

Reference 1 - 15.81% Coverage

I mean, it was a difficult age for you as a kid because, I mean, nowadays....

My teenage was nothing because we didn't have anything - no food, not a lot of food. But... then I thought, after when, after, when...let me think.... 1942, I think it was - they made young people - I was sixteen by then - and we had to join a pre-service Corps which was to be trained for the Forces. And you had to - they made you. You didn't say I'm not going - you had to go. And then we did... we did um, you know, marching and all that sort of thing. And cookery and um, I'm trying to think what else we did. We did all kinds of things.

This was locally based?

Yes, that was... No, no, that was only down the road. No, that was just down the road. Yeah.

Okay, um... I've got here... I think we talked about 'Dig for Victory' allotments. Umm... Just a bit here... you haven't got it ticked but entertainments... Again, I'm just thinking of you and comparing you with a teenager today. You know, it's a time when you want to look good, you wanna, you know, you wanna get out with your mates. What did you do for entertainment?

Well I was going to say, first of all we didn't have any because we had to sit down the shelter, didn't we, for, how long would you say? Six, twelve months? 1940, wasn't it? Yes, I suppose about a year, so that was nothing, was it? That was nothing then. And then there used to be a lot of church groups and things like that. Youth clubs and that sort of thing - much more church than these days. And they used to run youth clubs and things like that. And then we went dancing, as well, from being about seventeen, I suppose. So all that... it just started again, you see? The cinemas opened and all the things just went on as much as before.

But the real Blitz was about 1941, wasn't it?

Yes, 1940, '41, yes.

Any particular memories of dances as a teenage girl?

(Laughs) Well, no, not really. Just like as we do it to this day. We still go dancing. Yeah.

And what were you dancing to? Who were the....

Oooh, Glen Miller and all those sort. Yeah.

But Birmingham had its own kind of big bands and all that kind of thing, did you? Had your brass bands there.

Urr...

Did you go to things which had like... you know, what we would call, I suppose, night clubs.

Ur, well, it wouldn't be night clubs - it wouldn't be so late. But yes, the Dance Halls had the... it wasn't piped music, it was all, you know, proper music. Ur, yeah, you know, musicians - always.

[<Files\HFRT002 Maurice Garwood>](#) - § 2 references coded [22.34% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.50% Coverage

Um...any... Music. Thinking about music - making your own entertainment? Tell us about that.

That's another story. 1938, the five boys had an audition with Carol Levis. Have you heard of Carol Levis?

Yes. You tell me... I have heard of.... You just tell me.

Carol Levis Discoveries. And he was in Birmingham and because my Mum was....

Can you say more about this because children, I think, wouldn't know what Carol Levis Discoveries was? What was it?

Uhh...

It was a radio programme was it?

It was a car that used to go round the country picking talent. He used to interview... he was an entertainer in his own right but he used to be... he used to get entertainments and he used to be called Carol Levis Discoveries. When he discovered them if they were any good they...., there were quite a few – ooh, I think Tommy Handley was one. Anyway, we had this interview in '38 but when the War broke out, because there was no.... Mum used to call us the Five Woodbines and we used to dress up in white shorts, white socks and a red beret!

Reference 2 - 17.84% Coverage

What kinds of things did you do?

Urr, ballet dancing...

Wife: (laughter)...You should see him....!

Really?!

...singing, choral singing – choral singing, you know - choir.

What close harmony stuff? You weren't accompanied? It was all sort of 'a capella' was it?

Yes, yes. Mum used to keep us company on the piano, you see? And the ballet dancing - I used to do ballet dancing – ballesque! Not palais de dance but it was ballesque ballet. We used to go up to the sort of side of the curtain and we were looking at the audience, and then suddenly a chair would come into my hands, because me brother would be in the curtains, like, waiting, you know? Carry it away and get in on the side of the curtain. And then throw it away. And I wouldn't look where I was throwing it because I knew another brother would be catching it!

00:20:00

We'd do hypnotics as well. Because there was fellow that used to come round, hypnosis like - he used to do an act. Well, I was the one that used to spread across two tables – two chairs - ankles on one, space, another chair... me brother used to stand on a chair and just step onto me. Then get off - I said, 'Get off, grmmm!!!' (laughter) He wouldn't, sort of, look down at you, because you're an actor, you see? You've got your audience, you see?

Are you alright kid?

Wife: Oh dear! (laughter)

And how much did you do... where did you do these performances before...?

