

Reference 1 - 3.35% Coverage

*But you were too old to be evacuated, were you?*

Um, yes. 'Cause I'd just about... I left... we finished in July and I didn't ever go back to school, because that was it. You know? They didn't finish. 'Cause, I was going to leave anyway, in October, you see? So that was it. I didn't go back. But my sisters wouldn't be evacuated. They said if we have to die, then we will all die together. So we had an Anderson Shelter in the garden and my Dad said, 'Now I was in the trenches. So we'll have to have it four feet six deep.'

Reference 1 - 1.69% Coverage

*So you were '26 – 1926, so that means you were about thirteen – when.....?*

When war broke out, yes. I had just turned thirteen.

*Did you... were you evacuated?*

No. My father wouldn't hear of it. The school that I belonged to -they evacuated all their children - but when they approached my father with a view to me going, he said, no way. He said if we die, then we all die together. I was quite happy with that.

Reference 1 - 34.68% Coverage

*Can you tell me a little bit about um, your memories about being evacuated?*

Well, it started off on the 1<sup>st</sup> September 1939. We were told to report at school - it was a Friday - with our cases, our gas masks and be prepared to be evacuated. So we all turned up at school with our little cases, our labels and our gas masks. And we... The school was at Surrey Lane South, which was at the Latchmere, in London. I don't know how far it is from.... um, senior moment....

*From the station?*

Yes, um, it's a big station in London. Battersea.... Clapham Junction!

*So if you tell me that again...?*

Yeah, we, um... we had to crocodile from the Latchmere, down to Clapham Junction. And we got on a train. We didn't know where we were going. And after an hour or two hours - it seemed like forever - we stopped at this station and we all got out and it turned out to be Petersfield in Hampshire. So we all crocodiled again and we went all 'round the town and people came out their houses and said, 'Oh we'll have that little girl' - it was an all girls school. 'I'll have that little girl' or 'I'll take those two.' And me and my friend, we were still there at the end! I thought nobody wants us!

Anyway, an old couple - a Mr and Mrs Boniface - they were very, very nice but too old to be bothered with children - they must have been in their eighties. But they took us and we slept together in the back room. I mean, it was just a country cottage really. It's all been pulled down since. And I can't remember the name of my friend, 'cause she went home at Christmas and didn't come back, so....

But while we were at Mr and Mrs Boniface's, they were church people. He was a Church Sidesman so although we had to go to school with the church – at the Church as a school. And we were in church on the 3<sup>rd</sup> September when the vicar got up in the pulpit and said, 'We are at war with Germany.' And to this day, I could tell you what seat I was sitting in in St Peters Church. One of my friends started screaming - her father was in the navy and I think she thought he was dead already! Poor girl. Never mind.

Um, so while we were at Boniface's - Mr and Mrs Boniface's - he had an awful limp and you know what kids are like - we used to walk beside him, you know...! I think I still do it! (laughing) We made friends with a local farmer's son and we went up the farm. Of course there was chickens. Mrs Boniface wasn't very pleased 'cause we brought chicken fleas home in the bed (laugh). Didn't hurt anybody. We used to go scrumping - naughty! And um, we had a dug out up there. It was fun, we really enjoyed ourselves.

And as for the lessons - 'cause there was only the local little school so we had to share it and the locals weren't very pleased - not the kids. And we used to go all 'round the town. We had a lesson in the one of the council offices, we went somewhere else and had another lesson, we went to the Chapel schoolroom and had another lesson. You know, we sort of spent more time walking 'round than we did learning, I think!

Anyway, before Christmas, the Bonifaces were 'Oh we can't cope with these girls'. 'They're, you know.... not that they're not nice little girls, we just can't cope.' So we went up the Causeway - I can't remember the name of the road where they lived but we went up the Causeway. And we were billeted on a Mr and Mrs Hall who were in their thirties, I suppose. He was in the bank and she was just a housewife. And Christmas we went home and my friend didn't come back. And she stayed back in London. So I came back on my own and they moved me into the smaller bedroom which was nice - they did it out for me and got furniture.

00:05:01

So kind - they treated me like a younger sister.

'Course we used to laugh 'cause he called...she called him Brucie and he called her Ollie - Ollie Mistletoe! Bless him. But they were so nice. And we used to have... she... one of them played the piano - we used to sing 'round the piano and we had social evenings with the family. And she took me... they took for weekends on the bus, down to Southsea where her mother lived. And it was just like an... younger sister I suppose.

Then he was called up and went in the navy so that meant another move. We had what they called a halfway house, they had a matron in charge, a lovely lady and you went there while you were waiting for a new billet. Well while this was all going on in 1941, I was confirmed in St Peter's church and I've got that somewhere. But... we'd acquired a big house which was called Hilton House, The Spain? Petersfield and, I brought my school reports and they've got all that on. (You've got photocopies of those) So then I was billeted and my friend

went somewhere else, my best friend, I'm still friends with her, Eve. She went to somebody in a little bungalow and I went to a house up Tillmore Road - 8 Tillmore Road. It was right beside the railway and the engines used to come round and down the bottom of the garden. If I just hopped over the fence the library was there and I spent a lot of time in the library - I loved reading. And they were Mr and Miss Boniface and they were church people. And the vicar used to come to tea on Sundays.

