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Speaker 1: [00:00:00](#) What's your name? HETI born. What year were you born? In? 15th of February. 1931 where were you born? In white chapel in London. What did you parents do for a living? My mother was a milliner and my father was at what they call a commercial traveler. He would travel around the country getting, selling hats, buying them or, or other businesses that he could help with. Describe what your local area was like for you as a child. Before the war started? Well, we'd lived in various places, but just before the war for about a year or so before the war, we'd moved into, well, the part of the West end now you'd know coven garden, but right. The other end of Cochran garden, the beginning of a very famous street called Shaftsbury Avenue where all the theaters are in London, but right. The other end of it, we lived there, so it was a walk away from carbon garden from quite a little bit poor end of the London, but it was London. It's wonderful. How did you and your family feel when war was declared?

Speaker 1: [00:01:10](#) Well, I was eight years old and was declared and I, I'm not too sure of the dates, but I think I was sent away a day before or a couple of days before. Um, I'd heard my brothers were older than me and we knew that I could hear conversations, but I was a child and I was protected from everything. But I did know and hear what was going on and I knew my mother was very frightened and very worried, terribly upset for my brothers. One was, was 18 and one was 17, and as the day was declared, the war was declared. They volunteered immediately. I have got a photograph of my two brothers and through my school, um, obviously she knew all about trying to get me to get away, but my mother tried to get me to America, my mother's fare family or in America. She had three sisters living there and I had been through all the papers.

Speaker 1: [00:02:06](#) We had the books, we had everything for me to go on a boat to America under the auspices of the red cross and I failed. I'm weed. My mother lost a few homes during the war and we've lost all our papers. But um, well fortunately or unfortunately, fortunately for me, the night I, we had to go to a big London hotel. I had a cold and as I'd recently had a very bad illness diptheria, which is not known today because I had this cold, they wouldn't take me and they said, wait for the next boat, but that boat I should have been on was bombed. It's on, it's on the television. Many times. All the people that were on it died. All the children that were on it died and so my life was saved from that respect. But then of course, mommy had the talents to send me with my school, which was st Joe's in the fields. It's still

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there. The school is not there. It's now why MCA center, but the churches, that's a very, very old part of London, a very old church. I've been over at MIT since I'd been away and we went away from there. My mother had to send me away. She must've been devastated because her two sons were going into war and her Bay is very much precious child to be sent away to strangers. What was it like to live in London?

Speaker 1: [00:03:29](#) I came back many times because mommy didn't want me to be away and every time there was a lull in the bombing or nothing happened for the first few months or weeks. So I always said my education was on a piece of elastic. I was backwards and forwards, backwards and forwards. But when the bombing started, it was terrifying. It was absolutely terrifying. But all the stations you went in the underground stations, but I remember running through the streets with my mother, seeing the bombers come over and sing. Bombs come out of planes now you had all these barrage balloons, you know these enormous balloons that were on enormous wires. So the planes couldn't get too low. They would get caught in the wire, they were all over London and we would just run to the underground stations or wherever the RA, the gentleman who had telling you where to go underground.

Speaker 1: [00:04:23](#) And at one stage of the war we were sleeping in Piccadilly circus because of my stepfather. My mother had remarried at that stage, said that was the deepest underground station in London, which it was. And we had bunks in the station down there. So when I did come home, if there was a little lull, but we still had to sleep in the stations overnight because one didn't know what was happening. And it was terrifying. And as a child I was surrounded with love and he never would tell me stories and read me books were great book readers. My stepfather was a newspaper gentleman and um, uh, he told me the most wonderful stories and you weren't frightened cause you were with your family. But when the bombs fell in, it was now it was frightening because flakes would fall down. We didn't have anything in the house.

Speaker 1: [00:05:10](#) We lived in a flat when world breakout. But when I used to come back, move slightly out of London into the suburbs, not too far. And, uh, well we still went to the underground every, every night. My mother would go with a suitcase and if my father worked, a stepfather worked all night, he'd pick her up in the morning or the trains would start coming through Harper's five, six o'clock in the morning. You woke up and everybody

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went back to work. But it was, I still remember seeing these bombs in the search lights that were terrifying. Yes. I had a cousin, we're all very musical and she used to go round. She was much older than me, all the underground stations with an accordion and play to everybody and get them to sing. She was a really Sten girl. And, uh, she, she ran, she went to the family and American took it with, and then to take it out there, but everybody had to handle life in their own way.

Speaker 1: [00:06:04](#) She was happy doing that. My mother had obviously sought to me, made sure I was looked after and into the underground. We went. What did you parents do during, uh, my, my, I had a stepfather that day and he worked on the newspapers and he wouldn't leave London. My mother was a housewife, but she would sew and knit and cook. She was a wonderful, um, uh, cook and she could make anything from anything. She'd just walk into the garden and know what nature was growing. You had to dig up your garden. Everything. We had no lawn and we grew everything. Uh, but my mother also grew sunflowers. Now my mother originally had come from Romania, uh, from a farming country girl and she grew these enormous, you know, you see some flowers in the shops, but she would grow them this big, I swear to you.

Speaker 1: [00:07:01](#) And at one stage when I was home, the ARP who's to come around and make sure you had blackout curtains on your windows, that no lights would show because the planes would see spotter planes would go round to make sure that nothing was showing. And we had one of the gentlemen come to our house knocking at the door and she had to cut down the sunflowers. Cause when the moon was out, they were such big faces, they're not little ones like you see in the shops now, big faces that they would reflect the sunlight or the Moonlight, I mean, but she would take the sunflower seeds, which you eat, which are mostly good for you. And she would also use dye from the petals to die, all sorts of things to make clothes. And she was a great knitter. So she was always knitting for the forces for the army.

Speaker 1: [00:07:46](#) But whoever needed help, that was part of our lives. That's something we've always done. What did your father do, Jerry? Well, it's, I had a stepfather and he was a newspaper man and he worked on the London, very big London newspaper. And he was also working on, um, uh, he had to be the ARP man to help put out fires. And um, that's what he did. He, he couldn't go into the wall. He had very, very bad eyesight, but he reported and

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wrote stories for his newspaper. And we used to have in our house many, many reporters coming from overseas. Uh, which he would entertain and see too. And talk about and discuss the war and things like that. How did your family prepare?