In the local villages. In the halls - the local halls.

Unpaid was it or did....?

Unpaid! (!) definitely! (laughter) We used to have an artist - Beckett - he used to do the scenery. He were a signwriter, he was. He made his living at that but we never had anything.

But when you did this, it was your.... the five of you and your Mum on the piano, as an exclu.... the whole evening? Or were

you just an act in a concert party? Were you.... you were the whole entertainment were you?

Umm. Sunday after church, we'd come home and get behind the piano. Dad would be sitting at the fireplace, smoking his Woodbine. Mum would be at the piano and used to look over - 'Are you ready boys?' And we used to practise entertaining Dad, you see? 'I am a Music Man' we used to play for him. (laughter)

What did you play then?

All sorts of instruments. (laughter) Oh dear, oh dear!

Did you go to lessons or were you... did you Mum...? All self taught was it?

Yes.

Wife: Your mother was a musician, wasn't she? Trained musician, yeah.

Oh, she was a trained musician, yeah.

And the War....

Our only trade was our voice - choir. We had singing lessons, like.

Did you have a, kind of a, favourite song? That you did? You know? I mean, was it like...always together or did you....

'I've got sixpence, jolly jolly sixpence' (laughter)

I've got....

I've got sixpence, jolly, jolly sixpence
I've got sixpence, I can spend it all my life
I've got two pence to spend
And two pence to lend
And two pence to take home to my wife!

Oh and there was Gilbert and Sullivan, as well. You don't expect me to sing all those will you!

Well, from the operettas, Mikado and whatever? Yes.

Yes, yes.

Oh yes, wow. And the War, if you like, ended all that then, did it?

That in effect because we all went our different ways.

No, but as that kind of group of you?

Yes. Yes. The group actually never went on stage all together again - after '39.

Did you... when the War was on, I mean, you were working for a hell of a lot of the time... but you know, with those talents, did you ever do concert parties? Join concert parties?

No, they tried to but we weren't interested. I think it was one thing in mind, actually, that we were at War and that was it.

Yes. And the other thing, I was just going to ask about the actual factory itself. What work were you doing in the aircraft factory?

Undercarriages for Hurricanes, Mosquitos - bits and parts - it wasn't an aircraft itself, it was just...

And where did they go afterwards, to be made up? You know, where were the other bits... where were they assembled?

That was a... we didn't know anything about it. We just made

[<Files\HFRT004 Edith Wood>](#) - § 2 references coded [7.89% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.50% Coverage

Now, tell me something about entertainment. What did you do to entertain yourself during the War?

Pictures mostly. Pictures and dancing. We used to go dancing..

Where did you go dancing?

Locanos. In Streatham.

Locanos. Right. And were there lots of people there?

Oh yes. Yes. That's what I said – we didn't used to think about the bombing. You didn't used to think, 'oh, will it happen to me?' This is what I can't understand now - you didn't used to think that. You just used to carry on and you'd say, 'I'm just going to the pictures tonight' and you'd go! But you'd get half way through the picture and they'd turn you out because a Warning

had gone (laughter) But we used to do it and never think - although at Hammersmith, they did drop a bomb on the place where people were dancing - and a lot of people were killed. I suppose I was very lucky - well I was.

And how much.... do you remember how much it was to get into the pictures in those days?

Oh, it was only about nine-pence or one and six. It wasn't much more than that. If you paid three and six, well you were rich! (laughs)

Reference 2 - 4.39% Coverage

Did you do... did you spend any time at home doing things - with the family?

I used to go round to my friends - you see, I only had a brother and myself, so didn't have close, you know, young family. But my friends, round the corner, had brothers and sisters who were in the forces. So when the boy... one boy was in the Air Force and the other boy was in the Army. And then they had a friend who was in the Navy. So when they used to come home on leave, us girls who worked together - and I worked with them - we used to 'round there and we used to have a party, you see? 'Cause the boys used to be home on leave and we used to have a party.

So, I mean, when you have a party does that mean dancing and singing?

Oh yes! In the house, yes. Dancing and singing and whatever they could muster together as regards food. Everybody brought something.

No drinks then?

We had soft drinks, but no, not No, not...

During the War, do you remember, did you have a favourite song?

Um, 'We'll Meet Again', I think.

That's Vera Lynn isn't it?

Yeah. No, that wasn't really the one. No, that was a favourite song during the War - 'We'll Meet Again' - but I can't think of the other one. Can't think of the name.

