

## **INTERVIEW: HANNA**

**Q1b. Have you always lived in Milton Keynes? (When did you arrive? What was your first impression? What reasons prompted your move?)**

HANNA:

No, I moved here in 1978 initially moved in with my great aunt into her flat in Bletchley. There was my mum, my dad, my two brothers in a two-bedroom flat with Auntie Phoebe. Mum was pregnant with twins, but we didn't know they were twins at the time. And then we got a house in Great Linford eventually, and I stayed here from 78 to 1998. Then I went to Aberystwyth to do a degree took my son with me he was six and loved it. It was absolutely brilliant, but then he wasn't very streetwise. He was streetwise for Aberystwyth, which is a bit like Stony Stratford on Wednesday afternoon, so I just thought as he was 16 I needed to get him out in the real world. I loved Aberystwyth as did he, but I decided to come back to MK and yeah just slipped straight back into it and have now been back in MK for 11 years this year.

INTERVIEWER:       First impression.

HANNA:

I liked Bletchley because although I was there in the November, it seemed like if you watch any of Lee Scrivens films on Milton Keynes when it shows the bits about Bletchley is always Technicolor and sunny, and that's my initial memory. I hated MK at first. It was the V8 surrounded by some newbuilds and a bit mud and was before the shopping centre opened it just after we moved to Linford. I didn't really like it at all, but I went to Stantonbury campus, and I was taught by Roy Nevitt amongst other great teachers. Stantonbury was a brilliant school, and Stantonbury theatre was there, and I'm a drama person, and I got to perform on that stage at 14 in a real theatre, and it was just amazing, so I

loved it in that perspective. And then I got involved when I was 16 I think it was a with the music scene down a Peartree youth club and just fell in love with MK after that because of the community, because the community I was involved in, and it just went on from there. So, although it's got its negatives as has everywhere, I adore Milton Keynes I think it's a wonderful place and although I'm a Londoner and a cockney by birth MK is my home, but my heart is in Aberystwyth.

I have got half a heart there and half a heart here.

Well here's the thing there is a wonderful word in Welsh called "hiraeth", and the easiest translation is longing but it's stronger than that, so a Welsh person certainly feels it, and I feel it is a Welsh speaker, as a person who fell in love with Aberystwyth, and Wales. You don't just miss it, your heart is pulled towards it, and you feel part of you missing when you are not there and if I go on the train or drive into Wales, I just feel my soul lifting, and I feel like I'm home. So hiraeth is a really important word to me, and I have about Milton Keynes to an extent but particularly Stony Stratford even if I won millions of pounds on the lottery, I would not move away from Stony I would buy a big ole house or a plot of land.

Or a theatre space. I'm on that Kia building, that is ours, I will get it back, that is not is a bloody a garage was built as our cinema, we will get it back.

What's going on with the Children centre? because that's got that great space in the middle, its criminal, Council again, they own that building.

And Bradwell Abbey is too expensive to hire. I don't understand why they don't run stuff down there.

We were living in Lincolnshire and mum and dad were buying a house and dad was a self-employed long-distance lorry driver, he was doing a lot of stuff out in the Middle East was driving out to Saudi and Tehran and all that and loved it. And one of the companies he was doing the job for went bust while he was out there was he was stuck out there for six weeks without any money he is lorry was compounded he was with a couple other blokes, and they were really, really screwed. And my dad, being my dad, they were allowed to leave the compound where the truck was, but the truck wasn't. So he just went out and met the locals and couldn't speak a word of their language, but he ended up being

friends with them and going out fishing with them and earning a living, earning some money, and they loved him, and he loved them. But when he came back, we lost everything, so we left that house and dad's business he had to sell the lorry. We left in a transit van. And we went to stay with nan and grandad in London again in the two-bedroom house, and that was Tottenham and then we just somehow ended up at Auntie Phoebe's in Bletchley because Milton Keynes was ... so this was 1978, so it was like 11 years after it was born so is lots of development lots of council houses and that's what we got. We got a three-bed council house in Great Linford and yet was just the place to be. And yet I am so glad we did. Mum always sad about losing the house and I just went well I would have ended up; I knew when we lived there, I've got to get out of this place because it was Holbeach in Lincolnshire which is a tiny little no mark town. I've got friends that are still there, and they obviously love it, but the odd bit of drama happened, and I love that is in theatre drama not as in drama-drama, but I knew that I would end up married to one of the local farmers and that would be my life, and I didn't want that. I wanted more out of life. So whilst I was sad for Mum and Dad, and I bloody hated the school I was at, apart from the drama teacher, funnily enough. I hated it was such an oppressive ghastly environment and so actually for me although I was sad from Mum and Dad I was really pleased for me and as a consequence is the best thing ever. Because Milton Keynes is the town of pioneers and if you want something to happen, is not as easy as it used to be, but you get up and make it happen as well as creative types do, and that's what still happens.

