

MISS LANE . SOUTHWARK

R: What was your name before you were married?

Miss Lane: Sinden same as Donald Sinden.

R: Right and your first name please.

L: Emily Elizabeth

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

Miss Lane: St ? Road just across the road

R: Right and when was that

L: 1910 I'm 85

R: You don't look it.

L: They all tell me that

R: So you were 21 late 20's when the war broke out?

L: Yes thats right

R: So what were you doing before the war broke out what job were you doing or what were you doing.

L: Now where was I - I was working at - my first job was gold leaf work I kept on that job until I was 18 but my mum couldn't afford to keep me because I used to have to go to Aldersgate Street and she could not afford the fare so she brought me out of that just as I was going through my apprenticeship she brought me out and I had to go and earn more money and I went to Francis at tin where we made pans you know. At Francis it was in Trundley Road that was a tin making factory you made pans for all the soups and all that so I came from gold leaf work to that

R: So were you still doing that up until the War?

L: No, no I came out of that, now what did I go in after that - I went to Shuttleworth the chocolate factory used to be in ? Road and then from there I got married from there mumbles - I was married in 1923 no

R: 1933

L: Yes 1993 thats right 1993 I should know. I've been married for 62 years so that is right. 1923 then I lived in Reculver Road thats just around the corner. Now I lived there right till the war.

R: And what were you doing when the war broke out what were you doing?

L: I was working at Peak Freans

R: What in the biscuits

L: In the biscuit factory yes. I worked for Peak Freans then I had to leave Peak Freans to go on war work.

R: Did they make you do that?

L: Yes because I had no children.

R: Right

L: I had to go on war work and I went to a place could Ebenesters?? that was a turning out of Ilderton Road I went working there. Then from there - no before that I went back to work at Peak Freans. During the war there coming home from Peak Freans one day walking along - this is when the war was on - walking along ? Road I can still see it now the Messerschmidts came right down that that, and all the children were coming out of ??Road School - it was in our dinner hour. As we came through that turning the children were coming out we could hear these planes above us and they dived bombed the bright - the railway bridge in Gallywell? Road. We go all the children what we could and run them in the Victory Pub out then under the table. But I could still see that pilot as he came right down right onto the railway grinning there was a whatsname over his - helmet - but you could see the grin on his face thats how low he came down .Swooped like that and I came to Bury Bridge there was all the bullet holes all along the bridge whatsname.

R: Did he hit anyone?

L: He did not hit anybody no. But those children were coming out of school it must have been about between 12 and 1 because as we came out of work we came down ? Road because we used to come home to dinner. I was coming home to dinner at Verney Road to my mum. We were coming down that turning and as we did we could hear these planes and we knew the warning had been given and we knew we had to get in somewhere and as these children all run across the road frightened. So many of use we grabbed then and there was a Public House called The Victory. Its still there now. And we grabbed then we ran them in the pub and put then under the tables. As I looked up I could see the Messerschmidt I can see him now swooping down and as he came right down to the railway because they were bombing the railways. As I looked up I could see

a big grin on his face and I can to this day still see that grin. So thank God none of us were hurt that day that was the most terrifying experience to be there coming right - because I thought he was going to hit the bridge. I really thought that plane came so low it was unbelievable how low that came. But the grin on that pilots face was absolutely you know. It stayed with me all me life I can still see it today. A big grin you know he was really sort of so pleased at what he was doing but to all those children it must have been terrifying for them. Well it was frightening for us but after that I was always - every time I heard those planes I can still see that face. Something that stays with you all your life. So thats what happened that day. Well then I had to give up that job and I went to Ebbenesters? because they were doing war work. They were making they used to do corks and bits and pieces plastic for the planes and that and I went down before I went down there my husband was stationed at Whitham in Essex near Colchester and I asked could I be transferred down there on war work and I went to Crittles that was at Whitham and I worked there for two years when my husband was stationed there. Well then he got shifted and I had to come back here to work again.

