

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

A: I was born in Mile End, Old Town, 16th December 1907.

R: And you moved here?

A: I was brought by my parents away from that side of London over to this side of London when I was about two years old. The property over that side has been pulled down. Then after the First World War my father became bankrupt through no fault of his own, just the war. Because you see I have lived through two wars. So our circumstances changed and we had to move. Now, the houses in this small estate here, these little flats were built to help the people who had, through enemy action or enemy causes, lost their home during the First World War, and hadn't been able to be housed in any other way. Most had lost money, business, as my father had. It was mixed tenants, they came from all walks of life. We had stockbrokers, we had two doctors, a policeman or two and all kinds of people. Some were very poor. We were all poor in our own way but some had come from rather slummy areas. I can say that without being rude to them because they were alright and they all had to settle down. But because of circumstances and the experience of the First World War, everybody got along very well and helped each other as they did in those days.

R: And immediately before the Second World War, what were you working in before the war started?

A: I didn't really. I helped my father try to make something of the work which came his way, to start all over again more or less, but not in quite the same way. I used to help him and my mother. My mother had lived a life in which she didn't do her own housework and so on because our financial circumstances were such that she didn't need to. So it was a rather uphill climb for all the family.

R: After your father became bankrupt?

A: After, yes. The home had to go, and its contents, as it did in those days. Today I think things are made a little easier for people in his position. But we got along quite well. I was about twelve years old at the time we came up here. It was 1927. School was different. I had been educated - fortunately I had a good education - in private schools. I then had to go when we came here to see what I could do at - they were called state schools in those days. I stayed there until - In those days girls and boys mostly left at fourteen. But I did go on to further my education at evening classes which were very good in those days. It was purely education, not as it is today, other subjects.

R: So at the beginning of the war, what was it that you were asked to do?

A: Civil Service. I was asked if that would suit me. I didn't wish to go into the services if I could help it because it meant leaving the family and they did rather depend on me in many ways. So I said I would do that and I went to the department - a part of the Board of Trade - but it was a wartime department, export licencing, which meant that all goods leaving this country, being exported, had to have a licence. Some were rejected. The licences were pretty tight to come by. I went into the dangerous drugs section. I had to learn all decimalisation, weights and everything. Not so much the money side, I didn't have to worry so much about that. But I did have to know about weights and quite a lot about the various names of drugs (?). It was pretty uphill because it was all strange and fresh to me. All the people in that department were conscripts except staff officers and others who were what was known as 'permanent civil servants'. I worked there in various ways. I was fortunate - I had received a good education and I did have two or three promotions to higher grades. One of which was very interesting because we used to export diamonds in peacetime but in wartime it was necessary to do so in

order to keep money flowing. That meant that every Thursday morning you attended what was known as the 'diamond committee', which meant that you sat there, having signed various things not to disclose anything what you did - you kept it to yourself if you got caught disclosing anything else. Of course that was disgrace - Out! You sat there making quite sure by watching very carefully that only the diamonds that the dealer would bring in and display, only those were repacked and addressed to be exported. Most of that was Eastern countries that they went to.

R: What was it you were watching for?

A: That they didn't slip a few in on the sidewhich had not been included in the licence which they had to have. You had to keep your eyes on them. It wasn't too bad because over a period of time, they were always the same ones which came each time and they knew better than to try. In all that time - I did that for about two years - there wasn't a case of people trying to do what they shouldn't. That was very good, I enjoyed it.

R: You were working up in the city?

A: Yes, in the city, King William Street.

R: How affected were you by the bombing there?

