**Summary:** The story teller in this interview lived and worked in Bermondsey till World War Two. During that time she worked at factories; Cross and Blackwell, Liptons, Pearce Duffs and Pecks. For her war work the story teller was a park keeper for Southwark Park attending to the flower beds and nursery which grew vegetables for Rotherhithe Library.

**Ok so do you want to tell me when you were born?**

Um yes in Bermondsey

**And when was that?**

When was that oh well, well, well must have been 1920

**1920 wow ok brilliant and when was your birthday?**

Beg your pardon

**When is your birthday?**

What’s me birthday? 24th of December

**Christmas Eve**

Yeah

**That’s nice, is that a nice birthday to have?**

Well it wouldn’t have been as a child, today it’s lovely

**All in one**

All in one plenty of everything.

**Ok brilliant, so you said you were born in Bermondsey and did you live in Bermondsey for a lot of your life?**

Up until the war

**Ok so where was your first job?**

Cross and Blackwell’s in Crimscott Street

**Ok and what kind job was that what sort of....**

Factory work

**Ok so what sort of things did you do in the factory?**

Terrible job really looking back it was in what we called the hot rooms when the tins of beans and peas came off the retort and they went into the hot rooms and we had to stack em up high and the sweat used to pour off us and they had to stay there for so long.

**You did or the beans and the peas did?**

Yean 14 8 in the morning half past 6 at night Fridays 6 o clock.

**So you were the produce was beans, tins of beans and tins of peas or was it, was beans and...**

Oh in the tins, in the tins they were filled in the machines outside in another department and their hot rooms was attached and um the fellows used they were in big retort, to wheel them in and have to stack em up. They stayed them for at least five days before they were taken down again and then go to another department boxed up and go where they had to go really.

**Yeah so why did the room have to be hot?**

Why what?

**Why did they room have to be hot?**

Oh well to make sure the beans and peas were alright because sometimes when you took the em down the tins were blown that’s when they used to you know, that was why.

**So what was it like working in a room that was that hot?**

Well it was, you got used to it. You know it was quite a nice atmosphere with who you worked with. Used to have a foreman and manageress used to quite strict, quite strict no easy, well I think we accepted it that was life and they moved out of Crimsscott Street and the I worked for um for, um just a short while Pearce Duffs custard powder.

**So how long did you the first job for.**

Oh quite a few years don’t ask me how many quite a few years, quite a few years. Well when I say quite a few years no couldn’t have been coz I must have been about 18 when war broke out and I’d worked say three years.

**Three years ok, so say from about 15**

Yeah I was 14 when I started so I would have been turned 17 I know I was 18 when I worked for Lipton’s in Spa Road Bermondsey another glamorous job sausage making. That was, that was very relaxing

**In comparison, in comparison to the previous**

Yes

**The one with the beans and the peas what was, what were you kind of physically doing were you putting them on shelves?**

Oh no, mo you stacked em, you stacked em and you put cardboard in between you put another two lots on and you just stacked them as high as you can you know.

**To sit in the room, did you have ladders or were you kind of just reaching up?**

Oh no it was as only as high as you could reach not, not ladders or anything like that. It was what you call a sweat job really coz it was bonus you know you got your wages but if you did more than your quota you got a bonus. Yeah so course you sweated more didn’t you to get your bonus.

**So longer than half past 6 did you say or 6 o’clock at night you got more money?**

Yes, yeah

**Coz was it quite hard work in the heat?**

Well I suppose it would be today but it wasn’t than well we had. Well the hours were long we accepted it that was life of that day. Lots of factories in Bermondsey lots but it was um a very happy atmosphere in Spa Road, very happy atmosphere you know that was when the war was on. You know the times the sirens went we used to have to run out and go to a shelter that was quite hilarious really coz it was friendly very friendly. It was only a small, small factory.

**So there weren’t that many rooms?**

No it was just one big, it was a bungalow room it wasn’t, it was just one big room, big coz you had all the machines, it was quite, you had music going and the floor lady or manageress she was such a nice, cheerful person she didn’t mind there was all singing different atmosphere very good.

