused of taking low wages, taking jobs away. And it's so often the inequality is causing these dreadful social problems that the world has got, the world has got.

Q: I agree. I remember being sat at my desk at work, gosh I don't know, five or six years ago. And I remember just making a note in my notebook that says 'Where have the great leaders gone? Where are the great people?' Because I was sat there working in education, and I just kind of, I don't know, I suppose it comes back to this type of issue. And government and policy makers and, but then teaching every day
felt incredibly removed from, you know, what you’re told to do. And then I think a bit of me, as life does ebb and flow, for me I think, I think I put Alec in that great leader box. Which you won't like, 'cause it's got sides on. But I don't know, it's as if somehow Alec very timely came along in my own teaching practice. And I know he was of his time in many, many ways. And the job that he did, and how he did it in terms of post-war and rebuilding and building an authority, was very much I think of its time. But I think today we need to build something today. We need...

A: Yeah, you see I find it extraordinary that the National Health Service was set up in nineteen forty-seven, three years after the war. And we were all broke.

Q: Yeah, on your knees I think.

A: The war had cost an awful lot of lives, first, and then money. And yet we were, as a country, able to do that. And now we're... there isn't enough money to go into the National Health Service or other social things like caring for the elderly.

Q: I know, I know. Because when I, and again a lot of my information, knowledge comes from books, comes from reading. And even that has to be questioned; you have to question that. But this, naturally after the war, this spirit of wanting to make something better and build something, was all pervasive it seems. Of course that was there. But rationing went on till when? Was it nineteen... it was nineteen fifty-four. I mean, a long, long time. And Bretton opened in forty-nine, and that was still in all this era. But this whole sense... and it probably isn't this simplistic, but that of a country moving in one direction. Of our country trying to rebuild and build something of value. And then I look at today, and no we're not in that same situation, but we're in dire straits a lot of the time, we seem to have lost values and direction and... I think. And some of me goes 'We need, we need new Alecs. We probably actually need some new XXXXXs. We need people to be building things, not just constantly reforming them. Not constantly just kind of prodding it.' Because I, some again of what the West Riding seemed to do, there seemed to be a sense of stability about it. Things were maybe given time to work, and that's how it comes across, given chance to try something, to give a go. And you went to Derbyshire to see how other people were doing it, and learned from them and learn from each other. And then how could it work in the West Riding authority. And it seems to me that that doesn't happen so much any more. People are just keen to shine in their own right, and get to the prize and receive the accolades. And maybe again that's just of our time. Maybe that's...

A: I wonder how the Derbyshire service came into being. Because the Education Officer at that time was Jack (Laudon?).

Q: Yes, that rings a bell, yes.

A: I don't know much about him at all, other than he was one, one of the Everest expedition climbers.

Q: Gosh.
A: But how, what he was as an Education Officer I've no idea. But it's interesting, that that was set up independently of a museum wasn't it?

Q: Yeah. When I first met you and came across your collection, I'm very... because of my background and starting work in a museum, what I'm interested in, I was fascinated by what you had done with your career. And it's very hard to find information about Schools Museum Service. To find books about it, to find...

A: Yes. My own service, you mean?

Q: Yes, and just generally really. I found that quite...

A: Well it's in... there's something in those...

Q: It is, but there's nothing in its own right.

A: And I've done that other thing on the, a brief description haven't I?

Q: Yes. In years to come, XXXXX, at some point I'll probably come, and I would like to write something about you probably of...

A: Have you not got a copy of that? The development of the School Museum Service?

Q: Don't think I have.

A: Well it's in the collection at Bretton.

Q: I must have seen it there, but it's not ringing any bells.

A: Well ask Leonard for it.

Q: I will do. It just...

A: I've not got a spare copy I can give you myself.

Q: I must have seen something, but it's not ringing...

(long pause)

A: Ask Leonard for that.

Q: Brief History... okay. I don't think I've seen that. Is any of that in your collection?

A: Yeah. A copy of this is.

Q: How have I not...? Oh. I'll ask Leonard. Thank you.

A: Can you remember the name, what you're looking for?
Q: Yes, I will do.

(long pause)

A: Shall we get some lunch together?

Q: Yeah. I think I've probably exhausted all of my questions. That doesn't mean that I won't pester you in months to come, XXXXX.

A: Don't use the word 'pester'.

Q: Well I would hate to think I'm taking up too much time. Thank you so much.

(End of recording)
Q: Okay, if you could say your name XXXXX and when you were at Bretton.

A: I’m XXXX really, but I’ve been called XXXXX for a very long time, and I went to Bretton in nineteen fifty-two until nineteen fifty-four for… to take part in the arts department.

Q: And why did you go to Bretton, why did you choose Bretton?

A: Well, I finished at Slade and I knew and, well, no, went to talk to the art advisor for Cambridgeshire, who was Nan Youngman, who was, had quite a good reputation having been appointed by Henry Morris. And she’d done a Pictures for Schools Exhibition every year and headmasters could go and choose pictures for their schools. I think it was often in Wales for some reason or other, but, and she’d chosen art, new art teachers in my school. And she said, “Qualerton College, Cockerill, if you want a short one, but if a longer one, would be Corsham or Trent Park or Bretton Hall. And I don’t quite know why, I thought Bretton Hall would be interesting. I think she must have talked a little bit about the philosophy and, so I applied and that was that, but I don’t think there was any deep serious reasoning behind it.

Q: And what course did you do? What was it called, can you remember?

A: Well, the college was for students, for music, art and drama, but I chose the art course. I’d been interested in the Slade, but I really had got rather tired of eternal life drawing, and so on. It was high windows, very cold weather quite often in London, and although, no, it was interesting. We met very interesting teachers and visitors and so on, and it was not far from the Courtauld Institute to go to extra evening lectures and things. I think the idea that it was a mixture of subjects, I’d fought between taking English or art and a little bit ended school days with everybody thinking, ‘Perhaps your art is better than your English’ and I got very good art A Level and so on. So, I loved it with those English drama and song, the way you spent your day wasn’t with careful (prints of?) work. And it was antique drawing for your first, until they told you, you were good enough. So, it was black and white drawing of antiques, sculptures, and one of them said, “Ah, you’ve been,” one of the teachers said to me, “You’ve been deceived; that’s not shadow, that’s dust” and so, it was that atmosphere in the antique, antique room. (laugh). But, so, it was a breath of fresh air, it was absolutely lovely.

Q: What was your interview like for Bretton?

A: It’s a little bit dim, but it was, I think, in the City Lit in London. John Friend and Shauna Robertson, whether anybody else was there, I don’t really remember. We had, it was in a hall, but it was a stage, not curtained, but we sat on the stage. And Shauna Robertson, I remember her asking me, what I thought boys were interested in, and I said, “This and this,” and I think I forgot football, something or other. (laugh) So, I didn’t feel I’d quite penetrated the masculine mind, having been at a girls’ school and girls, a girls’ family; three girls in the family. So, three sisters and so on, but I don’t think I remember much more, but I think I had been very well educated in Cambridge, so, I think that came through, you know. But it was really you knew that education mattered if you were brought up three miles from Kings Parade, you know,
(laugh) as a child and so on. And my parents were not particularly ambitious for us, but they really did... my mother particularly, minded very, very much that you enjoyed your education, as well as working hard and so on, and I did work hard. I was a swotty little girl in lots of ways, as well as playing tennis and loving picnics and wild flowers. So, no, it was fitting in, rather than changing my way of life, I think, 'cause I'd had the beauty of Cambridge buildings and joined the Exploring Cambridge Society, where the Master of Magdalen had taken a little group of schoolgirls to show his own pictures in his sitting room. As well as, you know, it was that kind of atmosphere of only the best good enough for children again, you see.

Q: How would you describe Bretton, the first time you were there, when you got there?

A: Well, I think it was the drive, coming down the drive and majestic building, but the absolutely stunning autumn, you know, September, the lakes and everything were very, very beautiful. And then really, it was Paddy and getting to know her as, as a room mate, because she was very excited with life. I think she'd just got engaged and “Bob said this and Bob said that,” and so on. So, he was by her and her keenness too, she was funny, loved being a student. No, it was poise and the grandeur and the welcome really. I don't remember with Mr. Friend, met us from the station in the minibus, but I think he did, you know, he was going to and fro'. That's his role, when on the day students arrived. But, no, I was brought up a wartime child near Grantchester Meadows, you know, just south-west of Cambridge, where we picnicked and punt ed and all that kind of thing as children. We hadn't been on holiday for four years, so, that was all, you know, it was a world of beauty, I was, I was used to that all right, I wasn't short on that.

Q: Was there a typical Bretton student?

A: Well, there, I think there was a bit of divide, between the ex-service people and the others, not unfriendliness, but a little bit more worldly wise. And I don't know whether Derek mentioned John (Broome?), but he had been trained in ballet and was a very good ballet dancer and he was, I should think, the dominant student. Derek mentioned some ballroom dancing that we, in the evening, and Paddy and her pal had sung at that, but he did do movement into ballet with us, rather than movement into drama and Bretton... Mr. Dunn was really, it was really movement into drama. I think on my, I don't know why, but she chose me to, we did a, a re-enactment of, in dance form, of Joan of Arc, the death of Joan of Arc and so on, and without knowing at all, I had to be Joan straight away. So, I think it had been in my description, you know, that I was keen on dance. And I was in her tutorial group and could always felt real important, you know, she was very, very good and excellent with... alongside Mr. Friend, 'cause very different, but they complemented one another tremendously. Well, she wasn't the spokesman and so on, but in tutorial groups and things like that, she was excellent. In fact, when it came to the final thing, she suggested being quite versatile by then, that I got the children of what the main class I was working with, I suppose, to do all the objects for a meal table, including flower arranging and the, making the vessels, even spoons I think we made in clay and so on. And I can remember Mr. Friend and the Chief Examiner coming to see what it was like. It was suitably chaos the actual meal at the end of it 'cause we all ate the food, ate the food up if you cooked something and so on. But anyway, it was,
I remember being out of doors for some reason or other. So, I suppose it was nice weather and it was quite a poorly area, Derek will remember the name and quite a long way from Bretton. And I discovered that there was one child who had done literally nothing during this thing, so, I knew that I’d be an A teacher. (laugh) I wasn’t a miracle teacher ’cause I had, I hadn’t spotted that. That was Miss Dunn’s suggestion. Oh, that’s right, we plaited the back (...), the one we’ve had our lunch today and so on. So, but it was a lovely project to do, but very open-ended and I was perhaps a bit daft the way I treated it, at least not particularly efficiently. An ex-Bretton student was on the staff and she welcomed me most warmly, with tremendous backing, because it wasn’t particularly easy school and so on, but, so that’s life.

Q: What was a typical day like?

A: Waking up pretty early, west facing... east facing room and the birds, from, you know, the that was what... very noisy, so, that I think they probably woke us up a bit. But they didn’t wake Paddy up ’cause Paddy was really a lark... an owl, rather than a lark and, then dressing and it wasn’t a great worry as to what we were to wear ’cause there wasn’t much choice. And for some reason I used to sew a white collar round the neck. Mrs. Friend, long after I’d been in college, she said, “I always thought you were a Quaker;” (...) and, and so on. So, dressing wasn’t difficult, but I’d always loved school uniform really ’cause I hadn’t had the bother of deciding what to wear. So, I wasn’t particularly dressy and then washing’s down the corridor and breakfast. I think, had to be collected our plates at breakfast, I don’t know, but we did, I think, actually somebody had laid the tables. And certainly the main meals of the day, they brought the food to the tables. And we did find early on that it was a particular little group of friends that we sat with. So, circulate, circulate as they say. We’d do it for a little while, but we were inclined to go back to our own group. And then days were summer in feeling really, but I think the main, your main subject wasn’t tremendously dominating. But there was English with Paul Heffner or, do you know, I’ve forgotten his Christian name, or Martial. But you looked forward to it immensely, I... and Heffner’s friend did poetry, we got John Heath-Stubbs, the poet, who I supposed lived in Leeds. He came and talked to us. He was blind, that’s right, a blind poet. He was interesting and you never, you didn’t feel too enclosed. I think the men on that top landing were enclosed. The ceilings were lower and so on. You just felt open, sort of freshness, you know, you could have people who lived like that or people who lived like that, but Bretton gave you a feeling that extensions. Coffee break was sitting around but not sitting necessarily. A trolley came and you’d get your coffee, drink, and the post was in alphabetical order in little racks. And I, I’ve always liked writing letters, so, I think I had time to write letters to aunts and old friends and particularly to mother and father. And it happened to be Andrew’s pigeon-hole; my name was Margaret Andrews and Derek would, if he, if he looked, he’d bring me my letter and post, sit down and chat. So, that was another as well as the Barnsley bus that we got to know one another. But I think he was interested in me, that I had been academically brought up and he jolly hadn’t, you know. But he hadn’t ever been helped to write essays and things and I know how to structure an essay and take notes and things like that. And I was fascinated that he was the good friend to everybody and so inventive. And so, when Paul Byrd wanted anything done, you know, I was moved from place to place or so on. It was always Derek that was asked, you know, but he was not just popular with the
students but on, really useful to have around and, and so on. So, I took the notes in the lectures and Derek wrote a letter B and decorated a column somewhere or other and so on.

Q: They’ve found that picture at the archive.

A: Oh, that’s right, well, we still did that, you see these little figures in when the (...) went, I did them with children. I always thought that was under a table, ’cause it was, it was sort of, it was against that wall, wasn’t it? Yes, it’s, it’s, it’s just, the way things, you know, I think much more academically how it’s been done before and really, art education ought to be the extent', you know, the extension beyond the traditional, isn’t it? It, and it doesn’t need, it can be something that’s just completely fresh and new. So, I think I’ve, I’ve great admiration for that. So, no definite edges, but I do have definite edges myself usually, you know, I can, I can be experimental, but I go back to what I’ve done before and...

Q: It sounds like, it sounds like you probably supported each other and pushed each other.

A: Yes, I think so and valued the differences. But the tastes being so similar, you know, if we’re choosing something or other, we don’t have any debate about, worry about that, but he wants to, I think perhaps he spends money on mechanical things and computers, more than I’d be likely to, but on the whole, it’s things in common, you know, but, I mean, a lot of it’s from Brentford... Bretton, rather.

Q: Did a lot of students, kind of meet at Bretton, do you think, found their…?

A: I don’t think it was a lot in our year. Certainly Alex Fawcett had a girlfriend and then married. He was a music student and, and married one of our group in, in the art department, a very nice lass. And the chap who chose the tree for the coronation, he married Marjory Angus who was one of the one year art students. I think he was, I think he was the same from the group, but I don’t think it was a huge number, but it was… No, I think the authoritative world was really rather frightened of the baby before, and the, one of the music lecturers looked at us when we got engaged and he said, “I thought you were brother and sister.” (laugh) And so, which was, so behaviour wasn’t overt or anything, I think it must be the name being the same, but...

Q: How were you taught to teach children?

A: Well, I think that’s where Derek would say that it was left to your instincts quite a lot, that there wasn’t any... there was to value children and child development we were told about, and certainly we knew about children’s imagery, you know. That you didn’t say, “This is the way we draw a face or this is the way we do it,” and then all of it. There’s a lovely Victorian picture of early photography, I suppose, of every child in the class doing a certain shape of a leaf, you know, you know that one?

Q: Mm.

A: Well, you know, we were very much that. I think it may have been later, but... a headmistress of a primary school said, “The changes...” I think this is education
through art world, in the way she was drawn by children from the age of five upwards, she said. “Five year olds make me round as I am, and counted the buttons and got the buttons right. By seven, they’d learned tact and slimmed me like everybody else,” you know, it was a warm hearted work. (laugh). But we’ve got, Derek wrote a little book about some, “What shall I draw now?” I think it’s in the bookcase there, but my niece has a little picture of a Christmas angel I suppose and you barely recognise it at all. But there was the extension of the wing and manger and so on, which got the quality of angel-ness, but her brother, drew beautifully until he was five. Beautiful painting in colour, painting whatnots, but the teacher there told him how to do it and it switched him off. So, we knew about… and we did go, I had to do a holiday job, with children, and I was, one children’s home near Cambridge. And Derek, I think, went off to the Isle of White with his children’s home. They were going on a holiday, and you had to do a child study, and you wrote... I remember writing a child’s study for Miss Dunn. That's movement study, I think, the child’s expression and movement and so on. So, it did come out of observation, but oh, Shauna Robertson wrote about the rose garden and labyrinth. And she said, “You should look for (...) the rose garden is Sleeping Beauty. You go your way through to get to the beauty and, and, she’s there and so on. The other is the tunnel and the image of the tunnel and the treasure, perhaps at the end of the tunnel. But once it closed and one was (freshening?) out. And I always had thought very seriously about that. I think flying is another one and so, the red balloon I’ve used as a theme a lot or lots of children with balloons and going over magic countries and, and so on is a chance, all those chances of the world to diamonds or deserts or whatever they want to on the ground, but you were yourself floating and so on.

Q: Right.

A: But, and there are lots of art outside. I think that came through the education then.

Q: Did you feel valued as a student at Bretton?

A: Oh, yes, I felt very valued. It was, in fact, perhaps over, over valued. It was, I don’t know why, but I think everybody was, but no, I think any quality I’d got was, was a good thing.

Q: Did you, you taught at schools as teaching practice, didn’t you?

A: Yes, it was Barnsley to start off with and it might have been the school that Kes was fixed on. A not particularly interesting art teacher to work with, but I did cart stuff to look at and, you know, I’ve always done a lot of visual aids sort of stuff. So, whether it was rhododendron bits that were draped through (bushes?) and what not, and certainly you invited the children to come back to have a little party on the Saturday and so on. But one of the loveliest bits about the school, was one of the C or D stream, not so bright supposedly, a little girl said, “Will you come and teach at Barnsley when you’re a proper teacher?” I said, “Well, I’ll think about it, but it costs, costs me two pounds to go home about, go home again and two pounds to come back again.” And she said, “Oh cor, eight pounds a day, if you went home for dinner.”

Q: How lovely.
A: It was lovely, but you know, it was, it was all right and then Longley Hall in Huddersfield was the next one, which was a little bit selective. And I tried to do, As you Like It, in, in the wood, woodlands. I don’t know if that was a huge success, you know, the noise, there was too diffuse and so on. Needed very careful planning to read Shakespeare out of doors and act it at the same time. (laugh). But, and I tried to do a lesson on imagery, which the headmistress came and listened in on. And I think she thought that was very brilliant and I think she was probably right, but, and then it was Ray... Ray... well the... so very working-class little world, but I started off in teaching with the secondary modern school in Suffolk. But I was more at home with brighter children, I’m afraid and I don’t admire myself for it. But after that I taught in, I think, two secondary modern schools when Derek was doing the teacher training and it was harder, it was much, just much harder, bigger classes and a lot of clearing up. I always stayed late to set the scene for the next day, you know, that was something I liked to do. When you came into a room and took a lamp that could be a light, you know, with still life underneath it. The light’s on sort of. “The light’s on,” said one of the children. I said, “Yes, but don’t worry about anything else, but make the light come on in your picture.” And that, that, which apparently, the teacher at Wakefield High School, found a bit difficult, because she was a very good draughtsman, she did the Royal College of Arts, yes, a draughtsman. She could make scenery for, I know that she’d got talents, but it wasn’t painty painting ever. So I think mine had a slightly noisier time, (laugh) through a wooden partition. (...) and we were a bit aware of the silence next door and the goings on in my room. But it was, it was interesting, but to join in on community life in (…), as well as… that you would feel needed as well as the work that you were doing, you know, it wasn’t just that, but there were little contributions we could make in the community and that was…

Q: The community that was cultivated at Bretton seems really quite important to Bretton, kind of even...

A: Well, it was partly no money to go anywhere else and distance. That set the scene for it, but it was (…) you see, it was good, because you don’t need too many references all the time, do you?

Q: No.

A: You got to know your surroundings and your people quite well, quite well.

Q: And did you ever meet Sir Alec?

A: Clegg, no. I don’t think so. Herbert Reed came and possibly he might have joined in on that occasion. You were very aware of him and you knew he was sort of there, but I’m, I’m puzzled by that ‘cause Derek says the same as me, he can’t remember.

A2: We were at the lecture that he gave that, that, that pamphlet, we were there.

Q: Yes.

A2: But didn’t meet him.
A: No, not one to one, but no, I think we were very aware that he’d, he’d made the world, I mean, God had made the world as it were, you know, but the structural world, but the possible situation was his. I remember we were very, very aware of that, that he’d made it all possible.

A2: A cup of tea?

Q: Yes, please.

A2: Earl Grey okay?

Q: Perfect. Thank you. Would you say that John Friend then was really the face of the college for you too?

A: Yes, yes, definitely. He was a, very much the core and so on and his personality did seep through and to admit (…) and so on, but it was... He was so caring and interested, interested in us all by what we were doing and so on, and opening new doors for us. He wasn’t telling us what to do, you see, but it opened new worlds; we always did get on with it on our own really, I suppose.

Q: Did you, I was about to ask you, how did he lead, and you’ve maybe just answered that in a way, in a sense that it feels that he, he knew he had a job to do, but that you were very much, were all kind of moving along together and…

A: That’s right. Oh, it’s, it’s a brave new world sort of thing, as he was making a, a good new, new world and we were part of it. Not key to it necessarily, but we were just... no, it was, and education of the senses as well as the arts, you know. And the senses are helped by good sound, good touch and so on, and it helped us work with children of limited ability; you’d look for their responses and then we’d build on that, I think.

Q: Yeah, Herbert Reed said that emotional development thrives when you’re in harmony with your environment.

A: That’s right.

Q: And I think that, that can be said of Bretton as well.

A: Yes.

Q: And I do then wonder how much of that actually gets passed on, down through your teaching?

A: I’ve never read completely, I’ve got it out just, you know, thinking of things that might be relevant to talk about Art and the Child, you know, what I mean? Anyway, his book, but the one thing that I have brought out from time to time is the idea of getting small children to do, give them a reasonable sized paper, “Do me a picture called the trees grew stately and tall.” And I used to get sixth formers say, to take the piece of paper home, with a younger child (…) paints and come back with the child.
And one I can remember was a, you know, sort of like little willow tree, I suppose, and I said, “Is that little girl keen on dance?” “Oh, yes,” she said. “She’s a little bit round for it, so she’s not particularly graceful, but she can do it.” And the shy one would keep the... in a way it was a tall tree, a proper tall tree, there’d be tiny at the bottom of the paper. But a bit more expressive confident child would make it fill the paper, and so on. But which kind of tree, and it’s illustrated in this book when he’d asked children to do it, so we could compare notes with how he’d analysed the extroverts and the introverts, and so on, that kind of thinking, you know, kind of thing.

Q: Yes. What were the staff like at Bretton, if you had to describe the staff, what would you say?

A: Well, I think they, they felt the richness of the brave new world very strong. It was very soon after that war and it hadn’t been dead easy for their generation more than ours. I think my, I was ten when the war started, so, we were being protected quite a lot. But people who had been touched by it had a much more difficult time. I suppose it was dominantly women still. Daphne Byrd was interesting. She was very loquacious and very knowledgeable, the facts about musicians and what they did and illustrated, she played records and music and so on, analysis, some very, very clever, but perhaps a little bit lonely. She’d got a cat that she was fond of called Pi, and we always, a little black cat and we always admired Pi if we went to see her, and was very much part of her world. No, they always had talents in their own sphere, you know, they were chosen for their talents, but also, I suppose, that they’d join in and presumably, Mr. Friend was in on the appointment of each individual one, and met them, I think. I think John Friend probably went through the list, and so on.

Q: Yes.

A: They were very good, and a few slightly more mechanical than the others, but the, some chap who came in the music department after us, a nice family man, who wrote... quite a lot of music he composed and so on, he made a big mark and, I think he could write church music as well. The religious bit, that came quite strongly through and, you know, Mr. Friend managed to get the chapel restored, but again, when there was very little money around. So, he must have been very persuasive and so on. So Mrs. Friend... the Bishop used to come to do early morning, for anybody who got up early to go to the chapel, fairly often. And so, he’d stay to breakfast with whoever. I think I went to communion quite a bit. Paddy did as well, and Derek was a Catholic at the time, so, he didn’t come and join in on that bit; he used to go off to Barnsley to the Catholic church. But I’d say the Christian teaching, love your neighbour as yourself and all the good stuff, you know, would be very, very, keen.

Q: Yes. Interestingly, I know that Alec Clegg was, was a Quaker, was brought up a Quaker, and I wonder if John Friend’s background, working in an orphanage as well, I wonder if all that just somehow melded together as well.

A: Yeah, that’s interesting. No, I didn’t know that.

Q: Maybe became…
A: We’ve got very close friends who are Quakers, so, we’ve been to Quaker weddings and all that.

Q: Alec went to York, to Bootham School.

A: Yes, yes, so did my god-daughter. I mean, it’s absolutely hilarious. When she was born, I think her mum taught with Derek when Derek taught in a primary school in Cambridge. So Julia had the seven year olds and Derek had the eight year olds. Anyway, eventually there was a baby, so, we went to the nursing home to admire the new baby who was going to be called Grace or Cordelia, but she ended up as Cordelia Grace. And she said, (...) she said, “XXXXX, you know Quakers don’t have godmothers, but will you pretend to be her godmother and then she won’t feel deprived?”

Q: Oh, lovely, how, lovely.

A: So, so, Cordelia’s lovely, she’s in Yorkshire.

Q: Special.

A: She’s in Yorkshire and so she sent her children to Montessori. Wants, not too formal stuff and, so on. And one twin’s decided he wants to be educated at home at ten and the other’s going to the Grammar School. They still have a Grammar School within reach.