Speaker 1: [00:08:33](#) Well, you were all told to black out your windows and you had sort of an enormous sticky tape that would go over every window and then blackout curtains, the black curtain thing. So no light would show for any airplanes coming over. That's how they would see towns and also to prepare and store as much food as you could tin stuff. Um, but we never had anything like you have. And of course there was rationing. Uh, so you didn't have that much food. You grew your own. Everybody grew. There was no such thing as front gardens or back Gardens you just duck it all up. But it was beautiful. Uh, my stepfather was a very good gardener and he would always put a few flowers in between vegetables, whatever was growing. There's was always, but flowers you could eat. I mean, there's so much of stuff that of wildflowers, ordinary flowers that you can have pedals and make it pretty. And I said, my mother knew an awful lot about what would grow in the soil. And, um, that's what you had to do. We, you know, we, we had no, we couldn't keep chickens or anything like that, but people who did could, uh, so many people did. You did the best you could, but you had to get your rations and it was a very small [inaudible].

Speaker 1: [00:09:48](#) In what ways did your life change when war broke out? Well, I was torn apart from my family. Um, I don't have very many bad memories, I have to say. And I think this is because nature takes you over. And I, I have good temperament. I'm not a miserable person. I've always been a good temper. My mother said to me, you'd be a good girl. Do as you're told, and be nice to the pit. You know, you've got to be a good girl. And which I was, I was not a naughty girl. We got with friends, you climb trees and did all the things, you know, in all that I'll do to do today. But in work you did as you were told. Um, and I have, I don't remember any fear. I must've had fear. I'm sure I did. To hold a stranger's hand or to go on a train.

Speaker 1: [00:10:39](#) I didn't know where I was going and to see my mother in tears when I had to leave for, we had a bus and then went to a train station. I'm not sure which a train station it was and thousands of people and children being put onto trains. Some of them crying, some of them a good, we were with our school and school friends and teachers, so we knew them. And um, it was only when mommy brought me back and then I had to go back

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again. That I think I really felt sad because I wasn't living the life that I knew in London. A completely different, completely different in the middle of the country and a little village, which was little in those days, very, I don't remember any badness with the people. They were so kind and to, I've, you know, for somebody to open up the home to two children, it's just myself and a friend and one of the girls that we were left on the station and we were taken together.

Speaker 1: [00:11:37](#) I stayed with it. Had a little Chinese girl stay with me. We were together, but we had to sleep in the same bed and we had to go up in the attic at night. No, inside toilet. We never had such a thing as phones or anything like that. No such thing. And we had to, to school, uh, all talk. There was no, nobody had cars. There was no phones. There's nothing. If you went to a telephone, it was out in the street or somebody would allow you somewhere in a big house to come in and use their phone. Um, I don't remember being frightened. I that I have no memories of, but people were very, very kind. I never met any bad shit, but I was away. And I stayed with people who were very, um, religious and I'm not of their religion. I'm Jewish and I had to go to church three times a day.

Speaker 1: [00:12:32](#) Uh, which was not a problem. I enjoyed it. I loved it. It was a bit hard when the sun was shining and you still had to go three times a day. But I was in a church school. That's the school I went away with and we used to go to mom's Brie cathedral and I sang with all the school. I was always in school choirs and I loved it and I enjoyed all that and I've loved it. To this day it's given me such a good look into everybody's religions and life. Um, I didn't know. I've no different to anybody else and I wasn't treated any differently, which I'm very happy to say, but my mother was obviously very worried for me and nervous, but I managed. How did the food shortages affect ah, uh, we were never hungry that I have to say, and the people I lived with, I'd never hadn't lived in the country. I know I knew all about the country, but I never lived in the country. And then all of a sudden backdoor would come poachers, they'd been out and catching Rabbits with the people in the house by the rabbit and skin them in front of you.

Speaker 1: [00:13:43](#) It was a little bit shocked. I even now never seen that happen, but that was part of life. You. It was a wild animal and they shot the animals and you let them. I always knew we had food. Um, I was never a good eater as the young youngster. So probably it never bothered me too much. I've never eaten rabbits since, let

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me tell you. But whatever, we always had a meal. We always had breakfast. We always went to school with the breakfast. Uh, whatever we needed. There was always an egg because you were in the country and the local farmers would have whatever they could spare. We had plenty of milk, but of course you had very, very little butter, very little sugar. In fact, my mother used to send down any sugar ration that she could, or anybody that came down to us, so we could have a little bit of sugar.

Speaker 1: [00:14:34](#) But when you made a cake, it had eggs that were dried. You never had a proper egg in the shell. You had them in a tin. It was from America. They still sell it and the health stores. And it was very interesting. And I think this is why we would live such a long age because we never had or we never knew what CRISPR, what, what question. Never heard of them. No such thing. When we got on the train to go away to the country, every child was given a carrier bag with like emergency rations into the family. We were going to, and I know there was corn beef, I don't remember much else, but the thing I do remember was a very large slab of chocolate, big slab of chocolate. And when, when we've finally settled in the morning, they would break off one little sweet and you have to last you till he got to school.

Speaker 1: [00:15:24](#) And that was all the chocolate we had. And I only time I remember having sweets, uh, it was when my mother came down, she was still get the rash, sweet ration, fought for whatever was going on. She could save it for me. But my brothers used to come down on a Saturday night when they left work, they would cycle. It's gotta be a four hour journey, easy on a cycle. That alone in the car. And I don't remember sleeping in the house, but they would come to see me and bring all the little bits and pieces to have. I've got a couple of photographs. We were out in the country and then on the Sunday they would have to mope to cycle all the way back to London to be at work for Monday morning. That was a break for them. They did that as long till they were called up. Tell us about any experiences of blooming. Oh,

Speaker 1: [00:16:20](#) when I used to come back to London, I say my stepfather was a newspaper gentleman and when there was no not much going on during the day and perhaps it was a bit quieter, he would have to go and he would walk looking for stories to write editorials for the paper, but I always went with and he would take me into London specially. He specialized in London and we would walk London and he'd sit on, I still remember to this day sitting on the gravestones in the back of some Pauls. He would

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read Latin and he would interpret the stories of London, of how we went through. And then we'd walk through some of the bombing areas and he'd, you know, just to get stories and talk to people. Um, but it made it light for me. But I learned such a lot of history and I learned about the old history of London.

