



Unheard Voices: interviews with deafened people

Roy James
Interviewed by Andrew Godwin

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

T: +44 (0)20 7412 7404

E: oralhistory@bl.uk

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Interview Summary Sheet

Ref no: C1345/07

Collection title: Unheard Voices: interviews with deafened people

Interviewee's surname:	James	Title:	
Interviewee's forename:	Roy	Sex:	Male
Occupation:		Date and place of birth:	1929, Surrey

Date(s) of recording: 26th October 2008

Location of interview: Hearing Link head office, Eastbourne

Name of interviewer: Andrew Goodwin

Speech to Text reporter: Deirdra Jordan

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Interviewer's comments:

[Track 1]

This is Andrew Goodwin. I'm interviewing Roy James on Sunday, 26th October 2008 for the Unheard Voices Project in Eastbourne, East Sussex.

May I get you to introduce yourself, please?

My name is Roy James.

Your occupation, or previous occupation?

I'm retired of course now, but at one time I was first in -- firstly, in the bakery and confectionary trade and then, when the bakery trade as it was relatively died out in about 1965, and a lot of small businesses were taken over by larger concerns, I decided to move away from that completely and went into cooking. I was able to get a job in the local hospital which was just opened up and I stayed there for -- until I retired at '65, which -- so I was at the hospital for about 18 years.

Thank you. Can you tell me when and where you were born and also your parents' occupation, please?

I was born in Horley in Surrey in 1929. My father was a hospital cook. He was head cook at the Farmfield Institute, which was about two or three miles away from Horley, which was -- I believe it was a mental hospital.

Your mother?

I can tell you very little about my mother. I don't know when -- I don't know how old she was. She was -- we've discovered quite recently she was a few years older than my father, but I can't really tell you a great deal about her. She doesn't figure largely in my life because she died during the War and -- I think it was 1941, I would imagine. I think it was 1941. She died of cancer. My father married again.

I haven't really anything to add about that. I continued to live in Eastbourne and of course my father had -- my father had a small bakery in Old Town, Eastbourne, or by that time he

had given up work -- he came to Eastbourne -- of course, I've missed a bit because we came to Eastbourne when my mother was ill in about 1938 and of course the War came along. I was evacuated. My mother passed away. I came back to Eastbourne. My father bought a small bakery business in the Old Town and when I was 14 I left school and worked for him, which was probably about -- a bad move. I don't think I want to go into that.

Fair enough. [Laughs]. Can we stick with your childhood for now. You mentioned that you were 14 and you worked in the bakery. Anything else you can tell me about your early childhood?

My childhood when my mother was alive, my childhood was idyllic. I was an only son. I was an only child, probably spoilt beyond measure. My mother was ahead of her time, I think. She used to ride a motorbike and they -- my father owned a car. Very few people had a car in the 1930s, but he got the car and we used to go camping regularly in -- really in the New Forest down near -- near Sandbanks and Poole. When we didn't go camping, most Sundays in the summer we used to go in the car to Little Hampton and I can remember clearly watching and listening to Dr White, he used to be. He used to do a concert party on the sands and I know I can remember getting lost at one time and my mother managed to find me after some time. I went to school at the local school in Lowfield Heath. I'm afraid I've missed a bit because we moved from Horley, from Pony Cross where we did -- lived when I was born. We moved to Lowfield Heath, which is now -- which is now disappeared completely because Gatwick Airport, when it expanded in the 1950s, it slowly took over Lowfield Heath and in fact the only thing left there now is the village church. There's no other sign of Lowfield Heath at all. It's wiped off the face of the earth, except for the church.

How long did you live there for?

My earliest recollection of being there was 1933. So I was about 4. I lived there until we -- not very long, really, but it seemed a long time because it was -- as I said earlier, it was just idyllic. Just an idyllic childhood. We lived there until about 1938 when we moved Eastbourne. I can't really think. Of course, the village school. When I started school, I went to the village school in Lowfield Heath and I know the numbers of children -- there was about 30 in the school. That was -- that was the infants school and the juniors school.

The total number of the two lots was about 30. Two teachers, Miss Ride and Miss Jones. Sorry about the gap. Then I think that's really all about Lowfield Heath, except it was all wonderful, and then we moved Eastbourne and I really can be -- although my mother was still alive, I really thought when we moved Eastbourne my world had come to an end because I loved the country so much and we lived in a house in Gall Park Road to start and then moved St Mary's Road and then when my mother -- when my mother was -- when my mother was ill, I used to stay with my auntie Minny, who was -- her husband worked with my father at St Mary's Hospital -- you'll have to --

[09:21]

That is fine. No problem at all. So you moved to Gall Park Road. What school did you go to at that time?

