23. Christina

(1) Tell me about your background.

Well, I was born in Castleconnell, County Limerick, in 1941. I came over here, to England, in 1948. Went to school at St Joseph's Catholic School, just at the bottom of Headington Hill - stayed there until I was fifteen. Nothing much exciting happened; it was just an ordinary sort of school. We stayed there from once we started school till the age of fifteen - not like today. Went to University Press to work - met my future husband there. Got married at age of eighteen and a half, and life's just gone on normal, I suppose.

Tell me a bit about your parents.

Right, well, my father and mother were both Irish, both born in Limerick. My father worked at the car works when he came here, but also he started... Well, he came here originally to go in the army, to the English army, and he was in there for about twenty years. Then he married my mother, and they came here, as I said, in 1948. Mother worked all the time. I've got four brothers; one has died now, and...

What kind of work did your mother and father do?

Well, my father worked, as I said, in the car works, but other than that, I don't really know exactly what work he did at the car works. My mother was a cleaner-cum-cook. Everything, she did. You know, she worked in hospitals, she worked in Marks & Spencer's, she worked in an old people's home. That was the last job she had, in an old people's home. But she worked in various hospitals, cleaning and doing that, but other than that - the old people's home, she cooked there, as well as cleaned.

And how were you off for money as you grew up?

Quite poor, actually, I think. If it hadn't been for Mum, we would have been pretty destitute, I think, really. I think everybody was all in the same boat at that time. I don't think anybody was wealthy, you know, nobody had cars and televisions. We didn't have a television until I went to work actually, so we weren't brought up around a television, which was good thing now, you know, I think. Because I think, today, the children sort of seem to take everything for granted, and they don't seem to have anything to... well, I don't think they occupy theirselves the same as we did. But then again, we were freer then.

(2) There wasn't the complications of being attacked by muggers or anything, you know, or molested children – you didn't hear of that, then, so.

How did you occupy your time without a television?

Quite easily, actually. With four brothers, it was quite good. I mean, I was a bit of a tomboy, I suppose, really, so whatever they were up to, I was up to as well, you know. We used to just go down to the fields and play in general, just children's games on the swings, slides. We used to go up the fields bluebelling,

and we were quite good, you know, to go up there, and come back hours later without anybody bothering us or attacking us, or. You know, we were so free, you know, really. It was a much nicer life than what the children have got today - much nicer.

Where were you living as you grew up?

In Barton. We lived there - from whence we came over from Ireland, we lived in Barton. And we did everything from there, you know, we walked everywhere. We walked to Church, which was a good way - it was right in Headington itself, you know, St Margaret's Road.

How long did that take?

It must have taken us about half an hour to walk, you know, but you didn't think of nothing of walking then. There was no other way to get there, unless you waited for buses, which were... they weren't as regular as what the buses were today, you know. They just didn't appear, so it was just easier to walk, you know. And also we didn't have the bus fares!

How did you get to school?

Ah, we had a school bus. We had to go a little way to walk to it. It picked us up at Headington roundabout, and there we caught it, and it took us to school and it fetched us back again. That was run by the local council, I take it, you know. So, that was fine, you know.

Would you say you had a lot more exercise than children do today?

Oh definitely, definitely much more exercise. We didn't... well, we just walked everywhere. We either walked or ran, you know, this is the thing. I mean, we never thought of buses at all, and we never moaned about walking, because everybody did it, you see. I mean, it wasn't like "so and so's got a car, and they're going to get into the car and get a lift". Nobody... I don't think anybody in our school had cars to take 'em to school, like they do today. I just think, you know, just... well, it was the norm then. You know, you just got on with everything, and, I don't really know.

What kind of food did you eat as you were growing up?

Very plain food, actually. Very wholesome, but very plain. And Dad did most of the cooking, because Mum was working, and Dad worked at nights - he worked nightshift, and then he taught me to cook. And we used to eat bacon, cabbage, potatoes. It was all sort of

(3) boiled; nothing was roasted so much then. We did have a roast on a Sunday, but it wasn't like - today they have everything added to their foods: there's packaging and everything. We didn't get that. We just had the basic, what they call organic now, which is... That was the normal thing to have then. It was organic - everything was organic, but we didn't

know it was organic. We just knew it as ordinary plain food that's put in the ground and grew and harvested, and that was it, you know, so.

Try to remember, then, a typical breakfast, lunch and evening meal.

Oh, we had all sorts for breakfast, 'cause Dad was... he believed in, sort of like, whatever was there, he'd cook it up, you know. So, sometimes we'd have bubble and squeak for breakfast, you know. It's an odd thing to think of now, but we did have it, because it was left over from the day before, and so it was sort of filling, and different... We didn't really have... I can't remember having cereal so much as... Whether they were about or that we didn't get them, I don't know, but we didn't seem to have them. We did have toast and things like that, but mainly we had cooked breakfasts of some sort, but nothing... not... It was like we used to get different things, like black pudding and white pudding, then, in them days, and you can't get the white pudding at all like it used to be then. I've never... I think up North they have it mostly, but we never seem to get it down here the same. I've tried, but it's not the same at all.

Would most of your breakfasts have been fry-ups?

I suppose, yes, they would have been, but I'm not... I think it wasn't oil then, it was dripping. And we'd often have bread and dripping with a little bit of salt on. And the children, today, they just wouldn't eat that at all. I mean, they'd just laugh at you if you give 'em that. Well, they wouldn't - they wouldn't even touch it, you know. And also, it's not healthy, now, you see, so, I don't know.

And then what about your next meal when you were at school and at weekends?

Ah, we were never fussy at school, because we always had school dinners. But it was never a case of you didn't like it - you ate it whether you liked it or not. There wasn't this sort of thing - you could have something different. There wasn't a choice - you had whatever's put on your plate. And if you didn't eat it, the nuns that used to teach us then, they used to come round and say "oh, you can eat that up for the holy souls"! So, we used to think "oh, I don't know about the holy souls", but anyway, we did eat it, or tried to, you know, even if we really hated it. They didn't like anything left. They were really strict - very strict.

So what was a typical school dinner?

Well, I can't really remember anything to be typical, but we didn't like that tapioca. I couldn't

(4) stand that, it was terrible, but I think we sort of ate it, you know, or made an attempt of eating. I think they were quite satisfied if we'd sort of really made a good attempt at it, you know, and then it was sort of throwing up afterwards!

And what about a midday meal at home?