Speaker 1: [00:17:11](#) This was a terrible new way of war, but what was, had been fought all the time. But this was a new way of war and he made it as my mother did. It was just part of life. You were with them. I was cuddled. I had great love, um, that this, I remember all my life, tremendous amount of love and warmth from my brothers as well who do, who looked after me. I was the youngest, I was the baby and I was terribly sport. I was a spotlit and brat. And, um, I don't remember fear even when we were running and mommy's pulling me along and I could see the bombs coming. She's screaming at me, you know, to come with dragging me along. All I wanted to see was what was going on. It was exciting for me, but when I was away, um, [inaudible] evacuated and we, I was with one other little girl in from my school, but when we had to go to bed at night and we went up into the attic, it was bitterly cold, no heat.

Speaker 1: [00:18:07](#) And we had no such thing as central heating. The main one fire was in the main room. You came off the street into this kitchen scullery place and that was the room. And then you went through a cupboard up to in another room on one floor and then up the top floor. And we slept on the top. And when we woke up in the morning, especially in the winter, there was ice on the inside of the windows. We'd got undressed in bed and we got dressed in bed as well. How are we ever washed? I do not know. We had to bath once a week with a metal bath and they would pour hot water. Hot will come off the great and that would be put into the water. My friend and I used to bath together. I don't remember the rest of the family ever had a ball and I had very thick black wired hair and it was horrendous because they could can comb my hair. My mother used to comb my hair with a dog scope and I don't think they'd seen hair like mine before. It's very different today. But that's how I was as a young girl and I'm, that little girl I was with was the Chinese girl.

Speaker 2: [00:19:09](#) I'm just going to, sorry.

Speaker 1: [00:19:19](#) Yeah, of course. That's fine. And I don't think anybody had ever seen a Chinese girl. Not terrible. I've got a picture of her here. Uh, she, her father drove the horses for what is beer? Do you remember the old coach? Have you seen pictures of the old

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coaches? The old open top traders that used to take barrels of beer and they had these enormous beautiful Dre horses. What, how far the drove the from the bear waters. It's still going. Um, and it was opposite the school and we ended up together and we went to school together and did everything. We lived together for a couple of years. Yes, quite a few years.

Speaker 2: [00:19:59](#) How did you feel when you first found out you were going to be evacuated?

Speaker 1: [00:20:06](#) I was told I was going away on holiday. Mommy just said to me, you're going to stay with some nice people who will look after you and be a good girl. I mean, that's all I was told really. It was only when I actually got on the coach and I knew my mother was crying of course, but it says what all other Buster, it makes me very emotional or you're young. You really don't know. We'd never knew as much as you do today. Really. We were very innocent children. We hadn't got, we've just surrounded with your family and that's, we had no phones. You didn't have mobile. There was nothing like that. Didn't have phones going all the time or anything. You played, you were with your family and we were a close family every weekend. Mommy was always working, but we'd have to go to my aunt with my brothers would take me and mommy would come after work and we'd go to my aunt.

Speaker 1: [00:20:54](#) Who lived in the East end with her family and have dinner or be together and talk together. And I really wasn't aware. I knew it was going to be rather bad and mommy was very upset about it. But I was to be a good girl and people would look after me and they did. So I wasn't really aware. I can't say I had any bad, real bad. And I went to very many places after being there for a little while when the, when the long distance bombing started, when the doodlebugs, when there was no met people, you know, these bombs were sent cross. My mother sent me up to Birmingham thinking they weren't going to reach there. They thought just London. But of course they did come up to Birmingham and I was sent to a school up there and I was the only ref only, um, evacuee at that time to arrive. And they really didn't know what to do with me. And, um, but they've been very kind. And I went to a family of a relative of my stepfather who looked after me for awhile. But when my mother realized these bombs were, could go anywhere, she brought me back to London. She, if we're going to die, we're going to be together. That I remember. How did you feel when your parents should goodbye?

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- Speaker 1: [00:22:11](#) Well, as I've said before, um, I'm just going on a holiday and I was going to a lovely countryside and to, to be good. I don't say my mother was obviously devastated, but it really didn't hit me that I was going to be away for any length of time and I was going into the countryside, which I did well. My mother had packed my case, of course, and I think I remember there's three of everything all labeled beautifully done and labeled. I must've had a toy of some sort, but I don't remember. I was never a cuddly Dolly person, so I'm sure I must have had knitted things that my mother would always knit for me. I suffered very much with chilblains in those years as the youngster and mommy would need thick socks and six loves and hats. In fact, in one of the pictures I can see, she sent me new gloves and a big hats of where Barry to be keep warm and be warm cause you knew it wasn't very warm down there.
- Speaker 1: [00:23:23](#) Um, I don't remember very much, but what I do remember the house we went to the first house we stayed in for a few weeks before we went onto the village. Uh, we were sitting on a big wooden table. It was a bigger house, quite a nice house. And the lady was on the telephone. Uh, two somebody had phoned, she had a phone in the house so they were quite well off at that stage. But my friend was on one side of the table, big wooden kitchen table and I was on the other, uh, cases were open and the lady was taking to her neighbor. She didn't believe how clean we were and how wonderful our clothes were. Spotlessly clean. She kept on repeating how clean because we'd come from London, they expected us to be dirty little urchins. They didn't realize that even though she came, they lived above the, uh, what is bare place.
- Speaker 1: [00:24:18](#) And I lived in big flats. A mommy had lodges in every room to look after because that's the way she could earn a living. But we were clean and we were washed and our hair was clean and we didn't have nits. We had a nitty Nora who used to come around the school and they could never put a comb through my hair anyway, but we were clean and I'd never forgotten it since this day. The woman was so amazed that our clothes were perfect and we were so clean. I'm sure mommy would have put a few little bits and pieces for whoever would see us there that I would have known she would have done. But personally, apart from books, I was great reader or was great reader that I knew I would have mostly Charles tickets. Well, my bedroom, I didn't have bedroom of my own, but in a nice, comfortable bed. Uh,

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Speaker 1: [00:25:17](#) and warmth. I'd never been so cold in all my life. To this day, I can't bear to be cold. Um, yes, you, when you have a fire in the house, a live fire with coal, do you ever seek coal? If you ever touch cold, black, dirty and the whole house got blackened dirty. Um, though there were clean, everybody was scrubbing and cleaning and washing all the time. Um, everything would get tainted somehow. And I don't know what heating mommy had in the flat, but we never had, I don't remember a cold fire, but we were warm. But after those flats retain heat, but she cooked a lot. She was a great cook. My mother could make food from anything. And um, it was the warmth,