That was probably the worst thing of all because I'd always -- I'd either been in the small -- in the tiny school at Lowfield Heath or when I -- when I moved out of the lower junior school, junior class, I went to back to Horley for a short while and then we came to Eastbourne and I had to go to St Mary's school and I absolutely hated it.

It was an all boys school. I'd never been to an all boy's school. I'd always had mixed schools. I was terrified. There were so many -- I was -- I must have been nine, I think. There were so many boys there. I just -- I just couldn't get my head around the numbers there. I'm trying to think of the name of the master. I don't know whether you like names given or not? Perhaps you don't?

Yes.

We had -- my form master was Mr Burgess and -- well, he was always -- he didn't really give lessons. He was always talking about when he was in the "Mess Pot" during the First World War, being Mesopotamia. That's all his lessons consisted of: "When I was in the mess pot ..." But he was a bit of a tyrant and he was always pulling boys out to get the cane and I was terrified I was going to get the cane, but I never did because I think I was so frightened of him and everyone else I just kept quiet in the background and out of it. I never went to the school. I never went to the class of the teacher who used to pull the boys out from the class -- out from -- out into the front of the class. Pull up the leg of their

short trousers and give them whacks on the tops of their thighs. I can't believe now that I actually saw that, but I did, and when the time came that the children -- when the War started, children came to Eastbourne from London, evacuated to Eastbourne, but after a very short time we discovered that Eastbourne wasn't safe. All the London children went back and the children from Eastbourne were evacuated. Am I rambling?

That's fine. Keep going. If I can ask you --

I'd rather you did. I feel I'm rambling.

[12:53]

We like rambling. You're giving us a great deal of information and it's very good. You just started talking about your education from 9 to about 14. I presume this was about when the Second World War started?

The Second World War started when I was 10, 10.

Can you give us some of your memories?

I can, yes, I can. I -- because I was lucky. When the time came for the children in Eastbourne to be evacuated, most went to Bedford, but because when my father moved from Lowfield Heath he sold the house that he had there to a friend, I was lucky enough for my father to move me back to Lowfield Heath to spend my evacuee time with them, so I was privately evacuated. I went privately because to stay with my auntie and uncle, which I may -- may cry about because --

Okay. How long were you --

because they were so good.

Yes. How long were you with them for?

Erm, almost the duration of the War, and of course I was back in Lowfield Heath, which was just perfect. It was where I'd always been happy, but I didn't go back to Lowfield Heath School or Horley, but Charwood, which was a village almost exactly two miles away.

What was that school like, in comparison to Eastbourne?

There was no comparison. There was -- there was a room -- there was a room for the infants and there was a room for the juniors and there was a room for the seniors. In fact, the room that the seniors and the juniors used was divided -- could -- was divided by a glass screen that could be slid back for assembly and the whole school, which numbered 45, assembled in the mornings. Lady teachers, which I was happy with, and I made so many friends there. A lot of the friends I've known previously when we used to live in Lowfield Heath that it was all -- it was all fantastic, and of course during that period my mother passed away.

Do you want to talk about that?

No, I don't think so.

[16:16]

If we move onto -- you mentioned earlier you were 14 and then you went to work with your father at the bakery. Can you tell me about your memories?

Sorry, go on.

Can you tell me about your memories of that period?

Oddly enough, I say now bad move, but it never worried me at the time. I think I've always been a bit shallow. I don't know. My father -- I suppose, to pick up the story, my father married again. When I was still evacuated, my father married again and wanted me back in Eastbourne, so I had to come back to Eastbourne. The War was still on. I had to come back to Eastbourne. I discovered then that not only had I got a new mother, I had got the joy of a step brother, I suppose, her -- my stepmother's son, obviously, by a previous relationship.