R: And what was the work you were doing there?

L: At Crittles reframes for the plans. It was all metal work and welding work and all that.

R: That must have been very different from the work you had done before?

L: See unfortunately I had been bombed out and I had no home.

R: ?????? bombed out.

L: I got a paper here where I was war damaged and I wasa bombed out my mum was bombed out my sister was bombed out and my brother was bombed out. We were all bombed out of Reculver Road where I lived. But what happened then when we were bombed out we had nowhere to go Silwood Street School alot of then went in there but that was full. So what we did a friend of mine opposite all that was left of her house was the kitchen and scullery. So we used to have our food in there and wash and bath. I shared this house with them. And then we used to sleep in the arches in Silwood Street we slept in the arches.

R: How long did you do that for?

L: Three, three years we slept and we used to go get up in the morning go over to the house in Reculver Road which is opposite the pub still there now the Beaconsfield. We used to go in take it in turns go and have a wash and dress get ready for work do to work have our meals at work. Come home of an evening go in my friends mum's house have our meals sit there for a little while listen to the wireless we have no televisions then. And then we used to go over get out bedding take it over the to arch and sleep under the arches.

R: What even in the freezing cold in winter?

L: Well we used to wrap up and that I said we all bundles together we sort of and we used to have a priest come in every night Father Gote? used to come in every night and say prayers and one night we got bombed and if you go along Silver Street you'll see an arch and Belena Arch and the side of Belena Arch is all new bricks and that's where the bomb hit the railway and we were in the arch next to it. We were trapped in the arch but we got out by the air-raid warden the ARP and all that. But we were trapped in the arch that night because as all the bricks come down we had a big creater in the front and we were all panicking and me and my friend we were pretty steady going because we had to do fire watching and all. So we said to them don't go out dont rush out there's a big creater you'll go down a big creater. Stop there and their get us out. Well that stopped us going to the

arches then did'nt it. So what they done they got us another - they put us in another house and they got a house for us like they had to rehouse us because there was nowhere else for us to go. We only had a kitchen and a scullery and like most of the others they had a kitchen and scullery but there must have been 100 of us in that arch every night.

R: Was anybody hurt in that ?

L: No, no if it had hit then if he had hit the ground we would not be here now. But it hit the railway.

R: You must have known you were a target in that arch?

L: Yes were were you know but we used to sing and people used to knit. We were all knitting for the troops and that and we used to sing a song the girls had a gramophone in there and we used to put records on have a sing song the children the mothers and children we put in a little back arch, because that was more safer it was a lower arch and more safer. So mothers and children were in that and the grown ups like us we were in the big arch in the front. We kept it clean, I mean it was kept clean and as I say we had our bedding and we used the scullery and kitchen and used to do the washing get the washing dry but every night we tate out all our bed clothes take then and roll them out. Some of us were collecting chairs and armschairs took armchairs and that we did that for two or three years.

R: What about toilets? What did you do for a toilet?

L: Oh well we used to cook the food in the kitchen you see. The kitchen and scullery we used to ....

R: I was asking about the toilet

L: Toilet?

R: Yes.

L: Well we used to run back to what's name toilet see in the old houses the toilets were alright. You see just that all the top had gone but all that was left was the scullery and the toilets was just outside the scullery. See well there was about three or four people that could use that part of the house. I could'nt use ours at all. But we used to take it in turns but regards toilet in the night well the men went outside and the people in the back they gave them buckets you know. You had to do the best you could. But we kept ourselves clean. Saturday night we used to take in turns to go over Miss Beckhouse her name was that was the lady I think because her daughter was my friend so we all mucked in together see. My mum and Dad were moved they were moved to Burney Road then they got bombed out.

R: Tell us about the time you were bombed out. Were you in the house at the time or what? Or what.

L: No we were in the arch. It happened during the night. It happened during the night we all got bombed the whole street got bombed that night. We had people killed that night.

R: Oh so you were sheltering in the arches even before you were bombed out?

