



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

Jacqui Rawlinson
Interviewed by Marie Gilbert

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Interview Summary Sheet

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Tape 1 Side A [Track 1]

My memories are based on photographs. I've got a photograph of me in a nice, brown coat, a little purple beret, with a yellow badge on. Whether I actually remember wearing that beret, or whether it's the photograph,

Right.

that brings the memory back, I don't know.

Right, well, it seems, I mean, from my recollection it always seems to me like, that, if you've got [background noise, like something's being dropped] a pic, it's on your memory,

[Talking together] Yes.

so it's like, it's etched on your memory,

Yes.

and it's like, if, you, if you've got a picture, and you've looked at it recently,

Yes.

then you can recall it and: OK it was, quite a way back but like, things can start coming to flood back: do you, do you know what I mean? [Rustling sound.]

I went to this little nursery school, near St Andrews,

[Talking together] *Right.*

which is only, I'm hopeless on distances, about three hundred yards away, [rustling sound],

Right.

but I couldn't walk that far so I used to go on my tricycle. My mum would take me, but I'd be on my tricycle, and I couldn't leave the tricycle at school,

No.

so, but we had a friend who lived across the road from the school and we used to, leave my tricycle in his garden.

Oh right!

[Laughs] and then, just crossed the road and, went into the school.

So that was handy then, wasn't it?

Yes.

For that: and did you like, did you like school?

I think so, yes. I can't remember not liking it. I was able to do most things. I, couldn't do gym, and things like that, and I used to have to sit out on the side,

Oh.

and I wasn't happy,

[Talking together] 'Cos you, did you want

'cos I felt different...

Mm. So did you want to, did you want to join in, with the,

[Talking together] Yes.

say be, say be part of, you'd be part of the crowd?

Yes. I wasn't allowed to go on school trips, but I still had to go to school the day they went on the trips. I'm not sure why I wasn't allowed, [rustling noise] maybe it was the teachers, they didn't want the responsibility of me:

Mm.

I don't know but I was upset: not because I couldn't go on the trips,

Right.

but I had to go to school that day,

Yes.

so everybody else, in my thinking as a child was having a day out:

Sure.

and I was just at school in another class.

So you had to do your academic

[Talking together: laughing] Yes.

work, instead of, instead of saying 'Ooh you can have', instead of the teacher saying, 'OK, you don't have to go, OK you can't go, but you know, you can have the day off' [talking together] kind of thing.

Yeah. I still had to go, and then, for either one year, or two years, it was third year juniors, when I'd be about nine, every Wednesday, I'd go to school, for an hour,

Right.

then my mum would come and pick me up and we'd go onto the, into town on the bus, to Saul Street Clinic,

Right.

and I'd have speech therapy, for an hour,

Uh huh.

and then we'd get on another bus and go to a special school, where I had physiotherapy for an hour,

Right.

and, we'd no car in those days, and so when that was finished, we had to get two buses, one bus back into town and another out again to Ashton,

Yes.

and I wasn't allowed to come home; I had to go back to school,

Yes.

for another hour, and then come home from school, so I went to school, went to two clinics, back to school, and then home again. [Laughs.]

It doesn't seem fair though, that doesn't, does it? Well not to me it doesn't.

It seemed a long day, but also quite enjoyable

[Talking together] Yes.

because I had my mum to myself.

Well that must have been lovely for you.

Yes. There was only two of us at home, my sister's, twenty-one months older, so my parents had a lot of time for both of us, and when I, my mum started work, when I was about eleven or twelve, so in my [sound of something dropping] junior school years,

Right.

Mum was, always here:

Mm hm.

but on Wednesdays, I had Mum to myself, in between the speech therapy and physio, and that was good.

I bet it was. Did you, did you like it, did you like going to, you know, to the speech therapists and [talking together] physio.

I didn't mind; it didn't hurt.

No.

Physio didn't hurt. That was quite good fun really, so I looked forward, although I was tired on Wednesday,

[Talking together] Yeah.

I looked forward to it, and the other, great thing about my childhood,

Right.

and it's lasted all my life, I joined the Brownies, and I had great fun in Brownies,

[Talking together] Yeah, so I

and I loved it, but, [sound of paper rustling] I was only a Brownie for two years. In those days, you had to get a badge. You were enrolled but you had to get, your Golden Bar badge, and part of that badge was skipping,

Yeah.

and I couldn't skip so I couldn't get the badge, and I was waiting for a year for an alternate test, but you couldn't get any interest badges or proficiency badges until you got this,

Skipping

Golden Bar,

Right.

and so I never did anything in Brownies.

But did you enjoy, did you enjoy it?

Yes.

And did it open any door; did it open any doors for you?

Well Brownies didn't, but, when I was eleven I rejoined the Guides,

Right.

and, although we had other tests in Guides,

Uh hum.

some forward-thinking guiders found some alternatives, so I never looked back.

And what alternatives were they, if you can recall?

Well later on, when I was working for my First Class Badge, instead of swimming,

Yeah.

they allowed me to have my Firefighter's Badge,

Oh that was

and things like that.

So was it fun? [Laughs.]

It was.

So what did you do? Have to hold a hose and

Well we had to go to the fire station for a series of lectures.

Ooh!

[Laughs.] And there were a crowd of us going

[Talking together] Right.

so it was, great fun, but I couldn't skip, I couldn't swim,

Right.

but most things, I managed, some things I had help with: my needlewoman was very difficult to do.

Oh like, yeah, I can imagine. I mean we've all go our own ways of doing things, haven't we?

[Talking together] Yes, yes.

I mean we cut our cloth accordingly, and we always try to do it so that, like, OK we've got unorthodox ways of doing things,

Yes.

but we get there in the end, don't we?

[Sound of pages rustling.] Yes, yes, there are different strategies

[Talking together] That's what, that's what I mean.

of coping mechanisms and you just cope.

Of course you do, you have, it's a case of you have to.

Yes.

Isn't it?

The Guides taught me, the Guide movement taught me to think for myself:

Right.

to look after myself,

Yes.

and it's given me a positive and an outlook on life, and forty years later, I was still in the Guiding movement, and I still enjoy all the contacts, and [talking together: inaudible] friends.

Oh right, did you, did you make a load of friends then?

Yes.

And you still, are you, do you still keep in contact?

Yes. What, the group I'm with at the moment,

Right.

I've only known in the last ten years,

Right.

but we go away together for, two or three days every year: we have a reunion,

Oh!

together. [Laughs.]

So I bet that's fun: catching up with everybody,

Yes, yes.

and hearing all the news and

Yes, yes.

So do you get invited to other, all the other things as well, apart from the reunions?

Yes, locally, I'm in the Trefoil Guild now, but we get invited to all the Brownie and Guide events. [talking together: inaudible.]

Can you explain what that is please?

The Trefoil Guild is open to anyone, mainly over eighteen,

Right.

but it's anyone, male or female, who is willing to make the Guide Promise,

Yes.

and there are numerous groups, all over the country.

Right.

The one I'm in is mainly retired ladies. When, as in most things, there's a retirement age, so in Guiding it's sixty-five, and you've got to come out of uniform,

Really?

then, and the Trefoil Guild is mainly made up of retired guiders,

Right.

but I joined when my local Guild was formed, twenty-five or so years ago, when I was a Guider,

Yes.

I joined mainly because the local Guild meets at my church,

Right.

and I, at that time, I felt obligated, because it was on my doorstep to become a member, but now I'm not in uniform, I gave that up a number of years ago, I still enjoy the Trefoil Guild. [Banging noises. Muffled conversation.]

Well she told me that it was fully charged. [Sound of mic being moved.] I'd say that that's still ... [Sound of rustling paper.] So this Trefoil Guild, you enjoyed it then?

Yeah. Still do.

Good.

Yes.

Did you have any friends at school?

Yes. I've lost contact with most of them now, but I think I was very lucky: junior school especially, apart from gym and country dancing, and those sort of, not being able to take part in those sort of things, I can't remember being treated any differently, and all my friends, didn't treat me any differently, and we went to Brownies: well we didn't go to Brownies together because we all went to all our church units,

Right.

but we went to parties and we went out, and I was just one of the crowd, [laughs]

[Talking together] Well that is good then isn't it?

so ... yes, yes.

That's good and

Yes, so it was later on at secondary school,

Yeah.

when the differences started to come in.

Right, yeah, 'cos like you see the chi, you see, you see different people have different, perspectives, don't you?

Yes: and in the fifties, I'm single now, I don't have much to do with children, I don't know education: in the fifties, in junior school,

Right.

you stayed in the one classroom, [banging noise in background] with one teacher.

Right.

There was no moving about or, any, so, apart from the physical activities I didn't have many problems at school.

[Starts to say something.]

When I moved on to the second school,

Yes.

the teachers stayed put, and you moved round, between lessons, carrying all your books, and [interviewer laughs.]

That can't have been fun for you:

No.

well I bet, 'cos I bet they were heavy weren't they?

Yes.

And did no-one offer to help?

No, no. We had a new deputy head when I was in the second year,

[Talking together] Right.

I was twelve, thirteen, and he found out some kids who were, sort of bullying me,

[Talking together] Right.

but I don't think it really upset me, I just got on with it.

Sure: and did he have a word with them?

I think he did but it didn't stop,

Oh!

but it wasn't ... it ... it wasn't really nasty, well it was just more fun-provoking: or I didn't see it as nasty, perhaps, today, I might see it as, but I just brushed it off.

Sure yeah, you think 'Oh it's just childhood fun', don't you?

Yes, yeah.

But really, you get hurt, don't you?

Yeah. I didn't really let it hurt.

No but, like it does; if you, it's like if you bottle something up:

Yeah.

You can't, you know, you can't, you, you've got to let it out somehow:

Yes.

haven't you? But do you think that they got excluded then?

No.

They didn't get excluded from school?

No: no, nothing like that, they just 'had a word' but it didn't work, so, I don't, think it was really bullying in,

Right.

the sense you hear of it today.

OK

The main difference at school for me,

Right.

was when it came, nothing was done for the first four years:

Right.

But when I came to my O level year,

Right.

they thought 'What can we do to help Jacqui in her exams?' which was in those days, it was the exam and nothing but the exam, there was no project work to be marked on, and they came up with allowing me extra time in the exams, and some of my classmates weren't happy about that because they said they never: having got the extra time:

Right.

I could take as long as I wanted,

Of course.

and so I finished all the questions in every exam, and some of my classmates said 'That's not fair,' cos they couldn't finish, and then a teacher would re-write my paper, 'cos my writing's very difficult to follow,

Right.

so, I passed all my O levels.

