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Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Well you are you doing what you are you born

Speaker 2: [00:04](#) 1936. March the 15th.

Speaker 1: [00:10](#) Where were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:12](#) I was born in a sort of little old hospital in London, in Maida Vale. Then I moved to the country.

Speaker 1: [00:19](#) Okay. What did your parents do for a living?

Speaker 2: [00:23](#) Um, but you mean during the war or, my dad was a pilot in the air force. Uh, my mum drove ambulances.

Speaker 1: [00:33](#) Okay. I'll ask you, um, describe what your local area was like for you as a child before the war started.

Speaker 2: [00:44](#) Ah, well I lived in Essex and it was very muddy and there are lots of farmers and they were very friendly and just before the war everybody was happy and singing in the, the man used to melt the cars and they used to sing and everything else. And just before war started, it was a funny feeling. And they all were the headstart headstand looking very serious. And I said to mom and dad, why are they all, why aren't they laughing anymore? And nobody explained to me till the moment, which is the most important of all of my talk when my dad puts his arm around me and he said, darling, you've got to go away. And I burst into tears and I said, I don't want it to go away. He says, you have to go away because there's a war. And I said, dad, what's more, what does it mean more? He said when people fight. And that's when I realized I became about QE.

Speaker 1: [01:39](#) How did you and your family feel when the war was declared?

Speaker 2: [01:44](#) I don't know how they felt, but um, everybody got very serious and all went into little and got very, very worried because of the threat to our Island, uh, being invaded.

Speaker 1: [01:57](#) What was it like to live in London when war broke out?

Speaker 2: [02:00](#) No, I wasn't in London then. I was in Essex by that time in the country on the farm.

Speaker 1: [02:07](#) What did your parents did during the war?

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- Speaker 2: [02:09](#) Jews during the war, as I said, my dad was in the air force flying planes a lot all the time and several friends of his got killed. And mum was driving ambulances. That's why I was sent away. But my brother stayed there and during the war mum had a baby. I'll tell you about that later.
- Speaker 1: [02:29](#) How did you feel when you first found out that you were going to be evacuated?
- Speaker 2: [02:33](#) Absolutely terrified and then I started crying and crying. I didn't know what the word war meant.
- Speaker 1: [02:41](#) Tell us about the journey on your first evacuation.
- Speaker 2: [02:45](#) I was, I went all the way down to this place in Herefordshire, which is near Wales, and it was a long drive and I was very sad and I was all alone. My parents became NOMAS building in Herefordshire with fields all rounded. And it was an old school with no lessons there at all. And I stayed there for two whole years without seeing my parents. And as I waved them goodbye, I remember looking up a long drive and seeing the car disappear and all the children were crying and we cried every night. But it was a huge amount of children, just hundreds and hundreds. But we had a good time in other ways.
- Speaker 1: [03:28](#) Okay. Can you wait, you have acted with [inaudible]?
- Speaker 2: [03:31](#) I wasn't evacuated with anyone, but I, I just went, my parents took me there and I, then I met lots of children and I made friends with them.
- Speaker 1: [03:40](#) Okay. How did you feel when you were lost, when you last saw your parents when you were going away?
- Speaker 2: [03:46](#) Oh, I just said I cried and cried. I didn't want to go away only because I didn't know what war meant. Nobody explained to me. I've also written a song for all of you to sing later called what is war? Because everybody knows what it means now. But we didn't, we were living in the country. We'd never heard of that word. And we were very crossed to be going away from mom and dad. I was only four.
- Speaker 1: [04:11](#) Okay. Um, tell us about the things you took with you.
- Speaker 2: [04:15](#) It will only last take our gas miles in a box like that and a little carrier bag, which had my doll and a book. That's all I took. I

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think there was a suitcase somewhere that went with my clothes, but it's, that's all were you allowed to take as evacuee? Nothing else.

Speaker 1: [04:33](#) Okay. What were your feelings at first?