Speaker 1: [00:26:08](#) a long train journey, a long train journey. And as one settled down and got over the excitement of going that I remember very much a lot of children started crying. I do remember the teachers, they must've been as upset as everybody was. They had to come with us and take us. And it seemed to be, it went on forever because when we did arrive at the station, we were going to the Zodiac, like a station to shop house and a platform. There's nothing else there. We could have been in the middle of the desert. There was nothing else there. And these hundreds of spelt off, I'm filled the complete area and families were coming in and taking children or names from being called. But the journey itself, it got very sad at the end because we suddenly realized we were traveling along that I remember at the very last minute thinking, Oh, it was getting down and mommy was going to be there. Where will we go and what we doing. But I didn't cry. I didn't cry. I was told to be a good girl. I didn't cry. And

Speaker 1: [00:27:17](#) it got very difficult for me actually. How I never cried. I don't know, because every, all the children went and there was only two or three of us left on the platform. Might maybe in one my Chinese friend, another and another little boy who was collected. But a cow drew in very late and took my friends to this lovely house that we went to stay in a, whether we look different, cause we were dark, I was dark and she was Chinese. [inaudible] and I say we, that's, that's when we realized we weren't going to be at home and mommy and daddy weren't coming.

Speaker 2: [00:27:52](#) Who you evacuated with?

Speaker 1: [00:27:55](#) Well, my school, as I said, which is called st jars in the field, uh, in S I don't quite know what the address is anymore. I think of it as the back of common garden. It's not so ho. So he was further

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down. Uh, it was the end of [inaudible] Avenue. But the, eh, the building is still there and the church is still there. The [inaudible] very, very old church. St Charles in the field. And we went with this school. They didn't tell our school all the children that would, the parents were allowed to go. That's how I went.

Speaker 2: [00:28:25](#) Does it tell us about the place you were evacuated to?

Speaker 1: [00:28:30](#) Wow. Uh, when you look at the films of Charles Dickens, that's like the little village we went to, not to cobblestone houses or little, it was all back to back housing. One street with a horse and cobs used to go down. And as children we had to go out with a shovel and pick up the mess from the horses, which I'd never done in my life. I'd never seen because that went on the garden. I mean that's Manila. We were horrified to do that. But the little house you went into, I mean today there would be much salt after you came off the main road into the kitchen scullery type of thing. I think there was a little room at the back and then you went out to the back. We had the garden and the tea and the privy. The toilet. There was no inside toilet, no bathroom.

Speaker 1: [00:29:20](#) We were lucky. We had running water. A lot of the houses didn't, but this particular road did. It had water and we had to go out, say from here to that porch over there. That's where we had to walk at night to go to the toilet. If you wanted to go out in the middle of the night, God help you. But we had torches, but we weren't allowed to them because of the planes. But you didn't go out in the middle of the night? I mean there was no, it's just impossible. So what you, especially as two little girls, you had a pot under the bed. If you hear anybody talking about Zanda when it goes under the bed, you see. And that was um, that's what happened then. And then we take it down in the morning and emptied in the, tore that down the road, down the garden. What were your first impressions?

Speaker 1: [00:30:13](#) My first impressions? Well, I'd gone for another planet actually. I'd left London, very busy. London part of the theater world. My mother loved the theaters, my stepfather's very concerned, connected with it actually. And I used to go to dancing school and I went to ballet school and all that sort of thing. And then my brothers did as well. We all learned music and suddenly to come to this little sleepy village with nothing going, nothing. And it was getting dark. It was autumn and there was fields all the way round. I mean, there was no, no life, there was nothing. But in this they had a market square and once a week was a,

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was a real live food, livestock market. That was our fun because our school was there and something always got out. There was always a sheep to be traced or a cow when the cows come in, we all ran because if we wonder, those got out, we got a bit nervous and they were bigger than us and the chickens came.

Speaker 1: [00:31:10](#) You know, sometimes they'd get out. That was a lot of fun. But for the first few weeks it was very, very hard. I remember then feeling, cause I had nobody to read stories to me. And um, we read an awful lot. We had a lot of books. Uh, I read it was always reading but nobody to read to me. And I found that very hard because there was, they were lovely people. They were kind and we had food and we were warm and sheltered. And I think for family to open up their home to complete strange children, one, a Chinese girl and one looking like me. Um, I think it's amazing. I think people were just amazing, but they, if they did, they opened their homes to you and we will be forever grateful for them really. So as time went on, we learned because the school were teachers that we had to do this every Sunday.

Speaker 1: [00:32:05](#) We went to church, but when the farmers were doing the harvesting, the boys who were strong enough had to go and help the farmers as young as the young girls. We had to go in the woods and pick up acorns and help to pick up all the things the farmer would want to feed his, his flock to feed his cattle on the extra food that they needed. I remember doing all that, but we'd roam and we had all the fields. It was wonderful. I learned so much about the country and I haven't. Great. I don't want to live in the heart of the country. I do like the townie bit, but I have a great love and a great affection for the countryside and the life that was there. It's very sad that so much has gone today. How did it feel waiting for your new foster?

Speaker 1: [00:32:50](#) Very frightening. That was a little bit nerve wracking because we didn't know where we were going and as I say, we were left. Nobody wanted us. We were just left on the set, on the platform that I can remember very badly, very vividly and people talking and not quite knowing who was going to take us. And this gentleman arriving, I later learned he was who's on the council and he got in late and he should have come a bit earlier and we were the only two girls left. So he just took us and they were very kind but we couldn't stay there for very long. I believe the lady wasn't well but would take it took us, it was fine until they found us another home in the village itself. Cause this was

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quite a way outside the village. How different was the place you came from?

Speaker 1: [00:33:35](#) Oh, completely different. Completely different. I'd come from a block of flats, uh, with porters downstairs. They used to look, the porters used to look after me when I came from school cause mother was working and I mean I was alive. I was in London, I mean the, the metropolis of the world. I had a very full and interesting life and even when we had to stay at school or, or play in the church out in the summer months till somebody could pick us up, often I had to wait for my brothers to come from their schools or I'll work of business and then suddenly you go to a countryside where there's no sound. You heard the birds and there's horses and there's chickens and there's geese and there's things outside, but there's nothing, there's nothing there. It's a little high street which went into a square. There was churches and you heard the church bells on Sunday, which you didn't hear in the center of London.

