



# Speaking for Ourselves: *An Oral History of People With Cerebral Palsy*

Judy Smart  
Interviewed by Alex White

British Library ref. C1134/05/01-12

## IMPORTANT

Every effort is made to ensure the accuracy of this transcript, however no transcript is an exact translation of the spoken word, and this document is intended to be a guide to the original recording, not replace it.

Should you find any errors please inform the Oral History curators:

Oral History  
The British Library  
96 Euston Road  
London  
NW1 2DB  
United Kingdom

+44 (0)20 7412 7404  
[oralhistory@bl.uk](mailto:oralhistory@bl.uk)

This interview and transcript is accessible via <http://sounds.bl.uk>.

© The British Library and Scope. Please refer to the Oral History curators at the British Library prior to any publication or broadcast from this document.

## Interview Summary Sheet

|                                   |   |  |        |
|-----------------------------------|---|--|--------|
| <b>Ref no:</b>                    | C1134/05/01-12  | <b>Digitised from cassette originals</b> |        |
| <b>Collection title:</b>          | Speaking for Ourselves: An Oral History of People With Cerebral Palsy   |  |        |
| <b>Interviewee's surname:</b>     | Smart   | <b>Title:</b>                            |        |
| <b>Interviewee's forename:</b>    | Judy  | <b>Sex:</b>                              | Female |
| <b>Occupation:</b>                |   | <b>Date and place of birth:</b>          | 1945   |
| <b>Date(s) of recording:</b>      | 18 <sup>th</sup> November 2004, 16 <sup>th</sup> December 2004, 13 <sup>th</sup> January 2005, 27 <sup>th</sup> January 2005  |  |        |
| <b>Location of interview:</b>     |   |  |        |
| <b>Name of interviewer:</b>       | Alex White  |  |        |
| <b>Type of recorder:</b>          | Marantz CP430   |  |        |
| <b>Recording format :</b>         | D60 Cassettes   | <b>Number of cassettes:</b>              | 12     |
| <b>Digitised as:</b>              | 24 WAV files (16 bit 44.1kHz 2-channel, 1411kbps)   | <b>Mono or stereo:</b>                   | stereo |
| <b>Total Duration: (HH:MM:SS)</b> |   |  |        |
| <b>Additional material:</b>       |   |  |        |
| <b>Copyright/Clearance:</b>       | Open. © The British Library Board and Scope   |  |        |
| <b>Interview notes:</b>           | A (female) facilitator was present throughout the interviews, who repeated Judy's answers: where there is discussion, she is represented by 'F'. Elsewhere, for the most part, it is her words which are transcribed. |  |        |

**Tape 1 Side A [Track 1]**

*So this is Judy Smart, on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2004, Tape 1. [laughter in background.] If I could start, Judy, by asking you when and where you were born?*

I was born in Oxford, but my home town was in Banbury, but my mum had to come to the Radcliffe, because I was a difficult birth.

*So you were a difficult birth and you went to the Radcliffe Hospital in Oxford, but your home town was Banbury.*

F. Banbury.

*OK. So maybe if we... sort of short....*

F. Judy, do that in short bits, can you? [F & Judy laugh].

*If you can, that would, that would help.*

F. And then I can follow on.

[From now on the facilitator's repetition is speech that will be reported.]

You were born in the Radcliffe, in Oxford, but you lived in Banbury.

*And when were you born?*

1945.

*And the date?*

16<sup>th</sup> May.

*So the war was still on at that time?*

It was just ending.

*Right. And can you remember what your parents said about your birth?*

Well, my parents.... the first inkling that they had was when my mother held her in her arms, and she unwrapped my shawl, my left arm fell out and was twisted, like a dish rag, and my eye was damaged. They put my left arm in plaster, to straighten it out. They took me home and I didn't progress like a normal baby. They said that I was a lazy baby, and that I'd get there in the end, but my mother wasn't convinced of that. So she made an appointment for the paediatrician at the local hospital. This went on for months. They kept saying that I was lazy and they said that when I was five, they said that she should put me away and forget about me, in an institution and, and have a normal baby, although my mother had waited seven years for a baby. But my mother is a very determined woman, and she didn't accept what the paediatrician said, and went to her own G.P., where he made an appointment for her to see a specialist at Wimpole Street.

*What age were you then?*

At the age of three, and he diagnosed me as having cerebral palsy, as not much was known about that condition at that time.

*And that would have been 1948. And did he actually, did the specialist actually use the word 'cerebral palsy'?*

He didn't actually use 'cerebral palsy', but said that I was brain-damaged, and did explain it all to Mum. My mother asked him if I was mentally retarded. He said 'No', because the damage was at my cortex. If it had been half an inch the other way, I would have been mentally retarded. At that time, a doctor from America was giving lectures. He'd written on cerebral palsy. My mother and my aunt went to one

of them, so they knew a bit about the condition from the lectures, and then this specialist in London sent me to Great Ormond Street, but before that, in Banbury, I was picked out to take a psychology test, and that was when I was three years old, and this psychologist came to my house and did this test. Although I couldn't speak much, she was able to detect that I was highly intelligent, so that meant that my county had to find some way of educating me.

*Do you actually remember the psychologist coming to your house, or is it something that you were told?*

I was told by Mum. When I was at school age, [phone rings] I was sent to a local primary school.

*And what was the name of the primary school?*

St Mary's.

*In Banbury?*

In Banbury.

*And what kind of school was it?*

A mainstream school.

*And what can you remember about it?*

Well, I was, I sat in the class. I suffered bullying. It would be called that now, but it wasn't then.

*What form did that take?*

Pulling faces at me, calling me names. At break time I was out in the playground and they'd push me around, because I had a little chair that someone had made me that was on wheels. I could move myself around with my foot at school and the flat. I stayed in that school for two terms and then the headmistress, who was a friend of my father's said, 'As much as I would like Judy to stay here, I can't give her....'

*I can't give her the time.*

[F] the time that you needed.

Yes. So then I left that school and then the County provided me with a home tutor, which again was hopeless, because she wasn't patient with me.

*Going back to being at school, at St Mary's, can you tell me a bit more about the sorts of things that used to happen to you at school?*

I'm not really sure. All I can remember was being in the classroom, not inter-acting at all.

*Did you have any friends at school?*

I had one friend, who lived in the street opposite where I lived, and her parents came into our shop, so they had explained to her that I wasn't like any other child, and she was at this school with me, and tried to protect me, but the peer pressure was too great.

*You said that you were called names. Can say what sorts of things you were called?*

'Spasy'.

*What other sorts of things did the children say?].*

'Mentally-defective', all that sort of thing.

*How did that feel?*

I can't exactly remember, but I think I felt a bit rejected.

*And how did the teachers react to you?*

I can't remember. I think they just got on with the lessons.

*Is there anything else that you can recall from that first school?*

No.

*Alright, so you were there for two terms....*

Mm

*... and then the County decided that you ought to have a home tutor. Tell us a little bit about the home tutor.*

Yes, she came in three times a week for reading, writing and arithmetic. Every time...

*Sorry, I didn't get that.*

[F. No, I didn't either.]

At the end of each session, my mother would find me in tears, so she let it go on for about a month, and then she talked about it with my father and she decided to sit in on a session, but the tutor wasn't very agreeable, but my mother sat in on it, and the tutor said, 'Are you going to behave now, for your mother?' and she asked me what was

two and two, and I knew, but because I didn't immediately reply, she said, 'Now come on, you know the answer, what is it?', and I was getting more distressed, and my mother saw what was happening: so the tutor gave up in despair, and went down to my father and said that I was a very naughty girl, [laughs] and my mother said, 'You don't give her time to answer, and I've told you every time that Judy needs time to answer, but you don't give her that time, so I think you'd better not come back', so the tutor said that she would write to the education authority, and said she would not come back to me, because I was not educable, so my mother also wrote to the LEA, telling her side of it. I was lucky really because my father's sisters were both teaching, so they had taught me to read a bit.

*At what age were they teaching you to read?*

Well, they started very early, about two years old.

*So that was before you had the home tutor, you were already able to read something?*

Yes. When I was at the paediatrician's before that, the doctor said 'She can't talk to me', and yet I had said the word 'moon' at home. [laughs]. But I wouldn't talk in the hospital.

*Can you remember going to the hospital?*

No.... vaguely. I vaguely remember trying to walk with a frame, and [tape runs out.]

**Tape 1, Side B [Track 2]**

*...thing that you were trying to use?*

It had wheels on the front, and rubber bits on the back, and it wouldn't move when I pushed it, so I trotted round the back and pushed it that way.

*And what was it made of?*

I can't remember. The Sister said to the doctor 'That shows she's intelligent.'

*Because you'd worked out how to do it.*

Yes.

*So the home tutor was sent packing at the age of....*

Five and a half.

*So what happened next?*

My aunts were very into helping with me, and my Aunt...

[F. Your aunt was what, Judy?]

My Aunt Edna heard of a school in Croydon. She pushed, and got me a screening.

*Screening. Is that what it was called? And what was the screening?*

I went in front of a Panel, that had a head doctor and a headmistress, and physio., occupation therapist, and interviewed me.

*And this was at the school at Croydon?*

They said that there was a long waiting list, and if I was accepted, I would have to wait at least three years.

*So, doing the maths on this, you were ... it was 1950, no later than that. You were older than five. How old were you?*

Six and a half.

*So that would have been ....and St Margaret's in Croydon was.... so this was before the Spastics Society was formed?*

It was the National Spastic ....

*Was it not the British Council for the Welfare of Spastics?*

Yes. So I waited for six months, and they said that I was accepted.

*So they said 'Three years', but actually you only waited six months.*

Yes.

*Why was that?*

I don't know .... luck. [laughs]

*And do you remember anything else about the screening?*

I remember laughing and joking [laughs]. I don't remember exactly what they said, but they did me funnily.

*What medically examined you?*

Medically, yes.

*And what did that involve?*

Well, they just, they tested my reflexes and that was all. I can't remember too much about the rest, but my mother was waiting outside, and she was in turmoil. She didn't know if they would accept me, and if it meant parting with me.

*Because it was a long way from Banbury to Croydon, and St Margaret's was a residential school.*

Yes.

*So what were your first impressions of St Margaret's?*

I enjoyed it. I didn't like leaving home much.

*So you left home when you were seven?*

Yes.

*And what can you remember of St Margaret's, the building or....*

It was a great big Victorian mansion, oak-panelled hall, dormitories, big classrooms, and a Physio. Department, and an Occupational Department, Speech Therapy, and I couldn't sit up on my own at that age, so I was strapped in into a wooden chair on wheels, and I called them 'wheelbarrows'. They were very hard and very uncomfortable.

*Where did it feel uncomfortable?*

Everywhere. I had sides on my chair, to begin with, but then when I got a bit more balance, they took the sides off, which was quite scary and I remember the physio. sitting me on a stool, and I had to sit quite still and straight for as long as I could, and I was petrified, because she kept bullying me to sit still, and I can't sit that still. Can't even do that now, but on this stool, it just scared the life out of me, and then I managed to sit there for about ten minutes eventually, but if I fell off, I had to go back after school.

*Had to go back after school?*

If I fell off, I had to go back after school.

*Did you hurt yourself when you fell off?*

No, I was just very scared, so now, even now, if I sit on a chair without sides, I panic.

*Going back to when you first arrived at St Margaret's, can you describe what it was like?*

My mother arrived with me in a taxi, and I was met by a dear old house mother. She took me and introduced me to some of the little girls that I'd be sharing with.

*How many people were in the dormitory?*

Five. Christine, Laurie, Alex, Alice....

*Alice Moira?*

[F]..and Ann Smith?

Mary Flack.

*Black or Flack?*

Flack. And Joanna started on the day I started. She was my best friend.

*Tell me about her.*

Jo, she can't speak, or walk, or can't do anything at all, but we set up, we had a bond between us and I could interpret what she said, and all the other staff were amazed at this telepathy, but she got the worst of it in every way. They said she wouldn't cooperate with the physios and I remember hearing her crying and screaming in agony.

*Why was that? What was it for?*

Because they were making her do things that she couldn't do, and they put her in these callipers.

*Maybe you could describe them?*

They are iron, made of steel. Jo had one with a pair of callipers with a pelvic band that went round the middle. They'd got straps on the thighs and knees, and knee caps and round the ankles, and they were locked into boots, and Jo's legs were very twisted, so they put her straight into callipers and they would push her knees out straight, and you had a lock on the side which locked the leg straight, and then they'd gradually tighten the knee-caps up.

*Can you describe what that felt like?*

What, me, or Jo?

*What did Jo say?*

She was in tears. She didn't like having these on, but they were made to have them on. After lunch, we all had a rest on the bed for half an hour on the weekdays, when we had to have the callipers locked. It was worse at weekends: it was two hours.

*So you also had to have this, did you?*

I had callipers eventually. I was about nine when I had callipers. They said it would help my balance.

*Did it?*

A bit, but enough. Well, going back to school, the regime was to take me and Jo back to babyhood. That meant at the age of seven, I wasn't allowed to play with anything fiddly, or draw or write, or feed myself, or dress myself. My mother had taught me to feed myself in my own way, but they said that that wasn't correct, and that I must learn to do it properly.

*Can you describe how you used to feed yourself?*

I'd rest my arm against the table, and bend my head down to the spoon, because when the occupational therapist, I did feeding practice, and they wanted me to lift my arm up and put my food in my mouth properly, and I could never achieve that.

*So do you still find that difficult now?*

I've got very uncontrollable movement in my arms. That was a bit hellish. The Speech Therapy Department, I had to lie on the couch and make baby noises. The one I hated was the 'ga ga', because they'd put their hand on my Adam's apple and make it go up and down, 'ga ga ga' and that was the bit I hated.

*What was the idea of you making baby noises?*

And then I could pronounce my words properly.

*So it was breaking it down into sounds, was what they were trying to do, was it? How often did you have to do that?*

Every day. Some days I'd get away with it and just do breathing exercises. I'm not a great breather.

*So what were the breathing exercises you had to do?*

They'd place their hands on your diaphragm, and push the breath out.

*What was the idea behind that?*

To learn to breathe properly. I can't remember what they said about that.

*Was it ever explained to you, about why things were done?*

Yes, to a certain extent, but at that age, it didn't register. At the end of each term, we'd go home with a report on our progress. On the back of the report they said 'Judy is not allowed to draw, play with anything or feed herself, but she's to wear her callipers every day.'

*Sorry ,for how long: to wear the callipers all day?*

All day, every day. But my mother never kept to that at all. She always told lies.

[laughs].

[End of Tape 1 Side B]

**Tape 2 Side A [Track 3]**

*18<sup>th</sup> November 2004, Tape 2. I wonder if we could start this session by talking about your mother and father.*

Mm?

*Could you tell me first of all a little bit about your mother?*

In what way?

*Well, tell me first of all what her name was.*

Mary Smart. She married my father in 1938, when my father was discharged from the Home Guard. He bought a tobacconist's shop in Banbury, and we lived over the top of the shop.

*And where was your mother from originally?*

Banbury.

*And when she was born?*

1907.

*And what, who were her parents?*

Her parents were Mr and Mrs Ringwood, and they had three children, Mary, Olive and Robert.

*And what did her parents do?*

Her father was a butcher. I don't think her mother went out to work: it wasn't done. Her mother wanted to be a nurse, but in those days it wasn't considered that the women worked. My father worked for a tailor originally, and that was how they met.

*Could you explain?*

She didn't like my dad when she first met him. [She and F laugh.] She went out with someone else. I think they gradually got together.

*So your father worked for a tailor. What kind of job did he have?*

I don't know, actually. I think he was in a tailor's shop.

*And that was how your mother met him, in the tailor's shop, was it?*

No, they used to go to dances and that in groups: that's how they met.

*When you said your father was discharged from the Home Guard: why was that?*

He had flat feet. [F laughs.]

*And then they got married after that?*

Yes.

*And where were they married?*

In Banbury, in St Mary's Church.

*So your father was 'Jim'?*

Yes, Jim.

*And...*

He bought a tobacconist's shop.

*Can you describe what it was like?*

Well, it was one of the old-fashioned ones. A cigarette counter, a pipe shelf, scales in which you weighed out loose tobacco or twist: that was horrible black stuff that you chewed. Then pipes were displayed in a case.

*And how big was the shop?*

Not that big, about as big as this room.

*So about six, seven feet wide and about, sort of ten, twelve foot... no a bit longer.*

Yes. With a counter at one end and a showcase at the side and a little gate that led up to our flat. [Background noise]

*So did your father smoke?*

No, he only had a cigar at Christmas, but my mum did. And I used to sit behind the counter.

*What was that like?*

It was lovely; I met all the customers. They were all very friendly, except one old lady that scared me to death. She looked like a witch. {Judy and F. laugh.}

*What did she used to buy?*

Twist.

*So the chewing tobacco. So what were her teeth like?*

Black. I remember that she used to kiss me every time she came in the shop. [laughs]  
Her breath smelt vile, but if my mother saw her coming in, she'd whip me into the  
back stockroom.

*So what was the stockroom like?*

It was where all the cigarettes were kept, and big cartons, and it backed onto the canal,  
so it frequently got flooded.

*So what happened when it flooded?*

We just had to bale out the water and save what stock we could.

*So that must have been quite a bad thing for your father's business, to lose stock like  
that. Was it a profitable business, was it...*

It was then, because everyone smoked.

*So how many customers would you see, sitting there?*

[Coughs] About forty a day, on a busy day. We were near a railway. We used to get  
the staff from the railway, come in the shop. My dad would open at 7 a.m. and then  
get the porters that were coming off shift in the railway. He used to close for half an  
hour at lunchtime, and close up at six in the evening.

*And do you remember sort of, roughly, how much money you would take in a typical  
day?*

I don't know. I remember every night he would sit at the dining room table and cash up.

*And how long did that used to take?*

About an hour, and then he'd bag it all up, and then Mum would take me up to the bank and put it in the night safe.

*There would be a hole in the wall at the back.*

[F. Yes, that's right.] Put it in a bag and a leather pouch and lock it up, and put the bag in the hole in the wall.

*And what, sort of, were the most popular things that your father used to sell?*

Woodbines, Craven A, Black Cat, Old Holborn, Golden Virginia, and loose tobacco, pipes: special clay pipes.

*So that was still quite popular, clay pipes, was it?*

Yes, they were white with a blue end to them.

*What did your mother smoke?*

Craven A's, and then she went on to Rothmans.

*And how many did she smoke?*

I don't remember. About five a day. It wasn't a great deal.

*But your father would only have a cigar at Christmas. Did he sell cigars as well?*

Yes.

*Did he have a particular favourite that he would smoke?*

No, I think he liked Churchmen's: big ones.

*How did the customers treat you, sitting there in the shop?*

They were very friendly, and they let me hand them the cigarettes.