I don't think I want to go into that very much either. So we'll go -- then my father left the hospital -- left St Mary's Hospital where he was working and bought the small business in Green Street, a bakery business, and when I was 14, just 14, he thought it was time I left school and I left and went to work with him. I've got to say he did work terribly hard. There was no machinery. Everything was old in the bakery. He did have to work hard. I'm almost ashamed to say it these days because nobody has to do it and it sounds as though I'm piling on the agony, but he bought a trade bike and while I was -- when I -- I hadn't -- before I left school, I had to come to school in Eastbourne for about three months, and before I left school, I know -- when I -- during the dinner hour, I had to cycle to Willingdon for a shop there, but when I left school I started the bread round on the trade bike. He used to pile all the bread in the basket in the front and I had a little delivery basket hanging on the front of that and I used to deliver the bread. Until there was so much to finally be delivered that we went big time and my father bought a bike with a big box on the front, a three wheeler, like Walls ice cream bikes.

Oh, yes?

And all the bread used to be put inside and then I used to go around delivering the bread in that. The time came when that didn't hold it all, so he had another [Laughs] he had another box made that fitted on top of the box that was with the bike, so that he could get more bread on the top of that [Laughs]. I don't know why I loved it, but I was perfectly happy going around delivering this bread. I didn't get on at all well with my step brother, erm, and of course I didn't really get on with my stepmother because that -- you know, you hear -- although she was all right, and no doubt my father and she had a perfectly happy marriage, but I didn't think much of it.

Did your step brother also work for your father?

Well, he was a bit younger than me. Erm, I think he was about three years younger than me and that does -- that isn't a lot, but it did make a big difference because, while I was working, at that period he was still at school. Really, he was at school until I -- almost until I went in the Army. But before then, I know -- no, I didn't really see a lot of him. He was at school and I didn't see a lot of him. He used to -- he wasn't very happy living with my father, or me, probably. He used to live with his Gran quite a bit.

When my father managed about a couple of years later to get hold of a little Austin 7 van and he decided that I should learn to drive and then I could -- am I going on too much? -- I should drive the van, but the first -- he decided that I would have to have driving lessons first.

How old were you at that time?

16. Possibly a bit younger because I know -- I don't know how he worked my age, but somehow he worked my age, but if we say 16, that's about right. He decided I'd got to have driving lessons and another baker used to come in -- another bakers rounds man used to see my father and my father said, "My boy needs some driving lessons. Can you give him some?" And he said, "Yes, I'll do that". So one evening we got in the Austin 7 van and drove from Eastbourne to Lower Willingdon and around Lower Willingdon and back along the main road to Eastbourne, and that was it. That was my -- those were my driving lessons. Because at that time you didn't have to take a test. You could hold a provisional licence for, I believe it was three months. Then you'd got to -- you got a proper licence and you were fit to drive, and then I started delivering and on the -- in the van and I still loved that. I can't for the life of me think why, but I was perfectly happy and used to meet my friends in the evening. I only had two or three friends.

[24:00]

That comes on very nicely to my next question. You spoke a lot about your childhood, going to school, and you spoke about going to work. What about your leisure time? What did you actually do with your friends?

Sorry?

What did you actually do with your friends? Can you tell us about that?

Now I'm going to sound a bit of a prig because I felt because I left school -- well, let's face it pretty early, I really felt I should have known more. I realise now that I really at school didn't learn anything at all. I didn't really learn anything.

But I wanted to learn more and I made friends with a couple of boys about my own age. They were going to Eastbourne Technical College for evening classes, so we used to go to the -- three of us used to go to classes at Eastbourne Technical School, three nights a week. We used to -- I did English, maths, and science. I don't know whether it stood me in very good stead, but at least it was sort of an education, and of course Saturday nights the cinema, and then if we could go and have a meal in one of the cafes in the town, and there were a few by then -- we used to go in the Soldiers Retreat and have, you know, bacon and eggs, or something like that, if we could get it.

Very nice. You mentioned earlier you joined the Army at some point?

Yeah.

[26:00]

Can you tell me anything about that?

I could probably bore you with that. It was only National Service, you know. I was never a proper soldier. Father put his oar in there again because, as time was coming up to me going in somewhere, because everyone had to go into something, I had this crazy idea that I wanted to join the Palestine Police of all things because they were -- there were posters up in the town, "Join the Palestine Police". The poster was of a policeman on horseback with the mallet, playing polo, and I thought: that sounds good. I didn't realise if I joined the Palestine Police I'd be out in Palestine where there was no end of trouble. But that -- that phase passed away and, as I got closer to going in, I thought I'd like to join the Marines. So I went to Brighton -- Marine Office, or wherever we went to have a test, and they found that I was colour blind. I couldn't go in -- I couldn't go in the Marines and had to wait for the time for me to join the Army. When I was finally called up, at -- I was 18 and three months then -- I was called up and we were just sent. We were just sent wherever they decided to send us and I was sent to Chichester Barracks to become a soldier.