'The White Cliffs of Dover'?

No, no. 'Berkley Square!' 'A Nightingale Sang in Berkley Square'.

That was a favourite of yours was it?

Yes, it was. Yes.

[<Files\HFRT005 Betsy Stanley>](#) - § 3 references coded [12.14% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.05% Coverage

Well, when I left school, my stepmother worked in... well it was something to do with the war department - in a section of Landis and Gyr which was at Gypsy Corner in Acton. And she got me a job in the offices. I was shorthand typist, telephonist. And Rene – where's Rene, she's on one of them? Rene Cutler. She was one of the girls in the typing pool, where I was.

And we had music while you work, right? So you're typing away and you're singing. And she said to me, 'Betty you've got a lovely voice over there. Why don't you join our concert party?' I thought, ooh no, I couldn't do that, you know? But I did. And this is how it all came about and we used to put on concerts. This is in the works canteen. We used to... they covered the sinks and the units with these boards and we did, you know...? And we did about two concerts a year, as far as I can remember. And we used to do singing, sketches... I did a couple of solos – solo songs. I sung 'Somewhere over the Rainbow' and 'Waltzing in the Clouds'. If you can remember either of them - you must remember!?

Sing me again the second one. I know Somewhere over the Rainbow.

'Course you do.'

What was the other one?

A Dianna Durbin song. 'Waltzing in the Clouds.'

Don't know it. How does it go?

(Singing)

I was a mortal, with feet on the ground,
Where I was standing, with people around,
Lovely music, started somewhere,
And I started, floating on air.

Into a dreamland, I wandered afar,
I saw you smile and I reached for a star,
Could it happen, would it happen,
I only I know here we are.
Waltzing, waltzing, high in the clouds,
Only you and I in the clouds.
Over the moonbeam, we'll stroll away,
While the world below seems to roll away.

And we'll go waltzing, waltzing high in the clouds,
Only you and I in the clouds,
No one will hear when you call me your dear one,
While waltzing, waltzing, high in the clouds.
Waltzing high, you and I, waltzing in the clouds.

Reference 2 - 2.91% Coverage

00:15:32

Do you know I've never heard that. It's fantastic!

A Dianna Durbin song from, I think it's from, 'So many men and a Girl' or something? It's an old wartime film.

Oh, right. So you were... someone was accompanying you on the piano?

Oh yes, yes. Yes, we had piano and the boy I was courting at the time was on drums. And we had somebody on concertina. Oh yes, we had our own little band.

And did you... you said you did it in the Works canteen? Did you go out and do it anywhere else?

Yes, we took it, one show... you've got that as well on your...

Copied, uh....

Copied the programme. We took it to Roehampton Limb Hospital. You know, where the men were, that lost their limbs in the War? And there I sang 'Long Ago and Far Away'. That's another old wartime one. Yeah. Yeah.

Reference 3 - 2.18% Coverage

And we used to go home at weekends and hitch a lift up to Cockfosters and then get on the tube because we lived in Acton. While I was at home, before the army, we used to go dancing, swimming, I did first aid - St Johns. Three cinemas that we visited every week. There was a little place at the back of one of

the pubs where they did shows, and went there. We went biking out to Box Hill. We were ever so active. We weren't like the kids today, sitting at computers. We used to sing 'round the piano in the front parlour - always singing. Drawing - I think you took some of me drawings off that we used to do.

[<Files\HFRT006 Ted Stanley>](#) - § 1 reference coded [12.96% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 12.96% Coverage

And it says here, you were a piano player?

Oh yes, I was learning the piano before the War and um... well, up until I went into the army, really. As I say, one of my exams, my mother said, 'Do you realise who's taking that exam don't you?' And I said, 'no, tall man.' 'Sir Adrian Boult.' He came down to Bletchley - it was in the Conservative Club in, what is now, Queensway, you know?

I was under old Mr Holden then and, uh... I'd got, oh, goodness knows how many certificates, you know? Honorary and all of the rest of it. And I'd got one more exam for a Doctor of Music, you know, cap and gown. But Mr Hitler came along and I went in the army and I... 'Oooh we don't want that,' you know? 'Roll out the Barrel!' and, you know, all this 'White Cliffs of Dover.' They didn't want my posh music, you know?

00:10:03

But did you ever learn those kind of tunes....you know, did you ever take the role of, if you like, playing at concert parties?