I think it stems from our founding fathers. Jock Campbell, Fred Lloyd Roche, all those chaps I really do believe that they, that even now especially for us oldies who, I didn't know any of them, but my friend Louise, Fred's her dad. You know so I know about his heritage and his history, and I think that although there are some things are going horribly wrong design-wise and housing wise it's still got that core ethos of we want this to happen, something to get up and do it. "dig where you stand" Living Archive. You know you can find stories, make your stories happen, make your life happen. It's our heritage is what we create, and I think it's vital.

**Q2. What do you feel has changed the most in Milton Keynes?**

HANNA:

On a social level, the housing has changed because it was mostly council houses, mostly Development Corporation houses which was wonderful and now it's largely buying or private renting. There are so few council properties available which means that lots of us are trapped in private rentals and that the landlords and the agents get the blame for providing the housing that the government, successive governments, haven't done. And that creates a lot of tension and anger with some people. And the right to buy was a really good idea, but they didn't reinvest the money they made from that housing into more, and I'm not going to say social housing and going to say council houses because for me that's really important.

When I say council houses and I mean proper council houses like you got in Bletchley well-built, solid houses big rooms not walls made of Kleenex and spit, and a big garden so that your children can play and you can grow your own veg. That is the ideal for me so on a social level that's a problem and the funding for the arts is in decline, and that's an abomination, but that's global in a lot of ways. But we're still doing it. You know. There's still art gateway and art central. And you know for example when I moved to Stony and Roy Nevitt my old drama teacher was there, and he went 'ah Caz, he said there is a guy called Mike Door, there's never been a panto into Stony he wants it to happen, and I said you will direct it. Yeah, all right Roy. Now there is two, and soon there'll be a third one. Ali, my mate Alison and she runs Roundabout Theatre Company, and in October they can do a musical one they are calling it a musical pantomime, don't really know much about it but I know it's happening, and Alison is doing is good with brilliant. It's going to be good music.

I did the first Stony Pantomime, not my thing at all, I think I love it as an art form, and I was in one. Aberystwyth do huge pantomime they have a theatre there, Theatre Llewellyn which is very like Stantonbury in size and the head of drama writes and directs it and is in is as the dame and is brilliant. And so, lots of students when in George was six, and he desperately wanted to be in it so I said well I might be in it because got straight into rehearsals, so I was in it, and it was the hardest work I've ever

done. Three shows a day on Saturdays, and that they do 10-12 day run or something, I said 'never again'. And our little panto is quite different. It's tiny. It's like three shows or whatever was a tiny little town panto bit stage nothing else. But at the end of it people said what are we gonna do next and I said no that is it that all I'm doing. They said no we got to do something, and then the chairs Stony live cornered me in the pub me a few beers, and he said I want there to be some drama as part of Stony live, oh well do some Shakespeare excerpts.

So that went on, and then there was more Shakespeare excerpts. So, the group formed out of that, because I was doing the direction of the first panto, and we're not a theatre company we are a little community town drama group, and I make that definition is all about accessibility.

With merchant it was different. I had to have a very solid cast of very good performers because you can't, you oughtn't do a big show of Shakespeare work and just throw people in because they ought to have a go that's what the other stuff is for. If they don't get it the audience won't.

When I was working at restart which was for pupils at secondary schools in Milton Keynes who were at serious risk of exclusion. I used to go in on Friday and go and do a drama, to do a whole month of re-socialisation re-education where they could then go back into school and I always made them do Shakespeare always made the readouts a sonnet. They would go 'Awww', and I would say no, no, you won't look stupid if you have a go if you say it wrong it doesn't matter I can help you say the weight should be said you lonely looking idea if you say I won't do it. So that was a challenge that they rose to. And then I made them read the sonnet just a line each, every single time and you would always get them go oh this is about bullying all this is about... Right off you go got five minutes three groups come back and re-re-enact it. Show me, and you have to use some of the words, and then I go to them now you can go back into schools to your English teachers and your drama teachers they have got some Shakespeare actually thank you let's do some more it's my mission because I love Shakespeare.