L: Yes.

R: Right

L: No. We had about three lots of bombing but when the docks was alright see we got bombed that night but it did not do alot of damage so we could sort of use certain rooms some rooms. But that night we were bombed out that was the night when the arch was hit as well.

R: Lets go to the first one. The first time you were bombed at all. What happened.

L: The first time we were bombed out. Umm. Where was I. I think we had gone to the pictures that night. My friend and I went to the Astora that night. We came home and we see all the people around and that was only slightly bombed you know we could still go in and out you could used to have people come round to tell you your house was'nt safe not safe to go in.

R: It was blast damage was it?

L: Yes. The last time was when we were bombed out and we couldn's the houses were unsafe and we were not allowed to go in at all.

R: Were you able to get anything from the house?

L: One picture hanging up there. That picture that's a racing pigeon and my husband now everything went up.

R: Is that the only thing you got out?

L: That was in a frame and the frame and that's a racing pigeon at one of the? It's got his name on it and that was laying on top. We salvaged that. We could get nothing else at all. There's the war damage. That shows you when I was bombed out. That was the address they moved us to. That was the year we were bombed out....

R: Can you say that again sorry.

L: 2 Millet Street it's on there. They moved us to there. That's the house they give us when we had nowhere to go. See when the arch got bombed we couldn't go back in that arch so they put us in a house they found us a house to rehouse all the different people.

R: Could I sometime perhaps make a copy of this?

L: Yes yes yes.

R: In fact can I borrow them?

L: Yes you can borrow them yes.

R: Well I'd do that

L: Yes you can borrow those yes. You see you had to have someone down to estimate whether you lost your home and that and you had to go through you know they really was what's name they didn't give you nothing in them days. I mean I got £40 odd for a complete home I lost and it had hardly been used so..

R: Were you still ....? You came back from Essex before the end of war didn't you.

L: Yes I came back

R: And what work did you then go into.

L: That's when I went to Ebbenesters.

R: Oh right.

L: I went to Ebbenesters. Well then I got pregnant see and I worked at Ebbenesters a fortnight before I went to Somerset to have my baby because I was under St Olives Hospital and they were evacuating us up to the North. Well I all my mums people were my gran and that were evacuated to Somerset and I wrote to my Aunt and told her I

was being evacuated up to the North so she said you are not going up there she said you are coming down here with me. She said pack your things and come down with me. So I took my sisters two children and I only had a fortnight to go I took them down to Highbridge in Somerset. My boy was born at Somerset in Bridgewater. So I came back a little while after he was born to my friends because we had this house that's where they were living and I had a room there when I came up for weekends and that to see my mum. I came back for them I was only up here a fortnight and they started the doodle-bugs. So my mum said "Back you go to Somerset you are not here with that baby" she said. So I went back to Somerset but I used to come up for weekends because I worried about my mum and dad because they were getting on you know. My Dad wasn't scared he when the docks were alright he lived in Reculver Road. He wouldn't get out of bed. He said I've been through the First World War and the Germans did chuck me out and they are not going to chuck me out. He was I mean he was tough.

R: You must have done a lot of travelling then. That was a lot of travelling to come back at weekends from Somerset?

L: Yes.

R: What were the trains like?

L: They were not bad at all. I used to get the Somerset and Dorset line you know and that was pretty I didn't come every weekend because my sister was still up here because I had her two children with me. So she was keeping an eye on my mum. But she moved out to Brixton way somewhere that way you know. But as I say I had the two children and I had a friend the friend who I was sharing the house with I took her grandson with me so I had three children at Somerset. But as I say I didn't mind but I used to fetch the boy up my baby up now and again but as I say when the Doodle-bug started my mum said don't you bother to come up she said. Don't come up she said leave it keep where you are you are safe down there.

R: What about campaigns like Dig for Victory. Do you - Dig for Victory

L: V for Victory?

