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- typographical errors;
- comments being attributed to the wrong person;
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- instances where the transcriber completely misunderstood what was being said, and writing something wholly incorrect.

Where the GLA has identified genuine errors in the transcription when compared to the audio recording, we have made corrections to these transcripts using “tracked-changes”.

In each case, the corrected text is shown in the margins of the page and is accompanied by a brief explanation for that correction.

The GLA has taken this approach to ensure both the corrections and original text are available, and so we can balance our legal obligations under the EIR with our duty to help ensure accurate information is released in respect of the individuals interviewed as part of the Garden Bridge Review.

In some case, the parties interviewed have asked the GLA to include certain comments regarding their comments to help provide some clarification about what they were intending to convey. Again, these are clearly marked on the transcripts.

Please note however, the transcript may, despite our best endeavours, contain errors due the transcription process itself.

Garden Bridge Review
Meeting transcript

Event: MH/ Joanna Lumley

Date: 1 December 2016

*Present: Dame Margaret Hodge MP
Joanna Lumley
Bee Emmott
Claire Hamilton*

DAME MARGARET HODGE (MH):

Thank you so much for coming. Let me just make my terms of reference clear to you. I'm not looking at is the bridge a good idea or a bad idea.

JOANNA LUMLEY (JL): No, no.

MH: I'm looking at value for money and whether proper procedures were followed.

JL: I wanted Bee to write down anything that I can't answer on the dot. Can I do something really, really cheeky, which is to just do the very, very beginning of the bridge, not good or bad idea but just how it started?

MH: Yes, I would like to hear that because I've heard lots of things.

JL: I think that's important otherwise you won't know and it's important that you have all the information.

MH: Yes.

JL: After the Princess of Wales died there was a competition for a memorial, what was it going to be, and everybody thought of everything under the sun. Because I'd always loved bridges and have drawn them all through my life and everything, I'd always thought of a bridge as something pretty special and pretty spectacular. So I thought, "A bridge".

Originally I thought of it as a built bridge, a London bridge, with architects each taking a slice each and making shops and restaurants and things. Fabulous. That was out of the window, bang. Health and safety wouldn't have it. Then I thought of this idea of a garden bridge where you walk on to it but can't see across because it's just trees and stuff planted, wandering paths, but it's useful. I thought that the memorial must be something useful for London and spectacular for the Princess. I thought it must be essentially useful for Londoners but memorable. So we put it into the competition and we came second.

MH: You put it into the competition? Were you doing it with Thomas?

JL: No, no, this is far before. This is far before. And I only brought this so just that you have sight of -- This was -- for instance, this is 1999, "Lumley calls for river tribute to Princess". This is how they make up an idea of what a bridge would be like, so this was no design. It was just somebody showing where the bridge would be.

Originally I'd put it where the big London Eye is and so it went down from Horse Guards across to the London Eye. Then because I was part of promoting the London Eye and opening the London Eye, I realised that to land on the London Eye would be almost impossible because there would be so much there and the Dutch garden designer who was doing all that ...

So I went and walked up and down, taking photographs of the Thames from both sides and studying maps and things like this and relocated it in my mind and wrote back to all my supporters, who were a fantastic list of people. Anyway, so I walked up and down and saw the place where I thought it would be better to serve people using it, because bridges must be for people to walk across. If people aren't walking there they're not going to cross it.

So I then located this new place, said to all my supporters who were English Heritage and Arts Council and John Egan of the South Bank and all these people like this -- and I was also at the same time a governor of the South Bank. I took it to Ken Livingstone, who was Mayor of London then, and he said, "It's fabulous".

I had to raise money for it and I wanted to use the name Diana because it was going to be called the Diana Bridge. The Diana Memorial Trust said I may not use her name in raising the money for this bridge. So that was a bit of a bummer because I could have raised the money in two dinners in America and the lottery. I went to Camelot and said, "Could you have one lottery because I don't think that would be a bad idea and we'll get the thing done?"

Anyway, so eventually it went in, no drawings, but the idea went in. It came second to the round water feature which won. I put it all aside but so far I'd set up a trust, I'd paid for all this myself. Chancellor's office you've got here, went to see Gordon because he was the chairman of the Diana thing. Everything is there, stuff is there, Elliott Bernerd, all these people, stuff here, everything. I've left half of it -- Iain Tuckett, Coin Street, went to see Iain in those days.

MH: You went to see him then?

JL: Oh god, yes, absolutely. Port of London Authority, the councils, did presentations, did all those, but that was then. This is one tenth of what I've got in suitcases at home. I took it and kept it there and I thought so many people adored it, so many people were thrilled and all the people writing -- this is one of the newspapers which was going, "Yeah". I addressed the Royal Institution of Engineering. I did everything and it went.