A: Bombing had started then, night bombing mainly. A great deal of the city was damaged. I can't really remember any great loss of life because it was night bombing. There were injuries. But after a while we were subjected to daylight bombing. There were two instances that I was involved in concerning the buildings in which I was working. One - I used to have to take documents from one end of King William Street to another department - because they confiscated, as you will appreciate, any buildings that they could. Government took them over and their staff worked there. It was one end of King William Street to the other. The other end was just by the Bank station. The Monument station was this end and the Bank station was that end. They were both very convenient. If I went underground I could literally walk under the city along the platforms to the Monument station. But on this particular morning, a man said to me half way through "I shouldn't hurry if I were you. Those planes up there are getting very close". And I didn't hurry. But as I got to the steps of the Monument station a bomb did drop. Being underground I was very lucky. There were people in the street who were injured, but I was alright.

R: What was the other incident?

A: When my home was set on. That was a morning when I had some extra leave to come and my mother and father having breakfast in the front room of the house across the way here - Number seventeen. It was the show house which meant that it was a little bit bigger than the others. I suddenly said to her "Oh. I didn't bring the teapot in". She said "Never mind. Leave it. We're not ready for it just yet". As she said that there was the most terrific bang that you ever heard. They had dropped an oil bomb - they were horrible things because on explosion they shot out flames and of course the house caught fire. But the bomb had gone deep, way down through the bathroom into the kitchen. Incidentally, the bath and other items of the kitchen and so on were never found. The explosion was such that they had gone so deep that they never were found. The whole place was ablaze. The door caught. I had no visible means of ever getting out of that room, nor getting my mother out. So I went towards to window and we had some air force chappies with a barrage balloon in the green which you passed as you came up. They shot across the road. One had a big axe and smashed the window and we just got out in time. It was a horrible experience because you could see no way out and you knew the fire was going to stop you if you weren't very quick. However, we got out. And I just stood there and watched the house and all its contents burn. So all I had was my very mucky clothes on, and my mother also. And we just stood there. The queer thing about it all was that the ARP was not very well organised. There were incidents which other people had, by which the ARP were not very good. They brought with them the Auxilliary Fire Service which were

just volunteers, they were ordinary people who knew nothing about anything like that. And they brought an old fashioned stirrup pump which they were able to connect to the hydrant which wasn't very far, a few feet away from the house. But the hose had a kink in it and so it didn't work. So the house just burned.

My mother and I were left outside with just the clothes that we were wearing, nothing else. Money, fortunately. The little that we kept in the house - because you kept it in the bank or wherever - I had some money in the pocket of a jacket that I was wearing but that is all the money that I had. My mother didn't have any with her at all. It was a strange way of going on. Today there would have been all kinds of help. No body bothered to come to see whether there were any injured. Nobody came to ask where you were going to sleep or what was going to happen to you. The rest of the family were at work. And they never did all during the ensuing years after that. Nobody ever did. But a very kind neighbour who lived just at the top there, the husband came across and he said "Come on you two. I'll take you home with me". And he took me across to their house and they kindly, for quite a few weeks, put all the family up.

R: When you say nobody enquired, you mean nobody official?

A: No. Nobody official enquired at all. Not even a church worker from the top of the hill there, St Catherine's church. Nobody came.

R: you mentioned that you managed to save your dog?

A: Yes. I had a little dog, a similar breed to this. As I went towards the window I scooped him up in my arms so I did save the little dog.

R: Then you finished up..?

A: I just sat on the kerb with my mother. That's all we could do till the kind neighbours came along to help us.

R: How was your mother?

A: She was very numbed and shattered by it all. I don't think fortunately, she ever realised the danger that she was in or the enormity of the situation. To civilians, it was something we knew nothing about and there had been no warning before of the fact that there were enemy planes in the area on that morning. It just happened, just as today you would get a big clap of thunder, a thunderbolt would come down. So I had to inform the rest of the family that were at work. And just get along. By which time the neighbours had said "Now come along. It's all right. They fortunately had spare bedrooms there in the house where they lived. You just had to manage from then on. I did go to the authorities which were at the old Deptford Town Hall, just in Lewisham Road, and asked what would be available and they were very non-committal. They inquired where we were living and I told her and they were quite happy about that - because you'd got somewhere and so why worry any more about you. "Had I got any money? Could I get at any money?" "Yes". "Oh well then, we shan't bother". And they didn't. Didn't worry about us at all so we just had to pull ourselves together and pick up the pieces.

