

INTERVIEW WITH IVY RICHARDSON, SOUTHWARK - 10.2.95

Interviewer: Rib Davies

R: Mrs Ivy Richardson. What was your maiden name?

I: Chaney.

R: Can you tell me where you were born and when?

I: I was born in 1909 in Lambeth. Near Waterloo.

R: What did your parents do?

I: My dad was a printer at the News of the World and The Times. He used to do all the week at the Times and Saturday night at the News of the World. He used to go in at 4 and do the night and finish early in the morning. He'd always come here and have a sleep here before he went home because the tube didn't start early enough for him to go home because my parents lived at Hendon Central.

R: Your parents lived at Hendon. You lived here. Who did you live with?

I: With my husband. When the war broke out he went. As it broke out on the Sunday, he went in on the Tuesday.

R: When you were a child, you lived with your parents where?

I: In Lambeth. Near Westminster. Then my parents moved to Burnt Oak and then from there they went to Hendon Central. That's where they lived all during the war.

R: What were you doing before the war?

I: I used to do home help because I had the little boy and I worked in between his school hours. When the war came I stopped here because my husband was in the reserves and when war was declared, Sunday, he went into the Royal Engineers on the Tuesday. Then David was 5. He never saw his dad again until the war was ended. He was in Italy and all over the place. Oh, he did see him for a couple of weeks cos he was billeted in Yorkshire in Moreton. It was so bad here that he sent me a letter and asked me to go up there. David and I went up there to see him for a fortnight. When we got there he was shifted to France. I didn't come back. I stopped up there with the boy. He went to school up there.

R: Who did you stay with?

I: It was a couple. They had a place over a post office in Moreton, in the High Street. They had a large car for the weddings. He did all the delivering of newspapers. He used to do rabbit skins and I used to help and he used to give them tuppence for a rabbit skin and we used to hang them up. And David went to school up there and he liked it. While he was up there he won his scholarship and he went to a cap and gown school at Islington. So when the war ended and his dad came back he was at this new grammar school.

R: How did you find these people in Yorkshire?

I: It was through my husband being billeted at this particular house. He had to go there and any soldiers anywhere he had to find them billets so he had to stop at this house above the post office. So that's how I met them. I went to see him but he got shifted and I got on so well with the couple Lydia and Albert that I stopped there to give me a break from the raids here.

R: Were the people in the village generally friendly to you?

I: Yes. I joined the British Legion and I used to help to do the teas for the soldiers. I had a lovely time while I was there. Real freedoms. No raids. No nothing. After being here it was a relief. And it was for the boy. He got on ever so well. When we came back and he went to his new school. But previous to that when we got back here we had the raids again and they were bad. Opposite here there is the bus garage. There was an unexploded bomb over there. There were so many gallons of petrol underneath it. Everybody in these flats had to move out. I didn't have anywhere to go on my own and take what I wanted to take. That particular night I took my little boy - he had a budgie and he had it in the cage and he wanted to take it with him and I said we couldn't. Cos we went on the bus down to the Oval. We went in the Underground about half past six and then we went down onto the platform and I had a blanket and I said to him "We'll have to stop here. It's too dangerous. We can't go back to our flat". He said "Lets do it". We got there and we got laid down and it was terrible. He was crying and he said "I don't want to sleep with all these people". They were singing and they were happy. But it was how we were crowding and laying all along on the platform. And the trains were still going through. In the morning they said the all-clear had gone and we could all go out. I asked the station if they would phone up here to see if we could come back. They said we could do but we might have to go again in the evening. Then, my mum and my father decided to come here to see where I was and he said he'd take us back with them. And we went back to Hendon. They lived in flats over Woolworths and the shops there. We slept in the cupboard under the stairs there. We felt really safe.

R: How long did you stay there?

I: I stopped with my mum quite a while. Then they said we had to go and do work and all that. So I went as a booking clerk on the Underground.

R: Jumping back. When they told you that you had to leave your flat, what did you take with you?

I: The only thing I nearly took: When my father came we got the case and I put my husband's one suit, the best one. I said "Can we take that because if he comes back he hasn't got anything to wear except uniforms". He said "Yes". We took David's budgie.