Speaker 1: [00:34:33](#) Not very often unless you lived near something that was actually going on. But life I'd come from metropolis. It was a life. It was busy. You could open a window at two o'clock in the morning and hear traffic where I lived, it was a very busy part of London. You went there. Nobody was up at two o'clock in the morning unless it was the postman going to start his day or they're going out to feed the animals. But I didn't hear that cause I wasn't on the farm, but the farms where at the end you had to walk around. It was completely different. It was like night and day. It's it. I, I can't explain it. It was just quiet, but because I slept with another girl and we would giggle or talk to each other at night and you'd had a busy day and you were full and you went to sleep and the people went to sleep and it got dark.

Speaker 1: [00:35:21](#) That's when they went to bed. I didn't stop two one two o'clock in the morning. There's no television. You listen to a radio. I love the radio. That's still my lifeline. And we had children's stories coming on at four o'clock every afternoon or that's when I got home. I remember listening to that. I'd race home from school to want to be home, to listen to the continuation of a book or something that was being read and at school would put on as much as they could to keep us occupied because people had to go to work and there was munitions that had to be made. Salt comes, the women had to go to work as well. Um, and say the gentleman I was with was at the local Baker, so of course he got up very early every morning, had to go off to the bakery shop and he rode a bicycle.

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- Speaker 1: [00:36:06](#) And as I, we got more friendly with them. We got bought to know them. We would go to a certain spot in the village and he'd, we'd come home sitting on his saddle bar on the front of the bicycles. God help you do that today. But he would have to go through the countryside and I'd see the rabbits as it got dark and the Rapids would come out. And I used to say, he, I used to say to him, how do they catch rabbits? And his, his story to me was you had to put salt on their tail. Now can you imagine? And I'm sitting on the handlebar of a bike and I think my friend, one of us would be sitting on the back on the other bar and he'd ride home with these two children I need on for grim death. But it was a completely different world. I mean, now it's like going to the moon. It's, you know, but it was taught me great deal in life, taught me a great deal.
- Speaker 2: [00:36:57](#) Um, how are you
- Speaker 1: [00:37:00](#) by others in your new area? Beautifully, wonderfully. They were so kind. I had, um, a school how many times if people had something left over, they'd bring it to the school, a few cakes or biscuits if they'd been baking, if you could do that. It's very rare, but they were very kind to all of us. I, I don't remember, it wasn't until the Tilbury children from Tilbury dock area, which were a lot rougher than where I thought I'd come from a rough area, but they were very forceful and, um, that there might've been a few problems going on. Children would run away, but we never had any of that because if anybody saw anybody crying, you'd went out and cuddled them. Or the teachers were wonderful. They were just wonderful.
- Speaker 2: [00:37:43](#) Um, what was school like?
- Speaker 1: [00:37:47](#) I was not a very good scholar, but it was school. You'd have to sit down and you had paper and pencils or whatever you had and you had to do. I was always excelled at cookery, at sewing, singing, reading. Um, I had two very brilliant brothers who won every scholarship they're gonna ever go into, but they wouldn't put me in for one. I would never have got them, but I was, I could do cooking and I could repair. Um, but the teachers weren't. We ha we were quite close, quite tight in the classrooms. A lot of children with the local children as well. We weren't split up. Um, I don't know if we were ahead or the same as the young children, but we all got on together and we all played together. I have to say all the children everywhere and everybody came out and played in the street.

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Speaker 1: [00:38:37](#) I mean, you know, if you had to wait to record in for supper or, or see them, it's called [inaudible]. We played in the street unless the host came along. There's no other traffic. Nobody get cars out of bicycles. But even that, but they're few and far between. And because we haven't got many photographs as well. We had no money for cameras or things like that. And, and uh, the film you had to buy the film. My stepfather had a box camera and he was a very good photographer actually. And the three, I've only got three pictures here. I reckon my brother's must've borrowed the camera to bring down. So mommy wanted a picture of me and that's the only pictures I've got.

Speaker 1: [00:39:17](#) Can you tell us some experiences in the country? Well, we had to go to the farms and we had to go and get the milk. We had a churn and metal churn with lid on it and you had to carry it and they would milk the cow straight into the churn. And that's what you had to do. And sometimes you would pitch if under smell. I've never got, I've never got over that smell going into a farm yard. Um, it wasn't as clean and wonderful as they are today. The animals were all well careful, I'm sure. And then we would help to go around and get the aches for the farmers. Uh, depending on who you were, where you weren't, if you were a strong lab, they got you to help and do a few bits, push a bit of machinery around or help with the um, um, w change, dark wood. The fire would have to be collected because we didn't always have cold, so we had to go down to the farms or out into the forests or in the local woods and we'd collect what we had to for, to bring home to, to burn. They would dry it in, in an inside area. So we had fire, otherwise we had no heating.

Speaker 1: [00:40:25](#) I remember all that. Um, I think this is basically what we did because we had to help as much as we could. We had to help with the gardening. I mean, I still remember that had a very long narrow garden. Everybody's house had this long, narrow garden and everybody had to, and when it was fruit picking time, Oh, we had a wonderful time bellyaches by the door. I loved that. It was, I've always enjoyed apples and, but we didn't know the difference between a good Apple and a crab Apple. And a crab Apple was all wild on, boy, can they be sour and could you have a bad tummy upset? But it makes the most wonderful jam or jelly. And that's what you did. You went round when it was time to collect with your buckets, picking the plums and the a and everybody made jam.

Speaker 1: [00:41:12](#) You had to almost do all bottled fruit because that was your only fruit and vege. I'd never seen a banana when my mother

actually came down at one stage, brought me a banana. I thought, where's that? Where did that land from? That could have come from the moon. I had no idea. I'd never eat, never tasted one. I didn't want to. I was horrible. And she, I don't know what she'd done to get that banana, but she bought it for me and I wouldn't look at it. I would touch it. But we have at what grew the plums and the, and the raspberries and the strawberries. Whoever needed somebody to help pick blackberries. So we picked blackberries, they'd call her. What kids are around today, come on, come and help. And you'd go, um, that's mainly the things that we did. And you had to help with washing day.

