



Telling Our Stories, Finding Our Roots

Interview with Emily Hamilton

Interviewer 00:00:01

Okay, so, Emily, welcome to Telling Our Stories Finding Our Roots project. The date today is Tuesday, September the 29th. [clears throat] And it's 6:40 in the evening. I just want to thank you for sharing your story today. And we look forward to hearing about your experiences and your journey of coming to this country and living in Bideford. So Emily, I wanted to start off by asking you if you wanted to talk about something significant - an object or a photo or what you'd like to talk about in terms of a significant thing that you would like to bring to the project today? Oh, well, I just want to show you and talking about our traditional ao dai. It's my very special and traditional one we, we're wearing in, in the festival the Lunar New Year. But we call - we call Tet in Vietnamese but but in China, Chinese be the same day, same month with Chinese New Year, so called Lunar New Year, but we call different - it's Tet, T-E-T. Tet? Yeah. [laugh] That's lovely. And it's a beautiful top that you've got there.

Emily 00:01:30

Thank you very much.

Interviewer 00:01:32

Would you mind just standing up so that we could see a bit more of the top?

Emily 00:01:35

Yeah. One minute. [thud as Emily adjusts her screen].

Interviewer 00:01:45

Wow, that's very spectacular. Oh, thank you. That's lovely.

Emily 00:01:52

Thank you.

Interviewer 00:01:55

Okay, so Emily, so you're, I just want to start off by saying your husband actually told me that your name, your birth name is Ling.



Emily 00:02:06

Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 00:02:07

Yeah? And but you prefer to be called Emily?

Emily 00:02:11

Yes, of course. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:02:12

Okay, that's lovely. Just so I'm clear that, you know, I'm not getting your name wrong. So that question -- First question I'd like to ask you is why is this, why is your top the top that you just described today, why is that important to you?

Emily 00:02:34

Well it's quite important because is that - it make a memory for the my country, for my family, because when I'm more young, when I'm little, from five or six, we already start to wear something similar like that. On different colour, of course. But it's really really important for me because every time I'm wearing that one, make - I feel like I can see my family like, like Christmas in UK; you can see your family, whole family together, talking. And also it fit the booty, look quite nice, smart. I think the memory, the the love of memory. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:03:27

Thank you for that.

Emily 00:03:28

Thank you.

Interviewer 00:03:30

Also, can you tell me anything about your name? For example, who chose it for you? And what does it mean?

Emily 00:03:39

Oh, so my my my name was Ling, I from -- I got two names really. So my my real name is Thuy named It means water. Yeah, so it mean water and then when -- it's funny history. In in our near our home, got a lady named tree [?] - is same name of me. So when I'm little, my my father used to, used to shout to me when I'm naughty. And then the next door neighbour she's not happy. And she said [unintelligible], Oh my father shout to her, it's good. And then he had to change my name to Ling. So Ling is me now in [unintelligible] my trust, my trust, my belief, a good thing.



Interviewer 00:04:35

Excellent. Thank you for sharing that with us, Ling. Very interesting about your name.

Emily 00:04:42

Thank you.

Interviewer 00:04:42

Can you tell us about your decision to come to the UK? And finally, a little bit about how you came to be in Devon?

Emily 00:04:51

Yeah. Well it's interesting. About six and a half years, definitely six and a half year ago. My husband's English. We met - we met in Vietnam and we've been married for, I think 16 year - 14 years - 16? 16? 16 year now. So I met him 2004 and now 2020 so 16 year we are be together and I never thought we can come back to UK fully because in my mind I I don't know much about UK. Don't much about UK future, culture. So I never thought I'd come back to Viet-- to to UK.

Still to one day my my my step my husband's stepfather died who, who he loved and who, who he growing up with and he loved him very much and My husband's stepfather died his name was Peter he passed away alone in an old peoples home in Bideford. He he got his mum, who was 77 and he said that he cannot let his mum buy his-herself in in the UK, so he had to come back and I understand, but it's shock for me. Because only one month he's decide to come back to UK and I got no choice because -- It's hard for me, I got my own company in Vietnam, working very well. We got houses, we got everything in Vietnam.

And then soon as he decided to come back, like I'm shocked, I'm really shocked but on our on our traditional wedding like, well where husband, wife have to be go with. So I follow him to come back to - come back to UK and we live in Holsworthy. So Mum lived -- so we lived in my mother-in-law's house in Holsworthy. It's middle of nowhere. I think only sheep and cow! [laughter] So so it scared me. I live in big city in capital Vietnam where it's very busy, nice hurry. And I've come back to - come to UK, live in Holsworthy - big shock.

I cannot speak -- I can speak English but I can't, I feel not not confident to talking with people, but I think my English is not good enough. I'm scared. I cannot driving. I can't driving motorbikes so well, not car. So mum because she Oh, she don't want to go out too much. So I have to say in home a lot of time with Mum and I I have no friend, no job. Really different. And I'm scared and I just said with myself what I am doing here? I got nervous. I just said I got everything in Vietnam. I don't know what I do - what I am doing here, why I am here. My husband worked in Newbury [?] and he come back home one or two week one time, so he even make this even more difficult because I feel lonely, I feel scared, I not go anywhere. Yes, but it's changed now I live in in in Bideford six and a half years now and I'm in love with it.



Interviewer 00:08:31

Thank you for that that's quite quite interesting. Especially as you say coming to a country and being feeling alone and that, but now, you know, you've overcome that.

