



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

Susan Bucknall
Interviewed by Anne Austin

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Interview Summary Sheet

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Track 1 [Tape 1 Side A]

OK my name's Anne Austin. I'm interviewing Susan Bucknall, Sue, at Cerebral Palsy Midlands and it's Wednesday 31 May 2006. I'd like to begin by asking you when and where you were born?

I was born in Birmingham but I don't know what hospital I was born in.

And when were you born?

I was born in 1949.

And can you tell me about your names and why they were chosen?

My name is Susan Anita Bucknall. I believe Anita was my real mum's name and my father chose Susan because he liked it.

And can you tell me a bit about what you know about your birth?

I was born with cerebral palsy and I couldn't sit up, I couldn't feed meself, I couldn't dress meself and I was really... I felt like a cabbage but I kept on. Me mum kept me walking and me dad and helped me to walk and she fed me. She fed and she did it pretty well. Because I 'ad cerebral it was difficult for me mum 'cos she had other people rely on and I'm grateful for what she did because she brought me up and [?]. If me dad 'adn't 'ave got married again, I wouldn't be like I am now.

And your real mum, your first mum?

Me first mum: I would 'ave loved to 'ave met 'er but unfortunately, whatever happened, she passed away when I was born.

Have you been told anything about that?

No.

You don't know whether she was ill or...?

No.

She died actually at the time of your birth?

She died at my birth, yes.

And did your father or anybody talk about how you were treated at the time of your birth, whether you...?

It must 'ave been very difficult for Dad because 'e didn't know what 'appened, you know, 'e didn't know what was going to happen you know. Me mum's mum said, 'Get married' because 'e was going out with this lady and he must have brought this other lady [?] to where I was in care and I was told they were getting married. Me Nan said to 'er – me mum's mum – she said, 'Well if you want 'er, don't give 'er away, get 'er out and get married and we will 'elp you all that we can.' 'Cos I would 'ave been floppy you know. I couldn't sit up and it was difficult for me.

So they advised your dad?

So they advised me dad to get married and have me home.

And what was going to happen to you? What did they say should happen to you?

Well, they said to me I would have a better life you know. 'We will 'elp 'er all we can' and I think they did. They made me 'cos if I didn't, I would have been in a wheelchair.

And do you know who took care of you in those very early days?

I think me mum took care of me in the early days and me brother helped me, me real brother helped me. You know he'd take care of me and did all, you know, he'd take care.

When you were quite small?

Yes.

And do you know how soon after your birth your father remarried?

[Voice in background.] I don't really know how soon after me birth he got married again.

[Banging sound in background.] What are your earliest memories? What do you remember?

I remember in the early days and you know, me other sisters playing and I thought to myself, 'Oh, why I can't do that? Why am I like this? Why am I on this earth, you know?' Of course I wanted to be normal and I said to me sister, 'Oh I'd love to do that' and she says to me, 'Well, you can.' I said, 'Well.' [Voice in background.] I said, 'For God's sake, I can't walk' and she said, 'It doesn't matter if you can't, I can always give you a chair and you can always join in.' And they were playing skipping and she put me in the chair and she gave me the skipping rope and I turned the rope and you know. And [?] to wash-up because me mum was at work and I said to 'er, 'I wish I could do that' and she said, 'You can.' I said, 'I can't' and she said, 'You can.' I said, 'I can't. Look at me, I can't.' She said, 'What you can't do you can do' you know what I mean? And she put me in a chair by the sink and I washed up and she dried up.

That was your stepsister?

Yeah.

And your stepmum?

Yeah.

So yes, you were included in...?

Basically I was included in everything because she wouldn't leave me out. Whatever they do I 'ad to join in.

What about your father? Can you remember? What are your earliest memories of being with your father?