I think it was just basically what we got. We didn't actually sit down to an

actual meal, if I can remember rightly. We just got what was there. It might be just a bit of bread and cheese, or something like that; very limited amount. We didn't have choices at all - it was just really something to sort of fill you up at the time. There was no such thing as biscuits, cakes, unless Mum would bake sometimes, but... Or she'd bake what she'd call a cake-a-bread, and it was like the soda bread that they have now, but she never called it soda bread. She'd make it and... I mean, she couldn't understand the English people here. She said they didn't know how to cook bread, and so... I mean, a neighbour had run out of bread one day, and she said "oh, have you got a piece of bread?" to my mother, and my mother said "oh, I'll knock you a batch up". And she'd sort of done her a cake-a-bread and took it home. Well, all her children raved about it, you know, this sort of thing, you know. But we always took it for granted, because Mum would always just sort of turn her hand to it. But, it's like she'd make potato cakes on a Sunday with... and I've tried to do 'em, but I can't do 'em like she did. And she just mashed potatoes and things and flour, and put so much in - but she never measured it, she just threw it all in together. And she'd shape it all out, and put it in the pan and cook it up. It was lovely, but...

Was your main meal the evening meal?

I think that was mostly bacon and cabbage. We ate a lot of bacon and cabbage in those days, you know. I think it was probably cheaper, and it was probably the meal that Dad sort of enjoyed making, you know. Because my husband, when we were courting, he said "you seem to eat a lot of bacon and cabbage!". I said "I know". It was a sort of the staple diet, you know, really. I suppose the Irish probably like their bacon and cabbage, but I think Dad probably liked it a bit more, but. And then we'd have some sort of thing called colcannon, and that was like a potato and cabbage and onion, altogether, mashed together, and that was lovely - we liked that. But we liked all the sort of things that he did, you know, really. But they were all plain, normal foods, you know, but what they call organic and healthy today.

Were you strict Catholics?

Yes, very, yes. I'm a bit lapsed now, I'm afraid, but yes. And I brought my children up as Catholics. They were all... made their first communions and confirmation and everything, but they too have strayed away from, you know, the thing, which I think a lot of it is to do with the people that you're surrounded by. There are not Catholics immediately around you, whereas if you're in an environment where there's a lot of Catholics, one sort of pulls one to it, you know, a bit more. 'Cause they're looked down on, I suppose, if they don't go to Church, and "so and so's not going to Church today", you know, whereas nobody notices us here.

Would your childhood have included sort of fasting during Lent and fish on Fridays?

Yes, even to the day mother died, she'd never eat meat on Fridays, never. She'd say to me "what did you have today?", and I'd say "oh, I had sausages". "Oh",

she said, “you had sausages on a Friday?”, and I’d say “well, Mum, it’s changed now, you know, it’s different. It’s all been passed”, you know. And she’d say “it doesn’t make any difference”, she said “the law’s the law”, she said “you should eat your fish on a Friday”. And if you didn’t have fish - well, we didn’t have fish at home on a Friday, because we... I don’t suppose we had the money to buy the fish, but we had boiled eggs. You had a sort of a real spare day that day. It was sort of like, you just ate a little meagly amount, you know. You didn’t eat a great deal, and you didn’t sort of pig out on anything. We just sort of had the bare necessities to keep us going, you know, really. But that was life - you didn’t question it. You just thought “well, that’s it”, and you just got on with it, you know. Nobody else said anything, because everybody else was, I suppose, in the same boat.

(5) Tell me about your job when you left school.

Well, I went to the University Press. 1957 I started there, I was fifteen. I used to have to get up early in the morning, right from Barton, get a bus, to be at work at half past seven, so. And it was all dark, and I can remember the buses not turning up, and we’d have to run from one estate to the other to try and get the other bus. And then, eventually, we’d get there. And, of course, we had to clock in, so, you know, you had to be on time. And I was, you know, on time all the time, ’cause I hated being late for anything, so that was okay. And I did what they call... I was on a folding machine, which folded all the pamphlets of the paper, that you’d have sixteen page, thirty two page and that sort of thing. And as they came out of the machine you collected them up, and then you counted them out into fifties. And then you’d make a big bundle of them, and then you’d take the bundle to a tying up... the bundler, it was called, I think, yes. And you’d take it there, and it was strung up, and you’d string it up and pile it up in a stack, and then you’d come back to the table and start again, getting all the things out the machine. It was, really, you know, it was a bit mundane, really, but it was all right. I mean, I didn’t mind too much. I think we got about two pounds twelve shillings for that, for forty hours.

Were you able to chat while you worked or was there too much noise?

No, we learnt to lip read a lot, funnily enough, because over the noise, you tended to... well, you did talk, but... And you’d talk when you got to the bundler, and waited for the bundler to be pressed in, you know, to compress the book in, and then you’d chat there, and then you’d go back. But you could lip read from one to another, you know, and that’s how we sort of communicated, really. We used to wear these sort of turbans on top of our heads. It was sort of like a safety thing that you had to do, otherwise, if you got your hair caught in the machine, you wouldn’t be liable for anything, you know - they wouldn’t be liable for anything, rather, so. They were horrible blinking hats; I hated them!

Was it mostly women doing your kind of work?

Yes. The men were the operators - what they call the operators. They used to take all the paper up to a level. They used to have to climb steps and put it over,

and what they call bank it all up, and then the machine would take it down and fold it. And it was the women that did all the bundling up and everything, and the collecting up of the paper, yes.

How did you meet your husband?

Over the bundler! He just came along, and I think somebody had sort of prised him to sort of ask me out, you know. And I think I was only fifteen, and I said "yes", I'd go. I sort of went for a laugh, really. Forty four years later, I'm still

(6) laughing about it. But yes, it was all right.

What did people do when they went out together in those days?

Well, it was the pictures generally speaking, or else you'd... you didn't do anything really exciting to that extent; well, I don't think it was exciting. You'd go for a walk or you'd go to one another's... I'd go to his parents house, eventually, you know, and he'd come to mine, and we'd go to his sister's and visit them. It was just really something to do that didn't cost any money, really. Because you didn't have any money to sort of spare, really; not... By the time you'd sort of paid your bus fares and had a bit of lunch or something, and paid your mother something, you know, there wasn't a great deal left out of two pounds; I think it was about two pounds twelve shillings or something. Mind you, it did go further then. I mean, sort of like, you paid a few pennies to go to work, you know, whereas it would probably be about a pound now, so.

What did his parents do?