Q: Oh, gosh, they’re few and far between.

A: I know.

Q: Few and far between.

A: So, anyway, that’s, that’s another little side really. But no, I’m very, I think probably if I started again, that would be about where I’d be. But we’ll see, but it was, yes (...), yes there was very definitely they were quite strong religious faith. And when Derek went back, one of the reasons I went to cathedral a bit, was we lived in South Parade and Mrs. Friend and whoever of the girls was around, and I remember once or twice Mrs. Friend came back with me to breakfast and so on. But that was…Yes, but even you see to have a nativity in the entrance, I think he liked, you know, he liked it and warmed to it, to the extent that he put the picture in one of the brochures wasn’t it, later on.

Q: As a student at Bretton, did you feel you had a say in what happened? How do, were the students listened to?

A: Oh, yes, yes, I think so. I mean, it was a little bit through the student committee, as it were, and their ideas would be asked for, or your tutorial group. No, I think if anybody had or the playing of the curtain rail music and so on, was very inventive and, and approved you know. Everybody, staff and everybody, clapped like mad at that. It was nearly tuneful, you know, and so on, but, no, I think we were just left free rein so much really. Where the life drawing was concerned, they were only once I
think, did Paul Byrd find a model, and that was painting I did upstairs on that occasion with powder paint and so on. But other than that, we could be fancy free and go out of doors. There was usually a point to the thing, just as I might say, “Make sure the light looks up.” If we were doing a bottle sketch, the light’s on a shoulder of the, of the bottle; don’t worry about the shape too much and make sure you’re getting that sort of thing and concentrate on something. So, it was purposeful up to a point, but I can’t remember ever anybody saying, “I’m without ideas; will you tell me an idea?” It wasn’t, it wasn’t just as precise as that, but I think it was a (…). I think it came up that the only rebellion was that some people didn’t want to wash up on Fridays. There was a, the staff didn’t have to work Friday evenings you see, I suppose it was, and so, there was complaints about that. And I wasn’t having that ‘cause it didn’t do any harm and it was quite fun to get to know people in a different context so, it really didn’t take more than ten minutes, and so on. (laugh).

Q: Yes.

A: So, that was the biggest student rebellion I can remember.

Q: The Bretton motto was, ‘He who is not alight, cannot fire others.’

A: That’s right.

Q: I think that’s lovely.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Do you think that...

A: I think, I’m absolutely sure that’s true, that’s...

Q: Yes, me too.

A: My school one was (par undus per agros?), sow the sea and know her lands, so the influences spread, you know. But whether that was a missioning or whether that was, just, you know, don’t close yourself in your own nest, you know, find adventure, have adventures thinking.

Q: Yes, I think from the people that I’ve met and what I’ve read, when I then look at this, the motto over and over again, I sometimes see the Bretton students a little bit like satellites, as if you, you all are these little parts of a fire. Because the people that I’ve met, you all appear to have led productive lives and have really embraced a lot of actually what Bretton was about. Whether you’ve intentionally all done that.

A: No, the people I know, definitely have, very, very definitely and no, you can call it inspiration or, it becomes part of your being really, it’s not a superficial thing at all, it’s a way of life. And we are worried about the new ways of doing things. I like the idea of the Chief Education Officer and the, somebody specific who parents can refer to. I don’t like it that it may be people making money out of education; putting money in and then wanting to pick the best to work for their business or something or other. I’m appalled by that. I think, ‘Well, it’s not really to do with business.’
Q: It seems a very... when, thinking about Bretton at that time, it seemed really about the students that were there, training to be teachers and really about the children.

A: Exactly.

Q: And it seems that the mindset at the time, and I suppose it was a bit like the Zeitgeist, wasn’t it, it was post-war, it was this real opportunity to start something from scratch.

A: That’s right.

Q: And it, and even reading papers and, and documents about it, it feels exciting, and I think the mindset that was then, isn’t there now.

A: No.

Q: And, and it does feel as if there needs to be something.

A: You sometimes think that a machine has taken over in lots of ways, and, and some of the human, nearest to nature sort of things, are, are, are being, are being lost.

Q: Yes.

A: The animal bit, perhaps a, a little bit. But, but we know a lot of lovely people and see lovely children and little group of three little girls who live at the house there, she’s taking on extra children. She takes ten children to playgroups and different things. She goes off in the morning and has to run with the perambulator with three children in, you know, up that little slope. She wants to be a real teacher now, so, she’s going to train in a school. But that we got good lectures on psychology and so on. She’ll have to be appended with a good, I mean, she’s got a very good contact with children, so, I think she’ll be all right, and she’s got a law degree, I think. But I’m worried that she, you know, she’ll be lucky if she gets exactly the right, right spot for a year and then she’ll be qualified.

Q: Yes. And does, do you think that Bretton, a Bretton could happen today? Do you think the same...?

A: It would have to be a, sort of, almost revolutionary effort. The (do what you like?) school, it wasn’t, it was in Suffolk, do you remember where children weren’t so...?

Q: Oh, yes.

A: You know of it, well, Shauna Robertson and Miss Dunn came down to Suffolk to go and see it in action because they were interested. After we were teaching, they came to see us, that was the reason they came to our home near Framlingham. And I went with them, I think, and Derek worked at the Leach Pottery in Cornwall for a summer. I know they let him off school ’cause it was ‘Han honour to be hasked’, sort
of thing, but one of the... Bernard Leach, the son of somebody who had married the boss man of that do what you like school, she was his housekeeper and so on, her son went to work at the Leach Pottery. And Derek said, “But oh, gosh, he’ll have... that’s a marvellous education, you know, the do it your like education.” And Bernard Leach said, “But Derek, he still can’t read, you know.” And another one, I’ve read the history book that one of them had written later on, you know, so he’ll obviously thrive. But anybody who wanted to climb trees all day long, were allowed to, and Shauna, who was very much (...) (phone ringing) in lots of things. Derek will answer that. She said that it was a bit desolate indoors and unkempt and so on because they left it to the children. And then the children had a meeting once a week, when they were the only ones who were allowed to deal out punishments, apparently by vote. Which I suppose, it was, just weren’t allowed to do something, rather it wasn’t, but what you wanted to do, but there was no physical punishment of course, anything like that. But that, my headmistress was intrigued by that, you know, but repute was around, most people said “That awful do what you like school.” But Miss Prickett, the little girl who was captured stealing sweets, somebody’s sweets, she gave her free sweets from the tuck shop because she felt she was a little adopted girl and perhaps wasn’t quite as adjusted she should be. “We must give her things, rather than...” And so, that was do what you like school’s, sort of policy, policy, so, it seeped out. Now, a group of people wanting to get that going, I think it could happen, and I think you get financial backing for it possibly. Got people who minded, what I’d call less worldly values, I think it is (...).

Q: Are there particular influences from Bretton, do you think, that you could pinpoint or do you just think it was, it was, it’s become part of you?

A: It’s become part of me, definitely, but I don’t think it was as pinpointed as it was for Derek, but he was really much more deprived and he told you about evacuated and changing schools and, you know, and really quite rough, really. And no ambition for him, and so on. But I had the Henry Morris influence, I found very strong in Cambridgeshire schools - beautiful buildings, adult education mixed up with song, a billiard room along a corridor for men to come or anybody to come and play billiards in the daytime. That, I was on my dad’s shoulders when the first Village College at Sawston was opened in nineteen thirty-two, you see, so, I was a baby, was tiny in thirty-two. And that was in the village that my mother was brought up in. And then I spent a lot of time when they did their May Day celebrations and things like that and the village library was in the school, so, you went to the school to the library with my aunt and so on. So, I think that, I will have to admit to be, perhaps the stronger influence, a Miss Nan Youngman, who was our art advisor (...) for a long time. Sybille Marshall talks about her sparking things off with her and coming and seeing what she was up to when they were all sitting out of doors under beech trees, you know.

Q: Lovely.

A: You know, and liking it, so, it’s not quite as only Bretton. Bretton was a continuation, an enrichment rather than a fundamental change of lifestyle.

Q: The early decades of Bretton do seem to be like a golden age of Bretton. Why do you think it was so special?
A: Well, I put the age of hope as the, the key thing. But and hope for the success of hope as well, you know, it wasn’t just the hopeful. I think it, all things were possible, and that was, and the enrichment, I think, most of all. We didn’t meet it later on; we just heard a little bit how David felt that the... ’cause he was a dance, drama Goldsmith’s College trained person. And he felt that it became much more to train the actor type thing. Again, what we’re talking about education now, what’s the end of it? And the end is not necessarily better than we think, you know, it’s different and sometimes for some temperaments it’s all right. But you, if you want to be top, you can’t have everybody top. We can’t bear this television stuff, you know, the best cook, the best dancer, the best this. It’s, it makes it a little bit intriguing to watch it. I mustn’t say that I am not competitive; I think I was as a child, you know, but I liked being pretty near the top in things. But I did fail the Eleven Plus just as Derek did and he went to the central school, kind of thing. I might have done. My mother went that world and so on in her day. But mother’s best friend went to the Grammar School and it changed her life. Mother did the secretarial stuff and what not, so, it wasn’t as enriching as her best friend’s life. And I think that... they paid for me twelve pounds a year, I think it was, raked up the money, to go to a Grammar School, and then the Eleven Plus, you know, stopped. It happened about my second or third year, so I don’t think I had to pay any more, and my sisters got the Eleven Plus all right. So, we all, we all... but it was just, a, a very horrid business really, but I did come top of the A stream from time to time, so, it didn’t test and I think the... mind Grammar schools tested the same kind of feeling that Bretton was testing. I haven’t got the tremendous memory stuff. Your maths, you always put your thinking in the margin, so, that you could get some marks for good thinking, as well as the result.

Q: Yes.

A: And, yes, of course because I loved reading and so on, I could, and analyse and say what I thought about literature and things fairly easily. And my maths was good enough, but not really, because I think we all had the example on the board if we copied down, you could apply it in the example, rather than have real understanding.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: But I think Bretton was to do with understanding, rather than mechanics of thinking.

Q: Yes, I think you’re exactly right. I know Sir Alec Clegg believed in, he, he writes a lot about… “It’s fine if you’re a very intelligent child, and if you’re at the very, very bottom, teachers knew what to do with you, but that middle strata…”

A: I’m with that completely and I can remember it... if you wanted to be alive, you sat on the back row, there was a dead bit in the middle of the classroom where the teacher didn’t see you and if you were a little hands up little girl, you sat on the front row.

Q: Yes, yes.
Q: Yes. Alec’s written about how, sometimes it wasn’t the end product that a child produced, it was really the experience the child was having, how the child engaged and, and he became quite...


Q: Yes.

A: Yes, exactly.

Q: Yes, and he believed, Alec believed that often the experience was more valuable than the book in the first instance, so rather than maybe reading about it, try it, experience it. I suppose, you know, to that sense, what did chalk feel like, what does chalk do, rather than reading it? And then, of course, there’s that place for the book, as he called it, but to experience it. And I think in, especially post-war Britain, for children to have that type of man saying “This is what I want to happen in our
schools, and then I want to train our teachers to have this in our schools," probably
did seem, maybe radical, maybe it did, maybe it seemed…

A: It’s see what happens if, rather than, this is the way you do it, isn’t it?

Q: Yes, yes.

A: But you were saying to Derek earlier, weren’t you, that there are, is, there are
structures that help. One friend that came to our pottery class Miss Prickett came to,
he said, “I’m going to learn to pot on the wheel on my own. I don’t want to be taught.”
And he took his turn on the wheel, made his lovely messes and perhaps he got a
little way, but he did give, he said, “Those Egyptians or whoever started throwing on
the wheel, they didn’t know how to do it beforehand. I’m going to do it that way.” But,
but, you know, it did help to have a little bit of “This is the way it’s been done before;
you have a go at that way.” We certainly treaded, we did treading clay, and so, you
dug it from the ground and then you knew which was clay by rolling it and bend, and
if it bends soil, that’s clay. And then you tread it to get the humus to come to the top
and the clay to go to the bottom or vice versa and then you sieve it, and so on, but
we’ve done that with children.

Q: Gosh. What are your overriding memories of Bretton?

A: Well, it was delights and the friendships and the paintiness and just funny, lovely,
funny bits. And one bit that I learned from, which I still do, was that we caught Paul
Byrd one Saturday afternoon sort of, we’d left a mess in the arts room and he was
quite amiably just sort of, idly sort of sorting things out. He said, “I put things in rows,
you don’t have to put them away, but if things are in rows, they’re all right” and that’s
jolly true, isn’t it? I don’t know whether you, you ever do it.

Q: Yes.

A: You think the cupboards are full and you don’t want to bend, you just do that, and
so, this sort of, funny sort of order thing, order thing. It’s a rhythm isn’t it, almost
really, again?

Q: Yes, completely.

A: And I use music a lot and I’m not very musical, but imagery, that you have
staccato movements in your paintings and your, you know, and recipes and I went to
lecture Christopher Hicks one time on T. S. Eliot, and he said, “White pause is very
important.”

Q: Isn’t that a lovely image in your head, beautiful?

A: Yes, yes, that’s right and so, you don’t mind, feel that the rhythm’s got to go
everywhere, and now and again, you could have a, have a pause, so, that comes
into things a bit.

Q: Gosh. And didn’t you have to keep a journal when you were at Bretton?

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A: Yes, it's here somewhere.

Q: Oh, goodness.

A: Don’t stop it, wait a minute. An art journal, it’s very scribbly, but Derek thought you might like to see it ’cause it does say what the thinking was at the... you're beginning to think well it's... it’s on that thingy there.

Q: I'll stop this.

(End of recording)
Q: Okay. So would it be okay, XXXXX, if you could just tell me your name and when you were at Bretton Hall College?

A: Right, I'm XXXXX, and I was at Bretton Hall from nineteen fifty-two to nineteen fifty-four. I came straight out of the national service, having done it a little bit early in order to get into teacher training sooner, save wasting a year somewhere else. And, but it all... they let me in, out of the army about a month early, and I came straight to Bretton Hall. I... at Wakefield station, I arrived on the day appointed. I was met by a minibus, driven by a little, plump little man, who turned out to be the principal. He was on the bus duty day, collecting incoming students from Wakefield station. So I thought that was... well, I thought it was normal of course, 'cause I didn't know anything else. I'd never been in... I'd not had a higher education, so coming back into a college, I didn't know what to expect, really. But that's what happened. Driven back through the fields, out to Bretton village, down the drive, into the college area. Some of the college surprised me, because Stable Block area was a bit like a Roman ruin. Because it had this, the colonnade and pedestal... not pedestal. Pediments of the arches and things. But they were building the new hall on the third side of the block, so there was lots of rubble about. It didn't seem very wonderful there. But going round and into the college, we were met by existing students from the previous intake. And they were sort of... I was met by a lady called, a girl called Enid. And she just showed me the ropes. This was this room; this was that room. But how can I remember it? I don't know. I... because I now know what a wonderful place I'd been brought to, I don't know that I wonder... I probably expected it to be special, 'cause it was a college, and I was going to be trained to be a teacher.

Q: Why did you choose Bretton? What was it did you... what did you know about it before you went?

A: Well, my... even from school, it had been put into my head to be an art teacher. 'Cause that was my subject at school. Got my best marks in school certificate and all that. And I really wanted to... let's be honest: I really wanted to be a painter, and that was it. But art college didn't happen for me, and it was just a question of money, really. Teacher training was one of the few ways for working-class kids to get into higher education. So I won't say I passionately wanted to be a teacher. But my teacher at my secondary school had put the idea in my head, had suggested it. So I thought, 'Well, yeah, I'll go down that route.' 'Cause I couldn't go to art college. And so I was coming out of the army and... but while I was still in the army, I'd got brochures. And there was Bath Academy, Bretton Hall and Trent Park, I think, were colleges that specialised in training art teachers.

Q: And Bretton must have been in its early days at that point then.

A: No, but you could get a brochure. There was a brochure. I think I... I didn't keep it, but I did have it for quite a long time. And I think I just put that down and said, 'I'd like to go there.' So I was interviewed by Mr. Friend and Shauna Robertson, who was in charge of the art then, at somewhere I think like the Goldsmiths Institute in London. 'Cause I was stationed in London. They made it easy for you. Interviews in London for anyone in that area. So I went to the Goldsmiths Institute, I think, was interviewed and accepted. So amazing, really, because I only had school certificate. In those
days, they were so desperate for teachers, they took people who had just got school
certificate without any further...

Q: What was the interview like? Did you have to take your paintings or...?

A: Yes. Such as they were. There was one painting I've still got. 'Cause I was
stationed at Medical Corps, and on one side there was the medical barracks, Tate
Gallery, and the other side a hospital that the barracks served for staff. So although I
didn't actually live in that barracks, was on... We were allowed to live out. And I had a
flat in Pimlico. Sounds grand, doesn't it? A bed, bedsit in Pimlico. And... where was
I? I'm wandering.

Q: Your paintings. What did you take to your interview?

A: Oh, yes. I sat on the steps at the Tate Gallery and painted that tree that's in that
little green down to the right, and the river and... I think I was hoping to be
discovered by some passing...

(Laughter)

A: I took that painting. And I remember Shauna looked at the painting of the tree,
and she said I really ought to have looked more carefully at the way the things grew
and how the construction of the branches... I'd got it rather clumsy and... Never mind.
I'd sat there and I'd done it. And what else did I have? I don't remember.

Q: Did they tell you there and then that you'd been accepted, or did you have to have
a long wait and officially find out?

A: Can't remember. They probably thought about it first.

Q: So when you got to Bretton... Because of course, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park
wasn't there at all; it was, it was just...

A: It was the grounds of the college.

Q: Yes.

A: It was ours. A little thing about that: I, I thought it was wonderful that oiks like me
could turn up and live in a place like that. It sort of compensates for the fact that it
was really built for people with loads and loads of money, and they kept everybody
out, probably. But we were allowed in. It was for our use. And this was... I think this
was a bit where Alec Clegg's thinking came in: that we buy these stately homes and
make them into places where everybody can be. Not everybody, but more people.
Enjoy the beauty of the place and... yeah.

Q: Can you remember what your... what were your overriding first impressions of,
say, the mansion house? Was it what you expected? Was it...?

A: I suppose I didn't expect anything, apart from what was in the brochure. I knew
there was going to be a lovely park. I knew what a student room looked like. And
they... I mean, they were big. A lot of them were gracious rooms that were subdivided, with this what’s-his-name-designed furniture. Gordon Russell wardrobe and bedside table. So it might be six in a room. Are you going to show me a picture?

Q: Well, I have a photograph. You may have seen it. That was apparently taken in the nineteen fifties of one of the boys’...

A: Leonard Peg.

Q: Oh, is that who it is?

A: That's Leonard Peg.

Q: Apparently that was when they were in the mansion house.

A: Yes.

Q: Some of the boys' dorms.

A: Yes.

Q: I'm not quite sure why the picture was taken – if it's like a publicity picture, or just a picture that, that they decided to take.

A: Yes. That was contemporary with me. And, you know, he's got a window over his bedhead, which shows how they had to sort of pack them in somehow. Yeah.

Q: They've got, I've got... Oh, sorry. I've got... I can show you on here which one I have, actually, as well. Let me have a look. Some of them might need to kind of turn around a bit. I think this is... it's the dormitory. It's not the dorm. It's the...

A: Common room.

Q: Yes. It's meant to be the common room. I like that there's nobody in it. It's very quiet.

A: No, we...

Q: Let me find... This is obviously...

A: John Friend.

Q: This is supposed to be Monty, as in the Monty.

A: Oh, yes, we were told that story.

Q: I'm not sure who this gentleman is.
A: One of the... somebody. Yes, Monty came and asked if we had lessons in, lectures in morale and discipline. And I think John Friend gave him some answer, but the answer, true answer was no.

Q: This is outside... I think this is the Camellia House in the background.

A: That's Camellia. That's the orangery, or garden studio, we called it. We didn't do any sculpture in my day. That was the painting studio. But probably in the year or two before. Sculpture was done over in Stable Block when I was there. I can't tell you anything about that. She's wearing a mask.

Q: She is.

A: That... I don't know how that works at all.

Q: This is same picture. This is the...

A: That was the library, yes.

Q: Yeah.

A: Mrs. Friend was librarian.

Q: Was the library in the same place where it is now?

A: Yeah. No, it was in the house. It was called the library when it was the old Allendale dwelling. It was still the library, I think. Or it was their library, and it was fitted out with plenty more books and shelves for the beginning of the college.

Q: Do you remember being in it? Do you remember being in the spaces?

A: Yes, yes.

Q: What was it like?

A: It was like that.

(Laughter)

Q: Did it feel like a library? Did you still, did you feel that you were in this mansion house? Or did it feel like a college?

A: It felt like... to me, it was like the college, 'cause that's all I knew.

Q: Yes, yes. These ones are... This is... well, you tell me, I suppose.

A: Yes. It's Pillar Hall, isn't it? With the main entrance door, with the stuff outside. This is before it was the college, isn't it?

Q: No, this is when it was just the college.
A: Okay, yes.

Q: Some of the chairs came in.

A: That's right. It was more like that when we were there. And the room through there was the staffroom. Or it was Mr. Friend's study at first. And then he had the Bow Room made into his study, and then that became the staffroom, the room through there.

Q: All this area now is the reception desk, where the security guard sits.

A: Yes.

Q: And yes, that very front room – that, I think, was the principal's office for quite a long time.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: I think for a long time that was.

A: Dining hall.

Q: Yes. So did the staff and students...?

A: Yes. Staff sat there; we sat round there. Mr. Friend wanted us to not sit in cliques. He gave regular request that we circulate and not sit around with the same people all the time.

Q: Did you have every meal together?

A: Yeah. Breakfast, lunch, supper. Three meals a day we were... And some of it was a bit self-service, but mostly we had maids bringing the dishes to the table. I thought that was wonderful. Out of the army, it was very unlike.

Q: Yeah, it must have been a huge...

A: Yes, yes.

Q: …change, a huge, huge change. That's... These, this here...

A: Leonard Peg.

Q: This is the sculpture...

A: The Austin Wright sculpture.

Q: Yes. And there's John Friend again. And you've got Ezra on here, I think. One's Ezra, and one's Austin Wright. I think that's...
A: That's Austin Wright, I would guess, yeah.

Q: That's Ezra outside the nineteen sixty-four. But we still, the Yorkshire Sculpture Park still have that sculpture.

A: Oh, I'm glad about that, because I've looked around and not seen it.

Q: It's not on, on site, but they do have it, and I've been in their storage. And from this picture, I thought this was a really huge sculpture. And of course, when you see it, it's quite a delicate, quite feminine piece of sculpture. And that completely threw me. Because looking at this, I thought, 'Wow, this is going to be really big.' And of course, just a very clever photograph.

A: Yeah.

Q: But they do still have the sculpture.

A: Good, good.

Q: That's just some... those ones. These ones you may have seen before. This is a mixture. I've got some separate individual ones.

A: Is that a staff picture?

Q: I think it's a mixture. I think it's mainly staff. I think this is our, this is John. Were you... It just said nineteen fifties at the archive.

A: I don't recognise anybody else there, so more likely to be students.

Q: Maybe. It's a, literally a whole mixture. I think that's a bit later.

A: Yeah.

Q: Judging from haircuts and, and styles.

A: We hadn't got there yet. But...

Q: That's a very...

A: That's a typical scene, yes. People playing the recorder. Yes.

Q: That one I think's a bit later, possibly, too.

A: Yes.

Q: Think it looks a bit more sixties to me. Cricket team. Weren't there staff and student cricket teams?

A: Yes. I was not very sporty in those days, so I didn't take much interest. Yes. Can I just...?
Q: Of course you can. Just kind of move through them if you'd like to.

A: No, I can't date that.

(Pause)

A: No.

Q: Stuck on... yeah. Don't know if it helps or not.

A: I've got... this is us.

Q: So this must be about, what, fifty-two, fifty-three?

(Pause)

A: Well, a lot of familiar-looking faces. We've probably got this somewhere. I can't see myself, so why am I...? I'd be there. In one of these photographs, I'm there. Very scruffy, 'cause I didn't believe in this sort of thing.

Q: Maybe after the army you decided to then not have...

A: Martial Rose. Charlie Goode. Jeffrey Laycock. Hugh Heffner. Don't know... These are familiar faces, but I'll get mine out in a little while and show you, because I can recognise things better in it. But I can't work out why I'm not there. Must have been the year I didn't even turn up.

(Laughter)

A: Yes, must be. Okay.

Q: That must have been most of the college at the time.

A: Yes, it would be, yeah.

Q: Let's have a look. This is same. It's the same image. It's trying to probably get a clearer shot.

(Pause)

A: Don't know them. 'Cause could be people that were there and had left by the time we arrived, that one there.

Q: That's not best quality.

A: No, can't... Well, yes. This was... I think they were the people who were there the year before us, or they may be the one-year...

Q: Oh, yes. 'Cause there was one-year and two-year...
A: Yes. Can't remember the name. There were... Rosemary Hickling, Hicks. Rosemary Hicks, who was a great comic. I can't do names at the moment.

Q: It's okay.

A: His name was Ian.

Q: Gosh, gosh.

A: They are some of our contemporaries, but I... why can't I remember their names? That's, what's that one down...?

Q: That's the same. Some of it... 'cause they're very black and white.

A: Yes. I can't, can't say any of those.

Q: Think they're just, some of these, trying to get better shots. That's later, I think.

A: Yes.

Q: And these ones – these are more of Alec. That was Sir Alec when he was a young man.

A: Okay. In school.

Q: Yeah. And that's probably only about...

A: Yeah.

Q: That's probably the mid-nineteen forties.

A: Okay.

Q: And this is, this is Alec when he was a boy.

A: Yeah.