Maybe the key thing in Richard the third is where he has that scene Queen Anne which is one of my favourite scenes in Shakespeare. I cannot accept she is properly seduced by him, my feeling is, and

this is how me and my mate Stephen did it, as one of our modules, is she has no choice she submits to him... She is screwed, social standing she has to do it has to take that role she doesn't fall for him all.

And in real life, they were married for many years, so it is Shakespeare's telling of Richard that he is the tricky bit. I still love that play. There are villains everywhere, and theatre and art and storytelling and poetry and music are our way of finding and understanding in its vital.

### **Q3. What, if any, qualities make Milton Keynes unique?**

HANNA:

Oh God, its pioneer spirit. Its yes we can! Its the road system. I love the bloody roundabouts. You can't get lost in Milton Keynes. You can go on a diversion, the only time you ever really get traffic jams is the bloody traffic lights and in what I call the rush half-hour.

Its open landscape. Sally Annette, actually I have just remembered years ago she's an artist and a friend of mine living in France now, but she did an exhibition at Great Linford, and it was about fences and boundaries. But can't remember it will come back to me and I don't really think there are that many fences and boundaries in Milton Keynes we got some open landscapes and replaces the free to go to and people can just do stuff.

Its community within the arts there are a couple of people I will not even speak to, but that's because they treated other people, I know badly but not particular anything to me personally. You get that in every community. When George's dad and I were together, and George was a baby he, Alan Davies and Phil Tipper did a wonderful storytelling Festival at Bradwell Abbey and the most of it was adulty stuff, you know, some children but lots of it wasn't. And they went through a real stage of doing quite a lot storytelling which was lovely.

### **Q4. What would make you proud to live in a place? (Do you experience some of these elements in living in Milton Keynes? What could improve your pride in living in Milton Keynes?)**

HANNA:

A sense of community. Sense of ownership of the location by the community. A kindness within the community. Embracing the arts and supporting the arts within the community. And access to facilities and the countryside which wouldn't be central London. That is it and everything I say there is pretty much Aberystwyth and Stony Stratford and a lot of Milton Keynes wrapped up in one.

Yes I do, I do, and also there are parts of Milton Keynes that get slagged off like Netherfield and Bean Hill and the Lakes estate, and yes there are crappy parts. But there are crappy parts of Stony. But guess what I know on those developments there are great pockets of community and people looking after their own, and that's vital.

Funding for the arts and council houses. It is as simple as that. And a theatre that isn't Milton Keynes Theatre so, for example, Stony Stratford gets a theatre. We used to have the Jenny Lee in Bletchley that went long time ago you can use the OU lecture big hall, but that's not really a theatre the venue at Walton High is fabulous we're using that for Burretti this year, and yet we haven't got enough we really haven't. And that's community access as well that's not just about the building itself is also about people having ownership of it.

**Q5. In your opinion, what element of Milton Keynes is: The best. The most exciting. The hardest. Lacking. The most culturally significant. The richest in heritage?**

HANNA:

Best - the arts. The most exciting - the festivals. The hardest - the housing. Lacking - Council housing.

The most culturally significant - Stony Stratford. The richest in heritage - Stony Stratford.

**Q6. Has Milton Keynes played a part in helping you gain any achievements which you might not have been successful in if you lived elsewhere? Has it aided any failures?**

HANNA:

Oh my God yes as an actor as a theatre director as a person as a musician/singer, musician and singer as a singer.

INTERVIEWER:

I was watching the videos that are Stony Stratford volumes one and two, they were talking about a band that was very popular in Milton Keynes home grow, there is footage then walking through the shopping centre, and I had to doublecheck and thought there's you.

HANNA:

I'm so proud of that I really am. How funny. But interestingly this is something we say that was before they closed the city centre because when we made that film, there were no doors on the city you could just rock up any time. And we did we didn't ask permission we just gone and did it you know and that was again the openness that we can make video let's do it. And the funny thing was we made it, I saw it not long after it was made, there was showing of it somewhere, and I haven't seen it again until my friend Colin Barrett digitised it put it on YouTube, and I pissed myself it was ... I was screeching with laughter. Oh my God look at us. But I am so proud of it so, and actually there is a Stony Stratford connection because big George produced it, we recorded in the Mill studio.