R: What about when you went down the Tube station?

I: There was a shop around at the green - papers and sweets and everything. There was a gentlemen that owned it, a Mr Killick. He said "You fetch him round here and I'll look after him". And he looked after it. While I worked on the UNDERground there was no men because they'd all been called up. I've got a photo. Here's another - that's my son. He was 5. He became an air pilot for British Airways. And that is his sister, my daughter. She worked for the airways as well. He became a Captain. He's retired now.

R: This is a wonderful photo.

I: That's me. I'm the booking clerk in the middle. They're the 4 porteresses, cos all the men got called up. While I was at the booking office at Brent station underground - You know the rockets we used to have...

R: The flying bombs?

I: No. Not the flying bombs. We used to go and sit in the trains and go along, cos it's all in the open from Golders Green. I was between them. We used to look out the window. When you saw them stop they dropped. But this was a rocket. There was never any warning. It fell outside Collindale station. They were after the Air Force Depot at Colindale. Everything in our booking office where I worked, everything collapsed and all the tickets. It was a terrible mess. I was in the booking office at the time - Brent Station, Colindale - it was all the way along.

R: What were you first aware of?

I: You didn't know. The first thing you knew was, you heard the explosion and then everything about you just collapsed. There was tickets everywhere. It was a muddle. You are just trembling and you don't know what's going on. They just came and put you in a car and take you to a depot and give you something and see that you're alright. But I never got hurt.

R: Did you have to be dug out?

I: Oh no. It collapsed but they could see you and they could sort of help you out.

R: So where did the rocket land exactly?

I: It landed outside. It must have been quite a way from where we were. The other one - but I wasn't there - I didn't go that morning - to Lewisham - one of the rockets dropped on Woolworths and it was packed, all the people. Then I went off to Camberwell Green - one afternoon I was out with David - and the sirens went and they had the shelters over there. You went down and went in underneath. But that day I didn't go, cos that had a direct hit. It was a buzz-bomb. If I'd have been out that day I would have gone down there but I wasn't.

R: Where was that?

I: Just over the Green.

R: Camberwell Green station?

I: Yes. We had the shelters in the squares. We had 3 squares. We had them in the centre.

R: What, here?

I: Yes, here.

R: So that was why it was the first time that you'd been in a big public shelter, when you went to the Oval?

I: Yes.

R: Normally you went to these shelters?

I: Yes. They were all above ground. It was all reinforced. When I first moved here I lived in this block but I was one from the top. We always had a bath in the kitchen. It had a lid come down. It was all stone (?). The girl underneath me, she used to say "When the raid's on, come down to me. Don't stop up there". So I did. I went down to her flat and I took David and she had 2 little children. We used to put them in the bath with pillows and put the lid down and they went to sleep and they never heard nothing. When the all-clear went I used to come up. We had to black out there. One day I came back from Yorkshire for a week or two weeks. I came in and I forgot you had to black out everywhere. I had curtains. I could have done it easy, but I didn't. The Warden came up banging at the door and coming in and telling us "Your lights shining out. We'll all get bombed." Being up in Yorkshire and never having to do it, I'd forgotten all about it and I didn't do it. Of course after that for a week or fortnight they just came up and did it for me. They were too scared that I'd forget. Cos it was very serious.

R: At the beginning of the war, do you remember the day war broke out?

I: Yes. It was on the Sunday and my husband always went down the Lane, East Lane, shopping. He always got some prawns and some winkles. He'd gone down the Lane. I had chairs out of the room. I had one standing in the window. David was standing on the chair looking out of the window. At 11 o'clock a siren went and everyone was rushing about thinking

- but of course the actual war didn't start for a year. It was on September 3rd it came but we never had hardly anything for a year. Then after a year then it went every night. David turned round and said "Ooh. They've just announced that we're at war with Germany. Have we got to walk to Poland?" Because the war was declared because the Germans had gone into Poland. My husband came home and he said there was a proper commotion down the Lane. Everybody was running everywhere because the siren went. If it hadn't have gone it would have been alright. But everybody thought there was a raid on because we'd had these sirens going to show us what it would be like.