Thank you. Were you in a relationship with your future wife by then? Did she come along a bit later?

Since you want it all, since you want it all, I have to tell you she lived on the -- we lived in Downs Avenue and she lived on the other side of the road. It's true I used to stand at our bedroom window -- our landing window, and wait for her to come out at night and take her little dog for a walk. So, you know, I did fancy her then, but I don't think I made -- well, I was 18. I suppose, I could have made a few sensible moves, couldn't I? Anyway, I didn't, and I went into the Army without ever really speaking to her then at that time, but she did impress me considerably.

Okay, thank you.

[29:32]

We're now going to move onto perhaps more recent times and going to talk a bit about your hearing loss. Would you like to tell me when that started?

I don't really know. All I know is that I started to miss -- it's the cinema again because I was -- I was cinema mad. Absolutely cinema mad. I started to miss the punchlines in the films. Whatever it was, I wouldn't catch the end and I couldn't understand. I couldn't think why I couldn't catch the end. I often used to say to June, "How did that finish like that?" I suppose it was then I started to realise, but I didn't really do anything about it for a long time or think of doing anything for a long time.

How long ago was that?

Well, it couldn't have been all that long ago because I was working in the -- I was working in the hospital kitchen and without the help of hearing aids I think probably the hospital kitchen may have contributed to it because there was a lot of banging, banging and clattering, although I used to say it was because I went swimming without ear plugs, but I don't think that really accounted for much. I think it was the noise in the kitchen as much as anything.

How long was this?

About 15 or -- no, it must have -- started to notice about 20 years ago, I expect.

Right. You were working in the hospital kitchen at the time?

Erm, yes.

Did it start to affect your work?

No. Didn't make any difference. It didn't affect me -- the -- it -- the hearing loss couldn't have been very profound because it didn't really affect me at all. I didn't notice anything for a long time. You'll have to help me now, I am sorry.

So when you did realise that you had a hearing loss? Can you tell me about when you first went to the hospital?

Yes, but I was -- I could hear perfectly -- I could hear all right when I started at the hospital and, as far as I know, I got through the hospital without any trouble and without any -- without realising probably that I was having trouble.

As I said, it's only in recent years that it's really started to affect me. About the last, say, the last ten years I've already started to notice and gone in for hearing aids and whatever.

Can you tell me more about that? When you realised you needed some help, did you go to your GP first?

I can't think what I did. I must have gone to the -- to the doctor. What did I do? I can't think. That's right, yes. My doctor said I could apply for a hearing aid, but I had to wait ages. I think I had to wait three or four years to get a hearing aid, on the National Health, of course, but I can't say that it worried me very much that I hadn't got a hearing aid.

Really, when I got it, I didn't think it made a lot -- of course, they do make a difference, but I didn't think they made all that much difference. And it was then, I suppose -- I've always loved music. I suppose it was about 15 years ago I started to realise that I wasn't hearing music the way I used to hear it. I was -- I was missing the top registers. Although I'm not -- I'm not educated in any way, I did love my music and I did love my classical music, but I was finding that music that used to give me pleasure no longer did that because so much of it was either high register. I could quote Lark Arising if you like. Lark Arising, Vaughan Williams went right off the register completely.

I wasn't listening to anything. Likewise, loud music was distorted. Really, the hearing aid doesn't help that anyway. It doesn't -- I do find that really, because of hearing loss, that pleasure that I had from listening to music has gone. I can't really get pleasure from it now. Although I speak to other people who are -- who suffer with hearing loss who seem to get on all right, but I -- I don't like it. I don't like it if I can't hear whatever it is properly. It's got now so I don't really listen to music at all. Yes, I do, but I don't really enjoy it. Not the same. Not the same at all. Go on.

[36:13]

Can you tell me about any other leisure pursuits you have? You have mentioned music?

I've become -- I've never been -- I've never been a mixer. I've always had two or three friends. Never was in gangs or groups or football teams. Two or three friends and that's it and I found, since the hearing loss, I've found that I've become more solitary because I can't -- I've become -- I can't be bothered with people. I'm in the CTC, the Cycling Club, and I go out for the cycle runs, but where most other people are riding along in twos and chatting, no good me going because while we're riding, I don't know what they're saying, even with a hearing aid. You can't pick up what people say.