*Another Boniface?*

Not Boniface – Barnes. Barnes. Mr and Mrs Barnes - Mr and Miss and she was a retired Matron of Edale School in Hampshire. She knew all about children. And she was - they were - so kind. Old Mr Boniface taught me the song 'My Grandfather's Clock was too tall for the shelf!' (laughing)

*Can you remember that? Can you sing it to me?*

00:07:27

Oh yes of course I could.

*Go on then.*

(Singing)

My grandfather's clock was too tall for the shelf,  
So it stood ninety years on the floor.  
It was taller by half, than the old man himself,  
Though it weighed not a penny weight more.

It was born on the morn of the day that he was born,  
And was always his pleasure and pride.  
But it stopped, short, never to go again,  
When the old man died!

(laughing) And it goes on...

(Singing)

Ninety years without slumbering,  
Tick tock, tick tock.

(laughing) He taught me that! And, ur.... They were so kind, they were. I went back and stopped with them for a holiday after I'd left school.

But as I say, we had Hilton House. There was no baths as such in the houses, so Hilton House had a bath. So once a week, in turn, us girls took our stuff and went and had a bath at school. And we'd got this great big garden and we'd dug it up in patches - each classroom had a patch to dig. And the photograph you've got is my class holding lettuces, carrots and stuff. Our 'Dig for Victory'. So that's where the dig for victory came in!

And we... our schoolteacher, Miss Grice, she went with us - was evacuated with us - went all through school with us. And I think I left school mid 1942 to go back to London. But I loved it - I didn't want to leave school. My Dad said, 'Well you don't have to.' I said 'Dad, I'm the oldest girl in the school - I've got to leave!' (laughing)

*When you.. let's go right the way back. When that thing came - you were having to go off , um... First of all, what.... was there anything special that you put in your case to take with you?*

Well, not that I can remember. Clothes - I mean clothes naturally - toiletries. I can remember taking anything particular. I might have took my mother's - my own mother's, who died when I was six - I've got a perfume bottle that was hers and I seem to have had that all my life. That went in the army with me so it's on the cards that I took it with me. But I can't really swear to that.

*So you were actually... been brought up by your Dad were you?*

00:09:58

Well yes and a series of - I don't know what they're called - carers in those days. And then he met - when I was about sixteen - he met this lady, 'cause he was in the army and she became my stepmother.

*But this was long afterwards?*

Long after. Yeah, long after.

*And what was.... did Dad come with you to the school?*

Oh no. He was in the army.

*So who took you along to the school?*

Well we went to school, as if we were going to school - on the tram. And then the whole school went. And the teachers went with us. None of our...no parents went. We just....

*No-one to see you off?*

No, no, no, no. No, none of us. We... that wasn't encouraged.

*And when you went off, I mean....*

'Cause we were thirteen then, you see. We weren't little children. We were quite, sort of, capable of looking after ourselves. Yeah.

*And this 'dig for victory' thing, um, did you have, um, you know, was it, if you like, were there lessons about it?*

Oh, no, no, no. We just went out in the garden and our teacher was with us. I've got a photograph of that but I tried to take it out and it had got one of those 'films' over it, you know - those albums - and it was lifting the top so I left it. I thought, I can't... I shall destroy it if I try and lift it so I left it there. But, uh...

Oh no, we just, as far as I can remember, we just went out and dug a patch and sowed our seeds and hoed and weeded and.... (laughing). And mostly lettuces and we used to take them home and have them for supper. I can remember that! With bread and butter. It was a Cos type lettuce. If you chopped them up with vinegar and sugar they were delicious. I mean I couldn't do it now because I'm not allowed sugar but... and I can't take vinegar anymore either! But I can remember as a child - a schoolgirl - especially when I got to Mr and Mrs...Miss Barnes, I used to have them for me supper - I used

to take them home! But, yeah...! I can't remember a lot about it but I can remember it happening, you know?

Reference 2 - 2.19% Coverage

Well no, she was the one that made me join! (laughing) I can't call her a best friend! She made me join! No, I quite enjoyed it. I quite enjoyed it, yes, so.... That's them. And then I got... then, 'cause your Karen – was is Karen on Sunday? She asked me what we did for entertainment, while – when – after I'd left for being evacuated. I mean, while we were evacuated, we used to go blackberring, hazelnuts, primrose, violets - everything in season. We'd walk for miles up the Butser. Not Wardown - you weren't allowed on there. And the Shoulder of Mutton. Or the South Downs - we used to walk for miles.

Reference 3 - 7.29% Coverage

Cows. Cows! (laughing) They chased us. We ran like merry hell. I think we beat 'em to the style! But, looking back on it, we'd been picking clover and I'd never seen clover so big before and since. I mean, great big heads they were and we'd been... and I reckon they were after the clover, not us. But ooh, we did run! But that was the biggest surprise of my life but I loved it. I *loved* it. I really loved Petersfield. I mean, we used to go to the pictures there but you had to be chaperoned. We went as a school one matinee to see the Mikado with Kenny Baker in it. I can remember that. I've loved it ever since.

