

INTERVIEW WITH DAVID DEE

[SM]

Good morning, this is an interview for the Whitney Museum Oral Histories Project. My name is Sami Masani on behalf of My Vision Oxfordshire and today's date is the 19th of January 2026. The place where we are conducting this interview is at the residence of one Mr. David Dee in Kedlington who has very kindly agreed to offer to submit an interview for us for the Oral Histories Project. So, Mr. Dee, can I please have your full name for the record?

[DD]

David Martin Dee.

[SM]

Lovely, and is that what you'd like to be called?

[DD]

Dave. Thank you.

[SM]

So, Dave, can you tell us a little bit about your family and your earliest memories of Whitney or your first impression of Whitney?

[DD]

My very first impression of Whitney was with the youth club and going over to Whitney Methodist Youth Club and playing indoor football at Henry Box School in Whitney many years ago. The girls played netball and then we had a quiz and that was in the late 60s, very early 70s, before we were married I think, wasn't it, Mark? I don't recall it at all.

So it was well before we were married. But, yeah, that was my earliest. My second visit to Whitney was in a mini where we went to the Whitney Blanket Company and we picked up a coffee table from the Whitney Blanket Company and brought it from the area it was, which was by a church, wasn't it?

A big church and a field of green. Passed the Buttercross, back to Kiddlington with a dirty great big coffee table and a couple of chairs in a mini.

[SM]

So what first brought you to Whitney? Have you ever lived there at all?

[DD]

I've never actually lived there but I've played many games of darts in many of the pubs there.

[SM]

And what brought you to Whitney then?

[DD]

What brought me to Whitney was the shopping and of course the youth club. You know, being Methodist, it was a national thing. You could play locally but if you got through in any of the competitions you went into a national side and you played nationally.

I've been to Brackley with it and places like that with the youth club. But no, it's been a very fun time. With Whitney it was more going to darts and shopping.

Because it was a good little shopping area there.

[SM]

And do you think Whitney or the local community has changed a lot since then?

[DD]

Oh, it's changed tremendous. It's just been built up. It's like Kiddlington now.

That's changed tremendous. You know, it's all been built up. Before we were married we were members of the Carterton Bowls Club.

Indoor bowls, you know, the old ten pin bowling. We used to go there, didn't we?

[SM]

And now? No, I don't do any of that. Do you think there is that club still?

[DD]

Oh no, it's still running because one of the people I play crib with on a Wednesday, last Wednesday, he happened to be there bowling.

[SM]

What are your favourite places to meet people in Whitney if you were to go now?

[DD]

In the pubs. Always been the pubs. You know, the Harrow and places a little bit further round towards the Buttercross and down on a different road.

I can't remember the names of the roads these days. So I'm not allowed to drive if I don't go anywhere.

[SM]

What's your favourite pub in Whitney then, at the minute?

[DD]

Well, that's been what, five years at least? Or more. Five years or more since I've been to a pub in Whitney.

So I haven't got a favourite anymore. It would be the nearest to always playing darts.

[SM]

Quiz.

[DD]

And quiz. Yeah, the Windrush Club, wasn't it? We used to play quiz there.

[SM]

Has it changed very much over the years that you've seen it?

[DD]

Whitney certainly has.

[SM]

The pub?

[DD]

Well, the Windrush Club. I don't even remember it. We never played darts there, only quiz.

The pubs. You met a lot of people, always met up at competitions in other pubs, in villages dotted around Whitney as well as Kiddlington. And it's the same people you used to see.

They used to... What are you doing? You know, things like that.

Are you okay? Yeah. And you caught up with a bit of chat.

[SM]

Do you think that's unique to Whitney?

[DD]

No, it's unique to Oxfordshire.

[SM]

And you like it, obviously.

[DD]

You can get on with people. If you're playing a game like darts, and like Crib. Now I sit down and play Crib as best I can.

And it's meeting people.

[SM]

Can you tell me about a really memorable day that you had at Whitney or an object from there? Just like a memory that stands out to you.

[DD]

Well, I remember going or getting to Whitney by going through Northlay or Norlay as the locals call it. And picked up a couple of carpets, didn't we, from there. Brought them back here and then went back to Whitney to get the coffee table and the chairs from the Whitney Blanket Company.

What do I remember of Whitney? I remember having a great lot of fun in Whitney. I was old enough to enjoy myself there.

But the memories that stick out, of course, are the memories of playing indoor football, playing darts. I'd never ever played Crib in Whitney. Played darts at the Rowing Machine.

And like I said, the Harrow. And there was another pub that was on and they had, because I was chairman of Oxfordshire BDO, the British Darts Organisation. I was chairman of the Oxfordshire branch for a while.

And I used to go out and about watching some of the Oxfordshire darts players and see how they played and stuff like that. I thoroughly enjoyed myself.

[SM]

Sounds like it. And finally, just wanted to know, what are some of your hopes for the town's future?

[DD]

What for Whitney? They're getting rid of that stupid parking ban that they've got.

[SM]

What do you mean?

[DD]

Well, they've got a stupid parking ban. You can't get anywhere near the bloody shops.

[SM]
Oh, OK.

[DD]
And they, the poor old shopkeepers, are up in arms about it. At one time you could drive all the way through now you can't even drive through, let alone park up. You know, is it Corn Street that goes from the A40 up round over the little, the mini roundabout where the bridge is?

Then you go up into the middle of town by the, by the Buttercross. Well, you can't go up there now. So where do they park?

They have to park round by Tesco's, where they've built a way round, haven't they? Like a ring road. Yeah, Tesco's as well.

Oh, Sainsbury's, sorry. Sainsbury's. You know, this was back in the day when I used to drive for a living.

Now I can't drive anymore, so I don't do it. But I would wish to God that somebody would certainly do. It's like the shopkeepers in Oxford.

Shopkeepers anywhere need help to be able, because people just haven't got the money to spend. And yet all they want to do is take more and more and more money. Whoever it is.

[SM]
So you would get rid of the parking ban if you could?

[DD]
Oh, without a doubt, yes.

[SM]
How about more of the overarching townscape? Do you have any other hopes for it?

[DD]
Yeah, I must admit, the bypass has been a godsend. Because when you, I used to go down to South Wales to visit my grandparents and that. It was, you had to drive through Whitney.

Which is why I knew where the slope was going. I passed the Windrush pub on the left. Sorry, on the right.

You know, dirty great big pub. And then on through past Smiths, which was the Smiths of Whitney, which used to do a lot of car items and stuff like that. And of course, West Whitney Bowls Club was down that way.

And then it was just on then to, it was the old A40 to Wales.

[SM]

So that was easier for you?

[DD]

Once that bypass was built, yes. It stopped you having to stop at the lights, you know, and go up. I don't know, I can't remember half the names of these places now on roads.

But I know, I used to know how to get there. And Three Pigeons, where I worked, there was a lad that lived in Longham, not Longham, but he lived in North Lee. And we had a meal at the Three Pigeons.

And that was a lovely meal.

[SM]

I believe it's still there.

[DD]

Yes, it is on the green. Beautiful pub. It was a lovely meal.

That was in the early 70s.

[SM]

Well, thank you so very much for the interview. We really appreciate it.

[DD]

Is that all?

[SM]

Well, we'd like to keep going, but that is all of our questions. So we'll sign off now.