

ORAL HISTORY TRANSCRIPT

Interviewee: **Inga Kavanagh** (IK)

Date: 15th September 2025

Interviewer: Trudi Mayo (TM), Ju Mackrell (JM)

Location: Inga's home

Other people present: None

Audio files: Inga Kavanagh oral history.mp4



Note that the following is a verbatim transcript of what was spoken in the recording. Our best efforts have been made to capture and represent the interview in its entirety, though there is the possibility of error.

IK: I'm just a bit nervous today for some reason.

JM: Oh, thank you for talking to us, Inga, though. That's really interesting for us because you moved here in the 80s, didn't you?

IK: 1984, yes, yes. Well, I lived in London then and ran a pub together with my husband, which was a... I had a very good job in Christies the auctioneers in London, but my husband needed to have a wife to join him in running at this pub, you know, and so I left fairly quickly and we were very good, we were very successful in seven years, but it wasn't a job for me, so that's why I wanted to sort of come to Bath, really, because my husband talked a lot about Bath, what a lovely place it was. So that was a quite hasty decision, you know. So I came here and looked around Odd Down and I just liked the vibes from it, really.

JM: Yeah.

IK: And that was it. Yeah.

JM: Did you have the wool shop straight away or?

IK: Yes, I just moved in as it was, and the hairdressers as well. And I'm not good at sewing or knitting or anything like that, but I just sat here and people came in and bought a few things and, you know, it was just a nice, quiet life for me. I didn't have to work at night or anything.

TM: Yeah, nice.

JM: I remember coming across as a child with my mum from Larkhall to your wool shop.

IK: Oh yeah?

JM: and I thought it was the furthest distance just across town!

IK: But funnily enough, a lot of people didn't really know that this place was here, you know, because most people nowadays, they just drive past, they don't walk past, but the local people obviously knew. But the funny thing about it was to me, really, when they came in and they had bought a pattern, for example, knitting pattern, and had some difficulty in understanding it. And they asked me, of course the thing is, I don't knit like the English people knit, it's different, different the way I knit, you know, so I just had to sort of try to sort of say sorry. I got away with it, but...

TM: It's worth a try, isn't it?

IK: Yeah.

JM: The extent of my knitting didn't go beyond knitting a scarf, I don't think.

TM: No, the same here.

IK: Yeah. it's not everybody's cup of tea, is it?

JM: So how did you find the community when you moved up to Odd Down? What was it like then?

IK: I must say I just felt very welcome really, right from the kick-off. I could tell that it's quite a... quite a sort of close community, I think, really fairly ordinary people. But it really did surprise me because I was thinking, not being English, you know, and I have a sort of an accent, people might think, I shouldn't say really, but it was German, you know, because some people sort of don't really like German people or didn't.

JM: I heard that's changed.

IK: Yeah, but nobody sort of said anything. And also with the buses in those days, there didn't seem to be any foreign people really, not as much as now because there's more students.

TM: Yes.

IK: And yeah. I lost a tooth last night, came out. I can't really speak properly.

JM: Are you OK to continue or?

IK: Pardon?

JM: Are you OK to continue for us?

IK: Yes. Oh yes.

JM: So when you came from London, did you make use of the pubs locally and things because you'd left the pub or?

IK: No, I didn't go to the pubs that much. I sort of drank indoors instead secretly, I suppose

JM/TM: [Laughter]

IK: for two years. And then I went somewhere and I haven't had a drink since my birthday, 5th of May 1986.

JM: And where was it you had that drink?

IK: That was in the Burnt House and that was late in the evening as it happens. Because it was a bank holiday, Monday, and they had something special going on there. And I came home with the bus that stopped down there. So I think I was staying there until nearly 12 o'clock, you know?

JM: Brilliant.

IK: Yeah, that was the last drink I had.

JM: And of course, you probably remember The Wansdyke, which is a gym now, is it, or a boxing ring or something.

TM: Some sort of martial arts thing, I think, yeah.

IK: No. What do you mean? Oh, now?

TM: What they're using it for now.

IK: Oh, yes, oh, yes, It's very popular. It's a lot of people go, they're youngsters, you know, it's just sort of teach them, yeah, self-defence and all those sort of things.

JM: Was it a popular pub in the 80s?

IK: Oh, very much so. Oh, yes. everybody on Odd Down loved it and they loved the people that ran it.

JM: Can you remember who that was or?

IK: Yeah, I can't think of the name at the moment, but because my memory is not so good nowadays.

JM: Well hopefully we'll find out more at the Lost Pubs talk, I know that the chap that's doing it, David Lassman, is doing some research at the moment on all of the pubs.

IK: Yes, they had a very good, successful pub. They're taking quite a lot of money because when I came to sort of have a look at it, I was talking about how much they were taking in the week and all that, you know, I was surprised. They were doing very well. But since they left, I think, what's he called, Merv or something? It went downhill quite a lot, and it had various people run it, you know. So, yeah, it was very popular.

JM: And you're quite an active member of the St. Philip's community over there.

JM: Not active. I go there, but I'm not, I'm not part of running the place or anything.

JM: OK.

IK: Yeah.

JM: A good community over there as well.

IK: Oh yeah, marvellous people. But I think Odd Down in itself has got an awful lot of very nice people, you know, interesting people, you know, ordinary people, but they will have very, very, very interesting hobbies and all sorts of things, they're very nice, I must say. Yeah, because the best way of living in Odd Down, for me is, when I go outside, you know say if you're feeling down, you're depressed or tired and all that, I know so many people,

and there's people sort of driving past in cars, hooting, or something and I can't see who it is, it really annoys me.

JM: They go too quickly.

IK: Yeah, and then I run into people and, how are you? And I can't remember who they are because it might have been years ago, you know, "Oh I used to come in and buy a few things from you". And there's always somebody I know now.

JM: That's nice.

IK: So that's great.

JM: So was it just wool that you sold out there or were there other?

IK: Haberdashery and that sort of thing. And we also, I also... People could come and hand in their dry cleaning.

JM: Oh OK.

IK: And so I passed that on to Regency. They came every week to pick that up. And also shoe repairs. They were called Starsec, shoe repairs, I think, in Keynsham, I think they were. Yeah, things like that. And I got a bit of commission, you know.

JM: Oh, lovely.

IK: So it sounds quite old-fashioned, doesn't it, when you think about it?

TM: But people need these things, don't they?

IK: Yeah, they come here, you know, hand their shoes in. They don't. I don't think people go anywhere to have their shoes repaired now, do they?

JM: No, they're just not a new idea. Everything's got much cheaper.

IK: Yeah that's right, yeah.

JM: It's all mass produced.

TM: Did you run the hairdressers as well, or did someone else do that?

IK: No, I'm not a hairdresser, so I had somebody that was, you know.

TM: OK.

IK: Shared, whatever. They used to, it was the hairdressing that brought in the money, not the wool shop. Because I remember one accountant, he said to me, he was, do you do this for your business? Do you do this as a hobby? You know, because of hardly any profit. Which is true, it wasn't.

JM: Well, that's perfect, thanks Inga. Thank you for your time today. I think we'll probably call that a wrap there.

TM: Yes, Thank you so much.

