

VOICES FROM THE FACTORY FLOOR/LLEISIAU O LAWYR Y FFATRI

Peggy Anne, Horrocks – Penarth Road, Caerdydd/Cardiff

Interviewee: VSE011 Maisie Taylor

DOB: 4/10/1933

Date: 3/12/2013

Interviewer: Catrin Edwards on behalf of the Women's Archive of
Wales / Archif Menywod Cymru

Could you tell me your full name and date of birth please?

My name is Maisie Taylor, and my date of birth is 4th of the tenth 1933.

I'd like to ask you then a little bit about your background, your mother and father?

My mother and father were, my father was on the railway for 30 odd years. My mother started life as a gardener and after she got married to my dad she did several jobs, working, she worked in a factory as well, which was to do with making shelves during the war. Also she worked in a local club in Penarth, behind the bar. As I say, during the war she did several jobs. My dad had gone into the army and he was away for about four years during my growing up mainly, you know, but, yeah they were hard working parents.

Which factory did she work in?

It was Currans, which was, towards the town side of Cardiff. I'm not sure exactly where, but I know it's in that area, but she was there for quite some time.

Right. And were you brought up in Penarth?

Yes. I've lived all my life in Penarth, and I never wanted to move really. It's a nice town. You know, it's got everything. We're not far from the city centre which is Cardiff, we have a little local beach, there's not much there, but we do have a little beach and we've got a nice little town centre. Virtually, anything you want you can get in Penarth, and if you can't get it here, as I say, Barry is another close by town and Cardiff if you want the main shops. So it's quite a nice little town.

02:28

So where did you go to school?

I went to Albert Road. I started there when I was four, then when I got to 14 they altered the school leaving age from 14 to 15. Unfortunately most of my friends who I was very friendly with at the time, they were that little bit older than me and they left school in the August, but because my birthday was October I had to stay on in school for another year, and as I'd gone up in the classroom, you know, it wasn't so much your age, it was your ability with work. And because I was quite good at work in the classroom, I went into a higher class before my time really, so I was spending, I spent two years in the top class, I couldn't go any higher, so when they changed the school leaving age, I had to transfer to Cogan school, because there was no more room for me up in Albert Road, so I had to spend my last year in Cogan school. Just repetitive work really, but I had to stay there until I was 15, then I left school at 15 then in the December.

So you could stay at Albert Road through kind of primary years and secondary?

Oh yes. They had, I started as an infant, they had an infant school there, it was kept separate, slightly separate from the older ones but as I say, I started at four and stayed all the time, up until 14, up at Albert Road school. But then as I say I had to go for the last year down to Cogan school.

So was it your choice to leave school at 15?

Well I originally wanted to be a nanny, and I loved looking after children, and it was something that I enjoyed doing, and it was what I wanted to do, but when we went to see the careers advisor, they said, well, if you want to be a nanny, you have to go away to London to, for training. And I'd had a sort of very reserved upbringing and my mother didn't think I was suitable for it, to go away, and she vetoed it you know. She said well, we'll look for something else. The only other thing that I was fairly good at was using my hands, crocheting, little sewing things, and when we went to see the jobs advisor in Cardiff, the only jobs they had available were in a biscuit factory and a dressmaking factory which was on Penarth Road, that's how I came to start in Horrocks, because it was nearer for me to get to work and it was something that I was more interested in, so that's how I came and started there.

So did you mind leaving school, because you said you were quite good?

No, I felt that I'd gone as far as I could in school. I felt a bit envious of my friends who were out in the real world sort of thing. They'd gone onto different jobs and I felt that it was time for me to leave school then. I didn't want to go into college, at the time it didn't appeal to me. I didn't want office work. I didn't fancy office work, so that didn't appeal to me at all, but in the long run I know I chose the right job, because I was very happy there.

06:44

Okay. You said it was called Horrocks, but it wasn't Horrocks to begin with was it?

No, it was called Peggy Ann, and we made children's dresses, but I was only there a short while. I can't remember the exact amount of time, but I stayed six to seven months, if that. And we were taken over by Horrocks. Now at that time, Horrocks was quite a big concern. They had factories in other parts of the country. I don't know exactly where, but it was a well-known name if you went into some of the big stores in Cardiff. You know they used to do a lot of bedding, curtains, that sort of thing, but they also made dresses, and we had factories that made dresses, apart from ourselves, because every so often we would get, they'd have a sale and dresses were brought in, not that we'd made, our dresses would go to another factory, and then they'd be put on rails and we could go and have a look at them, and if there was something we fancied, we could buy them at a reduced rate of course. But if you were lucky enough, you could get some real good bargains that way.

Did you used to do that?

Oh yes. Yes. I had some, I don't know what happened to them now. I did have some lovely dresses. I can remember one in particular what I was very fond of was an emerald green satin. Beautiful, beautiful dress with little diamantes coming down the front, full skirt, which was the fashion then, you know. And of course we used to have petticoats underneath, buffing it out a bit. But um, yes, we had some real good bargains there.

Where did your dresses, the ones you made, which shops did they used to go to, do you know?

Well, no, somewhere like Howells and David Morgans in Cardiff, I believe they used to get them in. I'm not sure exactly. As I say, it was, once we made them they were taken away from us and we never knew exactly where they went. We weren't told. You know, we were just in the production of it and that was it. But um, yes, I can't say that I actually saw any shop selling the dresses that we made in our factory. But obviously they were, but where they went, I don't know.

What about Marks & Spencers? Did they?

Well, towards the end of the time I was there, Horrocks had, things had gone I suppose a bit low for them and we were fighting to try and keep the factory open, so they had to look for outside work and we had some work came in to do for Marks & Spencers, which were skirts. It was something that we hadn't done before, but we made the skirts for them and they were very particular about how they were finished off. They had to be just right. But that was towards the end of my service there. You know I was there for 10 years.

10:33

So tell me again. When did you, what year did you start at Peggy Ann and then Horrocks?

I left school December 1948 and I started in the January, beginning of January 1949.

Right. And were there people there you knew from school or from you know where you lived in Penarth?

There were a couple, yes. You got to know a lot of other people of course, because it was quite a big concern there. I don't know the exact amount of people there, but it must have been well over a hundred I should say, altogether, but there were people from Penarth, from Barry, all areas of Cardiff. Grangetown, the Docks, further afield, they used to come in usually on buses. I used to catch a train, getting out at Grangetown station and then walk down the road, because they did have a bus that went up and down there you know, you could go by bus if you wanted to, but it was, time-wise and travel-wise it was better and easier to travel by train, for me. And the girls from Barry used to come up on the train as well. But there were some that used the bus of course. But yeah, there were a few from Penarth that I got to know – better. I knew them, more so, they lived in different areas of Penarth, and some of them I did know from, not from school, I suppose living in Penarth, I got to know a few of them, but, as I say, it was such a different thing altogether. From living in Penarth, going to school and your school friends. Actually, none of my school friends that I was really friendly with, none of them ever came to work in Horrocks. They would all go on their own different ways. Different jobs.