Q: Because of course, Sir Alec Clegg's nephews were the Attenborough brothers: David Attenborough and Richard Attenborough.

A: Oh, that family, yeah.

Q: And I think you can really tell...

A: Yes.

Q: ...on that picture. And his mother and his sisters.

A: Yeah.
Q: One of his sisters married obviously, who became Attenborough. That's his father. This is when he got his knighthood.

A: Oh, right.

Q: 'Cause of course, he wasn't always Sir Alec.

A: No.

Q: That didn't happen until the sixties. Was Alec, was... is Alec's a familiar face or not to you?

A: Is he what?

Q: A familiar face?

A: No. No, that's what we said earlier, that we didn't see him. We only knew of him. And I was not even aware how important he was to, to... Wasn't till after we'd left, and we read, and reunions and things like that. We went to one reunion – it's the one I've lost the video of – where Mrs. Clegg... he'd died, but Mrs. Clegg came. Somebody gave, we gave appreciations of him. And so it's much later that I realised he was an important person.

Q: Did you ever meet him?

A: No.

Q: Was, did you... can you remember him ever being at Bretton?

A: No.

Q: Gosh.

A: He may have been at my interview for all I know. 'Cause you don't really know who's...

Q: Goes in a blur. Interviews go in a blur.

A: But I don't think he was. I think it was, I think Ezra was there for my interview. And he was certainly there for my second interview, when I was trying to stay in the, in the part-time job that I'd... Anyway, that's another story. Yeah.

Q: Was John Friend more a face of the college for you?

A: Yes. Oh, yes.

Q: 'Cause John lived there and...

A: Yes.
Q: Yeah, was Bretton.

A: He lived in the rooms above the Bretton, the Bow Room. They had a flat there, didn't they, at first?

A2: Oh, it was very strange, 'cause you could see when they went to bed through a glass sort of partition, you know. And I think Martial had a room in that section.

A: Yeah, some of the staff were in the same corridor.

A2: It was only a shadow, but you could see the movement as they went up, you know, from room to room.

A: He took his turn patrolling the college and the grounds before we all... make sure everybody was in the right quarters. They used to do that. Do you believe it?

Q: Gosh.

A: Member of staff would always patrol, patrol the house, make sure...

A2: And locking up.

A: …that the ladies went that way and... The little... above Pillar Hall, portico... no, portico. I'm getting mixed up. Anyway, the one that led into the dining room. There's a little, halfway up the main staircase, there's a little ledge. That's where we all used to sit, last thing at night, and share our cocoa and things like that. And then at ten-thirty, we were supposed... The women's staircase went up that way and the men's staircase went up that way. And a member of staff... I can remember Martial being there on one occasion, making sure whether any... I don't think much went on that I know of. It was like that.

A2: You were allowed on the women's landing because you came and mended the iron, electrical iron, you know.

A: Yes, that was my... 'cause the irons belonged to the student union. And as assistant to the chairman of the students' union, at the end of it I knew how to mend an iron.

Q: So you were allowed access.

A: But, no, that's just a joke, really. Yes. I mean, Elsie... a girl called Elsie something had to leave because... not because she got pregnant or anything, but because she was found entertaining a man in her room.

A2: I didn't think, I didn't remember...

A: She wasn't in, she wasn't even in college. She was in a room in the village. It was a discipline, disciplinary...
A2: I don't think she left...

A: She did.

A2: There was a couple where he, you know, his father owned the factory, so you weren't worried about them being impecunious. Of course, the baby was on the way. But there was a couple that had to leave because the baby on the way. And that nice couple that we're still in touch with. They didn't leave, but it was quite a palaver, wasn't it? He had... Don Askew.

A: Yes.

A2: They got, their romance started very young, didn't it? But I think that was later, 'cause he was on...

A: They were students when I was teaching there.

A2: When you were teaching. That wasn't on the first run or second run.

A: Wasn't any scandal attached to the fact that they were attached to each other. I don't think, I don't think they did anything naughty conspicuously.

Q: Do you think that was more to do with the time...

A: The time...

Q: …rather than Bretton in particular?

A: Oh, yes. Oh, yes. Oh, it wasn't Bretton in particular. 'Cause on the whole, Bretton was in advance of its time having male and female students in the same college.

A2: That's what what's-his-name, as well as wanting to know if we did... when what's-his-name came to the college. Poppa Friend's... What story did you tell? He was very shocked that there were women in...


A2: Monty.

A: Monty, yes.

A2: Monty was shocked. But my sister, younger sister was Reading University. And married a fellow student. And he became a lecturer at Reading University. So it was when we were in Cambridge, so it was sixty-six-ish. There was a baby on the way then. And his tutor, her tutor contacted my mother, his mother-in-law, and she found somewhere for the girl to live in Cambridge and be a sort of home help. And she actually found somebody to work with, and got involved with (...), and continued her work quite a bit. But when the baby came... I saw the baby about two days after it came, in Cambridge. And she decided to keep it. And the students, a gang of students brought up the baby, you know. She was going to a lecture at Reading, so
on. And eventually, we heard he'd got a PhD and so on. But mother met her mother. But it wasn't done... it was just not done to have pregnant and... And Wakefield High School Girls, where I taught, there was a baby on the way. And the headmistress did it very gently and so on, but this couldn't be at Wakefield High School for Girls. She moved over to the tech, where she could continue some training and so on. But that was sixty-seven.

A: Yeah.

A2: Sixty-six.

A: How times have changed.

Q: Yes.

A2: Well, attitudes were...

Q: Yes.

A2: And it wasn't necessarily rejection about it. But you just couldn't have the baby on the way, with all the other children being fascinated. It was nearly, you know. She wouldn't be centre stage for that reason, I suppose.

Q: These are much... I think these are more... well, they're in the nineteen eighties.

A: Yes.

Q: But I quite like them, because, like, this is the old, this is the Stable Block, where of course a lot of activity happened, from what I've read.

A: Have you seen any of the pictures of Martial Rose doing the Mystery Plays?

Q: There may be some coming up. Not many, but I think there may be some coming up.

A: I've got a lot on my computer. They're in the archive, 'cause Martial let me send them.

(Pause)

A: Now, this is... what room is that? We called it, I think we called it the music room, and small recitals took place in it. It's the room to the front of the house, to the left of the...

A2: Portico.

A: Yeah.

Q: Does this room open out into a bigger room?
A: No, I don't... No. This was...

A2: The room was sort of next to it, for going... if you face the college, to the right was our dining room, and that became a common room. When we came back, that was a common room, wasn't it?

A: Yeah.

A2: May have been staff common room.

A: It was later on.

A2: That's where we did concerts. Everybody did a concert.

A: If you're going in at the small door -- not the big portico one -- you're in Pillar Hall, aren't you?

A2: Yeah.

A: And then just to your left is this room. You came in through that door. That led into...

A2: Had a nice view over the lakes, really, and...

A: Had these nice thingies.

Q: There's some pictures further on that I took last year. See if you can guess the room again.

A: Yeah. This is Stable Block. When I, when I was there, one of the big rooms here, there was primary education, Rae Milne's fabric studio, then the sculpture, in the rooms along that side of Stable Block.

Q: This is when I visited.

A: Yes.

Q: And I don't know if there'll be much reference points for anything.

A: That's where we used to sit and drink our cocoa before we were sent in different directions.

Q: Fantastic place to sit. There was two directions. That's really interesting, 'cause when I went, and there was security guard and then myself; and those two directions were, they were all dark, and a little bit kind of: 'Dare I go up there?' Because I just didn't know what was up there. And that's where you went your separate ways.

A: But, you know, the women's rooms were mainly on the next floor up.

A2: They were much more elegant. Yours were servants' rooms, and a rather lot...
A: And we were right up in the attic.

A2: A lot of men in one room.

A: But this, this what's-the-name went right through both floors, didn't it?

Q: When... also, when I visited, I expected somehow every floor to be really vast. And I think must have been the original first floor – it's like it's been cut in half to make, like, a secondary floor. Can you remember: did it look like that when you were there? Or was that a later addition, do you think?

A2: No, I think that was how it was. With lovely murals.

Q: Yes, yes.

A2: You know, Italianate, weren't they?

Q: Yes, they're still there. There are some pictures.

A: Yeah.

Q: Some are up here, really. Some of them are just a bit dark, I suppose.

A: I think what I've just said about that skylight going right through both is a misremember. I know that on the men's floor we, there was a big circular balustrade that we could look... Oh, it was, I think it was glassed over. And then...

A2: You could look down.

Q: I think that picture's coming up. I think you might be right. This is a room that I wonder if this is what was your music room, but it leads off into two different rooms. And you will know much better than I. But again, there's no real references other than the, the plaster and...

A: What's that? Is this not the room that we used as a dining room?

Q: That, the window here, if you, if that window is there, I know the Camellia House is here. Where we saw the ladies doing the sculpture in...

A: Yes.

Q: I think that's outside that window.

A: Oh, well, it's Bow Room, isn't it? It's the music room, with the little stage-y... there's the stage-y thing.

Q: Yes, I think the stage-y thing's through there, through... 'Cause that's the ceiling of that big room.
A: Yes.

Q: And I just liked the ceiling quite a lot.

A: Okay, I now remember... if that room is, if the stage, music room with the little stage is through there, then this is the room we used as... it was the student common room.

Q: Right.

A: We had two common rooms when we were there. One was in the main... And it was a sort of, more of a formal place. The other door that was in that picture, that's the library.

Q: Oh, really?

A2: But we had a lot... the big, the room you're calling the music room with the stage was really the communal room, where we had main weekly lecture and so on, isn't it?

A: Yeah, college meeting.

A2: College meeting.

A: It was our...

A2: Well, the music room was where we... it was Benjamin Britten that we played a lot. That... when Daphne Bird was queen. That was on the front of the building.

A: Yes, yes. That was...

A2: But that bit was obviously the front of the building...

A: That's the room I thought I was in just now.

A2: No, I think you got a little confused.

A: No. Well, I'm confused. I probably...

Q: That's the window of that room, of the big room.

A: Yes.

Q: With just a random table in it.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: That, I think, is what would be the library. That's that left-hand door.
A: Yeah, that's the... was library. It's described as library in, in... Oh, if we move we won't be in the picture any more.

Q: Don't worry.

A: I'm worrying about you...

Q: I'm fine, really, really.

A: Sore knees. Yeah, anyway, that was, that was made into the library. And in the... sorry. I'm sure it was, it was the library in, in the olden days, shall we say.

Q: And this, that's looking back down that room, so the library's behind us to our right.

A: Yes.

Q: And I think...

A: Fireplace.

Q: Yes.

A: That goes back into Pillar Hall.

Q: Yes, exactly.

A: Yeah.

Q: That's just the same kind of... I was fascinated by the ceiling. Couldn't believe it.

A: I don't remember it.

Q: Can't believe it's still there.

A: Yes.

Q: Couldn't believe it. Just beautiful. Then this is through... I think the stage is here.

A: Yeah.

Q: This is the right-hand room.

A: That's right. Everything took place... because they hadn't built that hall yet. They were still building the, the main hall for performance.

Q: Because you also, you were there at a time when a lot of building work actually was still happening.

A: Oh, yeah. So when...
A2: None of the little practice rooms were there.

A: That little table was made out of scrap off the heaps of rubbish that the builders were...

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: 'Oh, there's a piece of wood. Piece of wood.'

Q: Oh, I love that.

A: And in the pictures of, where there's... I've built a stage set for, for The Flies, that we produced in that room that we've just been... which I said was a common room. That was also a room that we used for performances. And we did The Flies by...

A2: Sartre.

A: Sartre. Jean Sartre.

A2: It's Sartre's, it's Sartre's version of the Greek...

A: That picture where there's a god in the middle. Yeah, XXXXX was Clytemnestra. I was the tutor. And I built the set, which was a set of steps that went up against the fireplace. All built of scrap off the builders. Because we didn't have a budget. Didn't have money to buy stuff.

Q: What was your actual course called?

A: Well, we were the art group of teacher certificate in education.

A2: We did art and drama.

Q: So did you specialise in a particular art, or was it...?

A: Well, eventually, yeah. We had taster sessions in the first term, where we did a bit of pottery, bit of sculpture, bit of painting. And then we chose, I think after, in the second term, probably.

A2: No, no, no.

A: Second half of the first term.

A2: Can I correct that? We did, you and I both did painting as the main thing. We did the tasters as well as painting, but everybody did painting.

A: Everybody did painting for a while.

A2: And then the second year you chose. You chose...
A: Sculpture.

A2: Sculpture. I chose pottery, because I'd done a lot of painting. But you could choose painting if you wanted to as well. And textiles. I think textiles was one of the choices.

A: Yes.

A2: But the interesting thing was that XXXXX was one of two who chose sculpture, and there was a course for them on their own.

Q: Wow.

A: Yes, two of us in Stable Block, and Reg Hazel. And that was his job: teach us.

Q: Wow.

A: Well, only for a short part of the week. And so we didn't have that long to work on our main subject, did we?

A2: No, I think it was...

A: 'Cause we all had to do English, we all had to do education, we all had to do movement of some sort, which... XXXXX tells a story which isn't exactly true. She said, 'I didn't like it because it was too airy-fairy. And I gave up when I was told to do short, sharp movements with my nose.' And I was a bit abashed by that. That's Margaret Dunn taught all that. And she said, 'I then opted for cross-country running. And I don't think I did cross-country running, either.' But yeah, but it was, that was a revelation. You know, you go from army drill to doing, being a tree and all that.

Q: I did read that... and I can't... I don't think it was Alec that said it. When they were founding Bretton, it said that drama was a misnomer, and it had to be movement. And that movement had a place much more in the arts generally.

A: Yes, it did.

Q: But that drama was a misnomer.

A: Yeah.

Q: So it doesn't surprise me that...

A2: But, but Martial was appointed to do drama eventually. But we didn't do it till our second year. There was a drama course in the second year, but it was movement until... So that's fifty-one. Fifty-two to fifty-four. No, fifty-three the drama department as such started.

Q: Wow.
A2: And Martial's interest was quite a lot of medieval things, you see. And we all charged off to see the York Miracle Plays out of doors. And Martial at that time was doing his work on collecting together and resorting, really, and to do modern...

A: Translating.

A2: Translation, in a way. While we were students. So we did The Second Shepherds' Play, didn't we? It was a reading more than, so on, where they... you've stolen the sheep, and you pretend it's the baby in the cradle. You know that?

Q: Yes.

A2: Little bit of The Second Shepherds' Play. So that was in that room we've talked about, with the little hint of a stage.

A: Yes.

A2: And then, between the time that we were there, between fifty-four and sixty, when XXXXX went back, that was when the... it was produced at Bretton. But we went to see... It was professionally produced in London. So we went to one of the smaller theatres in London to see it. So it really, you know... review at bottom of the Guardian.

Q: Yes, yes.

A: The thing is, it's, sometimes it's difficult to separate... being at Bretton was all your life. We sat around in these beautiful rooms as common rooms, but there were things going on in addition to the course. So somebody started up some ballroom dance lessons. They did that in, you know, in the evenings. There was a drama group that was their leisure time...

A2: Club sort of thing. Tiny Philpot. Jean Philpot – she ran that, didn't she?

A: The studios were always open. So that's where I learnt to be a potter, was not on the course, but going into the studio afterwards. And XXXXX might have been there anyway, which was one draw. And the other was to make pots. And some, another student taught me to throw my first pot, not a member of staff. And our lives were sort of music, art and drama, and conviviality the whole time. It's... you know, how do we separate out what was the course and what we did out of our own accord and...?

Q: Yes.

A2: We didn't... I had thirty pounds a term for travel, a grant for travel and books, materials. And mother sometimes pushed a pound note in a letter. But I didn't borrow money ever, you know. And did a little holiday job and so on. But we didn't go anywhere else. We didn't go to the pub. One boy had a car. An ex-serviceman had a car, and one or two of his mates used to go off to the pub. Jester Tearooms in Wakefield on Saturday afternoon, perhaps. We did go to Leeds to buy the engagement ring, didn't we?
A: Yeah.

A2: But that was all. But a younger generation, and I think it still happens – she went to Warwick University and was terribly disappointed that there was no social life. Everybody was always going to see their mates somewhere else.

Q: It's okay.

A2: Sorry...

A: Your computer says there's not enough happening.

Q: Yeah. Let me just...

A2: Sorry.

Q: It's okay.

A2: I meant to keep it apart because I thought it'd be... Yes, that's, that's, that was a stage.

A: Yeah.

A2: And I think the students entertained the staff. That funny one with bibs. What was all that about? That photograph with bibs and...

A: That was a cabaret.

A2: It was a cabaret sort of thing.

Q: That's opposite the stage.

A: Yes.

A2: And that was, I'd call that...

A: I've got that.

A2: I'd call that a common room that was a tutor place as well. You know, I mean, it wasn't a student common room, particularly. It was just the common room.

A: It's confusing, 'cause if you look at Tony Ripley's photos of it as it is now and as it was – he calls this the music room. That's what the Allendales called it. That's what it is.

A2: Yes. Oh, yes. But it wasn't sort of... There was performance. But the music room was more intimate than that. It's a small room.
Q: I think the music room has been... I think it's on the door now. I think that's where it's coming from. And that's back in the main rooms. If you come out of the library or the music room, that's opposite the fireplace.

A: Well, that was a common room. But we had a more informal one in Stable Block, didn't we?

A2: What was the weekly important lecture called? Where it was Shauna Robertson...

A: College meeting. Usually on a Friday morning.

A2: Yes, that's right.

A: And each tutorial group would take a college meeting with what, under whatever subject they cared to do. And sometimes it was poetry and sometimes it was a little performance. And I can't remember what they all were.

A2: The great recitation of Dylan Thomas.

A: Oh, yes. Memorable one for me was, there was a black visiting African student working with the bursar. He was presumably learning to be a college bursar. I don't know. Or administrator. But he came into a college meeting, and he handed round all these jam jars and sticks and peas and so on. And put peas in a jar, and you've got to make a sound. Sticks you could bang and so on. And he, it was just...

A2: African music.

A: African music, really. Broken down into about six groups, I think, if not more. You had to do this rhythm. Duh-da-duh-da-duh-duh-da-duh. And this, somebody else has to do duh... (Claps three times) And so on. He taught each group, and then he conducted it. All made, turned into this wonderful... not, wasn't a cacophony. It was music. It was percussive movement. Yeah.

A2: The lecture I'm thinking about, I think it was arts in education lecture that was every week, and it could be psychological and so on. But Shauna did a talk about La Tempesta, Giorgione, and also all her theories about the mother goddess that recurs through culture and so on. And one of your lectures was Laban, wasn't it? I think Laban himself came.

A: Yeah, Laban came and talked on corrective exercise for people working in munitions factories, which is one of the things he...

A2: As chief of dance, you know, he was the key man for dance. They used him during the war to make sure that...

A: One of the rooms, and it was off the common... what I've just identified as the common room. But it was the, the next one along towards the main entrance hall. It had all these...
A2: Adam Room.

A: The Adam Room we called it. And a group of students stayed behind one holiday and painted all the, coloured in all the decorative moulding in a way that they thought was Adam-ish. Anyway, I think that was later painted out.

Q: These rooms are still very well intact.

A: Yeah.

Q: Very well intact.

A2: They're well built.

Q: Were you aware of the environment that you were in having an impact on you or on your practice?

A: I don't know. Yes. Well, it was pointed out to us, 'cause I think it was there that we got this: 'Only the best is good enough for children, and only the best was good enough for people who are going to teach children.' It was that sort of philosophy behind it. Of course, occasionally there'd be letters in the Wakefield Chronicle or some such paper, and these people who were aware of this place outside town. And we were accused of being an ivory tower. 'What are they doing, teaching these teachers out in this little ivory tower, where they don't know anything about real life?' Ignoring the fact that all our teaching practise, we were out in the mining villages. We were seeing the sort of environment that we were gonna be teaching in.

Q: West Yorkshire was very poor, I think, after the war.

A: Yeah.

Q: I've seen pictures of some of the schools postwar that are quite shocking, actually, to think...

A2: I think XXXXX's almost asking you whether you got a sense of wonder and surprise and how marvellous it was. And I think that would be true. I mean, we knew we were, it was special, and...

A: I knew it was special, because I thought...

A2: Did it become a norm, you're suggesting.

A: Well, I hadn't been to many other institutions to make a comparison with. So I probably thought all educational institutions were like this, you know. See what I mean?

A2: You were very young when you came.

A: Yes, I hadn't even... I'd been in the army, but that was about all I had done. It's like, sometimes we talk about what it was like during the war, you know. Shortages
of this and... Well, we didn't necessarily know there was this... we heard about shortages, but we weren't very aware, because we hadn't known plenty before it at our age, or my age, anyway. So the shortage was normal, normal. It was normal that you saved every piece of... There's a piece of paper without anything on it there. We'd save that.

Q: Yes.

A: And so the specialness of it probably didn't really hit me till afterwards. I would say that.

Q: Do you think that maybe Bretton then set a very high standard in some ways, following that?

A: Yes. Because you'd go to other colleges... another place I taught in was (Brent?) College of Education. It was a sixties-built concrete and steel building, with glass. Not particularly special in its architecture. And it was all a bit sort of, you know, makeshift, really, compared... So I, that's when I realised that Bretton was more special. Because a purpose-built, utilitarian, down to a cost sort of environment... Not saying we didn't do a good job there, but the environment itself wasn't as stimulating as Bretton.

Q: There's a richness, I think, to Bretton.

A: Yeah.

Q: That is kind of, even now, I think, a surprise. As you move through the seasons and move through the year even, that you won't... good or bad, maybe, but you won't get that at a nineteen sixties...

A2: And we did spend a lot of time wandering through the grounds. I would do sometimes song. And Paddy did primary education, which wasn't very big room. And they spent a lot of time on nature study. I mean, they had to learn to teach arithmetic and other things as well. Rae Milne did that as well as the textile work. But Paddy spent a lot of time in the woodland thing, didn't they? And there was skating on the lake one year.

A: Yes. I've just (...) photo of you... Oh, no, that was later. Yeah, but we did skate on... XXXXX sent home for some Fen skates, which are the sort you strapped on your boots. And I'd got my old army boots still. And I strapped these skates on my boots, and we tried skating on the lake. 'Cause it was very cold, and it was well frozen. And I think I did about three skids, and twisted my ankle, didn't I? That was the end of my skating career.

A2: We admired Daurene Spotten... Did you talk about...?

A: Oh, yes, Daurene skating backwards was a wonder to behold.

(Laughter)
A2: She was one of the first drama students. Had a great sense of drama in her appearance...

A: This is Daurene: D-A-U-R-E-N-E. Not the other Doreen.

Q: That room there, this one, is, is right, more or less near the top that I could get, overlooking the lake. And it's a wood-panelled...

A: Oak Room.

Q: ...room.

A: I slept in there for the second year.

Q: Oh, did you? And they just... it interested me, because there's these filing cabinets, and they're just left. There was a few chairs. There was a waste-paper bin. The room, beautiful room.

A: Yeah.

Q: Just, just obviously... And you can still smell the wood, 'cause...

A: I must say, there was a bit of competition to get a place in that room.

Q: I bet there was. It's beautiful. It's a beautiful room.

A: I think it was a question of getting back, back to college early for the next year. But my impression, even on my return, I think a lot, more and more rooms were being taken over for administration, as they built more and more specialist studios and specialist rooms for music and so on.

A2: But there were one-year students who had to live out. And our friend Joan was one. Of course, Martin's wife Heather was one. Joan didn't like it. And she'd made friends with Paddy and myself. And Miss Dunn just let her put an extra bed in our room, you know. It was always flexible and...

Q: Yes.

A: That's the skylight that...

Q: Yes. I think that's what you were talking... yes.

A: That's what I remember now.

Q: Yes, you're right.

A: But I think it was glassed over there, but the light came through the glass so that the next floor down got some of that light, yeah. What have I done?

Q: It's okay. This is looking, actually, that front... I think that...
A: In the rain.

Q: Yes. They'd started to drain the lake, so it's not the best picture, either, really.

A: I got, I just got it on my computer this morning. I've got the pictures that are at the bottom of our garden, that XXXXX did. It rained yesterday or the day before. And I looked down. Oh, they're all peeling. And I'd only just re-varnished them. It was actually the water forming beautiful rows, neat rows of droplets on the surface of the painting.

Q: Beautiful.

A: Yeah. Lovely, yes.

Q: I realise I might have one shot at inside the mansion house, so I just took the pictures that were kind of there.

A: Yeah.

(Pause)

A: Yes, wonderful place. No, I know I was privileged.

Q: That's up on the roof.

A: That's a good one.

Q: It's up on the roof, and looking obviously back over. So we've got, there's the Stable Block.

A: Yes.

Q: And so the sixty-four buildings are down here, the student ones, and the archive building's over here.

A: Yeah.

Q: 'Cause one of my... when I stood there, I thought, 'I can't see the Sculpture Park.' People tend to go obviously to see the Sculpture Park. And when you're up on the roof of that mansion house, the Sculpture Park doesn't exist any more again.

A: No.

Q: So it was a bit like being back in time.

A: Yes. Mm. Of course, whenever we've gone there, we've tended to focus looking at the college in, a) when it was still a college, and b) even after. So now, you go there, and you sort of have to arrive at the Sculpture Park, don't you? Not much choice. Sorry.
Q: It's all right. There's just a few of the... This is just up on the roof, really. That's looking out towards, I suppose back to the A1.

A: Yes.

Q: Back that way. I just was fascinated, being up on the roof. There's quite a nice picture... this is over towards... that must be back, if you're looking towards the back of the mansion house.

A: Yes.