**That’s lovely what kind of music was playing do you remember?**

What?

**What music was playing?**

What at the time, well the music at the time of, I can’t remember what it was the old tunes today.

**So you said the manageress was a lovely woman..**

Yes, yes she was very cheerful, very nice she didn’t mind you talking or singing as long as you did your job she was nice very nice. Better than Cross and Blackwell’s.

**And the foreman was he nice to?**

What at Cross and Blackwell?

Yeah

All I remember is his name was Archie little man no he wasn’t a friendly man no couldn’t get round him.

**He was quite strict?**

Yeah, yeah funny really you know I always remember him say “speed your still talking” that’s me and I’ve never left off since.

**So was your nickname speed?**

No that was my maiden name that’s why he said speed never called you miss or anything just speed. I don’t think people would put up with it today.

**Probably not**

**So what were the other people that you worked with like?**

Well let me tell you, when you think I’d just turned 14 and I go into a factory ignorant and I don’t know whether you realise language was terrible which, which shocked me because you know I didn’t hear it indoors and the crudeness of jokes I used to laugh and I didn’t know what I was laughing at, I soon learnt though.

**Very quickly**

Very quickly

You educated, so that was it. But I didn’t get any of that at Lipton’s.

**So was there a lot of other girls you were working with?**

Where?

At Cross and Blackwell, oh yeah, yeah there was lots you know and they were 18 they knew a bit of life didn’t they when your 14 you didn’t know not that type of life not when your dad was Victorian you know when life was strict not like today.

**Did you get on with them? Did you socialise with them outside of work?**

Oh yes, yes you know I had a friend who I used to go out with every night. When I say out it was only walking you know I’d walk over Tower Bridge oh and we go pictures always went to the pictures weekend for 9 pence that was a lot of money really.

**Talking of money do you remember how much you got paid?**

Yes I do my first wage when I was 14 was 10 shillings a week and I had tuppence stopped and I belonged to the union

**From the age of fourteen?**

Yeah because the unions was in the doings. I’ve always belonged to a union

**And that’s been something that’s quite important to you?**

Well I don’t know you were just asked I wouldn’t have known at 14 would I? I did at 18 though I don’t think there was a union in Lipton’s I don’t remember only as I got older was the union was important to me it is today not for me not today for other people

**So straight after the first job you did you said you went to a job quite briefly or did you go straight to Lipton’s?**

Now I’ve got to think I didn’t whatever way I didn’t stay long at Pearce Duffs very old fashioned firm, very old fashioned the people were older something happened there I can’t remember but it wasn’t long I didn’t work there for long I remember Lipton’s

**Pearce Duffs was that a factory too?**

Yeah course it was custard powder you used to sit at a belt and it used to come along and you used to have to open the packets skillets they were called you’d put three packets so you they made three lots of custard when you bought a packet there were enough for three and you’d put three and they would go along quite and somebody packs them, quite a easy job. Boring but easy, old fashioned.

**Would you say it was easier than?**

Oh Yeah older woman weren’t so

**Lively**

No that’s the word

**How old were the women?**

Well it was older than me that’s all I remember that’s all I remember but um as I say I went to Lipton’s er yeah and then my mum we got bombed and my mum went to my sister whose husband was in the air force down at Huntingdon which of course was sort of unheard of wasn’t it and so I left than to go down, down there.

**So that was you finished working at Lipton’s to go down there how long was there for?**

Oh a year or so that’s all because of the war.

**What was being made a Lipton’s?**

Sausages I know you say that but it was, it was people be surprised really coz Lipton’s was quite a big concern all over the country used to have Lipton’s shops you know was a big. It was Lipton’s tea and you know they had lots of shops all over the country for years so um so the sausages went to all their shops I mean it wasn’t a glamorous job but it was a pleasant job well I thought so.

**So what were you, what was your specific job?**

Um linking them coz they used to come off the machine and you’d just stand there you were clothed we wore clogs coz of the wet and aprons oh yeah you were well looked after. Very, very easy going.

**So was it a belt again?**

Yeah

**Like the custard?**

And that was it. That was the end of Bermondsey.

