



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

Pauline Johnson
Interviewed by Anne Austin

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

+44 (0)20 7412 7404
oralhistory@bl.uk

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Interview Summary Sheet

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Interviewee's forename:	Pauline	Sex:	Female
Occupation:		Date and place of birth:	1949, Handsworth
Date(s) of recording:	13 th March 2006, 10 th April 2006, 25 th May 2006		
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Track 1 [Tape 1 Side A]

My name's Ann Austin, and I'm interviewing Pauline Johnson at Cerebral Palsy Midlands in Harborne in Birmingham and it's the 13th March 2006. I'd like you to tell me first of all Pauline, give me, can you give me your full name, and where you were born?

My full name is Pauline Irene Johnson. I was born on the 29th September, 1949, in Handsworth: so it says on my birth certificate.

And can you tell me, before we talk about your birth, can you tell me any significance in the names you were given?

The significance is that Pauline was a really nice name that my mother liked, and Irene is a, is the name of my mother's best friend and my godmother. [Banging noise in background.] Irene Peprow was her name, and a very close friend of my mother's.

And were you living in Handsworth at the time? [Traffic noise.]

No. I understand it was, although, I think I, I hope I can pronounce this correctly, it was Wiley Road in Aston. Wiley Road, when my parents got married: that was the on 2nd October 1948, they moved and lived with my grandfather, my father's father, Henry Johnson, at that address, until 1956; when we all moved, when, then we all moved to that address, 151 Grange Road, Small Heath, Birmingham 10, when my father obtained a job at Ansells Brewery.

Can you tell me a bit more about that?

Well, my father, as far as I ... I can remember my father being, working for Ansells Brewery, it was for as long as I can remember, since the age of six, 'cos we moved, 'cos we moved there when I was six, so, you know, and we stayed at that address until August 1970, because they were ... they were, you know, they were gonna pull them

down, and then we moved to 900A, from 1970 until ... the early 90's, when I had to move out. I had to move out due to my mother's strokes which I will go into, you know, as, you know, as the story unfolds.

Mm. Can you tell me a bit about, to go back, about your birth and?

Apparently yes, it's extremely, intricate, and very sad as a matter of, when I think when I, [banging noise] when I think of what I was told. Don't forget this information is only what I understand, that I've been told by my parents. Now it was very difficult birth, now my mother was a very slight woman: very slim, and apparently I was quite a big baby: so if you can imagine a slim young woman of early twenties, I was born when she was twenty-three, and my father was twenty-eight when I was born. However, when you're expecting, she apparently when she, it was very long and out-drawn and very very difficult: old-fashioned apparently. It was out-drawn and she was strapped to a bed, according to what I understand, with her legs wide open and clamped down, and the old-fashioned forceps delivery: literally being, yanked out of. It was a horrible experience [banging noise in background] for a young woman like, now I think about, now I think about it, and it was really out-drawn and long and laborious apparently: [traffic noise] and anyway when I eventually managed to get me out, they noticed that, you know that the head, according to my father, my head was like a pear: [laughs] shaped as a pear, with the old-fashioned forceps delivery, and yanking them over, and it was awful, and according to as I understand, according to my father that her, she had terrible bruises on her legs, [inaudible] [music playing in background] they'd seen it, and of course she didn't see me. She did not see me, it was him, it was Dad who saw me before she did, and he said, 'Your head was like a pear.' Oh, and you can sort of picture it now, as an adult, in a small child with a head like a pear: awful, [voice in background] and then, they thought I was going to die. They thought I was going to die, they didn't think I was going to live. Actually they told them, 'Look she's not going to live; you better, we'll make arrangements. Don't worry about it, blah blah,' you know? And anyway, [laughing] they left me on a slab to die, one of those old, one of those old-fashioned slabs, I understand, and they said, 'Well you know, you should leave her to die, leave

her to die,' 'cos that what was they, they thought, they intended to do, this was now, September 1949 don't forget: and ... [music in background] there I am, lying on a slab, you can just imagine it, I can, I mean it must be: you know, and I think about, picturing it as an adult, and I'm thinking about, in those days, me just lying on a slab being there to die, and I sort of, [traffic noise] ... anyway, apparently I was left there, there for about three days, according to what I understand, and my mother, according to what I understand, heard nurses saying, 'The Johnson baby is still alive.' Anyway, she heard this, and this one male doctor says, 'What's that baby doing on the slab there?' 'Oh well, doctor so-and-so, you know, doctor so-and-so has told us to leave it there.' You know. He says 'Well, clean it up and put it in an oxygen tent. Clean it up and put it in a oxygen tent!' So I was cleaned up and placed in an oxygen tent, and because I could have died, I just know then, then that I could have died, and, and he says, 'Oh,' he says 'it's OK, it's moving about, [banging noise] and the head's in its,' [??] so anyway we stayed there, and Mum was in there as well, don't forget, and... well when she was discharged, I was left in the hospital and so therefore they both had to keep on commuting to the hospital, and they said 'Well you know, she's, cos it was, I also it was the shock of the birth etc., etc.,' I mean, you know, 'cos it was very traumatic apparently, and, well, after six weeks, well, I was taken home and my head sort of went back normal, and I recovered pretty well, and I was doing according to my mother, I was climbing up her chest: I didn't, I was climbing up her chest, in a normal way and behaving quite natural as babies do. Well, six weeks after I came back from the hospital, I head: my as a sort of, I sort of, screamed my head off, you know: couldn't, couldn't stop, they couldn't stop me, they couldn't find out what was wrong and, so me mother took me to the doctor, an old man named 'Doctor Rowner' funnily enough, and he was an old man, and he said, 'There's, look there's something wrong with my baby, and I want: look, it won't stop and [inaud]' 'Look there's nothing wrong: take the baby home [background noise] with you, to ...' Well, and then as the, as the, as the hours passed and a couple of days later, I still wouldn't stop screaming my head off! 'Now I can't stand this Harry, I am now going to take the baby to the hospital,' and so they took me to the nearest General Hospital at the time: doctors examined me and, this way, this way, that way this person [??], [someone shouting in background] until finally, a lady doctor said, held me up by my ankles,

like this [Pauline demonstrates] and suddenly turned round to everyone in the room; my parents, another doctor, and said, 'This baby's got meningitis.' You see there was no, there was no marks, the usual marks like, [music in background] rashes and that sort of thing: you know, there was nothing like that. My head was, I was screaming my head off. Anyway, 'This baby's got meningitis: and, so'

Can you tell me how old you were at this time? Do you know?

Six weeks of age: [voice in background] only six weeks. I got meningitis at the age of six weeks, and so, I was treated for meningitis, [traffic noise in background] and then released. But as time went, which went on again, this, you know, they said, 'She's not, why is she carrying, you know, why is she always was taking things with her left hand and not with her right? You know, when you offer her toys?' Anyway I was examined again, and 'til eventually it was decide, it was declared, 'This babe, this baby has got, this baby has cerebral palsy, through the old-fashioned forceps delivery, the shock of the birth: all sorts and cert, and this, you know, all what went on before and so therefore it was treated [??].

Can you tell me a bit about how your parents: what, what have they told you about their reactions and their thoughts at this time?

Well of course, you know, Mum was more calmer than me father apparently. She, she says 'Oh what are we going to do with her?' And then she said, 'She'll be all right, you know. Yes, she'll be OK.' You know, it's, I think people of our age group, you know, I mean our parents' age group, you know thinking 'Well my God, how am I going to keep well with a baby like this'. You know, she was very [??], you know, very ... very sensible, very caring and extremely: it's unbelievable what a lovely woman she was, you know, now I think back. And I had my first calliper, or iron, at the age of three. So from the age of three until the age of fourteen, I wore the conventional calliper: and,

On your leg?

and then, as time went on, she was taking photographs, as you do, with babies and, you know, the, the, we've got some lovely photographs with her and myself, growing older, you know, from, from babyhood until womanly-hood, and, all sorts of things, you know: in different poses with different cost, you know, different: even then or as a child she'd dress me up: [laughs] ah, you know, nice, you know, very nice little outfits; beautiful little outfits for the time. According to my photographs, I've got some of these photographs, I, there's, you know, I don't remember some of the outfits, but I can, when I look back on the photographs, [banging sound] they're quite nice for early 50's you know: it was, it was very nice.

And what are your earliest memories?

1953. Coronation Day 1953. I was chosen, and this is where my first [background noise] role came to be, I mean, it was Coronation Day and my mother, because where we lived was [inaud] a kind of a, in the area, and the little girls were being picked to play the Queen, and the other little children were playing to play the, you know, courtiers and, you know, the pages and... [laughs] ladies in waiting and this person and that person: and even the, you know, the, Archbishop of Canterbury, and all of these things, and, well, the first costume was made by my mother from a little dress, it was a little white dress, [voice in background] with red and white, with red and white, red white and blue ribbons, and a crepe cape and a cardboard crown, and it was a crepe, 'cos her kept it for many a long year, that costume. [Laughs] You know, she kept it in a little box and she kept it for many a long year: oh yeah: oh yes. Actually I even wore the crown in 1977 when we had the, as, you know, for a, and the cape, [laughing] 'cos obviously I couldn't get in the dress. However, you know, I still [??] there's pictures of me with, with that on and the crown on, in 1977, Jubilee year, the Queen's Twenty-fifth Anniversary of her Coronation, so that was then, then, they're lovely photographs they are. As I say, going back to childhood, and well, you know, and, and I can't re, quite remember the whole day itself, from beginning to, from the day I got up, from the moment I got up to the time I went to bed. [Laughing] I certainly can't remember every mortal detail, but I can remember, roughly, seeing my mother in a grass skirt, and a lei round her neck, and a flower in her hair and me father

in a grass skirt, carrying a spear! [Interviewer laughs,] Now that I can remember, but the day itself, as I say, from the beginning to the end I just can't remember every, every little nook and little detail; and apparently it was a great day and it's well documented in photographs.

Mm hm.

And as time, years went by, she was a keen photographer: she took up photography, [voices in background] and, you know, as well, with the baby, you know to, document all the, you know, growing up and, you know, and nice pictures of, you know, like most people do with their babies. Anyway I took, she took thousands of pictures of me from childhood, from a baby into adult, until she, until adulthood: and, you know, it was really good. Now when we moved, as I say, when we moved to 151 Grange Road, Small Heath, I didn't go to school till I was six, because I suppose there wasn't one suitable, a school suitable, around the area, so

Can you remember anything about the discussions about that, or?

Oh no: discussions about what? Sort of

About going to school?

About how

And how it was chosen.

No, I don't.

What are your early memories yourself, of having cerebral palsy? When did you first realise?

When I was at school. You see this school was geared up for people with physical disabilities in the school, ranging from cerebral palsy, spina bifida: you know, all sorts of different things. Yeah, naturally, yes, yes, I was at school when I, a little girl at school when I realised, truly realised it.

And before that: you were just a small child growing up at home? [Traffic noise.]

Yes, that's right, yes. Yeah, that's right, and [Voices in background.]

*What kind of things did your parents do with you? What did your mum do with you?
What kind of things did you remember about being with your mother?*

Lovely, lovely things. I mean she used to, straight away, to help me to, you know, with balance and how to speak properly and, you know, general deportment and that sort of thing, where ladies were concerned. Well being in show business herself, she taught me to, you know, sort of, taught me to dance first of all. According to what I understand, I was singing at the age of three, if it can be believed, because obviously when she was rehearsing her own numbers, I was sitting there or, in the house and she was rehearsing her own numbers so therefore, I'm learning them as well. She's rehearsing and I'm sitting there taking it all in. I was weaned on Edmundo Ross and his Orchestra that was played on the radio. Do you remember Edmundo Ross and his Orchestra on the radio, and Victor Sylvester? 'Slow, slow, quick, quick, slow' [Pauline hums and sings 'da, da, da, da, de, de, de'. You know, well I thought I'd put that in as well if it's being used as in tape: you know, and things like that, and some lovely, lovely songs she used to sing. I learned, I mean, I knew, I, do you know, I learned 'One Fine Day' at the age of, [laughing] at a very tender age, from Madame Butterfly: can you believe such a thing? Yes, it was a fair old ... and 'So In Love' and 'Strange Dear' from Kiss Me Kate. [Pauline sings] 'Strange dear, but true dear, when I'm close to you dear.' You know, I can even, you know, it's, yes, it was all different then, all, very different, you know, and she used to do some comedy songs too. I've learned some of them too [laughs]. Oh, yes. Yes, I remember I had me own act as well don't forget, as I got in, I mean I used to love to do 'Singing In The Rain',

in the style of Gene Kelly. I used to have a raincoat on, and an umbrella, you know, and this, we had some lovely costumes in them, when I think back.

Can you tell me about how old you were at this time?

Well obviously I was getting on and I used to, you know I mean you know: ten, eleven, twelve, thirteen, fourteen, fifteen, sixteen. [Music in background.] I can remember doing some shows for the school, as I got older: you know. That... yeah, I do remember that.

When you were younger, do you remember how people, other people spoke about your disability? Or how your parents treated you?

Well, they treated ... When I think back, I mean I wasn't allowed to do quite a lot of things that I should have been, you know, because, let's face it, our parents: you're in the same generation as I am: our parents were more cuddled-up with the notion that, you know, 'We're not going to let them, you know: keep them as young as possible,' that sort of attitude. 'Don't let them, you know, lead, slap the lead,' you know. It's in a way, it's very sad in a way.

Tell me a bit more about that.