Speaker 2: [04:38](#) What were my feelings at first I told you just we cry cause we didn't want to leave home. We didn't know we were going to be away for two years.

Speaker 1: [04:49](#) What was your like, what was your life like with your host family? What was your life like with your host family?

Speaker 2: [04:58](#) Well, it wasn't really a family. It was a huge collection of children from all sorts of different countries and and all over the place. Some French children and we had huge dormitories with about 20 beds in and the face strict matron. He used to come along very quietly and if we are bouncing on our bed she'd say sit down and punish us. And we did not some naughty things there and we had lots of fun, but the food was so disgusting and I'll show it to you on the table. We had something called tapioca, which we had to eat. Was there any pudding? And we call it frog spawn. And we used to just go like this and Ooh, it was so awful. We didn't have any parcels of food and sweets were rationed to four ounces. We'd never had any sweets at school. We just had a few bits of [inaudible].

Speaker 1: [05:47](#) Okay. What was the house like?

Speaker 2: [05:50](#) It was huge. Absolutely huge. Eight stories. And I played a very naughty game of some children called truths down promise, which there isn't probably a time to tell you about. And we used to dare each other to do things and one thing I was dead was to roll some blue Rose all the way down to the headmistress door. And when she opened the door she went, Oh. And everybody laughed.

Speaker 1: [06:14](#) What was your school like? The school

Speaker 2: [06:18](#) this, we didn't really do lessons. We did singing and we did lots of things in the country, just gathering trees and owls, nest and all sorts of things. We didn't have, actually I remember I was only four or we did lots of singing and at night the headmistress satisfy the far, uh, we all had stories. All of us went to bed crying though because we wanted our mum and dad's. It was awful, terrible time.

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- Speaker 1: [06:44](#) How were you treating on your area
- Speaker 2: [06:48](#) in the school? We were treated quite well, but it was very strict. We had, because there was so many people, and if you were naughty, you went and sat in a room on your own. If you were ill, you went to a huge room. And I've got chicken pox once. So my granny came to collect him. It was wonderful. And she took me to London and London was pitch dark. You couldn't see anything, no lamps on anywhere. We had a little taut like this. And suddenly I saw a fun, I said, grand is far. And she pulled me back and she said, that's not a far, that's a house that's burned. And then I understood what war meant because suddenly I saw a whole house had been burned.
- Speaker 1: [07:30](#) Tell us some of your experiences in the countryside
- Speaker 2: [07:34](#) experiences. Well, and we had a wonderful time, which everybody was saying was very naughty. But when we went swimming, it was a huge Lake and we all took our clothes off and just spam in the water with nothing on and sung and danced. It was lovely. And sometimes we went for long walks and we didn't like it and we learned all the names of trees and things. Then we went into a field and we saw lots of animals like the sheep and strange little bulls that were jumping over things. It was completely free. We never ever heard or saw an airplane or anything to do with war. So when I came to London and heard once an air raid siren and a play and you're going over, I was terrified. The country was so quiet. It was wonderful.
- Speaker 1: [08:21](#) Tell us about the, about any friends you made, any friends you made.
- Speaker 2: [08:28](#) That's the awful thing. I can't remember hardly anybody at the school except my brother who was two years younger than he came to school. He was two years younger, much smaller, and he was swinging on a tree and he fell and broke his arm. And so he went straight home. He went to hospital. So I went to the head, mr [inaudible], please could I break my arm? She said suddenly not and I'd wanted to vape my arm cycle, go home. That's how badly I to go home. And when I did go home after the war, I saw this cute thing sitting in a chair and I said, who's that? That's your sister. Said mom. And I went, Ooh. And she looked face strange as upon round her face. What happens? Have a family in London while you were away? Um, you know, we w we were, by that time we were still in the country, but we'd moved to Essex and sorry, we moved to Kent from Essex

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and in Kent was a huge garden, an under the garden with some caves and that became the air raid shelter for the whole village. It was incredible. The whole village came into that cave and that's where we made friends. People were so friendly in the, in the air raid shelter.

