

The background is a dark, textured blue surface, possibly a book cover or a piece of paper, covered in numerous white scratches and scuffs. The scratches are mostly thin and curved, creating a sense of movement and wear. The title 'HOXTON STORY' is written in a bold, red, sans-serif font, centered in the upper half of the image. The letters are slightly blurred, giving it a hand-drawn or spray-painted appearance. A thin, horizontal white line runs across the middle of the image, just below the title.

HOXTON STORY

Extracts from interviews with Hoxton residents
edited by Lisa Goldman · photographs by Leo Asemota



Falstaff House, Arden Estate.

Introduction

by Lisa Goldman, Artistic Director of the Red Room

Heritage is something of value which we want to preserve for future generations. But heritage is also a contested concept, based as it is on evolving values which are themselves subject to different - conflicting - needs and interests.

As I sit here editing the interviews that make up this booklet, Channel 4's 'Time Team' is digging trenches in Shoreditch Park in order to excavate artefacts relating to pre-war history. Elderly local residents are being asked about their knowledge of, and connection to, the unearthed treasures. Meanwhile, a few hundred yards away, on Pitfield Street, a lovely Victorian school - once home to a very popular youth inclusion project - is being bulldozed, without ceremony or cameras. Local residents I spoke to were upset about the demolition, maintaining, (rightly or wrongly) that there was no consultation.

Almost exactly a year ago I walked around the building. It was a boy's school until the 1950s and after that accommodated all sorts of community activities. Even as we started work on 'Hoxton Story', 168 Pitfield Street had already been sold and contained its first luxury show flat. The youth inclusion project - called the Crib - was living on borrowed time. The Crib provided a safe haven for local teenagers, of which up to 500 were regularly involved, drawn from rival 'territories' in the area. It was clear from talking to the young people, that the Crib was making a real difference to their lives and prospects. Yet they were not consulted about its future.

At the end of 2004, the much-needed Crib was evicted, whilst lack of demand meant that the plan for luxury flats fell through. The whole building was demolished to make way for key-worker and student flats. Perhaps the only way for the developer, Capital and Provident Regeneration, to recoup their investment was through the public subsidy such a scheme would enable.

I've visited the Crib in their new space, a tiny room in the middle of the De Beauvoir Estate. No longer in the Hoxton hotspot, with few young people living in the immediate vicinity, it is also hard to find. Moreover, many months had to pass before relocation. The spirit of the Crib is not dead - but it survives against what appears to be a concerted attempt to make it disappear.

There are many other examples of this kind of vandalism. Inflated property prices have created the conditions for Hackney Council and local businesses to cash in. Pubs have been sold, the market is in decline due to prohibitive legislation and everywhere valuable and scarce community resources are passing into the hands of the private

sector or new “private-public” partnerships. During my year working on ‘Hoxton Story’, King Bee Music Academy (in Hoxton since the ‘70’s) was evicted by the council, the Old Library was sold by the council (the English National Opera and the Hoxton Singers had to look for somewhere else), and Hoxton Hall, once a Victorian music hall, and a focus for community arts and drama, lost some local and all Arts Council funding, making 11 people redundant. No doubt these represent the tip of an iceberg. Interviewees suggest that the previous 15 years have seen a great deal of Hoxton’s heritage and culture stolen, often behind a “regeneration” smokescreen.

From a heritage point of view, what has gone on in Hoxton is akin to running a knife through a national treasure. If that happened there would be an outcry. But Hoxton’s greatest traditions are living ones – its strong sense of community, of family, of self-organised activity, of diversity. These are being torn apart piecemeal, seemingly deliberately. Generally stoic and good-humoured, many people of “the village” keep extending their community networks and looking to the future, whilst others simply pack up and move away. It is the heritage of self-organisation that leaps out from the interviews - a community which struggles against all odds to make positive change.

The interviews were conducted by seven of us over nine months. Inevitably there are great stories missing. However, the full interviews, from which these extracts are drawn, will be based at Hackney Archive for perpetuity. Being a theatre company, we are also using the material as the basis for a walkabout performance piece in the area and a website.

This short booklet offers a snapshot of Hoxton and neighbouring estates. Residents’ memories, fears, resentments and hopes about their changing area are interwoven. I have tried to draw out both contradictions and repeated themes. I’ve also deliberately maintained the rhythms and uncertainties of everyday speech on the page, editing only for readability. There are no headings. It is a book to dip into, or follow the story. So I’ll stop now and let the people of Shoreditch speak for themselves.

Lisa Goldman
July 2005



Entrance to demolition site of Pitfield Street old school (foreground) and Caliban Tower, Arden Estate (background).



Hoxton Street-Pitfield Street roundabout

LINTON

Oh, we have some great memories. There was a park, you had secret areas and you could go out and your friends can say, “That’s our camp over there”. That was a great part of the play. You go in that area and that’s ours. You put your board up and anyone who doesn’t belong and you’re in trouble. Cause you crossed the border. That was a great part of it. That’s wicked. We were 11, 10 to 11. The smaller the group the better. Too many people and your secret’s out. It’s not secret anymore. It’s got bigger. After a week then your area’s been exploded. Everybody knows about it. Your secret gone. It’s gone. Your privacy. You know? Our area wasn’t much. It’s just where it is ... It’s unique where it is. The uniqueness is where it is cause not a lot of people know about it. It’s just the three of you and you’ll be more away from everybody. Most of those areas are not there no more. As time goes on things are changed. I don’t know if they still do that kind of play ...

CAVAN

Someone said, um, “Hey we’re going to the Ditch.” And I said, “‘The Ditch?’ Where’s the fucking ‘Ditch?’” And that was it. It was Shoreditch, yeah? And I was like, “‘The Ditch?’ No one calls it ‘The Ditch.’” And then people started using the word Hoxton, which no one had ever heard about before. Or if they had heard about it, it was the place where the Krays were born, or a place where the women eat bricks, or – do you know what I mean? It was a sort of urban – sort of, East End mythology, sort of, gangster-type things, do you know what I mean? And then all of a sudden people are saying, “Hoxton,” and I was like, “What do you - no, you don’t know, you don’t know Hoxton.” But it wasn’t the same Hoxton, though, but where I’m talking about. It was Shoreditch. There was nothing there when I was growing up. It was just an old place ... with dirty grey windows.

ANNETTE

I moved into this workshop in ‘91 which are now full of artists. They was loads empty then. Just a few old men who did upholstery, wood turning and print making. Over the years they’ve gradually left or died and it’s all the new set.

IVY

It was all industry in Hoxton Square. Like cabinet makers, furniture makers there was Italian firm they used to make all the statues, pottery ... it was an industry area, and I don’t know whether that’s still round there where they used to make the queen’s uniforms, the busbies you know, the hats. There used to be a printers ... it was proper family factories there.

TESSA

It was derelict. You could just park wherever you wanted. And it just had a very dark mood. I can’t really describe it, but it was quite scary. Just like “ooh ... anything can happen...”



Ivy Wills

DOLLY

The church doors were open, and I walked in. And it was a warehouse for, umm, garden furniture, great big oak panel doors and fireplaces, the lot. And I went “My God.” So he said, chap said, “Can I help you?” So I said, “Not really,” I said, “but can I walk round and have a look?” So he said, “What you looking for?” And I said “To see what you done to my church” He said, “Your church?” I says, “I got married here 40 years ago this year.” He said, “You never.” I said, “I did,” I said, “My two children got christened here.” I said, “What the heck’s happened?” I said, “Where’s the, where’s the ... where’s the stained glass of Saint Michael?” He said, “Oh it’s still there, we boarded... we put something in front of it.” But if you’d seen that church you’d never credit. And, at the side of that there used to be a convent. Yeah. And then they pulled that down and they was burning all the woodwork, all the beams. And the beautiful colours that was coming from those beams in the fire was unbelievable. They kept the wall, and then they built a garage. Yeah. It was unbelievable.

CAVAN

I remember seeing a thing on the floor on the corner of Pitfield and Great Eastern Street, a thing that said Hoxton, and I was like, “Fuck that thing there! That’s not Hoxton.” I don’t say it in the same breath. I know that there’s a different place there that, for me, is always and will always be Hoxton.

JASON

Hoxton Square has become so, sort of, popular now, it’s kind of - Hoxton’s got a bit bigger, really, inside of Shoreditch, if you know what I mean.

CAVAN

Hoxton Square would be in Shoreditch, yeah.

IVY

My kids was brought up in that square practically, there used to be a nice little putting lawn in there, it was a nice place to sit, you had um, a caretaker in there that he wouldn’t let anybody in there with cans of beer of anything. He kept it beautiful. But that’s how squares should be - to me a square should be a pretty thing.

PAT

Well, what they did was, first of all they had solicitors, and barristers and photographic people in there... and the artists as well, and it was really, it was all quite reserved round there and the park was still like with the rose garden on one end, and the mini golf the other end, and then, after about a year to 18 months they started putting up the price of the rent, and it got so exorbitant that these people had to move out. After that they

started moving in the clubs and that's when it went a bit bandy. The original artists was quite good because they didn't interfere with anyone, they used to put their exhibitions on, and I found that um, it was, it was, it bought culture into the area ... But having said that, you know if you move people out like that, and then you get people that have got money in, and they start buying up property in Hoxton Square and then it becomes a commercial industry, and a money making industry and then people get very greedy...

IVY

Well look what we had round there a few summers ago? They had a group in that park, filling condoms up with ice cream, tying them to the railings, you never seen a state in your life round there, there was condoms everywhere. That was supposed to be art.

PAT

That was supposed to be art. It was a guy called Crompton who lived down in Charlotte Road and he wanted to put this exhibition on. Very few people knew exactly what he was going to do, 'cos it was supposed to be stalls with art, and you know the small commercial art, artists would be in there, and it turned out that it was really farcical in as much as they had tampax, chocolate tampax round, hanging up round the railings, and as Ivy says these condoms filled with cream and all those sort of things that, that weren't nice for children to see you know.

IVY

Condoms filled up with fake blood ... a witchcraft thing round there weren't it? That's what it looked like! Oh, it was a right state.

PAT

Most of the bars round here are made in to clubs, and they just get a certain type of person that comes into this area. In fact they have a big club in Old Street itself which is not very far from here, and they actually bus youngsters in here weekends to get their money, you know they bring 'em from places like Dartford and other places from outside of London. So it's the only way they can actually do the business that they do. People in this area could not afford to go to these clubs anyway, especially some of the kids if they're not working they couldn't pay. I don't know if it's £10 or £15 a night to go into a club ... I don't know of anyone that lives in the area that actually goes to those clubs.

ROSE

I would think that to live down near Hoxton Square would be very hard. People get up in the morning and find somebody's urinated or thrown up on their doorstep. So I feel for people that live down that part of Hoxton.

NICK

We did find a few bottles thrown out here. And you can tell the area's getting gentrified because it's very good French champagne!



Nick Strauss

IVY

They come round and they devastate that square, and then we have to foot the bill to clean it up. Apparently sometimes I was told the restaurants do donate something towards the cleaning, but I think they're entitled to, I think they're entitled to pay for the whole lot. 'Cos you come out there's glasses everywhere, you've seen it in there haven't you, there's everything round there.

JACKIE

I used to look down on Hoxton Square see people milling about. And now it's different people. It was just buildings, you know, factories, the school, the church. Well, there was Fox's which was a safe place. They used to make safes. It's a nice different square, don't get me wrong. And I've got no objection to what goes on. But it's not ... it's not for what the local people want. To me it's an extension of the city.

ANTOINETTE

"The Hoxton fringe", or "city fringe" we're told we are now. But I understand that the City Fathers, who are a business conglomerate who work in the city, their aim is to get Shoreditch within the City boundary ... and I'm all for that, and the sooner the better.

