**Anonymous 4’s Story**

**Perfect. Um, er and how did you come to hear about this project at the moment?**

Through Claire. She came down and was talking about it.

**Ok. And do you usually come to the community centre often or?**

Every Thursday because I am a volunteer stroke befriender to one of the users.

**Oh right. There you go. And you do that every Thursday?**

No I befriend other people as well, with the elderly.

**Ok. Very nice.**

If you say so (laughs).

**If you enjoy it, that’s the main thing. Yeah, everyone has their own…**

Yeah.

**And you mentioned before where you were born, if you could tell us…**

I was born in Dublin. My mum was Irish. Dad was English, but we came over when I was a year, just over a year.

**Ok. And what year were you born?**

Fifty four.

**Fifty four.**

So I’m getting old now (laughs).

**Same as my mum (laughs).**

(Laughs). So I class it as I’ve always been over here.

**You’ve always been…**

Here….

**In England. So your mum was Irish and your dad was English?**

Yeah. I mean I’ve got Irish aunts and uncles scattered around, but I class myself as English.

**Because you were here since you were one basically..**

Exactly.

**Of course. So when you moved over to England, you probably don’t remember that, but do you remember what your parents had told you? Where you moved to basically…**

Yeah. Across the road. Bermondsey (laughs).

**Do you know which road it was?**

Yeah. Alma Grove

**Ah there you go, ‘cos I don’t know the area so well.**

44 Alma Grove

**44 Alma Grove. And that was your first house here?**

Yeah. Then we moved to 64 Lynton Road

**What age were you when that happened?**

About eleven.

About eleven ok. So that’s a long time in one house.

Yeah. And then we moved back to 37 Alma Grove and I was twenty. So I’ve always been this area.

**Ok. That’s good. Always in the same area. So you’ve basically seen, since you’ve moved here how the area’s changed.**

A lot of changes, a lot of changes.

**Do you have any brothers or sisters?**

One brother. He’s three years older.

**Ok. And does he live in this area?**

No. He’s married and he’s living in Sittingbourne.

**Ok. Do you remember the kind of work that your mum and dad did? Did they work in this area?**

Well my dad was in the Post Office. He was on the vans, the parcel vans in the Post Office..

**Oh to handle the parcels?**

Yeah.

**Ok.**

And my mum, she worked in a care home; she done that.

**Ok. In this area?**

Yeah, just down Grange walk.

**Ok.**

(Laughs). Just down there. Literally about ten minutes down the road.

**Ok, right.**

And she also done part time in a baker’s, which is down there. You got a secondary school down there, and it was next door to that.

**Ok, right. And she worked there while you were growing up?**

Yes.

**Did she work until?**

Oh and she done cleaning in the school as well.

**Ok.**

The school we was at.

**Oh right. Which school did you go to?**

Primary school was St. Joseph’s, Dockhead, Jamaica Road.

**Ok just over there.**

Me brother went to St. Michael’s which is over there. I have to be different.

**You had to go to a different school.**

Thanks to mother (laughs). St. Joseph’s, Hatherley Road, Sidcup.

**Right.**

That’s a convent school.

**Ok.**

Taught by nuns.

**Ok.**

Well I’m not saying nothing (laughs).

**So you had nuns at your school?**

Yeah.

**And all the teachers were basically nuns?**

Well yeah apart from maybe two.

**Ok. And what, did you have a good relationship with them or?**

What with the nuns?

**Yeah.**

Yeah. They was blooming strict, I’ll be honest, they were strict. But yeah.

**What would be an example of them being strict?**

Well they do give warnings out. You know like the old fashioned blackboard rubbers?

**Ok yes.**

That come flying down the class (laughs).

**They’d throw it at you?**

And if you don’t put your desk up…..

**Because you had those desks that would lift up…**

Yeah. Not like now you just got a table. I’m talking about years ago when you had desks that **went up like that.**

**Yeah and you would put your items…**

Yeah, and if you don’t put your desk up it was….(laughs).

**Did you receive this coming at you….?**

Well you just all had to be careful. If you see her with this, you thought oh it’s going to come…(laughs).

**Would you say that you were a good pupil or maybe ?**

I was good yeah.

**Yeah?**

Yeah.

**And did you enjoy school?**

Yeah. Yeah. Yeah.

**What did you enjoy about it?**

I enjoyed mostly craft, things like that. I mean I’m not clever clever. I got by. I enjoyed more crafty things.

**Like just doing things with your hands?**

Yeah, yeah.

**What kind of, what did you do in school for crafts?**

Cookery.

**Ok**.

Sewing, things like that. I enjoyed that more than, what I call the academic things.

**What other, what subjects did you actually learn in school?**

Well there was normal, English, geography. The normal..

**Normal. Science…**

Ok I got by with it but…

**Didn’t have, yet you preferred…**

Yeah.

**Did they have the same subjects running through from primary school through to?**

Well in a primary school, that was what I call just a normal English, maths and whatever. Then you change at eleven.

**And then it goes onto something…..**

Yeah.

**Did they offer courses? Did they talk to you about what you wanted to do?**

What when I left school?

**Yeah.**

Oh I just left school and went straight into childcare.

**Ok.**

(Laughs).

**What age did you finish school then?**

Sixteen.

**Sixteen. That’s the standard age here for……**

(Laughs).