Well, when I think back, I mean ... [laughing] I wasn't allowed to cross the road on my own. I wasn't allowed to walk the bloody streets alone. Apart from you, 'cos in those days they're not as, you know, worried about, paedophilia at, at, at that time as they are today, but, you know they were so frightened that, you know, that I might hurt meself or do this to meself, or [laughing] whatever it may be. When you think, I think, you think back, I mean, it's rare, I lost a lot of my teenage years, I understand, quite honestly: but my mother did apologise towards me before she'd, long before she died, because, you know, when it was forced, when we were forced to part in that way: because we parted long before she died; because with her strokes, you see, your first reaction is, 'Oh my God, what's going to happen to me?' Meaning half of me

was frightened, half of me was scared for my mother. Half of me was selfishness, half of me is partly selfishness, let's be frank and straight, cards fairly on the table here: the frightening thing is, 'Oh my God, what's going to become of me? How am I going to cope?' you know what I mean? 'I'm now going to have to go into a conventional care-home situation,' which is not suitable for me. [Traffic noise.]

Do you think they, I mean did they keep you very ... I don't know what the word is exactly: were they frightened to let you, go out and grow and learn? [Talking together] Did they keep, keep

Yes. When I think back on it, the truth is, yes. If, yes, that's it in a nut-shell. I didn't really blossom whole, blossom, really, 'til I was forced to leave home. Now, to leave home at forty: forty-one, in your early forties, isn't right. Now I'm going to actually say something here, now, and I hope to God that something is done in it. Now that it's, you know, now I'm a middle-aged woman and I think about my own childhood, and the years I could have lived on my own, I mean, it, you know, it's a question of, I'm glad it changed when it did, but then again

[End of Track 1]

Track 2 [Tape 1 Side B]

[Music and voices in background.] Yes. Well as I was saying, being a woman in her early forties, and then, sort of, kind of, pushed into the deep end, thrown in the deep end, 'You're on your own now, you know, you'll have to, you know, you'll have to, go into a place called 'Prospect Hall' which was based in Selly Oak, on the Bristol Road, near the other colleges: you know, the teachers' colleges and the other colleges or whatever other colleges there may be, and we had this Prospect Hall: and ... I could tell you stories in there, my God, that would make your hair stand on end, you know, that, or, to make your hair curl, [talking together] or yes, and

Tell me a bit about it.

Ah, yes! Ah some, some of them are very amusing at some points. Now then, they were expecting me to go in there, not knowing a thing: [laughs] and this was about home management in general, you know: budgeting etc., etc. Now I did know some of it you know, I mean, they expected me to know, nil: absolutely nothing at all. Well, I did, and they were very surprised because, first of all, being a very clean woman anyway, a very clean person, there was one time in the early 90's, it was about her [??] in 1990, so Christmas 1990, I went home for Christmas, for two weeks, from Prospect Hall and, then in January when we went back, in the January of '91, this young girl, I use the words 'young girl' because now I'm in my early forties, forty-one-ish, and this girl is only about, a care worker, she's not more than, twenty, twenty-five? And she says to me, 'Don't you think you ought to have a bath?' And I said, 'Excuse me?' 'Well, you have been with your mother for two weeks.' I said, 'Excuse me? Don't you think I had a bath?' And then an argument infused, I started it and I don't, and I said, 'How dare you talk to me like that?' [??] and I says, 'Well, I don't need to be told to get in the bath.' [Laughing] Well in fact I did not need to be told to get in the bath. I don't have to, I don't need to be told, to do, have a bath, and it's a fact, I don't, and I can become extremely indignant at times, if I am challenged in that way and I don't make any bones about it, you know. 'You should do this. You should do that. Don't you think you ought to do it this way?' 'Why?' And if they say

‘Well you know,’ and I mean, to actually say, a young girl of twenty-five, saying that to me: I was very annoyed, and I says, ‘Good God how dare you talk to me like that!’ She says ‘Well I’ll have to tell the,’ and I says, ‘Well you go and do it then! In fact shall we do it together?’ And I says, ‘In fact shall we go together, shall we?’ and, I says, ‘Come on. You want to complain about my toiletry: let’s go together.’ Anyway, no more was said about that: and there was, ‘We’re going to teach you budgeting.’ ‘Oh, budgeting? Oh.’ How to shop and etc, and, you know, cross the road and do the bridges, and some of the things that they did teach me, I think that it was a good thing, but others, there wasn’t [??] already do them, ‘cos the trouble with Prospect Hall and anything like it, they think you’re ex, you’re completely an absolutely nincompoop. A total nincompoop, which I’m, [interviewer laughs] I wasn’t.

You said you regretted not having left home earlier.

Oh yes!

Can you think about why that might be? What?

Because I think that, I think I’d love to, you know what I’d love to do? Now that I have, done it and worn the t-shirt, as it were : from forty, being thrown into the deep end as it were: I’d like to, I would very much like to try and educate young couples, whom today, who are now being, presented with a special needs child, [background noise] especially with someone with cerebral palsy, a child straight in its arms and young parents with toddlers and school children, to target the parents, I say, not the child.

Can you remember your parents saying anything about, along those lines?

Well I mean, if you take my father for example: he said some very hurtful things, I mean, I mean very hurtful. There was one occasion when mother was ill, and she was in hospital at the time, and Barbara Brand, who is based here, she came to our home

and he turned round to her and he says, 'She can't even make a cup of tea for herself,' and I stood, I sat there and I thought to myself, 'No, because you won't even let me try.' [Voices in background.] I never said it, but that's what was in my mind. Now if I were, I maintain now as I'm an old woman, now I am an older woman, a middle-aged, early sixties woman, I think that, you know, we should target young parents more than anything else, first of all: do you know, to teach them, 'Don't be so afraid to let the child experience something, with cerebral palsy.' [Traffic noise.] You see, if you can think back about in your own, I mean you were, in our day, our parents were so, [banging noise] the wrath of our parents was so afraid that, [loud voices in background] 'He or she won't be able to cope to do this: they won't be able to [banging to affirm her point] take it in; they won't be able to do this, that, or the other.' I want, I, now, something about Prospect Hall, when it was closed down, annoys me now because, it, apparently as I understand, it was run by social services, and due to social, the usual social services cuts, that was closed down. Now I think, that you know, we should target youngsters: youngsters You can go to these special schools, and when they get to ... [banging to emphasise numbers] twelve, thirteen, fourteen and fifteen, start in that environment immediately, from that age, twelve to sixteen: of, cookery. We did a bit of cookery at the school, funnily enough, [laughing] and we used to make cakes, but it wasn't that serious because they were always geared up, weren't they, of getting your [shouting in background] limbs to move. It was more to do with physiotherapy and this and that, they weren't into educating about life in general, what goes on outside, and which you have to do outside. I know I'm getting on my soap-box, [laughing] which I'm inclined to get on from time to time, about this subject, or that subject, or the other! There's a lot of subjects I get on a soap-box. Now I really am getting carried away.

You were going to tell me a bit more about, where you went to school and?

[??] It was Victoria Physically Handicapped School, was in Little Green Lane, Small Heath. Yes, the headmaster's name was Mr Perrett: a very nice man, I can see him now. Grey hair, although I can imagine him [inaud], a nice tall man, a nice-spoken man with grey hair and a very pleasant nature: [Sounds like argument in background]

and I can remember my mother, you know, coming on several occasions when we had a doctor coming, which was a common occurrence wasn't it? You know, when you used to come: not all the time, but they used to have doctors and examine you and have a look at the limbs and the [??]. There was one occasion a doctor, I was on the bed, and I'd got these lovely, oh every time I used to wear quite, quite frequently, lovely, it's documented in there, about these lovely snow white ankle socks: snow white they were, and they only came up to me knee, and as I say, I'm laying on the bed there, and he says, 'These are, what lovely socks these are! Where do you get them?' So she says, 'Oh I get them when I can, and I get them in bulk, when I can afford, you know, when they are available.' 'Oh they're very nice, aren't they?' Because when they come from Leigh. [Dog barking?] The calliper rested on the sock, not [traffic noise] on the bare skin, like a lot of children did, have ankle socks, and the calliper was resting on the bare skin. My, mine were never on the bare skin: never! I always got these lovely, lovely white, sparkling white socks. I can see them now, wearing them right up to the knee, they were really, really, nice, and he says, I says, 'They're very nice.' Anyway she says, 'Get them in bulk.' 'Oh they're very nice.' Anyway, 'cos my mother used to come all dressed up in her finery. [Laughing] There was one occasion, a child said to me, she said, 'Is you mother rich?' I suppose, to a small child I suppose that's, it was that she appeared rich. Well she did have quite a lot of money in those days, like, [laughs] being in show-biz, you know, and always coming up with, beautiful outfits and this beautiful, she had a beautiful hat one, these high hats she used to sit and she had a high forehead, and she used to wear these lovely hats. There was one when: do you remember the times when ladies could wear gentlemen's hats? And my mum had a trilby, with a, for a, in a, in it, in the shape of a trilby, and it didn't half suit her: it suited her so well. Anyway, [inaud] you know what I mean? And of course Mr Perrett knew she was in show business because you know when we used to have Harvest Festivals in the school? She used to buy beautiful, absolutely beautiful display things, such as great big Harvest loaves, [voices in background] as big as that! Great big things they were, and absolutely wonderful, and if it wasn't a big Harvest loaf, it was big baskets of fruit, or a large, two boxes of tinned foods, you know. It cost her around twenty or thirty, nearly forty pounds.

Do you want to tell me a bit more about your mother's background and her childhood perhaps, or what you know of it?

Well she was born in 1926, the year of the general strike, in April '26. You know then, I mean I could write, I'd love to write a book about her and that's a different, [laughing] you know, I'd love to do this again and have, you know, have that, really documented because that's, you know, really interesting, but, it's mainly me you're after, so, you know,

No but tell me about her and where she was born.

She was born in Birmingham, [traffic noise] and me grandmother, Christine Cecilia, grandmother was Christine Cecilia Shoot. My great grandfather was a tax collector, I understand: a German, so there's German in me, [laughing] so if I did, decided I wanted to trace my, study genealogy and study my family tree on my mother's side, it probably would take me right into the heart of Germany.

Do you remember your grandparents?

[Traffic noise.] I remember her, my grandmother and I don't remember, I remember the man she married which was Stanley Morton because my mother, because my mother's father is unknown: but there are talk about that man, had three sisters, according to what I understand: but that's a different story altogether.

Was she, did she have brothers and sisters?

Yes, quite a lot. Her mother had ten pregnancies: eight survived, and Mum was the eldest of... seven children maybe? Because... let me see, me, me grandmother's children are obviously, Irene, my mother, [voices in background] Olivia: five years' older, five years' younger than me mother, Bernard is still alive, he's now sixty-two. Stanley is the youngest. Maybe, oh I can't remember, she, there's Stanley: Linda ...

Vicky, there's the aunt, the Auntie Vicky and there's ... somebody else, I can't remember their name but I haven't seen them for years. [Laughs.] But it was a shame that

Did your mum ever talk about her life? [Talking together] If she was the eldest of a big family.

Oh yes, oh yes, it's quite sad her life is, actually, her earlier life is [dog barking? voice in background] extremely sad, very sad indeed. You know I mean, her life was quite, very cruel at times, I mean, growing up, and, I understand. Then she went into the A.T.S. at eighteen, and [someone coughing in background] you know, that's a different story altogether.

Where did, when did she go into show business, or what took her into that?

Well, apparently, I understand, she entered a talent competition at the age of sixteen. When she was sixteen she entered a talent competition, and won, and then at ... seventeen, eighteen, you know, and the dance band vocalists were, you know all the rage and all the commonality [??] was the dance bands, she was a dance band vocalist, to start with. She sang with Johnny Fairbrother, and his Orchestra. That was a dance band based here in Birmingham I understand, you know, so she started off as a dance band vocalist, and then ... She was very, very keen on, she was very keen on the: oh what was her name now? Dorothy Lamour, and Carmen Miranda, that, what made her go into show business apparently, from at the time was she was inspired by, as I say by Dorothy Lamour and... Carmen Miranda.

And

'The Brazilian bomb-shell' as she was known. [Traffic noise] And you've seen the old films now and maybe you can remember those, mainly on the old films, Dorothy Lamour, she was the first to do, Hawaiian dancing, and of course mum was very keen

on that, [mechanical beeping sound] and South American dancing and different things like that.

So she was a dancer and a singer was she?

Oh yes, yes, and very successful too. I've got all her photographs and all her press cuttings at home.

And was it mainly in Birmingham, or did she travel?

Oh she mainly was in Birmingham, the Black Country, Wolverhampton, Tipton, Solihull: all of that country, 'the good [inaud] that was the phrase, I understand. All the Black Country, you know. [Someone coughing in background.] Yes, oh yes, it could be quite, her story is quite comical, but that as I say is a different story, and, but as I say, as she was rehearsing a lot, in the house, so therefore I'm picking up all these new songs aren't I? [Voices in background: mechanical beeping] And, I'm learning them as I go, as she's rehearsing them. Actually, when I got older, she used to say, 'Oh my God, she looks like me and she sounds like me!' Honestly.

[Traffic noise.] And how did she manage when you were young? How did she go on with her career?