Emily 00:08:47

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:08:47

Okay?

Emily 00:08:48

It only take me six months, only take me six months. And and it's definitely I love Devon now. I don't want to move anywhere else.

Interviewer 00:08:58

And so when you came, do you remember who travelled with and and how did you feel about leaving your country?

Emily 00:09:07

Well, I travelled by myself with my son. So so very far, they -- So my husband go back to UK first. And then we got, he got work. I travel with my son after one month. So I go by myself with my son - it's really really scary. Really scary. I got stopped in on the gate, the check-out. So they check everything. Everything we bring in. So So while I bring a lot of stuff. I care about food because I don't know in the UK can buy the food, you know, [unintelligible] people and I have we - food quite important. So I bring a lot of food and then, I think in the - for people checking in airports, it's like no, you cannot bring that food. I said why? You're not allowed to bring in. And I said okay, but I'm saddening because, like, all the food my my mum make, and then all the food I want to bring, I just cannot have it. So so yeah. But for te - everything is scary. Scary, scary what the life in UK? What the culture? What the people? Well a lot of question. I think scared more than exciting.

Interviewer 00:10:34

that's great thank you for that and what was the first thing you noticed in UK when you arrived in particularly in Devon?

Emily 00:10:44

So in, so we -- so I think for Mum - Mum - we lived with Mum about three months and then we moved to Bideford. It's a lot more easy for me when I live in Bideford because now I can walk around the town, take the bus out to Barnstaple. I tried to looking job so so it's all very - I am work -- So I got sitting here



asking about training, beauty, like wedding make-- wedding makeup hairdresser, permanent makeup and, well, all sort of beauty thing. So I got my own training company in Vietnam. So I know so well about all this sort of beauty job. When it comes to UK everyone said Oh, you do job - because I'm going to try to get in job in English shop, in local shop in Bideford, but the problem is they don't have enough business. So I go to Barnstaple called Ameri-- So my first job in American Nail in Barnstaple, and they asked me, like, Have you got any, like, certificates for, for you qualify for your work? I said Oh no, I've not thought about that. They said what they said with me Oh, your job is amazing, but we need your certificate for your work. So I have to return again for everything really. Take me for a long time to settle down, but after I got job I met a lot of people and I make friends.

Life is different. Yeah, it changed my way to thinking. By the time when I live here, I found out people are very friendly and they they they very easy, like, you can - for I used to go Oh my god, what they think about me? Because I'm Asian. I do not meaning no question [?], if the people like me or not, is it my English good enough to to to to the understand everything? Everything scary. But when [squeaking noise] when I - couple come out or I go to work and I talking with people I said no, they're so friendly, they nice. And then and then much better. I feel more confident to chat to with people. And I love it. Everyone remember my name when they come to the, come to the shop and I try to remember their name. So it's there's [unintelligible] support and helping me and my English if I'm talking the wrong words. Sometimes they not understand what I mean, because my English, I cannot finish the word, you know, the end of the word I cannot finish. But now more of them can understand even I'm talking not perfect [laugh] or, or properly but they still understand.

Interviewer 00:13:58

Thank you. That's a lovely story. And you mentioned about being scared and lonely but actually overcoming that and, and and how lovely people were towards you, which would help for you to settle in. You know quicker.

Emily 00:14:13

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 00:14:14

Fantastic. Excellent. I'm going to hand you over to, to Dave now and Dave is going to ask you a few questions. Dave are you ready?

Emily 00:14:23

Hello.

Interviewer 2 00:14:24

Hello, Emily.



Emily 00:14:26

Hello.

Interviewer 2 00:14:27

Yeah, good, good to listen to your story, as well.

Emily 00:14:31

Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:14:32

You're very resilient in being able to deal with all the challenges you had in -

Emily 00:14:37

Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:14:38

The airport experience I was listening to, that must have been quite frightening for you.

Emily 00:14:43

Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:14:45

Yeah. But it is great that you've done this with us. So I was going to just ask you something about the local area, where you're living now. And my first question would be what do you like most about living here? And also what don't you like, so it's two questions in one really.

Emily 00:15:06

Wow that's a really interesting question. I think I love the area -- well the weather not, but I love the area because we go to the beach. We've got so many beach around in the summer we can do a lot of things. And then people are lovely. We live - we are lucky, I am thinking I'm very lucky to live in Biddeford because it's the beautiful town. Like we got the river that goes around the town. People friendly. Life is very calm. But importantly, life's really calm and safe.

Interviewer 2 00:15:46

Ah yeah.

Emily 00:15:47

Beautiful area.



Interviewer 2 00:15:49

Yeah. Oh that's pleasing. And is there anything, is there anything that you don't like?

Emily 00:15:56

Not really. I in love - I in love Bideford. I don't think nothing. I don't think anything I don't like really.

Interviewer 2 00:16:05

That's good. That's good.

Emily 00:16:06

Thank you. Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:16:08

And have you got a favourite place in the town? You know, I mean, I like going to the Cafe du Parc, for example, for a coffee.

Emily 00:16:15

Well for summer I love going to Hocking. Hocking's van in in the Victorian park.

Interviewer 2 00:16:22

Oh, yeah, yeah.

Emily 00:16:24

Yeah, so that is my favourite area. So we can have Hocking and we go to the park with our son -- we, I got the ten-year-old boy named Henry. So he loves Hocking very much. But we both loved Hocking at first. [laughter]

Interviewer 2 00:16:38

So Hocking's and Victoria Park?