*Did the kids - the local kids, the teenage kids - take the mickey out of you at all? Was there any hostility?*

I can't... there was one boy – one boy. I can't remember anybody else. But one boy used to... when I lived up at the Causeway – 'cause I was on me own - I used to walk home, and he'd ride his bike beside me and I'd always had a rather prominent nose. He used to call me 'Long nose stinging nettles'! Because my name was Nettleton, you see? And I tried to ignore him and I tried not

00:20:03

to get upset and it had been going on for a little while – if he could catch up with me, he could. And one day I simply turned round to him and I said, 'Yes, my name is Nettleton, I have got a long nose. So what?' Do you know, from that day on, he couldn't have been nicer. Because I turned 'round and confronted him with it and he taught me how to ride a bike.

*That was his method of seduction. That was his chat up line!*

Oh was it?! Oh! Well I didn't realise that at the time. I was only fourteen! He taught me to ride a bike. He's the only one that I can... I can't remember his name. I mean the others were all quite.... I even went out with one of the locals. I shouldn't have done! We had to hide round corners. You didn't dare let the schoolteachers know. But Miss Barnes was very good, she said 'I'll chaperone you to the pictures,' she said. 'But I'll walk quite a way behind you.' (laughing)

<<Files\\HFR007 June Woodward>> - § 1 reference coded [6.32% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.32% Coverage

*Right, did you have any evacuees at the time?*

Well we did have an evacuee, Yvonne, she came from Chingford, but I can't remember how far into the war it was when she came.

No?

No.

*She came to stay with you, did she?*

Yes, she lived with us.

*She lived with you, and what did she do?*

She was roughly the same age as I was.

*Oh right.*

Yes, yes.

*So her parents weren't with her?*

No.

*She was alone?*

That's right yes.

*And did she fit in well with family life?*

Yes, yes, she did yes, we both went to school together an' being as I hadn't got a sister I suppose it was nice to have somebody my own age.

[<Files\\HFRT008 Derek Denchfield>](#) - § 1 reference coded [6.87% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 6.87% Coverage

*Can you tell me anything about evacuees? Did you have any evacuees in the area?*

There was quite a lot in Stoke but we didn't have any. Probably, I don't know why, well there was the two boys but we only had two bedrooms and the wife's old father was living with us at the time, my old grandfather. So we didn't have any ourselves, no.

*If you look back to when you were at school do you remember evacuees coming to the school?*

There was a lot come into the school.

*Do you remember ... Did they fit in well?*

I think they did after a time, the majority did, yes. It was a different life for them but then it was different life for us to see how the other half lived I suppose. We used to have our meals in the school you see. School dinners, well all the village children had school dinners, there was a school canteen.

*Hot...?*

Yes. Lentil soup as much as anything or stuff like that ..(laughs). But when I was thirteen, as I say, I was in my last year at school and the school had a lot of flower garden there; and then there was a school playing field next to it and during the early part of the war that was all dug up, and us village boys and one or two of the town boys used to do all of the gardening and produce food which was pushed over into the school canteen.

[<Files\\HFRT010 Betty Wise>](#) - § 2 references coded [2.57% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 1.58% Coverage

*Now what about...? Oh, we were going to talk about evacuees.*

Well, when they came, the children, the St Johns were called in then and had to go down and help organise them. I didn't send them out anywhere, someone else did that, poor little things.

*And were they really there, just with their labels and their bags?*

00:30:00 That's all, yes, and I really didn't appreciate how bad it was for them, at that age I didn't, no.

*You didn't have evacuees at home?*

No;

Reference 2 - 1.00% Coverage

*When did they evacuee children arrive?*

I think it was before Christmas was it?

*In 1939?*

I should think it was.

*How long did they stay?*

I don't really know what happened, 'cos we hadn't got... and I was at work all day...I think quite a few went back to their parents, poor little mites.

[<Files\\HFRT013 Joan Draper>](#) - § 3 references coded [34.93% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 16.03% Coverage

*Right. So you talk about that bombing. You then were evacuated were you?*

00:10:50 It seemed that after that night, which now came clearer to me this week, was the reason they did the mass evacuation like they did. We come home from school one day and we got up and for some unknown reason we were all dressed in our best clothes, this was to go to school. Mum said, 'We're going off now to the station.' No explanation, nothing. She picked the baby up in her arms, my brother was four and I was six and off we went. We went onto a

coach to a station. I walked onto the station with our labels, gas masks and a bag. I heard a slam and I turned round and my mother was there behind the fence, behind the gates at the station just looking and crying and we were ushered on then. Total, total bewilderment.

*You had no idea?*

We hadn't got a clue why we were going.

*There was no explanation from your Mum?*

Nothing. No, nothing.

*That must have been very frightening for you?*

It was because there was nothing there and my brother was younger. Then we got onto the train and off we went. We went into Bedfordshire and off at the nearest station wherever it was, the back of a lorry again and went to Ivinghoe Aston that is a village at the bottom of Whipsnade Downs.

*Were you with members of staff?*

With people and other children.

*All the children from your school were evacuated on the same train?*

On the same train, but we went to different parts of the country.

*I wonder who organised that then?*

00:12:37

I think it was all done by... it was compulsory, I do know it was compulsory after that because it was getting all the children. It wasn't just London, it was all the big cities all over the place.

*So you were evacuated and you went to Bedfordshire?*

Yes.