So I kept it, kept it, kept it. At the very end of it I'd met, through Terence Conran, Thomas Heatherwick who said, "This sounds fantastic". I said, "It is fantastic" and Terence Conran said, "If ever you want this bridge built, this is the boy who should design it". It goes back into the cupboard; nothing happens. Every year I get a Christmas card from Thomas, the ones he used to make himself, which were just works of art, which I've kept all of those, "Dear Joanna, Love Thomas" because we'd met.

Then suddenly in 2012 I get a call here from Thomas Heatherwick which says, "Shall we talk about your bridge? There's an idea that maybe there is a footbridge being planned in London. Can we talk about it?" So he'd got wind of it. Somebody had said, either Transport for London, because Thomas had done all those buses, "What can this brilliant boy do next?" the Leonardo da Vinci, as Conran called him, of our day, and so presumably that's how it happened. Anyway, the only reason Thomas would have

come to me was connected with the bridge. So we thought this would be fantastic. We talked about it; nothing happened. Not nothing happened but time went by, time went by.

The next thing I see here is the fourth plinth. I do stuff for London. I love it. So, whichever mayor asks me to do stuff I do it. I unveiled the fourth statue plinth. None of this matters to you but I'm a Londoner and I live in Lambeth and I do stuff for London all the time.

This is the Boris myth. I sat for Boris's mother, who is a painter, who painted me for The Breaking of Bumbo in 1971. At that time there were children creeping about on the floor so I said I must have met Boris when he was a child. This has turned into he was my childhood friend. I was a grownup actress being painted by his mother, so this is an awful myth. I don't know Boris. I've met him now.

However, Thomas and I, when later on he said, "I think we've got to take this idea to the Mayor's office". Our first meeting was with Isabel Dedring and Sir Edward Lister.

MH: So you'd met them before you met -- you wrote to Boris, didn't you?

JL: Yes. I wrote to him. The Mayor's meeting, Isabel Dedring at 12 o'clock with Ed Lister and Thomas Heatherwick. I've got another meeting before then. Where is this one? You have to understand I was trying to get all these dug out of my cupboard.

MH: Yes, I think it is about then. What I've got is you wrote to Boris after the election and then you went to see and you had a meeting with Isabel and Ed. That's what I think.

JL: No, I wrote to Boris after. Because I'd done something for him and I nearly broke my back trying to do a photograph with him on the South Bank for recycled furniture. It was one of the Mayor's charities and he sent me a bunch of flowers. I wrote back and thanked him for the bunch of flowers, which I notice went into the papers as if he sends me flowers. Anyway, it doesn't matter. It makes me enraged because people are implying that we're some old mates. Anyway, we went to see Ed and Isabel and they said, "Come back and let's talk to the Mayor about it later on". Then Thomas and I wrote to the Mayor and said, "Please consider this idea if it's to be a bridge".

We went along and the Mayor had asked us to look at a site between Battersea and Pimlico. So we went down there, dutifully, and looked at it and there was not one single human being there. I said if we were going to put a bridge there it would be just a complete waste of time. Nobody needed from Pimlico to go to Nine Elms or vice versa. There were no shops in Pimlico. There was no reason for a crossing there. A cycle path perhaps but not a pedestrian bridge.

I said to Thomas, "Come and see my old idea, Aldwych, to complete the Aldwych", because I changed it from Horse Guards to the Aldwych. I took him there. We walked, we took photographs, we took photographs down Arundel Street looking straight across. We went across then to the other side, to the patch of Coin Street-owned

grass in front of ITV Studios, which I know well because it's where the fans stick their autograph books through the thing. There was not a human being on it on this bright sunny Sunday, people walking up and down. We looked at it, we looked across the river, and we said this would be a brilliant place because people who want to get from the South Bank culture hub across through Aldwych to the culture hub up there, people who want to come from Waterloo station and walk to their offices in Holborn, ... it doesn't matter where you say, this crossing will be used by people. Then I had this balance of it going transport, footbridge, transport, which can be train or cars, footbridge. So that's how it goes now, these footbridges are crossed by London things. So Thomas agreed that this would be a sensational place, added to which it's going to be pretty daring. This was years before the High Line.

MH: Before High Line?

JL: Yes. That wasn't until 2007. This is 1999 that I dreamt it up and then this was now 2012 by which time the High Line had started. High Line, of course, came much after the French one which is the thing round Paris. So this was obviously in the air, elevated gardens. Ours was different because instead of converting an existing thing it was a new build and anyway I'd had this idea long, long before. It doesn't matter. The High Line gave us a great deal of confidence because it was fought like mad. Everybody said, "This is a disaster, blow it up, build glasshouses on top, turn it into a shopping centre, do this, do that". The boys said, "Make it a garden, make it a garden, it will work" and they fought, fought, fought, those two boys, and they got it. So we've always been in touch with them.