Oh, [laughs] oh that! Yes, well, of course ... yeah, well, as she, [laughs] well obviously, you know when you strike, presumably she was thinking, well she used to dress me up in the, in a little coat, I had a photograph taken in me, in a grass skirt [banging noise] and a lei, a flower in my hair, with a friend, I've got those at home, and she used to dress me up in all different sort of costumes: everything, and [someone shouting in background] for, to get my limbs moving, she said 'Well let's [inaud] she showed me how to dance, properly, you know: Hawaiian, Charleston. These are the things that I can do, the things I've done in this very building. [Door banging.] [??] Ken, if you can, but feel free to interview, no, you don't want that: but as I say, but he can, you know, he can actually say, 'Oh this, yes I've seen her

meself.' It was Hawaiian, soft-shoe stuff with a proper straw hat, a cane and a, [inaud] white trousers. There was me barrow boy act. I had a cap with sequins on, a little waistcoat with the same sequins on, and I used to do a Cockney medley with that. I had a red cape, like more like a Little Red Riding Hood cape, kind of thing really but, I used to do Christmas medleys with that, and as I say there was the 'Singing In The Rain' dressed with a raincoat and an umbrella, and then there was the Charleston, go-go dancing when they first, you know when they used to first come out with that? There was a disco here: that's right, in the late 60's, early 70's and I says, 'Well, do you want me to, to do a, you know be a go-go dancer in the corner?' So they built me a platform in the hall there, and in the corner by the window, and I go-go danced, all night. [Sniffs. Interviewer laughs.] Oh yes, you know, when you used to have them in the cages, in the early 60's: you know, '65, '68, that sort of thing? Well I did exactly the same. I was dressed in a pair of hot pants: oh yes! I had the whole, in [??] had these beautiful white boots, and my God I used to love them. They used to come to the knee, and they used to zip up and they were white, and they were lovely, and I loved those white boots, my God did I love them boots, and I'd got those white boots and they came up to the knee, and I'd got the tights on and I'd got these, as I say, these 'hot pants', as they used to call them then, a she, and a little t-shirt on, [sound of footsteps] and I'd stand on this little platform, well you know: this little platform that they'd built in the hall for me and I'd go-go dance there. I'd have a few rests, you know: I'd have a rest, and then I'd go up again and I'd do some more: [laughing] you know, and that was, that was good. In the early 70's, [music in background] 1972, in early 1972, they wanted to raise some money, the club wanted to raise some money, so I suggested that we do a little concert kind of thing, [voice in background] and so I got somebody who could play the, in the club that was called 'The Wednesday Night Club', there was a gentleman who could play the harmonica: I got him to play some songs. I got somebody else to do something else. Robert came and did his, a couple of his acts with his friend Alan, and, and I got my mother to come out of retirement, this is 1972, come out of retirement for one night and do us a couple of songs for us, which at that time she could still do. It's 1972, and she came and she performed with me, in this very building, in that very room: that, in it, and she sang a couple of songs for them:

[Talking together] So,

and I brought her out of retirement just for that night, to appear with me here, to raise, you know, to help to raise some money. I think it was quite successful. I enjoyed that, and that night, that particular night, I also did the belly, first, in public, belly dancing, in here. Oh yeah! Oh that was me mother's costume too, and the, [??] in my mother's costumes. Oh yeah. I mean, the top hat and cane, a real top-hat: I had a real top hat. She got that from a, I think she said she got it from ... one of these flea markets thingies, and she wore, she used that herself. She let me use it, and I used it and I did 'Burlington Bertie': 'Burlington Bertie' you know, that sort of thing, and, and, you know, it's been very successful over these years.

Mm.

Very successful.

It's obviously an important part of your life, this, both your mum, [talking together] and your own singing and?

Oh yes, she was a, I don't, I agree that she was a great influence over me: a great influence over my life.

What about your dad?

Me dad? Well, dad wasn't a bad man, but [voices in background] he was a heavy drinker when he was younger. The rows they used to have were rather significant. I remember, I mean, many a time my mother went on a show in tears: but we won't go into that and, I mean he never, I mean when, as I say, his conversation with me mother he might, out of earshot, [??] you know, 'She'll never cope with that. She'll never cope with independent life, she'll never do this and she'll never do that.'

Talking about you?

Exactly, yes. He's saying that in my earshot to my mother. 'She won't do that.' She says 'I've got more faith in Pauline than you, than obviously you have.'

[End of Track 2]

Track 3 [Tape 2 Side A]

[Voices in background.] We were talking about your father.

Yes, we were talking about me father, well, Harry Johnson was not a bad man really it was just that ... he drank quite a lot, because I know that there was a little pub on the end of Grange Road, Small Heath, on the corner there, called, 'The Nelson'. He was always in and out of there. I mean he was a very heavy drinker: extremely heavy drinker, as I say, I can remember the rows that they had, and the, you know, the times that my mother had to go out onto a show in tears. Very, very sad: you know what I mean? It was awful.

And the rows mainly about you?

No, not always. Money: money. You don't forget that she was, she had most of the money with her being in show business; you know. He had his, you know, he had his job. He went to work, he went to work, but, you know, he did silly things with that money, and she was more practical than he was. Where practicality was concerned, she was the leader, and where, practicality now, I'm ninety-nine, I am more like my mother than my father. She used to say, 'I've got my, you've got your daddy's blue eyes,' but, I mean, characteristic-wise and, and I'd say that ninety-nine per cent of me is my mother.

Can you tell me a bit more about his birth and early life?

Pardon?

His early life: his life, [talking together] before he met your mum.

Well he was born in 1922, and he went, [voice in background] he left school, and I don't know, I don't know where he went to school because he didn't, he never mentioned that, to tell you the truth. He was telling me about, he did tell me that, at the age of fourteen, he used to go and get the batteries for those little, those old-

fashioned, crystal: you remember they used to [??] when they became, the radio became, in its very, very infancy. [??] since 1922, he was born in '22 so, so when he was ten or fifteen, he used to go to the shop and, for his dad and get the battery for this ... little crystal, 'crystal [??]' they used to call them, I think that's what they called them: the first little radios: [traffic noise in background] and he, you know, he took him out drinking, that's what probably what turned him, you know, that's what sort of did it and [talking together: inaudible.]

Did he have brothers and sisters?

Oh yes, yes. There's, yes there was Harry, Ted, Len, Sid, Eunice, his sister, Eunice, Dennis. Now he, me father is very similar to my mother with the respect that, his mother, Harry's mother, Harry Johnson's mother, my father ...'s mother, divorced my father: I mean, I mean, divorced my grandfather, and he took up with this other woman: Mrs Henry Johnson we're talking about now: Henry Johnson took up with this woman called 'Florry' and it was Florry, who had Ted, Len, Sid, Dennis: where are we? and Eunice, and they never married, I mean, they were co-habiting as far as I understand, in those days I mean [laughing] it was "Ooh, living over the brush" in those days, you know what I mean?

Do you remember

Yes.

your grandfather, or your?

Oh no, apparently my grandfather, my father's father, did see me when I was a baby so I understand and me dad said, 'Oh yes, he liked you.' He says 'Oh aye, he held you in his arms before he died.' Apparently he died a couple of months after I was born, I understand. But, but Dad, he let her, you know, he let Mum sort of, take control where I was concerned, you know what I mean? I mean he used to bring me,

he used to buy me pop and sort of bring me crisps in from the pub, you know what I mean? It was, when I think back, I mean, honestly I mean I did, did say, didn't I, I said I wasn't going to leave anything out. [??] I asked, you know, asked, you know, if you want warts an all: then why go, I'm gonna give you warts and all. [Break in recording.] As I say my father, [voice in background] you said you wanted to know about when, he went into the Army, and he did go to Burma I understand, and there are some pictures of him in the, in that uniform with, like an Australian hat, you know, in those hot, hot day, those hot days, you know. I mean I don't know much of, of what went, went on, in his life all that much, you know, because he wouldn't talk about that, [noise in background] all that, all that much: I mean I know more about my mother than I do about my father where that is concerned: you know, about her early life and how she got into show biz and all the rest of it.

And, can you tell me about where they met, and?

Oh yes. According to my mother, she was lodging, as I say, with [inaud] my godparents at the time: she was lodging with them, and apparently, when they used to work, they used to pass each other in the street: one going one way, the other going the other, and apparently, according to my mother, a friend of his, said to her, said to my mother, [voice in background] 'He'd like to go out with you,' [laughs] and she says, 'Tell him to ask me himself,' because I used to often say, I said 'How the hell did you two get together, because you're so, different as chalk and cheese? And she said 'Well.' I said 'What was the attraction, to him? I mean how could you be so attracted, to him?' I says, 'You're so different.' She said, 'He was so shy.' Were there a lot of men would have been more forward in a lot of things. You know, making passes at you and things like that. She said she liked him for his quiet, unassuming and, to quote her words, 'sort of shy-ish, shy manner'. [Banging in background.] You know what I mean, it's, when you look at your own parents: you know, generation, even when you're younger, even when you're middle-aged yourself: well, when you're much older or a young adult, you look at your parents, and you think, 'She fancies him, or her, he fancy her?' you know.

And

You know, 'How can you get turned on by him?' [laughing] you know what I mean?
Let's be honest with you, you know, 'How can you bring yourself to... you know.'
Strange how, how life is, I've discovered. [??]

And did they have a long courting period, or?

Actually they were married after they were going out together and they were married
six weeks: six weeks later they were married, and their wedding anniversary is the
second of: that's right, the second of the tenth 1948 and I was, as I say, born the
following September.

Did they tell you anything about their wedding?

Yes, it was a registry office wedding. They were married in the Birmingham registry
office in town. Yes, they were married there with a few, with a couple of friends: not
much, in those days. [Voices in background.]

And you were born a year or so later?

And that's, yeah, and now that's the sort of a world, [??] we were talking about
money once Mum and I were talking about money once, and you know how we got
into money, and apparently when they first got married, he was giving her five pounds
week house-keeping money: five pounds! You know, in those days, apart from, and in
them, when I was a little girl the metre was sixty, a shilling for the metre, wasn't it,
and... the rent had to be paid, and there was all sorts of: strange ...

*You said that they lived their early married life with your [traffic noise] ...
grandfather?*

That's right, until he, as I say, 'til Dad got this job working for Ansell's Brewery, and then they moved, because of Dad's job, to 151 Grange Road which is really documented in there, that was a [inaud] and when you went into this little cottagey kind of thing. [Laughs] Oh, oh dear! When I think about it now.

Tell me about it.

[Laughing] Well! Well you go in there, you know, there was a back door, and then there was on this side of the room there was a little door leading to, down to the cellar, [banging in background] where they kept, down the coal and then the meter was there, [traffic noise] and upstairs was a two-bedroomed house with one little box-room, which was my room: I had the little box-room for many a long year, and then you went down the back, and then you went down and opened the back door, you'd got the, you went through there, you got the old-fashioned brew-house: the old-fashioned brew-house: [laughs] I can remember the old fashioned brew-house, straight ahead of me. Dirty, dusty, dusty and sometimes you had to play in there: not very much, but, you know there was even an old-fashioned, an old sink, all rusty, and derelict, and they'd got this great big copper thing and they where, where they used to do the [??], the clothes, you know: and as I said the old-fashioned outside lavatory, on the corner that we shared with the next-door neighbour, Mrs Thomas: [traffic noise] yes: mm. Yes, and we had this, you know, to play in the yard with this scooter and the, prams and the, you know, and things like that. And there was a cinema down on the corner of, the, with you know, on the Victoria, you know, at the bottom of that road; and it was called 'The Grange' because it was in Grange Road. We used to go quite, quite a lot to the cinema. There was The Grange and the Kingston, on the Kingston Road.

Did you go with your parents or friends or?

I used to go quite a lot with my mother.

And do you have any brothers and sisters, Pauline?

No, I'm an only child.

And how's does that feel?

[Voices in background.] It's OK because your toys are your own, but, you know sometimes company would have been OK but I find that's life, isn't it? I mean it's hard.

Do you think you ... were protected more because of that, or...?

They wanted to devote themselves to me and only me I should imagine: you know.

Did you take a lot of looking after?

Well, looking after, when Mum was in show [??] Daddy was doing something else. My mother used to go quite a way, go away, to do these shows: couldn't go on these seasonal things, no, not, not in my life at all, but she used to sort of work it in such a way that Dad was either off, you know, when she used to go away for a week here, a fortnight there: you know what I mean? and I had a lot of people working, a lot of people looking, after me: you know, different people.

Were they friends, or?

There was Mrs Handy who used to work, all, used to pick me up on the bus, to take, you know those special buses, to take me to school. There was Mrs Handy, there was a couple that, a couple, an oldish couple, a middle-aged couple who run an out-door, they looked after me. A friend of me dad's wife used to look after me: Mr and Mrs Smith. There was quite a lot of people.

How do you feel about that?

How do I feel about that?

Mm.

Well, it's just one of those things, isn't it?

Did you get on with them? Were they good to you?

Oh yes, quite a lot of them I did. Yes I did, quite, quite a lot actually.

But your father didn't look after you particularly?

Oh yes, I mean, when Mum used to go out on these shows, you know for a week or a fortnight there, you know, he used to take, he used to sort of coincide it with his times off, because him being a shift worker, you know: that's, you know, that's right: there were many times he got me up to get me to s, you know, got me ready for school and things like that, and, yeah. [Voices and traffic in background.] [Pause.] Is there anything else you'd like to know?

[End of Track 3]

Track 4 [Tape 3 Side A]

My name is Ann Austin. I'm at Cerebral Palsy Midlands, to interview Pauline Johnson and today is April 9th.

10th.

10th. Thank you. All right Pauline, do you want, you wanted to say something [talking together] from last time?