*What was it like when you first arrived? You were a young child, you'd lost your Mum, you were with a member of staff, I suppose, and she or he had to look after an awful lot of children.*

That's right.

*So there was no attention given to you.*

Nothing, nothing we were just there and we were on a lorry, back of a lorry. We've always got a famous lorry haven't we? With our labels on but that was how it was. We got off and stood in the street at the village and that's where we stood and along came the people from the houses to pick the people. They'd say, 'Well I want a boy bigger than that I want him to work on the farm.' Or, 'The girl is... I shall need her for the house.' Until it was left with just myself and my brother and I clung onto him and he clung onto me and even at the age of six, I thought nobody's going to take him away from me. The lady come along and said, 'I didn't want two, but I'll take the two.' So very fortunately she did take

both of us. But we just did as we were told. But there were boys there who were older who said, 'Well I'm not staying here.' And went back to London. I thought then I wouldn't dare do that, I wouldn't dare say I'm not doing anything.

*So what was the lady like that took you in?*

00:14:24

They were farming people, she had no children and we, David and I, we shared a bed, a big feather bed and we cuddled up at night and that was it really. We went to the village school. The village went in the mornings and the evacuees went in the afternoon. Then we settled down nicely, we went to church with our foster parents and we settled down into the village then. Then by that time we'd gone on another few months into the next year. My father was in the forces, my brother, the youngest one was old enough to leave my mother and he came down as well. So our foster mother took the three of us, which we now know we were extremely lucky because a lot of children were split and that.

*How long was it before your mother came to visit you? Did she come down?*

They came down once a month in the beginning and we'd have a day off from school and then when it was time to go the taxi would come and we had to say goodbye. I couldn't let my Dad go, my arms were round his neck, my legs were round his neck and he would prise me off and they would go, just go. There was no looking back or blowing kisses because they must have been as choked and we just stood there.

Reference 2 - 10.16% Coverage

*When you left Bedfordshire, or wherever you finished up after the war, did you keep in contact with the lady that had boarded you?*

We did. After (the war); she had no children and of course we went back to the Isle of Wight and I remember my father coming to pick us up. It was well after the war, it was getting towards the end of 1945 and we got on the ferry at Portsmouth and once again I turned round and saw her at the gate, at the fence crying and we just got on, you know. I thought then it was just the same. I was then twelve, I thought then this is the same as when we went. Anyway they adopted a boy after they got back and he died and she went down into Sussex. Well my brother, he lived in Sussex and he kept in touch with her so all her news came back to us and our news went down to her and that. I've already showed you the locket that was put in an envelope for me. When she died, I thought there's nothing else I can do. So I volunteer for Willen Hospice here and they light up a life at Christmas and I lit up a life and put in the Memory Book her name, 'Our foster mother during the war, end of an era.' I thought that is the last thing I can do for you.

*She must have been... well it was almost six years wasn't it, she must have almost been like a mother to you.*

00:25:44

That's right.

*When you came home again after the war how did you feel? It must have felt strange coming back into that environment again?*

It was, because I had the responsibility of my brothers, I looked after them and when I came home I lost every bit of confidence I had. My brothers settled

down nicely, we went to the Isle of Wight and we could see the sea from the bedroom window. I... my brothers settled nicely but... I got to a point when I said to my Mum, 'You meet me halfway from school, you take me halfway.' I'd lost everything then and Mum used to say, 'Well look go swimming then.' I didn't want to and later on my mother said I really got on her nerves because I would not leave her. That went on for a long time. Also I would... I'd always been used to looking after my brothers and I remember after the war when we were at home again I gave my brother, my youngest brother, such a good hiding that my mother said to me, 'I'll do the smacking now Joan.' And I said, 'But oh yes.... but you don't realise...' But it was because I'd always done it but I had to hand all that over to my mother. Very strange.

*It must have been a tremendous responsibility for you to look after you two brothers while you were away. Because you weren't that old at that time.*

No that's right. It was just (if) anybody touched them, I was there and nobody would dare do it now.

Reference 3 - 8.74% Coverage

*you'd been looking after people for so long.*

That's right, because my brother used to say to me we're going to school, two mile walk, bitter cold it was and he used to say, 'Look at my legs Joan.' I'd look and they'd all be red raw where his wellingtons had rubbed. I'd say, 'oh alright.' I got his socks and put them over his wellingtons and dealt with him like that.

The only thing that also made it... particular thing. For some unknown reason we had parcels from the Red Cross, evacuees. The boys would have a lovely jumper and trousers and socks but the little girls would have a liberty bodice, you know liberty bodice and navy blue knickers and bottle green knickers. They were right up here and right down there with little pockets. I remember we were having dinner and it was mince and my brother didn't like his mince. This was my elder brother and she said, 'You will sit there and eat that you're not wasting your food.' She went out and he was there with this food and it was getting more and more congealed and I wanted to go out and play and he looked at me and said, 'I don't like it!' I just shrugged there was nothing I could do. Anyway Auntie Edie went down the garden to get in the washing. Quick as a flash I picked up this mince and put it in my knicker pocket, two scoops up and in my knicker pocket, knife and fork down straight. She came in and said, 'There you are, I told you, now off you go and play.' So we had to go down, run across the fields to a stream where I emptied out all the mince, wet all my knicker pocket but we never ever had clean clothes every day. These knickers had to last me for another three days and I was naïve enough to think she didn't notice. Whether she did or not I don't know but no repercussions came.