**It could be different (laughs).**

Could be (laughs).

**So did you have an idea in school that you wanted to leave and do childcare then?**

I knew I didn’t want to work in office.

**Ok.**

So I knew it was either going to be working with animals or children.

**You liked them both then?**

So, I didn’t know, I didn’t care which way it went but it was that.

**And how did you, how did you go into the childcare, how did you find a job in childcare? How did you….?**

Phone Social services.

**Ah ok. There you go. And they helped you…**

Just said, ‘ I’m interested’. They said, ‘Have you?’ I said, ‘No’. I said, ‘Is there training on the job?’ ‘Yes.’ ‘Right.’

**So you were trained on the job then?**

Yes.

**Oh that’s good. How long did, how long did you?**

Two years’ training.

**Two years’ training.**

Two years’ training to become a nursery nurse.

**And what, for a nursery nurse, what ages does that cover?**

Nought to five.

**Nought to five. Ok.**

Then I done the in-service training, which I ended up working in a children’s home, which is nought up to sixteen (laughs). Which went up nought to sixteen, I done that.

**Ok.**

And then I done another course, which I must have been mad, for all the naughty children that didn’t go to school.

**And was that?**

That was difficult.

**How old were you when you did?**

That course?

**Yes.**

About twenty three, twenty four.

**Which did you prefer, did you prefer?**

I love children. I can’t say anything better than anything, but I love children.

**You don’t mind which age?**

No. As long as I’m around children, I’m happy. I mean, I know it’s weird, but that’s me.

**Everyone has their own.**

I mean like, I had to give up work because of, I had my eldest.

**How old were you...? Did you...? When did you?**

How old was I?

**Yes.**

I was twenty three and a half when I had my eldest.

**And what was his name?**

Jacqueline. And then three years later I had Ian. Can’t cope with this, can’t cope with this. I done child minding at home, you know like taking him to school and all this, that and the other. Then they got off hand, you know, they got married, they had their own lives, and whatever. I done nannying in people’s houses. I loved it.

**How long were you doing nannying for? Up until, up until twenty three?**

Yes. I love it.

**And for being a nanny, you live in a house?**

No. They me. I’d go there for say half past seven, the parents go to work or whatever they do, I’ve got some child or the children, and whatever, take them to the school or wherever they’ve got to go.

**And how many families did you take care of do you think in your……?**

Oh, while I was doing it?

**Yeah.**

About five.

**About five. How long would you work for each family usually?**

Varied, about three or four hours.

**Ok. Each day?**

Yeah.

**And how many children were there usually?**

Could be two, could be three. I love it.

**And you were with five families…Did you, did you happen to meet, did you marry for example?**

I was married then, that’s how come I went child minding, yeah?

**Ok.**

But ok that. I split from him, divorced from him, and that’s how come my kids have grown up, I went into nannying.

**Ok. So when were you married if that’s ok to ask?**

When I was twenty one.

**When you were twenty one?**

Yeah.

**Ok. And was it in the local area?**

Over the road (laughs).

**In the church over the road?**

Yeah.

**What was the….?**

St. Anne’s.

**St. Anne’s is it? Oh, what was it like?**

It was a lovely day. If I knew then what I knew then, I wouldn’t have done it. But still, that’s how you learnt by your mistakes. I mean I’ve got two lovely kids so that’s it.

**And when did you have your second child?**

Three years after my daughter. So that’s 23, 24, 26.

**Twenty six, when you were twenty six. And what year was that? 1970…..?**

Jacqueline was ’73 so if I….Oh, I don’t know, ’73. (Laughs). Well anyway it was three years after Jacqueline.

**Ok. And you lived at, was it (number), did you say?**

When I got married, I lived near Surrey Docks. 118 Redriff Estate.

**You remember?**

Oh yeah. It was a one bedroom flat, but ok we had to move because of Jacqueline. So…

**Because…?**

Well it was only one, and we needed a two. But someone upstairs decided to flood our flat with their Machine.

M: **Their machine? Oh, their washing machine.**

X: Yeah. Literally, everything, water coming through the ceiling (laughs).

M: **Oh no (laughs).**

X: Fire engines up there, the lot.

M**: Ah wow.**

X: Seriously.

M: **So that was easier to move then? (Laughs).**

X: Yeah. ‘We’ll give you a flat.’ And I said, ‘Ok fine.’ Went to see this flat, I said, ‘ That’s all on. I’m not moving.’ So I got a three. Fine (laughs).

**And you didn’t have to pay any?**

No. But it’s not my fault.

**No, of course. Oh that’s good.**

Yeah.

**You didn’t have to pay any extra for?**

No.

**When you did the nannying how, if you don’t mind me asking, how much were you paid per week, or was it monthly or?**

It was weekly. That varied, that varied. It’s usually about seven pound an hour roughly.

**Ok. And you did about three to four hours a day?**

Yeah, yeah.

**Ok. And when you received your pay cheque, what would you spend your money on?**

I would make sure like, there’s money in me house, then I’d go spend it (laughs). I’m honest (laughs).

**What would you spend your money on? What was?**

Me and my kids.

**Yeah, that would be…..**

Well I say that, that’s wrong, it’s always my kids. I come last, even now. It’s got to be your partner, my kids, my grand**kids and me at the bottom.**

**That’s what a lot of mums do.**

Yeah.