Q: Not quite sure which direction we would be facing in. This is towards Huddersfield, and the moor over there.

A: Yes.

Q: There is, there's one picture, though... This is... and they're all the sixty-four student...

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And I don't know which ones'll be kept or gone or... But that's a picture...

A: It was, I think it was a bit controversial that they put anything in front of the mansion at all.

Q: You're right. And it's very interesting, because some people who went to Bretton, especially I think the students who spent their time in those hostels, are very connected to them; they don't want them to go at all.

A: No.

Q: But there's other people that say that Bretton Hall and the mansion house was there long before, and that they shouldn't be there.

A: Shouldn't have been there.

Q: So it's a real mixture.

A2: There was a little communal kitchen, you see, on, on each floor. And that must have meant that you either had to get on and so on. I mean, you did have your main meals in... Didn't have to cook the main meals, so it was refreshment rather than the rest. But... no, I think it's a funny place to put it, really.

Q: There are some people who would like to see them be listed buildings. Because, I suppose a bit like you did, they met their partners there, and, and their life together started there – which makes it incredibly personal.

A2: Yes, that's right.
Q: And they don't want them to be demolished.

A: No. Well...

A2: It's little music practise rooms, which were marvellous. Because, you know, they were insulated so you can hear from one room to the next, I suppose. And then the new dining room going back. And there was a new gymnasium, wasn't there? And then...

A: There was a dance studio, wasn't there, sort of raised up above...?

A2: The principal's bungalow, principal's bungalow going back. And the...

A: Don't know what... Then there's the Victor Passmore Studio. What's happening to that? It was newly built especially for painting.

A2: And then the little place that became the student...

Q: Up in the roof part...

A: Oh, right. In the...

Q: Yeah, right up in the... It was kind of a bit like: 'Just step where I step or you'll go through it.' I was very lucky. He just said, 'Where do you want to look?'

A2: And didn't mind you taking your time and...?

Q: No. I just said, 'I want to look everywhere. As much as...'

A: Need to go everywhere.

Q: You did. You did.

A: Up in the roof.

A2: He was probably proud to show what he was...

Q: To get outside, there was a, there was a big gap. And you just saw right down. And he just kind of said literally...

A: 'Be careful.'

Q: Yeah. 'Hold that bit, and step here.'

A: Oh, what's this?

Q: It was above one of the doors. Just that little bit. I don't... there's no real context to it. But he took me down into the cellars as well, which will be coming up. There's down in the cellar.
A: Yes.

Q: I think at one point – you will know more than me – did photography happen down there? Or something happened in the cellars.

A2: Flower arranging.

A: Flower arranging. It was the wine cellars, wasn't it?

A2: There was a table big enough to... And a very nice David Leach bowl that she was fond of.

A: And the laundry...

Q: Spooky.

A: …was down there.

Q: Oh, right. It... as you'd imagine, it's vast. It's a very big space.

A: Yeah. We didn't, I mean, we didn't have washing machines even, did we? There were big, several big sinks, and drying racks; and we did our own laundry down there, didn't we? You did flower arranging. Wasn't there a chapel down there? Did, did the Friend, Mrs. Friend make a little chapel?

Q: You might be right.

A: I just remembered that.

A2: I think he was really Methodist, and she was very Church of England, wasn't she?

Q: You might be right. It's very dark down there: much darker than anywhere else. And not every light works.

A2: I'll ask, I'll ask Alison. Alison'll remember that.

A: Yes, she would.

A2: Alison Friend.

Q: And it's not very high.

A: No.

Q: I'm about five foot seven, and I, and you have to really crouch to get down there. And that was, in that room there, there's a drain at the bottom. I don't know if that maybe was where the washing was done. And kind of racks to the right-hand side. But the man from the council took me round. He kind of thought that much more
sinister things had happened in there in centuries gone by. But it did have a history before the college, so who knows. But I found it amazing that students worked down there at some point, or something happened down there. Because it's a cellar of a mansion house. There's an awful lot of, you know, pipes and tubes, and the heating system's down there.

A: Yes.

Q: Yeah.

A2: We were never cold, were we? I can't remember...

Q: This bit here... When I was taken through kind of towards what's now the archive building, this was just left on a board.

A: Oh, I see.

Q: Like a lesson. Like a class about what it is to be an artist. And that felt really spooky.

A: Yeah.

Q: Because students could have just left the room. It's a big mind map, isn't it, about what it is and what...

A: Yeah. We went back in the eighties for... they called it a summer university, didn't they? You could, you know, anyone could apply to go to their summer university. And we went on an art course there with the man who was at that time in charge of the art. That's why I know about the Victor Passmore Studio. And this is another tutor, who was an expert on J. M. W. Turner.

A2: Turner in the North, he wrote a book.

A: He wrote a book called Turner in the North. But that looks like the sort of things that these two were talking about. They're very philosophical and...

A2: He took us to his own home to show us his painting and how he was thinking about his own work.

A: We had to walk. We walked all round the park, with specific instructions on how we were to record what we were seeing, and, you know, to make us think, twist our angle and mindset. Yeah, may have been him.

Q: I think, for me, when I came across that, it made me think: 'Yes, this was a learning space.' Because there's nothing in those big rooms. So going, last year, to somebody who didn't study at Bretton, it felt like a very beautiful mansion house; but I didn't necessarily feel college. And I felt disappointed. But when I saw that room, I then thought: 'That's what it is. That's what it was all about.' It's decided to be slow today. I'm going to...
A: How much memory have you got in there?

(End of recording)
Q: …I put it there. Are you both in there? But it will, it will go black, so... after a few minutes. 'Cause I know it can be quite off-putting. Do you mind just telling me what your names are and when you were at Bretton?

A: Oh, me first. I'm XXXXX Vidal, née Mould, as I was when I arrived at Bretton in nineteen sixty-nine.

Q: Okay.

A: And I did a two-year art course, art with drama as a subsid. And I left in nineteen seventy-one, when, from then on, I taught till I was fifty-nine.

Q: Goodness. Okay, thank you.

A2: XXXXX Vidal. I came here in September sixty-nine, and left at Easter seventy-two, for... because I was naughty and I'd... to do a couple of extra terms. I'd started on a three-year course, converted to a two-year course. But as I say, I didn't really pull my weight. But because of Joe Breel and Alyn Davies seeing something in me that was worth continuing, they gave me another shot at it. And I left, qualified in Easter seventy-two.

Q: So did you meet at Bretton?

A2: Yes.

A: On the first day.

A2: First day.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A2: First day. At the other side of what you're calling the refectory, that we would refer to as the dining hall.

Q: Oh my goodness. 'Cause I spoke to... Thank you, Tony. That's really kind.

A: Oh, thank you.

A2: Thank you very much.

Q: Thank you, Tony. I'm fine. Thank you. I spoke to another couple, who were here in nineteen fifty-two, who met on the first day, and have just celebrated sixty years of marriage. The amount of you that met here...

A: Yes.

Q: …and have long-term marriages, is phenomenal.

A: And long-term friendships as well.
Q: Yes. That's very important.
A: Yes.
A2: Worldwide.
Q: Yeah.
A: Yes, yes.
A2: Worldwide.

Q: I would agree with that. The couple that I'm talking about in nineteen fifty-two that I spoke to put me in touch with their friendships and I suppose their network. And the amount of... I mean, like that. You know, you have kept these friendships. And there was a guy who worked here, again in fifty-two, called Martial Rose, who was head of drama.
A2: Yeah.

Q: He's ninety-four now. And I spoke to him. And he, I mean, he's clear as day. He's as sharp as a pin. And it's this network that you... that's continued, which I find fascinating. Why did you choose Bretton?
A: I...
A2: Yeah, go on.
A: I was at Brighton Art College.
Q: Okay.
A: And I had a friend at Brighton called Phoebe, who was a real character. And she turned around to me one day and said, 'Oh, I've just been to this wonderful place, and it's called Bretton Hall. Write it in your diary. Write it down. Write it...' And she gave me the address of it. And it was weird, because I actually forgot all about that. But she said, 'It's marvellous. It's a wonder. You must go there.' I think she'd been for the weekend. Anyway, as time went on, I was sort of in a little bit of a: 'Oh, I don't know what to do with my life.' And I went to Spain, and I went... One of the tutors at, at Brighton was, had retired to Spain. And I went out and did some work with him. And I met a girl when I was in Spain who said, 'Oh, I do my work, but I've got a teaching certificate. And it means what I do is, I go and teach at home for a while, save some money, and then I go abroad. And I keep myself going by doing conversational English lessons, and then I carry on doing my own work abroad.' And I thought, 'That's what I'm going to do. That's what I want to do.' So I left. And I um-ed and ah-ed. And my mother, who was really fed up with me by this time, sort of said, 'Oh, when are you going to do something decent working in, going to art colleges and...? You know, lowest of the low.' And she said, 'Why don't you do something nice like be a teacher?' And I thought, 'Well, actually, that's what was in my mind.' So I contacted County Hall in London, 'cause I lived in London in those
days. And I told them that I'd been to art college and I was thinking of teaching. They said, 'Well, there's only two colleges you can go to. One is Trent Park and the other one's Bretton Hall.' And I thought, 'That name rings a bell.' So I thought, 'Well, I'm not going to Trent Park,' because it would have meant I had to live at home. 'So I'll go to Bretton Hall.' So I applied. And then I found it all in my address book, all this information that Phoebe had given me. I thought, 'That's really weird.'

Q: Fantastic.
A: So there's a sort of, you know...

Q: What a lovely story.
A: And so I came up and met him.

Q: My goodness.
A: And I didn't go abroad again for ages.

(Laughter)
A2: You'd just come back from abroad, in the same way that I had.
A: Yes, yes.
A2: I'd just come back from...
A: Germany.

A2: Germany and Italy and Austria. And... yeah. But I got here by... I was at York School of Art, and the idea was to be an art teacher. But instead of going on to the next stage, which was gonna be Sunderland, I found that I could get a job and make loads of money. And I just went from job to job to job, until, at the back end of the sixties, I was working in my old school in York as a lab technician. And the head said, 'Well, what are you gonna do long term? I'll give you day release, you can get a couple more GCEs, and decide where you want to go for teacher training, if you want to teach.' I said, 'Yes, I do.' And I think he as much as anybody got me in here. And I came, came here because... Now, XXXXX's reckoning Bretton and Trent Park. But to my way of thinking, from what I'd heard, if you applied... There were two: Bretton Hall and Enfield.

Q: Okay.
A2: And I was told that...
A: I bet Trent Park's in Enfield. It wouldn't surprise me. It's, it's North London, anyway.
A2: Oh, right. Well, yes, there's a possibility there. But it was gonna be Bretton or Enfield. I thought, 'Well, Enfield's quite a long way, but Bretton's only forty miles away.' And this is coming from York.

Q: Yeah.

A2: And, but I also realised that, if you wanted to get into Bretton, it really had to be your first choice – in the same way as, for the services, you... Well, that's another story. But, yeah, so I chose Bretton first choice, Enfield second. Came and had an interview with Daphne Hale and Theo Olive. And Daphne Hale was very perceptive. Saw right through me. But again, must, must have seen something worthwhile there. And Theo was very nice and... And that was it, and I was in. And it was such a breeze in those days, because York paid me seven pounds a week. They gave me three hundred and sixty-five quid grant.

Q: Wow.

A2: I lived in Swithen for the first year, and ate in the dining hall, and drank in Kennel Block, and just had enough room to manoeuvre anywhere. There weren't the worries about student loans to be repaid or...

Q: Yeah.

A2: It's just a completely different set-up. Perhaps too easy. Perhaps too easy for students then. But it certainly gave students the opportunity to focus on what they were doing, rather than having in the back of their mind: 'How am I gonna pay for this? How are my parents gonna pay for this?' Because it was something that local authorities did for the students that had been accepted. And I think that's, that's how it should be.

Q: Do you remember your interview, XXXXX?

A: I was trying to think about that. I do remember, it must have been... it was March, and there was snow. And it was... sort of looking back now, being a southern girl, I had no idea what snow meant. I mean, we have snow in London, but you'd sort of... I don't know. You'd need to get the snow off loads of walls before you could make a snowball. And I remember arriving at Wakefield station, and I must have got a taxi or something to come here. And I think... who was... was he Tony, the pottery man? I'm trying to think. I've a feeling it was him.

A2: Reeve.

A: I've not got any... Oh, Reeve, yeah. I've not got any real strong memories of the actual interview, because it was the weather that overtook everything. Because they suddenly turned round to me and said, 'I think you ought to stay the night.' 'I can't do that. I've got to go home.' And they said, 'Well, the roads could be closed, you know. How, how are you going to get into Wakefield?' And it was, it was such a shock, this weather thing, that that has overtaken everything else about my interview. It was this weather, and that's all I seem to be concerned about. 'This is weird. I've never had
this before. Why can't I go...?' You know, it was that, rather than, 'Oh, I'm scared because of the snow.' It was more like, 'How dare it?'

Q: What were your first impressions? When you started here, and you'd got your places, and you turned up, what were your, what... just what were your impressions?

A: Well...

A2: The...

A: Yeah.

A2: Well, go on.

A: Sorry. Didn't appreciate it at all.

A2: No.

A: Just took it for granted. Really did just take it for granted. The, the amazement and the wonder and all of that came after it had gone, and thought... and now... Because as I say, I come here two, three times a week. I was walking round Top Lake last night, and thinking, 'Oh, wow.' Because the other thing was that it was ours. There was a serious, serious belief, with all of us, that Bretton... And I still feel that. I can't... I think that's one of the... when I walk round, I own this place. This is mine, and it will always be mine. And I think it's just an acceptance... it was an acceptance that this was ours, and this was sort of like our playground and so on and so forth. And, but there was never that sort of: 'Oh, aren't we lucky?' Never thought that at all. It was...

A2: No. We felt unlucky, in some respects, that we were a bit isolated. But I was all right: I had a car. And I think when I arrived for my interview, I drove down the drive, parked in front of mansion, walked in through the front door, was directed to the staffroom door, and, and that was it. It was just, yes, you own the place. Once you're here, you own the place. And you really do: you own the place, from Ray Kelt the ranger's cottage, to down at the bottom, that's another car park now; from the chapel to Kennel Block – the lot. From that phallic war memorial at the end of Park Drive...

Q: Yeah.

A: Yes.

A2: And... yeah, that was the big joke.

Q: Yeah, I imagine.

A2: The shape of that. And, yeah, just owned the place. And there were certain places that, they weren't... There were no no-go areas, but there were places that were, that belonged to particular, shall we say, cliques, cliques.

A: The staffroom. Oh, the cliques, yes. But there was the staffroom.
A2: What?

A: I can remember coming back as a teacher, and being asked to go in the staffroom for... And I felt so uncomfortable. 'I shouldn't be in here.' So that was, to me, that was sort of sacrosanct: that was the staff staffroom.

A2: I was all right with that, because I had my interview in the staffroom.

A: Yes.

Q: Oh, right.

A2: Must have just cleared the decks, everybody out. And all my, my art folder was out on the floor, with Theo Olive going, 'Hmm, yes. Very interesting, yes.' And...

Q: Excuse me.

A2: Yeah. I don't know. But the whole place... The music people up there... well, that was theirs. But we were...

A: We were art.

A2: You were art and drama subsid. I was art and drama subsid. We did our art in those studios above the boiler room.

A: Yeah.

A2: And then later on we operated up at Kennel Block with Reggie Hazel.

A: Yes, I think they banned us, because we were a bit scary. 'Cause we were, we were two-year course. And our course was quite interesting, because we... well, I was one of the... Morag was actually the youngest, and I was one of the youngest. And the eldest was...

A2: Grace.

A: Grace, who was fifty-something. And we were all ages between, men and women, all with experience in art. And I think to some of the tutors, who were younger than some of the older ones, I think we were quite scary. 'Cause we also asked questions. I mean, I can imagine, sort of having been a teacher myself, to actually try and come up with somebody who was older than me and sort of say: 'You've probably got more experience than me, but I'm gonna try and teach you something.' Yes, so...

Q: It's really interesting you say that it belonged to you. Because, again, people I've spoken to that came here, they say exactly the same thing. And in my own tiny way, I feel it as well. Coming here every week, learning about it, being in this environment – you become very protective over it.

A: Yes. Oh, yes.
Q: Very...

A2: And this, this is why it's, it's very difficult to accept that the place is... it isn't falling down yet, but it does need a few million spending on it.

Q: Yeah, it does. I'm, I'm a lecturer, really. I did a PgC so I could lecture rather than teach. But I've always taught, for the past twenty years, doing, teaching art, all of those things. And so it's really my bag. And so to find... And this sounds, I don't know, maybe... It's a magical place. It is absolutely tremendous. And so knowing that it's been like this since about two thousand and seven is actually really quite difficult to kind of get your head around it. And of course, it will be developed if and when, how. And again, I feel quite protective about that.

A2: Yeah.

Q: And that's only after two years. And so I can well imagine what you're saying, that is sounded out by everybody else that seems to have come through these doors, that actually, this is, it's got a real... there's a genuine place inside of you all.

A: Yes.

Q: Because you haven't come through the system and gone. You all are brought back. I've met some of you that literally make pilgrimages, that live abroad.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And keep coming back and keep coming back. And I think that's quite unique. I haven't really come across that in the scale that people do it at Bretton.

A: Right.

Q: Not at all. Was there a type of student that came?

A2: All types. I think all types. There was everything from the real intellectuals, people with brains that'd run rings round other people – and unfortunately some of those who knew it. There were the pseudo-intellectuals, who would love to have been in on the intellectual scene. There were the, the drama types, sporty types...

A: Ezra Taylor knitters.

A2: Ezra Taylor knitters.

Q: Ezra Taylor knitters?

A2: Yeah. You know Ezra, you know Ezra Taylor?

Q: Yeah.

A2: The knitters were up there. And they were: the knitters.
A: They used to... we used to call them the...

A2: The knitters were upstairs, and we'd seem them as we went to do the laundry.

Q: How fantastic.

A2: (...) on their knees. There were the sporty types, who would use the sports building, you know, next to that pond.

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A2: Dance-y theatrical people, who'd be with Sam Thornton or whoever in that... What was that hall called? On that side of Stable Block.

A: I used to do dance with Sam Thornton up above the pond.

A2: Really?

A: Yeah.

A2: Not in that...

A: In the gym-type place.

A2: In that hall as well?

A: No.

A2: Oh, right. There was the audio-visual building. And Harold Dabs, who... I think he lived in Denby Dale. He was really pleased with that. He had a very dry delivery. He'd almost bore you to death in the small lecture room down here. Remember one of his lectures. He said, 'The development of the fetus is quite remarkable. At a certain age, the fetus...' I forget what. 'The fetus has grown twenty thousand times. Imagine what would happen to you if you were to grow twenty thousand times.' Waited for applause; nothing happened. So, so he went on. But we only... going from there into this audio-visual building. And it was just this empty building, with a half-circle of chairs, and him sitting in another one. 'Well, here we are in the audio-visual building. We have no audio-visual, we have no audio-visual equipment because the money's run out, but we do have the building. So, what shall we talk about?'

Q: Oh my goodness.

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: That's fantastic.

A2: And you... George Dobinson.

A: I know. George Dobinson.
A2: Yeah. We won't tell you what our name for the option was.

A: What we used to call it.

A2: It was other ethnic groups. And, but...

A: Oh, it was, that was really... I don't know. It, it... I think it's a case of, it was doing something... We had to do it, and so therefore you sort of chose something. And I chose that, because I'd done my first teaching practice in, or was going on my first teaching practice in Dewsbury, in a girls' school, which was quite interesting. And so I thought, 'Well, this will come in useful or not.' And it was... again, some of the things were very, very dry, very, very... And I can remember, we used to pass silly notes to each other at the back of the lecture... I mean, really, we behaved like children. It was... But, yeah, I don't know. You ask sort of what makes... I sometimes think, because... I, I was led to believe that one of the reasons it closed was because it was too far out on a limb. And there was stuff going on in Wakefield, because the dance people and the drama people had taken some buildings over in Wakefield. And this was so far out on a limb, and nobody wanted to be this far out of where it was happening or whatever. And I think the fact that we were out on a limb, that we became a sort of small microcosm of, of life.

Q: Yeah.

A2: Yeah.

A: You know, you've asked what sort of people we were. And we were all sorts of people.

A2: Yeah, it is. It's this variety.

A: And I think...

A2: The...

A: Yeah.

A2: …majority were girls or women. I think the ratio was six to one, females to males.

A: Was it?

A2: Yeah, something ridiculous like that. I've got this figure in mind of about seven hundred students overall.

Q: I was about to ask if you remember how many were here.

A2: I think seven hundred.

A: Yeah, because a lot of people did... not everybody lived in.
Q: No, and I was about to ask that as well.

A: Yeah, yeah. Not everybody lived in.

A2: Well, they were out at Bank Hall beyond Cawthorne. Living in all the surrounding villages. Living in Wakefield. Anywhere round and about. Plus in the halls of residence. Plus that... there was a hall of residence the other side of the main road at the top of the village.

A: Oh, yes.

A2: And it really... after the first year here, with you in Grasshopper, the one down at the bottom, next to the...

A: Key, that's gone.

A2 …key of knowledge, which has gone somewhere else – a piece of sculpture.

Q: There was a piece of sculpture that was there in nineteen sixty-four, an Austin Wright piece.

A2: Yes, yeah.

Q: I probably actually... I'll have a picture of it.

A: Supposed to be the key of knowledge, we were always told.

A2: Looked more like a pair of spectacles with a blacked-out...

A: Lens.

A2: Yeah.

A: Yeah, that's the one.

Q: That's with Sir Alec Clegg.

A2: Yeah.

Q: And Ezra Taylor, I think, if memory serves. I think it's... no, sorry. That, it's John Friend, first principal.

A: Oh, yes.

Q: Ezra Taylor in the middle, and then Austin Wright's on the right. And it was just outside, wasn't it?

A: No, that's not Ezra Taylor.
Q: Isn't it?
A: No.
Q: It says underneath: 'Ezra.'
A2: No.
A2: Must have been renamed.
A: Ezra Taylor was...
A2: That looks like King's Head.
A: Yes.
A2: Can you see the thingy there that looks like King's Head?
A: No, that's... that was... oh, Vanessa lived there. Allendale. There was Allendale and...
A2: Beaumont.
A: Beaumont, were those two that were along that way.
A2: Oh, the two long ones that faced...
A: Yeah, which would... what you'd have seen through that.
A2: King's Head was round the corner.
A: Grasshopper was there.
A2: Next to the fence to the fields across to the chapel was Grasshopper. Up the hill from that was Swithen. And then the one above that was Litherop. And above that was sickbay. And above that was Joe Breel's cottage, bungalow.
Q: Crikey. I've seen that piece of sculpture 'cause it's in the archive at YSP, as in their sculpture archive.
A2: Oh.
A: Right.
A2: Right.
Q: Because when I did this walk in October, what I did, I got a map... In nineteen... This is a bit of a tangent. But in nineteen sixty-four, when those buildings were made,
there was kind of like a prospectus-y type, I suppose promotional document done. And in the middle of it there was a map, this hand-drawn map, as they used to be. So in October last year, what I did is, I walked the nineteen sixty-four route as if I was a sixty-four student, really. And of course, the piece of sculpture was there to commemorate the opening of these buildings. And it's not there. So I tracked it down, and it's at YSP. And I thought that was a really huge bit of sculpture from that picture. It's quite feminine; it's quite delicate.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: And I... because of course, the way that's been taken...

A: Of course, yes.

Q: It's like they're through the... and I was expecting this great big thing. But they do still have it.

A: Yeah.

Q: It's still there.

A: Well, we saw them taking it away, didn't we? We said, 'Where you going with that?'

A2: They were going up to Deer Park Lodge with it, weren't they?

A: They were, yeah. Deer Park Lodge, that was another one.

A2: Yeah. Our drama tutor lived in Deer Park Lodge, in... as you'd face it, she lived in... as you face it from the road, she lived in the right-hand side. And she had a student living with her.

A: Yeah, Annie.

Q: Wow.

A2: And so, yeah, you've all these different parts within the campus and beyond. Like Banks Hall in Cawthorne – it is Cawthorne, effectively, isn't it?

A: Oh, yeah.

A2: That one halfway down the hill to Asda from Wakefield, on the right-hand side. Beyond the crematorium.

A: What's that? I don't...

A2: It was part of Bretton.

A: Was it?
A2: Yeah.

A: Oh. I don't, I can't even think of the building.

A2: And I can't remember when, because it's forty-odd years since we... There've been the changes. But all these things are, they've all got some sort of significance. Like, I did you that run up the hill to Joe Breel's cottage. Now, behind that, there was something called Back Path, which cut the corner off from coming down to the main entrance.

A: It was haunted.

A2: And then going straight on to Kennel Block, or turning right and coming down to mansion. If you went Back Path, a) you would be scared. You'd be really...

A: You might see the grey lady.

A2: You might see the grey lady, or you might get the goats jumping up on the wall at you.

A: And they really do scare you.

A2: They do make you jump, or they did do. And, but the grey lady apparently lived in mansion. And we'd, we'd a few ghost hunts.

A: Oh, you... I never did. But you're sort of making me think now about why, why was it as it was. And I'm just wondering if... Most people lived in, the first year. Which I think gave you a grounding, possibly, and made you... and obviously, that's when you made your friendships, or you started to make your friendships. Then that feeling... you said you were all right because you'd got a car. And come to think of it, there was sometimes that little bit of feeling: 'Oh, I've just got to get out of this place.' And so to be able to escape was good. But if you then lived out... and it gave you a focus to come back in. And you'd got all the home comforts. 'Cause another little thing that's just reminded me... Monty Python. Monty Python started while we were here. And there was a television room in Stable Block

A2: It was in Stable Block, at this end of Stable Block.