This occurred to me earlier when we were talking and that the vaults bar is a wonderful thing on Sunday and the folksongs that are sung there are wonderful. And I was there a few weeks ago, and there was some of the songs, and I was thinking they are a bit close to the edge, but you know what



nobody got all snotty about it. They are of their time we are informed differently now, but they are still bloody funny they are sexist and naughty and I just funny. I don't agree with them, but they are of the time.

Don't say the B-word [Brexit] but the whole B-word and hold something has empowered nasty people with nasty views to feel their okay to do and say the things they do. And we need to rule that out because it's dangerous times and the arts can help us combat that.

**Q7. If you were in charge of advertising Milton Keynes what view/image and/or tag line would you give it?**

HANNA:

Well of the first thing that comes to mind and I would be tempted to use it, and I don't know if it was a setup or not, but Lee said he came across it at the Discovery Centre and it was a poster developed by the Milton Keynes Development Corporation. Whether it's true or not I don't know if but it was a beautiful view of like a wetland or something and it was the sewage works and it the tagline was "if we can do this for shit think what we can do for you". You can't use that, but it comes to mind, and it makes me laugh.

INTERVIEWER:

It wasn't a poster. That actually happened. It was when they did the exhibition in London they needed models of the city, but at the time that they've been a bit of a hold-up and it was very close to the opening, and the only model that was ready go was this beautiful silver model of the sewage works. Fred Lloyd Roche was actually at the exhibition overseeing it being set up and David Walker was phoned up to ask where the models were. We've only got the sewage, and we can't just display the sewage, David said it was a nice model, they all agreed it was a great model, but we can't just to show

them the sewage, and that's when David said That [referring to suggested tagline]. Fred heard that and said, 'you can't tell people that' David said 'I was joking'.

HANNA:

I think only "so much more than roundabout and concrete cows" much as I love them both and I do love those cows. On my wall up there, that frame I got it from Lee. It says it all really you know look at the dinosaur, and the cows, the point. Oh my god I love the point that's a crime that it is facing demolition, but that's just corruption, I believe that's corruption. Some f\*@ker owns that, and they just let it fall to rack and ruin because they can get bloody trader and telephone shops in there.

You know Deborah Matthews, right? One of the classic lines ever. I remember we went there, we were in the bar downstairs, because there was like a platform with a grand piano on it and people played music and because I'm little I could get straight to the front to get served. and I remember standing with Debra, and there were just five people deep at the bar and all of a sudden you know her lovely voice 'who does one have to sleep with around here to get served behind this bar?' And there was silence. And some chap served her straightaway. I thought it was first-class I thought 'oh my god I love you, you are so brilliant.

It was just amazing. There were so many amazing moments there. But to me the bricks and mortar glass and steel and the red lights. Used to drive down the hill from Brick Hill end but you could see it, you can't see it now, but you could see glowing in the dark and it was like wow and it funky modern and it's happening now. Our city centre was the city centre. They've listed the bus station which is ugly. One of the negatives about when they opened the cinema there was that it was the end of the Electra Newport and the Cinema in Bletchley. And I remember being part of the campaign to try and save the Electra and we did our bit, and we put our shows on and gigs and cabaret events and stuff, and it went anyway. And it's like the shopping arcade now but least that the facade is still there, but you know that that but in some ways it could be argued that that is progress but those buildings... The Bletchley one just got pulled down. They saved the facade Newport Pagnell and our one in Stony is a

bloody garage and the one in Wolverton is a church. The cinema was the centres that should be there are still the king's hall in Wolverton which was MadCap. Love that place that was a wonderful space.

So there is that problem but Milton Keynes itself there are so many images I would sort of add have a montage of images because I'd have Stony Stratford and I'd have the point, and I'd have the park or a lake and yeah bit everything just a montage because it is everything that is everything. Years and years ago, I worked for the Play Association of the Council, and I did a project with the children's centres, and it was an arts project and the... I had to work with children on Milton Keynes, and every group made a model of Milton Keynes, and every group talked about what they wanted and what they loved what they didn't want, and every single group that was there was Netherfield, and we did one in Linford about half a dozen different sites. Every single one of them they all loved it they wanted a beach. That's what we miss, the sea. They make a beach down at Middleton hall every year, but it's the sea air they miss. Yeah but for images it would have to be the montage. It could be the roundabouts, it would be the cows, it would be something like Stony; a picture of Stony Stratford during the Christmas lights in the dark contrasted with Willen lake on a hot sunny afternoon with a frame of the cows and roundabouts with the point in there somewhere. With TogFest stage or Folk on the Green stage or something like that. Yes, because they say we have no history, and we have so much. I love the mirroring, not mirroring, our parallel lives if you like of the new and the ancient and we can do both.