JACKIE

I think the one thing that should happen is that they should give the people of Shoreditch their Town Hall back or their borough back. When I was young it was its own borough. And to me, personally, I'm sure everyone else feels the same, it was a very sad day when they moved the boundaries. Yeah, it was in the '60s. Because it did change. Without a doubt. Because then it's a smaller borough, it's more manageable. And then I'd like to think there would be the opportunity to actually try and improve on, certainly the lack of services than, you know, than we've got now. I just think give it back to the people of Shoreditch.

ANTOINETTE

The inner cities are coming alive again. People are fed up with commuting and having a lovely house but only sleeping in it. Hoxton is part of this change.

JOAN

Well, what I call it, I don't know if you call it - I call it yuppie land. Because that seems to be working for it. You know what I mean?

CAVAN

When I was young, I had a little Zippo lighter with a little British flag on it, and 'Hoxton' written in the middle of it.

JOAN

I said it's like after the war now, the way they're building up.

WILLIAM

I was watching this documentary - "A place in the sun?" they showed Old Street and it goes, "This is the new Soho. No, this is the new Soho and it's called Shoho", because Shoreditch and whatever. It's what they like to call "urban", which I really don't understand that phrase, but - and I just sat there and was like, "That's - that's where I live! That's where I live! That's my area!" And, well, my part of the area didn't get shown, but you know, you know the places that would've got shown.

DOLLY

And everywhere is glass. Everywhere is glass. I mean, they said they wouldn't do glass any more, but it is. Everywhere is glass in the cit.... in there. Yeah. I can remember as a little girl, the buildings wasn't as big as what they are today. They're enormous.

JASON

It is nice to see nice buildings. Makes you feel good. Makes you feel a bit more proud about bringing people into your area. Only it's just a shame that, me, myself, there's no way that I could afford a place around here, you know, and in the place that I've been brought up ... No way can I afford it. And even - even the council, to - to buy a council house ... You know, because I'm living in a council house at the moment. In order for me to buy a council house, it's like a hundred and sixty-thousand plus.

JOAN

Well the system is now, it don't matter how long you've lived in the place. If you want to buy now ... You've got pay dearer. Do you understand what I mean? It's not lower. People are getting everything now that we've worked for. Why they got developers? You know why they got developers? To keep control, so they got developers over the top ...

IRIS

We've the edges of Hoxton of what I just call - well it's just the white middle classes come knocking and buying up properties. Not so much in Hoxton itself because it's mostly old, '60s blocks of flats that are just falling to bits and they don't want to live there. But they buy up the odd street of houses that are left or, you know, Hoxton Square and all the, sort of, nice little bits. And you know. It pushes the price of housing up. My kids can't afford to live round Hoxton any more. At the moment I've got one living home with me. Because he can't afford to live anywhere else. And I think that's outrageous! Suddenly the gripes that a lot of people who live in the country have make sense to me. You know all these people coming from the city, coming out of the city, buying all the cottages, and their own children can't afford to stay. Well Hoxton feels exactly like that.



Mural at the Geffrye Museum. Photograph taken on behalf of Rose Hayes.

JACKIE

Downstairs there was Louie's front room and, you know, a kitchen or a scullery. And you went upstairs to their bedroom. And then you went up to the top floor, which was - my mum just had two rooms, which was a living room and a bedroom - and the kitchen was on the landing. It was like one of these old-fashioned, like, sort of dressy, you know, cupboards, and the glass sliding doors and that was our kitchen. But it was Louie's house. She'd just rent it out, just the two top rooms of the house, to my mum. Because before that, when my mum and dad got married, they lived in the Nile over the baker's with my nan. I mean I can remember that house because - old school, the old days. You know, wash day was a certain day and ironing day was a certain day. That was quite a big old property above those, they were. Which is still there. But the house in Crondall Street is gone.

I miss the old bonfire. And I suppose at that time, yeah, the flat was nice. I didn't like the fact that it was at the top. Right on the eleventh floor. One thing that I missed was, for one thing. I'd have to go all the way down. Because I was used to saying, "Oh, I'm going to go down to Louise." She was just the lady in the house. I could go down, walk in the living room, snuck out in front of the fire. There were the people across the road, as I'd said, the girl who went and to push me. And I could say, "Oh, I'm come just to see." So there was that. And then there was particularly being high up, you'd think, "Oh, well, I can't be bothered." I mean I was young. But, of course, I didn't like the fact that I was locked in all the time. Because when you went out the street door there was the four flats and it was just like a balcony with a bit of glass that high.

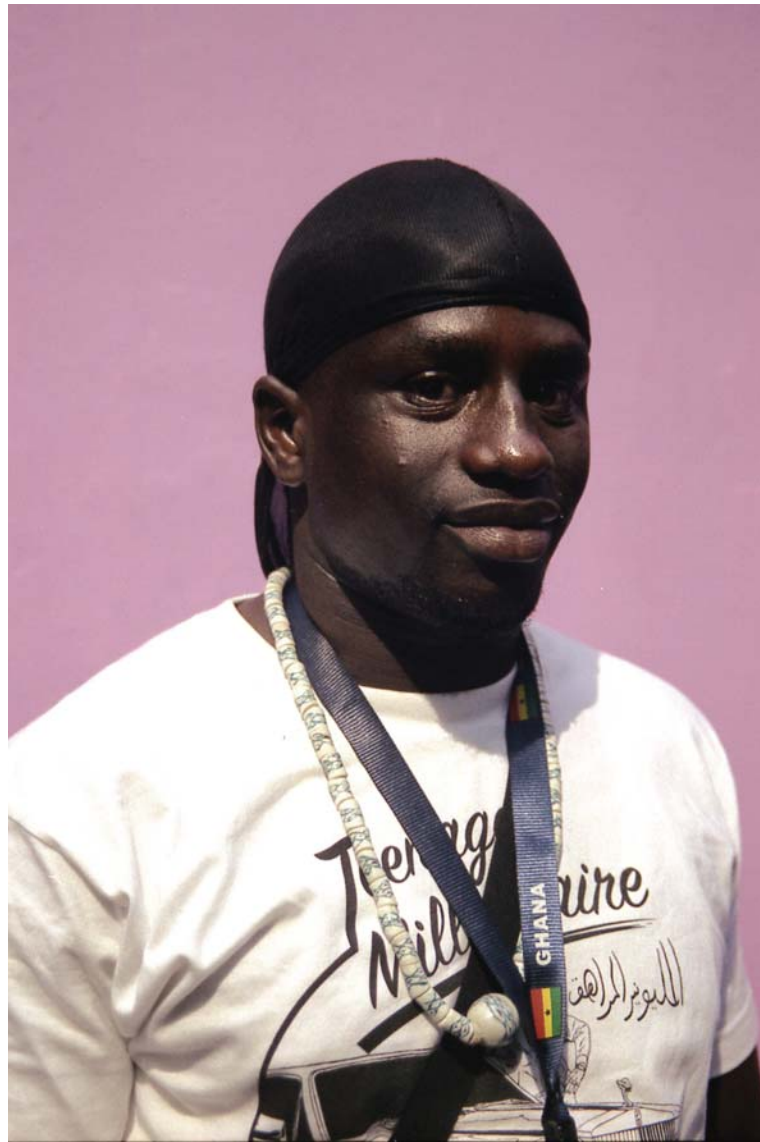
So, as a young child, you could've easily climbed up and gone over the top, which was the reason my mum got a move anyway. Um ... because, having two youngsters. So I'd have much rather been in the old house. In fact, that's where I'd rather be now. In an old house. I'm not a modern property person. I suppose to my parents it was great because it was all new, especially after having just two rooms. Now suddenly they had a two-bedroom flat and they could go out. And they always worked. My mum always worked. That's why I went to the nursery as a youngster. You know, so I suppose to them it was exciting being new and clean, fresh, modern, and, you know, being able to ... I suppose, buy furniture and stuff they obviously didn't have enough room for in the old house. And, you know, dad was one of these, don't want to be the richest man in the graveyard, put it into the home.

JASON

Back in the day, we used to say, "We're going to Hoxton," it would be Hoxton Street or Hoxton market.

CAVAN

Hoxton Street goes down to the Red Lion, but for me Hoxton would end on that, um ... Do you know where the post office thing is? Across the road from The Macbeth pub.



William Adomako-Opoku

TESSA

The market still reflects the true area. Tin cans that've been dented, you know, past their sell-by date sold for 50p and then you get down this end, and it just changes.

ANTOINETTE

The prices to have a pitch is almost the same now as having a shop. And to get a licence, you've got to take your passport to the, uh... town hall. Which with all our immigrant population they don't want to do. And stalls used to be a way out. But there's no way out now, because your photograph is on everything. And that has made a lot of empty spaces in the market.

DOLLY

When will you pay me say the bells of old Bailey?
When I grow rich, say the bells of Shoreditch.

ANTOINETTE

We had lots and lots of butcher shops and it was not unusual to see rabbits hanging up with their fur on them. Because I remember my mum used to take me out shopping and used to say, "We'll go and buy a nice rabbit today. What one would you like?" And I'd go, "I want the black one!" You know, but these things you just don't see today. Now the only time I was able, in recent times, to buy rabbit, it was frozen, and when I had looked at the label it had come all the way from China. So surely our rabbit that was hanging up was much better! Surely!

WILLIAM

It was nice. It was an experience to go in the market on a Saturday. A few years back they put up the Hoxton Halls market sign - that is probably the first reflection of the change that is happening. I think many people will be sad when the market goes away.

TEENAGE GIRL 1

I think, yeah, they're trying to fit in posh places around here but I don't think it's going to work. No one in my class go to the caffs. Plenty go to normal caffs, like Ozzy's or Sunrise Caff. They just go there. But instead they just made this really posh caff and no one really goes there. So they're obviously just making that caff for someone else.

KELLY

Like, we're all Cockney, the ones around here. Most of us are all Cockney. We don't like posh food, so we're not going to eat it or drink it, right, do you know what I mean, or drink. So, really, I don't see the point in having posh restaurants down here, because Hoxton Market, which is where the Cockney are brought up, and we're all like "fish and chips" and "kebabs" and that, do you know, and Chinese food, which we've got. We don't need posh stuff. We don't want any of them posh things; do you know what I mean? They're not taking them away. Then I'll protest.

TEENAGE GIRL 1

I'm not saying that people are different from us, but we're, like, different from them. We just don't go into them caffs. We go in the normal caf. It's like a proper posh caff, like, they get, like, little silver tables, little silver chairs, silver cups, and we get all the white cups. But that's all right

TERENCE

There's people don't associate with you - they don't walk down the street, they don't walk through the flats, they drive round it.

JASON

They don't take part in the actual community itself.

TERENCE

It's two totally different walks of life. One side of it cannot see how the other side lives because they don't go there. And the other side can't see how the other side lives because they haven't got the money to live like that. *[Long Pause]* I can only live in my world. I can't live in somebody else's world. *[Pause]* It'd be nice to!

JASON

Say for instance, say there's ten - ten permitted parking spaces, but Hackney Council, they're selling twenty or thirty tickets. The person who's new to the area got to the parking space first and there was a big hoo-ha, "ohhh, I've lived here all my life! You just come round here and you've bought one of these flats here!" And I said, "Look, it's first come first serve. It's unfortunate that there isn't enough spaces, but he has got a right to ..." But then, there is that resentment.

TERENCE

But, then again, the world's about making money, isn't it? That's how they look at it. They don't come into the real world with, like, a labourer. Breaking his arms and legs and getting two hundred pounds a week. Or going out and digging a trench and having the sides cave in. Because they just want to pay you peanuts. Some of the people at the top are making money, and people who are doing the hard graft don't get nothing.

