

We
believe
in
love,
not
luck.

KATE GENEVER & TONY WARD

For over a year artist Kate Genever and photographer Tony Ward from Top Color, Hessle Road, Hull, have been connecting with people via his shop or through ongoing work in the area. Resulting in a deep collaboration that has produced these studio portraits, histories and ceramics.

Everyone included is deeply connected to Hessle Road. Their lives are shaped by being there. They are people forged as part of the community's long but changing history. Some come from families who, for generations, have lived and worked there. Others have arrived more recently. All contribute to this area's rich docklands heritage.

We believe in love not luck began as an exploration into the maritime tattoos seen on many of the area's older men. It has developed into a process of collecting the visible and invisible marks people carry; marks that represent identity, struggle, love and history.

THANK YOU...

Tony and Gloria at Top Color for all your efforts, kindness and care.

Amanda for your design eye.

Lisa and Rachel for your ongoing enthusiasm to get involved.

Julie at JE Books.

Tony, Tony C, George Martin, Harry, Gloria, Pearl, Eddy, Bob, Pat, Ruta, Maryan, Dougie, DD, Audrey, Alec and Ted - we couldn't have done it without you...

Due to a live legal situation, at the time of going to print, the portrait of one participant is not shown. To this individual we do, however, want to say thank you for your contribution and we will keep your work safe for the future.

Three Ways East and EofUs for letting me go where things emerge.

Deborah for critical thinking and friendship.

Arts Council England, Hull Maritime and Hull City Council for support.

And finally a very special thanks to Rob Bibby at Woodnewton Pottery. I am grateful to Rob for many things - mostly his patience. I am not a potter. I have very little knowledge of working clay, in fact what I know is because of him. Yet his hard won skills, gathered over a lifetime of throwing, firing and glazing, have been generously shared.

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CHIPPY TEA

FREE
16th Jan
6.30pm after Flower Club



FORWARD

I've been thinking on a word to best describe Tony and Gloria's photography and print shop Top Color - hub, archive, trusted, busy, diverse, welcoming, kind, safe, creative.... not one works. And I've realised why. It's because they're not just an "average photo print shop", they don't just take photos, print and frame them. They instead, somehow, create a space where all that sort of happens, but in a way that enables people to meet, connect, explore, have ideas, access local knowledges and get better outcomes - but for no more money - than they went in for. Which leaves everyone feeling confident that everything's sorted, right and good.

I was introduced to Tony and Gloria by a HU3 local, who on several occasions had encouraged me to visit. I'd been putting it off because I'd assumed it was one of those "average photo print shops". But I'd forgotten I was on Hessle Road and nothing and no one is average there! So when I stepped inside, of course, it was like coming home. A place and people who were generous, interesting, kind, embedded and knowledgeable.

Tony showed me the studios upstairs, the archives featuring work they've made since the 80's including calendars, makeover portraits, promo posters... Then there were the antique glass plates, slides, framed works, props, guitars... Everything had a fascinating or hilarious or moving, or important story. Everything was worthy of attention and in some cases study. Everything was rich and proud. But it was the Hensel Studio Technik Compact system and its resulting images that captivated me. A system I bought from a studio photographer in a pit village after the Miners Strike whose community no longer had incomes to afford family photos. A system that allows slides to be projected and appear as backdrops behind the sitter. An advanced painted cloth or analogue blue screen.

In the shop I met equally fascinating, hilarious, moving, important people. Customers, from all over the world, and regulars who Tony and Gloria might call friends. HU3 folks, who pop in for a chat, a cuppa, life advice, help with cameras, to work out "what was somewhere before so and so?", for a laugh, for gossip or just sometimes to bring treats, old photos of Hull and to reminisce. It's often a cacophony of work, people and biscuits. Perfect.

Of all the people I've met there, it was Dougie and Billy who were the catalysts for this project. Both have experienced violent childhoods, worked in the fishing industry, are widowed and both visit Top Color regularly - or at least wave on their daily pass. Dougie and Billy told me stories, some never "spoken before", that made me cry, laugh out loud and think that the authorised fishing narrative celebrated in the city was at best romanticised and at worst a total fiction. They confirmed what I knew. A truth, their truth, was being overlooked and lost.

It was also with these two, over the counter, alongside Tony and Gloria, that we concocted this project. A project, put simply, that utilised Tony's photography skill, back projection system, props and studio to record and subsequently capture people who wear, and bear the marks life makes. Marks that represent identity, struggle, love and history. But if we knew then, Dougie would strip off, Billy wouldn't have his photo taken, that the title would emerge in conversation as we photographed Pearl, DD wouldn't believe they could look so beautiful, that two dogs, Charlie and Patsy, would feature, Maryan would have to work hard to convince her family she should feature, that Eddy has Pocahontas on his chest, Ted would turn 90 during the process, Ruta would serve Jiu Jitsu realness and Harry would be nervous.... if we'd known the final 18 portraits of beautiful folks and everyone's stories would be in a newspaper, a book, a website, on some hoardings, on platters for eating chips off or displayed in museums and exhibitions, then we may have been overwhelmed at its potential, it's magic. Which is what happens in Top Color, or at least can, if we let it, encourage it - magic. So as it turns out Top Color is a magical place somehow.

Kate Genever

...FORWARD CONTINUED

This is a really exciting part of my life. I love this work, I don't want to do the other normal portraits now. This is how I used to work, it's so creative. It makes me realise I am creative, I'd sort of forgotten that. I love setting the pictures and getting the props together. I feel really excited about making these portraits. It allowed me to use my imagination. My job in the shop is commercial. But I was able to bring my personality into these pictures, which doesn't happen often, in fact hasn't happened for many years. I'm really proud.

I like how we developed pictures with all the people, from selecting the slides and thinking about poses. I liked how collaborative it was. I really liked being able to show people who they are. I see many of these people regularly and so enjoyed the interviews and the collecting of stories - getting insights into their lives. This is not what you do when you're taking portraits. I often think people are normal housewives or electricians, just people going along. But people's lives are in fact fascinating. It was really revealing and often moving. I think it brought an intensity to the studio and to the resulting images. People came out of themselves in there, they revealed themselves.

I've never worked with an artist, only with fellow photographers. But working with Kate is like working with a new-old-friend. We have common pasts, we both went to the same art school and were taught by the same people, 20 years apart. We have a lot in common in how we work with people in places. I've always wanted, since I worked in Jimmy's all those years ago, to create a place where photographers and artists, characters, could pop in and talk photography, come for coffee after work, to hang out, laugh, for it to be an inspiring, energetic place. I've got that now, but only at this point in my life, which makes me sad. But it also makes me want to come to work. I feel inspired again

People have seen what I've been doing and it's drawn attention. They come in and tell me they love the work. I think what we've done is unique - bringing a 40 year old projection system up to date to make great contemporary portraits. I've completely disbanded the white studio space and now am purely using the front projection system - it's much more interesting. I hadn't used it for 15-20 years. I've gone back to my roots - my theatrical roots! I hadn't felt proud to show my work until this project. I show people and say "this is what I do" and they love it too. I feel we are getting recognition, but also it's about the area. Folks have seen the people we've worked with or the stories and they can relate. It has shown this area is deeper than you think. That everyone has a story and is worth listening to.

Tony Ward in conversation with Kate.

When Kate asked me to write something about the work in this book I said yes without hesitation, but then found myself having to think long and hard when it came to writing.

Firstly, she asked if I would write something to 'make sense of the work', but I'm not sure it needs anyone else but the viewer to do that. The quality and care-fullness that has been invested in the process by Kate, Tony, and each one of the portrait producers/subjects, means that it is all there for the taking.

Secondly, typically writing about art works in this way requires a level of objectivity about the work that I'm not sure I have, because I have been an ear witness to the project as it unfolded. I heard about the conversations with men, about tattoos and seafaring lives, in Tony's shop. Conversations that I know affected her very deeply. I heard about the shaping of a project to

bring a visibility to important people and stories that are typically paid scant attention. I heard about reviving Tony's projection system. I heard the reflection that tattoos are only one kind of mark that people carry...and that some marks are by choice, most are not, some are visible, some are not... but that they all acted as a register of experiences that we could never guess at, as we pass each other in the street. I heard about how this was becoming bigger than the original seafaring focus, and that HU3's docklands history fostered a community of the most incredible diversity...full of people with the marks of a story to be told...and worth our attention.

The resulting artworks are a mix of oral history, heritage, biography, and contemporary art response. A co-production process (where everyone's contribution counts), writ large.

Whether it's because the sitters were in control...choosing carefully how they want to be represented in the world...or whether it reflects their whole experience with Tony and Kate...telling their stories and being heard...this collection of images exudes warmth, ease, softness, safety. There's pride too...but with humility. Perhaps this is reinforced by the projection method, which gives the images a kind of serene, stained-glass quality, through which warm light glows. These portraits reframe both the people and the photographic technique, and both are invigorated and emboldened.

The interplay between the photographic portraits and the sitter's stories is often surprising. The ease that is present in the photographs is not always echoed in the words, because these are stories about real, complex and often hard lives and they include some breathtaking experiences.

Pattie slappers, fish dock pram races, salt fish, barrow boys and filleters. The Wash House, the boneyard, The Gaul tragedy, Piper Alpha, death and Brussel Sprouts. Racism, bullying, disability...faith, Father Ted and Father Christmas. Fishermen and rugby, Brazilian Ju-jitsu, DJing, dancing, dogs. Grafting. National service, art school, politics, broken legs. The Aurora Borealis. Mental fortitude, anxiety, courage, imagination, self expression. Joy, comradeship, belonging and solidarity. Finding love and finding ourselves. Holding people's hands as they take their last breath, talking to strangers on benches, dignity. And home. "I'll go anywhere in the world as long as I'm home for me tea".

The fish platters that accompany the photographs and stories, are Kate's personal response to the work and are truly the sign of someone who has been deeply immersed...listening hard and noticing. You only have to look up Kate's other work to see that her drawing skills are formidable, but here she has pushed her practice into new territory. She has made the ceramic portraits to reference the fishing industry...the fish platter of course...but with a drawing style that is reminiscent of both Scrimshaw (unknown artists/sailors carving onto whale bone) and the kind of art that kicked this project off, tattoos. The fact that they are not only displayed, but used at communal events to eat fish and chips off, is beautifully fitting.