*And so, tell me a little bit now about upstairs from the shop. Your flat.*

Well, it wasn't ideal, but we managed. We had one flight of stairs up to the flat. A living room, a kitchen. There was a step up to the living room and a step down to the kitchen, and then a spiral staircase up to the bedrooms, which was all right while I could be carried, but when I got bigger, it became a problem.

*So there were two bedrooms up this spiral staircase, were there?*

Yes, there were three bedrooms, but one was an attic.

*What was in the attic?*

Oh, all the junk that wasn't needed. Then our flat was joined onto the next flat, but was the butcher's, and we eventually bought the rooms over the butcher's, because he didn't use them.

*Did you have your own bedroom as a child?*

Yes.

*What was that like?*

Well, to start with, I was in mum and dad's bedroom, because I had a bed with cot sides, when I grew out of my ordinary cot, [laughs] but I kept getting my right arm caught round the sides, and mum had to get up and get me hand out.

*So you would get stuck...*

[F] It turns up.

*Oh, so it turns out*

[F] Out and up]

*So your hand is out, like that. So how often would that happen?*

[coughs] Not often, no.

*And so when did you move into your own room.? How old would you have been?*

Five or six.

*Describe what your room was like.*

It was pink with Mickey Mouse curtains, a blue wardrobe and chest of drawers.

*And did you have many toys?*

Yeah, I had a lot of toys. A doll's pram, a cot, lots of dolls, a dolls' house, and I had a pedal tractor, which I used to ride up and down the street on a Sunday morning with my dad. Because I couldn't balance on the saddle on the trike, so they bought me the

tractor, which had a curved seat, and then my dad would walk me up and down the street. Doll's pram.

*Can you describe what that was like?*

At first, it was a normal doll's pram, [laughs] but then I got it into my head that I wanted a twin doll's pram, and they said, 'Right, you can have one when you can walk a bit better', but of course I got it before that.

*What age were you when you got it?*

Eight. I felt very proud. My dad would hold the back of my dress, so that I could walk, pushing it, and when I was three, my cousin had a scooter and I wanted one, so I tried to ride on it with Mum's help, and they pushed me up my aunt's garden, and the next Christmas, I had my own.

*Can you describe what it was like to have a scooter?*

It was good, it was just like everyone else, although I couldn't scoot myself, my dad did.

*And what about other children where you were living, did you play with them?*

No, there was a girl next door, but she was very academic, and she didn't have a lot to do with us.

*Did you have any other sort of friends locally, or was it just your cousins?*

No, my cousins.

*And how old were they?*

Well, Jerry was two and a half years older than me: Christopher was a year older than myself, and we were like brother and sister. They played with me a lot.

*And what sort of games did you used to play?*

Well, they knew that I couldn't run around, so they played games on the floor. Cowboys and Indians and cars, Dinky cars.

*Anything else?*

No.

*And so did your parents play with you much?*

My mother did, but my father would rarely have time, but he did on Sunday mornings. He would take me to the park or the rec. That was behind the shop. They had swings round the park, and a slide.

*What sort of games did your mother play with you?*

Dressing my dolls and things that I could manage. Draw, cards, play cards.

*So when it came for you to go away to school, can you describe what your parents' reaction was?*

Well Mum...

[End of Tape 2 Side A]

**Tape 2 Side B [Track 4]**

Mum had mixed feelings. She didn't want to part with me, and yet she knew it was for the best.

*Were you aware of that, as a child?*

Yes, I think I was, in a way, because I always got upset.

*And what was it like, the first time you went?*

The first time I went, I didn't really realise I would be staying overnight. My aunt made me pyjamas, and when I packed my case, it never really registered that I would be staying at school, and the only time it registered was when I watched my parents walk, when my parents walked down the staircase opposite my dormitory.

*What they did say to you about going to school?*

Well, they just said that I was going to school and that it would be nice for me. I think they did say that I would be boarding, but at that age it didn't register.

*Can you describe what things you did take in your case?*

All my, most of my toys, my crayons. I loved doing jigsaw puzzles, so I took those, and some of my dolls and my teddy.

*And did you have to take clothes?*

Oh yes, we took clothes and they all had to be named. We had a uniform, which was grey and red, and we had grey skirts, red and white ties, white shirts, grey blazers with a red badge, with a red S,M, and these awful grey bloomers, [F laughs] and liberty bodice. We were sent a list before we started school of the items we had to have.

*And what else did you have to have, apart from the uniform?*

Weekend dresses, we weren't allowed to wear trousers at any time.

*But at the weekends, you didn't wear uniform?*

I don't think we wore uniform every day, but we used to wear it for Church. Oh yeah, and we had a grey beret, with a hat badge, that I could never keep on. [F. & Judy laugh.]

*So the dolls you mentioned: you took a teddy and, was it one doll?*

Two dolls.

*What were they?*

They were soft rubber dolls.

*Anything else?*

A teddy bear, and my crayons.

*And how many jigsaws?*

About two, but I could only cope with the wooden ones, but they were confiscated.

*Why?*

Because I wasn't allowed to do anything.

*[Inaudible]*

They stopped me drawing, which I loved.

*How did they stop you?*

They took them away.

*Did you ever try to draw when you weren't supposed to?*

Yes.

*When were you able to do that?*

I only did it in school time, and they said, 'Don't do that: you're not allowed to do that.'

*Are you OK to carry on?*

Yes.

*So what was the thing you think you missed the most, when you were at school?*

My parents.

*What particularly about...*

Well, we were segregated. We were cut off from the outside world, except when we went to Church, or the dentist, or parents' weekends.

*So what were parent weekends?*

Once a term, parents could come and visit us, and towards the latter half, we were allowed to stay out overnight, but at first we weren't.

*So what was it like, the first parents' weekend?*

It was very exciting. It was a fete weekend.

*It was a fete, school fete.*

My aunt made me a dress. I knew exactly what I wanted, and she made it for me. It was bright yellow, with frills round the skirt, [laughs], a bright green sash. It sounds awful. Yeah, I wore that on the Saturday of the fete. St Margaret's was giving....[phone rings. Break]

*....about the school fete.*

They had very large grounds, St Margaret's. St Margaret's had been left to the Spastics Society by Miss Ruth Garwood, and her sister, and they lived behind the meadow of the school, and they were on the Board of Governors. It was a huge grounds: cedar trees, lovely grounds.

*And what sort of things went on at the school fete?*

Pony rides, which I loved, and various stalls. Hoopla, Hook the Fish, coconut shies, all those other things.

*And who used to come to the fete?*

The general public, and the parents, and the governors, and all the staff.

*Talking about the staff, who really sticks out for you? Who do you remember?*

Miss Harper. They called her 'Harpy'. She was a very warm, loving person. She always looked after the little ones. She wrote letters to every parent nearly every week.

*And how many children were at the school?*

Thirty-six. She had six in her dormitory.

*So was she one of the house mothers?*

Yes. We were in the green dormitory, and there was a peach dormitory and a red dormitory, and a blue one. When you got older, you moved up to the peach dormitory, and when you were older still, you moved up to the red, which had ten girls in it.

*What age were they: how old would those be?*

Eleven, up to fifteen. Rosemary Dawson-Shepherd was the Head Girl. She scared the living daylights out of me. [F, laughs]

*Why was that?*

She looked so prim and proper, and very big: tall, and Alice Moira, she was in our dormitory with Ann Smith [Knocking in background.] All the old day boys and day girls.

*How many of those were there?*

Three came in each day.

*And where did they come from?*

Croydon.

*So they all lived in Croydon, They were local.*

Sue Hodgson was one.

*Eric's daughter... and do you remember the other two?*

Martin someone. I don't know what the other one was.

*Can you remember any other staff?*

Miss Edwards. She was house mother with the older girls. Miss Lenton. She was a dragon.

*What did she used to do?*

She was in the boys' dormitory, and she was very strict, and then there was Miss Charlton, and Miss Tuckett was my teacher.

*Can you explain a bit about what the house mother was: what was the house mother's role?*

Well, to be a mother figure, and to look after our welfare.

*So what would that entail on a daily basis?*

Getting us up and getting us ready, and getting our meals.

*Helping at meal times. And who would you go to if you had problems?*

Miss Harper, to start with and then we had a matron as well, and a head mistress. She was a bit of a strict disciplinarian.

*When you talk about people being strict, what was the sort of discipline regime?*

Well, when we were put to bed at five o'clock, we were allowed an hour's play time in bed, and then a gong was sounded, and we ought to be tucked up in bed by then, and go to sleep. [F laughs.] The house mother sat down in the hall and ate her supper, and if we talked or if the head mistress caught us talking, she'd come in and say, 'Button up that lip!', because the door to the dormitory adjoined her lounge.

*And what would happen if you were caught talking more than once?*

She'd bring out the hairbrush or a slipper.

*And what would happen: how would you be punished: would you be punished in front of everyone, or....?*

Joanna was crying one night. She whacked her.

*What with?*

Hairbrush.

*Where?*

On the bottom, and that made her cry even more.

*And how often did things like that happen?*

Some staff were more lenient than others, and let us off.

*When you went to bed at five, and the lights off were at six, were you tired?*

Seven.

*Seven? Oh, right. Were you tired at seven o'clock? Could you sleep then?*

In the winter, yes, but not when it was light, but mostly they talked a lot after lights out.

*Did you get up to anything else, apart from talking?*

I don't think I did. [She and F laugh] I was a bit of a goody- goody. {She and F. laugh.} I was scared of getting told off, so I never made any murmur.

*Were there any naughty children?*

Yeah, quite a lot. Boys.

*What did they used to do?*

Play up at meal times. You weren't allowed to talk at meal times, and some of them would talk and got sent outside, or you'd get punished. After tea every day, you were allowed to have your sweet tin, but that could be used as a form of punishment, by withdrawing the sweets.

*What sort of sweets did you have in your sweet tin?*

Jelly babies, chocolate, lolly pop. Jo had peppermint creams. One day, I don't know why, but my sweets were held back, so Jo slipped me a chocolate and the house mother came by, and said 'I thought I gave you three peppermint creams, Jo', and she'd slipped me one.

*Is that what you were allowed then, three sweets?*

Yes.

*And so your house mother would write letters to your parents. And you got letters from them as well?*

Yes.

*So how often would you receive letters?*

My mum wrote to me about every other day, and Dad wrote once a week.

*And did all the other children get letters?*

No, not all them.

*And what was it like if you didn't have any post?*

I was lucky, I always did have post and I always had fruit parcels: fruit for breakfast with the lumpy porridge, which I hated.

*Is that what you got for breakfast then, porridge and then whatever fruit you got in your parcels? What else did you have...*

[End of tape 2 Side B]

**Tape 3 Side A [Track 5]**

*O.K., this is Judy Smart, Tape 3, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2004. I'd like to just finish off what we were saying last week, and ask you to maybe sum up what your childhood was like, before you went away to school.*

It was very happy really, apart from the discrimination and ignorance of the people. My mother would take me out in my big pram. 'Why is she in that big pram? Why isn't she walking?', and I remember being left outside a shoe shop. A gang of children came up and started picking on me. It would be called 'bullying' now, and my mother came out to hear this commotion, and she sent them away and took me into the shop with her, and she never left me outside a shop again.

*What were they actually doing?*

Taunting me, and calling me names. I can't remember just what names they were.

*So was that quite difficult for your mum, to get you inside shops in those days?*

No, most shops were quite accessible. The bank was not accessible, but I didn't mind being left outside.

*And this is the local bank in Banbury?*

Yes. But I think I enjoyed my childhood.

*Are there any other sort of significant memories that you have from that time?*

No, only walking with my father on a Sunday morning. I'd walk up and down the street, pushing my doll's pram. In the weekdays, my mother would stop off at the greengrocer's, and they were always very kind towards me.

*In what way?*

Well, they'd make a fuss of me, and my mother thought it was safe to leave me with them. It was in the days when neighbours were neighbourly.

*And so then you went away to St Margaret's.*

Yes, then I went to St Margaret's, and it was difficult, leaving home, and it got worse as I got older, but once I was at school, I was all right. I made the best of a bad job.

*Can you remember what it felt like, when you first arrived at St Margaret's?*

Well, as I said, I didn't actually realise that I was going to stay overnight, until my mother and father walked out of the dormitory.

*And so what do you remember of that sort of first night, being in a strange dormitory?*

The first night, Miss Harper came and cuddled me and settled me down in bed with my teddy bears. I could remember hearing some of the other girls crying under the bed clothes, and I went off to sleep quite quickly, but then I remember waking up in the middle of the night and crying out for Mum, and the headmistress came out of her sitting room, which was next to our dormitory. She comforted me, settled me back down, and then I went back to sleep.

*So then, what happened when you woke up in the morning?*

We were woken at about seven, [rustling noise] when I tried to get out of bed and dress myself, and Miss Harper gave me a hand, and put me in my push chair, which I had brought from home. Then she wheeled me to the lift, and then we went down to the dining hall.

*What was that like, when you went into the dining hall?*

Very strange, because I'd not been with many people.

*So how many people, roughly, were there in the room?*

Thirty-six, on eight tables, and I was on the smallest table – the lowest.

*And so what happened then? What did you have for breakfast?*

They served cereal, and then a cooked breakfast, toast, which, when my mother rang up later, she couldn't believe that I'd eaten a cooked breakfast.

*Why, because that wasn't what you had at home?*

Yes.

*So what was the food like?*

You had to eat everything, whether you liked it or not, and in the winter we had porridge. [F. laughs.] Some of the staff could make it very well, but most times it had huge lumps, which we had to eat, and it made me gag.

*So who made the breakfast, then?*

There was a cook in the kitchen, but I think the house mothers helped out at breakfast time.

*So some of the house mothers were better at making porridge than others. Right.*

Yes.

*And so were you able to feed yourself, or were the house mothers...*

I did the first day, or the first week, until I was first screened by the doctors, and then it stopped. Everything stopped.

*And so what happened after breakfast, then: what was the first thing that happened to you after that?*

I went to my classroom, and I was pushed by a house mother, and Joanna was with me in the classroom. Elaine was there, and the teacher came in and introduced herself, and the new people, and then the day children came in as well.

*What was your first impression of the classroom?*

It was nice. It was a large, Victorian room.

*And what was in it?*

About eight desks, a nature table, and pictures on the walls, and a piano. At the back, there was a dividing door they opened, so that we could join up with the other class.

*And when would you join up with the other class?*

For music, Assembly.

*What do you remember of your first lessons?*

My first lessons were arithmetic and reading Janet and John books, which I went through quite quickly, because I read quite well with my aunts.

*Because your aunts were teachers, and they taught you to read.*

Yes, but the head mistress did not like Enid Blyton books. She confiscated any books written by Enid Blyton, and I had a number of Noddy books, and they were confiscated. [laughs]

*Why was that? Why was she against Enid Blyton?*

She said it was bad literature. [rustling noise.]

*So what were you allowed to read?*

Any of the well-known novelists at that time.

*Can you remember any books that you read?*

*Little Women*, all the series. *Rupert Annuals* were allowed: any books, except Enid Blyton.

*And this was when you were about seven or eight, was it?*

Yes.

*So that was the headmistress: what about your own teacher? What were your impressions of your teachers?*

Very nice, all of them.

*In what kind of way were they good to you?*

They were motherly and friendly towards us. We had story time about three o'clock, where we'd sit in a circle, and each day, each pupil would take turns sitting next to the teacher for stories.

*So what else happened in your sort of typical day?*

Well, we had a porter called Wally [rustling in background]. He used to come and collect us, to take us to the treatment rooms, and he was a very nice man.

*And when was that? When did you go to the treatment rooms?*

During our lessons. It was timetabled into the day.

*So would you ... presumably you all had treatments at different times, did you?*

Yes.

*And so you had to be pulled out of lessons.*

Yes.

*Was that quite disruptive?*

Yes, it was, looking back on it: it was very disruptive. I think we must have missed out on a lot, by doing it that way.

*And how many treatments would you have during a day?*

Three. One was physio., half an hour, and one was occupational therapy for half an hour, and the other was speech therapy, but they didn't always link in together, so you might get one session, and then have to go back to the class room and come out again at a later time.

*And what sorts of things did you used to do in, say, speech therapy? What kind of things would you do?*

At first when I went there, I had to learn to burble like a baby, [F. laughs.] and I was put on a couch. [Sound of siren in distance]. I was put on a couch and the therapist had to make me gurgle [siren gets louder], by pressing on my Adam's apple, and I didn't like that. [sound of rustling].

*And what about physio? What did you do in physio?*

[Creaking noise.] I had to learn to sit on the stool, and you had to learn to sit absolutely still for as long as you could, and I could never do that: it was most upsetting.

*So it sounds to me, the two therapy sessions you've described, you didn't really like very much at all.*

No.

*What about occupational therapy? What was that like?*

That was better, because they let me draw, but you could only draw big circles, and that was because they wanted you to be able to move your arm in a flowing action. It was very difficult for me to do this, but they were very patient with me.

*So you'd had, you said earlier, in your previous interview, that you'd had all your crayons taken away, so this was the only time that you were able to draw?*

Yes.

*So can you talk a little bit more about some of the friendships you made at the school?*

Joanna was my best friend, [rustling sound] and I went round with her a lot, but I also made other friends: Elaine and Christine, but most of the boys were on trikes.

*So did I get that right, most of the boys were on trikes? No?*

When we were outside, they would ride round on trikes.

[End of Tape 3 Side A]

**Tape 3 Side B [Track 6]**

*This was at play-time, the boys would be on trikes. What would you do at play-time?*

Sit outside in the summer, with my dolls or my teddies, but later, when I was older, I was allowed to play draughts, and they had a special board made: it had holes in it, and we had big pegs, and I liked doing that a lot. In the end, my parents had one made for me at home.

*And were there any other games that you like to play?*

Well, I liked the Wendy House. We would scabble along on our hands and knees, when I could crawl, into the bushes. [Judy and F. laugh.] Elaine was very daring, and we'd hide.

*Did you ever get caught?*

Oh yeah, yeah. They knew where we were: it was like our den.

*And what did you get up to in your den?*

Oh, not anything much: we just sat and talked. [Rustling sound] And then when I grew older, when I became the oldest girl there, I liked to take a book and sit in the meadow on my own.

*And what kind of things would you read?*

[Laughs] Not Enid Blyton. {F. laughs.} I can't remember which books I had. It might have been *Heidi* or *Little Women*; one of those classics.

*And so how old were you, when you were the oldest?*

When Delarue began, most of my colleagues left St Margaret's and went on to Delarue School, but my parents begged the headmistress and the governors to keep me on at school at St Margaret's, because I was progressing. [Phone rings. Break] I'd just got on my feet, at the age of thirteen.

*Thirteen. And when you say, 'you got on your feet', do you mean sort of literally?*

Yes. I was walking up and down the treatment room.