**Q8. If Milton Keynes was a person could you describe them and the type of 50th party they might have?**

HANNA:

Milton Keynes is a fun-loving, feisty person. I don't know if it's male or female actually, fun-loving feisty person who likes a good drink and a good party a walk in the country to chill out and the sound of church bells even though they don't go to church. And they kind of, looking after themselves but

there again a bit shabby around the edges but they know they need to get back down the gym. And this is me, oh god I'm talking about myself.

A huge music festival with lots of food stalls and local music and invited musicians from outside and it will be a festival with storytelling and theatre and circus acts. And there'd be a huge community picnic and so all the food stalls at the end of the afternoon would donate whatever was left to everyone to sit around and have a great feed, a great sing and a great drink, and it would be sunny. It would have to be sunny, and everybody would help clear up afterwards last, and everything would be recyclable there would be no plastic on-site at all that's what it would be.

INTERVIEWER: Gift?

HANNA:

If I had the money, I would give Milton Keynes the money to complete, so that would mean funding for another hospital and proper council housing and community centres and small theatres venues. If money was a problem, then I'd just bake it a beautiful big cake in shape of the point below the little people multicultural people made out of sugar, and they were all over it and around it and holding hands in a big circle around the point protecting it. Yeah but everybody, every skin colour, every culture every faith and none yeah, that's what I'd have.

It's a wicked question.

Milton Keynes is what 51, 52 and I'm 55, 56 this year so though wasn't born here I spent more of my life here than anywhere else thirty years.

**Q9. Please watch this clip from the BFI archives, 8 mins**

**(<https://player.bfi.org.uk/free/film/watch-milton-keynes-a-village-city-1973-online>). It shows the**

**early days of Milton Keynes. Does this evoke any memories or thoughts you are comfortable sharing?**

HANNA:

Of course, that is where arts gateway, arts central are now based [referring to the building at kiln farm shown during the film]

Such a handsome fella [comment on Fred] I wish I knew him because so many I know speak so highly of him. And of course, he is Louisa's dad.

See that map I just love it. It's like a patchwork quilt. We've had those things like the fabric of Milton Keynes, haven't we? Actually, that is something I did, the women of Fullers Slade made their fabric, but they didn't want to tell their story, so I read it out at the church up the city as one, representing them that was lovely.

"For me, it's about people" yeah totally.

You see, nowadays every new development they are not made to build a community centre and pay for a community worker for the next few years. They used to have to do that. When we moved to Great Linford, the community worker came around and met us, and said what help did we need and to tell about all the different things going on. That's what there should be.

That's interesting, that's carpet right.

Tidied up! How rude, our town doesn't need tidying up.

That's where Fred lived [Simpson], it like Milton Keynes village it is original.

That's where they have gone wrong, no buildings taller than the tallest tree. And that lovely tree up the city centre, that was disgusting, they didn't look after it properly. [referring to the death and removal of the Midsummer Oak, which had a shopping mall built around it and subsequently died in 2015.]

Look at Campbell Park; it's still used as farmland.

It took Pete to provide us with a football stadium, though.

I love the cherry trees up the city centre. I don't go up there very often because I object paying for the parking. I rather shop locally. But those cherry trees in the spring are just beautiful.

They are good size houses as well [referring to the footage of Galley Hill being built]

That's really interesting; he is using the word city; he is not using town. So, it is a city. It is the new city of Milton Keynes. I don't mind which it is. I live in the town of Stony Stratford, which is part of the city of Milton Keynes. I just love it.