TEENAGE GIRL 1

The only thing they've done in my block is my roof. No new windows, no new door, nothing like that. Because they don't really bother about my house, my block.

TERENCE

I've heard stories about especially an up-and-coming area. I mean, for *him*, not for *us*. Don't improve it for us at all. It's a one bedroom council flat. Me and my wife and three sons - 2, 3 and 10 year old. It was illegal apparently for them to move us in. And they won't move us 'cos at one time I stopped paying rent 'cos of the rodents.... the rats. We was in temporary accommodation before that.



Terence Smith



Joan & John Duggan

JOHN

In the war, my mother used to go down the underground, Old Street. She was in charge of the food down there, with your little brother, she used to go down there and they all used to sleep down there and that. After the war everywhere you turned was flattened to the ground, so there was a lot of building work going on. But life then still seemed better than it is now to me.

TERENCE

They don't take nothing into account. You know, the pressure you two are under because you've got so many kids underage that you've got to keep them all sane... which is bleedin' hard. There's nowhere for them to play. So now you think put them together and they'll play with each other. One pulls one toy, "I want that toy," and they're fighting. It's terrible. From my point of view it's terrible, anyway. There's no space. You can't get up and walk away while you're shouting. Where're you going to go? You have an argument the worst place you can go is to the pub. When you've only got a kitchen, a front room, a bedroom, and a bathroom, and that's the whole house. You know, there's nothing. Ideal bachelor pad. They are ideal for a person on their own.

NICK

Spare bits of land on estates are being developed, then that being a springboard for the more fundamental breaking down of the estates. Of course, the estates are simultaneously, sort of, honeycombed from within by right to buy, in the case of council estates. Or, in the case of the estates that have been stock transferred.

JASON

I'm not sure how it exactly works, but I know that there's meant to be sort of a percentage of any new developments has to be affordable. But then ... what's affordable? You know? And affordable to who? All the developments that I've seen lately - I work Drysdale Street right down there. And the two, the two... uh, main properties that they've built, they start at 280 the cheapest! I know ... and I'm just thinking, "Where's the affordable?" Do you know what I mean? Gainsborough Studio, I think was a bit more.

WILLIAM

I wouldn't like us to move to a different place. Plus, because of the regeneration, you know my mum never bought the place. She always wanted to buy the place. But she never, you know, never bought the place and then she thought, "Okay, now it's a bit late because it's got real expensive now because of - things have changed in the area now." The prices of the houses have become so expensive, and really it's like people are getting forced out because ... because, really, you know, people who have lived there forever don't think, "Well why would I pay all that money to stay in this house?" So I think we stayed there because of the connections we had with the place. So many people on our block have left.

JASON

I thought, when they were building Gainsborough Studios, I thought they were going to make affordable... affordable apartments. But when I heard that Kylie Minogue was buying one of the apartments off the plan, I'm thinking ahhhhh, maybe this isn't for the community. And that's, again, that's ... caused resentment. It really has. My mother's bought her flat, which is just around the corner from here. Right in front of where she's living, although her building of flats is like four or five floors, there was, um... they showed us these plans of the new luxury apartments. They're being built right next to her and they're going to be thirteen stories high. Yeah, and some people are saying, "Oh, don't worry, because it's going bump up the price of your flat." But my mum's not really thinking about that. And it's going to block out the sunlight. I don't think enough people are shouting, you know? I don't think enough people are moaning.

TEENAGE GIRL 2

Well since I've lived here...it was quieter. And now everyone's just getting more louder while they're getting older, but... it's just Hoxton down there, like... You've got all these drunks standing around on the bench and drinking, it's disgusting, I don't even like it. And they're standing around making all this noise, and the police won't even move them. And they go around talking to little kids and everything... stealing people's money, those tramps ... I'm sorry, I can't believe that. This area is not right, put it that way. It's not right. People getting shot, stabbed, just in a road, and you have to like - you're so scared, you have to like walk past another way and stuff like that.

TEENAGE GIRL 3

I don't think it's that bad, I really don't. I think it's quite violent, but it's not that bad, and I think I feel safe around this area. And I don't think it's that bad at all, I don't. Because, maybe it's because I know a lot of people and I don't think it's that bad, because, I don't know. I know everybody and I've got peace with everybody. I ain't frightened of nobody. I haven't got no violence with nobody. But maybe people have got violence with each other, but I haven't got no violence with anybody. So I haven't got no problems with nobody, really.

TEENAGE GIRL 2

I don't feel they've spent money in the right way. I think ... They're not, they're ... I don't think. I can't really explain what I think, it's like, hard to explain. I don't know. I really don't know. I think... I think, yeah, do you know the blocks where they're getting re-done up? I think they should do that... I think that they should give us. Do you know inside our flats? Do you know intercoms is that what they're called? I think they should make them security doors because basically people come into all our flats doing drugs and basically I think they should do security doors and all that stuff, because basically it's people coming in and leaving, like, all these needles around. And people can just get all, like - a little child could get up them stairs and try using it. And then the next thing, something bad is going to happen to him. So I think we need security doors. I'd buy security doors.

TERENCE

My son had a fight - had an argument with one kid. And now ... The information that had come back, had come back to my wife. This woman now wants to beat my wife up because my son was standing outside the door so this kid punched my son and run off. So now my son went round the door screaming for her at the door. The woman comes out and says, "You tell your mum I'll be round there in a minute to beat your mother." Another time my son had an argument with a kid, kid slapped my son, I wanted to kill him. I said, "If you ever hit my kid again..." He was this 23-year old kid. He was a 23-year old. I told him, "If you ever touch my kid again, I'll knock you out." Simple. About an hour later his dad, his mum, one of his dad's mates and a kid all come up to my door and I proceeded to get beat in the head with a hammer.

JACKIE

Well, I think the first big improvement needed is, obviously, repairs, maintenance, and refurb of a lot of the properties. For example, the tower blocks on my estate. I went into one several months ago, first time really since I was a youngster, and I actually came out and made a phone call and said, "I would rather live in a cardboard box in the middle of the street." They are absolutely disgraceful. In that particular tower block ... Panels off the ceiling, bare electric wires, broken light-fittings, ripped lino, fire doors not working, you name it, it's there. And obviously, the things where obviously people - people abuse it. Abuse the stairs, etcetera. You know, blood on the walls from people injecting...

TERENCE

You know you can't ... you can't win no matter what you do round our way. You will always come one step behind someone else. It's not a fair society to live in where we live. Every time my son goes to school it's: "not allowed to hit back". Hang on, if you don't hit back down from where I live, they ain't going to stop. Simply - people seem to think, like, if you turn the cheek, "What, just so I can get hit?" You know, you turn your back and run away. No, because they're going to leap on your back. You're stuck. The only option is to hold your hands up and have a fight. And that's the only option you've got. You can't turn away. You cannot talk to people with reason. You can't turn the other cheek because that's going to get you as well. The only option you've got left is to defend yourself. And the only way you can defend yourself is defend yourself better than he's attacking yourself - you. So then you're classed as the attacker. So, where do you win?

PAT

There was a guy outside the Bell Club yesterday and he was cleaning down the road where you saw that they'd cut the ... back there, and he said all they're allowed to do is clean the pavements and clean that side up to the end of where the Bell Club was but they don't go beyond that point 'cos that is estate, and someone else is entitled to do that, and because it's cut up into so many different quarters now you're not aware of who is responsible for what, and so consequently they always pass the buck...

JACKIE

And again, I believe it's people that make slums and that there's not enough education. But also, until Hackney actually improves the environment they live in they'll think, "Well why bother?" Why bother? And it's all well and good but they talk of concrete all the time at – when you go to these meetings. But I want to hear people, or certainly council personnel, talking about the people who live there. Um, and channelling some efforts.

ROSE

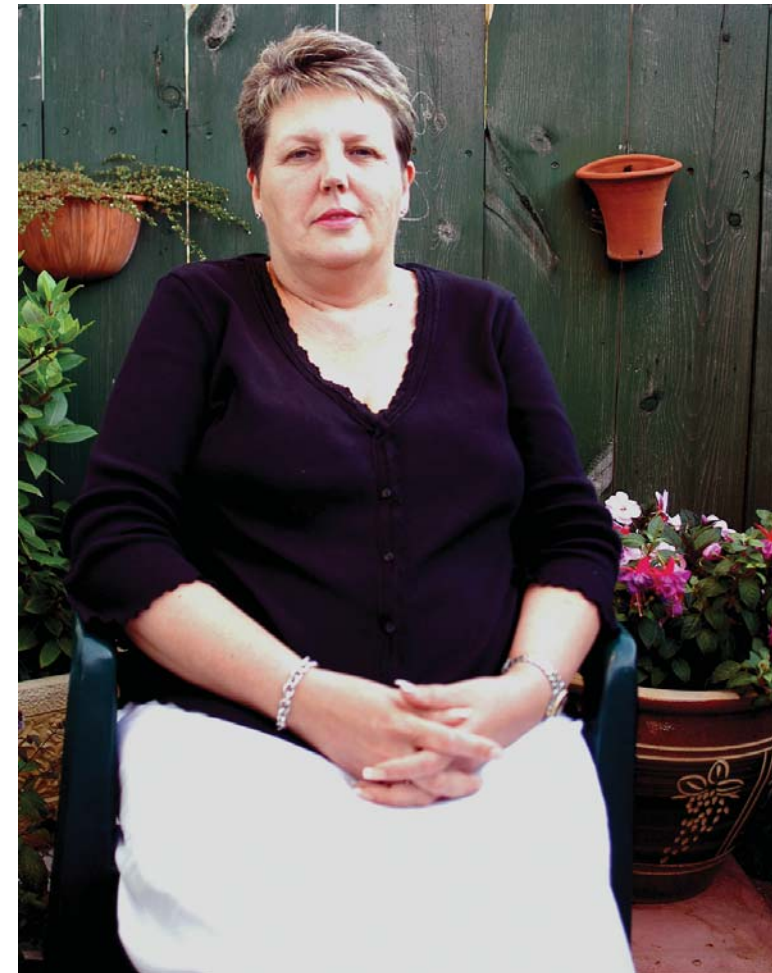
If you've got an estate up in Scotland of ... several thousand acres of moorland there's usually money behind it and it's a status symbol. But if you live in a London borough on an estate, people think that you're not... you're not much. And lots of estates have become sink estates and people won't go and live on them, because it's... bleugh! So if it's just called the Whitmore, I'm hoping to bring the area up and the only way you can – money, is not everything, but money has a lot to do – it brings areas up. I'm not very happy about all the building that's happening on Kingsland Road. But it's going to help the people want to live here. We have to take nomination from the council for people to live here ... and some of them don't want to come here because perhaps somewhere along the line there's been a story, perhaps not true – we don't want to live on Whitmore Estate, because ... you know how stories happen, things get exaggerated. So if it's just the Whitmore, let's try to bring the area up. Make the area nicer, a better, a healthier, a cleaner environment to live. So, if I got rid of the word "estate," I've got "The Whitmore." "Oh yeah! That's not a bad area to go and live..." That's why I wanted to get rid of the word "estate."

JACKIE

Um, the other thing that concerns me personally is, um... the lack of... social housing, particularly for people or families who have lived in the area for generations and the young people are unable now... well, they'd never get a council property anyway because you just never do. And also, they've not even got the opportunity to rent in the private sector. It's just gone absolutely crazy. I think – I think it's um... I think it's having a big impact because youngsters are trying to move out. And it's not all about, which is, obviously, breaking up family units. I mean don't get me wrong, your children grow up, and they go off and lead their own lives. And you can't live the life of your parents or your brothers or your sisters. But, I still think it's nice to be in that environment where, if needed, you're close at hand to support each other.