Excellent, [Jacqui laughs] well done so that's given you something to be proud of,

Yes, yes.

Hasn't it?

Yeah.

And what the other children must, I mean the other students must have been, OK they must have been a bit jealous probably.

I think it was; I think it was jealousy. 'Why has she had extra time? It's not fair.' You know.

Was it one particular person then or was it a group?

Well one stands out, but I think she was egged on by others. [Laughs.]

Right, yeah. I, I, to me that sounds more like a dare.

Yeah.

'Oh I dare you to.'

It was one particular exam, English Literature,

Right.

where they did complain the most about it.

Right: well then obviously they've got some complaint against themselves.

Yeah.

than, than you, than you, you know, than you. I mean did you revise really, really hard?

I think I did because, whether it was ... in my mock exams, just before Christmas in my GCSE year, I didn't have the extra time,

No.

and whether it was that and my writing I failed all my mock exams,

Oh no!

so when it came to the proper ones,

Yeah.

I think I did a lot of homework and revision so,

So that

So that threw them all. [Laughs.]

Excellent! Excellent. Could you also tell me, oh have you lived in Preston all your life?

Yes. Actually this house, more or less.

Right, so is, is this your childhood home?

Yes. I was actually born in that house there.

Oh right!

Well, I was born in the hospital, but we lived in that house next door, but it only had one room, downstairs,

Yeah.

and my parents wanted two rooms so, when I was three months old,

Yeah.

they took the fence down and, [laughs] moved,

Oh what?

and then ... in the late sixties, when I finished school,

Right.

the career options were opened, but everybody said 'Oh Jacqui can't cope at University. Jacqui wouldn't be able to cope on her own,' so I did face some blocks there:

Right.

I don't know whether you want to go into that now or [laughing] next time.

Probably, probably Uni would be, next time,

Next time.

If that's OK

That's fine.

You know, 'cos that, I mean Uni's a completely different area isn't it?

Yeah, but I didn't get there.

No.

But, so I stayed here,

Right.

then, when I was thirty,

Right.

I was thinking 'What's going to happen to me?' 'cos my parents didn't own this house,

Right.

and I thought 'Some day I'm going to be on my own,' so I did leave home, and I bought a flat,

Right.

and I lived there for seven years: only a mile away,

Right.

but I lived independently for seven years.

Yeah.

During that time unfortunately Mum died,

Oh dear, I'm sorry.

then Dad had a ... traffic accident,

Right.

and I was running round in circles; I was trying to look after him here,

Yes.

I was in my own flat,

Right.

I had a full-time job,

Ooh!

we had a dog, he was here but he was mine, we had a Labrador,

Right.

so I was helping with the Labrador, and after a couple of years doing that, I wasn't so well, I was running myself down, and I thought, I wanted to look after Dad, so I tried looking for a house, a bungalow nearby, where I could move. Oh, another thing, the flat was on the third storey: no lift, [interviewer laughs] and I could do it, but taking the shopping up and down, and then I had, it had a flat roof, I had problems with the roof and all the rest of it, so I was looking all over for a, [sound of paper rustling] bungalow, so I could move and then hopefully persuade Father to move with me,

Right.

Couldn't find anything, then, after a bit I thought 'You silly thing, he doesn't own it but your dad's got exactly what you want:'

Right.

two living rooms, so that we could each have our own living area:

Yes.

three bedrooms, garage ... 'scuse me.

Are you all right?

Yeah, yeah.

Do you want to?

No I'm, just needed to swallow.

Oh OK

And although we didn't own the house, I managed to persuade the owner to sell it to me,

Right.

so that's what I did, I bought this house, so I came back to my childhood home, but I was away for seven years.

And you, and you were, so this house must hold one hell of, you know, what a lot of memories for you.

Yes, yes.

Does it not?

Oh yes, yeah.

And, is it alright if we talk about that next time as well please?

Yes, yes.

'Cos I'd now like to, you to talk about your parents about me, for me, and what about your friends and the attitudes: you know, if your parents obviously, you know, doted on you,

[Talking together] Yes ... yes yes

right but obviously the people around you that, you know, their attitudes towards you because you being disabled would, could have been different.

The one thing that really stands out is coming back home.

Right.

Well a lot of people, I came back home because Father had an accident, and he needed looking after, but a lot of people said 'Oh, Jacqui couldn't cope in the flat and she's had to go home to be looked after,' whereas, to those who really knew me,

Right.

I was doing the daughterly thing, coming home to look after the elderly parent,

Right.

but people who only half-know me, thought that it was Jacqui going back home to be looked after, and that hurt.

Of course, it must, it must have.

Yes.

I mean they're making, it sounds like they were making assumptions about you,

Yes, yes.

and that you hadn't got a voice or an opinion, so it must have been quite horrible.

And then I had six years in a caring situation, where I was the carer.

And did that give, that gave you a lot of strength though did it not?

Yes, yes. It was jolly hard work as well.

Oh, I can imagine.

It took its toll on me,

Right.

because at that time, I was again running a house,

Yes.

looking after an elderly father,

Right.

a Labrador, had a full-time job, and I got myself elected onto the council of Scope so I was [laughing] running up and down to London,

So,

every other week.

so it must have, so it must have been difficult to juggle, juggle, you know, juggle all balls in the air:

Yes, it was.

was it not? So I mean did, did something give, or did you manage to find five minutes to yourself?

Something had to give. My health suffered in the end,

Unfortunately.

I was forced in the end to retire but, my father died,

Right.

and, and I just fell, physically, I fell apart, I

Right.

think I'd been battling on.

Do you think that could have been down to the stress: the fact that you were really upset because, you know, your dad died, you know and,

Yeah.

I mean bereavement affects people in [talking together] all types of ways don't it?

Yes could've been.

[End of track 1]

Tape 1 Side B [Track 2]

And, I mean, were you very close? Were you a very close family?

Yes. Yeah, my grandparents lived down the road.

Right.

Well they came here when I was about three, my grandfather was a Methodist minister, and they retired here, to be near their daughter,

Right.

and grandchildren, and we were very close. There were only the four of us: Mum, Dad, Liz and myself, and we got on, though we never had a car,

No.

'til I was twenty-one, and I bought a car and I learnt to drive, so we never had a family car 'til I got one.

Liz went away to college at eighteen and she's never been back home [to live]

Right.

so she moved away... when we were kids but we were never really close, she had

[Talking together] No.

her friends and I had mine. She passed at scholarship and went to the grammar school,

Yeah.

and I didn't, I went to the secondary school.

Was that like, when the Eleven Plus was around?

Yeah: yeah. That was a blow to me really, 'cos all my friends, mainly at school and my other friends in the church family,

Right.

I was the only one who didn't go to the grammar school: [talking together] but

And did that make you, I was gonna say, did that not make you more determined,

Yeah looking

and say 'I'm gonna be doing this'?

Yes, looking back, it was probably 'cos I hadn't any advantage, no, concessions: like when I took my A and O levels,

Right.

I had the concessions of the extra time,

Sure.

but when I was eleven, they hadn't thought about that, so I'm sure ... I was grammar school material,

Right, yeah.

but I probably didn't finish all the papers. I can't remember [talking together:
inaudible.]

So I s'pose the tutors didn't notice your, the teachers did not notice your potential,

No.

*until it had got to grammar; 'til, what, what you say, 'til it was, you got to your senior
school or something,*

Yes, yes.

and it was there when they started to realise.

I was all, we had two streams,

[Talking together] The mainstream and the

in junior, junior school and I was always in the mainstream: the A form.

Oh that was good then!

Yeah.

That at least, that must have given you confidence.

Yeah, I was always in the A form and,

Right.

but I was the only one out of a group who didn't go to the grammar school.

Oh! So did that, that must have disappointed you then.

Oh it did yes, and my main disappointment, initially, was the grammar school had to wear hats; they had a winter hat,

Ooh

and a straw boater,

Oo Gawd!

[laughs] and they had to wear; well we didn't have to wear that,

[Talking together] Sounds like

at secondary school.

I was going to say, sounds like something from St Trinian's:

[Laughing] Yes.

You know the, the hat and the [laughing] hockey stick.

And the grammar school had a shirt-style

[Talking together] Right.

dress with buttons and, we could have any dress of the same material: in the sixties, they were mainly shift: very little, just a yoke:

Right.

and straight, no, no skirt, just straight shift, but the grammar school had to have a skirt and a, buttons down the front, and I made my poor mother make me a dress like they had at the grammar school.

Right.

Granted it was in our school material, but I had to have a buttoned down, I had to have the same pattern dress as my sister and friends.

Right.

I remember making Mum,

Did she, did she, did she

She did!

She loved, did she, did she do it?

She grumbled but she did it.

I was going to say, did she complain?

She, oh yes, she was muttering at me but she did it.

So, did you, did you and your mum have a very special bond?

I think so, yes, but unfortunately Mum started being ill when I was thirteen,

Right.

and she died when I was thirty-three: so for twenty years, she wasn't an invalid but she was, not well.

Right.

She was away in hospital a lot of the time.

Right.

In London actually,

Yeah.

she used to go down for six weeks, or, three months at a time so, when I was a teenager and in my twenties it was quite difficult, so,

So, and did you used to, I was gonna say, did you used to try and get up quite often, to see her?

I didn't go very often when she was in London.

[Talking together] Right.

Dad used to go down every weekend, but somebody had to stay here and look after the pets and,

Your sister.

No Liz had gone by then,

[Talking together] Oh, oh sorry.

but in my later teens, 'cos Liz went when I was sixteen.

Right.

She was eighteen.

Right.

And I had to look after Father and the pets and I'm at school working then, and my work work, when I started work so, I did go down occasionally but,

Right.

not as often as Dad went.

And what was it you used to do, work-wise then?

I was a computer programmer.

[Laughing] Oh right!

They trained me on the job,

[Talking together] Yes.

took me at eighteen. The Spastics Society, *[talking together]* Scope or

Yes: it was The Spastics Society then, wasn't it?

I went down for a career assessment, and they found, I had a number of tests and they found I had a very logical mind, and they suggested computing and a local firm, British Aerospace, which was the British Aircraft Corporation in those days, took me on as a trainee programmer, on the understanding that I would [laughing] provide my own electric typewriter. Can you imagine it? They wouldn't buy me [talking together] an electric,

They wouldn't buy you one?

They wouldn't provide me with an electric typewriter; I had to provide my own.

And did you?

Yeah, well Scope did.

Oh they, they [talking together] paid for it.

