

Extract One:

Pam: what was your father's main job?

Doris: He was in the Arsenal during the First World War. It was he and Olive's uncle, her father's brother who was working with him and there were three others, I think all sort of friends, and they were working in the Arsenal filling shells with this TNT or whatever it was and they used to call them the Canaries because they were completely yellow. And they had no masks to do all this and that was 1918 when the war ended and my father died in 1926. But it had taken all those years...the TNT had eaten the lungs away and all five of those men died within six months of each other. My father first and then Olive's uncle died and then the other three. Not that old. Forty seven my father was.

Clare: And in those years his health had deteriorated presumably?

Doris: Well I suppose it did gradually you see, you then developed a cough. And I remember the morning when all this happened. My mother said that he just fancied a long walk and Kidbrooke then was just farms, and he'd gone all the way round and he said: "I really enjoyed that." And I think he'd been in the house about half an hour when he haemorrhaged. And that was about the November and they took him to hospital and he died in the January.

Extract Two:

Doris: One girl, she was older than me, she used to work as a chambermaid, I know it was in one of those boarding houses, hotels up in Bloomsbury Square or somewhere like that, and apparently this man was staying there and she was quite the bottle blond, you know and the parents had a country accent. I don't know where they came from, very strict she always seemed to me, the mother, but apparently what had happened was that he had come down and asked the mother if he could pay for her to be home so that he could take her out when he wanted to. And he would come down on the off occasion, (he never lived there) and away they would go, you see, even for the day. And the mother would go with them, and I can see them now going along in that little cart with mother sitting up the back with the two of them in the front. And he used to take them out and this went on for quite a time. And he was a dapper little man, older than her, and I can see him with this black jacket on and he had a homburg hat and spats, and that's what affected me, the spats!

And they used to come and go and she would be dressed up to the nines, in fur, and mother would have a fur stole and all these flashy dresses. And the girl would have a sale of dresses now and again, well I mean it wouldn't suit anybody living in the road. These were dresses obviously that he'd brought when he'd taken her out to places, you see and of course I suppose they thought that eventually they were going to get married and probably it was quite a big step up for the daughter. But this went on for a while you know, and then I think it was when Hitler started playing around, getting very big over there that he just didn't come anymore. And the brother had gone up 'cos he had this big warehouse furrier place in the East End, to see what had happened because he'd not been down and they hadn't heard anything and the place was completely empty and he'd gone.

He used to take photographs when they were out and she used to show me the photographs.

Pam: What were they photographs of?

Doris: They used to have a lovely run down to Portsmouth, this was the day one, but where they used to go at weekends I wouldn't know. I think it was just her and him at weekend. But the Portsmouth thing her mother used to go as well and they'd be standing there at Portsmouth, well of course there's all the boats at the back of them.

Pam: Were you convinced that this was the explanation for the story?

Doris: Well everybody was. Because everybody was a bit suspicious of him although you wouldn't really voice an opinion.

Pam: And he actually paid for her not to go to work so she would be available for these Trips?

Doris: Yes, wherever he went, he would take her, that was the point of her being home.

Extract Three:

Doris: Mother would leave the school at about half eight and then she would come home about nine and have a cup of tea or whatever and then she would have to go to clean some of the houses where she would go. This particular one was in The Close, off Eliot Vale and she used to go and work in there. That was the one where I used to have to go and do the Sunday afternoon cleaning and washing up, and she'd go there and work from about ten o'clock to half twelve or something like that and she used to get two and sixpence for that and then she'd probably come home and do shopping and so on and then she'd have to be back at the school at four o'clock. And then she would come home about seven o'clock.

On one occasion when she was working in that big house opposite Prince of Wales pond, that huge big white place...Mrs Japp and her husband lived there and on this one occasion mother was there and they were away and I think there were two housemaids there and Mother used to go in and cook things like that and as I was walking over the Heath there were these two children who were really quite nasty kids, you know and they said: "Well where do you live?" So we were just coming near the pond and I said: "Over there". That was the huge house you see. "You don't!" So I said: "Yes I do." I didn't look as if I could live in a tent probably at that time! Well you know what kiddies are..."Let us see you go up and knock on the door then!" So of course I went up to this front entrance, didn't I? Rang the bell and the maid answered the door and of course she was all done up. And she looked at me and said: "What are you doing walking up here?" So I said: "Those girls don't think I live here."

"Oh." She said. So of course she opened the door and in I went. It was lovely! It was absolutely lovely! And I went in there and downstairs to the kitchen and my mother said: "What are you doing?" So I explained and they all laughed! They thought it was great fun. So I had something to eat there and then I walked back to school but after that I was treated with great reverence by those two girls who really did think I lived in that house!