

Pam : I would like to ask Renee to tell us about the first job that you got when you left school. What it was, how you got it and how you felt about it.

Irene. "Right. I can tell you how I felt about it. I left school at 14. As you know in those days you didn't stay on any longer. My mother said to me one day, she said, 'Rene. Now I have packed up a case for you and I have got you a job (my mother got me this job). I said "what is that doing Mum" She said "well it's in service. This lady's house was at the top of Vanbrugh park Hill running down by the side of the park. So I goes there this day and I was expected to start straight away. I wasn't given the option of whether I wanted the job or not and it was so hard to leave home because every thing was all cut and dry. I was quite happy there. I did not want to leave school actually. But anyway, I started this job. I had to sleep in as I was up at six o'clock in the morning to clean out their grates in their lounge. This was where they used to sit of an evening. Also the one in the kitchen and there was a little tiny back room which I was able to sit in. I had to get all these grates out and get them ready for the morning when I took up jugs of hot water to so many rooms, because there wasn't any hot water up there then. So I had to make sure that I had done that ready for them. Also cups of tea ready, when they came out, as some of them had to go to work , sons and daughters. In the end I began to wonder just how many there was in the family because it seemed as though there was such a lot of people there and after all I was only fourteen.

Pam: "And did you have to wear anything special"?

Irene :Yes I had to wear a navy blue dress with a pinafore, like a nurses pinafore, You know, and a band around my head Well it was all a hat during the day but at night time I had to wear one of these bands as though I was a nipper or something

Pam: "Did they provide that"?

Irene " Yes they provided that. They took me to a shop, an outfitters, and had me fitted out , y' see . so that was okay. I used to have like an hour or two off in the afternoon , then I was back at again after that. So I was back there for tea time and then at supper time. It seemed as though I was never getting any time off at all. I used to have Sunday afternoon off and my mum only lived at Plumstead, which is not very far away from there, so I used to go there for my time off. Each day I did not like going back, I really resented going back, but I had to do it. I felt as if I had to get to like it

Pam: " Did you argue with your Mum at all about it"?

Irene;" No you did not argue with your Mum in those days. Your mum said that you had to do it, you had to do it.. One look was enough, she did not have to say anything else. In her day as well, she had to go in the service, so I suppose it was in the family. When your daughter left school that was where she went.

Pam: "What did you get paid, Irene"?

Irene;" I was living in so I think that I got paid about seven and six, or something. Which is like three half crowns , like it was in those days, pocket money.

Pam: "Were you actually working to the lady of the house? Was she your direct boss or was there somebody else in line?"

Irene : "Yes. Well there was the lady there who was like the Mrs ,you know. I very seldom saw the Mr, only just at the meal time. I can't remember what there business was, what there work was, you know."

Pam; " What did you call them"?

Irene: "Mam or mister like, or sir. Something like that."

Pam: "Were there other people working in service then or were you on your own?"

Irene: "No. I was the only one working there and that is what made it so hard."

Pam: "So you found it quite lonely then?"

Irene: "Yes, yes. There was a couple of dogs there. Small Alsations and Dalmations. I had to take them for a walk around the park which was just across the road, well they took me really. They used to race around and I did not like that very much because, well never having a dog, it came so strange to me."

Pamela: "You said something to me before about having a list on the wall?"

Irene; "Yes. On the kitchen door there was a list pinned up and it was my duties for each day. No sorry. In the the afternoons, when I came back after having a break. One was to clean all the silver., and another time was to clean some windows. Then the stairs had brass rods across the carpet, y'know, the brass rails. I used to have to take them off once a week and give them a clean and polish up, then put them back in again, y'know. There wasn't any spare moment of time as they was always finding jobs for me. These jobs was all pinned up so that I to do something different each day that was outstanding

Pam: "Obviously you did'nt like it there,and know from what you said you did not stay there very long. Could you say something about how you came to leave?"

Irene: "Yes. I really got so uptight, that I did not have the nerve to say to the lady, ' I am not saying here any longer.' So I just remember packing up my case in my little back room and walking out the door. I left my mother to say what happened.

Pamela: " Was that a Sunday? Did you go on the day that you was going home anyway or did you go.....?"

Irene: "Well yes. I went home to my mum that day. I never used to take my case with me but I did that time(Non comprende) and when I told amy mother all the jobs that I had to do, she said "oh I should'nt of thought that you would have had to do that" I think that she sought of sympathised with me afterwards and that she was sorry that she pushed me into it. I did make a friend of somebody along the road. She was a maid and she quite liked it, although she was a bit older than me, but I did not like it very much and I think that I was there, what two months at the most. So I left there and went to work in the factory which I liked

very much. I worked at Cork and Seal, which was in Charlton, which is not very far from there and it was'nt very far from home either."

Pam: "And a very different environment"

Irene: "Well yes. Well you sitting at benches and chatting to girls whilst you were working , and that was a much better environment. Because I felt as if I was isolated, I was cut off from everybody. I'd come from school where i'd got friends and living there as well. It didnt go down well at all with me so that was a very bad start of my job there ,Y'know. But jobs that I had after that , I was quite happy..

Pam: "Wonderful. Thankyou Reeny, do'nt go away. Ok , what is your name?"

Sylvia:" Sylvia"

Unknown:"Well Sylvia, now that you have left school I think that it is time that you went to work and I have got you a little job.

Sylvia: "Oh that's good, well it will be more money coming in wo'nt it."

Unknown: "Yes. Because you will want pocket money wo'nt you. I can't afford to give it to you and you will be independent wo'nt you."

Sylvia: "Oh that's great. What is it then? Where is it?"

Unknown: "Well it is not very far, it is in Greenwich. Which is not very far away."

Sylvia: "Oh, so I can be really near home that is great"

Unknown: "Yes but you will have to live in I am afraid. You will not be able to come home at night time."

Sylvia: "Oh."

Unknown: "And it is in service. I am going to take you along there tomorrow and introduce you to the lady that you are going to work for"

Sylvia: "Oh right .Ok."

Unknown: "And then she is going to take you out and buy you a uniform that you have to wear"

Sylvia:"Do I have to wear a uniform?"

Unknown:" Yes you have to wear a uniform!"

Sylvia:"Well what is it like?"

Unknown: “ Well I’m not quite sure yet. She is going to take you and get it for you. I suppose it will be an apron and a cap, or something like that.”

Sylvia:”Well there be any one else there Mum?”

Mum:”I do’nt think so, I do’nt think so. We’ll just have to go there and just find out what it is all about, alright”

Sylvia:”Oh, Ok. It’s good that I got a job though is’nt It.”

Mum: “Well of course it is, of course it is. You see, you can’t sort of just hang around in doors all the time and you want a job do’nt you.”

Sylvia: “Oh yeah.”

Mum: “I’m sorry that you had to leave school went you did’nt want to leave school but they wo’nt keep you on any longer when you’ve become fourteen, y’see.”

Sylvia: “No, I know. I did need to get a job!”

Mum: “You will feel better because you will have some money in your pocket and you will be able to come home , you know, when it is your day off.”

Sylvia: “I wish that I did’nt have to go away from you mum.”

Mum: “Well that is it you see. It has to happen to us all at times. It will help you to grow up as well.”

Sylvia: “Yeah. It will help me to grow up.”

Mum: “Instead of being a school girl, you will be a working girl wo’nt you.”

Sylvia “Yeah.”

Mum: “So we will have to play it by ear and see how it works out for you.”

Sylvia: “I will miss you mum.”

Mum: “Of course you will, of course you will. We will all miss you, and your brothers’ will miss you as well.”

Sylvia: “Ok. I am really nervous.”

Mum: “Well yes, yes. It’s going to be strange for us not having you around like, y’know , but you will get used to it and I wo’nt be far away. If you need me I wo’nt be far away. If you need me you know where I am.”

Sylvia; "Yes. It is not far."

Mum: "Ok. It is only a little tram or a bus ride away."

Sylvia: "Ok."

Mum: "Anyway try it and see."

Sylvia: "I will. I will do it for you Mum."

Mum: "There's a good girl. That's a good girl."

Unknown. "Is that kind of how it happened."

Unknown: "Yes."

Unknown: "Is that kind of how you felt?"

Unknown: "Yes. I am speaking my thoughts of all those years ago. That's a long while ago. But those early days really stick in your mind, y'know."

Unknown: "Yes. I bet they do. Especially having to go away at that early age from home."

Unknown: "Yes. That is right. Just leaving school as well with all your friends around you. Then You have to go and make new friends. That happens in so many walks of life. Where ever you go you have to go and make new friends, now do'nt you. Your life just seems to go along in stages and you have to go along with it."

Unknown: "It's just ending one stage, is'nt it!"

Unknown: "Yes and starting another one."