**But you l- in Liptons, was the atmosphere lively again or was i-**

Oooh lovely…Yeah…was was…Was different atmosphere all together, really nice

**And were the girls your age again or were they?**

Yeah and older, older women…But it’s still um, a lovely atmosphere.

**Did the change in atmosphere change how you felt about your job?**

Well I suppose really, looking back. The manageress, or the foreladies they called em then. She was such a nice person. Which makes, makes such a difference, and and, and also the war. The war brought people together. Because at that time, we used to keep getting all these sirens. At the beginning of the war, which was, nothing come of it. But not then, did after. And and so, that’s what made the atmosphere different. The war did make a change to people looking. But you know, the war made people more nice to each other. Funny that isn’t it? But it did.

**Because it brought a more, sort of togetherness of your community?**

Yes.

**Do you think that was sort of, reinforced through the factories as well, cos’ everyone was working together? How did the factories affect Bermondsey as a place or how did it affect the community?**

How did it affect the community? Well I d-…Yeah I suppose they accepted it didn’t they…Yeah. And, and the war did make people more friendly to each other. It really changed people, plus the fact that’s why everyone smoked. Haha true.

**Did people smoke while you were working, could you do that, or?**

Oh you weren’t allowed to smoke. Oh god no, no.

**Not in the?**

No, no, no. Good gracious me no.

**\*Laughs\***

No…

**You said the foremen were strict, Umm what kind of things were they strict about?**

Well, talking while you’re working and all that. Was very strict really. Cos’ , because I suppose he had to get so much work out. He didn’t think you could talk and work at the same time. Well I could anyway…But it was hard.

**Did you find the work quite easy for all of them or did you?**

Well not at first I never. Not at first. I did afterwards and I used to get quite a bit of bonus plus. That’s-they used to call me ‘Speed’. Cos’ the more I worked the more money I got, and and…So you know I could go to the pictures and I could buy tights. No not tights, stockings. Fine ones instead of...ones. Off of a stool in Tower Bridge Road. Every Friday night, but that’s life then.

**Did that make you happy? Being able to do you know-**

Well course it did. Because we didn’t know any other life did we? You know that was, I mean we was, really and truly we were only educated for factory fodder, as I call it. In them days, it was only elementary…Whe-when it became to education. I mean I think the education is so high today, which it should be. It wasn’t in my day, well you could always read and write and spell…And there was one or two who managed to get to the grammar school, but only one or two…Which wasn’t me. But other than that, that was life in those days.

**So at fourteen?**

Eh?

**At fourteen, when you were looking for a job, what was that process, were you asked what you wanted to do?**

Oh I didn- My mum, my mum took me up to, up there. My mum took me. Yes I think she did. And uhh…Yeah.

**So was there any choice that you might of gone on to do something else?**

Um yeah, yeah I’m sure she took me up there being only young, and and they took me on. And I think I started the next day.

**Aah…Did you ever wanna’ do-What did you want to do?**

Well I always thought I wante-\*laughs\*. God I wouldn’t want to. To be a nanny. I thought that was a glamorous job. But I’m glad I didn’t. Either that or there was another job I thought I’d like to be which was a waitress…But…My mum weren’t interested really. As long as you earned some money in them days.

**So how much of, how much of your wage-**

Did I give my mum?

**And did you get to keep it for yourse-**

Well when I started it was ten shillings plus a little bit of stoppage. So I ga-You give it all to her, and she gave me back a shilling…Which doesn’t seem much then, but a shilling was a shilling. You know, and, and then as I got more used to the work. I got bonus, and of course every year you got rise, you know. And in the end, because I got good bonus, I said to my mum “You can have me wage, and I’ll keep all the bonus”.

**That’s a good idea \*Laughs\***

She never knew how much bonus I got

**\*Laughs\* That’s clever**

I never told her no

**So what did you do with the bonus?**

Well, I was able to go to the pictures, as I say. I’d buy silk stockings, you know. And buy your clothes, you know. Things like that. Never, never holidays or anything, but nobody had holidays. Odd. Tell you another terrible thing I did. I started to smoke, everybody did. Only a couple a day. Hence, they reckon my breathing problems is all due to smoking. Might have been, I dunno’.