*And that was the first time, was it, when you were about thirteen, that you were able to do that?*

Yes, and each morning before breakfast, I remember, we had to do standing practice at the foot of our beds, and we looked like soldiers, lined up, and if one of us fell down, we were stood up again, until the gong went for breakfast, but I was so scared of falling forward, that in the end they let me stand between two beds, so that any way I fell, I would land on something soft. [laughs].

*Did anyone get hurt, or... , doing that standing practice?*

Yes, quite a few times.

*What kind of injuries did people get?*

Oh, cuts and bruises, and our legs ached a lot, when the braces were unlocked.

*O.K., so you stayed on: how did you feel when other people were going onto Delarue?*

Yeah, I was all right. I was happy at St Margaret's, and I got privileges.

*What sort of privileges?*

My aunt lived in Croydon, so the head mistress would allow my aunt to come up and take me out to cultural activities.

*What kind of.....*

My aunt was an art mistress, so I went to the art exhibitions, and the Festival Hall, so it was quite good that I was allowed to do that: otherwise, I would have had no company of my own age, and when I got in the top class, we had homework to do, after tea, and I was allowed to stay up later.

*Until what time?*

Until eight o'clock.

*So normally it was lights out, or in bed, by seven, wasn't it?*

Yes, and when we had our last teacher in the top class, she really made John and I work. [phone rings. Someone laughs. Break]

*So carry on from there.*

John Wilkinson was a bit younger than I was. We sat and did homework together, and she got us doing algebra and geometry, which was all new to me, and I hate algebra, and I didn't like fractions. They let me off that, because it upset me so much.

*So what kind of subjects at school did you like?*

Reading, sums, practical sums, but not problem-solving, geography and history, and nature.

*And did you have any idea, what you wanted to do, later on in life?*

No, not really. I really wanted to be a nurse, before I realised it wouldn't really be possible.

*So when you were about thirteen, that was what you were thinking you would like to do?*

Yes.

*So what happened next, after St Margaret's? You were in the top class until you were thirteen...*

I failed my eleven plus, but I still went on to grammar school at Delarue, and that was completely different. It was more academic, and they didn't do any physical training, except P.E.

*Can you describe a little bit about what Delarue was?*

Delarue was a grammar school: a large gothic building, and when I got there, all my former friends were there, including Joanna, because, when I was at St Margaret's, because one term when I was at St Margaret's, I was told that Joanna wasn't coming back, and that really upset me.

*So you weren't told where she had gone: just she wasn't coming back.*

First I was told she was ill, and this went on for weeks, then the teacher took me aside and said Joanna wouldn't be coming back, [rustling] and she said her mother was sending her to an outdoor school, which at that time I imagined was an outdoor school. [Judy and F. laugh.]

*What is an outdoor school?*

I never asked; I was too upset.

*So you didn't know that she was going to be at Delarue when you turned up?*

No, it was very nice to see her. [coughs]

*And in what other ways was Delarue different from St Margaret's?*

It was more relaxed, but the head master was a strict disciplinarian.

*In what way?*

Well, he wouldn't let anyone associate.

*What do you mean by that?*

Oh, boys and girls. If we got caught holding hands, we'd get called into his office and lectured.

*Did that ever happen to you?*

[Laughs] No.

*So did you know people it did happen to?*

Oh yes.

*And what did he say?*

He said, 'Familiarity breeds contempt', and every time it happened you'd get a lecture in Assembly about familiarity breeding contempt.

*And how often would you get the lecture in Assembly?*

[Judy and F. laugh.] About once or twice a week, and also we'd get a lecture if we wore frivolous clothes.

*'Frivolous' clothes: what were regarded as frivolous clothes?*

Frilly dresses. It was not allowed.

*So you didn't have a uniform? You did have a uniform?*

Yes. We wore the uniform most week days: maroon and grey, gold badge on the blazer. I was quite proud of that. When I first wore it, on the first day I was in a French class, that was the only day I had the chance to learn a language.

*That was the only day? What, you only had one lesson? Why was that?*

[Rustling.] I don't know. I was taken out of that group and did a normal lesson.

*Were you given any explanation?*

No, no.

*So what other lessons did you do?*

Geography, history, science, domestic science, [F. laughs] and arts and crafts.

*And which of those...*

F. She's good at art.

*Art. And what kind of things did you do in art?*

Collages, painting. There's one in the hall now that I did when I was eighteen.

*In the hall outside?*

Mm. We had Speech Day once a year, and every year I seemed to up for the form prize, so I can't be that bad.

*What kind of thing did you do in Crafts?*

Make baskets, which I loathed, because the canes kept breaking. They dried out, and I haven't got the most delicate fingers [laughs], and needlework was a nightmare. I loathed needlework. The teacher was very strict again, made me undo any stitches that were wrong. My needle kept unthreading. She'd lose her temper. [Judy and F. laugh.]

*Just going back a bit: there's something I just remembered I wanted to ask you: can you talk about what it was like to do your eleven plus?*

It was quite stressful. I was in the head mistress's sitting room with her amanuensis. It was a strange feeling, to be on my own, knowing that I had an exam to do, not ever having done one before.

*So you didn't have any practice at all before-hand?*

No.

*Were you told anything about what the exam would be like?*

No. I was only just told I would be sitting for my Eleven Plus.

*Did you know what that was?*

No.

*Apart from having someone to write things down for you, were there any other things allowed to you in the Eleven Plus?*

No.

*Were you given any more time, or anything like that?*

No, I don't think I was at that time: no.

*So you said previously that you failed your Eleven Plus, but you still were able to go to grammar school: why was that?*

That was the only secondary school that was there at that time.

*And you say when you went to St Margaret's that you were first told that there was a three-year waiting list: was there a waiting list at Delarue?*

No, not that I was aware of. I left St Margaret's in the summer, at the end of term, and then I went to Delarue in the autumn.

*And what year was that?*

I was fifteen.

*So your friends had gone up to Delarue...*

In 1960.

*1960. And your friends had gone up the year before, or...*

Some went up two years beforehand, and then gradually the others went up.

[End of Tape 3 Side B]

**Tape 4 Side A [Track 7]**

*Why do you think it was that you weren't in the French lesson?*

Well, I think at first I was put in the grammar stream, a higher stream; then, I don't why but, I was put, and then I was put into the secondary modern stream. I wasn't grammar school material.

*But what was the difference between the two streams?*

It wasn't obvious really, and I don't know why.

*But did you do different lessons, or...*

Well...

*...what was different about being in one stream to the other...?*

I didn't do languages, and that was what I missed out on.

*And what about exams? What exams were you going to do?*

None.

*So you didn't do any exams?*

No. I was told at the age of ... nineteen that I'd reached my academic potential, [sound of rustling in the background] and I was standing in the way of someone else, so I had to leave.

*How did you feel about it?*

In one way I thought it was good, because I could go home and live at home, and lead a normal, but not a normal, life; a family life, and not have to keep breaking that bond

every six weeks, but in another way, I felt hurt that I hadn't been given the opportunity to explore my academic field.

*What were you hoping to do particularly?*

Well, I thought that I could graduate to learn languages; only what the other people did.

*[Rustling] So what were other people around you doing then? What were they doing?*

Well, languages and careers. I had a careers advisor come to see me, and I said that I would like to be a receptionist in a hotel, because that was what my cousin was doing at that time, and this careers advisor slapped me down and said: 'Oh no, you can't do that. It's your speech. You'd be better off doing journalism.', and I thought that would be a boring career. [laughs] So I left school at the age of nineteen.

*So you'd been at Delarue from fifteen to nineteen.*

Mm. No, I was only there two years, so I must have been seventeen when I left Delarue.

*So from seven until fifteen you were at St Margaret's, and from fifteen to seventeen, you were at Delarue.*

Yes.

*And so, I mean, you touched upon this in what you were saying earlier, your life at school and your life at home, they were quite different, weren't they? Can you explain in what ways they were different?*

Well, when I was at St Margaret's, I was restricted, but when I went home in the holidays, I could do anything I wanted.

*You talked about some of the things you were stopped from doing at St Margaret's: what about when you went to Delarue? What was the difference there between Delarue and home?*

They expected me to do everything by myself, which I could, because I'd kept it up at home, in the holidays.

*I'm sorry, I've not quite understood that: so are you saying that you had to do everything yourself at Delarue?*

Yes, dress and feed myself, and all that, and write.

*And when you went home, you kept that up, did you?*

Yes. I was able to take that on board when I went to Delarue, only because I kept it up during the holidays at St Margaret's. [rustling.]

*How did your parents react to you coming home, you know, doing all those things?*

When?

*When you were at Delarue?*

They were very upset about my callipers being taken off me, because I was told my callipers were doing the walking and I wasn't, so they took them off.

*When did that happen?*

When I went to Delarue, about a week after I started.

*And so you'd had callipers almost from when you first started at St Margaret's?*

Yes, about.

*Right through until you were fifteen,, and then the first week you were there, they took them. How did you feel about that?*

I felt delighted to get rid of these awful shackles, but my parents were very upset, because it meant that I would never walk: not that they were bothered much about me walking, but it was just that I'd got to that very point of actually taking the first steps. They were very angry that I was set back.

*But from your perspective, you were quite happy?*

Yes.

*O.K., so you left Delarue when you were seventeen.*

Yes.

*So what was it like, coming home after all that time?*

It was very nice to be at home all the time, and then I wanted to go to the local college, to do typing. I thought that I could improve my typing, which was a bit foolish of me, but that's what I thought I could do.

*So what happened? Did you go to college?*

No, the college, it wasn't equipped for disabilities.

*So did you apply, or what happened? They...*

Yeah, I did apply.

*And did they interview you?*

No. They rejected me, without even seeing me.

*And what did they say when they rejected you?*

That the technical college wasn't equipped to take disabled people. [rustling]

*So what did you do next?*

That was the end of that! My aunt had a friend that would let me work at home, at my own pace.

*Doing what?*

Well, it was when they had rates on shops and buildings: I had to fill in the relevant details on these forms with my typewriter, and I quite enjoyed that, and they paid me a bit of money.

*Do you remember how much you were paid?*

About twenty-five pounds, if I did a batch of forms.

*And how many was a batch of forms?*

About fifty.

*So twenty-five pounds was fifty forms.*

Yes.

*And how long would that take you to do?*

About a couple of months.

*And so this would have been in the sixties?*

'64 and '65.

*And what kind of typewriter did you have?*

Electric. The first one I had was given to me by the Bedser twins.

*The Bedser twins! The cricketers... How did they know about you?*

Through the local spastic group.

*So an electric typewriter in 1964, '65, that was presumably quite an advanced piece of equipment?*

A great big piece of equipment: very heavy.

*And so where would you do your work?*

In the lounge over the shop.

*So you were still above the shop in the tobacconist's in Banbury?*

Yes, but we moved soon after I left school, because of the stairs. [rustling].

*And where did you move to?*

We moved into a house and it had a downstairs bedroom and cloakroom, in a village near Banbury. We stayed there for four years, until my father died in '68, and then it was too big for Mum and I. We moved back into Banbury into a bungalow.

*So what did your father die of?*

Cancer. Liver.

*And had he been ill long?*

We knew fifteen years prior. He had his colon removed.

*Did he appear ill, or....*

No. Not until the last few months, but he still kept working, and on the day after he handed over his shop, he died.

*So what happened to the shop? Who did he hand it over to?*

Someone bought it.

*So he got so ill that he had to sell the shop, was that it?*

He didn't want to give it up, but Mum begged him to give it up.

*So what was the impact of your father dying on you?*

Well, I remember going upstairs, seeing him lying in a coma: that upset me. In the end, the doctor put him out of his misery. I don't think I was greatly upset. I was upset up to a point, but not that much.

*What about your mother's reaction?*

She had sort of prepared herself. She knew.

*How do you remember your father now?*

I don't know. I remember him being there, but he was quite distant, and I was more close to Mum.

*So you, after he died, you decided that you would move from the house in the village.*

Yes.

*So what was this new place that you moved into like?*

It was a two-, three-bedroom bungalow on an estate.

*And was that an improvement for you?*

Yes, it was, because it meant that we didn't have to travel into Banbury, but I didn't make many friends, so I didn't go out a lot, until I joined a church group, and then I made good friends.

*How did that come about, that you joined the church group?*

I think, when I was confirmed, I met this young deacon. I got very friendly with him, and he started up this group; not a youth group, but an older group.

*So how old would you have been then?*

Nineteen or twenty. All the other people in the group were my age. We used to meet in a cellar [F. laughs] of the church house and they would carry me down the steps.

*And what sorts of things did you do?*

We had music evenings, and we just chatted.

*So that was what you were doing in your social life, so that helped you get out a bit: can you sort of describe what a typical day was like for you in those days?*

[Coughs] I'd get up and help Mum as much as I could in the house, and then go into my own room and type, when I had work to do, and then the local society sent me some labels to print out, and that kept me busy.

*Is this the local Spastics Society who sent you labels? And what were the labels for?*

*The Spastic News*

*You were saying that your careers advisor suggested that you go into journalism.*

*Were you at all tempted by that, or was it disregarded?*

No. Another advisor came and visited me at home. He said the same thing, and I thought, 'Oh no, I'm not going to do that boring job.' I wanted to work with people, not on my own. [pause]

*So...*

So I more or less finished with The Spastics Society.

*Why was that?*

[End of Tape 4 Side A]

**Tape 4 Side B [Track 8]**

.....she attended the parents' meetings at St Margaret's that were held there.

*So this was your mother. What was your mother's name again?*

Mary.

*Mary. And she went along to the St Margaret's parents' evenings; and was she at all involved in the Spastics Society when it started up?*

Not really, but she met up with Ian Dawson-Shepherd, Alex Moira and Eric Hodgson.

*And they were all parents at St Margaret's, weren't they?*

Yes, Eric's daughter was a day pupil.

*And was your mother ever involved, sort of in a local group?*

Yes, the Oxford group. [rustling]

*What did she do with them?*

I think she just went to the meetings.

*Did you ever go?*

I went to the parties [rustling] that they had at Christmas time, and then I went to the opening of a unit on the Churchill Hospital. It was opened by Princess Marina. I gave her a bouquet.

*So the other thing that we talked about last week, you said that you were involved in the early Spastics Society's films: can you say how that came about?*

Well, again, I was a goody-goody [F. laughs} and I co-operated with the physio. so much that they thought I would be a good candidate.

*And what was the film?*

*Chance of Their Lives.*

*And what do you remember about the filming?*

I remember filming in the Physio. Department, when I was lying on the couch, and I had to deal with exercises, and Wilfred Pickles was commentating.

*Did you ever meet him?*

Yes. He had a child with cerebral palsy.

*Was it someone that you knew?*

No, he was at the other school, that was named after him.

*And where was that?*

I don't know where it was. I can't remember.

*So are there any other things that you re.... how long was the filming, can you remember? Apart from your physio. exercises, did you do anything else?*

They filmed in the class room, when I was playing a number of games. I get mixed up with that one, and the other one, *Every Eight Hours.*

*So you were in both The Chance of Their Lives and Every Eight Hours. And...*

And I was chosen to go to the British Medical School in London, on closed circuit T.V.

*What was that for? Why were you at the British Medical School?*

To show what they were doing for cerebral palsy.

*Was this for part of the film?*

No, it was separate.

*Oh right.*

I was about nine years old when I went up there, and I remember we was in a room with all these glaring, hot lights on me, and I had to do exercises on the plinth.

*Can you remember what kind of exercises they were?*

Moving my arms and legs up and down.

*And what was that for? What were you doing it for?*

A seminar for doctors.

*So what was that like, at nine, to...?*

Well, it was a bit embarrassing, because I had to be stripped down to my vest and knickers, under these hot lights, with a camera man. It made me very self-conscious.

*And what did your mother say about it?*

She thought it was great that I'd been chosen.

*And what did you think: did you...*

I thought it was great as well.

*Did you ever see any of the films that you were in?*

No, only *Every Eight Hours*, and that's the only one I've seen.

*And what did you think when you saw Every Eight Hours?*

Well, I can't remember a lot about it. I did vaguely recognise myself.

*Where did you see it?*

I forget now. I think it was on the television.

*So you weren't invited to a screening, or...*

No, no, no.

*Did you get paid anything?*

No, no, nothing like that: no royalties. [All laugh].

*But, for instance, did you get your travel expenses paid to go up to the Medical School?*

I think I went up with a house mother, and the physio. in a car.

*So your mother wasn't there: just the house mother and a physio?*

Yes.

*Well, I think we're going to have to get those films for you, to have a look at. [F. laughs.]*

Yes.

*Well, I think... shall we leave it there for this time? Are you able to do next week?*

Yes, I suppose so. Yes.

*Right.*

[End of Tape 4 Side B]

**Tape 5 Side A [Track 9]**

When we moved back into Banbury, I was there about four years at home, and then I thought, my mother wasn't getting any younger, and it would be better if I left home now, and chose where I went, rather than being put somewhere when the time came. I had a very good social worker called Mrs Murphy, and she got me into Drummonds, in Essex, which was a very big institution, about fifty or sixty residents. I went there on a trial basis, for a month. I had to share a room, which was not as I expected, so I asked the warden if I could have a room of my own, and he said there was a very long waiting-list for single rooms. I stuck it out for a month. It was a communal dining room, a communal lounge, and nowhere to get away from everyone. It was for the severely disabled, and people with learning difficulties, so it wasn't really my type of place, and it was set out in an outlandish part of Essex, and the nearest village was about eight miles away.

*How old were you then? How old was your mother?*

My mother was about sixty-eight or so: I was about twenty-four.

*And what was your first introduction to Drummonds? How did you arrive, and what was it like when you were greeted?*

[Clears her throat] I arrived there by car. My mum drove me there, with my aunt, and I was greeted by the warden and his wife, and shown to my room, and it was very strange, being amongst disabled people again, after having spent [coughs] twelve years at home, and mixing with able-bodied people. When I was at home, I joined a club. It was an old mill in Banbury, and they'd converted it into a club for older people, and I enjoyed going there, and I even got them to put a lift in it for me. So we had arrived at Drummonds. It was quite a culture shock.

*Were there any outside activities that you got involved with?*

No, it was quite insular.

*Can you describe what a typical day was like?*

We got up at about half past seven, had breakfast in the big dining room, and then went to arts craft workshop. [coughs]

*What was that like?*

I like that, because I like that kind of thing: making baskets and weaving, stool making, and making pottery.

*And you enjoyed the basket weaving, did you?*

Not the basket weaving; it was a nightmare.

*Why was that?*

The canes kept breaking, because when you use cane, you need to keep it soaked in water, otherwise it breaks off, and I could never weave it in and out the uprights quick enough, before it dried out, so I made some peculiar-shaped waste paper baskets, but I did make one good one: I've still got that, and we made cane tea trays, which was not so bad.

*What were you making them for?*

We had sales of work every so often.

*I think I've seen a picture of the sort of Drummonds van with sort of a stall, that used to be at fetes and things like that, was that how you remember it?*

I was only there a month, so they didn't have a fete while I was there.