So, tell me where, where was Horrocks?

On Penarth Road. On the corner, which is now Hadfield Road, which was, at the time like a country lane, there was nothing down there. There was virtually very, very few factories or workplaces at all. The only places that were down there were, there was an electrical wire firm, a little bit below us. There was a cigar factory, but there was, and across the road from our factory there was, it's like a pumping station with a hut that used to sell coffees and teas and buns and different things. It was like a corrugated hut at the back of the frontage you know, and occasionally for a change we'd go over there to have a break, rather than staying in on the factory grounds.

Do you know what's there now?

A garage. It was a Saab garage. But of course that place disappeared a long time ago. Up the lane opposite there was like a lorry place, I think they were sort of transport lorries, but that was right up the far end of the lane across the road from us. But on our side there was, Hadfield Road, as I say, it was like a country lane and all that was up there were allotments, you know. We didn't go up there very much, we'd take a short walk up the lane, but it was very dusty, there was no pavement, no road even. It was just like a dirt track really, but we'd have a little walk up and the bushes each side. Totally different from what is there now. Quite a thriving place up there now. But as I say, there was nothing down there you see. Nothing, there were no lights to start with. You know, if you went down in the dark, it was dark. There was no lighting down there. No lighting along that road at all, right from Penarth to Grangetown. The first lights appeared up by Grangetown station.

15:49

Tell, me. Describe to me what it was like on the first day you went there.... walking into the factory, what you felt like, you know, what the factory was like if you can remember?

Bewildered. Absolutely um, it was a different world. An absolutely different world and I didn't know what to expect. I was very nervous and I had to learn how to mix with people who were totally different to me, and for the first week I was there, I didn't like it. I used to come home and say to my mother, oh mum, I don't like it. And she said, you know, you've got to learn to adjust, you've got to earn. You will get to know it's different, and you will adjust. And I did, and it was the making of me. Because I was a very self-conscious person, I sort of had a very quiet life, and this was totally, totally different, but it was enlightening.

What were the other women like?

Oh, very noisy, very brash. They used to, they just used to enjoy life and yeah, it came out, I mean, the noise in the factory was another thing that you had to get used to, because it was very noisy, all the machinery going, you know, and it's something you just don't realise until you walk into it, how noisy it is. Music is going in the background, [unclear 17:52] used to have music on. People singing, if they knew the words to the songs that were coming over the tannoy, and it was, it was a very noisy thing. And you got used to it. I think in the end, when I come home, my mum used to say to me, don't talk so loud, and I said, you get used to, you had to talk at the top of your voice to make yourself heard you know. And when you came out of it you see, you didn't realise that you were doing it. It was strange, it was strange, but very rewarding.

How long did it take you to settle down do you think?

Oh, a couple of weeks that was all, you know. Once I got used to it, it was something that you had to adjust to anyway, otherwise you would have been no good, but no, I did, I did enjoy it.

And did you make friends then with other women in the factory?

Oh gosh yes, yes. My best friend, she was Val, Valerie. She was on the cutting section, she used to do all the cutting out of the patterns, and over the years, I got to go in and work on all different sections. Not particularly the sewing side of it, but I was on what they called special bench. And the special bench was a section where all the garments had to be either overlocked, buttonholed, felling, which was the hemming of the garment, and they even sewed buttons on, the machines sewed buttons on. But over the years, I started on the overlocking machine. That was my machine for quite some time. Then I learned to use the other different machines, because each one has got a different way of working it, you know. One instance I can tell you, I was on a buttonhole machine. Now bear in mind, the machine goes up and down, comes around and a knife comes down the centre to cut it, and I was on a machine, a little further over from my original machine, the overlocking, I was on a different section, and I was on an older machine that didn't have a guard on the front and I'm making a buttonhole on the garment and my finger inadvertently got caught in the machine, and the needle went up and down through my finger, through the nail and came out of the machine. So I'm left with the needle through my finger, and I thought, oh gosh, and I got up. I must have stopped the knife dropping because they had an emergency switch on the side which

you could stop the knife cutting, and I must have inadvertently pressed it without realising it, because otherwise the knife would have come down on my finger. But I [unclear 21:30] oh gosh, stopped the machine, got up and walked over to my supervisor who was on the other section and said, Mary, look what I've done. And she went oh my god!

21:44

Do you remember what happened then?

Called the manageress, Miss Grünfeldt and they said, oh you'd better sit down quick, they thought I was going to faint. I didn't. I just said, oh. And they just pulled the needle out.

What other treatment did you have, do you remember?

Well we had you know, they said, are you alright? And I said, yes, I'm fine. It was, it was a bit of a shock you know, but I didn't feel particularly hurt, but they just bandaged it up you know, and let me have a quiet day. Yes, it was, that was the only sort of accident I can ever remember having in there, all the time I was there.

What about other people? Do you remember other...?

There were slight ones, you know. Nothing drastic. If there was, we had a rest room and it had a bed then if anyone was taken ill which, you know, which being women, girls for some quite often there were certain times of the month that they were affected. I was one of those that was affected on a regular basis, and I used to have to take time off work and my manageress, the manageress, Miss Grünfeldt, she said to me, I notice every so often you're not in work. Why is that? And when I explained to her that I was, because of my monthly, I was always very ill, and I said, she said, are you ill all day? And I said, no, perhaps it would be two hours or whatever, then I'm alright. So she said well, don't stay home, come in, if you have to go in the rest room for a while, you can, and that's what I used to do, and there were other people had the same problem, or through one thing or another, if they felt ill they could go in the rest room, and there was a bed there, and must have had somebody. It was usually the supervisors, each section had a supervisor and the supervisor was usually an older woman, and they would sort of take care of you and say, get a hot water bottle, have a hot drink and just lie down for a bit and see how you are and then if you felt okay after a while, come back into the factory.

Did you find that helpful?

Oh yes, yes. It would save you losing a day's work you see.

Were you not paid if you lost a day's work?

Oh no, no. You had to clock in and clock out, as you went into the factory the machine was there and you had your card and you clocked in and then you clocked out when you finished.

So you weren't paid if you were on the sick?