Unknown:" Forteen is a bit young to end childhood."

Unknown: "It is. Yes, it is. A bit cruel sometimes!"

Unknown: "Yes I bet. Especially going away and being on your own."

Unknown: "Yes , that is right. I felt as though my world had come to an end but it was helping me to grow up."

Unknown: "Did you say that to your mum?"

Unknown: "Yes?"

Unknown: "You felt , like, the world was coming to an end."

Unknown: "She could tell by my face I think. Instead of being red faced and laughing , I was drawn and miserable."

Unknown: "If we show It to any body else perhaps I should say that, You feel like the world is coming to an end."

Unknown: "Yes."

Unknown: "So your Mum knew how worried you were."

Unknown: "Yes, but you see, they think that is the best for you better than the factories because the factories more or less got a bad name like, girls working in factories and all that sort of thing. Well brought up girls always went into service."

Unknown: "Oh right."

Unknown: "It was a bit of a drudgery actually."

Unknown: "Yeah , I bet, especially if you was the only one there."

Unknown: "Yes. There was no other maids or anybody there."

Unknown: "How long ago was it then."

Unknown: "Well I am seventy five now and this was when I was fourteen, so how long ago was that. Sixty years. I couldn't go to the house but I know which turning it is. Down the side of the Greenwich park, top of Ambra Hill , down that way. I lived at Plumstead which isn't very far away."

Pam: "Hello Joan , I'm glad your sitting there. I want to have a word with you. Right , now I have got you a job. Now you have been at home now for two weeks from the country and I think it is time that you went out to work. I mean, you have been lolling around not doing anything. You have not tried, have you, to get a job, so I have got you a job."

Joan: "I don't know how to do.....!"

Pamela: "Oh well if you had looked in the paper you would have found something, but it does'nt matter. I've got you a job where I work, alright."

Joan: "I do'nt think that I can do it."

Pamela: "Of course you can you are just labelling boxes up with the bottles in, it's quite simple, and I know Hilda. Hilda is the forelady there and she will show you what to do. Any problems, you can just come along where I am working and just tell me right."

Joan: "But I do' like it Mum."

Pamela: "Oh well, you will get used to it. I know that it is very noisy but there are a nice lot of young girls there just packing. I am sure you will get on with it. Any way you have got to. You have got to give it a try because I have sorted it all out now . The money is'nt too bad. You can have your own money and you can give some to me too, to help, alright."

Joan: "That's no problem, but you have great hands and I have not."

Pam: "Well you do not have use the hands to do the bottles, no you just have to get off a sticky label and put it over the box. You will be shown what to do. I mean there is no thinking attached to it. You can do it. I know that you can. I do'nt want you to wear those school clothes when you go. W'ell have to go through the wardrobe. Have you anything that you think you ought to wear. You can have those crochered gloves on that Nan made you. Those white crochered gloves would look nice. What dress have you got in there? Do you know? What about that tafferted one? Oh yes . Yes I am not having you look like, y'know... No, no. It's got a nice little belt and what about shoes. Your gonna wear those high heels. Well you have only got those little sandals. You have only got those plimsol things. You will have to wear your high heels, that's all. So tomorrow, get up early because I know what you are for going to bed late, and I go to bed early .

BATTERY WENT

Now you're not going to wear that uniform, right. No we can,t have anything like that. Oh your Grandmother made those nice lace cotton gloves, you can wear those and the dress. What dress do you think? Because you are not gonna go in anything. That Taffata dress, y'know. Oh yes, the Taffata dress. Oh and you've only got plimsols. Have you got the high heels? Well you'r not going in plimsols! No, no, no that's it

Unknown 2" I can't go in.....

Unknown. "Well you find them comfortable, don't you. Well you will have to do it on your first day.
Right your high heels.

Unknown. "What is your name?"

Sylvia. "Sylvia"

Unknown. "Well Irene. While we are at tea tonight I have got something to say to you. You have been
home from school now, You left school ,what, three weeks or so.

Irene. "It's three weeks, yeah."

Unknown. "And you must feel that you want to go to work, must'nt you."

Irene. "Yeah I do. I have been looking!"

Unknown. " Oh yeah , I know you have. I have found you a nice job."

Irene. " Have you?"

Unknown. "Yes, I have found you a nice job. And it's with a very nice family. So I am told.

Irene. "What is it?"

Unknown. "It's to be a maid. In service."

Irene. "Oh!"

Unknown. " So I want you to give it a try a see whether you like it. Alright."

Irene. "Yes Mum."

Unknown. "I am sure you'll like it and it will be a bit of pocket money for you."

Irene. "Yeah. It will be a bit of money, won't it."

Unknown. "And it will make you from a school girl. You will be going to work. A young woman at work
and you will like that, won't you."

Irene. "Yes mum. Will I have to live there."

Unknown. "Well I am afraid so, yes. But you can come home when it is your time off. I don't know what
the lady's arrangements are. So, I am going to have to take you there tomorrow, and we'll see her and
find out all about it. Alright."

Irene. "Yes Mum."

Unknown. "And I know that she is going to take you Shopping to buy you a uniform."

Irene. "A uniform. What is it like?"

Unknown. "I am not quite sure. I don't know what colour the lady will like. It will be a nice apron and a cap I expect."

Irene. "I will miss you."

Unknown. "Yeah, I know you will. So will your brother's, and your Dad and myself."

Irene. "I feel like the world is coming to an end."

Unknown. "I know you do, I know. You must give it a little try. Y'see that happens every time someone leaves school and they go to work. You have to start another part of your life, y'see."

Irene. "Yes Mum."

Unknown. " And it happens so many times during your life. And you change and make new friends. I do'nt know who else is in the house, how big the family is or anything, but we'll find out when we go tomorrow."

Irene. "Yes Mum. I will do it for you."

Unknown. "Try to be happy won't you."

Irene. "I will."

Unknown. "And you know where I am if you need me. Not very far away, am I."

Irene. "Not far."

Unknown. " Just a little tram ride."

Irene. "Alright then."

Unknown. "Ok."

Irene. "Ok."

Unknown. "Any way, we will go tomorrow and find out what it is all about."

Unknown. "Penny."

Penny. "Yeah."

Unknown. "Well. You know that all the children are going on the evacuation."

Penny. "I know. Am I going?"

Unknown. "No your not. You are going to work. You have got to go and get your self a job.

Penny. "Oh. Have I got to go and find it myself then?"

Unknown. "Well I can't find it for you. I am working on the docks. You can't work down there."

Penny. "Oh. Ok then."

Unknown. "Try the shops. Try all the shops and see if you can get something in there because you have got to bring some money into the house."

Penny. "Right. Ok then I will go and see what there is."

(PAUSE)

Penny. "I have got something."

Unknown. "Good."

Penny. "I've got a job."

Unknown. "Where?"

Penny. "At the corner shop."

Unknown. "Oh,what Mr Reesses?"

Penny. "Yes."

Unknown. "Oh, what in the dairy?"

Penny. "Yeah."

Unknown. "Oh good."

Penny. "I went in and asked."

Unknown. "Yeah."

Penny. "Yeah."

Unknown. "So what are you going to do then?"

Penny. "I am going to be delivering milk."

Unknown. "Well that won't hurt you. You wrap yourself up you'll be alright."

Penny. "Yeah but there's a bike that I've got to push. There's milk piled on the front and there's milk piled on the back and I had a go while I was there and I could'nt get on it. So I am going to have to push it there and I am"

Unknown. "Well it won't hurt you to walk, you put your cloggs on. You wear your cloggs and y'know, your long socks and your wooly hat and your scarf. You will be alright."

Penny. "I'll get to work in the shop when I get back."

Unknown. "Oh, well, that's good. You'll be inside then won't you."

Penny. "It's eight shillings a week."

Unknown. "Oh good. Good. So don't forget to bring those wages home at the end of the week. You don't touch them. Y'know that, don't you."

Penny. "Oh. Yeah. Ok."

Unknown. "You give them to your Mum."

Penny. "Right."

(That's what we used to call me stepmother)

Penny. "I give her the eight shillings then."

Unknown. "Yes. You give her the eight shillings and she will probably give you something back to spend"

Penny. "I hope so."

Unknown. "But that's up to her. You behave yourself when you're working for Mr Rees won't yer."

Penny. "I will."

Unknown. "Well you know their religious."

Penny. "No."

Unknown. "Yes they are. Very religious people."

Penny. "What have I got to do then?"

Unknown. "Well they've told us that we can go down there when the bombs start dropping. And they won't drop bombs on him then, will they. He has got a basement so we'll safe down there.

(INTERFERENCE. CANNOT MAKE OUT.)

Unknown. "So behave yourself."

Penny. "I will. I will try my best."

Unknown. "Well you try, because you don't behave yourself 'ere at 'ome now do yer."