Well, me dad treated me like 'e did... I think 'e worried, 'e kept on shouting at me, you know because I was cerebral palsy. He kept on shouting at me, and I didn't realise what he was shouting at me about. It was difficult for me 'cos you know he kept on shouting, I couldn't do this, I couldn't do that. It wasn't my fault. 'E was thinking I could do it, where everybody else... and then they were bad for me and I couldn't, I can remember 'e shouted at me and put me to bed and then me mum...

[End of Track 1]

Track 2 [Tape 2 Side A]

[Loud Feedback.] My name is Anne Austin. I'm interviewing Sue Bucknall at Cerebral Palsy Midlands in Birmingham and it's Friday 2 June 2006. We're going to continue to sort of talk about your early background and so on. Tell me a bit about your father Sue.

My father was remarried again and I had a very difficult life because 'e shouted at me because I 'ad cerebral palsy and you know. 'E didn't find me much to do – I could do – with the other children.

Could you just repeat that? He found?

'E found it very difficult because I was a spastic and the other children did what they wanted to do. You know and it was very difficult for me because I couldn't do anything like the others.

So how did he react?

'E shouted at me and 'e got a bad temper sometimes and I went upstairs crying, you know, until me mum come. Then me mum came up and said you know, 'What's the matter?' and I told 'er and after that it would be... and they 'ad a big argument after that.

[Talking together.] And was...

It could be very difficult for 'im, for me as well. It wasn't my fault. I really you know, I wanted to be normal but the doctors said I was disabled and I couldn't do much about it you know.

And what have you been told about the doctors' advice that was given to your dad or to your parents?

No.

They didn't,

I couldn't remember.

There's [talking together] nothing that they've told you?

No.

Did anybody, do you think, give them advice about how to take care of you?

I think me Nan did, she told me mum, you know. Me mum's mum, she was good. She's told 'er – my mum's mum told 'er – to, you know, be very patient with me and [?] you know. Best way she could, you know, and I can remember my mum feeding me and you know, [voice in background] all the other children, the other one child fed 'erself. And they were, I remember, I'd be on Mum's lap and she was feeding me like a baby, you know, and it was difficult.

Your Nan – your mum's mum – do you remember her?

Yes, she was a really nice lady and very good temperament 'cos when I was 18, no well, 15, she used to give me a party at 'er 'ouse and all me mates come from school you know. It were really good you know.

It must have been quite sad for her too,

Yes.

To lose her daughter.

Yes.

What was her name, your Nan?

Ada.

And her surname?

Bissegar.

Bissegar.

Bissegar.

Bissegar.

Yes.

So that was your mum's...

Mum. Yes.

Your mum's mum but your mum also had that surname when she was young.

Yes.

And what kind of work, to go back to your dad, did your dad do?

'E used to work at Cadbury's, then he went to the Leyland, you know, until...

Rover?

Yes, Rover until 'e retired and 'e went... 'E was on nights. 'E didn't like doing days, you know because I would be at 'ome and 'e looked after me at 'ome you know.

So he helped to look after you?

Yes. I think he got too much worry [?] at the end, you know.

Can you tell me about that?

'E was helping me to walk and you know. 'E was getting me to do things in the 'ouse like anybody else would do.

How old were you at this stage?

Not very old.

Five?

About eight. 'E would help me to walk around the house, walk around the furniture and anything like that.

How did cerebral palsy affect you when you were young?

Well, it was difficult for me because I didn't know what cerebral palsy was until I 'ad saw a video – you know children in a wheelchair – and I thought to meself, 'Ah!'

When was that?

You know, when I was at school.

At school?

Yes.

So you didn't realise you had cerebral palsy...

No,

Until then?

No, until then no. They discovered when I was 18 months old, I think it was. [Banging sound in distance.] And the doctors told my mum there, 'You've got a cerebral palsied daughter.' But now when they say I'm normal, you know, 'cos I've only got a speech difficulty and they all – everybody says where I'm living now – I'm just a normal girl but I'm a bit slower than the other people.

Did your family talk about it at home, having cerebral palsy?