*So, moving on about your typical day, so after you'd done the art and crafts, what would happen next?*

That would last all day, till four o'clock in the afternoon; and then... we would break for lunch, about half past twelve, and then go back to the workshop, and continue till four-thirty.

*Was that every day?*

Yes.

*So from after breakfast, right through until about four o'clock, you'd be in the workshop.*

Yes, four o'clock: as far as I can remember, yes. At the end of my stay, the warden said he would welcome me back, but at that stage, I'd made up my mind not to return.

*And why was that?*

I didn't like it a bit, and I wanted my own room, and my own space, but they tried to talk me round, saying that I was a good resident, although I'd had a few disagreements with the warden.

*What were they about?*

About the workshop, and the regime, and sharing a room with this person that I didn't particularly get on with.

*And what else about the regime?*

You had to do what they told you to do. You rarely went out beyond the grounds, only if one of the staff could spare the time to take you out, and then you'd go down to the village, which had a post office, and a general store.

*Was that Feering?*

No, Kelvedon.

*So, and that was...*

I don't remember going out anywhere, or any further than that.

*So, from four o'clock when you stopped at the workshop, what would happen then?*

Well, you had free time, to do what you like. I can't remember what I did. I just went back to my room, or sat in the lounge.

*Can you describe what your room was like?*

I've forgotten really, but there was two beds... Oh, it had three beds in it, that's right. One was unoccupied. It was pretty much like a dormitory, like I'd been used to at school.

*And roughly what sort of size was the room? As big as this room?*

About half the size of this room.

*Half the size of this room. With three beds in it?*

F. Are you sure?

*That seems tiny. That would be about ten by ten. No! Is that right?*

F. Or about the same size as this room?

Yes, I think it was half the size of this one.

F. How did you get your wheelchair...

[Judy laughs]

*Yes, how did you?*

Well, I got mine in, where the other person could walk. It was only me in a wheelchair in that room.

*And did you have your own things in that room? Your own personal things?*

[coughs] No, I was only there a month, so I only took clothes and basics.

*Did you have any books to read or anything?*

Yeah, I took three books with me. They didn't have a library. At the end of the month, I'd made my mind up that, if this was the kind of institution I was going to have to be in, I would rather not go anywhere, so I went home, which was a great relief, and then I was quite happy at home, but I was a bit listless, and my periods were out of control, so my mother took me to the doctor's, and he said it was all the stress of being in that situation. It was emotional upset. The social worker came back again. She said, 'Yes, alright, we won't try any more, and let Judy settle back into a normal life.'

*What was your mother's reaction?*

She was horrified that it could have upset me that much.

*And how did she feel about you being back home?*

She was very pleased. Although I think I felt guilty at leaving my mother on her own: I think that added to the stress. So I just went on normally at home, and then, a year later, the social worker said that they had a place coming up in Harpenden. I'd never

heard of it before, and she said, 'At the moment, they were getting over a bad experience', so she advised me to wait until they had got really established.

*So, the social worker... where was the social worker from?*

From the Spastics Society. She worked in my area.

*So you'd never heard of Harpenden before?*

No, I didn't know it existed.

*And so what happened next?*

They said that they'd take me on, on a week's trial, when things had calmed down, and they'd got a new warden in situ.

*And so, remind me, how old would you have been then?*

Thirty.

*So what was Redclyffe like?*

I enjoyed it at first, and I met another lady that had been at Drummonds, and we started at Redclyffe together, so it was quite nice, knowing someone there already. I enjoyed the freedom that it gave me, but the more independent I got, the more I wanted more.

*Can we go back to your first impressions of what Redclyffe was like?*

[Coughs] It was an old house. It had been given by a doctor. The main house had a communal dining room, a kitchen, and a large hall, and they'd built sections off of it,

and I was in Section One, which had five bedrooms in it, and we all had our own bedroom, which was nice.

*What was the room like?*

It was quite large: it was larger than I'd had at Drummonds, and it had a desk, a wardrobe, with drawers built in inside, and you could take your own chest of drawers, which I took. A bed in it as well, and all the light switches...

[End of Tape 5 Side A]

**Tape 5 Side B [Track 10]**

...along the side of the bed was a light switch and an alarm bell, which you could press for help, at any time.

*Were you allowed any sort of personal touches?*

Oh, yeah. We had our own book shelves, and you could take your own books and ornaments: and a wash basin and a vanity unit.

*And how did the sort of regime of Redclyffe contrast to Drummonds?*

Well, it didn't really... I mean, there were more people of my own ilk.

*What do you mean by that?*

They weren't learning difficulties. It was all cerebral palsy people, so I could converse with them more easily. We got up at seven, again by a bell. We were meant to be at breakfast by half-eight, if not earlier, but if we were late, we would get punished.

*In what way punished?*

We were just verbally told off, in front of everyone. There was one girl that wouldn't get out of bed. She was for ever being late for breakfast. Although she suffered from Huntingdon's Chorea.

*Huntingdon's Chorea. What is that, exactly?*

It's a disease of the blood. It's hereditary. It makes you have outbreaks of madness.

*I've read something about it...So this would make her stay in bed, would it?*

Well, she didn't like being bullied and nagged, and this would just wind her up, and then she'd go off on....

*What was it like when she did?*

Terrible. She would shout and scream. It got worse. Sometimes I would go across, and I was able to calm her down, but most times, she was uncontrollable, and she'd smash up her room, or throw things at people, and I nearly got hit once [laughs] by a foot plate.

*And how did the staff react?*

The staff, some, a few of them, were very understanding, but most of them were... seemed to aggravate the situation by nagging her, constantly being on her back. It was terrible.

*So what...*

I got very anxious when this happened, because it was so disruptive, and the staff seemed to have no understanding of what they were seeing.

*So what were the staff like?*

They were very nice, most of them. I think most of them were on my side, because when I got into trouble with the warden, for not conforming, and I got punished, the staff would be on my side.

*Can you describe a little bit more about what you mean about what you were you punished for and what weren't you conforming to?*

Well, it was like, you had to be one big happy family, and 'You've got to go to this workshop every day', which I hated.

*Why did you hate it?*

The jobs were so monotonous and repetitive.

*Can you give some examples of what you had to do?*

Yeah. You had to count out screws, put them in a bag, and then pass them on to the next person, who sealed them up and then the next person packed them in a box, and it would just go on, and on. and on.

*What time in the morning, till when, did you do that?*

Half-nine... if the bus got there early. We all went in two bus loads to Abbots Langley, and we were herded in like cattle. We got there about half-nine, and started work about quarter to ten, till eleven, and then we'd have a fifteen-minute break, and then go back till about half-twelve, when we had lunch in the canteen, and then we'd go back at half-one, till four, and then the bus came. It was very uncomfortable in the hot weather, because the workshops had a glass roof. Sometimes the temperature got up to ninety, or over ninety, and the manager wouldn't let us stop work. We got paid three pounds a week, out of which a pound was taken off for our lunch.

*So, you were working from ten until four, every day, for five days a week...*

Yes.

*...and you were being paid three pounds, minus a pound for your lunch, so it was two pounds: what year was this?*

[Pause.] 1974.

*I don't suppose you know what the average pay was in those days?*

No, but the worst job that I ever had, and that was screwing up newspaper to pack round lunch, and Veronica and I did this, day in and day out for about a year, and then we decided to complain to the management. We were both quite rebellious, [laughs] so we went up into the manager's office, and said that we were not happy with this work, and he said, 'Well, I'm afraid your disability will not allow you to work anywhere better', at which, I think smoke was coming out of my ears. [F. laughs.] The deputy manager was very kind, and he was in there. He knew that I was annoyed, and told me not to answer back, but not in so many words: he looked.

*So what happened then?*

Well, I went back to the job, and then I decided that I'd take up a suggestion that somebody had given me, to apply to the local educational college at St Albans, so I did that. But that didn't meet with their approval, so I went away two days a week to college and three days at the workshop, and I got penalised in my wage packet. [laughs.], so in the end, I ended up with about one-fifty in my wage packet.

*What you could buy for one-fifty at that time?*

We had a tuck shop at Redclyffe, and we would buy sweets and toiletries. Once a month, the Lions Club in Harpenden would come and take the residents into the village.

*Into Harpenden?*

Yes.

*What would you do there?*

Buy clothes or anything.

*And you were able to buy clothes out of your wages, were you?*

No. [laughs]. We were allowed so much off state benefit [rustling]. It worked out about [pause] six pounds: I think it was about that.

*I mean, I suppose you don't remember how much things were in the tuck shop?*

[coughs. Rustling noise] It was bought in bulk, so we got it at a discount. A bar of chocolate would be about [pause] ...no, I can't remember.

*So did anyone else at Redclyffe go to college?*

No, I started the ball rolling. [F. & Judy laugh.] I had to get agreement from the warden at Redclyffe and the Society, of which I got a letter back, saying that it was alright, but this experience wouldn't last.

*So what did you want to do at college?*

Anything. I started off with basic computer skills, and that was hard: half a day a week, and then I took another half-day, which a tutor would help me privately, to cope with the computer skills.

*And who paid for that?*

At that time, it was free.

*How was it like, applying to the college? What sort of process was that?*

Fairly simple. I can remember although the college wasn't very accessible, there were places that I could get to. Each year, when I chose my subject, they'd put the class in a ground floor room.

*Were there any other disabled students at the college at that time?*

No.

*No-one. So how did the other students react to you?*

Fine, I got on very well with them and they were very helpful, pushing me anywhere I wanted to go, because I didn't have an electric chair at that point.

*So what was it like, being at college, then?*

It was lovely, it was like a different world, a world that I had been used to at home. I made a lot of friends there, and I could eat with the staff, because the staff canteen was more organised, and I felt that I wouldn't get pushed and shoved too much.

*And so what kind of computers were they, that you were working on?*

Well, at first, it was basic binary system, [rustling] which, don't ask me what they are now. [laughs] It was easy, but I never got the hang of it.

*Why do you think that was?*

I don't know: it was all based on figures, but I...

[End of Tape 5 Side B]

**Tape 6 Side A [Track 11]**

*We were talking about computers, and you passed your first exam.*

Yes, it was called CSE.

*CSE Computing, was it?*

Yes.

*And what did it feel like to have a CSE?*

Well, it was good, and when I got the certificate in the post at Redclyffe, I took great pleasure in pushing it under the noses of the staff that said I wouldn't manage it.

*And what was the reaction you got?*

They were quite pleased, but I don't think they expected me to carry on with it: well, I didn't really expect to carry on with college, but I found that it got me out of work, so I just carried on, doing course after course.

*What other courses did you do?*

Business studies, A-level literature, where I met another friend: Sociology, A level and O level Sociology, and then I had to take a year off, when I got English Literature.

*Why did you have to take a year off?*

I had cancer.

*And how did that first manifest itself?*

Well, I found a lump in my breast one night, and I waited until the next night, when I knew one of the staff who was coming on, who was an ex-nurse. I talked to her about it. She went straight to the warden's wife, saying that I ought to see a doctor immediately. In those days you had to be nearly dead, to see a doctor up there.

*We're talking, what, about sort of the late seventies, are we?*

Yes.

*So what happened next?*

The next day, the warden's wife made me very upset. I was in tears, because she said that I had betrayed her trust.

*Why did she say that?*

She said that I ought to have gone to her first. She wouldn't talk to me for the next four days.

*So, when did you go...*

So the doctor came. He said it had better be investigated. The doctor was very patronising.

*How? How was he patronising?*

We had to have the same doctor that was at the unit: we didn't have a choice.

*But how was he patronising?*

He talked down to me, and he was a bit smarmy.

*And what did he say to you?*

He didn't think it was much to worry about, but he'd send me to the hospital, to have a biopsy, so I went to the hospital at St Albans, and they tried to aspirate the lump, and it wouldn't. It wouldn't aspirate, so I went in for a day and they took a biopsy. They sent me back home that day, with stitches in my breast. I went to work as normal the next day, which angered my mother.

*This was in the workshop, was it? What were you meant to be doing, in the workshop?*

I was put on folding up newspapers. Fuses. They were in paper. You had to fold them up in half. I don't know what fuses they were.

*And how did you feel at this stage?*

Well, a bit apprehensive, but the staff were nice at the workshop. We had two ladies that helped us at work, and organised the work. They were very chatty and jolly: lovely ladies. And then, I don't know, I can't remember but, I was at Redclyffe, in my room, and the warden came round, and said that I was needed back in at the clinic, at the hospital, to have my stitches out, but there was no-one there to take me, except the odd-job man: he was a really nice old man. He took me to the clinic and we waited in the corridor, and they called me in, and gave me the bad news.

*And what did they tell you?*

They told me I had to have my breast off, so [coughs] they sat me in cubicle with a glass of water, which I couldn't drink, because I hadn't got a straw, and they drew the curtains across, and I think I was just in a daze. They told the driver; his name was Sid; to go back to Redclyffe, and try and locate the warden's wife.

*Why was that?*

To come. I think I sat there about an hour or more: I can't remember: it was just the shock. In the end, the warden's (wife) came. She drew back the curtains and said, 'I can't leave you alone for five minutes'. I think it was a joke, but she was quite sympathetic, and she brought my overnight stuff. She took me up to the ward, and they showed me to my bed, and the bed was all crumpled sheets and dirty, and she said, 'You're not getting in that bed until it's changed', and they changed it. She sat with me about an hour, and then she said she'd go back and ring up my mother, about Avis, (that was the staff I told about my lump), she said she'd get her to come and sit with me in the evening. It got towards the meal time and I was in the bed, and they put the meal on the bed table, and the bed table had wheels on, and I went to help myself, and [laughs] it flew down the end of the bed, but the lady opposite me saw what happened, and she came over and fed me, 'cause the staff didn't bother. Meanwhile, the warden's wife had rung my mother up, in Banbury, and told her that I was having my breast off the next day.

*What did your mother do?*

I think she rang up my cousin. He said that he'd drive her straight up that evening, and she could stay in my bed at Redclyffe. She got there the next day, just before I was going into the anaesthetic room, and then I remember I was in the recovery ward. I was trying to tell the nurse something, and the nurse asked my mother what I was saying. Apparently, I was very conscious of my right arm knocking against my wound, and I was asking that it could be tied down to the trolley.

*And this was when you were just coming round from the anaesthetic?*

And then, when I was in the recovery ward, they were very nice to me down there, but when I went back to the ward, I never saw a nurse or doctor. If it hadn't been for my mother being there all day, I wouldn't be here today.

*Why do you say that?*

Well, one day she came in, my wound had bled so much, it was through to my nightdress, and they hadn't noticed, and they wouldn't come and re-do it.

*So what did your mother say?*

She insisted that they re-do it. They said that I was wriggling too much, and that's why it hadn't been done, and one day, I didn't have a wash; well, I never had a wash all that week; except they did get me out of bed and they kept pulling me under the arms, which was excruciating, and they sat me in the wash room and expected me to wash myself, and then they put me back in bed. Then I wanted to use the toilet. I couldn't use the bed pan, so my mother suggested that they put the bedpan in my wheelchair, or a chair, so I managed that alright, but I missed the pan, and it went on the floor, and it stayed there till I went and discharged myself.

*How long was that?*

A week.

*So you discharged yourself?*

Yes. My mother knew I was getting a bit anxious. We said that I wasn't getting the care that I needed. The doctor came round. He said I could go back to Redclyffe, and the district nurse would take the stitches out.

*Where?*

At Redclyffe.

*So how did you feel when you got back to Redclyffe?*

Relieved, but I had my stitches out....

[End of Tape 6 Side A]

**Tape 6 Side B [Track 12]**

*And what was the reaction from everybody at Redclyffe when you went back?*

They were quite shocked. Anyway, a week after I had my stitches out, the warden's wife brought the doctor round to see me, and they stood outside my door, and my mother heard the warden's wife say, 'Judy is getting bored here, and she's ready to go back to the workshop.'

*And what did you feel?*

So they came in the room and said that they thought I was getting bored, and that I might like to go back to the workshop. [laughs]

*And what did you say?*

I was just astounded, and they walked off, and I burst into tears. My mother said, 'They can't make you go back: they can't make you go back', but I said, 'They will, they will.'

*I meant to ask you, did anyone ever say, 'I don't want to work in the workshop?'*

I did, but...

*And what was the reaction?*

'You've got to go to the workshop.'

*Was there any reason give that you had to go?*

It was just to get us out the way, during the day. They didn't like anyone there during the day. It would mean extra work. Even if you felt ill, you would have to go to work.

*You'd still have to go to work. You were saying that you had to virtually drop dead before they would let you off. Why were they asking you to do the particular jobs you were doing, then? Why were you doing, putting screws in bags, why were you...*

Well, that was all that we were fit for.

*But I mean, why those particular tasks: was it because somebody was paying for you to do that work?*

Oh yeah, it was contracted.

*And what sort of companies did you have contracts with?*

I don't know, really, it was just delivered every week. They were making porch lights.

*Porch lights. How were you making porch lights?*

Assembling them.

*And do you remember what that involved?*

I wasn't involved in that, only packaging. That was all I was paid for.

*Were the people who made the porch lights paid any more than you, or was everyone paid the same?*

Yes. I think we got a bonus at Christmas [laughs], but it wasn't a great big bonus: I can't remember what it was.

*Did you have targets of how many things you had to do every day?*

Some of the more able ones had targets, but the rest of us worked at our own pace; but if we were slacking, we'd get chivvied up.

*I mean, did you talk about the work amongst yourselves?*

Yeah.

*What sort of things did you used to say about it?*

Well, Veronica and I didn't like the work and we complained.

*Did you complain more than that one time when you went to the manager?*

No. We did with the staff, but it was hopeless, when we complained: but it was far better off, keeping quiet: the same at Redclyffe; it was far better to keep quiet, than to complain. [laughs]

*And how many years were you at Redclyffe?*

Thirteen.

*And in that time, did it change at all?*

No. The staff changed a lot, but not the manager: except we had a deputy manager, and he was just terrible, disrespectful to us.

*In what way was he disrespectful?*

He would walk in your bedroom without knocking, catch you washing, or undressed: and one boy there, he was about fifteen, but he'd got the mental age of a five-year-old. He was a lovely boy, but the staff beat him. They were cruel towards him, as well. Taunting him.

*What would they say?*

I forget, but they'd wind him up: then he'd get angry, and then he'd have a spasm, and push himself out of his chair, and then he'd fall out and they'd pick him up very roughly, plonk him back in his chair, and the poor chap couldn't speak at all, only make sounds.

*Who was....how many people on the staff were doing this?*

Only this one particular man.

*And how many times did it happen... when he was beating him up?*

Well, I don't know that he was beating him up, but he made his life pretty unpleasant.

*And how long did this go on for?*

Two or three years.

*And when was that?*

Actually, the staff, I met him at Drummonds.