Viewing this catalogue of work at times made me angry at injustice and brought grief fuelled tears, but just as much it made my belly ache with laughter and filled me with awe at what human beings can do. Sometimes the achievements are about, despite everything, having good jobs, safe homes, bringing about change, making things better for others. But, sometimes the biggest achievements are invisible, just like the marks...what we have withstood, tides we have held back, what we have had the courage to sacrifice to simply create a space in the world for who we truly are, and for those who come after us. The uniting themes across all the stories are, I believe, love, loss, passion and purpose...these are what motivate people...and I guess the title says it all....We believe in love, not luck.

Deborah Munt. Three Ways East/ Encyclopedia of Us.



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WE BELIEVE
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NOT LUCK

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PEARL
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ROSEMARY

EDDY
TED
DAD
MAXTON
JIMMY

THANKS
TO ALL
INVOLVED
FOR
LETTING
US BE...



DOUGIE

I first went to sea three days after me 15th birthday. My step dad was a bag of shite and me mam's brother filled in me papers and so I went. My stepdad previously had me sent to a Pru School when I was 13 because they said they couldn't control me. But he'd been violent, really violent and this made me angry. I'm 5'2' now so when I was 13 I was really little. When I was there they put me to work in the kitchens cooking for 300 boys. The cooks were ex Merchant Navy so I learnt lots. I was discharged on Nov 16th and got a train back to me grandmas in Hull.

I was out about 3 weeks before I went on the first trawler in 1966. Cape Tarfia - an ex mine sweeper. I was a galley boy which meant I worked to help the cook and tidy the bunks. This first trip was perfect, good weather. The second I was sea sick for 18 days. It was so rough. We would go up towards Norway. Sometime after that I burnt me arm on a water urn and it turned septic, on the second trip an engineer broke his leg, it must have been rolling I guess, and they put him for port, but I didn't get off. When I got back they signed me off for 2 months. Then I went again and it was around the time the Peridot, and the triple trawler tragedy happened and everybody came to the docks to wait for us - even me mam and she never came to the docks. All the family were there waiting. I lost me best mates Eugene and Rob on the Peridot.

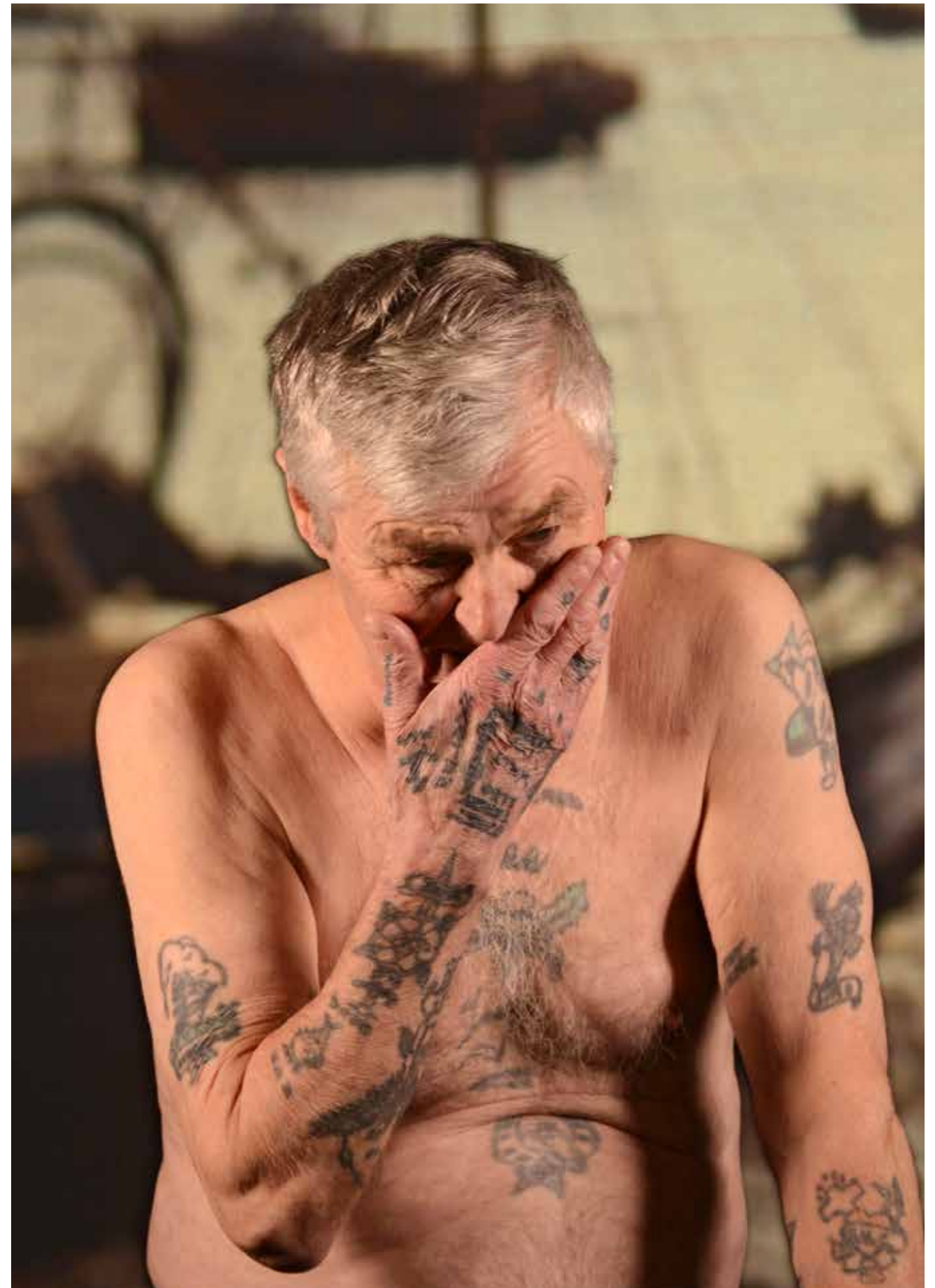
I was cooking on the fishing boats till 1971. It was rough and good. I made good mates and had good times. We were like a band of brothers. I was courting my wife June by then and then we had a little girl and so I wanted to look after me family more. I went on pilot cutters off Spurn point and to catering School at the Nautical School on Boulevard.

I met me wife in 1968 and we got married in Oct 1970. And we were married until she passed nine years ago in 2014. It rained all day, stair rods rain, King Arthur the tattooist was my best man, he was a good mate.

King Arthur was the only tattooist in Hull then, there was no one else. Tattoos have a code, but all walks of life have them. Like my earring. I've worn it since I was 16, if you wore two it meant you were gay like carrying a hankie in your back pocket. All these codes we knew. I got me first tattoo, after me first trip when I was 15. I wanted to see what it was like - it was painful. But not as painful as me stepdad taking a scrubbing brush to me arm to try and rub it off. It says MAM/DAD. But I said "I can do what I want". I was earning the money. I got to like em. I reckon they used to do them with a six inch nail and drag them through your skin, it's not like now with the fine needles. I regret me hands, when I go out of town people would look at ya and I'd say "There all mine!" People didn't like tattoos then and at one interview for a job they said - we don't have many crew with tattoos, but I told them they had accepted me on my experience they would have to accept me in person. It was a different mentality then, there was a bias, like I was anti-social.

I have all me mates on me and all the girlfriends before me wife. The horseshoe is for luck. I had to have the knuckles changed because when I got tangled up with the police they said I better off get them changed. I've got a small King cod, a Scotland forever, because me mate Stuart was from Aberdeen and he had Kingston on Hull on his chest. Funny though we also wanted to have our wives names on but Billy Rudd / King Arthur made a mistake and so I've got Joan and he's got June - we've got each other's wives on our chests! I've got a Happy Hooker on me back, she's walking the dog! A tattooist in Den Helden Holland did that for free because I let him take a photo of me so he could copy them for other sailors. June went berserk when I came home and showed her. I've got spiders on me legs, I don't like spiders...

My daughter rang me and said "DAD! you're bloody massive on a building. you look great!"



PAT

I've lived all over this area, currently I'm on Division Road - the street that leads to the Boneyard! I'm one of 6 kids, although there's another 3 from my Mums first marriage. Mum left us when we were little and me Dad brought us up. They live all over Hull, but lots are in this area, one sister is two doors up. Having a strong community of people to help and be friendly and good neighbours is really important.

I'm part of the people who do the Christmas lights. We've been doing them since lockdown. My sister Chrissy and Sarah opposite started it all. It's just grown and grown. We even have a memorial tree where people come and put baubles on for those they've lost. We started it to raise morale, now people bring their kids to see the lights!

I was a carer in Somerville Care Home on Boulevard for 16 years. I guess lots of loss and grief piled up and it overwhelmed me. I couldn't cope. Thankfully all my family and neighbours are helping me to find Pat again - the fun Pat that liked to laugh. The Pat who falls off her stool in the pub!

I like helping people. I will just help or if people look like they need help I will offer it. But slowly all the people I've cared for passed away. Then one lady in particular went too and I just couldn't cope. I couldn't clear out the bedrooms and people's things anymore. I was just so sad. I got down and depressed. Everything got on top of me. I couldn't bear the thought of caring for anyone again. My manager has been brilliant and offered lots of help, but I had to leave. I'm good at me job, looking after, listening, understanding Dementia, washing and feeding, holding people's hands as they take their last breaths and getting them ready for the undertaker.

I've got arthritis in my feet and being on them 12 hours a day was bad. So there was pain on top of pain. I got lonely, I live on my own and got really fed up, there was no one to vent to. All of it made me think I'm going to be one of those people in a care home - all alone one day. I just got lower and lower. My work had a huge emotional toll on me. But more recently I wake up and think I'm going to get up and get a shower and get on. I'm putting myself back together. I don't want to go back, I'm lighter. I'm doing odd things for the care home, helping people go for appointments and do their shopping. I can't cope doing nothing. I'm a grafter. I can't stand doing nothing. It also means I'm earning a bit too.