- Speaker 1: [09:41](#) Thank you.
- Speaker 2: [09:43](#) Can you tell us about any times you saw communicates with your parents while you LA
- Speaker 1: [09:49](#) saw? What
- Speaker 2: [09:51](#) can you tell us about any times you saw or communicated with your parents while you know, I wish I had, that was a worst thing. You didn't have mobile phones, you didn't have telephones, there were no letters at all because they didn't get them in the ward. They were in the postman. They'd sort of got lost in all the terrible rubble everywhere we, I never had the letter. My husband had a parcel once with a banana inside, and by the time it got to his school, it was black. So he wasn't very happy and bananas were the most sought after thing in the war because they couldn't be imported. When war finished, everybody rushed to the Harbor to get the banana because they hadn't had Bomba. Yes. Tell us about any more evacuations experience. Well, the worst bit of being in the wall was the air raid siren, which goes
- Speaker 3: [10:43](#) [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [10:45](#) not as most terrible whining sound. And when you hear it, everybody rushes to the air raid shelter and being little and for all I could see with these knees like this running and running and running and running, it was terrified. And my kitchen was above the caves where the air raid shelter was, and I thought Hitler was there. So I used to scream as high as a mom. I do, and I thought he was done this. Say she picked me off and said, come on and we put the gospel Skelton and we went down to the cave and then I've asked it wasn't there and all the people in there from the village, the butcher and everybody was in the caves. Very friendly. Sometimes you stayed there for two days, sometimes for two hours and you've got used to being in these extraordinary, you had candles and then we had played lots of games running round and we made lots of friends and all the older people were just like us and they were very generous.

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Speaker 2: [11:42](#) If you haven't done need to eat, they say, come on, come and have my lunch with me. Very, very generous. They were in there and one lady came in and said, my house is gone. My husband and she was crying and somebody said, don't worry, don't come and live with me. That was the sort of generosity which was incredible jungle. I've never known it since ever. I think we're all very selfish now and we don't share things easily. You know, we all have everything, lots of things. And in the war you didn't, and we all rationed. And 10 years after the war we all had rationing still, which was very important. And it's a strange thing. It did us a lot of good. Nobody was ever, ever journal. People didn't have bad diseases or anything because they were eating just a limited amount of food. You grew your own vegetables and it was extraordinary that people were though it was a serious time. People were very, very friendly.

Speaker 1: [12:42](#) Okay, what did you do? And that was an arid

Speaker 2: [12:46](#) siren. Arid. Well, that's what I, I've just told you when it was terrified and when the all clear went, was a different sign, which was, uh, and everybody would rush out and we went to the sweet shop and we had a ration book like this. I've got it here. And you had four ounces of sweets a week and everybody went to the sweet shop and all the sweets when big, big jars. And she never let you have more than four ounces. She only that you have the right amount. She's fair, strict. Everything was rationed. Butter, sugar. So you never had birthday cakes and things like eggs. People had lots of chickens. So you had eggs.

Speaker 1: [13:28](#) What was it like when the bombs were falling?

Speaker 2: [13:31](#) I didn't luckily here any because in this enormous cave under our garden, you never had anything outside. But my husband, he'll tell you later, he was in the blitz and when I went to Coventry after the war, this city called Coventry was complete. It flattened by the blitz, which as you probably read is when they bombed the whole city. It must've been terrifying, but I was lucky. I heard a doodle bug and he had lots of doodle bugs and he describes it

Speaker 1: [14:02](#) in a minute. Tell us about any friends or family who were injured during the war.

Speaker 2: [14:08](#) Oh, everybody else. Me. If anybody in my family died or they were injured and I didn't luckily know any friends who were injured and my dad had several people. He was a flight app

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AirFloss and two of his friends got shot down. He was flying and he suddenly saw this plane dive down in flames and that was his best friend. And he wrote a poem, very famous poem called for Johnny and it was in the film, the ways of the stars and he must've been terrible because he was fouling a plane and his friends play just went shot that Nazi irony deaths. I remember.