*So the staff member had been at Drummonds, and then gone to Redclyffe. And there was just this particular fifteen-year-old he picked on?*

He picked on other people, but they were able to fight back, but if you fought back, you got it one way or another. It was just better to accept it.

*Did you ever experience anything like this happening?*

Yes. He knocked at my bedroom door, and before I could shout, 'Wait', he burst in, and I was in the nude. He said, 'Oh, I'm sorry', but the next day, it was the topic of conversation at breakfast.

*And how did that make you feel?*

Embarrassed. Sick. Humiliated. And another time, I had a male friend in my room. He burst in on us. He said, 'Oh, I'm sorry', and went out again, but he took the rise out of me the next day, because I didn't have boyfriends at that time, and that was the first one that I had.

*What sort of things did he say?*

'Oh, I caught Judy at it last night'.

*So you weren't able to lock the door?*

No.

*And why do you think this particular chap did this?*

I think he was just a creep.

*Did anyone complain about this member of staff?*

Oh yeah, we did, but the warden would always be on his side, because he'd worked for them previously, at Woodford: I don't know what that was, but Woodford; I think it was a hostel.

*So do you know if anything ever happened?*

I think he just left, or he was ill. Oh no, he got married to another member of staff, and they left, and they found out he'd got epilepsy, and he's since died.

*And how do you feel about him?*

Well, I just think he was a creep. He didn't have any respect for us.

*So why do you think he worked at Redclyffe? Why would he take a job like that?*

Well, it was just a job, wasn't it, to him? It was seen to be a great job, and he was doing his job well.

*Just remind me when this was, exactly?*

About 1980.

*So I got puzzled when you say, 'Well, he was doing his job well': in whose eyes was he doing that?*

The warden's.

*And why would the warden think that?*

Well, because he'd worked for him in the past, and they'd go off duty at four o'clock, and they didn't see what went on afterwards.

*So most of this used to happen after four o'clock?*

F. After work. [Judy coughs]

*Were there other things?*

No, not really, I think. He could be very nice, but mostly he was manipulative.

*In what ways was he manipulative?*

Well, he knew that if we reported him, he wouldn't get reprimanded.

*Shall we stop there or do you want to say anything else? That's enough?*

[End of tape 6 Side B]

**Tape 7 Side A [Track 13]**

*O.K. So it's Judy Smart, and it's 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2004. So Judy, you were about to tell us about your, what happened with your education.*

Well, I went to Delarue School for two years, and at the end of those two years, I wasn't very well, academically, and they asked me to leave, because I was standing in the way of someone who might be more academically-minded.

*And what age was that?*

Seventeen.

*And then you went home for a while.*

Yes.

*Then, later on, [Judy coughs] when you were at Redclyffe, you then decided to take up education ...*

Yes.

*... as a mature student. Can you tell us what ...*

I took it up because I needed to get out of the workshop, before I went insane. [Judy & F. laugh.]

*And what age was it, that you went back into education?*

Thirty.

*Right: and what was the first course that you did, and where was it?*

CSE in computer studies, at St Albans Further Education College.

*Right, and then I think, the bit we got to, in our last session, was, and then we sort of moved on afterwards, and we talked about some other things, was, you'd done the CSE in Computing, and then you did a number of other courses, and I wondered if we could, maybe, talk about those in a bit more detail.*

[clears throat.] Yes. Then I went back and did Business Studies, but it was the wrong move, because, to get the qualification, you had five subjects to pass. These were Computing, Law, Accounts, Business Management and English. I passed in four of these subjects, but the problem was that the last subject was Accounts. At that time, I had my electric computer, and if you've ever tried doing accounts on a computer, you will know what trouble I had.

*So there wasn't any sort of accountancy packages: you had to do it in word processing.*

Yes.

*Right. And in terms of your accessing a computer, how did you do that? How did you get hold of a computer?*

That came later on.

*So what did you do, up until you had the computer?*

My electric typewriter, which I typed, using a stick in my hand.

*And did you get any other kind of support, for studying at that ...*

No, not at that time.

*So what was it like, trying to study, while you were at Redclyffe?*

It was quite difficult, because, when everybody came back from work, it was [F. laughs] pandemonium, and at night, they'd play their music at full blast.

*What kinds of music were they playing?*

Pop music, or their televisions, on loud.

*So you said it was a mistake to do that: why do you think that was? Why was it a mistake, to do the business course?*

It was too many subjects to take on board at that time.

*So you passed four.*

Yes.

*So what did you do after that? What was your next sort of step?*

I went back to English Literature 'A' level, and coming up, I met my friend, Linda, there, and I met a lot of other students, who were very helpful.

*In what ways?*

They let me borrow their notes, and helped me write my own notes.

*And what sorts of things were you studying, at A level?*

Literature.

*What kind of books?*

We studied E.M. Forster, Howard's End, Shakespeare's King Lear and the war poets.  
I can't remember what else.

*And what impression did they make on you?*

Not much. [F. laughs.] 'Howard's End' was very convoluted. It wasn't until I saw it on the television, many years after, I was able to grasp the plot.

*And in the books you've read, do you ever see any of your ... what can I say? Do you ever see any sort of disabled characters in the books that you're reading, or that you have read, or do you think that's reflected in the books that you have read?*

I've read books by disabled people.

*Can you give us some examples?*

The first book I read was called Over My Dead Body, by June Opie. She contracted polio as a young child, and led most of her life in an iron lung, and that was the first book I read. [rustling noise]. Another one was There is Always an Open Door, and that was by a polio victim.

*And what did you think, when you read these books?*

They interested me very much. I could relate to the characters, and what they had to go through.

*And, in your sort of more general reading, I mean, say, when you were a child, did you ever come across books that related to your experience?*

No.

*And what about in terms of ... you know, you've written a book yourself: what sparked you off to do that?*

Boredom. [F. laughs.] I just felt a bit bored, when I left university, and I just decided to write, and only in the past year, I've taken it seriously and got on with it.

*O.K., we've jumped ahead a bit, haven't we? So if we go back to ... so after your English Literature 'A' level: what did you do then?*

My English Literature 'A' level, I had to take that again, because, I was just coming up to the exam, when I was rushed into hospital.

*And this was with the breast cancer.*

Yes.

*With the breast cancer.*

*So you had to re-take it. So ...*

I had to re-take that the next year, but, at that time, I didn't realise that I needed extra time in the exam, so I just failed that one.

*So what was it like, trying to manage the exam, then, without extra time?*

Impossible . My friends wrote for me, and I dictated it all, but I ran out of time.

*What did ... where would you take the exam?*

In a separate room from the others.

*And how did that feel?*

Isolating, but in a way, it was quite a relaxed atmosphere, [rustling] although I had to have an invigilator sat with me.

*So you, so the re-sit you failed? Is that right?*

Yes.

*So what happened next?*

I failed by one mark. The next year, I went and did 'O' level English, still on the typewriter, and they gave me extra time, to write the essay.

*So you used the typewriter in your essay?*

Yes.

*With a stick.*

Yes.

*Oh right.*

All my essays were written on the typewriter at that time.

*And how long would it take you to write an essay, using that method?*

About a week, or two weeks, but they were very lenient.

*When you say 'two weeks', I mean, how many sort of hours would that actual be time  
[?]*

I could only type at that stage, two hours, otherwise it would get messy. I'd lose control of my hand, and I'd hit the wrong keys, but they didn't mind that.

*Can you sort of describe what it's like for you, to sort of type for the two hours? What sort of physical effort involved?*

It is a physical, quite draining, because I have to control my hands.

*Is it just physical, or ...*

Whilst thinking of what I need to write, so it's mentally draining as well.

*So when you did it the second time, with the typewriter, how did you get on with your exam?*

The exam I dictated, and I got an 'A'.

*And how did that make you feel?*

I'd always been very good at English at school, but I didn't think I'd get an 'A'. It was quite an achievement.

*And what did other people think? What were other people's reactions?*

They were very surprised at Redclyffe, but my fellow students weren't.

*So what came after your 'A' then?*

I decided to do Economics, and that was the {F. laughs] biggest mistake in my life, because it was so boring, and my tutor wasn't very articulate, and made it even more boring, so I took the exam, but, [F. laughs] I didn't really know what I was doing ...

*F: [?]*

but it kept me out of the workshop, and [F. laughs] that's all I wanted to do, at that time: so then I took Sociology, and met a marvellous tutor, who put me on the right track.

*How?*

He spent a lot of time with me, introducing me to the computer. At that time, the computing lab was on the top floor of the college, and they didn't have a lift, so he pulled me up three flights of stairs in my wheelchair, to get me to the top, which I thought was fantastic.

*F: Was that Pat McNeill?*

Pat McNeill, he tried me out on the computer, and the next week, he said, 'Can you bear an afternoon?' so I said 'Yes', and he said he'd get the computer brought down to the ground floor, so we could get the experience of it.

*So what kind of computer was it?*

It was an Apple. It didn't have a key card. It was just a normal computer.

*So how did you get on with it?*

Quite well, but again, I kept hitting the wrong keys, but at least, I could delete the errors easily, and it went on for weeks like this. He looked into what adaptations might be.

*Might be made, yeah. What kind of things did he have in mind?*

We tried the head stick, which made him laugh, because it looked to funny on my head, but it gave me such a neck ache, it wasn't worth the bother, so we discarded that, and then he found out about a trust fund, that loaned out computers for disabled students, so he got on to them, and they came and assessed me at Redclyffe, and they loaned me this computer at Redclyffe, to do my homework on.

*And what difference did that make?*

It was marvellous. My work was neater, although my speed wasn't any better.

[End of Tape 7 Side A]

**Tape 7 Side B [Track 14]**

*So were you were saying that the computer made a difference to your work: just making it neater and ...*

Yes.

*But your speed didn't improve.*

No. But Pat McNeill was very generous, and always extended the date for my essays to be handed in. So when it came to exam time, he was connected with the exam board anyway, so he got me all the time I needed, to give the exam in, with a pause every hour, which made it a lot easier, and less stressful.

*So how did you get on?*

I did the 'O' level first, in Sociology, and went on to the 'A' level, and I got a 'C', and he was quite pleased with that.

*So what do you think was the most important ...*

So I did eight courses at St Albans that went quite well.

*What do you think was the most important to you: the subjects that you studied, or the tutors?*

The tutors, and the companionship of the other students.

*Can you talk a bit more about why that was important?*

Well, I was getting away from the residents of Redclyffe, because it's not normal to live, work and go on holiday with the same people, day after day, year after year, and

I would not allow myself to fit into that niche. I was me, not what they wanted me to be.

*O.K., so, after you'd finished ...*

It was like a form of stereotyping, that you had to act like disabled people, and that's not me.

*Can you describe what that stereotype is?*

[pause.] Being passive, submissive [Judy & F. laugh], taking orders from everyone, and that's just how it is, well, it was. I think it's better nowadays, if you've got a strong will like I have [laughs]: so that's why I didn't fit in at Redclyffe. So, going back to my college days, I did 'A' level Sociology, and at the end we all got together, and I remember Pat, coming up to my desk, saying that the college could offer me no more courses, and my heart sank, because I thought that meant going back into the workshop. He saw my disappointment, and said, 'I think that you are a good applicant for Hatfield Polytechnic', and my mouth dropped. I said, 'I can't go there, I'm not good enough', but he insisted. He arranged an interview date for me. He said that he would come with me and hold my hand. When I got back to Redclyffe, I told them that I was going to Hatfield Polytechnic, and they scoffed at the idea, everyone, so I thought, 'Well, are they right, or are they wrong?' I had many doubts in my mind, but I'd built up the faith in Pat McNeill, so I knew that he wasn't fobbing me off, and he meant what he said.

*So what year was this, when you went there, the Poly?*

[Pause.] '84, I think.

*And so tell us what the interview was like.*

Well, I felt very nervous. Four people were there. It was very informal, but they looked very formidable people, but in the end, I got to know them very well, [rustling noise], and I'm still in touch with most of them.

*So, what were you going to study at Hatfield?*

They suggested ... I wanted to study Sociology, but they said, Well, why don't I do an introductory course for the first year, to see how I coped with it, and that year was very tough, because my tutor wasn't very helpful, and it was very difficult, taking notes. I tried to take notes on the tape recorder, but then it would take me twice as long to transcribe the notes, as well as doing homework: but I scraped through that year.

*And you were still, were you still living at Redclyffe at the time?*

Yes. I was at Redclyffe for three of my degree years. My B.A. was three years. For my B.A., they suggested I took it over five years, to give me longer for my work.

*Can you remember what your first day was like, when you went to Harpenden College?*

A friend of mine dropped me off, as Redclyffe weren't at all helpful in that way, transporting me there. So the Vicar's wife took me that first day. She dropped me off and I met up with the tutor, and it was just bewildering, because all these students were rushing about everywhere, and I was in my manual chair, and I had to wait to be pushed round, and then they pushed me to the lecture hall, which was vast, and I sat in the front row, with my tape recorder, but not much of that lesson came out.

*How did the other students react to you?*

Well, indifferently, so I relied a lot on hand-outs that the tutors gave me, but my tutor in the Polytechnic said that she couldn't provide me with notes before-hand.

*Why not?*

She wasn't very prepared for her lesson. She was very woolly in the lectures, and no-one could make head nor tail of it, really: and she was my personal tutor, which didn't help.

*So what about socially: how did things progress socially, at University?*

The year that I was in, the students didn't socialise, but the Psychology year took me under their wing at meal times, and I got quite friendly with them, and they were a great help, and they would help me in the canteen, take me to the library, and take me

to the toilet, when I needed to go: but the other tutors were quite helpful, but they knew what I needed. So I started my B.A. in '85, but I was very unsure of myself, and I had another personal tutor, and she was very perceptive of my needs. She helped me lots for two years, and every time it got near to exams, something would happen at Redclyffe that would freak me out, so that it would make it more stressful, leading up to the exam. The second year, I took my second exam, the night before, I fell over and cut my head open on the fire escape door, and I was taken to St Albans Hospital, eleven o'clock at night, and been stitched up, and then I was taken back to Redclyffe, then got up for college the next day, where the exam was taking place, in the afternoon.

*So how did you get on?*

When I arrived at the Polytechnic in the morning, I went straight up to my personal tutor, and told her what had happened that night. She said it wasn't a particularly easy exam...

*She asked you if you wanted to sit the exam?*

Yes, that day, or delay it, but then I had to sit the exam that day: although, she wrote to the Board of Examiners, explaining that I'd cut my head open that night. So I passed that year, and went on to the third year. But when the third year came round, something else happened at Redclyffe to freak me out: so, in the end, my tutor said she could see I was unhappy at Redclyffe, and she said ...

[End of Tape 7 Side B]

**Tape 8 Side A [Track 15]**

*... about to say that, you were, in the third year, you were unhappy at Redclyffe: can you say why you were unhappy?*

Well, because they would mock me, when I went back from the Polytechnic.

*What sorts of things would they say?*

Well, the Warden said, every time I went in, he said, 'Have you been studying sex again? Where are you up to now?'

*Did he say that every day?*

But I just laughed it off, but it got to me a bit. I felt a bit angry, that I wasn't taken seriously. The other residents were all right really. They didn't mind, but they were a bit jealous that I wasn't going to the workshop. When I started my degree, I had to get a dispensation from the Spastics Society.

*F: Oh right.*

*What did that mean? What did you have to do, to get that?*

I had to write a letter, saying what I would like to do, [F. laughs] as an alternative to the workshop, and I got a letter back, I can't remember who it was from, but it was very patronising. They said that the education would be wasted, and that it would lead nowhere, and I was pretty pee-ed off at that stage, and it made me even more determined. I was completely astounded at the letter. Anyway, when I did my degree, I had to ask for every day off at the workshop, but that didn't go down very well either. So, I got one week off, to do my homework, and then, they granted me every day off, to stay in Redclyffe, and do my homework, which was good, because,

during the day, no-one was allowed to stay behind, but it was all right, and it was quiet, and I could get on with my work.

*So to clarify, before you went and did your degree, you were still doing some time at the workshop: how many days?*

Three days.

*..at the workshop, and two days, doing your courses. So it was only got to do your degree, that you were allowed to stop doing the workshop completely.*

Yes. And when it came up to my third year exam, the night before that exam, something kicked off at Redclyffe.

*What was that?*

One of the new residents, who'd lived at home for all her life, I knew her at the workshop, she was a lovely lady, her parents thought it was time that she left home, so they sent her to Redclyffe: and the night before my exam, she freaked out completely. At 3 a.m. in the morning, [F. laughs] she set the fire alarms off, and went, screaming about the building, and all the staff that were available, which was only about two live-in staff, had to evacuate all the bedrooms. By the time they got to me, this girl was screaming outside my door, saying, 'All they're after me, help me! Help me!' Then one of the staff came in, [rustling noise] bundled me into my duvet, put me in my wheelchair, pushed me through the fire escape door, by which time, someone had rescued this girl, and taken her away. We sat in the garages, whilst the firemen went all over Redclyffe, trying to trace the fire. It was a freezing cold night, and we were all stuck outside for an hour, and then they found out it was a hoax, and then we all went back in to bed, and this girl continued screaming. She was put in the staff room, with a member of staff, trying to calm her down.

*Not exactly the best preparation for an exam; so how did you cope the next morning?*

Well, I got up, I didn't sleep much that night after that, and I went into the Polytechnic, I went up to my tutor again, told her. I thought she might think I was having her on, two years in a row. She was very sympathetic. I took the exam again, and then after the exam, the next day, she said, 'How about moving out of Redclyffe, into halls?', and I said, 'I can't cope without help.' She said, 'We've got a number of students here with disabilities, and they have community service volunteers, to stay with them, and help them with whatever they need. That would be right for you.' There was very much wrangling went on, because my tutor and the warden were not of the same opinion. He didn't want me to leave Redclyffe, because I was an easy resident, and that meant that I wasn't very demanding, and they wanted to keep me at Redclyffe.

*And what did you think?*

I wanted to get out. I'd been saying this for the last six years, to the social worker, but she said, the only way I could get out, would be to go on the waiting list for the Milton Keynes unit, which was over-subscribed, at that time.

*And this social worker was employed by whom?*

The Spastics Society.

*So when your tutor came up with another idea ...*

Yes, it was met with hostility, and the warden had the cheek to say that he was my custodian, and yet my mother was still alive.

*And he said 'custodian', not 'guardian'? Custodian. So what did your mother think?*

She didn't want me to leave Redclyffe. She believed that I was happy there, but, in the end, I moved out. Well my tutor and the welfare officer, won the battle, and I moved out to halls, and my tutor looked after me for about a fortnight, because my local authority weren't willing to pay for a CVS volunteer [rustling], to look after me.

*So what happened after the fortnight was up?*

They managed between the tutor and the nurse. In the end, they decided to put me in with another student (in a) flat, and that was great: well, it would have been great, except for the student, who was living there rent-free, and getting paid to look after me, which she didn't.