No, no. And they didn't, because, you see the special branch, it wasn't like the rest of the factory, where the machinists, there were quite a few of the ordinary machinists, what I call ordinary machinists are those that put the dresses together, but the special bench, it was, it was a section that there were only so many of you on that section you see, and of course, if you were missing, it affected the production on that side. So they didn't like you to be away for too long, and it was unfortunate that you know, that there was nothing you could do about it. If you were ill, you were ill. But the only time apart from that I took time off, was I caught measles. And I had to take time off work. But apart from that you know, I didn't like to be away from work anyway. I enjoyed, I enjoyed work, yeah.

You say you were on the special bench. Were you trained at all when you went to the factory?

Oh yes, you had to be shown how to do it. You see, the overlocker had three sections, you had three cones of cotton, and you had to learn how to thread that machine up, and operate it, and the same goes for different sections, whether it was the buttonholer, you had to learn how to change your needles, because the needles would snap, so you had to learn how to do that. Little minor things we could do ourselves, if it became blocked in any way, you know, you had to clean the machine out. At the end of the day, you had to clean your machine out you see. And you had to be able to do that. If something went radically wrong, and you couldn't do it, they had a mechanic who would come and sort it out for you. But little things like that, but you had to be trained to use it. As I say, it was a special bench, that was the name of it.

27:12

Do you think you, were people on your bench more skilled than the other workers?

In their own way, yes. You see, you had to be adaptable to work the machines. It wasn't like an ordinary sewing machine, but once you got used to doing it, it was easy for us, because that's what, that's all we were doing. We weren't actually sewing the garments together, we were doing the finishing off, if you like, the finishing off side of it. But the overlocking side came in the middle of a garment, and the hemming or felling as we called it, the felling, that came at the end and the buttonholes and the buttons, that came at the end. And they went from us to, they had a hand finishing section, things like hooks and eyes that had to be done by hand, that was the finishing section. And then you'd go from, it was from the machinists, to us, back to the machinists to finish off, us to finish it off, the finishing section and then from there it would go to the presses, and the presses were the last in the line sort of thing. It was a relay system, it was a conveyor belt system.

So did you go straight on the special bench, or did you work yourself up?

No, no I went straight on the section.

Why do you think you were given.... they put you on the special?

I don't know, whether it was an availability, I'm not sure. I never, ever, I mean I learned how to use the ordinary machines, but they were, high powered you see, high powered sewing machines, not like little machines, the smaller machines you've got now. They were industrial machines, industrial sewing machines. We had the machines, we also had one section who were, they did the whole garment, right from start to finish but they were more advanced sewers. When somebody came in the factory and started as a learner, they had to start learning how to sew a particular piece, and they did that for quite a while, and then, if they were any good, they went on to different sections, and once they became proficient in what they were doing, they could go on and it was a piecework thing that they would do. So they would go onto another section, where the more industrial machines, because the factory you see, was laid out in rows, of what we call benches, and it was, you'd had a pathway down between, and the girls would be almost back to back on their benches. If you can understand. It's a bit hard to explain it, but if you went into the factory and looked down, there was a row of section there, then a section there, another section there. Then all along that wall was the tables where there were great big windows. That was the cutting out section. They had to have the light you see, so where those windows were was ideal, and they were massive, heavy tables, where the cutting out was done. And that went three quarters of the way down the entire length of the factory.

Is this what you saw when you went there on the first day?

The first day I was overwhelmed, you know. It was, oh gosh, you know. If I remember rightly, I can't, I think the lady who was my supervisor, Mary, she'd been there a while, and she had to show me how to do things, you know. And, they sort of walk you through it at first, and then you have to learn how to use the machine, it's, trying to remember that first day, it's such a long time ago. I find it hard to really picture it, you know? Because it became my way of life, I suppose you'd call it.

Did you have an interview by the way to go there?

Oh yes, yes.

And what did they ask you in the interview?

What was I interested in, um, my mother came with me, you know, as support and they just asked you what were you interested in, what would you like to do and as I say, interests, that was just the main thing, say you know, we'd like you to start.

32:53

And you were sewing at home weren't you?

I was doing small things, it was moreso putting little things together, embroidery, that sort of thing. It wasn't actually putting a garment together, I hadn't done that. I'd never done that.

Did you use a sewing machine at home?

No, we didn't have one. Didn't have one. My mother couldn't sew. She had, you know, she'd never been able to sew really, but, it was, you know little things in school. When I was in school we used to do little bits of embroidery and it was just using my hands. I was very fond of crocheting and knitting and I wasn't interested in that, so I was using my hands in that respect, but I mean this was a totally and entirely different thing, and you can't, you can't really picture it, until you start doing it. And it's something, you either like it or you don't. But fortunately I liked it. I enjoyed the challenge I suppose it would be. What you would say a challenge. I found, well, as I say, I spent 10 years at it. I wanted to complete 10 years because when I left I only had six weeks to go before my first child was due but I wanted to complete my 10 years and that's why I finished up on the Christmas time and I said, I've done my 10 years, and to me that was, I felt fine, I was, I'd put on weight obviously, but I was fine. I was able to work right up.

Why was that important for you do you think?

Um, it was something I wanted to do. I wanted to say I had completed my 10 years.

To the day?

To the day. Really, yes. And you know, they didn't object to you working there, you know. As long as you were able to do the job, but I'd gone from an overlocking, as I say, I went through different sections, and the last few years I was there I was on the hemming machine, you know, I was on that, and I was actually the special bench was in one section, but they extended it out, and we had to, you know, I was working right by the door, the exit door by the entrance and the exit door, and I was working there, and the problem with that was, on a cold day if they left the door open, ooh, I was caught in a draught. And er, it did affect my back and I've suffered with my back for so many years.

I was going to ask you that about the conditions in the factory. What would you say on the whole about the conditions? You know, lights, heat, that kind of thing.

Quite adequate really. You know, you had a chair with a back to it, and your work was put into the bins, as we called them. You had a metal bin on the side of your machine, and the garment that you were either sewing, overlocking or whatever, it was all put in the bin and you took it out and packed it, because they were tied up in bundles, and you took it out and you did it and then you put it in the finish, you had a bin the other side, the finish section, and you put it in there, and then it was passed on. The supervisor would come round and collect it, pass it onto another section. So it was, what affected a lot of people I think was the fact that you had a light on the needle. Don't forget, if you are sewing for, we would get a break about 11 o'clock and then lunchtime you had a break, and then you got a small break in the afternoon again, but you see, constantly sewing or constantly watching the needle, up and down, or going round, whichever, for so many hours, you do get eye strain.

37:49

So do you think it affected your eyes over the years?

Well I was already wearing glasses by then. I was very fond of reading and of course growing up where I grew up, there was no electricity in the house that I was brought up in, it was only the old gas mantles. And because I was a prolific reader, I'd go to bed with a candle and read, and of course it strained my eyes, but I was wearing glasses by the time I left school. So it didn't affect me too badly but you know.