Yes, yes I do. I like to perceive myself, I like to introduce myself in situations like this, as 'Pauline Irene Johnson, Variety Artiste, now retired, in, on the amateur c, on the amateur circuit,' because my mother was in show business professionally, and I got into this at a very young age, and then when I got older, I got more serious about it and so, I've always wanted to be a variety artist, ever since I can remember: you know, since a child; and, lucky for me, when I joined this building which we are in now, in the old days when it was known as 'Midlands Spastic Association', way back in 1965: '66 that way, that, when I left school in '65, I think I joined the MSA Club, the Wednesday Night Club when I was about, maybe seventeen, and from then, every time they wanted a, they were looking for, you know they were going to have a, sort of parties, and that sort of thing, [voices in background] social gatherings, where either parties, as I said, Christmas parties, you know to, nights to raise money and that kind of thing, and I said that I sang a little and danced a little, because of my mother's theat..., because of my theatrical background, and they gave me a trial once and then the rest is [laughing] history basically, and I became, well, quite popular, if it doesn't sound too much of a pat-on-the-back on my part, do you know what I mean but I became, a sort of, a personality actually on site, as it were, and it was: I remember a while ago, I can't remember the year it was, but we had a couple named, in the good old days, their name was 'Peter and Mavis Barrett', who actually used to come, Mr Barrett used to come and visit my home, as I said earlier on the other tapes, as a child, and, you know, and he used to knock the door and say 'How are you?' and 'Is she OK, blah, blah?' And incidentally, they had a retirement do: [squeaking noise in background] a retirement party, because they were now going to retire. I can't

remember where they were going, I can't remember the year that was again, but, it was quite successful, and I had, Peter and Mavis Barrett, actually I asked them to put all the chairs out in a sort of rows, like a theatre sort of thing, and I sat on the, they had the, had the stage and I said 'Well' and I requested that the Barretts should sit in the front row, as far as I can remember, you know,

[Talking together] Can I

and I can remember what happens to, and I can remember the act I performed that, and I don't remember that, very vividly: that was an Hawaiian, I did an Hawaiian act then.

Can you tell me why is this important to you? Why is it important to, for you to be known like that?

Because it's something that I would have liked, I, that is something, you know, that is something that I would have taken on as a profession, if I hadn't had cerebral palsy. Funny how fate is, isn't it? You know, I often asked my mother, I said, 'If I,' I says 'Do you think if had have been able-bodied, do you think I might have made it successfully-wise?' She said, 'Oh yes,' she said, 'I would have introduced you to the Variety Club, and you could have taken up with them.' I said 'Well I'm not going,' I said, 'well if that was the case, I certainly wouldn't have you sitting on the panel,' because my mother also, at some point in her career, was also a judge, who was judging up-and-coming artistes, you know.

So how does it make you feel, Pauline, that you haven't been able to fulfil your ambitions?

As regards to it being, I have to disagree.

Mm hm.

Oh yes, I am quite satisfied with what I've done, as regarding to, as regard to performing an artiste, because I've given pleasure to other people with cerebral palsy, and I, to my physical, ability, as it were, I've been able to bring up, I was able to bring normal variety acts within ... not world, I wouldn't have but it's a sort of environment: that's the word I wanted: environment, because ninety-nine per cent of the time people with cerebral palsy or any other special needs person, is taken to pantomimes, on outings to pantomimes and to the theatre: and nobody actually isn't ... you know, I mean [??] I have heard of [banging noise and voices in background] acting, actors who are prepared to act in mime, theatres with people with downs syndrome and things like that: special needs people in that regard; but as, as far as I know, there's never been anyone [laughing] quite like me before: within, which I'm proud to say, but again, I try to show a little modesty, and the sort of, there's an old theatrical saying 'Be nice to know on the way up because you'll never, you'll meet them again on the way down,' there's a theat, I'm also very interested in theatrical sayings and superstitions, which I also learnt off my mother: they were very, very interesting.

[Loud voices in background.] I was wondering if we could go back a bit to what your mother talked about? I was wondering if we could go back to some of the earlier times? But I do hear what you're saying about wanting to be known as not just a woman with cerebral palsy.

Oh no, no, no:

Yes.

and I think that if anyone were, you know, if you've got a talent, or you've got some sort of intellect, or, you know, you've got [??] a lot of people have desk jobs and things like that, who I, why not go into every walk of life, if you are physically able to, or you are mentally able to, and it's your own personal capabilities, to the fore, such as, why not a solicitor? Why not ... you know, why not go and do it? All sorts

of the world, things like the law, and as I say, a barris, not necessarily a barrister but a solicitor, you know, sort of, or perhaps, you know, [????] but if you're able to get a career, good luck to you, that's what I say.

Can we go back a bit then, to your early days again?

Yes.

I just wonder about your memories of just, of being at home when you were little.

What memories do you have?

As I said, as I said on the other tapes it's mainly to do with growing up and sort of, going to the, you know, going to the school, going to school, going to the hospital for this, for this examination, and that examination, to the Orthopaedic Hospital just to get, to collect my boots, when they'd been drilled a hole in the right boot, to accommodate my calliper.

Can you tell me a bit more about how you were treated and what you felt about it?

You mean by my parents?

I was thinking that time about the hospital, but whatever you feel.

Well, it's, that's rather vague. Oh obviously, I remember getting on the table, you know, getting on the bed and being examined and, you know, seeing how, how strong the foot was, you know, you, sort of, get you to lift up the foot and they sort of, get you to press against the hand: do you remember that? And... you know, and this, you know, take your shoes and socks right off, and sort of see how you walk in a general sense.

Did you have any periods when you had to spend time in hospital?

As a matter of fact, thank God no, [laughs] I'm very lucky, as I said, the last, the only long period, as I said on the previous tapes, is only when I was a baby. I did go into hospital to have my tonsils out, like a lot of children do. Oh, I also went into hospital... Apparently, when I was a child, they noticed, they, said how, I don't know how they noticed but, I did go into hospital to have some teeth out, because apparently there were some teeth growing on the one, more, more teeth on one side of my mouth, [traffic noise] than others, so they had to be removed, surgically, [talking together] so that was

Do you remember that, do you remember that time?

Yes as a matter of fact, I do, and I also remember going as I say, going to have my tonsils out. I do remember that. [Talking together] Yeah.

What was that like?

It's, you know, it's again vague-ish, but I can remember, certainly sitting upstairs and crying 'I want to go home' like most children do.

Do you remember how, your, how cerebral palsy was talked about in, either around your family, or by the doctors?

Oh you know what the doctors are like and I mean, as you can remember yourself, I mean they can say, you know, sort of, 'Ooh,' you know and sort of, 'she walks like this,' and sort of business, and then also, or, also they got this habit of looking at your shoes, aren't they, haven't they you know and I do know that I wear out my right slipper out more than my left, because obviously I walk on my right toe. Actually I've got, now I have to have hard skin removed from there now every time I go to the chiropodist, but it's not hurting in any, in that sense of the word, it's just that it just, they noticed that, this slipper, you know, do wear more and more than the right slipper: [laughs] but, you know, but that's life, isn't it? That's how, that's life, the

way things are, aren't they? You know, but as long as I can get on my feet and as long as I'm OK and thank God I walk unaided still, thank God.

And, when you were young, did your parents talk about you having Cerebral Palsy much? Or did other people talk about it?

You mean within the family?

Yes.

It was never, you know. In what capacity are you referring to? Such as I mean you're not talking about cerebral palsy, you know, every week, or every month, or every year, sort of thing: you know what I mean? But it's... you get more [??] by strangers in the street, or on the bus, do you know what I mean? 'Ah! there, there! Oh what a shame!' Oh, incidentally whilst we're crossing of my mind, you know, when, I don't know whether you've noticed this yourself but, when they say start talking about, I know this is on, on television and in the media: when they say well they're raising money [background noise] to raise money for special needs children or, or 'This child had got cerebral palsy,' they say, 'Oh what a shame.' It's all very twee-twee, isn't it? Tweet-wee: and I don't mean twee-twee, you know, with the birds. You know, it's all twee with these little, when you're children and [??] children today, and they still think about people, children with cereb, I mean the general things when they're raising money, and things like that, they talk about 'children with cerebral palsy'. They never even mention: and this, and I am getting on a bit on a soap box: from time to time you will find, as part of this interview, that I will get on, you know I will get on and off this soap box, over certain situations regarding people with cerebral palsy, in general. Now if you notice, that as I say, when you're a child, or, children even now, today, in this, the beginning of the Twenty-first Century which we are now in, they say 'Children with cerebral palsy. Ah well [????] we'll have this and we'll raise money for that' and he'll, you know and if they interview some parent who's got a child with cerebral palsy, it's 'Give them a present and giving [inaud] the kid, but they never seem to think this is a general, or this is a personal observation, on my part, that

I have noticed this as I've got older, and I do notice it still now as a middle-aged woman, and into early and now getting into an older situation, that adults with cerebral palsy are never ever mentioned at all, either in, in the news or in the media. Now, I find, you know, I find that very, somehow, somehow demeaning in some way. I don't know whether that is your perception of that, you know...

Could you tell me a bit more about that, how you feel about it?

Because I feel that, this generalisation once again, not me personally, but people, that people, but people with cerebral palsy who are adults, are never, never mentioned in the media.

And how does that make you feel?

Annoyed. Annoyed, you know what I mean? You hear the odd occasion, you know, when some gentleman in a wheelchair let's say, trying to cross the road, 'Oh, can I help you?' and then I've also had that myself, [laughs] and then I get sort of, you know, then I get, you know, [mimicking, drawing out the words,] 'Are you all right?' 'Yes thank you.' 'Are you sure?' and you got that sort of, and, and I am using this sort of tone of voice to illustrate the stranger in the street, who is actually saying to you 'Well can I help you? Are you all right?' and well, I don't know about you but I say, 'Yes thank you very much. I'm perfectly all right thank you,' but there are certain, of course, there are certain situations where you have to, hopefully though, grit your teeth and say, excuse me can you help me to do this, or that?' you know: but it's, but generally speaking you know, it's, you know, it's so, you know, with the general members of the public you know you get, "Oh dear, dear, diddums, waddums, pat on my head" syndrome.

Do you remember that when you were a child? Were you treated like that then?

The odd occasion. Very rare, because a child then you see.

What, how were you treated then, by other people?

Now?

No, when you were a child.

Well it was, "Ah, isn't she sweet?" or, I can remember my mother telling me there was one occasion, we were talking about, I dunno, [laughing] I can't remember what we were talking about, but she said that there was one woman, asked her directly. She says, 'Has Pauline got downs syndrome?' She didn't use the word 'downs syndrome'. 'Is she a Mongol?' And in those days, you know this was a, downs syndrome used to be known as down, 'mongolism'. It was an insult to the, and according to my mother, and I agreed with her, it's an insult to the Mongol race. 'Is she Mongol?' 'No she isn't!' 'Is she mentally, you know, deficient?' 'Is she mentally deficient?' 'No she is not!' you know and, 'No she isn't' you know, what I mean, that's, you know, I don't know whether, [??] your remembrance [??] a lot of that but it's so ... you know; when you know, when you clearly haven't got a, sillier, you haven't got any, well, you're a little bit slow in the hand-writing may be but I mean, and I... unfortunately I've remained that way all down the years, but what I mean is, you can't, you're saying, 'Well' you know 'she's got any [drags out the word] learning difficulties because [laughs] huh!

But what did you feel about sort of, somebody who was asking very directly, as apposed to the people who don't, just flannel round the subject?

It's... amusing at some point, in some places. I mean I had an incident only, had some a while ago and the incident was [laughs] a very unusual, very recently actually, when I was going to have my flat ... workmen were going to come in and put central heating in the property because my flat is an ordinary council property and it hasn't got central heating. Now at long last, Birmingham City Council are putting the central heating in a lot of properties and on the 6th of, yeah, 6th March last, two guys come in and they said, you know, to see where the radiators were going to go, and

they were answering this questionnaire, and that, and they got this, you know, 'Do you have a physical disability?' Well when it came to that and I said I'd got cerebral palsy, [laughing] [traffic noise] this chap, this is a very, and you can keep it on the tape because this is very amusing: extremely amusing, because this chap said, when I said I'd got cerebral palsy, 'Oh yes,' he says, 'I know someone like that.' I says, 'Oh yes?' And he says, 'Don't you have to,' [laughing] this is where the funny thing is, this is: 'Oh, oh you have to have a physic; you have to have a massage don't you?' And I looked at the other, I looked at the other older gentleman, like, sort of, 'Ooh, how do I answer that kind of thing?' As I turned round him I said, excuse me?' I think you're referring to physiotherapy. Massages are something quite, quite different,' and oh my God, [laughs] That was amusing, [talking together] in itself [laughs].

How did, how about when you were younger, and people, the people who knew you? OK, we'll leave your parents aside, but what family, friends, neighbours: how did they, [talking together] treat you?

I [inaud] well, they did say 'Good morning' of course and 'Good afternoon', in the usual, polite exchanges like that, but generally, it's nothing to do with them, sort of thing. If Mr and Mrs Johnson next door, or Mr and Mrs Johnson down the road, has got a daughter who's got cerebral palsy, it's nothing to do with us, is it?

So... it was quite a private neighbourhood. People didn't talk?

Oh yes there were always a lot of, I mean, yes, yes that's right. She did make some friends, later years when we moved to 900A Coventry Road, Pay Mills. There was a lady from the, around the corner who, who was teaching her German. Ursula.

What about you, [clears throat] what about your friends when you were young?

I was quite... was then known as a 'loner'. [Voices in background.] I don't know why it was but, as I said on the previous two tapes, you know, most children were a

little bit jealous of me in a way, which is very, very, sad and I don't ... you know. You've got this child with cerebral palsy in a school, who are catering for special needs children of all kinds, which are not only, a lot of people with cerebral palsy, you know, went to that school: but you had the odd person who was deaf and dumb, there was, I remember Jeff, Raymond Overton, who died some years ago who I knew, came here years later, but he went the same school and he was totally deaf and dumb, and got, so I mean to have, to be struck to, special need, with three, it's just, just that man alone, with three things wrong with you: you know, you're deaf, you're dumb: well you're dumb because you're deaf, and you have cerebral palsy. [Mechanical noise in background.] I mean that was very sad in itself.

So why do you think they were envious of you?