Emily 00:16:40

Yep.

Interviewer 2 00:16:42

And do you think Bideford is in any way similar to anywhere, you know, you've lived, say at home in Vietnam, is it?

Emily 00:16:53

No, no, definitely not. I live in Hanoi. It's the capital, Hanoi, it's H-A-N-O-I.



Interviewer 2 00:17:03

Yeah, Hanoi.

Emily 00:17:03

Capital - yeah, Hanoi - it's capital of Vietnam so where I live is very busy, very busy city. A lot of motorbikes. Life is very hurried. The life in the in Vietnam is is very hurry busy, but one thing is in the in the morning, we go to try [?] food to have some noodle, lunchtime you go coffee with friends, dinner we go to the restaurant with friends and go to karaoke after that. In here life is so different. If you're not used to that, I thought take me for a while to deal with it because I feel like too quiet. I feel a bit bored, not not a bit, quite a lot bored because you don't know what what to do. But after you deal with it, I think you would love it. I love it now. I really really love my life now.

Interviewer 2 00:18:09

That's great to know, Emily. And is there, well I've really asked the second part of that question, so I'll ask you something else. Is there anything you miss now because you're living here in Bideford? Like you said you like, you used to like anyway the busy city, [is there anything?]

Emily 00:18:28

[Yeah.] [laughter] I think it sounds quite funny. For for first year I miss food because, because I don't know where they sell the Asian food. I really really miss food and then after I [unintelligible] food all nice, they sell and they send to us, it's easy. And both of I miss, I think, weather and family.

Interviewer 2 00:18:59

Yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. But and I was gonna ask you, just just a supplementary question. Do Do you ever get a chance to go back home to Vietnam?

Emily 00:19:14

I go back every year, but not this year because Covid.

Interviewer 2 00:19:17

Yeah, yeah.

Emily 00:19:18

Yeah, I go home every year for for for learn learning more about new techniques, because with my job I have to update new new stuff all the time, all new techniques I have to pick up every year. I travel to German [?] I travel to France or or London or Vietnam, wherever they got new technique for for my job. I work in beauties, and I have to go to training all the time. So I travel quite a lot. Yeah.



Interviewer 2 00:19:50

Yeah. Now I'm just gonna move on a bit, but thank you for all those - answering those questions, Emily. And if you thought your English wasn't very good, I can tell you your English is fantastic.

Emily 00:20:04

Thank you so much. Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:20:07

I just wanted to go on to talk a bit about the local community. And

Emily 00:20:12

Yep.

Interviewer 2 00:20:13

Our project is looking at three different communities: Okehampton - you probably know these places - Okehampton, Bideford and Tiverton. And we're keen to understand a bit about each town and its community. So and how living in one is different from the other. So we'll hear from other people about where they live. But we're wondering what you think about Bideford in terms of, for example, do you feel that benefit has its own particular community identity? And do you feel part of it? Do you feel part of the community?

Emily 00:20:49

Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. I think so. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:20:51

Yeah. So that's great. And is there anything in particular in Bideford that you would say, Oh, I would always know that was Bideford? Or is - you don't see it like that? Or do you see it like that?

Emily 00:21:06

Well, I I don't see anything like that really, I think it's - that Bideford is nice and friendly town.

Interviewer 2 00:21:14

Yeah [Unintelligible].

Emily 00:21:14

With the business, it's - I think, it's quite local, it's it's local business. So we we both both of our -- when I walk on the street, people know my name. And I know them, so we say hello, we have friends -- really I'm that is knife, nine,[?] their local business, everyone know everyone. We did support each other. Very friendly. Really really nice.



Interviewer 2 21:43

So in a way that answers the second, I think -- I'm - I think from what you said that might answer, certainly part of the second part of the question, which was do you feel like part of a community? And it sounds like you're saying yes. When people know who you are and that they're friendly?

Emily 00:22:03

Yes, yes. [Yeah,] definitely. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:22:06

[Yeah]. That's great. And and there's a second question on this bit. And it's about if you if you're part of a community linked -- Oh, yeah. Do - are you connected in any way to your own culture or heritage in in Bideford? Is there anything or anyone you're connected with?

Emily 00:22:27

Yes. Um, we got we got Asian group in Viet -- in in Bideford. So Asian group, we've got Southern East [?], Thai, Vietnamese, Malaysian. So we're all Asian, live in Bideford and around Bideford [unintelligible] Barnstaple and Westward Ho. So we're all together even in new New Year. Vietnamese or Chinese New Year, we all together, go to one place or one Chinese restaurant. We got the party, we start to chat, talking about life, about what going on. And sometimes we invite our friends in in Asian group to to the house to cook different, more different types of food. And we all enjoy we bring husbands, kids. So we we are travelled to another person how to another one to try to different food because we got in group we got Southern East [?], Chinese, Thai, Malaysian and Vietnamese.

Interviewer 2 00:23:41

Yeah, brilliant.

Emily 00:23:42

Yeah, yeah. It's very good.

Interviewer 2 00:23:44

Yeah. Now, I'm gonna ask you just a couple of questions. And if you if you feel any of these questions are in any way intrusive, stop me. Just say

Emily 00:23:55

[Yeah].

Interviewer 2 00:23:55

[I don't] want to answer that question. Or your, you know, it's not appropriate. But

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Emily 00:24:00

I will, thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:24:02

The first one is do you ever talk about your heritage your your, you know, in your family? Do you talk about your Vietnamese background and your culture?