Penny. "I do"

Unknown. "No you don't. No you don't. You're cheeky to your Mum."

Penny. "I don't mean to be. I try me best."

Unknown. "Alright. Ok. Then you go off and get that job and we will see how things go."

Penny. "Ok then."

Unknown. "Ok."

Unknown. "Now listen 'ilde. I'm thinking about doing something with the 'orse and car' and i'm wondering if you can come to the market and help me sell some tin ware. Now what do you think?"

Hilder. "Well it's a bit cold!"

Unknown. " Well. I've done plenty of stall work. So that wo'nt hurt you."

Hilder. "What time do we have to go."

Unknown. "I want you up at seven o'clock in the morning."

Hilder. "Oh, no."

Unknown. "I will give you a call."

Hilder. "Oh no."

Unknown. "And when I call yer, You get up. Because I will have that horse and cart saddled, and loaded and ready to go. Now you have got to get up, and we have got to get there early to get a place in the market."

Hilder. "What about helping Mum in the shop?"

Unknown. "Mum don't mind. Mum said you can come with me, she don't mind."

Hilder. "Mum. Are you sure? Because I would prefer to do the shop really."

Unknown. "No. When I was your age I used to have to help my father. It will do you good. I had it worse than you when I was a child."

Hilder. "Well why didn't you ask one of the boys to do it Dad?"

Dad. "Their no good for business. None of them except you. Hilda's very good and she can do it and I know yer can."

Hilder. "I ca'nt."

Dad. "Yeah you can. Right I will give you a call in the morning and I do'nt want no more said about it".

Hilder. "Night Dad."

(Next morning bang, bang, bang on the covers)

Dad. "C'mon. Up.

Hilda. "I ca'nt."

Dad. "Hurry up now. I am waiting."

Hilda. "Oh. What time is it."

Dad. "Well it's ten past seven now so you had better get a move on."

Hilda. "Oh no. Take one of the boys."

Dad. "No. No. And do'nt put the kettle on for tea we have'nt got time. We will have our breakfast in the cafe, on the way."

Hilda. "I am not going in one of those workmans' cafe's,im not."

Dad. "Well nobody is going to say anything to you. You have got to. Do you want a nice breakfast of egg, and bacon and chips?"

Hilda. "Yeah."

Dad. "Okey dokey then. Hurry up. Put your coat on and off we go. Put a blanket over you because it will be cold."

(Horse trots off) Enter the cafe.

Dad. "Morning Marie."

Marie. "Mornin. What do you want?"

Dad. "Egg , bacon and chips twice, two slices, two teas please."

Marie. "Ok Harry. Coming up."

Hilda. "Oh Dad. Don't eat so eat so fast."

Dad. "Right are you ready?"

Hilda. "No. I have'nt even started yet."

Dad. "I will wait outside for you then."

Hilda. "Don't leave me in here with all these men."

Dad. "No. I am going."

Hilda. "Dad. Look there all looking at me."

Dad. "Right I am going outside. If you're not ready that is your fault."

Hilda. "Just let me finish. I have'nt even started yet."

(Bang)

Hilda. "Dad. You could have waited."

Dad. "I'll wait no longer."

Hilda. "You could have waited. I have'nt had any of it yet."

Dad. "That is your fault."

Pam. " So now you are your Dad. So what do you think that she is going to think about Hilda. This was the other bit of work she did there. They had er...er..... well you explain it Hilda.

Hilda. "We had a second hand clothes shop. We sold furniture, bric a brac. A bit like a jumble sale. what it is now. Now there were clothes every where going all up the wall. Now Pam is going to come in and she is going to be my customer. Pretend that this is the shop out there and this is from that curtain. So you'd stand in the kitchen, our living quarters, and my Mum would say. "Go and serve her out in the shop. Bloody nuisance. She don't want nothing anyway." So right in comes Pam, whose a nuisance. Now she'll sort out all the clothes. You say"

Unknown "How much do you want for that then?"

Unknown 2 " Let us have a look at you. Fit You. Do You want to try it on? Is that your size, yeah. Yeah . Now I think that it is your size now dear. You only need to sow a button on and it'sShilling! Oh go on then ninepence."

Pam " What else have you got? I want a dress to go with it ."

Unknown 2 " Um. I could find you a dress. All the clothes are up here and I would pick up something and say" Look that coat is miles too big for her. Yeah it is a nice dress.

Pam " Shake it and hold it up against you let's see it on you. Oh it looks nice on you.

Unknown 2 " Yeah it looks' nice. Um we have got some shoes. Would you like some shoes on?"

Pam " Last time I came here there was only one shoe. I came out and I don't know what you did with the other one. I have been looking for that ever since.

Unknown 2 "Oh you asked me. You keep coming in every week for that other shoe.

Pam " Well where is it? I went home and now I have only got one shoe."

Unknown 2 "I am sorry dear, we never did find that shoe.

Pam " Well, I want my money back for that. Can I have this pair for nothing then because I never got the other shoe?

Unknown 2 " No dear. No, no, no, no"

Pam " Now if I have only got one shoe, it would be alright if I only had one leg, now would'nt it."

Unknown 2 "If any body was too difficult my Mum would come out and sort them out. She would have a row with them.

Pam " Yes I will be you. And you can be your Mum. Mum, come and sort this out eh."

Mum " What do you expect? I've got rent to pay. I've got rates to pay. You can't come getting things for nothing dear!.

Pam " I don't want them for nothing. I bought a pair of shoes' and I only got one shoe."

Mum " If your not satisfied dear, just don't come in the shop any more. Ok."

Pam " Oh. Well that's it."

Mum " Ok. 'bye."

Unknown “ And then of course, you got all the stories. “ My ole man hit me last night. He’s left me and some body else gave him a black eye.”

Pam “ Did you listen to all that as a girl?”

Unknown “ Oh yes. My Mum would be talking and I would be standing. Well I was only 14. I knew everything. All gossip of really wanting to join in. It was great. I got every bodys’ Story. Oh it was a great time. Who was going if she had another bloke. Daughter got into trouble. Oh dear the stories could write a book. My mum loved it. My dad would come along y’see, about 5 o’clock, and h’ed say “ is the dinner ready yet?” He always called out, “dinner ready May^{to}?” Oh no. She forgot all about the dinner. She would be in the shop talking. She would say “quick, quick. Light the oven and we’ll get the chops in or what ever. Your father wants his dinner.” They’d be so busy talking all day and that was it. Oh it was terrible really. It was good.”

Pam. “ Did he go off with the takings’ then, because he was a ‘boozy man’ was’nt he. Did he go off with the takings’ on daily basis?

Unknown “ Oh yes. He liked a drink every night. He was in the pub every night. In this pub. I used to sing in the pub every night on the mic.”

Pam. “Sing what? What sort of thing.”

Unknown “ Vera Lynn songs. Well meet again. I was a good singer then. He worked over the ‘Royal’ in the evenings. The Theatre Royal, Stratford. He was a scene shifter. One my brothers’ would meet us at Romford, and drive the horse and cart back with me on it. My dad would get on a bus to get there quickly because he had to start his scene shifting, y’see, at a certain time. What time did the show start, what about 7 or, we had to get back. He was a scene shifter there. So I could go over there when I liked, y’see. I was always in there. I would stand in the wings and watch everybody. This lady wanted me to be in her chorus girl troop. I wanted to be a chorus girl but my dad said, “no, no,” he wouldn’t let me go.

Pam. “Why did’nt he want you to be a chorus girl?”

Unknown “He said that they led an awful life. He said that they all slept together and they never made any money.

Unknown 2 “ I think that he thought that there was’nt any future in any thing like that.”

Unknown “ No it was an awful life. He said you’re not going to live life like that. You will never have any money.

Unknown 2 “ When we used to say that we wanted to go on the stage. He used to say. “Oh yeah. You can go on the landing stage. If they choose you, you will be alright down there.”

Unknown “ The only thing that they wanted for you was to get married, didn't they, have a family and meet a nice.... My Mum always said “When you meet anybody ask him where he works. The first thing they ask. Don't marry anybody poor because when you have children, love flies out the window.”

Unknown 2 “ He is not a catholic is he.”

Unknown “ Where does he live? What's his mum say?...Oh”

Unknown 2 “ Y'Know the silly things that they used to think were important. “ He is not a catholic is he.”

Unknown “My dad always said “do you drink.” and if they did he liked 'em. When I brought a bloke home.”

Pam. “ where did you keep the horse and cart.”

Unknown “ In the stable beyond the stage.”

Pam. “Yes that was an interesting thing that each of you had ideas about what you would like to do. I know Joan did as well. It wasn't the stage but you did as girls have ideas about what you did like to do, but they never got a hearing.”