Because of Mum's ... theatrical things and you know, and every time she picked me up she was always glamorous, even when she wasn't, you know, it was not in her costumes now I'm talking about. You know I'm talking about being dressed up in an outfit, let's say, with a coat and shoes to match and a handbag to match, or something like that or, you know what I mean?

Yes, so how did you feel, about the way they treated you, with not having friends?

It didn't bother me really, I mean it didn't really bother; I had a few, a couple of friends:

[Talking together] Could

but not to say, not say, they say, you know, 'We're real bosom pals, we'll stay together all those years.' 'Oh, remember when we were at school?' that kind of situation.

[Talking together] So what's

Once you'd left school, you know, like a lot of people do, you know, you leave school and you lose contact with each other, you go your separate ways: you lead your separate lives, that kind of thing.

But, can you just go back to then.

[End of Track 4]

Track 5 [Tape 3 Side B]

*I'm wondering what other kind of things you enjoyed doing when you were young.
What did you play with? What did you?*

Well obviously I played with a load of beautiful dolls, [laughs] and my beautiful twin-dolls pram and my teddies and things like that, because I had, oh that was at home: and my Triang, the, and I had a little desk and easel made by Triang. That's a, that was a brand name, you know. Do you remember the Triang toys? You do: and, you know, I said 'Ooh, you, this is remarkable,' I had a, so many times [inaud] and she used to buy these beautiful, beautiful toys, in a shop in town somewhere, which is now closed by the way. Of course I had the odd silly little thing, say from Woolworths in those days, do you remember? That, they weren't quite, quite [?] and my beautiful rocking-horse, which I'm now, you know, photographed. I must bring you my pictures next time, by the way, and show you, and

And reading, did you, when did you learn to read?

Ooh I can't remember, but I do, can, I can, I do remember reading. I had my first watch: Mum said 'You can have a real watch,' she says 'you can learn to tell the time properly,' and I had my real first watch at the age of eleven. I had it for my eleventh birthday, and I've got photographs of me showing it off, by a, standing by, I think it's by the fireplace, actually leaning over like this, you know, and showing it off. I was actually eleven then.

Let's talk a bit more about school and, your memories of that. Can you remember your first day at school?

[Banging sound.] Oh no, I can't! No don't ask me that because that's a complete blank. I don't actually remember my days at school. There are again snatches that I remember. I remember, going by this [??] you know, and reaching for a pin.
[Laughs.] I don't know, I don't remember doing [??] that, but it was, I, you know, I

didn't go to school 'til I was six you see and because when we were living with my grandfather in Wiley Road, we didn't go, as I say I didn't go, I didn't get a school place, until we moved to 151 Grange Road, Small Heath because the school that was available and more convenient that mum wanted, my parents wanted me to go to, was round a couple of corners which was in Little Green Lane, Small Heath.

Was it a special school?

Yes... It was a PH [Physically Handicapped] school, Little Green Lane. Victoria, you know, Victoria School for the Physically Handicapped, in Small Heath.

And what was it like? Can you, was it, were there many people there?

Yes, there were quite a lot, and as I say, I do remember Mr, as I've mentioned it before, Mr Perrett who was the head, the main head, was the headmaster of the school, of that particular school. Very as I said, a very nice man: a very, very, nice man. You know: very nice.

Can you remember any particular memories of?

Yeah well there was, my, as I say, Mum used to buy as I say, beautiful, as I said before, beautiful, beautiful displays for Harvest Festivals and, that we used to have at school, you know.

Can you tell me about a typical school day there? Can you remember how it went?

That's, well I went, I mean obvious we used to go to the playing fields a lot. I mean it's, [some background noise] picked up by another special bus from West Midlands Travel, and we used to pile in there and we'd go to this special: I can't remember where it was, don't ask me where it was because I don't really know, I don't even know where that was, they was playing fields, where a lot of children played, you know: rounders and all that sort of thing, you know what I mean and football and that

kind of thing, in playing fields. It was, I mean it was used quite for, extensively by other schools I know, that I know of: do you know what I mean?

But were, what was, what were you good at school? What did you enjoy doing?

At the school? Well I was very [engine noise in background] ... I like, I liked Science. I, we all had a little bit of [??], a little bit of that and not really, not in a serious... like, you know. You cut up a little bit of, you know ... tadpoles or what was it? On one occasion we, sort of, cut up a, I think it was a frog. [Laughs]. Can you believe? Oh yes, I can remember that most vividly, and

Was that in your junior school?

[Voice in background] No this was when I was a little bit higher up: you know. I can't think of anything, I can't remember quite a lot about my very early years at school: [talking together: inaudible.]

Can you remember good moments or the bad moments?

Oh yes, as I told you, I was quite worried, quite extensively, by as I say, I mentioned in the other tapes, you know, when we were both taken in front of Mr Perrett and sort of, you know; for her terrible scarring of her scratching me all down the one arm.

This was another child was it?

Yes, that's right.

Can you remember how it started or, [talking together] anything about it?

[Laughing] No I can't. No, no, it was just, she was picking at, I don't, I can't remember those things, you know: it's all, it's, I don't know what it is. My, the favourite name for me at the time was 'Johnson's Wax Polish'. [Laughs.] Oh it's

ridiculous, it's you know, as silly, how silly it sounds now, doesn't it? [Voice in background] You know, [calls] 'Johnson's Wax Polish' and things like that.' How ridiculous, you know... you laugh at it now. [Laughs].

Do you remember, do you have any memories of school trips or outings?

Oh many. As I said... the outings to the playing fields. Several come to mind down the years, of course, and the Christmas parties at the school, you know what I mean and, oh going to a specific [laughing] sort of, like something like Trentham Gardens, something like that you know what I mean? But generally speaking, I can't quite, don't ask me to rattle off, sort of, 'I went here, I went there with the school' because I can't quite remember.

Did you ever go to the sea?

Yes. When my aunt Vicky, my mother's sister, lived in Essex. [Voices in background.] I can't remember where it was now, but it was somewhere in Essex, and eight maybe? Seven, eight? Maybe six, maybe seven or eight. I actually have a picture of, again, I have a photograph, wearing a bathing costume and playing in the sand with a bucket and spade like most children are.

Do you remember enjoying it, or?

Oh yes, very much so. Oh yes: oh yes. I mean my life actually is very rarely, it's very well-documented in photographs. [Laughs.] Anyone wants a, a sort of a photographic archives, you could, you know, you could sort of, you know, follow me from birth to the present day. [Laughs].

What about your secondary school, did you stay on at that school right through secondary years, or not?

I didn't go to secondary school in the sense of the word. I stayed, as I said I stayed at Victoria School in Little Green Lane until I was, until they were going to pull it down, you see: and this is, I'm now about, thirteen to fourteen now: and so they were gonna be pulled down. That particular school was gonna be pulled down, it was going to be demolished, so... they transferred me to a school in Sheldon; and I remained in, I went to this other school in Sheldon, I can't remember what it was, I can't remember the name of that school now, but I do know it was in Sheldon, and I remained there from thirteen 'til I left school at sixteen.

*Can you remember the, any decisions that were made about going to that school?
Any talk about it?*

Yes, well they, they said 'Well it's gonna be closed down, we've got to find another school,' obviously, and quite a few of us were transferred to that school.

And were there other children there?

Yes. Oh yes they, yes, there were obviously other children there.

And what are your memories of that school and being there?

Well there was another gentleman who was the headmaster, but I can't remember the man's name. I can see him now, funnily enough. He had darkish hair, pleasant features, but I can't remember his name. No, I can't. And I can't remember the teachers from that year, that school either, because that's a blank to me now too.

What did you like about that school?

Well, that school ... were on a complex: it was a special site in Sheldon was, they were going to build three schools, there was the, one for the deaf, one for the blind and one for the physically disabled. Actually I do remember, making friends with another class. My class made another friends with another class who came from the

deaf school, and we visited each other, you know what I mean? [bangs the table or ever to make her point] They visited us and we visited them etc etc.

At school, or at home?

Well obviously what I'm talking about, the whole class went to their school, and their class came to ours, and it was only like, this big complex, it was only like going from, walking, say, a couple of, [??] from, from across the yard there, and around, and round there, the corner, sort of thing, you know what I mean?

Mm. And, you say you enjoyed the science there: cutting up the frogs. [Pauline laughs.] What else do you remember?

Yes, that's right. Oh when Mum used to go out, I can't remember how I... because I done it from Dad's works. Now Dad used to work at the Brewery still then: this is ... because Dad was redundant in '66, '67, something like that? No, no, no, no, that's right; that's right, yes, he became redundant in 1966, just after I left school, and then he became a patrol-man for, I said it was, Telewest: I mean, the Post Offices as it was then: an he used to work in Anthony Road and Ford, Anthony Road and Fordrough [?] Lane, that's where he used to work: you know because, you know, he remained a patrol-man for the Post Office, which later became, you know, [talking together: inaudible.]

What was it he brought into school then? Or you brought in?

Well he brought a white coat [laughs] and I was older now, and I loved that white coat, because I used to go in, I'd walk along with him like a proper, you know, like a proper ... science bloody ... [laughs: inaudible.] It was a white one you know, [inaud] you don't know what, like what they do, you know. It was more like a doctor's coat [laughing] rather than anything. [Laughs] When I think about it now: amusing. It's strange, the things you like to do when you're young as I say.

What about exams? Did you take any exams at school?

No. No. It wasn't that kind of school.

Were you not allowed to, or...?

No it wasn't, it just never was, it was never suggested, it was never... Don't forget this is now ... where are we? '63, '64, '65. Now I left school in 1965: I think it was the Easter of '65, so I left in 1965.

Would you have liked to have taken exams, Pauline?

I don't, funnily enough, I don't think that I'd, no, I don't think I would be, I don't think I would have been that, that clever in that sense of the word. I was quite, quite happy: I was quite happy, to, I'd already had, by that age, I was quite happy to entertain people. I was entertaining people on and off, as it were at school, you know, because that was my main ambition; to go on the stage, and in my own ... as it were, circle, in my own circle, I achieved what I wanted to achieve, and I'm still quite happy with what I've done in, over the years, as an entertainer. I'm quite, quite happy with that, and I'm quite, quite contented. I did what I wanted to do, I succeeded in what I wanted to do, and I got [laughing] notoriety over it, funnily enough, by being an artist in this building by, this person and that person, I've got my own little fan club, believe you me! But you know I am quite contented with what, what I achieved and I'm quite, I'm quite happy with the way things turned out; as regards to that: very happy.

Did you spend time, when you were younger, practising, rehearsing,

[Knocking sound.] Funnily enough,

learning things?

Pardon.

Learning things?

Yes.

What, can you tell me a bit more about that?

In what regard?

Well you said that you enjoyed entertaining people, and I was just wondering what kind of, what you kind of, did to prepare for that?

Oh, learning new songs, learning new routines, that sort of thing, and preparing my own ... dance choreography.

Did you go to any classes?

No. No. No, no. I didn't go to any dance classes in that sense: no, I did not! All I've learned I, as regards to a dance routine, and as a performer, I've learned off my mother; and I'm quite contented and I'm quite happy, the way things have turned out as regards to that.

So when [talking together] you were

I don't...

Go on.

I don't have any regrets, you know. I have a little regret maybe that I didn't, wasn't able to, literally follow in my mother's footsteps, as the saying goes, and get paid for what I do, but I'm definitely quite contented the way things turned out.

So you spent quite a lot of time with your mum when you were young.

Yes.

She was the main person around for you?

Yes, that's right, yes.

Mm. Were there any other kinds of things you did with her?

Well obviously we went on [background noise] a lot of outings, particularly from the, early '70s, from the 19, you know, 70s when we moved to Hay Mills, because there was a Boeings travel agent's right in the same road as us, so you know, I used to be, get picked up there on the coaches, and we'd gone, here there and everywhere, we've been to Rhyl, Wales, London, Windsor Castle and Scotland, by train, and I used to love going by train, and it was lovely, the, you know, those proper dining cars; I really did like those: really, really, really nice: and we went, you know, we went to Crich Tramway Museum: very , very interesting Crich Tramway Museum, near Derby, I think it is. We've been to ... there was Oxford, I've been to Oxford and I've been ferried around outside, she photographed me outside the School of Music. [Laughs].

What do you remember about, you know, what did you enjoy about these trips?

It was really nice and we were photographed for St, though funnily enough, that particular day St. Jude's were raising money and you know, they, one guy was dressed in a monkey suit and somebody dressed like a clown and, and with a drum and things and I've been photographed with them, you know: and we went to a, my mother, we went to a... military display, you know, somewhere, and I've got photographs with soldiers behind me, you know what I mean and, and airmen.

Was, did you, was this just with your mother, or was your father there too?

No. Me father did take me to the fair when I was a little girl, quite a lot, you know, and, I've photographs with my father, in his arms, funnily enough. As a little girl; photographs, you know, at the fair, so, and so, you know.

And was that unusual?

No, no, no he did, he enjoyed a lot to the fair: I will say that, you know, when he was younger, and I was a little girl: you know.

Was he affectionate at all to you?

Yes. He used to call me 'Flower'. That was his nick-name for me, 'Flower' or 'Bab' or 'Chick', you know what I mean, but ... he was, he wasn't a bad man, not really, he wasn't, no, when he was younger.

Did you enjoy being with him, going to the fair with him and things?

I did, yes: I did. Yeah I did, [background noise] yeah I did: and, and when he got his scooter: I mean obviously, I mean you know, he didn't, he didn't need his scooter to get to work, because he used the transportation, to go to work. I was supposed to go on his scooter, you know.

How old were you then?

A little bit older then, you know: maybe twelve, thirteen, something like that. Yeah!

And did you family ever have a car then, or...?