Speaker 1: [14:46](#) What did you, what did you and your family do when you heard bombs?

Speaker 2: [14:50](#) If we have, we know where we didn't, you see, I wasn't with my family but we didn't have any bombs in the country. But when I came to London I was more aware of, I didn't hear a bomb, but I was very frightened because grant, his house had been bombed. Every time she came home she found all the windows had been blown out in her house. She couldn't believe it. And she was driving ambulances and so they had to put all the windows back on the bomb blast that blown out all the windows. It was freezing in the house. But I didn't cause I was a fact waited. That's why we were evacuated to get away from the bombs and anything else like that. The danger.

Speaker 1: [15:29](#) Thank you. Thank you. What were your fears when you came back to London after being evacuated?

Speaker 2: [15:34](#) When I came back to my house in Kent, it was very difficult because, um, I was lucky cause I had a mom and dad, but several friends of mine, when they came back, they all swear daily. He wasn't, he wasn't there. He was, had been shot. So it must've been terrible. Another friend of mine was a boy this size and he came back and he said to his mum, who's that? She said, that's your daddy. And little boy looked at him and he'd never had a daddy because he'd been born during the war and daddy was fighting and he didn't like the look of him. And it took a long time, but I knew the war had finished. When dad came to the gate with his Jersey on and trousers, he wasn't in uniform and I rushed up to him and hugged him. That's when the war was over for me. It was a wonderful feeling seeing him.

Speaker 1: [16:26](#) What were your feelings about your family?

Speaker 2: [16:29](#) Um, well it was difficult. So you couldn't really go off and hug them because you've been away from them for two years and you, you felt sort of like this, you know, it took a long time to, to feel safe again, really with them. And particularly with this creature who I didn't know about my sister. Um, it, it took a

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long time. It must've been so difficult for children though with a new daddy or you know, no daddy. And I was very lucky to have both back.

Speaker 1: [16:59](#) How has London changed while you were away?

Speaker 2: [17:03](#) Well, again, I wasn't in London then, but when I came to granny's, which is by the river, which is where I live now in Hammersmith, a lot of it had changed because a lots of houses have been flattened by bombs and we live by the river. So the Germans followed the river. The Bogle had placed the bombs things and where I give a talk about the war, um, some planes used to come over with little parachutes during the wall metal. How pretty they look. And they were German power ships and used to lower mines into the water to explode the ground. Paul discovered them. So we just have a quite a lot of danger though.

Speaker 1: [17:40](#) Okay. How did you, how, how did your family feel when you were leaving?

Speaker 2: [17:48](#) I did my family feel well, yes, but that was, this was this huge school. So when we all were leaving, I think the headmistress was very sad because she'd become great friends. She was like a mother through us really. And she read lovely stories to us at night and she's rolled aside saying goodbye to us and this whole place was empty. Eventually we all went off in different directions. How did you stay in touch with any of the host family? No, everybody asked me that. I don't remember anyone at all from that. I'm 82 so it's a very long time ago, but I didn't stay in touch because I moved to the country and starting school was terrifying because I was seven and we'd never done maths or anything. And so suddenly we were sitting at school and I'd never been to school. Lots of us had, so we'd, I don't have any remembers of anybody there, sadly. How did you celebrate the end of the world? Oh, the end of the war. Everybody had parties then and there's a wonderful picture of Piccadilly circus with everybody screaming with joy, with flags, waving flags. My mom and dad has lots of explosive sort of pop things going off like this and everybody was drinking and happy and as children our best fit with, we had a whole bowl of sweets, which was wonderful. I just still remember it all free.