Speaker 1: [00:41:56](#) Of course, Monday was always washing day. They all mango, we had no washing machines. You had a big tub, but the Dolly Dolly Pasa, it went up and down. It was a big top and they'd had Boulder water and put that in Soper. Can't remember. But we had carbolic soap smell was unbelievable and she used to rub that on everything. And you had a big steak with like a head on it, something like that. But wood with, with legs coming down and you went up and down on your laundry like that. Can you imagine doing that for hours on end and having to rinse it all and then hang it all down in the gardens. If you have it had rained, I don't remember. Oh, you had pulleys in the kitchen. It would drip on your dinner. Big things that would pull up and down in the kitchen ceilings. Let's got married. And if you couldn't, didn't have anything to ring, you had a, a roller and you put your, your sheets or towels and you have to roll with this, that the rollers would close together and squeeze out all the water. And if it was a nice bright sunny day or autumn day that you could actually blow you, then it was marvelous. Um, can you tell us any times you saw communicated with your parents?

Speaker 1: [00:43:14](#) Um, we were in school. We were told to write letters, so of course, which we did, but my mother and my brothers, you say, I told you used to come down until they actually went into the forces, uh, as much as they possibly could to get away from the bombing was one of them. And I believe they slept in the fields because I don't remember them. There was nowhere for them to sleep anyway, but they would have had that sleeping bags like that. Not quite the style they have today, but they were great cyclists, cycling association of great Britain. They cycle all over England so they could cope with it, cope with it very well.

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Speaker 1: [00:43:59](#) That's all right. Donnie, I can't remember the other one. Two, three, four. Yes. I'm sorry, ask me the question again. What was that one? Oh, go on to another one. Go on to another one. Could you tell us about any times you saw communicates with your parents or the parents? Right now, but it was mostly by post. It was always bipolar. There was no other way, but we got post and we had to ride through the school. We were told to write every week, but um, mommy came down as often as she could or there was a loud in the bombing. Next thing I know, I was on a train coming up to London and a traveler on my own had to be under the, um, the guard would look after you and mommy would always be eating. She didn't really obviously want me to be away, so I did come up to London quite a bit.

Speaker 1: [00:44:53](#) Um, but as soon I was only for perhaps a weekend or something like that. And then that's, you'd have to put me on the train back again. Um, but we'd get the communication really was very good. I used to send in the spring, I used to go in the countryside and I still remember to this day a little box full of primroses in on cotton wall. And it arrived the following day in the most perfect condition to my mother. We'd gone out and picked primroses and when my brothers came down, they would, we'd go and pick the bluebells, which unfortunately have hard. They got mostly gone. I hope I wasn't to blame for the natural blue belt. Sorry, Becky path. Um, and let me go back with the bicycles at the back with bluebells hanging on both sides, just from the country. That was rather lovely, but we were in coat and contact all the time.

Speaker 1: [00:45:41](#) I mean, just didn't let go. There was no way. The few children didn't hear very often. But then you see, not everybody could read or write. Um, we were quite different where that was concerned. My mother had wonderful English language. She started it because she was a foreigner in this country. Um, but she was embarrassed to write, but somebody would always writer an envelope. She would write to me, but then bloops somebody would always write cause she was embarrassed about that. But her English was perfect when she came to this country, her mother said to her yacht now to become an English lady and she did. Perfect sense. Um, could you describe your journey?

Speaker 1: [00:46:28](#) Well, it was always fun. I would be put on a train. What I've been, the ward finished you mean? Or just when I was evacuated and he said, well I'd come home before then when the bombing started to reach up North, when these doodle

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bugs and these terrible V rockets could go anywhere without an ma. That's where my mother said, right, do you know you're coming home? I said, she sent me to burn me. I'm thinking they wouldn't get up North. But of course that was the farthest. I forgot she didn't, she brought me home. She said if they can go anywhere then you're going to be at home. And I was, but that's, I was still, we were still sleeping down there on the underground shelters. We still had to have all the backup, the black outing and what was, it was hard. It was tough and I was a little, a bit more understanding, uh, of what was going on.

Speaker 1: [00:47:14](#) But the schools were open, the school holiday and we used to all do all sorts of things and as languages or we put on shows, we'd do music because parents had to go to war work. And, um, I can't remember what my mother was doing. My stepfather was still in London doing his, his, his job, but she had to do, and I was able to go to school. It wasn't open like a full day, but I think it was open like a full day. But we used to, I used to do a lot of music at school. We did piano and violin and, but it was wonderful. It was lovely. And we were all together. Listen, as children, we were looked after. Um, when you came home, how did London change?

Speaker 1: [00:47:59](#) Well, I'd live, I was living in the suburbs when I came home and I was in London a lot. And of course it was, it's horrendous. When you'd go where my aunt, she used to live in the East and that was completely demolished. That was completely demolished and that the devastation was unbelievable. It was, it's hard to understand. You'd walk along the street and there's, the rubble was still there. They couldn't clear it all away. They'd clean the streets for the buses. And then the big thoroughfares in London shops were still open. Um, everything tried to carry on as normal. When it did, they did carry on as normal. They were marvelous. The people of England were just amazing. The soldiers would come home on leave and they wanted to go to the cinema and they'd wanted to go to clubs. The theaters were open.

Speaker 1: [00:48:46](#) They didn't close. There were certain times they had to, but I don't, I think there was always a motto. I said, we never closed the theater. Life was still going on. And I remember coming up as a very young girl hype, whether I'd been aware, I must've been aware at that time we came home. I don't know if you've ever heard of a very famous pianist in her day, Myra Hess and she gave free concerts in the national gallery, which is off Trafalgar square, you know, Trafalgar square and there's the

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national gallery there. And I remember going to see her and the whole room with my stepfather, I presume my mother must've Pam as well to see this very famous lady who was a classical pianist. That place was just full of uniforms. In fact, they do show it occasionally on television. I always look to see if I, I had been stuck in a corner somewhere, you know, but it was just full of uniforms and that was one of the, they did so much to try and entertain and keep the morale of everybody up in London to keep it all going to keep as much as they could.