A: And it just packed. We all stood there like this, because we couldn't move because we were so many of us packed in to watch Monty Python. And it'd just started. It was...

A2: There were two... And it was a colour set.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A2: It was a colour television.

Q: Crikey.
A2: And it was a fair-sized screen. Wasn't an enormous screen, but it was a fair-sized screen. And in this reasonable-sized room, with comfortable chairs, you could watch colour television.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A2: So I would say the most important programmes to be watched for people in this place, being of the type of students they were, was Monty Python and Disco 2.

A: Oh, yes, Disco 2.

A2: Which was the... that came before The Old Grey Whistle Test.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A2: It was called Disco 2.

Q:Crikey.

A2: Because it was on BBC2 and it was, it was pop music.

Q: Oh my goodness.

A2: And there was some seriously good stuff on there. But it... before Whispering Bob did The Old Grey Whistle Test, that's, that's what it was. And those, those were the two particular ones that we used to watch. But you'd to make sure you got there early.

Q: I bet.

A2: To get a seat. And after that, you'd be up to Kennel Block.

A: Yes.

Q: Goodness. What... I've asked some other people this, and I get different answers. What type of culture existed here? Like, what was the environment like to be in?

A2: Easy, relaxed, no pressure. But unlike a university, where I feel that students are very much on their own, and don't always get the sort of direction that they need from their lecturers or tutors, and are left to their own devices and can sink rather than swim – here, it was all very easy, but there was the coaxing and the just general input from tutors to keep you going. You don't see it that way.

A: I do not see it that way at all.

A2: Oh, right.

A: No, no. I think, I think... I very, I felt very much as though there was that for some, but not for everyone. I always felt I was left to sink or swim. I really did. I didn't feel any support, particularly, at all. And also, learning to be a teacher. I didn't learn to be
a teacher coming to Bretton. I learnt to be a teacher by going out on teaching practice, and learning from good teachers that I met on teaching practice, and got lots and lots of advice.

Q: Was your teaching practice in the West Riding? Were your schools local schools?

A2: Yes.

A: I suppose, yes, they would have... I mean, the first one was in Dewsbury.

Q: Yeah.

A: This is the way of the world. The schools that I did teaching practice in no longer exist. Like, for example, the school that I taught in no longer exists, either.

A2: Detention centre. There were two, two near each other. The one that XXXXX and Morag taught in had predominantly Asian kids in it, Muslim kids. And across the road from there was St. Paulinus, a Roman Catholic school, with predominantly white, Roman Catholic kids.

A: Yeah.

A2: I was then at Featherstone, in a middle school that Alec Clegg set up. And I had a particular group, the majority of whom hadn't been outside Featherstone in their lives. They hadn't been as far as Pontefract. They hadn't been as far as Wakefield. They hadn't been to Scarborough, to the seaside. They'd certainly not been abroad.

Q: Wow.

A2: And if, as I say, if that doesn't apply to the majority, it applied to a lot of them.

Q: Yeah. You were here at a really interesting time. My research runs from nineteen forty-five to nineteen seventy-four, because that's when Sir Alec, that's his tenureship at West Riding. Bretton opened in forty-nine. He left in seventy-four. 'Cause a lot of what you say, in that period of time... Because I think Bretton's kind of in two halves. There is a delineation; there really is.

A2: Right.

Q: There's a lot of students that can say exactly what you said – spot on, word for word. And when you talked about your interview as well... Alec Clegg was very good at picking very good staff, staff who could see potential. And that comes through the whole track of it. But then your experience also comes on the cusp of, heading towards seventy-four. The boundaries were changed of Yorkshire. The West Riding no longer existed.

A2: Yeah, that's right.

Q: Alec happened... happened, I suppose, but he retired in seventy-four. That was... and so he was gone. So you were here as that period of really, you know, innovative
investment in teachers, investment in the schools was all put in place, and just as it was starting to... Well, some people describe it as like, just overnight, it had gone. It had just gone. So it's interesting that I think you're caught on that cusp, where there's that foundation of Bretton, that feeling very valued; but then that kind of, that change was happening, and it was on the air, and it was really... Well, again, when I've spoken to people, mainly people who worked in the West Riding, who lived through that transition, I suppose, and just... they found it horrendous. Just a really difficult time. So the fact that you feel that you were maybe taught how to teach in one of the schools completely rings true.

A: Yeah.

A2: Or you learnt technique or you took in technique by discussion in, with other students, either at the bar or in their rooms or wherever they were living. And experiences would be shared there. And you'd, I think you'd take in: 'Oh, I'd better be careful. Better watch out I don't do that.' Because there were things you could so easily do as a student which would offend staff. For example, I... I've been guilty of so many things. This first place I went to, in Featherstone, I, when I arrived, the school was running. And had a cigarette in the staffroom, threw my match on the laid fire, which burst into flames. And by break, I'd sat myself in the deputy's wife's chair. And he told me to move from it, 'cause it was her chair. I'd picked up somebody's cup to have a cup of coffee, and it was their favourite cup. And there's people who came in the staffroom – 'Oh, the fire's lit already. Oh, well, that's early.' And, and thinking, 'Yeah, I wonder how that happened.' 'Oh, yes, your cigarette, isn't it? Yeah.' And these mistakes you can make in the staffroom, mistakes you can make in the classroom...

A: You must have not been there for the lecture. I can remember being told quite categorically, 'Now, you're all going out on teacher, teaching practice. There is staffroom etiquette. And you must make sure...' I remember this.

A2: Who told you that? 'Cause nobody told me.

A: They obviously didn't tell you, but I definitely remember this. And it was sort of, you know, sometimes the staff like to have their own chair, so your best bet is to just sort of lurk a little bit until you see an empty chair or until somebody says to you, 'Come and sit down.' And the same with cups. Oh dear. Yes, I remember that.

Q: Did you have a typical day at Bretton? Was there such thing as a typical day?

A: Oh, no. I don't think so. Not really.

A2: Typical day. Might start in the middle of the night, with Joe Breel turning up and saying, 'The fire alarm has been going for the last half-hour. You have been incinerated. Get outside.' You'd go outside, and there'd be people there in, in their pyjamas or nighties, with a coat on, freezing to death. And it'd just be a fire alarm test. So that, that's an early start to the day. And then I suppose breakfast and...

A: Eggy bread.
A2: Eggy bread.

Q: Oh my goodness.


A: Eggy bread.

A2: And that cheese that you absolutely hated.

A: Ugh. When I didn't like, when I didn't like what was the main, the main food, I would pretend to be... well, I'd just say, 'I'm vegetarian.' And inevitably it would be this cheese that... I ate so much of it, I hated it in the end. And it was... what would it be? Lancashire?

A2: I think it was Lancashire.

A: It's, it was crumbly.

A2: Or Cheshire.

A: But not like Wensleydale's nice and... I think it was Cheshire. It was Cheshire, and it was... But sometimes that was better than the other stuff that was on offer, so...

A2: Then you'd go back to your room, get set up for the day. And Mrs. Wood'd come in to me, or Mrs. Westwood'd come in to you.

A: Mrs. Westwood.

A2: And Mrs. Wood'd come in and say, 'Can I clean your room?' You'd say, 'Yes. Thank you, Mrs. Wood.' And, 'Ooh...' I'd say, 'I'm sorry it's a mess.' 'Oh, don't you worry about that. My gentlemen don't, I don't mind if they make a mess. That's what I'm here for.' And Mrs. Westwood was nice. But I think Mrs. Westwood wanted to know what was going on, didn't she?

A: Oh, yeah. She, we used to have lots of chats.

A2: Yeah.

A: I think that was, that was definitely one of the things here, that all the staff, you got to know them. I mean, it was like that time... we hitch-hiked back from London once. And we did it quicker than you could do it on the train, I'm sure. It was, it was ridiculous. We'd got, we'd been to stay with my parents. My... it was in the days of hitch-hiking. My parents took us to the beginning of the motorway and dropped us off so we could hitch.

Q: Goodness me.

A: And we stood for long enough at the first spot. And eventually we got a lift to the second spot. And we thought, 'Oh, this is gonna be terrible.'
A2: It was... I can remember this journey. It was eighty-five miles an hour, in a TR4, halfway.

A: Halfway.

A2: And then a bloke picked us up in a 3.8 Mark 2 Jag, and brought us at a hundred and thirty-five miles an hour to Junction 38, and dropped us off there.

A: Where we met the Bretton Land Rover. Bretton Land Rover picked us up and brought us in.

A2: Hop in, up here and...

Q: Just normal.

A2: Yeah, yeah.

A: And it was just incredible. It was just absolutely incredible, that journey.

Q: The sense of community that has come through is, is huge. Whether you were here in the fifties, late fifties, early sixties, late sixties – that huge sense... You know when you say about kind of being friendly with staff and just...? Again, that's exactly what people have been saying.

A2: And the thing is, I can remember the faces but I can't remember the names of these guys. And did we know them as mister or as first names? Who was that tallish guy with steel-rimmed glasses? And he used to get you coloured bulbs for...

A: Make my room more lively.

Q: I've got some pictures, but they're not... you may... some of them, they're completely undated, and they may jog memories and they may...

A2: These people were around, and you could see they were looking at you, but you'd give them the time of day, and then it would be so obvious that they were watching you. 'Cause I'm sure they must have thought to themselves, 'Oh, bloody students.' But...

Q: There's no dates on these. I mean, they're just... I mean, feel free to flick through. They may be from your period. I've got ones from the fifties, from the sixties. There's some from the eighties, which... I'm not sure.

A: Look at these.

Q: Some are...

A: Oh, my, these look early.

A2: How old do you think we are?
Q: Which ones, which one have you got?
A2: Well, I don't know any of these. Just doesn't...
Q: Some of them...
A2: No. Too...
Q: This is really early.
A2: Too many suits.
Q: These are really early. There's no dates on so many of them.
A2: It's a shame.
A: I don't ever remember...
A2: Are we looking...
A: No, no, no.
A2: Still too early.
A: No.
A2: Yeah.
A: Oh my goodness. Look at...
Q: These are only of Sir Alec.
A: Yes.
Q: This is Sir Alec when he was a very young man, in the West Riding.
A2: Right.
Q: And this is him with his family, when he was a very young boy.
A: Oh, wow.
Q: And then that's kind of a montage. This is the day he got his knighthood.
A: Right.
Q: With Lady Clegg, Jessie, and Alec, and his son XXXX, who I've spoken to, and his other son.
A: Oh.

Q: I think we might jump to kind of the nineteen eighties now. There's not... the ones I've found, there's no dates on them.

A: Actually, long dresses. 'Cause we had, we had May balls and things like that.

A2: The Saraband.

A: And, and there was the social committee. Was it Saraband?

A2: The May ball was Saraband.

A: I know I made, I made a sort of gypsy-style dress. And, yeah... I was quite impressed with the, with the social committee, because there were always bands playing. Was it every week we had something up at Kennel Block, or was it once a month? I can't honestly remember.

A2: It was every week. And who used to run it?

A: It was Mel.

A2: Biff.

A: Mel. Biff.


A: Yeah. Liam's in...

A2: John Wood.

A: Yeah.

A2: Liam's in Seattle, isn't he?

A: Yeah, yeah. I'm in touch with him on Facebook.

A2: Oh, right.

Q: Wow.

A: It's...

A2: Yeah, there were... yeah, it's this variety of people. There were girls who seemed very well-heeled and dressed to the nines; and their thirty-odd-year-old boyfriends would turn up in Jags or Bentleys. And that's sort of at one extreme. You'd got hippies at the other extreme. Just all sorts. And as I say, all in these little cliques.
A: I think, in a way, that's probably what's held it all together. Because if you've got too many people who are of a like mind, then... I don't know. You've got a group that's too big. Whereas lots of little pockets of people, who may be thrown together, maybe because we're away from general society; and you form tighter bonds. I mean, definitely, all the people... In fact, is it next week we're going to Bill and Di's?

A2: Yeah.

A: They're just always part of our life. Sue, Sue's in Australia at the moment. But she would be an interesting person to talk to, because she was drama. And...

A2: She'd be with John Hodgeson, wouldn't she?

A: She was with John Hodgeson.

A2: But we were with Maggie Watson, 'cause we were doing subsidiary.

A: Yes.

Q: I was about to ask you, in terms of art and drama, what were you taught? What did you do?

A2: For art it was...

A: Get on with it.

A2: …do what you like.

A: 'Cause... yeah.

A2: Do what you like.

A: 'Cause you've had your art training; get on with it. Which was nice, because you did your own thing, and it was, it was really, really nice.

A2: Did some hideous stuff. I decided to go in the boiler room and paint the boiler room.

A: We did do some life drawing, though. We went to, we went to a school.

A2: That was at Crofton High, where I did my first teaching, from seventy-two to seventy-eight.

Q: Goodness.

A2: Oh, there was an outbuilding at Crofton.

A: Where we did drama.

A2: Yes, yeah.
A: Pretended we were trees and that sort of... Quite nice. But, yes, generally speaking, it was, we were very much left to our own devices. And that was, I felt more or less that all the way through. There were lectures that you went to. And the big bone of contention: exams.

A2: Oh, yes. We arrived, and we were told that it would be...

A: No exams. Continuous assessment.

A2: There won't be any exams. Was it continuous or continual?

A: Whatever.

A2: Yeah, continuous assessment. So I went into a paddy about having to do an exam, and...

A: A lot of people refused. They said, 'No, no. You said there'd be no exams, so we're not doing them.'

A2: Hid in a caravan with another student so we didn't do the exams. But curiously enough, this, this... Now, it's curious. You've got this place, which is a haven from towns, cities, whatever. But Cawthorne and this caravan site was also a haven that... strange as that sounds. A haven from, sanctuary from Bretton. And were you with me that evening?

A: What evening?

A2: At John's, when this bloke came out of the next-door caravan.

A: Yes, I was. Yes, I was there.

A2: A bloke came out of the next-door caravan with a pack of cards in his hand. He started doing card tricks. And he got a bit of string and went... There was a knot in it. And he went like that, and there was no knot in it. And he got a big pack of cards. And we were walking round him, and he was doing all these magic tricks. And we were just...

A: 'He's good, him. He's really good, yeah.'

A2: It was Paul Daniels.

A: But that was before he was known as...

A2: I think it was, I think it was Paul Daniels between wives. Between, between wife and Debbie.

A: Debbie McGee.

Q: Is he Middlesbrough, Paul Daniels? Is he from Middlesbrough?
A2: Yes. I think he... yes, it's got to be that... he's not quite Sunderland.

A: But he lived in Cawthorne in a caravan for long enough.

A2: And he's not North Yorkshire.

Q: No, he's not.

A2: Yeah. 'Cause where are you from?

Q: North Yorkshire originally, but moved about loads. And I had a very strict North Yorkshire nanna, so you had to finish your words and... So I have a bit of a weird accent, really. But then I spent a lot of time living in Northumberland. And me and my husband, little one, another one on the way – we've just moved to the East Riding.

A2: Oh, right.

Q: So it's all kind of somehow Yorkshire and Northumberland, but... My husband's got a Devonshire, southern accent, so goodness knows what our children will end up talking like. Did you ever meet Sir Alec Clegg?

A2: No.

Q: Were you aware of him when you were at Bretton?

A: Only by name.

A2: Only as a name.

A: Only name.

A2: Only as a name.

Q: When... the very first principal of Bretton was a guy called John Friend.

A2: Yes

A: Heard about him, too.

Q: And people called him Poppa when they were here.

A2: Oh.

Q: Again, that... 'cause when people first started, they lived in the mansion house – which, again, must have been a very different experience. And that sense of community was built all the time. And again, when I've spoken to people who were here in the fifties, they'd never met Alec, were completely unaware of him. John Friend, the principal, was the figurehead. That's who kind of set the tone for it. Alec gave some lectures and talks, but again, I think unless they were possibly part of
something you were asked to go and see, you probably didn't. Which I find really interesting, because Alec Clegg founded Bretton; it's in his authority.

A2: Yeah.

Q: I suppose a lot of his vision. And yet the students that came through it, you never really seem to have maybe heard of him or, or met him even.

A: Definitely heard of him. Definitely was talked about.

A2: Oh, yes, certainly heard of him. And I know that there was this liaison with Wakefield education in Bond Street. And I think even my grandfather in York knew people in education in Wakefield, and yet he wasn't in education.

Q: Isn't it interesting?

A2: Business side...

A: I wonder if... I mean, it would be... will you find out how, how much of an input he actually had in, in setting this place up? Because that would be interesting. Because if he, if he was sort of, I don't know, conducting from a distance, or just sort of, having put something in place, then was happy to stand back and let it, see it develop – that would be really, really nice to know.

Q: Some of what I've been discovering is, as a character himself, he's fascinating. He's absolutely fascinating. And he, like I said earlier, he was very good at picking good staff, a good team. He surrounded himself with really knowledgeable staff, who then could see potential in students. And so in terms of filling Bretton, in terms of teaching the children, and all of that was all joined-up thinking. He obviously with the middle schools... he's given credit for founding the middle schools, and legislation went through government, and that's all his credit. What's interesting, and what I'm finding much more about him, is this much more kind of implicit policy – maybe not the black and white stuff, but some of that guiding hand all the time. And it's there, and you can see it. Again, I've spoken to lots of you. You all seem to be like little satellites to me, of Bretton. You all came through this experience. The majority of you went on to teach. You did what you were trained to do. Have kept this network together. And his guiding hand is there, in terms of... in terms of lots of things, really. But that... he valued children and he valued teachers. And I think that actually starts to come out in, in who you all are as well. But I think it's definitely here. There's something here...

A: Oh, I'm sure.

Q: Do you know... It's maybe not even tangible, but his guiding hand is there. So the fact that maybe, as students, you didn't really meet... knew of him but, you know, wasn't part of your life here – I think some of that's also his character. He didn't have a big ego. He didn't seek the limelight. You know, he didn't maybe want to be... I read something the other day that said, 'We live in a culture of the, of the big me.' And I thought, 'Yeah.' Rather than this humility or a greater good. Because Bretton came out of post-war. It was really about pushing forward and educating the
children. We'd won this war; what were we going to do with this victory? And he really ploughed into that. The society we have today's much more about you and... And I think, and I think that's quite valid, actually. So yeah, the more I learn, that's exactly what I'm interested in as well, is about where is his, where's his footprint? And it's everywhere.

A: Yes.

A2: I think his, his... his biggest influence in the area where I worked, which was Wakefield, where I spent most of my teaching, was this creation or involvement in the creation of middle schools. And that was something that I really wasn't totally in agreement with. Because I'd come from a system which was primary, secondary, further, higher. I taught first at Crofton High. My first kids were from Walton, XXXXton, Crofton, etc. Whole variety of kids, and they came in at the age of eleven, and they were just totally lost. And within two years, they'd got to the third year, present year nine, I think it's referred to, is it?

Q: Yeah, you're right.

A2: They still refer to it as year nine. Up to year nine. And they were established in that school. And they, and you could put to them the idea that they really ought to be thinking about a) what they were gonna choose in the way of subjects, and have a think about careers through years ten and eleven. Now, if you get a kid coming from middle school in year nine, to my mind, they've been kept in this junior school environment, and they don't, they only have the one year to make the transition to secondary school and to get themselves established as somebody in this big school, which... And the schools were going for bigger numbers back then.

Q: Yeah.

A2: And for some of them, easier to get lost, because they'd not been brought on gradually. And I think any change, any break in continuity in the child's education, is not necessarily a good thing. It doesn't work for kids of people in the services, or for whatever reason. I think a bit of continuity, all the way through, so that they've time to feel a sense of belonging. And that's the only thing I have against what Clegg introduced, and that's the middle school. Ours went through it.

A: Yes. Our grandchildren will be going through it, 'cause we've still got a middle school in our area.

A2: And the reason it's not good is because some of the middle schools are very much primary-oriented, and some of them are very much secondary-oriented, and some of them have that period to make the transition. But there's that change that they've got to make when they go to middle school, and then another change when they go to... It's an extra upheaval in their school life.

A: Wouldn't it be worth actually looking at that and...? Because I've also now... because I spent most of my teaching career in Barnsley, actually. It was West Riding when I first went there, but then it became South Yorkshire. So I was there, but it just carried me along with it. And I've got friends now who are teaching. All the Barnsley
schools closed, secondary schools closed, and they're all new now – and whether they're academies or whatever. And I mean, that is a whole new ball game, and I don't know that I like it at all. But there's one school in particular I know, where the children start at three, at nursery, and go all the way through to sixteen; and then at sixteen, they leave and go to sixth form college. Which was another development in education that I really was very much against. I thought that was a terrible time for, for young people to move to somewhere else. So it would be interesting, as an exercise, to see which system is the most successful. But then how would you judge that, the success? Would it be on the, on the achievement? Or would it be on the characters of the people? Which is a huge area, that maybe Clegg liked, but has gone by the wayside now. 'Cause it's all, it's all figures and everything.

Q: Completely. It's fascinating to know all of that. The debate on middle schools is still raging. In Northumberland, they're clinging on to middle schools.

A2: Really?

Q: There's not many, there's not many middle schools left.

A: No. There's one near here.

Q: And I think you're right: I think, I think... some children seem to thrive in a middle school; other children don't seem to. But it, it didn't become widespread, I think, as the plan would be. It also came... again, I think that nineteen seventy-four cut-off point's quite important in this. That continuity had just gone. So I wonder if then individual schools were kind of thinking, 'It works for us, works for our kids,' and have tried to hold onto it. But without those stepping stones of character, maybe, is quite hard. Teachers seem to be... Well, I'm presenting at a conference next month. And there's something that Alec said in sixty-four about the dignity of teaching. And I think that really, that... yeah, the dignity of teaching. I don't think we have that any more. And that's a sweeping statement. But I don't think we do. I think our system... again, what you say is really interesting. How, which system is the best, and how do we judge that? On the news a few weeks ago, they talked about... Nicky Morgan, the Education Secretary, said, 'All failing schools automatically become an academy.' Well, what does that say?

A: Yes.

Q: What does that say?

A: That says sweep it under the carpet to me.

Q: Yeah. And the schools that are currently academies, who aren't failing – what does that say to them as well? So there is so much... there's always going to be debates about it. The thing that I find interesting with some of this research with Alec... and I'm very largely Bretton. The schools is, I suppose, another PhD. But that what he did – there is things we can learn. There are things that were put in place that we can learn from. And we seem to very quickly just dismiss ideas. And so we seem to be in a new cycle, all the time, all the time, all the time. When the one thing I think that... And this is, I suppose, post-war, which is a very different time as well.
But he did this job for thirty years. You don't often come across that any more at that level.

A2: That's right.

Q: So he provided a stability and a sense of... I know some of the staff, the teachers I've spoken to have talked about, they were given that freedom to kind of let things... try it. You know, to try it, see if it works, see how the children respond to it. That doesn't happen.

A: That's gone now. That's gone now, yeah.

Q: It just doesn't happen.

A: And teaching... when I first started teaching in nineteen seventy-one, the, the actual, the job was totally unrecognisable by two thousand and seven, which is when I retired. And even worse, my colleagues that have carried on... And the last few are retiring this year. Not because... I mean, we're, these are people of all ages. Because enough is enough. And you talked about the dignity of teaching. I can remember, there was this... what was...? PPP. Something in people. It's a thing that companies have. And I can remember, we had this...

Q: Oh, I know what you mean.

A: Yes. What is it? Something in people.

A2: Investing in people.

A: Sorry, IPP. Investors, investors in people. We had one in the school where I taught. And we laughed a little bit then, because we, at that time... it was sort of, 'Ugh,' going like this. And teachers have been brow-beaten for so long now, that they're just going, 'Do you know what? I'm going. Enough.' And I know too many people who have left the system. People I worked with, people who were in good positions in schools and were doing an excellent job, have been beaten and beaten and beaten so much that they've just said, 'No. Not doing it any more.'

A2: There have been so many significant changes in education since I first went to school, and that was nursery school in the, what, the late forties. And I've memories of hanging my coat up on a coat hook that had picture of a van on it and a letter v. And that's sort of my first learning memory: that the letter v, for Vidal and van, and putting those two together; and it's there as a visual thing as well; and it's, it's part of the social education of hanging your coat up 'cause everybody else is hanging their coat up. And going all the way through different junior schools, and then grammar school, and then art school. And then this period going out and making money. And then coming back into education. And then teaching. And then doing a bit associated with Bretton, which was just driving people round, driving inspectors round to one school, give them lunch locally, drive them to the next school for the afternoon. This sort of thing. I've seen the changes that have gone on. The Eleven Plus was the be all and end all. And then it was not that important. And then the grammar schools became mixed with the secondary modern schools, and then they became high
schools. In our subject, there was that big shake-up with Guggenheim, wasn’t... Is it Guggenheim? Or have I got the wrong...?

A: Guggenheim Museum in New York is the only one I can think of.

A2: What was that really big shake-up in art education in the eighties, mid-eighties? Not Guggenheim. No matter.

Q: There was a lot of the arts for schools, and Ken Robinson was very instrumental in all of that.

A: We know Ken. He was with us.

Q: Oh, do you?

A: Yes.

Q: Oh, was he?

A: Oh, we can tell you Ken’s story.

(Laughter)

A2: Yes, out here, out here.

A: In those days, Ken had an invalid carriage.

A2: An AC. Pale blue.

A: It was pale, pale blue.

A2: Fibreglass.

A: Yeah. And it was meant for one person, because, you know, because he had this problem with his legs. And he used to see how many people he...

A2: ‘Where you going?’ ‘Kennel Block. Give us a lift.’

A: ‘Give us a lift.’ Yeah, he used to charge around...

