

Education and Work

Little importance was attached to academic achievement in the early days, as finding and maintaining a job was relatively easy and a lack of formal qualifications didn't serve as a barrier to gaining **employment**.

“Well my dad was- I think expectations were fairly low, although there was loads of work. The one thing was- well loads of my mates- well I've got a few qualifications, but most of my mates got nothing. But there wasn't that drive, there was loads of work, the idea of being out of work was just something that was in the past. There was no unemployment and jobs were two-a-penny.”

“Well I started scrubbing the floors at fourteen, doing all the dirty jobs, when I left to have my son, um, and I was twenty-five then, um, I was managing it, so yeah”.

“But um, yeah, so they, they took their A Levels at the school and done quite well actually. Cause me son went into banking and the other went into British Telecom... You didn't go to university all that much in those days, you know what I mean? You didn't-, people just didn't do it”

Helicopter airlifting a car flying past the Ford plant in Dagenham in 1970



The **Ford** Company which launched its Dagenham factory in 1929, was a major employer for people living in Dagenham, and further afield. For example many people from **Ireland** came to work at the company

“Well, I don't know who's living in that part of the estate now. In those days, it was working class, many people there worked at **Ford** motor works, very many people there, in all kind of capacities - making cars, painting, man next door was a painter for instance”

Ford Motor Company plant- The last Ford Cortina, being produced.



“Because of Dagenham, well Ford's of Dagenham, many people from Cork, Irish people from Cork came over to Dagenham to work in **Ford's** and so that's why there is a- was, I don't know what it's like now, but there was a big Roman Catholic presence in Becontree”.