R: What did you do when the siren went?

I: I just stopped here. I didn't do anything. I thought "They can't have started bombing here. They've only just announced that we're at war". So I didn't do anything. When my husband came home, then on the Tuesday I was worried cos that's when he got his papers to say he'd got to go.

R: Do you remember seeing him off?

I: Yes. The only thing what really upset me was that when he got demobbed to come home my friend and I that was a booking clerk. The husband was over all the booking clerks in so many stations. She said "We're going down to Bude in Cornwall. Would you like to come with us?" I said "Oh yes. It would be a break. It would be nice for David cos he'd have Barry to play with". So I said "Yes". I decided to go. We got down there. But when my husband got demobbed it was while I was away. My mother knew that he was coming but she never got in touch with me and told me so that I could come back, which I would have done. He came home to the empty flat. No one was there. He didn't know where I was or nothing. It was upsetting and I was crying. We was all weeping in the end. While I was on the Underground and I was at Collindale Station - I used to do Brent and Collindale, Burnt Oak - there were some houses that could be bought. I had enough money that I could have bought one of these houses. You could get a lovely house for £1000 then. I didn't do it because I thought - the war hadn't ended - Say Bob don't come back. So I didn't do it, but I should have done. On the other hand, my husband died 33 years ago. I only had Sally cos David was married. Between David and Sally there is 15 years. The war years he was away. I had Sally just after the war. She was born on September 3rd after the war. So Sally was David's little bridesmaid. The difference in the time elapsed through the 6 years of the war and him not coming home.

R: Did you find it difficult to get to know each other at the end of the war?

I: No. He was very easy to get on with. All he kept saying, when we did have Sally was - cos he'd missed so much of David - what he was going to do with Sally. All the things he'd missed with David he'd be able to do with Sally. She was 13 when her dad died.

R: Was he bitter about missing out?

I: Yes. He was. Very. David was very studious, always studying. He knew what he wanted to do. When he did leave school he went into the county hall to train as an architect. But he didn't like the hours. It was half past nine till half past four. He didn't like every day the same hours. He wanted to do something different. So he decided he wanted to do with flying. So he did 8 years in the Royal Air Force but he didn't do the 8 years. He finished early so that he could go to Cranwell, go and try to get in to be a pilot.

R: To cut back. You husband's relationship with your son. You were saying your husband felt bitter about being left out of those years.

I: He did. He said he missed such a lot of him. He really did. He was 5. When he come back he had got his scholarship. He was going to his new school and everything. It took a long while for them to get on a level together.

R: What was it like when he first came back?

I: He wanted to do everything for David. David wanted to do everything himself. He thought that he didn't ought to do so much for him. David would get up and the shoes, they would all be clean and done. His clothes would be out ready for him. He'd never had it. He said "Why does he do it?" It's just that he missed it so he thought he'd start then. It was okay but of course he died before David told him what he wanted to do and he went into the exams and passed them. He went to Cranwell to take it and then they sent him to Southern Rhodesia to get his wings which he did. Then he went to fly for BOAC. Then he became First Officer. Then it changed from BOAC to British Airways. Then he became the Captain. ✓

R: Going back to the beginning of the war. There was the Phoney War. But nevertheless, lots of mothers and children left London.

I: Yes. The children that I knew here. They were crying. They said "Why don't you let David go?" I said "No. I don't want to. If we do have to leave London I'll go with him. I've got relations". It was terrible. The thing that upset me more than anything was my young brother. He was 20. He was married and he'd got this little boy Derrick (?). He was called up and they had to go. They never had any option. We went to the station to see him off. I took David with me. His wife and Derrick the baby didn't come to the station - she was too upset. I remember my brother saying to me "Won't it be lovely. Perhaps when the war's over Derrick will be just like your David". Of course he was sent overseas. He went to - I don't know where it was - it was abroad, but it was forests, the country wasn't like a built up country. He got an open wound on his leg and got elephantitis. That's a swelling. The Regiment he was in was due to come home in the March. This was Christmas Eve that my mum and dad got the telegram to say that he'd died out there. I remember my ad coming in. He'd got the turkey for Christmas and everything. This was at Hendon. They all broke down and nobody wanted to do any Christmas fare or nothing. Every time I looked at Derrick I thought of his words. On the other hand, I wondered whether it was meant to be because Derrick was very backward. He had learning difficulties. But he was a lovely boy. He went to work in the Town Hall. But you had to talk him to do things. My brother never came back and his wife, soon after - there was these associations and you could go to the council where they got their burial stone and she went to see it. She applied and as she was the widow they let her go and she went.