Oh no. No.

Just the scooter.

As I say he had a scooter to go to work.

What do you remember about any Christmases or festival times or special times at home?

With, with Dad you mean?

Pardon?

With Dad you mean?

In general, at home with your mum and dad, or?

Well obviously mum was working on Christmas Day quite a lot, so she had to do dinner the night before, so, how she managed to do all that sort of thing I don't know, it's, you know, she'd say, 'All my presents are wrapped up,' year after year after year: dinners were cooked and, and she used to go, [hiccoughs] oh excuse me, she used to go to the, she used to go the artists' club, and then she used to go to these parties or, ... you know, parties at working men's clubs, to work, you know, to use, to everyone, to perform.

So when did you celebrate your Christmas then, if she was out?

Well there, she used to give me my presents in the morning, then go off, later.

And did you, what were your feelings about her often being away and out and things?

Ooh, ah you mean, do I object to her doing that? I mean there was several people tried to suggest that I was neglected in some way but which is absolutely ridiculous, which is totally absurd. I'm not, I wasn't rejected by my mother at all. Oh no, no, no: [talking together] definitely,

But do you remember what...

quite the opposite, quite the opposite actually. Oh no: quite the opposite.

What about the time when you were about to leave school, did you have any advice, or...?

Yeah well I mean I went as I say on that assessment course.

Could you tell me a bit more about that?

About this assessment course? Well... they gave you this to try to do and that to try to do, and I couldn't do anything like that.

Well what kind of things were they asking, you or?

Piece-work kind of jobs and, you know, as I told you before, about that black telephone. They asked me to take it completely apart and put it together again. I took it apart, but I couldn't put it together again: no way could I do that, and it went from there, and it went on like that for the remainder of the course.

What other kind of things were you asked to do?

You know ... oh I can't remember, it's only that that sticks out in my mind.

How long were you there, can you remember?

Two weeks.

[End of Track 5]

Track 6 [Tape 4 Side A]

You were telling me about the assessment course you were on.

Oh yes, well, the assessment course weekend, it was only there for two weeks, as I said, and I went into this office. I think it was about three days before we were due to go home and [voices in background] there was a panel of experts, lined up on this table, and there I am sitting like this, you know, and her said, [speaking in 'posh' voice] 'We have your notes here. We understand that we have tried to see if you can do this, that or the other.' You know, because I can't even remember what it was, not even half of it [????]. 'And unfortunately we can only ascertain... [laughs] that you are unable to work.'

Is that what they said to you?

Yes. 'We unfortunately will have to declare you, we will have to unfortunately declare you,' what's the word, oh damn! The actual word they used: 'unemployable', that's the word I wanted. Unemployable! So this in now, maybe, '64, 1964 this took place, I remember that most vividly, 1964.

How did you feel about that?

Oh, I felt, 'Oh, I see,' so I said, 'Yes, I see: yes I understand,' I said, 'Yes, yes, that's OK.' and, and then a couple of days later I came home. So, from then on I, as I said, put my energies, my main energies at the time, for twenty-five, nearly twenty-five years, nearly, you know, twenty-five years as an entertainer for other people with cerebral palsy: and I've loved it ever since, and I al, and I loved it. It was something I was capable of doing and I ... I have no regrets, doing it. It's something I wanted to do, and that is deep, deep within me. It's nothing to do with, I was, it's nothing to do with pushy parents, nothing like that, just because my mother was in show business, 'Oh let's try and teach her to do this, and, you know, and try and make her do that.' It wasn't that at all. As I said before, it was mainly, she started it off, for sort of,

entertainment to get your, me limbs going' you know, to help me to, you know, dance, and use my hands more, and to speak properly and to ... project my voice, you know, and I think I've been, I'm very, very, happy, because I did all that. I have no regrets whatsoever. I gave a lot of pleasure, which I hope I, a lot of people can remember me for it, and I, you know, I consciously decided to pack it up after I appeared at the Aldridge Little Theatre as the Snow Queen, back in 1990. That was what's known as "a Swan Song" by the way, but I... it's funny, isn't it how you, you know, concentrate on the abilities that you are capable of doing? And I encourage that, most sincerely. Now when I ... went to Prospect Hall and I was in, they taught me to, you know, to, they were going to teach me to live totally independently, I am very glad I managed to master that, because it's the most precious, wonderful thing that you know, you can ever have, and you, when you have a visible disability, you appreciate your independence more, I feel. I can only speak of that personally. Your independence is much more, you're more aware of your independence: you're more aware... this is my own personal, I am more aware of it, and I'm more conscious of that, you know. Never ever, take, and as I say, people who are able-bodied and, you know, get up every day, go to work, bring the ch, you know, go to work, take the children to school, do this, do that, bring the children up: you know, never, you know, because when you either become struck down with an illness, this is generalisation once again, if you're struck down like strokes and things like that, they find themselves physically impaired, and they find they have to go into something like a nursing home, and their independence suddenly snapped away from you, you know, they soon, it's a terrible, a terrible shock to them, because you can be doing, all down the years and then suddenly they have a stroke: things like that, you know what I mean?

Tell me about you friends and friendships down the years. What about when you were young, in adolescence, did you have special friends, or?

[Laughing] Oh yes.

Can you tell me about it?

Yes. Friends, I made friends with Susie Bucknall who was, is still here.

Sorry could you...

Who comes at this building now. I'm just seven days' older than her. We're the same age, [talking together: inaudible.]

And where did you meet her?

At school, funny enough. She was in the same class as me at one stage, and then when I came here, after I'd left school and she came here too, 'Oh hello, why are' you know, as you usually do, as most people do, you know. 'Oh! Oh, you know, fancy meeting into you,' that kind of thing, you know what I mean?

So you've had, you've known her for quite a long time?

Oh, yes, since we were girls, and we're the same age, and there's seven days between us.

What about...?

I'm seven days older than her.

What about relationships with people of the opposite sex?

[Laughs] Oh now! Now, you'll need a couple of more tapes for going into those sort of things, lovey: believe you me, so, [talking together] you're suggesting

Tell me about when you were a youngster. What boyfriends did you have then?

As I said, I started off with Geoffrey Britton at, at the age of fourteen, and he was fifteen,

[Talking together] And where did you?

and that was at school.

And what did you?

We became friends and you know, we used to have a quiet kiss and a cuddle in a store room of kind, you know what I mean? But it wasn't that serious. So, that is just, I mean, a little instance which you can be mentioned and just dismissed.

Did you go out with him, at all?

No, he, no, no, no, no, very I mean, very strict parents. Here we go about, about over-protection parents. You know, here we go again on the soap box. Now

Tell me a bit more about other friends you've had.

[inaud]

You said you had lots to tell me about that.

Yes, well, I had ... several friends, but I can't remember them from sixteen to eighteen, but from eighteen on, onwards, I can remember some. Now, there was, you know, there was several young men which I can't remember the names of: but, [laughs] you know, which are, you know, but I, when I was eighteen I was, had a crush [laughing] on an older, a man who was older than me, who's dad came here. Dennis, now he was older than me, a couple of years, two years older than me. I didn't know that at the time: then I only learned that later: and, I had this crush on him: and, terrible crush it was, oh, my God what a terrible crush it was, my Christ

Almighty. How, and nothing developed from there until later, 'til much later, until I, 'til early 70's.

But you'd known him from an earlier, from quite a lot earlier?

'Til as I say from '68 onwards. And... he says, 'You love me, don't you?' And I said, 'Oh yeah, I do.' And then he started visiting me at my home, and yeah, and yeah, and then when I moved, then in the '90, in the early 90's [laughing] when I moved to this half-way place, he was only, he was not so far away from me and I bumped into him again in a club, funnily enough. I'm talking about in a club of 'The Outsiders' at the time, and he joined up as well, and it started on, then it started up again, for a short while, and then it petered out again. As I say, there's been quite a few. Names I can, there's been Robert, Robert Hawkit, there's been ... as I say, there's been Dennis, Geoffrey: who else? There's [??] many years ago: two David's funnily enough. But this is, it's like business diaries, you know: backwards and [laughing] forwards-ing, you know what I mean?

Were they people you met here, at the centre, or...?

Some, some were and some in, in this outside of thingies and [background noise] ... yes. [Talking together] I mean,

Was there anybody very important amongst them?

Not, not until later. Not until much, much, later. ... No.

Do you want to talk about that?

Well ... well, when I became independent, I did ... This is where the eyebrows begin to raise: possibly, but then I hope not: from the some, I'm talking about the people who are listening to this. I mean don't forget this is the Twenty-first Century for

God's sake. However, [voice in background] I did have a couple, a few escorts [Laughs].

Tell me about that. How did you...?

This is now getting into the spicy bits, now. They're much more for, a bit more, a bit more spice, so, pin your ears back and don't be so, you know. Anyway, I decided to, I had a bit of money after Dad died, you see, and with Mum ... We're having to go into the ... early 90's now: we've drifted, we've gone back, but we've gone forward, we've gone much, much, forward now. I, when my mother died, she left me a bit of money obviously, and Dad was still alive, and I was a bit lonely like a lot of people are. I put my name in the, I saw this advertised in a paper: 'Escort', in an escort agency, or in, or in I knew about [inaud] I wanted to meet a man: not necessarily to pay for it, [laughing] as it were, but a sort of ... and when I went to The Outsiders, when I met, when I joined The Outsiders as it was then, you could put down your name down and age and you know, likes and dislikes generally, and your hopes and needs. It said, then I put down, "Friendships, with a possible view to meeting a gentleman friend." So, but I never met anyone there who was that special to me, so we, you know, just skipped that sort of thing, so I'm looking in the Evening Mail, so I decided to answer a couple of lonely hearts in the 'Lonely Hearts' column section: and I met a couple, I met quite a few men, quite honestly: and when I answered, it cost me the earth, quite a lot, I mean these 098 numbers, you know, and these, I ring these 08, 0, 0908 numbers, you know? Very expensive. In the Evening Mail, they're still there, I mean you can see them in any newspaper if you look, and there's so many of these, some popular ones on the internet as you well know, but of course, I ain't got the facilities for the internet, and I answered a few ads. and when ... I, to, well generally when I usually leave a little message for the person, I used to say, "Well, my name's Pauline, I'm five foot, five foot one, light brown hair, blue eyes and I am, what, whatever age I was at the time, you know: I'm mid-fifties etc., etc., I answered your ad etc., etc., and I have slight cerebral palsy." A couple of men did ring me back, and decided to meet me, but nothing really came of it. So I thought 'Well, blow it, I'll put an ad in myself.' Yes, I did! I've advertised myself in the Evening Mail.

Again, it cost the earth, again, you know, you leave a message, 'I am Pauline,' no, 'I'm Pauline, my name's Pauline, I'm...' [inaud] When you first read the newspaper, it's quite free to dial a certain number and you put your message that you want to be printed in the newspaper. I can remember one ad I put in, which was, "Mature lady of fifty, early fifties, with slight cerebral palsy seeks gentleman of similar age group for friendship and more," or words to that effect. And then I get the paper and see if it's in the paper, you know, see if they've printed my ad in properly, and just wait, and then, and then you also have, you've got, also got the printed, what number to dial, to get your messages back: so then, the number to get these messages back, and they've got several numbers so I was ringing them up and then they're leaving their contact numbers, so I rang the contact numbers and said, 'Hello, thank you for answering my ad. Yes, I got your message,' or words to that effect, and then you started to talk to a certain lot of men, you know, and, then I said, 'Oh, this is a,' I remember one particular man said to me, 'I was very interested to know your ad [inaud] said you've got cerebral palsy: what is it?' And then of course, you've to get them you know as it is: what is it, and you have to give them a slight lecture of how it affects you personally, a general perception about people in general with cerebral palsy, you give them a quick lecture on cerebral palsy, which is really ridiculous, really, but anyway; he agreed, there were a couple of them did agree to meet me in town and in pubs, you know. There was one occasion I remember, I agreed to meet, there was quite a few in Square Peg, in the city centre: so I'm sitting there in the Square Peg waiting for Mr X and then, I told him obviously what I was wearing, this is how, the usual format, you know, 'I'm wearing this colour coat,' do you know what I mean, 'I've got this colour glasses on,' and, you know what I mean? And there was one young man spotted me. I was sitting there while drinking a drink: it was pop actually, and he says, he walks up to me and he says, 'Are you Pauline?' I says, 'Are you Joe Bloggs?' you know, I can't remember the name so [??]. 'Are you Joe?' meaning Joe Bloggs. I said 'Are you Joe?' 'Oh yes.' I said, 'Oh yes, yes: hello. Would you like to sit down?' 'No, I'm gonna shoot off.' In other words, 'I've walked up to yer, I can see what you're like, now I don't like particularly what I see, so, you, so I'm gonna, so I'm shooting off.' With that, I just got up, finished my drink and I walked off. You know, you do get that sort of ... unfortunately, though it is. And a couple of men have tried it on,

more than once, [laughing] you know, you know. Some of them successful, some of them have been successful, so I am not, [laughs] I assure you I am not virgo intacta. [Laughs] I might as well say it as think it, because you want a ... true record of people with cerebral palsy in general, don't you?

Did you have any lasting, or

Yes!

...important relationships?