No, not a lot. I had to use my wheelchair. Me sister took me out down the shops you know, [?] which they did.

So, you used your wheelchair when you were younger?

Yes.

And can you tell me about your brothers and sisters, your whole family?

The eldest one of me sisters was really good, she did take me out and me brother. Me brother I've got now was only young – a baby – and you know, he couldn't... When he was born he didn't realise how I was and I sat on the settee and he kept on sitting on my lap and probably Mum told him you know, how cerebral palsy was. And I used to take him out in the pram while Mum was cooking the dinner. I was in callipers then, you know. I was in callipers up until I was about 18 because I was in and out of hospital.

Tell me a bit about being in hospital. Can you remember?

Yes, I can remember one [?]. I went in and out of hospital with me legs and they were like bent. I was walking inwards like a penguin [voice in distance] and after the last operation I said to the doctor, 'Can you...?' When I was walking inwards, I was walking inwards, you know, like a penguin and I said to the doctor, 'Why was that?' And the doctor said, 'Well, do you really want to know?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Now you know the guides in your legs? They were touching together and they 'ad to straighten them out, to get you walk normal.'

So you've had operations on your legs?

Yes.

Both legs?

Both legs.

To straighten them?

Yes.

How old were you then?

I was eight, nine. You know, all me teens I was in and out of hospital like a yo-yo. I didn't go to school much 'cos I 'ad school in the 'ospital.

And were they painful operations?

Yes, they were painful, yes.

What was it like in the hospital? Can you tell me about that?

They were good to me and we 'ad a good time. We 'ad radio stations, you know, the people asked to play on the radio. Then they played the songs to the radio station and they played it back to us every – well not every night – once, you know... every Monday. You know, me and my friend was in the same ward.

So there were other children with cerebral palsy?

Yes.

Having similar operations?

Similar operations but most of them with the back. They couldn't sit up or anything like that. They 'ad to lie down to be fed and look in the mirror.

And was it a big ward [talking together] or what was it like?

Yes, it was it a big ward. The orthopaedic in Northfield. You remember The Woodlands? The Wood there,

Mm.

It was a big ward you know.

And was there anything you liked about the hospital?

I like the nurses, I liked 'aving schoolwork you know and 'aving, well they done Sunday church and things like that, you know.

And the horrible things?

Well the horrible thing was when I wanted to go to the toilet and they put me out [?] the balcony. I fell out of bed.

You fell out of bed?

Yes and in the middle of the night I woke up and I saw these two gentlemen putting you know bars on the sides to stop me from falling out of bed.

Didn't you realise you had fallen?

No, no. [Laughs.] [Voice in background.] I just fell out of bed.

So and I mean how much has it helped you, having operations and so on?

It 'elped me a lot. It 'elped me from my legs. Before I had me walking aid I was walking normal and now I'm getting older I can't do everything like I used to 'cos I used to go down the shops to get Mum's paper or grocery or whatever and I can't do that no more.

Can you tell me a bit about what is happening? Why are you unable to do it?

Because I've been getting older and as you get older your legs are getting on a bit and you know, and I've got arthritis very bad in my legs and in me arms and you know. And because I live with me brother now both parents have died. Me mum and dad have passed away and I'm living on me brother. I still want to keep on my feet, so long as I can because if I was in a wheelchair me brother and sister... I've got one sister over in Portugal [?] and the other sister, she don't care about me, she don't do anythink for us, you know and...

Where does she live?

Well, she lives in King's Heath with 'er daughter.

[Talking together] She doesn't...

She doesn't come round to say, 'Did you want anything?' or anything like that.

So you don't see her very often?

I don't see her. I do see 'er if she comes down, when she wants sommat, you know, but we all [?] I know.

So you have an elder brother. How much older than you is he?

Oh, I can't... he was much older than me.

He was?

Yes.

What's his name?

Peter.

And he looked after you?

He looked after me, yes.