I had a sister, part of the family. She was pregnant. The man that she eventually married was a soldier. He was stationed in this country, Norfolk I think. So I had to think about her. She was just working in those days, because she could go on working until time was a bit nearer. I had to just get along with the family, making what comfort I could for them. My father who unfortunately had such a bad experience in the First World War, it brought it all back to him so he was - how shall I say it - a bit vague about everything and so it just fell onto me. I got some compassionate leave which was just about a week, from the Civil Service, because on the morning that the bomb dropped, it was a morning that I had off. You did occasionally get a day off because you worked fifty two hours a week, which is quite a long week normally. Often you were called on to go in at weekends, Sundays. But I managed to get a week off. I saw the rest

of the family settled as best I could, informed my sister's husband to be, through the proper military channels, and from then on it just meant that you got along as best you could. And then the Council informed me that there was a house - which was 94 along here - that there was a house vacant that we could have, provided that we had no furniture. It was in a filthy condition. Now that was very strange. The point being that if you had furniture you did not come under the same heading of being in need. Never mind whether you had it in the gutter or not, didn't matter. So I thought "I haven't got any". I borrowed a few bits from neighbours and I went to Pines which was a departmental store in Lewisham Road where I had an account. Oh yes, they were very willing to help me, not to worry at all. And so I was just able to purchase the minimum. I had to provide a suitable room for my sister to have her child. We literally used orange boxes to sit on and as a table. I had to concentrate on her needs. I bought a minimum of linen. Clothes - I was quite fortunate really because some people did offer me some to tide over with. That is how you had to do it then you see. You didn't get handouts. You didn't get help. Had the neighbours not provided us with somewhere to sleep we would have had to go to a communal air raid shelter by night and just walk around all day. It was a dreadful situation in those days. It is hard to imagine that in this country it could happen, but it did.

From that we gradually built up. My sister had her little girl and we gradually got together and did what we could.

R: At home in general, if there was an air raid, where would you normally shelter?

A: There wasn't a shelter round here to which you could go. There was one dug into the ground in the garden of that house but it wasn't suitable to use. It was just like a hole in the ground with corrugated over the top. It was Autumn when we were bombed and burnt out. We had the winter to face. But again, fate was kind - It wasn't a very bad winter and we did have shelter.

R: Before you were bombed, if you didn't use the shelter in the garden and there wasn't a public shelter close by, what did you do?

A: No public shelter anywhere near. You just slept where you thought you would be safest in the house. Before we were burnt away we had a large mahogany dining table in one of the rooms. I used to sleep under there, keeping awake as much as we could during the night. And the others just had mattresses, blankets, whatever, on the floor. That really existed until the end of the war because you could not go out and buy what you wanted. You lived just like that. You lived in a way that is hard to realise today, anybody being expected to live like that.

R: Do you remember the day war broke out?

A: Yes. Sunday. Third of September, I think it was. We were just living in the ordinary way ..(?)... My father had put the wireless on because he said Chamberlain is going to announce at eleven o'clock whether we are at war or not. Of course he came through that yes, we were at war. We just stood and looked at each other because you didn't know what to do. At the same time the air raid warning came from the police station which is the other side of the railway over there - Halcon Road. And up went the warning. And again, you just froze because you didn't know what was going to happen. You hadn't a clue. After two or three minutes the all-clear went. There was no reason for the warning to go. There was no enemy planes, but it was done to demonstrate to the public how it would be. There was quite a lull after that. They hadn't started bombing, not civilians. Then it broke. Raids were an every day occurrence: daytime, nighttime. I don't know how we all - everybody - managed with the small amount of sleep which we were able to get because we were afraid to go to sleep. It amounted to one person in the family keeping awake while somebody else had a little nap for a little while. You dared not take your clothes off. Only to change into old clothes, because you didn't know what was going to happen. I'd had one experience of it, as I say, with the fire, so after that I didn't dare.

