



Anita Pollack

europaean outlook

You could describe Anita Pollack as an accidental resident of Newham, as when she arrived here from Australia, the UK was supposed to be a stop over on her way to America. However, 32 years later, she's still here and has made Newham her home.

Anita has spent most of her career working in European politics, first as an assistant to Labour MEP Barbara Castle and then as an elected member of the European Parliament herself. "European Parliament really does effect people and they don't know it," explains Anita, "If you turn on your tap, the water quality comes from Europe. If you go to the shop, your consumer protection comes from Europe. If you breathe the air, your air quality standards come from Europe."

In 1999, Anita was to face a new challenge when she wasn't re-elected as an MEP and went straight from full-time work to unemployment. "When you're in your mid-fifties

looking for a job, you suddenly realise that your skills are worth nothing," she says. "It's a real growth experience looking at your skills and trying to figure out what to do, getting back on the tube everyday. And I had to learn how to use a computer".

Anita found employment in her current position with English Heritage as Head of European Liaison which she says isn't all about castles and stately homes, "There is a lot of that, but there's an awful lot of other stuff to do with planning and regeneration. There's some really interesting work in the re-using of old buildings, turning them over to new uses."

Despite her enthusiasm for her latest role, Anita hasn't been able to leave the lure of the EU behind her and has decided to run for election to European Parliament again in 2004, "I feel a bit powerless without being there, so I want to get back and do more".

Q: How long have you lived in Newham?

A: Adventure and youth brought me here 32 years ago, then I met my husband and stayed.

Q: What are the two best things about living in Newham?

A: One has got to be the cultural diversity and the other is that it's where my family is.

Q: Is there one thing about Newham that gets you down?

A: Litter. The mess, the rubbish and the general nastiness of the streets. It's a problem because it leads to a lack of civic pride.

Q: What is your favourite Newham building and why?

A: I really love the church in the middle of the road at Stratford [St Mary's]. It's in this island with all the trees, it's got the lovely spire and it just looks gorgeous with all this nasty traffic swirling around it.

Q: If you could make one change to Newham what would it be?

A: I'd have Crossrail built please! I go into Oxford Circus on the Central Line everyday and it's like sardinesville.

Q: What is your vision of Newham by the year 2010?

A: That the division between the rich and the poor will be eased. Hopefully bringing business into the borough will help that.

Q: Tell us one thing about Newham that you hope will never change.

A: One thing that's terrific that ought never to be changed is West Ham Park.