Speaker 1: [00:49:53](#) And if people like this would come forward to give wonderful. She was, she was world famous and I remember seeing her, it was quite something, but you'd walk through parts that you knew and he said, where am I? What's happened here? Quite different, quite different that the landscape had changed completely. And it's terribly sad. I'm in the East end. Yes. It needed to come down, most of it, but not in that way. Not in that way. It was really devastating. Um, there's beautiful old places and I, I'm, I love, I'll still love London. I love to around in London. I, it lifts me, lifts me terribly. Just to look at the, the scenery and the architecture and to know this was there and that was here. It made a great difference.

Speaker 1: [00:50:41](#) Um, how did you celebrate the day? I'm not too sure of whether I remember this or whether I've seen it, but I'm almost sure I would have been, what, 12, 13 and I have gone out to lunch. If my mother had allowed me, I'd have been in Trafalgar square. I'm sure I'm possibly, I have, I would probably there with my mother. I cannot think of any better way. Mother loved London, didn't want to leave it at all. And if, if there was anything going, I went to every Lord mare show in London. I sat on the pavements. I was so many places and things that were going, we've all been great Londoners. And if, I can't honestly say it was a real thing, but I have a feeling I would have been happy. Now we all celebrated. It was amazing. Amazing. But the app is only part of the war, cause that was Europe.

Speaker 1: [00:51:30](#) There was still war going on in the far East, but that was Europe. And that was an amazing thing. And I was grateful that both my brothers came for their lives, but my younger brother died as a result. He was in the Navy. My other brother was in the air force. You stay in touch with your no, which I'm very, very sad about because my brothers didn't come home till at that time. And mommy wasn't a writer. Bobby didn't, would like to have done. I'm very, very sad. I didn't, lots of people did. And of course life was very different and I wasn't living back in the old

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place. Um, life went on and my, my mother's mantra was always, life is for living, darling. You only have one life, live it. And she made sure that I had clubs to go to and a life to lead, you know that there would be something good at the end of the day.

Speaker 1: [00:52:25](#) And then of course I was getting on 30 we left, I left school at 14 and I went to work. So you know, that was already working. Oh no, not the end of lives. A few years after then we moved and I went to work when I was 14 looking back, do you think that any of your experiences or changed your life? Oh definitely not as the youngest. You don't realize what happens, but when you have your own families and they're growing up, I have great respect, great respect for everybody's religion. I've met some amazing people in my time. Whether you have a religious thought or not comes the end of the day and you're in trouble. You ask for help from somebody. And as said to me once, when I've never forgotten it, we all go through to the same God through different doors. And the what I learned going to the churches that I did and the choirs that I sang in set me up so much to meet so many different people in my life.

Speaker 1: [00:53:27](#) I've been very blessed. I've met, I'm not well to everybody well traveled, but I met some amazing people in different walks of life that I have it. I've never forgotten it. My husband was a little bit older than me and he fought right through the war and he had a very difficult one, let me put it that way. But he had the same outlook on life and you'll have, we had to go forward and do voluntary work and help wherever we could. We've done it all our lives and I'm still doing it now at my age. I can't give up completely. And this taught me, there's so many people that need your help. You've only got to offer a hand. And if somebody takes hits, you help whatever race or religion. And my mother had this as well though. She left persecution. She arrived in this country as a very small child, as my father did.

Speaker 1: [00:54:17](#) Um, and as they arrived here, the mother said to them, he never spoke a word of English in her life. Your English, you learn English and you become English leaders. But so three of her sisters went on to America, but she was here with her other sister and they became very English. And I'm, I'm terrible. Royalist I love it. This has been an amazing country for every race and religion and we have to learn and live. And it taught me a great deal. It taught me a great deal and I've never forgotten it and I've loved it. Devastate I've, that's how I've lived

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my life. What I've done and what I still do. What are your strongest memories?

Speaker 3: [00:54:57](#)

No

Speaker 1: [00:55:01](#)

strongest members going down the underground. Boy, did you meet some different people down there and they brought their animals? We had all sorts of things coming down. Um, but it was, everybody was together and helped each other and it was quite wonderful.

Speaker 3: [00:55:20](#)

Mmm.

Speaker 1: [00:55:24](#)

I say I didn't have terribly bad memories. I was always surrounded with great. Then my mother was quite strict in her way, but I was loved. And the boys, when my brothers came back from the forces we had, we'd bake parties for them. They both were waving them at 21 and they didn't know a soul. I didn't know. So where we lived and my mother knew I went to a, I went to the clubs and she said to me, everybody's got a brother or sister phone phone than we had a phone in the house at that stage. Yes we did. And I phoned just to say my brothers were coming back. We want to make a party. But if nobody knows, they don't know anybody. The hats was full. We had them upstairs, downstairs in the garden. The parents were so glad that somebody would do this, that all the people coming together, all the young people coming back from the war, didn't know everybody. Everybody had moved and shifted this way. They made a few friends and my brother did. My older brother, he's still alive. He's 96 and he's great and he's just got the, uh, lesions, y'all know, for being D day. He got here, he was living in Canada at the time and he got it from president of Canada and, but he's back in England. And, um,

Speaker 4: [00:56:37](#)

okay.

Speaker 1: [00:56:39](#)

[inaudible] I say, what do I talk? It taught me to be considerate and to listen. Listen to the other person, however bad you think they are, listen to the story and see what you can make of it rather than, than condemn completely. I mean, bitter, terrible things happened. My, my brother saw some terrible things going on in Europe as my husband did. And um, but you can't carry bitterness with you. You can't, it ruined your life. You can't always forgive. Certainly never forget. But there are other ways of looking at life. Otherwise you can't, you, it ruins your life if you carry bitterness and hate. It's not what, that's not life. Is

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there anything we haven't covered that you'd like to? Well, I think you've done amazingly well. Perhaps I've talked too much. I don't know.

Speaker 5: [00:57:34](#) Well if any of the other, every the rest of you, you've got questions. If they've got a question, if you could answer towards Anna for anyone. Got any questions? I've got a couple of, just to start, could you just tell Anna, you talked about the boat. What was the name of the boat?

Speaker 1: [00:57:49](#) I don't know darling. It was right at the beginning of the war. It's, it's, it's, it's on. You'll probably get it on YouTube. It's all authenticated. Yes.

Speaker 5: [00:57:57](#) Yeah. Any questions from him? We've, we've only, it's going to be lunch time in about six, seven minutes, so we haven't got

Speaker 4: [00:58:05](#) [inaudible].