R: No no Dig for Victory

L: Yes well at Somerset they were all digging for Victory round here they had little allotments where they had allotments where they had allotments they used to grow their own food and that you know. But yes, well you were rationed then. You were on rationing. But my friend and I we used - I don't know where we used to get it from we used to go when the parachutes used to come down they used to crash, we used to go and buy the parachutes silk and make our clothes out of them. My friend made her bridal outfit out of that, because we had a machine, I mean I've been a machinist, and we had a machine and we used to go and when no one was using the scullery or the kitchen we

used to go over there one night when it was a bit quiet do a bit of machining and all of a sudden the siren go - over the arches! and then when it went - back again. When we went to Millett Street my friend and I, I was not expecting then - you know. We used to do fire watching of a night with a stirrup pumps with the ARP wardens. We used to go out. One night it was funny we were both on fire watch duty that night, you done so many hours each - all the neighbours you know set neighbours used to have to do fire watching. This night they started dropping the whatnames bombs down right around us so we dived in the passage and we had been doing this house up my friend and I decorated all that house up between us. Knocked a copper down and everything you know like the old fashioned copper, and we dived in there and we forgot we'd painted the ? of the hall like the passage, so she's dived one way and I've dived the other as the bomb dropped. When we came out everybody's laughing at us. I've got a white patch one side of me trousers and she'd got a white patch the other side, where we'd both gone against the wet paint. And the funny part was when we knocked the copper down I said to my friend "Oh great we go to plaster that up I said "now how do we plaster it up". I said "I know I'll write to Steve" that was my husband he was in the army. I said "he's done a bit of building and decorating". So I wrote him a letter I said "Steve how do you mix sand and cement"? and I can remember his answer. He wrote back two of sand and one of cement. So during the backout we used to go out in the garden and she hold a torch and two sand one of cement and run it in. We did all that house from top to bottom and when the landlord, we had landlords then, we didn't have council then, we had a landlords. He came and said "I'm going to engaged you two" he said "As you do better work than my workman". We'd all painted the whole house out and plastered all the walls. But I remember doing that in the blackout two of sand and one of cement. Yes I'd ? all ready and she'd run it in on the...laugh.

R: So in some ways the war was quite enjoyable?

L: Oh people looked after one another we were friendly. If you'd had had nothing to eat and you muck your coupons in together. If someone was getting married you'd all give a bit out of your rations book. As I say we did make our lives were presentable.

R: Did that change at the end of the war?

L: It is now.

R: Well not now I mean immediately after the war did it change.

L: No not immediately after the war you know, soon after when my husband was demobed they gave my a prefab at New Cross.

R: Right



L: And I lived there for 8 years until they pulled it down. I had a beautiful prefab up there and there was 8 of us and do you know we were the friendliest 8 neighbours I can ever remember.

R: There are still prefabs at New Cross at St James' Road around there.

L: Yes it was the Clifton Hill. There used to be 8 along by the old cinema. There used to be a cinema there we lived down there Akileas Street.

R: Can you describe the prefab to me.

L: Prefab?

R: Yes

L: Like a bungalow and lovely bungalow. A two bedroomed bungalow. It had hot water and we had a gas fridge in them days and that was a luxury. It was all built in there was a fridge there was a boiler for your washing. After coming out of arches you can imagine and well they Deptford Town Hall they used to call my prefab the dolls house. They used to bring American visitors to see my prefab. Mind you I did take a pride in it. After what'sname. I have always done my own decorating. I can do it now because I can't climb. But that prefab it had a bathroom two bedrooms a kitchen like this, and a front room like this. And that was it really was heaven. I broke my heart when they pulled it down. I said she, her name was Miss Bambridge, she was the housing officer in Town Hall. I said to her "could you take my prefab up and move it as it is"? She said "if I could do that Mrs Lane I would willingly do it" she said. She said "but I'm afraid it has got to come down. Well then they moved me to a prefab in Goodwood Road that was where Woolworths was bombed, that turning there. I was up here when Woolworths went up. I was living round Reculver Road when the church went up and they bombed the St Catherines Church and that went up in one o'clock in the dinner hour and the men was dismantling that bomb and they just come for a break and there was this terrible crashing.