Unknown “ Well money was the thing as well. We had to have money for the clothes. Once you had a job that paid fairly good money for that time, you were very loathe to get out of it. Where, as I wanted to go into nursing, the money that I was getting at the factory, was far, far better paid than doing a job that I would of liked. If I can go on from there. I left in 52, the factory, and in between 52 and 57, I decided to go into the nursing reserve, you had to a first aid course and a nursing course, to get this thing out of my system because it is so frustrating. You had to do a day. You had to do a 44 hour week, voluntary, in each section of the hospital. The last one was casualty, which I questioned, whether I was right to want to go into nursing after I did that bit. The nurses said no you don't do it like that. You get imune to all that. So it got out of my system doing that, other wise I would have been very frustrated not being able to do what I wanted to do.

Unknown 2 “ I wanted to get it out of my system.”I never got it out of my system. I always loved drama and the theatre. If I had the money I would be at the theatre every day.”

Unknown . “ What I wanted to really ask was, when you done this job as a child, would you have had to do all the house work as well. You would’nt of had vaccuum cleaners or what they have got now would you.

Unknown. “ Well it was mostly sweeping with the ash pan and brush down the stairs.”

Unknown “ And you got all this dirt and dust when you done your fire.”

Unknown “ yes, yes.”

Unknown “So you had to clean all that up.”

Unknown “ Yes, yes.”

Unknown “ Was there more than one fire to light?”

Unknown “ Well yes. There was one in the drawing room ,as they call it, you know , or sitting room. Then a diining room where they all used to sit and have their meals. Then it was the boiler thint, you know, that we had to stoke up, that heated the water. All that had to be done out. If I forget to do it, they used to create, like, what they call a clinker. It used to set hard. Once that happened, it used to put the fire out did’nt it. They’d say you have’nt been doing this or doing that y’know.”

Pam “reeny. The other people were saying , like, they had dreams about what they wanted to do. Joan wanting to be a nurse and the other two wanting to go into the theatre. Did you have a vision of what you wanted to do?”

Irene. “Well. It is funny that you should say that, because at school, I was always bandaging somebodys’ leg up or something like that, Y’know. Making out to be a nurse or something . Once I left school it sort of just went from me, y’know. I did’nt think that I could stand the sight of blood, y’know. It was alright making out, like when you were younger , but I don’ t think I could of done it. Yet I worked in a hospital since like, y’know. That was in the mothers’ and babies hospital in Woolwich..

Unknown “ Samual street. One of mine were born in there.”

Irene. “ Yes, I was like an auxiliary nurse there with the babies. That was lovely. That was nice.

Pam. “Can I ask all of you, just for a moment, to say something about what it was like to be your parent.

What ever parent. What kind of experience was it to, sort of, represent your parent?"

Unknown " My mum and dad never really got on, because he was always in the pub

Pam. "But how did you feel playing him though Hilda. What did it feel like, being your dad for a few minutes?"

Hilda. "He was very Bolshy and oh, that type y'know. (Uncomprehensible) Now this is funny really because all my familys' still alive touch wood. All my brothers' and sisters', we all talk about it. The wireless, as these ladies will tell you, was always on a shelf, upon a shelf in the kitchen , as we called it. Now my dad, that was his armchair where the wireless was, would have this boring programme, political or something that did'nt interest us. He'd also read the paper . They were big papers' then. He'd sit there like that. If you walked past , h'ed rattle the paper. That was when he did'nt have any money.

Unknown " He would rather be out like."

Hilda. " And the wireless would of been here with this rotten political programme on. My mum always used to say "you're reading the paper for a row are'nt you. You're reading the paper for a row! Have'nt you got any money." And she used to give him shilling just to get rid of him. So he could go in the pub next door. When my dad went out, and I know it sounds horrible, then the house would come to life.

When he went out, we would all get together and start laughing. He was like a big black cloud my dad.

Unknown " Was he physical?"

Hilda. " What do you mean."

Pam" Did he hit you?"

Hilda. "Yes he did. He clipped me around the ear often. He would get up and hit you. He hit me around the head with the fish once. Oh christ if he was in a temper that was it.

Unknown " I was going to the dance. I was getting ready, make up and everything, and he was cleaning his fish. He was flicking it like that at me. I got so bad tempered and everything. So I said "stop it!" He wrapped the fish right around my neck. I stunck of fish and I could,nt go out."

Pam. " What did it feel like for you actually representing your dad, Because you said some really interesting things there?"

Unknown “ Unknown “I did love my father. Very much so. He was the only parent I had from the age of 3. The reason that I was very Bolshy with my stepmother was because I thought that I should of, taken the mums’ place. I planned to look after the rest of the family. When that did not happen. He got married again , and he was only in his Thirties mind, he was only a young man, I rebelled against this woman.

Unknown “ Yesh. I can imagine so.”

Unknown “ To play him. I din’nt really know my father very well. He was’nt a man that would sit down and talk to you. He would’nt sit and talk to you. He was always shouting. “Do this. Do that. Where have you been? Where are you going?” You know. “Do as your told.”

Unknown “ But that was general, I think.”

Unknown “ Yeah. Yeah. That was general.”

Unknown “ There was a saying, in those days, that children should be seen and not heard.”

Unknown “ That’s right. That was the thing. If you was sitting at the table you darnt talk.”

Unknown “ Oh know.”

Unknown “You darn’t get up without asking can you leave the table or anything like that.

Pam. “ Just going to you, representing your mum Reeny, it was kind of very clear for you that you did this and it was right for your daughter. You had lots of reasons why you thought that you were doing the right thing. Had you ever thought about it from her point of view or not?”

Irene. “ Mostly as I grew older, I realised that what mum said was true, y’know. I am glad that I listened to her, if you know what I mean. My mother was a lovely mum. A lovely mum. It was not all that long ago since she died and I will never forget her. She was the only one that chastised us, myself and my two brothers’, my dad never laid a hand on us. He used to say one is enough. You don’t want both at you. So if there was any problems , it was always mum who chastised us.”

Pam. “That is quite unusual actually.”

Irene. “And I don’t really remember our mother ever giving us a real good hiding. I think one look from her and that was enough. You did’nt want to upset the household, like, because they were good to us. We had a really good upbringing. “

Pam. "So for you to kind of represent your mum, you did it really very clearly. In a way that you were like, comfortable with.

Irene. "Yes."

Pam. "In a very different from the situation from Joan. I wanted to ask you Joan, because you have done something in a way before. Yet the way that you did it today was all interesting new things that I had't ever heard about before. What did that feel like for you, being her, in this situation?"

Joan. "Well that was two separate parts of the life, was'tnt it, when I was away and came back and that is when we worked on the day, 'how I felt when I came back'. You see, if I put it this way. I was an only child. You become very independent. I mean, I travelled from Kent , to come to London. That's how the situation arose, when I tried to find the house. I was a very independent person. When I came home, near the end of the war, and found that someone had almost thought for me, to get a job, instead of me trying to think for myself what I would like to do, I felt very 'I did'tnt want to do that I want to do this'. Playing her part, I suppose that she must have thought ' well. I have to become a mum again and find this job for her' as most mums did if you did'tnt go out and get a job. I suppose that she thought 'well I better start doing something'. I mean she started to think ' oh now I have to think what I can give her for breakfast' were she had'tnt done that for quite a few years."

Pam. "So it was'tnt just a jolt for you, it was a jolt for her as well."

Joan. "Certainly, yes."

Pam. "Very interesting."

Unknown."Penny."

Penny." yeah."

Unknown."Well, You know that all the children are going on the evacuation."

Penny." I know. Am I going?"

Unknown." No your not. You are going to work. You have got to go and get your self a job.

Penny." Oh. Have I got to go and find it myself then?>

Unknown." Well I can't find it for you. I am working on the docks. You can't work down there."

Penny." Oh. Ok then.

Unknown." Try the shops. Try all the shops and see if you can get something in there because you have got to bring some money into the house.

Penny." Right. Ok then I will go and see what there is.

(PAUSE)

Penny." I have got something."

Unknown." Good."

Penny." I've got a job."

Unknown." Where."

Penny." At the corner shop."

Unknown." Oh, what Mr Reeses?"

Penny." Yes."

Unknown." Oh, what in the dairy."

Penny." Yeah."

Unknown." Oh good."

Penny." I went in and asked."

Unknown." Yeah."

Penny." Yeah."

Unknown." So what are you going to do then?"

Penny." I am going to be delivering milk."

Unknown." Well that won't hurt you. You wrap yourself up you'll be alright."

Penny." Yeah but there's a bike that I've got to push. There's milk piled on the front and there's milk piled on the back and I had a go while I was there and I could'nt get on it. So I am going to have to push it there and I am"

Unknown." Well it won't hurt you to walk, you put your cloggs on. You wear your cloggs and Y'know, your long socks and your wooly hat and your scarf. You will be alright."