R: When the raids first started, do you remember those first nights?

I: What was nice about it was, everybody helped each other. I was one from the top - I lived up high.. *hwo*

R: Where was this, exactly?

I: In this block. One from the top. Number 55 Lewis Trust. Everybody helped everybody else to come down. Also if you was completely on your own, they would come down and say "We're going down to the shelter". And we all got our own places next to who we wanted to be with. They were ever so helpful. Everybody helped one another. It was awful cos you all dreaded - you used to sit and wait for the sirens to go, that there was a raid. Then you just didn't know what you was going to do. When you went out again you never knew... The flats, when we were little tiny children, I lived in Blackfriars, The Cut. Lower Marsh. My husband's sister was married to a chap named Bert Gardener. They lived in the flats I used to live in when I was a little girl. Her mother lived at Burnt Oak. That's on the same line as Edgware. So the sister and the children went and stopped with the mother. Then one weekend, the raids had eased up. Sometimes we had a week, maybe 2 weeks and not have a raid. You'd get a buzz and feel that much better. So they decided - she'd left the flat in the Cut and gone and lived with her mother while the war was on. But this particular day, they said "Let's go down the flat and give it a clean. It must be dusty." They all went. And while they were there, there was a raid on. It hit the particular block that she was in. They were all killed. It seemed that she went away to be safe, which she was cos there was nothing in Burnt Oak that they wanted to bomb like there was in London - there was all sorts of places that they

wanted - it was right on this block of flats. Like the one that was here. It was round in the other gate and it dropped on the end block and it took the whole lot down. Like it would be if you just come in the block and come up the stairs - that's one block. That's what it took. The whole lot was flattened to the ground. When they did rebuild it, it wa lovely. Then of course, I'd got Sally after the war and I was entitled to another bedroom, a 2 bedroom flat - I only had one here. I moved into this block that was being rebuilt and it was lovely.

R: So if the block you used to shelter in had been hit, would you have survived?

I: I'm not sure whether I would or not. The block that was hit here - the whole lot went. But it was in a period when most of the people had had enough and had left. There was some poeple living there, but they weren't in the block when it happened.

R: Before you went to Yorkshire, you stayed here right through the blitz with your son? How did you cope with things like rationing?

I: That was very hard. My friend that lived down the other gate - she didn't live in here then, she lived round by Myatts Park (?). We used to - about 4 of us - save our rationning and we'd take it in turns - one week I'd use my month's rations and buy the sweets and we'd sharethem and all have sweets each. Then another week it was one of the others. That's how we did it. My father worked at the Times and the News of the World. He could fetch home white paper that hadn't been printed on. He used to fetch it home .There used to be a butcher round the corner called Edwards. It was the finest butchers in the whole of Lambeth. It had all the cuts and everything. My father used to come back on the Sunday morning and take the paper round to Edwards, cos they couldn't get it - they'd order it and they had to wait so long so he supplied them with the white paper. It was all cut in squares, it was marvellous. So every now and again my dad got a leg of lamb for that. That week we all had roast lamb.

Another thing was, over the road there was a beautiful veg and fruit shop. It was called Michaels. It was very well known. It was a husband & wife owned it and they had 6 children. The girl, the middle girl that was the same age as my David, they used to go up to school together. They got very friendly and he liked her and she liked him. If she had a party, he always went to theirs or vice versa. She used to say to David "Tell your mum that dad's having the oranges in tomorrow or the bananas". So I knew before anybody else knew, the day to go up and you lined up and you could get things. That's how we existed. We just had to.