Tell me about that.

You know, we used to play cards. He got me card games. He used to play Snap and Patience and he used to go on and play me. I played up he used to put me in the coalhouse. [Laughs.]

He used to put you in the coalhouse?

Yes for being naughty, you know.

Was he teasing you or...?

He was teasing me, yeah he was yes.

Were you frightened?

No, no.

So that's Peter and then you had some stepbrothers and sisters?

Yes, I've got Wayne who's 37. I've got Diane in 'er forties. I've got Kay now 49, my other sister and they're really good to me they are. Everythink I want.

Which is the one in Portugal?

Karen: our Karen.

And the one in King's Heath?

Diane.

And you now live with?

Wayne,

Wayne. Who is?

The youngest.

He's the youngest. He's quite a lot younger than you.

He's quite a lot younger than me.

And how is that?

[Mechanical background noise.] OK, we get on fine. We don't argue or anything like that.

No? When you were young what was the reaction of people towards you, do you remember?

No. People towards me?

Mmm.

Well, you know, I couldn't even get out. I just couldn't even go out of the 'ouse without people picking on me all the while. Because I 'ad a cousin who wheeled me in a wheelchair and she got me out of the shop in the wheelchair and these people kept on picking on me all the while and she went 'ome crying to 'er mum.

What kind of things did they [talking together] say?

You know, 'How did the spastic get on?' and everything like that and I didn't like it.

That was down at the shops?

Yes.

What about other places?

You know, I go out now and they're still looking at me. It's probably the way I talk, you know. Even today I find it difficult to say anything. When my niece 'ad a baby, a

little baby and I say, ‘Ello’ and that and instantly they cry, you know, [banging noise]
I don’t think they realise ‘ow I am, you know.

But within your own family when you were little, how did they treat you?

Me own family?

Well yes, your family, your cousins, your aunts?

They treated me all right, you know, they got, you know... I always think of me mum with the others, [someone coughs in background] and me mum she, you know, shouted at me. And me Auntie Jean, ‘Don’t shout at ‘er.’ And me mum said, ‘Be quiet! You just don’t know ‘ow to bring ‘er up. I’ve bring ‘er up meself and I know what’s best for Susan.’ And I didn’t realise then because I was only young but now I’ve grown up I realise what she’s done for me. She done the best things I reckon.

She’s been, if you like, your real mum.

She’s been like a real mum, since she died really.

What kind of ways did she look after you when you were little?

She used to, you know, give me a wash, a bath. You know, getting me in and out of the bath, she used to tie me legs to the wringer. You know the wringer? Then I couldn’t get wet. She was as good as golden to me, really she was golden.

So she tied you to the ringer, so you wouldn’t fall off?

Mmm, so the plaster wouldn’t get wet.

Right and how were you expected to behave to your parents when you were little, do you remember that?

How did I react?

How were you expected to behave?

Normal. Just a normal girl, you know.

What kind of rules did they have, were certain things enforced?

Yes, like going to bed early. I 'ad to be in bed for a certain time to get proper rest, for me legs and tired.

What time was that?

Every night I used to go to bed at eight o'clock without fail.

Even 'til you were?

Even me aunty didn't know 'ow early that was.

And how old were you when you were going to bed at eight o'clock?

About eight you know, I mean like a normal child should be. [Voice in background.]

And what was discipline like? Were you ever naughty?

Well I would 'ave been naughty you know. [Traffic noise in background.] I didn't get me own way 'cos Dad wouldn't 'ave liked that – wanting me own way – and they didn't give me me own way. They wasn't sharp with me but they didn't give me me own way. They gave me more and more...[?].

Did they treat you the same as the other kids?

Yes. [Voice in background.]

What would happen if you did something wrong?

I would 'ave been sent to bed. I remember I 'ad done some wrong and I was sitting on top of the stairs crying and they wouldn't let me down. And I said, 'I'm sorry, I wouldn't do it again' and they let me down in the end.