They, they loaned me an electric typewriter, so instead of writing out my programs: we're talking about thirty-five years ago now. We used to have to write out the code,

Right.

onto forms, and then the punch room would punch them up, before they'd go into the computer, but I used to type my programme code up. Now it's all changed.

Of course it's all changed hasn't it?

Yes.

Electronic typewriters

[Talking together] Yes.

aren't, aren't even, well, it's very rare that they're used: it's 'cos it's all turned computerised now.

Yes. Yes, so,

So do you look at, you know, do you know anything of the computers of today?

Oh yes, yes. [Talking together] Some,

And do you used one

some people say I'm a wizard but I don't know. I've got four computers

[Talking together] Really?

Now. Two laptops and two desktops and I use them all,

Yeah?

for different things.

Excellent! So is this what this course is that you do on the Friday?

Yes.

It's computer course.

Well, I'm playing about with digital photography.

Right.

Two, three years ago I, did my EDCL:

Right.

European Computer Driving Licence, and I did that in double-quick time, some people take months to do it: mine was a seven-week, one day a week for seven weeks, and I [sound of paper rustling] was on holiday for three weeks,

Right.

and I did it in four weeks!

And you still did it. [Jacqui laughs.] Excellent! Excellent, so again that gave you some,

Yes.

confidence.

So, I'm laughing 'cos of the thirty years in the industry,

Right.

that piece of paper is the only computing [laughing] qualification I've got.

But it can take you, I should imagine now it could take, it could take you anywhere.

If I wanted it to, [talking together] yes.

Yeah, if, if you wanted it 'cos it's

'Cos it's recognised by the British Computer Society.

Is it?

But while I was at work for thirty years and never had any piece of paper.

[End of track 2]

Tape 2 Side A [Track 3]

Right. [Talking together] Well

I was lucky when I went in, in 1969,

Yes.

you could go in without many qualifications, I went in on my A levels and O levels, but now, the job I was doing you wouldn't get in without a good degree, so I was lucky in that I went in when the industry was taking off.

Yeah, it is, it is very, it's very difficult to

It's very different now: [talking together] very different now.

Yeah. [Loud turning of pages.] What was I going to say? And what did it feel like, to do, to be different? And has it changed much?

The change, when I was growing up, I never felt any different at all.

Right.

Most, all the family never treated me, any different: differently to my cousins. They made a few allowances,

[Talking together] Right.

that was just, Jacqui and the way she. Surprisingly enough, it was only when I started working at Scope,

Right.

that I felt a bit different. And today I get very annoyed at words like 'courageous' and ... I just get on and do things, but a lot of people sort of put you on a pedestal. I do a lot of travelling on my own,

Right.

and I don't think anything of it. I want to do it, and I just get on and do it, and some people are horrified and, it's, you've really got to know somebody,

Right.

before you can make any judgements.

Oh yeah!

A guider once was horrified when I said I drove... She said 'Well how will you get there?' 'Well I can drive.' 'You drive? How on earth do you?' It's as though they see the word, 'disability' of a condition, and they put their own interpretations on it,

[Talking together] That's right.

so it doesn't matter what you are,

Right.

it's your outlook on life,

That's right.

and if you can, I don't think I'm any different to anybody, it takes me longer to do some things but it's your outlook and your determination,

Course it is.

and it's,

You must never ever lose that. Never.

but some people put you on this pedestal and sometimes you're frightened you're not living up to the

Expectations.

Expectations.

I know, I know what you mean. I can see, I can empathise with you on that, but I should, I could, I can imagine

[Talking together] Yes, yes. Yes.

that people see disability as disability, not an ability;

Yes.

They just see the shell,

Yes.

don't they? You know, the fact that, they see the disability,

Yeah.

not the person.

Contradictory, that's a good word that: it does work the other way round. Some people don't make any allowances,

Right.

for my disability, and sometimes I get hurt when they expect me to do things I find difficult ... I'm pleased that they don't see it, but I can get hurt when they think I can do something which I can't. [Laughs.]

Sure, sure. So do you find, have you come across much oppression: or discrimination, you know? [Talking together] Discrimination.

Quite a bit, I wouldn't say 'oppression'. Discrimination. Two things really stand out, one, once at work, these comb binder things,

Right.

I was really struggling to do that, and someone was getting really annoyed with me, 'Well come on it's easy' and I just couldn't do it, and that upset... It pleased me in a way that, they thought I was on a level where, they could do it, why couldn't I?

Right.

but it upset me in that they were getting annoyed at me, 'cos they couldn't, they were blinkered, they couldn't see that I was having difficulty, and last night actually, one of these ceiling light bulbs went, and I can't do things like that.

You can't change a light bulb.

I can't change a light bulb, and that

So, does it, is it still, is it still

No, a friend came in and she did it in ten: well not ten seconds: two minutes. That annoys me, that, but it's not discrimination.

Oh no, it's not discrimination.

That annoys me, that I can't do things like that: I get frustrated with myself.

I've gotta admit, I can't change light bulbs: I can't change them; [talking together] but lamps, I've just about mastered how to do them, it's 'cos I've got a dexterity with my right hand

Yes. Yes. Yes.

you see so, I can't, but, I you know, I mean, I've got a way of doing it. I'll just tend [laughing] to ask other people to do it for me.

Well, you learn to cope and you find other ways of doing things,

Right yeah.

sort of, 'Oh I never thought of doing it like that,' well, you have to, sometimes.

That's what I say we've all got unorthodox,

[Talking together] Yes. Yes.

and our own ways of doing it,

Yeah, yeah.

and it's just, the, our own, you know, it's just ways of doing it, isn't it?

Yes. Yeah.

You know, we, we do it, we all do it different but, the end result should be,

Yeah.

what it should be:

Yeah.

don't you think?

Quite: quite. Everyone's an individual.

Of course.

But people, do hurt you rather than discriminate,

Against you.

against you. There's a lot of hurt because a lot of people say things without thinking.

Well I do it sometimes; we're all guilty of it.

Uh huh. So, what are your, what are your friends, you know, do you have many friends now?

Yes, I've got some very close, good friends.

That's what I mean; [talking together] I mean that you can really

Yeah, yeah I have, yes. Yeah, yeah.

rely on and really call friends.

Not many but I've got a group of, a small group of friends I can rely on, and then I've got a wider group of friends [talking together] in

Right.

the church and Trefoil Guild and,

Yeah?

other places.

Well that is, yeah, I'm glad, you know,

Yeah.

I'm pleased that you have.

But I had some problems early in the year.

Right.

I fell and I injured my shoulder,

Oh right.

and for three months I couldn't drive.

I was going to say, are you all right now?

Not really. I'm a lot better than I was but I've got an electric scooter,

Yes.

and a bike, and I can't use those yet because I can't hold my arms out in front of me,

And do the steering.

but I can steer the car, 'cos me, my arms are bent but I can't hold it out straight in front of me [talking together: inaudible.]

So was it, was it painful for you then?

Yeah, but I had problems shopping: well, for three months I was snookered. Very few people thought 'Oh, Jacqui's not driving – does she need some help?'

Really? [Prior recording of woman cuts in, then break in recording?]

I know, we've been talking quite a bit.

About fifty minutes. [Sound of paper rustling.] We'll stop this now.

How to stop.

[Sound of mic being moved.] I'm really [End of recording.]

[End of track 3]

Tape 3 Side A [Track 4]

That's going round. So, do you want to, do, where we left off last time, we were talking about, you worked in an electrical factory, didn't you? Weren't you? Where we left off last time?

Yes.

Do you want to tell me a typical day, if you can?

Did we talk about how I got the job?

No you didn't so

Right.

Go on then.

Well I was taking my A levels and the careers advisers were speaking to me, and every time I thought of something I was interested, in they all put stumbling blocks in the way. I thought about librarianship, but no, I couldn't carry the books: I thought about teaching: and, but no, completely unsuitable: no way, so, I thought about trying to go to university: 'No, you wouldn't be able to cope.' I don't think anybody expected me to get my A levels, so,

So it was a big surprise for them: than, than it was for you as well?

Yes: and I got my two A levels in Maths and English, and by the time I got the results, I'd left school, so the school careers advisory ... Is it going round?

Yes: yeah, it's going round.

They'd written me off by then. Because I'd left school, they weren't interested, so it was up to my family to try and find me some work:

Right.

and while I was in the sixth form we were put in contact with Scope, which then was then was The Spastics Society, and I went down to London for two days of aptitude tests, and they suggested that a career in computing might be the avenue to take, so, when my A level results came out, and I had two A levels, we contacted some local firms. I went for an interview at County Hall for Lancashire County Council, and the only way into computer programming without a degree was through the punch room, so I had an aptitude test for the punch room, and a physical test, but whether I was naive, or what, but nobody explained to me that if you made a mistake in punching the card you put it in a different pile, to the correct ones, so when they came to verify them the cards were full of mistakes and so I failed that test so they turned me down, [laughs] point-blank.

Right.

I then got an interview with British Aircraft Corporation, and they were quite happy to take me on as a trainee programmer, on the one proviso that I had an electric typewriter, and, in 1969: so, what, thirty-six years ago? they were quite expensive and quite new technology, but the Spastics Soci... Soci... can't say it: Society, stepped in and lent me a typewriter, and so I was able to take up my first post as a trainee programmer.

Did you enjoy it?

Yes, I never really looked back. I thoroughly enjoyed computing. The aptitude tests showed that I had a logical mind and I loved maths, and that was the way forward for me: and, I trained as a COBOL programmer and on my first day at work it was, 'Right, here are the books: get on with it,' so I didn't go on any training course. It

was a teach-yourself COBOL book. Obviously I had a training officer, who helped me, but I had these guide books to read and I read my way through those, and I started programming.

And what did you think to the attitudes to... from other people, towards you?

I can truthfully say, for the first ten years or so I was just one of the programmers. There was no discrimination; I just joined in. The only allowance I had was instead of writing out the programmes long-hand; I did it on the typewriter. The punch room actually thought it was great. We're talking about thirty-five years ago, when computing was a new industry, and in fact I've just bought a new PC and the memory on the small laptop, the memory in that is far greater than the commercial machine we had in the late 60's, which, the computer room was large, it wouldn't fit in this house: it was a big room with massive equipment,

Right.

the way to get programs onto the machine, in those days, the programmer had to write them out and a punch girl read your forms and punched cards. These were then read into the card-reader on the machine. Nowadays, everybody just has a keyboard in front of them and does them, their own work on the desk, but, in those days we had to, before you got to the computer you had to write out the logical statements on a piece of paper, which was then transformed onto cards, or paper-tape, and then read into the machine, and the point of this: why I'm telling you this, the punch room actually liked my forms better, because they were all typed out, so it was easier for them to read than normal handwriting.