*That's a lovely story.*

My brother doesn't eat mince now, he still doesn't eat mince. But those knickers came in, I always think about those. But I'm absolutely fanatical about hygiene and cleanliness because... baths were once a week. You can imagine, in front of the fire and no clean clothes. I always said that if I had any children I would always, always tell them what was happening. I only had one boy but I used to say, 'Haircut tomorrow or we're going to see nanny tomorrow.' He always knew, because we didn't know anything.

Reference 1 - 3.62% Coverage

I wasn't evacuated but my sisters were we was sent to Thaxted in Essex to friends of my parents. We didn't stay there very long, from there my mother being Dorset her family wrote to her said they are converting train carriages for London children. Because Harrow was way behind East End and so we went to live in this converted train carriage at Lyme Regis and it was fantastic, it really was fantastic. Then my mother heard that our area was being evacuated and I was very strong willed said I would not go so I went into a boarding school in Lyme Regis because she gave up the train carriage. But I got Scabies and I had to come back to Great Ormond Street so I was back home for a while.

Reference 2 - 4.68% Coverage

*can I just pursue this railway carriage I mean was this specially created for people who, for the war?*

That's right, that's right they was on a hill at Lyme Regis and they were you imagine a train carriage you had a back door and a front door. well one side was were the kitchen was the other door was the front door and then the separate carriages was bedroom and living room there was lots and lots of people there.

*Right I haven't heard that before.*

No it was great and my parents had brought me a blue bike and a letter my mother came home while one of sisters came to look after us. And she said, 'Right peddle like mad to the station and get there before the train goes.' Because we new it was for my father this letter. well I got on my blue bike and knew no more about it! I was in an accident.

*Oh dear.*

I woke up in hospital some where but I can't remember where it was.

Reference 1 - 2.01% Coverage

Apart from that her two young children, me brother and sister were evacuated, my brother was evacuated to Leighton Buzzard, but I had no idea where my sister was evacuated right further up north somewhere, I never saw them during the war em...

*So it really did break families up the fact that you didn't see them?*

Oh absolutely, and another thing to see those different places of young children like being in London going to the stations, em it's quite upsetting seeing all these little young, near all young children I'm talking about with their labels on and the little box so to speak with a bit of food in, but I think the worst of, was it fifty thousand children? it was a hell of a lot of children that were put on this boat over to Canada, young children, I mean so have come back, you know, em.

Reference 1 - 4.20% Coverage

*Did you have any evacuees?*

Next door to us we had a little girl, four year old Vera Ellen Pike from Islington she came. She was only four but I think she lived in our house more than she lived next door. Because there were three girls you know and she used to come in and play and we used to bathe her and dress her and wash her hair and all that sort of thing.

*And how long did she stay?*

Well nearly all the war didn't she? She had a brother and sister come down with her but they went back didn't they? But Vera stayed all the war.

[<Files\\HFRT019 Audrey Lambert>](#) - § 1 reference coded [3.68% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 3.68% Coverage

*Did you have any evacuees during the war?*

No, we didn't have any children but quite a number of others were around in the streets and of course a number of them have never gone back.

*Really.*

No, there was a girl about four doors up, she changed her name to the name of the people she was staying with and I think her parents didn't really want her back. She changed her Christian name as well, cos that was Margery and she changed it to Madge.

*Really.*

Umm... and she still lives in Wolverton.

*Umm...when you think about those evacuees do you remember where they came from? Were they from the London area?*

Oh, yes, yes they were nearly all from the London area, yes, yeah.

[<Files\\SHLT045 Shelia Lindsay>](#) - § 8 references coded [71.36% Coverage]

Reference 1 - 31.46% Coverage

*How did you find out that you were going to be evacuated?*

I was told by my parents actually, in fact everybody was going to be evacuated from the school but my parents were the first ones to tell me that I was going to go away.

*Did you prefer it that way?*

Pardon?

*Did you prefer it that way?*

What that my parents told me? Well yes I think at five you're very young aren't you and you need to have it explained to you really don't you?

*What did you feel about leaving home and your parents?*

Well I didn't leave home with my parents. Let me explain to you what happened. My mother decided because I was quite young to go with me and she also took five other children who were round about the same age with me um when I went. I didn't like the idea of leaving my dad at all you know I had to do that.

*Not much choice. How did you feel about what happened on the day of the evacuation?*

On the day of the evacuation I can remember it being very busy at home you know we had to pack things and off we went to school and I had to go up to my infants school and when I got there with my mother and the four other children that where going with me, five other children going with me. We had to just, we didn't go into the school at all we just had to line up in crocodile fashion in our classes and they gave us a sort of box, a cardboard box with a piece of string on it and of course do you know what in that do you think?

*You'd have a gas mask?*

That's right the gas mask.

*Did you have a teddy bear with you or anything?*

Yes I did I took a teddy bear with me and I had a label and we all had labels with our names on so that they could identify us.