**You lived with your husband when you moved to the….?**

Yeah.

**And did he grow up in this area, do you know?**

Yeah. He lived in Lynton Road just round the corner there as well.

**Ok. And where did you meet each other, how did you meet?**

Now you’ll laugh at this….

**Only if it’s funny (laughs).**

Evening classes.

**Evening classes! For what?**

Guitar.

**Oh for guitar. And you both learnt guitar? What made you take an evening class for guitar, how did you hear about?**

I just had this wacky idea I wanted to do something. And when I had this wacky idea, I got into it. And the school down Galleywall Road were doing guitar classes. Down I go. Thought nothing of it.

**Was that once a week or?**

Yeah. Every Friday. Thought nothing of it. I mean, he’s been going for X amount of years. And this person said, ‘He likes you.’ And I said, ‘Not my problem.’ (Laughs).

**So it wasn’t love at first sight then? (Laughs).**

But everybody saw it. Apart from me.

**Ok, wow. And you continued to do the guitar lessons together and?**

Then it’s all we’ve met sort of thing, and ok we got married, which was a bad thing but still. I mean we’re civil now because of the children, the grandchildren. But maybe if I know from relationships you can’t live with that person, if that makes sense.

**Yeah it does.**

But, I mean I wouldn’t wish anything bad to happen to him even though it was a horrible relationship, I wouldn’t want that. But what’s done is done.

**Things are civil. And so he was taking guitar lessons ‘cos he lived locally. Does he still live locally?**

Yeah, which is horrible (laughs). He sent shivers down me spine.

**So you still see?**

Well he used live at Lewisham. I thought ok, chances of meeting him is nil, and my son come up to me and ‘Dad’s moved.’ I said, ‘Good. Where’s he moved to?’ He goes deaf. ‘How do you know?’ ‘Down the road from you.’ I said, ‘Go away.’ Literally two minutes from me.

**So you still see him? (Laughs). How long did you continue with the guitar lessons for?**

Oh quite a while.

**Do you still play?**

No, no, no. It was weird, I mean it was a weird thing. It was nice but it was weird. How we got together, but we’re civil and that’s it.

**That’s the main thing.**

Yeah. I mean there was a time when I used to go ‘Grrrrrrr’ (laughs). But, for the children and the grandchildren, that’s it.

**Do you keep in contact with any of the children that you used to nanny?**

Yeah. Maria, she lives Baker Street, very posh area (laughs).

**Is Baker Street the area or?**

Baker Street. Yeah Baker Street.

**Ah ok.**

Near Holborn, that way.

**Oh yes, yes, yes.**

Very posh (laughs).

**Was she one of the first er?**

Well her mother was Chinese, Vietnamese, I’m not prejudiced, whatever. And the dad had his own shipping company, yeah, how his own shipping company. Yeah exactly.

**Where was the shipping company?**

I don’t know. But he was always away on business and whatever, and she was at college and she used to come home about half past four, so all I had to do was get there about half past seven, give Maria her breakfast, get to school, which was across the road, day’s my own. Day’s my own, ‘cos she had a cleaner in, to do whatever, and as long as I was back to pick Maria up, I could do whatever I wanted.

**What did you do with your time then**?

Well go round, I could do whatever I wanted. And she said, ‘Can you drive?’ I said, ‘Yes thank you.’ She said, ‘Come with me.’ Down these stairs, out this back, the garage. Her husband had bought her this convertible car, never touched it, she never touched it. I said, ‘I’m not touching that.’

**She couldn’t drive or?**

Yeah, yeah. She never touched it (laughs).

**So did you get to drive?**

Yeah. Oh yeah. I said, ‘I’m not taking it home.’ (Laughs).

**You’d be worried, wouldn’t you?**

Yeah, I should be looking at the people all the time. I said, ‘No.’

**So you got to drive the convertible?**

Yeah. I’m living it up a bit for a little while (laughs).

**So how long were you, was this the first family that you…?**

Oh about a year or so…

**And it just finished?**

Then she packed up college and left her husband. So petered out.

M: **So the break stopped there. And what was the, so they were quite, they had quite a big house, so generally you would get there at seven thirty, you’d make the breakfast for the kids and get them ready for school or?**

Take them to school, yeah.

**Take them to school. And they had a cleaner, so you didn’t have to do any cleaning?**

And someone who came in to do the laundry and that comes back. I mean, it’s like something off the telly. I’m not being funny, you know when you, not being rude, like an American. That’s what it’s like I thought.

**And you enjoyed it?**

Oh yeah. But it was a different world. Where I’m used to getting up and doing something. No.

**Perfect. And you would just pick them up at school?**

Yeah. Get up, get there for about half past seven, Maria would be up, give her her breakfast, make sure she’s washed and all dressed for school. That’s that.

**And then pick them up in the afternoon?**

Yeah.

**And then?**

That’s it.

**That was the end of your day?**

And ok, so during the holidays I may go over there during the holidays. But to me, that’s nothing.

**Did you go on holidays, when they would go on holidays would you go with them?**

No. No.

**Just for more of a day?**

Yeah.

**Day** **to day stuff. And what was it like for some of the other families that you worked for?**

One I had which was in Peckham. She was ill with cancer. And she had two children, and dad obviously found it hard to cope. So I was going in to look after kids, take the kids to school and do the washing and whatever. I mean there’s all different things. I had to make sure the kids were sorted out and Pepper was sorted out, the mother.