His father was... he was a driver, a truck driver. I think he worked for Tuckwells, one of the big sort of firms. And his mother didn't really work; I didn't think she had a job of work. She might do the odd sort of cleaning job, but I don't think she actually... not when I knew them anyway. Whether she did earlier on, I'm not quite certain. I don't think she did - like my mother worked all the time, I don't think she did, you know. She might have just had a few hours, as I said, but nothing really permanent, you know.

So you were both quite young and living at home. What happened when you got married?

Then we had - that was 1960, we got married - we had a flat. A furnished flat, we had, to start with, which we paid four guineas for, which was an enormous amount of money then. But, I mean, of course, today, it's nothing today, but it was a lot then, because we didn't get the money. I can't really remember how much my wages was. I think they'd gone up to something around about twelve pound, but then I was on shift work then. I did the same work at the University Press, but. And then my husband didn't get a great deal more than me. He also worked there.

(7) Where did you live?

We lived in a place called Woodbine Place. It was down where the old cattle market used to be, and so I had to walk to work, which was about... I suppose about quarter of an hour's walk, or something like that. And I'd have to go out in the dark again, because I used to do shift work. So, I started work, then, at six o'clock in the morning until two o'clock in the afternoon, and then the following week I would do two o'clock in the afternoon to ten o'clock at night. But my husband just worked ordinary days, so I'd have to leave him a meal that he'd put in the oven or put in a saucepan - on top of a saucepan - to heat up. There was no microwaves - they weren't even invented, I don't think, then, or if they were, we didn't know about them. Then we moved from there to a Press place - University Press. That was a flat, and we paid... I think the rent, then, went down to fifteen shillings a week, so that was really good, so we were rocking away with our money then. So, then the next thing, I fell pregnant with my eldest son, who's forty now. Then we lived there for a little... no, we didn't live there. We moved to a house in Great Clarendon Street just before he was born. Then, three years later, Simon was born - that was my second son. And, of course, in the meantime, I'd given up work, so times were a little bit harder then, because we had to live on one wage. But, then again, we only paid a small amount of rent. We only paid a guinea, which was one pound one shilling then, so that was good for a house, you know, in that sort of state.

Was that still in Great Clarendon Street?

Yes, it was, yes, that was Great Clarendon Street. Then we moved down here to this house, Albert Street, in... I'm not quite sure of the year of that. I think we've lived here about thirty one years now, thirty two, so that's going back a bit, but it was in the seventies, anyway, we moved. Of course our rent, then, was about seven pound, which we thought it was terrible, you know - "how are we going to find seven pound?", but we did, you know, so.

Is this house rented from the Oxford University Press?

Ah no, this is a council house, this is. But what happened with the Press houses was that they had to be pulled down, because there was a new school going up, so the Press sold off the houses. And then that meant that Council had to find us another house, so this is the house that they found us, so. And we were quite pleased with this, and we've lived here ever since, really, so.

(8) How has Jericho changed in the years you've lived here?

It has changed a bit, but not a great deal, really. I think the old Jericho people would say it's different completely, but I think that perhaps the friendliness is not quite as friendly, because I think it's... then again, it's the times that we live in. Before, you could go out your front door and leave it open, you know. Nobody would think of walking in, because, you know, there was no sort of robberies or anything about then. You could go out all day and leave your door open on the latch, and people would never even dream of walking in. But now, of course, you can't cross the road without putting the latch down, and, you know, having to get in with the key and that all the time. I think this is what

we miss, really, but, I mean, there again, it's the things with the times, you know, you just have to go with it – "go with the flow", as they say.

As your children were growing up, what would you have done in your spare time?

Let me see. Not really a great deal. We didn't really go out an awful lot, but if we did, we had to have a baby sitter obviously, so we'd have to pay the baby sitter. And then we'd go out to sort of clubs, like the University Press had a club down on Walton Street. We'd go there from time to time, to discos and parties and functions, and things that were on. But other than that, we didn't have a great social life, other than perhaps the pictures or something like that. But when the children grew older, for the pictures, I would take them. My husband wasn't a great lover for the pictures, so we tended not to go too much, you know. But I always liked the pictures, because this is the only thing we sort of had when we didn't have a television. We used to go to the pictures, and sort of, well, let off a bit of steam, and then you'd sort of come home and go all through the films and everything, you know. But I've always liked the pictures, you know, really.

Did you go back to work when your children were older?

I started work again at St Edward's School when Simon was... Simon had just started school; yeah, the youngest had just started school. I think he started the same day as I started work, he started school. So, I left him off at school, feeling a bit sad because he'd gone to school, and he didn't bother. He just said "cheerio Mum", and that was it. And there was me thinking "oh dear, last one's gone", and off I went to work, and I thought... And then I cleaned there, I cleaned at school, and I worked there for thirty one years. Then, due to my eyesight, I packed up. But other than that, I really had a good time, because there were boys there. They came from - I think it was eleven until eighteen, but they were lovely boys, really lovely. And then they introduced girls

(9) later on, but I always liked their boys the best - I had a soft spot. But, I suppose having brothers and then having two boys of my own, I always had a soft spot for the boys, really, you know.

Did you get a lot of exercise as a cleaner?

Oh yes, there was loads of stairs. We had to go... three flights of stairs we had to climb, even to get our coats off in the morning, and then we'd have three flights to come down. And we were up and down all day. And we had polishers to sort of drag up the stairs, and polishers to use, and oh yeah, we had a good lot of exercise that way, yes. Walking all through the corridors, and without doing all the work, you know. Yes, we got quite a bit... and sometimes I used to walk to work as well, you know, for exercise, but.

And was your husband still working at the Press?

Yes, he was working there, until he was made redundant. I'm not quite sure when he was made redundant now exactly, but the whole Press actual printing

place sort of folded up. I think they've got a very small amount of printing there now, but most of it is... Yes, there's no printing there now as such, only a very small amount, but there's the publishing, mostly publishing now that's going on there. So, he was made redundant from there after working thirty four years there, and then he worked at the local exam place in Summertown. So, he worked there for about ten years, something like that, and then he was made redundant from there. And now he works at St Peter's College in Oxford, but that... he finishes about half past one, two o'clock, so he's home in sort of afternoon, so that's quite good. But he'll soon be retiring from there as well, so.

(10) How did your diagnosis of diabetes come about?