AUDREY

When I first come here I had five children and I was pregnant with my sixth. And the first time is my first memories actually having a house, because we lived in a two-bedroom flat and we had mould growing everywhere. And it affected my health to the point where I was in a wheelchair because I couldn't breathe. And to be here, to be able to breathe was something that I needed. And there was a little garden so my kids could be protected. That's what I noticed most, I think: the silence and the quiet. And I have



Jackie Carter



Lisa Ogun

to be honest; my next door neighbour didn't like us much. But she weren't used to having so many kids, because you could put the kids out in the garden safe, and that's what you wanted, a safe area. And you know, they have to have somewhere to play. Being in a damp property for six years caused diseased lungs, which I've got. I was on an oxygen tank for that time, with five small children, sixth on the way. But the good news is I still carried on being part of the Tenants Association. I wouldn't give that up for nobody no matter how ill I was. Even though I spent three months at a time in hospital, I still came out and still carried on what I had to do. Because people have needs, we all did. I knew what it was like because I had it firsthand.

JACKIE

Some people say to me, "I don't know why you want to live where you do. Why the hell don't you move?" I mean, to be honest, my husband would go tomorrow. I mean, let's go and live out in the sticks somewhere. And I said to him, "That doesn't mean to say it's going to be any better." And that's what I really want to see change. I don't want people to think that living in the inner city is nasty, is horrible. Yeah, we know it's not perfect, it's far from perfect. And of course, what's happening is that, you know, young people – they've got to have somewhere to live. And they're just having to move out and I think it's dreadful. And I think because - I mean, people often say about the East End, they think it's close-knit. And it is close-knit. And I think it always will be, and that's being destroyed, I think. I think that people, if your family for generations has lived in the area and you've grown up - I think you should be given the opportunity to be able to stay. It's as simple as that. It's almost like your birthright. It's almost like your birthright. Um... you know? I've got four ... you know? I've been, sort of, starting a family tree and, you know, whole generations of my family have been in the area. I was forced to move ... and I was extremely unhappy.

IVY

Well when I spoke to a council officer the other day I talked about a flat, they got a girl out of there, she'd been in there fifty-two years, 'cos her mum died she had to come out of there, she didn't know nowhere else, she was two when she moved in there. And they give it to a foreign family they're not even in there, there's two, there's three different people in there.

PAT

Well we did make a big stink about that, we did make a lot of opposition, 'cos Jeanette had been there since she was two, with her mother and her father and the trouble was legally her father was the tenant, when he died it passed onto his wife, and the mother tried desperately to get her daughter on to the council tenant on the rent book, but they wouldn't allow it, and so consequently they said she was not allowed to keep a two bedroomed flat, that she would have to move into a one bedroomed flat. She moved round the corner.

IVY

Round the back. The thing is she kept that flat...

PAT

Immaculate.

IVY

Outstanding. She kept it beautiful, lovely home. Windows were always clean you know what I mean? And they get somewhere like that and they put a load of rubbish in it.

PAT

Her father was a carpenter and built a lot of furniture, which obviously she had to get rid of because the flat they moved her into was only a one bed roomed flat and she didn't have room to put it, it must have been soul destroying I should think.

IVY

So upsetting for that girl I mean she was two when she moved in there, then her mother died, beginning of April wasn't it, and in that week she lost her job what she'd been at thirty odd years, she got made redundant, she had all that and the council never stopped persecuting her. I was going round to her every day I was saying just tell 'em to go, 'cos I would never have got out of there personally, I'd have waited for them to take me to court, I'd have let 'em take me to court, 'cos I've got a niece that's gonna be in the same predicament, she's fifty seven, lives in Burt House.

PAT

Well I tell you, the one thing that I've found that is very, um how can I say, is a big, is very problematic, is the fact that people buy their flats, they then sell them on to whoever and then they use it as a business, so the people that actually go in these flats are not responsible, they don't care because they know that whatever they're doing there, that the council cannot be aware of what they are doing or cannot be you know responsible for it, so we find that because they're doing this and sub-letting flats, there's an awful lot of sub-letting flats with regards to people that rent flats and then, under the council, most of them are on income support, or whatever and then they sub-let the flats to maybe oh, 16, 17 people in there, so they've got quite a few bob for that per week, but if you complain to the council, or as we are under Pinnacle at the moment, they say they'll look into it but nothing changes ...

IVY

We had trouble across there the other week, well couple of months ago, lot of Chinese, they was there they was chopping each other to pieces, they was in a flat like that, a man who was renting that flat from the council, he's moved out, he's renting that out to a lot of Chinese ... See there's another thing I can't understand with council policies, we had a fella, move in here, he rented that one next door, it was bought private, well, property dealer, and then he started renting it out, and a fella moved in there, he lived in there for



Evelyn Marks



Janette Collins

a year, he ended up buying, the flat below, £178,000, and he's ended up bought the end maisonette for £200,000, why is it one man allowed to walk in here and buy these properties like that? I've got another girl in here, she owns two flats in here, don't live here.

PAT

Because this area is like an up and coming as they call it, a yuppie area, the prices have rocketed so much, that the normal people like Ivy and myself couldn't afford to buy them anyway, so it's only the business people that have come in and bought them, and they know they're onto a good thing 'cos it's only going to go up, it's not going to go down.

IVY

The council tenants sold them to the property dealers didn't they?

PAT

Or, if a flat is beyond repair, the amount of money that Hackney allows Pinnacle to do a flat up, then they are allowed to sell it on, to the Housing Association... There's quite a few of those. So consequently then the Housing Association does exactly what it likes.

IVY

See I've never voted Labour. Never. Never in a million years. Because all right years ago after the war my father was a staunch Labour man, but, then there was proper Labour councillors, they lived next door to you, they knew, what had to be done ... But now, how many councillors have you got live round here, I mean Pat when she was a councillor she lived here, but the thing is there's not many, we had one councillor used to sit for round here, used to live in Jersey! You know? Now the reason I won't vote for Labour? I would never vote for Labour? 'Cos this has always been Labour controlled, same as the other part of Hackney and what have they done round here? Nothing. And I always say, perhaps if we got someone Conservative in, they would spend a bit of money here to make it look as though they're really doing good.

PAT

They had a hung council in '98 to 2002, and the reason why they got a hung council was, and I thought it was a good thing, because they cleared up a lot of the corruption, there was a hell of a lot of corruption going on at that time, there was the paedophile issues um, oh such a lot of things that were going on that were corrupt, and I think by having the hung council they did clear up a lot of the corruption. I mean we had an estate manager on our estate before we had Pinnacle and he just used to have what they call keys for sale, he used to sell flats, give them the keys for a backhand, he used to let garages go for a backhand. So normal people, unless you was prepared to pay x amount of money, you didn't get anywhere, and it took us years to get rid of this guy, and we couldn't get rid of him until Pinnacle came in, and then Pinnacle got rid of him, they gave him an offer he couldn't refuse and he's gone. He made a lot of people unhappy, he actually used to blackmail a lot of single girls. He was absolutely diabolical, and they knew about him.

AUDREY

We have 749 properties on Arden Estate, and as I said, everyone volunteers. Now some start from 10 o'clock 'til 2, I do the whole day - I'm here from 10 o'clock 'til six. Then we go to a meeting at half past six, 'til 8 or 9 o'clock in the evening. But the only thing that we've got - seeing done on the estates what we've done ourselves. The improvement we've had on the regeneration is Malcolm House. That's since last year under the Decent Homes Project. Hopefully in the future we'll have Rosalind, Cordelia, and Caliban Tower having new stuff done.

JACKIE

My friend Declan's fantastic, he's an Irish guy, and he's an artist. We've become very close. And he loves cooking. We found out we both have a passion for cooking. He said to me, "We could do a meal," he said, "for the local people." He said, "We could turn one of the rooms or - downstairs, into a restaurant." So I said, "All right, let's just sit down and think about this." So, we thought we'd give this a go. And it just started with us sitting there talking. He said ... We'll call it The Stove. I said, "Okay, fine." So, we planned this. He said, "Well, we'll have to charge people for the ingredients. I can pull together some, you know, bits and pieces, obviously equipment." So, this was a complete, you know. Let's see how we go. Ask the kids if they would be waitresses. Okay, so ... We went off and we came back with a couple of choices of menu. Asked people if they'd want to come and we said, "It'll cost you £8. But, nothing will come out of a tin or a packet."

AUDREY

Now what we've done for ourselves, we've done up lots of areas. Put dog bins in. Places for people to sit. We've done a gazebo in our park just so that in summer they've got somewhere to sit. We've got a lovely garden right outside our office, which we let tenants come in and sit anytime they want... because we have a water feature as well. It's not closed in. We leave it open so that... to see it open, it's not going to be vandalized, because we're not hiding nothing. We've noticed that if you hide something they're going to vandalize them again. So it's about being open with your tenants, asking them what you want and we talked to the youths on the estate and asked them to become involved in our TAs. Some of them will come along. I've got a young girl here she lives on Cranston she's 17, now. She was one of the bad ones. But I've asked her to come in here and help out. And it's doing that that makes a difference; you don't pay 'em much, but I pay her £10 a week, and she's happy, because she's then helping us answer the phones, we're teaching her how to use computers, fax machines. We're now getting her into a college. So that's something.

JACKIE

Feedback from the people was - it was like going to this really, really posh nightclub. Couldn't even believe it was the room that we were in. "When's the next one?" So I said to my committee, I said we need equipment, you know, actual, you know, cutlery,

you know, china and all that. "Well how much do you want?" I went, to try and put them off, I said, "Oh five hundred quid should do it." Passed. It's little things like that that actually make a difference that people really enjoy, and if the council actually did that, you know ... And that's what I'm about. I'm prepared to give up my time, and do something that's a bit of fun. Just to take the doldrums out of living in the conditions that some of them are living in. And also particularly for the people who are on their own, you know, who are really isolated.

JANETTE

I think Shoreditch Regeneration is a load of woolly. All it's doing is buying up properties and trying to make money. Regeneration is about ploughing the money back in the area and trying to regenerate the money as well, right? But you just can't go around buying all the properties. Because I think the property market will flop soon. Do you know what I mean? And people are just not buying the properties around here, because don't forget you're selling properties, right, in an area that you've got... two cultural diversities in one area. Right, you've got the middle classes - or the upper-middle classes because to be able to buy a property around there you have to be earning at least seventy-five thousand. Right? To be able to get a mortgage out on the property around there. Then you've got the ones that are on social security. And the ones that are on crack, the ones - the alcoholics, the ones that live in really disgusting conditions. The ones that, um... live round, the back of... what's that estate called? Oh... What's the estate? Terrible that estate is. It's on, oh... It's off, it's off, it's the side of Pitfield Street on the - near the roundabout, you turn left. And they've got, like - They've got, um... factories, as well, that they're doing up into apartments. They're turning everything into apartments around there. Factories.

JACKIE

I think Shoreditch Trust are doing a really good job and they're trying really hard. And there has been a lot of improvements in the area.

JANETTE

I mean, you should see this estate. It's got all the broken-down windows still. It's got the old baths. There's an estate just down the road is a part of that regeneration that has been totally missed. They've still got the old baths and the old cupboard units. They've even got the old light switches. So where's regeneration when it comes to that estate, now?

AUDREY

We also got told last week that there was a bogus caller saying he was from Decent Homes to look at someone's kitchen. And it was a tenant who was on her own. She let him in, then phoned us. So I went over and I asked for his credentials. He didn't have nothing on him. I phoned the council. I phoned the police. And I wouldn't let him go. He wasn't going to go with my dog pinning him to the chair. So yes, I have to take the dog. My dog's not aggressive, but it does know the basic rules. Yeah. Apparently it was just another scamming.... He's seen that we're getting decent things done, and he thought he could scam the woman.