**Ok, so it was a….?**

A different thing. You know, like with her medication, if the nurse was coming in and I had phone calls from the dad saying, ‘Right is she all right?’ And all this, that and the other, it’s totally different.

**It sounds different**.

Yeah, I mean that did press on your brain like it was saying ok. But yeah, I thoroughly enjoyed it though.

**Was it, for the kids was it the same routine basically?**

Oh yeah. To get there in the morning, then dad would give me a run down, saying, ‘Right, this, this, this, this.’ I said, ‘Ok fine.’ And he used to phone me whatever time. Fine. And the only thing different is I did the washing and I gave them their ‘tea’ as I call it, but that’s fine.

M: **What’s tea? It’s?**

Well it could have been like omelette.

**Ok.**

Things like that.

**So like a dinner?**

Yeah. I call it tea, they call it dinner.

**Yeah, I call it tea as well.**

Omelette or whatever. ‘Cos I’d say to them, ‘cos dad used to come in later, I’d say, ‘What do you want to eat?’ ‘What can we have?’ I said, ‘Well no, you give me a suggestion.’ ‘Can we have an omelette?’ And I said, ‘Ok. What’s going in this magic omelette?’ And all these things come out (laughs).

**Did they help you cook then?**

No. We had ham, and we had tomatoes, and we had mushrooms (laughs).

**Always what they wanted.**

And if you don’t eat it (laughs).

**And you used to cook for the kids and also for the mum? Yes?**

That was important, make sure she’d ate lunchtime because of her medication.

**Ok. And you had to take care of her medication. Was that going out to the pharmacy, to do the prescription?**

Yeah. Yeah, and to make sure she takes it during the day; so I had to make sure she eats lunchtime, whatever it is, and in the evening. Ok.

**Make sure she’s set up?**

Yeah.

**So you said, you mentioned the husband would come back later, what time?**

About sixish roughly.

**And then you would, and then you would go home?**

I would tell him everything’s all right, children been fed, and Pepper has been fed and watered, just got to have medication at night and everything’s fine.

**How long did you work for this family for?**

About two and a half years. Oh I love it, I really do love it.

**How did that family finish with you?**

Well God rest her soul, she died and he moved out of London.

**So the whole situation changed?**

Yeah.

**What about your next family? Basically when you would come home in the evening after that job….**

What to my house?

**Yeah. Who would, would the kids still, would the kids get home from school by themselves or were they still in school at this time?**

What you’re talking about my kids?

**Your kids.**

No my kids were older, they’d left home and everything else.

**Ah ok. Who would, when you were working when they were younger, who would…..?**

When I was working in a nursery, I didn’t have kids then.

**Ok. Ah ok.**

Then when I got pregnant, I worked part time. And then, obviously I packed up working, and that’s when I went as a child minder, things like that, and when they left home I went as a nanny.

**Then you did the nannying. Ok.**

Yes I know it’s weird, sorry. (Both laugh).

**Not at all. Did you, did you make any friends through your line of work?**

Yeah. More so through the nursery and the children’s home.

**Ok**.

Because it’s, how can I put this, the child minding and nannying is lovely, but it’s, you don’t really meet anybody apart from the family.

**It’s more, always with the children.**

When I was in the children’s home and the nursery, you got more people. You know like there was about four visiting in one room at a time. So if there’s about say four or five rooms, there’s lots of people around.

**Yeah. For the children’s home, what…….?**

That was a nursery. In children’s home, it’s different.

**Ok yeah. And you got to, you interacted with, you made friends with them, and you saw them outside of working hours as well?**

Yeah. But I mean I loved doing, I loved doing nanny work but that’s the downfall.

**You don’t meet as many people**?

Yeah, yeah. That’s the downfall. But you’ve got to take the rough with the smooth.

**So what would you do with your time off then? If you had a typical weekend?**

What when I was nannying?

**Ah yes basically.**

When I was nannying and it was my time off, then I would get in touch with one of my friends and we would go out (laughs).

**What would you do for fun then?**

A girlie night out (laughs).

**Just in the evenings, not during the day?**

If it’s a Saturday, we’d hit the shops (laughs).

**Ok. Retail therapy.**

Yeah. Hit the shops say on a Saturday, and then it’d be a night out or something. Could be something silly like bowling or something stupid.

**Yeah. And what would you do with your time off when you weren’t doing the nannying, when you were doing……?**

Oh that’s easy….that would be decorating my flat (laughs).

**Which flat was this?**

That would be at Surrey Quays, Surrey Docks that way. I’ve got a thing I don’t like things in the same place more than a month; that’s why my partner gets the hump with me (laughs).

**You like to move things around**.

So I sit there and he knows, he says, ‘You’re going to move things around.’ (Laughs).

**You get restless.**

Yeah, I’m terrible.

**So do you like moving the whole house around or….?**

Poor thing does night, shift work, he’s a security guard, he come home one night and the whole place was decorated (laughs).

**With no help?**

Me.

**Just you?**

I was bored (laughs).

**So that’s something you enjoy doing in your time off?**

Yeah. He came home, he goes, ‘That wasn’t there when I went to work.’ I said, ‘No, wasn’t that colour either.’ (Laughs).