It was pretty grim and you dreaded nighttime because the raids didn't begin until nighttime. This area here was known as railway island because it is a square mile of land surrounded by a railway and you've got to cross the railway somewhere to get out of it. Of course the enemy knew that so they didn't hesitate to bomb the railway. They used to come across the coast and use that river as a guide because water you can see from a long way off and it reflects natural light although of course the blackout was in force. Of course there was no end of places up here - holes, roads. You could go through the back here - I could point out end of roads that were absolutely devastated by bombs and so on.

Rationing was very tight. You ate what you could get, which was limited, made the most of it. Some people were a bit cleverer than others at it. It was a good community up here because people helped one another. You lived as a community. You didn't worry whether it was somebody who had got a bit of money or if they hadn't got anything. It didn't matter. You lived as a community because all that went on brought you together, which was a good thing.

R: Did you manage to get anything on the black market?

A: Yes I will admit that I did. Sometimes through the service, but I did.

R: What sort of things did you get?

A: We mainly used to get butter and fruit. Bread was a difficulty always because it was horrible stuff. It was wartime bread. You never quite knew what you were going to get but whatever it was, I will be honest, you did take advantage of any offers you had. You didn't become very righteous about it because you knew you weren't taking it from other people. There was what was known as the spivs and the black marketeers. You didn't ask a lot of questions. It would have been foolish to do so.

R: Talking about people doing things together - When did that begin to change, if it did begin to change?

A: It didn't really begin to change until after the war. It was a very gradual change and the government had an idea that if they mixed people - the haves and the have-nots would try to copy the haves. I don't necessarily mean in their material ways but in their way of living. But unfortunately it didn't happen and so you have got what you have today: People living in little boxes, flats, not even knowing the name of their next door neighbours. Now I don't know - I suppose I could name about three people. When you consider that I've lived in this area since 1927 and knew it before as a child. But people unfortunately die. Families moved away. They were seeking - There was a lot of new houses being built in various areas. They were quite cheap to buy. There was a great deal of change which happened quite rapidly. Then there was slum clearance and they moved people from those areas. Now, this may sound snobbish but it's not meant to be. They moved people from those areas and instead of trying to live with the people who already lived here, they made life, and they still do, uncomfortable, by bad behaviour and very unpleasant things. And it ruined areas, as you have with you today, this area being one of them.

R: People from other places moved here quite a lot after the war, didn't they?

A: They did. People before the war did not own their own houses. You rented a house but very few people bought a house. There were people who owned several houses which they let out to other people. But this idea of buying houses was pretty slow. It only came with various building companies building new houses for sale.

R: A lot of people moved out of this area, I don't know - to Downham, or where to?

A: Yes, Downham was one of the first ones. Downham was a more unpleasant place to live in than it is today. I'm often surprised at the small amount of crime that you hear of in that area. I did later, through a friend, I came to know quite a lot about the schools in that area. They are

much better than they are here. This area, which was a very good area and it only had one poor street. But it has come to what you can see looking around today - Dirt. Badly behaved people. People breaking into others' houses. Drugs. You name it.

R: You mentioned a number of people moved out to West Wickham?

A: West Wickham was a large area of new houses which were up for sale. You could buy a house for as little as about £250. If you spent £1000 on it, you were really going. I'm only saying that to draw your attention to the difference in the value of money. So a number of people, some of which I knew moved from here. West Wickham was quite a favourite place. Downham was Council mainly, Bromley Council.

R: Was it that moving out of people from the area that most changed life?

A: Yes it was. Everything changed. Life today has no comparison with life of the same type of people during and for about ten years after the war.

R: So things stayed pretty much stable for about ten years after the war?

A: It was a gradual performance.

R: Do you think people's attitudes in terms of wanting to get things, wanting to acquire things has changed?