MH: The boys being Thomas ...

JL: No, the two American boys who did the High Line. And they've written a fabulous book about it and Thomas has met them often. I've never met them but have conversed.

MH: It is a slightly different.

JL: It's sensational. It's an old railway bridge.

MH: Is it a bridge or is it a viaduct?

JL: Sorry, it's raised, it's an elevated railway section, which had gone to drug users and things. You can walk on it, it winds away, and see the city from a different height and they've extended it when they've got more money to use up bits of it. I think they've completed it now. Last time I was there I walked it again and it's terrific.

MH: I haven't seen it.

Bee Emmott (BE):
It is amazing.

JL: It's terrific and it's a huge hit. It's a huge hit because it's peaceful and it's in the middle of a buzzing city and it works. That's beside the point. They just gave us useful advice. We said, "What do we do about night-time?" and they said, "Shut it. Shut it between 12.00 and 6.00 or you'll get hobos sleeping there, you'll get drug users, it'll be unsafe in the morning. Also you've got to keep it clean and tidy". So we took messages from this. We took messages from the London parks, "What shall we do about it?" and they said, "Shut it like the London parks shut, get it clean, get it tidy, get it safe". So we've taken a lot of stuff from other people.

MH: And cycling?

JL: That was me. I take all the blame for that. How can you walk peacefully with little babies walking with cyclists doing this? If you wanted to build a different thing, which is a cycle track underneath it, you'll have to build the bridge much higher because of the tidal reach, which is 16, 17, 20 feet in some parts, and the scar of the Thames, which if you want to know about slugs and water-living insects and the scar of the Thames, please, go ahead, because I had to do all that. To have clearance at high water for boats to go underneath, it would have elevated it up to there, so either you have the cycle path on the same thing or you make it too wide to be tenable or you put it underneath it, which is impossible. So if you want a cycle path you can use, guess what, Waterloo Bridge or Blackfriars Bridge, all of which have cycle paths on. Also, you're not allowed to cycle on the South Bank so why would you take your bike down there to be affronted?

BE: They do actually

JL: Well, they shouldn't. They're not allowed to.

MH: Are they not allowed to?

BE: They're not allowed to. Everyone does but they're not allowed to.

JL: And lots of people bicycling and they're not allowed to, because nobody stops cyclists doing anything.

MH: Yes. I didn't know.

JL: So they could take their bikes down there and take them all up there and wheel them across there and wheel them down there, but it's not a cycle bridge anyway.

MH: Why did you decide not to put the lift going right down to the Underground. Why does the lift not go down to the Underground?

JL: Transport for London, I don't know. Maybe a question for them.

BE: Yes, it possibly is a question for them. That was led by the transport requirements that we had to provide in terms of making it fully accessible.

MH: So you can't go straight from Temple tube?

BE: Temple tube station, there is a ramp and then there's a lift to take you on to the bridge.

MH: Whereas you could have gone straight from the Underground up to the top.

JL: Yes, we should have done. They weren't allowed to.

BE: And it cost us a lot of money to do that because Temple station is actually quite small, so the capacity of the station to still function while it has increased usage and so on.

MH: So it was really cost more than problems?

BE: I think it was costs but I think it was very much led by what Transport for London wanted us to do from a transport perspective.

E: And on the other side it goes all the way down.

MH: Yes, okay.

JL: I wish you'd seen my original drawings. I spared you the horror of looking at these original scribbles. But, look, here you can see where we had the original bridge crossing and where I've then located here to here, although I'd moved it. I didn't think of Temple tube station roof. I thought of it coming from originally Arundel Street elevated going across, but that wasn't allowed.

Anyway, I did presentations. You don't need to know this. This is the people who we had on my supporters group, who were interesting, and that was just me, because I know nothing. I'm not a politician and I'm not a businesswoman. So I just put together that group of people who were the supporters.

MH: I know most of them. It's awful, I know most of them.

JL: Yes, of course, you do. Here's another scribbled page on another script.

MH: This is -- she died in 1997, didn't she?

JL: Who did?

MH: Diana.

JL: 1997 and I thought up this in 1998 and then 1999 coming along. That's all that, so that's all that.

MH: Boris was the first one to really say, "I like the idea, go away and develop it"?

JL: Well I came to this slightly later on because as far as I could see Transport for London were going to be building some more bridges of which this was to be one. I understand they've got 11 in the pipeline. Did you know that? Of course you knew that but I didn't know that.

MH: I have to say to you, Joanna, as you read through, one of the arguments is that it wasn't originally in any of the plans. Vauxhall was and that, of course, hit the buffers but this one wasn't.