**Did you like to go to any of the local pubs or….?**

Years ago, yeah. But now, I wouldn’t give you tupping time.

**What, the pub that, or the pubs that you used to go to, do you, would you say that they’ve changed much do you think?**

There’s only one round here now I would say I would go into, and that’s down the road, The Grange.

**The Grange**.

But the rest of them, I wouldn’t reckon it, I mean I used to into like The Red Cow, which was down the Grange. But now, it’s all trouble, trouble, trouble everywhere. And I can do without that.

**Trouble like?**

Well knives, guns, everything. I can do without that. No thank you.

**How long ago do you think it sort of changed to that, do you think?**

I suppose it’s always been around, it’s just come to a head hasn’t it?

**Come more aware of?**

I think, you know, I think it’s always been around. It’s been, it’s just come to a head.

**Would you say, it’s a reflection of the times or do you think this area has changed?**

Well this area has changed, it’s not just this area, it’s everywhere. I mean, you used to be ‘Oh move out of London.’ You move out of London, you get it there. So it’s not, oh ‘cos it’s a built up area, ‘cos it’s everywhere.

**Yeah, true. This area round here, ‘cos this is Bermondsey, is that correct? Is this the High Street we have along the road here that is next to the community centre or…?**

X: Yeah. Years and years ago, go back years, this road here, Southwark Park Road, used to be stalls on both sides.

**Stalls on both sides?**

Yeah, going from here right down, right down.

**To the end of the street?**

Yeah.

**What kind of stalls were they?**

Oh you had everything. It was like a market in the street, it was brilliant.

**Ok.**

It was brilliant. Yeah but when you see something change so drastically…

**What would you say has changed about it, it was all stalls before like?**

Yeah.

M **Was it clothing?**

Clothing, fruit, veg, everything. You know like, you could get plates, you could get everything.

**More independent owned, family owned….?**

Yeah. It was lovely. But, ok you’ve got a few stalls down there, you’ve got a car stall, a pet stall, and I thought, what’s the point in that?

**Is that now is it?**

Yeah. And I thought, going back then, you knew exactly what you was doing, and you had one, about four or five decent supermarkets down here, years ago it used to be David Braid’s stitchers and the Co-op, ok the Co-op’s still there (laughs).

**Ok. Still there?**

Yeah. Well it used to be down this end but it’s gone down there. But there used to be three decent supermarkets, but now we’ve got the Co-op and Iceland.

**But not really the same?**

No. So if you want another supermarket, you’ve got to go traveling. And if you want anything else, you’ve still got to go traveling.

**So you don’t think it has the same things?**

Oh it’s gone right down, which is sad.

**Did they all just, when did they sort of move away from the area do you think?**

I know it’s sad, probably people die and the families don’t want to keep on the thing, you know, probably that’s what happens. And then they had this wacky idea, oh we’ll put the stalls in this square thing, yeah ok (laughs).

**So it’s changed a lot then? (Laughs).**

Yeah. Well somebody had a wacky idea but….

**And did you, did you go to church very often or…..?**

Yes.

**When you were younger or you continued to?**

Yes, still do.

**Yeah. And how often did you have to go when you’re younger?**

Every Sunday (laughs). Cos mum I’m told (laughs). When I was at school it was every first Friday (laughs).

**Every first Friday.**

Yeah don’t ask me why (laughs). Because the nuns said so.

M: **And then you continued to go every Sunday, and you still go every Sunday?**

Yeah**.**

**M: And which church do you go to?**

Jamaica Road, Holy Trinity.

**Holy Trinity, not the one that you were married in?**

No. That was Church of England.

**Oh ok.**

It is weird. I’m Catholic, and my husband then, he’s Church of England. I know it’s horrible, I says, I would not make my children be Catholic.

**Really?**

It was drummed into me, if that makes sense….

**At a young age; you were always brought up….**

I said, ‘I’ll christen and baptise them into a Church of England.’ If they want to change religions to whatever, that’s fine.

M: **So you christened them in a Church of England?**

Yeah.

**And did they continue….?**

They go Church of England.

**Ok. And you go to the Catholic Church.**

That’s down to them. I said, ‘If you want to change to whatever, you do whatever.’ I mean, from, well I was baptised a Catholic, and fight to whatever. It was drummed in. I mean it caused a row ‘cos I didn’t get married in a Catholic Church, that done it. I was a sinner (laughs). You think I’m joking, that’s what I got called (laughs).

**Everyone’s a sinner (laughs).**

‘You are a sinner.’ I went, ‘Yeah that’s good.’ (Laughs).

**Who said that? The priest?**

My mum, my mum.

**Oh. Why would she call you a sinner?**

Because I didn’t get married in a Catholic Church. ‘You know that’s a sin.’ I said, ‘Oh all right fine.’ ‘You know it won’t work if you don’t go to a Catholic Church.’ Well ok miss know it all, she knew something I didn’t (laughs).

Th**ey were quite strict with your bringing up in the Catholic….**

I mean the worst of it is, how can I put this? My mum, it was her way or no way, that was it, there was no meeting half way (laughs).

**It was a hundred percent.**

That’s it. Her way, no way, that’s it. And me dad, talk about chalk and cheese, he used to go along just to keep the peace (laughs). But you know, they were so different, but they got along like a house on fire. Now when me dad died, it looked like me mum had lost her right arm and leg, she was completely lost. She just gave up completely, which is sad, I mean, when you’ve been with someone, what, forty, forty, fifty years…

Th**ey’re another half of you.**

Yeah exactly. I mean but, as my aunt said, she said, ‘What it is now, it’s so easy to get divorced.’

