



Five Years On: Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley flash floods: oral history interviews

Accession number 32233

Date 2016-2019

Author / Creator

[Gearing, Amanda, creator.](#)

[Bell, Kayleen.](#)

Scope and content This collection contains 23 oral history interviews conducted by Dr Amanda Gearing with survivors and rescuers of the 2011 Lockyer Valley and Toowoomba floods. The interviews, recorded five years after the floods, examine the impact of the disaster on the lives of the interviewees. One interview was recorded in Spring Bluff, five in Murphys Creek, one in Toowoomba, two in Withcott, two in Postman's Ridge, five in Helidon, one in Carpendale and seven in Grantham.

Description online resource (23 audio files, 1 text file)

Administrative / Biographical history Dr Amanda Gearing is a journalist, writer and broadcaster. She is the author of 'The Torrent: Toowoomba and the Lockyer Valley, January 2011'. Dr Gearing conducted a series of interviews in the aftermath of the 2011 flood. The collection is held in the John Oxley Library under the title: 28510 Amanda Gearing Queensland Flood Collection 2011-2012.

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Preferred citation

32233, Five Years On: Toowoomba and Lockyer Valley flash floods: oral history interviews, John Oxley Library, State Library of Queensland.

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Series 1: Spring Bluff (2016)

Series number 1

Series title Spring Bluff

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains an oral history interview with Sharyn Powlesland, Spring Bluff, Queensland.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording

Locate OMDIG Digital files

Access

Copyright status In copyright

Copyright status Amanda Gearing

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Items in this series:

Sharyn Powlesland interview (26 May 2016)

Unit ID 32233/1

Date 26 May 2016

Scope and content

In this oral history interview Sharyn Powlesland talks about the long-term effects of the disastrous 2011 flood. Sharyn's house was for sale at the time and she was unable to sell it. Sharyn discusses the difficulties she's had with the insurance company and the damage to her house caused by the flood.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Powlesland, Sharyn

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (50 min. 57 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

(1 digital)

Series 2: Murphys Creek (2016)

Series number 2

Series title Murphys Creek

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains five oral history interviews with residents of Murphy's Creek, Queensland.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 5 digital audiorecordings

Locate OMDIG Digital files

Access

Copyright status In copyright

Copyright status Amanda Gearing

Conditions of use CC-BY-NC

Items in this series:

Matthew Eddison interview (26 May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/2

Date 26 May 2016

Scope and content

In this oral history interview Matthew Eddison talks about how he was asked by Ian Hoddinott to help rescue two women whose car had been swept from a causeway at Murphy's Creek. Matthew believes that Ian should be recognised for his bravery during the rescue and for his other actions after the flood.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Eddison, Matthew

Description

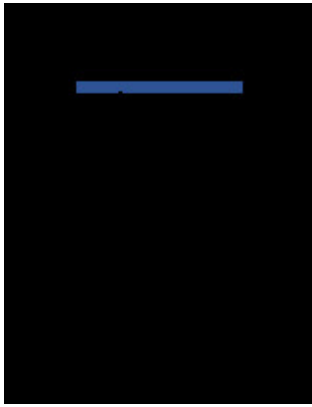
Description 1 digital audiorecording (48 min. 47 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[View the item](#)

[Transcript](#)

Ian Hoddinott interview (May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/3

Date May 2016

Scope and content

In this oral history interview Ian Hoddinott describes how he rescued two women during the flood. Ian talks about the relationship between the rescuers and the survivors and about the effects of the flood on the township of Murphy's Creek and on those who were particularly affected by the disaster, such as Catherine Schefe and the Matthews family.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Hoddinott, Ian

Description

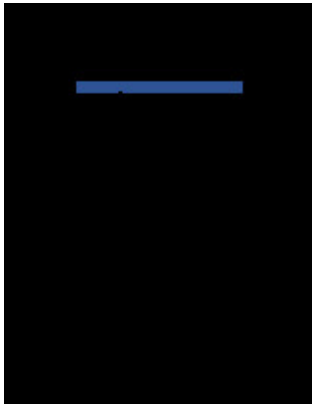
Description 1 digital audiorecording (35 min.) 1 transcript

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[Transcript](#)

Sue Patterson interview (1 July 2016)