A: Yes. The thirties was bad regarding jobs and money. But once it began to break away, which it did finally, people wanted things. They had more money. It didn't necessarily provide them with any more than the smallest salaries did before and during the war because prices and everything were so different. But life today has no comparison with life in those intermediate and before years. People changed and of course, whether you include this in your account or not, is entirely up to you. But as I am being entirely honest about things, I must add this - That the go ahead for immigrants - I'll not refer to colour - the immigrants into this country, which wasn't popular among the people who lived here. That had meant now. I might as well - I've got to mention colour in order to bring it to you, what you use of it is your affair. You have a dividing line between black and white, a very distinct line, and you have various rules and regulations, legally so, laid down by the government that you couldn't complain. You had to accept. I watched it happen and I've often come up against it, especially with the Council in more ways than one. They are now, and lots and lots of other people will agree with me, that they are now taking over. It's a complete reversal. What I'm telling you, you can use or not, but I'm giving you a picture of it.

R: It's not really worth entering into because it is out of our period. What are your memories of the elections at the end of the war?

A: We were all rather shocked and disappointed because whatever the colour of your politics, you didn't think of the two parties - what were they called: before Labour was Liberal I think, anyway, and Conservative - you didn't think of them so much as separate parties. They were different but you didn't think of them as such.

R: Do you mean you were voting for individuals?

A: Individuals and as a whole really, because there wasn't the dividing line that there is today. This area here was Lewisham and Deptford. Lewisham starts about half way up those flats if you want to draw a boundary line where it used to be. You lived this side, you lived in Deptford borough. But there wasn't a dividing line between the two so much. Nobody was very interested if you wanted something if you were Conservative or Labour. We had - I think he was - one of the best mayors of Deptford, as a man, that you could ever have. I knew him quite well. It was not the colour of my politics at that time but I knew him as a man, knew his family and he didn't make that dividing line so sharp as it is today.

R: So when Churchill was voted out. What were your feelings about that?

A: very sad because we felt that he had pulled us through the war, which he did, there was so much evidence of it, and then the people suddenly deserted him because the powers that be in the Labour party had been very eloquent. People didn't quite know what they were doing. People were jobless, moneyless. There wasn't the money, there wasn't the opportunity somehow and Labour had promised so much that people turned thinking that they would get more privileges and that they would get on better. That drew a very decided dividing line between which wasn't so evident before.

R: Do you think people voted Labour because Labour spoke for people doing things together as they had done in the war, whereas the Conservatives to some people didn't stand for that?

A: No. I don't think that element came in. No.

R: What about the National Health Service? Do you think that was a major element?

A: That came along and in its beginning days it was very beneficial. Before that, people who could pay did. You had your own doctor and you paid your bills. But if you hadn't any money there was another section of the medical services to people - People used to pay a contribution as little as three pence a week. They usually paid it to the doctor. Nearly all doctors ran what was known as a 'panel'. It helped people. Nobody was ever refused medical attention. Nobody. Of course we had the infirmaries and whatnot, but that of course is a very different story. That came afterwards, changes in hospitals and so on. But I will say that before the war and during the war you were treated more or less as an equal if you were ill. Nobody ever refused to treat you because you hadn't got enough money. Oh no.

END OF AUDIO TAPE - SIDE A

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SIDE B

R: Did you witness evacuation?

A: Yes. It was very sad to see the children going away from their families. Some unfortunately were very badly treated by the people who were paid to take them. Whatever your connection within that, you'll always find the bad ones around somewhere. They did exploit those children. On the other hand there were people even then - people learned to be a bit cunning during the war - there were people who deserted their children. There are people alive today who were deserted. Owing to the kindness of the foster parents the children stayed with, they came out fairly good. Some even adopted them into their families, but there were some very bad cases.

R: When you say deserted, how exactly did that happen? The children were evacuated and then the parents disappeared or what?

A: The parents disappeared. there was an element of that all through the war. There were some people who were not bombed out in so far as they had nowhere. They did get homes ready but they didn't want their children back. You've got the same element there as you have today with people who neglect their children.