So I've slowly -- just recently this last three or four years drifted away a bit, although I still see everybody, but if they all sit around talking in groups, it's just too much. I find that a lot of other men and ladies who suffer the same problem can't sit in big groups because the clatter of these things is ... is awful.

Thank you for that. I'm just aware of the time. I think we will have a short break now. Is that okay?

[End of Track 1]

[Track 2]

Okay. We've just had a very short break.

Before the break, you were starting to tell us about how the hearing loss had affected you. I'd like to go back to when you first had your hearing aids fitted.

Can you tell us a bit more about that?

Well, the first -- it was fitted -- the Hearing Centre that was by Princess Alice Hospital at the time, and it was very similar to the one I've got now, but it wasn't quite as sophisticated. This one is hardly sophisticated, I can't think, but it's not bad. I can switch it on and off and it's easy to switch on and off and there's a button that I can press for the -- the loops, for the hearing loop, although I do find that most places that advertise they're on the hearing loop are very rarely switched on. I'm always telling them in the bank that their loop isn't on and it's never on, but they say ...

Can you tell me your experiences when you were having your hearing tests and things like that?

I'm very sorry, I don't think I'm going to be able to help you here.

What was going through your mind when you were having the hearing aids fitted?

God. I can't -- I know I had them. You've got to remember, I'm starting to push it a bit now, you know, and I know it was at the pier, I know it was by Princess Alice Hospital, but I can't remember having any tests. I must have done. But I know they told me I had have to wait. I think I waited about three years for a hearing aid and then, when it came, they fitted it and I didn't really like it very much at all, and I've got hearing aids for both ears, like a lot of people, I'm sure, and, like a lot of people I'm sure, I only use one. The people in the Hearing Centre in the new Hearing Centre at Hampden Park have told me that I'm better off with two, but I think vanity is playing a fairly large part in the fact that I don't wear the two. I just wear the one and I think it helps. I can hear you perfectly now, but I would like to try listening to you at some time without any hearing aids because you do

Speak so clearly and even with a hearing aid -- it isn't that I can't hear. It's that whatever I'm hearing isn't clear enough to sort out into words. If I listen -- even with the hearing aid, if I've got the radio on, some people I can hear, some people I can understand and others I can't. Mainly the ladies, I'm afraid, I can't understand. People have told me it's to do with the pitch of the voice and I think it is.

Can you -- I know you find it difficult to remember having the hearing aids fitted, but in general can you tell me about your experiences with the NHS? You mentioned it took three years or so before the hearing aid was fitted, but can you explain or can you tell us about your experiences with the GPs, audiologists, and so on?

I never had any. I never chose to go to my GP. I used the hearing aid intermittently probably. Certainly, when there's nobody about, when I'm on my own, it out because I prefer to be without it. But if I'm on my own and I put the radio on, it's got to go back in because then I can hear generally what they say. But, no, I can't remember ever going back to my GP about the hearing aid, except that I -- a friend of mine got the new -- got a different sort, a newer one, and I just went to -- over to Hampden Park and said, "I'd like a new one", and they said, "We can fit you up with one", and I got another one quite quickly.

How long did it take the second time?

Three months. Something like that. Oh, yes, it was quick. They were very -- they were very good, yeah.

That's a big improvement.

Oh, yes.

Three years to three months.

[06:00]

How do you feel about wearing hearing aids? You mentioned the vanity about wearing one?

It is. It's vanity. It's vanity, vanity. All is vanity. Shakespeare, I think. Yeah. Yeah. I hate it.

What sort of feelings do you have, then, if you are out in public? At the Cycle Club you mentioned you are having to wear a hearing aid. Can you tell me more about your feelings?

Only that, you know, I don't like wearing it. They do laugh because I take that out if I can. When we're on the move, this comes out and then when we -- if we stop somewhere for coffee or something, it has to go back in. Unless it's a big crowd of people. If it's about 14 of them there together all talking, it's such a hubbub that you can't make anything of it. Other people have said the same thing to me and most of us go out. If we can't hear properly, we sit outside or something. Certainly, you can't go to meetings -- you know, you can't go to meetings and enjoy them the same. I go to -- I go to a French conversation class once a week and I mean it's ridiculous because I can't really hear people very well when they're speaking English and to try and understand them in the French is very difficult, but because I'm so keen to learn, I -- I do try so hard, but it's difficult to understand what they say. It would be easy to pack it in. No, no.