So did you get a lot of praise?

Yes, yes. My, I can honestly say, in the first few years, I don't think there was any discrimination because of my disability at all:

Right.

which I'm very pleased about.

That's good.

Yes.

Oh, what about the employ, what about your bosses towards you? Were they all right with you?

They were fine: I had no problems at all. In the last few years, I wondered once or twice, whether my disability was holding me back, but I was employed for twenty-seven years:

Right.

mainly as a programmer, but I branched out into training, where every six months I'd have some graduates to whip into shape, so, there were two of us, a colleague and myself, we set up the course, for these graduates, and we ran six-month training courses, which were in a class-room environment, but by that time we'd all got our own PCs on our desks, so, and modern equipment, so we... I never had any difficulty, expressing myself on a black-board. I'm saying that wrong, because I didn't need to use a black-board: we had all the modern equipment, which was statutory, and the students; they'd pull my leg: they accepted me as I was, they didn't make allowances for me, and I could be just as tough on them as my colleague, and they didn't play me up and get away with things.

So you enjoyed being

Yes.

So you have been a lecturer really,

Yes.

[??]

Yes.

Where did you teach that?

That was at British Aerospace, I stayed, I've only ever had one employer, and I stayed with them

So you went from department to department?

Well I stayed in the same department.

Right.

It was, I mean service, what ... This isn't exactly true, because after I'd been there twenty-four years BAC, renamed as British Aerospace, in their wisdom decided to out-source all the computer staff and I, along with all my colleagues, was sold off to Computer Sciences, and I ended my career, the last three years, with Computer Sciences, but I was still on the British Aerospace contract, so I was still working for, the work content was the same as always, I was employed, I had a different employer but the work content was the same.

And did you enjoy every minute of it?

I did. I never had a day off; I never had a day's sickie. Unfortunately I had a few illnesses and I did, in my twenty-seven years, have about two and a half years off, but that was legitimately sick, but I never took a day's sick, because I was fed-up, or

feeling down or, I wanted to do something, and I never had a hol, I took all my holidays, but I never had a day's holiday, just because I was fed-up at work and I thought, 'Oh I've got to get out of here; I'll take a couple of days off.' All my holidays were planned, and I was doing something special. I never took a holiday just because I felt, 'Oh I'll have tomorrow off and do nothing.'

And did you get any, you know, what was the support like from your family network, when you were working?

Fine. I don't think I really needed any support. They, obviously, they were pleased for me and supportive, but I'm fortunate in that [talking together] I'm so independent that I did not need 'physical' support, they always encouraged me it whatever I wanted to do.

Encouragement, and if they, if you, if you, if you struggled with anything, that they were there to help you? That's what I meant, I worded it wrong.

They were, but, I don't think I ever struggled at work. It was something I did, and I didn't really need any encouragement, because I loved my job,

That's right.

and

So where did, so what happened after you left there?

Unfortunately I was taken ill at work. I think, leading up to ... I, sorry, can we start that again? Can I have a, two, two minutes? [Break in recording.]

Right.

Yes.

Issues arising

To me finishing work.

Yes.

Right. In the three years leading up to having to finish work: so, for a number of years before that, I'd been working voluntarily at Scope, on their regional committee and with the local group, and then in 1993, I got myself elected to the National Council, the Executive Council of Scope, which I thought I could fit in around work, and I did for a few years, but then my father became ill, and eventually he died, coupled with, when British Aerospace sold: what's the word? Outsourced all their computer staff to this American company, I had to change my office and instead of working seven miles, just outside Preston, on the right side, where I didn't need to go through Preston: it was a very easy run into work: I was transferred to Chorley, which although only slightly further in distance, took a lot longer because of traffic, so my travelling time doubled in the day, and with the issues after father, I was just burning myself out, and it came to a crunch one day when I wasn't aware of this, but it came to a crunch one day when I collapsed at work, and it was the 999, flashing blue lights, etc, and Casualty, but the outcome was after a few weeks at home, I was told that I was burning myself out, and if I carried on doing that, there'd be no more [laughing] Jacqui, in a few months, so, it, it was good in a way. Scope helped me at this time again. I did go down to see a consultant who specialised: is that the right word?

Yes.

Specialised in cerebral palsy; and I had a long chat with her. I was forty-six at the time, and it was the first time that anyone had sat down with me and really talked about cerebral palsy and how it affected me; because when I was a child, I was at clinics all the time. My parents were always carting me off to see this specialist, that specialist, but obviously they talked to my parents, I was a child and they didn't talk

to me. Nobody had ever sat down with me and really told me what was going on with my body, etc, etc, and this wonderful female consultant explained that, what I was doing, the physical thing, I was doubling up on the energy. It took far more energy for me to do a simple task than, I hate to use the word, 'normal', non-disabled people, and I really appreciated this doc, it was a shock, but I appreciated what she was saying, and a few weeks later her written report was sent to me and my GP and the outcome, the bottom line was, 'Jacqui must slow down [laughs] and change her lifestyle.' She said I was horrendously overweight. Well I did something about that, but unfortunately it's crept back, but she said 'I had to change something', and she virtually gave me two options: she said 'Carry on working and stop everything else,' which would mean I had, I would have a job but no social life, or 'Give up working and cut down, but carry on doing the things that you like to do,' and the second option had the better outlook, from the personal perspective, and fortunately, I am financially secure and stable, so I could go down that line, and I shared it with work, and they agreed, they accepted the report, and so I retired on health grounds, and I can't say 'I've never looked back,' because the last few years haven't been easy either, but I've not regretted having finished work. Now, this might sound a bit funny, because I was saying, 'I loved work, and I never had a day off,' but, and if somebody had said to me June 1997, 'Next week, you'll finish work and never work again,' I would have been devastated, but it happened. I was ill for a few months and I had time to think about it, and the outcome was 'Well yes, perhaps finish employed work,' but a lot of people were encouraging me and supporting me, saying 'Well, there's a life outside work Jacqui,' and now, if you said, if somebody offered me a job: no way! I don't want to be tied down to going into work. I do lots of voluntary things,

Right.

but now I can do it on my terms and choose when I do it. Even that is a bit of a headache at, sometimes, when you commit to something, but generally, I used to get up at half-six in the morning: I had a Labrador, so I had to go out on the park with him; prepare my father's meals before I went to work: all that's gone now. I can get up when I like, and I can do what I like.

So what sort of voluntary work do you do?

Well, [laughs] obviously I mentioned a few times, Scope. I was on the ... See, my Scope work all goes back to a holiday, and anyone who knows me, knows I love travelling. Well back in 1979, I think it: no, 1981, we had a family worker in our local Scope group, and she came round one Thursday: I don't know why, but I know it was a Thursday evening after work and said 'There's a club connected with the Spastics Society called the 'Uphill Ski Club,' and she said, 'Would you like to go on a skiing holiday?' So my parents were with me at the time, and no one says to me 'Would you like to?' and I'm there. Obviously if it's something I want to do. Anyway, I did go on this skiing holiday and I went again two years later, I enjoyed it so much, but when she offered me this she said, 'Oh, by the way, would you be interested in serving on the committee of the local group?' and I thought about it. My parents have been on the committee when I was a child, they were some of the founder members of our local group, and I know they helped me at work, getting a typewriter, so I thought 'Yes. I'll give something back to them; I'll go on the local group.' Well, I went to the first meeting, and they said, 'Oh we need a new member, a nominee member to the Regional Committee: would you be interested?' And 'The meetings are in Manchester four times a year, and you'll go to the AGM in London once a year: would you be interested in that?' so, I thought and then I said, 'Yeah, I'll do it,' so I started going to the Regional Committee: this is all voluntary, and after I'd been on the Regional Committee, I think only two or three years, I found myself Vice Chairman, and a few years later, I had the opportunity of standing for the Executive Council, so I stood and I got on it, and I had eight rewarding years of being on the Executive Council of Scope, including one year as Vice Chairman. I was on various committees. I got used to the railway line between here and London. Sometimes I was down every other week. The last couple of years I was up and down like a yo-yo. It's a three-hour trip on the train from Preston to London, and I got so used to it. Going, I generally re-read my papers, but I only needed to lift my head up, look out of the window and I knew exactly where we were, because I've done it so often, but

that's that ... I've forgotten where I was. Why did I? [Laughing] What voluntary work?

Yeah.

Yes.

Yeah, that's what you were telling me, but. That [talking together] sounds interesting, what you were saying.

Yeah, the, the Council work was hard work. The paperwork was horrendous. One meeting of Council could generate two inches of paperwork, and if you did your job properly you would read it all, and take it all in. Very rewarding, and being on Council wasn't just the council meeting.

[End of Track 4]

Tape 3 Side B [Track 5]

The Executive Council isn't just one meeting, you do serve on other committees, and for two years, I was The Chairman of Scope Individual Grants, which had a budget of £220,000 a year, and I was responsible, along with other committee members, to giving this out to other individuals with c.p., for aids, equipment, holidays, help in the home: you name it, we got requests. We had a limit for each individual, but anything under, any request under £200, came to me as Chairman, and one other member of the committee, on the nod that we had to read all these requests, but anything over £200 went to the full committee, so that took a lot of work. I'd get two or three parcels, every week with about fifty grants that I had to read.

So was it difficult to decide whether they could have the money or not?

Quite difficult. We had a tick-board, kind of thing, on merits and we had to go into all sorts of things.

So it was like an award scheme, was it?

Yes. But, it wasn't that difficult deciding, but the difficulty was in reading all the information and the back-up information, that was time-consuming. Fortunately I did that after I finished work; there was no way I could have coped with having to do that amount of paperwork as well as going out to work. My year as Vice Chairman, apart from, obviously the work involved, being Vice Chairman, which was more than being on the committee and the responsibilities, I had a wonderful social life that year. It was an off-spin of being in that position in a large charity, and I was fortunate in being invited to Buckingham Palace.

So you met the Queen?

I not only met and talked to the Queen on that night; I met and spoke to Philip, Edward, Sophie, Andrew and Ann.

Oh, so this must have been quite recent then?

The year 2001.

Oh, right, yes!