JL: Wasn't what?

MH: In any plan.

JL: I'm sure it wasn't.

MH: What I'm trying to get at is I think, from what I read and I don't know whether you accept this, is that you just convinced Boris that it was a good idea.

JL: The Garden Bridge? The notion that it was a garden bridge I convinced, not a pedestrian bridge because we were asked to build a pedestrian bridge down at Vauxhall and Pimlico.

MH: Okay, so you always thought of it as a garden bridge, so that then leads me to ask why on earth when the tender went out did it call it a pedestrian bridge?

BE: The original tender was for a pedestrian bridge and it didn't specify a garden and it didn't specify a location, and Thomas Heatherwick entered the Garden Bridge, which was Joanna's idea.

MH: Take me through it. This is the process thing.

JL: What do you want, dates?

MH: No. As I understand from the paperwork I've seen, and this is just confirming, you wrote to Boris after the election saying, "Please now get on and do a garden bridge".

JL: "Please may we come and see you and offer this idea."

MH: Yes, and then you went to see Isabel and Ed who I assume had been told by Boris --

JL: I rang up the office and made the appointment because I'd worked for Boris. I'd opened the plinth for him, not with him personally but from his office. You look in the telephone directory. You look it up, dial the Mayor's office and make an appointment.

MH: Well, you wanted your bridge. You wanted your bridge.

JL: No. I wanted a meeting with Boris. Oh, did I want the bridge? I'd been dreaming about the bridge because I think a bridge is a beautiful thing. Now, that's beside the point. You can hate the bridge, and I know you're not interested in whether you think it's a nice thing or not because you've said that, you're not interested in that.

[REDACTED]

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MH: [REDACTED]

JL: [REDACTED]

MH: I have no idea, but anyway that's slightly outside my terms of reference.

JL: [REDACTED]

MH: I haven't actually talked to Sadiq. I've done it through ... who are the guys who commissioned me? I can't remember.

CH: David Bellamy.

MH: Yes, David Bellamy. I haven't even talked to Sadiq about it. I think I had an exchange of texts or something, "Would you be interested and will you come in and talk?"

JL: But, you see, I don't know David terribly well. So for him to phone me up and say this seems --

MH: I don't know what that is about.

JL: You don't think it happened?

MH: I wasn't that close to the London Mayor. I never heard that, never heard that.

JL: But it's important, isn't it?

MH: I never heard that. So let me check, so you went in just to see Ed and --

JL: I tried to put on a full 100 watt mega charm offensive.

MH: Did you deal more with Isabel or with Ed?

JL: They were both there at the meeting. Did we deal more with her? Did she answer the telephone more than him, through her aides and things like this? Were we put on to Isabel more? I don't know. I wasn't party to all the setting up of the following meetings, some of which were at Thomas's studio, there were meetings all over the place but they were all down here.

MH: I don't know how many meetings there were, it doesn't matter, but there were meetings. So what we've cleared up is you took the cycling bit out of it.

JL: No, no, I didn't take it out. It was called pedestrian; it was a pedestrian bridge, not a cycling bridge. There was no question of it being a cycling bridge. It was a pedestrian bridge.

MH: So what was the discussion? So, having encouraged whoever it was, Boris, Ed or Isabel or all three of them, that this was a good idea, they then instructed, one assumes TfL et al to start doing a design, to start progressing the project really, and then the first thing they do is the design. This is the process, so this is where I do come in because it's a process. So it looks to me like by then you, Heatherwick, what are they called, Arup and Mace had all done quite --

JL: Mace?

MH: The construction people, Mace the builders.

JL: I didn't know Mace but I knew Arup, of course. All this had gone to Arup the first time anyway.

MH: Well, it looks as if you'd all had quite a lot of work on it.

JL: Well, no, I don't think so. I don't think Thomas had even designed the bridge.

MH: Well, he'd built a model.

JL: Had he by then?

MH: I think so, unless I've got my timing wrong.

CH: I'd need to check back on the notes of that meeting.

MH: I think he'd built a model by then but we will check.

CH: No, you're right. He said in his letter to you yesterday actually that between September 2012 and March 2013 he had done development of concept design, site research and produced a model, so that's before the tender.

JL: Well, if you tender for something you've got to put something on the table, haven't you, or can you tender an idea like I did, rather weakly?

MH: Well, that's one of the questions I've got to look at: what were they tendering?

JL: Well, tendering is something that people can look at and say, "Is this a good idea?"

BE: Architects often invest a huge amount of time and their own resources.

MH: No, because the original tender was to develop a concept and then it went on to the Arup tender, which was to put meat on the bones. To look at the engineering and all that stuff.