R: So the bomb had landed but not exploded?

L: No, yes, yes they were dismantling it and they just come away. How fortunate that those men were not to get killed. They had just gone away for another coffee break they had been working on it all the morning, and we were coming home for lunch from Shuttleworths and that. I went in at Reculver Road and all of a sudden this terrible crash we see it go up. They've rebuilt it but it will never be our own church St Catherines. That's were our vicar used to come from to say prayers. And every so often we used to go in the church and say prayer for peace. We were not religious but we still kept faith. You had faith you know.

R: Was that more important in the war?

L: Yes it was important. I mean the most hardened people used to say their prayers in that. There was all dockers lived in that area and all worked in the Docks including me Dad and that and neighbours all hardened Dockers but the men used to say their prayers and Father Goater his name was and Father Goater used to come in there, he was only a young chap but we sought of name an idle of that man because he was sort of soothes you down if you got frightened and that there was something about him that calms you down, he was really a nice chap he really was.

R: You don't know how to spell his name do you?

L: Yes. G O A T E R - he's still alive. He's still alive and he lives out down the line. But I asked someone the other day about him. I said I'll always remember, I was talking about the war and I said I remember Father Goater and he said "he's still alive Emmy". I said "is he really" they said "yes he's out down like Somerset way and that way somewhere". But he was a young man to us, well he must be getting on now the wars been over 50 years, but he still carried on that church after the war for quite a long time. He was really a thorough gentlemen he did, he had something about him that sort of, he came up to you and if you were.... we had laughing confidence in him.

R: At the end of the war do you remember VE Day itself.

L: Really and truly I think I was at Somerset at the end of the war. I know they did alot here. But at the end of the war I was at Somerset.

R: And was your husband still away?

L: He was still away yes. He wasn't relieved. I had his draft paybook. I put it away I can't find it. He was'nt relieved until 1946 see so...

R: How long had he been away then when he came back?

L: 1945 - 5 years.

R: Been away for 5 years so how did you obviously the marriage worked as you had been along time, but how did you cope with the two of you being back together again after such a big gap?

L: Oh yes we coped alright. He used to come up on leave. He came to Somerset when I had the baby they gave him - he got a fortnights leave and he come to Somerset. We just settled in you know. We were happy couple. He was happy go-lucky he couldn't he wasn't a miserable man.

R: What about with you with the baby?

L: Oh he doted on him didn't he. He doted on the baby being a boy and all because I lost my first baby.

R: I don't want to keep you too long but at the end of war there was the election, do you remember when Churchill was defeated.

L: That's right.

R: And then a Labour Government got in.

L: Labour government got in.

R: What would be your feelings about all that?

L: Well we were brought up round here and I admired Lord George I mean Churchill I admired him what he done. But we were brought up in a Labour Constistency so we voted Labour we thought it was good you know, at the time. Which we were doing good then after the war things were really nice and then now things declined. People were happy I mean when I was in that prefab you couldn't have had a happier crowd of neighbours we used to have a cup of tea over the, we had like a lovely garden but we had a wire what'sname. We used sit and have a cup of tea each day one of would make a cup of tea and we never used to go in one of the houses, go in the garden when the weather was nice have our cup of tea, but all the children played together. I said to my Son the other week I said "you remember Christine that used to live in the [refab next door but one"? He said "Yes" I said "well she's working in Asda" I said "She asked me about you". They used to lend one another records because they never had tapes in them days it was records. And they'd go in one another's houses and play the records and the child we never once ever had a what'sname. We had a "do" down there once and something to do with after the war had a party it might have been Jubilee or something, and I know we set all the tables for children had a Street Party and all the mums had to run a race. I came second. I remember I got a pair of glass what'snames whisky glasses and that and my Son was over the moon because I came second.

R: So at the end of the war were you feeling optimistic about the future?