**But as you say everyone did it back then.**

Oh god they did.

**Yeah.**

Very few people didn’t.

**Yeah.**

Especially during the war.

**You were you-When you said you were saying your mum took you to work. I was just thinki-**

No she didn’t take me to work, took me to-

**Yeah, I was thinking the first day. Yeah, I was thinking how did you travel to your job, did you, did you walk?**

Well, well yes. It was in the borough wasn’t it? It was in the borough, you know, lots of factories in Bermondsey…There was.

**So it was just really easy to walk to work then from home?**

Yeah.

**Yeah.**

Yes, I mean. I even ran home to dinner, in the lunch hour.

**Ahh did you?**

Yeah.

**Otherwise did you bring you own food in?**

You would do, we was- we always had a tea break in the morning and a tea break in the afternoon. And um, so we always took um…A sandwich back with us. Was mostly bread and Jam, except Fridays. When mum used to give us tuppence. And I used to buy two pence of biscuits. That was a treat…S-So, that was life.

**Did you work after the war?**

Did what?

**Did you work after the war? When the war had finished, did you work afterwards?**

Ooh let me-After the war? Umm I got married in the war, when I was twenty-one. And I worked at Southwark park.

**What did you do at Southwark Park?!**

What?

**What did you do there?**

Gardening

**Wow.**

That was a lovely job that was the best job of the war. And I worked there and I always said, once my husband come home from war I’d give up working. I di-…Umm and he didn’t com-cos’ he was in, umm on the Burma borders? On the border’s of Burmas-Burma. So he didn’t, the war didn’t finish then. Till a year after. So I kept on working at the park, and then he came home. And I packed up work, and that was that.

**How, so how long did you work at the park for?**

Oh, through the whole war period, yeah. Lovely. It was a lovely job.

**So outdoors?**

Outdoors.

**Doing the gardening?**

And uhh we used to start half past six in the morning, but we used to have breakfast. Oh ohh it was a lovely job. Umm, my mum came back and we-she was at New Cross. So I lived with her. And umm used to go on the underground from Surrey Docks...To New Cross. It was...A lovely war. No! You know the song “Oh what a lovely war’. It was a lovely job, in the park. Absolutely.

**So you said you were doing the gardening?**

We did gardening, and we used to go down the nursery...And they used to, Fred was the propagator. And we used to grow tomatoes and cucumbers and lettuce. And Rotherhithe ho-Which isn’t there anymore. Rotherhithe Hospital, we used to supply them with...the stuff we bought. Plus we never bought tomato, cucumber or a lettuce. Which was something in -during the war.

**So how many of you were working in the in the-**

In the park?

**Yeah.**

I think, there was about...Five of us. Five or six of us.

**The whole time?**

Umm yes, women. But there was men, older men.

**And do you remember the women?**

Do I?

**Yeah.**

Yes, umm...But I do know three of them are dead. Yeah well my sister was one who worked there, I got her there.

**Alright yeah.**

Yeah so you know, it was a...Was a, a, umm. A nice job, lovely job. Gardening.

**What did you like about it did you like being outside?**

Yes, I liked the work, the gardening and and the friendship. It was, it was... It was Quite a good job. And as I say I like gardening, it was lovely when we use to have to had to rake all the leaves, and burn ‘em and I always remember when the planes used to be going over and we used to say “good luck” and all that sort of thing, and when I look back I think “ooh it’s terrible really”. You wanted ‘em t-to, now I think you wanted ‘em to bomb somebody. All terrible really, but at the time, because they bombed us. We wanted them to bomb them, yeah.

**And did you get to interact with people around the park and using the park?**

Yes! Of course they didn’t use the park that much, the using of the park then because...Because of the war. I mean all the young people were called up. But umm...It did keep the park nice, as nice as they could. I don’t think it’s ever gone back to...What it was. I don’t know.

**Did you-It must have been a nicer environment. Just thinking about the hot rooms you were talking about and then the park?**

Ohh, there was no comparison, yeah but I remember I was fourteen then, I’m twenty one, twenty two. Cos I was twenty one when I got married.