TERENCE

We had a burglar, Saturday. We sat there, I fell asleep, in the armchair, she was sitting with the kids. And someone had come in through the front door and gone into the kitchen. And now here's the funny bit: they nick food. They nick food! And loads of food in the fridge, and loads of frozen stuff out the freezer. And they must've had to nick a carrier bag because they nicked that much there was no way they were carrying it in their hands.

KELLY

Don't get me wrong. Half of the ... half of the, half of the girls and boys that do it are my friends. They just like ... they just like going out and fighting and arguing with people and smoking; doin' the blocks and this, that and the other. But I just thought, I don't wanna do that any more. I've had enough.

AUDREY

If we know there's a bogus caller we actually leaflet the whole block. Don't answer the door. But some pensioners forget that simple rule. I've had one lady who's been mugged 19 times in two weeks, because she's simple-minded. She's simple-minded. She thinks they're coming up to do a repair for her. And no matter how many times you've told her, they'll come up, take their laugh, and that's it. It's just not funny.

JOAN

And ... when I walk - I used to walk out ... I used to pick my sister up from mass at one o'clock in the morning, walked through Hoxton. But now, I wouldn't walk through Hoxton. Hoxton Street at one o'clock in the morning.

AUDREY

We're the only estate in Hackney that has our own CCTV and control room. We've had a lot of dealings with a lot of officers and to be quite honest with you over those years the council's changed. Because when we used to be here, you couldn't meet an officer. Now they come to us. Yes, they actually phoned us to ask if we were ok. So that tells you the changes now because, being in a strong Tenants Association, that means we have a strong impact on everybody now.

JOHN

In them days there was all houses, no flats just houses and everybody knew one another they were all families, cousins, brothers, all had their own different houses. In the summer you'd sleep underneath the window and the door that was open all night. That's how it was. Could you imagine that now?

JOAN

Because when people come up near you, you don't know what's going to happen. Once upon a time, you didn't take no notice. But now you're wary of everybody.

TERENCE

It was very friendly as a kid. I mean everyone talked to everyone. You know, you got a, "Good morning," for walking down the street, but you don't no more. You know you walk down there they all want your valuables. It's become an untrustworthy area. You don't. Because you don't know the people you're around, you don't trust the people you're around.

JOAN D

You couldn't have a cigarette, cause not a chink of light could show and we used to walk home and that and not be frightened or worried at all, now frightened to go over the road.

JOHN

A lot of the places were bombed and it seemed to affect the houses that were standing, know what I mean, 'cos most of them were all private landlords, not like council like today and they never used to spend any money ... All the private landlords wanted to do was get your rent off you.

NICK

I suppose one of the things, of course, is that anti-social behaviour has to be seen in context. So there's the anti-social behaviour of the council who can't fix light bulbs so that the streets are dark. I find that all quite anti-social. And then you've got the council who will stop letting on their estates since '97, so there's 100 empty flats on Haggerston West and Kingsland estates. That's anti-social clearly for the people not getting the accommodation. And then squatters use the homes. And then they get evicted, they get all bricked up, and then you've got a guard geezer with a watchdog, with a guard dog walking around. I have to say that the effects on the kids who are really scared of the guard dog who's unmuzzled and a big effing Doberman, that's quite anti-social as well, really. And then you've got the anti-social behaviour of other landlords for example, in order to keep their subsidies going, will not allow accommodation to be used for what it's meant to be used for. And is keeping homeless people in hostel accommodation when they needn't be, all of which is quite anti-social.



Anna Lovell



Jason Gallier

CAVAN

Hoxton was, for me, growing up as a kid there, it was blinding. I knew everyone. It was a buzzing place. It was, sort of ... Yeah, it was like the only community place around here, really. It was a real community, do you know what I mean? The other word is for Hoxton is "the village." They call it "the village." Do you know what I mean? So, it was a village in the middle of, um... in London. And it had a sort of village mentality. There was a lot of inbreeding going on in Hoxton. Do you know what I mean? There was!

JOAN D

And the mothers used to turn the ropes for you and all the windows were up and the mother used to have the cushions on the windowsill watching.

CAVAN

I think when I was younger my ideal was to be yeah, I want my kids to be brought up in Hackney because, because I loved being brought up in Hackney.

KELLY

Well when you're young, you don't really take much notice, you just think it's an area and you're going to play out in it. But, obviously now looking at it, if I was ever to have a child, I'd try my hardest to get a transfer away from the area if possible. It's not an area I would like to bring a child up in because I don't want 'em to go the same way the other youths are going.

LISA

I think this is a great area for my kids to grow up, because, there is so much for them to – there is so much to offer to them, in terms of art and youth activities. It's very rare to see, a community of this size within London with so much to offer.

CAVAN

I loved bein' brought up here. In fact it ... I love going to the country, but this had, this environment we lived in had the same thing. We might not run across the field but we'd jump on a bus and go right the other side of London, d'ya know what I mean? Or we might not have had a forest, but we had the estate, the tower block, so we had all these things that.... It was there for us.

KELLY

I haven't really done half of these things in the area, to be quite honest. But there's just nothing - there's just nothing out there to do, that's enjoyable in this area, to be quite honest. If I could, if there was enough money. I'd get like a little youth project in a dance theatre to do dance... singing groups. Do something that, like, maybe get a survey for the children, for the kids and know actually before doing anything, what they like, and then come to a vote, and get their parents to bring their child along, and their parents to actually say... We could actually turn then and say to their parents:

“This is what we can do with this area... to improve it for your child. Do you want us to do it or not?” And if the child isn't - or whatever we've got from the parents asking the child, we will do that. Obviously, if we have the money. If they wanted a new football pitch, we'd give them a new football pitch, if we had the money for it, obviously.

JACKIE

And when I got older, sort of more as a teenager, I used to sort of spend a lot of time in the café playing pinball. We'd have leagues and competitions that we'd set up. Umm, you know and places to go, I mean that was it. I often think that now... today, I'd like to see places to go like that, café bars where they've got somewhere to go rather than just hang out on the street. And I suppose in those days there was ... places for us to go.

JASON

As you see, in Hoxton, there's a, there's a street culture. There really is, like a, a... there's nothing else for people to do really, but, there's... the youth really... when I walk from my work place to home... and the amount of summer holiday now, and there's so many youths on the street. When I was younger ... I had so many options....

KELLY

Me ... if it was me ... and someone said there's a singin and dancing group, I would, I would go there. I would go. Because I love to dance and I love to sing.

CAVAN

I remember the runnin'. Y'know, people used to run people's mums down, at that time it was like a new sort of phenomenon..... there were a few key people that were just the bollocks at it, and were just like... so I remember that. I dunno, it would just be like ... it would start off with like uhm ... well, basically with just like 'your mum'. It'd start with something like ... I mean, I wasn't very good at it, but like 'I saw your mum sleeping on a bench.' And then someone would go, 'yeah, with, uh... yeah with my dad on top of her.' And then it would sorta spiral, y'know what I mean? And were sort of... and it would depend on the person and.... And as soon as someone started breaking down, then everyone would be in on it, y'know what I mean? And nine times out of ten they'd be someone crying their eyes out and you'd think that.... but hilarious as well at the same time as really cruel.

KELLY

The area like this area is getting worse off. Because you've gotthe teenage population that have got younger brothers and sister that are watching the older ones and they're growing up and once they grow up they're gonna be exactly like them. And then when they.... When the big ones grow older they're gonna be doin even more worser things. And when go out and do things themselves, they're following.



Pat McGuinness

AUDREY

So at the end of the day, there's always the element of money: there is none available. And I will say that is for most of the people on the estate: there is no money available. You've got the Britannia Leisure, you can't go there, they'll cost you a lot. You've got the Lion's Boys Club, not everybody want to do boxing. You've got Hoxton; they do half the facilities, arts and crafts and ... Hoxton Hall. But... not everybody wants to be part of that. Kids nowadays, and I'm being honest with you, kids nowadays wants to feel valued. They want to be respected. And to give them respect they have to show respect as well. And the only way you're going to do that is to ask them to come in and earn something. Because at the end of the day, let's be honest, there is nothing for these kids anymore.

KELLY

I used to be a young teenager who was doing things that they shouldn't have been doing like causing mischief on the street. Never hurt any elderly ... I couldn't do that. I respect uh, any old person because they, because they're still here, d'you know what I mean? They're actually looking out for young people. I couldn't like... never ever in my life could I hurt anyone. Unless I was having a fight with one of my mates or something, but still ... my intention is not to hurt them. But obviously nowadays you get teenagers who just don't care. But they think because the old girl gets pension they've got quite a bit of money in their purse, they think they're gonna take it.

TEENAGE GIRL 1

There's not'ing to do, there's jus' a few parks, and they're only makin' baby parks and tha's it ... They're makin more things for boys like they've made a big pitch over there for boys, and none of us girls gonna use it. I think they should make more like drama clubs and dance clubs but they don't do that.

KELLY

My brother, he's terrible. He'd done so much crime it's unbelievable. He's got, he's got a phase where he was addicted to cocaine and heroin - cocaine and I'm not too sure if he was taking heroin, I hope not. But it took the family ages to get him off of it. Now he's got a bundle of...friends that he has to pay and he can't do it. So now he has warrants out for his arrest. That's because living in this area has done it to him because he mixed with the wrong crowd. My brother was nothing like that before. He was good as gold, he was the politest boy you'd ever meet. He's got a baby on the way and he ain't even working.



Brian Marsh

AUDREY

The Crib is a really big youth project which I was chair of and I was pleased with that. It just got too big for me. It started off with just 10 and by the time were so successful we had 500 youths. On this estate, in all other estates, we actually expanded out to other estates. We managed to get money from different people.

JANETTE

I was brought in by Pinnacle and Arden Estates in 2001. We were funded through Urban Development and City Fringe. Due to the fact of the high crime in the Shoreditch area, they decided to set up a youth inclusion project and I was brought in to set up the project called Crib. Well we did have a space, we were allocated a space through the Youth Service. The Hackney Youth Service gave us a building that, um, the Pitfield Street building, the old school building. And we were there for four years, or nearly four years ... nearly. But we'd been using the building before that when I had to do some community work. It used to have dance in there, drama, video workshops, photography workshops, Hackney Players Association was upstairs, Hackney Playbus was a part of it, it had a youth club five nights a week.

WILLIAM

The Crib was more for the teenagers. There were younger kids, especially when it came to the trips in the summer and stuff. You'd got more people and their books like kids from about ten years old and stuff, even eight years old. But, I mean, the people who used it on a day to day basis, I would say, would be about, you know, anything from thirteen to twenty to twenty-one. This kid that does designs that came out of maybe a little in-house fashion show type of thing they were doing, he said, "Oh, I'll do this, I'll do that." And everyone was like, "Right, you're really good!" And then they got equipment for him. You know, they used funding to get stuff for him, and he carried on doing it. To the point where he was getting, you know, in newspapers - in fashion newspapers and got youngest, and the - um... young designer awards and stuff. When I first met him he had no desire to, you know, be a designer, or at least none that he spoke of at that time.

PAT

The Crib was an organisation that was funded by Shoreditch New Deal. Phil Poole who's a police officer was helpful in the running of it and it was to help people who were into drugs get back onto the right track ... and get back into the mainstream again whether they're working or whether they're at school, 'cos school kids as well that he used to encourage them to come, to try and help these children but they weren't controlled, they weren't controlled, there was no control there.

WILLIAM

I mean, for me I think they had that parental control. And we always used to say that Karlene is the mother-type and Janette's the friend, you know. And you could talk to Janette about everything. And if you did anything wrong, Karlene would come in. It was kind of like good cop, bad cop kind of thing. Karlene would kill me if she heard me say

Graffiti on a boarding around the site of the old school on Pitfield Street, previously home to the Crib and the Pit.

that but, you know, that's the way it was really. But, for those kids that are very vulnerable but act hard and act like they know what life's all about, they need a shelter - they need a place where sometimes they can call home. A home away from home. Somewhere where they can share things with people, you know. Sometimes just to have somebody there outside of the family unit. It was really, like, they were one big family, you know?