BE: See how it would be built.

MH: So the original tender was a concept tender and by that time you were also an associate with Heatherwick, I gather.

JL: Yes. Because I realised people didn't understand what a garden bridge or a green bridge or a living bridge would be, in the olden days I had made -- in 1999, from Lez Brotherston who is a great stage designer, his assistant, Stefan, made me, I said, "Model it on Lambeth Bridge. It doesn't matter. Make a bridge, clad it in Lalique-y glass stuff [which is what I always thought would be divine, a glass bridge] stick some trees on it so that when you sit down at one end and look like that you can't see across it". I then carried that about. I've got it in the attic at home. I carried this metre-long thing around to every meeting I went to and put it on the table. I made it. Nobody asked me to make it. I made it so that people could understand what a garden bridge was.

That's probably why people have to make something for a tender because otherwise people literally don't know. Iain Tuckett said, "You mean with grass growing along the side of it?" You go, "No, with trees going across" but people who haven't got that can't imagine that, so I just wanted to say that.

I wasn't an associate but that's a word. What Thomas wanted to do is he knew that he was going to be putting it forward and he knew that this was my idea. He thought that if he didn't acknowledge me somehow I wouldn't be part of it. I wanted very much to be part of it if it was going to be a success, which is why I'm a trustee. You probably think I'm a flaky trustee. I know that you criticised some of our trustees and I can see that I'm easily the lightest weight but the truth is it was my idea and I've done quite a lot of work on it.

MH: I don't think I've suggested that at all.

JL: Trying to find out from people, taxi drivers, people in bus queues and things, I've stopped doing it now but in the old days I'd say, "What do you think, what do you

think?" Everybody was mad about it. So I became connected with it. It was my idea, it's my baby, and you say, "Did you want your baby?" and you go, "Yes". Why else would I fight for something as lovely as this? I'm not doing it because I think there is a prize in it, I'm not doing it because there is money in it. I set up the whole first thing, which vanished away, and this time I know it's only £100,000 but that's what I've put into it. You don't receive even a bus fare in our position, so it's not really for money.

MH: Just for the record, you never got money from Heatherwick?

JL: Never. Never, never, never. That was a word; "associate" meant because we dreamt up the idea.

BE: And that has been confirmed in writing back in the day because as a charity we wanted to understand what that relationship was.

JL: I don't get money from anybody.

BE: So we've got a document between Heatherwick and Joanna that says this is just a term used for recognition of your idea, so Heatherwick had provided it.

MH: Okay. And take me through, I don't know how deeply involved you were, was that tender -- did you see the document? There is a document that formed the basis of how they went forward. Did they share that with you? Do you remember that at all? Do you remember that?

JL: I've got to read it to see.

MH: That may not be the final version of it. There were lots of versions of it.

JL: Who was this sent to? Where did you get it? Did somebody give it to you?

MH: It was a briefing document for a meeting with the Mayor.

CH: Yes, that was an internal TfL document and it has been released under FOI.

JL: It's a briefing note, TfL planning, legal and finance. It wouldn't have come to me, would it, if it's legal and financial?

MH: It looks as if it might have been shared with you or with Thomas at some point.

JL: Why?

MH: Well, that's one of the things that I'm trying to find out.

JL: No, I've never seen this. Thomas H led approach TfL support." I don't know what OJEU is.

MH: That's the European procurement process.

JL: I've never seen this. I've got to say I read plenty but as this is clearly not anything I could have any influence over.

MH: Well, it may have been shared with Thomas.

JL: It says TH in there but not JL.

MH: Because what is then up for question is Thomas got the original design tender. I don't know whether you've got a perspective on this at all. It may be that you had absolutely nothing to do with it, that they decided then to go out to develop the concept and they gave a design contract to Thomas who had been working on it with you and others.

JL: No, he hadn't worked on the concept with me. He hadn't worked on the design with me.

MH: Well, he had developed, as we've now established, a prototype, he'd developed a model.

JL: Sure, but he worked in the studio on that, not with me. I wasn't there in the studio working with him.

MH: So you weren't part of that?

JL: No. Again, I've less time --

MH: But when he put the tender document in and I haven't got it --

JL: He put my name in as associate because it was my idea. Don't you see I brought it to him, I brought the idea of a garden bridge.

MH: But as he was developing that he didn't really discuss that with you?

JL: No, except one thing --

MH: What I'm trying to see is: was that a fair competition or wasn't it? That is the question I'm asking.

JL: I wouldn't know that because I wasn't any part of the competition. My contribution was the idea of a garden bridge. All I'd ever said to Thomas is that the two pillars, mustn't from the air look like a bra or a pair of glasses, ie it mustn't look seductive. It must be slim and beautifully done and also that you mustn't see it across. I had a third thing which they've taken no notice of, which is at Christmas it must have a Christmas tree on it.