No, no, no. No, no.

You were into, the more, classical?

Well then, yes, yes. Of course, got in the army, as soon as they found out you could play the piano, they'd soon find you a piano - from somewhere, for you to.... That was the thing, in those days. I mean, wasn't so much radio. I mean somewhere, I can't remember where, they found a piano in a bombed house and stuck that on the back of one of the wagons and we had that for months! I used to play that. Come home, 'Give us a tune...' you know? 'White Cliffs of Dover' or 'I'll be Seeing You' or...

So you learnt to 'vamp' as it were?

Oh yeah, yeah. I still could now, but the trouble is I've had a stroke, in 1980, and it blew me fingertips up. So I'm a bit clumsy on the keys now, you know? But if I want to, I can have a... you know? Make a noise.

[<Files\\HFRT007 June Woodward>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.00% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.00% Coverage

What about the entertainment you had in the war, what were you, as a child of six? I know it's difficult to remember but the war went on until 1945, so did you have any entertainment that...?

Only listening to the radio and sort of indoor games, you know, that we played, cards and things like that.

[<Files\\HFRT008 Derek Denchfield>](#) - § 2 references coded [13.95% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 11.74% Coverage

What sort of entertainment did you have in the war?

Well we used to come into Bletchley. After we'd left school, I used to work in Leighton Buzzard then, so obviously you had a bicycle, which most youngsters did at that age because that was the only way to get in to Bletchley or Leighton Buzzard for work. There were no buses. So we used to come into Bletchley on a Saturday evening, go to the cinema and that's about all there was. We had bits and pieces in the village hall, in the village concerts and games.

The cinema in Bletchley, is that the one that used to be on that corner, by the Bletchley Leisure Centre?

00:15.24

That was there later on, but there used to be one in the High Street, but that's been pulled down now, and those new houses there. In fact all that side of Bletchley, of Queensway, no, all that side of the High Street going out of the town was all houses, but there's none there now, just these newer types of houses.

Do you remember how much it was to go to the cinema in those days?

About three-pence or sixpence I think. Couldn't have been much more than sixpence, but then as I say we were getting towards sixteen or seventeen probably, so it might have been ninepence. It wouldn't have been any more.

Did you have a favourite song?

Well we used to sing the sort of... the wartime songs that were about in those days, didn't we?

Can you remember any of them? Doesn't matter if you can't.

00:16:24

Well what was it, 'We'll Meet Again', 'Who are you kidding Mr Hitler?' we used to sing that. All those sort of things. There wasn't any new songs being produced, not any wartime songs I think.

When you think of the radio did you listen to the radio a lot, to know what was going on?

Yes, we did.

And Wwhat time did they used to give announcements?

I think the six o'clock news in the evening was the favourite. People were home from work or the majority was.

(Mrs Denchfield: We used to get Lord Haw Haw)

You could get.... If you moved a little dial around you could get Lord Haw Haw speaking from Germany with a lot of propaganda but....

Did you take that in?

Not a lot of notice I don't think, everybody had a good laugh.

Reference 2 - 2.21% Coverage

Going back to entertainment. You talked about going to the cinema. Did you entertain yourselves at home at all?

Well we used to. We'd got dominoes and draughts and cards and that sort of thing. But not much else I don't think, no. But as I say as soon as I was eighteen, the war was still on then, I was away from home so I only know about the first three and a half years of the war from a local point of view.

[<Files\\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 2 references coded [9.37% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 2.23% Coverage

Which cinema did you go to?

Well, there were two, you see, the Palace on the Stratford Road and then there was the Empire which was the Old Post Office, which is now... a mosque.

Which was your favourite cinema?

No, it wasn't the cinema, it was the films they showed. I wouldn't say one was more popular than the other.

Were they crowded?

They were well attended, I wouldn't say crowded unless it was a very popular film.

Can you remember how much you had to pay to go to the cinema?

Perhaps about 1s 6d, I think, 18 pence.

That's quite a lot; did you go with your girl friends?

Yes, or I used to go on my own if there was a film ... you know.

Reference 2 - 7.14% Coverage

So your entertainment was cycling, walking and ...?

And on Saturday evenings they usually had a dance in the Science and Art Institute, which was burned down.

Opposite where Madcap is now?

Yes

Who put on those dances?