Well, I'd had an accident on a bus - this is how it eventually sort of started - and then I'd gone to Dr Shakespeare. And she'd sort of examined me and everything, and said... Oh, then she sort of kept in touch with me, from time to time, about all the different pain I'd had and everything. And after that, she said "you've lost a lot of weight", you know. And so I said "oh, yes" I said, "but don't forget" I said, "it's over a long period of time I've lost this weight", I said, "and I've been going to Weight Watchers and Rosemary Conley and all the weight places, so". Each time I'd sort of... Before, I'd put on a stone, then I'd lose a stone. Then, this time when I'd gone, I'd sort of lose a stone, finish with the class - I'd got fed up with it or whatever - and the next time I'd go back, I hadn't put any weight on. And I used to say to my friend "oh that's good" I said, "I haven't put any weight on". She said "don't knock it, it's good", so I said "oh, all right then", you know. And we'd go on again and lose another stone, so I lost about three and a half stone in all. But it was just... I thought it was just through dieting, you know, but apparently, I think, it was probably because I was a diabetic. But anyway, she said this - she said "I'll take a blood test". So, she took a blood test, and so I went back again, and she said - I think she took three blood tests, before she sort of said it was going to be diabetes. Then she said "I think you've got diabetes", so I said "oh dear", you know. Anyway, I wasn't too perturbed. I didn't know nothing about it - it was sort of ignorance was bliss, so. Then she said "well, we'll put you... see what you do with the dieting first". Well, I thought "well, I don't think dieting will help too much", because I'd already been on so many different diets. So, anyway, I tried that for a little while, and that didn't do anything, so she put me on a tablet then. I think it was just one tablet then, a Gliclazide.

Was she your GP?

Well, they were in the group practice. She wasn't actually my GP, but she was the one that was available at that time that I went after the accident, so I sort of tended to keep with her, then, for a while. But then I was asked to, by Dr Briggs, to make my mind up - he would like to see me go to the same doctor each time. So, I said - I didn't like to put him off - I said "well, I'll stay with you", you know, as he'd taken over from the previous doctor that I was on. So, that's who I'm with at the moment: Dr Briggs. But then, after putting me on a tablet for a number of months... oh, years I was on this, they increased the tablets.

So, I think it must have been after about two years, they said they'd think I'd have to go on insulin if it didn't come down. Well, it didn't, so I eventually

(11) went on insulin, and went to the hospital, and they explained how I'd inject myself and everything. And that wasn't nothing too daunting. I think the thought of it was more daunting than the actual injection. The injection, as I've told many people, it doesn't... there's nothing to fear or hurt or anything. It just... well, there is no pain at all, you know. People just think "they don't mind being injected" - well, this is the way I looked at it - I didn't mind going to a nurse and being injected, or a doctor, but I didn't like the thought of myself giving myself an injection. But there was nothing daunting at all - it's so simple. It's in a pen, and you switch up the counts - the amount that you're going to have, the units you're going to have - and then just inject it in, and it's so simple, it's... For anybody that's going to start onto insulin, there's nothing at all to be frightened of, because it's just so simple. I mean, I can't see now, so I just... I am lucky that I can hear still and that I can feel the clicks - you can hear the clicks going round on the pen - so each click it counts as a unit. So, you know how many units you're taking, and that's it, you know, it's so simple.

But after three years of managing on diet and tablets, how did you feel, at the time, about going onto insulin?

I was a bit nervous actually, to be truthful. I would do anything, you know, not to go on it, and I thought "oh". I tried my best not to go on it, I must admit, but now that I'm on it, I just don't think nothing of it. And I've got a friend that might have to go on it, and she's a little bit nervous. And I've tried to sort of say to her, you know, it's absolutely no... and I've showed her my pen, as well. I've said "there's absolutely nothing to be nervous about". In fact, the actual taking of your blood count is more diff... well, it's not more difficult, but it hurts more, then - let's put it that way. And my brother, who's a diabetic as well, he hates taking his blood count, and yet he injects and he doesn't mind that at all, so.

Tell me about all this dieting that you did before you got diabetes.

Oh, before I got diabetes. Well, I went on the Weight Watcher plan to start with, and, as I say, I lost a stone or something, and then it got a bit boring and you sort of, you know, you give up. But that was like you counted all the points - everything had points on, you know - and you counted up how many points you were allocated a day. So, that was sort of like twenty points a day for the actual weight that you were.

When was this?

It must be about twenty years, or more, that I went on these diets. I think I must have been dieting all my life when I think about it, but it isn't really. I think

(12) I was probably more concerned when the children were tiny, you know,

small, but I never seemed to get it off. It was just a stone off, back to it, and my husband used to say to me "they see you coming". He used to sort of say - because you had to pay - I don't know how much it was now, it was about two pound something then - but he said "they just want your money, they don't want to... They're on a sort of a good thing, you know". And he wanted me to lose weight, I suppose, but I think he was a bit complacent that they were taking money off me falsely or something, I don't know. But I think it was me, really. I didn't keep up to it, you know. But then, when you're a diabetic, it's a different thing altogether, because you have to watch everything you eat, 'cause everything sort of puts your blood counts up. Bread'll put your blood counts up, if you're eating too much of it, or potatoes, or anything seems to sort of trigger it off to go up too high, which you don't want to do, you know. You want to keep it... So, that, in a sense, is a good sort of standby really, although, at the moment, I'm in Slimming World at the moment, but I'm finding it terribly difficult to lose weight. And I don't know whether it's the insulin, the lifestyle that I lead at the moment, which is pretty sort of mundane, you know. I don't really do a great deal. I'm retired now, so I don't work as such, but I do try to walk every day, a couple of miles, like, you know. But, other than that, I don't really have an awful lot of exercise, I don't suppose, because it doesn't take long to clean the house with the two of you in it.

Why do you think you did put on weight?

Probably greedy. I don't really know either. I think I ate - well, I ate all the wrong things. Yes, I did; I know that. But it's something in your head, really, I think. I've always said this. It's not really to do with... you look at things... I think fat people look at things in a different way than thin people. I think we look at food in a totally different way. We wake up in the morning and think "oh, what can we eat", whereas a thin person just gets up and they don't think the same about food. We sort of think, when we've eaten one meal, when's the next one coming, and what we're going to have and how delicious it will be.

Why do you think there is that difference?