Penny." I'll get to work in the shop when I get back."

Unknown." Oh, well, that's good. You'll be inside then won't you."

Penny." It's eight shillings a week."

Unknown." Oh good. Good. So don't forget to bring those wages home at the end of the week. You don't touch them, y'know that, don't you."

Penny." Oh. Yeah. Ok."

Unknown." You give them to your Mum."

Penny." Right."

(That's what we used to call me stepmother)

Penny." I give her the eight shillings then."

Unknown." Yes. You give her the eight shillings and she will probably give you something back to spend"

Penny." I hope so."

Unknown." But that's up to her. You behave yourself when you're working for Mr Rees won't yer."

Penny." I will."

Unknown." Well you know their religious."

Penny." No."

Unknown." Yes they are. Very religious people."

Penny." What have I got to do then?"

Unknown." Well they've told us that we can go down there when the bombs start dropping. And they won't drop bombs on him then, will they. He has got a basement so will safe down there.

(INTERFERENCE. CANNOT MAKE OUT.)

Unknown." So behave yourself.

Penny." I will. I will try my best."

Unknown." Well you try, because you don't behave yourself 'ere at 'ome now do yer."

Penny." I do"

Unknown." No you don't. No you don't. You're cheeky to your Mum."

Unknown." Well you try, because you don't behave yourself 'ere at 'ome now do yer."

Penny." I do"

Unknown." No you don't. No you don't. You're cheeky to your Mum."

Penny." I don't mean to be. I try me best."

Unknown."Alright. Ok. Then you go off and get that job and we will see how things go."

Penny." Ok then."

Unknown."Ok."

Pam. "Penny would you just like to show us, a little bit of what you were saying before, about you as father. What your hopes are for the girl and what your hoping will come out of this job."

Penny. "I am trying to think as my father would think. He knew that I was a bit of a rebel."

Pam. "No do it as your father!"

Penny. "Oh sorry. I know what is the matter with Penny and why she has not accepted my new wife. She thought that she was going to run the home, being the eldest, and it has'nt turned out that way. So she likes to do what she likes to do and does'nt take any notice of her mother. So she has got to go to work. She has got to get herself a steady job. I know she has got notions about going on the stage as she is always singing and dancing. That is no good for her. She has got to bring some money into the house. Get some experience of work until she meets a nice young man and get married. That is it."

Pam. "ok. Well done. thankyou very much. Let's visit Reeny, and,well Reeny is being played by Silvy. Reeny is playing her mum.

Mum. "Well Irene. While we are around the table having this meal with your brothers' I have got something to say to you.

Irene. "Yeah."

Mum. "Well you have left school now have'nt you.

Irene. "Yeah."

Mum. "Now how long have you been at home now?"

Irene. "About three weeks."

Mum. "Something like that, yeah. Now I think that it is time that you went to work, don't you."

Irene. "Yes mum. I have been looking."

Mum. "Yeah. Well you have'nt been lucky to find one, so I have found one for you."

Irene. "Yeah. What is it?"

Mum. "Well. It is to go into service. To be a maid."

Irene. "Oh."

Mum. "But I am told that it is a very nice family and that you will like it."

Irene. "Oh. That's good."

Mum. "So I am going to take you along there tomorrow, and we are going to see the lady, and find out what it is all about. What you have got to do."

Irene. "Will I have to live there?"

Mum. "Yes. I am afraid that you will because, you have to be up earliesh in the morning or you'd never get there in time anyway. I know that she is going to take you to the shops to get you sorted out with a uniform."

Irene. "A uniform!"

Mum. "Yes."

Irene. "What will it be like?"

Mum. "Well I am not quite sure what colour it will be. I know that it will be an apron and a cap to wear. So that you don't get your hair dirty and that. So, We'll go along there tomorrow and find out what it is all about. It is not very. It is only in Greenwich."

Irene. "I know it is not far."

Mum. "It is not very far. You will soon come home when you have your time off, can't you."

Irene. "Oh mum, I feel like the world has come to an end."

Mum. "I know. That is what all children feel when they leave school and they have got to go out into the world and earn some money. But at least you will have some pocket money won't you."

Irene. "Yeah. I will have some money."

Mum. "Because I can't give you any, can I. "Because I have got your two brothers', y'know. So you will

have some pocket money.”

Irene. “I will do it for you mum.”

Mum. “That’s a good girl. I knew that you would. That has made me feel a lot better. So go into with a good heart and we’ll see what happens eh.”

Irene. “Alright then.”

Mum. “ok.”

Pam. “Thankyou very much. Could we just ask you to say a word as your mother about your hopes for your (cannot hear)

Irene. “Well I knew that she had to be pushed into a job, y’know, because she has been really pampered a lot. Waited on and everything. She has not drujed or made to do things for herself. So it was going to be hard, but I had to push her into a job, as I knew that that was the only way that she was going to do it. I felt sure that she would want to please me and make the best of it.”

Pam. “And are you confident that you are doing the right thing and that she is going to be ok.?”

Irene. “Well I think so. For girls to go into service....um. They turn out to be good jobs and can work with some very nice people, and learn a lot. Yes. Yes, I did when I was a youngster, yeah. It is a sort of foundation, for later on, for when they get married. To be able to cook, be able to clean, wash and iron. Things like that. Unless you go into a job like that , you don’t learn very much. Not for when you’re growing older and you are going to bring up a young family. So I thought that it was a good way of preparing her.”

Pam. “Great. Thankyou very much. Now we’ll visit Joan. Joan has also just come back from being and evacuee.”

Mum. “Now Joan. You have been back now for two weeks. You have not done very much , going out , and I know that you have got some money off your Grandma. So I have got you a job. I think it’s time that you looked after yourself. So tomorrow, you are coming into the factory where I work. It’s not very hard. You are going to.....”

Joan. “Are you sure I can do it!”

Mum. "It's not very hard at all. There are boxes to be labelled up. When the boxes are labelled up, you just put them into a crate. There is a very nice person called Hilda, who will watch over you. If you have any problems, I am working just down at the end of the factory, you just come along to me and I will sort it all out. Alright."

Joan. "But it's not possible to have another job."

Mum. "You haven't looked, have you. You haven't looked for any other job in all the two weeks that you have been out, and you're fourteen now. I mean you go to work! I mean, I can't keep you. You must start keeping yourself."

Joan. "Of course, but um, it's not possible to look....."

Mum. "You've left it too late my dear. You've got the job now and they're very pleased to have you. I've worked there for over twenty years and I can tell it is a wonderful job for you."

Joan. "Yes you're strong."

Mum. "Nonsense, nonsense, you will be strong. Now you can't go to work in that school uniform. I can't have you going like that. You'll be showing me up. I can't have you going in that. Um, now, Your Grandmother, she is very good at crochery, and she has made you some gloves. Now what dress have you got in the wardrobe. Something nice. I know that nice taffeta. That nice taffeta you've got. The one with the reverses and the gloves. The shoes. You can't go in plimsoles. You can't go in plimsoles to work. There's glass. Too much glass. So, I suppose that you are going in your high heels, that you have got yourself. Right. Yes. So you're going to give it a try."

Joan. "Yes."

Mum. "So tomorrow. Eight o'clock."

Joan. "Eight 'o clock. Yes."

Mum. "Right. We're going to both go along and see how you get on."

Pam. "Now lets just hear a little word from Joan's mum, about how she feels about having this excellent and totally undesirable job for her daughter."

Joan. "I just can't understand why she was rebelling against it all. I mean, I worked there for so many years and they looked after me so well. I mean, there was a good canteen, music while you worked and a first aid. Even when one of the governors', or one of the owners' even, died, I was left something in the will. She doesn't know how wonderful it all is."

Pam. "And of course, what Joan wanted to actually do was nothing like that but"

Joan. "No. Right from a very young age, I was a born nurse. I really dressed up and made the beds, all things like that, in my uniform. I tell you something, which I can hardly believe myself now, but my Grandmother was a diabetic. There was no throw away syringes then. You had glass syringes that you had to sterilise with metholated spirits or boiling water. Then you had the insuline bottle, which you had to fill up with so many cubic centimetres, With no bubbles in. I used to inject my Grandmother and I could of only have been in between twelve and fourteen. She used to do herself and this was all lumps, in front of the arm, so she was desperate for someone to do the back of the arm. I used to do it without a quarm, because I knew, I wanted it desperately, to go into that profession. In any case at fourteen you was'nt allowed to go into nursing profession. You had to be a little bit older if I remember rightly. So once I got into that job, which mum got me, it was very good money and I took to the factory work as if I was meant to be. So perhaps a chip off the old block eh."