IVY

They had a couple of girls running that didn't they, and I don't think they had any control over what was going on I really don't. But as you say when you say "is there anything round 'ere for teenagers", they're just not interested ... to be truthful, the teenagers round here, if they had everything for 'em they wouldn't use it anyway, they just go out looking for trouble they just like going out stealing, vandalising, they've tried everything round 'ere, 'cos that used to be a youth club didn't it? ... Where they've pulled the school down that used to be a youth club, and then we 'ad Saint Monica's youth club ... boxing and everything went on in there ... and then you've got the Lion Club ...

WILLIAM

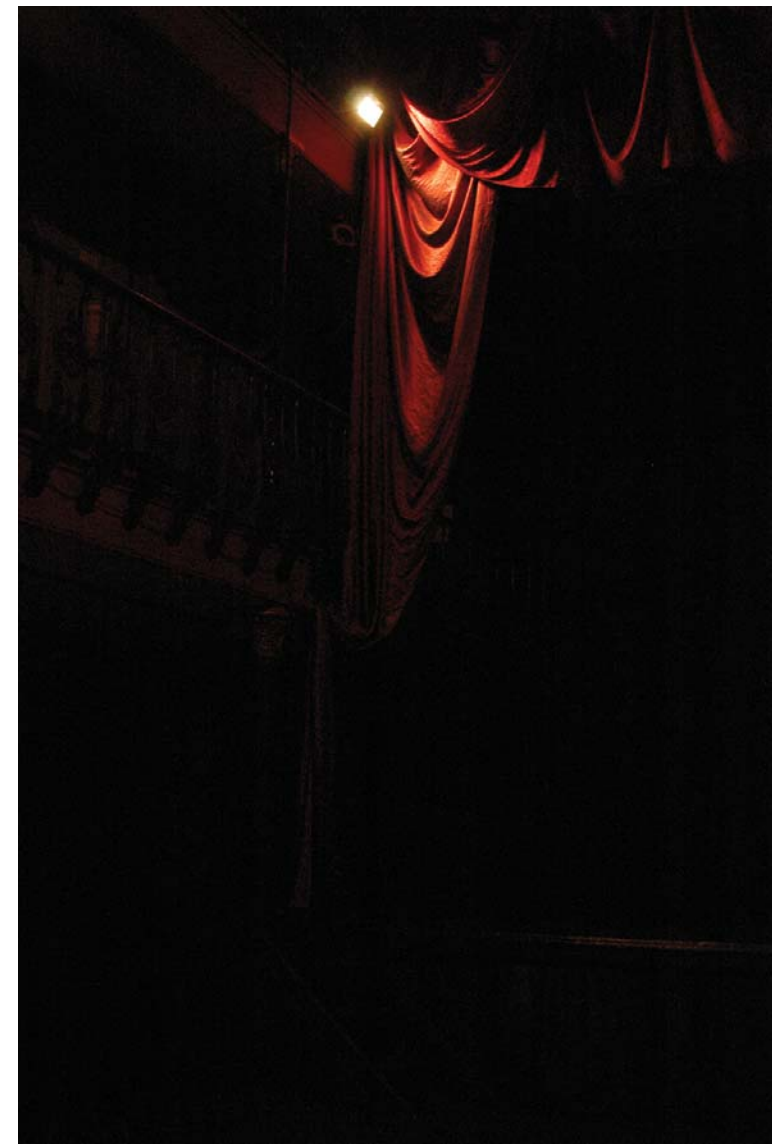
The powers that be could've put the right, you know, put money into it and gave them the right resources was just, kind of, like, "You know what ... We're not going to do that." And I think it was because Karlene and Janette were two headstrong black women and they were always pushing for what they believed in. And everybody saw a different vision for the place.

JANETTE

What happened was, oh, uh ... When we asked for extra funding they decided to fund an extra fifty thousand. But the clause was... right? For me to give them my business plan, right? So I had to go to a meeting every single week. Right, and telling them what I'm doing, and why I'm doing it, and how I'm doing it. So basically they were in my brain. They said to me, "What would you do if you could have that building?" And I explained to them they could turn it into a multi-purpose building, service building where you could house child health care, family welfare could go in there, patient services could go in there, you could have a youth club in there, you could have several different workshops, so it's got everything under one umbrella. And obviously the other agencies would actually pay rent, to actually rent the building.

CAVAN

The Pit was in the old school on Pitfield Street. In the '80s. I mean once the Pit closed and there was nowhere to go we'd end up hanging 'round Stanway... Stanway is an estate just off of Hoxton Street. It's behind Hoxton Hall I s'pose. D'you know... d'you know where The White Horse pub is? So, the estate, not on Hoxton Street but behind there. Just there. There's a big tower block there. And we used to knock about there. I mean, during term time we'd have, I dunno, I mean some nights you might 'ave thirty kids hangin' round there, d'you know what I mean? Also we used to hang around in... the church ... just across from the Lion Boys Club. D'ya know that church, St John's Church, isn't it? There, and we'd just sorta light a fire and just... plot up there.



Hoxton Hall's Theatre



Iris Hirst

WILLIAM

Karlene and Janette kind of went with the flow. Whatever the kids wanted to do was what they did. There was no set structure. I think that's what the powers that be had a problem with. But for me, at a time where there's so much craziness going on in the streets, it was important to keep the kids off the streets. When a parent says stay off the streets now it means don't get involved in drugs. Don't get involved in guns and knives. And, you know, don't go messing with people you don't want to mess with. And the Crib gave the kids a roof ... a roof to hang out in where they don't need to get into trouble. And since the whole... you know ... are we getting chucked out? Are we not getting chucked out? Since the kids have lost that place there's been two kids. One who is now on life support and one who was on life support and has passed away. And this is all in the space of how many months?

JANETTE

By rights, they should've consulted the young people to find out what they would like to see happen to that building. Right, the majority of young people would not have turned around and said: "We would like the building to be turned into luxury apartments." Because luxury apartments are not even in anyone's price range that live in the area.

CAVAN

I suppose if your parents were splitting up at an early age and there's drug abuse going on and you've got nowhere to hang around and you're living in some shitty sorta place and then what you realise is a way to sorta get that out is to fuckin smash someone. Or is to smash something. So that's what you do. And if there's 15 of you doing that at the same time then that's a lot of smashing going on.

JANETTE

I just - personally what I feel about what they've done with that building there, they've just really ...

CAVAN

We'd go on like tours so you'd walk... you'd go on a tour, we'd walk through de Beauvoir and then walk up to Marquis, and you'd just be basically hunting, d'you know what I mean? And then you might get into a fight. There was also the fair over in Shoreditch Green which was another good place to have a fight or would be our sort of territory, d'you know what I mean? And then we'd have to, obviously, defend it. You'd have Hoxton and then Murray Grove and they were like two separate little ... firms, d'you know what I mean? We're two sort of... gangs. D'you know what I mean? So you'd have Hoxton gang and then Murray Grove gang ... And we were all mates, but you'd be known as Hoxton or Murray Grove... and then there was Packington which, like there's been a history of sort of fighting between Packington and Hoxton, I mean I'm sure it's still going on now. I mean, it's just like a history - we had to go and do it.

JANETTE

They said to me if I'll go to the papers then they're going to withdraw their funding. So when the funding ran out, then's when they signed the thing to get rid of - to get me out of there. They blackmailed me ... And I'm saying that as well, I'm shouting blackmail ... Shoreditch Regeneration blackmailed me to get me out of that building for the young people. They're not going to be able to sell the luxury flats neither. It was us that was keeping it open that long. And if that person never signed it on our behalf, we'd still be in there now. And young people around here would still have somewhere to go and maybe there wouldn't be murders on our hand, and things like young people jumping off of buildings. We've got one young boy dead, one murder, and then we've got like nine people in prison for murder. Then we've got ... another five of them going up to court for selling drugs, going up to court for violence. You know, all these young people who were a part of our project that was engaged in their own thing. The project belonged to them.

WILLIAM

At least, about, four or five of the kids from the Crib are being arrested. Or, you know, looking at manslaughter charges. From anything from manslaughter to murder charges, because they, you know, had a fight with some kids in ... Old Street. And around the time we do 'Family Values' is the time they were getting chucked out of... uh, they were getting chucked out of the Crib. And it was really ironic because the play 'Family Values' was all about ... well, was partly about a youth centre and this kid that left home to go to the youth centre and that was his place he could, kind of, hang out when he was in the youth centre. And then he basically wanted to leave home because he felt like he needed his own space so he ended up hanging out on the streets and selling drugs and all the rest of it. And it was – So, it was funny because during the time we were doing 'Family Values', Karlene and Janette had gotten chucked out of Crib. And at the same time those kids started hanging back on the streets again and this is when they got involved in the altercation with another group of kids. And that was, well... the sort of, result.

IVY

We've got no secondary schools round here except for one, Central Foundation for Boys, and that's in Islington, there is a lot of boys from this area go there admitted, but there used to be Pitfield for the boys, they took that school away now there's no-one in this area now got any choice where their boys can go to school ...

PAT

It was an old building but it didn't have any conservation order on it so consequently when they actually made the plans to build homes, they couldn't get anyone that was interested, they had show flats there but it wasn't of any interest to anyone because it was opposite flats, surrounded by flats. So consequently because they didn't have enough people that were interested in it and they'd actually bought the land from Hackney borough the developers was allowed to demolish it. So they're going to start from scratch. They will rebuild there. They've got to make their money back that's why they've demolished it, to build these homes for students or key workers, they've got to



Dolly Pearson

be for key workers. They did the same thing, what's the name of that block at the end of um, Ivy Street, you know those little houses there, right opposite the Arden Estate? Well they built some little houses there and they were supposed to be for nurses, firemen, policemen. You go and try and find a teacher or a policeman, or a fireman, that lives in those houses, they are let to whoever. I don't know why they don't take them, it's like the same thing on New North Road there, just by Ruskin Street, they're supposed to be for key workers, it's a load of rubbish, I think.

DOLLY

Now in Hoxton Market is a famous person. We called him - well I didn't call him, my family called him - called him "Daddy Burt." Daddy Burt believed in feeding children. He didn't believe in children starving. I don't know if he was a rich man or not. He had this place in Hoxton market and he used to let the kids come in, and he'd feed them. And the kids, oh, the kids used to say they had a beautiful dinner, or tea ... cake and everything. They had it there.

CAVAN

We went into Hoxton Hall basically to rob the gaff, you know what I mean? Or - or set it on fire. That was what we ... That was as far as we were concerned there were queers and red socks in Hoxton Hall and they ... They just weren't from our road. So it would be a good place to, sort of, cause havoc. But then, they were doing this video course in there. That me and another mate of mine thought it would be a good idea to get on that because then we might get closer to the camera and then we ... It might be ... Good to get some money out of it. So we went in there and we ended up doing this course. And then we met a couple of people in there that were making these little films ... And we found ourselves, sort of, sneaking back in there to make the films. So - and what was interesting about the people in there, that the, instead of, sort of, being intimidated by us or whatever, they, sort of, gradually brought us in and were like, 'Know what you're doing?' And then, instead of hiding the camera from us they'd just basically give it to us. And went It was almost an option where you can nick it, but you could come back and edit your stuff here and, you know There was something else, do you know what I mean? And that was almost like a challenge in itself, do you know what I mean, to be given that choice?