**How, how long was the day in the park, you said half six-**

Used to start at half past six in the morning and we’d finish at half past five but, we used to have breakfast. We had so long for breakfast. You know, and umm it’s funny really. You got used to it...It’s only in the summer we started at half past six. Not in the winter.

**And you carried on working through the winter?**

Yeah, yeah.

**And what time did you start in the winter?**

I think it was eight o’clock; oh ooh yeah it was the best job of the war.

**Do you think so?**

Yeah

**Yeah it does sound s-**

Better than working in munitions factory. Oh it was lovely.

**How did you find that job then?**

Ho-...Ooh you don’t want me to go into that. Haha, well um um I got married...Quickly. And umm I did work for Pecks, in Old Kent Road? Was it Old Kent Road...Not Old Kent Road...Umm...Yeah it is Ol-it is Old Kent Road. You know umm...The railway arch at New Cross?

**Mhmm**

By Ilderton, that’s Old Kent Road ain’t it?

**Yeah, yeah.**

I thought it was, just shows you me memory. Peck’s a fish-paste people, worked there. I um I went there temporary...Because...I went there temporary, no I di-no I didn’t really like it, and I really didn’t like the people, and they didn’t like me. And, umm...They said, you take turns in doing the toilets every week. And so I said-God rebellious me- “I wasn’t employed to clean toilets, and I’m not gonna’ do it”. Well course they told the woman in charge. And she said to me, on the Friday, to do the toilets. And I said “I’m not going to do toilets”. So she sacked me.

So, I had to go to the employment exchange. Uhh, and they was gonna’ stop me money. So I appealed, I appealed on the...condition that I was employed to work in the factory but not employed to clean toilets...I got me money.

**\*Laughs\* so they weren’t, they weren’t trying not to pay you at all?**

Umm...So...Anyway I got married. And I had to go to the Labour exchange then, what it was called then. Cos’ I knew I had to do war work, and I knew I had to do war work. But I was picky on what work I wanted. And umm, She said about being a conductress, well I couldn’t. Because as soon as those sirens went, I was the first down the air raid shelter.

**\*Laughs\***

So she said, what about the um munitions’ factory. What was it called? It was at Woolwich, Seamans? Seamans. And I said “Ooh I’ve heard terrible names about them” she said “if we listen to anything nobody will work anywhere”. So I refused that job and then she said “Would you like to be a park keeper”. I said “Ooh lovely, that’s just my job” she said “At Southwark Park”. So that’s how I got the job at Southwark Park. And and, how lovely it was. But course’ I wen-When I went I wasn’t a park keeper. That was to do with the gardening, and that’s that. And I stayed there till Jack came home from the war.

**Did they have to train you, or did they have t-**

Ooh god no. Didn’t need any, its common sense init. You don’t need training to rake leaves, or-Well we did planting, but I mean. Was...but we loved it down the Nursery when we had to pick out the seedlings, lovely job. Lovely job.

**Do you remember how much you got paid for it?**

Yeah. Umm, two pound fifteen, that was under the London County Council. We got paid same as the men. Two pound fifteen, which was quite a lot I suppose in them days.

**Was it quite unusual...to be paid the same, or was that?**

Well it was when you think of it, well because I suppose we were doing a man’s job. Because we took over from...the men. There was only a few park keepers, and they were too old to go to war, so we couldn’t fraternise with anybody.

**Was you always quite rebellious?**

Eh?

**Was you always quite rebellious?**

Was I always quite rebellion? Well I wanted me rights, if that’s what you mean. That’s why I believed in unions. You know, that was that.

**Do you remember the name of the union’s you were-**

“Transport and General Workers”. Yeah...

**Did you used to go to meetings with any of them or-**

God no, no. Well I don’t think there was meetings than during the war was there? If you’re talking about during the war, you know, and I mean there was still raids, and as I told ya’ I was always first down the air raid shelter.

**So you know the job where you did the fish paste?**

When what?

**Umm was it called Pecks? The one where you, you said you didn’t want to clean the toilets, the one before the gardening job.**

Before the gardening job?