[Laughs.] What was it you'd done wrong, do you remember?

I couldn't remember.

How did you celebrate at home? There must have been birthdays and so on. How were things celebrated, do you remember?

I remember a... and Mummy used to make me a birthday cake, you know and 'ave, round the corner was another aunty – my real mum's sister – and every Sunday she 'ad me to dinner. You know, I mean she didn't treat me like a grown-up; she treated me like a baby 'cos she used to cut my meals. Everything I 'ad she used to cut [traffic noise] me dinner up small and even though I was about 14, she still cuts me dinner up small and she didn't, you know, well I was getting old really.

Did she have children?

No. Well, she did but they were grown up.

And so she was your birth mum's sister.

Yes.

What was her name?

Maureen.

And she was married?

Yeah.

And what was her husband's name?

Frank.

And their surname?

I can't remember their surname, no.

[Traffic noise.] But they had you every week?

Every week.

How did you feel about that?

[End of Track 2]

Track 3 [Tape 2 Side B]

So, how did you feel about going to your aunty's every week?

I felt I was doing OK. Good. You know, sitting in the house all week, it was the opportunity to give Mum and Dad a break and for me to go round 'cos me sisters took me round and came back for me. She took me around about 10 o'clock in the morning and come for me I think it was about five o'clock in the afternoon 'cos then I 'ad to go home, have a bath and get ready for school [talking together] the next morning.

And did you like it at your aunty's? I mean it gave your mam a break, what about you?

I liked it because they used to take me out to me other aunty's, me other mum's other sister.

And what was her name?

I can't remember.

I haven't asked you where you were living at this time. Can you tell me about the places you lived Sue?

I used to live down town in Norwood near Albury, you know, the old houses down town [?].

What was the address?

Down town. I can't remember the address because I knew they were old but our toilet, it used to be down the entry and...

This was...

I couldn't go down the entry because I couldn't walk and I had to use a commode in the kitchen and after a bit my brothers took me down the entry to the proper toilet.

Was it a shared toilet?

Yes.

With other houses?

Yes.

And do you remember how long you lived at that place?

Oh ages ago because I lived with the other aunt then. I think I would have been about 14. I moved to Norborough. No, yeah, I moved to Norborough when I was 14.

What was the address?

Porlock Crescent. 41 Porlock Crescent. And me Nan, Granny Warner, when me Nan died me mum moved to this address where I'm living now.

And that is?

Porlock Crescent.

And do you remember the move to Porlock Road?

Porlock Crescent?

Crescent, sorry.

I wasn't very old when we moved up there because it was nice because I went to school. Mum used to take me down to meet the bus, down on the corner because the bus couldn't get up the road 'cos it was only little buses then when we first start. And yeah, I 'ad to be lifted up and tied onto the seat by the bus conductor. We sat by the bus conductor.

Was it a special school bus, or?

Yes.

And where did it take you? And what school did you go to?

[?] Little, smallish...

And was that a special school?

[Talking together.] Yes.

Can you tell me about it?

They used to 'ave like a pram to get you off the bus you know.

Like a?

A pram that people sit on and take you up to the school you know.

What was the school? Can you tell me about the school a bit?

The school was very nice. I enjoyed it and the teachers were good to us.

What did it look like? Do you remember?

No.

Were there a lot of children?

Yes, me and Pauline were in the same class and a boy named Geoffrey.

In?

A boy name Geoffrey, you know, he was in the same class.

And how long were you in that school for Sue?

I been 'til I was 16.

Still at the same school?

Yeah, until we moved up Northfield. We moved up Northfield, Bell Lane then and I was there 'til I was 18 and I went and left school and I then went to Tunbridge Wells, Dean Park to see what I can do or I couldn't do.

Can we go back again, we will come onto that. But can we just come back again to the things you remember when you were a childhood. You told me about getting wrong and being disciplined. What kind of memories do you have of spending time playing, either with your parents or your sisters and brothers? What kind of things did you do?