It was a special reception for people working in the voluntary sector. It was an evening reception, and there were ten of us representing Scope, and I just lapped it up. We all trooped up... Of course, I had to have a new outfit first of all, and my, I had a query before hand: whether to wear a hat or not, and I was asking various people, because I had been to the Palace before: as a trustee of Scope, I went to a garden party. I think that was 1997, and, of course for a garden party, hats were obligatory, but I didn't know about an evening reception, so that was a query, but after enquiring from a few friends, I found out that hats weren't worn after six-thirty' and as the reception started at seven, there would be no hats, so it was a new outfit: and then, just the atmosphere of being in the Palace, and we were all allocated to a room. I think there probably were eight hundred, nine hundred people there, and about a hundred of us in each room, and then the Royals would wander in and out of each room and, if you were lucky, you were, and I think I was very lucky because [laughing] I spoke to about six of them. .

So you, I bet you loved it didn't ya?

I did. That was, so, I thought that was it, but, a couple months afterwards, I got another envelope with the Royal coat of arms on. I thought 'What now?' and I'd been invited to St. Paul's Cathedral, to the Hundredth Thanksgiving Service for The Queen Mother.

When?

For her birthday in, hundredth birthday in August, 2001.

Oh, right.

Yeah, the same year that I'd been to the evening reception ... So I think six people were invited to represent Scope.

Did you go?

Yes. That was [laughing] another new hat. That was a new hat, that one. I didn't quite buy a new outfit... Unfortunately I wore the same suit,

Right.

that I wore earlier: it was the same year, February and June: I don't think the Queen would have noticed.

Oh no, I'm sure.

Well actually, I was nowhere near the Queen, but at least I was in the Cathedral, and when I stood up in the hymns, I could just see the rim of her hat, the Queen Mother's hat, obviously, I recorded it and I actually saw far more, watching the recording than I did when I was in the service, but just the atmosphere of being there...

Like I say, not many people can say they've like, met the Queen twice, like and spoken to her twice, can they?

Well, I didn't meet her in the Cathedral actually, [talking together] but she was there.

No but you, you've, you've seen her, and to, you know, to say that you've been there

Yes. Yes.

is absolutely, you know. I bet you were shell-shocked when the letter came through the door, were you not?

Yeah, but it doesn't end there.

Go on then.

This isn't Scope, another voluntary work I do. Well, it's not voluntary. It is voluntary, it's not work: since the age of seven, I've been a member of the Guides Association.

Right.

I was a Brownie, Guide, Guider, and I've been in Trefoil Guild now for nearly twenty years: over twenty years. I'm getting old, older!

Just explain to me what Trefoil Guild is, will you?

Trefoil Guild... I've got to be careful at the moment because, they're re-establishing what it is: the non-uniform section of the Guides Association.

Right.

So it's open to anyone over the age of eighteen, who has made the promise, or is willing to abide by the rules, by not actually making the promise, but understand the principles and abide by the principles etc, of the Association, so we are mainly ex-guiders, who support Guiding and meet socially... who are no longer in uniform, and, although it's completely different to Scope, being a charity, the hierarchy is very similar, and after working at local level, County level, regional level, I also found I was elected to the National Council of The Trefoil Guild, which for three years ran simultaneously while I was on Scope's Council, so I was on their Council in the year 2001, the same year I'd been to Buckingham Palace and Queen Mother's Birthday.

Because of her Hundredth Birthday, she had a big Pageant on Horse Guards' Parade, and because she was Patron of the Trefoil Guild, I got one of those invitations [talking together] as well!

Oh.

So, two weeks after going to St. Paul's, I found myself back in London on Horse Guards' Parade.

Excellent!

And then to end the year, I actually wasn't Vice Chairman at the end of the year, at the AGM somebody else was voted in, I had a reception with the Duke of Kent, in 2001 that was through my work with the Scope Individual Grants Committee.

So you enjoyed that?

Yes.

So that, so, so you ended that year on a high, then?

The social aspects of being involved with charities can have spin-offs, so there is some fun out of all the work...

That's all right. So, do you, what do you do now? What sort of voluntary work do you do now?

After twenty-three, four, years I've been on the committee of Preston Scope, most of those I was Chairman: sorry, most of those I was Vice Chairman and the last few years, I was Chairman, but two years ago I decided to finish, my active involvement with them and they asked me to be a Vice President, so I'm still going to the local group, but I, and I've started, or I'm about to on Thursday, start a project for them, but

I don't do very much now with the local group. I'm on the sidelines, but I don't go to committee meetings etc. I'm still involved with the National Council of The Trefoil Guild, but I don't call that 'voluntary work', that's ... social, it's fun, and I am involved in three ways with that, I'm the Local Secretary, I'm the County Treasurer and I'm the Region Press and PR Advisor. But it is fun, voluntary work, but it isn't, it, it's fun and I do it because, I want to, and I get a lot out of it: but it's fun, [laughs] so it isn't work, it's fun. I'm the Chairman of Governors at a local disabled children's school, which is run by Scope, but again, apart from the work, it's fun. Tomorrow we're, it's a very small school, there's only nine pupils at the moment because they have very severe, challenging, behaviour, but tomorrow the whole school, bearing in mind that it's only nine kids but a lot of support, we've got a big red double-decker bus and we're going to Blackpool illuminations.

Lovely.

We're leaving at four o'clock and we're going out for fish and chips, and then we're going round the lights, so that will be fun, so with every voluntary work, I think, you've got to do it because you want to, and you've got to have some fun out of it... but there is quite a bit of work, being a governor, and sometimes it's difficult and not very pleasant.

I suppose it can also be very challenging as well, can it?

Yes. Yes.

So do you get involved in any of the, less, like the running that goes on?

Yes, as an observer. Unfortunately the children there have got very challenging behaviour, and so I don't have any one-to-one contact with the children. I'm trying to think, only one of them, can you have a conversation with: they haven't any speech, and although I've been on some sign-along courses, it's like with everything, you learn it but if you don't use it, you lose it [laughs]:

Right.

so I think I can sign, 'Good day,' but I can't, I'm not competent enough to have a conversation with some of the, with most of the kids.

So would you go on a course now, you know, a sign language course now?

Well, the one I did was in the summer, it's quite recently.

Right.

But even if it was last week, I don't think a week down the line, down the [talking together] line,

Yeah, I know.

like, I could remember what to do. If I'd come out of that course, and was working full-time with the children I'd be able to do it, but as I'm only in, once every three weeks and I might see different children each time I go in, so it's difficult that way.

Have you made a, you must have made quite a few friends then, as you progressed throughout your working life?

Oh yes, yes, I've got friends all over the country; contacts that I keep in touch with. Are we moving into friends, generally, or?

Well, if you want to mention friends then, you know, because they help in social contact as well: you know, work contacts as well.

Yes... Get my head round this bit. My other great activity, if you can call it that, it's more than a, it's part of my life, is Church, and I have, I do a lot for the local Church, I, it's difficult to talk about but I am,

[Talking together] Well you only talk, you only tell me what you, what you feel comfortable

I am a committed Christian, and I'm part of the local Church family. Going back to my own family, we were a family of four, my parents, my sister and I. I'm now in my fifties: my mum died twenty, twenty-two years ago? My father died what, '95, ten years, 96: [talking together: interviewer inaudible] I can't remember now: ten years ago. My sister left home at eighteen, went to college and through life never came back home. She went to college in Lancaster, trained as a teacher, and got a job in Coventry where she met her husband: this was in the 70's, and their lives have gone on a separate track, they now live in Cornwall, so, I'm on my own now in Preston. I've got two elderly, they'd kill me for saying that, but they are both in their eighties, aunties: well an aunt and a cousin, but family-wise in Preston, apart from these two aunties, I'm on my own, so I do rely on my Church family. I've got some local friends through Scope; I've a lot of friends through Guiding: perhaps we'll talk about this next time, my Guide career,

By all means.

if you can, [talking together] call it that.

By all means, by all means we will.

But, but particular friends: when I started work, in 1969: actually I started a year before, Margaret and Sue, but I didn't have any particular friends at work for that first year, and then these two girls started, a year later and we just hit it off, and although they both got married and left work to have families, quite soon after they started, within five years, we've continued to be great friends, and I think Margaret and Sue

are my two greatest friends. Margaret now lives locally and has got quite an extensive family: children, grandchild, but I'm part of it, and she's like a sister to me she'll, do anything for me. Because of the c.p., I'm not very good with my hands and such like,

Right.

so Margaret does all my sewing and, and it's, she's started making me Christmas cakes for me, and when I was fifty she, well I did ask her, but she made two birthday cakes, and it's, Margaret's a really good friend, and the other girl, now: girl, she's knocking on sixty, [laughs] lives in Kendal, but she's got an extensive family, and I go up there when I can and we just hang out and enjoy ourselves. I've a lot of friends. They're my two main friends, but with Guides and the Church family, I'm not alone, I've got a lot of friends I can call on, so socially, I'm

You're very much in demand aren't you?

Yes, but... we've not touched on this, again, I'm single. I'm not one to go into it, but I had one very short relationship, which wasn't really a relationship, it was a long distance thing, but I have had no regrets at all, about being single, and I'm quite, I'm very happy living on my own. Some people don't understand it, but you're free to do what you like, you've got your own front door, you can go out and be with your friend: I'm fortunate I've got friends: you can go out and be with them when you want and, you can be alone when you want, and living alone doesn't bother me at all. I, sometimes, if I'm not so well, I can go for a few days and not see anyone and I do feel sorry for myself, but sometimes when I'm fine, I can also go for a few days without seeing anyone and it doesn't bother; when I was working, generally Saturdays was very busy, I'd be going' out to meeting and doing my shopping and doing this, doing that. Quite often now, I've got a free day on Saturday, and, the Saturday just gone: I've got a tricycle, which is another story, and I get some exercise. I like to go out on the bike every day, so I did go out on the park on Saturday for twenty minutes, but for the rest of the day I just stayed in, didn't see anybody else, didn't talk to anyone and it just does not bother me; I'm quite happy. I hope people don't think, 'Oh she's a

recluse,' or something but being on my own does not bother me. I'm not somebody who needs other people all the time, obviously, I don't know who said it, 'No man is an Island'. No, you're not!

It sounds like something out of Robinson Crusoe or something, doesn't it?

I think it was, I don't know, it was a philosopher I think, who said it, but

But it's irrelevant

but for a limited time I'm quite happy on my own. I struggle to do things sometimes: physical limitation, but that apart, I'm content with my own company,

That's good.

I don't get lonely. If I'm ill, and I feel a bit neglected then I might mope, but generally, I don't need people around me to continue, and I don't think I'm sad and [laughing] introvert: a sad and introvert person.

No, you don't give, you don't [talking together] seem to me.

but, but I'm happy with my own company.

So have you had any dealings with the green card that Scope? You know the green card, the green employment card? You used to have to carry it in the 80's, I believe it was.