**Yeah, the one where you didn’t want to clean the toilets?**

Pecks.

**Right, yeah. Was it, was it- You said that the people, you didn’t like the people-**

Well yes, and they didn’t like me

**Did you like the over people that were working, or was it just the foreman?**

Tha-be-be-be-before, I just...They. You see after working at Crosse and Blackwell’s, and Pecks was such a small scale, and I, it was...I could do so...much quicker than them.

**Oh really?**

Well yes, and they were ooh god, they were. They didn’t like me anyway and I didn’t like them, really.

**What-who-what was it again was it a belt-**

They were clicky.

**What’s that?**

Well, th-they’d been there a long time, and so they were all...

**Ooh, I see what you mean.**

Yeah.

**The people who worked there.**

Yeah. I suppose looking back you see I, I bragged about how I could do the work I suppose. But I weren’t gonna’ do toilets.

**I don’t blame you. Was it the belt again or was it? Different, the kind of work you were actually doing in that one.**

I can’t really remember much...about it. Cept’ I didn’t like it, In fact I think it’s the only job, firm that I didn’t really enjoy. Cos’ I’ve never mind working, really. I’ve never mind getting up, to go to work. Can’t understand people not wanting to go to work, well not, not when you’re young anyway.

**So you, you did the gardening job. Did you have any jobs after that? When after, after when you’re husband came home. Did you work again after that?**

Ooh well, no. Not really because I had John, and then I had Jacqueline, and you didn’t go out to work when, in them days. Not really. Not until, we lived at St Pauls Cray, and then Jack got a job in Bristol, and we moved to Bristol. We won’t go into that, he, he suffered a heart attack, and he had, was...Was only there eighteen months before he became ill so, I did go out to work again. I’ll tell you where I worked, Imperial Tobacco?

**Oh yeah yeah.**

In the Kitchen’s.

**Oh okay.**

And, and that was another good job, I had in the kitchen.

**Do you remember when that was, what year that was?**

Let me see...I’m...Do you wanna’ know how old I am?

**If you don’t mind, um**

Ninety-two.

**Wow.**

So, I retired at sixty.

**Okay yeah.**

And I’d been at the Imperial for...I suppose seven or eight years.

**Okay yeah...Yeah.**

Yeah and I had to...That was another lovely job.

**In the kitchens.**

Yeah. I liked it, in-in fact. I still keep in, with people I’ve worked with.

**Oh really?**

Yeah, yeah. Every year. Yeah.

**Aww that’s nice.**

Yeah.

**Do they-Is that in Bristol you said?**

Bed your pardon?

**Was that in Bristol you said?**

Yeah.

**Oh so do they live around that area now?**

Yeah.

**Aw that’s nice.**

Yeah.

**So what kind of work were you doing in the kitchen?**

I-I was very, lucky. Because when I went there, I was supposed to go in the scullery. Oh ooh god I would’ve hated that. Wouldn’t of stuck that, but I went in kitchen, and I was only supposed to be temporary. But, they let me stay in the kitchen, and then there was a department where you did um...Cos’ there was two lots to cooking, cooking for the directors and managers, and the other cooking was for the um...The office workers, in the building. So outside off the kitchen, there was this lady. She used to do salads, cheese, and sandwiches. All for directors and management and I got...Umm got the chance to go and work with her she weren’t pleased to have me and I was what you would call, an assistant cook. So I got promotion, I’m in overalls, instead of being in the ordinary overalls. I’m in white, and it was another, a lovely job like the park. So it was a lovely job there. I loved it. Lovely atmosphere, I was educated then-the swearing in kitchens, it’s terrible. Absolutely. But it didn’t bother me then, I didn’t like it. You know they’d shout and bore at each other. Terrible. But I didn’t mind, it was a lovely job

**Was it, was it men and women?**

Yeah.

**Yeah**

Yep, yeah.

**What did you like so much about it?**

Well it was pleasant. It was free. Long as you got-did your job. It was it was nice. Well you know, it was. Umm as I said I still write to the four of em, that I worked with.