My dad working at the News of the World. On the Sunday morning when he used to come here, he used to fetch 6 News of the Worlds in his case, and a couple of other papers. Any of the friends that I really liked, ...(?)..I used to say "Don't worry about papers. My dad'll fetch them home. I'll put them through your letter box." We sort of shared things. It was very good. When people say "You're lucky getting so many ..(?)" I said " I tell you what, when my dad ..(?) and I cook it from here, I'll perhaps catch you up a bit or you can come."

Another thing we used to do. When we had the books to be able to buy clothes. If we knew anybody, like somebody was getting married or anything special. We'd say "We can spare one book. Put your stack (?) with this one." And we'd go round collecting, if we wasn't going to use them. You just had to do it.

We had the egg powder. That wasn't too bad but a lot of people didn't like it. You could make scrambled egg with it but it wasn't the same as having a real egg.

R: Were there recipes you had to come up with?

I: Oh yes. Recipes that didn't need sugar and didn't need this. You scrounged off of everybody. You had to. When I went up to Yorkshire, it was marvellous. There was no restrictions cos they had got the farms and everything. What I found different was their way of eating. If you saw my David he'd sit and tell you about it. He couldn't understand it. On Sunday there was a terrific big meat dish. That came up first for Sunday lunch. It was full of what they

called bun-tins of Yorkshire pudding. There'd be 45 of these little puddings all on there. That's what you started with, with gravy. Of course, we'd never been used to that. We had a small piece of Yorkshire with our roast beef. My mum used to make it in the bottom of the meat tin and let the juices run on it. But there! By the time you did have your proper lunch, you didn't want it. They'd filled themselves up with Yorkshire pudding. On the Tuesday was baking day. We made the bread. Then you always had bacon, just cooked. It used to be beautiful. I always enjoyed Tuesday's meal. They did really know how to cook and they really enjoyed their food.

R: You stayed there for a year. Why did you come back?

I: I came back I think, because I missed the family so much. My mum and dad - she was a beautiful cook - we were always together, all of us. I don't know how I stopped up there for a year. I think I did it more for David. David loved it. He didn't want to come back.

R: Was there schooling for him when he got back? Did he start straight away in Islington?

I: I put in for the school when I was up there cos I knew I was going to come back. I knew he'd have to go to his grammar school this end, if he passed, which he did. Now, my daughter's got 2 children. This is the funny part as well - Being that David was 15 when I had Sally, she was his little bridesmaid. He got married and he had one daughter. She got married and had 2 children so I had my great-grand-children before I had my grand-children. I've got great-grand-children - the boy is 18 and the girl is 15. Then Sally was married for 4 years before she had any children - so Oliver is only 9 and Jennnifer is 13. People can't understand why I've got grown-up great-grand-children. But that's why it was. The War years. He didn't get much leave. He went through Dunkirk. When I got the card to say that he had got on this banana boat. But when I got the card - wish I'd kept them - they crossed out - there was only the words that said "I am safe" That's all.

R: Was that the card he sent when he was in France on the British Expedition?

I: Yes. He got it to send to me. But he didn't mark all of it out. They did that because you couldn't have it.

R: Do you remember them coming back from Dunkirk?

I: Yes. He never had any boots or anything. He got back and never had any boots and he was very poorly clothed. He was very tall, he was 6 foot and very smart. I have a picture. He was in the reserves, in the Dragoon Guards. He was on his horse. Two of these fellas, him and another - they were carried to their horse to be put on their horse so they didn't have any dirt on them. Even the studs on their boots were polished and done. They got the cup for being the smartest. But it was only because the others in the Regiment carried them to their horses. His horse's name was Margareta. He loved it.

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R: When they came back from Dunkirk, you thought that they'd lost the war?

I: They all did. Everybody. People used to say "We're going to lose this war. They're going to get over here, the GERMans are going to come marching in like they did in the other countries". Everybody was down. They really were.

R: How long did that last for?