L: No I thought after the war I thought well please God we can settle down now and things and then there was plenty of work about then and everybody was working and that I was working myself I went as a machinist then in the shirt factory Recolar and I was working and my husband was working and my Son was at school, he was at nurse school then, so everything sort of settled down. People were not envious of one another everybody spoke to one another I mean even on the bus you'd sit on the bus. We used to have little low decker buses used to stop opposite my prefab and Christmas time he used to toot the what'sname - hooter - and he'd say Emmy your husband's here he's got all his mates with him. They came home for a drink wouldn't they from the Docks. But when it was foggy I used to put, I had a table lamp, and I used to put it in the window so the

buses turning round, and when they we said they was pulling the prefab down he said "what we got to do Emmy we aint got no beacon lights to guide us round the corner now". But we were a really happy crowd and I still see people from them prefabs and you know as one person when she she's me she hugs me and wont let me go. She lives at Brockley now but I still keep in touch with my old neighbours. We still send Christmas cards and that.

R: Do you think when you voted in the Labour Government at the end of the war do you think there is a determination not to go back to what it was like before the war in the 30's.

L: I think there was there was a determination. We thought that it was going to carry one like it was you know plenty of work and people in work and there was work for people who if they wanted it. You could change your job if you wasn't happy. And we though that things that were going see if went so smooth after the war for a little while.

R: You didn't trust the Conservatives to..

L: No no, we didn't trust Conservatives you know we thought they was for the rich and Labour was for the poor. Thats what we was brought up to believe. They was for the rich and Labour for the poor. There was a gap there was no leeway on meeting you halfway. I mean we didn't understand alot then like we understand now. I mean I'm more learned now regarding governments than I have ever been. But I mean I remember as a kid we used to walk around with little bits of cardboard on a stick Vote for Labour, and I can remember now these are the names I can remember as a kid walking around the street. Vote vote vote for Mr Bearman chuck old Pikey out the door. If he don't whatsname he wont come voting anymore. Now they were a conversative government and the Labour. Bearman was the Labour and Pike was Conservative. Now I was only a little girl and I can remember that. Same as I can remember being a Millwall supporter. I'm still a Millwall supporter and we used to go round then we never used to fight. Millwall supporters this side and the enemy we used to (sings) Play up Millwall cant play football, Oh yes we can we beat West Ham.

R: Did you watch football during the war?

L: Yes, when it was on my Dad used to take us you know and my Dad was a Millwall fan.

R: But it was during the second World War?

L: Second World War.

R: When you were I dont know, about 30.#

L: Yes

R: Did you used to go to

L: Yes my husband was a Millwall supporter. I used to go with him. You could go we used to have speedway round there New Cross, we had a speedway and we used to have all the speedway fans come to our turning with all rattles and that. We never made no objection to them we used to, we had all models of the speedway riders in our front windows.

R: And what about when your husband was away. Did you go to football matches then?

L: No, I didn't have time then.

R: Were they still playing do you know, in the War?

L: Yes. They played. Were still playing. Yes, but if there was raids on it was all cancelled you know, because I was looking after me Mum and Dad and keeping an eye on them and then my sister she had two children and me Brother he had two children. We all lived well Mum moved to Blena Road my brother lived to Blena Road but being on my own and my husband in the Army I wasn't counted as urgent that had to house the families first and you know there wasn't many houses around they was all being bombed so they had to put you where they could. So thats why my friend's husband mother got that big house and she said "you can have a bedroom there for when Steve comes home on leave you go your own bedroom". So I had a bedroom in there see it was like a two tier house we had one two three four bedrooms upstairs. My friend and her husband had one bedroom my husband and I had one bedroom and her mum and dad had a bedroom and then her brother he was mentally handicapped, he had his own bedroom. So we had the four bedrooms upstairs and we had all the whatsname front room kitchen scullery and a backroom bedroom downstairs so we were alright like that. We all worked it all out that we all had our own little privacy.