I don't really know. I'm not quite sure, really. I've tried to sort of analyse it from time to time, but I don't really know. I've always... 'cause I was a thin child, I was really skinny little thing. I mean, my mother used to say I was really hard to rear, you know, because I would eat nothing and I'd pick about something. And I think really, where it come in to it, was when I was a child, my father used to say "oh, eat up", he said, "and you'll be a big girl", you know. And I thought "yes, I am a big girl now. Not big in height, but big in width". But I think that sort of manifests itself in your head, that if you eat up, and you'll be strong and you'll be, you know, healthy and that. But it doesn't work that way at all, you know. I think it's just the wrong idea. I think it was just put into your head, somehow, you know, that. But I don't really know why the thin people don't think of food, but we always do. I mean, I go with friends to

the Slimming World, and we constantly... all we're talking about is the things that we can't eat - not the things that we should be eating, you know. But I think that's... I don't think we'll ever be any different; I'm sure we won't.

When you got married, did you cook the same sort of food that you'd been brought up with?

No, because my husband didn't like... I don't think he liked the same sort of food, so I was sort of more or less - whereas before we were sort of eating, like, say the Irish cuisine as such - we went back to the English sort of food, and what we eat, you know. So, we were eating sort of pies, which we didn't really have pies at home, not really, but we did, then, when I was married. We had pies and different things like that, you know.

(13) Can you talk me through all the different slimming programmes that you've been on?

Well, I'll try my best, but I think the first one we went to - a friend of mine and myself - we went to Weight Watchers, which we went every week. We got weighed, told what to eat, and we had a point system. And it worked for a certain length of time, and it gets in your head. But when you go back to get weighed each week, it's like going to the dentist and pulling your teeth, because you're frightened to death that you've put on. But it does keep you on the straight and narrow, and to be truthful, it would keep me for a certain length of time, but it's that motivation that you can't sort of keep up. You keep it up for a while, and you get all excited about losing the weight, but then it sort of panders off - that you don't lose anything, and you think "oh gosh, this is a waste of time". Because you might go two or three weeks and you might not have lost anything, or if you have, you might have just lost a half a pound, which you can't see a half a pound, you know, nowhere. But, I mean, I know, now, it's different. Half a pound, to me, would be lovely, but then, I was younger, so I wanted it off magically - I wanted it off the next day. But, of course, life doesn't work like that. Then, after we'd had been on a number of times to Weight Watchers, we went to Rosemary Conley, whereas, that was another good thing. We ate all the right foods, for a certain length of time. We exercised at that class - we had music and exercise, and we exercised for about half an hour, which was gruelling - I hated it. But, I mean, it did sort of work, as I say, but only while you were there. As soon as you left the programme and that, you just went back to your old habit of eating again. And, I think, no matter what I've been on - it doesn't matter what club or anything. I'm on Slimming World now, and I hope this one will work, and this is the longest I've been on one. I sort of started in, I think, June this year, and I think this is about the longest I've stayed there, whereas I haven't really lost... I've only lost about six and a half pounds, seven pounds, something like that, in this sort of time. And it's so slow. But I think I would have given up now, but my friends keep saying "keep going", and they're sort of motivating me to go. And they're not losing a great deal either. They've lost a lump, but now they're sort of standing still. So, I'm just wondering if ever I should get to my goal, you know, which I would like

to get to about another stone off, you know, which would make me about ten stone, which would be quite nice.

(14) Have any of these slimming classes that you've paid for tackled the reasons why you eat?

No, I don't think they have, really. I mean, I don't know whether it's me or what it is, but no, they haven't. I think it's something in me that gives up, and I think if I probably persevered longer, it might well do, you know, I might sort of get it in my head. Perhaps I'm too thick headed or something, I don't know, but.

When you were diagnosed with diabetes in 1997, what advice did you receive about diet?

Well, Dr Briggs said at the time, you know, when I went to him, he said "it's not really a diet, as such, it's just like everybody should eat like this". And I thought "oh". It is right, I mean, I can understand that, but even when I did eat sort of smaller amounts, I never seemed to lose the weight, you know, so. But they did say at the time, also, that insulin puts weight on. You can't lose with - I'm not quite sure why or how it works - but if you're on insulin, you don't sort of seem to lose weight, you know. Or else, if you do, it's very, very difficult, you know, so you sort of lose heart a bit, you know.

So Dr Briggs, your GP, did he give you a diet sheet, or?

No, he didn't actually. I think he sort of... I'd told him I'd been on a number of diets, you know, so he probably knew I knew how much to eat and what to eat, you know. He just said it was just ordinary food, not - I mean I knew not to eat like loads of cheese and loads of fattening things, you know, and cakes - that was obvious things, you know, sort of sweets. And also - I'm not sure whether he told me or whether the hospital told me - that it was processed foods, you know, in tins and things, to keep away from there, because there's hidden sugars and hidden things in there that you don't know what they are, so it's best to have just fresh vegetables and fresh, you know, fruit, and all this sort of thing.

Was your diabetes managed entirely by your GP at first?

Yes, it was, because I wasn't on insulin for a number of years, you see. It was only when I went on the insulin that I went into the hospital – well, went to the hospital for advice.

(15) Can you talk about your first visits to the hospital?

Yes, the first time I went to the hospital for insulin - to get all the gen on the insulin - and I was as nervous as anything, because I thought "oh dear, what are they going to do?". And they injected it into my - well, she gave me the pen to inject it into my leg, and she said "you can just go through your tights, as well", you know, and I thought "oh gosh". And I didn't feel nothing, and I said "is that it?", and she said "yes". So, after that, I didn't bother, you know, I never looked back, really. It never daunted me at all. I mean, it did to the extent of the

actual insulin - what effect it would have on me. I think I came home and had it that night or something, and I sort of felt a bit peculiar, but I think that was all in my head, really, when I'm thinking about it now. Yeah, I'm sure it was. But that was nothing; it was just, as I say, all in my head. But they said about the diet, then, to have, as I said, fresh vegetables and not to have sauces, and to watch all the things that were hidden. That was the most important, because you know when you're having a cup of tea if you've got sugar in it, that's it. Sugar is quite easy to see, but when it's hidden into jams, or... And also they said not to have this diabetic stuff, because that could have different effects on you as well. And it was just as easy, just - if you were going to have a piece of chocolate - just to have one square rather than have a whole bar. Or even the diabetic chocolate, because the diabetic chocolate can have other effects on you that you might not even be aware of, until it happened, so.

What else did you learn at the hospital about monitoring your sugars, or?

I'm not really quite sure, now, what it was. It was just a matter of keeping... well, the machine they gave me to start with, I had to drop the blood onto. And there, of course, when my eyesight went, I couldn't see the blob going on. So, they gave me another machine, eventually, which pulls the blood out of your finger onto the machine, which is - oh, it's a hell of a lot different. And also, I can see the noughts going round and round to when it clicks over... It's so much easier now; much more easier than when I first started. Well, I suppose it was sort of trial and error, what I was sort of going to do - what I was capable of, you know, but this other machine's brilliant, you know.