A2: And there’d be I don't know how many people just hanging onto this thing, while Ken drove up to Kennel Block. And of course, by the end of the evening, you’d need a lift back.

A: Well, yeah, coming back over.

A2: So you'd (...) down the hill.

(Laughter)
Q: Oh my goodness. He's just written another book, Ken Robinson. And he's dedicated it to Bretton.

A: Good.

Q: The first one...

A: We were a bit cross with him, because he, he suddenly forgot his roots.

A2: Well, the way...

A: Now, this has, this has obviously got to be a Brettonism, because there was a lot of... all those of us who were at Bretton at the time with him, that we still know and we... 'Did you...? Ken's been on the radio, and they asked him where... and he said he went to Leeds University. How could he? He went to Bretton.' And I'm glad he's devoted... yes.

Q: It was, I think, published... something like April. Very recently. And I ordered a copy, and opened it, and it says, 'To Bretton and all who sailed in her,' and then the dates. Well, he's put the dates of Bretton, but his dates aren't correct. But I found it fascinating, because...

A2: He might not have got the dates right, but he's a sharp cookie.

Q: Yeah, he is, he is.

A: Oh, yeah.

A2: He's on top of things. I like that: 'Bretton and all who sailed...' 'Cause I've spent many a happy hour on that Lower Lake.

A: Oh, yes. We did sailing.

Q: Really?

A: Oh, yes.

A2: Oh, yes. Along with another type: the sporty types. There are the sporty types, who would spend their Wednesday afternoons kicking shit out of each other playing rugby or whatever. And there were other students, who... I've no idea what they did for studies, but you'd find them halfway up a stone wall on...

A: Oh.

A2: And you'd think...

A: Yes. That was, they were from... were they from Devon or Cornwall, those...?

A2: Well, there was the really tall guy. I think he used to knock about with Nick Proctor. There's a really big lad. Timothy Tuncliffe was in on that scene as well.
A: And I think they were the first... What's that new thing that they do? Urban...

Q: Oh, when you kind of jump from...

A: That's what they did. They climbed all over these buildings.

A2: But they were free in these buildings.

A: Yeah.

Q: Crikey.

A2: You think, 'Well, there isn't a finger-hold there; there isn't a toe-hold.'

A: But they did it.

A2: But they did it, and this was the challenge. Which, it was like: 'Which face are we doing next?' on Frogget or Stanage or, or whatever local rocks. These were their local rocks.

Q: Wow.

A2: Wednesday afternoon. And that'd be until somebody saw... 'Get yourselves down from there.'

Q: This might be really hard to answer: Do you know how Bretton influenced you? Did it influence you? Can you quantify it at all?

A2: Yes. It made me feel more inclined to indulge in physical sports. Not competitive stuff, but to, to want to play badminton, to want to sail, to want to do something, to take advantage of what was available. Which you wouldn't have got in other places, I don't think. And apart from that, gave me the opportunity to give some input to a small percentage of individual kids that I came across through my teaching career, that I can feel quite smug about, in some respects. Others, total failure, that I didn't get on with, and staff I didn't get on with. But there's just, there's a few in there that I can, as I say, quite smugly think, 'Yeah, steered that one on the right lines.'

Q: How about you, XXXXX?

A: I was racking my brain, listening. And I'm thinking, 'Do you know...' 

A2: Which way is the nearest loo?

A: I think...

Q: Out that way and down the stairs.

A2: Cheers.
A: I think the influence has probably been through all the people that I have met here and that I continue to, to know. I think that's got to be one of the main things. But also... I don't know. Maybe opening my eyes to, to nature, so to speak – if we're sort of taking it from that point of view. But I think it's huge. I think maybe I am what I am because of Bretton. I do. I think... to actually sort of say, 'Oh, it's because of this...'

But it was, it's everything. It is: it's everything. And the fact that it means so much to me, and that I'm still living it.

Q: Yeah.

A: Which is...

Q: Yeah.

A: Yeah, I am still living it. Because the people that I met here, and that I continue to meet... Because so many of my colleagues, and really, really good friends, are ex-Bretton. The ones that I really, really clicked with are ex-Bretton. Week after next, I'm going out to France, where one of my ex-colleagues from the last school I taught at, who... she was the deputy. She's got a house in France. And she's also ex-Bretton. And we're going to spend a week. She's writing; I'm painting. So we're still living the Bretton. We're still living it. And I think that's...

Q: I find it fascinating. Because of course, I've tried to look at it from so many different angles, and think, 'Hang on...' You know, I went to art school, and I've been to university. And those years at university, you can form these types of friendships. But this, this is teacher training as well here. It's different. And that sense... You're spot on. It still, it still exists. All of... and that's why I see you all as these little satellites. It's not like you came through a system and shut the door.

A: No, no. We're still living it.

Q: Yeah. And the majority of you did go on to teach, or whatever... or drama or whatever it was. And then, like you said, you'll paint and your friend will write. Do you know what I mean? That...

A: Yes.

Q: It's not like you're just gonna go and have a week together and go shopping, necessarily. It's the activities that you're doing. Which does, I keep... all the time, the more I learn, the more I hear – there is something special about Bretton. And I don't know if I can, I don't know if I've got the words yet to describe what that is. But I know, I know it is. I know that it's special, because the people that I meet...

A: I think maybe we've all been Brettonised.

Q: Think you're probably right. Think you're probably right. I think what I would say as well, and this probably sounds slightly crass, but I've met some really lovely people. There's something about you all. There's a real generosity about you all, and in wanting to share your experiences. And the fact that you all... majority I've spoken to are teachers as well. I think there's something about being a teacher as well, and
wanting to, to help, and all of those things. But I mean, a lovely, lovely group of people.

A: But here's another question for you: Do you think maybe... Because you've mentioned twice about the fact that the, that Alec Clegg was really, really good at picking the right staff, who were astute enough to pick the right students. So therefore it's not, it's not happy chance. It's directed; it's deliberate. And does it go back to Alec Clegg?

Q: Yeah. Which some of me thinks it does. 'Cause part of my job is to find out... There's a lot written about what Alec did, and to an extent how he did it with the schools. But I'm interested in him. You know, what drove him to do this? What drove him to have this... He, at a very young age, he... the chief education officer of the West Riding, of this huge, huge authority.

A: It was, yeah.

Q: And he's not as well... not as well remembered. He's not as remembered as much as I would like. The people who do remember him, it's very fondly – very fondly. So it's the character of this man, and has that character come through Bretton, even kind of... maybe not explicitly, but implicitly? Is that man's character in the air? And that's what I'm interested in. To wrap it up – because I'm aware I will talk all day to all of you – when you come back to Bretton, like today or whenever, what do you feel now? What do you see, or...? What does it mean today?

A2: Part of our lives. It really is. And it's because of the memories of the whole area, from Ray Kelt the ranger's cottage, to...

A: Yeah. It's the ghosts.

A2: …the post office that used to be in the village. Post office and shop, and the butcher's next door to it. Excellent pork pies. No pub, of course, but that was...

A: Allendale.

A2: …due to Allendale. Kennel Block. Drinking upstairs. The studio downstairs, run by Reg Hazel. Sports there. Roger Burrell. And you could be out there sailing, and you'd think, 'Oh, this is the life.' You'd just be sitting there in a boat, twiddling a bit of rope with your feet. And there'd be this voice from the bank: 'Where's your life-jacket?' Or up Top Lake, by the... what's it called? Greek, Greek theatre.

A: It's, it's the summer house. Greek amphitheatre.

A2: Greek amphitheatre.

A: Yes. It's ghosts, I think. I was gonna say, can...

A2: Drama department did a production there at dawn one day of a, of a Greek tragedy – in costume, round this Greek temple. Is it Greek temple? You know where I mean.
A: Oh, you mean the one that they've now opened up, at the top of Top Lake, beyond the obelisk?

A2: It's halfway along Top Lake.

A: Yes, yes, it is. Yes, it is a sort of... well, it's like a, it's a summer house, really.

A2: Shell House. Your yew tree.

A: Yeah. I was gonna say, it is, for me, it's, it's ghosts. When I walk in front of mansion, I'm reminded of the very first educational lecture I had on that bank, learning how to swing a golf club, by David...

A2: David Shields.

A: David Shields, yeah. That was the first... it was, it was... Having, having come for my interview in March in the snow, the September when we started here was beautiful. It was still hot. It was really lovely. And so we were outside swinging golf clubs. And I'd never swung a golf club in my life. So there was... Top Lake last night, walking round Top Lake, I, I do remember Ian... And we were in a boat. I don't know how we got a boat onto Top Lake. We were in... I've got in mind a rowing boat. And he was playing... Yeah, Top Lake. He was playing a wind-up gramophone, or he'd got it on a... some, some Siegfried or something like that.

A2: No, I had the wind-up gramophone.

A: I know you had a wind-up gramophone. But he had some kind of musical thing, and he was playing me that. And then I had a tree that was beside the lake, which is now... they've cut it down, and they've put a, a sort of crazy-paving path in red stone. It's in that particular area. And I used to spend ages going and drawing this tree. Eventually I painted it. And it's all that. Every time I go, at some point that thought flips through my mind. Absolutely. Outside, outside Grasshopper, on May Day morning, that... You'll probably remember her name. There was: 'Fa-la-la, fa-la-la' – girl, with a ring of flowers, doing a May Day dance all on her own. I opened my curtains to see this girl. And thinking, 'What on earth is she doing?' She was bringing in the May.

Q: Of course, yes.

A: So, just crazy, but silly. And thinking about swimming on that... when you get to the other end of the lake. We used to swim in Bottom Lake. And there was a raft on the water. And we used to go and swim up there, and sunbathe on the bank, and all those sorts of... Yeah.

A2: And... well, was it April, when all the boats were brought up? First of April, were they all brought up to the dining hall? And John and I put a cauldron on top of the...

A: Yes, April Fools' Day.
A2: …on top of the clock on Stable Block.

A: Yeah.

Q: How did you get up there?

A2: Oh, there's doors and stairs, and then you go on the outside and... used to be able to climb in those days.

A: Used to put an orange... There's, there's an obelisk with, like, a world, and they used to put an orange on the spike. Totally irreverent. Totally.

Q: It's fascinating when you say it's part of your life, because in the tiniest way, it's part of mine now. When I ask you all who influenced you – all of you, I know, have influenced me and what I'll go on to do. I think the next forty years of my life is in that archive. Because there's just, there is something about this place.

A: Yes.

Q: And it's a joy to come here. I mean, I feel... I'm on, I'm scholarship. I'm paid to do this PhD. And I feel incredibly lucky. Incredibly lucky. Because you come down kind of that sweep, and you think: 'I spend my day here.' You know, and I spend one day a week here. So to have been a student here, and to have this as part of, of your life history, is phenomenal, I think, is absolutely phenomenal.

A2: Yeah, yeah. This is... looking along, across to Long Side, or up to Jebb Lane. Yeah, the whole thing. Sunday mornings, when, quite early on, I'd be somewhere where I perhaps shouldn't have been and... You know.

A: Oh, I see what you mean.

A2: Very early Sunday morning, I'm like... open the curtains in XXXX's room. And I remember one morning, as I did so, maybe the window was open and they heard the swish of the curtains, but Daphne Hale and Daphne Bird were on their way to the chapel, and they both looked round and saw me. Took it in for a couple of seconds, and then turned and carried on to chapel. I don't think there was a toss of the head in disgust.

Q: Unfortunate timing.

A: 'Cause there was, there was, there was a story, because... Bretton stories go back down. But when, when it was Mr. Friend. And it must have been Daphne Hale. And it was all to do with students being in the wrong room and all of that sort of thing. And I'm not going to remember this very well, because, as I say, it's not my experience; it's something that was told to me, and we did have a laugh about it. And it was that... I think there was something written down about fining people. Was it fining...?

A2: Oh, right.
A: You must ask someone who was here at the time if they remember the incident where there was... I'm sure there was something written down about, anyone found in, in the, in the wrong room at a certain time would be fined so much. And somebody had sort of changed it all, and said that according to, Daphne Hale says that to spend the night in your girl's room was seven and six or something like this, you know.

Q: Crikey.

A: And it was... I don't know. It was just... apparently it was really... I think the early days, and you must know this better than us, were much more strict than when we were here. Because we'd got, we'd got the lovely Alyn Davies, who really was... he was lovely. Yeah, as principal.

Q: When did Alan start, then? He, was he... it must have been late sixties, he started.

A2: Yes, I think it was the sixties.

A: Yeah.

Q: And when did he run till? I can't...

A: Don't know.

Q: I know there was four principals in total.

A: Don't know.

Q: I need to check my date with that one.

A2: Didn't run till eighty-eight, did he? No, sounds a long time.

Q: I don't think he was that long.

A: He was, when we...

A2: See, he was very young when he were appointed.

A: Yeah, he was, he was the youngest...

A2: Relatively young.

A: I thought he was the youngest principal of a college when he first started.

A2: Yeah, could have been.

A: But he was here, was it... when did we have our last reunion? When did this place close?
Q: Two thousand and seven.
A: Two thousand and seven.
A2: Yeah.
A: Oh, must have... Could it have been two thousand and six? I'm sure it was before...
A2: What, when he left? No.
A: No, no, no, no. When we had the reunion, the big reunion.
A2: I think we had one in two thousand and two.
Q: I know there was a big event, which may have been two thousand and six, seven, for people who'd been at Bretton.
A: That's right.
Q: Did Alan speak then?
A: Yes, yes, he did, yes.
A2: Yes.
A: Yes. 'Cause that was, that was brilliant, that weekend.
A2: Is that the one at which one of the groundsmen retired? Or was that...
A: No, no. I'm talking about that reunion where we were all down there, and we went and we saw something in that little theatre there. And then there was a big marquee. And we went in to dinner, and Alan got up and spoke.
A2: Right.
A: And, and then we spent the rest of the afternoon up in the music, where...
A2: Oh, yeah, yeah.
A: …a lot of people... I personally think that when we were here, our particular area, were even more special. It's easy to say that when it's... 'Oh, our group were even more special.' There were more people from our era turned up to that event. And a whole host of them got into the music centre and had a jamming session for the whole afternoon. And it was absolutely brilliant. And everywhere you turned, there were people from our year groups.
Q: Wow.
A: And it was, it was brilliant. I mean, Liam was there. Liam from Canada was there. And Nick.

A2: Steve.

A: Nick, Steve was there.

A2: Mercy.

A: Was Mercy there?

A2: Yeah.

A: Mercy was there.

A2: Mercy was with Liam.

A: Of course she was.

A2: Whether her husband was here or not...

(Laughter)

A: Yeah, it was. It was...

A2: But, yeah, everywhere, there's some sort of memory. You see, for me, I've a memory of Bow Room, and Alan saying, 'Would you like a drink, XXXXX? Now, Joe, I know you like, I know you like dry sherry.' And I said, 'Oh, well, yeah. Don't be awkward. I'll have a dry sherry, too.' And wherever, I can think of things. And even now, at the chapel – it's good to go down to the chapel.

A: Oh, yes.

A2: Joe's...

A: Two weddings there.

Q: Really?

A: And Joe's buried there.

A2: Joe's grave's down there, and Daphne Bird's is down there.

A: Yes.

A2: But I went down there one day, and I thought, 'Where is Daphne Bird's gravestone?' And it was so overgrown with moss, just... not moss, but it was so green and shabby and...

Q: Uncared for.
A2: I took an old scrubbing brush and a couple of bottles of water, and had a walk down there, and just gave it a scrub one day.

Q: Isn't it funny? 'Cause I feel that now, about these buildings. I just, I want them to be cared for.

A2: But where would you start with Ezra Taylor, where the window frames...?

Q: Some of it makes my heart break. I mean, I've taken loads of photographs of it. And you just... well, you just want to shake people. You kind of want to go, 'Do you know what happened here?'

A: Yes.

Q: 'Do you know what...'

A2: Because of the staff, and because of the care the staff took of everything: the grounds, the buildings, the boiler. I mean, the, the guy who ran the boiler, I said to him one day, 'Can I use the boiler?' He said, 'Yeah.' And he showed me the boiler. And I did my painting down there, or rather I finished it off in the studio above. But all these different people with their jobs. Like... is it Mrs. Holmes? Was she the bursar?

A: Mm.

A2: Mrs. Holmes was the bursar. What was the name of... No, she was sort of secretary, the...

A: She used to give you money.

A2: Yeah.

A: Not because she was generous.

(Laughter)

A2: In that area... There was a telephone exchange, and there was a rota for operating the telephone. And I think Bretton's telephone number was Bretton 192. And I think somebody in the village had the number Bretton 208.

Q: Oh.

A2: A three-digit number, with a prefix of where it is. That was the telephone. So if you were on... You did telephone exchange.

A: Probably.

A2: And it was plug pushing and: 'Hello, caller.' And one night, I was in sickbay because I'd done a, I'd done a play. Was it Paul, was it...?
A: Oh, you hurt your foot, didn't you?

A2: Was it Paul's play, Paul Corris?

A: Yes.

A2: Now It's Just the Three of Us.

A: Yes.

A2: Tripped on a weight, sprained my ankle – did the play, but did it with feeling, because of pain in my ankle. So that was good. But I ended up in sickbay. And in the middle of the night, or quite late on, I heard this: 'Help. Help. Oh, God, will somebody please help me? Oh, help, help.' And I got downstairs, got on the phone, said, 'Who's the tutor on duty?' And it was Giles, and it was in Kennel Block. And I said, 'Look, there is somebody somewhere in real distress. It's a girl, and she's screaming for help.' 'It's all right; we'll look into it.' And I'm thinking, 'No, this is something bloody desperate, and I can't move 'cause I've sprained my ankle.' It turned out that this girl had had her duvet hanging out of the window during the day to air it, had come back from Kennel Block, couldn't haul it in through the window – and she's there, hanging onto this bedding or whatever, screaming for help. And it really sounded like someone in the middle of a serious crisis, but that was... And it's those sort of things that stick with you. And things... like you say, one of the caretakers or staff might say to you, 'Where have you been today, then? Have you been round the lake?' 'Yeah.' 'Did you see Ray?' 'No.' 'He'll have seen you.' And, you know...

Q: And you talk about the care of the buildings. Of course, in the West Riding, Alec had... the caretakers went on courses.

A2: Oh, right.

Q: The caretakers in the schools in the area. So how it looked was incredibly... I think one of his caretakers actually got an MBE at one point.

A: Oh.

A2: Oh, right. That's good.

Q: It was literally, literally... Because Bretton in itself... and you kind of, you just elevate to the place you're in. And Alec believed that about his schools. And of course, Alec's dad was also a headteacher. Alec went to school in York, at Bootham School, a Quaker school. I think it's still there, Bootham.

A2: Yes, it is, yeah.

Q: Samuel Clegg was Alec's dad, and he was a headmaster. And it was all about that kind of elevation.

A2: He was head at Bootham?
Q: And being in that environment. And so, yeah, the care of the places was a complete... it was a West Riding thing, for want of a better term. So, yeah, the fact that it was all very well kept is just like, it kind of goes, yeah...

A2: Oh, it was. Those... what the title was, I don't know. Groundsmen. But I remember... is it when Alan retired? He gave a speech. And a groundsman was retiring at the same time.

Q: Oh, that rings a bell. Think I... 'cause I read Alan's speech. I can't remember his name. I think, I think you're right.

A2: And I think the head gardener or somebody of that ilk had retired on the same occasion, and gave a speech. And it was absolutely marvellous to listen to this real salt of the earth, 'I, I've looked after this place for so many years,' and this other bloke saying, 'Yes, I've looked after these students for so many years.' Operating from this bungalow.

Q: Yeah, yeah. The principal's bungalow was built for John Friend.

A2: Oh, right.

Q: On the first day that Bretton kind of was here, when John Friend arrived, he and his family – and his family then expanded – lived in the mansion house. And the head caretaker left fresh flowers. And that became a, that just was the norm.

A: Yes.

Q: And it's that tiny little detail, that tiny... that I think all leads to that sense of being valued. Whoever you were at Bretton, that sense of being valued. Because the space was so well cared for, and...

A2: Yes, it was.

Q: Just that you belonged here I think is incredible. When I went to the mansion house, I got to go on the roof and the cellars and everywhere. And when you're up on the roof, the Sculpture Park doesn't exist. And that was fascinating. All you can see is Bretton. And you get that kind of different feel about what it may have been like.

A: When the Sculpture Park first opened, I remember feeling quite resentful. Because it meant that people were coming into my Bretton, ordinary people. Oh, and it really, really hurts. Somebody said something to us last week or the week before. We were here, and we, we... we wanted to go somewhere in the Sculpture Park. And, and they said, 'Oh, no, the public can't go that way.' And I remember saying to you, 'Public! I'm not the public! I own this place.' And...

A2: Yeah, yeah.

Q: I know what you mean. It's strange. The first time I listened to one of the tapes that Alec had recorded, had been recorded of him, really, and I was the only person
next door – that eeriness that Bretton can have. And hearing his voice in the buildings. And I was very goose-pimply.

A: I'll bet.

Q: And was very just like, 'Wow.'

A2: There's superb acoustics in mansion. At the bottom of the stairs, outside the staffroom door, with the common, one of the common rooms across from it – I can remember one evening, there was somebody playing an acoustic guitar and a flute.

A: And a flute.

Q: Wow.

A2: At the top of those stairs. And it gets me thinking about it. The...

A: It was beautiful.

A2: The tune was The Trees They Do Grow High.

Q: Yeah. How beautiful.

A2: And it just floated.

Q: When I, when I was there, and you, by yourself, in October, with nobody really there... I mean, there was a security guard, and the guy from the council was there; but they would be doing their thing. And I went up to the staircase where the kind of portico and the frescos are. And there's two staircases go off either side. And they all looked a little bit sinister. And I thought, 'Oh, crikey.' When I spoke to the guy that'd been here in nineteen fifty-two, and he said, 'Oh...' He gave me this wonderful memory of the girls went up one side to bed, and the boys went up to the other, and they'd have hot chocolate, sat on that balcony. And it's all those things. 'Cause when... my experience of that was a bit like: 'I'm not gonna go up there.' A little bit sinister. Not the most comfortable place to be. And it's those things that I just feel need to be captured, like your memory. Because it's, these walls are full, this whole place is full of it. And like I say, when I went into the mansion... If something doesn't happen to it, I mean, what will happen to it? It's just gonna rot and decay. And so it makes you go: 'Something has to happen to it.'

A: Yes.

Q: It's actually all of the rest of this that I feel much more precious about. The mansion house had a life before Bretton. It just did.

A2: Yeah.

A: Oh, yes. Lady Diana.

Q: All of this, though...
A: Have you done, have you looked at the history?

Q: Very, very briefly. The PhD's horrendous, 'cause you start that big, and you have to end up with it tiny.

A: Yes, yes.

Q: But all of this is, is Bretton to me. And that's the bit that concerns me: what will happen to that, really? I will talk all day. Is there anything you would like to add as we kind of wrap up?

A2: Yeah, I've just thought of another one. I don't know why, but I went to Rafe Best's office one day. Now, that was a panelled room, with an aspidistra, and he sat there with his pipe. And it was just like going into a St. Trinian's set with Alastair Sim.

Q: I bet. It's still there, the panelled room. I think in the fifties... they used to be called the railway carriage or something. Someone used to call it the railway carriage.

A2: And I don't know what the occasion was for me going to Rafe – not Ralph, but Rafe – Best's office.

Q: Goodness me.

A2: And... yeah, apart from that, it's just... well, everything. You could take me to any part, and I'll say, 'Oh, yes, that's where so and so and so and so.' Maggie Watson teaching drama. Well, she'd just let you get on with it. But she'd sit there, in her little red boots, going, 'Oh, that's wonderful, that's wonderful.' And John Hodgeson – he'd let people get on with it. He'd be all: 'Great, great. Script it. Great. Script it.'

(Laughter)

Q: Yeah.

A2: And that's what you'd get from him. And from others... From Theo: 'Yes, well, I'll think about that. Yes, give me...' And just the way people were.

A: They were all characters.

A2: You could put them on the spot. Because we were effectively mature students. I was twenty-four when I arrived here. You were, what, twenty-one?

A: Mhmm.

A2: And some of these more mature students, they really would ask some searching questions that'd put tutors on the spot.

Q: Crikey.
A2: All these different departments. There was... who was it ran it? Was it Horbury or Norbury? Robin...

A: Robin Norbury.


A: Yes.

A2: Now, which was which?

A: One of them was environmental studies.

A2: Who was the bloke who gave us an IQ test?

A: Oh, no. That was...

A2: Paul Horbury?

A: No.

A2: Robin Norbury?

A: No, no, neither of those two.

A2: Malcolm Boyard.

A: No. Just stop saying names and it might come to me. 'Cause he married Judith, didn't he?

A2: Hey?

A: Yes. Drove a little sports car. Got red hair.

A2: Tony Longton?

A: Tony Longton.

A2: No, no. That was to do with the teaching machine.

A: So, sorry, what were you thinking of?

A2: I was teaching, thinking of something in the science or maths department, where we had an IQ test.

A: Oh.

A2: And he said, 'Oh, I've got the results here. That's very good. XXXXX, yes, you have an IQ of a hundred and fifty.' And I said, 'I cheated.' He said, 'Oh, well, I can't give you a hundred and fifty, then.' I said, 'Yes, you must.' He said, 'No, 'cause you
said you cheated.' I said, 'You've got to figure out how I cheated. If I'm clever enough to cheat, I deserve the result.' 'Well, did you look at...?' I said, 'No. I'm not telling you how I cheated. Your test is flawed. That's how I managed to get a hundred and fifty.' And it ended up with me getting a D instead of a B or an A. And I got really cross with him. And then we got cross with Tony Longton.

