

## Transcript of interview with Patricia Yeomans, 11 December 2017

**[00:00]**

Evacuated during war to Buckinghamshire a few months after she was born; returned to east London; lived in Malet Park; born in 1943 in east London; earliest memory from infant school; schools different, fewer children more individual attention; played variety of games in playground; broke windows in the street whilst playing rounders, replacement costs were 2 and 6, which is half a crown; played on bomb sites looking for treasures; brother found detonator, tried to open it in concrete back garden; toilets used to be outside the house; Dad was a rag'n bone man like many other men; "whatever they earned was theirs" [3:04].

**[03:00]**

Cleaned slot machines father found at work; Patricia and her brother got the six pence out of it; family holidays to Kent in summer; hop picking; people would build bonfire outside of their house or go to a communal bonfire; parents couldn't afford holidays; father often out of building work; mother didn't work, looked after kids; if she didn't have enough money went to the RO.

**[06:00]**

Dad made and sold toffee apples; aunt worked in a jelly factory; needed sugar for the toffee apples, but sugar was a ration, so had to buy black market sugar; stored contraband sugar in Nan's flower shop behind family home; police were called, charged grandparents heavy fine; father was a bookmakers runner.

**[09:00]**

Neighbourhood safety; "doors always open, never locked your doors, even at night" [9:17]; punishment for betting or being a bookmakers runner; no supermarkets, produce brought around to the houses via horse and cart; grandad used to look after houses for co-op; gave ladies down the road manure for their allotments; one brother died from pneumonia when he was nine months old; did not have penicillin; doctors visit cost about 2 and 6.

**[12:00]**

Only illicit drugs she heard about as a teenager were purple hearts; street fighting involved fists not guns and knives; "I wish my children could be brought up in the environment that I [was]" [12:41-2]; safe environment for kids; was a Jewish man who came around to buy and sell gold; limited diversity; by the time she was 15, more Africans were coming to the area; went into services in big houses or into jobs others didn't want.

**[15:00]**

Radios; listened to Top of the Pops; channels included Radio One and Two and Radio Luxembourg; kids listened to Pirate Ship with Tony Blackburn; grandmother and neighbours used to go on coaches, known as charabancs, to horse races including Ascot and Goodwood; father won 1000 pounds and bought a TV; little round screen, about 9 inches; "the year he got it [TV] they took all our windows out so all the street could come and look through the windows and watch television, cause we were the only ones on the street who had television" [17:25-17:27].

**[18:00]**

Brother's apprenticeship cost 32 and 6, only earned 30 shillings; the RO and benefits; her son's struggles to get benefits; raised her children in east London; did not have a washing machine when she first got married, washed clothes in the sink and boiler; Mondays wash days.

**[21:00]**

Housework; washing clothes before there were washing machines, using a boiler, mangle, bath and a rubbing board; keeping food cold with our refrigerators; first fridge was a gas fridge.

**[24:00]**

"You made the best of everything" [25:03]; visits to Kent and Bluebell Woods with grandmother; bluebell collecting; married at 18 years old; lived in old house backing on to the old gas board places; 36 shillings a week; old house, falling down, no bathroom.

**[27:00]**

Centrally heated flats caused flat price to increase to 12 pounds; no washing machine; laundrettes; old fashioned baby products and toys; married for 23 years; domestic violence and lack of support facilities; cost of divorce and solicitors; no legal aid; Husband often drunk; remarried.

**[30:00]**

Street party for Queen's coronation which included dressing up; Johnny Reeves organised the parties, later becoming mayor; festival of Britain celebrations at school; lack of community spirit in Newham; "Everyone was in the same boat, nobody had anything [nothin']" [32:07] everyone helped one another; FairPlay house; school sports.

**[33:00]**

Kids used to get on a boat down the Thames listening and singing along to a man playing the accordion; Sunday school very popular; didn't have after-school clubs; kids games includes skipping, run outs and knock down ginger; for Guy Fawkes night kids made a 'Guy' to play 'Penny for the Guy' to get money to buy fireworks; fireworks much cheaper and less dangerous; at Christmas kids went carol singing to get money for presents for parents; "they were innocent games, nobody ever got hurt" [35:25]

**[36:00]**

Age 15/16 went to a music halls and dance halls; the Salisbury at Malet Park; would take visitors in Newham to Passmore Edward Museum; had pictures and books about history of Newham; oldest buildings in area Eastland and Stratford town halls.

**[39:00]**

Suggestion regarding how to preserve buildings and history of Newham like in Battersea Power Station; collecting oddities and relics at Newham General; bathing facilities at home; coal man and coal scuttles.

**[42:00]**

Chimneys and chimney sweeps; chimney sweep at a wedding was good luck, cost her granddaughter 150 pounds; chimney sweeps used to sell soot; "Everything was 30 bob" even the local prostitute 30 Bob Lil; more women became "women of the night" [44:41] after the war.

**[45:00]**

Issues with Lil, the local prostitute (sex worker); indoor toilet facilities; lady lived down the road told the police about activities in the street, was known as a "Coppers Nark"; maypole dancing.

**[48:00]**

Maypole dancing; school remembrance ceremonies on November 11; school sports days at Flanders Fields; school teams; school assemblies.

**[51:00]**

Easter celebrations as a child included Easter parade through Hyde Park; women would dress up in bonnets; egg rolling competition; old traditions for when neighbours died; local midwives.

**[54:00]**

Midwives and health teams used to come around to check on mother and baby until baby was 3-4 weeks old; would take older children to local clinic; programmes not available like that nowadays.

**[55:59 end]**