I love me dog Lilo. She gives me so much love, she understands more than most humans. She sleeps on me and I don't mind that she snores - I tell her I got rid of a boyfriend because he snored! But not her, she can stay. She's someone who listens. She's like the man I met on a bench in town once. He noticed how I looked, he was a stranger but he sat and listened and was interested. I said I was really grateful to talk, and he said he was happy to listen - bear the burden. I was there for two hours! I think talking to a stranger is often easier. I think if we could all just listen and let people talk - let them share their emotions that would be the best way.

I have been so low but now I see I can keep going and do something good. My photo and story being in the pub has meant lots. lots of people have commented saying they have really enjoyed it. It's helped them understand me and for them to see how hard life is for all of us.





HU3
COME TO TEA
15 JULY - 28 JULY

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PEARL

Lots of people know me as Kathleen. But when someone visited me Mam when i was born they said "Oooh little Pearl and big Pearl" she said "That's not going to happen!" So from then on they called me my middle name. I was born on Liverpool Street - the smelly end! Sometimes the town smelled real bad depending on the way of the winds. If it was blowing in from the sea - ooof! Now you hardly ever smell fish. But you've got to remember fresh fish doesn't smell, it's the bad that does. It was the fish meal factory that stunk.

Me dad was a fisherman and I remember the 'knocking up man' coming at 4am to get him because a tide was right. The 'knocker up man' had a stick with a wire on the end and rattled it on the bedroom windows, it sounded like a spider with clogs on. Clogs were the sound of Hull, everyone then wore clogs. They called him Matt, me dad, although he was George Mattinson. He used to go away for weeks and months on end and then come back with loads of goodies, or sometimes he didn't get wages if they landed in debt. It depended on what they caught and also how many "settlings" they got. Settlings was a % of what the catch made. You weren't guaranteed a good wage. They often had no time to recover before they went again.

He always tried to give 2 bob into the 'ovel'. You could draw on it when you needed it, like a fund I guess. But he'd help others out if they had no money. Everyone tried to help everyone. You shared the good times and spread the wealth. I knew someone who used to be a prostitute to make money, as her husband never gave her an 'allotment', a wage. We'd say "there by the grace of God, we wouldn't want to be walking in her shoes". If you sold your body to feed the kids there was no judgement. No one looked down on those who did.

Before I met my second husband I worked at Brekkes, on the dock, I packed fish. It was a hard job, it was smelly but the people were nice. Then I went to Findus. The fish was frozen and we had to cut it into pieces for dog food. We had to cut it small else people would eat it! Then I went to BirdsEye. It employed 1000's, when they closed in 2007 I got a medal.

My husband Steve died suddenly aged 31. He was a master plasterer, he did work in Beverly Minister. I had 4 kids. The baby, a 10 year old, one at 12 and one at 14. I remember when they came to tell me I was cutting sprouts. It was a terrible shock, I took to me bed. People rallied round. In my street I had family next door, and my mother in-law across the road. It was the family you clung to, like a drowning man.

During this time there was a knock on the door and a good looking fella trying to sell double glazing. I said me husband had just died and I wasn't interested. He said "God was there for me, he was waiting to help". I wasn't a church person so I shut the door. I rang me sister two doors down and asked if he'd visited her. No. I looked out on the street and there was no one. It was a matter of minutes since he'd passed. But no one. I believe he was my angel. He helped me, him and my 14 year old daughter, who told me I had to get up. After that I started going to St Johns. They're like an extended family. Back then everyone believed, but not everyone went.

My kids all have good jobs. One's a teacher, a carpenter, one's a nurse and the youngest works for the army in Germany. I'm proud. I didn't want my girls to have a life like I'd had, working in a fish factory as a 'pattie slapper'. Steve, my husband was a clever man, he didn't want the girls in a factory either. He wanted better too. We never wanted them to be fishermen, it was too hard and dangerous.

To have ourselves recorded like this helps us see how we are special.



ALEC

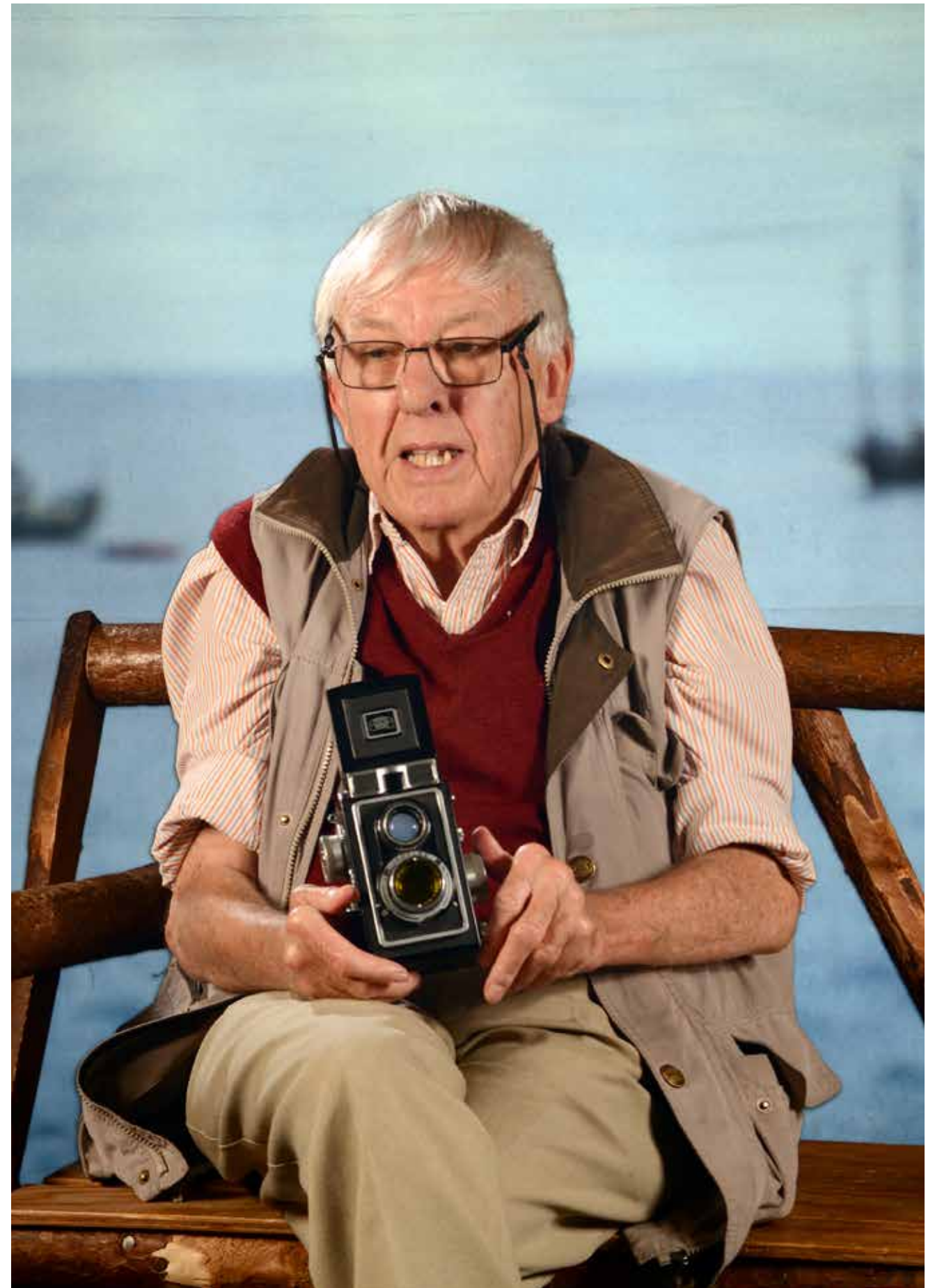
There's a saying "The Middleclass have books and gardens, working class only got the freedom of the street." That's been true for me. My dad went all over on the boats and so I grew up hearing stories of exotic places. My older sister also went and travelled. Eventually I did too because I wanted more beyond Hull. I went across Europe and further afield, taking my camera everywhere with me.

When I was younger, school told my Mum that they would save my embarrassment by not letting me sit the 11-plus, instead they sent me home on the test day. If I did well at things I was accused of being a cheat. I was born with these hands and I was always small. I was often bullied and told I was a cripple, but I had my minders, Tony, Barry and Roger, helped me do things those bully's thought I couldn't do. Hessle Roaders like me are seen as Underdogs. I had an affinity with that. We were both seen as the same. Me because of being a cripple and for them there was this social snobbery that created a false image of drunken brawling fishermen and screaming fish wives.

I have taken photos on Hessle road for years, particularly in the 70's and 80's. My camera was a passport in their lives, I built up trust. I was small and so people saw me as harmless. My work tried to show what's really going on. I became interested in so many things like how people didn't have much faith, but I think the saying "Her children were her God." is right, it was all about family on Hessle Road. Also the superstitions of the area were fascinating. All cultures from the Romans and Greeks have superstitions. I've come to understand anyone who takes risks, risks their lives, has rituals or develops superstitions. Hessle Road was all about risk.

I think people look at the past with rose tinted nostalgia. We see the things in the work not as it was, but as we want to see it. However I hope I gave the area, through my photos, a heroic status. I wanted to reveal these working class ordinary people as heroes.

I admire your enthusiasm and the hard work you put into this work. It's great to see us all together.