**It’s a different time now for….**

Which is true. I mean, she’s what, seventy odd, I know she went through the war, and all this and that, she said, ‘ No. If we had our problems, we talked. Where do people talk now?’ And I went, ‘Which is true though.’

**You don’t feel there’s as much communication now as there was before?**

I mean, me and my partner, yeah. We don’t argue (laughs). Which is brilliant. I mean, eight years never had an argument.

**Wow.**

Yeah. Says something doesn’t it?

**I really hope so (laughs).**

Yeah. Good innit? (Laughs). That’s good that, yeah. But she said, ‘Now you get people get married, they think they have an argument, it’s easy to go down and get a divorce.’ I said, ‘People may have arguments, disagreements yeah.’ I said, ‘ I agree on that.’ She said, ‘ No, that’s the problem, everybody years ago had disagreements but we couldn’t just walk out because there was nowhere to walk to.’ Which was true. Now there is all this help isn’t there?

**There wasn’t any option of divorce.**

I mean now, if a woman, bloke walked out, there is this help but years ago there wasn’t.

**Someone to take you in if…?**

Yeah. But she said, ‘No*,* it’s too easy.’ And I said, ‘Well ok.’ I can see both sides to it.

**Depends on the circumstances as well.**

Exactly. I mean, like my husband, I stuck with him because of the kids, but it was wrong, because he used to hit me.

**Ok.**

Yeah, and I thought the kids need their dad, but when I’d got the courage and said, ‘That’s it, finished,’ I knew I’d done a stupid thing of putting up with it because it affected the kids in the long run.

**Then they knew, ok.**

So yeah I had to sort of sit down and say sorry to them, and they said, ‘Don’t worry.’ I said, ‘No you saw it.’ So you know, ‘cos we’d split a few times, but if I’d just stuck with the split, ………?….but that’s in the past and I thought it’s going to take me ages to trust someone.

M: **And did it take you…?**

I was quite happy by myself doing me own thing.

**So how long were you alone for then?**

Oh quite a while. I had boyfriends, but I didn’t want to settle down. I just wanted to be me.

**How old were the kids then when you…?**

What when I separated?

**Yeah.**

Jacqueline was fifteen, and Ian was three years younger. But ok I thought ok, in a way I was glad, I know that sounds horrible, but I was. But, then I thought, I can be me. You know, I can go and do whatever I want to do and that was it. But it did take a long while to trust any man. I mean, yes I had boyfriends, yeah that’s where it stops, that’s it. But then when I met my partner, I thought ok………when I met my partner that was eight years ago. I thought, I’ll meet him, he won’t know where I live, I’ll have it on a meeting, go out, whatever. And it was going on for a few months, and he came up one Saturday, that done it my heart broke when he walked out that door. I’d tried to keep that barrier up, and I couldn’t.

**And you’ve been together since? And you live over here now?**

Yeah, near Tower Bridge.

**Near Tower Bridge, that’s a nice spot.**

(Laughs) Come and see me.

**Do you, when you were paid as a nanny and basically throughout your career, do you feel that you were paid well for the time that you did, did it steadily increase or?**

When I was working as a nursery nurse, I mean that’s going back, when I was sixteen, yeah it was good, and ok when I went nannying, it’s going back, when I was twenty odd, more older than that, it’s just a wage of the times isn’t? Ok I got more nannying probably than what I did when I was in the nursery, if that makes sense? Because I was sixteen, training and it was just a sign of the times wasn’t it? But I probably got more for those few hours from nannying.

**When you were in the nursery, what would your day be like then?**

Well it’d be all different hours, I’d either start at seven, seven ‘til whatever it was, ‘til about four.

**Ok, seven ‘til four.**

Yeah, and then you’d either come on at different times and finish at different times. We had to be open ‘til about six, half past six. So if you’re there seven o’clock, obviously you have to open up, then you get the breakfast ready, you get some toys out ready for them.

**So you give them breakfast and everything, so the parents had dropped them off early before work?**

Make sure there’s no weird or other things happening, and then you have to make sure there’s no bruises on them and all this or whatever…

**Did that happen often?**

Sometimes yeah. Then we had to sort of tell the boss and then we had to go through social services.

**Wow.**

Yeah, exactly (laughs). Not nice.

**But it didn’t happen often?**

No. But then you got the baby room, which is totally different, you know, you got baby noise…..

**Just doing everything……**

Screaming (laughs). Screaming, nappies, bottles (laughs).

**Would you, how did you feel about, were you ok with the screaming, everything?**

Yeah, yeah. That don’t worry me.

**Doesn’t bother you? And how many babies would be in the room for example?**

If there was three of us, then about twelve (laughs).

**Wow. So you had to look after about four babies each and that was for the day?**

Yeah. Yeah so you had like from baby baby going up to about a year. Then once they’ve passed year, year and a half, then they go up to the other rooms.

**And how long did you work in the baby room for?**

About eight months, nine months. Then I went onto the other rooms, then I done me in-service and work training in a children’s home (laughs). Then I done another course which meant I worked with children who didn’t go to school.