MH: Did you think about -- talking about the view, again, would it interfere --

JL: Yes, if you stand here you won't be able to see St Paul's Cathedral. Do you know what? Can't see St Paul's Cathedral from here. If you got up on to the bridge you'll see views of St Paul's Cathedral that you can't even believe. Added to which, I take comfort from the fact that when St Paul's was built London went mad with rage and said, "Take this filthy building down".

MH: It's a bit like St Pancras.

JL: Exactly, it's a bit like the Eye.

MH: I still don't like the Eye actually, I'm afraid. I don't like it. It's not my cup of tea.

JL: Well, anyway, London builds and London changes. But I thought that this was such a darling thing. When I look at what is going up in London, with my heart leaping, because you think this is a busy vibrant city, how people have suddenly turned their venom on to this little green bridge.

MH: Let me just ask you another question. When did you talk to Coin Street?

JL: Secondly or the first time? I spoke to Iain Tuckett the first time.

MH: You spoke to them in 1999?

JL: 1999, yes.

MH: I think local people will say the first they heard about it was when the planning application went in.

JL: No, we went to Coin Street, Thomas and I. I've got to try to find this meeting and --

MH: Is this with man who runs Coin Street, was it?

JL: Iain Tuckett. We went there and we did a presentation to the board. The board at that meeting said, "I wish we were walking across the bridge now tonight. I wish we had champagne."

MH: When was that? Can you find that?

JL: I'm trying to find it. So here we are, 18 December 2012, 11.30, Iain Tuckett and George Nicholson --

BE: He's a board member, a founding board member.

MH: George Nicholson, the old GLC member?

BE: Yes, I think it is the same. I think it's the same George Nicholson.

JL: Here we are on 17 December, Isabel Dedring, Ed Lister, City Hall. Is it called City Hall or is it called County Hall? It doesn't matter. That was in 2012. Ed Lister at Heatherwick studios with Martin Scholar and Peter Hendy.

MH: When did the tender go out? March or April, something round there, wasn't it?

CH: February it went out and March was the deadline.

MH: Right, went out February.

JL: Westminster Borough, Philippa Roe, City Hall, Victoria Street.

MH: So that February meeting you had with Peter Hendy...?

JL: That is 31 January 2013.

MH: And then it went out --

CH: In February.

MH: And then when was your next meeting with Peter Hendy and that lot or Isabel after your 31 January one?

JL: Coin Street with bridge. That was 16 March 2013.

MH: And that was the board?

JL: That was the board.

MH: During February you didn't have another meeting with the GLA, with the Mayor's office or anybody there?

JL: I would have marked it. I work and film and I'm never here. I tried to do this because I knew how important it was. Bridge filming here, James plus B.E. I'm still writing your name politely down, because this was before we -- and I've also got a bit where I put in a pink thing where we went and saw Heatherwick studios to meet with Thomas and Dan Pearson. This is April 2013.

MH: By then the contract had been let, hadn't it?

JL: Bridge news, 15 April, bridge news from Thomas, 2013, 15 April. It doesn't say what the bridge news is but I put sparkles round it which means that it must be some good news.

BE: Won the tender presumably round then.

JL: We'd won the tender?

MH: No, you won it in March.

JL: Well then something must have been delayed, the finalities, because I wouldn't have put sparkles round it.

MH: "TfL launches a procurement exercise for technical design services April." So that was when they brought Arup on board. They launched the procurement in April. March they appointed Heatherwick as design advisor; April they did a procurement exercise.

JL: Well, that is the day that he rang me with some good news. I've got more meetings there, I've got more meetings here.

MH: With Isabel, mainly with Isabel?

JL: No, no, these are all to do with now trying to meet with Lord Davies to get people on the board.

MH: The trust was established in ...

BE: November 2013.

MH: Right. Let me just go back to -- I think the questions that are really being asked is around how Heatherwick got the thing and how Arup got it.

JL: I might be the wrong person because I'm not at the studio. I know I'm called an associate but we've cleared up why that is. He just wanted to credit me with the idea.

MH: Yes.

JL: So I wasn't a party to any of this part of it, so I can't help you on that.

MH: Yes, and Arup likewise?

JL: Well, Arup were old pals because, of course, I'd worked with them on the first bridge and they'd supported me all the way through that.

MH: Pro bono? They'd done it --

JL: Of course, because they wanted to be part of it.

MH: Yes, they wanted to be part of the building. Okay. And Mace you never came across?

JL: No.

MH: Okay. I think that was Thomas probably dealt with them. Can I just ask a little bit about the private funding? Did you want to ask something?