Pam. "finally we will just visit Hilda's dad and Hilda. Hilda's dad has had one pint too many. It's the night before Hilda's going to have to go out to work with her dad. Hilda's dad is sitting in front of the fire announcing to the family what is going to happen next day."

Dad. "Right then 'ild. I've got the 'orse and car'. he was a right old cockney, my father, you see. I've got the 'orse and car', and we're gonna go ou' to the market in the mornin' and sell some tin ware. What d'you think?"

Hilda. "Not me. I'm not goin'."

Dad. "You are!"

Hilda. "Tell the boys. I'm not goin' dad!"

Dad. "No. No. No. You're the only one out of the lo' that can sell. You're like me."

Hilda. "No. I wanna be in doors with mum and the shop. I wanna sell the clothes' in the shop."

Dad. "No.No. Your mother does'nt mind. We're goin' out in the mornin'....."

Hilda. "Mum. Mum. I don't wanna go. I wanna stay with you and do the clothes in the shop. I'm not goin' on the car'. It's freezin'"

Dad. "You are and that's final."

Hilda. "Why don't you take one of the boy's?"

Dad. "No.No. I'm gonna wake you up at seven o clock in the mornin'. I'll be in your bedroom, waking you up at seven. I want you washed, dressed and ready to go ou' in the 'orse and car'!"

Hilda. "Please dad. Take Fred."

Dad. "No. No. No. That's it now. I'm goin' to bed."

Next morning

Dad. "Come on."

Hilda. "No. Oh no."

Dad. "Up!"

Hilda. "Oh no. Dad. No"

Dad. "Get up."

Hilda. "Oh no. Dad. No"

Dad. "Move yourself! I've go' tha' 'orse 'n' car' outside the door, all stacked up and i'm not 'anging around for you."

Hilda. "Freezin', It's freezin'."

Dad. "And don't bother to put the kettle on an' make any tea. We can 'ave our breakfast on the way."

Hilda. "Where?"

Dad. "We're goin' on the 'orse 'n' car' an' we're gonna pull up for a nice breakfast."

Hilda. "Where?"

Dad. "Would'nt that be nice, Hila."

Hilda. "Where are we gonna have it."

Dad. "Manor road. It's not far away."

Hilda. "I'm not goin' in a workmen's cafe with you dad."

Dad. "Well if you don't want....."

Hilda. "Not with all those men."

Dad. "You'll 'ave to go without then and wait outside, because i'm goin' in and that's it."

Hilda. "Could'nt we have some breakfast at home....."

Dad. "No we 'ave'nt got time 'n' I can't mess about with all that now. No."

Hilda. "They will look at me. It's all men in there."

So on the cart we get

We pull up

We go in the cafe

Dad. "Mornin' 'arry. Mornin' Bert. Mornin' Bill. I want egg 'n' bacon 'n' chips twice. Two slices and two teas' please. Right 'Ilda here's yours'.

Sound of eating

Dad. "Right you ready."

Hilda. "What? I have'nt started yet."

Dad. "I'll wait outside for you then."

Hilda. "Oh no dad."

Dad. "No. I'm going."

Hilda. "I have'nt started it yet."

Dad. "Well that's your fault. You should've been quicker. I'm going."

Bang

Hilda. "Dad."

Pam. "Do you want to say a word as your dad?"

Hilda. "I think my dad, if he had the money, he would've liked to see me in a business. With a big business, because he said that I was always very good at business. This is what he used to say when he was drunk. In fact, when I was courting my husband, he used to say"

Dad. "if I had the money mate. I'd buy her a big business and i'd put her into business. She is the only one who can do business and sell anything."

Pam. "Do you trust then?"

Dad. "Oh yes. I could trust her with any money because we used to have a little round on the stall..."

Pam. "I've seen that round tin and you leave a lot of money in that tin, don't you?"

Dad. "And she would'nt touch a penny mate."

Pam. "Are you sure?"

Dad. "Yes."

Pam. "Have you counted it?"

Dad. "I've Counted it. Before I went....."

Pam. "I would'nt leave my girl with any money!"

Dad. "I knew everything that was in there and she never touched a penny."

Hilda. "But he did, mind you, he was taking it all the time. Twenty Players and a drink around the corner, but I never. So I was a good girl really. He used to be able to float of and go where he liked. I used to stay on the stall and do all the work. 'I won't be long, 'ild'" and he would'nt be back for two hours you see, he'd leave there."

Pam. "And tell then about the kettles. Just about what you used to do."

Hilda "Your Hilda. You do it."

Pam. "Oh, I've got to do it have I. Oh no, you do it because I can't remember."

Hilda,. "We sold kettles, baking tins', small saucepans', graters'. All different things. All made of tin ware.

Pam. "And he would say, "come on. Get them to buy these kettles. Stand up and get them to buy these kettles. Get them coming. Get them coming."

Hilda. "I'd hold up a kettle. This kettle had water. I would pour the water into this kettle and I would say, " 'ere 'are. One 'n' fourpence halfpenny. A five pint kettle. All sale. No leakers'.

Unknown. "Don't believe ya'. Don't believe ya'."

Hilda. "They had to believe me because I did'nt put the water up to the spout. We done a boiled matrimony, we really sold, because it was during the war and you could'nt get any kitchen equipment, as these ladies would back me up. You could'nt have hands' to serve with and it used to drive you mad really, and they were all around you. The kettles were tied up in a dozen bundle with a bit of string, so if you was'nt careful. If you cut that string they used to fly everywhere. So you had to be careful just to sort of keep it. Nine times out of ten we, just sort of, sold out and we came back with....."

Pam. "That was thanks to you, the good sales girl, was'nt it."

Hilda. "Well, I don't like boasting, but I suppose it was. But my dad was'nt there anyway. He was always off somewhere."

Pam. "Well done. Well wemust leave you now."

Unknown. "I must explain. I did'nt have a last day at school ,because I left when we all broke up for summer term, in the middle of July. So we all skipped happily home, because we had got the long summer holiday ahead of us, and never did I think that that would be my last day at school, because I was fourteen at the beginning of August. So I never went back to school any more. All I wanted to do was to grow up and be able wear high heel shoes, and work in town if I could. That was my ambition. However, I had one teacher there that I got on awfully well with. She'd be talking about me and she would say to the headmistress, "One of our pupil's will not be coming back at the end of term. She has left really , at thirteen, But as she is fourteen we've agreed that she could leave. Joyce pleasant has always been interested in English and drama. I took a drama class, we had guilds at the end of the week, and I took a class on drama and poetry reading which she always came to, and always enjoyed. She is a studius girl and I hope that her health will improve. She is very thin and has a lot of ill health, because she does'nt eat much, and her mother is awfully worried about her. She took an active part in swimming. She got a bronze medallion.

I took her for three lessons in the hall, over a chair, to coordinate the strokes. We went to the swimming pool, in the open air, in the freezing winter. She managed to get her swimming certificates and her bronze medallion. She is a quiet girl and I hope that she makes a success of her life. She very much wants to work in the west end of London. I don't think that she will aspire to anything in the drama field at all because, she is rather reticent, and and rather stands back when she is asked to speak out."

Pam. "That was good. That was really great. Olive. Can we meet one of your teacher's?"

Olive. "Well I will be miss Henson. She was my favourite teacher. She'd be talking in the staff room. Do want me to stand up. Olive was short and fat. She had straight hair with a fringe. She didn't leave at fourteen because the Christmas of nineteen thirty four, she took a very important examination in music, which was the beginning of a series of important examinations, leading to the gold medal further on. So she took the bronze medal, sat for it, and that was all she was thinking about. She passed and received a certificate and she was still on at school. This takes us into thirtyfive and she is still at school. Miss Henson but miss Henson would say....."

Miss Henson. "I feel so sorry that now I hear that Olive is leaving. Her father is unemployed and there is financial troubles at home. She has two brother's and she has got to leave. They can't afford to keep her anymore at school and study the music. I feel sorry for Olive because I am quite fond of her. We have got on very well over the years, and I liked to think that she continued, with her music. I am sure that she would always have a deep love. What she does with her life is up to her really. Whether she comes to terms with what is happening with her now."

Olive. "I've got a feeling that I didn't go back to school. It may have been at the same time as Joyce, I can't remember that much. That was the end of that episode."

Joyce. "we're from the same school, y'see."

Unknown. "My teacher was miss Eliss. She was a lovely teacher and I loved her very much. In turn, I think she loved me. She was a little, chubby teacher. She had cheeks that wobbled. If I did anything good, she used to be so pleased, that tears came into her eyes. Of course that would start me off and we used to cuddle each other. She was lovely. Really lovely. What ever I did, she used to make a point of

telling the headmistress. The headmistress, miss Highfield, was very strict. She was a tall, very very tall teacher. (Imitates voice of miss Highfield.)