Well, I don't know who put them on but the Rhythm Aces used to play and there was Joe Lovesey, he used to have a band too, and he would sometimes have a dance on a Wednesday. I think sometimes he might be at Stratford and the Rhythm Aces at Wolverton

The Rhythm Aces were the band of the area?

Yes, they were very good too.

Who came to these dances?

The girls and the boys and if there were soldiers billeted around they'd come.

A real wartime get together?

Yes, 8 until midnight, I think it was, they played.

What sort of dances did you do?

Quickstep, foxtrot, waltz and they said tango, but it wasn't a proper tango, but we used to try and do it. We used to dance together very often, because there weren't enough men.

What did you wear, did you dress up for these dances?

No, ordinary afternoon dresses or dresses you'd put on on a Sunday but no, we didn't wear dance dresses at all.

And did you wear make-up?

Yes, not a lot. I don't think we wore mascara, I never did, but powder and a foundation and lipstick, we always did that. I don't think we had eyeshadow, I don't think that had really come in.

Did you wear jewellery, was jewellery popular – did you wear earrings?

Well, I never wore them, people did, but then they hadn't got ... well, my mother had her ears pierced, she did, but not a lot I shouldn't think they did. Some of them did, and if you'd got jewellery, well, you would wear it.

What about stockings? We hear a lot about stockings during the war, or was that after the war?

Well, there weren't any stockings, only lisle or something like that so you went without stockings for as long as you possibly could.

You hear stories, did you ever paint your legs?

Well, yes, I've done that. I can't remember what we did it with, some sort of thin paint, brown.

Amazing thought, isn't it?!

And they used to draw a line up the back for the seam.

[<Files\HFRT011 Woodward-MissingAudio>](#) - § 1 reference coded [36.98% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 36.98% Coverage

What did you do for entertainment during the War?

Well I can remember going to, like, I'm sure you must have done as well, like, apart from playing cards at home and games and then there was the concerts at The Progressive Club.

What sort of concerts were they?

Just basic ... almost just entertainment, singing, dancing, comedian and pantomime of course.

Where was that?

The Progressive Club, which is now The New Bradwell Dance Centre.

Right, so you went there for your entertainment, once a week?

00:15:51

Oh no I wouldn't have thought once a week, no, certainly less than that, two or three times a year I'd say.

So what did you do with your spare time as a boy, what sort of games would you have played?

Well we used to roam the fields - these fields are now all under housing - and some things like that; and in the summer time, I'll be quite honest, we used to swim in the canal and the river.

Yes, yes.

I mean a lots of people (went to) what we used to call 'The Bay'. There was two hills come down, not that they were particularly big hills, and there was a bit of a bay, I mean, and people used to be there picnicking and the children used to paddle in this so called bay.

Is this down by the linear park, where the linear park goes now, down by New Bradwell?

Umm, this is just coming towards Wolverton from the New Inn, do you know the New Inn?

Yes I know the New Inn.

Yes, well if you're coming back from there towards Wolverton, this is where this bay was; now again it's practically, apart from the canal close side, all that area is housing now

Right.

And then we used to use the same area in the winter if there was any snow, where we used to sledge.

[<Files\HFRT012 May Webster>](#) - § 1 reference coded [9.56% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.56% Coverage

What did you do for entertainment?

Went dancing; most of the factories, quite a number of the factories had clubs and there was different nights... they used to have a club night, where there again we used to dance to records there and we went from one place to another; actually we were pretty well entertained.

What sort of dances did you do?

00:04:48

Just ordinary ballroom dancing.

(Friend) We used to have the bands come, Billy Cotton.

(Mrs W) Oh yes and the big dances at the George Hotel and Wallace Street Baths and the Alma wasn't it?

(Cousin) No it was the other one round Mill Street.

(Mrs W) The Palace, but you couldn't dance in there could you, because there was seats.

Can you remember the names of the bands?

Oh we often used to get a big band. Yes, at the Alma we could dance.

(Cousin) And the Assembly Rooms.

(Mrs W) Well that's the Baths; and the British Legion. But the big bands you see used to go to, we didn't dance to the big ones, they came in this concert hall.

(Friend) It was Show Bands, more entertainment, we had that didn't we?

(Mrs W) Oh yes.

[<Files\\HFRT013 Joan Draper>](#) - § 2 references coded [6.18% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.27% Coverage

Entertainment. What did you do for entertainment during the war? Do you remember? Obviously when you were in Bedfordshire you had plenty of countryside around, I would imagine.