CH: I just wanted to clarify, when you say the first bridge, do you mean when you were first looking at the idea in 1998?

JL: Sorry, when I first had the idea, yes.

MH: Just going to the funding of it. That's the value for money side from the public sector. Just take me a little bit through that because there you are involved as a trustee and --

JL: Yes. I've talked to Bee about this. I don't ever remember asking anybody in the Mayor's office or Transport for London or the government. I don't remember us asking for money, so I remember them making an award. We had this private donation from what we call the family, because they want to remain anonymous.

And they had proposed, although they have now unproposed, £30 million. Obviously that figure caught the imagination of Transport for London, government through the Mayor's office or whatever it was.

MH: They proposed £30 million, the family, that they would give?

BE: Not just to the operations, to the project.

JL: And they wanted to be anonymous but they felt that it would be a beautiful thing in London and they wanted to set up a bridge. That obviously was the reason why that figure stuck as a figure that could be a matched contribution. That's all I can think of. I know nothing about anybody asking it or them proposing it or volunteering it.

MH: But now as a trustee you've lost £15 million of commitment, haven't you?

JL: Have we lost it?

BE: Yes. The two funders that we spoke about at the last meeting.

MH: That has gone and, again, if you look at -- so from the public money investment side of things, I just wondered whether you have a view on whether you feel you can raise it, whether you would raise it.

JL: Well, I have to say that the delays we're going through and the bad press we're getting is no help at all. We should be fundraising now but we can't fundraise while we're being investigated. We don't know how long the investigation is going on for.

MH: Has the Charity Commission come back to you?

JL: God, yes.

MH: They have?

BE: They haven't published their report but they've given their findings to us and they're due to publish the report any minute now.

MH: And that's okay, is it?

BE: It's perfect, yes.

JL: He came to give a presentation and he just said, "You are five star, top of the class ever of any charity". He was fabulous but, anyway, we're not allowed to say that and it's going to be written and sent out. I just wanted you to know that.

BE: It went to their committee on 16 November and they said it would be out at this time.

JL: Squeaky, squeaky clean but of course the press, "Oh, they're being investigated by the Charity Commission" and that slant makes people think, "Oh, maybe they're all suspect". The fact that he came out saying, "It's the best run charity I've ever seen", that's never published. So that's a bit difficult.

So, anyway, investigations like yours, which are absolutely right, people go, "Oh, they're being investigated. The word 'investigate' means something has gone adrift". So we're stuck now, unable to fundraise, with the slur coming in, a slur going, "Maybe they're all shits and have been taking money or paying themselves or doing dodgy deals or something". And then people who have had their money waiting to be drawn down are going, "Are you going to use the money? You're a charitable organisation. Maybe if you're not going to use it we'll move it to somewhere else". So we're a little bit stuck.

Lambeth as you'll remember, halfway through, they'd given us planning permission and suddenly they took the planning permission away again. We're going, "Of course we've started. You gave us planning permission".

MH: And Coin Street?

JL: Well, we've got to be kind and beloved about Coin Street and I couldn't admire them more. I've known about Coin Street since they started but the fact is they've got some very vociferous critics who, of course, the press adore. I've worked with the press, as you have, all our lives and we know that the press would much rather have a bunch of people saying, "This will kill babies" than, "This is just ..."

MH: Have you made any advance with Coin Street? Probably not since we last met.

BE: Yes, we've made quite a lot of progress. We had a meeting with our chairman and Scott Rice who is the chairman of Coin Street, which was about a week ago. I think it was last Tuesday, which was after we saw you actually, and they've committed to try and conclude the deal by the middle of December, which is the deadline we've given

them. So we've got a workshop in the diary on 2 December, which should be all the outstanding things.

MH: Are you optimistic about that?

BE: So far the messaging is what we want to hear, so I can only go on what they've told is, which is they believe it's achievable to do a deal in that timeframe.

JL: Coin Street wanted this very, very much bigger building on the South Bank, which means we cut down far more trees, but now there are notices tied all round the trees saying we are murdering the trees and yet Coin Street have insisted on the size of this building which we've got to pay them money for and they want the thing. We understand this deal but the fact that we're taking the flak for a much bigger building, cutting down far more trees. I can understand Coin Street hating the idea of more people on their patch but we live in London. All of us have got our skylines desecrated, our roads shot to pieces. This is called living in London, so I'm anxious that they aren't the only voices heard.

I'm anxious that Londoners, walkers particularly, people who can't afford a bicycle or a car, might not even be able to afford a bus fare, can walk across the bridge. A lot has been done for cyclists and nothing really has done for pedestrians except enormous patches for tourists. This is for Londoners. This is for Londoners and it's so strange, Dame Margaret, that something that I dreamed of almost calling the people's bridge, because it would be funded by the very rich for people who have nothing, for perpetuity, for people, has suddenly been turned round into the toffs bridge, and you go, "Where did this happen?"