Unit ID 32233/4

Date 1 July 2016

Scope and content

In this oral history interview Sue Patterson remembers the 2011 flood and its aftermath. Sue was at home with her daughter and some visitors when the flood struck. In the years after the flood, the family decided to stay. Sue has been diagnosed with severe anxiety, triggered by the realisation that her daughter's life was in danger and that she could do very little about it. After the flood, friends helped by donating goods and money and helping to clean up.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Patterson, Sue

Description

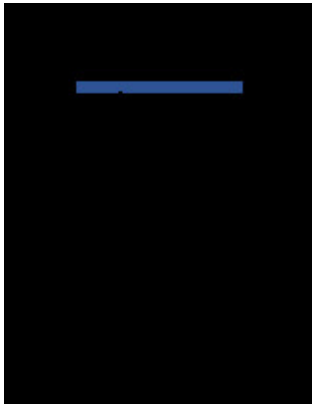
Description 1 digital audiorecording (26 min. 18 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[View the items](#)

[Transcript](#)

Angelika 'Angie' Pohl interview (2 May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/5

Date 2 May 2016

Scope and content

In this oral history interview Angie Pohl talks about the events on the day of the flood. She was in her car driving home when she reached a flooded causeway. Angie attempted to drive over the causeway, but the water quickly flooded her car and began sweeping her away. Matthew Eddison and Ian Hoddinott managed to pull Angie out of the water. This interview documents how she feels five years after this incident.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Pohl, Angelika

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (39 min.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Peter Souter interview (2 June 2016)

Unit ID 32233/6

Date 2 June 2016

Scope and content

Peter Souter's business, Murphys Creek Escape, and his home and office were severely

affected by the flood. Peter used his army training in disaster recovery to voluntarily step forward as the community leader of the township's flood recovery.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Souter, Peter

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (66 min. 13 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Summary](#)

(10 digital)

Series 3: Toowoomba (2016)

Series number 3

Series title Toowoomba

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains an oral history interview with Greg Twidale.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording

Locate OMDIG Digital files

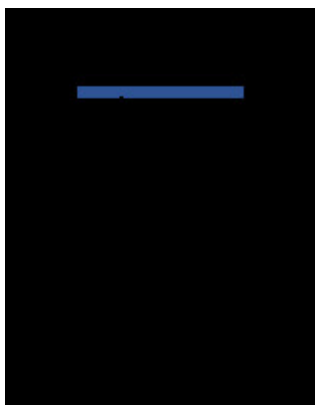
Access

Copyright status In copyright

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Items in this series:

Greg Twidale interview (3 July 2016)



Unit ID 32233/7

Date 3 July 2016

Scope and content

Greg Twidale is a truck driver from Toowoomba who was at the intersection of Kitchener Street and James Street during the flood in Toowoomba on 10 January 2011. He saw a motorist in distress and used his truck to shield the car from the current and threw a snatch-strap to the driver to anchor her to his truck in case her car was swept away. Greg has maintained contact with the woman he saved.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Twidale, Greg

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (20 min. 27 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

(2 digital)

Series 4: Withcott (2016)

Series number 4

Series title Withcott

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains oral history interviews with Ben Burton and Neil Simpson.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 2 digital audiorecordings

Locate OMDIG Digital files

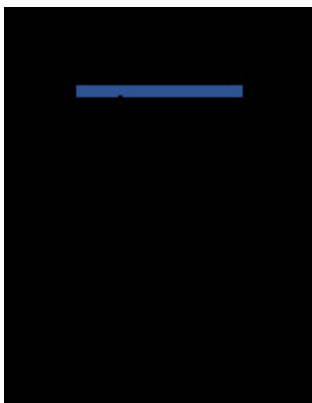
Access

Copyright status In copyright

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Items in this series:

Ben Burton interview (1 June 2016)



Unit ID 32233/8

Date 1 June 2016

Scope and content

Ben Burton and his wife Anthea owned Withcott Antiques at Withcott. They repaired and opened their business on 1 April 2011, but later moved because of the trauma caused by the disaster.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Burton, Ben