**So, so for the children’s home, how long were you there working?**

Oh god, can’t remember, years. I know it was at Sidcup, Hollies at Sidcup, I remember that.

**Hollies at Sidcup?**

Yeah. I remember that. It was a big, big house.

**And how many, how many kids were there then?**

Oh quite a lot, ages ranging from little to about sixteen, so you had all different ages. You had about two or three houses, you know, with different ages.

**How big were the houses then? How many rooms?**

Quite big, we had about four or five bedrooms in each house.

**Wow, and how many children per room then?**

Maybe two. Oh I loved it.

**How long did they stay in their houses for?**

What? How long did they stay there for?

**Yeah.**

Hopefully not long. Hopefully not long, ‘cos some of it was temporary care.

**So the children’s home was a combination of temporary and more long term?**

Yeah, yeah. Some of them was you know temporary care, due to family problems, you know. But some of them, ok, it was long term care, which ok meant either foster care or adoption or something.

**That they’d lost their parents?**

Yeah. Or they’d been abused or whatever the case may be.

**And you worked with……?**

All of them. I mean a classic one is for these darling children who won’t go to school. You know, you’ve got these lovely fourteen year olds (laughs).

**And they didn’t want to go to school.**

And you’re trying to sit with them, reason with them. Ok, ‘You’ve got to go to school.’ ‘Why?’ (Laughs). ‘You get a good education.’ ‘Yeah ok.’ And where we were, this person, Billy his name is, he just walked over to the window, he saw this policeman. He just threw something down, and it went straight onto the policeman’s head.

**He threw it at the policeman’s head? How old was he?**

Fourteen.

**Oh (laughs). What happened?**

Oh police would come. I’d say, ‘I’m sorry.’ He goes, ‘What’s your problem?’ I said, ‘Well I’m trying to get him to go to school.’ He goes, ‘You’ve got more luck seeing pigs fly.’ I said, ‘I know that.’ (Laughs).

**What happened to the boy?**

Nothing. He goes, ‘If you do it again, I’ll take you away.’ And I go, ‘Ok fine.’ And he laughs and I went, ‘ You’re going to be locked up before you’re fifteen.’

**So he wasn’t very…**

No. I got there in the end, I got there in the end. I said, ‘Say sorry.’ He goes, ‘Ok I’m sorry.’ I said, ‘Well say it as if you mean it.’ But the only way I could get through to him, ‘cos he used to go, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.’ I goes, ‘Ok, I’m going now, I’ll see you later.’ I just used to leave him. Then he came and found me.

**That’s a good way.**

Then sit down, then we’d talk. There’s no point me sitting there saying, ‘Blah, blah, blah, blah, blah,’ because he wasn’t listening.

M: **Yeah. Were a lot of the kids like that, were they troubled?**

For whatever reason they couldn’t get on in a mainstream school, for whatever reason. You know, whether they’re bullied or dyslexic or whatever. And we had this unit for children of that description, and it aged from twelve up to fifteen, and we had about eight kids of that. We had a teacher there, and two of us. That was hard work (laughs).

**A teacher and two…?**

And two like me. Yeah that was hard work.

**For how many children?**

Eight. But a range in age, when you’ve got about fourteen fifteen year olds (laughs).

**Bigger than their minds.**

Yeah. I mean some of them were giants (laughs). Twinkle foot giants as I called them.

**How did you, did you have to treat each child differently?**

Yeah. I didn’t favour them, I didn’t favour anybody. It’s where you have to approach them differently, not because of religion or colour or whatever, you just approach them differently.

**How would you do that?**

Well some are quite easy to sit down and talk to them, you know, they would just sit there, ‘Rabbit, rabbit, rabbit, rabbit, rabbit.’ And some would just get their back up and go, ‘Yeah, yeah, yeah.’ You just totally ignore them and let them come to you. Because if you carry on saying, ‘Oh do this, you’ve got to do that,’ they won’t, you know they won’t do it. ‘Cos I know if someone tells me to do something I won’t do it anyway. Even now (laughs). So you can’t expect a child to do it anyway.

**So that was the best method for you then?**

Yeah. Well it worked. But no, it was hard work, but I did enjoy that.

**What was, were there any sort of happenings there, where there any, what can you say, did anything major sort of happen, or was there any big problems, no one had any….?**

No.

**And then you ended up working with kids who had left school, is that correct?**

Hmm hmmm.

**And that was your last area that you worked in, what was that like?**

That was more of a challenge.

**Because you’d had experience of the kids before?**

And trying to get them into school, now I don’t know if they’d actually gone to school, but now it’s trying to sort of channel them into something.

**Give them a path**.

Yeah.

**And did you receive training, how long did the training take?**

A year.

**Did you enjoy it?**

Hmm. Oh give me anything with children or the elderly, I’m well away. I’ve done all the training for the elderly (laughs).

**So you’re very qualified (laughs).**

Oh yeah, oh yeah. As I’ve said, Yvonne is my befriender, I’ve done the training for that. If an elderly person needs ?, first-aid I’ve done, chair exercises.

**So you can work with…?**

Anything. Well that was the thing we had to do as a befriender, we have to do it.

**In case you need to come to the person’s home…**

Exactly.

**For working with the kids, to give them a direction, how would you work with them for them to realise…?**

I’d ask them what they’d like to do in life, or where would you see yourself in five years’ time.