(16) Can you talk about monitoring your blood sugars from when you were first diagnosed with diabetes?

Yes, when I first started I was a bit blasé about it, and I thought "oh, I'll go a few days without it". But then they said to me to monitor them at different times of the day. I'd take it before breakfast, before lunch, before dinner, before bed, but now I take it once a day, but not always on the same time. I might take breakfast-time some days, I might take it lunchtime another day, but I always take it once a day at some point of the time, you know. But it's always before a meal. I've never taken it after a meal - I've never been told to take it after a meal. I know some people do, but I never have. I just take mine before meals.

And what kind of equipment were you using in 1997?

I'm not quite sure of the actual machine that it was doing, but I had to drop the blood onto it. And it wasn't very successful - well, not for me, as I couldn't see it. I think it had been all right for people that had their eyesight, you know, but. Then they put me on this Advantage machine, and that's much better and much easier. And, of course, years ago, they used to have to draw the insulin up out of a bottle, but now you've got a pen which just clicks on the amount of units that you use, so it's far easier altogether, you know. There's no complications at all, now.

So you find the insulin injections easy and the monitoring easy, but the diet difficult. Has anyone at the hospital talked to you about the psychological aspects of dieting?

Not the actual psychological points, no. I mean, when I went up the last time to the hospital, I'd actually lost a stone from last January, which they were over the moon about. Well, I wasn't, because I thought I should have lost two stone by then, but they said that's the best way to lose it - slowly, you know. But it's terrible when you want to lose it a little bit more quickly, you know. I don't want to lose it overnight like I did when I was younger, but I do want to sort of get it off. I'm getting to the point now that I'm thinking "I'll never get into those ten stones"!

When you first went to the hospital, and since, were you seeing doctors or nurses primarily?

Doctors and nurses. I did a card study for Dr Rosemary Spivey for three years, so I see her and Jenny - Jenny Shaw - regular, well fairly regularly. And then I took a tablet for them - it was a sort of like an experiment thing. You were either on the right one or a dummy one, and I never did find out what I was on, but I didn't really care

(17) anyway, because it was just a study, and that was it. But it was going to be for five years, but I think they'd got all the information by about three years, so I was finished with there about a year ago now, so. I only see them now about once a year. But I can also go to my doctor, which has got a diabetes nurse there, which I can always make an appointment with her at any time that I need to sort of – well, get any more information or anything, you know.

When did you begin to develop complications associated with diabetes?

I didn't, not really. It was just out of the blue, really, that Dr Shakespeare found it. Other than the fact that she'd said that I'd lost weight - I mean, I was sort of pleased with that, you know - I didn't have any complications at all. She said to me did I have any symptoms, like passing water a lot and things like that, and I said "no, nothing like that". So, she said "well, what other symptoms do you have?", and I said "well, other than being tired, nothing", and I said "everybody was tired". When I said to them at work, you know, that I was tired, they said "oh yes, so are we. We go and have a sleep in the afternoons", and I said "oh, that's all right then". But I did find that when I did sleep, when I came round out of the sleep, I felt really dopey, as if I was sort of doped up somehow, but I just didn't put nothing to it. I just thought it was menopausal or something like that. It never bothered me to that effect, nothing at all, not really.

And then, after you were diagnosed, how did your diabetes develop?

Well, I don't know. I can't really sort of recollect anything. I just went on with life the same as normal. I just sort of tried to cut things down, and I never had any sort of real symptoms of any such, you know, not really. I did get better, in

the fact that I wasn't so tired. But other than that, I mean, I just carried on working, doing the same things; nothing seemed to alter.

(18) Well, I did lose my sight, of course, other than... that was the only other really downfall with diabetes. I tend to sort of forget about it now, because when you're in your own surroundings, you think you can see, you know, which is a bit silly. But I know it sounds silly, but you do - you think you can sort of see around. It's just when you go to other places that you haven't been before, you think "oh gosh, where's everything?", you know, and you can't find anything, you know. You couldn't even find a toilet. I couldn't find a toilet, on my own, without going perhaps into a man's toilet, without anybody being with me, you know, this sort of thing. This is the only sort of drawback I suppose, but. You tend to sort of live with it, you know, and you don't take a lot of notice of it. The only other thing I would say about - not being blind so much - but about the diabetes as such, is when I've been in hypos, and they are quite nasty, you know, and I don't really know why. Sometimes I do know why, but not always why they come on. Sometimes I've had a meal and they've come on just about an hour afterwards, which I don't think they can explain, even in the hospital, why that happens. But I don't always know whether... Sometimes I sort of gauge it that I take ten units. Well, if I think I'm cutting down more on my food, I take eight units then, you know, and sort of trying to sort of figure it out like that way, you know, so that I don't go into hypos; that's the only thing.

When did you begin going into hypos?

Well, when I was on insulin to start with - I think it must have been about a few months into the diabetes - and then if you're cutting down and trying to lose weight, or trying to be really good and regimental, really, on your diet, you can't really take the same amount of insulin. This is what I've found to my sort of horror, I suppose. But I always keep sort of Dextrose by the side of my bed, just in case I get sort of hypo, that I can take two or three of those and that brings the sugar level up, you know. But the only thing I've always thought about them - having them in the night - was that I might not wake up out of these hypos, you know, I might sort of go into a coma, but. So, I do tend to take my blood count now, more so, before bed, you know. Even if I don't sort of put it down in a book, I will take it, you know, regardless, because that sort of gives me a little safeguard. Because I think, well, if it's too low when I'm going to bed, I have a little snack, like a... I might just have a biscuit or a banana or something like that - nothing too major to put any weight on. But you're constantly sort of watching the hypos, the weight, the diet, and you're constantly sort of thinking about it. Because sometimes, when I go to the

(19) Slimming World, I'll say to the dietician, like, you know, there, I'll say about what I'm eating and everything, and I said "I haven't lost any weight". And she said... she'll go through everything what I've eaten, and I'll sort of say "I'm very careful what I eat, and I always remember what

I eat". And she sort of thinks that I have to write everything down, but I don't, 'cause I remember it. I think it's because you're blind, you get some sort of sense - I don't know what it is - but it's some sort of sense, anyway, that you get, that you remember what you're eating, you know.

Have you ever been completely out with a hypo?