How --

Tell a lie. Used to go to the Classic Cinema Club, but of course the cinema is right out the window now. I can't go to the cinema even with these on. Even with these, although I haven't tried one that says it advertises the loop system. I don't know whether it does or not, but I haven't been to the cinema for ages and when the films are on the television, I have to have subtitles whether these are on or not, but I think if we had the television fitted with a loop, I think these would probably be all right. I've been to one or two churches where the loop is working and they're good then. They really are clear. I went to one -- no, that's all right. Not useful. I went to one where they had a visiting padre, as well as the resident padre, and the visiting padre had the loop and he was fine, but when they went back to -- when they sort of -- the resident padre took over, and started talking about the church, because it was an anniversary of the church, and the resident padre talked about the beginnings of that local church, the bit that was interesting and that he was going to tell us

about, they never changed microphones, so of course I couldn't hear it and I never did know what he was talking about, although I had got the hearing aid on.

[09:58]

That is very interesting and shows you how --

They got, you know -- if they don't switch them over. Banks. Don't talk to me about banks and the loop because they're never on.

Can I ask you about the banks?

If you like.

So you have gone into banks?

Every time -- every -- you know Deborah, of course, and she says to me, "Dad, if they haven't got it, ask for it, because if people don't ask, they won't put it on". So every time I go in and I have to ask for anything over the counter, I always say, "Have you got the loop system going?" They say -- most of them look as though I'm daft. What am I talking about? Then I say, "The hearing aid", and they say, "I'll go out the back and see if it needs to be switched on", and sometimes it's not been switched on or sometimes they put it away and they put something away. I don't know. Sometimes they have put it away. Very rarely is it going.

Do you find attitudes towards your hearing aids and the loop system -- can you tell me what you feel about general attitudes towards deafness?

I think, generally -- I honestly -- although I don't like having a hearing disability, it's not -- it's not bad. It's not a -- it's not a severe disability. One of the ladies I was talking to downstairs, apparently she can't hear anything. Well, I mean, I -- you could call me -- perhaps you could call me "middle of the road", or not even quite middle of the road yet, because generally I'm okay. But when I do have trouble, if I'm travelling alone, when I came back last week on the ferry from Dieppe, the loudspeaker came and I hadn't a clue

what she was saying. I'd got this on, but I hadn't a clue what was said and I don't think there's any way out of that.

[12:19]

Do you go travelling by yourself often?

I suppose I do, really, but that's nothing to do with -- that's nothing to do with hearing disability, really. I think that's a personal thing. I used to -- when I talk about travel -- my wife and I we go away together, but she doesn't like going away quite so much now, but we go away together. We go away together. Erm, but if I go on my -- if I go cycling, which is what I do quite like, I usually go on my own. Because I -- I don't think I get on with people very well. I do. I do get on with them okay, but, erm, I used to have -- I had one friend I used to go cycling with, but over the years the ten year difference that was between us, or 11 years difference between us, as I've got older has become more pronounced. I'm going down hill and there are lots of problems if you can't keep up or you're holding the other up and I've really -- I do really enjoy my own company and prefer my own company, even, except when I'm with June. She's probably -- which is probably quite a good thing.

Has having the hearing aid affected your relationship?

Not really. We get fed up with each other sometimes, but only mildly. Because every -- because if she's reading a book and I'm doing something else, I think I needn't have this on and I can take it out and she says something and I say, "What did you say?" and she has to go through the whole rigmarole again and after I've got it on I ask what she said if she's some way away -- let's face it, we're not all perfect, are we, and I'm not perfect listening to her paying close enough attention to what she says. Perhaps it's a bit the other way, although I certainly wouldn't like to put anything on her plate. I wouldn't like to, because she does the best that she can, I'm sure. I'm talking to you here now. That's fine, because we're talking face to face and there's no -- there's no interruptions and nobody else talking. Nobody radio playing or music being played. That does make a tremendous difference.

Can I ask you more about your relationship? What sort of support has there been within your family, if anything at all?

Oh, well, everybody is good. Nobody -- I've heard of some families where some members take, you know, take the Micky out of someone, either a parent or anything that has hearing loss, but there's absolutely none of that in our family. There would never have been anyway, but with Deborah, I mean, how can there be? It's just no problem at all. I've never had any problem in the family, even with the young grandchildren.