*Can you now describe the journey for us?*

Do you know I can't remember much about that journey, all I can remember is that I had to go by train. We went from the school in crocodile line down to the station we all marched down there and the trains were waiting and we got on the trains and we travelled some distance, we went to Canterbury and then we got on a coach, the coach was waiting for us to take us to a village hall and it was, you can imagine at that age you felt very vulnerable and you wondered you know what was going to happen and you didn't know what was going to happen it was just one of those things, you arrived and there was so many people.

00:05:00

We were in a sort of, I suppose like a church hall bit sort of, from what I can remember dark and dismal there were people inside with sweets and cups of tea and things like that and we had to just sit ourselves down there and wait.

*They did try to at least make it bit nice for you though?*

They did try yes, I am sure they did.

*What happened when you were off to your destination when you got to your house you was going to live in?*

Well let me explain, let me explain the village hall first, I can remember sitting in there feeling quite vulnerable, quite alone even though my mother and there was an excitement but equally so it was, I felt very, very isolated and people came in and they had the names of the people they were going to

collect. And we sat and sat and sat nobody seemed to want us and I can remember feeling that nobody really wanted us we were going to be left there. But in fact right at the last minute in walked this lady who was quite young actually and she was collecting all five of us plus my mum and we were going to live in her house.

So off we went in a car and I wondered what sort of a house it was going to be on I wondered if it was going to be like my house that 'd left behind and when I arrived I couldn't believe that I was in this house. It was huge, you know how things look bigger when your a child but this was enormous and green fields all round it, we went up to the door and I thought this isn't a house this is like a town hall that's what it looked like. And we went inside and I can't remember much about the inside apart from the fact that we had a nursery. We were taken to a nursery, we had a chauffeur to drive us to school and pick us up and home! Yes wasn't I lucky, we had a cook who cooked for us my mother didn't have to do any cooking and it was a very, very grand place and I couldn't believe this was home, to them it was home to them and it so happened that this was in Bishopsbourne and the house was called Bourne Park and it was in Canterbury and the lady and gentleman who owned was called Lord and Lady Prestige so they were Lord and Lady so we lived it up, we had a lovely time you know we had sugar lumps which you know we'd never had before. The grounds there was lots of things in the grounds there was raspberries and strawberries growing fresh fruit I used to go down and help myself to some of those and...

*When nobody's looking?*

Pardon?

*When nobody's looking?*

When nobody's looking, well it didn't matter actually and then when we explored the house they used to go out shooting, birds you know, you've seen that have you how people do that and they used to hang the birds in the cellar, pheasants before they, I mean they were dead but they used to hang them so that they were just right for eating. So it was quite a grand place actually.

*A blessing in some way?*

A blessing?

*Sort of you got a little bit of adventure.*

Yeah, yeah.

*How did you keep in contact with your class mates?*

The class mates remember I was still six, I was only six at this time and having all those children with me who came from... I was lucky really wasn't I? So my friends where those friends and I can't remember very much about the children in the school all I know is the school was very similar to the school that I'd left, a bit smaller a village, like a village school really.

*How did you get with local how did you get on with local children?*

Well you see we didn't have very much to do with them because you know we were chauffeured to school, chauffeured back again we had our own little environment we had all sorts of things to play with and we never, I never mixed with any of the children in that particular school.

*Where did you go to school and how was it different?*

I've just told you the difference in it. When I think about it now I mean I was there for six months that's all and then I had to come home. My mother had to come home with me and the reason that I had to come back was because they started to bomb Canterbury and that was the area that I lived in and so because they were bombing my mother decided that I couldn't stay there so I had to come back home to my house. I then went away again afterwards after about another six months. I'd stayed in Gillingham my home town for a period of time and when I arrived back home it had altered so much there was black out do you know what I mean by black out?

*Yeah where turned off all your lights so they couldn't...*

And you had to have black out curtains, there were strips of brown paper all stuck to the windows criss cross you know like these old leaded windows well instead of it being lead it was just brown paper stuck, now why do think that happened?

*Because when bombs dropped the glass could smash and it would catch all the glass next to it.*

Good, yes, that's exactly what it was and my father was in the Home Guard and he also was in the ARP do you know what ARP stands for? Neither do I actually!

*Roger Kitchen – Air Raid Precaution.*

Thank you Roger, Air Raid Precaution and they used to wear tin hats on there heads with ARP written on it and they used to go off and patrol the streets around. Also when I got back my garden had altered, I'd only got a very small garden I suppose it was, I suppose about as big as this but then it had an Anderson Shelter in it and that's where you had to go when the air raid warning went and you had to go down into the shelter and stay there until the bombing and the air raid sirens rang again to say it was over, the raid was over. So you used to have to go down inside that.

*Did you worry about your parents back home when you was evacuated again?*

Yes I went away again and this time I didn't go with my par... my mother because my mother was needed to stay at home. My father who worked in the Dock Yard which was the ships and things they started, that's why I had to leave the Medway towns because they bombed the Medway towns because of the dock yard. My mother also worked as a nurse.

So I was then moved on I suppose I was about six getting on for seven then and I had to move on to, I went Marlborough which is Wiltshire.