Speaker 1: [00:58:07](#) I've tried to explain a little, yes darling.

Speaker 4: [00:58:11](#) Your favorite part of your experience in the countries?

Speaker 1: [00:58:20](#) I think the trees. I mean we lived in London. There's, yeah, there's trees, but you didn't exactly look at them a lot, but we, my mother always went to the seaside, took us to the country. We, we'd gone everywhere. She was a great forward thinking woman, but it gave me an enormous love of trees. I learned. I love the green this and now I go mad when I'm driving. Look at that tree, look at this, look at that. And I've got a tree right outside the lounge where I sit and not many birds there. Now we have a screws nest and I watch the squirrels building their nest and things like that in there. Uh, but it taught me how lovely this countryside is and how we've got to look after it.

Speaker 5: [00:59:02](#) Can I ask you a question? A couple questions about [inaudible]. You talked a lot about, so I mean obviously you're a child then, so,

Speaker 4: [00:59:10](#) but for your mother,

Speaker 5: [00:59:12](#) she'd come to this country to escape persecution and then you talk about what you thought this decision she's making on 101 is to keep you with her, but just send you

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Speaker 1: [00:59:22](#) away to keep you safe. Yes. I think if it hadn't been for my stepfather, she probably wouldn't have sent me away. But he felt as a Jewish child and we knew, we didn't know what was going on in Europe. It's been going on from 1933 she'd come to England before that, much before that. From the, for after the first world war. No. Before the first world war, her mother come over and the persecution there from tiny little communities and she'd managed to survive and they knew they had to get out and we'd had a lovely life. Hardworking. You had. We didn't work. We had no body to hand us money or do anything. Mommy worked hard. Her mother went out scrubbing and did everything she could to raise her children. But my mother was the youngest of her family, so she was the youngest of five and went to school here. Um, she must've been, but I've, I bought it. It was just to save something or somebody of the family when she couldn't finally send me to America when I wasn't allowed to go. Um, this is all I can think that there should be somebody to carry on the story or to know that we have survived.

Speaker 1: [01:00:50](#) Yes, please. Yes. Did you ever go back to visit the place you stayed at? No. No. It's, I can't go back to anything. This is a very, it's something very personal to me. I have memories which I treasure.

Speaker 3: [01:01:10](#) Okay.

Speaker 1: [01:01:12](#) Um, I've been a widow for many, many years and I can't go back. I just, I go over holidays. So I go over pictures, which is lovely, but I personally can't go back. It would devastate me. Um, I had, I was married, I had two children. I had loved her husband who died on 42 young and I had to move on. I had a family too. My family, real life, I've gone, I got married very young, but I had to go to work. I had to start a new life and I had to do it. But two, I, I can't go back. I can't even as a holiday, I've been asked, but I like to go back. But it would be different. I know it is. My son's been there and son's been back to the, it's not a village anymore. It's a whole town. And loads of people go around. Nothing's ever stays the same. So there's new things to learn. There's always tomorrow. And that's how I have to look at it. None physical today. Tomorrow's another day. The sun comes up and then I'm awake and I think thank God.

Speaker 1: [01:02:16](#) Yes. Could you just say, I'm going down. What is savvy? Young and my brothers came back from the war. My younger brother was very old. He'd been blown up in the Navy. But my elder brother, who was, who looked after me always, Oh, I'm so

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excited. And it was that he was say eight years older than me and I, he took me everywhere. I was very grown up for my age. Cause when I came I was treated as a grownup. I wasn't treated as a child when every time I came home, wherever mommy and my stepfather went, I went weird. So it was all grown up places and wherever he went, I went, my brother came, whatever he wanted to do, I went with, and life was exciting. The men were coming back. Life was hard. They hadn't got jobs. They had to find work.

Speaker 1: [01:03:07](#) What did they do? Um, my brother had been an academic. He wanted to do academia, but he couldn't do this. He had to earn a living and he did lots of things in his life. He sort of still very bright gentleman and he made something of himself and made good friends while he was away, he'd seen some of the world that I had never seen. And if he would tell me about it and I would meet his friends, some that he kept from the forces. And then he old, the older boys, and I was with EV, all of them. And it's exciting. Music was exciting. I was not allowed to play modern music when I was learning the piano and I got fed up with it. I wouldn't practice. I didn't want this. And of course the new music coming out, my brother could play modern, more modern music.

Speaker 1: [01:03:55](#) I was only allowed to play classical music and lots and lots of theory, which they don't do anymore. Oh, it's dreadful. And of course I wanted to dance and the Americans were hair. I liked you to barked. And that's what I wanted to do. That was the dance. And because I used to drive my mother mad, she'd meet me from school, I'd go home and in my socks and no, we didn't have uniform though. And during the war we'd wasn't, she would take me up to London to common garden and she'd sit upstairs and allow me to dance with the Americans. So I was about 13 yet no quality. Of course, of course. Yes, yes. With your mom, how did that feel to be away from the foster family in back with your mother? You do remember the feeling? It was quite difficult at first because mommy thought little heathen was coming back, you know, um, diction was, was I had a little country accent also. She was very concerned with the manners. Um, I've never been overlooked to have worrying about bossing or washing. If I didn't, it didn't matter really how you wash your hands and face, fully dressed. I mean, it didn't care. And she was very concerned about my cleanliness and fact. My brother's eyes. Remember my brother's shouting down to her. She's coming out and going to school. She's fully dressed. She hasn't washed.

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Speaker 1: [01:05:18](#) Um, but she wasn't hard on me. She was full of life and whatever. I, she never said really. I remember sending note or anything I wanted to do, but she would explain it to me and tell me and ask me why she was a very modern woman, but she wanted me to be a young lady and it was hard to begin with because she was all embracing and I've read had such freedom, but we hadn't stopped our freedom at home as long as she knew, um, that I was behaving myself, which we all did in those days. There was no other way. I was given an enormous amount of freedom, enormous amount of freedom, which, uh, when I look back now, I thought, Oh my God, I did all that at swell, a floating 14. I was allowed to do things and travel up to London as long as she knew where I was and what time I was coming home. Uh, it has a specific reason. I wasn't allowed to do something for nothing and all switch. You had to pay to go up to London. It wasn't easy. We weren't rich people regardless the job that my stepfather had in those days, badly paid. And, um, as long as I behave myself. She was very, very modern lady and I have great pride in that.