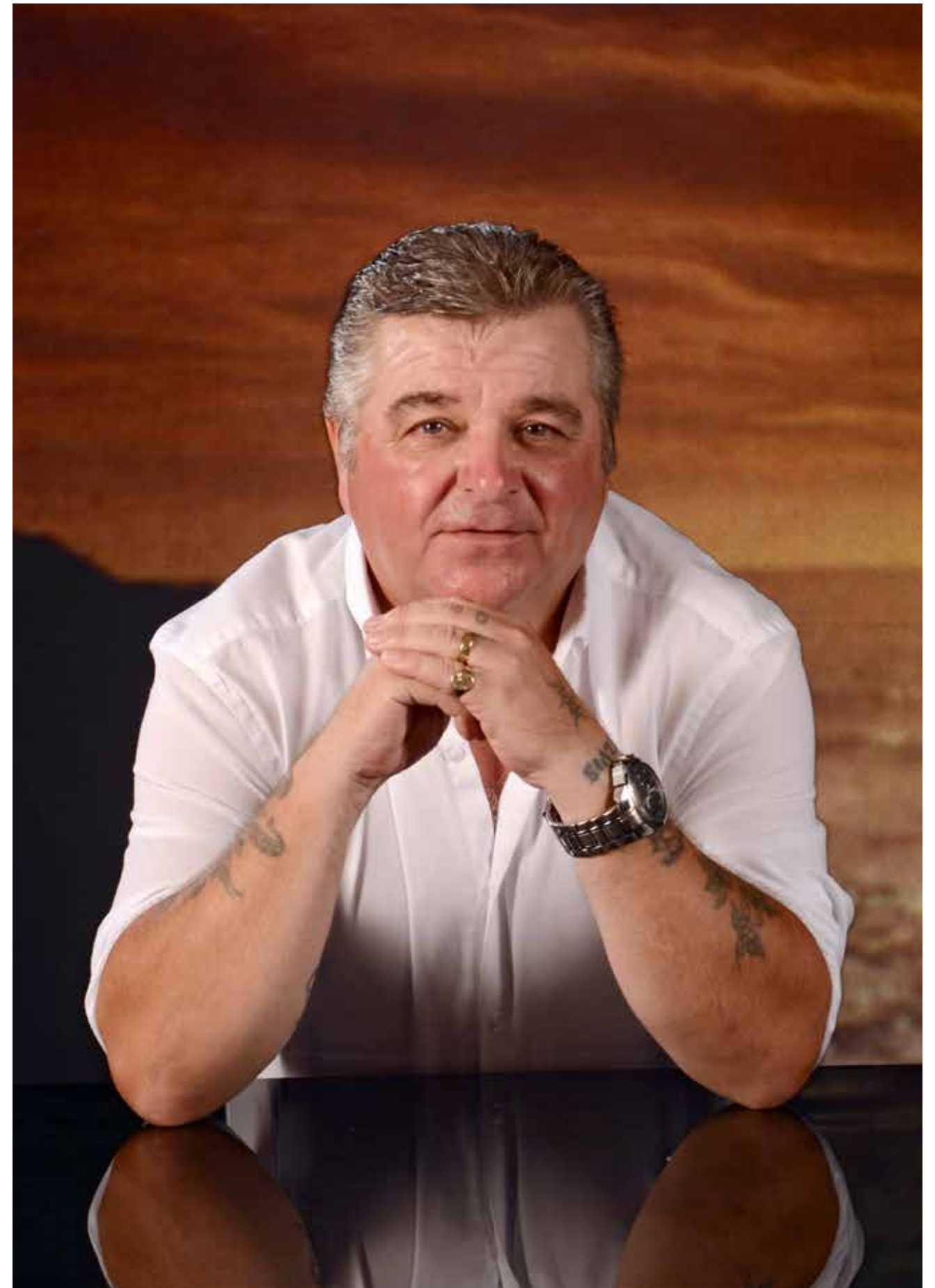
BOB

I was born at 148A Hesse Road, above Nobby's betting shop. The tree we all used to lark out in is still there but not the house. When they demolished it, they moved us to Humber Buildings and then to Orchard View. Me Mam's still there. In that first flat we had one cold running tap. We went to the slipper baths on Madeley Street once a week and I've seen some photos of when I was little and I'm not sure I went that often! Me Mam did her washing at the Wash House just over there. Humber Buildings was amazing, we had a bath.

At school I was into Rock and Rockabilly. My knuckle tattoos were from then, I did them myself. I had more of them up me arms but got them covered over by King Arthur, and Johnny Betts covered a few and also I got a few from a lad called Gary. This one's for me wife Elaine, we've been married since 1981. The Homeward Bound one, a lot of fishermen had that. I landed, had a good drink and thought "Yes I'll get that one". I've got Elvis here and Eddie too. I did Eddie myself as a kid, it was supposed to be Eddie Cochran, but it hurt, so I left it as Eddie. I've spent years looking for a mate called Eddie!

I've been a fisherman, but I only got the last 3 or 4 years of that. Then I trained to be an electrician and then I went back DJ-ing for the clubs and bars. I'm more or less semi-retired now and only do Ryders every Wednesday and Sunday. Wednesdays I go on after Ric Owen has finished his spot. As resident DJ/Karaoke I try to keep the night going as long as possible, and to get them dancing. I love the people in Ryders and know what people like. As a DJ you are always trying to read the room and put on the appropriate music. People say I'm good at what I do. I really enjoy being with people.

When the ship I was on in my fishing years got sold, it went to New Zealand and I was offered, along with all the crew, to go for work. I didn't go, alot did, but many came back because they missed Hull. I didn't go because I knew I'd be too homesick. I'm a home bird. I say "I'll go anywhere in the world as long as I'm home for me tea".





FRAGILE POTTERY PLEASE DO NOT TOUCH



HARRY

I'm Hull born and bred. Me mam, Aina, came from Nigeria in the 1950's. She met me Dad in the UK. He was a truck driver also called Harry. Me son's called Harry too! He always says I should write a book as I've got so many stories. I know about deaths, rescues, accidents, the lot... Like when we were kids we used to fish in Princess Quay for the oak blocks they'd pulled up from the old streets. We used to get a bamboo pole, say 6ft long and attach a cage from a pram to it. We'd then sell them round here for 75p a bag for people to put on their fires! Or that we used to build bonfires on Acko's yard, a place that had been bombed, or how I caught a man from jumping off the bridge. When he sees me now he always shouts - You saved my life!

Our family was only one of five in this area in the 60's and 70's. I think there were only seven black families in all of Hull. I was really bullied by a certain family at school. Racism came from everywhere, kids, their parents, the teachers, shops... If you went home crying my brothers would bray me too. They toughened me up. It was hard, I had to fight. In the 70's there was no other way. But you know what, I wouldn't change it. Now I have a beautiful life on this area and I wouldn't live anywhere else. For what I have, I live in comfort.

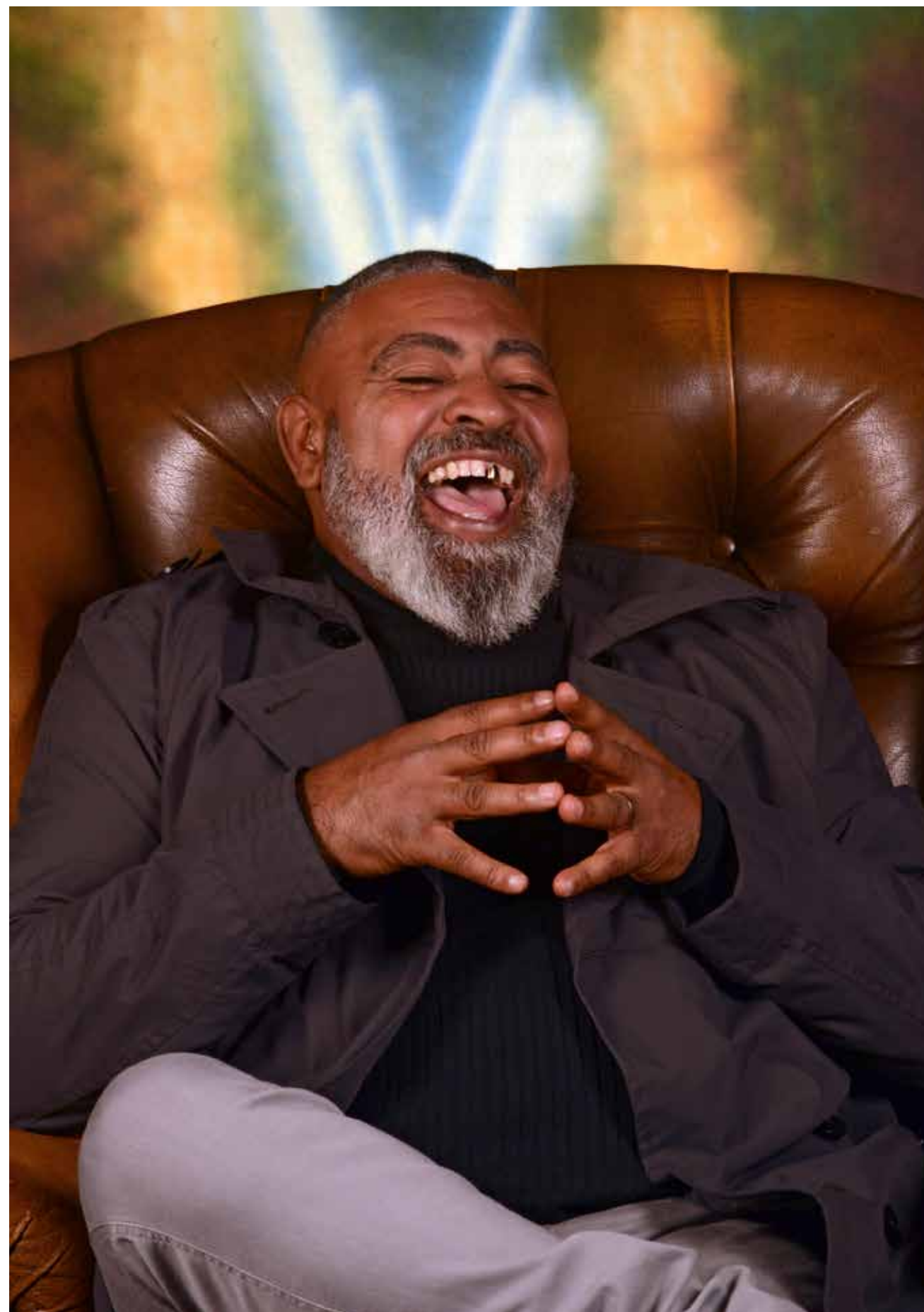
I was one of the smallest of 11 of us that were my brothers and sisters. I used to love picking the eggs from our chickens first before school and looking after the geese and animals in our huge back garden. We lived on Coltman Street in one of them big houses. The garden was huge. We milked the goats and Dad grew lots of vegetables to feed our huge family. I guess he was self-sufficient. Our house was like the Walton's, always lots of friends around. Me and brother used to get in from school and was told to get our uniforms off and go and to get two chickens - we had to kill and pluck em, then gut them and get them pan ready, all in 20 minutes. We used to eat African food four days a week and English food the other days. Me mam and dad would take it in turns to cook English or African food. I learnt to make both. I still love to cook all the African food. I got the best of both worlds.