As a matter of fact one of my... [laughs] escorts, as it were: [sound of hooter in background] I met Tony ... it was the summer... It was August of 1996, I remember. I met him in the church in the Bull Ring on a Saturday afternoon, lunchtime, it was about twelve o'clock, and the church was open, he walks up the aisle, because in that church you can go in and just sit and sit quietly if you want to, [voice in background] and, in, you've got on the side of the church there's a sort of church hall, where was, that particular day, was having a garden fete, or was having some sort of jumble sale maybe, or having some kind, we went in there, he bought me some cakes, [voice in background: traffic noise] and he escorted me to a function that was being run by the nuns. I gave him £50 that day so that, you know the, because funnily enough, he said to me that, this one: I didn't know, he was Gee, again he was just, this was Mrs Joe Bloggs having a go, [inaud] he didn't know, do you know what I mean, so he said 'Oh, oh' this is true [??], 'oh' he says 'you can have me for ten pound an hour.' I gave him, as I say, I gave him ten, twenty, thirty: it was five hours, at, that's in £10 an hour, that's £50 for five hours, and he escorted me to a garden party run by the treasurer of the [??] and then I discreetly slipped him the, an envelope of money at the door, [voices in background] after he left: and then I said, 'Well thank you for doing [??],' he said, he said, 'Thank you for doing that for me,' and I says, 'I might be requiring another outing sometime, is that all right by you?' 'Yeah.' he said, so! Anyway we've been to this other function. It's not a question of, 'Excuse me do you [inaud] ?, ' you know. I didn't quite exactly ask "Do you provide personal services?"

He said 'If you wanted,' because [laughs] you want complete, because you want completely, you want me to be quite frank, and speak in the language, you know, about it, because this is me, and this is not.... I don't speak crudely, though, you'll be perfectly OK by that, but, you know? And I said, 'Well, I'd like to see you again, if I may,' and he says, 'Yeah, OK.' So another time I rang him up... to take me somewhere, and we got talking and you know, and he says he liked me and I said I liked his company, and, to be honest with you, one thing led to another and a proper affair grew up, and it lasted for eighteen months, because apparently, he decided not to, he says, 'I'm not getting any,' he's told me he says, 'I'm not gonna ...' What does he say? 'As you can [inaud] escorting other ladies while escorting me,' you know. 'I don't mind obviously, you know, if what he wanted to do.' He says, 'No.' He says 'No no, I'm not getting any feedback from it so I've given it up, but I still want to see you.' [Voice in background.] So it sort of stopped then, kind of, it, when I say 'it stopped then', I mean it started as a proper relationship and he took me, he took me out. I mean I stopped paying him, and he started taking me out as a girlfriend, and [??] as I say the relationship from then on lasted for eighteen months, you know. Yes, and then he's rung me up one day and says, 'I don't want to see me any more, and I'm leaving, going to London to start another job,' so I said, 'OK then, fair enough.' And that was the end of that! And then I got somebody else, another somebody, another gentleman, and then I answered a couple more ads in the newspaper, put me ad in again, to no avail, and yet I met this other gentleman, on-and-off, who I'm now going to see today, funny enough, who, [laughs] that was a laugh in itself. I mean, apparently he had a thing for me without me knowing, I mean, when Mummy used to come here when it was a variety club and he used to say, 'How long,' you know, 'How's Pauline?' Well she used to say, 'Well, why don't you go out, go up to [voice in background] her and ask her?' They said, 'Well just walk up to her and say, 'Hello Pauline, how are you?'' and then we had to go to this special function, funny enough, this was in there too, at the...

[End of Track 6]

Track 7 [Tape 4 Side B]

Yes, as I said, George escorted me round the Convention Centre, and that was that! Then a couple of weeks later [inaud] came up to me and he said, 'You're a member of The Outsiders, aren't you?' I says, 'Yeah, that's right.' He says, 'Well I suggested that George might want to join the club. Is it all right if you could have a word with him about it?' This is now in the early 90's, this is now '92; early in the, that's right: early '93. I says, 'Oh yes, by all means, I'll have a word with him when I can spare the time.' Well, when we went to that convention centre I said to him, 'George, would you like to come in for some coffee?' meaning, you know, and I'll talk to him then, when and I got in the one, in the same vehicle so we were all being dropped off and he dropped off and I says, 'Would you like to come back to mine and I'll take the opportunity and talk a bit about it now?' You know he says, 'Oh no, I'm sorry, I ain't got me bus pass with me so, you know, I'll have to leave it at some till time,' I says 'OK then, we'll leave it to some other time.' Anyway, to cut the story short, this other day came, and there, it was, I think it was the following Tuesday, he came back, and he came to visit me from Leighton Projects he used to work at, which is near me, and, and I gave him a cup of, you know, a cup of tea and a sandwich, and I started talking about The Outsiders, 'til suddenly out the blue he says, 'I don't want the Outsiders, I want you,' and what a smack in the eye that, you know, I was gob-smacked by, you know, is the phrase, I was completely gob-smacked when he said that. I said, 'What?' He said, 'I don't want The Outsiders, I want you.' You know, and, 'Oh!' you know [??] and then he says, 'Can I kiss you, and again?' and then it started, and then it started from there. Then he spent the first Christmas, Christmas '93 he spent it, he spent it, he spent Christmas with me: you know.

Is he still with you?

He... yes. We've had problems in the past and... we split up here and there and everywhere, and then we started it off again, then we split up again, until recently, we've gotten together yet again, and it looks as if it could be permanent now.

And how do you feel looking back? About your relationships and the way, you know, you've presented yourself as a ... advertised yourself. Does that, how do you feel about that?

Well that, it's my life and I'm quite happy the way things are, and I'm happy the way things have been in my life, basically, and now at the age of 56, coming up to 57, in my mid-fifties, early sixties, I think that I have, I feel that I have actually done something positive with my life. I feel that I've done something worthwhile, in a general sense, and, and I'm quite content with that.

OK.

[End of Track 7]

Track 8 [Tape 5 Side A]

It's the 26th of May, Friday 26 of May. My name is Anne Austin and I'm interviewing Pauline Johnson at Cerebral Palsy, Midlands. We have talked about quite a number of things, about your life, and I was wondering: you're not, you can't sum up a whole life because here you are, and you can't sum it up until it's finished, and it isn't, but I was wondering about so far? What are the, you know, so far in your life, what are the happiest times you've had, do you think?

Happiest times I've had? Well obviously, well obviously, you can't say 'the happiest times' because some times you can, [??] happiness here, there and everywhere and then suddenly along the way you know, you come up a bit of sadness, somebody lets you down and all the rest of it, or, you know, and then you lose people such as you know your family, and, you know, your parents particularly and

Can you tell me about any particular time you remember when you were very, very happy?

When I was very happy? I ... as a child you mean, perhaps, possibly?

Mm.

Well, I loved going out with Mother, here there and everywhere, all over the, any where you can think of. You know, all those places she took me to and, coach trips etc., and outings, all over the place like Derby and ... I think we went to... Stratford and all sorts of places like that and all those lovely, you know, lovely picturesque places that I have thousands of photographs of.

Do you feel

and the sea-side of course.

Mm. Do you remember being happy there?

Yes, and I did enjoy, extremely, very much that week, that holiday I had with me mother at the Cox's home in Brumley in Lincolnshire. That was a really, really nice holiday. I really did, you know, [voice in background] as I said earlier in the tapes, you know, I was rather reluctant to come home at the end of it, and it was rather, really, really nice.

Can you tell me a bit more about that holiday?

Oh well, as I said, this Mr and Mrs Cox, I was put, were a member of a social club, as I understand, where ... and the owner of the club or, the secretary of the place, or one of those said, 'Look we're looking for theatrical digs for our, our, our guest artiste, as it were, and then they started to put a couple of their rooms in their house for theatrical artistes, which of course my mother was one, and when she used to work in Brumley in Lincolnshire, she used to stay with them, so obviously she, when she became friendly with them, as a, you know, she became friendly, she was talking about me, obviously, and then there was this, they must, I mean I assume obviously that they must have said, 'Oh well, you must come back for a holiday sometime,' something like that, 'and bring your daughter.' [Voices in background.] So as I said, in the summer of '61, at the age of coming up to twelve, she took me up to the Cox's home, where I spent a whole week with them, which, as I say, they were very, very, nice, a lovely family, you know, what I remember. Very nice family. Obviously... the Coxes are dead and you know, the, Josephine and Philip who were, and I mean Philip was two years older than me so, if I'm now fifty-six going on fifty-seven, he's going to be about fifty-nine himself, you know: fifty-nine [laughing] to nearly sixty, is Philip, and I know that Josephine was either, there's only two weeks, I think there was only a couple of weeks between Josephine and me, I remember, well I can't remember if I'm the oldest, or she's the oldest, all I know there was two weeks, two weeks between us:

[Talking together] Can you remem...?

so she's got, so she's got to be about, fifty-seven-ish.

[Talking together] Can you remember

You know obviously, I assume that they, they two got married, had children of their own, or, probably divorced now, like people do. [Laughs].

[Talking together] Can you remember

I know that their eldest daughter, I know that their eldest daughter, but I can't remember her name, that we went, as I said, we went to her wedding the following summertime, so that's ... '62, and because Mum was chosen as a witness, and I sat at the back of the lovely local registry office and watched them get married,

[Talking together: inaudible.]

and that was the following summer, the summer of '62. OK.

Can you tell me about some of the things that you did that you enjoyed? Things like, on that holiday: why was it so special?

Oh yes, I mean, walking their dogs, which was a lovely, walking two of their dogs. There was Tony who was a standard white poodle. I've actually I've been looking at those old photos again and, you know, beautiful, and Josephine, not Josephine, I'm talking about, I'm talking about Juliet, was one of the dogs, and I can't remember the other name, dog's name, and anyway, apparently, they, the Cox's also, I understand, did breed poodles at one point, and Joseph, the, Juliet the was, lost Romeo. Romeo died apparently and so they got another sort of husband, sort of thing, and that was Tony, a beautiful, beautiful, beautiful, dog, absolutely lovely. He was a standard white poodle, and

And you liked to play with them?

Oh yes, yes, I did, and, so they had a little, little family of their own which was Juliet and their, and Tony and their daughter. I've forgotten what they called that other, that other one, but I know it was one of theirs, they kept another one of the litter, so it was sort of, you know. Yes, [banging noise] you know.

The good times.

Oh yes, it was very nice, and we used to go to Bromley market. I used to go over to their market and have rummage round their market, you know, it was really, really, really, nice. [Voices in background.] And of course Philip also had some rabbits; they also were photographed nearby and, it was really, a really [banging noise] nice time. And there was another incident, [voices in background] ... and there was another nice time, you know, when we used to go on, go to the seaside and, you know, and on the train Oh, I loved that, and particularly eating in the dining cars, I loved that. You know you actually have a proper meal. A proper meal of soup, a proper meal of soup and a main course and a pudding in the dining car of a train. Those old trains, you know, if you can rememb, they were really nice, I mean, I took even, even [or Eve and, Eve and?] Ken and Eve [????] on those old trains, it was really, really nice, and the steam. A friend took me on a train, on the railways a few years ago. You know, with the, with the, I can't remember the name of it now, but you know where they, they do ... the old things about the old trains? Then, and that too was, that was a nice time too. [Voice in background.]

Yes, and again, looking back, what were the sad times? Were there sad times for you as well?

Sad times? Yes, well, obviously when I lost my, lost, you know, lost the dogs that I had, I mean when I lost Bob, you know, because it sort of had to be put down because Pepe had kidney failure and had to be put down to sleep.

How old were you then?

Oh, I don't know, I can't remember; I can't remember: but I had Bob for fifteen years, and I was, you know what I mean, so he had to be put to sleep due to having cancer of the jaw. I've still got pictures of them in the flat. Yes.

Was that while you were at home still, with your parents still?

Yes, that's right, yes, that's right, [traffic noise] yes, yes, yes.

I'm wondering how you feel about, you lived for quite a long time with your parents,

Oh yes, [talking together] which is a very,

and then...

that is a, yes, that's right, yes.

And you've been living independently?

Since I was at least forty-one.

Yes. And tell me, what are the differences and difficulties that you find, living on your own?

Getting decent staff to do what you want them to do. You know, cleaners, getting staff in to do the cleaning and changing, changing the curtains, it's very difficult; very, very, very, difficult. [Voices in background] Yeah, that is, that is [talking together] the main bug-bear. [laughs]

Are there any advantages for you to be as you are to be on your own? Have you, do you feel there's been any benefits?

Benefits? Well too live independently is great; I only wish I had done it years ago. Now we're going on to regrets here now, and

Tell me a bit more about that, why, you know you've lived, as it were, quite happily, why do you, tell me a bit more about, wanting to have been independent earlier.

Because now I, now that am older, and I have done it since ... since early forties, I feel that, to, to lose so much independence all those years, that you could have lived independently and didn't. Now you're coming on to the question of that, our parents, our generation: our parents in a general capacity, you know, they think 'Well, you know, keep them at home with us for as long as we possibly can, because they can't possibly, you know, [background noise and voices] you know, they couldn't possibly cope out in the community at all. Now I mean in our generation, those of us who were born, shortly after the Second World War ... you know what I mean, if you think back about the years before that, when you had special needs people going around, they always put them in what they used to call [with 'posh' accent] 'an institution'.

And what about you Pauline? You, you stayed at home with your parents: are you, for quite a long time and they obviously wanted to care for you. What do, did you feel, even at that time, when you were growing up I mean?

I didn't think much of it. I mean it didn't even occur to me, until later, until I was pushed, only you know, pushed into the deep end with my mother's illness. Through her secondary stroke, as it were, then I was pushed into the deep end, as it were. I was put, it was either... it was either, I mean to actually say, to have your father actually say to someone else, an official, such as Mrs Barton-Brand who was a senior, who is, the senior welfare officer in here, who I've known for many years, at that time, to have that said, in your own ear-shot, that is a little hurtful. I mean my father, you know, it, I mean, to I mean, to actually have the intelligence to understand and think 'Well,' you know, to have him say, 'Well, she's got to go into an home, for the simple reason she can't even make a cup of tea for herself,' and to have that said that into

your ear-shot is rather hurtful, and then you think about, you think about 'Yes, because you wouldn't give me the opportunity, to try.' I mean if you really consider this, I mean, there are so many things I could go on and on and on about this. I mean it's absolutely, I mean, I would like to take this opportunity, at this juncture, rather than tell you about my life is to look at my life as a woman who has cerebral palsy and who likes glamour, who enjoyed being glamorous, thanks to, for my mother's kind help, but because of her death, and, and speaking purely on my own thoughts on this, is simply that women with cerebral palsy, or any other physical disability who have the intelligence to know that they are women and they cannot, as soon as they lose that sort of, in me, it's as soon as I lost my mother, I lost my glamorous. You see I sort of,

You lost your?