No, I've never been completely out, no. I've just got... they're funny things. They're quite frightening, the ones I've had in the night. 'Cause when you have them in the day, you know you feel a bit wobbly legged and everything, and you think "oh, I must get something fairly quick", you know. And there's always something there on tap wherever you are, you know, and I always carry things with me. I'll either carry a little box of biscuits or the Dextrose tablets or something. I never leave the house without them, without... I suppose they're sort of like a child and his dummy, really, you know, that you just have to keep them with you. But the ones in the night, when you wake up, you wake up in a terrible sweat, and I mean it could be winter and you could be sweating like anything. And you get so wobbly legged that you don't really... it's like coming out of a trance or a drug sort of thing, that you just don't know where you are or what you're doing. You don't even want to wake up, really, but something triggers you to wake up. I suppose it's like somebody sort of pushing you to wake up and try and open your eyes. And you just have to do that so you can get the sweet or whatever, the Dextrose, by the side of you and put it in your mouth, and you're all right again. Well, I say all right - you're not for a while. It takes a while for the sugar level to come back up, but within about half an hour, three quarters of an hour, you can sort of go back to sleep, and you feel all right safely to put down your head again, you know. But they can be a bit sort of stressful, really.

And when did you first start losing your sight?

About three, four years after I was diagnosed diabetic. I became - well, I wasn't really aware of it at the time. I went to have my general sort of check-up at the opticians, then, it was, and he sort of looked at them, and sort of said "oh, your eyes have deteriorated a lot". And I suppose I'd noticed, but I suppose not to that extent. I kept putting it off. I thought "well, it must be the glasses or something". Anyway, he did the glasses, but they weren't no good at all. So, then I was referred

(20) to the hospital to have another check-up by my doctor, and then they sort of realised that my eyes were going, you know, bad. But I think it was before 2001. I think I was registered in 2001, but it must have been about a year before that they were going, you know, but it was 2001 that I was actually registered. But it was a little Chinese nurse in there, and she said to me, when she took my - she put the chart up and I couldn't see any of the letters and that - she said to me "how do you get about?", and I said "with great difficulty". And so she said "would you like to speak to somebody on the desk?", she said "we have somebody from the OAB".

And, of course, I hadn't heard of them before or anything, so I said "yes, I would", you know. So, I went to see this person, and she told me all about the different things that I could get. So, eventually a social worker came to see me, and she pointed all the different things out that I could have to help me with my blindness. And that was little buttons, proud buttons on the washing machine, that I can still feel free that I can use my washing machine without any help, other than these buttons. She also gave me magnifying glasses, which I could not do without. I have to magnify everything to read, because I can't read any print whatsoever. I have one in the kitchen to look at the cooker, when I put it on, to what number I've put it on. I have - well, the one in the kitchen also is for weighing anything, like food, that if I'm making a cake or anything. And I'm quite capable of doing that, and it leaves me that independence that I can do it without having to ask anybody, which is most important, because you've got to have your independence. I've got another one upstairs – I carry these - and they provided me with them from the hospital. Also, I've got a radio with big buttons on, and the social worker got that for me. I have the books for the blind, which they come in whenever I order them. And my husband helps me to sort out the catalogue, and he'll sort of go through the different ones that I want to read, and he'll order them for me, and then they come through the post. All I do, when they go back, is take them back to the post office, and they don't cost nothing or anything. That she also got me my stick, which I can walk perfectly all right without it. I don't need the stick to aid me in walking, but I do need it to let other people know that I'm partially sighted, blind, or whatever. And if I've got that, I feel... that, again, is like a dummy. It's a security thing that people know, because, by looking at me, people have said they don't see that I'm blind. So, that sort of, I suppose, it's sort of a security thing or something. But I've always got it whenever I go out on my own, and it helps people, if they're drivers, that they a bit more careful, or supposed to be - I hope they are. And I always cross on a crossing. I never ever cross without crossing on a crossing, or at lights or something like that. I would never dream of crossing on the road, because I would never judge where the car was. I could hear it, but I wouldn't be able to judge how close it was to me.

How have you adjusted mentally to losing your sight?

(21) Quite well, actually – well, I think. I don't know - perhaps other people might not think so. But most people say that I'm pretty good, you know, with it - you know, I'm cheerful and everything, but. And it has never really got me depressed or anything. I don't know - perhaps I'm a bit thick or stupid or something, but it's never really bothered me to that extent, but then again, I'm not completely on my own. I've got my husband, which he does all the shopping, you know, which is marvellous, really. I could shop, but it would take me hours to shop, because everything I'd have to have up, you know, with a magnifying glass. And I do use my magnifying

glass. I've got one in my handbag, a little pocket one that I take out for prices, but generally speaking I'm with a friend or somebody with me. I feel more confident with that. But I can go to certain places that I know personally, like the town. I'm quite near to the town, so it's only about ten minutes, quarter of an hour walk. And I do know all the shops there, because I can remember them, you know, from when I could see properly. It's just the crossing of the roads. I have to do my sort of... in my head, before I go, I know which way I'm going, so that I haven't got many sort of side roads. Well, the way I go - I go up on to the Walton Street, cross the crossing there, up onto Little Clarendon Street, then I go along St Giles. And there's only one little side street, and that's only... there's not much traffic at all coming there. Other than that, I've got all the lights that I cross straight across with, so that's one thing, you know, but. Yes, other than that, with my husband with the shopping and everything, I would be lost, I think, you know, but.

Has it made it more difficult to get exercise, losing your sight?

Yes, it has, because I wouldn't like to go... I go with friends walking - when I walk – because, again, it's the side streets. And it's not fair to the other people that are driving, because they don't always want to look out for a blind woman that's going across in front of them, you know. And so, I mean, I don't trust myself just on the side streets, not at all. So, when I go, I go with friends, but, of course, if they can't go, it means I can't go. But then I throw myself around the house with the records or something, you know, so I get a bit of exercise that way.

Have you had any other complications, with your feet or heart?

Well, I've got a high blood pressure, and I do get my feet regularly... the toe nails clipped, because I couldn't cut my toenails. Anyway, they say that

(22) diabetic people shouldn't cut their nails, but... and they do all the hard skin. But I've just been, actually, the other day, and they said my feet were fine, you know. But you do get sort of pins and needles sometimes in them, or a little numbness. But they check 'em, and I'm monitored all the time with that. And I must say that all the hospitals, doctors, nurses - they've been brilliant, brilliant.

All of them?