A: Tony Longton, 'cause he told us we could use the teaching machine.

A2: He said, 'I need somebody to use this...' This was in philosophy. Philosophy of education. Or was it psychology?

A: No, it was psychology. It was definitely psychology.

A2: Right, psychology. 'I've got this thing called a teaching machine.' And all it was was a... instead of ticking boxes, you pressed buttons, and answers came up. And he said, 'Oh, oh, it's really good. Thanks for doing that, 'cause I've not been able to persuade anyone else to do it. Oh, that's great. You'll get a good result for that.' And I ended up with a D. And I said, 'Why have you given me a D?' 'I don't know.' And I thought, 'What do you mean, you don't know?' And just... but I don't know. You'd say, 'Right, Tony, what... going on from this thing, what we gonna do now?' 'Oh, can't do anything now. I'm gonna take the head off my Jag, take the head off the engine.' 'Oh, shall I give you a hand with that?' 'Yes, you can if you like. Just...' And, you know, whatever you did, if he decided you... It was weird. And people followed on from people. Shields was here for starters. And then...

A: I had Joe Breel after Shields.

A2: Yeah, but who was that other guy who came? The Irish man. Used to play tennis. Friend of Di's.

A: Oh.

A2: And there was Dave Farnsworth. He was very quiet. Kenny, Kenny Marsden, was he called?

A: Kenny Marsden. Oh, bless. He was nice.

A2: He was like, he was like the bumbling owl of the remove. Looked a bit like a chubby Philip Larkin. And there was just sort of...

A: Reggie Hazel.

A2: Yeah. All these very soft people. And I mean that in a nice way. They were just gentle people.

A: Yeah.

Q: I think my very last question, and I must let you go...

A: 'Cause we're gonna have to go.
Q: I know. Do you think a Bretton could exist today? Do you think what you experienced could happen today?

A: In the present climate, I would say no. It would be lovely if it did, though. It really would be lovely. But I think, knowing what I know about education at this moment in time... I would say purely on numbers. Because everything's got bigger, bigger, bigger, bigger, bigger. And I think one of the blessings of Bretton was that it was small, by comparison. It was small. And it certainly, it never felt big when you were here. I mean, I've no idea... how many students were here? Do you know?

Q: Crikey. By the time it ended, I think they had a couple of thousand. But they'd been shipped up to Leeds.

A2: There was nothing like a couple of thousand.

Q: When it first started, there was... I think there was fifty-four.

A: Oh, right.

Q: And the sixty-four buildings were built for expansion.

A: Right. So, I'm just wondering how many of them would have been here when we were here. But it never felt as though there were loads of people here, because a) we'd got masses of space, b) you'd only got a certain number of students actually living in. Probably quite a lot. Because I don't know how many rooms... I never, ever went upstairs in Kennel Block, where Susan lived. I did go upstairs in mansion, but I didn't particularly go and look at students'...

Q: Like a rabbit warren upstairs in the mansion.

A: Yeah. So how many rooms are there and how many rooms are there, I don't know. There were twelve... was it twelve? Or was it... Yeah, I think there were twelve rooms in each of the blocks.

A2: Yeah.

A: Where I lived. So there would have been, I don't know, hundred, couple of hundred people actually living on campus. And then all the other people who were off campus. There were the people who were in to lectures. There were people who were on teaching practice. There were people writing long essays. So you never, ever felt as though there were masses of people, you know. When you went into the dining room – the dining room's a reasonable-sized dining room. And quite often, evening meal, you'd probably find it was quite full. But it never felt as though there were hundreds of people here.

A2: I've got this idea it was six-eighty or seven hundred or something.

Q: Okay.
A2: Just got this idea that there was about seven hundred, and that maybe six hundred were girls and a hundred were boys, something.

A: And going back to your question, I would say that that would mean that you couldn't do it today.

A2: How would you fund it?

Q: I was about to ask. Do you think, do you think it's economics? Do you think we've got, have we got Alec Cleggs today? Have we got those staff today that could, even if they were given the chance to have a big, long stretch of stability of something...

A2: It's a business, isn't it? Education isn't education: it's a business.

A: Oh, very much, yes.

A2: And that's, that's where it's gone wrong. Because it's not done as, it's not gone into as a vocation. And the... I know when I was teaching in the, by the, certainly by the eighties, the fast-track graduates were coming in and taking over departments, with no idea how to teach. And this, this just turned itself into one of these things where, they had their staff for a department, or teachers, but they didn't teach because they couldn't teach. But they apparently knew how to. But it was... not exactly seat of the pants when we were doing it, but you, you did it as you felt was necessary. And the kids in Crofton got what I felt kids in Crofton needed. And the rest of the staff gave what they felt the kids needed.

A: But that sort of trust...

A2: And it was the same everywhere else.

A: That trust is gone now as well, isn't it? You can't trust teachers to do the right thing.

Q: Interesting we talk about things being full circle. Because I did my PgC in FE so I could lecture rather than be in schools – a long time ago now. But I did it with the University of Huddersfield, who I'm with now, funnily enough. But the lady who did it... 'Cause it was at Darlington. She used to come from Huddersfield to Darlington twice a week, a very old lady. And it was one of the best years I've had, my teacher training year, with this lady from Huddersfield, who was old West Riding. And it isn't till you start to learn more... And so the things that she instilled in us... 'Cause I was twenty-three. I'm forty now. I was twenty-three when I did my teacher training. And it's carried me through such a lot. And she was West Riding.

A2: Right.

Q: So that whole thing that I learn now, and that whole sense of, of... Somebody said to me once that West Riding now would be classed as a brand. And I know what they mean, though. Where there's hallmarks if you've come through Bretton.

A2: Yeah. Because West Riding was proud of being West Riding.
Q: Yeah, spot on.

A2: Based in Wakefield. And they had their monthly bulletin, their...

Q: Yeah, yeah.

A2: Which was on... it had the West Riding... it had the white rose at the top. And it was just a single-fold-out broadsheet, effectively, on beige paper, with comments on education. And this was in staffrooms and around. And, yeah, it was something to be proud of. It's... and you think, and suddenly think, yeah, I was privileged to have gone there, privileged to have worked in the West Riding. 'Cause you...

A: Well, I worked in the West Riding initially, when I was at Darton. And then it became South Yorkshire. And you notice differences straight away, don't you?

A2: Yeah.

Q: I have a lovely story – and I really will let you go. One of the teachers who worked for the West Riding under Alec Clegg, seventy-four came and went, and she retired in seventy-nine. And she, I think she must have become South Yorkshire as well. Can't remember which school she was in. Until the day she retired, so for five years out of West Riding, she insisted on doing everything on West Riding letterhead, and everything she sent out was West Riding letterhead. And she would not accept at all that the West Riding had gone – because of what it had achieved, what it meant to her. So for five years, till seventy-nine, everything she did went out on West Riding... And that, for me, is so telling about this loyalty, about this pride, in where they'd worked and what they were doing, that she refused... I mean, today you'd...

A: You've just used two words that have disappeared, really disappeared lately. The, the school that I taught in... I don't know. I suppose it ended up with a kind of a Bretton... The pride and loyalty that as staff we felt for that school was definitely there. And I think that now, this pride and loyalty, they appear not to count for anything any more. And it's such a shame. Because I know sometimes I'll meet pupils that, that were at the school, and they'll say, 'I can't believe it's gone.' I mean, they flattened it. They're building houses there now.

Q: Goodness.

A: And it was, it was within... it was in Barnsley. And... which of course, that'd have been West Riding as well, initially. Because that was, it was Broadway Grammar School to start off with. And then, then it became a comprehensive mixed with the secondary modern next door. And then, and then it became this big school called Kingston. I don't know... you probably won't have heard of it. And I felt, I really felt that we were a leading light within the authority. And, yeah, it's...

Q: Isn't it funny? When I met with XXXX, one of Alec's sons, a few weeks ago, met at Sculpture Park – and he's an architect, and I think he sits on the board of trustees. And a lovely, lovely man. And I said to him, I kind of want to say to his dad, 'All is not lost. You know, everything you put in, it didn't just go to waste. Bretton did continue.
There are, there are these satellites of generations of people that came through your schools, who taught in your schools, who came to Bretton, that are out there and kind of doing what you hoped would happen.' Because I think a lot of people now, there is that, there's a resignation, isn't there, about education? There's just a... I've got a three-year-old and one on the way. And you start to go: 'This is... what do I do? What choices do you make?'

A: Precisely.

Q: And it is difficult. It's really difficult.

A2: Well, we've got the same, haven't we?

A: We've got a three-year-old and a six-year-old grandchildren.

Q: It feels impossible.

A: And it's...

Q: I mean, I always... when I teach, I always say to students, 'Do the best... if it's genuinely your best, all you can do is your best at the time. And ten years later, might look back and think that was a rubbish decision. But at the time, do your best.' To try and do your best to choose a school, to choose a path of education for your children today feels immensely pressured. Because none of it feels right.

A: That's right.

Q: None of it seems to come up to scratch. I think sometimes when you work in education as well you, it's like you know a bit too much as well.

A: Yes.

Q: And if you've had a good experience of teachers or training or education, and you can't find that for your children, that feels quite challenging.

A2: Yeah.

A: Yes, definitely.

Q: It really does.

A2: Well, as peripatetic special needs at the back end of my career... And this was in Wakefield, which had sixteen high schools and the rest. And the back, mid-nineties, southern area had its review to close the middle schools. And there was a lot going on, really a lot going on. But the feeling in these different places was just so varied. And there were some schools I would go into and I would think, 'These people really care for the kids.' And it shows in the kids' eyes and the way they look up at them like pups in a box, you know. And there are other places where it's soulless. And you think, 'Oh, this is bad, 'cause this reflects on the kids.' But I think Wakefield was pretty good. Now, whether that came from Clegg and what the West Riding was, I
don't know. But generally speaking, I think teachers are there and they give kids what they need. Apart from what they want, they do give kids what they need. And I, I just hope that people coming into education now are coming in with that same want to give something to kids, that goes beyond: 'Oh, yeah, I'll be a teacher 'cause you can make a fair bit of money.' Because I heard this the other day. 'What's your lad doing these days?' 'Oh, he's still a teacher.' 'I thought he didn't like it.' 'Oh, he hates it, but he says he's staying with it 'cause it's good money.' I thought, 'That is crap.' It's just...

Q: I've worked with colleagues like that. You may have done as well. And you just think...

A: Oh, yeah.

Q: And you think, 'You shouldn't be drawing that salary. You shouldn't be drawing that salary. If you don't want to be in there, if you don't get a thrill from being in that classroom, if you... You shouldn't be taking that money.'

A: That's right.

Q: And it does exist.

A2: Yeah.

Q: Thank you so much for your time. Absolute pleasure.

A: It's been very interesting.

Q: Absolute pleasure.

A: Could talk for ever. Gosh, it's, it's twenty-five to one. I thought...

(End of recording)
Q: … interests me. Did you have to keep this every day?

A1: No, no, in fact we really coughed it up at the last minute a bit.

Q: Gosh, look at that.

A1: Anything you were thinking about.

Q: Crikey (…).

A1: XXXXX's done one of… last thing he did nearly was one of that funny little things, those eighteen century, whenever they are. It was the year I was doing coffee, so it was the last year, I suppose, what I went and looked at in the Fitzwilliam Museum.

Q: And did you... was it literally to record what you were seeing and feeling and doing?

A1: It was just a diary. And if you wanted to do pictures in your diary to explain... some architects and of course anything to the Village College was Gropius in Cambridge, that was the famous one, wasn't it?

Q: Yes.

A1: So that came into it.

Q: My goodness me.

A1: But it wasn't very complete or anything. It was Grantchester church (I should think?).

Q: How fantastic that you've kept it. (Fountains Abbey isn't it?)

A1: (...) Anyway, if that's interesting, but it says a little bit... we went to York community plays. I don't know if that was that year. But Laura Lamborne who did the costumes for it. I think I mentioned that when Jeanette was interviewing us, she came to talk. And that had tremendous influence, because it was just starting. And we went to the plays; had seen the plays first, but she organised the dress of the whole lot. And she divided people who wanted to help into groups, and she sort of worked with the group leaders. But the main thing was that you got your colour of your fabrics right; they could be cheap fabrics, but on the whole they needed weight so they didn't blow around because you were out of doors. Your colour was good. And she showed us how she did the gold jewellery on it, so it wasn't too glittery. But it was plaster of Paris; you moulded your jewel in plaster, your own jewel, perhaps with small jewels going round the edge. You papier maché and took your clay away, and so you had your firm base. Then you painted your gold things khaki all over. And then clear, clearer goldy-yellow paint and then just a teeny weeny touch of shiny paper, gold paper. So when, I did it with children on just one or two things when I was teaching. If you wanted... I'd say 'You must all have lots of penguin bars, because we want some bright green shininess.' You know, you could get your colours from that, and red ones and so on. Make sure you get the right colours. And
we want those for tomorrow or next week. And we've always used that method; XXXXX dressed nativity plays and I did The King and I, I think was for one school. And I had to do those lovely headdresses, you know, they have in the east and so on. I'm not as inventive as he is, but you know, we did do it that way. Now that's Laura Lamborne. The other thing is you don't cut material. So if you can ever possibly not cut the material, you make that, then slip your head, and then you put your jewels round the bottom and the edge and you tie up round the waist and things like that.

Q: I suppose some of it must have been universal, because of the time that it was. But it just, it sounds so creative and so inventive.

A1: That's right. And it's better. I see things that are too goldy now, that glitter too much, whereas that got the glitteriness without, the essence of glitteriness without... the other looks sort of a bit false doesn't it?

Q: I wonder then if that comes back to...

A1: Phoney.

Q: Yes. I wonder if it comes back to again teacher training now, and art training now.

A1: Perhaps so.

Q: Maybe the skills aren't, maybe that isn't being... that type of thing isn't being used now.

A1: I don't know, I don't know. Very much, the school here, the one that's been downgraded badly, had a very good potter at one time. And he got good pottery equipment in the schools, I hope that's being used still. But you see, it's money saving. I don't know, did we charge children? No, it was adult classes. We'd charge a shilling. Or we'd weigh it and say we pay a little teeny bit towards the firing. And they came to free classes, so they didn't mind paying a little bit for their favourite pot. I think it's genuine, as opposed to phoney. And I think we were trying to teach the genuine; we were taught to teach what was so not phoney and...

Q: Yes, it does feel that...

A1: ... artificial and, invented but not artificial. And that's difficult to differentiate isn't it?

Q: Yes. And I don't know if this is the right word, but it, the things again that I've read, and people I've spoken to, it feels like staff and students... there doesn't seem to be a mass delineation between staff and students. And that you all did believe in it.

A1: That's right.

Q: It wasn't just that you were there; you happened to be there kind of feeling. Or that it was just a bit of kind of treading water to get to the qualification. There was
this sense of community and this sense of believing it was the right thing to do and that you would do something with it.

A1: And if there were difficulties in a class, what were the causes of the difficulties rather than punishing the... And this punishing of the whole class for one demeanour, because nobody owned up, and all that kind of thing.

Q: And that comes back to understanding.

A1: It didn't work, it just creates nasty, gets nasty feeling doesn't it?

Q: Yes.

A1: I'm being punished and I didn't do it, you see, believing that I didn't do it, you know sort of thing.

Q: Yes. And class punishments I think are dreadful. Because then you just kind of pit child against child. And that isn't good for relationships, is it? There's some photographs that, again the ones that I showed to XXXXX. And it's literally just there's lots of different ones; some of them are from different periods that I got from the archive. This is obviously John. This I think is Monty. And he's supposed to...

A1: Yeah, I'm sure it is.

Q: We're not sure who this guy is.

A1: No, I don't know. Maybe a sidekick of Monty.

Q: Yes. And then this picture, I think this is the Camellia House.

A1: Yes, this is outside the painting studio really, so while we... everybody was doing three dimensional stuff there. And I think that would be the garden studio. But it was just the weather was nice so let's be out of doors and stuff, I think there. And that, I don't know what they're doing. That's more doing carving isn't it, it's not clay really is it?

Q: I think it is.

A1: So that's interesting, as I say you only... we all did a little bit of carving, I think, nothing too much but... In the, so extreme that they let two of them work with one teacher.

Q: Fantastic (...).

A1: The move and the people doing the job (...). Now that is I think probably exactly as the old house was. And this was the library as we remember it, yes completely. And I spent a lot of time there, because I'm really quite bookish. And it was easier to work there than in your own room, really. Rotten sitting on a bed and I think we had a little table, something or other. But no, it was well used. And not busy. Mrs. Friend wasn't there all the time; she was enthroned a bit. I think she worked three mornings
a week or something or other. I think she'd get stuff for you, but... We didn't do a lot of... we did this long essay. I chose Virginia Woolf for the English thing, but I think I got my own, don't think I relied on the books in the library. And it was done, the nucleus of it was done during the holidays. And I know I nearly read the lot. So I'm reasonably good on that period, whether it's the pictorial stuff or the films and so on.

Q: These pictures here – that one, well I think and XXXXX thinks it's the entrance hall.

A1: Yes, I think so.

Q: As you come into it. And then there's a bit more student chairs and activity really.

A1: Yes. Is that the same one as that one?

Q: Yes.

A1: Yes. I think that's the entrance hall, you see. This is a room. I think this is the room with the... I'd say that was the room with the little stage in it. But anyway, I'm not dead certain.

Q: Oh, we've got...

A1: That's that, the dining room. And those alcoves, there was John Room the dancer and his chief pal was somebody who'd been an art student somewhere else, David somebody or other. And he did paintings for the in bit of those. And he also painted three Friend girls, for portraits for, and so on. And yes, that was this room, the servery I think. And so people who were waiting on us would come from there. I think that was high table. And we were scattered the rest of it.

Q: This on again. Not quite sure why it keeps stopping today. (pause) Yes. No, that's the same room. These ones... this is one of the boys' dormitories, and XXXXX recognised him when they were in there. In the mansion house. So not quite sure why the picture's maybe taken in his striped pyjamas. Funny (...).

A1: Perhaps that was a diary to show his mum what he looked like. Now that was... XXXXX knows this sculpture of that. He told you his name. And the heaven and hell and purgatory picture... sculpture in Wakefield Cathedral was by him. We did go to his workshop once. Nice sculpture, very good.

Q: I said to XXXXX 'This...' that's a better picture of it. This sculpture isn't in the grounds any more. But I have been into the Yorkshire Sculpture Park archives and they do have it, and I've seen it. But I did say to XXXXX... XXXXX...

A1: It ought to be in position really, because that's looking to the future, through glasses to the future and so on, isn't it?

Q: Yes, completely.
A1: The vision, a new vision. And Leonard's for a little bit, which you actually focus... because I'm very inclined to go through things recognising things, without seeing them. 'That's a Cezanne, that's a something-or-other.' But it stops you looking at it, doesn't it?

Q: Yes, completely.

A1: And I think that would have a little bit of morality tale about it.

Q: Yes, I agree. No, I said to XXXXX I thought this was very big, because of the way it's been shot. Of course it's quite a small scale...

A1: No, not particularly big.

Q: So when I saw it, and it did seem quite... it's quite delicate.

A1: Wonder who paid for that, or did he do it reasonably because... they found money for things.

Q: Yes, it was, I know it was made to celebrate the opening of the new buildings. And that's why it's in front of the new buildings, as they were. But yes, I thought it was a big sculpture and it's not.

A1: Yes, I remember it there.

Q: These pictures here, again XXXXX wasn't sure of some of them and I'm not sure of the period of some of these either. I think some of them might be slightly later, judging by hairstyles and clothes.

A1: Yes, almost inclined to me. It wasn't very different.

Q: I think this is the sixties. Again, just hairstyles I think.

A1: Yes, looks like they were getting...

Q: Shorter, but higher.

A1: It's music out of doors isn't it, really?

Q: Yes.

A1: The music was very important, and I think Mr. Friend... I don't know that he was particularly good on visual arts, but he really minded about the music.

Q: I think this is the one that... this is a picture... this is Sir Alec Clegg as a young man.

A1: Oh lovely.
Q: When he was teaching at, it must have been probably the late forties, mid forties, not too far afterwards, when he was a teacher. Because he taught languages and sport.

A1: Did he?

Q: So he had a teaching background. But that's him as a young man. 'Cause lots of photographs of him as an old, elderly man; not so much a young man. But that was him in his heyday.

A1: That's real boys' school...

Q: Isn't it?

A1: They all have ties and things. Lovely. Partings on the side.

Q: I know.

A1: And nearly always partings on the same side; not all of them, but...

Q: And I think he looks like, he looks like such a teacher. He looks very much in control of things.

A1: Yeah, he is I expect. 'Put a tuck in your back. Be proud.'

Q: See, he's our brainchild, he's our founder.

A1: Good, good.

Q: Here's a picture of...

A1: (...) super.

Q: This was when he was a boy, Alec. Because his nephews are the Attenborough brothers, Richard and David.

A1: Yes. I'm intrigued by that.

Q: And I think here, I think you can see that...

A1: Because were they Leicester College of Arts (...)?

Q: Yes, yes I think you're right, yes.

A1: I think that's it.

Q: These are his three sisters. Of course his mum and his dad, and I don't... Mary, don't know which one she is, married the Attenborough, and they had Richard and David. And the third one, I can't remember his name of the top of my head.

Q: Very young David Attenborough is there. And this is when Sir Alec was knighted, with his wife, Jessie Clegg, Lady Clegg.

A1: Oh (…).

Q: And their two sons, which I think...

A1: Still not very old was he?

Q: No, I think he was in his...

A1: What was he here roughly?

Q: He must have been maybe late fifties, early sixties. But yes, that was him when he was knighted.

A1: That's lovely, absolutely super.

Q: Isn't it a lovely picture?

A1: Yes it is. A happy, happy day. Oh super.

Q: Yes. 'Cause of course his son I think this is XXXX, who's still very much alive. I think his elder son is as well. And of course, XXXX designed the Long Gallery at the Sculpture Park. And is an architect, and very much involved in...

A1: Gosh.

Q: These ones are from, these are from the nineteen eighties. That's the archive building. And just kind of, you know, twenty, thirty years later.

A1: Gosh.

Q: And this is the stable block. It's different. Different times really. And then these... when I went to visit... this is when I went last year, and this is obviously inside.

A1: That's not too bad, is it?

Q: XXXXX says this is where you sat and had hot chocolates, when you went to girls and up to boys.

A1: Yes, that's right.

Q: This is just some looking... they're different angles a lot.

A1: (…) brought quite a lot of my (…).

Q: And these are those kind of frescoes.
A1: Yes, and the frescoes.

Q: Round the sides.

A1: Well there's lots and lots of modelling isn't there?

Q: This door, it was all... I've taken a photograph because it's all packed in. I don't know what's happened to the room, but you can't get in to the room. And this was coming in, the front of the mansion's here, and up here's where the portico and all the frescoes are. And I felt... and it's huge, and to be in there by yourself... slightly eerie I suppose. This is the room...

A1: It must have been, the family it must have been very different in the holidays, well for the children. When it was really their playground. Just one or two people. Yorkian people being around I expect.

Q: Yes. This is the room that XXXXX thinks was the library. And this, with the stage – the music room. And that's the ceiling of that room. I was mesmerised by this ceiling.

A1: He didn't think that was the other room did he?

Q: I don't think so.

A1: Don't think that had got two doors.

Q: This is what I think was the library. XXXXX thinks was the library too, the original one.

A1: So they've taken out all those bookcases.

Q: Everything's... they're just empty rooms. Big, big, empty rooms. And this, let me find, there's some of the ceiling. This is a room that I think has got the stage in it. Start to see...

A1: Yes, that's it.

Q: There it's a bit kind of fuzzy.

A1: I think that was a main (chum?) room. You know, 'cause any important occasion happened there; it could take you know the hundred, two hundred people if you wanted to, I think.

Q: Yes, yes.

A1: I think that was the only space, other than the dining room.

Q: Yes. This is the other side of the stage.
A1: Yes, that's right.

Q: There's the big kind of doors.

A1: They must have, those candelabrum things must have stayed from the old house, mustn't they?

Q: Everything's... when I walked round, and I shouldn't have expected to see, but I did, I expected to see the college, because that's what I'm looking at in my head.

A1: Picture what's going on.

Q: But it is a mansion house, because all of the fixtures and fittings are still there. And my overriding thought was 'Wow, this is a beautiful mansion house.' This is the (...).

A1: I suppose it satisfied our aspirations to be posh.

Q: Yes.

A1: If we'd got them, you know, made us walk a little taller because the room was high.

Q: Some of the rooms, you know, little bit states of disrepair, but I mean...

A1: (...) things to do up the... I can't quite think why it's taken so long to... I think it's what to do with the rooms that a conference centre cum hotel wouldn't need. And I think that would be a little bit of a worry, even taking it down would be a huge job. Because the sculptor's studio is up on High Hoyland somewhere aren't they?

Q: Yes. I mean, all of this is still intact.

A1: That's very elegant. That's beautiful.

Q: It's completely intact.

A1: It's funny.

Q: Let me see what else we've got.

A1: Denman College is about that period, which is what the Women's Institute have as their hub...

Q: Oh yes.

A1: ... and the porticoes and all that sort of thing are very similar.

Q: This is the Oak Room, XXXXX was saying he thinks that he was. And it seems like this had just been left. Which randomly just looks a little bit... and buckets.
A1: Very strange.

Q: The next kind of few, I got to go up, this is up from the roof. This is looking back out, 'cause there's the stable block. And the student hostels are down here, and the archive's this side. I was saying to XXXXX on this picture, I realised as I stood on the roof, that you can't actually see the Sculpture Park. So it's a bit like going back in time, because the Sculpture Park didn't exist.