Tim Dalglish said something really interesting when I was talking to him about this sort of thing a couple of years ago. I can't remember why we were talking about it. I was interviewing him for something. I think it was for the Living Archive. I asked what's missing from Milton Keynes, particularly the city centre and he said when you're in Spain you got the plazas, you got the city square where people come together and sit chat and drink and eat. And when you go to central Milton Keynes the shopping centre they redeveloped, Queen Square which was lovely at the big fountain, and it was open, and it was light, and it was lovely the grass and stuff happened. And when I go there which is very rare now, going for my eye test I go to boots, I just think it looks like a fucking prison exercise yard. It's horrid it's soulless the big fountain is gone there is a water feature there but it's just nasty, and it's such a shame I remember that used to be a lot of free parking I remember that there was talk at one point in the early days a free bus service. I mean you can't just have free; obviously. It's got to be subsidised, but it's that whole subtle taking away from the people and imposing stuff which isn't really what the Development Corporation did. And all these years later Fred and the other guys are still being talked about because we remember them because we want our children to remember them for what they did, and what they gave us. The opportunity that they gave Milton Keynes and I don't want it to become another Harlow or another Romford, and I've got family in both places actually, and I remember years ago going to Romford to stay with my cousin. I was going up for a drink with her and some of the blokes in the local pub, and they start up about Milton Keynes roundabouts and concrete cows I went, yeah and what have you got John Paul bitter. Do one! And I just launched into them about what it was all about, and they went alright, and I said you ain't bloody visiting cause we

don't want you there. Don't diss my town. I do get cross if people diss it. If people diss it who live here, that's fair enough but don't do cheap gag about it you know.

**Q 10. Do you think Milton Keynes has a good reputation a. Internally with its residents, b. Externally with the rest of the country? (Why do you think it has this reputation? How does that make you feel? What could improve it?)**

HANNA:

On the whole, yes, it's a bit like a family I think Milton Keynes is that I can punch my brother, but anybody else tries to punch him, and I'll have them. You know it is that, it's ours and it might not be perfect because nowhere is but guess what leave it alone. Don't like it don't come here.

I think it's mixed people, with a modicum of intelligence and articulacy will understand its potential and the good parts of it if they've been here. People that only come to the Milton Keynes bowl, not the national bowl it's in Milton Keynes it's the Milton Keynes bowl and always will be. If people just come to that and they get the hump causes it takes them ages to park or get there because the road is jammed because that is a bit of a problem, they are going to bitch about it. People go on about being lost in Milton Keynes; it's like get a bloody map. You got satellite stuff now anyway.

So I think it's the butt of a lot of jokes, but that's because it's cheap jokes for people that don't really understand or don't know. And in fact I just remembered years and years ago I was in a theatre company called Flash Idiots, and we devised a play. It was devised before I was in it and then I joined, and I was involved in the reworking of it, and it had a bit in it about because it was about Milton Keynes on the whole. You do know Jeremy Cooper, he's an old friend of mine, an actor like he does lots of different things but there was this, we did it in the barn a great Linford because we were based there as a company. Throughout the show, he'd come on and off throughout the night he would come in on the bicycle, and he was wearing reflective clothes and a cycling helmet, and he'd sort of come in and he was lost and be lost in Milton Keynes. And he was cycling around the redways, and he couldn't see the signs which were turned the wrong way around so he couldn't find anything

and was lost. And then as the evening progressed, he'd become more frustrated more dishevelled more manic. He kept coming back to this place and still couldn't find his way around Milton Keynes. So that was really funny, but that was an in-joke that was our joke we are allowed to tell a joke because we know it's funny you know, and I can't remember lots of other things that I think it's linked to the Camelford water poisoning.

Two shows we did Fistful of Fingers and, I can't remember what the other was called now. It is a long time ago it was like 1986, yeah. But I've just remembered that because it was new, and it was different, and it was exciting, and it's proud of itself, and so people were envious of it, and they were frightened by it. And central Milton Keynes "shopping as it should be" free parking get out your car you could go shopping all over the shop you could get pretty much what you want because in the early days it had the market hall. Right, the indoor market which had a butchers and I think it had a bakers and a fabric shop and also you could get anything up there, and you wouldn't get wet in the rain, and it was lovely, and it was shiny and sparkly, and there was McDonald's which was exciting. So, it was proud of itself, and people don't like people or places that are proud of themselves they are threatened by it. They are threatened by the arrogance threaten by the confidence, and if someone is living in the arse end of nowhere and they see this then, they're not going to like it. It is that whole notion of it being of it's all just concrete and roundabouts, and there is no soul and that Paul Weller song and things like that. I just think people find our confidence in our town from the very early days I think they find it objectionable, but envy is a pitiable thing.

INTERVIEWER:       How does it make you feel?