Can you tell me more about your relationship with Deborah and your grandchildren?

I think it's quite -- I think it's -- I think I'm just a normal grandparent, I think. I don't think -- erm, I've always loved the children. I've always loved my own children and our grandchildren. Like every grandparent, I expect. I prefer them when they're children. They seem to lose -- they seem to lose a certain magic when they get to a certain age, but when they're young, the children are wonderful. I've always enjoyed them. They never sort of make comments about me not being able to hear.

Has your hearing loss affected your relationships in any way?

What, marital or general?

In general?

No, no, no. Except, of course, there's a tendency to -- a tendency that was probably there in the first place to cut myself off from the majority of people, but that probably goes back to childhood because I was never a mixer and that may go back to being an only child. So who knows?

[18:07]

If I can go back, you mentioned going into banks and shops, and so on. You seem to be very aware of what rights you have. Do you feel or can you tell me more about your feelings when going into shops about what they should provide?

No. I think if they -- I think if the loop system is installed and correctly installed and always on, I think that would answer the problems of most people with -- well, with any -- any -- normal type of hearing loss. I'm not talking about the profound hearing loss, but I think with people in my situation, I'm sure the loop system would deal with most of it adequately. Let me say when I go into the supermarket or wherever on my own, I don't really have any trouble.

Can you describe how you -- how would you describe yourself when it comes to your hearing loss?

I'm not quite -- I'm not quite sure what you mean.

Well, you mentioned profoundly deaf --

Yes.

-- as being different to you. How would you describe yourself?

I think I'm middle of the road. I would think I'm middle of the road deafness. That's how I've always thought it was because, if I take this out, I can probably hear you, but if it was a young lady talking or a young lady came in over there and said something, I probably wouldn't be able to -- I would know she was speaking to me because I would hear, but I wouldn't know what she was saying.

All right.

But, if I were to put this on, I'd probably be able to hear her.

So is that what benefits you again from the hearing aid, the clarity?

Yeah, oh, yes. It isn't the degree of sound. It is, as you have just said, the clarity becomes more pronounced.

[20:48]

Is there any other equipment that you have, apart from the hearing aids, that you use?

We haven't any. We do talk about getting the loop. I believe you can have it fitted to the television, but we're waiting until we get another television. I think -- I believe we're waiting until we get another television. I think it has to be a particular type of television. Otherwise, you can either hear it, the person can hear it on the loop and the other person can't hear, or something like that. I'm not sure.

Okay. Have you got involved with any organisations?

No, I couldn't -- I couldn't cope with more. No, no. I couldn't cope with any more people. No. But that is nothing to do with my hearing, because I never wanted to mix. I've never wanted to join groups. I like the Cycle Club. They're okay. They're okay, but I'm just as happy on my own.

You are obviously aware of organisations, such as Hearing Concern LINK?

Yes.

Have you used their facilities in any way?

I don't think I know what their facilities are and I -- I don't -- do they run a book scheme? Do they run a book lending scheme or something? I'm not sure.

They may well do.

No, but, no, I've -- I haven't -- I've never bothered.

If I were to ask you to tell me a story that you feel a listener would be interested in to do with your hearing loss --

Oh, crumbs.

-- would you have one? Perhaps something that happened either --

There must have been dozens of occasions when I've -- I can't think of anything. There have been occasions, but I can't bring -- I can't bring anything to mind at all -- where I've misheard something, yes. Yes.

[23:32]

While you're thinking about that, if I can go to something you wrote down on the questionnaire, which was that you mentioned you had tinnitus?

Yes.

Can you describe what that is for you?

Well, I suppose it's tinnitus. Sometimes it comes and sometimes it goes, but it's more -- people talk about tinnitus as bells ringing, don't they? But this is more a buzz all the time. But there's nothing there at the moment at all. But that's how I'd describe it, but it's not permanent. A gentleman downstairs said his wife almost suffers with it constantly. That's terrible.

So do you get it all the time or just a few times?

No, it comes and goes. The other night, when I was laying in bed, I got it, but it didn't stop me going to sleep, and when I woke in the morning it had gone. It comes and goes. I don't think even that's very bad. I'd like to think I haven't made a big thing about my -- my hearing loss. Probably because it's not a very big thing, compared with a lot of other people.

Okay. Unless there is anything else you would like to tell us, I would like to say thank you very much and we're going to conclude the interview now.

[End of Track 2]

[End of Recording]