The people were farming people but it didn't mean to say they stayed in the same farm. We then moved on one time into Newbury, just outside Newbury. Always with these people and always on the farm, because they were farming people. But we used to have... the three of us would play... we used to go to Saturday morning cinema but later on, towards, nearly to the end

of the war time. But I remember always having, always asking the lady we were evacuated with, Auntie Edith if I could wear any of her clothes. I was always doing this but she always used to say no there was nothing I could wear today. I thought 'how can I dress up to go to London today'? So I'd have my flat sandals to play around the farm and suddenly I'd have to get ready to go to London. So I used to put one of my brother's building bricks in my shoe which raised me up a bit. I tottered off down the road like that. Because we had untold freedom, because we had the woods.

Reference 2 - 1.91% Coverage

Did you have a favourite song during the war?

Yes I did. 'This is the Army Mr Jones'. I knew all the words and I would do a radio programme and make my brothers listen to it and I would say, 'This is my latest song, I hope you like it.' I'd go into this full stream of 'This is the Army Mr Jones!'

You don't fancy singing it now do you?

No. Because our foster mother said that I was the only person who could sing 'This is the Army Mr Jones!' to the 23rd Psalm in the same tune, I was that bad!

[<Files\\HFRT014 Diane Lillian Bowsher>](#) - § 1 reference coded [9.79% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 9.79% Coverage

So you entertained yourself at home, I mean you say you went to boarding school so you had loads of kids there all the time and you boarded there, what did you get up too in the boarding school, do you remember were there any hobbies that you had or games that you played?

We used to play games like in the field, the grass area I seem to recall playing Rounders at one time

Skipping was one off those things

Oh yes, skipping yes

I can remember playing with a hoop.

Oh, we did have hoops that's right but mostly because there weren't many cars on the road we used to play a lot of marbles in the guttering and things like that.

I mean you couldn't buy very many toys for children could you, the greatest gift I had, when the war broke out we weren't allowed to

play in the street on a Sunday, no way. So we went to Sunday school in the morning we went to a park at Wealdstone which was quite a long way for us but we walked there with my other sister and the siren went, it was a practice one but we didn't know that.

00:19:15

My younger sister she was a very nervous child, she went into absolute hysterics, so these other children and I said, 'no don't cry we'll be all right I'll take you home', and we were walking along and this fella, the people in this house obviously heard Pamela screaming and they took us in there and gave us an apple each. When the All Clear went as we were walking home Dad's come down on a bike with flat tyres because he couldn't run or walk because of his asthma, so he came on this bicycle consequently that's the end of the story we got home all right. So he realised that I did wander off quite a lot to different places, so for that Christmas I got a second hand boy's blue bike. Because he realised that you could get quicker on a bike than you can walking and so I used to wander off on my bike all the time

[<Files\\HFRT016 GladysBanks>](#) - § 1 reference coded [8.91% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 8.91% Coverage

The other evenings I used to go walking round because it wasn't far, I was going to say the Ritz because I've always been a good walker. From the Ritz and other places round there, Dover Street, I think Langhams is in Dover Street but we used to go walking round during the evening and you could hear all these different bands playing including Glen Miller. And it just broke it in the evening and then not only that to get I was going to say a breath of fresh air, because when you've been in twelve hours a day. Although it was dark and it was dark, It was nice just to have a little break and to hear bit of music, you know. Then I used to come back quite late in the evening and have a game of table tennis course we had a few games, table tennis, which I was very good at because when I was at Chelsea for two or three years I represented Chelsea for table tennis. They had a tournament, this was before the war when I was at Chelsea. I represented Chelsea and I played at Earls Court and I had no fear of walking out to represent Chelsea as a double and as a single and er I won. Beat Oxford Cambridge all the other different universities and colleges. And I remember this course I'm a keen tennis fan I remember this year at Wimbledon, Murray our new British, I think he is 16 years old walked out at Wimbledon. And Sue Barker and Andrew Castle and others that were commentating, couldn't get over and praised him. How a young chap like that to walk out in Wimbledon on that grass and had no nerves, they couldn't understand it. Well I can because I walked out at Earls Court and it was packed, absolutely packed, with people and I had no nerves and the strange thing is when I walked out I didn't see anybody although it was packed. I was so concentrating on my tennis, of the table. They had two or three tables going at a time at the Earls Court where the Royal Tournament used to be held for donkey years, and now, actually it is next week I am going to the Ideal Home Exhibition at Earls Court, I do every year. But they do it twice a year now. And I had no fear at all and somewhere it must be Chelsea had the shield for a year that Chelsea had one the singles and the doubles and I represented them. I think I have gone off a bit.