**What would be a general response?**

They’d say, ‘What do you mean?’ I said, ‘Oh.’ I said, ‘I see myself here or something like this. I said, ‘Where do you see yourself?’ They say, ‘A racing car driver.’ I said, ‘Well yeah good.’ I said, ‘Let’s calm down and be a bit sensible.’ (Laughs). They go, ‘Ok.’ I said, ‘Right be a bit sensible.’ Well I used to write things down, I put racing car driver down, I’d say, ‘Good idea, but we’d be a bit sensible. ‘Policeman.’ I said, ‘Policeman, you need qualifications.’ ‘Yeah.’ I said, ‘Have you got them?’ ‘Don’t know.’ I said, ‘Ok, right.’ And that’s the only way I could get through to them.

**You put through on a list?**

Yeah. No matter how crazy it was. You know, it could have been an actor, it could have been a dancer or whatever, I’d say, ‘Yeah ok we’ll come down to earth.’ And then channel what I call a normal profession. Well there’s no point me saying, ‘Oh you go and work in Asda,’ because they’re tell me very politely to go wherever.

**Did you get through to most of them, all of them?**

Hmmm.

**Yeah? All success stories?**

Yeah.

Do **you know what careers they ended up taking?**

One has gone into police work (laughs). One has copied me, she’s in child care (laughs). One has gone to be a chef or cook, call it what you like (laughs). Whatever, Gordon Ramsay (laughs), and the other one’s training to be a social worker, so not bad.

**So you would help?**

I’ve done four, I’ve helped four.

**Wow. And you helped them to get the training?**

I would get in touch with the college, I would go with them to the interview, and I would explain to the tutor this problem, and they would also have my number if there’s any problems.

**Ok. So you were like their guardian, sort of….?**

Mentor. Call it what…Yeah. I said, ‘If these people don’t turn up, you get in touch with me.’ But that’s not bad, four out of whatever.

**Did that ever happen? Were you…? They all did well.**

I think letting them sort their own selves out is better than telling them.

**Yeah. How long did you work with the kids for?**

What like that?

**Yeah after…**

Oh years, years, years.

**Years and years. More than five?**

About four roughly. I mean yeah, I just found it far more better, they’d tell me what they want to do. It was no point me saying, ‘Oh we’re going to do this, how about this, whatever.’ It didn’t work.

**How did you feel that one of the girls wanted to do the same as you?**

Well she said, ‘Can I become a nursery nurse?’ I said, ‘That’s up to you.’ I said, ‘It’s hard work, yeah.’ I said, ‘You’ve got to go college.’ ‘Can you help me?’ I said, ‘If you want.’ So I put her in touch with the college and all this, she’s happy.

**More success stories.**

Yeah.

**Oh it’s nice. Did you have things in your line of work, was there a union for being a nanny basically or a child minder?**

No, no. With the child minding, it’s, it wasn’t a union, it’s something else. Like an insurance thing. If something does go wrong, then children are insured and all of this, not a union. But it’s not exact a union, but you know what I mean.

**They, you would be taken care of if something happened?**

Yeah.

**Is that something that you had to contribute to out of your pay cheque?**

Yeah.

**Ok. Do you remember what it was called?**

I can’t remember now. I can’t remember. I mean that just sort of, you know if something happened, I mean, things like that. It’s not like the big unions now. I mean there’s hundreds of them now. But no, I mean that’s the only thing, no.

**Did you put any money away for a pension or anything like that, did you have to contribute to a pension in those days or now?**

No, no.

**It’s good to hear different things (laughs).**

(Laughs).It’s all different isn’t it?

**Did you have holidays, sick pay, anything like that?**

Yeah (laughs).

**You had both?**

Yeah.

**Yeah. How many holidays would you get?**

With the nursery, the children’s home it would be about three weeks, three or four weeks.

**Out of the year yeah?**

Yeah. Then when I went with the nannying it could vary. They’d say three weeks, but if they were going away, it could be more. So I say three weeks, but if they were taking off, it could be more.

**Depending on the..?**

Yeah.

**For the families, you mentioned one was in Baker Street, was it?**

Yeah.

M: **Did you have to travel far for when you did the nannying when you had to go to the houses?**

No, I was still at Tower Bridge, so just a Tube straight over to Baker Street.

**So you catch the Tube?**

Yeah.

**Would you say that the Tube has changed much do you think?**

I don’t like the Tube, but I did it ‘cos it was quicker (laughs).

**So it was just one line.**

I mean I did it once by bus, but it took forever and a day, I thought I can’t do this. And it was that time when there was all these things about bombs on the Tube, I thought oooooh. I thought I’ve got to get there, I’ve got to get there, I’ve got to get there. I don’t like Tubes. I couldn’t tell you if they’ve changed ‘cos I don’t like them.

**You don’t take it now?**

No. I don’t like them. If I have to. If it’s quicker, then I’ll close my eyes and it can go. And if it stops in a tunnel, then that does it. I don’t like lifts. I only sort of take the Tube if I have to. I don’t do lifts, I don’t like lifts.

**Do you feel a bit claustrophobic?**

My poor son was in hospital in St. Thomas’….

**Well thank you very much for the interview. I hope it was ok and I wouldn’t want you to miss your lunch. It was very nice to meet you**.

And you.

**Thank you very much**