

LLEISIAU O LAWR Y FFATRI / VOICES FROM THE FACTORY FLOOR

Morris Motors, Felinfoel, Llanelli, Carmarthenshire

(1962- 1969 & 1970 – 1974)

Interviewee: VSW007 (SISTER of VSW006, ALSO WISHES TO
REMAIN ANONYMOUS)

Date: 20.11.13

Interviewer: Susan Roberts on behalf of Women's Archive Wales

PART ONE: TRANSCRIPTION OF VSW007.2.1

Right then, we'll start with you now, if you can give me your date of birth?
3rd December 1944.

And where you were born.
The village of Felinfoel.

And your father's occupation.
A labourer.

And if you can tell me where you went to school.
Felinfoel.

And how old were you when you left school?
Fifteen and three weeks.

And the three weeks is important.
It is important, because I was just barely three weeks, fifteen rather.

And how did you feel about leaving school?
It was just something that you automatically did. No one in those days came around and said, 'oh look, you're doing well in school, should you consider staying on'. I just left for the

Christmas holidays. No teacher came to ask me would I like to stay on because I had done well in school. I just left and didn't go back.

Did some of your friends stay on?

The majority of the class, because with a birthday in December, in those days you could leave at the Christmas time. Well years later they stopped that, so I wouldn't have left at that stage. But it was only, we were a class of thirty six, I would say if six of us, four of us even left at Christmas and just didn't go back.

Did you feel ready to leave then?

As I say, it was just something that we knew was going to happen and my mother did ask me to stay on, but I think, obviously my sister and I are twins, and she was leaving and going to earn money and..

Did you have a job to go to?

Yes. But I went to a shop, I went to work in a shop, whereas shop money was very, very poor. I started I think on one pound ten shillings a week.

00.02.28: Did you consider at that point going to where your sister was?

No, because I wanted to work in a shop. But when I could see the long hours I was working for, for virtually half the wages, and when the time to finish came, I should have finished at one on a Saturday, and I could be there until half past two. No extra money for that and then I stayed there for about two years, and then I didn't get a rise on my birthday, which was in December. So I got a bit fed up.

Did you query that, if you should have had a rise?

Well, I don't want to go into it but he, virtually he'd employed somebody before in the October, who was younger than me. But her mother had pushed for more money so he gave me a ten shilling rise at that point. And then that girl stayed about four weeks and left, and my birthday came along so he just didn't give me a rise on my birthday.

00.03.22: And because there weren't many people working there you probably didn't have anybody to represent you then did you?

No, so I came home and asked my sister to ask for me, so they said yes, tell her to come up. So I went for the interview and they took me down to the shop floor where they were working, and I could see what type of work I'd be doing. But I knew all about it and I knew a lot of the girls there, because they'd been in school with us. And I was told start next week, the following week which I did. And I've got to say it's the best move that I ever did. And I look back even now and I will say those were the happiest years of my life. I enjoyed every minute of it.

00.04.10: But you'd said initially you wanted to do shop work?

Shop work, yes.

So working in the factory was very different to that. Apart from the money then, what were the other advantages

Obviously the money in the main. And more sociable hours. I was finishing at half past four. I was going in earlier in the morning admittedly because the shop was nine o'clock but it

could be six o'clock before I came home. And of course, if I did work over, I was getting paid for it, which I wasn't in the shop. And of course, there was far more girls there, of our own age, and we had fun. You know people used to say, 'uh, factory girls, common'. That's what was said.

00.04.57: Is that what was said?

Yes. Work in a factory, common. They weren't. There were girls, they were really nice, and there was no bad language, there was no fights or vindictiveness, it was a real happy atmosphere and I enjoyed every minute of it.

00.05.20: So who were the type of people who'd say that type of thing?

Well, it was just a known thing that, you know, if you were good in school, you went on and did other things like office work, or shop work.

But that was poorly paid wasn't it?

They were poorly paid, but if worked, I'm not saying you weren't good in school, but if you weren't academic, you went to work in a factory. But they looked down their noses at you. But it weren't. There were girls from offices that had come there for the money, like me. I left the shop, for more money, because I could earn double the money. And I had a boyfriend, and I wanted to save. If I hadn't gone there I would never have had the money to buy my first house, because my husband was, my boyfriend was, having an apprenticeship, which was very small money.

Where was his apprenticeship?