That's fine. Going back to what you was saying about entertainment did you used to go dancing and cinema?

30.33

No I never, never liked dancing. I didn't go inside the building. You could hear it was so loud, it was so loud. I can remember, I can see the building now in the Haymarket , course the theatres tried to carry on you know. Glen Miller was in London quite bit till he got, got er say killed, disappeared. Whatever one likes to think and I had all his papers. I also had the papers when I was down with the government beginning the war of Amy Johnson. Though that flew to Australia. But you see we had different, well I was going to call them pilots that used to go to the 'A' so to speak and pick up and aircraft and fly to 'B'. And then it was taken over by the regular pilots. No I never went inside any of the buildings but I did it quite a bit and I still, actually yesterday, I was round Dover Street, round there which is opposite well nearly opposite the Ritz and all round there and the buildings haven't changed at all. I think Manotvani was another one that was going strong at the time.

So you didn't actually used go out for the evening to them you just used to go out for a wander round because you had been in so much during the day?

32.25

Yes well not only that certain length of time you know.

[<Files\HFRT017 Mary Webb>](#) - § 2 references coded [12.41% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 5.60% Coverage

tell me a little bit more about these dances.

We used to em there was a Miss Dibbs she was one of the school teachers actually at the girls school then which is Wyvern now. She used to be Ranger Captain and she would eh, we would send out invitations to the different aerodromes and round. Then we would do refreshments at half time you know but em and sometimes we would have it up the scout hall because you couldn't have drinking you know we couldn't have drink, you know. And they would go out down to the Crauford Arms or somewhere like that the forces chappies, some of them over drank you know and then they were putting them in the lorries to get them, you have got to sober him up before we get back to camp!

Reference 2 - 6.81% Coverage

And entertainment, there were the dances you had, so the cinemas were quite popular were they?

Oh yeah, we used to go and queue outside the Palace you know from the side entrance down to the Stratford Road. They had two houses each night you know and that was a regular Saturday night thing you went to the cinema mostly, or the Empire, you know, but we never sort of favoured the Empire as much as we did The Palace you know.

Why was that?

I don't know, they seemed to have different sorts of films at the Palace didn't they?
And eh...

Was it more plush at the Palace?

15.15

No I don't think so, the Empire really was, because it was more recent than the Palace you know. But I mean you would queue right down the back way and along the Stratford Road to go in because they never had that front door open, did they. You always went in the side entrance, yeah, um...

[<Files\HFRT018 Lena Jakeman>](#) - § 5 references coded [28.13% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 4.57% Coverage

What did you do with your free time?

Well the same as Mary, we went to the dances, we were in the guides used to go down to church and do the St George's Players and that sort of thing.

Tell me a little bit about that the St George's Players. During the war as opposed to before and after the war.

5.55

Well it didn't start till after the war, didn't start till after then and I mean in the first place we started and we just used to do little plays for social evenings down at church which we used to have quite frequently. We'd just do little one act plays for social evenings and then it grew to larger plays and then when the Reverend Houghton came he decided that we could do something different so he produced the first pantomime and we had the pantomimes then.

What year was that?

I can't remember....

Fifties? Late forties?

Earlier than that.

Reference 2 - 7.52% Coverage

Interesting and for you, the entertainment was the dances anything else that you used to do? Church was quite important to you was it?

Oh yes, yes. It always has been, yes.

So beyond the Sunday service there were other church activities?

Oh yes, yes, yes. Girls Friendly.

What was that then?

It was like a little friendly club like Guides and Brownies sort of thing but it was a church thing called Girls Friendly. You just went to it for an evening and you did things. There we sort of knitted things and sewed things to send away for missionary or war effort or anything else they wanted it done for. We spent an evening doing things, learning things from teachers down there.

Who was it run by?

I suppose it was run by senior church members, like Jessie Clinton she did it didn't she? Miss Fry used to come and help us sometimes. Miss Fry was teacher and Mrs Tinckler used to come and help and she was another teacher. It was just run by senior church people for the younger ones to do something.

We're talking about a very different church to today in terms of congregation. How many people would you have going to, we're talking about St George's aren't we?