A1: No, that's right.

Q: When Bretton was there, and now people go for the Sculpture Park and not for Bretton. But it was a little bit like going back in time for ten minutes, because you couldn't see anything.

A1: It, the Sculpture Park was the early morning walk. And either you usually thought about going round the bottom lake or round the top lake; you didn't do the two together.

Q: No.

A1: Because you ought to be in lecture at nine o'clock, and so on. But you weren't very aware of the road, you know, the end one. But you were a little bit if you got onto High Hoyland bit, of one of the last coal mines.

Q: Oh yes.

A1: There was a coal mine fairly near.

Q: Yes, yes, I can't recall the name of it.

A1: Because we were collecting wool for learning to spin and home dye things. And we got to hedges and what not, barbed wire fences, and carefully collected what we thought was the white wool from the, white sheep's wool from the black sheep's wool. We washed it and it was all black sheep, the white sheep wool really. Because it was coal dust, you know.

Q: Oh of course!

A1: You didn't, very difficult to picnic sitting down without having something to sit on. There was that film of black everywhere.

Q: Of course.

A1: And we went back, I think I was in the doctor waiting room once, and somebody said 'How often... you come from the south. How often do you wash your nets?' I thought 'Well we don't actually have nets, but... Wash curtains about every two years.' And absolute, you know, that sums it up, you know, that we have to wash ours once a week.

Q: Completely.
A1: And (...) and so, rather than an accent being different, it was really this. But second time we went back it was virtually hidden I suppose.

Q: Well, this is what was on one of the walls, as I was walking round.

A1: A flow plan.

Q: Yeah. It just felt like there was nothing in the room apart from this. And it felt like students could have just left.


Q: And nobody's been in that building since two thousand and seven. Which is over seven years ago, and it hasn't even been wiped off the board even.

A1: Really?

Q: And that's just a...

A1: Probably quite interesting to actually read it and work it out, what it's all about. Society comes in somewhere, which Mrs. Thatcher wouldn't have believed in, would she?

Q: No.


Q: And then when I saw that whiteboard, it just made me think 'Yes, this was a college.'

A1: Yes. I wonder if we used blackboards very much. I don't remember putting up blackboards or anything. We certainly didn't in the art department. No, I don't think we had blackboards. In fact we had boards where a teacher could do, put a diagram. I think you projected things then a bit, but if you wanted to illustrate something. But I don't think you'd draw... certainly teaching we did. I mean, XXXXX teaching primary school children, he drew illustrations of stories that he was telling, as he was telling them, and all that kind of thing

Q: This is the room here that on the outside has got Sir Alec Clegg's name on the front.

A1: I see.

Q: And it needs an awfully good hoover. And even there was a piece of student artwork not collected. So it's just sat there.

A1: Well isn't the... where's the National Collection for Children's Art? Is that in that sort of section? It hasn't got as many windows, has it?
Q: No, we're the next door bit really. It just, when I was inside this space, it just felt really quite sad.

A1: It's quite nice, the windows, I quite like it, nice.

Q: Yes, it's not a bad room at all. And then those pictures are... now these are the pictures I think... this one is a picture for the first prospectus. So it must have been in the mansion house somewhere.

A1: Yes. Now that's the furniture we were talking about.

Q: Yes.

A1: And, but that's a single room, isn't it?

Q: Yeah.

A1: There weren't many... I had a little single room, through Paddy and Margaret's double room, in the stable block for my second year. But I think nearly everybody else had at least two people in the room.

Q: Whose furniture was that again? I can't remember his name.


Q: Gordon Russell.

A1: It was quite, well it was good wood you know. Just a little bit dark, I think stripped pine took over didn't it really?

Q: Very much. December nineteen fifty-two.

A1: We ought to be there. That's XXXXX in the middle there still. They were dressed up, weren't they?

Q: Mm.

A1: Yes, I can't... I'm not good at who's... oh yes, that's Glenn Hughes again. He's the one who came to Cambridge for some reason and popped into my home. That's the lass who sang rather well in Dido and Aeneas I think. May have been the main soloist. I should think 'cause XXXXX's too tall... No, no it's certainly a drama... that's the first year of the real drama course. I don't think that...

Q: Oh yes, nineteen fifty-two. I think you're probably right.

A1: Yes, that's right.

Q: There are some, let me... That one I think...
A1: There was a chap named Bob Cayley who was very well liked and very sound actor. He wasn't terribly exciting actor, but he died very young. XXXXX grieves him very much, I think he was a lovely person to do things with.

Q: This one says it's an early play at the Camellia House.

A1: Yes, I wonder what that was. They used to do the fashion parades in XXXXX's second go there. Miss Hickey used to get, you know, and so on. Mrs. Rentle the costumes were slightly way out. She said 'I like girls in dirndl skirts' she said 'best.' She said once. But I've got a painting I did in the Camellia House upstairs. I haven't kept a lot of stuff.

Q: Goodness! This is opening of the new hockey field – staff team nineteen fifty-two.

A1: Yes, XXXXX did that for you. He could do that.

Q: Oh did he? Bursar, (...).

A1: I think he could tell you who was there. He could tell you who it was for that. It was staff versus students I think.

Q: He's gonna have fun playing in that outfit. With his wig and his skirts.

A1: I think you could (...) off with it. That was just on the lawn down the front of the college, you see. Eventually they had the cricket field on the right, but that hockey field got going first.

Q: That's in the team made of second year students, nineteen fifty-one to fifty-three.

A1: Yes, Paul Gandy, who wants to make contact with you, that's him. And he'd tell you the names of all of those.

Q: Such a fantastic place.

A1: Taffy Thomas, Taffy Thomas. Some... little red-headed lass again. No (...) they were lovely, lovely people.

Q: You both remember an awful lot. Is it, do you think you remember so much because it was such a special time for you?

A1: Yes, it's special time and as it's two of us, you talk about 'Oh that associates with that' and the associations are the same.

Q: Fill each others gaps I suppose.

A1: Yes, yes, quite a lot.

Q: And that's your coronation tree – nineteen fifty-three. Maybe not your tree.

A1: No, but we've got a picture of our tree.
Q: A tree.

A1: The Principal went to every tree and put his... like the royals do, did a little bit of a... did a little bit of...

Q: Well done Mr. Friend.

A1: ... the planting. I, it was, sat on the top of the steps, portico. 'I declare these trees well and truly planted.'

Q: How lovely!

A1: 'Cause we weren't near televisions or anything for the coronation so it was about the right time I think.

Q: Oh, a German visit, nineteen fifty-three.

A1: Now, XXXXX organised those. He took students to Germany. They did a very well-known play, because I think they were doing it for exams. But he'll tell you about the trips to Germany.

Q: And this one did you say this is nineteen fifty-three?

A1: Either Miss Barr or Rae Milne went at one time. But I think they went possibly two or three times. That's...

A2: Is that XXXXX's pictures?

A1: I don't know whose pictures they are. I would have thought that was Charlie Good. It's very common sense (...). Who was it who was the one who sort of worked out the Eleven Plus tests and things? The psychologist or whatever it was. And he was beginning to be questioned even then a bit I think. I don't think Charlie thought particularly much of him. But that's ever so much like Susan Lames, but she can't be, XXXXX, can she?

A2: Susan Lame? Well she went there, didn't she, to college?

A1: Oh, XXXXX thinks that they're the German students coming back. But I think it's Charlie Good on the back row, isn't it?

Q: I'm not sure. You know more than I will.

A2: That's XXXXX's disc of all those productions.

Q: Thank you very much.

A2: And I found his list of what each one is. Unfortunately, for some reason, in transferring the photos into my I-photo, it's lost... the photos that you've got on the disc have lost the numbers that they...
Q: Oh okay.

A2: But you might be able to work it out just by going, re-numbering them.

Q: Yes. Oh thank you.

A2: ... somehow.

Q: Fantastic.

A2: Well I know what I had to tell you. I'm sure that is Susan Lame.

A1: I think it could be. So, if so... we'll ask her now. She'll tell me. She's a bit poorly, she lives near Bradfern. But she's been poorly and I'm trying to write to her about once a fortnight, but...

A2: Yeah, we know her. She came to teach in the Suffolk school I was in soon after I did.

A1: We didn't have a lack of students. We stayed very good friends through the years. But she's...

A2: She used to play the piano and I used to sing, just for fun.

Q: There's some, I don't know if you saw these early ones, XXXXX. That was one of the first prospectus photographs.

A2: That's right. Just like that, these sliding doors on the... that each set of wardrobes would form a partition for the next one.

Q: Clever. December nineteen fifty-two. XXXXX in the middle.

A2: XXXXX, oh yeah. Can I?

Q: Yes, of course.

A2: I haven't got my glasses on. I recognise faces here. I think this is the Lower Depths. Bob Eckersley, he played guitar rather nicely. (Pause) She's not dressed is she, for...? Must have been producer I think. Oh, that could be Fanny Philpott couldn't it? Because did you say she ran the drama? I think sort of out of time...

A1: The Lady's not for Burning, but it was only a reading I think wasn't it?

A2: No, I think that's the Lower Depths. Or, no what was the other one they did? Gorky, Lower Depths.

Q: Early, this is an early play at the Camellia House.

A1: No, I don't know what that was.
Q: Probably the new hockey field, staff team.

A2: Yeah, we got all those. Poppa could let his hair down a bit.

A1: He played tennis with XXXXX, didn't he? He liked playing tennis; he was quite a good tennis player. Oh you know, they all played nicely together. The thing about XXXXX is that you talk to him now and he's not critical. He thinks of it as very happy time, doesn't he?

A2: Yes.

Q: Good.

A1: XXXXX. I suppose he'd got his eye perhaps on Heather, but he coached her and our friend, Joan, to possibly get a, you know, super result at the end. There was a, and so on.

A2: Way of the world.

A1: And a little party went off to Italy together and I think he proposed about that time.

Q: How romantic.

A1: Yes, it was very romantic.

Q: This is the same, nineteen fifty-five. Is that Rae Milne?

A2: Yes. We've gone by then.

Q: Yes.

A1: That was our little gap time.


A2: On the terraced gardens.

Q: Yes. Nineteen fifty-five. I like the big group photographs. Staff and students cricket, nineteen fifty-seven. First production of the Mystery Plays, fifty-seven, fifty-eight.

A1: Yes. That was quite something I think.

Q: Yes.

A1: Quite, you know, it was a big, big do.
Q: I read that in the history of the college, that around the time the Mystery Plays came in, that the college was expanding and they needed, they needed vehicles where the students could be part of the community. And that the Mystery Plays just kind of fell into the lap of perfect timing.

A1: No, that's right.

A2: Yeah, I did that. Well I didn't – the students did it.

Q: One of yours.

A2: I just organised it, yeah. Should have those photos somewhere, but don't know where they are.

Q: Do you know how excited I was when I saw your name?

A2: That was when I was tutor there, when I was teaching there, so I'd groups of students doing bits and pieces.

Q: I think these are later – sixty-seven.

A2: I was there sixty... sixty-three.

Q: That's one of the hostels.

A2: Yeah. Yeah. There's more leg on show in these photographs as they go on.

Q: Isn't there just, isn't there just.

A2: All these knees.

Q: I don't know which hostel that is; I can't... 'cause they're all named aren't they, but I can't tell from that one, which one...

A2: No, I can't remember them. It's a little god isn't it, with a moustache and things.

Q: Apparently the...

A2: Because there's the head.

Q: ... the developer company who wants to develop the mansion house wants to take them all down and put them in the mansion house.

A2: Good, yeah. They certainly should be re-used in some way.

Q: Yes. Some of the students obviously want them, whose hostel it was.

A2: Oh, right.

A1: These little figures like the ones that you are seeing...
Q: Oh gosh!

A1: ... which I did with children in the village school. Because I used to go across and do a little bit of artwork there.

Q: How fantastic.

A1: So I made the pot on the wheel, and then they had clay and added to it while it was leather hard. The one, talking about primitives and so on, this one is an angel, and I just love the wings. Because it's really, your arms being wings.

Q: How fantastic. Yes.

A1: Because you flow with your wings. Because my mum used to say 'You're getting to be an angel; you can have another wing to your feather.'

Q: Oh how lovely.

A1: And your shoulder blade, it's the shoulder blade that made the wings. So I find that very funny. And then this is a child with no real sense of form, but there's beginning to be the outlines of eyes, nose and mouth, but again minus the wings on the back.

Q: I love how you've made, how you've made...

A1: The basic bit.

Q: Yes. And then...

A1: It was just a pot upside down, you see.

Q: Yes.

A1: And we did do that kind of thing with the children. But we've got a book that you can have, because, as a present, the... don't know where I've put it. One other book that I wanted to ask you about.

(pause)

Q: I love how there's even thumb prints and finger prints of the child.

A1: Yes, it's... I think we gave one to Jeanette, but I'm not sure. But that was... we didn't move house at one point and had to (...), we thought 'What shall we do next?' We were all packed up. So XXXXX designed the cover for that, and actually page by page how it was to be printed. But it's got pictures of what we made in the middle there.

Q: Oh yes.
A1: But it talks about living in the community. And I think that was the main outcome for us, was that we were community; even if we weren't teaching, we were community orientated. Having to be careful not to interfere you know, and so on. But those were the things that we made.

Q: Do you think that you ever... did, because you created another community through the pottery, in a way. Do you think that that sense of community at Bretton then...?

A1: I think it inspired it. Yes, it did.

Q: Yeah. That you had such an enjoyable experience.

A1: Yes, yes, that would be feeling, the feeling for community would come through because of that, because of that. And it was very much, if people came and said 'Could you make us a so and so?' We'd say 'Go and look at what we usually do. If you think we'd fit in, we'll have a go.' And it was, sparked off, somebody wanted a little stand to put their grandfather's watch in, and so we started making those and you had to measure the watch carefully, and then allow for the clay to contract enough, you know, and so on.

Q: Of course.

A1: The thing we rebelled against eventually was the broken teapot lid; we didn't want to replace that, because again the shrinkage is difficult, so we'd have spare lids in the thing and say 'Go and see if we've got one that fits – you can have that.'

Q: (...).

A1: That was Sybille Marshall opening our village hall. And she said she didn't need a loudspeaker, but she did. She did need it. But we all dressed up and we did painting. But that was the children flying over...

Q: Oh how lovely.

A1: … rather than have a Fen picture, we lived in... XXXXX got children making a dragon so they did all children inside the dragon. That was all for the opening ceremony of our new village hall.

Q: How beautiful. And I do just see Bretton.

A1: (…)

Q: I think, and looking at photographs of the plays and...

A1: That's why I wanted you to see it. But I think it's a continuity, a sort of growth that is certainly not... and then...

Q: I know exactly what you mean.
A1: Deep influence I would say.

Q: And there's the queen's, the WI exhibition. Goodness me.

A1: Yes, they asked me to represent the potters.

A2: I've never heard of Ken Robinson before. Says here might have achieved international acclaim for his two thousand and six TED talk. What is that?

Q: Yes, you pronounce it a TED talk. And it's about, I think it stands for Technology, Education and Design. I can probably show you actually, on my phone. And it's people, people who give lectures or talks, normally for... sometimes it's for six minutes or twenty minutes. It's very, very short. And then you can view it. And he spoke in two thousand six about killing creativity in schools. It's quite witty; it's quite a... I'll show you. I'll show you how to have a look at it.

A2: Viewed by an estimated three hundred million people worldwide.

Q: Yes.

A2: That's wonderful news. If his message is what I think it is.

Q: Yes. He very much sings from a Bretton hymn sheet, very much.

A2: XXXXXXX was saying that this guy's written this book. She's just got her copy and realised it's, it's dedicated to Bretton Hall.

Q: Yes. And all the students. I think he's put 'And all who sailed in her.'

A1: I must try and track it down.

Q: I think he's written, he's written five or six books. He's written lots of papers, and he is based in Los Angeles now, so I'm aware that he's writing about the AmXXXXXan school system as well as the British one. But he's a doctor; he got his PhD in, I think he's from Liverpool originally. But I'll show you the TED talks. And yeah, have a watch. It's an interesting watch. And he's witty, there's quite, there's a dry wit about him.

A2: Would I get it on an ordinary computer, or does it have to be a phone?

Q: Yeah. No. If you google TED.

A2: Google TED.

Q: TED talk. Or even TED talk Sir Ken Robinson, it should come up. And I think it's maybe about fifteen, twenty minutes.

A2: I'll do that then.

Q: Have a look, it's good.
A2: Because it's reassuring, because sometimes we think all that we were, that we're talking about with Bretton Hall, has got completely lost and forgotten and you know. But if he's saying what I think he's saying, it's a new version of it, a new, a development of the ideas.

Q: Yes. And he's talking, in some of his books he talks about reforming education, and in this book – I haven't read it, I have just got it – but apparently he talks more, not about reforming again, but transforming it. And that it's, in a way it's things that you know. It's not new, I don't think, in that sense. It's, it's been forgotten...

A2: No, but it's in a new form. That's fine. Was important – it's essential really. What says... what Clegg says on the front of that pamphlet, that there's a little quotation in, right in the beginning there. Get it. As usual, I can't find the thing I want when I want it. Can you see the...

A1: Too many things, too many things.

A2: … pamphlet, XXXXX?

A1: What's that dear? What you looking for?

A2: Clegg's lecture.

A1: No, I haven't had that. More, that's in your bag. I've got a bag of odds and ends, but it's...

A2: No, this isn't from your bag.

Q: Is it that his loaves and hyacinths quote? He talks about 'If thou of fortune be bereft' that one.

A2: No, it just says if you're a good teacher, when you're first a teacher, you can be a good teacher. But if you don't change, you'll become a bad teacher. I think that's sort of summary of what he's saying.

Q: Yes. I like Alec's... Alec was a teacher. And I sometimes think he's quite parablistic. And I like his rhythm, when he speaks. I think in his head, he's a teacher, even when he's a chief education officer. And I think that comes through. He seems to innately know what you have to do to engage a child. And to be on their level without dumbing down or being patronising. And I do believe that that's then... when he hires staff, he was looking for that.

A1: Listeners thinking, the listeners thinking.

Q: Yes, that's completely.

A1: (…)
Q: But Sir Ken Robinson, I think it was the nineteen sixties he was at Bretton. His wife, his wife's called Terri, and I think she might be drama; I don't think she went to Bretton. But I think they were based in Liverpool, but he's quite, I think because he moved out of the UK as well, he's definitely worth a look though, XXXXX.

A2: Yes.

A1: Haven't mentioned Gervase Phinn. He's about a lot now and he has had a lot of broadcasty thing.

Q: Yes.

A1: He came to talk in Ely. But that's not mainly... it's when he retires. But very, you know, wandering round schools as an inspector.

Q: Yes, (...) inspector.

A1: And loving them all. But he reads, and very funny. He was, there was one in one of the churches, the local bookshop does. Promoting a book, where they come and talk and then you buy their books and things and have them signed. And he's the only person who wanted to talk to everybody before his lecture began, as we arrived, he sort of welcomed us and went around talking to us. And we asked him if he'd got a link with Bretton. He said yes, he certainly went and taught there sometimes, but... Is your thingy still going?

Q: Yes, I can... I'm so pleased you kept all of these things. When I first started to look at Bretton, there's very little...

A1: Not nearly enough.

Q: I've written among my notes things like 'Where's the paperwork? Where...?' And there's just...

A1: Oh it's probably around here and there. Oh Kathy hasn't kept anything, I don't think she has.

Q: I think sometimes... because as somebody who lectures, I've got things and you keep things. And there's nothing. And I'm assuming it's probably with individual people, if anything exists. But the collections that I've seen on Bretton, there's some architectural drawings of Bretton. There's kind of... you have to really scour documents to find specific references.

A1: Really? I, I hadn't... I have done diaries a little bit, but not much. And XXXXX does holiday diaries nicely. But I've discovered that really, in a funny way, if you want to remember the sequence of things from our paintings that we've done and work that we've done — the sequence is there, more in the work rather than in the thinking or in written, a written work. You've found it, have you?

A2: 'Let me take change first, and I do so because if you continue to teach after five years in the profession, as you teach... as you now teach, you'll almost certainly be a
poor teacher. If you teach after ten years as you do now, you will certainly be a bad
teacher. Two reasons: there's one that you're as much beginners in your chosen
trade as is an apprentice joiner, butcher, builder, gardener. Second is that times will
change, and if you don't change with them, you will be bad teachers.'

Q: Spot on.

A2: That's putting it.

Q: There's some things that he wrote, that he could have written today. That really
stand the test of time.

A2: Yeah.

Q: And that's when I sometimes think all his words are now in...

A1: Can you pop those out of the way?

Q: … in boxes, in files, in archives. And I'm pleased they're there; but they're just sat
there and nobody... it doesn't feel that anybody in the power of education is speaking
them.

A1: Are the pictures that...

A2: I'm going to have some more tea, anybody else?

Q: I'm okay, thank you.

A1: … have been collected... my sister's primary school work, those earlier on.

Q: I did, I looked at your sister's collection.

A1: Yes, she was good.

Q: Very good.

A1: She wasn't teacher trained at all.

Q: Really?

A1: She went straight from, she went straight from Reading University. It was a four
year course. She'd been taught well herself you see.

Q: I looked in her, one of her boxes, and there's a folder that the children made. And
there's instructions how to make it. And there's a folder that they made. And I was
beyond impressed that it...

A1: Oh well, I will tell her; she'll be pleased.

Q: It's brilliant.
A1: Because I've often wondered... what, ours now you see, and whether it will be accessible. It will be accessible to anybody doing research. But when I went one time in the early... because it had got quite a lot of Marie Richard's collection even. And there were the, you know, panels that you pushed up, to and fro, on wheels. But, does that exist still? Because that didn't seem to be around when, that you could just go into the room and see some of the well-known collections; Viola, have they got some of Viola's collection I think it was?

Q: I don't know. They probably will have. I know when I looked at, is it Pauline?

A1: Twyman.

Q: Yes. When I looked in her collection, I was incredibly impressed. Because I read... she'd written down how to make a folder with the children. And I thought 'Wow!' And read it. And then very naively realised, there was one of the folders. And it's perfect, it's absolutely brilliant. And it made me smile, because she's written in it, there's some loose leaf, about how to make certain things and how to produce certain effects.

A1: I think they asked her to...

Q: Oh, it's brilliant.

A1: … say what sparked this off and what didn't. No, she was pleased when I think her son helped her get it together. Because that had been under a bed for a long time. But she didn't... she had three children, and the village school was just down the road. So she could fit the timetable and things. She didn't work full-time, but people didn't seem to want to do their own art teaching, so she was a specialist art teacher. And now and again they'd want her to do the history of something else but...

Q: Oh it was lovely.

A1: … she's, she's interesting. She came to Bretton on one of the sixth form courses.

Q: Oh, did she?

A1: So Paul Bird taught her then. She did some very nice work with him. She thinks of him as an inspiration. But she was taught very well at school. And Margaret Ingles who was (Cortion?) trained; this Nan Youngman who appointed a lot. She, it was Cortion she went to most of all. I don't know that Bretton existed when, earlier when she got people. But she appointed somebody who'd been to Slade, who'd just done London University teacher training. And she came straight, an Ely girl, here, came straight to us. And was tremendously inspirational; was fun, young. You see nearly all the people who taught us were those lovely unmarried ladies who didn't marry during the wars, you know, so that they were mature and very earnest and taught very well, and loved school dearly; we were their children. But Jo appearing, I've just got into touch with her. And when she left the school, she'd been on a communist conference in Wales, fallen spot on for a miner, married him almost immediately; had four children. Got him through college and so on, whilst she did the working. And his
four kids... he died and eventually... brought up the children on her own. I met her art examining once, I did some art exams, A Levels and things. But she had been living in Greece for twelve years. Some mutual person met at a wedding in Wales and she said about the high school. So contacted me to get in touch with her, and she'd been teaching Baha'i, relaxation as well as painting, in Athens for twelve years.

Q: Gosh!

A1: Isn't it strange? We never met her, but she said she had been to see where her sister's ashes were sprinkled, in Ely; she'd been back to Ely once.

Q: My goodness.

A1: But she had her ninetieth birthday on a Greek island, she's gone back to... she's ninety-one now, I think, but we've been in touch with her (...).

Q: When I read your sister's explanations of things, it was so clear. And there was a real kindness that came through. You could, you knew she was teaching to a certain audience, and she'd completely nailed it. And it made me smile, because one of the resources, she'd put 'school glue'. And I thought 'We all know what that means. We just all know what school glue means.' But yes, I was...

A1: I'm so pleased for... because she knew... I wrote to the, yesterday or day before, yes I posted it yesterday; I said you were coming and haven't heard anything really, I'll...

Q: Oh well I have looked at her collection.

A1: I'll tell her. I'll tell her.

Q: Yes, do. It was lovely, it was really nice.

A1: And her husband's written a rather important book in his field and very much caught the headlines, but she's been... she does adult teaching on a Friday, still. She's eighty. Nearly eighty, and she's still doing... class in the morning, class in the afternoon. Of course it was state organised, but it got all difficult and too expensive and things, so she's doing it privately now. So she's having twenty people in the morning; twenty in the afternoon, painting.

Q: And she's eighty? Well you only retired two thousand five didn't you? Did you retire, from the pottery? When did the pottery...?

A2: The pottery we closed in nineteen...

A1: Before then.

A2: ... nineteen...

A1: Well XXXXX was ill you see and we had a little bit forced issue, wasn't it?
A2: No, it was twenty years teaching, twenty years potting, twenty years retirement coming up.

Q: It's nice if you can get it.

A2: Mad.

Q: Yes. Right. Let me...

A2: Is it in the way? None of that means anything. You know, it was just...

(End of recording)