Well, I used to do skipping with me sisters and I enjoyed that and they used... Meanwhile, I remember me one sister 'ad a bike, 'ad a two-wheeler bike and I said to 'er, 'I'd like to ride that bike' and she said, 'You can.' I said, 'I can't' and she said I could. I did ride the bike 'cos 'er friend put me on the bike and me she was 'olding, me sister was 'olding me on one side of the bike round the back and her friend was holding me on the other side of the bike. And so, [laughing] and so she gave me a ride

in the end. [Interviewer laughs.] I didn't get [?] anything. Everything they did I wanted to do. I thought to meself, 'Well, I'm in a wheelchair but I can't do that. If they can do it, so can I' you know. And I didn't give up, you know, it was nice being a child, you know and I can remember a lot when I was a child. Yes.

And any other memories you can tell me?

Yes, I can [laughing] remember a lot. You know when you 'ave nits in your 'air. You know, the way you burn ticks [?] in your 'air. They gave me a [?] one day and take me to the nurse, said to me, 'Take that out, do you want [?] because you've got dirty 'air.' And I used to go down the [?] and throw the towel and throw the lot in [laughing] the other garden, so that Mum didn't know what it was. I was frightened what she would say.

So there were some things you [talking together] kept from your mum?

Yeah and me dad. Yes.

Would you share things, worries and so on, with them?

Yeah, if something was on me mind. Well, I used to share a lot, you know, they would listen to my problems, [voice in background] you know, if something was on my mind or if something didn't go right for me.

Who would you tell?

I was the closest to me mum because me mum was always there for me and she brought me up to be a normal person as anybody else.

And do you have any memories of, sort of discussions or arguments at home?

No.

Any decisions, or?

No 'cos I didn't argue a lot, I don't, [voice in background] I'm a placid girl.

You are?

Yes.

Any arguments in the family, even if it wasn't about you?

No, not to my knowledge, no.

Did you have pocket money? Could you spend pocket money?

I did 'ave pocket money yes and I spent it when I went out.

What kind of things did you spend it on?

Sweets and yes, trousers, shoes. Well I 'ad to 'ave special shoes made for the callipers to go in and that was difficult. Yes, I remember Mum and Dad were on 'oliday the day I came out. They 'ad the 'olidays [voice in background] on the day, I couldn't go.

You, sorry?

My mum and dad booked a holiday and I came out of the hospital the day before they went on holiday and the lady over the road had me – only for that week – while they was on holiday.

So they had gone away and you were left...

With the neigh... yes.

With the neighbour.

Yes.

Where did they go?

They went somewhere abroad.

How did that feel for you?

'Cos I'd just I mean come out of 'ospital and I didn't want me mum to spend more time... I wanted Mum to enjoy her holiday and I said, 'I'll be OK.' Because the neighbour's daughter over the road looked after me and our mum 'ad a really good time, you know.

So it was OK?

It was OK

How old were you then? [Voice in background.]

Not very old.

And did you miss your mum when you were in hospital?

Yes.

When she was away?

Yes.

Well, who would you say has been most important in your early life?

Me mum, from the time of me birth she 'as been very good to me and I know she shouted at me a lot but I didn't realise what she shouted at me for. Now I realise from the start onwards it was for my best. And what I remember was Pauline said to me, 'If ever your mum, [banging sound in distance] if ever your mum passed away or Dad' she said, 'you won't be able to look after yourself.' She said, 'You'll be in care.' I'd be in a care home. I said, 'No, no, I'll live.' I wanted to stay [man shouting in background] where I am now and I've proved it to Pauline, [voices in background] 'ow I am now. 'Cos she couldn't do more for herself better than I can.

She knew you very well.

Yes.

What about your Nan? You said she was important, your birth mother's mother.