IRIS

I think the first time I found myself in a place where you could have an opinion and it wasn't put down. Even if, um..... When I think back to my views then, I mean I think.... I don't know. Like, a lot of people, especially around Hoxton. It It was very white.... you know, a bit racist. But I never once felt, when I was at Hoxton Hall, that I got put down for having views that I just grew up with. That's not to say they weren't challenged. I think a lot of my views were challenged, but in a way that it didn't make me just say, "Well fuck you, I'm going." So, it was quite an important time for me, because it was a time of real change.

CAVAN

But what was good about it, it was an autonomous thing. They basically let us have it, and... I think the youth theatre were a bit put out by it as well, because we were getting more numbers into our little thing than they were. But I was doing both at the same time, so I was doing that and then I was doing youth theatre as well, which was ... plays like 'Road' or we would be improvising these, sort of, things. And I suppose ... Well just that. Just that all this, sort of, aggression, and that ahhh ... energy or whatever that you had, and it was probably put into, sort of, more negative things. You got a chance to, sort of, do that... through theatre. So, for example, 'Road', for example, was probably the first play that I'd ... done. And the characters in that were people we could relate to and the scenario we could relate to, this sort of working class environment.

But by the end of it - you'd have like a sort of, round of applause and people telling you how brilliant you were. So, for the first time, you were going like, "What? Oh, wow. I can do something. I'm getting a pat on the back for it." Do you know what I mean? And it was brilliant. It was something you could, well for me anyway, I could really lose myself in it. ... And, I find, yeah, it was cathartic, do you know what I mean? It was cathartic. Without having to kick someone's head in and get the same sort of buzz, you know what I mean? The whole adrenaline rush and the buzz of getting on the stage and, sort of, losing yourself a bit was the same as being out, sort of, on a Friday night and having a fight, or whatever, do you know what I mean? It was like, there...so I started getting into... stuff. Music, and another mate of mine was doing drama. I remember he did just flip out one day, in this play he just completely lost it. And he was like, bawling his head out, and just - it had nothing to do with the play, he just sort of went mental, and I think he went and booted some bird out the arse. . He just sort of lost it; do you know what I mean? So it was the same thing. It was like - raar!! It was ... It was ... raw. It was like, sort of, I think it must've been very powerful to watch, do you know what I mean?

But then we were making these films as well, which were not ... they were just, sort of, stupid films that were just fun and we'd make them up as we go along and then we'd try and work out, "Oh, well that might fit in with that." And then we'd grab someone's mom and they'd get involved in it, and whoever was on the street at the time would be in it, or we'd need someone, we'd need... Oh, we broke into someone's car and we did this whole scene in this woman's car. And then we were watching it back in Hoxton Hall ... She walked past and went, "Oh, that's my car!" And the next thing you know, we were sitting in her car, there were about four of us, and she's standing there watching the thing! But it was just like... well, it was a creative endeavour, and that's what had to be done, you know what I mean?

WILLIAM

I suppose it's changed so many people's life, and I'm a testament... You know, I'm testament to that. And I'm a product of Hoxton Hall. I've always, you know, considered myself that. So that's the way Hoxton Hall works. People.... So many people have come through Hoxton Hall and ... have made ... something, you know, of themselves through Hoxton Hall. Learn a craft and then gone off and probably doing something somewhere in the world.



George Burke



*The script for "Road", a play by Jim Cartwright, in Hoxton Street.
Photograph taken on behalf of Cavan Clerkin.*

JACKIE

I understand it's difficult for publicans to live in, but again, I don't think that the pubs are disappearing because of that reason. It's obvious. They're being turned into flats, or they're building more flats in the private sector. And I've got you know, no problem with private sector ... I know, social housing ... There is a shortage. But then, a lot of that's because councils don't manage what they've got ... well enough. I've seen properties empty for two and three years. I've had a scenario with a friend that lived with me for eighteen months. He was homeless, would've taken any one of these, you know, unseen. You're getting council tax, you're getting rent. It's got to be cost-effective, don't wanna know. So... with the pubs, I think that's one of the reasons why a lot of them are going.

JOHN

There used to be about half a dozen pubs you could walk to within five minutes, now there's only one really. It's changed, the old atmosphere has gone.

JOAN D

I used to get up and sing.... A new song would come out and I know it by the evening 'cos I'd write it down.

JOHN

She used to sing all Italian songs ...

JOAN D

Didn't matter whether you had a voice or not, it was lovely the old pint of beer on the top of the piano.

JACKIE

We might've gone to the odd nightclub but we didn't go to nightclubs, we went to pubs - And there was a pub on every corner! In Hoxton there's the Marie Lloyd, which my friends actually own now. Which is probably one of these more old-fashioned pubs that's left. And the Queen's Head, is still there, opposite Iceland. There's The Green Man... There's Charlie Wright's on Pitfield Street, we used to have live entertainment in there. The Bacchus and the Standard where the owner used to think he was Frank Sinatra. He would get up there and sing his heart out, he would. Absolutely sing his heart out. And again that was a nice pub, but ... The Bacchus is still there. But to be perfectly honest, I wouldn't drink in any of the pubs in Hoxton at all, not in the market. First of all, I wouldn't be keen on being around Hoxton market, to be quite honest, late at night, anyway.

ROSE

I go out a lot - to a fair amount of meetings. Now, I can't let the fact that it's dark stop me from going out, or even from coming home when I've been out with friends. I can't do that. All right. When I'm coming home at 11 o'clock, or something at night, I get the keys out of my handbag so that I can come straight through the door. I don't stand

and fiddle at the door with my keys. But it doesn't worry me about the fact that it's dark and going out. I don't feel insecure around here. If an incident happens, it might make you a bit wary for a couple of days, but then that goes. But no, I'm not frightened about going out at night. You can't do that. Just don't take money with you. Leave your plastic behind, especially if you're not going to use it. Why take it? All they're going to get is a handbag with a lot of rubbish at the bottom of it.

JACKIE

But again, the thing was in those days, people were out just to enjoy themselves. You never really had a lot of trouble. And the other thing was, of course, and I don't know if I should say this in public ... most of them would just lock the door... and you could just carry on sitting there and having a drink, you know? And places like the old pubs we could take the kids with us and they'd just sit there, or they'd play some darts.

IRIS

On the whole I think it's very difficult to be a part of Hoxton now. I really do think that even with the bad bits, one of the strengths of Hoxton was a sense of community, and... you know. Your kids, who have lived in the same area as their granny, not necessarily next door to each other ... But family connections were quite strong. You knew your neighbours... I'm sorry I don't want to sound like some old lady churning on. Because as I've said, there are some aspects, elements of the past that I am glad we moved away from.

CAVAN

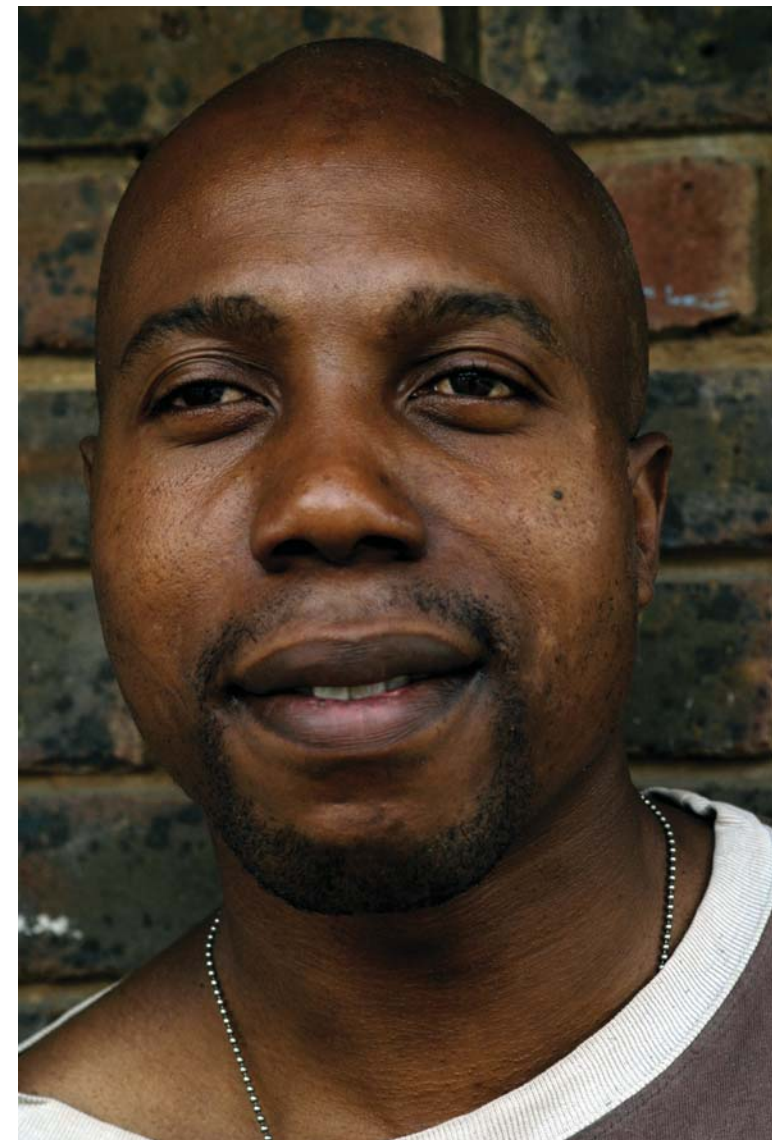
So you might spray 'Hoxton NF' on the wall but, but just because it was a banner, d'you know what I mean? It was just sort of living up that sort of reputation that it had. At that age as well we was, I was very into, sort of, British symbol, in a sense. And it was more of a sort of ... I dunno, it was more about sort of embracing our culture, if you wanna call it that, I dunno. And there was a lot of people that we looked up to that ... Our peers in a sense, that would 'ave been skinheads and would 'ave been sort of villains if you like, d'you know what I mean?

WILLIAM

You know, I think, it's kind of like – When I think about white flight, I think about it in the sense that. You just kinda think people are funk up the area. Do you know what I mean? The same way, now, my white flight would be the Hoxton Square/ Hoxton Street issue. Because, if I was to move out, that, to me, is white flight because – I'm moving out because the area isn't the same to me anymore.

LINTON

It's a mixed blessing. The people may say 'Well, yes it's nice, we got a new sports centre.' But the new sports centre become so privatised that it costs us a lot than when we had a little centre there and it cost us a penny. Now it's costing us pounds. We used to pay penny to go to the old one. It wasn't *all* that, and that's why it's a mixed blessing.



Linton Brown

PAT

They've got a group of people that actually keep fighting for that Haggerston baths to come back into its use. Because the only baths that we've got in this area is Bath Street which is over across the roundabout in Islington ... So I mean we have no swimming baths in this area apart from the one they've got in the one down the bottom of Pitfield Street the Britannia Leisure Centre but it's not what you call like a swimming pool, it's more of a play pool for kiddies. There's no swimming pool for adults. I mean my doctors told me that I should go swimming to keep my bones going because I have osteo-arthritis, but where can you go, unless I want to travel to Islington?

IVY

We 'ad lovely swimming baths and all that ...

PAT

They demolished it over a weekend.

IVY

You could go up there and have a bath, everything in there, sauna ...

PAT

Swimming pool the lot yeah, and they just demolished it. If you go into the back...

IVY

It was a library. Now the library's shut, they shut the library down.

PAT

The library is still in existence it was an opera company, right next door was the wash houses and the baths, that's right, that has now been made into Symester Mews which is a Housing Association, if you walk round the back of the housing association into the gardens there you still see walls that were the previous walls before they knocked the complex down ...

IVY

You can see them from here ...

PAT

Can you? Beautiful they are ...

IVY

The line where the swimming pool used to run, the swimming pool used to come right the way down here ...

