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Interviewee: Rose Andrews (speaker, female)
Interviewer: Marsha O'Mahony (speaker, female)
Camera & Sound: Richard Goldsmith (male)
Producer: Julia Goldsmith (female)
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Transcript:

MOM: OK. Oh thank you so much, Rose, for coming along today on a very busy day for you and Mike, My goodness me! Um, I wonder if you can just start by telling us who you are um er how long you've lived in Fownhope and er how long you've been involved with the club walk?

RA: Right I've, er, lived in Fownhope for 48 years. I'm involved with it because i married Mike and I've been involved with it ever since so – helping along the day day and different things and doing things before hand as well so, that's er. I'm Rose Andrews and er I've been involved with the Heart of Oak since I've been married to Mike – 48 years and..

MOM: Do you want Rose to say anything about how long in Fownhope again? Do you want all that again?

Rick Goldsmith (RG): No that's alright, we can –

MOM: No that's fine–

RA: Yep–

RG: –we can go over it we can cover it another time can't we.

MOM: Um, so what's – what's your role? What do you do?

RA: My role is helping to get the ribbons ready and term getting them ironed if they need to be ironed and also helping to get the banner together and er flowers – doing the flowers, helping with the flowers, doing them on the stick with my husband – passing them to him. So, that's my role really [laughter].

MOM: When you say 'preparing the banner' what does that mean?

RA: We have to put it together.

MOM: Sorry Rose –

RA: –outside

MOM: We're gonna have to bear with me now –

RG: It's just for people who know nothing about it - yeah-

RA: Yes, that's right -

MOM: So if you could say 'We have to put the banner together-

RA: Yes

MOM: -and then tell us what that means.

RA: Right. Well we have to put the banner together, which involves with having to put to poles and slide it all up together and put ropes on it and put it ready in the morning of the club walk to - for them to carry down ready for the walk.

MOM: Tell me about the banner. I mean - how old is it? Where does it stay?

RA: it stay in our place [laughter] up in the attic.

RG: Sorry -

RA: All nicely wrapped up.

RG: We need that 'the banner', because Marsha's questions aren't gonna-

RA: Yeah

RG: Yeah so, if you -sorry.

MOM: You'll get used to it Rose

RA: [laughter] I dunno. Can i just ask Mike something?

MOM: Yeah!

RA: How long we've had that banner?

MA: This one? I ain't sure now I think we've had him 6 or 7 years.

RA: Yes. We've had this banner 6 or 7 years, anyway, so that er it's been an easier one for them to carry and er so we do we get it ready in the mornings so whoever is carrying it - it's all prepared ready for them to er come down to the New Inn to start on the walk.

MOM: You talked about dressing the flowers. I wonder if you can just tell us a bit more about that because I noticed you said you hand the flowers to Mike. Does find Mike - I mean does - it Mike the one who puts them on?

RA: Yes.

MOM Because its.

RA: [laughter]

MOM: Ok if you can just [laughter] if you can just describe that to us just to give a bit -

RA: Yes, well we get the poles read- the stick ready, soak it in water because there's a rag on the end.

RG: Sorry can we start again because there was a little shout outside so, from 'we', that- sorry.

RA: We stick the wa- um - stick in water to get the rag on the end of it damp and then Mike puts some string on and starts rolling it around a little bit and then we put the flowers on. So hand- I hand flowers to him and he keeps turning the sticking as he's turning the stick I keep passing all these flowers and it comes down the stick. All sorts of flowers, different colours and makes it quite nice and colourful.

MOM: Does Mike have a particular style of dressing the stick?

RA: He has his own style, which is the traditional style that he does. A lot of people don't know the traditional style. So Mike has that tradition style to do it and er and then at the end of doing the flowers, putting the flowers on, you put the red, white and blue ribbons on at the bottom and er - its all ready to go.

MOM: See, I'm really interested in what the traditional style is, I don't know what that is

RG: Yeah, and can we say 'Mike has his...' yeah? That would be great, yeah.

MOM: So you could say-

RA: The traditional style is just how your flowers are tall ones at the top working down and smaller and smaller and wind them around with the string, and tie them very tight, obviously, or else - a lot of people you will see that when they're doing these sticks, they don't tie them, and of course, as you're going through the walk, they're dropping all off. Whereas Mike's doesn't! [laughter] It stays on.

MOM: You're making it sound quite simple but I imagine it's not.

RA: it isn't simple, no, no. it's very, you know, he's got to concentrate on what you're doing you have to cut the stems down and... It is it's er it's a good thing doing it like that because

you've got to taper it down sort of thing, and put the ribbons on at the bottom.

MOM: well how long does it take? From beginning to end?

RA: I would a good half and hour and three quarters, doing it nice and tidily and getting the colours, different colours, you know, don't get the same colours all together as well, makes it more prettier you see.

RG: I wonder if Rose could describe, just from beginning to end almost, the time - because I think - imagine there's lots of people watching this film that wont have the 'that's obvious' do you know what I mean?

MOM: Yeah, yeah

RG: Do you want for a..

MOM: Yeah

RA: Right...

MOM: So just just - it's - um - so I'm completely new to it.

RA: Yes.

MOM: You clearly know know it so well, you've been doing it for such a long time but, so to describe it to somebody who's very very new to it: how it's put together.