*What did she do?*

She was a vegetarian, and every meal I had [F. laughs] was a jacket potato, or tofu. She was never there when I needed her. She always came back very late at night, and she was never there during the day, when I needed her, so I had my main meals at the canteen, at the Polytechnic, and spent as much time down there as I could. I'd got an electric chair by that time.

*And how did you get that?*

My aunt bought me one.

*And how much did that, would that have cost?*

About £500. That was a lot.

*That would have been, sort of, late eighties.*

Yes.

*So what difference did it have, having an electric wheelchair?*

It gave me a lot more freedom, I could come and go as I liked, and mix with the other students. It was great: and then, I became Disability Officer at the Polytechnic, [rustling] which meant I had to make sure every building was accessible.

*And what was access like, when you became the officer?*

Quite good, although I'd pick up on the bad bits.

*Such as? What sorts of things?*

Well, not having ramps. The Elephant House, that was the student club.

*So you couldn't get into that?*

No, but I got a ramp made.

*So what went on at the Elephant House?*

Well, it was the student bar, where most of the students hung out, instead of going to lectures. [laughs.] It was quite a student life.

*Going back to this person that you lived with in the flat, what was she supposed to have done for you?*

She was s'posed to get my meals, and help me get ... well, I could get up and get dressed on my own, in those days. I wasn't dependent on her, but I was dependent on her for meals and drinks.

*So, if she wasn't there, what would happen?*

And she didn't clean the flat at all, and she got me in a frightful mess, so in the end, they got me in a home help in, once a week.

*I mean, did you complain about ...*

Yes, I did.

*And what happened?*

They said it was up to me to tell her, but I'd come out of an institution where you weren't meant to speak up for yourself, so I daren't say anything to Maria. I just accepted it, and this went on for two years ...

[End of Tape 8 Side A]

**Tape 8 Side B [track 16]**

I kept complaining about Maria, and the nurse at the Polytechnic, and they had words with her, but it never did any good, and then they said that I had to say that she ought to leave, and I didn't have the bottle to do that. So, during the last year, I got quite ill on this [Judy & F. laugh] diet of baked potatoes and tofu. I went into hospital with it, and I think I found a lump in my breast at the time. They took that lump out, and when I got back to the flat, the doctor came and saw me, and told Maria to give me a nice, healthy meal. She said, 'Why don't you get her a nice steak?' And she said, 'Yeah, O.K., I will', so I waited in my room, and Maria was cooking in the kitchen, but I couldn't smell anything, and I was all ready prepared [F. laughs] to eat this nice steak. She brought this tray in, with [F. laughs] a bowl of potato soup and natural yoghurt, and that was my healthy meal. [laughs.]

*But, I mean, what do you think, why do you think she was like that?*

She was just not in this world, although she was clever, because she was doing a PhD in artificial intelligence, and now I see why. [both laugh]

*So, when you went into hospital, to have a lump in your breast removed, this is a, the second time is it, or was this the time?*

*F: No, this is the second time.*

*The second time: right.*

That one was benign. Maria stopped with me to the end of the summer term. I went home for the long vacation, and when I got back, I unlocked the door, well, my mum unlocked the door, Maria had done a bunk, and not told anyone, so my mother nearly had kittens on the spot. She said, 'I'm not leaving on your own, till we get this sorted out', so I went down to the medical centre, where I was great friends with the nurse. They knew nothing about Maria's vanishing act: nobody knew anything about her, so

they said to my mother, 'We'll get another student to stay with her, overnight, until we can get someone else.'

*F: Did she take your stuff?*

*Did she?*

No, not my stuff. She took all her stuff, and left me one chop stick, and one brown cereal bowl.

*So, looking back at those couple of years that you had with Maria, compared with life at Redclyffe, which, I mean, which was better, from your perspective?*

Maria.

*Despite the fact you had baked potatoes...*

Despite the fact that I had potatoes every day, yeah, it was good.

*Well, why was it better?*

Because I was away from the institution: although I was still in a protected environment, it was different, it just wasn't the same. So they found a replacement for Maria within a couple of weeks. She bought a piano with her, which was quite nice. She was a very good cook, but she liked the student life, and was a typical student, and that lasted about a term, then she took off, I can't remember where, so I went straight down to the nurse again, and said, 'Look, I'm not having anyone living with me again: I'll do it myself', which sent them into panic mode. I told them I'd be all right, and I told them what I needed; a microwave, and a flask, and a table at my height, and a fridge.

*Did you not have a fridge before?*

Yes, but it was quite high.

*So a fridge at your height, yeah?*

So they said, 'All right, we'll give it a try, but we're not a hundred per cent sure you'll cope', and I wasn't that confident myself. [laughs] But I thought, 'It can't be worse than living with someone else.' I had a help come in, three times a week, and the district nurse to bath me, and I coped.

*So how did that make you feel?*

Good. Very good that I could cope on my own, with support. I knew that I'd always got the back-up, and two tutors lived in the block of flats, where I was, so they kept an eye on me, and it turned out all right. It put me on the right road.

*So, this was coming towards the end of your degree. What were you thinking about, in terms of your future?*

Well, in the last year of my degree, my B.A., I knew that I had to vacate my student flat, so I put myself on a housing list. It was six weeks before my Finals, I came and saw a flat in Harpenden, because I wanted to get back here, because I'd got all my friends here, my external friends. So this flat came up, and the nurse took me to view it, and I was very taken with it, and said, 'Yes, it's for me, it's for me. I'd like it.' Previously, I'd seen a bungalow in St Albans, which was on an elderly housing estate. It was right out in the sticks, and I said it wasn't any good for me, because I'd be isolated, so when this flat came up in Harpenden, I jumped at the chance. It was just what I wanted, [rustling] and I went back to the Polytechnic, and the next week, I went down to the medical centre, talked to the nurse, and she said that she'd had a phone call from the housing association, and they would like me to move into this flat next week. I said, 'But how can I? I'm coming up to my Finals: won't they keep it for six weeks, even if I pay the rent on it?', but they said, no, I had to choose between

the flat, and my degree, and that left me distraught, because I'd put five years into my degree, and I didn't want to give it up, and if I moved to my flat, I wouldn't be able to get transport to the Polytechnic for my final lectures. I was crying my eyes out, and my new personal tutor was lovely. She came down, and I made a decision, that I'd let the flat go, and take my degree.

*What I don't understand is, I mean, you were saying that, they wanted you to move in, six weeks early, and you said, 'Well, I'll pay the rent, six weeks early,' and they still said 'No'?*

Yeah, they won't let it go unoccupied.

*Well, what if you went on holiday? It, that would be unoccupied, wouldn't it?*

Yeah, I suppose it would, really. [coughs]

*So you were facing your finals, and you had nowhere to live in six weeks time?*

Yes.

*So what was that like?*

Well, it was quite a dilemma: it weighed a lot on my mind. I think it detracted a bit from my finals, but, luckily, by this time, it worked out the perfect solution, to how I took my exams. My tutor wrote to the Board of Examiners, explaining the situation, and my disability, and she put forward a proposal that I write one long essay, on a subject of my own choice, out of my five subjects, would that be enough, as it was so exhausting, sitting five exams: it was more a test of my physical ability, rather than my academic ability, and they said, 'Yes.' So I could take my time over the exam, and I chose a subject of Philosophy, which I liked, but I didn't understand it: so I did about a five-thousand-word essay, so I did it instead of my exams.

*And then what happened?*

I passed. My tutor had a hot-line to the Board, and she rang me up, the night before they were posted up, and said that I'd passed. [laughs]

*So what was your reaction, when you were told?*

I was bewildered, and completely shattered, and then I wanted to go out and celebrate, but I couldn't: I'd got no-one to celebrate with.

*Why was that?*

That made me feel a bit lonely and depressed.

*Why didn't you have anyone to celebrate with?*

Well, I was on my own in the flat: my next-door neighbours were out, and I didn't want to go down to the Polytechnic on my own, in the dark, because it wasn't a nice area. I rang up my mother, and I rang up someone else, and said I'd passed.

*And what was your mother's reaction?*

She was delighted. The next day, I went down to the medical centre and told them that I had made the right choice, and when would I have to vacate the flat? The nurse got on to the housing people and the student union, and they said, 'We'll let her stay till the October, when the next year was due in.' So I stayed there, and we chivvied up the housing association.

[End of Tape 8 Side B]

**Tape 9 Side A [Track 17]**

*F: Which one?*

*Interviewer: Oh. This is Judy Smart. 13<sup>th</sup> January, 2005. We left off last week with you having just got your degree, and you were staying, you were allowed to stay on in the student flat.*

Yes.

*So what happened next?*

I stayed on in the flat till October, until the new year came in. By that time, I had been offered a flat in St Albans by the housing authority. It was specially adapted for disabled people, and it was in a block of twelve flats, and I was in this one flat that was adapted for me.

*So all the other flats weren't adapted: it was just this one?*

No, just this one.

*And what age were you at this point?*

Forty-ish.

*And what was this new flat like?*

Terrible. It was a one-bedroom flat, and the front door had a ramp. It was so steep, that I couldn't get up it in my wheelchair. Because of the bad design, it was at an angle, and every time I got near the front door, to unlock it, I would slip sideways, down the ramp. [F. laughs.] When you got inside, it was a narrow hallway, with cupboards on one side of it. The kitchen was a low-level kitchen, but on the work-top

was a hot-plate unit, right in the middle of the work-top, and there was a built-in oven and fridge. The fridge was within my reach, and that was all right, but I didn't use the oven anyway, because I had a microwave on the worktop, but with this hotplate in the middle of the work surface, I was unable to eat my meals in the kitchen. And there was a very large bathroom, with a bath in it, which was very high, a toilet, and a pedestal sink. My bedroom was about the size of a box room, but the window sills came up to my forehead, so it wasn't very well designed, because the architect who had designed it, was six foot tall [F. laughs], and he said, he sat on the chair and could see quite clearly out of the window, which was ridiculous, because not many disabled people are over six foot tall. The lounge was a fair size, but again, the windows were at the same level, but at that time, I could stand up a bit and look out onto the playing fields. My mother kept coming to stay with me, and her stays got longer and longer, so I bought a sofa bed for the lounge, but she took over, and took away my independence. She didn't do it consciously, it was just a natural habit. The flat was in a back road in St Albans, so we had to get taxis everywhere.

*Did you have to pay for those yourself?*

Yes, but I had a taxi person that used to take me backwards and forwards, to University, and he was very good, and he didn't charge me over the odds.

*So you were still going to University at this point.*

Not then, but then I got so I missed the University so much, I decided I'd go back and do an M.A., one day a week, so he took me to and fro.

*What was the M.A. in?*

Social policy. It was one year, and it was very intense, but we all got through it.

*So you did the five years with your degree, and then one year to do the M.A. So what was the difference between stepping up from the B.A. to the M.A.?*

Well, it was more pressure than I was used to, and because it was one day a week, it was all crammed in to one day, but we enjoyed it. I enjoyed the company, but we didn't like the subject very much.

*So what was it like, having to have your own place to stay in? As well, I suppose you had that with the flat in the student [?], but was it different studying, say, with your mother around?*

Well, not really. She'd leave me alone in my bedroom, because I had my desk in my bedroom, and my computer, so that I could be separate from the lounge.

*So, earlier, you were saying that your mother sort of took away your independence: can you sort of describe in what way she did that?*

She did all the cooking and cleaning, although we did have a home, help twice a week. At first, I enjoyed it, but then, I began to realise that she was robbing me of my independence, but I didn't say anything to her.

*Why do you think she did that?*

Habit. She didn't like to see me struggle. My mother told a white lie again about the ramp outside the door, so they changed it, and flattened it out a bit.

*So what was the white lie?*

That I fell out of my chair, and broke my wrist.

*And didn't they check that you had broken your wrist?*

No.

*I mean, were you worried, though, seriously about the ramp: I mean, could it have happened?*

Yes, it was a forty-five degree angle.

*I mean, going back to the architect: presumably, he wasn't disabled?*

No, he wasn't. I met him at the opening.

*F. You've got pictures of that, haven't you?*

Yes.

*So you got your M.A: what happened after that?*

My mother stayed longer and longer with me, so in the end, we thought we'd buy a place in Harpenden, together. She sold her bungalow in Banbury quite quickly, because she didn't have any friends or anything left, only her brother, and he didn't really bother much about us, and she kept falling over in the bungalow, which worried me.

*So, I mean, how did you feel about the prospect of living with your mother?*

I was pleased in a way, because [rustling noise] it meant I could get back to Harpenden, where my friends were, but it wasn't easy to find a ground-floor flat in Harpenden. We looked at several: most of them were upstairs. The estate agents didn't grasp the idea that I was in a wheelchair, and needed level access. 'Level access' meant going up three steps to a ground floor flat, to them.

*I mean, so how many places did you see, and how many were ...*

My mother went to about six, six times to view places, by taxi, and then one day, one evening, I was looking at the local paper, and I saw a flat advertised, with a thirty-foot lounge. We couldn't believe it would be that long a lounge, so we rang up the agent the next day, with curiosity, and checked that that was correct. He said it was, and we came over to view it, with Mike, who is a friend of mine. As soon as I got in here, I knew it was what I wanted, and my mother could see it in my face.

*Sorry, to be clear: you're talking about this flat?*

*F: Yeah this flat.*

*[Someone else speaking: inaudible.]*

*F: Yeah, they put the partition up for another bedroom.*

My friend, Mike, built a partition in the lounge, so that I could have a bed sitting room, and my mother could have the bedroom.

*Right, so, we're in the living room now: the door through here is your bed sitting room, is it?*

Yes.

*So there is a bedroom off the hall in there, is there? Oh, I see.*

*F: It's now the work room, i'n't?*

*Right. So you found a place.*

Yes. It was a very reasonable price, considering the area and all the curtains and carpets were included in the price. So we lived here together, and then in the next year, I didn't move in here, until after I graduated.

*So what year would that be?*

My M.A. 1993.

*So what was it like, when you moved in?*

It was very good. I could get out on my own to the shops, and I had all my friends again. And then, the next year, I won a prize for Disabled Person of the Year in the County.

*So how did you win that?*

I don't know. Someone put my name forward, and I didn't even know anything about it, till I got the letter.

*Do you know who nominated you?*

No.

*And who ran the Award?*

Hertfordshire Action for the Disabled: HAD.

*What was the prize?*

£1,000 cheque.

*So what did you do with that?*

So I put it to good use. I had the kitchen re-designed and lowered, to my level.

*When you came here, what other adaptations did you have to make to the flat?*

None, except the kitchen. The kitchen was standing height.

*So, who was living here before?*

It was rented out to a man, a businessman.

*O.K., so maybe we'll talk a little bit more now, if you can, about*

[End of Tape 9 Side A]

**Tape 9 Side B [Track 18]**

*... talking about living in the flat with your mother.*

Yes, I had carers come in, three times a week, from social services. They helped bath me, because I originally had a bath in there. [coughs]. They did a bit of housework, when my mother would let them, but that wasn't very often, and then, I went into hospital, for a carpal tunnel operation, and that seemed to start my mother on a downward slope. She pleaded with me, not to have it done, because she had always believed that I ought not to be operated on.

*Why was that?*

She thought that cerebral palsy children ought not to have operations, because so many had gone wrong in the past. Then, my other friends and a nurse, Jean, tried to explain to my mother that it wasn't anything connected with my disability. It was an

ordinary operation. I had to go in for a day, so on that day, I went in at 7 a.m., with Jean, and my mother didn't want me to leave that day. Anyway, I went in for the op. My mother kept ringing Jean up, asking her where I'd gone. She rang up every hour, on the hour. Because the operation was on my left hand, I couldn't do anything for myself, and Jean thought my mother wasn't capable of looking after me, in that state, so I went into The Red House: that is a local cottage hospital, and they do respite care. I stayed there for about two weeks, with my hand, and my mother kept ringing up Jean, and the hospital, to see where I was.

*Do you know why your mother was so distressed about your operation? I know you said that, she was worried about operations going wrong: can you, maybe, talk a little bit more about that?*

Well, I think it was the beginning of her dementia. That sparked it off, being separated from me for two weeks.

*And the carpal tunnel that you had, the problem with ... do you know what that was caused by?*

No, they said it might be typing on the computer, but I didn't exactly do that much, so I don't know why I got it.

*And were you experiencing pain before the operation?*

Yes.

*But you're not sure why.*

No. [whispering from F.] It swelled up as well, my hand.

*And that's the one that you need to use, to do most things?*

Yes: no, yeah, that's the one I'd use to do for everything. My right one is very unreliable. I don't use it for much. [F. laughs] It does its own thing. I can't rely on it at all, except for hanging on things.

*F: You use it as an anchor, don't you Judy?*

[laughs] Sometimes it lets me down.

*So, after the two weeks at Red House, what happened?*

I came back here and my mother said, 'Where have you been?', and she was unable to take in that I'd been in hospital, and then, gradually, her whole character changed, making my life a misery. [rustling noise.] For instance, I arranged a ninetieth

birthday party for her, and I didn't tell her anything about it, until the day, and she went berserk, crying, and telling me off.

*What kind of party was it? I mean, did it happen?*

Yes. I'd arranged for all my family to come up from Banbury [rustling]

*[?] What, that picture up there?*

So she was in a state, so I rang up my other friend, Tish, to come over, and she calmed my mother down, by the time that my uncle and cousins got here. The day went off quite successfully: and she, my mother, used to like going out shopping, but suddenly she wouldn't move out of this flat. It was like agoraphobia, so I did the shopping. She would give me a list of what she wanted. I would go and get the shopping, come back, and she would say, 'Why did you get that? I didn't want it. Take it back to the shops.'

*Was this stuff that was on the list, that you'd got?*

Yes, and I'd show Mother the list, that she wrote, and she'd say, 'I didn't write that down: it's not my writing.' My carer often found me in tears, in my bedroom, because my mother would tell me off about the slightest thing, which was very out of character. She became incontinent as well. We had to get pads delivered., but she would say, 'Oh, they're not the right ones.'

*So, was your mother getting any care at all?*

She wouldn't allow my carers to do anything for her at all. She didn't have a bath for about two years. She would wash herself, but not bath. I had no idea what was happening, so I went to my support worker, and Age Concern support worker. She explained to me about my mother's deterioration, but it still didn't register in my mind: and then, the next year, Jean and I went off on a tour to Canada, and the

problem was, what was my mother going to be like, left on her own here? And my doctor suggested that she went into respite, but, of course, she refused to go, so I said, 'Well, if you let the home care help here, you can stay here.' She did accept them a little bit. They came in three times a day, to check on her, and when I came back, she thought I'd just gone off for the weekend, [Judy & F. laugh] and I'd been away eight days.