“Cathlyn has done well. I’m going to give her five stars’!”

“She had a deep voice. This was in front of all the school, the next morning , in assembly. Of course they would want to know why I was getting these five stars’. My teacher, miss Eliss, she was excellent. She was really lovely.”

Pam. “So talk to us about her. About you, as she would of done then. So you be miss Eliss.”

(Unknown. Imitating miss Eliss.)

“I’m going to be sorry when Kitty leaves school. Well they called me Kathlyn then. When Kathlyn leaves school, I shall miss her. Apart from her work, I shall miss her singing, her dancing and her acrobats. Her playing about as usual. I am sure that all the other children will miss her. Miss Lynn has already told me that she is going to miss her, tremendously, for her art. Believe it or not.”

Pam. “Miss Eliss. Do you know why she is leaving school?”

Miss Eliss. “She is leaving because they need the money at home, because financial. Her mother’s got seven children and when Kitty goes to work it will help. I think that she should be staying on. Although she is not academic, I was’nt clever in art or those sort of things, I would have loved her to have stayed on. It’s a shame really, because she is good at doing the things she loves. Very good at doing the things she loves. She wants to stay on but obviously she can’t.”

Pam. “That was grand. Thankyou very much. Good. Joan. Your teache talking about you.”

Joan. “Well I’m talking about Joan. I think that, under the circumstances, the way the schooling has been, during these war years, I think that she has faired very well. I find that she does a very good composition and writes a good story. I mean the introduction that we have had, with her going home to London , and then coming back. I mean she has’nt had a very controlled schoolling at all. She has had to go further afield, unfortunately. You know how bad it’s been in Kent bringing down these damned ‘doodle bugs’. So we’ve lost her for a while. She has gone to Oxford with the sister of her fostered mother. I must say

that we have got her in the net ball team and she is one of our best players. I mean we play the other schools, and I feel that, on centre half, it is very, very bad of her to go off like that. So I do that she does something with her life. I think that she is quite a lively child, a little bit shy and very independent. She won't be told too many things. So we will have to wait and see what becomes of her."

Pam. "Great. Thanks Joan.

Unknown. "Right I'm Mrs Willets. She is the headmistress who has recently got married. She has a little dachshund that used to 'wee' all over the place. But that's Mrs Willets supposed to be talking about me, is'nt she. Well she probably would'nt bother to do that really because she was a bit busy with her married life. With her new husband. To get one, sort of after fifty, is quite good is'nt it. The other teacher that I can remember much more had a green jumper and was rather fat. I'm not speaking for her because she would'nt be interested in any of us, anyway. I just have to tell you about the jumper. It was green here and sort of grey at the back, because it was all sweat here, and it never was washed at all. I was given the job of putting a note in her locker, this is'nt what she is saying about me, saying, y'know, do you think that you could either buy a new sweater or maybe wash this one. That's the sort of person I was. When we had the midnight feast, it was in my suitcase. I mean I always carried the can. If anybody did say anything about me, they would say, that I was good at arithmetic and English, but best at sports, dancing, netball, tennis. That sort of thing."

Pam. "Be one of them, Barbara, and say something about you as a person. You as a child. As a young girl."

Barbara. "I think Barbara wants to leave as soon as she can because she wants to get back to her mother. She took her GCSEs at sixteen, and her sister, who was head girl, took A levels' at the same time. So they both left together. Although her parents wanted her to stay on. She wanted to go and I went home. I can't really say what they'd say about me."

Pam. "Try."

Barbara. "No. I could'nt, because I would just be making it up and I would obviously say, what a lovely person. How we should miss her. But it is not true."

Pam. "Well I don't want you to lie. I just want you to use your imagination....."

Barbara. "Well I can't."

Pam. "Just think about what other people might say about you"

Barbara. "I can't."

Pam. "Well that's fine. Let's go to penny."

Penny. "My teacher. The war started in nineteen thirty nine, in the September, and I was fourteen in the October. My teacher was a German. Her name was Miss Schneider. The following day, she was'nt in school. We could'nt make out where she was and they would'nt tell us where she'd gone. Obviously she was'nt a British subject so they'd taken her away some where. I quite liked her. She was short, dark hair, had her hair back in a bun and glasses down on her nose. She was very strict but quite nice. I'll now try and be her. I'm talking to, maybe a friend, over a coffee, about Penny. (Imitates Miss Schneider.)

I've got a pupil in my class, Penny martindale her name is. Now unfortunately, I did'nt get her very early because she was in an orphanage until she was ten years of age. Well she is a bit of a rebel. She won't listen to anything you say. She starts off, seemingly, quite interested in what is going on in class. Then goes off into a dream somewhere else. So I was a bit of a dreamer. She's quite good at art. Hopeless at arithmetic. Hopeless at English. She can't spell and I don't think that she ever will. She likes art. You've seen some of her drawings' on the wall. I think she wants to go in the theatre. She is such a dreamer. She is always dreaming about dancing and singing. I know by the stories she tells me, about little shows she does at her sister's. I don't quite know what is going to happen to Penny, but good luck to her anyway.

Pam. "Marjory. You be your teacher and talk about young Marjory to us."

Marjory. "Well there was only one teacher, at my school, that had really any sympathy with anything that I might be likely to be interested in. I was interested in the English and all that side of things. I cooperated fully and completely in all the sport. I was in the netball team and very, very good at gym and that sort of thing. I think that I used to get onto the wrong side of the gym mistress because I think, she used to think that I was inclined to show off, which I probably was. I was my....."

Pam. "Now we want you to stop talking about you, except as your teacher would have done. Can you try and tell us about Marjory, as though you was the teacher who you think was interested in you. Just try."

Marjory. "Yes, well. I think she'd have realised that I was interested in other things, besides those which I was at school for. That I was trying to conform all the time and I was very anxious not to do anything wrong, because I didn't really want it to be known, what, because I was being trained outside of school."

Pam. "Right. I see. You had another life."

Marjory. "Yes. I did."

Pam. "O.k. Fine."

Marjory. "I think that was the only one at school. The headmistress, if she had known, would have been very, and was in the end, very much adverse."

Pam. "Really."

Marjory. "Yes."

Pam. "O.k. Thankyou. O.k. Flo."

Flo. "Well my last teacher at school, when I left at fourteen, was a Mrs Fisher. Who always wore twin sets. I can always remember. The jumper and cardigan was always identical. She didn't seem to be interested in any children, except she always had a teacher's pet. I think Miss Lancaster, the year before, might have said some nice things about me."

Pam. "Lets hear some of it."

Flo. "She always had grey hair with a bun. She would always do pieces that she was forever putting back, y'know, it was always hanging down. (imitating Miss Lancaster)

Now Lilly, as I was known, Lilly is a very hard working girl. She has been top, well almost top of the class, in maths and English. She has a most excellent memory for.....If you ask her write a poem exactly as it is written in the book, she would put in the dots, the commas, the exclamation marks. Everything. I think having such a good memory, helps her to learn very, very quickly. The only thing wrong with that young lady, that young girl, is the fact that she never talks talking. She is always being told off by me and the other teacher's, for talking in class. Therefore, I don't think she has ever got ten conduct marks by the end

of the week, because she loses them for talking. Not because she wants to know the answers from someone else, because she is very quick at learning, but she does tend to talk to somebody else in class about things that are nothing to do with school.”

Pam. “lovely. Thanks. Tom.”

Tom. “Well. I went to school when I was five and that was the only time that I had a single teacher. After that it was Mr Kennedy for history and geography and, a Mr Morris for maths and this sort of thing. Now, Mr Morris once accused me of working to the Irish binomial theorem. Which since two is nearly four, let’s call it three or since two is nearly three lets, call it four. What else did people say about me? Lots of things but I can’t remember, I’m afraid.”

Pam. “We’re trying to form a picture of you, at the point when you left school. That’s the object of this exercise. The object of this exercise is not really to know about your teacher’s. It’s to know about you and how you think that you were perceived by your teacher’s. What we have been learning about people, is not really about their teacher’s, we’ve been learning about you. So I’m not really concerned whether you had Mr Morris or Mr whatever. I’m just trying to get you into a situation, where you can remember what you were like, from somebody else’s point of view. So I will give you a bit longer to think about that and we’ll come back to you. Right. So let’s try, Hilda. I realise that I have set you a really difficult exercise, but, I do have a good reason for it.