Yes. Yes, it was. What was it? I never referred to it as 'a green card'. I know what you mean. Yes, I had one when I first started work. For a number of years,

PACT used to give it out, didn't they?

Yeah.

Yeah I remember now.

I wouldn't acknowledge it, and I don't think I was counted in British Aerospace's number of disabled people, but, then I started to use it because there were a lot of perks to it.

Go on then, tell us. What were they?

A car park position near the door: near the office door: well initially just a car park position in the office perimeter... For a few years I was down in the car park, down the road, like everybody else. But, what was it called? I've still got it somewhere.

[Talking together] I'm sure, I'm sure

Registration Card

I'm sure mine was called 'a green card'. I always, I was always called, I was always called, it was always called 'the green card', when I used to have one: [talking together] when I used to work.

But I'm twenty years older than you, aren't I?

Yeah.

It wasn't called that. I can't remember, I've got it; I've still got it somewhere.

[End of Track 5]

Tape 4 Side A [Track 6]

That's on. OK. Right you were, your childhood. How old were you when you started Brownies?

Seven. Perhaps, rather naughtily, a few weeks before my seventh birthday.

And what did, what, what was it like at the Brownies?

Well, we played games, we did activities, but I got very frustrated, because when I was Brownie in the 1950's you had to get your golden bar before you could start taking any other badges, and there were eight or nine parts to the golden bar, and one of these was skipping, and I couldn't skip, so I never got my golden bar and so I never progressed in the Brownies.

Why do you think that is?

Well, because I couldn't skip, I couldn't get the initial badge,

Right.

so I wasn't allowed to take any more badges, [sound as if door's opening] so after two and a half years I got a bit fed up and I left, but eighteen months later, when I was eleven, I joined the Guides, and I've never looked back since. I'm, my arm, my right arm was covered in badges, three rows down, so about forty badges.

Right.

I got my First Class badge, and I used to go camping, I really enjoyed the camping, and I got my First Class and all-round cords [*a special badge*], and then I went on to be a Queen's Guide. I completed my Queen's Guide badge. There was a hiccup in my First Class, as in the Brownies, there was something I couldn't do: I couldn't

swim, but my father wrote to the County Commissioner and they found an alternative test for me.

And what was that?

I think it was my Path Finder badge. They accepted that, so I went on and got my All-round cords and my Queen's Guide badge and then I started to become a leader. I ran the Brownies. Well, I didn't run the Brownies, I was the assistant to the Brownies whilst I was taking my Duke of Edinburgh Award, and I got my Silver Award and then the Gold Award, and I went to Buckingham Palace to receive it from Philip,

Right.

Duke of Edinburgh, and then when I was twenty-one, I went to the Munich Olympic Games. This was an indoor camp for disabled seniors, and I think there were about thirty disabled young Guiders from all over the world, and we went to Bavaria and we had about five visits in the fortnight to the Munich games,

Lovely.

which was a real highlight. Back in 1972 that was, and I shouted myself hoarse, shouting for David Bedford.

Who?

David Bedford, he was an athlete: a runner,

Right.

and I can't remember, I could check, I think he got a medal,

Right.

but it was unusual in those days for Britain to have good runners.

Mm hm.

I wasn't there at the final, but I think I was there for the semi-final, or something. The atmosphere in the stadium was wonderful: and then I had a period away from Guiding, I wasn't very well so I gave up. Oh, I should have said, when I was nineteen apart from being Tawny Owl in the Brownies I became Bagheera in the local Cub Pack.

And what did that involve? [Telephone rings]

That, can we switch it off? [Break in recording.]

Right, where were we?

Ba, Bagheera,

Yeah, Bagheera.

in the Cubs.

You were telling me what it involved, being part of this

[Talking together] Yes.

[??], being in the Guides.

Are we on?

Yeah. Yeah. It's, you're fine, go.

Bagheera in the Cubs was exactly like being Tawny Owl in the Brownies, except Brownies we worked with little girls from seven 'til ten and Cubs we worked with boys from eight to eleven, and although the girls were sweet: well sometimes they are at that age: the boys were sweet and mischievous and little terrors, and, we took them camping, the first time we took them away, we went to Great Tower Scout Camp on Lake Windermere. Oh, I'm sorry! Oh! [Break in recording.]

Right, Lake Windermere.

Lake Windermere.

You took them away.

Yes. We hadn't unloaded, they were still getting out of the van, when we were running up to a hospital because one had jumped out of the van and landed and twisted his ankle, so on three o'clock in the morning they were still all awake; little boys away from home for the first time. You pull your hair out, but I liked doing it; it was fun, and I helped my friend Elizabeth run the Cubs for about six years,

Right.

and I was also Brownie Guider: well assistant Brownie Guider at the same time, so I hadn't anything, time for anything else. Wednesday nights were Cub nights, Friday nights were Brownies, and all the preparation we had to do was, took up all my spare time. But then, I wasn't so well, something and nothing, I had appendicitis so I stopped doing it for a bit, and about two years later the County Comm: no the Division Commissioner rang me up and said there was a Brownie Pack: 'Would I be interested in helping out?' and I said 'Yes and no,' and then I said 'No,' and then a few weeks later, she rang up and said 'Well, there's a Guide Company who are really, really, struggling; would you go and help there?' so I said, 'Yes,' so I ended up, not only helping, but running the Company, and I think I had about six years with some fantastic girls, running this Company. We did everything, we went camping, we went

down to London. It was a small Company; I only had a half a dozen, or so, girls, but they were all friends... they all were in the same Sunday School. All their parents were involved in the Church. They were all very enthusiastic, all the parents were keen. They helped me and I got all six of them through the Queen's Guide Award.

You got what, sorry?

All six girls gained the Queen's Guide Award,

Excellent!

in

What did that involve then?

There were various challenges, and various badges you had to do. For instance, the Little House emblem: to get that you've got to take six badges, one for cooking, one for needlecraft, childcare, home-making: things like that:

Right.

and we just did it all together and we all, we just enjoyed it, while we were doing it, we had fun. I remember once, we met upstairs at Church, well in a schoolroom belonging to the Church, and there was a piano in this room and which we weren't allowed to touch and we had a little bouncy ball, the size of a ping-pong ball but a flexible bouncy ball, and it went behind the piano once. 'Don't worry, don't worry, I'll get it. Don't touch any ...' [Laughing] I only knocked the piano over, broke the central heating pipes and there was water spurting everywhere, I couldn't blame the girls, I did it. We got told off for that, but never mind;

Oh dear.

but things like that we, always had fun.

So did you become good friends?

Oh yes. One lives across the road and I've seen her growing up. Well, not her growing up, I've seen her children grow up. She's got a daughter now who's in the Brownies and a son who's a Scout, and one of my other Guides still lives round the corner and I'm thrilled to bits, because I've just become a Godmother to her daughter, and she's,

[Inaudible]

I'm in my fifties, and I hadn't got any Godchildren; I haven't got any nieces and nephews, I've got plenty of children who call me 'Auntie Jacqui', but Natalie is my first Godchild,

[Talking together] And I'll bet [Inaudible] Did you go, did you go to the Christening?

Yes: and she only lives round the corner so, *[talking together]* I

So do you get to see her every single day?

No, not quite, but I see a lot of her,

Right.

and I intend to spoil her: and, and her big brother. Natalie's seven months now and Jack's three, so in a way, Jack is more interesting at the moment, because you can talk to him and, but I intend to spoil them. You ... more interesting in that you can talk and

[Talking together] Yes.

you can play with him, whereas Natalie just sits on your knee and googoes at the moment, but she's delightful, and I'm going to enjoy that.

Oh good, excellent.

Another thing I used to love, which I can't do now, I used to walk,

Right.

and, it started at school, we had a, every time we had a day's holiday like Election Day, that school closed for election, and some teachers and about thirty of us would go off on a coach, up to the lakes, and I think the first mountain I climbed was Bowfell and then I climbed Ingleborough at Ingleton. Not rock climbing climbing, just walking, so I had all the fancy footwear and everything, and being a Guide, I took everything with me. Well, I was prepared. I always had my compass and my maps and my spare socks and my spare jumpers so my rucksack was too heavy really, for me to carry, but we coped. We used to go out with the Youth Club as well.

Is that what got you into all this sort of thing, all this climbing lark, and all this?

Yes.

What you used to do

Yes, and the highlight of my, hiking days was getting to the top of Scarfell Pike,

Oh!

which is the top of England. A friend and I did that, I was, I think I was about thirty, or thirty-one, but, and it took a long time, but just the two of us. We did it, and I've got photographs to prove it.

Excellent.

For quite a long time I went out with groups of friends, quite often to the lakes and we'd just have a walk round.

Right.

I did that with friends and of course with the Guides, and I think a few times I ended up carrying; I was the carry-horse. I think at one point I had twelve anoraks tied around my waist, because the kids couldn't be bothered to carry their own, so I said 'Give it to me,' and I think on one occasion I had twelve coats, and was trudging along at the back [talking together] with twelve c

Well that would pull you down, would it not?

Yes.

And did it?

Yes, well, it made me slower;

Right.

so I was always at the back, but never mind. Nowadays I can't walk very far at all, which is unfortunate, but I have a little scooter, which isn't really sturdy enough for me. I've toppled over once or twice, but I got this small one because I can put it in the boot of the car. If I got a bigger one, I wouldn't be able to, to get it in and out of the car, on my own and that, I think I've only been out on it once this year, but I have a tricycle. This is my third tricycle. No, it will be my fourth tricycle, because I had a tricycle as a kid and I was fine on the tricycle until the accident, but I never could balance on a bike.

Right.

I haven't got the balance. When I was about nine: we're talking about 1959, 1960, so there wasn't the traffic there is now, I used to wander round the local roads: not on the main roads, but the local roads, round about here, on my tricycle, on my own; [laughs] and I started following a milk float.

Right.

I was waiting behind this milk float, waiting for it to go on. [Laughing] It didn't go on did it? It reversed.

[Laughing] Oh no!