We used to shop at the only shop in Hull that sold African food - the Indian Continental Store, it was on Princess Ave. Now there's hundreds of shops and all the supermarkets sell things too. We used to get oxtail, tripe and a bag of cows legs for cheap and make this huge broth. Now all that is so expensive. I make jerk chicken and okra soup, which is amazing. But also Sunday lunch. I'm like Jesus - call me and I feed people. It's a joy.

I'm married to Abigail, we've been together 35 years. Our son Harry works at Siemens and is so tall. God knows where he got that from! I love being a father. I'm really proud of our marriage. Like my mam and dad we are black and white. Their marriage was pretty radical for then. My dad got called "N***** Lover". I say everything good in the past was black and white - just like me mam and dad and just like us too.

People think I'm a ruthless character, they stereotype because I'm a black man. Yes I've got a gold tooth, yes I'm a charmer, loud, but so are others. Everyone presumes. I've been called everything. People have said I sold drugs, done things I've haven't, it's all bullshit. In many ways I'm a lone leopard. But I also like a laugh and I am always trying to make friends laugh. If I can do that my day has been good. But of course I've learnt to stand up for myself - no one dominates me. Lots of people are born and bred ignorant. They say daft things like "I'm not racist I've got a black friend". So I treat bad bad and I treat good good.

I love my photo. you totally got me. I love that it's on those hoardings. my friends were all ringing me last night saying they'd seen me. I'm so proud. it's hilarious I'm so massive on the street!



GLORIA

I was born in Germany and lived in Dusseldorf till I was 5 yrs old. We moved to Hull, although my father was born in Castleford. Hull was a busy town with lots of job opportunities mainly connected to the fishing industry and the busy ports. He got a job with Blundells on Charles Street, they dealt with credit cheques, and my dad was a debt collector. I went with him during school holidays. In those days I sat in the car with all the money he'd collected, you couldn't do that now! He went all over, Hull, Hedon, Paul, the East Hull Estates. At Christmas he carried toys in the car to sell. On a night I'd sit with him whilst he did his paperwork and I'd count the money.

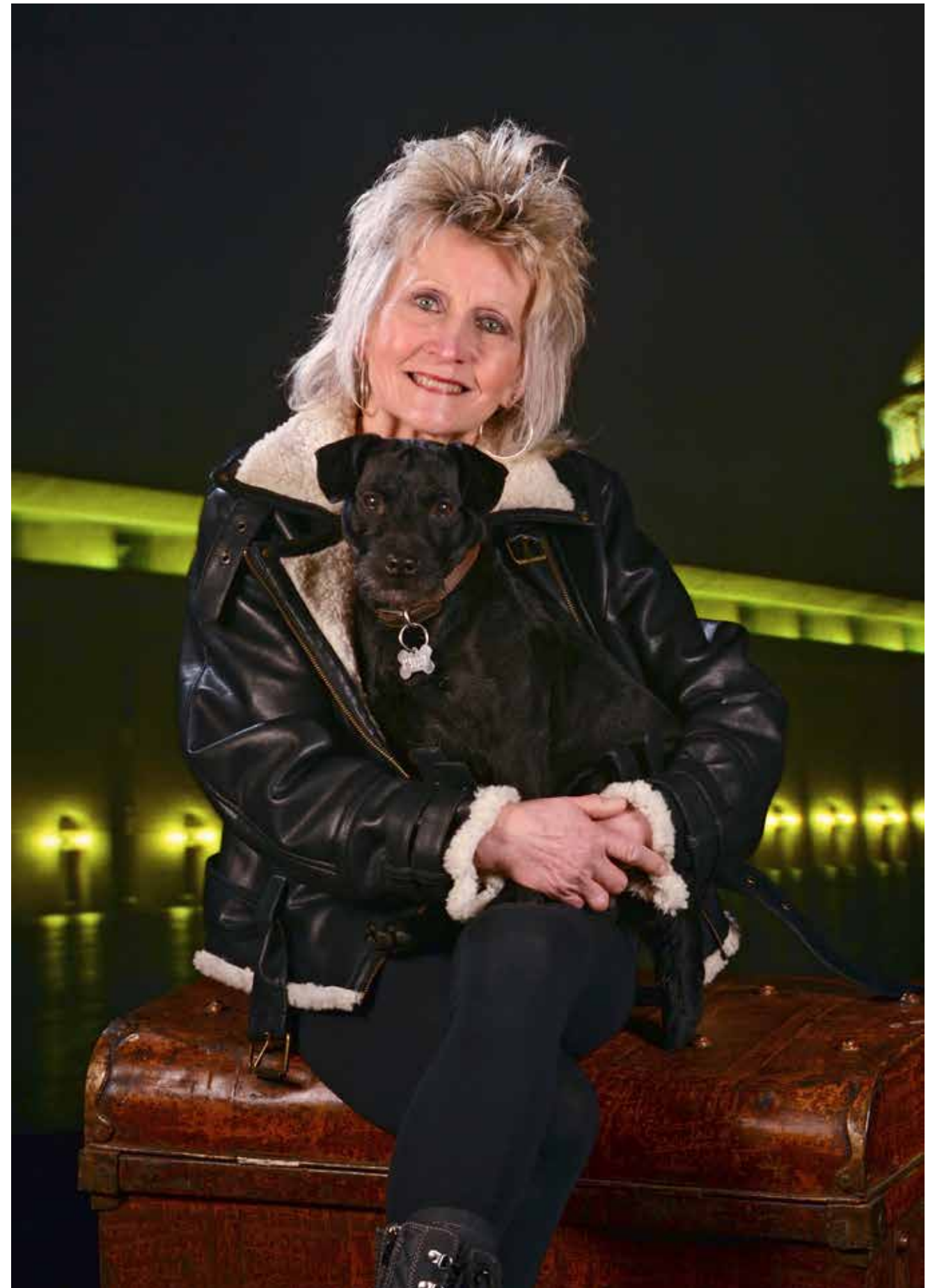
My mother was pregnant when she came over to England . We stayed with my dad's sister in Albert Avenue while my parents looked for a house. My mother wanted to live in Anlaby and they found one in Lloyd Street. It was more than they could afford really but my mother was adamant that's what she wanted as it was a good area. My brother Walter was born shortly after they moved in. She missed Germany so it was great when her sister came over and moved in down the same street. But unfortunately they argued most of the time.

My brother, Walter, was diagnosed with Leukaemia when he was 2 and died at the age of 4. I was 9 and the tragedy changed all our lives. My mother wore black for a year and never went anywhere except to visit his grave everyday for years. I went with her most of the time and it broke my heart to see her pain and know that my brother was lying there beneath the flowers. I've never taken my life for granted and tried to live every moment as Walter never had that chance.

My dad got paid on Thursdays and that was our main shopping day – on Hessle Rd. I remember the shops were so busy you often ended up walking on the road as the pavements were full. Looking down the side streets at all the terraced houses with washing lines from one side to the other and the children playing in the street. No-one shut their doors then. Boyes was a favourite of my mums, she'd trained as a seamstress in Germany and so most of my clothes were adaptations of what was in the sales. Everything smelled of fish and many of the women customers came in wearing headscarves with a roller sticking out the front – preparing for a night out!

I went back to live in Germany for most of the seventies. It is such a beautiful place and I found it difficult to return to the UK. Hull never really had many good memories for me. However a few years after returning I met 'Topcolor Tony' and life changed forever! We had two beautiful daughters and are now very proud grandparents to five brilliant grandchildren. My family means everything to me. Topcolor re-invented itself about 4 years ago and now it's just the two of us in the shop. We get lovely customers coming in, sharing family stories with their pictures or places they visited or where they lived. It's such an honour to be included in their lives, they tell you so much. It also makes you realise particularly as you get older just how fragile life is and you really should live every minute.

I feel so lucky. thank you. I love seeing ourselves even under the chips!



EDDY

Every Saturday my brother and I went to see my Granddads on Anlaby Road to watch the Spaghetti Westerns. We were each given 10p each for the shop and we got five packets of Polos each and he used to shout "Don't be long, make sure you're back the Bang Bangs are on!" While we watched we had to be really quiet. Clint Eastwood in Rawhide, was my favourite and of course John Wayne and Alan Ladd.

Over the years I've built a large collection of Western Memorabilia. I've got teapots, Zippo lighters, jackets, hats, mugs, one of those has a Colt 45 as the handle and another a Winchester rifle. I've got a child's saddle, plates, statues, you name it I've got it. The family always knows what to buy me for presents so they get me things too. It's slowly built up. It started really as I got older and I could afford things, but what kick started it was I used to do some work for a picture shop and they didn't like to pay in money so I got pictures from films, cinema things.

Me wife calls it my museum. It's in its own room. Lots of it isn't worth a lot but it's really valuable to me. Me Mam got me a full set of John Wayne film plates with gold rims, she's no longer with us so they mean a lot. My sons and grandsons are not interested in it. I've got a granddaughter, Ivy, and we do loads of things together, we have proper conversations, she's only six. It's like the same thing with my granddad I guess. Maybe she'll like it one day.

I've been to America to see where everything was filmed. The wife and I did a tour, I thought I was going blind, so she asked what I wanted to do? We did a tour, the Parks and Canyons and went to Sedona. We looked at all the memorabilia and everyone saw my tattoos. So I was stripped to the waist and they took photos for the wall. It was funny the Mayor came and thanked us for visiting - the surprise visitor! Anyway, after 17 days of doing all that I came back and my eyes were fine. It was because I was running a business with 22 blokes and the stress was enormous. So I changed my business. Now it's just me and Jason and Jill who do the office work.

After that we also went to Mexico and I rode a horse - I felt sorry for the horse! I wore a jacket and hat and looked the part. I would love to be a Cowboy, everyone says I was born in the wrong time. My tattoos are of John Wayne, Geronimo, I've got Native American women on my chest and back. I had them all done in Filey at Black Cat. I have a caravan there and we go and my wife does her thing and I go and get my tattoos. I had my first one when I was 40. I used to go to a pub on the Beverley Road, where they did Quick Draw events. There was a machine that worked out who did it fastest. We would get dressed up. It was fun to see it done. It's an amazing skill, you have to wax the holster and practice lots.