But if affected your back, you think?

Oh yes, yes. Well you're bent over a machine you see. And you sit in that position for a few hours, it tells on you. But, it's like everything else, you get used to it. You know, after so long, you get used to things.

And you didn't think the conditions were really bad?

Oh no, no.

No?

No, it was, there were times when you got a little bit fed up with it, and as I say, we all go through different phases. Management could jump on you for, you know, you'd be doing your best and to them it wasn't enough. You know, they wanted to push that little bit harder. But we all went through different stages where, oh I've had enough, I'm thinking of looking for something else. But we didn't. We stayed on to the end. A few left because of one reason or another, people got married and left, others just got fed up with doing the job they were doing and wanted something different. As I say there were quite a few different reasons. But there was a lot going for it. I mean, we had our Christmas parties for the children, and that was enjoyable. We used to have it in the canteen. We had a lovely canteen. Nice big canteen. And they were very good.

Did you used to eat in the canteen?

Oh yes, yes.

What was the food like?

Nothing too drastic, you know, but they had a really good canteen, the girls that worked there did their best. We used to get buns and cakes and sort of things in the break, and then lunchtime they'd put on a couple of meals. Sometimes you know we, cost-wise, because we weren't on big money, sometimes we took our own sandwiches, which you could do. You know, just buy a cup of tea. It was mostly tea then, not so much coffee. But you could buy a cup of tea or squash or something. And we'd have our own sandwiches, you know.

So it was mainly women working in the factory was it?

Oh yes. We had a couple of, we had, I'm trying to think, one, two, three, four, on an average of just four men. Two men in the stockroom, the mechanic and one of the bosses. Oh and our main boss was Miss Grünfeldt who was the manageress of the factory. Miss (name?) was the office manager, and I've been trying to remember, Mr Leo something or other was one of the managers. He came in later. At first it was only Miss (name) who was the total control. Mr Smith was the stockroom manager and he had a chap working with him, Jimmy. I can't remember his surname. I think it was Jimmy. That was the only men, the rest were all girls.

42:38

How did you treat the men? Did you, did some of the girls used to tease them?

No, no. The only one who, the only one we'd joke with was the chap who did the, was under Mr Smith, I think it was Jimmy, his name, but um, no Mr Smith, you treated him with respect you know, and the mechanic, he was like, just part of the scenery sort of thing you know. Didn't have a lot to do with them really. It was mainly the girls.

Right. Yes. Okay, by the way I was going to ask you, was there a certain smell to the factory? Do you remember any kind of smell?

Um...

You've mentioned the noise but I was wondering....

Well, you had to, you know, as I say, we used to have to clean our machines and you had to oil it. Clean, so, there was, yeah, if you can smell material, yes. But there wasn't, it wasn't like an unpleasant smell at all you know. You just, you just didn't notice it really.

No, I didn't mean an unpleasant, just what was the smell of the place, you know.

Oh, do you know I can't even visualise it. To me, it, um, no. I wouldn't have said, it didn't really register.

Right, that's fine.

We had, how can I explain it? It's hard to try and describe, something like that, but no, I mean the material, yes, you could smell the material, you could, when you cleaned and oiled your machine at the end of the day sort of thing, then yes, you could smell that, but there was no, I wouldn't have said it smelled. It's something that was there and you just took it for granted, I suppose, yeah.

Did you have a favourite job when you were there? What was your favourite work?

Actually I suppose when it came to the Christmas party I used to go out, we had sort of, not a union, it was just a welfare I suppose you call it, and I was the lucky one who used to go with the manager, with the male manager at the time. We used to organise a Christmas party for

the children of the people who worked in the factory. Well, as I didn't have any children I used to take one of my cousin's son, to put his name down, because we used to have a nice party for them. They'd each get a present and I used to go with the manager and go to a warehouse, have a list of the children and the ages and we used to say, oh right, we've got five children aged six to seven, three of them are girls, so many are boys, and you had to, we had to get, and I used to love doing that. I really did love doing that, but.

So was it the management arranging the party you would say?

Well, they'd say to you know, when do you want your party and we would pick out a date near Christmas, and then it would be, the girls, the girls would all do the work. I can't even remember, I suppose the management I suppose paid for it. I can't really remember. You know.

So, there was the children's Christmas party?

It was a children's Christmas party. We used to have a dance. We used to organise a dance for our girls and I can remember one being in Cardiff, in what is now I think is, it's not there, it was a theatre at one time. We went upstairs and there was a dance hall up there, and we organised, we used to organise that, but that was for us, it was a Christmas dance.

47:44

Do you remember where that, you know where, which theatre it was?

Well, it was down at the end of St Mary Street and I remember we used to go, we went upstairs for this one, but I can't remember the name of the place. I'm saying it was a theatre. Whether it was actually a main theatre, I'm not quite sure. My memory is very poor in remembering that to be honest, but I can remember going upstairs for this particular dance, and that's the photograph that I showed you in my photographs, where it was taken, in that place.

Right, right.

But I can't remember the name of it.

Did all the girls used to go to these?

Most of them did, yes. Yes, most of them did. And some brought their boyfriends and one lady that we had, she brought her daughter, you know. But most of the girls used to go to the dance, yes.

And what kind of music was it?

Oh, during the, what would it be, big band and a bit of rock and roll and all that sort of thing. You know it was...

Sorry... Did you get some famous names playing?

No, no. No it was, I think it was a band that was perhaps registered there. To be honest I can't remember much about it, although I know I went because I've got a photograph to prove it, but er. I've had a lot of years since then to forget about it unfortunately.

So where did the children's parties used to happen?

We used to have that in the canteen. We used to set that up there. It was easy enough you see, and we could use part of the factory because at the bottom end of the factory there wasn't a lot down there so we could utilise that area if we wanted to, which we did, very often you know, we'd set up something down there. But the canteen was, as I say, it was a good canteen which was actually not in the factory building, it was a separate building altogether, across the concourse, you know we came out through the exit doors, and it was facing you. And It was a good size, really good size. It had to be because I mean the breaks we had to take the breaks in stages, you see. They'd have, the first section would go and they'd alternate it from one time to another so our section perhaps the one week would be on first, and the second week we'd be on seconds, so they had to do it that way, for people to be served, because there were only so many working in the canteen, and you couldn't get all the girls in in one go.

No. How many girls were there would you say?

In the canteen?

No, in

Oh in, well, as I say...

Hundreds was it?

I'd say over 100 I think. I, it's something you don't realise at the time but there was quite a lot because there were so many different sections there, there were quite a lot of people there. Yeah.