So, I ended up under the milk float. [Both laugh]. I wasn't hurt. I cried out

[Talking together] Right.

and it stopped, and all neighbours came out, but my mum was really upset, seeing this milk cart arrive and my bicycle, my tricycle on it and me being, so I was banned. I got, that was in October, the end of October, and I got my Christmas presents early. My grandparents lived down the road and they got a nice big pram, dolls pram, for me, but a really nice one for Christmas, and it was stored at Nana's, but because I was banned from using my tricycle I got that early, so I could walk round pushing. Anyway, in the early 80s, I saw a tricycle. I don't know where; it was somewhere in Preston, but I saw this lady riding on a tricycle and I thought 'That looks nice,' so I made enquiries, I told my parents about it, and they said 'Well, if you want one why don't you have a go?' so we made enquiries and we found somebody who had one, so I went, had a go, and I was fine, so I bought myself a tricycle, and I used it for exercise, but I used it locally, it had a basket on, so, I used it going up to Guides and

going to Church and things like that. Sorry, I'm all right, really. It was a bright yellow tricycle, so I called it,

[Talking together] And so you

'The Yellow Peril'. I used it for a few years, and then, it wore off a bit, and I stopped using it and it just went to rust in the shed, and then, when I was on Scope's Council, I was at a meeting once, on a dreary November day down in London, and I heard about a charity bike-ride to Israel, and I came home and I was thinking, 'I'd love to do that,' and then I thought, 'Don't be daft,' and then I thought, 'I'd like to do it.' Well two days later, I was at another meeting in Yorkshire for Scope, and the Chairman was there, and there was a poster about this bike-ride, and I said to the, Chairman, 'I'd like to do that,' and he said, 'Don't be daft, Jacquie.' I said, 'No, I'd like to do it.' At first I thought it was a cycle-ride from London to Israel, which would have been stupid for me to consider, but when I really read the details, they were going to fly out to Tel-a-Viv and then ride from Haifa round Israel in six days, and I said, 'I could do that. I'd like to do it,' and so I did! [Laughs] I'd got three months to train for it. It was going to be 250 kilometres, in five days,

Right.

and I had to take my own tricycle with me. There were ninety-three people taking part.

Did you parents take part?

You're joking! No, my mother had... Well, my father had just died.

Oh.

My, we were due to go out mid-March, and early in the February, 2nd of February, my father died, and everybody,

Oh, I'm sorry.

It's all right. Everyone was saying, 'Jacqui don't go. You can't do it; you've got enough to cope with, you can't do it.' Mum had died twenty years earlier: no, twenty-one years, Mum had died in '84.

Right.

You'll have to edit that a bit. Do you want me to start again?

No. You carry on.

Just that bit?

Just carry on.

Right. No my father died just before the cycle-ride and everyone was saying, 'Don't go, don't go, put it off, no one will think any the worse of you,' and I was determined to go and it did me the world of good to get right away from everything. Anyway there were ninety-three cyclists; ninety-two people on bicycles and me on this tricycle. Among them were some very fit [interviewer sneezes] people;

Sorry. [Both women laugh] Right, yes.

among them were some very fit people, there was one International Triathlon competitor, and I was full of confidence, I was going to do it, and going out on the plane I began to think, 'I don't know whether you can,' but we got there and we set everything up. Everybody got their bikes and I pumped my tyres up, because that was a feat in itself. I had to dismantle the tricycle, pack it all up in a big cardboard box, but what they didn't tell me... what they didn't tell me was to take the air out of my tyres, for when you're flying, so [laughing] at the airport I was unpacking the tricycle

to take the air out of the tyres and anyway, we got there, and the first, the day we arrived, we flew overnight and on the Sunday, the first day we set everything up and we went to a briefing meeting after the meal and then they told us what we were doing the first day, and we were staying in Kibbutzs, and I remember walking back to my room: fortunately I was on my own, I was in floods of tears.

Why?

About 'I can't, I can't do this. I'm not going to be able to do it,' and I was feeling really sorry for myself. Anyway the following day, I got up and I set off and I thought, 'Well, I'm going to do what I can,' and they assured me, there was some Scope staff; the organisers there, saying, 'Well, do what you can: when you've had enough just say so, we've got a van, we can put your tricycle on that.' I think I only went about six kilometres the first day, well the first morning. When we were on the road, I was fine, but as soon as we got off onto the track, I couldn't cope, it was too rocky and I was getting left behind, so I gave up, so I was a bit down that. Later on in the day they got my trike off the van again and I had another go and I rode down into Galilee and enjoyed the second day, we rode along the banks of the Jordan, and that, that was good, and I did quite a lot that day. The third day, I didn't do any at all. [Laughs.] I was a bit of a chicken. It was pouring down with rain and I was tired, but, so, I had a day off, I went in the back-up van, and the fourth day was my best, my furthest day, when we were riding by the Dead Sea. That was wonderful, just riding on the main road by the Dead Sea. We went for a dip, and the last day, the Friday, it was raining again, but I did quite a bit... probably, twenty-five, thirty kilometres, and I was soaked to the skin, and we stopped for lunch and I said, 'I've had it.' Anyway, I got in the coach and, the bike was in the van. We were nearly into Jerusalem and everyone was stopped, waiting for everybody to arrive, so all ninety-two of them, ninety-three including me, would arrive at the finishing line together, and they made me get out of the back-up van; and I didn't want to. 'Come on, you're going' to ride into Jerusalem.' Again I was in tears. They made me lead them all, [Jacqui getting emotional] so I was the first one, riding into Jerusalem, over the finishing line.

Oh, I bet you felt glorious.

Oh, it was wonderful. We then had a day in Jerusalem, to do some sight-seeing, which I enjoyed and then we came home, and, at the end of the 250 kilometres, I'd only done about eighty, but I did it and I raised £3,400 odd for Scope, so that was good. I really enjoyed that.

Do you think you'd do another one?

I don't think I would if I could, but I don't...

[End of Side Track 6]

Tape 4 Side B [Track 7]

But it's getting difficult, so I think it's three years ago now, I've got two tricycles. I don't know where I saw it; I can't remember now. It must have been an advert or something on the box, I saw an electric tricycle and I made enquiries and nobody in Preston stocked this bike, trike, so I had to go further a-field in the county, I went to Fleetwood, and I've now got an electric tricycle, which I can still pedal, when I don't need the battery, but when I do need it, it gives me a boost, and so I charge it up every day, but I do go out every day [talking together] on the tricycle.

So you like to, oh right, so you prefer it, [talking together] to pedal-power?

I do, yes, I do like it. I can go further than I could without, on the other one, but even when I'm boosting, even when I'm getting the help, I'm still using my legs, so I'm still getting the exercise with my legs going round, and unfortunately it's the only exercise I get now, so I do want to carry on doing it if I can. I had a period in the summer where the battery wasn't working, and I had to replace it, and it dragged on for about six weeks when I hadn't got the use of my bike, and I did miss it.

You did, you said?

I did miss it, so even now in the cold winter, I go out daily on it. I've been out this morning before I came to pick you up.

Oh, right.

[Talking together] It's,

When did, where did you go?

Just round the local park: takes about twenty minutes,

Right.

but, just round the

And do you think it clears the, it clears the... from your, from your mind?

Probably not, but...

You enjoy it though, that is the main thing.

I do enjoy it, yes. Leading on from that, saying I did the bike-ride in Israel; my other great amusement, pastime, well, well, I've got two, I've got computing, which we might talk a bit about, but my holidays.

Right.

I love my holidays. When I was growing up, the family never went in a hotel. They were, my mum always said it was because of me. I don't think that was... Well, I'm not a messy eater or anything, but she always said when I was little, it was easier to go on self-catering type holidays, so when I was young we used to have caravans: Mum, Dad, my sister and I, and then we started becoming friendly with another family, through the Church, and they had three children, all younger, so Liz and I were older, and then there was a gap of five years and then their three children, and for twenty years, we all went on, well, we started going on holidays together. For the first five years, there'd be nine of us and then a few years later, as we grew up, all the kids would drop off, so my parents still went on their own in the end with the four of them. Anyway, my teenage years we went to Wales, Cornwall, Devon, Dorset, and then I had a few years when I'd go off with some friends, and things, and then I started going on holiday with my father. My mother, when I was thirteen, started becoming ill, and she was ill for twenty years 'til, she died when I was thirty-four, but she was very good and kind and she appreciated that Dad and I needed holidays even when she couldn't go, so we started going on coach tours, abroad and we trotted around

Europe and Scandinavia, and then after Mum died, we, we went a bit further afield. We went to Israel and we went to Egypt, and we went on two or three cruises, and then Dad was getting quite elderly and, he didn't want to go, so, and I started feeling sorry for myself, and, and I thought 'Well, you've no-one to go on holiday: you can't go,' and then I thought, 'Blow it! I'm going to go on me own,' so in the last ten years, particularly since I lost my father, I've trotted off all over the place. I, mainly, for the first few years, in Europe, and I did Europe, I love coach tours, but I hankered after going to New Zealand. I really wanted to go to New Zealand. This was going back to my Guide days.

Right.

To get the Queen's Guide Badge, you had to take the Commonwealth Knowledge Badge.

And what did you have to do for that?

Do a project on a Commonwealth Country, and mine was New Zealand, and I read about it, I wrote about it. It was in the 60's when we'd only just got colour telly, there was no Internet or anything, so it was all books, but, since I was fifteen there was something in the back of me mind saying, 'I want to go to New Zealand,' but then, 'I thought it's such a long way away; I don't know whether I could go on my own.'

What the flight? You think the flight would be far too long for you?

Well, I don't know. I just felt, 'No I can't do it,' but again at another Scope meeting, I was talking to somebody, and they said, 'Jacqui, they speak English, and at the end of the day, they're only a day away; they're only twenty-four hours away,' so that did it. [Laughs.] A few months later I was off to New Zealand. I went to New Zealand for nearly a month and... that was fantastic, I really enjoyed it. The, it was early spring here, so it was autumn there but the weather was wonderful and I thoroughly enjoyed it, but up 'til then, that was it, I'd no desire to go to Australia, but the

company I went with were so good, I was spoiling myself, it was first-class hotels all the way, and they were good, and I got talking to the courier, and it was a company that only did New Zealand and Australia, and she said, 'Why don't you go to Australia?' and I, 'No, don't want to go there,' and she was telling me what they did, and so twelve months later, [laughs] I found myself in Australia.

Oh right, which bit did you go?

You name it, I did it! We flew to Melbourne, then we went down to Phillip Island to see the penguins: I've got a thing about penguins, I really have. We then went on the Ocean, Great Ocean Road, and round up to Adelaide, where we went on a river cruise. We, I then took the Ghan Train from Adelaide to Alice; wandered round Alice.

Where is Alice Springs?

Alice Springs. We picked the coach up again, well another coach, and drove across the Outback to Uluru, which is Ayer's Rock, and we had a couple of days there. That was where we had a silver service dinner in the open-air, in the Outback at sunset, under the moon, and then the following morning: that was a late night; I think I got four hours in bed that night; I was up in a helicopter for the dawn;

Ohhhh!

for a sunrise helicopter ride over Ayer's Rock, and then we flew to Cairns and went up in the rain forest, and it was Easter Weekend and we went out on a Catamaran for three days; a three-day cruise down the Barrier Reef.