TONY WARD

I was born in London in 1952 but we came to Hull in 1957 mainly because even then the house price was prohibitive for my parents with me and my twin brothers born in 1955... and dad was a lorry driver. I had a pretty normal childhood, being very average in most things, but quite clever at school until I discovered the opposite sex! I left school with two GCE's in Technical Drawing and Art. My first job was with Consolidated Fruit and Veg on Humber Street with a first boss called of all things Alf Peach! It was there "when man landed on the moon in 1969" and after staying up all night with my Mum watching it I thought early mornings were not for me. Anyway, I went to the local careers office looking for a change of job. They asked me what I was good at to which I replied the only thing I was good at was drawing. On the books was a job for a junior with a photographer called Jim Marshal and from day one I was hooked and to this day, 55 years later, I still love it. Aswell as photography Jim played the drums at The Westfield Country Club in Cottingham. All the big jazz stars played there and came to the studios Count Bassie, The Peddlers, Marion Montgomery, Duke Ellington and many more. He would photo them during the day and play at night. One frequent visitor for photo shoots was Michael Chapman the folk singer and one day he brought Mick Ronson (Ronno) with him. I remember having a light hearted conversation with Ronno (who I knew from growing up on Greatfield Estate) during the shoots as to what was better: a camera or guitar to impress the opposite sex? The next thing I knew Ronno was with David Bowie in The Spiders from Mars which completely blew my argument for the camera out of the water!

After Jim's I embarked on my Butlins adventures, as photographer, from 1971 to 1976 in Skegness and Filey. What an eye opener that was. It was great to learn from working alongside professional photographers. We used to work with the many cabaret stars of the era - Warren Mitchell, Ted Rogers and Bob Monkhouse to name a few. Bob Monkhouse was brilliant. He'd pose for ages with the fans before his show but asked us not to photograph him after the show as he admitted his appearance "faded". We held our side of the bargain and he his - what a fantastic and professional man he was. We also photographed the kids football training on Tuesday afternoons. Believe it not the likes of Billy Bremner, Allan Clarke, Eddie Gray, Peter Lorimer and Norman - bites yer legs- Hunter all came to Filey for the kids' football! I then did my Art Foundation at Lincoln College of Art and then Exhibition Design at Hull College of Art. Great days from what I can remember?

I formed my company Topcolor in 1981 from the back of a Chemist shop on Springbank West having at one time three shops with 30 staff (what a headache). We grew to having a turnover of over £500,000 in 1994, hard work to say the least. We used to produce sticky backed photographs for all over the world. The ladies of the night from London were frequent visitors to the studios, we used to photograph them in seductive poses and add the telephone number to the picture and print off hundreds of stick on pictures destined for the telephone boxes in London.

In the mid 80s, I met my wife Gloria at a dog training club. She remembers what a nice man I was because I bought a length of carpet with me so my dog didn't have to lay on the concrete floor and get his balls cold! Not only did we have two beautiful daughters Nikki and Jess I got a fantastic model in the deal. She's always been a great inspiration and partner helping me with new cameras, lighting and projects etc. I can honestly say that Gloria has been the biggest influence and help with my life and in photography.

A "roller coaster" of emotions and realising that with everyone "what you see isn't what you get."



MARYAN

I was born in Somalia, but grew up in a refugee camp in Kenya. It was terrible. I lived with my mother and family in the camp. I left with my children in 2013, 11 years ago, through the British Government Get Away program. My children were 1 and 2 years old. I came only with them. There were five other families that came at the same time as me. We came to Hull as refugees. We were flown from Kenya to Brussels and then to the UK. I left all my family behind. At the beginning it was very very hard. I saved myself and my children.

For one year The Refugee Council helped us with everything, then I had to do everything. All I had done is be a girl, then a mum, then a housewife, then on my own. I had two small children and I didn't know anyone. I was 20. After a while I got a job in a factory, in Greencore on the cake line. By then I had a Somalian friend who would watch the children while I worked. I also started to volunteer. I would help at the community centre and translate documents for other refugees. I speak Arabic, Somali, Swahili and English. Back then the forms were in English but now they are in different languages to help people.

Then the kids started school and I met other parents, but I am a quiet person. The Refugee Council offers practical help. I had no psychological help about anything I had been through. It was hard. I used to think about going to another environment and being patient. I had to be self-motivated and I listened to a lot of people on social media offering ways to help people heal. I thought let me try this. I don't think about courage. But I do often think how did I manage?

From 2015 to 2018 that four years was really difficult. I was thinking why did I come into this world. But I had to get up every day for the kids, I had to be powerful, not sad or depressed. They rely on me. If I was a loser they would have no one. They needed to see me as powerful. I had to be a role model. If your kids see you as nothing or as powerful, whichever they follow your step. What you are they will be. It is an important position being a parent. I never give up and believe in myself. I rely on myself.

Being a Muslim, or having a faith helps. You go back to God. Thinking about God will help a lot. At the hardest times I was reading my Quran. It was saying good and bad happens. But I can cope. My faith is stronger now.

My advice to other people given all I know and have learnt. Be helpful, you might change someone's life. A little thing today might change things for the good. Also don't judge people. People judged me, so I never judge. You don't know what people are going through.

I'm happy now, I have lots of friends and I'm a social person now. My children are happy. I'm happy in the community in my local area.

*My story is important.
my kids need to see what we
went through. the locals need to
see - that's how we build tolerance.*



GEORGE

My family are connected to the docks. My grandma was a general trader with a fruit business and my grandad sold horses to all the businesses that worked there. They were used for moving things on the dock and delivering goods across the city. If you didn't have a horse you'd have a barrow and pull it by hand.

Me, I did 30 years working offshore for BP Gas on the rigs. My friend Budgie was doing it and I could see the money he was earning. I wanted to earn money to buy a house. Me dad and that were Rag and Bone-ing but it wasn't a stable income. I was 24 when I first went off. I wanted to achieve more I guess. At first you think you are missing out - your mates are all out and doing things. But life happens when you get off. The job bought me freedom.

I would get a train to the heliport - depending on which rig I was going on. So it could be Aberdeen or Great Yarmouth. They would fly you out in a helicopter. I took those amazing journeys for granted in the end. We had to do survival courses about how to escape if it crashed, also first aid and how to deal with fires. The Piper Alpha disaster happened while I was working. I've only had 2 panic attacks in my life and one was about getting on one of the helicopters. In the cabin was this massive guy which made me think I wouldn't be able to get out. Sometimes you don't realise the stress you're under. I guess it did give me anxiety.

The first time I went offshore it was to Easingfield. It was a 25-minute flight to West Sole in the North Sea. I worked on Rough Fields in Viking Gas Fields too. A rig is about ¼ mile wide and as high as Nelson Column above the water. It was weird at first, you spend 2 weeks with people you don't know and then by the end you're all close, but when you go back to shore you don't see them until you go back to the rig. I liked the comradery; it felt like a family. You found out about people's passions and hobbies.

This work also got me away from my family - me mam and dad. None of them had any history or had done anything like this. I knew I had to get out of Hull. There was no work and I wanted to earn and do things. I think if I was honest I was going to only do it short term, I could have never imagined it would have taken the best part of my working life. I wanted to make me mam proud that I'd done something. My sister went to university and got a good job. People romanticise it when they don't live here. They have a rosy view of the fishing industry and 3-day millionaire stuff. But there was so much poverty and hard lives.

To work on a rig you have to have the right mental attitude. It's not for everyone. You have to get on with the job. You can't walk off at any point, you have to be tolerant and accept life goes on. It was physically and mentally demanding. I worked in 12-hour shifts for 2 weeks. Now I couldn't do what I did then. I'm a dreamer, I'd go into my imagination and often I'd be thinking about photos or what I wanted to organise around them. I saw amazing stuff on the rig - Aurora Borealis, sunsets, dawns, unbelievable beautiful things. I liked the solitude sometimes, it was good for me head to think. It helped me focus on other stuff. You get ideas. It does affect your relationships and your life. But I think it's harder for women who stay at home and have to deal with kids and everyday things. My wife looked after my daughter and did all the extra stuff.

It was good money, but the scaffolders and mechanics really earnt the cash, and guys get into that and get trapped - they call it trappings don't they?! But everything has a price. I was brought up to save up for things, so I didn't have that problem. With my wife's good job too we put our daughter through Hymers - I used to look at the money going out every month and think wow! But she was bright. At the time I kept saying it was against my principles but she's got a great job in London now - I'm proud. Education failed me, I was interested and observant, but they didn't get me. I wanted better for me self.



It's funny, this area has its own story about working class communities and the struggle they've gone through, or are going through. I love the emotion of the people and the image combined - who they are, what they've done. Tattoos, body modification, clothes tell a story. They tell of a person's identity and place and background. They tell how they feel or who they want to be. People are carrying their class, history, lives, on them and in them.



MARTIN

I'd always had the feeling that something wasn't quite right with the world, but growing up on East Hull in the 70s and 80s, I don't think I really had the ways and means to put my finger on it. I've got memories of being drawn to nature, the unexplained and also I had an interest in current affairs. My mates used to take the piss out of me as I'd want sometimes to go home and watch the 9 o'clock news or something like that. I remember once finding an old yellow oil skin type jacket - not sure where I found it but probably Alex Dock where we used to go fishing and swimming - and I scrawled a big CND Peace sign on the back and wore it to school one day.

Music had always been a big part of our lives growing-up. I've got great memories of us dancing to the top-forty on a Sunday after we'd got home from the rugby and had tea. Then in my mid-teens me and my mates started dropping acid and listening to Pink Floyd and it started to open up this other world. The dad next door introduced me to The Clash, then came the reggae and suddenly there were words and ways to describe what was wrong with the world.

In my early 20s I ended up going to a rehab in another city to get off the skag, then from that found myself at Uni and of course that just opens up all sorts of new ideas, theories, art, music and all that stuff.

It was around the age of 30 that the spiritual side of life started to open up. I came to realise through a few awakening experiences that maybe there was something, and I'm not sure what that thing is, but now aged 50 I can't help but have the feeling - and I say this fully aware of the complexities and contradictions of life, of what it is to be human, to struggle to survive, to see all this oppression and unfairness - that something seems to want us to connect, to have good lives, live well and have an experience of the oneness of it all. Serendipity might be a good way to describe it.