**Four girls?**

We-w-well one is...Umm...Andrew. He was a chef, and he married a girl from the office, Lyn. So I get a long letter from her, Andrew and Lyn every year. Telling me all her news and yeah everything Andrew was a chef there, and yes. I-yes it was a lovely atmosphere, and Fridays, we always went down the pub for a drink in the lunch time. You know, not all of us, but I was one of em’.

**You said it felt free, why did it feel free?**

You what?

**You said it felt free? Why did you feel free? What, why**

Why did I feel free?

**Mmm**

Well because of the atmosphere, was a nice atmosphere, you know as I said especially when it was hot in the summer, in the kitchens. Terribly hot. So they used to get a bit, drained. But I was alright, cos’ I was outside in the cool.

**Where was that?**

Imperial.

**Yeah but was it separate from the kitchen?**

It was a room off the kitchen you see, so it was cool cos’ I’m doing salads and...things. Yeah.

**Was it quite nice with the park job and then the job in the kitchen, cos’ it was a bit of a quite a bit of variety of things, different tasks and things you had to do which was quite nice, did you like that about it. There, was there a variety?**

Oh, it was just how how things happened, really...Just how things happened. I was fortunate to work at the park, plus I knew Southwark park from a kid. When we used to go up there with a bottle of water and bread and dripping sandwiches. Push the pram up there and spend, the day in the swings. And there I was, sometimes relieving the lady because they had a lady in the swings the children used to queue up, yeah and so really, it was lovely. I knew Southwark Park from a child that was our Bank Holiday...

**Where you went?**

Yeah

**So from the park you just went straight to the kitchen, and then that, that was the next job you did?**

What from the park?

**Yeah. It was the kitchen**

Well yeah, more or less, I did work for Brentford nylons, in Bristol. Did you, do you? Well Brentford Nylons was, up before you get to the M4 Brentford. Their factory and they did blankets, dressing gowns, sheets. Polyester sheets and they got quite big. And I worked in one of their shops, that was quite, that was quite nice. Everybody in the family had Nylon dressing gowns, blankets...polyester sheets, dirt cheap.

**So were you, were you selling them?**

Yeah.

**Yeah, and did you like that one?**

Did I like that? Yeah! Yeah, I liked Bristol, I didn’t at first, but I, I hear from my neighbour every year in Bristol. My next door neighbour where I was. It was only Pecks that didn’t like me.

**So that’s the one you didn’t like?**

Now that’s the end, the end. Less you wanna know anything else?

**Well I was think about the technology that you used; did you see changes in the technology that you used to produce stuff?**

You what?

**Did you see changes in the technology that you used to do stuff? Did the machines get faster?**

The technology?

**Yeah.**

Well, well I...I suppose it is today, but it wasn’t then was it? I mean, it was, the the the, I suppose that’s why the employment was, because the factories. I suspect they do things a lot different that they do today, well there isn’t much manufacturing today?

**In any of the jobs, did you ever operate machinery? Or was it just the belt and you were doing the kind of stacking, or did you ever operate machinery in th-**

Did I?

**Yeah.**

The only machinery I operated on was temporary, which, if I hadn’t of left when I did she would of made me permanent machinist in Lipton’s. On the machine there. That’s the only part of machine. Less you wanna’ know about David Brown’s in Huddersfield? \*laughs\*

**Yeah, yeah. How was that one?**

When I was courting Jack, my lovely husband. Somebody said to me the other week “would you have changed your life” and I said “would I do anything different? And I said “no” and she was amazed, well, well if my life meant changing my late husband, ooh I wouldn’t he was a love, love of my life. So I wouldn’t change, I don’t think material thing comes in you’re in love and happiness comes first. With me it did anyway. So...He was working up in Huddersfield on a reserved occupation, and um he invited me. He was staying with this lady Mrs Penrose, the old bitch. And he invited me up, and so up Huddersfield I went. And, and then, Mrs Penrose said I could stay there. But um, she thought she’d thought the world of him coos’ he’d taken her to Theatre’s and like that before I got there, and of course that stopped didn’t it? And anyway that’s beside the point. I worked at David Browns engineering; don’t talk to be about machines. Ask me if I was any good.