All of them, yes, all of them. I can't really say a bad word for any of them. No, they've all been really good.

What about the National Health Service itself? Have you noticed any changes over the years you've been diabetic?

No, I think I must live in a real good place in Oxford. I don't think I'd have the confidence to move anywhere else, but I think Oxford is one of the best places

to be if you're a diabetic. And they've now got the new one up in the Churchill. It's absolutely brilliant, that centre up there, for the diabetes.

Do you have long waiting times?

No, not really, no. Well, I mean, I wait here for my taxi to come for me, because I get transport there and back, and they take me right there. I can't fault it, you know. There's nothing, really, that I could say that could be bad - it's all good. I mean, sometimes you have to get ready about an hour before, but that's no hardship, you know. You can get ready and sit and watch, or listen to the radio or whatever, you know, so that's no hardship. It's just... And even waiting there, really - it's a little outing. Because if you don't go out too much, it's... you know, you meet people up there, and you have a little chat or something like that, and they're all ever so pleasant, really pleasant.

And is the transport free?

Yes, it is. That's another thing, you know. I mean, I wouldn't be able to afford to pay for the transport, because I'm not on a pension yet because my husband's not sixty five until next April. So, I think I'll get a little pension then. But, I didn't pay into a pension, because when I first started work, we weren't, believe it or not, getting... I wasn't getting about five pound a week, so, for about twenty hours then, but. So, we never went into a pension, and anyway, I don't think there was a pension scheme there anyway, so.

Are there any costs for you, associated with diabetes?

No, I don't think there are, no. No, I haven't come across any yet, no. Everything has been absolutely wonderful. I can't really say anything highly about it, you know, it's just marvellous. I've always been looked after, and people knock the National Health, I know, but I've never had any qualms at all about it. I mean, I might be just one of the lucky people, I don't know. But you do get people moaning that they've had to wait an hour to see the doctor - but so what? An hour, you know,

(23) that's nothing, really. If you're there for an appointment and you have to wait an hour, well, that's no bother. I mean, I just... Perhaps I've got a sad life and I don't have much to do, but I don't mind waiting, really.

You mentioned a brother who had diabetes. Is there any other diabetes in your family?

Yes, I've got three... two brothers living that have got it, and one died, but he had other complications as well, other than diabetes. He had heart problems and everything, but he had heart problems before he was a diabetic, so whether that was the onset of it, I don't know, really. But he died, and he was only sixty two.

Do you know if there's any history of diabetes in the family?

Yes. Well, as I say, my other two brothers have got it, and then I had an aunt

that had it, but other than that, I don't... Mother and father didn't have it, and no immediate family, you know, relatives that I know of have got it.

How did your family and friends and workmates react when you were first diagnosed with diabetes?

Well, they weren't really too deturbed, because, I suppose, it was me and not them, you know. And I was the same when my brothers had it, because they had it before I did, and I wasn't sort of too deturbed. I think it's... you get ignorant of it, you know. You don't really know about it, you don't really particularly want to know too much about it if it isn't you, and it's only when you've got it yourself that you think "oh yes, it's pretty drim", you know, and that, you know. You don't really think about it as a disease or anything, you know, when... I don't really know. Now I'm really sympathetic to people that've got it, very sympathetic, and especially to children, because it's quite devastating. A friend of mine's grandson, I think he was about seven or eight when he was diagnosed with diabetes, and it made her sort of nervous of looking after him at one point, you know, because, I think... Well, it's what you don't know, you know - you're nervous of what you don't know. But yes, I think it is a bit daunting when you've got it yourself, to what, you know, other people... so, I don't expect other people to sort of really relate to it to the same extent.

Did you blame yourself or anyone for having diabetes?

Oh no, not really. I think, really, in hindsight, I should have listened to the doctors when they used to say to me that I was a sort of a prime suspect for it, you know, or something, but I didn't. You know, you sort of think "oh well". It's like you warn people about smoking or drinking or whatever. I mean, I've never done either of those, but they used to say about my weight and everything - "try and get your weight down,

(24) because you could be diabetic in later life". But when you're younger, you think "oh well", you know, it's way down the line, you know, or you don't even think about it at all; you just keep on. You try for a little while, as I say, but you just give up in the end, just go your own sweet way. And then when you've got it, you think "oh, I wish I'd have listened to them, you know, now".

Can you think of any way that one could get through to people?

Ooh, it's difficult, really. I suppose if they were taken somewhere and shown the people that have got it, and they could listen to them, and sort of - probably I'm saying this now and I'm recording it, but I'm not saying that I'm interested in any way - but they might find it beneficial to them to sort of listen to people, and sort of think "oh, I don't want to go down that road, that might happen to me". I think it might be a sort of wake up call, you know, to them. I don't really know. I can't think of anything else that would sort of do it. It's like, as I was saying, taking people that smoke to the actual people that have sort of got lung cancer or emphysema or whatever it is called - that can't sort of breathe

and that, you know, to stop smoking. It might have some sort of bearing on them, I don't know. I think that would be perhaps the only thing that would get through to them, I don't know.

There seems to have been a lot more publicity about diabetes recently. Have you noticed any changes in attitudes when you tell people you're diabetic?

No, not really, no. I can't really say that I have. Not really, no.

Would you have any message to anyone who was diagnosed with diabetes now?

Well, other than just to follow what the doctor says, you know, to your diet, and not to be... I've got a brother, now, that he doesn't... he does to a certain extent ignore everything the doctor says. But he seems to be losing weight, which is so annoying. And that grieves me a bit, you know, that he's losing weight and doing all the wrong things, and there's me gone blind and doing everything right, and nothing's happening to lose weight, you know. So, I don't really know the answer to that, but, I don't know.

What keeps you going?

I think probably my outlook to life. I'm a bit... if it doesn't happen, you know, don't wish it to happen, or. I'm a bit blasé about it, I suppose - I just go on from day to day. I just get by, you know. I'm quite sort of a happy person, in a sense. Perhaps I don't sound it now, but I am quite a happy sort of person; happy go lucky. I never seem to let things get me down or worry. If it gets me down for a moment, I sort of pull myself out of it by talking to myself, and saying "come on, you silly bitch, get on with it"! It just seems to be... because you see somebody that's totally worse off than you for starters. And I did feel a bit down at one time when I went to the hospital, thinking about this, and I saw this man with no legs, and I thought "oh, whatever are you grumpling about, or thinking that you're down", you know. It's stupid, you know. So, you always see somebody that's worse off than you, and that's how I sort of get by, I think, really.