Speaker 2: [19:19](#) How do you think your experiences have affected your life? I think that it's made me as a person, very insecure because being away from your parents, without being told what the wall

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was and not warning that you were going to be away for two years, two and a half years as made me always very insecure about life and about friendship and everything. I've never forgotten it, but the one thing I remember is this incredible friendship of everybody was terrified Hitler was invading on an Island and yet it made us all like a family. So when you were in the air raid shelter, you're all in the same old, young anything. And everybody was so generous. It was like a wonderful sort of family of people, which I've never had since. I've never felt that lovely warm feeling because we were in danger, we were close and we were all the same.

- Speaker 2: [20:17](#) Well all you're strongest memories from the book. Um, I think darkness is the thing that terrifies me most because everywhere, like in a city it was dark and I was so, granny's house was pitch dog. We walked in, she said don't make a notice. And I rushed, rusted the window and she told me off cause all of every house had blackout material and you weren't allowed to even open the curtains in case the German soil house. I was very frightened to the dark, very in the country. We didn't have any, any, we just run everywhere. So that's what's affected me more than anything. Was the dark in London.
- Speaker 1: [20:54](#) Thank you. Okay. That's all we've got on the list. Any questions from the group you want to find out more about [inaudible] go ahead.
- Speaker 2: [21:03](#) Very good questions,
- Speaker 1: [21:06](#) Sam? Anything? How many times does your house one is yours?
- Speaker 2: [21:11](#) Um, it, no, it, it um, the windows were blown out six times.
- Speaker 1: [21:18](#) Could you also saw,
- Speaker 2: [21:20](#) Oh, so the, the, the windows in very tall house. We live in a terrace house and when they came home from their jobs each time they came home with six times, I don't know how they put the windows back, they'd probably put paper in front or something, but it was the effect of a bomb going over the house didn't hit the house, but the, the reaction from the bombs blew out every single window, which must've been very cold and you didn't get Workman in those days. You just had to Pat up the windows. And there's a wonderful picture of a bus, just the beginning of more going down a huge crater in Chizik, a double

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Decker bus, and it's missed the road and it's gone straight down this crater. And I looked as it was my grandfather and I said, what is that doing there? He said, that's the beginning of all. It shouldn't laugh at the picture, but it looks so strange. See it done there.

- Speaker 1: [22:13](#) And did you ever see the V one and V two?
- Speaker 2: [22:17](#) No, but I think, I think my husband might've heard it, heard it, which is very nasty whining sound.
- Speaker 1: [22:25](#) Is there anything that we haven't covered that you'd like to tell us about?
- Speaker 2: [22:30](#) Um, no, I think, I think that the thing that, that, um, one has to explain is to make you a match. Well, first of all, rationing was awful in some ways and you couldn't just go out and buy a loaf of bread. You had to queue up every morning and poor mum, any mom with a family, she would have to buy a bit of meat that big for a family of six. So we never had more than one little piece of meat. Everybody lived on tins and the food, we never had a birthday cake because sugar was rationed and flowers rationed. But the one thing that I think was most terrifying of all was was the fear of being invaded and why the farmers on my, my farm suddenly look frightened. Because as a child you, you don't see adults looking frightened and they were all sort of huddling like this and they used to be happy farmers all singing and milking the cars and suddenly everybody was petrified that Hitler was going to invade our Island.
- Speaker 2: [23:30](#) And it all got very near, you know, and every time they, the news Churchill came on. Oh. So one thing I've forgotten to say is we went swimming with great man Churchill just before the war because my parents knew him and my brother was swimming in the pool like this and he's swamp underneath Churchill. He's a hideous fat man, lying with a huge tummy, just like a sort of big object, but lifting. And my brother went underneath him and turned him upside down by mistake and church. It went like this. My mother screamed out, dope drown the prime minister. And my brother said who that and when he got home, because there's terrible smoke bottom, because he didn't realize that that man was so important. I mean, he was the most important man who won the war for us. It was a lovely family and he had a big poem, the fish, but that was the most famous moment in our childhood. I think.

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