R: Did you know of particular individuals that this applied to?

A: Not personally. I came across one or two cases afterwards, and heard of them, but I couldn't say "I knew an individual case". No. I only know of a man that I came across in the service, in the hop trade afterwards which I worked with for a number of years, needing a job. I

came across a man who was a victim of that. His parents had deserted him. He came from the East End of London.

R: During the war?

A: Yes. He was too young to have any memories of his people. He only knew, but he was one of the fortunate ones in so far as the family that he was evacuated to did take care of him. That's how I heard about it because he told me. He said "I was one of the fortunate ones". But he told me of many cases that he knew, of children who were literally abandoned.

R: Similarly, did you ever come across people who were absent without leave?

A: No, I didn't personally.

R: You mentioned conscientious objectors the other day. Could you tell me about that conscientious objector you knew?

A: Yes I knew one. It was the son of the people who gave us the temporary home when we were first bombed out. He was connected with the Methodist religious group and he became a conscientious objector using his faith as an excuse. But I always felt that he had shirked his duty. Other men had gone and fought for the country, given their lives and he was just swanning about with a job in the city and his religious connections. He didn't suffer at all.

R: What was the attitude towards conscientious objectors generally?

A: Bad one. Nobody liked them. Nobody was willing to accept them unless they had to for some reason. They were taboo, absolutely taboo.

R: You said something about them having to move?

A: Finally they had to move. His mother and father - they didn't agree with it, you see, although they were very goodly living people, but they didn't agree with what he'd done - and so they moved and he went. I think he married a girl from the church. He more or less got lost to sight.

R: Presumably they didn't move because they didn't agree with him?

A: No. They moved because people were - even in those days they weren't all saints and angels, they were just human beings - they pointed the finger at the family, at the parents, and they did move. Nobody liked conscientious objectors. They were regarded as less than the dust, as it were. Of course it was a natural reaction. You felt that there was so much sacrifice being made and they were keeping their jobs and they were going along as if nothing had happened. It was felt in a number of cases that it was just a put up job, more or less, that they hadn't any deep feelings about the matter at all, they just wanted to get out of things. Oh yes. In some instances the law didn't allow people to sack them. But it was done.

R: Can you tell me your memories of VE Day?

A: I was in the Service. I was trying to finish a rather important lot of work. Somebody rushed in the office and said "It's over! It's over! Come on - Put that down!" I said "No. I'm finishing my work. You're telling me that the war is over? Well, one expected that. That's alright". and I continued with my work until I'd finished it. That was me, the way I liked things. You didn't go riotously joyful or anything. You came home and enjoyed it with your family and you just breathed a big sigh of relief that there would be no more bombing raids and no more lives lost. As you thought then - Of course there have been so many other incidents since, in one shape or another. You felt a great sense of relief that you could hope and that you could plan a better life, not realising that life was never going to be quite the same as it had been before the war. But we did - we had to do it. There was parties and wonderful homecomings and troops. There was sadness because of those that didn't come home, service people that didn't return.





It was very mixed really. I don't think I ever felt over-jubilant because there was the memory of the things that had happened, people that were no longer there. But some people did go over the moon. That was up to the individual, how they felt.

R: You said the other day that when you heard that the war had ended it also made you immediately worried about your job.

A: Yes, because I knew that we were not what was known as 'permanent civil servants'. We were only there as conscripts. We knew that if we were fortunate - there was a lot of wangling always went on, no matter what it was, in promotions and all sorts of things - you felt that you might be given the chance to become a permanent civil servant or your job would end and you would have to go and look in other quarters for a job. What I didn't like was that if you asked to become a permanent civil servant you had to give up all your promotions, the privileges or anything which your promotions gave you, plus your salary, and start from the very basic. Because before the war it was a long process to be accepted as a permanent civil servant. But because of war service they were quite willing to waive some of that. But - it was all I suppose a matter of pride, which is only natural - why should you go to the bottom on the lowest salary, and you knew that your chances of promotion out of that category were very small because there were lots of other people. They would n't require so many staff for one thing. Departments would actually close down and it would all get back to the smug little circle it had been before the war. I didn't like that.