I: If the raids stopped people tried to forget it. It was a different feeling. But directly you heard that siren you just went to pieces.

R: What about the sound of the planes? Could you hear those clearly?

I: Yes you could. You always knew. I couldn't, but a lot of the people could distinguish whether it was a German or they'd say "It's all right. It's one of our planes". It was the siren that was the awful part. When the all clear went you could see the change in people. My friend round the other block, she was never afraid of anything - she used to go to dances and she'd be coming home and the siren would go. She was never afraid of anything. My sister was exactly the same because she was her friend. They were two of a kind.

R: Did you ever go out to dances?

I: I never went anywhere while the... Of course I had David and all I thought about was him. When the people were sending their children away - some people are wicked and they say they're glad to get rid of them. But they didn't. If you've got more than one child - I couldn't imagine myself taking two down on the Underground. But David was cuddling up to me. The only thing that worried me was how I was going to get down there carrying the blanket, look after a little boy. You had to take a pillow, but I didn't. I took another little blanket and rolled it up to make a pillow.

R: Did he have anything precious he wanted to take with him?

I: He had, like a bear, but not like a teddy bear, it was like a real bear. Don't matter where he went, he took that with him. When we went to Yorkshire that went with him. Now my other little grandson Oliver, he's got a funny looking thing, Oscar, and he won't go anywhere without it.

R: Would David take this teddy down the air raid shelter?

I: Yes, don't matter where he went. We took it on the Underground. The only thing he didn't like - When we were down there, some was laying that way - their heads were there - and the next person coming in - their heads would be here and their feet would be up here. He turned round and said "I didn't like seeing the people's feet". It was awful cos although there was entertainment, the people were marvellous - as long as they were safe and down there. Some people used to go night after night. I only went the one night.

R: What was the entertainment?

I: Singing. And somebody saying "I'll give a turn" and then they'd stand up and do it. Then they'd say "We'd better pack up now. The last train will be coming through soon". When I was a booking clerk there was a couple of chaps used to come through. They always came through on the last train. We wouldn't cash up our tills until the last train. The porters that was there before me - the foremen, ticket collector - he used to collect the last train passengers. But of course when the war came, we didn't have a man to collect it so as they went through the station I had to get it off them. I used to have a sheet like that. Course the fares were cheap then - there was 1/-, 1/5d and all that. You had to mark down how many you took. As you took one you'd put 1, and then 11, 111, 1111. Then five you had to mark it like that, with a line across it. Then at the end of the day, or when you come in, if you're on early duty the next morning, you could cash it up and you knew how much money you'd taken. Well, our former ticket collector, he was a nice chap. He lived outside Edgware Station. It was a nice house. They all had names. It was called "Excess House"! Us four girls on there used to talk, used to say "Why did he ever give it that name?" Of course we found out after we did the job for a little while. Then, I was going to pay in the money I took on the last train. I think it was another fella from another station, he hadn't gone. And he said to me "Don't pay all that money in. Only pay such and such amount". I said "I wonder why?" He said "Because that's what they all used to do." And that's why he called his house that! Best part of buying that house, that's where he got his money from! So I said to them "What do I do with the money that I don't pay in?" I used to give it to this chap. He used to give those 4 girls a share out, and I used to have a share out. I used to say to my mum "Mum, here's a fiver". "Where's it come from?". It's amazing. People say there's not perks in jobs, but there is. that's how they made it over and over ..(?)

Another job I had, that was during the war - but this must have been more at the beginning of the war. My sister in law lived in these flats with another friend. We all got jobs as cashiers at the Trocadero, at the Elephant. There used to be a stage show. It used to be lovely. On a Saturday and Sunday you had queues and queues, queuing up all round it. We were cashiers and we had 2 fellas, what they call ushers, and the girls were usherettes. The fellas that were on the door, as you go in, they used to take your ticket, tear it in half and give you half. That's what they used to do. Then they'd come out to Ivy - That's my sister in law ..(?) and Dolly and the other girl. What they'd done - they kept some old tickets and the halves they gave them was these old tickets. They kept the new tickets and they used to give them back to us to sell and they used to make money. There was a racket, everywhere, they made money.