So, I'm going to ask you about wages now then. Can you remember how much you were paid when you went to work there?

My first wage was one pound, eight and six.

And did you have a pay rise at all when you were there?

Yes. You were on trial sort of thing to start out with you know. They'd say we'll put you on that wage to start with and see how you get on. If you improve and you get on with your

work, you get a pay rise, and I was only there about three or four months, I had a pay rise because I got on with the job.

And how much did you get then?

It wasn't a lot more but it was something over two pound I think then, but I mean the money then was totally different. I mean I'd never earned money before. I used to give my mother a pound and because when I first started, I cycled, I tried cycling to work but that became a bit of a bore in the end you know, and my poor old bike conked out so I had to travel, but because I had a slight rise travel was a lot cheaper than it is now. But I always tried to give my mother a pound towards my keep, and as I increased my wages you know with experience, my wages went up and up, and I could manage a bit more then, but I mean it got in the end that I was earning more in piece work than I was in wages.

53:23

I was going to ask you about the piece work. So, was that a good thing do you think?

Oh yes, yes. It encouraged you to do more. The better you worked, the harder you worked, the more you earned, so it was beneficial for you in the end to be able to do that. There were sections that couldn't do it, you know, they could only, it was moreso on the production side, but they used me as a, I used to be timed to do the jobs and they used to say to me, Maisie, slow down when you're going, don't do your usual speed. So we'll get a better bonus at the end of it because otherwise, if I went at my normal speed then, they wouldn't have had much in the way of bonuses, so I'd have to hold back on the way I worked.

Was it, did they have time and motion people in?

Time and, that was the man, the name I can't remember, Leo was his first name, but I can't remember if it was Anderson or, that's my failing, I never forget faces but I'm terrible for trying to remember names, but he did the time and motion most of the time you know. That's what he came in to do and of course he used me as a, for time and motion, on the overlocker and on the felling machine.

So what was that, can you explain that to me? How did that work? You know.

Well I'd have a, if it was for the overlocking side of it, you get parts of a garment, which you have to overlock the seams. So he would say, I'd get the garment in my hand and he'd say, right, he had a watch and press it. And then while I was doing it, that watch would be going. When I'd finished doing the particular job, he'd stop the watch and used to jot it down. When it came to the hemming of the garment, the same thing applied, as I picked up the garment, go, press the button, and then, when I'd finished the garment, press the button, and then he used to take those times and work out what a garment was worth by the time it was finished. Say for example, if I did one dress in four minutes and it was worth 50p, this is just rough ideas, because they didn't tell us, they just timed us. But the more we worked and the harder we worked, and the more we did, it became beneficial for us, rather than just a basic wage. It was to encourage you to do more, to produce more really.

So if you or other, or some of the other women went faster than the time he'd timed you, you'd get a bonus?

Yes.

I see....

Yes.

So you were the kind of benchmark?

Yes, yes.

Right.

That's what I said, you see, there were girls who did the whole thing, now those were timed the same as, and each section was timed to see how long it took to do a job and each section was timed to price it I suppose. This is what the time and motion meant, but I can't speak for the other sections, because I never worked on those sections, I never, I don't know whether the garment pressers ever got anything by working. I don't know, I can't say whether they were actually timed. I've no idea on that. I only know how I was affected on my section.

Did you all have the same kind of basic wages?

Oh yes, you had a basic wage.

And everybody in every section had the same kind of wage, did they?

Well I presume so, yes. I mean it wasn't something that we talked about really. I can't, you see, one of my best friends, as I told you, she was a cutter, a pattern cutter, and I can't remember her ever telling me that she had bonuses, but she might have done. It's something we just didn't talk about a great deal, you know, it's only on our section as I said, they used to say to me, the girls I worked with, don't go at your normal pace, you know, slow down a bit. That's the only thing I can tell you about that side of it.

59:06

So you used to give your mum some of your wages and keep some for the train. What did you do with.... how did you spend the rest of your wages?

Well bearing mind, you know, I had, I wanted to get, I was what, 15, I wanted to have a wardrobe, something that I, you know, my mum had bought my clothes for me and, limited money, we weren't on big money, and I wanted to get some clothes, so at the time there was what they called a club. And you could buy, you could have a cheque, what they called a cheque, for a certain place, and there was a place in Cardiff where you could go and spend a

cheque and you paid the agent weekly amount of money. So I'd have a cheque for say £5.00 and I would pay such and such amount each week. The agent would call to the house and pick up my money every week. And when I'd finished paying for it I could renew it, but I could go into that, (name) it was called in Cardiff on the Hayes, it was, it was a big store that sold virtually everything you could wish for, you know. And I would go in there and I would buy myself blouse, skirts, that sort of thing, even a coat if I could afford to get it, and that's how I started, by getting a cheque, and my, I had eight and six a week to last me and I used to spend, I think it was about two and six to pay my cheque off, or whatever it was, I forget now the exact amount, but that's how I started. And then of course I started making some of my own clothes. And it was something I picked, I picked up how to use the ordinary machines by watching the girls sewing. You know, if I had a break I would go and watch them and see how they did the job and I would ask permission to use one of the machines and I was doing, and I, at the time I managed to get hold of a little hand machine which I had at home, so I learnt on a hand machine, you used to wind the handle, and that's how I started with the machine, but then of course I learned to use the electric ones which were much quicker, much easier to use really then, because it was treadle, you had the treadle and later on in life, then I got my own treadle machine and of course then it was, it's one with a foot control that I had, not the big machines there, that they used in the factories, but one with a foot control, and when I finished actually, when I finished work I used to take in sewing to, when I was living in lower Penarth, I used to get people come in and ask me to alter things for them or make them things, and I took in sewing as a supplement, because I had children and I couldn't go out to work, so that was to supplement my income really a bit.

You say... was that a sewing machine, was than an electric sewing machine...?

Electric one, yes.

Okay, well I'm going to ask you about, did you say, were you a member of a union, did you say?

I think we must have been. I think, I haven't got any of my old payslips there, but I think there must have been, and we had to pay some kinds of subs in for that.

And you don't remember which union it was?

No. I think it was something like the garment workers union or something like that. I'm sure we must have had, but um, I honestly can't remember much about it.

So there were no problems, no strikes, no disputes?

Well, if there were, I think we must have had a union woman there. I vaguely remember somebody that, if you had a problem, you used to go to her with it, and she would take it up with management. That's as far as I can remember about it.

Do you think on the whole the workers were fairly treated?

Oh yes.

And everybody was, were they? On the whole was everybody happy?

I think so. Yes. Yes. I mean it was, I can't ever remember any real sort of animosity on either side.