*Had you been away on other holidays, previously, or ...?*

Yes, I had, but Jean and I went on a coach trip to Canada. [rustling]

*And was that the first time you'd been abroad, or had you been abroad before?*

*F: No, yeah. You'd been abroad before.*

Yeah.

*Yeah.*

I got back and it went on and on, and my friends got worried for me. My mother didn't like me going out. One night, I came back from being out, and she'd rung up the police, and they were here, questioning her, about my whereabouts. I came in that door, and said, 'Oh, I've only been out to a meeting', but they understood.

*So what were your friends saying to you, at this time? What sort of things were they saying?*

'Put my mother in a residential home: it would be better', but I thought I would be betraying her by doing that.

*Why would you feel that?*

She'd looked after me all that life: now it was my turn to look after her: and then it got so bad, that our doctor came in on a Monday morning, took me into my bedroom, and explained that they were going to section her on Friday, but I wasn't to tell her.

*How did you feel about that?*

Terrible. On the Friday, I felt even worse, because it was betraying her. One of my carers came in, in the morning, and I was in tears in my bedroom, because I knew what was going to happen, and she kept saying, 'It's for the best': and then my mother kept saying, 'Shall I get dinner now?', and I kept saying, 'Oh, not yet, not yet', because I knew that the doctors were coming in at one o'clock, to interrogate my mother.

*So what happened when they arrived?*

By this time she hated anyone coming in the house, so four of them came in at once. There was my family doctor, a psychiatrist, an advocate, and the district nurse, and they sat round in a circle, and my mother was wondering what was happening, and

the doctor had told me on the Monday morning, that, if I didn't give my consent, they would have to take it to the court.

*So what did you do?*

I just sat in the corner, saying nothing, and listened to these questions they put to my mother, which she was unable to answer.

*What kind of questions?*

'What day is it?', 'Who is the Prime Minister?', things like that. So one of the doctors went out with me into the porch....

[End of Tape 9 Side B]

**Tape 10 Side A [Track 20]**

*Sorry, so you were saying, your doctor took you out into the porch.*

All three of them came out with me and said that they thought it was best that they take Mum away, to a psychiatric unit, to assess her. I wasn't too happy about it [rustling noise], but I spoke to the advocate, and I asked him what would happen, and he said she'd be taken up to the psychiatric unit for twenty-eight days, to be assessed, and I asked him if she would have a private room, and he said, 'Yes, she will', so I came back in the flat, and the nurse took me into my bedroom, and she helped me pack a case for Mum, and the doctor had phoned for an ambulance, plus a policeman, which they have to do, in case the client resists being taken away.

*What did they say to your mother?*

They didn't say anything to her. I sat there for two hours, and she got more distressed, crying, and the ambulance wouldn't come, because it wasn't an emergency, they said it would take four hours or more. In the end, I got so distressed, I went outside, and I cried and screamed, by which time, the Age Concern support worker had come to see what was happening, and I was outside with the nurse, crying my eyes out, so the nurse said to the support worker that she thought she ought to take me right out of the area, to take me shopping in St Albans. So someone came back in to get my purse, and my mother stood at that window, opened the window and shouted [coughs] 'Don't take my child away from me!' and the support worker just bundled me into the car and I was a complete wreck by then. [coughs. Rustling.] We drove down to her office and it was near James Marshall House, in Harpenden. She said, 'You don't want to go shopping?' and I said, 'No, I can't.' I was still crying, so she let me get over most of my crying, and she said [F. laughs] 'How about goin' to the pub?' and I said 'Yes.' So we went to the pub and I had a stiff drink, and something to eat. She kept phoning back here on her mobile, and my mother was still here, so we sat in the pub till about four o'clock, and she said, 'They must have taken her away by now', so we came back here and she left me in the car, to check that my

mother had been taken, and she'd only just gone. It was the most weirdest feeling, being pushed up the drive, knowing that my mother wasn't here in any more, and it took me about a week to get used to that. So the support worker sat with me for a bit, and then rang up another friend, Linda, to come over. Linda was out, but she came eventually, and sat with me that night, then Jean came in, to collect some more bits for my mother. She said she was in a bit of a state up there, and she said that I couldn't visit her for a week, to give her a chance to settle down. So I left it for a week, and then I went up there every single day after that.

*And how was she when you saw her?*

She begged me to bring her home. At first, she was in a room with six other people, who were screaming and really bad, and I hated going up there, but I went, and then they accused me of upsetting her every time I went up there.

*And they'd promised her, or the advocate had said that, she would have a private room, but the reality was that she was in with six other people.*

She got a private room within a week, because I kept asking, and that calmed her down a lot, so I'd go and sit with her, and have tea with her, and she was a bit calmer. At the end of twenty-eight days, they had a review and they asked me to attend, so Jean went with me. Not knowing what the outcome would be, I didn't know what the outcome would be: it was such a relief when the doctor said that she only had dementia, and that she could cope in a residential home. So then it was up to me, to go and look round the residential homes. Fortunately, there was a brand new one, opening two roads away.

*F: At Holly Lodge?*

Yes. I went up there, looked round and spoke to the Matron, who was a lovely woman, very homely. They only took fourteen residents, so I put Mum's name down,

and they moved her up there. After about a day, she settled quite happily [rustling] up there, and I could visit her, any time I wanted, in my chair. There was a step into the residential home, but the staff used to transfer me into a manual chair.

*So from there was a step ... a brand new ...*

There was a ramp round the back, but it led into the lounge, but I couldn't use that way, because it would be disruptive. But she was in there for about [coughs] three years, but she kept going into hospital with unknown ailments, and the last time she was taken into hospital, my doctor said that she had an 'old man's complaint', which meant pneumonia, and that she might not come out.

*F. He didn't know your mum [Laughs].*

No he didn't, but unfortunately, she was unconscious for about four or five days, and no-one ever knew what caused it. She just came out of it, just like that, but she couldn't go back to Holly Lodge, because she wasn't able to wait there, so that meant another move. I thought this might mean she'd go further away, but fortunately, the matron at Holly Lodge contacted St Mary's Nursing Home, and fortunately, they had an emergency bed vacant. I went over and looked at it, and thought it looked fine.

*F. She's still there!*

She's still there!

*And how old is she now?*

Ninety-eight next month.

*F: She's still going strong, isn't she, Judy?*

She's got good days and bad days, but she knows me.

*F: She still knows Judy*

*Do you still visit her?*

*F: Yeah, every week.*

I try not to miss a week. So that started my life off on my own here, which was difficult in one way, but great in another, because I've regained my independence. I had a care agency come in, in the mornings. Because I was able to get myself to bed, they'd put my meals ready, in the microwave, and they'd come in once a week and bath me. It worked alright like that, so I was quite happy, until the year 2000, and then it went a bit haywire.

*Why did it go haywire?*

New Year's Eve, I was invited to a party, but that afternoon, I got a terrible pain in my hip. It came on all of a sudden, and I was doubled up in agony, and I rang up and said that I couldn't go to the party. I don't know how I got to bed that night, but I did, and Jean came in the next day, to take me to another function on the Common, and I was still doubled up in agony. She took me to this function, and said that I really ought to go and see my doctor, so I went, and she referred me to a specialist at BUPA, and I had an X-ray. [tape ran out]

**Tape 10 Side B [Track 20]**

The X-ray showed it had decayed so much, that bone was rubbing on bone, and they said, the only option was to perform a girdle-stone operation.

*What's that?*

This is where they take the ball and socket out of the hip, and they join the leg to the pelvis. It meant that my leg wouldn't be able to bear weight, and that it would be very flaccid ...

*F: ..which it is.*

So I went in almost immediately. He said that he'd performed a lot of these operations on cerebral palsy children at Great Ormond Street, so I thought, 'He must know what he's doing', but he didn't bargain for me, did he?

*What do you mean?*

He said that I would be out within a fortnight. I was out in eight weeks. I was in terrible agony, when I came round from the anaesthetic and all the staff up there didn't know what to do: none of the painkillers worked. The only one that worked was Pentothal, which put my lights out, and they couldn't keep giving me that.

*So what was wrong?*

We never knew what was wrong, because no-body could get to the bottom of the pain.

*F: Oh, that was when I used to take you to the pain clinic!*

Eventually, they got me stabilised, but I'd never taken a tablet in my whole life, so my system kept rejecting them. I kept throwing up every day, so I lost all my weight, and

they kept me in BUPA for as long as they could, which was eight weeks, but they couldn't wangle me in any longer. So Jean wouldn't let me come back here. I wanted to get back here, and in to my normal routine, and BUPA said that it would be better if I went home, but Jean insisted I went back to the Red House, which was full of geriatrics. [F. laughs.]

*F: Jean is the district nurse, by the way, of Harpenden.*

So I stayed there for about a month, but they got a bug up there, and I kept catching it, and the Sister felt that it was very unfair that I kept catching this bug, so we looked around for a care agency that would come in four times a day here. That wasn't easy, but eventually, we found one. I gradually got down to two visits a day, from the care agency. They got me up and put me to bed. [She & F. laugh.] Linda worked for the care agency, and she doubled up with Sue, to put me to bed at night, and Sue got me up in the morning, but sometimes I was in very great pain, at night, and Linda used to sit with me. [rustling noise.] Eventually, I did the rounds of the specialists, trying to find the cause of my pain, but because it was a vicious circle: my pain started off my spasms: the more spasms I got, the more pain I got in. It was just hopeless, then one day, I went to a pain specialist.

*Yeah, one day we went to the pain specialist.*

Linda took me to the pain specialist. She was a foreigner

*F: I nearly hit her, didn't I, Judy?*

And I had to restrain Linda.

*Why, what did she do?*

*F: Because she didn't take any trouble to talk to Judy. She said, 'Would you interpret for me?' and the nurse behind me went 'Oh!' [sharp intake of breath] and I went ...and I just, and we didn't go back, did we Judy? She's very rude.*

She put me on the top pain killers: Gabapentins. [ph]

*F: They do work, don't they?*

Yes.

*F: And they work.*

*And you're still on those painkillers now?*

*F: Yes.*

*So talking about ... I mean, you seem to have had rotten luck throughout...*

Yes.

*... your hospital treatment: what, how much of it do you think it is to do with your cerebral palsy, that you've had all these problems?*

Like what?

*Well, like when you were saying, the problem with your hip, and the spasm, spasming, creating more problems: are there other things you can think of, where your cerebral palsy's been a factor?*

No, no, not really: only my hips.

*And what about in terms of, the way you've been treated?*

Well, I moved into the private sector, because I was treated so badly in the public sector, but I believe that the public sector have still got a lot to learn about caring for cerebral palsy patients. I know that the private sector have got more money to spend on nurses, but I still believe that the public sector should have more disability awareness training.

*So are you saying that the private sector, they do seem to have?*

Yes. Well, they've got more time to give. I don't think they know a lot about disability, but they can make you more comfortable, and they've got more time.

*Talking earlier about your G.P., how has your, sort of, G.P. service been?*

Quite good, actually. I got on quite well, once I got out of Colditz.

*F; [laughs] If Judy has to have a home visit from her G.P., her G.P. will phone me on my mobile, and I come and... she won't move Judy, will she Judy? So if she needs to go on the bed, I move 'er. [rustling]. Pretty good like that, isn't she?*

*You've never been to your GP's surgery, have you, or have you?*

*F: Oh yeah, she always goes there.*

Yeah, I always go up there.

*Right, so it's not just home visiting. You go to the surgery as well.*

No. I go up there if I can.

*And do you think there are any medical services that you don't receive that you ...*

*F: [whispers] Yes.*

Well, yes.

*Such as?*

Well, I don't get any physio. Linda does that for me.

*F: We can only get six weeks at a time, but with long periods in between, and then they said they couldn't do it any more, didn't they, Judy?*

*What kind of things do you need physio for?*

*F: [inaud]*

They gave up on me in the physio department [laughs] straight away, within two visits.

*F: Although those two visits did help, didn't they?*

Yes.

*F: Greatly.*

I only got two hydrotherapy sessions, because I had a cold on the third week, and they only allow three weeks.

*And what, can you explain what the benefits of hydrotherapy are to you?*

They make me more relaxed, stretch my muscles. I had it at BUPA, but when I was in pain, and if I was to go up there now, it would cost me about £40 a session, half an hour, and I don't go swimming any more either, 'cause it's too cold in the public pool, and my muscles tighten up in cold water, so I'm pretty lazy now, [Judy & F. laugh] but I don't get enough exercise.

*And what about, say, dentistry?*

I don't go. [Judy & F. laugh.] I'm a coward.

*Have you had bad experiences?*

When I was at St Margaret's, yes. Yeah, that frightened me. I did go back a few years ago, because there's only one dentist in Harpenden I can get into.

*And what happened?*

Oh, he was very good. I got on well with him. He kept cleaning the tartar off my teeth and that was all, but it was costing me a fortune.

*This was a private dentist?*

Yes.

*And that's the only one that you can get into, in Harpenden.*

*F: And he knows it.*

I should go back, but that's the New Year's Resolution, [All laugh] for next year.

*So what happened at St Margaret's that put you off?*

Well, we were taken to this dentist, and I had to have a tooth out, and that was the days when they put a gas mask over your nose, and that scared me so much. I know that they don't do that now, but it just scared me.

*And did everyone have to go?*

Oh yes.

*Well, shall we wind it up for today then: is that all right?*

Yes.

*Well, thanks for all of that. It was, talking about your mother must have been quite hard ...*

[End of Tape 10 Side B]

**Tape 11 Side A [Track 21]**

*O.K., it's Judy Smart, Tape 11, 27<sup>th</sup> January 2005. So Judy, tell me about how you got your current job.*

I thought it was a joke at first. Because I was a Trustee of PASS: Personal Assistance Support Scheme, and at one meeting two years ago, the Chair said they were going to create a new job, for an outreach worker. It was to spread the word about direct payments, throughout Hertfordshire. He looked at me and said, 'Why don't you do it?' in a laughing way, and I didn't take it seriously, but I slept on it, [laughs] well I was awake all night actually, and in the morning, I emailed him, to ask him if he was serious about the job. He said, 'Yes', he was, and I was to come along for an interview, in about a fortnight's time. It would be a job share. I had a gut feeling that I knew who I would be job-sharing with.

*Just take me back a stage: how did you get involved as a Trustee?*

I was on the Steering Committee, way back in '96, when direct payments was trying to get up and running, in Hertfordshire, and, at that time, it had to be run under an umbrella organisation, so all the voluntary sectors in Hertfordshire bid for the job, and I was Chair of POHWER at that time.

*Can you tell me what POHWER is?*

POHWER is [spells it out] POHWER. It stands for 'People of Hertfordshire Want Equal Rights.' It is an advocacy organisation, so that got the contract to take direct payments under their wing. For several years, Direct Payments had an office within POHWER, and they asked me to be on the Trustees.

*So when did you first hear about direct payments?*

At the inaugural meeting, 196... [?] [phone rings. Break.] So POHWER took direct payments under the umbrella for five years, and POHWER had a very tiny office, and it was expanding, staff-wise, and Direct Payments were being squeezed out of an office, not purposely, but it was just that POHWER was like Topsy: it grew without us really thinking about it. By that time, Direct Payments wanted to be independent of POHWER. They were well-established anyway, so they moved out, and then I was still on the committee, and then the Chair of the Direct Payments left, and so did the assistant, so we got a new manager in place, and I was still on the Board of Trustees, which meant every two months in the evening.

*And can you sort of say what your first ... when you were talking about when you first heard about direct payments: what was your reaction to the concept of direct payments?*

I'm afraid I thought it was not for me, because the concept of independence didn't match up to my understanding of independence. I had always been brought up to think that 'independence' meant doing things for yourself, and I thought direct payments were fine for people who needed help to live independently, but it wasn't for me.

*What ... I'm still not quite sure why. Why?*

Because I felt that I had to everything myself, and not rely on anyone else, except the occasional home help service that used to be.

*And what do you think about direct payments now?*

I think they're marvellous: if they're handled in the right way, they make a lot of difference to people. They can take control over their own lives, and not have to be reliant on agencies.

*Can I ask you, maybe, to talk about some examples of people: you don't have to give their names, obviously, but, how direct payments have changed their lives?*

One man who moved out of Redclyffe, he is on direct payments, and he has been able to have a flat of his own, and do things that he's wanted to do, and I've not met anyone else, other than through my job, that have done that: but the people, my clients, that I have got on direct payments, say that it's made a world of difference to them. [F. whispers. Inaudible.] My first client, that I had as an advisor, the client was an M.S. lady, who was expecting a baby, and she was unhappy with the agency care, which she was getting, and I enabled her to get a PA, and she's now got one, and has got a lovely little boy of seven months old, and she said that she didn't know how she would have coped, without my support.

*So, what, you've worked in direct payments, and helped other people ...*

Yes.

*... with direct payments, but you yourself don't have direct payments: is that correct?*

Yes.

*Can you say why?*

Yes, I'm too rich.

*So, in other circumstances, you'd be on direct payments?*

Yes, but I'm glad I'm not on them, because you have to be accountable for every penny you spend.

*Can you, maybe, give some examples of that?*

You've got to keep records of your outgoings, and every quarter, they come and do your quarterly returns, and you have to tally up your outgoings with your incomings,

and also, another reason, I don't want to be assessed, because they should assess you on needs, and not on finance.

*Can you expand a bit, on what you mean by that?*

I suppose direct payments is more about needs than the old agency style, because the agency would come in and just do the basic assessment, and it was based more on time, than needs, so in that respect, direct payments is an improvement to an agency.

*What do you think are the main barriers to people getting direct payments?*

Most of my clients are afraid of taking on the responsibility of being an employer: that is a great barrier, which PASS has, up till now, supported their clients through the process, and we were always there until the client felt the need, that they could take on that responsibility, but I don't know how it will work now.

*Why do you say that?*

We are only doing one long visit to a client, and the rest has to be done over the phone, and the way I feel is, there's so much to be taken in on that one visit, that the client will be put off direct payments altogether. [rustling noise.]

*So in the past, what would the process be?*

In the past, we supported clients through recruitment, advertising, interviewing, and explaining the process of direct payments. Now, we can only contact clients, once they have been assessed by a social worker, and [F. laughs] getting hold of social workers is like getting hold of gold dust. They're either on annual leave, maternity

leave, or sick leave. When you ring up they're never there, and never return phone calls.

*So are there any other barriers that you can think of, that the people face?*

Apart from the financial barriers, that's it. I would like to see this scheme open up to people who have private incomes, but who would like the help of exactly what we've provided. We are not allowed to help anyone that is self-funded and pays for themselves.

*And what's the sort of a limit?*

£19,000. I have helped one lady, in the past, who was self-funding, but we can't do that any more.

*Going back to when you were ... we're taking this slightly out of order,, but going back to when you first heard about the job, and then you rang back, and you said, you know, 'Can I come to interview?'...*

Oh yes. I went to the interview, with my friend, Linda, and the Chairman of the committee and the manager, and one of the Direct Payments Team from the County Council, interviewed me. It was the first interview I'd ever had, and I was thinking on my feet, well, [laughs] I was thinking on my chair.