I think that given the right circumstances we can all thrive through cooperation, solidarity and mutual aid. We can live those good lives on planet earth. That doesn't mean to say it'll be some utopian bliss, but it'd at least be a place we can look after one another and this amazing planet we live on. And - as bad a taste as this might leave in our gobs - it seems that goes for the 1% too: the very wealthy, land owning, aristocratic, corporate, political class who're leading us further into the shit. On the one hand, it's class war politics of course, but aren't most of them just born into this shit system too? - Discuss?

For me these days the radical politics and the inner, spiritual life meet. How can we have one without the other? How can we transform our communities without trying to transform ourselves? And that's the difficult part aye? To transform, as the mystics say, we must travel through the dark night of the soul. See ourselves for what we are: the good, the bad and the certainly f-ing ugly. But then when we do this, each time something seems to happen. I think it's a bit like a snake that sheds its old skin and heads off afresh into some new lands. And then we seem to be better at loving ourselves, others and our world.

It's easy to complicate it all - as I do at times - but really it's pretty simple stuff. As them real feral ragamuffins Jesus and Bob Marley say: just try and be nice to each other...

Me mam wants copies of everything!



RUTA

I am 36 years old and I am Lithuanian. I was born and grew up in Vilnius. The capital of Lithuania. I lost my parents when I was a teenager.... and it was a very heart breaking experience.

I finished my studies and after a while I started traveling and looking for myself. I was interested in other countries and other languages, that's why I speak 5 languages easily.

While looking for my life path, I met the person of my life who understood me without words and supports me always. Yes, I came to Hull 12 years ago. I've had two wonderful miracles with him. A girl and a boy they changed my life 360 degrees and only for the better

I love my life and all the trials of life. I have a strong will and I am stubborn and I am also loving and humble. I'm learning to listen and accept the opinions of others. I don't give in to the gossip and intrigues around me. I am hardworking and seeking new changes. I have been working the night shift for 3 nights in a row. The day to study and I have started volunteering. Things are changing. When you change a door opens, you close one and two open.

Three years ago I started to do Brazilian Ju-jitsu in MD Martial Arts Hull. This teaches mental and physical resilience, which translates into everyday life. So in BJJ, endorphins are much MORE than just a "feel good" molecule - they enable me to grow. I find stress everywhere in brain, in body and spirit. So Jujitsu lets me leave bad energy behind and I come home with only good.

My ambitions are to improve myself spiritually and physically. I'm not afraid of risks and I don't shy away from responsibility. I'm full of real ideas. I step forward always with passion and an unbreakable will.

I love all the work. I'm proud of it.



TED

I've just turned 90! I was born on Gillet Street, me Dad was a trawler man and Mam a housewife. And given I'm one of 10 - I've got 3 sisters and 6 brothers - it's no wonder! When me dad died at 57, from cancer, it got even harder for her. We all helped out in our own ways though. Three of my brothers were in the Navy during the war and a sister went in the Land Army.

I went to Westbourne Street School till I was 15, then I got a job for Cawoods who did Salt Fish. Then I went on the Fish Dock as a Barrow Boy. I became a Foreman Barrow Boy and then a Filleter - all by the time I was 18. Then I did National Service from 1953 - 54. I was in Jordan, Jerusalem and Egypt. I enjoyed it and made good friends. After that I went on the trawlers for 2 years and then worked for Brekkes. I was at Findus, at one point too, working on freezing the fish fingers and packing them into boxes. Whatever you did was a job and importantly you were earning money.

As a Barrow Lad you'd start at 7am, you'd wait for higher up people to tally the fish and then we'd take that and put it on the barrow stand and the filleters would put in on the bench. Then when they'd finished it was packed and would go out for orders. I'd take it into the wagons and then it would go out all over the country. It was hard work and you worked in all weathers. You'd often work till 6 or until the work was done. Trawlers were coming in everyday - there might be 4 in one dock and 6 in another. The place was full of people and

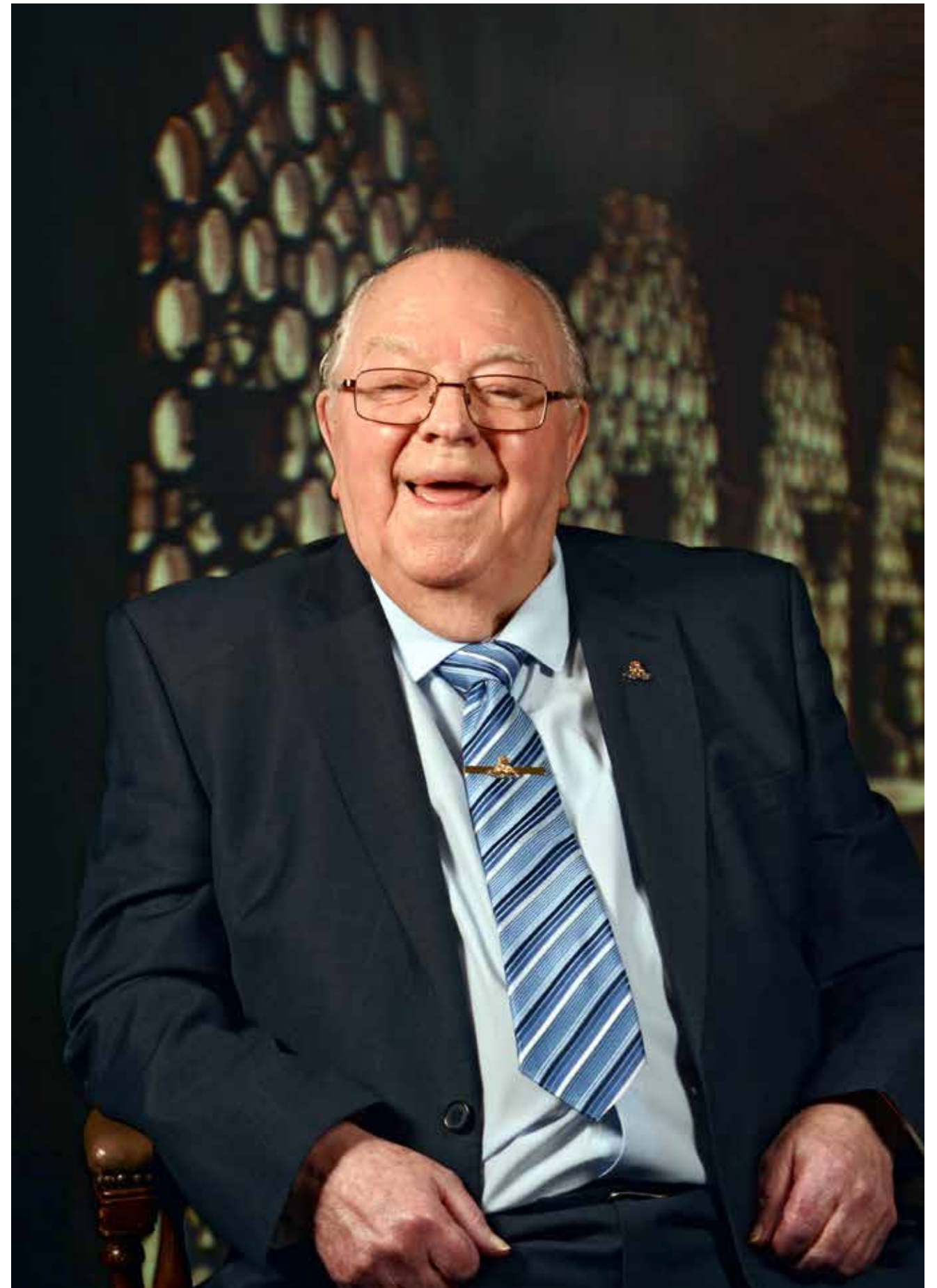
characters, some were robust...swearing was popular! You also met men from all over. There was Norwegian and Icelandic fishermen who were really interesting people, they'd come off dock for a drink and then they'd be gone and you wouldn't see them again.

Everyone who was part of that world also pretty much got involved in the club life of this area. So when the lorry drivers went on strike in the 70's I was asked to run the Subway Club Bar. I was in my early thirties then. I loved it and also became the compare, giving out bingo cards, anything really. I loved the community of it. After that I went to the Cholmley Club, which was where the Nisa shop is now. I worked there for 14 years. And then I went to Ryders and worked alongside my wife Rita, who's sadly been dead 20 years now. I like the people, they're good company. It's like a family of all ages. Everyone together - lovely. When I walk in I'm really welcomed. Everyone says "Hey it's Father Ted!"

I was also Father Christmas at Boyes for 10 years. Everyone knew it was me! I even go into the shop and they still shout "Here comes Santa!"

I've lived in the same house for 45 years. I've got 2 children, a son and a daughter. My son is my carer now. I've got 3 grandchildren and 6 great grandchildren. Me and Rita looked after each and I miss her a lot. But I've really enjoyed my life and would do it all again. I loved working and running clubs, being helpful in the area and supporting the community. It's nice to be liked and be known.

Thank you. I'm not doing too bad for 90 hey?





MADE IN HULL

Local Interest

There's a wider ambition and focus through the public campaigns and local business groups.



DD

I moved here in 2015, it's when I came out. Wow! Nearly ten years ago. How fast has that gone? I'm 68 now and reinventing myself. I am changing how I dress. I want to wear these type of clothes now, show my legs. It feels great and important. I have tattoos all over, the butterfly on my legs I had done in Thailand. I have large hands and can't get good rings, so I had my fingers decorated. I was going to have a Ziggy Stardust spark done on my upper arm, I nearly did it, but I'm glad I didn't now.

I was a farmer, I had cattle and 50 acres. I raced bikes and lorries. I loved that life with my wife and children, a son and a daughter. We worked hard and we did well. I achieved alot. I took part and won at races in Europe and Britain, I became a British Champion. I won awards for making Cider. But I had to do this - be me. I'm guilty of living a lie, and this lie meant my children and wife no longer want to speak to or see me. This is painful and I am eternally sorry to have hurt them.