Description

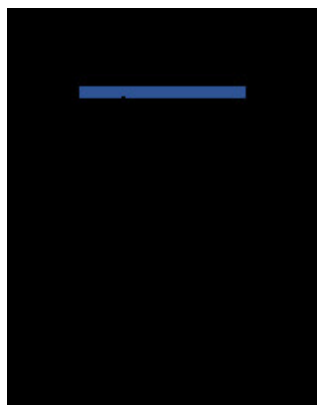
Description 1 digital audiorecording (24 min. 53 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

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[Transcript](#)

Neil Simpson interview (1 July 2016)



Unit ID 32233/9

Date 1 July 2016

Scope and content

Neil Simpson, a pub owner, and his wife Gay catered for motorists stranded by the flood.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Simpson, Neil

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (15 min 30 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

(4 digital)

Series 5: Postmans Ridge (2016)

Series number 5

Series title Postmans Ridge

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains two oral history interviews: an interview with Rod Alford and an interview with Gayle Teale.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 2 digital audiorecordings

Locate OMDIG Digital files

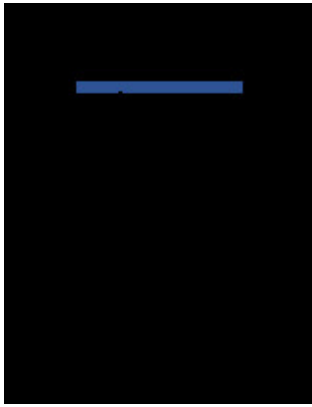
Access

Copyright status In copyright

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Items in this series:

Rod Alford interview (1 July 2016)



Unit ID 32233/10

Date 1 July 2016

Scope and content

Rod talks about the difficulties he and his wife had with their insurance company after the flood. Hydrologists measured the height of the wave that hit their property at 9.8 metres high.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Alford, Rod

Description

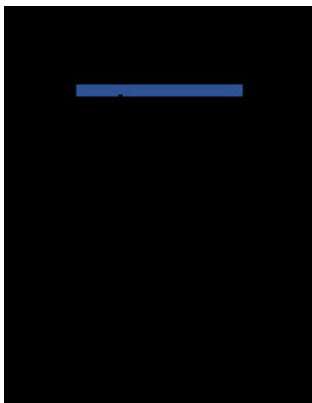
Description 1 digital audiorecording (48 min. 57 sec.) 1 Transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Gayle Teale interview (2016)



Unit ID 32233/11

Date 2016

Scope and content

Gayle talks about the stress she experienced when dealing with her insurance company after the flood. She has moved to Murphys Creek where she has five horses.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Teale, Gayle

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (22 min. 44 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

(4 digital)

Series 6: Helidon (2016)

Series number 6

Series title Helidon

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains five oral history interviews.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 5 digital audiorecordings

Locate OMDIG Digital files

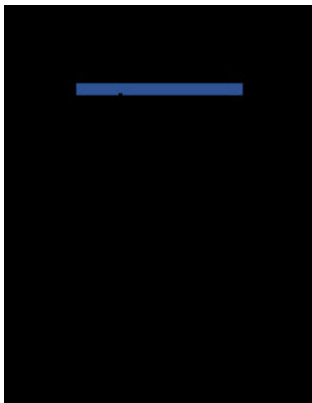
Access

Copyright status In copyright

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Items in this series:

Angela Emmerson interview (29 June 2016)



Unit ID 32233/12

Date 29 June 2016

Scope and content

Angela and Rebecca Emmerson were at home at Helidon when the flood struck. They attempted to shelter indoors, but then climbed to the roof to escape the rising floodwater.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Emmerson, Angela

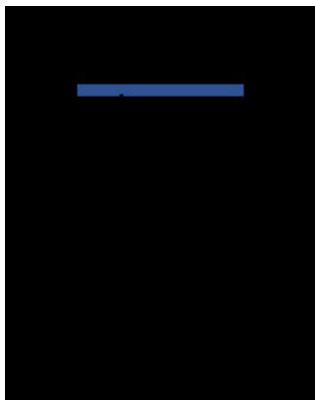
Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (17 min. 38 sec.) 1 summary

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[Listen to the audio](#)
[Transcript](#)

Brad Mills, QFRS interview (30 June 2016)



Unit ID 32233/13

Date 30 June 2016

Scope and content

Brad Mills is a QFRS swift water rescuer. He and his colleague Andrew Neil rescued Jenny Thorncraft from Lockyer Creek. They saw her from a news helicopter clinging to a tree. She had been floating with her partner James Perry and their son Edwin on the roof of their car. Suddenly the car sank and the rescuers were dropped off on an island in the flooded creek to save her.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Mills, Brad