**Were you any good?**

You would’ve lost the war if it’d been me. There was this, these great big machines. And you had they had gears big gears, and they had to be ground down to nil. All I know was these HUGE machines. And you had to do these wheels for them for the gears for them to come in. The ca-ooh what’s the name? They ground the steel gears to nil. Well whenever I brought the bloody thing in, it crashed. I wasn’t any good. I was doing night work, month on days and month on nights. And amongst all Yorkshire, I’m the the only Londoner, not that they weren’t nice. But I wasn’t good at any engineering, so after causing so much havoc. They put me on um, hand grinding. Such a boring job, and um I didn’t stay there, I didn’t stay there in Huddersfield, couldn’t stand it, talking about machines, oh they were. I mean the women, the women could do it! Not, not me!

**What kind of work did you have to with the machine?**

I’m telling you! Great big machines, and you have these gears and you gotta’ bring these wheels in and they have to be ground down, to nil. Cos they’re going in for aeroplanes aren’t they, well I would’ve busted all the aeroplanes. So they took me off, I went on hand grinding I didn’t like all the night work, so I went back to London and stayed with my Auntie at new Cross. That’s why I went to Pecks, and I stayed with her. And that’s why I came back to London; I wasn’t any good at that, sausage machine-Yes. Engineering-No. Well David Browns is a big company up at Huddersfield.

**So you’ve had really physical jobs, all you jobs have been very physical.**

Well yes, I haven’t had easy.

**I can’t believe the hot room one.**

I don’t suppose they do it now, they wouldn’t do it now. Different technology.

**Yeah, did it ever make you tired when you were in there? When you first started? How was it physically on you in the hot room?**

Well in those days, you accepted it. I didn’t like it at first, but I got to like it, not the job so much as much as the money. If you know what I mean.

**Do you think you didn’t mind it as much because, because of all the other physical work people did?**

Yeah, in in in in in them days, education wasn’t much was it? You, you. Not compared to what the children need to know today, marvellous. I mean I could do reading writing spelling sewing and we did do domestic which isn’t really taught today, you don’t really need to know how to cook. But life’s different. And so you left school at fourteen, which looking back is a bit early. They don’t know they’re born do they. Well I wouldn’t want them to. There more knowledgeable than we were life wise.

**Just going back to the machinery quickly, the machinery. You didn’t like doing the machinery in Huddersfield, but you said in Lipton’s.**

No comparison. Oh god no comparison, if you’ve never been in a engineering factory. You don’t know. HUGE machines. HUGE!! Ooh god I can see em’ now. I told you if it was left to me we woulda’ lost the war.

**Was it very loud in there as well? I can imagine it being very loud because-**

Oh they had to set up the machines after I’d finished. Ooh it’s very technology, very clever. See I’m not a te-I’m not an engineering person. You know I mean women worked on aeroplanes didn’t they? I admired them, when, you know. But um it wasn’t for me, I’d much rather been a nanny, but not now. Looking back, I wouldn’t wanna’ have looked after Lady So-and-so’s baby.

**Did you tell anybody you wanted to be a nanny or a?**

No. I did tell the school, I wanted d to be a waitress. Oh no, I’ll tell you what I wanted to be, because the only thing I got 10/10 in embroidery, I was very good at embroidery and needle work, I would of like to of done that but you had to be an apprentice and they got no money. That was my mum’s concern cos’ she wanted...The money. And when I said I wanted to be a waitress looking back I’m glad I wasn’t. cos’ I think that’s a hard job, and demeaning sometimes, well in those days I don’t wanna’ bow to anyone or be subservient. Terrible person.

**Were you rebellious person at school?**

Eh?

**You said you were quite rebellious, were you at school?**

Ooh no, you couldn’t be rebellious at SCHOOL! Good gracious me, you were frightened of you teacher at school, corr and you wouldn’t say “boo” corr...No...Cou-...Ooh no your teacher was a teacher. Which looking back wasn’t right. It’s gone from one extreme to the other. Right that’s it.

**Yep.**