12.00

A lot more than you do today. I should think there was a hundred and fifty Sunday school children. You had the infants Sunday school, the junior's Sunday school and the senior's Sunday school, didn't we.

A lot of people.

Yes, yes.

Reference 3 - 8.35% Coverage

What about things like make up and fashion? Was there lipstick and things like that available?

Well not us we were too young then.

Well it's interesting you say this because to young people today you were fifteen when war broke out, well kids today at fifteen are wearing makeup when did you as a young woman, what age would make up start normally for people?

Not till at least eighteen or nineteen because for one thing as far as my father was then you weren't allowed to, one thing you couldn't afford it one sense but you weren't allowed to use it anyway so you had to act your age.

But went you were doing these dances because you were under eighteen presumably then when you were doing that?

Yes

What did you do?

13.26

Just be ordinary, there was no need to be dressed up and made up and that we were just ordinary you didn't need all that.

This is were it's really interesting

You got your fun being ordinary you didn't need to be different

Young people, you know teenagers today would find that extremely hard to understand

Yes. Because all your young teenagers today when they sort of come out of school at fifteen go home and within half an hour they look about nineteen or twenty don't they? Well we didn't well we didn't anyway I'm not saying all off us every body didn't but we didn't, no we acted our selves

(Sister)

I can remember mum making a long dress for me for the Technical New Years Eve dance I had a long dress for that I can see it now turquoise it was and she hand embroidered it but I don't think I used makeup then

Yes

Reference 4 - 4.57% Coverage

Again comparing it with today sixty years on television kind of dominates our lives really in terms off activities, doing something in the evening. What would you be doing during the war time, how would your evenings normally be spent after work?

Playing games. We had a radio but we didn't have it on much because it was on batteries accumulators which ran out and dad was interested in keeping up with the news and that sort off thing. So we didn't have that on a lot because we did have electricity to run it from so, because we didn't have electricity in those days

You didn't have electricity in the little streets?

No, later but no till the back end of the war when my brother came home and decided it was time that mum and dad had a bit of luxury. And the three of us that were at work then paid for the electricity to be put in the house that we were in

Reference 5 - 3.10% Coverage

What kind of games would you play?

Well Ludo and Draughts, Canasta, Mah Jong and all those sort of things

(Sister)

Our brother was in the Navy and brought home a Mah Jong set because he was in Alexandria so we use to play that quite a lot.

(Mrs Jackman)

16.28

Then we had a quiz on Saturday night at the Methodist and they asked about the Dragons and we couldn't remember the three colours.

When you say the Methodist you say, people went to different churches as well as their activities?

Oh, no, no, no. If some body else had got something on you'd wanted to go you went

[<Files\HFRT019 Audrey Lambert>](#) - § 3 references coded [11.22% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 7.40% Coverage

Entertainment during the war, you were a teenager.

It's a job to know whether you know, whether some things were before or after the war or in it. When about that age I joined the Rangers, that's the older Guides and although I didn't go camping or anything with them I know the Guides did go camping because I've got a friend who talks about the potatoes being rationed at the camp. But most of the things we would go up to the Bushey Field which is up Beachampton and get water out the stream and make our evening drink, out the Ouse, which was just across the road. Then there was a big hollow and we used to have a campfire in there and sing songs and things. That's my biggest memory I think of things that we could do.

Any clubs or anything that you went to?

13.54

I went to the youth club at Wolverton once but I didn't somehow get on very well with youth clubs so I stuck with the guides.

Dancing?

No I think that was all after the war when I started doing that after our Scout troop here had a Skiffle band. Then we went around with them in the coaches.

Did you have entertainment at home?

Well we'd always got, we had entertainment at home in some much as we'd got all sorts of games, boxed games and things like and mother had been a music teacher. So we were both taught the piano and so we used to entertain our grand parents with duets with mother!

Reference 2 - 1.72% Coverage

Can you remember any of the songs? There was one Run, Rabbit, Run Rabbit?

They were the all in the same sort of vein really. Popular songs or Hanging Out Your Washing on the Siegfried Line. But they weren't the sort of things that we'd sing at school in classes. They were all those.

Did you have any favourite food?

Reference 3 - 2.10% Coverage

Did you use the radio a lot during the war?

Ooh yes, my parents were the sort who listened to every news bulletin we certainly had things on like 'In Town Tonight' I think that must have been in the war. And Uncle Mac of course being children you know for the children's programme. But they were very selective we didn't have it as people do now, churning out all the time, no we didn't no.