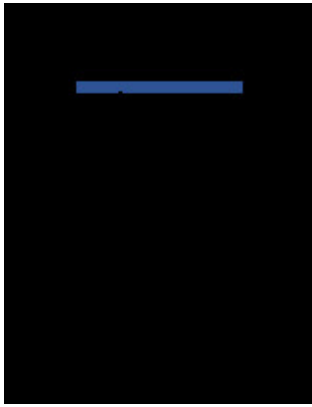
Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (34 min. 46 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)
[Transcript](#)

Neil Pennell interview (12 June 2016)



Unit ID 32233/14

Date 12 June 2016

Scope and content

Neil Pennell lives at Kalbar in the Fassifern Valley. He is a medical sonographer who noticed a supercell embedded in a cloud band on January 10, 2011. He attempted to warn communities he believed were at imminent risk in the Lockyer Valley.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Pennell, Neil

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (46 min. 50 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Kendall Thompson, NSW RFS interview (1 July 2016)



Unit ID 32233/15

Date 1 July 2016

Scope and content

Kendall Thompson was awarded several bravery awards, including the Benjamin Franklin Award for Valour and is the only recipient in the world of the award from the International Association of Fire Chiefs. In his rescue of Teddy Perry, Kendall improvised a rescue harness because there were no child-sized harnesses available at that time. Child harnesses have now been introduced.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Thompson, Kendall

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (31 min. 57 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Kelly Zischke interview (June 2016)



Unit ID 32233/16

Date June 2016

Scope and content

Kelly is more cautious about driving on flooded roads since the flood, as well as surprised and disappointed that the local council has not contacted residents since the flood.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Zischke, Kelly

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (8 min. 5 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

(10 digital)

Series 7: Carpendale (2016)

Series number 7

Series title Carpendale

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains an interview with Sandra Friend.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording

Locate OMDIG Digital files

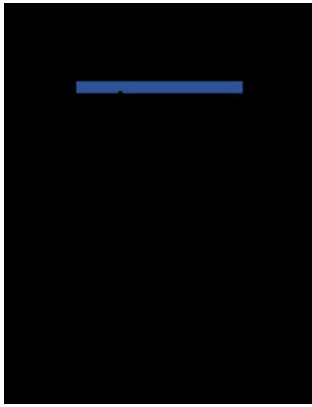
Access

Copyright status In copyright

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Items in this series:

Sandra Friend interview (27 May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/17

Date 27 May 2016

Scope and content

Sandra and Tom Friend were away during the flood. When they returned, they felt better off than the others as they had a few changes of clothes. Their house and farm were destroyed, but their insurance company paid their claim.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Friend, Sandra

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (24 min. 19 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

(2 digital)

Series 8: Grantham (2016)

Series number 8

Series title Grantham

Date 2016

Scope and content

This series contains six oral history interviews.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Description

Description 6 digital audiorecordings 6 transcripts

Locate OMDIG Digital files

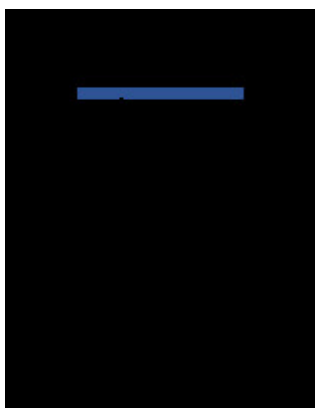
Access

Copyright status In copyright

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Items in this series:

Frank King interview (2016)



Unit ID 32233/18

Date 2016

Scope and content

An oral history interview with Frank King of Grantham, Queensland.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

King, Frank

Description

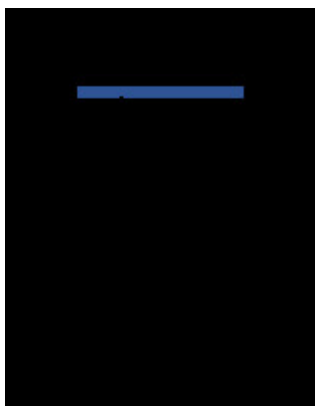
Description 1 digital audiorecording (21 min. 50 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Kathy Mahon interview (May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/19