So you had a good relationship with the supervisors and the managers?

Oh yes, yes. The supervisors were like our mums, because when I started there, Mary was like a, she had children, grown up children or, and she was like our mum, you know, and most of the supervisors were the same. They were slightly older women that had done some training I suppose, had training in the machinery and they ran the, well they ran their sections, that they were. I'm trying to think how many, each section had a supervisor and there were quite a few different sections.

Did you ever become a supervisor?

No. Didn't want to. I was quite happy working, no. Well Mary was my supervisor for the whole time I was in the factory, so she was there for the 10 years, well she was there longer because she was there when I went and she was my supervisor for the whole time I was there, but there were others that you know. Most of them stayed, most of them were there for a long, long time. I can't remember many different supervisors. Supervisors were, they were the bosses of their section, and they seemed to be there forever.

66:32

Did you have to wear a kind of uniform or overall for work?

No, no. You, no we didn't. We just wore our ordinary clothes.

Okay. Were you ever made aware of health and safety issues?

Only when I got injured. Most of the machinery was, all the ones that we were on on the section, and as I said they, apart from that one machine which shouldn't really have been used I don't think because it didn't have the guard on. It should have had a guard on the front that your finger couldn't get caught in it, but it was an old machine and it was brought in because it was needed in the production you know, and it shouldn't really have been used because of this no guard, but the others all had their guards, they all had their safety things on them. Each machine. And of course with the girls on the ordinary machines, if you took your foot off the treadle thing, it stopped, so that was up to them to stop, you know. With us, a button hole, a felling, an overlocker, a felling machine, even I think the button, the button and the button hole were the two that you could stop with an emergency thing, but the others, as soon as you stopped pressing they stopped. But the overlocker, the button holer, it was on a, it's hard to, how would I explain it? Once it started it went up and then came back down

and then cut, so unless you, it would complete the button hole, so you had to press the thing, it was like a little lever on the side of the machine, and you had to press that to stop it. That was the emergency stop. But the other machines, once you took your foot off the treadle, it stopped.

What about the other facilities in the factory, like toilets and things? Were?

Oh we had big toilets, yes. You were, you had to be, well, some of the girls of course were smokers, and they used to try and sneak off to have a cigarette and you used to have to open the windows down there. It was quite a good, quite a big section, you know. It was separated off from the factory, but it was, we had a big cloakroom, so when you went in you hung your coat up, and the toilets were actually at the bottom of the cloakroom which was, it was sectioned off from the main side of the factory. As you came into the entrance you see, you had the entrance into like a lobby where the restroom was. That was the restroom area and then the cloakroom went down the side of there and the toilets were at the end, but we had a big double doors, swing doors, down the bottom end. Once you were in the factory, you had double doors down the bottom end which went into the toilet section, but you had to go out through the main doors to go to the cloakroom and the rest area, and then you had the main doors out into the yard. But, yes, there were quite good toilets, yes.

So if you were a smoker you weren't allowed to smoke on the factory floor?

Oh no, oh no. You weren't supposed to smoke in the toilets either.

Did they have anywhere where they were allowed to?

Outside the factory, outside the factory. Oh yeah. They couldn't stop you if you went outside to smoke, but inside you weren't allowed and as I say, they weren't supposed to be in the toilets either, but of course some of them were, they had to have their little puff of a cigarette and they used to go in, have a quick puff and come back out and smoke, chew a mint or something.

71:27

We you aware, you said it was noisy the factory, and things, was there any kind of protective you know, like?

No - no ear muffs.

Or anything like that?

No. You worked in it. That's, that was part of the job, you worked in it. As I say, you got to the stage in the end, you didn't really notice it, because you were in it from sort of well, I mean, eight o'clock in the morning until five at night or whatever, you know, you just, you were there and you accepted it. You didn't say, oh I can't work in this noise, I mean very often they wouldn't put the music on, but the girls used to like the music. It sort of took the monotony, because it is a monotonous job when you're sewing non stop for hours on end.

That's something else you get used to doing. But they used to, they were where's the music, you know, and I'll go and ask, well it's distracting you. No, it's not, it's helping us pass the time. And of course as I say we you know, you'd sing along to it even if you were sort of working on your own and you were concentrating on what you were doing, so it was, it was something to take your mind off the monotony a bit.

Do you remember what, what was it? Was it a radio?

Well, we had, it's like a tannoy stuck up on the wall, and it used to, it used to come out of this box thing on the wall, by the main doors.

So you weren't aware of what it was, like a radio?

I don't know whether it was came from the offices or came from, I think it came from the stockroom, because I think, if it didn't go on we'd go up Mr Smith or Jimmy and say, you know, put the music on. They forgot, they wouldn't think to do it always so we'd have to go up and ask them, please can you put the music on.

Do you remember any of the songs?

Oh gosh, no. I can't even remember. Let's say it was, I think it was a part of a radio or something, I'm not quite sure, or just a music system. I really can't remember.

Okay. Do you remember, your hours. What hours did you work, and how many days a week?

Five.

And the hours?

Five days. As far as I remember it's eight till five. Start at eight then about, where would we be? About 10, half past ten, you'd get a break. Quarter of an hour. And then as I say, whether you were first section or second section, there'd be, it could be ten to quarter past and the second would be quarter past to half past, or vice versa, and then lunch was I think it was half past 12, might have been half past 12 to one o'clock. One to half past, something like that.

Half an hour for lunch then?

Yes I think it was about half an hour.

What about an afternoon break then?

Then it was the same. Fifteen minutes. Yes.

And did anybody work shifts?

No. The only time we did, it was, very occasionally, it wasn't often, there was an order, an order was when, you know, it had to be completed to be sent off to wherever it had to go. And just occasionally we would be asked, could you work overtime, or could you go in and, on a Saturday. I had worked Saturdays. I even once worked a Sunday when it was desperate to get an order finished, and we had to finish it off. But that wasn't very often. But the only time that really stuck in my mind was one evening we had to complete an order and when we came out, there was a tremendous fog. It was the worst fog I can ever remember, and as I said, there were no lights down there at all. We had to be careful coming out of the factory because the main gate, for the workers to come in, was in the front of the building, but the main gates that were, the delivery side, had big gates on the side near the canteen, but they were always locked, you see, at night (phone rings).

77:01

Sorry. Could you tell me about the working late at the factory?