R: But in the longer terms the war spilt the family up?

L: Oh the war split family up. Yes my sister moved out to West Norwood and then her husband died he was only 37, he went in the army collapsed on the square and found he had a heart defect and he died. She was 37 then he was only 37. His son was only 14 he had just started going to Art School. You know we got split up like that you know it did split us up. It wasn't the same the people were, the street we lived in everybody knew one another the whole turning even now I can almost go right through that turning and tell you everybody's name in that turning. Everybody knew one another and if someone was ill if you didn't see the old lady next door all day, you had a string you pulled the string opened the door and said "Mrs so and so, are you alright" and you got no answer so you went in you were not afraid to go into people's houses. We had nothing so we went in and if that lady was ill you either get a doctor or she'd say go round the chemist and get me something. We had like a little like a herbalist round there they'd make up bottle of medicine, and we'd take that lady in a bowl of broth something like that. No one went

hungry we looked after one another. If someone was ill you'd pop in and see if someone was alright. Not like today they, I mean you could lay dead and no one knows you're here.

R: Was the National Health Service coming very important to you.

L: Oh it was better in them days. The National Health Service was absolutely fantastic St Olives Hospital was one of the best hospitals I ever knew. Now I was taken to St Olives Hospital. I went to St Olives Hospital with a letter my husband took it I was ill and I went in with that letter and that doctor surgeon he just looked at me and said "how long have you been walking about like this Mrs Lane" so I said "about three weeks" he said "do you know you could have collapsed anywhere" he said "do you know what's wrong with you"? so I said "no I just got pains in me stomach" he said "you got an abscess on the bowel" and he said "nurse get a bed for this patient". I said "I can't stop in I've got to go home and get.. he said "I'm not taking no you go in straight away now" he said and he would not allow me out of that hospital. My husband was with me and he said to my husband "you can get what Mrs Lane wants". That is the way you were treated in them days and you were treated, I can't praise it high enough. St Olives Hospital was one of the finest little hospitals you ever knew.

R: And did you associate that the National Health come in with the Labour Party?

L: Yes. That's ? I honestly believe that the National Health Service was a lot better under the Labour Party. It was. I mean you didn't have to wait weeks for a bed, you didn't get turned out, if you had an appointment you was there at your appointment and you were seen at that time. You might have a little delay of about 5 or 10 mins. I mean my husband had emphysema and he was treated at St Olives hospital and New Cross Hospital those two little hospital looked after you. He used to come out like a new man.

R: Can we change the subject a minute. The war obviously put a lot of strain on family life. Where there women who were a bit naughty when their men folk were away.

L: Oh yes quite a few.

R: And did you know of them.

L: I knew some of them yes. I knew some of them yes. It caused a lot of breakups in some homes yes the girls went out for a good time. My friend and I we weren't like that we were indoors what's name we were worried about our menfolk we were worried about our folk. We were always doing something. We were either cooking to take into the arches we were either machining making knitting making gloves and that we used to go to the pictures a couple of times a week we used to take our brother with us for a chaperone.

R: But do you think the way women and men related to each other changed during the war. Can you say exactly in what way. I know it's a hard question.

L: Its very hard the point even my husband in the army I used to wonder was he playing the fields because it happened. It did happen. It happened with I seen it with some of my own friends and he saying you got husband in the army, they said yes well whats he up to. See well we didn't look at it that way and my friend and I Gracie and I we weren't that way included we was worried about our men folk we were worried about our folks we worried about everybody because my husband said to me one day "you can't take the world on your shoulders and put it straight". He said "you worry about everything" I said "well I cant help it Stev I was born a worrier". But alot of women did two time their husbands and alot of men did two time their wife.

R: And did any of them get into serious trouble. Like did they..

L: No not as I know of no. I mean after a little while it all sort of settled down. Some people split up but the majority they sort of fell in and they were happy times I mean they were really happy times.

R: Do you think the way women say themselves and the sort of work that they did

L: I think it gave them alot of independence. I think it made them independent of the men.