Oh lovely, that sounds lovely.

Then we went to Brisbane and Sydney, and Hong Kong on the way home.

Very nice.

And since then I've been to Hawaii. This year, I had three weeks in South Africa, and I've been to America.

Did you go to safari, on safari?

Yes, all the, that, we started off, we went to Victoria Falls,

Right.

which was wonderful, and then we went to Kruger National Park, and I saw four of the big five. We didn't see the leopard, but we saw lions, rhinos, hippos: leopard no, lions two, hippos three, rhinos four: elephants! Oh, Elephants! It wasn't there, in Kruger, we moved on a bit, to another park and we went on a sunset drive, and it was a big lorry really, with seats in it at the back, and I was right in the back corner, and this elephant started to, not exactly chase us, but it was getting a bit close and, and then half an hour later we broke down.

Oh no.

Well, there were about twenty-six people in this lorry thing, and only one driver-guide and we broke down, and we, it was going dark and, elephants [talking together] all over.

I bet you were getting, I bet folks were getting quite concerned, weren't they?

Well, they were, but, everybody apart from me. I wasn't scared, [laughing] I was lapping it up. I was thinking, 'Isn't this funny?' If we'd have been there two or three hours, I might have been getting a bit bothered, but I was thinking, 'They know where we are ...' If it was a small car,

Right.

and you were on your own, and they say an elephant could turn a car over, but this big lorry, it was, well it had to be quite big, for twenty-odd people to fit on and, I just enjoyed it. [Laughs]

So did they come and find ya?

Yes, but [talking together] and we

Eventually?

transferred to other vehicles, and they didn't drive us straight home, they, we were supposed to be out for three hours, they made sure we got our three hours' worth of riding round the park, [talking together] so that was good,

That was nice.

and it was different from the daytime, because we saw the night animals. They had [talking together] big torches,

Did you see giraffes and that?

Oh yes, giraffes and, yeah! Hippos, oh, it was wonderful, and then we went down the Cape, the garden route in South Africa, [talking together] to the Cape.

Like the Cape of [??]

Cape Town.

Oh, Cape Town.

And then, and then down to the Cape of,

Good

Good Hope.

Oh right, and what was that like?

Interesting, I'm glad I went, so, and then there was a penguin colony. I don't know, is it a colony of penguins? At the end of the Cape and I lapped that up, so,

Is it, is it things like Shearings, you go with?

Yes, it's

That, them organised coach trips.

Yes, yes

and Saga, and places like that?

Yes, those, that, you get used, they do everything for you.

Oh, yeah!

You, you pay for one piece of luggage and once you've got there, you don't, they deliver your case to your bedroom door, your meals are provided: well, sometimes you've got to go out and buy your meals, but your meals are provided, you've no driving to do, and you see everything, I just love them, you know?

Well that's, I think that's, I think I like, I mean, I like coach, coach trips, but coach trips are very good. You know, you do get to see more.

It's all organised, but if you went on your own, you wouldn't see half the things you, you do on a organised trip, and some people don't like the

[Talking together] Yes: mm.

regimented side of it, but it, they, they tell you you've got to be on the coach at a certain time, sometimes it is a bit early:

Right.

but if, if you went on your own, you wouldn't set off that early. I mean a foreign place; you don't know where to go,

No.

so, whereas the, the drivers know where they're going, and you don't, you go straight there, you don't get lost, or

Mm hm. Have you made many friends doing that, other than,

[Talking together] Yes.

other than, you know, other than your New Zealand friends?

I haven't really kept in contact with anyone.

They're just acquaintances?

Yeah. I've got email addresses,

Right!

but I've never met up with anybody else, apart from this year when I was in South Africa, I met two ladies, I won't say girls, from New Zealand.

Right.

I correspond with one of them particularly. She's coming over; she might be here in three weeks, so that's exciting:

Yes it is. [Inaudible: talking together]

so I'm looking forward to that.

Right.

So, I've had to cancel one or two holidays, because my mobility isn't as good,

Right.

as it has been, and I had been thinking how much longer, I hope to go off on my own, but while I can, I'm going to. Up 'til Saturday, I had two holidays booked, but I got a letter on Saturday saying one of them had been cancelled.

Oh dear, which one was that?

Florida, and a cruise to the Bahamas,

Ohhh!

so, I'll have to look at that.

Have you booked next year's then?

Yes. [Talking together] That was in March.

Oh right. That was the March one, but you're not going, did you get a refund?

Well, I haven't done yet; I'm going to see what else they've got.

What have they done, offered you an alternative?

Yeah, so I'm going to have a look. They've offered me the refund. I don't know. In June I'm going to Canada,

Lovely. Which bit?

Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island.

Yeah.

I love California. I've been,

Yeah, you liked the [talking together] Grand Canyon, didn't you?

I love the Grand Canyon, I've been twice: once, about fourteen, thirteen months ago. Well, two or three years ago, I was supposed to be going to India, and I kept tripping up and I had a number of falls in the autumn, and two days before I should have gone, I cancelled it as I had lost my confidence as well, and I thought my holidays had finished, but I was talking it over with my physio, and she thought I was a bit better; about sixteen months ago, and she said I wasn't going to get any better, I may have, when I cancelled the holiday, I lost my confidence as well. Though I got my confidence back, she said I wasn't going to get any better, my walking would deteriorate, and so she said, 'If you want to do it, get on and do it.' As I seemed to be a bit better, and my confidence returned – I did! [Laughs]

One of the things I wanted to do was go to the Grand Canyon, so last November, 2004, or end of October, I set off to go to the Grand Canyon. I flew to Phoenix, in Arizona, end of October and it was eighty degrees, eighty-five degrees Fahrenheit, and was wandering around in my t-shirt: this is great. The following day we was going to the Canyon and it was pouring with rain: still warm, but it was about 100, I don't know, 150 miles, and it was raining,

Right.

and then it started sleeting, and then it started snowing: we, because it's quite high, the run up to the Canyon. We got there about four o'clock in the afternoon and we couldn't see anything.

Oh.

It was a blizzard, the clouds were down, and I wasn't very happy, I was nearly in tears, but I was thinking 'Only Jacqui can come all this way to see the, and not see it,' because we were right on the edge of the Canyon and we couldn't see a flipping thing, and I was biting the tears back, and then I thought 'You silly thing, well, there's thirty of us on the coach any way, so I'm not the only one, not seen it.' Anyway, the following morning the lodge we were staying in was bang on the edge, and sunrise was wonderful and the snow was the icing on the cake. We went for a walk before breakfast, because we were leaving at eight o'clock in the morning after breakfast. It was a bit hairy, because it was all ice, and again I was on my own 'What do I do?' Fortunately, somebody helped me, but that is a problem of going on your own, you can't expect people you [laughing] don't know to give you a hand:

Right.

but that apart, we, it was wonderful. Anyway, I saw it, but I was still hankering after it, so I went again this year.

Right. [Talking together] Did you get to see it this time?

Only just. I couldn't believe it. Well, I went to, started off in San Francisco, we moved down to Vegas, and then from Vegas we were going up to the Canyon, but my free day in Vegas I did have a helicopter ride over to the Canyon, where we landed and had a champagne lunch.

Oh, that sounds lovely.

But the day we all went, 'cos only a handful of us did the helicopter, the day the whole party went to the Canyon it was raining: although it was hot, it was raining and I thought, 'I've done it again,' when we got off the coach it was raining, but then the sun came out and it was wonderful, again: so I do like my holidays.

Yeah, it sounds, it sounds like it, it sounds like it.

While I can.

So what are you doing to do next year?

Canada,

Yeah.

and I should have been going on a cruise; I do like cruising as well, but

What are you going to do next? Will you get one round about, April, May time?

Well, I'm going to Canada in June, [talking together: interviewer inaudible] so if I go, I want one in March, but I've been thrown a bit this morning, [interviewer inaudible] I got an email from my friend in New Zealand, who's coming over, and while I was on

the park this morning I was thinking, 'Well, Jacqui you could go back with her. You could go back with her!'

You could go back for a little holiday.

So, I'm leaving all the options, [laughs] open.

Well why not?

I wouldn't mind going to New Zealand; New Zealand's a long way away, but never mind. [Laughs]

If you want something badly, only you can go for it.

Well, I've been before so, and I've been to where she lives, but before I met her I didn't know her then, so, why not?

Well why, that's it, I mean, you've got the opportunity. You know, you haven't, there's nothing stopping you at all is there?

No.

There's nothing stopping you at all.

Fortunately I can afford to do it so,

Right.

while I've still got the opportunity, [laughing] I'm going to make the most of it.

Well, why not? I don't blame you.

I'm not thinking about it; it's just at the back of my mind, but I will go somewhere in the spring.

Right. So, do you want, about your computing now?

Yes, well, I think we mentioned before, when I was working,

Yes.

My career was in computing, but since I finished work I just use it for pleasure.

Right, like surfing the net?

Not that much, I surf the net if I need something, but I won't spend hours, willy-nilly.

Right.

I like digital photography and I like, I've learnt how to play with photographs,

Right.

so I mess about with photographs. Recently I've been designing me own ~~gree~~, Christmas cards, birthday cards: any occasion I'll create a card for it. I just like messing about and, I jokingly say to people 'My computer's attached to me, my hip,' 'cos I'm far happier just playing about on the computer. I do play games, which some people say is time wasting, but I do play logical and thinking games, [Talking together] I like playing Sudoku

Like your Sudoku?

Yes, I type in the grid, I've set up a grid.

Yeah. Have you played patience on it yet?

Yep! I play solitaire and thinking games, I don't think I'm timewasting, but,

No.

I'm not harming anybody else by spending so much time on the computer, [talking together: interviewer inaudible] and if I enjoy it,

And it's your computer.

Yes. Yep, so, and at the moment, I'm doing some work for the local Scope group.

Right.

I'm cataloguing the Toy and Resource Library,

Right.

so, that brings in all my skills, because I've got to take photographs of the equipment, I've then got to put it in the PC, my main work at the moment is producing this catalogue,

Right.

so, I've got to have a photograph in and then I've got to describe it, but when I've done all that, and it's no mean task, for a hundred and fifty odd items, I've got to work out a way of library cards and, storing and so, it's keeping me out of mischief at the moment.

And you're enjoying it?

Yes, yeah.

That's the main thing.

And one thing I haven't really mentioned, which I've mentioned it in passing a few times, is my faith.

Right.

And ... I am a committed Christian, and I do work at Church.

[End of track 7]

[End of recording]