HANNA:

I 'ave 'em for it, and I say all right where are you from? Oh, Margate, right! Just said that randomly because of cousins there and it's a great vibrant town, and it got great arts, and Tracey Emming gives it a lot of welly, so that's good but is that sort of, is that cheap jibe. We have it within Milton Keynes.



Oh bloody hell where do you want to go, the lakes estate? And you get it in Wales, the north, north wales, the Gogs, I was going to say as we call them because I lived in mid wales and I consider myself of the mid-in the south, but you got the Gogs who knock the southerners in the south it's not the northerners.

It is the tribe. And anyone who has a dig, I find out where they are from first have, they ever been here, what was their experience, have they ever visited here. My cousin, god my cousin Tracey lives in Romford and she came and visited last year with her mum, my aunt. we were really close as kids, and she just wants to live here. When she came up in the summer, she was like got to come to the Christmas lights switch-on so that my auntie and cousin came and stayed at the bull. Had a lovely time came to the Christmas lights switch-on had the best time ever and then she contacted me a couple of months ago and said right when is good to come, I want to come in the summer. So, she is coming up for the opening week of StonyLive! And she's booked another room at the Bull for her and her mum because her dad, is my uncle Derek, and her fiancé Charlie they do like it, but they just want to sit and drink ale, and they are not really fussed about all the stuff that goes on. They love it and think it's beautiful. She loves waking up in in the Bull hotel hearing the church bells on Sunday morning cos where she lives she lives opposite greyhound stadium in Romford and it's really busy just traffic, traffic, traffic you know she doesn't particularly like it, but she loves it here.

Yeah, I defended it, and I will call out what's wrong with it because otherwise, it would be dishonest. I wouldn't want to live anywhere else, but yet just like anywhere it's got areas that need attention, and I've already covered what they are. You know, and I love it passionately I believe in it. my boss is very dismissive of it you know he doesn't like Milton Keynes particularly, but then I just say to him you grew up in Leighton buzzard so shut your noise. You Know Leighton Buzzard is not a bad town at all actually, but you know you are going to make a comparison jog on. But the core for me is Stony Stratford. And I'm very lucky I live in a beautiful town. And on the part of the community I walk out my door, it takes a minute and a half to get to work, and I will always see people say hello whether it's Bill who cleans the streets or friends or people who were working in other places in the town that I see you know. And that's important to me, and I had it in Aberystwyth. And I had it soon as I moved

back to MK, I just slotted straight into all my old mates and but I know I'm very lucky to live in a beautiful part of our part of it, but I bloody pay through the nose for it, you know, 875 for a little two-bed house with the courtyard garden. I could live on Two Mile Ash and pay 675, but I'd be living on Two Mile Ash, and I won't be living in Stony.

It's like Fred said it's the people, I love my community, and I will do everything I can for it. I am trained in theatre and performance studies I'm bloody good at that, but I can't earn a decent living doing it, so I work in a letting agent for my salary and over half my monthly wages go on my rent over half. It is a life choice but having said that all the things I do outside work apart from going to the gym which is purely for me but there are people I know. That's what's nice, it's for my community, and I don't do it so people can thank me I do it because it's what I do is what I love doing but the sense of joy and pleasure I get from putting on a show and seeing people from the community come to see it. People from the community and outside the direct community being part of it and people within the group growing as individuals and gaining confidence and skills and being happier and friendships that are made and relationships that develop. Oh my God you can't put a price on that would be I would be doing that wherever I lived, I just happen to live in a wonderful place that enables me to do it with relative ease, but I do it for nothing.

When I moved to Stony, Sue Adams, who I've known since before I got pregnant with George that's 28 years. I became pregnant with George while I was working with Sue, we were youth workers at Radcliffe, and as soon as she knew I moved to Stony Stratford she was straight on the blower 'Caz! for Stony lantern parade I need a voice at the front telling people to step back nicely, but then if they don't that nicely I need somebody behind that voice that will make them step back without conflict, but they will know to do it.' 'Yeah alright I will do that'. So, I've been involved every year and then last year and this year Michelle Wellbore asked me to do the carol singing I was like oh my god I really scared, but I loved it. But I am part of it would be so nice, I've never actually stood and watched the lantern festival I've never... The first year I lived here I came to folk on the green and I just ... I heard that they were clearing up, so I just helped do some litter picking. And then went back to the green next morning and just see if there was anything to be picked up, there wasn't because they are