Emily 00:24:12

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:24:12

Within the family?

Emily 00:24:14

Yeah, I don't mind. Yep.

Interviewer 2 00:24:16

Yeah, yeah. And and but how strongly -- How can I put this? Your own culture as a Vietnamese person? You do you feel - do you feel very strongly attached to being a Vietnamese person?

Emily 00:24:34

Yes.

Interviewer 2 00:24:35

Yeah, yeah.

Emily 00:24:35

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:24:36

And and being part of the, the Asian group, does that help in strengthening your your self identity?

Emily 00:24:46

Not really on that, I think, just simple. We are contact with Asian group because I think is quite important for show up my son to know Asian culture.

Interviewer 2 00:25:01

Yeah.



Emily 00:25:01

And also I can meet people and interesting know more food of different country and different people in different country. I found that one thing is our culture similar and that is make - is nice to me and my son, growing up around with the - because he's half English and he's half Vietnamese, and one - when he live in [unintelligible] he he feel I am English, he always told me that: I am English. Yes, he's English but also he's Vietnamese because he had from me. So I always explained with him, and I always try to got a chance for him to understand more our culture. So that's why if I got a chance to go to Asian group, to show my son about how it's nice, I love to and I will.

Interviewer 2 00:25:57

Aw, that's really good. And does your son, your son also feels a - an identity with Vietnam and England, I would -?

Emily 00:26:05

Yes, yes. Yeah. I try to speak Vietnamese at home for him. He understands a lot but cannot speak much.

Interviewer 2 00:26:12

Yeah. Yeah. And other any other people in Bideford who are from Vietnam, for example?

Emily 00:26:19

Yes. Quite a few, yeah. We got -- So about two, two family Vietnamese, so all - four -- yeah. Two - three family Vietnamese people in in Bideford and few in Barnstaple and Ilfracombe.

Interviewer 2 00:26:36

And Barnstaple and Ilfracombe, yeah.

Emily 00:26:38

Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:26:39

And are you able to get - do you - I mean, you don't - I'm just saying, Do you get together with other Vietnamese families? Because you might do, you know, for festivals and things like that, or just friendship, do you?

Emily 00:26:52

So? Yeah. For friendship friendship. Yeah.



Interviewer 2 00:26:56

Yeah, yeah.

Emily 00:26:57

For friendship, yeah.

Interviewer 2 26:58

Oh, good. Good. Good. And can I - And and in terms of language, so what languages do you speak apart from English and Vietnamese? Do you speak any other languages?

Emily 00:27:09

No. The Vietnamese and English is enough for me. It's quite hard really. [laughter]

Interviewer 2 00:27:18

You speak more than I do, because I speak English and bits and pieces of other, but you [speak -]

Emily 00:27:24

[You know what,] you're lucky because English is International. So you already know English, already you don't need to learn another language.

Interviewer 2 00:27:33

No, that's true. But it's nice to be respectful when you go to other people's countries.

Emily 00:27:37

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. That's why my husband speaks so good Vietnamese, because he, he tried to learn Vietnamese by himself with - yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:27:47

Yeah. And does your language - do you feel the importance of your language to you? Is that a - is that is that - it's important -- is it important to keep your language?

Emily 00:28:00

Really really interesting question. I never thought about that. I just think language is language and where I come from is, we speak Vietnamese. But I never thought about thinking about the importance a lot, but I think, yes. Because, you know, you growing up with language and I, I spout myself in Vietnamese, and I love to speak with our language. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:28:29



I'm just gonna stop for a minute. Just a second. I'll turn the light on, because I can see I'm disappearing into the darkness.

Emily 00:28:35

No problem, sir.

Interviewer 2 00:28:39

There we are. I'm back. And -- Oh, that's great. I love your answers. And you're so clear about what you're saying as well. And the last thing, do you or your family carry on any of the traditions from your home in Vietnam, in your home in Bideford, for example?

Emily 00:29:01

What is mean? Sorry, sir.

Interviewer 2 00:29:04

Are there any traditions that you carry on, you know, at certain times of the year? Are there particular say a festival that you observe? That's not observed --

Emily 00:29:14

Yes, yes. Yes. So - sounds very funny, my mum, she'll call me every night about one or two hour. She, she don't need to talk with her but even I do my own thing and then left video and she can see me. For the Vietnamese, the family is really really important. We are -- now in our family, so I am the, I am the older in my family. So but after me, I got my brother and my sister. My brother's job I think may be interesting for you. My brother's job have to look after my mum and my dad. Have to. It's mean a traditional son have to looking after Mum and Dad. And then all my mum and my dad money when they pass away comes straight to my brother, we got no complaint.

Interviewer 2 00:30:09

Right.

Emily 00:30:10

So in Viet -- so so for Vietnam, for traditional way we we have to marry with someone live near our family to be near together. So half of my family live in same town, like, like, example, that if Bideford is village, whole my family around and we got big family. So I - we got about 2-300 people in our family, Uncle, Auntie, well, all they got four or five kids and all four or five kids got -- you never remember all the names. So my wedding 500 people coming all family, that so you can how much it's big family. So we got very strong, strong family. So when my mum and my my my - when my mum and my dad older, the children need to look after. Now their job have to look after not mean like -- you got choices, yes or



no? And if you are not doing good job, and another childrens come say like, You're doing bad job, you cannot do it.