The working late? Yes. As I say, very occasionally we would have to complete an order that had to be finished by a certain time, so we would work occasionally a Saturday, I even remember working a Sunday, very rarely, but Saturday was okay. But the one particular night I remember we'd had to work till about eight o'clock in the evening, and coming out of the factory the main entrance for us to come in and out of the factory was a small gate in the front of the building. But we had to cross over a path and each side of the path was a ditch, and you know, bear in mind no lights at all down that area, so we came out but there was such, the worst fog I can ever remember, and it was really, really frightening to try and find your way out onto the road because there were no pavements you see down that road at all. But what you had was like muddy paths, you had the main road but the paths were just like mud or dirt or whatever you want to call them. There was no pavements and there were about five or six of us I think it was, and we managed to get out through the gate carefully, we were sort of like a chain you know, catching hold of one another, carefully walking one foot in front of the other to get out and we actually found ourselves across the road, up against, they had like chain fencing going up. It was just sectioning off the road, the dirt path from fields, there was just fields there, and we'd actually crossed the road without realising it, and we used the chain fencing to walk up to the station to get our train, those of us who had to catch the train, and some lived in Grangetown, but we didn't even realise we'd crossed the road, it was very frightening experience actually. Because there were no buildings as such down there now and no lighting, you see the river, not far from there, used to get all the vapour I suppose it would be, coming off. All the moisture coming off the river, and it settled as this heavy fog and even cars because it was only cars coming down the road that could light it, even the cars had to travel so slow because they couldn't see where they were going, you know, it was a totally, people don't realise it if you go down Penarth Road today, with all the lighting and all the buildings there, it was a totally different world then. There was nothing down there. Nothing, apart from as I said, two factories and a little place across the road, which wasn't lit, it wasn't, they didn't work after a certain time, it was closed up.

So very dark then.

Oh very dark, very dark.

Tell me about your holiday. Did you have an annual holiday allowance with pay?

Yes. We used to take our holidays, if I remember rightly we used to close down for about two weeks in the summer. A couple of us used to go off together in little groups you know. Those of us who were sort of close friends, we would go off, we'd organise it between ourselves, usually I arranged it and got in touch with places and a group of us, we would go, we went to Devon, we went to Portsmouth. A couple of small holidays you know that, well we didn't have big money then, so we had to sort of look for a good deal, but as I say that was our holidays.

And that was the summer. What about Christmas?

I can't remember, about a week I think we used to have off at Christmas or three or four or five days, something like that you know.

Did the factory close down then as well?

Yes, yes. Oh yes.

And what about bank holidays?

No, I can't really remember what we did on bank holidays. I presume we, I don't remember much about bank holidays to be honest. We must have had them I suppose, but we just took, make the most of it if you had a day off and got paid for it and that was good. Just saying that the money was very poor, it wasn't a big money-making thing you know. I can say, I can't even remember how much I even ended up. I know that at one time I was earning quite good money, what I considered good money at the time, but in today's area, it's laughable really, but it's what we had.

83:31

Yes, it's what you considered at the time?

At the time it was considered a good wage, you know, a fair wage.

How did it make you feel as a young woman, you know?

Oh...

To have that...

Satisfied.

Yeah, did it make you feel independent....?

Oh yes, yes. It's, you could do things, you know, speaking for myself I mean I sort of, I never went to dances up until I, well only with an aunt. We used to go an old English dance now and again, if somebody put one on in Penarth, but, the cinema, that was something that I used to do as a child, but I mean I never went into Cardiff, very, very rarely, before I turned 15. And it was only because a couple of the friends that I'd made in the factory lived in Grangetown or Cardiff, you know different parts of Cardiff, that I started going into Cardiff to go to the cinema, go to a dance, that sort of thing.

With your friends from work?

Yes. Oh yes. It was nothing to do with friends from schooldays because we'd gone our own way. They'd gone their way, I was gone in a different direction to them, and most of my friends were, as I say, the girls from Barry, used to go to dances down St Athans. They'd organise a bus trip. Someone used to organise bus trips from Barry down to St Athans to the dances and I used to love to dance, and I used, the girls, one of the girls used to say to me, if you want to come to the dance, you can stay the night at my house. So I'd go down after work, go down to her house, get the bus to the dance, and stay with her overnight and then come back to work the next day. And Cardiff was a different system. I had one friend who lived in Cardiff, by Sloper Road, and her sister had a flat there and if I wanted to go to a dance in Cardiff, I used to stay at her sister's flat with her, you know, we did that. But other than that, so that, earning the money enabled me to do those things. I was able to go to dancing, which I really enjoyed, and go to the cinema or whatever, you know. Shows, if there were shows on. I can remember, one time in Cardiff, they used to have big band concerts which my cousins used to take me to. I wasn't, I was still in school then, but they would take me to the big band concerts, and I enjoyed things like that, so I was able to do more in that line then, because I had the funds to do it.

So, can you remember any one event when, during your time at the factory when, if a famous person turned up or anything like that, you know? Can you remember any one big event at the factory?

Well we had two occasions when we had, we had girls who were working in the factory, both of them were discovered as talent by an organisation down in the Docks area of Cardiff. One girl was called Rose Roberts and the other one was called Irene Spetti and they were taken on as artists, right. Now they were young girls, they were a few years younger than myself, but I was, I mean I left when I was 24 there, so they were I suppose 19, 20, perhaps something like that in age. I don't know what happened to Rose, all I heard was that after training she went to Germany to work in some cabaret. With Irene, we did have a big going away party for her and the whole place, we had a party, we actually had, I did at one time have a photograph taken with her, the whole factory and her in place of honour with a bouquet of flowers there you know, wishing her luck, and I've lost that photo, I don't know what happened to it, but we were all stuck up outside the canteen and I was stuck up on, I remember I stood up on the wall at the back to get into the photo, but she did go on to into show business and she later become the wife of quite a well-known man. She changed her name, well they changed her name to Lorne Lesley, and she married David Dickinson. And they're still married now, because I've seen them on the telly.

89:55

Did she used to sing in the factory at all?

Oh yes. But it was, as I say, you see, we all used to sing to the music but we knew she had a good voice, Irene as we knew here, Rose I didn't realise until she said that she was going, she was a black girl, she was. But Irene was like, her mother was white and her father I think was West Indian as far as I can remember, so she was very, very tall. But Rose was very, very dark girl.

But do you remember them singing in any dos or anything?

No. They just used to sing in the works you see, and it was only because the area that they came from. You see, they lived down the Docks area. I don't know exactly where, but I know it was down that area and at the time they had, they had some kind of social club down there, like the likes of Shirley Bassey, she was one of the people that was down in, I think she was discovered I this club. And these girls obviously were the same, but not at the capacity that Shirley Bassey went onto because of course she become quite famous, but these two girls, as I say, what happened to Rose I don't know. I only know what happened to Irene who became Lorne Lesley. She was in cabaret, I'm sure. But I think a lot of their work was over on the continent.