*Sorry, I don't quite understand: you were ...*

Thinking on my feet.

*Oh I see. [laughs] And how did the interview go?*

It went quite well. I answered most of the questions, and Linda thought I did really well, considering I'd never been in that situation before. [End of Tape 11 Side A]

**Tape 11 Side B [Track 22]**

That night, I got a phone call from the manager, saying that I'd got the job.

*And how did you feel?*

Elated. The following week, I got a letter, saying 'Could I start immediately?' I can't, I don't know why, but I couldn't start that week, so I started in the October.

*Of what year, October?*

*F: 2003: October.*

Yes. And my role was to, with my job-share partner, to start creating a new job from scratch. My partner was very knowledgeable, and had a lot of brilliant ideas, and I felt very insecure, because, basically, it meant going out to do presentations to social workers and other organisations, and at that time, I felt that I couldn't do it because it wasn't with the right equipment.

*What kind of equipment?*

They told me that I could get Access to Work, which I'd never heard of before. This would enable me to have a support worker and they would pay a support worker to help me, and that they would come and assess me for equipment, which I needed to do the job: and my understanding of 'assessment' was, you would be assessed on the equipment [coughs] which was needed, and I would go to a centre, to try out the equipment first. But, of course, this wasn't the case, and they spent all this money on all this equipment that I can't use, and it's sitting in the cupboard in the office: a thousand pounds' worth of equipment.

*What sort of things?*

They bought me a laptop computer, which I can't use, because I need a guard. This was to take with me, to give slide shows: and my p.a. has had to learn to do it, and had to connect it up to a projector, and then my job-share partner [Judy & F. laugh] stuck her nose into my business. She was there at my assessment, and she suggested that I try an electronic infrared pointer system, to improve my speed on the computer.

*How did that work?*

{[Laughing] It didn't. You place a small dot on your forehead, and you have a piece of equipment on the monitor, and you have a programme on the computer. You aim the dot on the computer, and I never got the hang of it, because it was so tiring, nodding, even my IT expert said it wasn't right for me.

*Because you'd had a thing before, where you'd tried to use the keyboard with a sort of head pointer thing, hadn't you?*

Yes.

*And that had given you neck ache?*

*F: This was similar wa'n't?*

Yes. It was similar, but ... it does work for a lot of people, but I couldn't get on with it.

*Did you have any training to use it?*

No. No, I would have expected to have gone to a centre, to be trained how to use this equipment. They also got me a roll-able mouse, which I had tried years ago, and not got on with. I knew I couldn't control it. I'm better, left to my own devices,

although it's not very quick,. I would like to have better equipment, but I wouldn't be allowed to be trained for it.

*Why? I don't ...*

The expense.

*O.K. So what kind of equipment would make your working life better?*

I don't know.

*You said earlier, you were talking about a 'guard'. Is that something... what, can you explain what that is?*

Yes, I have a key guard on my computer now. It stops my fingers from touching the wrong keys, and I've got one on my telephone too, that somebody made for me.

*Oh, right. O.K. And is there anything that you use on the computer that makes using the computer easier for you?*

No.

*Not any special software, or anything like that?*

I bought Word Predict. It was an American one, but with English spelling, but it seems to have developed dementia. It forgets words that I've put into it, and it's really annoying, so I would like to get a better one. They got me one at work, which I still can't cope with.

*Why's that?*

It was connected to the head with the equipment.

*The thing we were talking about earlier, with the dot.*

Yes.

*I see. So what was it like in terms of ...so, you had Access to Work ... how long did all that take to arrange, Access to Work?*

About a month or two.

*So were you able ...*

But the only issue I have with Access to Work is that, unless you've got money to pay your support workers, it's always in arrears. They pay in arrears, but once you get into the system, they payment comes quite regularly, but it still means that you've got to initially pay out.

*F: And the first time, it was three months, Judy, wasn't it, before they, before you got into the system?*

Yes. And my partner set the hourly rate for my support workers, which I thought was a bit high, but I didn't quibble with it.

*What was it?*

Fifteen pounds an hour, which, I s'pose isn't that bad, because they do most of the work, [F. laughs] and I just supply them with the prep. work. Brain work.

*F: Yeah! [laughs]*

*So what ...how does it work with the support worker? Can you sort of explain how you do the work?*

My other support worker picks me up on a Tuesday, takes me into work, and up till now, we've gone out and visited clients. She takes notes down for me, helps me explain direct payments to the clients, and we come back and enter it into the database on the computer, which is always changing. And my other support worker isn't very computer-literate, but we struggle, and then Linda, my PA, helps me on a Thursday. So the outreach job didn't exactly work for me, so in May, I was allowed to change for an advisor, which I enjoyed enormously.

*Can you describe what the new job was like? What changed?*

I was able to get out of the office and to meet people in a similar situation, and that was very gratifying. But now, under this new system, that's all gone to pot.

*Why has the system changed, do you think?*

Because the ratio of people wanting to go on direct payments has outstripped the capacity of the staff.

*What...*

So, in order to get through the backlog of people wanting direct payments, it had to be done this way. Also, I made the mistake in my job of visiting a client eight times, and that was picked up by one of the managers, and they said it was a waste of resources, and that's why they said the resources would be better spent on telephone conversations.

*Why did you visit a client eight times?*

[laughs.]

*F: [laughs] She's nuts.*

Basically, she was a very difficult client, and kept changing her mind, about PAs and it was just a nightmare, but I was told that we had to support clients, up until they felt ready to manage on their own.

*Why do you think there's been this sudden growth in people wanting to access direct payments?*

Because of the outreach work that we did. We've not really done ourselves any favours by doing outreach work, because that has only brought in more applications, more and more, and we've had a number of staff leave recently, which hasn't helped. I don't think it will work this way, but that's not for me to say. As long as I've got a job, I don't care about the rest. I was angry about losing my job because, all the years I've waited to find a job, and now I've got one, it seems that it might be taken away from me. [F. whispers. inaudible] Because I challenged the decision, it was made clear that my speech was a barrier, which all along, I got very irate about my speech being a barrier, but I thought I'd got over that, until last week, and then it all came back in my face. I know my speech isn't that clear, but if people would only have the patience to listen, and watch my lips, they would understand me quite well. Anyway, that's just how it is, and I just have to accept it. But all my clients have not objected, and also my management said my PAs had overstepped the mark, and they couldn't discipline them.

[End of Tape 11 Side B]

**Tape 12 Side A [Track 23]**

*27<sup>th</sup> January, 2005. So you said your PAs had been accused of over-stepping the mark.*

And then the management said that several complaints had been made about my PAs, saying bulldozing clients into things. I know this only happened on one occasion, and it wasn't my PA being bulldozing the client, it was the fact that we had to make the best of a bad situation.

*Are you able to say what that situation is?*

Yes. After interviewing six PAs for a client, which she said she'd like to be one of them, the next time we went out to finalise things, only two out of the six turned up for the meeting, and we had the social worker with us, and the social worker said that we had to give these two PAs something positive to go away with, so my PA worked out what times they could do, and this client needed three visits a day, and we worked it out, between the two of them, leaving only two visits uncovered, which would be covered by agency: and then, the next day, the client rang up the office and said that my PA had bulldozed her into accepting them, and she didn't want any of them. She wanted one person to have all the hours, and yet this person didn't even want the job. So that was the complaint.

*So what's the situation now, with your job?*

I leave the present job at the end of March, but I heard yesterday that they've got some independent funding, and that they want me to organise training for PAs, and that I'd be the ideal person to do it.

*And how do you feel about that?*

It's starting a new job again, from scratch, and I'm not very inspirational: but I've got some ideas about it, but I think I might be over-ruled, but I want to keep on with the job, if I could work with my manager.

But I think we're too alike. Outspoken. [laughs]

*So, summing up your job: what are the best parts of the job?*

Going out and meeting the clients, and helping them to take control of their own lives, and that is pretty rewarding.

*So what about for you, personally?*

That is rewarding.

*What about, then, the worst aspects of the job?*

[F. & Judy laugh.] I'm afraid we've got rather a domineering personnel manager, and a very laid-back manager, [rustling noise] and that doesn't gel very well.

*And how does that sort of exhibit itself?*

Our manager is very laid-back, and is over-ruled on many occasions. It's basically a one-man show. I don't know how it will resolve itself. The Direct Payments team at the County Hall have also got a very domineering head. She is making all the decisions, but they've never liked PASS from the start.

*And the management you're talking about, are they disabled people?*

Yes.

*F: At PASS they are,*

And at HAD?

*So, in your sort of office, in your working environment, how many of the employees are disabled?*

Three and a half. [F. laughs] Three, and one's got dyslexia.

*Out of how many?*

[pause.]

*F: [whispering] Ten.*

Ten.

*And how would you describe the working environment, generally: what's the office like?*

It's quite a good working environment in our office, but it has changed over the last few months. They won't admit it's office politics is at the heart of everything: not that I know a lot about office politics, but I'm learning more and more and more. [laughs]

*So is there anything else you want to talk about, involved with your work, or...?*

Well, except it's enabled me to get a car, and it's enabled me a lot more freedom, and I've got more self-respect, having a job, which is why I was so angry about the prospect of losing it.

*Can you talk about, getting a car?*

Yes, my manager at work in the office, offered me one of his disabled cars, and I thought about it very carefully. At first, I said that I didn't want it, but, several months down the line, I realised that I needed it, to do the job, and it saves my PAs hauling me in and out of the car, and the wheelchair, so I don't really want to give it up, 'cause I'm getting less agile in my old age. I don't want to be putting too much strain on my PA [F. laughs.] They make me do enough as it is.

*So what kind of a car is it?*

It's a Vauxhall Chairman, combo van. It's an N registration, and it's been converted with a ramp, to take a wheelchair.

*So can you describe what the mechanics are like, for getting in and out?*

The back doors open, pull the ramp down, and I wheel up into the van, then I'm strapped in at the front, at the back, and a seat belt.

*F: And you can see out the window.*

Yes., I can see out the window.

*F: 'Cause you don't come up to the car window, do you, when you sit in a car?*

It's been a great asset, although some of my friends don't like driving it. It's not got power steering.

*F: Very hard work.*

Yes.

*F: But it's good, i'n't?*

I thought I'd get out a lot more with it, socially, but they won't drive it: but it's been very useful for work.

*O.K. Moving away from work, we were talking about... last time we were talking about a holiday to Canada that you were going to take, and I, because you hadn't mentioned holidays before I said to you, was that the first time that you...*

No, no, no, I'm quite a seasoned traveller.

*So can you tell us about what your first holiday abroad was?*

Well, the first holiday abroad was when I was nineteen, when I joined PHAB. I went to Paris, and then, I continued with PHAB until the age limit was twenty-five.

*So, on this first trip, when you went to Paris, how did you get there?*

By coach, and ferry. [laughs] But it was such a long time ago, I can't remember, but I enjoyed the PHAB holidays immensely, especially the one in Hampshire: I went there several times.

*What was special about that?*

You did courses in the morning, like art, and a number of different activities: I can't remember right now, but I always did art, and after dinner, they would take us out on outings, to discos in the evenings.

*Where did you actually stay?*

At a place called Avon Tyrell: it was near Burleigh. It belonged to the National Youth Club organisation, which PHAB was a part of.

*And what was the sort of the atmosphere at PHAB sort of holidays?*

Fab. [F. & Judy laugh.] It was a mixture of able-bodied and disabled people, and everybody gelled. We had a great time on every holiday.

*So, you said that twenty-five, that was the age limit, was it?*

Yes, it was, [rattling noise] and then they started up an older age group, but I was never able to go on those, because it was up in Scotland, and I couldn't get up there, in those days.

*So what did you do for holidays?*

But they let me go on these holidays, until I was about thirty. That was when I came to Harpenden, and then I was put on the list for the Across Holidays.

*For the what holidays?*

*F: The Across holidays.*

*A-C-R ...*

*F: A -C-R-O-S-S*

It was started up by a Catholic organisation, and they only went to Lourdes, but then it broadened out. They said it was for 'the sick and handicapped', which I hated:

anyway, I went on one of them, because one of the staff at Redclyffe put my name forward, so I went to Belgium with the local group of Across.

*And what was, how did that compare to the PHAB holiday?*

[Laughs] Not a bit. Initially, when they started, they had to take a doctor and a priest, and a nurse with them on every holiday, [F. laughs] and we were treated like invalids.

*So have you ever been to Lourdes?*

No, and I don't wish to.

*What is it, about trips to Lourdes?*

I think they're vastly over-rated.

**[End of Tape 12 Side A]**

**Tape 12 Side B [Track 24]**

*So do you know people that have been to Lourdes?*

Yes, several. I was bridesmaid to a couple who went there, year after year.

*And why did they go every year?*

Faith.

*F: Are they Catholic?*

Yes.

*And what did they say they got out of the experience?*

They got a lot out of it, and they really did enjoy them. They were very disabled anyway.

*So after your experience of going to Belgium, with Across, what was your next holiday?*

Well, the Across is a great big Jambulance bus. It takes about twenty-six 'patients', as they used to call them. It's got a kitchen at one end, a toilet and beds on one side, and seating on the other side. It's quite spectacular: and you can only go once every three years, and you have to be invited, but I've been quite a lot of places with them. We went to Italy twice, Belgium twice, where they stayed in a Convent, and we had a fancy dress night. One of the nuns lent me her habit to dress up in, [Judy & F. laugh] and then I got to hear about another holiday group, called 'Phoenix', and they ran cultural holidays for disabled people. I enjoyed a lot, but unfortunately they couldn't get the funding, and packed up, a number of years ago. I went to Egypt with them,

and I even went into a pyramid, and it was great, the next year, I went to Florence with them, the year after that, I went to Venice, which is a nightmare for wheelchairs, but they took several strong men with them. We went everywhere. Venice is full of bridges and steps, and they even managed to get me onto a gondola.

*What was that like?*

Wonderful, because I never thought I'd be able to get into one. It's a great pity they didn't get any funding to continue.

*What was it like, being in a pyramid? How, first of all, did you get in?*

We went over the Sahara Desert in wheelchairs. Some of them had too many steps, but we went to the little ones at Guisa. We went round all these archaeological ruins at Luxor. It was all right, except our hotel wasn't exactly great, because the rooms were in a square. We were on the ground floor, and every single night, there was entertainment in the square, which finished at [F. laughs] 4 a.m. in the morning, with belly dancing and all that, and we had to get up at 7 a.m. to go on these trips, so we were quite tired in the evenings, and the week after we came back from Egypt, there was that big earthquake.

*And what year was this?*

I can't remember, but it shook the hotel we were staying in, so we were very fortunate.

*So what, after Phoenix folded, what did you do then?*

I went on the Across Trust holidays every three years, and they got better, but three years ago, the Across Trust went into liquidation, so a local lady bought five jambulances, and raised enough sponsorship for local people to continue going on holiday. It goes under the name of 'The New Jambulance Trust', but there is a

separate part to that, which they didn't know what to name. They were going to name it, 'Harpenden Holidays for the Handicapped', and of course, I jumped on my computer and wrote a strong letter to Catherine Salvesson[?] that it was politically incorrect to call it that, and would she like to call it 'Phoenix', as it means rising out of the ashes? So she thought that was a wonderful name, but they've still got on their publicity 'Holidays for the sick and handicapped', which I keep repeatedly telling them, is not acceptable, but they don't respond. Maybe one day they'll realise.

*So did you go to Canada with the Across Trust?*

We went on a coach, package coach. It was quite good in one way, but not in another. It was a bit of a mistake, on my part.

*Why was that?*

Well, it was an eight-day trip up the east coast of Canada, starting off at Boston, having an overnight stay in each place. The tour guide wasn't exactly accommodating, although all the passengers were.

*Were you the only wheelchair user on the coach?*

Yes. I could walk with help then, and I took three friends with me. The tour guide suggested that the passengers rotate seats each day, and Jean said that that wouldn't be feasible for me, but he said, 'Oh, you've gotta do it anyway.' But all the other passengers said, 'You stay sitting in the front', and I did: and when we went out on the outings, he wouldn't let us get off first, he made us wait till the last, which meant, by the time Jean had got me off and got my chair out, all the other passengers were following this guide up the road, and then we had a big black man as a driver, and at first, he said, 'I can't help you with Judy, because I'm not insured to lift', and then, after a few days, he said, 'Come on, I'll lift you. I've been a paramedic, so I know how to lift', so he continued to help me on and off the bus. He was lovely, and he made our tour a lot easier.

*So of all the sort of journeys that you've done, where do you think has been the most accommodating to you?*

I've been to Holland as well, and that's quite flat, but I don't know which holiday is most accommodating. Maybe the next one will be.

*Tell us about that.*

Linda and I, Linda is my PA, we've booked up to go on a cruise in July, around the Mediterranean ...

*F: ... with a disabled cabin ...*

The ship has several disabled cabins, which we've booked one.

*Do you think, over the time that you've been travelling, how has it changed, or has it changed?*

Canada was very advanced with accessibility. Yes.

*Sort of, what ways?*

Well, everything was very accessible, and it was more disabled-friendly, except the biggest hotel that we stayed in, and that wasn't. It had swing doors, which I couldn't get through, so I had to go round the back, in the servants' entrance, and then, the bedrooms weren't that bad, but we couldn't get my chair through the bathroom doorway, and then all the other hotels served breakfast in the rooms, but this one wouldn't, so when we arrived down for breakfast, we were a bit late and it was full, but, the restaurant was up two steps, so Jean and my other friend had to grab some breakfast for me, and I ate it on the coach, and I think they were the Howard Johnson chain.

*What about air travel: how do you think that ...*

Air travel ...

*F: We're about to find out [laughs] aren't we?*

Canada is eight hours, and I cannot get into the toilet on the plane, so I went for eight hours without going to the toilet, so I was very careful not to drink. They've got a long way to go, air travel. And ...

*F: How do you get onto the plane?*

That was easy. They provide a luggage bus, which has got a ramp on it, and you just go on that, straight onto the plane. They put you in a carry chair, take you down the aisle to your seat, and lift you onto the seat.

*F: Will they still be able to do that?*

Yes.

*F: So they take the carry seat down to your seat, and lift you onto the seat.*

Yes. [laughs] I've had no problems with air travel, except for the toilets. I did manage to get into one toilet, with a helper, but it was rather a tight squeeze.

*Well, it's fingers crossed for your holiday.*

*F; [laughs] I'll bet I'll have to transfer you this time.*

Why?

*F: They're not allowed to lift: health and safety. Did the machine do it?*

No.

*Anyway, I think we're running out of tape. That's it. Thank you very much, Judy.  
Thanks for all your time.*

Thank

[End of Tape 12 Side B]  
[End of recording]