So we cap - we cap, we cap them at one week. If my mum and my fa-- my mum and my dad not very well, my brother looking like three days per week and my sister looking three days a week. I am, I am far away - I send money home to support. I said like, Okay I come out there I'm not there to support them healthy. I send some money then you guys can get that money to get someone look after or buying whatever they need to. But we we certainly[?] feel our job have to look after our fam- our family. And so there is family be together even I'm farther away My granddad and granny passed away a very long time almost 10 years so **ngam ham** is the is the day we must go and dig up the bones to be cleaned and then put them back in the grave. So they have video video video call for who in part of family live around the country or live around the world have to see it. Yeah and then after that the whole family together make make party and so in Vietnam, people dead, whole family remember they dead - dies - [unintelligible] so they can they can all make -- it's my granddad death in November the second, so whole family in around the country have to go home, the second November to meet each other to remember days of death.

Interviewer 2 00:33:17

I understand. Yeah. Yeah. Your your family is hugely important then from [what I -]

Emily 00:33:23

[Yeah.] Really traditional.

Interviewer 2 00:33:26

Yeah. Traditional as well. So that that answers the question, as well. And I've now it's going to go on to something else, if you don't mind now. This is kind of family traditions and what people might - what you think people might be thinking about them or what you've actually experienced, so - or not. So for example, do you think you've adopted or do you think as your you and your family, you know, Henry, and your husband and you. Have but have you adopted English traditions yourself? Do you think?

Emily 00:34:06

I love to. I love to. I always mean to. So I got only - I got only my son and, and I always love a baby girl. So I said with my husband, can we go to doctor's or get get baby girl? [Interviewer 2 laughs] I love it.

Interviewer 2 00:34:25

Yeah, yeah. Yeah. And then when you - if you were talking about your ident--, say I met you and we were meeting just socially or say, and I asked you about yourself, how would you describe yourself? So how would you in terms of your identity - who you are - What would you say about yourself? Who - I - who am I?

Emily 00:34:51

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Okay, who am I? I am Emily. [laughter] So. Wow, I am always been strong woman. I am. I used to in -- so I got a very difficult time when I growing up with our family. At 11 years old, I am already making money by my own. I go to market selling vegetables, go to school, everything I do myself and only one thing I I told myself, only learning can take me out of poor. Only learning can make my future getting better. So my when I were young, my family quite poor, so I had to live far away of family, and I I only be strong. I can - everyone can put me anywhere, on the road, everywhere, I can live. Because I know who I am. Only one thing with me, I am scared. But no one can know I'm scared. I am strong, more strong than who who am - I am. Yeah. And nothing can scare me.

Interviewer 2 00:36:06

That is a just fantastic, inspiring answer. If I might say. I [laugh] I'm not sure that I'm supposed to say that [Emily laughs] but it's inspiring. But -

Emily 00:36:15

Because --

Interviewer 2 00:36:16

- Going to say to you also -- Did you want to say something else? Sorry. I was going to -

Emily 00:36:22

I think, so my family think I'm, I am not lucky, because the way I grow up. But I think I am lucky to growing up on that hard way because it be what me now, I am now who I am.

Interviewer 2 00:36:37

Yeah. Oh, what an answer. It's just incredible to - when this is, you know, written down and people hear what you say. Fantastic.

Emily 00:36:47

Thank you.

Interviewer 2 00:36:48

Just to go on a little bit further. If - I think you've partly answered this question. But if somebody says to you, where are you from then? You know, what's your - what's your kind of reaction to that? Do you feel positive or do you think they're being?

Emily 00:37:07

I, I'm fine with that.

Interviewer 2 00:37:08



Yeah, yeah.

Emily 00:37:09

Yeah, I feel fine with it.

Interviewer 2 00:37:11

Yeah.

Emily 00:37:11

I will answer. If Vietnamese ask me, so if we go Vietnam and asked me, I say I come from Bideford, Devon. If English people ask me, I say I come from Vietnam.

Interviewer 2 00:37:22

Yeah, yeah.

Emily 00:37:24

Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:37:24

You've got you've got the different parts of your of your life.

Emily 00:37:28

Yes.

Interviewer 2 00:37:28

Yeah. And what and and probably, what about people? Do you - do you think you've experienced racism? Or do you? What do you understand by that? You know, do you think people have have ever been not very nice to you say, shall we say?

Emily 00:37:48

They do. Yes, yes, they do. Um, couple, not much. But I don't mind. Yeah. With with, you know, [unintelligible] and I told him with my self, people have some day good some day bad. Not mean they are horrible just because they're not good - have good time or good day. So I always told myself if people are angry to me, fine. Maybe they don't have a good day.

Interviewer 2 00:38:16

Yeah, yeah yeah. Yep.

Emily 00:38:18



I never feel sorry. I never feel bad for that because I understand human.

Interviewer 2 00:38:26

Yeah.

Emily 00:38:27

It's like that. [?]

Interviewer 2 00:38:29

Yeah, human race, and do you - so generally would you say - how do you feel? Do you -- I think you, again, you've answered this in part. But just to reinforce --

Emily 00:38:39

It does feel sad, it does feel sad. But I make myself even even happiness as I said my - Thank you, love. Or Thank you, darling. I smile, walk away.

Interviewer 2 00:38:53

Right. So you in general, you feel accepted? Would you say?

Emily 00:38:59

Well, I never say anything when people be horrible to me. I always walk away with smile and things and say thank you. Always like that. Even people try to be horrible to me, because they cannot do anything if I use that word. I have to got patient and only the walk away and nice thing and make they feel guilty. When they horrible to people and the people nice to they back.