R: Did that make harder in some ways.

L: In some ways I think and some was yes. See I mean I had a friend and I mean she was a little bit on the wild side and when her and her husband quarrelled it was always brought up what they done during the war and what you done during the war.

R: Who brought it up. Who would bring it up. Which of them would bring it up.

L: About the well it would just be a little argument.

R: Yes but during that argument would it be she would it be the woman that would

L: Oh yes. Hit back at the husband yes.

R: By saying that she did more in the war that he did

L: Yes. I mean it was sad really. It really is sad. Well you see the women was on their own even at Somerset when I was at Somerset they had all the Americans there and I mean I used to see it there and I was invited to a party the American soldiers give and you see it going on there with the Somerset girls and me own cousins yes me own cousins them cousins with the Americans but when I went over there I took me baby with me and never left me baby had my son with me. And them Americans made a fuss of that baby and I can remember one of them he was very friendly with a cousin of mine. Well my

cousin had a baby she had that baby adopted that broke my heart when I went and saw that baby. But when I took my baby out I said to this chap his name was Jim he was holding Michael that's my son, he was holding him and he looked at him and I said to him Jim you play the fields don't you I said "you got a baby of your own at home haven't you". So he said "how did you know" I said "I know the way you are handling my son". I said "I know the way you are handling my son you are a married man aint you". He said "Yes I am married" and said "and you got children haven't you back in America". He said "Yes" I said "I knew that the fuss your making". He was treating my son like it was his own you know. And he really did and I had a good talk to him. I said "Do you think its fair Jim" he said "there's a war on Emmy". See so that is the attitude.

R: Did you tell your cousin

L: Oh I told my cousin Oh I mean her father wacked her unmerciful but she still went out with the American

R: And what was the attitude when she got pregnant

L: Well she came back well the war was over when she had the baby

R: But she got pregnant during the war did she?

L: At the end of the war. He went back to America and she well they had the baby adopted. She had the baby for about 6 months she went back with her mum. That was my Aunt I went to Somerset with because they come back here after the war and she went and lived with her mum and I often wonder does she think of that Son.

R: What was her parents attitude

L: Oh her step-father was terrible. She would not have had it adopted only for her parents. Parents made her have it adopted. But I went and saw that baby. I went and saw that baby when it was born and it broke my heart ? I used to her Polly I said "Polly please don't have that baby adopted. She said "I've got no choice Emmy I've got nowhere to go" she said. She said "me mum and dad wont accept him. The only thing I can do is have him adopted". And I've often wondered if she ever thinks about him. I do I think because I saw that baby. He was a lovely baby but that was what happened see. I mean they got her step father chased her all round Somerset one night her and her other cousin, two cousins they were both well one wasn't married who had the baby she wasn't married at the time and she settled down with her young man now she is quite a nice person now. But I often think when I look at her and that. She is happy go-lucky girl you know but I often think does she wonder about her son. Only he must be 45 years of age now or do that son worry about his mother. I often wondered if hes tried to trace her. I often thought of that although I think her husband knows about it. I think he would take it in his stride you know. But it does happen I mean it happens in my own family I see it happen but the Americans were so free with their money they had everything. Even the



children they spoiled the children. Everything they see children there was chocolates well we was in rations so the kiddies loved them because they could get what they wanted. We couldn't buy them. It was very hard it was hard for us with children because we couldn't buy the things we wanted to buy for our children we only had a ration book and you could only buy a certain amount of things. You only had certain amount of food yet we thrived. Yet when you think now what we lived on on the ration books its unbelievable. I was pretty lucky my husband was a cook in the army so he used to sneak a little bit home when he come on leave.

R: What did he bring home?

L: Bacon little bit of bacon butter, which was a luxury. He didn't get home very often but when he did he'd have a little attache case and when he would come in with about half a dozen eggs which well we thought it was wonderful we were going to have a party wasn't we. It was like Christmas all over again. (Laughs).

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