I always knew. I knew from being a kid when we played Cowboys and Indians. The suede outfit was very attractive to me. But I was told not to mess about by my Granny, so I hid this part of me. Then when I was married, we had a fancy dress party. I wore women's clothes and I didn't want to take them off. I lived as a man for a further 37 years. I kept it a secret. I was successful at all these things but I still had all this need. In the back of my head, I knew I had to deal with what I was feeling. But I'd never met a trans-woman before, I didn't have any knowledges of others who were like me.

One day I took my shotgun into the yard with one cartridge in and was going to kill myself. Terrible. But I decided go to the Doctor instead and he was so helpful. It still took another 2 years before I did or said anything to anyone. I went to Leeds to try and meet and talk to people, but I went to the clubs and bars at 10am! I was a farmer used to getting up in the morning. They all laughed and said "Yes you're in the right place, you're just 12 hours too early!" I bought a woman's jacket and wore it with my jeans and shoes. God it felt so good.

When I told the family I was trans I lost everything. I was told I was a disgrace. My family disowned me and I still don't have any contact with them. It's heart breaking. But I had to do this. I never wanted to leave my wife or get divorced. But I also understand. I have never done anything by halves. If you don't go full at something you never get anything. My wife knew this, she said we could stay married, but I would have to hide who I was. I couldn't do that anymore. Funnily, the bike community I was part of were fine. I went racing one year as man and then the next time I went I was a woman and no one ever said anything. They just were themselves. I guess I was respected.

We need to talk more about what it's like, what it was like, and how hard it still is. I want to get people to accept anyone. What anyone does is up to them, there should be no judgement. I think I give people permission to have more courage. I've had lots of men talk to me who want to do what I've done, but they are too scared of losing everything. And that's the serious stuff, because it's true.

This is how I would like to be remembered. If I could only show this to my ex wife and ex friends they might understand. I've taken so many pills. done so much to my body and wow. I can't believe this is me. It's not who I see in the mirror. but wow... I am moved. It's so important that I have this. That I can share this. I'm 68. I've only been out for 10 years and look at me it's been totally worth it. I feel so confident.



AUDREY

I was born in East Hull. During the war my family evacuated to Lincolnshire (1941), where I went to a rural school. When we came back to Hull we were like refugees and lived in temporary accommodation. My mum dogged the corporation for a council house, which after two years she achieved. We got a house in North Hull, but sadly, after only two weeks there, she died of a cerebral haemorrhage. I was ten and my brother was four. It was a terrible tragedy.

Fortunately, my father, who was an orphan and had been to sea, was good at domestic life, especially washing and darning. Determined to keep us together, he brought us up single-handedly. We were a one-parent family before the term was coined.

At Fifth Avenue School, I was placed in the B stream with Miss Holland. She was a very caring teacher and advised the other pupils, all girls, to treat me kindly because of my sad loss. A small group of us devised a play based on the book *Little Women*. I played Elizabeth, the girl who dies young. I lived my sorrow through that part. It was healing for me. I did well in her class and went up into the A class that year.

Nowadays, I enjoy my later years. There's always something new to learn, life is a wonderful learning process. Time goes faster, though - as I go slower. But it's no matter. Life is good.

I became a poet. I have lived in Hull for most of my life. It's been a good place to be. This poem is about my love of the city. As a child coming back from Lincolnshire, I was fascinated by the way the train comes in by the waters of the Humber.

*I'm so glad my platter features
the gold. none of us are perfect.*



TONY

My dad drove lorries. My mother Betty and her mother were both net braiders. Men would come round with more twine and collect finished work too. Lots of women did these jobs alongside other jobs and family work. That's why the twilight shift - 6 while 10pm - was full of women working after everything else.

After school I worked firstly at Hudson Brothers Trawlers as an office boy. The trawling offices were situated on "The Dry Side" over the swing bridge near the Hull Ice Company. A responsibility I had was to send out the weekly mail that contained the wages. Although some families would come down and collect them. I eventually became head cashier, I was so proud. With the many ports the ships visited I sometimes joked that I held more currencies than Thomas Cook.

I got joy from listening to stories of the sea. I suppose it prepared me for the time I would become a priest, as an important part of supporting people is listening and then being able to relay those stories, especially in taking funerals. I've found many people's stories overlap - especially in this tight knit community.

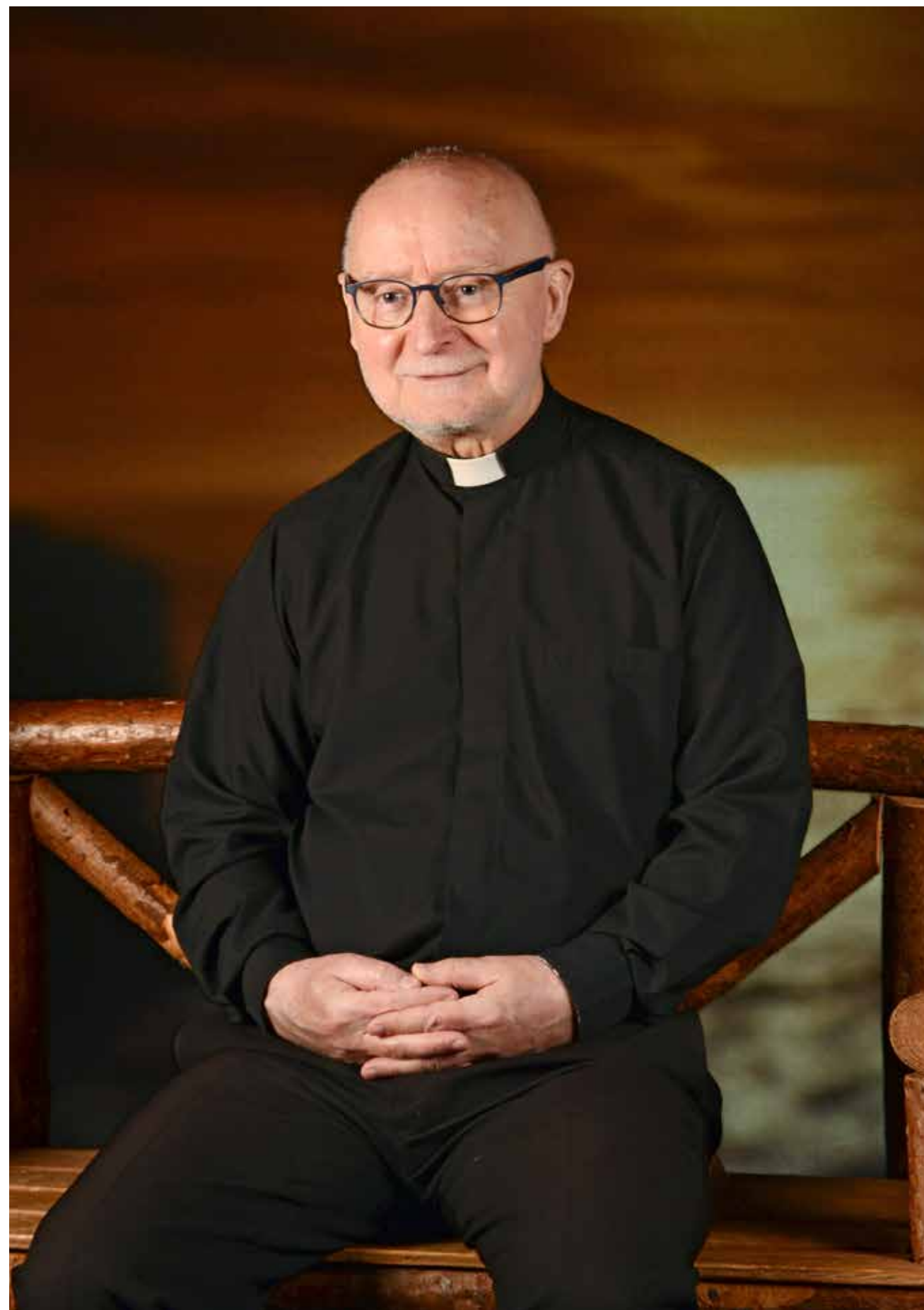
I left the docks in March 1984, one of only six employees left in what was once a great industry. I had witnessed the slow decline of the industry from the early seventies as fishing quotas were reduced and ships laid up. It was so sad to see hard working men leave the industry, many of whom would struggle to find alternative employment. I once remember a fisherman describing his new work in a factory as being like a "caged bird". I felt much the same when I started work in Sainsbury's Homebase, it took me a few years to settle, it was so dull to that of the fishing industry with its many characters. I was forever grateful for the 15 years experience I'd had among some of the bravest men and colourful characters you could meet.

Of course it was not all fun, there were times of great sadness when men were lost to the sea, or even whole crew's lost when a ship went down. The community was so tightly knit that it seemed everyone knew someone who had suffered the pain of loss. St Johns proudly displays items recovered from the Gaul including the ship's bell. The Fishermen's Corner also displays a copy of the memorial book containing names and details of our cities losses, the pages are faithfully turned to display the current date.

I have been asked many times how a Hessle Road lad became a vicar in the Church of England... I came across a message displayed on a church notice board in St Ives. It challenged me enough to share it with my girlfriend when I returned home. This started us attending a local church and the rest as they say is history. By the way, that young lady became my wife. We have been married 47 years now. I never consider I have worked for the church, "we" have. That "conversion" led to many years of voluntary work in the church as a youth worker, a worship leader as well as study group leader. After many years I was accepted for training. It may surprise many that the training process in the Church of England lasts seven years. It seemed right to us both that our final place of service should be at the church I was baptised, a church that was due for closure in 2006.

My time at St Johns would not only see a reversal of that proposed closure but in many ways the rebirth of Hull's last Victorian church that sits in the centre of Hull's once great fishing industry.

Over the years I have been asked to bless many items like crosses and St Christopher's worn by individuals. Of course superstitions are common to all seafaring communities but I can only guess what thoughts and fears our fishermen must have had when faced with mighty winter storms in the middle of the ocean, faced as they were with the prospect of ships icing up from the stormy seas. Faced with such conditions it would be foolish to think that our men did not consider their mortality and seek the comfort of God the creator of sea and sky.





People don't normally show this side of themselves, we only ever see the front.

I know all these people, but I never knew their stories, it's so important to hear them.

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