I lost my glamour: due to the, [??????] so I can say it properly. I lost the ability to look the way I used to look in old pictures, when I look at myself in old photographs, I was quite a, very, attractive woman, like my mother, but because I can't put my earrings on, and, because, yes a simple thing like that: I can't put my jewellery on: earrings, necklaces, brooches, you name it, I can't put them on, simply because I have, I can't physically do that, and with, I mean I could also say a lot of things, I can, here I am again getting on a soap box; and I feel like this is my duty to get on a soap box, to make it crystally clear to whoever's listening to this, and I hope to God that there's some official out there listening to this, at some juncture, who will be more sensible, to say look 'Disabled women are women.' Now, if you're going onto Disability Living Allowance, now I can also, yes! I mean we can say that a low rate care as it is now, £16.50 per week on that, is absolutely scandalous. Now, and you don't, you really want to go in there: if certain people don't match what they consider the criteria. Now, someone like myself, who likes glamour, and wants to look nice, glamorous, go for a, have her hair done occasionally: now normal, if you look at a woman, you know, of my age, or even younger, if you look at a woman who likes to go, you know, to have their legs waxed, her underarms waxed, because that's the way women are, and that's how I would be if I had the capabilities or the... money to go

and do that. Now I don't see why, I cannot comprehend why, that, just because I have cerebral palsy, I can't get a medium-rate care, to allow me to do these things: it's sickening, it's absolutely ridiculous.

Can we just go back though, because what you were saying was, [voices in background] you wished you had been independent,

[Talking together] Much,

much earlier.

[Talking together] Oh yes, yes.

I mean do you feel that your parents, I don't know, held you back, [banging noise in background] or?

To a degree, yes.

Can you tell me about that?

[Banging noise] Well it's simply because, I mean before my mother died, even when I was at Prospect Hall she apologised, for keeping me, you know, holding me back in a lot of things. [Voices in background.]

I mean was it true, it was very hurtful I agree: was it true that you couldn't make a cup of tea?

Well I wasn't allowed to, was I?

Right, OK, yes.

This is when the parents are pushed in a situation, like a particular illness or they are, then they become elderly and then they become ill and one dies off, and then you're left with the other, the other one can't cope. Particularly if, [voice in background] in my case, the mother dies, and the father is left behind, you don't expect, he says, 'For God sake you can't expect,' you know, to take on the personal duties: and, you know, it's only natural. There are certain situations where people with cerebral palsy or someone in a similar situation, when they're affected like MS or whatever that may be, they have to go into these [background noise] situations because they are forced into a situation that they can't get out of.

But for yourself, I mean, was there ever any talk for instance about, well about the future for you, or about [Talking together] living on your own?

No, I mean, when I was younger, let's say, twenty:

Yes.

eighteen to twenty, or twenty to thirty, they all had this vision that if anything should happen to my mother, or even, in, if they, anything happening to them, [inaud] put, straight into something like, The Beeches, which is in Five-Ways. Now, I'm not saying that those sort of places, nursing homes or that calibre should not, they should be, shouldn't be closed down. If you think about those sort of places like [????], [someone laughing in background] to phase them in now, it's only now, in the beginning of the Twenty-first Century, that people are now trying to, sort of gradually put people into this sort of situation, which is independent living. If we get the younger, if you can get young people: I'm talking about young parents now, if you can get young parents with special needs children and say, 'Don't you, don't start living like your parents,' our, my, if I, if I was sitting there, I'd got a young couple who've got a baby with cerebral palsy in their arms, and I'm sitting here now, talking to them, I'd say, 'Well yes there are special institute schools, but when the time is right, you know, let the lead go, you know, relax the lead appropriately. Don't think, you know, 'I should keep this child with me until I'm sixty, and they're forty to fifty.

You know, they're in their forties and I'm sixty to seventy.' No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no. No, no, no. Get these young people to, with these special needs children, to be more sensible and [banging noise in background] you know, let the lead, you know, let them go to college and let them learn to live independently.' So someone with cerebral palsy, or whoever that may be, who is now eighteen to twenty, could be starting thinking of getting their own place now. You know what I mean? It's all wrong, and of course our generation and older generation: booh! You know? They, you know, they won't compute [complete/compete?] to society. [Pauline says this in a toff's accent] 'They can't,' they said the other day, as they said at that special conference I attended, 'I mean you can't possibly say, that for one moment that that is, that is, we're doing what we think is right for the child, or we're doing the right thing what we think is best, for our teenage son or daughter who has cerebral palsy.' Come on now, get real!

And for yourself, I mean if you could,

[Talking together] If I was a very young

could change something, no, if you could change something, what would it be? What would you want to change for yourself?

I wish to Christ, I do maintain, I do wish and I, yes it's one of my greatest regrets, the greatest mistake of my life, I regret, is that I didn't leave home when I was at least twenty. [There was a loud bang] Now that is a fact. Now I didn't leave home, I did, wasn't this situation until I was in my early forties; that is wrong! Totally wrong. That is awful! And that is you know, I can really get incensed in some of the things, that my parents did really, which they thought was their, they thought they were doing correctly, which in, in, in, when it really gets to the nitty-gritty and really down to earth; it wasn't. So, you know, I mean pray to God in twenty or forty years or, sixty years' time that sort of behaviour shouldn't, you know, will be extinct, as it were, you know: it won't exist. [Break in recording?] I only hope now that now we are in the Twenty-first Century, [traffic noise] the year 20, 2040 or 2060, that young people

with cerebral palsy are treated as equals and the education is better, the... doctors and the social workers or any special person or any other official that deals with cerebral palsy, particularly in the young, will, that independent living, will be just a common factor and part of normal school, create, create, you know, creatively, and learning to live independently, so young people [rustling noise] of sixteen to eighteen can live independently, so at the age of twenty, they can just go out and get whatever they need and living in a normal, independent life. That it's just one of those normal things that everybody else does and oh, to have somebody going in to independent living, just because they happen to have, be in a wheelchair, they've got cerebral palsy, or walk with a stick, or even, you know, with a walking frame, a walking aid of some description: as long as they can live independently, and everybody and we all learn to live as equals: that's all I'd like to say, on that subject.

I'm wondering, you were talking there about your hopes for other people and

Yes!

succeeding generations: what about your hopes for yourself?

[End of Track 8]

Track 9 [Tape 5 Side B]

Well, I always do the lottery and I wouldn't mind to, you know, live my old age in some, you know, some, some sort of, security, or not on, on state benefit for [laughing] the rest of my life, you know. That is why, one of the reasons I'm thinking of, seriously thinking, of writing my own mother's biography. I certainly would like, the, you know, the benefits of that, and that's the word: royalties: that's right, I couldn't think of it. I certainly would want the royalties to that, [laughs] and live my twilight years in sincere comfort and, and live, you know, live the life of Riley. [Laughs] [????] you know, cerebral palsy; and this person doing this and doing that for me and, 'That will be all!' [laughs] and you know, 'You may go now,' and all the rest. Oh yes, but the chances of that happening on the lottery is, like everybody else, you know, a million to one chance, but, you know, one can only dream, can't we?

And what are the things one might do, while you, while you're dreaming?

Oh yes, well, I'd get a couple of nice sophisticated gentlemen to escort me around the town and, you know, and spend a quarter on that, on escorts. [Laughs and laughs.]
Yes.

Do you ever think about travelling, Pauline? Have you been abroad?

I've been to Calais. Yes, that was a lovely day too. Oh yes, Calais! Oh, yes!

How old were you then?

I was ... I was mid, again mid-twenties, early thirties. We went on a day trip, and that was funny: all we could say was, 'Pour', all we could say was, this was in the shop, 'Pouvez Anglais si vous plait,' [laughing] that's all we could say, and that translated is, 'Can you speak English please?' You know, and there was a rather amusing, there was an amusing time when me mother wanted to use the ladies, you know: [laughs] when I think back to it now, it was rather funny because you know, she was actually

dying to go, and you can imagine [inaudible: laughing too much] and she was dying to go, and she, there was, get this, it's like a little, girl, school girl, and she said, 'Madam's, Madam's, Madam's.' [inaudible: laughing] legs [inaud] in that way. But we got by that day, that was amusing, that was amusing in itself: [laughing] 'Madam's, madam's, madam's.' you know, she was dying to go to the toilet. [Pauline laughing and banged three times on something.] [More laughing and banged again three times again.]

You can't stop laughing.

No, [still laughing] 'cos it was very funny,

Mm hm.

and I can picture it now you see. [Laughing] Really funny that was: yeah, yes it was really funny, you know: her saying, 'Madam's, madam's, madam's.' Oh dear, when I think about it now, it was a scream, it really was funny. Anyway it was a really nice day and we got by with 'Pouvez-vous Anglais si vous plait?' you know, and she bought me a, you know, bought me a souvenir of the Eiffel Tower, a can-can girl. It was really, really nice, and she was pointing to it, you know. Yeah. Yeah. And, oh yeah, we had to have our money exchanged into Francs at the time, you know, but it was a very nice time, but that was really, really, funny you know, 'Madam's, Madam's,' you know. [Laughs and laughs] Oh, yes, yes, that was really funny, yes.

Your mum has been quite influential hasn't she, in your life?

Yes, she was, but she had a good sense of humour, and a lot of people say I've inherited everything about her. Her sense of humour, her interest in the show, in, in, her talent, as I say her sense of humour, her talent [voice in background] and everything that I try very, very, hard to be like my mother, you know, even now. I mean, she's not here but, the way I talk to people, the way I conduct myself in a general sense, I like to think that I, she was a very nice woman. When I think of

myself, I think about her as a woman, thinking I am woman and I'm not just thinking not as my mother but as another woman, she was a very nice woman, and a very loving nature. Her only mistake that she made, [clears throat] was to keep me back, and as I say, they, as I will continue to maintain, if we can target young couples with special needs children to lay, to learn, for them to learn to relax the lead and not keep them back, so that when they are sixty, the parents, today's parents with special needs children, are sixty to seventy, they won't find another generation of people with cerebral palsy going to their forties and fifties into independent living, we want it straight from school [she bangs] college [she bangs] independent life: [she bangs] that's it!

And work?

And, yes and if they, yes, and if you are talented, and there's [clears throat] you've got some talent whether it's, be able to be a musician: maybe again, maybe a singer or painting, or anything that you wanted to do, that young person with cerebral palsy should be encouraged, not only by their parents, but every official person that they come into contacts: their teachers, their social workers; every official agency that they are dealing with: you know, you know, Scope and whatever it is, that, that young, young, young generation are encouraged to, as a natural, a natural process, first school [bangs] college [she bangs] independent life, [she bangs] normal life wherever it is possible. [Voices in background.] There are, in certain situations, where it may not be, appropriate for one individual not to do that. I'm not saying they should close completely; they should close places of, special need places. I'm not saying they should close them down completely and do away with them, caput: but wherever possible, wherever physically possible, that person with cerebral palsy should be encouraged, from birth, to school, then college, then independent life, in that order.

And you have talked, haven't you, about the idea of, of regression and coming back?

Oh yes, [talking together] I know

Now what would you like to come back as if you had the chance? How would you like to come back in a hundred years or seventy years?

Well if there is, and they've suggested they, you do die and then your soul goes on, is another subject all together. In that, you die and your soul is not completely gone, but you sort of, come back as another person. [Voices in background.] I would very much like to come back as a man. Yes, as a man, and be some sort of tycoon, business ... not necessarily entertainment again, but you never know, you know: but ... but some sort of, intelligent, very intelligent business tycoon, running my own business and, having, you know, children, or whatever and sort of leading a good life. Now whether that is a fact, I do not know. I mean I watched a programme once some months ago called Have you lived here before? and you know, they were personalities, TV personalities and sporting personalities, comedian and things who were regressed apparently and they were coming back: I mean, you know, they could be, they'd say that they'd come, one was a, said he was a seaman in ... on Nelson's ship, or something like that, you know, something like that, or it was

Why would you want to come back as a man? What's that to do with?

Well ... I don't know it's just, I just, fancied to come back as a man, not as another woman [laughing] because, you know the, you know, there's the problem of periods and, going through the menopause and all the rest of it, and then, childbirth and all the rest of it, a child, you know. [Voices in background] But, it would be interesting to know and of course, we all don't know that until we actually die do we? Mm yes, well that's it really in a nut-shell but, I would seriously think that, if I could get the, if I could get help to... you know, need some help with, a person, you know, someone to type it out, I could do something like this, to do Mum's biography on tape, then somebody else would, you know, put in an advertisement to find somebody to, type it out and find a publisher and all the rest of it, you know:

Mm, mm.

all that, you know. But I do hope that, whoever is listening to this or whoever will listen to this, or people who will like to listen to this about me, Pauline Johnson, who was born on the 29th of September 1949 and at the end, at the time of this completion of Speaking for Ourselves for Scope would find my particular life interesting: you know; and not a trial, I hope I haven't bored, whoever's listened to this, I hope you haven't been bored.

[Laughs.] Thank you.

[End of track 9]

[End of recording]