Interviewer 2 00:39:23

Yeah.

Emily 00:39:24

If you horrible - if some people horrible to you and you horrible to, back from them, I think you're even same. So only one thing is take the nice thing to to to put on the horrible thing.

Interviewer 2 00:39:41

Yeah. And the last thing then, but would you say most people in your experience, you haven't felt that? You've you've always - have you always felt accepted and in within Bideford and in, you know, in your experience? Would you say?

Emily 00:39:58



Well, with with my job, with my job I did have someone really really difficult and they're not trying to be too horrible but it's horrible in actual - might make - I'm feel really upset and want to cry, but of course no one can make me cry apart from my parents. So as a whole they have and and as you said, Please Darling, I do not make upset you but you do you have make upset me now. I try my best. But got patient please. So that all I can say. Reckon that, I think, when I'm live here for six and a half year, I only got two to three people make a few, few like that. But it's a small. Life is like that. A lot of things more horrible outside, so I'm fine with it. [laughter]

Interviewer 2 00:40:55

Thank you very much for answering those questions, Emily. I'm going to pass you back to Rose now. She's got a few more questions for you. So I'm just going to mute but thank you very much.

Emily 00:41:05

Thank you so much. Nice to meet you.

Interviewer 2 00:41:07

And you.

Emily 00:41:08

Thank you.

Interviewer 00:41:13

Hi Emily.

Emily 00:41:15

Hi Rose.

Interviewer 00:41:15

Are you doing okay?

Emily 00:41:17

Yeah, very good. Thank you.

Interviewer 00:41:18

Yeah, lovely. I'm fascinating - fascinated listening to your story. You give very comprehensive and clear answers. It's it's great, thank you. You know, I'm really enjoying listening to your your journey here.

Emily 00:41:32

Thank you.



Interviewer 00:41:33

I've got a few more questions are you - and you're still okay?

Emily 00:41:36

Yeah, I'm good. I'm good.

Interviewer 00:41:38

Fantastic. I was just want to come back a little bit and talk about you mentioned about your family. It seems that family is very, very important to you. And you said that you missed your family back in Vietnam?

Emily 00:41:54

Yes, I do.

Interviewer 00:41:56

Yeah. Would you just tell us a little bit about, you know, missing your family and what that means for you please?

Emily 00:42:05

Oh, so what my family mean to me? [chair creaking] Parents are where their parents they are really really important, like I said night also stop by missing I'm not miss - I'm not miss -- not that I do not miss my country, I do miss my country, but my -- I'm not miss that - I, I will but my family always in my heart [?]. My family really really opened up - really all important to me. Not no word can can explain or writing for you how you feel how much you love your parents. It's difficult to say because no one can can can write that on. My mum, my mum, she's a lovely woman. She very hard work for whole her life, so so she got really really hard life. That's why I always spend a lot my time, a lot of things I can't support my, my mum. Definitely my mum for she get the [recording cuts out momentarily] and feeling happiness. I could do whatever I can do for her. So when I'm little my my my mum always amazing. She works so hard, she she take care. She she do her best for us. I always [unintelligible] what she do? In my mind now.

Interviewer 00:43:45

That's lovely, Li-- Emily, sorry. Thanks. Thank you for sharing that. You know, family - I can tell that your family is very very important and it sounds like you miss them as well. Did you say something about that your mum phones you most days or every day?

Emily 00:44:00

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Pardon? My mum, my mum call me - I'm not going well with my dad but I'm rolling [?] so well with my my mum. So my my mum calls me me every day about one or two hours to see what I am doing. So she talking everything. She said just even the the next door neighbour - chicken learning egg - how many eggs today? I know. about two two kilometre from our home someone's sick. I know. So ev- it's just like, mum update every single thing from from from the from the town where her live for [unintelligible]. Oh no, someone sick, or someone marries. Oh, just every single thing. Yeah. I know everything from [laughter] from my mum.

Interviewer 00:44:54

Sounds like it's lovely to have that link. I was very interested about that you have formed a network. I think that sound something, again, that's really really important to you to have this network where you can learn about other cultures and, and, you know, and their food and you can invite them in your home - It means an opportunity for you to also make friends. And you stress that that was important as well from your son.

Emily 00:45:21

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:45:21

It's really important for your son to learn about other cultures as well as --

Emily 00:45:25

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:45:25

-- your own. Do you want to just talk just just very briefly about that again? I was very fascinated to hear about the networking.

Emily 00:45:34

Yeah, so we we noticed that before we got quite -- I think the big big big community people is in, like, Thai. A lot of Thai people live here. I knew quite a few of them. And we got Chinese, of course. Quite quite a lot. I only know two to three of them. We got two or three Japanese, and we got, like, Malaysian, a Philippine. They needed - they live around Bideford - or Bideford, Westward Ho and Barnstaple. So we, like, before Covid, we we got like one year, two three meet meeting, like, New Year or someone's birthday, and or someone just saying like, Oh we we we cook some food, do you want to take your son and your husband come over to to have? And [unintelligible] and I bring the food we make at home and every single bring the food and drink and come to the house and we can try to different food from different country. It's lovely. It's beautiful and nice. And my husband and my son also may love it.



Interviewer 00:47:01

Wow, that's fascinating. That's amazing. You know, the - to have that network - social network for you. That's, that's amazing. Emily, do you have any hobbies?

Emily 00:47:12

I am. I have a lot of hobbies, really.

