1981. I started on the gardens, and then when, er, not the water gardens but I worked at Gadebridge. And then, about a year later, when the council, Hemel council took over from the New Towns Commission, they needed a, somebody to run it. And I applied for the job and got it [laugh]     I think there were about, I think there were about 11 people working, when the New Towns Commission had it. Well, all I got was 2 people. And me, meself, 3. So it went down from 11 to 3.

A lot of shrubs were overgrown, but as soon as we took it over, then the big new scheme started. And it was, er, a big clearance job really. Some of the stuff was so overgrown it was, hadn't been looked after properly and half dead as well, dead stuff there. So we had one big clean up . One of the first jobs we done was empty the river and clean the river out. Cos you could see the, you could see the ...earth, you know, the er, silt, come up to the top of the water. Well we planted, 1000 shrubs and trees. But, unfortunately, through lack of security, 95% got stolen. As fast as we could plant them, overnight, I...I done a big azalea bed. Went there next morning, gone. All stolen. That was it.

Well there was no security whatsoever, down there. And, there was a fence, from the children's playground, right through nearly to Bank court. End of the water garden, the car park there. It was just a 5 foot chain link fence. But the landscape manager, as his first job, ripped it all out. And it opened it all up, the BMX bikes, and it was at night time, the children were.. going through it with bikes, so it just, it was destroying everything, just over one fence. It was a children's playground!

Sort of, what we could we planted, what hadn't been pinched. After we refurbished, we had lovely beautiful, floodlights, that went up through the shrubs, into the trees at night time. And when it was all, when it was the grand opening, I was invited to, with more from the town hall, we went down at night time and switched the lights on. And it was ab-so-lute-ly beautiful! And the snowberry, you know, the little, the little snowberries, they shone in the lights....we had to go to the mayor's parlour [laugh], for drinkie booze [laugh]. And we all trooped off down there, you know, landscape manager, just the top people from the town hall, that’s all. There was no celebrities there. Because there was no security there, eventually it was all vandalised.