This time a totally different experience, I went with my aunt and her invalid sister and her little girl so that was four of us and to a very, very distant relative of my aunt and that house was a council house and it had five children in it and a mum and dad. So there where eleven of us in all and that

was a big squeeze, I mean my bedroom, my aunt, my, her invalid sister her little girl and I lived or slept in one room. That was a very, very different experience but there was something in common, those two places had in common. Because I'd lived in a town house for so many years when I was a little girl when I went away to those two places they were in the country and I've never experienced what it was like to be in the country and live in the country and you had lots of excitements outside. Because you could just wander freely and I'd never known that as a child because I'd lived in a town all the time.

*So you liked it?*

I loved, yeah.

*How did you keep in contact with your parents during that time?*

00:15:00

It was very difficult because my dad was working as I say in the dock yard and my mother was a nurse they couldn't stay in the house that I lived in there wasn't anymore room it was heaving at the seams so my dad and mum used come down about once and month to see me and visit me and they wrote letters and sent cards and things like that but I got very home sick in that environment.

Reference 2 - 7.72% Coverage

During that time the happiest thing, I think being with my mum and dad because you know I didn't have them all the time so whenever I saw them it was really quite nice to see them.

*What were the saddest things that happened?*

I say, I suppose saying good bye to them you know I really hated the idea of leaving them going but I just had to let them go?

*When did you come back?*

I came back, I think round about 1944 some time in that year just before the war finished, when was it 1945?

*I think so yeah*

So it was round about 1944 when I came back.

*What happened when you got back?*

I can remember really vividly because, remember the experiences that I'd had of being in this very big house to begin with then being in this council house but having a lot of freedom to run and... in the countryside and when I came back to my house and I can remember it being quite dark and I'd been away for so long that I wondered whether I'd ever fit in again and I was the only child again. Whereas before I'd had lots of children around me all the time so it was a very strange experience to came back home, I wanted to come back home but I felt, I felt really as if I was hemmed in.

*What was your feelings about all the things happened, what were your feelings were you happy?*

What about coming home? Yes I was looking forward to coming home but it was different when I got home because being just one child again and having had the experience for you know, two and a half years and mixing with lots of children all the time it was such a different environment then when I came back home. It wasn't quite what I'd expected.

*(Unintelligible) did you ever keep in touch with your friends that were in the big mansion with you?*

I keep in touch with some of the people I mean some of them are not around any longer because as you get older people just people just decide that it's time that they went they leave but um I keep in touch with some of them yes. My aunt has died and so I keep in touch with her daughter the one that lived in... I've never been back to Bourne Park but I tell what I did do when Roger came up and asked me if I would do this interview I began to think about, I wonder it was like at Bourne Park now you know this very large house that I went to and I have a friend living in Canterbury so I've now rung her and said, 'Find out about what's happened to the house now.' You know what's going on there.

Reference 3 - 8.71% Coverage

Yes I did and wasn't very happy at that school the children weren't all that nice and of course I didn't have all those other little children with me that came to the same school.

00:20:02

So I remember not liking the teacher very much, I tell you what I do you remember which was something that might interest you. One day we were told that we had test our gas masks and so the gas masks, we had to line up outside a sort of shed and inside the shed they said there was gas inside and we had to put our gas masks on and walk through this shed and out the other side to see whether the gas masks were working properly. Now whether it was really gas inside or not I don't know but I remember that it was smoke and it was like yellow smoke it filled... you could hardly see where you were going and it was almost as if we ran through it and out the other side. Yes I wasn't very happy at school I was...

*It wasn't a very kind thing to do to you all really was it?*

Wasn't a very kind thing to do? No I suppose it wasn't but I suppose they had to test them some how or other.

*Did it course a bit of panic?*

Pardon.

*Did it course a bit of panic because you were children?*

Yes it did I think I think we were all a bit panicky you know it was we got to do it but we didn't really want to do it.

*Roger - You were at that school you were like a stranger did you get and you came from a town did the children there play any tricks on you were they nice to you or not you know your fellow class mates?*

I don't think they were very nice to me, I don't, I don't know whether I was very good at school at that point in time. You know I had quite a lot of different schools and maybe I wasn't as academic as some of them there I don't know. But I know that I found it difficult to keep up and maybe that was because you know I was away from home but I didn't really enjoy it that's about all I can remember about it.

*Roger - Where they any other children in the school who were like you or were you the only evacuee there?*

I was one of the only evacuees there because remember this wasn't sorted out by the school or the government. It was sort of my aunt having this distant relative in Marlborough where it was safe. So we went there without any sort of help from anybody else in fact Marlborough had the Savenake Forest the house that I lived in was near to Savernake Forest and in Savenake Forest that's where the Americans were. And they had all their, well they just had their unit in there. I remember my aunt saying that I must never take chewing gum from the Americans because they used to give out chewing gum sweets and things like that and I was told...

*I suppose you went and did it anyway.*

...never to take it, ever

Reference 4 - 8.12% Coverage

*And one of the questions we had down was what happened at Christmas?*

*She's done it*

*Did she say about what happened at Christmas?*

No didn't actually I mentioned the fact that I had Christmas cards and birthday cards and things but at that particular Christmas I can remember the one, the first place that I was at I can remember going to church. I can remember, the, it was very, very lush festivities you know lots of decorations everybody was lovely with everybody else there was no, it was almost as if you didn't have share things there because you had so much. But at the other house, in the council house with five children you had to share everything, absolutely everything.