Interviewer 00:47:16

Let's talk about some of the hobbies that you that you enjoy please.

Emily 00:47:21

Oh, so hobby for me - number one is my work. So I think, because I I think I in, I in the job 16 year about beauty. To training people and also doing service. The -- Hobby for -- I think I love the doing art. So I can I draw quite good. And with all my job, I love what I do. That's all I can say. And nice to meeting with people. There's a lot of lovely lady around. Yeah. And then, and then in the weekend my hobby is go around the countryside with my husband and my son. We got like nice, now you see, we got beautiful beach around Westward Ho, view [?]. We're lucky where we live, like, very close with the beach, and if sunny you can take your kid go to beach or go to the field. One summer, so much things to do.

Interviewer 00:48:40

Thank you. So would you say that walking is a part of a is a hobby that you enjoy?

Emily 00:48:45

Yeah, yeah, yeah, we always walk - walk beyond the - what is it? I don't know the name, but on on the beach, but you have to walk very long way to the field near -- I'm sorry I just can't member - remember. I just can't think about the name. Walking is one part of my, my hobby really because we got, we we got my mother-in-law dog named Hector [?]. So every day, we will take him to walk on the different field, about [computer glitch] three miles a day. Yeah.

Interviewer 00:49:27

Excellent. Thank you for sharing that and it sounds like you really love living in Bideford and that you settled in --

Emily 00:49:36

Mmm. Very much. Yeah, I cannot move anywhere. My husband said, like, Oh, in the future can we move to Exeter? Or or or Newbury? I said no. I got enough moving. I love here now; I got friend, I got job. I don't want to move anywhere. I love here.



Interviewer 00:49:58

That's fantastic to hear. I think Dave's got some final questions for you.

Interviewer 2 00:50:04

Yeah.

Interviewer 00:50:05

Dave, have you got some final questions?

Interviewer 2 00:50:06

Yeah, just a couple. Yeah. I just wanted to ask you about - since you've been in Bideford - yeah, I don't know - I think you said around six years, however long anyway, have you seen any changes in Bideford that you can think of?

Emily 00:50:26

Yes more new house! [laughter] More new house. A lot of trees cut- that upset me because I love countryside. For the town, nothing change. The people are, I think a lot more people come from parts of different country - different area - from, like, Essex, London. A lot of people looking buy certain house down here. I am so about that because my job I chat with the client, so a lot of them because they love the area and then Devon. And then they just - well, a couple of people they found it very funny. Last year, in summer, got a family come for second time they come to Devon - and they just said I go home and sell my house now, and move down here. I said really? How can you [unintelligible] do that? And I shared with them, not not many shop around here. They said, No I can work at home with my job. I said fine. Okay. But it surprised me how people love Bideford and and Devon, because you just -- when I met a lot of tourists, they're in love with that area.

Interviewer 2 00:51:39

Yeah, yeah, yeah. And also, you've been talking to us now and you've given so much of your time this evening. It's fantastic.

Emily 00:51:52

You're welcome.

Interviewer 2 00:51:53

And is - was there anything else you want to say that we haven't said to you about coming here? The journey you've been on? You know, and, yeah, is there anything else left to say for you?

Emily 00:52:11



Well I think just be -- when I, like I said, like, Devon, I don't know where is Devon. I don't - it's a different country, different language, different culture. I scared. But down here is very friendly. Lovely people, lovely area. Much most most thing you can need in your life, nice and safe. People friendly. Nice. Everyone know everyone. That's so why the reason why I love Bideford. Love, love whole area. Because people - everyone know everyone, nice and kind people. You feel, I feel Bideford is more my home now. [Interviewer 2 hums] Now this is my home now. Definitely. And the way I love it's now my home because people around me, the area, my family here. Everything. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:53:13

That's lovely, Emily. And do you - would you say you have any hopes or fears for the future? Would you --?

Emily 00:53:23

Yeah. Well, I hope, I don't know, but I hope Bideford town getting better about about the ways council look after, like, like council tax, or the car park free for make more people come in to the town. Because sadly in a couple of year now, you know, a lot of local shop had to close because of shopping online, or a lot of thing else, it's not one thing. But I think the shopping as a town, shop, the shop town is really important. Just so the local pulled up[?] to collect people local together. To make the town feel like town, this means there is more people come in. Yeah, I love more, like, like -- it's hard to see, like, a lot of shops closing down. Because you feel sad, because when when you see a couple people closing shop, you know them, you know the customers come over for years. Yeah, I think, I hope the council or government can help and support the local business to choose - choose business people are getting more easy to build up the business. And when the business getting better, of course, we happy to pay the tax, to support back for the government, support back for the for - for the council. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:55:01

That's great. And I suppose that covers both hopes and fears in a way because you want things to get better and so on.

Emily 00:55:09

I hope so. I hope so. But it's not, not easy [thumping sound] no it's just they talk and the talking can do, you know, how to take time and have your support from a lot of people.

Interviewer 2 00:55:19

Yeah. Yeah. And the very last question. After the last question, I'll probably do something - I just want to say something -- No, I will say it now because it is important. Vietnam is a country that when I was growing up, we saw it was called the first war that was seen on television effectively.

Emily 00:55:40



Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:55:41

And your, your family, I imagine, your your parents and your grandparents -

Emily 00:55:47

Yep.

Interviewer 2 00:55:48

- must have lived through that.

Emily 00:55:49

Yeah. My father, my my father and my, my uncle and my grandfather in the war.