Hilda. “My name is Mrs Richard. Sorry Mrs Richards. I take a top class, and I’ve got a girl in my class called Hilda. Now she is not a very nice looking girl. She doesn’t wear very nice clothes. I gather that she is from London anyway and these old evacuee’s. Well that’s how it is. Well, we had PT the other morning and she couldn’t even do leapfrog. We had four teams in the class, one of the girls was a team leader and you all had to go, like a relay, one over the other. Hilda was the only one there, who stood there and wouldn’t jump over the other girl. So I sent Gene, the team leader, out in the field with Hilda and I made her stay there for two hours’. Until she come in and she’d done it. Another thing. With her needle work. She was making a baby’s peticoat. Now her work was so bad that I threw it in the waste paper bin. But on the other hand Hilda was very good at composition, what you call essays, very good at English, top in fact

There was a best book in the hole, where somebody in the school would write their composition for that week, and Hilda's stories were always in the best book, kept in the hole in the cupboard."

Pam. "And what do you think is going to become of Hilda in later life?"

Hilda. "Well, I would say, that she is going back to London, which she did. She left school left school straight away, this was in the middle of the war and went straight back to London. We really washed our hands of her and we wo'nt see her any more. I Think that we are really not all that bothered because she wo'nt be here anyway."

Pam. "Do you think that she will come to any good?"

Hilda. "Yes she was never in trouble at school. She never got smacked; she never go the caine; she was never in any bother at all. Only for talking and being silly at the Back of the class. She was always being silly with this girl, her friend."

Pam. "Which was that girl?"

Hilda. "Molly. Molly Williams."

Pam. "Another Londoner!"

Hilda. "No a Devon girl. There was quite a few evacuee's in the class with her. So a lot of them went back."

Pam. "And did she ever think about what she wanted to do. What her ambitions were?"

Hilda. "Well Hilda loved plays'. Now she did pick all the plays, and we used to perform to an audience, christmas plays'. Hilda wanted to be an actress and go on the stage. She was in the school choir. She went to practice in the evening, and I was always picked for plays and the choir. Starring part in the plays actually, all the time. Hilda was an ordinary girl, I'd say. That's about it."

Pam. "Thanks Hilda. Fine. Now it's Annie."

Anne. "I went to Leicester at fourteen. My teacher's name was Madam Delhi. She was French. She was a very nice teacher, and I was sorry to leave, because she was so nice."

Pam. "So what would she say about you. You be Madam delhi."

Anne. "Well. She used to say that I was quite good at work."

Pam. "What she'd say is Anne is quite good at work."

Anne. "Anne is quite good at work and is a very good speller. She used to be very good at geography."

Pam. "Did she say about your personality. How you were with the other girls in the class?"

Anne. "She always used to say that I was very good. Very nice and clean. Oh I am lost."

Pam. "Alright. O.k That's fine. Um Eileen. Tell us about Eileen."

Eileen. "The headmaster is talking to Mrs Murray. I've got a girl in my class. I don't know what is going to become of her. She is thoroughly spoilt and she is never, ever on time for school. Her mother keeps her away. I am sure that there is nothing wrong with the child, because she is as fat as butter, But I think that she is an only child and she is spoilt. She is not very good at anything. Oh yes she is, she is good at religion. Well she will have to do better than that unless she is going to work in a monastery or something like that. In a nunnery. She is good at sports'. In fact she is rather good at swimming and she is going in for the gala this year. That is if her mother will let her go. She is overdressed. I mean, for the rest of the school. She comes as though she is going to a party every day. All these fancy clothes. Well I feel sorry for her really. I expect that she will leave school at fourteen, maybe even before. I don't know where she will end up. She has got my sympathy really.

Elizabeth "My name is Miss Score. Elizabeth is very attentive. Particularly if it is anything to do with art; gym; dancing; embroidery but when it comes to maths or geography, she is hopeless. She goes onto to cloud nine and she is just not interested. So I feel that we should take her in hand and see that she has some private tuition, because she tells me that she wants to stay on at school until she is sixteen. If she stays the way she is, I'm afraid, that I shall be ashamed of her to leave school, the way she is.

Pam. "Tom. Shall we give you another go."

Tom. "I'm not going to be able to do this. I left school when I was sixteen, with a focus in mind to join the Air Force, and I did. I then spent another four years under training with the Air force. I then became an N.C.O. Private....."

Unknown. "But you have got to be the teacher !"

(Previous interview concluded. Enter the final part of another interview.)

Joan. ".....just a little bit apprehensive; I'm very sad; just a little bit excited; the unknown; be nice to have some money but what am I going to, I don't know. Just looking forward, in one way, but very sad, in another!"

Interviewer. "Lovely. Thankyou. Olive."

Olive. "Well very much, as Joan just said, sad in one respect but looking forward to something new.

Hopefully it will be better. Wondering if I shall keep in contact with my friend's."

Pam. "Thankyou. Eileen."

Eileen. "I could'nt wait to leave school. In fact I left when I was, not even fourteen. The end of the term was at christmas. I just had my fourteenth birthday and I did,nt go back. No leaving certificate or nothing because, my mother said that she could get me a good job and I did'nt need a leaving certificate. So I got away as quick as I could."

Pam. "Not too bothered really. Right Joyce."

Joyce. "Do'nt know, really. I just do'nt know. I wanna work with my friend's in London, but I do'nt know if my mum will let me go. She might not let go. So I do'nt know really."

Pam. "Right. Quite right. Kitty."

Kitty. "I'm very sad that I'm leaving school because I really love it. I'm going to miss all my friend's and the teacher's. I feel secure. I am looking forward to going to work but at the back of my mind is leaving school. Which I do'nt want to do."

Pam. "Fine. Liz."

Elizabeth. "I feel that I have and inferiority complex. I feel terribly lonely; I'm going to miss everyone; I'm going to a different area and I feel completely lost."

Pam. "So you do'nt want to go. You do'nt want to go at all."

Elizabeth. "I do'nt want to go."

Pam. "Right. Penny."

Penny. "Very pleased to be leaving school, as I did'nt like it here anyway. I can't wait to go."

Pam. "Marjory."

Marjory. "I am sad in a way. I had one life long friend , in the end. Well, I did'nt know that she was going to be life long then. I was looking forward so much ,o be able to do what I wanted to do , outside of school."

Pam. "Good lovely. Hilda."

Hilda. "I was very excited. I knew that once I left school , I could go back to London. My mother came the following week. It was very wicked of me, because a lady that I lived with all this time, saw us off at the station, and cried 'take me with thee, take me thee'. I just looked at her and got on the train. I never took a blind bit of notice of her. That was awful. I was so excited to get back to everybody."

Pam. "Oh. Ok. Barbara."

Barbara. "My first reaction was YES!! because I was really looking forward to a new life. I was, however, very sad and had a sad fairwell with my best friend, Natalie Sherrit. I really did miss her."

Pam. "Lovely. Ok. Anne."

Anne. "I thought that I was going to miss school. I did'nt really because I was looking forward to the printing job that I was going to do. My uncle and aunt had already worked in the print and they spoke about it being very interesting. So I was looking forward to going."

Pam. "Lovely. Lil."

Lil. "Well. I think,at the time,I did'nt really want to leave school because it was I mean I'd been doing it since I was three and I always wanted to go on learning. I knew then, that when Friday came, I would have to go. On the following Monday, I would have to start work in a factory. I think that I was really terrified as I did'nt really know what to expect. It was a grown up world. I think, that what I was going to miss more than anything, was my friend Georgina. She was a year younger than me and it meant that I would be earning money and she would still be at school. I have to say that we are still friend's after all those years."

Pam. "Right. Lovely. I just want to take one more photograph. Then I want you to stay very still after this because I want to go straight to You remember the moment we did last week, when you closed the door, and left the house. So I just want to go straight from.... You'll just have to improvise this Lis because you were'nt here. So my idea is this, that we do the photograph. It is very much like a school

photograph with people either smiling, or people going,there is always someone thinking 'oh. I'm not going to smile.' So you do the photograph.”

Unknown. “No. I'm smiling.”

Pam. “And then It's... Most people probably smile. Then hold very still, until Hero takes the picture. When I clap, You go straight into the sequence we did last week. You remember the sequence of 'by mum. I will be alright.' With all the traffic noises, all over London, making your way to work. Do you remember what we did? Everybody did it. The whole sequence through. Just to finish, alright. So you go from the school photograph and imagine that you have just said. This is like the final school photograph.

in a minute Hero, when I say. So it is very still and very much in a pose position . Y'know how it is and what would be seen on those long roles. Move in a bit Joan. Make sure that you can all be seen because the photographer will be saying 'I can't see you'. Then on a clap. That is the signal for you all to start that scene we did last week. I will just put the chairs back. So you're going to get to work using whatever transport you had. You leave home. You make your own journey, if you remember, completely independently. You didn't talk to anybody except the people in your imagination, like Doreen and the people that you met on the way. So that is what we do o.k . So. Ready? Very, very still and”

Hero. “O.k . Cheers.”

(CLAP)

Sound of crowd talking on a bus. People impersonating bells and whistles.