RA: How it's put together. How it's put together is with the flowers, tall ones, put on the stick first and then the string is wound around those and then you put some smaller ones around the bottom and keep winding the string right around all the way, make sure they're secure - or else they'll just flop about and just fall off - term - right down to the bottom - well not down to the bottom of the stick but a good three quarters of the way down. And then, then you tie it all off, and put the ribbons on, and it's then ready for going for the march - the walk.

MOM: There, there must be a great deal of pride linked with it? Associated with it?

RA: there is, there is yes. Mike makes sure it's very nice for our granddaughter to carry to carry it.

MOM: What does Mike carry? Does Mike carry one?

RA: Mike carries the oak bough, so he has a bigger job than anybody else, with the red, white and blue ribbons on. He carries that.

MOM: Can you tell me about that? What is to oak bough? I don't know anyway about it.

RA: The oak bough they go catch the-cut the oak boughs that morning at 5 'o'clock, usually about 5 'o'clock and they dress it with these red, white and blue ribbons on all the various branches and once they've done that, they bring it home to where we are and term, its there ready for when they take off to go the walk to the New - the go to the New Inn and then it's ready for the walk at half ten.

MOM: Cutting of the oak bough - is that something that only a few select people can do.

RA: Anybody could do that! But it's usually Mike or whoever's helping him will probably do it, but its usually Mike that does the cutting of the oak bough.

MOM: What's your earliest memory of the walk, Rose?

RA:Of the walk when I was a child, i can't remember what age i was, but I remember somebody brought me to a place called Morney Cross and I remember seeing the walk then. And then, when I met Mike, so it'd be roughly about 50 years I've seen it, i've been involved with it really... a couple of years before we got married and er I've been involved with it.

MOM: Have you ever missed a year?

RA: Yes, 2001 I believe was the Foot and Mouth year that it didn't take place.

MOM: Was that difficult for everybody?

RA: i think it was, because everybody, you know, had that day to look forward to and they couldn't go ahead with it. So it was a bit of a disappointing time them, but er, anyway ever since it's been going.

MOM: Have there been any highlights? Any particular walk that stands out for you?

RA: The centenary walk. there was a centenary walk that we had. um i think the Bishop of Hereford came -that's the only on that really stands out, I presume that er, it was good, yeah.

MOM: What about when girls were first allowed to enter?

RA: Mmhmm

MOM: Do you remember that?

RA: I remember it, I cant remember the year. Um, I remember a

young girl who lived opposite where we used to live – she joined in and I think she was one of the first girls – and her name was Nicola Goodwin. So, she was one who started walking first.

MOM: In fact she's– heard Nicola say that actually, um. Do you– do you– I mean, was she the only one? I mean...

RA: There may have been others but I can't remember that. But she stood out because I knew her, so – lived opposite, so...

MOM: I mean, is there lots of drinking on the day?

RA: Oh yes [laughter] they do some drinking, different places – the places they visit they have a drink and refreshments, um it used to be, it used be obviously the three pubs – there used to be the three pubs opened and they used to be open all day. So there used to be then, and they used to have the fun fair as well. But, er, that's all gone now so it's the drink where they go to the place and then where we finish off now, at the Wye Leisure, they have a drink there and have the sports.

MOM: So the three pubs being?

RA: The three were being was: The Green Man, the New Inn and the Forge and Ferry.

MOM: Um, were you ever aware of um, er, you know – photographers coming to the event and taking–

RA: Yes, the Hereford Times, there used to be chap from the Hereford Times used to come. We used to inform them and they used to come and take photographs. I've got quite a few cuttings from when they used to come and take photographs and put in the Hereford Times and, because obvious that's – you know, that doesn't happen no more really. So, er, we have we have a lot of cuttings from way back, yes, so...

MOM: Did you ever meet Derek Evans, whose photographs–

RA: I didn't actually meet him but he was obviously around, you know, so yes.

MOM: So um, it seems to me that it's a big family event too, it it–

RA: It is, there's a lot of families gather up and get together on that day. That's probably the time they all meet up really, uh, during the year –and er – come and enjoy themselves...

MOM: So you're married to Mike, so what's it – what's the anticipation? is there a lot of pressure? Or–

RA: Yes

MOM: Could you describe that to us?

RA: Yeah there is a lot of pressure, hoping the day is going to go well and everything's, you know, sorted out – as long as you get the people that help to do the banner, uh take – carrying the banner and that and – so there is a lot of pressure for that day, yes.

MOM: So do you mean you have to find somebody to carry the banner?

RA: Yes, yes. We do – we have to make sure that they are strong enough to carry it really because, although it looks as though its not very heavy –but it is quite heavy. Um and if you get a wind as well, that can cause problems so, there is a lot of pressure.

MOM: So what do you see as your role being? I mean because Mike has quite a prominent role, doesn't he?

RA: Yes.

MOM: What's- what's your role?

RA: My role is to be by him, on that day.

MOM: Have I missed anything out?

RG: No that sounds great actually.

MOM: Erm, er – finally, Rose, unless there's anything else you'd like to add of course –

RA: Mmhmm

MOM: Um this is, erm, an evaluation question is that: this project is funded by the Heritage Lottery...

RA: yeah

MOM: And er, just like to ask you whether you think recording memories from an event–

RA: Mmhmm

MOM: –like the club walk, er, should be done?

RA: Yes I think so. I think so because it'll eventually die out, you know if there's no people to carry on – it will eventually die out which is a shame really, because it is a good thing – you know – for the village! As I said – bring people together. I wish more would get involved [laughter].

MOM: Lovely, thank you ver y much Rose.

RA: That's OK!