So it's so odd and ... anyway, it doesn't matter. Whine, whine, whine. I've been told not to whine to you and I'm not going to but you suddenly feel the injustice and you go, "This is the people's bridge for the people, a thing of utter beauty".

MH: The issue which the current Mayor is going to think -- you've got the costs have gone up and at the moment the money you've managed to raise is down. I accept that there are problems with the inquiries, but I just want to hear from you your view on whether --

JL: If the inquiry stopped tomorrow we'd have a chance. If the inquiry goes on for six months we haven't a hope in hell and we will have been, which I've warned the board about -- I said if we're going to be killed it will be by a cushion over our face in the dark and not a fingerprint on our neck. We will be stifled of funds. We won't be able to progress and people can go, "What a shame".

MH: Are there people sitting there in the wings? You haven't really started. You've got £2 million is your first bit, is that actually in blood or is that --

BE: We're in negotiation on that. It's not signed yet.

MH: Not signed yet.

JL: Shall I tell you a wish list and then I'm going to leave you, literally leave you? The wish list is that the Mayor says, "Let's do it". The government says, "Let's make this work. This is the people's bridge. Let's build it. Let's put trees and plants and flowers and god's gift to the world on this gorgeous little bridge where you can climb up and see the finest Waterloo sunset on one side and St Paul's Cathedral gleaming on the other side, free and open to everybody, for ever and ever. Let's make it work". What is awful is people going, "Well ..." So we've got to either be killed or fly, but there's something about this uneasiness and people coming up to me and going, "What's happening to the Garden Bridge?" Three years ago we were getting, "Yay" and now it's, "Well, what's happened to it?"

So I long for you to do me one tiny thing and that's to ask the Mayor, who I've never met and have admired so much, whether he did promise to kill the Garden Bridge. I've got to know that for my heart, for my own transparency. I can't bear the thought that Labour potential candidates were told that they would kill it.

MH: That is news to me.

JL: There were five points that they had to accede to.

MH: That's news to me. But you haven't really answered: do you think in the current climate that you can raise the money?

JL: That we can get it? If there was, "The Garden Bridge is happening", yes. If we're never released from this shade until eventually in April of next year --

MH: And the other thing you've got to accept that public opinion has shifted from when you had your original --

JL: No wonder because they say it's a chumocracy, that I'm a toff, I'm a childhood friend - 25 years older than him - of Boris, that we're all toffs with posh voices.

BE: I think when there weren't the reviews and the politics around, it was just government and the Mayor supported the project, that's when we had the most success fundraising, making progress on everything. But as soon as you start throwing an inquiry, a review, the Mayor has apparently supported commissioning a review, it makes even your supporters say, "Well, what's that? They're commissioning reviews. Is there something wrong?"

JL: What's happening? Is it bad? People are on fire from the Kids Company thing. I backed Camila. I still back her. I've just sent her some more money for something.

MH: No, she did good stuff.

JL: She was a brave girl and she got mud slung at her and everybody now people, as a term of condemnation, say "Kids Company". She did more for children than most people in their entire lifetime, she did in a day. So anyway, that's beside the point.

MH: Okay.

JL: We want, please, Dame Margaret, sign this off very soon.

MH: Fortunately, I don't have to take the ruddy decision.

JL: Oh, please do, please do. I do know that the world is a sweet place and that the darker the days become around us the more people might go, "Do, let's just do something fabulous and exciting and proud making". What I fear most of all is that if it is killed we will have wasted public money, we will have wasted it.

MH: Just the final thing. The cable car got Emirates to -- you haven't got anybody as big as that that is willing to -- that is hovering there?

BE: Well, Emirates got naming rights and we can't give naming rights as part of our planning and our public funding.

JL: I'd love your opinion on this because I've said no, no, no, if this is a bridge for London we don't want it called the [REDACTED] Bridge. It's got to be "the bridge". So we've said no to that. Now the board is saying, "Look, we might have to go to that" and I'm against it actually. I think it's not right. We don't want Labatts Apollo. We want the Hammersmith Apollo. We don't want Labatts anything. That's horrible.

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BE: If the permissions and so on were changed there is no reason why you couldn't do the Emirates thing.

MH: Is it within the permissions?

BE: It's in the planning permissions.

MH: From who?

BE: Lambeth and Westminster.

MH: From both of them.

JL: But not from me. I just can't bear the bridge being called a name. It's like the decorations on Oxford Street. I love it now they've got angels and things, in Regent Street. Do you remember one year they put out advertisements?

BE: Yes, I do. Everybody went up in arms about that.