

## **Martin Norwood describes his memories of the riverside.**

Interviewer:

So, if we think about the area where the water gardens are now, do you have any recollections of what it was like before they er before they started work on the water gardens?

Martin:

Yeh, My grandfather lived in Cemetery Hill and he, he owned the house up there. And he wor.. he purchased two further properties in Cotterells Road, so this was prior to the Leighton Buzzard Road being opened, or even constructed. Er, Numbers 38 and number 40. Um, my aunt, who was my dad's eldest sister, lived in number 38 with her husband. They had no children but it was always good fun to go there in the in the afternoons for tea and things. um, and I remember vividly the railway sidings, the coal yards. Um, vaguely the iron works, and things like that, um. but certainly the sidings and coal yards along there, and of course there was no other road through the town, so, Cotterells was the main thoroughfare. Quite a busy piece of road, for the time.

Interviewer: Hmm, do you remember anything of the river?

Martin:

Yeah, the river run through the back there. I believe that some of the river was run into a culvert, at points, and then it run down through and under the railway embankment, and then came out where the roundabout is now, but obviously where the roundabout is and where the roadway is was where we had our park. So we had swings and a thing called The Jazz in there and there was a kid's paddling pool there, and an open field to the back of it, which backed off to the railway si.. to the railway embankment. So yeh the river ran through from the top end of the park, down the back of the town, but it, I think it just meandered its way around through the various buildings that were already there.

Interviewer:

So, was it accessible or was it all, sort of private property?

Martin:

That, that I can't actually remember. I think, I think it ran through private property like the iron works and people like that, it was, it was running through their properties, like other streams and rivers do around the town now.

Interviewer:

And the railway was still there? What would you remember about that?

Martin:

Yeh, Puffing Billy. I think that that was the nickname that was given to us, she was called Puffing Billy. That used to run from, um, Harpenden right the way through and bring coal down to the gas works in in Boxmoor Road or London Road. um, yeh, and it used to be a bit of a pull for the old train to go up those slopes, specially going up to the Railway Arms, which is now the Midland Hotel, up Midland hill, so yeah, the recollection of that used to come I think it used to run two or three times a day basically. Backwards and forwards. And I remember it was a big thing to see the train going over the railway arches at the bottom of the Marlowes itself.