really good at it. And from the next year onwards I was involved helping set up and stage managing and litter picking and then obviously do the comparing. Tog Fest, I'd never been to TogFest. I was planning to go, and Malcolm Jones who, god love him, he used to do TogFest and Folk on the Green. And he said to me 'oh I've double booked myself this year for TogFest can you do it for me', and I said 'yeah if they'll have me I'll do it', doing the courtyard stage and that was the year he died. So I've been doing that ever since, and it's really weird when I go to a festival. I used to do the Campbell Park festival; I'd help book the bands, I announce the bands, help get them on and off stage, deal with any issues, bit of security. But going to something like and not actually been involved is really weird but it's lovely because you see as a punter.

If we don't give to our community who does, it's like the story of the little red hen. Oh, Stories! But it is though, you know, who is going to help me weed the land, oh no I'm too busy said the cow, oh no not me said the pig. Everyone wants a bit of the bread when it's cooked but who's going to help bake it and clean up afterwards. You got to give to receive.

**Q 11. Do you know any stories, jokes, or urban myths about Milton Keynes? Can you share them?**

HANNA:

Oh God, I'm shit at jokes so no. Urban myths? Adrian Stanek from Broadway twisters has got a brilliant song, and it's called something like "suddenly North 10th Street" or something and he wrote it about a house in North 10th Street because it was a knocking shop. And it is well it was a knocking shop at the time. I will get the CD in a minute. That is one I know is based in truth which is hilarious. But I don't really know any jokes about Milton Keynes apart from all the pathetic ones everybody knows, thinking they're funny when they're not. That's an urban myth that made into a brilliant rock 'n' roll song. The only stories I have are personal anecdotes and things like that about what we did and about what Peartree bridge meant to us about the album we made "the warped the sense of human" which is it's not folklore is just something that happened, and it was part of our lives. As part of our

history. So, the police played Milton Keynes bowl they really were impressed by it they gave money Peartree bridge youth centre which gave shiny who the keyboard player in our band a Korg synthesiser and it paid for the warped sense of humour and album to be made. Part of which was recorded in Stony Stratford, there was a launch gig at the Pitts. And the album if anyone is mug enough to buy it goes for 200 quid on eBay. Dylan Jevons had a box load of them and just got sick of them and binned them. Peartree bridge youth centre was torn down and turned into a marina which was heart-breaking, but hey that's the way goes. John Peel played two tracks on his show which was very exciting. Our video, as you've seen it, is on YouTube, people watch it. I've been contacted on Facebook by three different people from across the world who have said oh my God are you from that album. Which is really hilarious. And a great time was had by all, and those of us who are still alive are all still Great mates, some of us are still play music. And the figure-of-eight which Cliff Richard roller skated around the front cover of the album. It was for, of, and by, the youth. Not so much the youth because one of the tracks on the record was by Jeff doughnut, who was king size keen and his rocking machine, and he used to own a burger van on Milton Keynes market. And he was in his 50s back then he's been dead a long time. Trevor Jevons, Trev, was on it, I'm not sure. I can't remember now, dancing counterparts, one of eight bands, us, fictitious, just loads. We were part of that scene, so that was the story of, it was a time will be a youth leader who enabled us, he created a safe space, he puts in a van take is to play at the Wheatsheaf in Leighton buzzard even though we were underage. Well a couple of us were underage. We just did it, and that is the essence of MK from me because there were switched on adults who cared enough about young people in the town city whatever to enable us to do our thing in the safe space and that was brilliant, and that's a story. And this probably plenty more about this stuff but that will do.

HANNA

Date: 11/2/19

Location: Hanna's living room, Stony Stratford

Observation: Hanna was welcoming and a keen interviewee. Her sharp wit, spontaneous laugh and openness made the interview feel like a catch up with an old friend.

From her answers and discussions it is clear Hanna really loves throwing herself into community events, especially arts events, and her experience and connections throughout the community both in the Grid Square where she lives and works and across Milton Keynes are evident through her living room with pictures on the wall. Spotted around her room she has numerous Milton Keynes memorabilia in the form of pictures objects, some even connect to her teenage years when she was part of a band. Due to this she is incredibly well connected to the music and arts scene within Milton Keynes and very positive about the impact and opportunities for art in the area.

Throughout she was laughing and cheerful, even when expressing her frustration with those who put Milton Keynes down.

The transcript is verbatim with minor text edits occurring during the member check to