Interviewer 2 00:55:58

Right Yeah. Okay, I won't go into any details about that but I know that it must have had and still must have a lot of effects on the people who are alive today, who - and their families - because of -

Emily 00:55:59

Yeah. Yeah.

Interviewer 2 00:56:14

- that war Yeah, yeah. Okay. And the very last question, then. In -- This history this or, you know, oral history will be kept for people to listen for in the future. Do you have a specific or a message you'd like to say to people who might listen to you when when this is - when, you know, when we have an exhibition and people's what you said will be you know heard or or read to people - they'll be able to read things to, you know, what you said. Is there a message you have for people?

Emily 00:56:56

For my personally, I would like to say that doesn't matter where you are. Doesn't matter where you are, if you got, like -- like. Doesn't matter where you are. If you've found right area to live, right people and right job, I think, it must be fine. I'm sorry I don't I don't need I don't understand exactly what the person you mean to ask me. Is it like what I am talking with people about, what I'm feeling about a life living in Bideford or what? What I --?

Interviewer 2 00:57:46

Anything you like really, Emily. It's just a feeling - a question to ask is probably because you've told us such that this wonderful story of your and your trials and your difficulties as well as all of the good things that happened, maybe there's a kind of concluding message, something you can say at the end



to say well, look I'm here I've done all this. This is this this is what you, you know -- I've I've come to a country where I knew nobody except my partner, you know, and my and my child. And here I am. You know it sounds like -

Emily 00:58:24

I understand now. I more clearly understand. Thank you so very much. Yeah, so I am come from different country. It definitely is very different culture, different life. And I was scared. I was scared for first I come but all I can say is where I live now, I feel very lucky. With the people around me nice and kind and friendly. Doesn't matter I am Asian, they still love me. My friend, my family. I got to show off [?], I got the lovely family, I'm lucky to live in such a beautiful town and lovely area. I got more than I need. I thank God for that. And I hope who, who even want to come to, to different country or, definitely some area in the country and worry and scared of the many things, do not. Don't need - you don't try you don't know.

Interviewer 2 00:59:40

Right.

Emily 00:59:42

All the things you try and then you will know. It's good for you a lot. Keep you on the town [?]. And here I am. I got the lovely, happy life now and thank you so much for people are around me to support and helping me, to got me today.

Interviewer 2 01:00:01

And thank you and I'm sure anybody who comes and is scared or worried, and if they met you, they would soon find that they would be able to cope much better and feel more comfortable. You've been a fantastic interviewee that's what I've got to say.

Emily 01:00:19

Thank you so much.

Interviewer 2 01:00:20

Yeah. And I will leave it there and put pass you back to Rose. But thank you very much for giving your time like this. It's been a real -

Emily 01:00:29

You're welcome. Nice to meet you. Thank you very much.

Interviewer 2 01:00:33

And you.



Emily 01:00:33

Thank you. Bye, bye.

Interviewer 01:00:37

Emily, I just want to reiterate what Dave said there. It's been a fascinating interview. And thank you very much for your time. And we've really enjoyed hearing your story. Is there anything that you wanted to add? Or is that -? You didn't want to say anything else?

Emily 01:00:56

I don't know. [laughter]

Interviewer 01:00:58

There's nothing that we've missed out that you'd like to say?

Emily 01:01:04

No, not, not not. I don't think so. Yeah.

Interviewer 01:01:08

Okay. Well, I've really enjoyed hearing your story. So, you know, thank you very much. It's just been lovely and fascinating to hear. And

Emily 01:01:17

Thank you very much.

Interviewer 01:01:18

Good luck with your businesses. And just to say, you know, thank you again, and I'll be in touch very soon. To let you know more about the project and the exhibition.

Emily 01:01:29

Thank you very much. Oh, one one thing is the - is it in emails you said you want to take the picture? And so you will email me for for the days and things like that, right? Yeah, yeah.

Interviewer 01:01:44

Yeah, I've sent the dates to you, so you just need to pick one of those dates. And then we'll decide we'll go with the majority of of - for the day that we'll pick for to take the photos. Would that be something that would be of interest to you then having your photo taken?

Emily 01:02:00



Yeah, if you like, yeah, no problem. Thank you.

Interviewer 01:02:03

That would be brilliant. Yeah. Well, I'll email you and we'll sort something out for that.

Emily 01:02:08

Yeah. Thank you very much. Thank you.

Interviewer 2 01:02:11

We could take a screenshot just to as a record as well if Emily's okay with that? Just taking a photograph off the screen now. You happy to do that?

Emily 01:02:24

That's fine I'm fine with it.

Interviewer 2 01:02:26

Okay. Here we go. [camera shutter noise] There we are. I've done it.

Emily 01:02:31

Thank you.

Interviewer 2 01:02:32

And we'll send, we'll send the photographs to you and everything. I've just done one screenshot, which I'll send to Rose. And then she can send it to you.

Emily 01:02:41

Thank you.

Interviewer 2 01:02:42

Yeah, yeah.

Emily 01:02:43

Thank you. Thank you very much.

Interviewer 01:02:45

Emily, enjoy the rest of your evening. And thanks again.

Emily 01:02:49

You're welcome. Thank you very much. Thank you. Have a nice evening.

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Interviewer 01:02:53

Yeah. Dave do you want to stick on the line for a minute?

Interviewer 2 01:02:58

Yeah, yeah. And I'll just stop the recording now. Bye. Bye.