R: So you could sell the same ticket twice without it going through the books?

I: We sold the tickets that came out of the till. But these fellas used to keep them. Really we should have said "No. We won't do it". But they said "That's what they always used to do" so we just carried on what they told us to do.

R: Did you get a share of that?

I: Oh yes. We had to make our books up of how many tickets we'd sold. Say 1/6 or 1/9d, as it was then. We used to work it all out. The money that was over - We'd have the money right for what we started, but sometimes we'd have £10 over cos we'd re-sold £10 worth of tickets. It really was a racket.

R: Let me get this straight. They would sometimes take a ticket and not tear it up, but give back a half ticket they already had.

I: Yes. Then it all got stopped because as they tore the tickets, they had a long string with a block at the bottom. As they tore the tickets they had to put them on this - they had like a needle - but before they had that they just kept them in their hand and put them in a bag and they'd always got two halves that they could give. The people, it was too dark for them to see, they wouldn't know whether it was half a ticket cos they don't look at them. That's how they gradually stopped it. The ushers, they were the head blokes. The manager, Mr Waverley (?) ..(?) and the assistant manager, they were all in the office so they didn't know what was going on.

R: So you think there was a lot of fiddling?

I: There was.

R: Was there a black market as well?

I: Oh yes. These two buskers that used to come through at night, they'd been out with their instruments and got their money. They had earned their money. If you seen the money they made! I said to one of our fellas there "Those two chaps, don't they make a lot of money". One of them said to me "You know when you have your tea break, you come with us". And they showed me the two houses that they lived in. Honestly, they were no more tramps and hard up - the money they must have made. They went up on the Northern Line, it took them right to the West End, Leicester Square, Piccadilly and all that. That's where they used to go. We'd always see them go up about half past six, but they always come through on the last train. We used to change their money up. And I used to feel sorry for them. Used to say "The hours they do". But then they got a lot of money. He said "You come out and see". They were outside Collindale Station. Beautiful houses.

R: What do you remember of the songs and the radio during the war?

I: There was a terrific lot of shows on. I used to like Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon. There was Flanagan and Allen, and the Crazy Gang shows. Over the Green we had - the post office was on one side of the green and it was over the other side - it was like a palace. They always had plays and things like that. Up in the gallery it was 4d. We often used to go over there and see ever such a good play for 4d. There was another place in Westminster Bridge Road, near the other end of Waterloo Station. It was a picture palace. I remember my eldest brother always taking the empty beer bottles. (Short break to answer the phone).

My dad used to have a bottle of beer. He used to wait for the empty. He'd take it and get the money and go to the pictures. It might only be 3d but it was enough to get in the pictures.

R: Do you remember the Dig for Victory campaigns? Did that have much effect?

I: Yes. The schools sort of did that more. And evening classes. Things like that. Anybody that could find an allotment did because because they could have their potatoes, have their vegetables. It was marvellous. They'd always share what they had. You always had to go a little way out to get them, though they did make a lot of them.

R: Were there any parks here turned over to allotments?

I: I've got a feeling Kings College Hospital did, a small part of it. I don't think, nothing any closer than that to us.

R: Around VE Day, were you here for that?

I: Yes I was. My friend and me went over to Leicester Square for the jollifications and got in the crowds. Everybody went mad. They really did.

R: Did you just feel happy or did you have mixed feelings?

I: The people were so happy that it was over. I don't think they thought about anything else.

R: Even though there were still some soldiers serving in the Far East?

I: There was a couple of fellas, lived over the way there. If you saw a fella that had been a prisoner of war, like that chap, he was in the hands of the Japanese. When he came back. I've seen people literally go by him and say "Hello, Albert, how do you feel?" and you could see the tears in their eyes cos he looked dreadful. It was horrible. He's never really ever picked up. But he's still alive and still about.

R: You said everybody helped everybody else. Did that change at the end of the war?