She was important to me 'cos I used to talk to 'er. Every Sunday I used to make apple crumble – what I used to do at school – and she'd made... And with over the road [traffic noise] where Nan used to live there was an outdoor... and I used to go... I could walk from my 'ouse in Northfield to me Nan's and I would drop things. So they, 'Oh you've dropped 'em [?] something to eat or [?].' And I'd say, 'No I haven't. I couldn't throw it away' [?]. And I used to have [sound of door banging] dinner in the evenings, Sundays, to give my mum a break.

And how long did your Nan live for?

She died [man's voice in background] when my brother was one year old, a little baby.

So you don't remember her very well?

No, no but she was nice, you know, she was ever so nice.

You remember her enough do you, your Nan?

Yes.

And your grandad?

I didn't remember my grandad because my grandad died before I was born, so he didn't know what I was like.

And your dad's parents?

Well, I didn't know them very much, you know, my dad's parents because I didn't see them.

What do you think were some of the best qualities of the people round you when you were little?

I enjoyed the company when I was little because I used to play about, you know, with me sisters and cousins because they used to send me out a lot. Yes.

Did you get on with them all, your cousins and sisters and brothers?

Yes, I used to get on with them well.

You didn't fight?

No, [laughs] no. Me cousin used to carry me on his back every time I wanted to go to the [laughs] toilet because I couldn't walk, you know. 'E says, you know, 'e called me 'Trouble' because every five minutes I wanted to go to the toilet. [Laughs.]

So they had to help and take you to the commode did they?

Yes, they had to 'elp me to take me to the commode and all that, yeah.

And what was their reaction then?

Well I didn't know. They didn't, [?] you know, like it, 'cos when [?] forwards to me. I would 'ave done it if I'd been able to walk [?] for me walk, that would have been... They – me aunty and me mum – got me a bike, a three-wheeler bike. I used to ride this bike every day, whether I liked it or not they put me on this bike for me legs to get stronger.

Who was encouraging you to do that then?

Me mum because we had a garage. Our house was 'ere and the garage at Northfield was 'ere and I used to ride [someone shouting in background] around the garden and the garage on this bike and I think it actually worked, you know.

It made you stronger.

Made me legs stronger and nice.

Roughly how old were you when this was happening?

About nine or 10, I can't remember exactly. I was only a baby... thereabouts.

And were there any other special toys you had that you were fond of?

No. When I was at school one Christmas, I 'ad a pushchair and a doll and then one Christmas I 'ad this shop with sweets in. And when I was a bit bigger me brother, me real brother, bought me a typewriter to use in the 'ouse. I can remember this typewriter 'cos it's not like the typewriter we've got now, it was like a wheel, a big

wheel and you pressed down and the letter came up, you know. And I used to play on it for ages. I think me mum was fed up in the end, me mum and dad got fed up 'cos I kept on playing on this every time, you know.

It sounds as though you had quite a good childhood. Were there sadnesses there or are there any things you remember that were not happy?

I remember sometimes I was happy and sometimes I was so sad and I don't know why I was sad because I was fond of me sisters and every time me sisters... when I [?] a tooth fell off or broke a teeth, I could fall [cry?] a lot, you know. And they'd cry for me. When I fell down the stairs and 'urt my head because I had to go to [?] with me 'ead because and me 'ead was bleeding, you know. And I can always remember, I lived in Northfield and in me day holidays, when me aunty lived in, she used to live in King's 'eath. And 'er 'ouse is like this: a toilet down the yard and then her house is [?] was in the kitchen and they were upstairs. When you went upstairs there was like a bend and I went up the stairs and she said to her daughter, 'Go behind 'er' but her daughter didn't go behind me. I fell down the stairs from top to bottom and I didn't cry. I got up and laughed. I think me aunty said, 'Have you been crying?' I said, 'What's the use in crying?' you know. [Warning beeper like vehicle backing.]

[End of Track 3]

Tracks 4 – Track 7

No transcript available