

AN ORAL HISTORY OF BREWING IN 3 LONDON BEWERIES

INTERVIEWEE Shila Singh, Accountant
DATE OF BIRTH 1969
PARENTS OCCUPATIONS retired. Formerly postmasters
INTERVIEW LOCATION Fullers Brewery, Chiswick
DATE OF INTERVIEW 23rd March 2019
INTERVIEWER Peter Dobbie SUMMARISER Chris Conway

Shila started at brewery in 1986 following helping out in the family business. She started off as a post room girl. Her job Interview took place in restaurant at meal time, and very was informal, which she later realised was a characteristic of the brewery. Shila had no previous knowledge of what a brewery did.

Describes her first day at work and finding her way around the brewery. First impressions were the noise and smell of the brewery and general level of activity. She describes the activities in the restroom where the office staff met twice a day.

Shila was the youngest person in the brewery when she started and was mothered by the other female members of staff. In those days everything was posted and the post room was upstairs so all of the post had to be transported upstairs and then around every office in the building.

She started evening classes funded by the company in finance and business and moved into the finance department. Advanced through the department with help from the company and worked her way into her current position. Without the support from the brewery Shila might not have obtained the skills and qualifications.

Talks about the use of terminology the use of cockney that she had to master. Used to be large social activity but decreased as staff live further away and the advent of drink driving and closure of other breweries

Shila stresses the family atmosphere at Fullers and how staff are mutually supportive. She describes the social activities that took place and how this element has changed over the years and the reasons for that change She describes the use of the beer token machine. Recalls the day that the beer token machine was removed, similar to a bereavement. Shila talks about some of the characters in the brewery and the recalls amusing tales from the office.

When she started there were staff from different ethnic groups and diversity amongst staff has increased. There have never been any tensions between staff. Much romance between staff and families have been involved for generations. Best thing about working in the brewery has been the people. The saddest was the announcement of the sale of the brewery to Asahi as it marked the end of an era.

Shila has loved working at the brewery from day one. Without the support from the brewery in terms of her personal development Shila is not certain that she would have been able to pursue her career path.