So tell me, you got married when you were at the factory. When did you meet your husband?

I met him, my best friend and I went to a post office dance in the city hall (doorbell goes).

So, while you were at the factory, you met your husband.

Yes, I'd gone to this dance in the City Hall with my best friend, and in actual fact, my husband, he'd gone, he was attracted to my best friend, and but she at the time, was courting a sailor but he was away, and we just, she'd danced with him at the dance, and he tried to contact her, he came down to the factory and she said, look she said, I am spoken for, but why don't you ask Maisie to go out. And I didn't know anything about this, you know, and she arranged it and he asked me out, and that was the stat of it then, so, that was on the Christmas time, no, it must have been Christmas time and we were going out for a while and then he asked me to marry him, I said yes, and we got married in the March about a year later.

So tell me about your wedding dress then.

Well, I got on very well with Miss Grünfeldt. She was a bit of a dragon sometimes but, I got on well with her, and when she heard I was getting she said to me, what are you going to do? I said, oh, I'll you know, going to see about getting my wedding dress made and she offered to have it made in the factory for me, by one of the supervisors herself, was going to do it for me. And they did. They also did a dress for me that I wore after my wedding. You know I changed into. And I haven't got the dress now, but I have got my wedding dress.

94:30

So how did you feel about that?

I was so pleased. What she said to me was, well, pick out a style that you want, get your material, go and buy your material, and we'll make it for you, and I was thrilled to bits. I was thrilled to bits. So I went into Cardiff Market, somebody advised me to go there, they said you can get some nice materials there, and I chose the material, and as I said, they made the dress for me.

And what did you think of the wedding dress when they finished it?

Oh I loved it, loved it. It was, I was, I used to get very embarrassed and on my chest I would blush up a bit you know sometimes, so I wanted, I couldn't have anything low cut so I chose a style that I knew would suit me, and that's, I bought the pattern, and the material and they made the dress for me. Very thrilled about it.

Why did you eventually leave the factory?

I left because I was expecting my first child. I'd got married in the March and my husband was 26, I was 24. We could have waited I suppose to start a family but my husband previously had been very ill with mumps and doctors had told him that he didn't think we could ever have children and, soon proved that wrong, because we ended up, as I say, we had five children altogether, although I lost one with leukaemia at the age of two. But I still had four children. So I was expecting, I was married in the March and my first child was due February so I completed my 10 years and finished up at Christmas time, and six weeks later I had my son, my first son.

How did you feel about leaving the factory?

It was time for me. You know, I'd done 10 years and things had got, when my, Miss Grünfeldt, she'd got married herself, quite late in life, about two years beforehand and she'd married an older, you know an oldish man, because they were both well, I'd say in their 50s at least, and we didn't realise she'd ever get married but she seemed to take, I don't know, when she found out I was pregnant, she seemed to, not jealous, I can't explain it, but she didn't seem to feel the same towards me, and she made me feel sort of guilty somehow that I was having a child. I don't know what it was, I could never put my finger on it. I mean she'd come to my wedding and she bought me a dinner service for my, as a wedding present you know. We'd got on so well, although she was way above me sort of thing in her job and that, but I couldn't put my finger on what it was, but the things were not the same, so in the end I was glad to be leaving. But as I say, it was a wonderful experience. I don't regret any of it and I did have a very good first 10 years of working life.

Did you do anything after you had children?

Oh I did all sorts, yeah. I worked in, I went into catering, I was in catering for quite a few years, something else that I was keen on doing. I like cooking and I started working in a restaurant down Lavernock Rd which was called the Schooner and it was a restaurant and I started there as a dishwasher, just you know part-time, I did a couple of evenings because I had children and ended up as a chef. But I was only doing the dishwashing for a short time and then I was asked would I go in the restaurant as a waitress and I did that for several years, and then I was asked would I do the relief cheffing when the chef was having time off and he didn't have anyone to replace him, and the lady that was doing it at the time, she finished, so they asked me would I do it, so I did. I was down there about 10 years altogether. And then I went from there, when they closed it to refurbish it, I went to a private place down on Sully Rd, Cog Rd down, it's called Inn for all Seasons. It's now Mark Manor, and I was down there for a couple of years as well.

100:28

But you didn't go back and work in a factory again?

No. I worked in a garage, I was manageress of a garage on Penarth Rd. Which has now closed, and then I came and worked in the little shop down the end of my road, and I worked there till I was 69. And then I retired.

Thank you very much.

It's been a pleasure.

Are you in contact with any of your former workmates? Do you see them, still see them?

The only one that I see, she is a friend of mine, she's, her name is Ray, she came to work, she was only there for a short while in the factory, but we became close friends and good friends and we're still friends now, but she was only there for a short while. But as for anyone else, no. I've completely lost touch with, of course a lot of them have passed on you know.

Did you miss the camaraderie?

Oh yes. I did, you know. After my son was born I did make the journey down to the factory with him. I promised my friends down there, they said, oh when you've had the baby, bring it down for us to see, and I did. I had, I bought myself a lovely big pram. Coach built pram, and I took it on the train because that was the only way I could get it there. I took it on the train, to Grangetown, struggled down the stairs with it because it was very steep stairs to get down, and walked down to the factory, showed them, I spent about half an hour there and spoke to a lot of them, and then made my way back up. Luckily I had a bit of help to get the pram back up onto the platform, because it was rather awkward. But not long after I did that, this was in the February, I heard that the factory was closing down. I don't know what happened to a lot of the people that were you know, and as I say, I was in Penarth, I didn't get into Cardiff now very much, and I lost contact with most of them. I did try to keep in touch with a few but found it rather awkward. My best friend Val, we stayed friends for many years. She got married to her sailor boyfriend and moved up to London to live, and I did visit her a couple of times and we stayed with her. She had family like I did, and unfortunately

she died quite young. She was in her 40s and she developed cancer and she had it in the lymph glands and she died leaving three boys and a young child of about, Leanne was only about two. But that was heartbreaking for me. I did go up for her funeral with one of the other girls, Margaret. Margaret(name) had married Micky (name) and they took me up in their car for her funeral, because my husband stayed behind with the children, but I went up for Val's funeral. And that was heartbreaking, really heartbreaking because she had been my best friend, you know. But since, as I said, I've lost track with everyone, and so many have passed away.

Looking back now though, how do you feel about the time you spent working in the factory?

Best time of my life. The best time of my life. I don't regret it one minute. It was the making of me. It brought me out, made me what I am today. I'm a much more outgoing person, I think I probably come across as that. Very chatty. And it was the best of my life. I thoroughly enjoyed it.

105:16 END OF INTERVIEW/DIWEDD CYFWELIAD