R: Did you resent that?

A: I did because I had worked very hard, as we all had in the Service during the war. As I said, it was compulsory 52 hours a week which is quite a long week. And we did extra work as well, weekends and so on. I felt that we had given a lot to the service for which we were not paid, which is only a natural thing to think, and you thought "Well, why have I got to be humiliated and go to the very bottom?" It was pride - you felt you'd done your duty and you'd done it to the best of your advantage, and you didn't quite fancy going right down to the bottom. I later learned that those people who did accept, and accepted Grade Three, which was the lowest form of life in the Civil Service, never got out of it, and they were never allowed to forget that they had been conscripts during the war. Very unpleasant.

R: What did you do instead?

A: I thought "I don't know quite what to do but I'll take whatever I can" and I went to - I had a friend and her friend ran an employment agency. Because it suited the life of that time, there were a lot of people who often wanted people in a new department which they might be starting, just temporarily for a few weeks. Some of these agencies are still in existence. There were about four of five of these agencies. As I had a friend in one of them she said "Come and work with us - I can guarantee you work". You were paid for the work which you did, provided that you did the hours that they asked for, more or less, but you were paid on that basis. It was a very comfortable way of living if you were married and if you were perhaps between jobs. You were called "Temps" - temporary. You worked for a "temp agency". It was very convenient for lots of people and the pay was good and so a lot of people drifted into that for the time being. Then you thought "If I keep my ears and eyes open I may be offered a job which will become permanent". I did. In the hop trade, which is now no longer in existence. I worked with them for thirty two years. I finished my working life with them really. It wasn't terribly well paid but it was a good salary. It enabled you to live quite comfortably and it was very interesting.

R: Jumping back, you told me before that when you heard the announcement of the end of the war, you were aware on that day, of the implications...

A: Somebody rushed in and I suddenly thought "Well, that's the end of that. I shall now have to make a new life. Although there's been a war on, I must say that these years in a way have been happy ones. I've made friends with people and I've known the horrors but I've known the

good bits too". I think it had a bearing on my life afterwards. Because now, I could sleep anywhere. If you said "There's a space over there you could use" I would sleep on and where it was available without thinking too much about it. I was grateful in a way to some of the austere part of the war because it taught me to take what came. That's just me, I don't know if it did it to other people.

R: Did you ever have an opportunity in the war - I doubt it if you were working a 52 hour week - to enjoy yourself?

A: No. You couldn't safely go to a cinema or a theatre because it would have been disastrous if the air raid warning had gone. People used to, but I always had my family on my mind. No, I couldn't say that I had any outside entertainment. I was sent out to the country twice for five days. It was compulsory leave to get you away from things. You would come back refreshed. They were quite enjoyable but that was not until towards the end of the war when the raids had lessened. Once we had invaded France and the continent, the raids did simmer down. You'd always got it there that there might be, but it didn't happen so much. Only when they sent what were known as the 'buzz-bombs' across. We hadn't a clue what that was. We just sat one night and we heard this noise going overhead. We said "What on earth is that?" You were afraid because you were afraid of anything that went on in the air. Then there was this sudden silence and bang. That was how they worked. They went a certain distance, the engine cut out and they did a lot of damage in this area. After that there was the V2 and it was silent. You could be walking along the street and it could happen without any warning at all. I really think that after the years that we had endured during the war, raids and so on, that really finished us. I ended up being terrified of a thunderstorm. Still am. Somehow it did something to you. But not until we had these V2's - They were devastating and people had stood so much that it was the end. You'll find lots of people who lost their nerve, that they had before, because of that. You'd stood so much and you could take no more, and it had that effect on you. Some people were really nervously ill for some time after the war because of it.

R: Thankyou very much indeed.

END OF AUDIO TAPE, SIDE B

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