Date May 2016

Scope and content

Kathy Mahon and her family now live in the new development above Grantham. NSW Legal Aid represented them in a court case which made a precedent that insurers are required to pay for traumatised disaster survivors to be able to move from the scene of the disaster, rather than limit the compensation to repairs of damaged houses at the site of a disaster.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Mahon, Kathy

Description

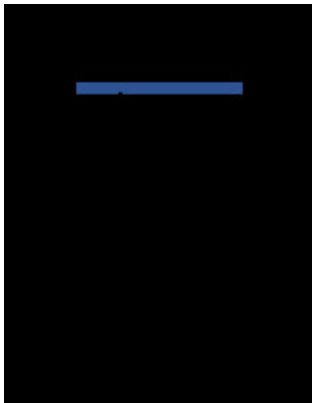
Description 1 digital audiorecording (21 min. 21 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

Transcript

Lisa Spierling interview (25 May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/20

Date 25 May 2016

Scope and content

Lisa and her family moved from Grantham to a rental house and later to a shed on a hill on their flower farm at West Haldon. They lived in a shed on the farm for some years until their new house was built.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Spierling, Lisa

Description

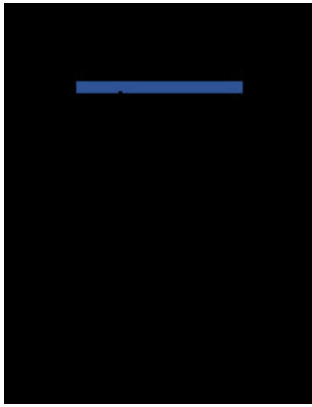
Description 1 digital audiorecording (38 min. 17 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Marie van Straten interview (20 May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/21

Date 20 May 2016

Scope and content

Marie van Straten and her husband were swept away in their house during the flood. Since then both were diagnosed with cancer. Peter died in 2015 during the Grantham Floods Inquiry. They had to move several times. Marie is 61 and has to find work. She is a nurse, but is unable to work as a nurse due to a wrist injury she got during the flood.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

van Straten, Mary

Description

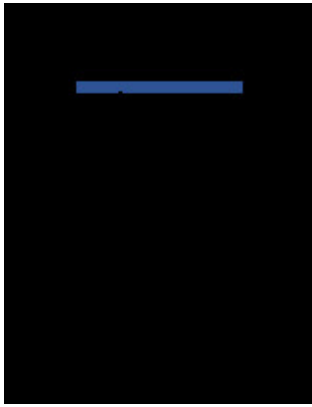
Description 1 digital audiorecording (36 min. 43 sec.) 1 transcript

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Mark Turner EMQ interview (May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/22

Date May 2016

Scope and content

Mark Turner is a swift water rescue officer with Queensland Fire and Rescue Service. He returned to work for several years, but had several months off work after a rescue several years later triggered memories of the Grantham disaster. He has fully recovered and returned to work. Mark returned to Grantham on the fifth anniversary of the disaster and met the people he had rescued.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Turner, Mark

Description

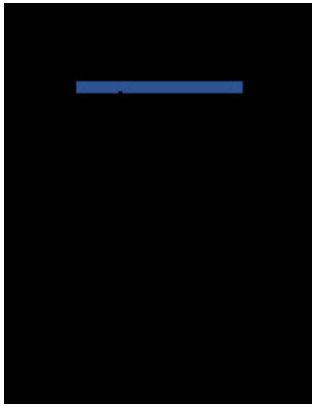
Description 1 digital audiorecording (27 min. 55 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

Marty Warburton interview (25 May 2016)



Unit ID 32233/23

Date 25 May 2016

Scope and content

Marty Warburton realises now that he should have moved away from Grantham. Those who did leave appear to him to have recovered better than those who stayed. Marty's business was not moved to the new estate because it was only for residential houses, not businesses. Marty sees this as an error in administration because the economic framework of the town was destroyed and there are now very few jobs in town.

Author / Creator

Gearing, Amanda

Warburton, Marty

Description

Description 1 digital audiorecording (71 min. 44 sec.) 1 summary

[View the items](#)

[Listen to the audio](#)

[Transcript](#)

(12 digital)