PAT

So they didn't quite demolish it all but...the history's gone you know, and they keep doing this sort of thing and it's not fair, we have another place in Charles Square, number 16 which years ago used to be an old court house, it has a, it's a grade 2 listed

building, now they want to put in four flats in there, we're already densified down here, there's no infrastructure down here so why? Why are they doing this, you know? I know it's an old building but surely someone will come along and rent it rather than putting it into commercial use.

IVY

They are, they're just doing away with all our heritage round here, nothing left ...

PAT

They did the same with the technical college over there, housing association, Copestone Homes I think it was that did that, they rebuilt the inside of it, top flat went for one million plus, it's money ...

IVY

See you know it ain't people like us that's going to buy a thing like that ...

PAT

In fact they're trying to get the parks as well but there's a lot of opposition regarding that, and they said no they can't have the parks, that was Copestone Homes itself, but they never, they never consult, fully, and if there is opposition they don't take notice 'cos there was a lot of meetings regarding that building, we had a lot in lunchtime, we had a lot in the night time, and they were held in the church, St John's Church, they were held in Hoxton Hall, they were held in Shoreditch Town Hall before they did the refurbishment and nobody from the Hackney Borough listened to us. They still sold it.

IVY

I'd like to know when they're going to start refurbishing the old Hoxton Cinema over there ...

PAT

Yeah that'll be the day won't it?

IVY

They - Shoreditch Trust - bought that haven't they?

PAT

If you think they can get three screens in there then well, maybe I'll learn to speak Chinese. Because it's just not possible, I don't think it's possible and because they're saying that they'll have to build flats above it to actually pay for the cinema part of it which will be public obviously, if they was to do those three cinemas in there it wouldn't be wide enough or big enough to do say, a Tom Cruise film or you know, a country and western film, or whatever ...

IVY

But that used to be our local cinema over there didn't it?



CAVAN

I don't really know what I'm talking about here. I don't really know who the powers that be are, but... yeah, I think it's, I think it's absolute disgrace that Hoxton Hall is like ... there's no-one, it's not going on anymore. Y'know I think it's disgusting that the Pit is like made into a block of flats now, or that pubs down there, just pubs, y'know what I mean, which is like the hub of the community, have been turned into flats and... it's wrong. I mean, it must be wrong, yeah? And if you think there's a lot of government money going into that, then I do sort of ... wonder.

AUDREY

To be honest with you, and I'll, I'm going to be honest with you, I haven't seen much regeneration. And that's being honest. I used to be a director to the Shoreditch Trust board, and in three years I was director, I'll be honest, not much was done.

ROSE

To be honest, I'll probably get killed. I don't see what they're really doing. I know that they have done lots of things, but ... I just can't I personally can't see it.

KELLY

If there was enough money I'd make a little survey with the kids and before doing anything find out what they like and they could all vote. We could say to the parents this is what we could do with the money. If they wanted a football pitch we could do them a football pitch.

JANETTE

You know what one of the young people said to me? "Janette the city is coming closer. They're trying to drive us out." And that young boy now is in prison doing five years and he's on crack at the age of fifteen. Do you understand what I'm saying to you? They don't really realize that what they're doing in that area with all them posh places and shrinking up the people, is distressing the young people.

WILLIAM

I just think y'know, sometimes they do little things that please the people then its always the bigger changes, we got to shut up and take it.

AUDREY

The happiest memory is, uh... being able to just walk down the street and people saying, "Hello," to you. That, I said, is part of the family group because people come up to you and say, "Thank you for doing it." And that's the best thing you could ask for.

LINTON

There's a lot of change now, so a lot of the areas that you can play in is not there no more. That is umm, to me is a tragedy, cause I like to see children having the space... if not just in their home, they can come out. It's a tragedy. The space that they had ... is not there. Their playing ... is taken away.

Acknowledgements & Information

Interviews were carried out between January and August 2005 by the Hoxton Story interview team: Linda Broughton, Cavan Clerkin, Lisa Goldman, Amy Hodge, Kirsty Housley, Annette Mees and Julia Samuels. Those whose interviewees are extracted in this book are:

Anna Lovell, jewellery designer, 46
Antoinette Nicastro, florist, 59
Audrey Villas, Chair of Tenants' Residents Association, age unspecified
Cavan Clerkin, actor, 32
Dolly Pearson, retired civil servant, 76
Iris Hirst, receptionist, 53
Ivy Wills, Tenants' Association representative, 66
Jackie Carter, Company Director, 49
Janette Collins, project manager, 45
Jason Gallier, fraud investigation officer, 33
Joan Dewitt (Joan D), retired, age unspecified
Joan Duggan, retired civil servant, 76
John Duggan, retired driver, 81
Kelly Southcott, trainee hairdresser, 17
Linton Brown, youth worker, 34
Lisa Ogun, youth dance and drama tutor, 33
Nick Strauss, part-time regeneration worker, 37
Pat McGuinness, community activist, 73
Rose Hayes, Chair of Charitable Trust, 70
Terence Smith, builder and house husband, 41
Tessa Christian, band manager, 42
William Adomako-Opoku, artist, 26

The teenage girls quoted in the text participated in 'vox pop' interviews in Hoxton Street, for which the supply names and background details was not appropriate.

Audio interviews were also carried out with:

George Burke, 87, retired mirror maker
Evelyn Marks, retired housewife, 63
Brian Marsh, 67, Chair of Charitable Trust and school governor



Macbeth Pub, Hoxton Street.

Interviews transcribed by: Ali Beale, Satya Bhabha, Eve Dallas, Sarah Dickenson, Rhona Foulis, Kirsty Housley, Peter Kelly and Julia Samuels.

Text edited by Lisa Goldman.

All photographs were taken by Leo Asemota between July and September 2005. Interviewees were asked if they would sit for a photographic portrait or, as an alternative, if they had a particular view of the Hoxton area that they wanted to be captured on their behalf.

Leo Asemota would like to thank all his sitters for their warmth, generosity and understanding. Leo Asemota would also like to give special thanks to Miss Yoko Horikoshi, Sally Fischer, Administrator of Estate of the Leo Asemota, Abi Lawal at IAMA Group, Antoine and Corral Thomas, Deedee and Massimo Benucci, Othello de Souza-Hartley, Minesh Patel, Decima Francis, Nancy Loader at Geffrye Museum and to everyone involved with Hoxton Story.

Hoxton Story produced by Tim Jones for the Red Room.

All photographs © 2005 Leo Asemota | Estate of the Leo Asemota

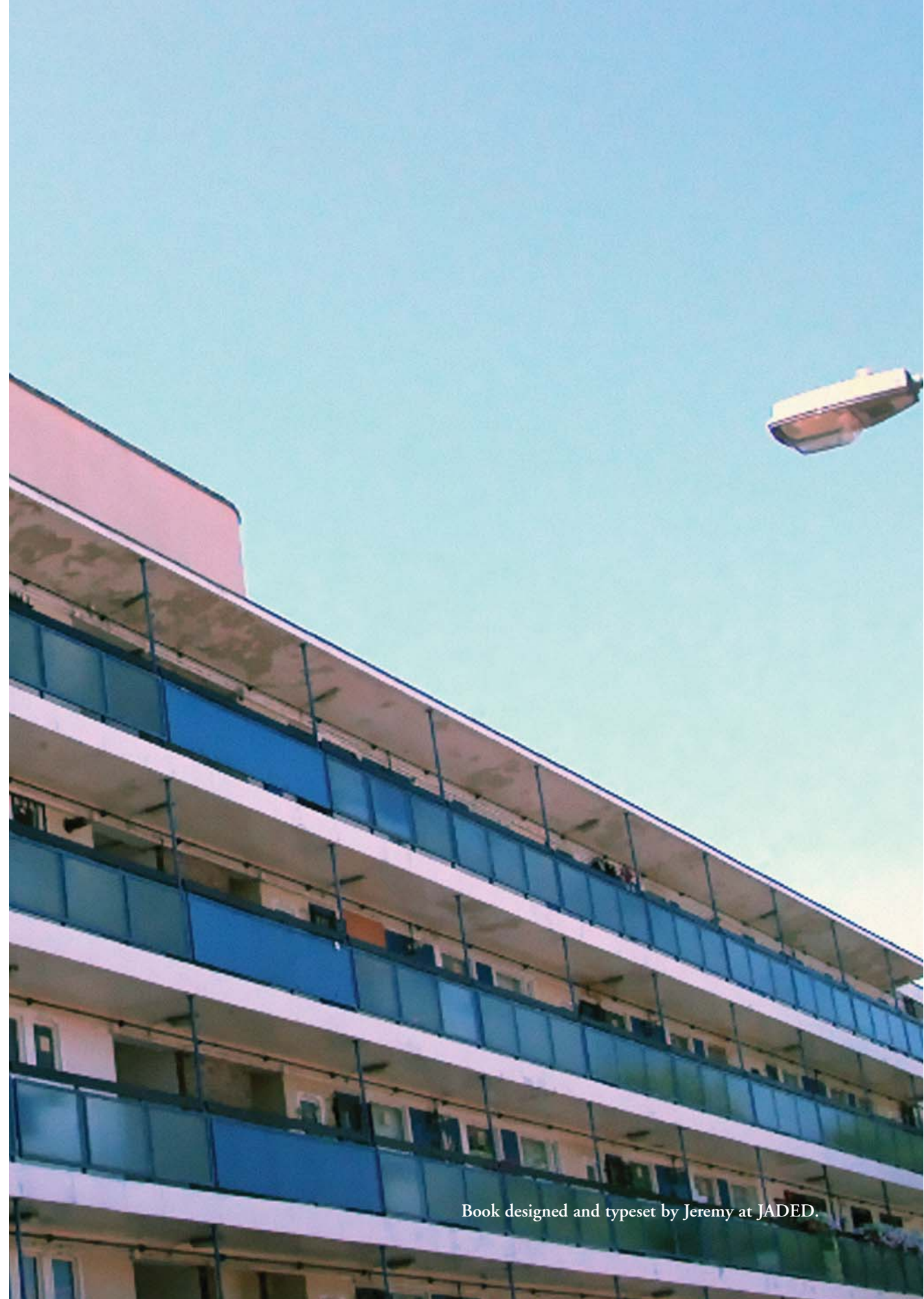
Introduction © Lisa Goldman 2005

From October 2005 onwards, unedited copies of all interviews carried out for Hoxton Story will be available on CD from the London Borough of Hackney's Archives Department. 43 De Beauvoir Road, London N1 5SQ Tel: 020 7241 2886 Email: archives@hackney.gov.uk. Open Tues – Thurs 9.30am – 1pm, 2 – 5pm.

The Red Room would like to thank:

The Heritage Lottery Fund for their support; the interviewees, the interviewers and the transcribing team; Ellie Doney, Mark Hone and Paddy Chatterton at Hoxton Hall; LB Hackney Archives Department; Michael White, Roger Kitchen, Lara Samuels, Rhona Foulis, George Burke, Brian Marsh, Sam Lewis, Kathleen Whelan, Ben Shallcross, Andy Duck and Lucy Brown, Ebony Skerritt, Sussan Rassoulie, Glynn Pierce-Jones, Robin Hawks, Frank Owen, Jane Perrott and everyone else who contributed to the realisation of this publication.

The Red Room is committed to using the arts to explore and promote dialogue about contemporary issues. Founded in 1995, the company has won numerous awards under the leadership of its founding Artistic Director, Lisa Goldman. The Red Room can offer Hoxton Story as a model for creative, arts led inter-community dialogue, aiming to foster balanced critical engagement with urban regeneration and the needs of communities directly affected by it. Please contact the Red Room directly for more information on 020 7697 8685 or info@theredroom.org.uk.



Book designed and typeset by Jeremy at JADED.



Price £3.00