*So what did you have, I mean compare the Christmas, what did you have like Christmas, I mean you might not remember, Christmas dinner in the big house and Christmas dinner in the council house what..?*

Well it, I can't, I can't really remember Roger I mean I would imagine we had some sort of pheasant or turkey or something like that in the first house. I can't remember what we had in the second house apart from the fact what we used to have every Sunday for lunch, which was absolutely disgusting for me.

00:25:02

We all had to sit round the table you know all these five children, my aunt , everybody and we had what they called calves heart. Now it was a big heart it was from a cow, it was a heart of a cow and we had to, they sliced this up and it used to be put on our plates and then we used to have cabbage and potatoes and every Sunday I can remember I was quite, quite a strong willed little girl actually and I used to hate this calves heart and so I used to sit there and I used to eat my vegetables and I used to sit and I wasn't going to eat the calves heart. I can remember every Sunday dreading Sundays because they always insisted that I had to eat it and there was no way I was going to eat it and it seemed like for ever I was sitting at that this table with this heart in front of me looking at it but determined not to eat it. Eventually they gave in and I used to be allowed to leave the table without eating the calve's heart.

*Did the other children like it?*

Did the other children like it? I think they were used to it they'd been brought up with it you know and I'd never eaten it before, horrible stuff.

*I suppose your cousin didn't like it much either?*

Well she was much younger she was a little thing at that time you know she was only a tot and I don't think she was ever forced to have it I certainly was told that I'd got to eat it.

Reference 5 - 7.27% Coverage

*So you never actually saw Lord and Lady?*

We did but only you know high days and holidays you know when I say that it might be perhaps on a Sunday they might in invite us down there and they'd talk to us. They were very kind people but very sort of isolated, they isolated you really they only saw you when they wanted to see you. They were very, very kind and when we all left they gave me bible which was leather bound with gold leaf and a prayer book and we all had one of these with it written inside 'From Lord and Lady Prestige'. We had a photograph taken, I've got the photograph at home but it's in a frame and it's in a big frame with lots of other ones so I didn't bring it along today but I should have done probably.

*Roger - How was your mother treated was almost like treated as a nursery nurse then?*

Yes, I mean although she never had to cook she just looked after us. You know our welfare she looked after what clothes we would wear and so on she didn't have to wash it or anything they did all the... all of that was done for her so I think she had quite a nice time at the...

*Did your Mum mind it just being a nursery nurse?*

Sorry?

*Did your mum mind about being a nursery nurse or not?*

Well I mean she was a qualified nurse I suppose she was used to looking after people anyway.

*Roger – What about, the other thing was you mentioned Easter, when you were down in Marlborough, Easter, your parents coming at Easter with a present?*

Oh yes, yes when my mum and dad came down to see me one Easter time they brought Easter eggs with them for everybody but because it was during the war I can remember the Easter eggs these particular Easter eggs where like barrage balloons, do you remember do you know what I am talking about? When I say barrage balloons?

No.

Well barrage balloons were big balloons in the sky which were put up to stop the planes coming. They had wires and things coming down from them and the planes used to come along and it used to tangle the planes up, so all of these were up in the sky. At this particular time we had Easter eggs which were barrage balloons I don't know how they were fixed at the bottom but they were identical it was just very, you know it was just a war like thing and we all knew what barrage balloons were like.

Reference 6 - 3.39% Coverage

*Homesick, you said you were homesick how did that kind of show itself, did you cry at night you know or any of that kind of thing?*

It's a long time to go to remember all this isn't it, I mean I can remember feeling quite heavy inside I think I am the sort of person that when I have a problem I sort of go into myself and I wonder whether that ever stems from the fact when I was a child you know I was homesick especially the second time I went because I wasn't with my parents then and I'm sure I isolated myself and just had sadness inside me. I think sometimes I must have cried too, yes.

*Did you ever sit actually sit down and talk to the adults that were around you at the time?*

Yeah.

*Your aunts and that did you ever sit down and talk to them about the war or whatever?*

No I don't think I ever sat down and talked about the war. I mean I could always talk to my aunt about things, but I can't really remember what I talked about. I mean I know that she was quite a warm person and you know she was quite caring so I would feel that I could talk to her yes.

Reference 7 - 1.67% Coverage

*The other thing, again it's very difficult to remember all these years ago but did you think that maybe it would never come to an end that you'd ever..?*

Oh yes I did, I can remember feeling that and wondering if I would ever be able to go home again. You know two years, two and a half years is quite a long time in your life especially when you're young a year seems along time

as you get older it seems to race past. But at that time when you're younger, I mean two years is a long time to be away from home and your parents.

Reference 8 - 3.02% Coverage

*Do you think, the other thing was do you think it could happen again? I don't mean war or anything but this idea of just your children going off and sending your children off do you think people would tolerate it today and it seemed amazing really that people just up and went and..?*

Yeah it does seem amazing I don't I can't see parents allowing that to happen any longer but I suppose when war breaks out, I suppose people get panicky don't they and if the government decides that this is what's going to happen, if the parents are protective at that time they must have thought it was an... they must go you know. I mean living so near to London it was and Chatham Dock Yard I mean you can imagine how if bombs are going to come over and bomb that parents would be wanting to get the children away from it and out of it. I don't know if it would ever happen now, I can't imagining it happening how but we'd have a different sort of war now wouldn't we?