I: Yes it did. People after the war got very selfish. Nobody seemed to want to help. Some people got on their feet very quickly. You could tell that they didn't seem to have as much time for one another. Whereas, they were always helping one another and saying "Have you got this" or "Do you need this or that". Most of the people gradually got on their feet and they seemed as if they wanted to forget it more than anything.

R: Why do you think that change happened?

I: People just had a different outlook. Before, they were worrying about if this person's all right or that person's all right. But then it was everybody for themselves. They were getting back on their feet. They could go out and buy things. Though we were on rations for quite a long while after the war. They just didn't give everything back to you. Though of course the fiddling was one of the main things. If you knew somebody that knew somebody else.

R: Do you remember the election at the end of the war?

I: I do faintly. I wasn't really...I heard people say "Whoever gets in, they'll look after themselves. They won't look after us". Some of the soldiers needed pensions and they didn't get them. They were running the reason why they hadn't got them (?) The same as, I get annoyed when I look at - there's a show on, elderly people, and they are all grumbling that they never had meat and they never had this. Yet, honestly and truly we do get looked after. We've got a wardens block of flats up the end there. I could have got one years ago but I didn't want to. There's quite a lot done for them. They've always got hot water. They used to pay £5 for their TV licence. Now that's stopped, they don't pay anything. They get two thirds of their rent paid. None of them seem to be grateful for what help they get. Now, I could have meat every day. It's not a joint. It might be a chop or a small piece of steak. They're always grumbling.

R: There were a number of Italian POWs locally. Did you have much to do with them?

I: No. Now, we've got every nationality. It's only cos we've had to borrow money from the council. Previous to that, we never had to do that. This is the Lewis Trust. Now we've got every nationality. We've never had a foreigner of any description all the years that I've been here.

R: During the war, you didn't get to know any of the Italian POWs?

I: No. Though my husband did because he was in Italy and he had to do a lot of billeting of troops in Italy. He got friendly with a lot of them. We never had any here.

R: Did any of the women here 'go astray' while their husbands were away?

I: Yes, quite a few. There was about a dozen that I know of. It's the people themselves. I lived up in number 55 then. My sister was married to an airforce chap, Jimmy, very nice. They didn't have a proper home. They lived either with his mum or my mum. While I was away in Yorkshire - I did it to several people - I said to Stella, that they could have my flat cos I wasn't living there. So they did. There was lots of friends that was getting leave but they didn't have anywhere. They had to go to his or her parents or to a friend for their leave. I used to say "My flat's empty. Use it for the week or fortnight as long as you leave it as you find it". My sister and her husband, they did live in it. The lady underneath me, she was an elderly lady and she was on her own. Something happened in her flat so she went down and he went to do this job for her and he did it and went back. Then the people in the flats had seen them going in but they didn't know that I wasn't there. They was telling people. And somebody wrote to my husband and told him that I'd got an airman here living with me. It was nothing of the sort, but that's where the trouble started.

But of course a lot of them were doing it. A lady over the other side there, she had ever such a lot of chaps coming out. She met this chap and she fell for him and the marriage broke up in the end. You know I told you I worked at the Troc for a while. Well, my sister in law, she's the type of girl, she attracts men. Dolly, she fell for the under-manager. Ivy was friendly with the assistant manager. They were going out and having dates and all the rest of it. But it didn't go too far. It could have done but of course the husbands come back and it ended. But several of them were like it.

R: Were there any children as a result?

I: No. Not the ones I know. They were too wise(?) I think. But they all had a good time while they was doing it. When I was a booking clerk on the Underground I had a boss whose name was Mr Gideon. He was a lovely man. He really was. I got friendly with him but also the wife and the family, which was alright. He was a freemason and they had dinners and dances. His wife never wanted to go with him. So he always used to ask me. I used to go and his wife used to say to Jim, "Your girlfriend phoned up today" to see how he was. But you see it didn't do anything wrong cos it was with the family as well. David was friendly with the young son so

it was alright. If it hadn't, it could have done because he was such a lovely fella and he was there. That's how, often it happens.

R: Thankyou very much.

END OF INTERVIEW WITH IVY RICHARDSON, SIDE B. TRANSCR7.DOC

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