In the ROF, in the Royal Ordinance Factory in Pembrey. And when you were doing a trade you had very small money. So it was me earning good money in the factory working overtime that gave us the money to buy our first house. So without that I would never be in the position that I am today.

00.06.45: And did you find that working in that environment as well suited you better because you were talking about your work in the shoe shop.

To be honest it was a grocery shop I worked in, and I enjoyed working there but the hours were long. You couldn't say, I couldn't finish at half past five, five thirty. I never got out before six any night. And I didn't get paid for that extra. As I say, my half day was Saturday, supposedly finish at one. It could be half past two, and perhaps my sister and my friend would be off down to town, and I couldn't go because I hadn't come home from work, and double the money, and of course if they worked the Saturday, or on in the night you were trebling that money. So, in the first instance I think what instigated my move into the factory, it was, I was starting to get dissatisfied that I was working these long hours and you know, I could see if it wasn't for my sister working there, I wouldn't have known any difference. But I could see what she was earning and I was beginning to get dissatisfied. And then when I didn't get that rise, because I felt that if that girl hadn't left he'd have had to give me a rise, because he couldn't give when I was older. But because she'd left now he thought, oh well, we'll bypass that and at that stage I said, alright, 'that's it'. And so, in the first instance, it was the money, the pay, having being paid for overtime, and of course when I go there I loved every minute of it. I loved the girls, I loved the work, I loved everything about it. And then years, after I'd been there a good couple of years, I did start training the new ones coming in.

00.08.48: So there were chances then to get on then?

No, I wouldn't have said. I think it was just basically the only way you'd get on is after a couple of years, like my sister now got onto Inspection, and that was your only, and I mean those didn't come round very often because there was far fewer inspection workers than the workers we'll say, building the radiators. But I did, if someone was n sick or I'd go on and do a bit of inspection work then and I did start training new employees coming in. And I was given an opportunity but the opportunity came too late for me. I'd been there seven years and I was married and I had just, I had been married five years, and I'd just got pregnant which they didn't know about because it was quite early stages then. And the superintendant came down and called me one side and asked me if I'd consider going to Oxford, they had a car plant in Oxford. Would I consider going there to train, going there for two weeks to train, they were going to open a training school in the Llanelli, Felinfoel factory, and they wanted me to run it. And would I go to Oxford for two weeks to train. But of course, I had to tell them that I was pregnant and that I knew that I'd have to finish. They wouldn't keep me on.

00.10.36: So how did you feel?

I do feel that in one sense it was a shame, on the other hand it was a good thing because if they'd offered me that opportunity three months earlier, most probably I wouldn't have got pregnant. Most probably, but whether my husband would have allowed me to go, I don't know.

Do you think he would have, if the timing had been different?

If the timing had been different, I think I would have given it a consideration. It was a big thing in those days, you didn't go away, a few went to university, but that would have been Cardiff or... But it would have been a big thing for me to go to Oxford on my own. But I was pregnant, and that was the end of that. Well then, of course, when I was six and a half months pregnant the Personnel Officer came and gave me my notice on the shop floor for me to finish that week.

00.11.49: You knew that was going to happen?

I knew that was going to happen.

00.11.52: But how did you feel. Even though, you know it's going to happen because you'd worked hard there hadn't you.

Very, very upset. I broke my heart actually because I didn't want to finish. And I knew it would happen because you know you either didn't have a family or kept your job. But I was upset because I did enjoy working there.

00.12.15: But at that point if your six and a half months pregnant, you couldn't physically carry on.

No, couldn't have carry on.

Did some girls delay saying that they were pregnant then if they knew.

No, you couldn't do that because by the time you were six and a half months, you know, some of the radiators were big. Like I kept it quiet until I was about two and a half months but then it came my turn to go on one of the big, big radiators which I couldn't have handled. So I had to tell the supervisor then, 'I can't go on there, I'm pregnant'.

00.12.52: And did their attitude towards you ever change?

No, no, no. Not at all. I was just kept then on the smaller radiators which weren't a problem.

00.13.03: Do you remember your first days?

Yes.

So what were your first impressions?

Well I was nervous but I think the fact that I had a sister there, and I knew a lot of the girls because some of them were in school with me, and the fact that I had a sister there was a big encouragement. I knew that I wasn't going to be on my own.

Why were you nervous do you think?

Well I think, I hadn't done that type of work before and I was thinking, just thinking I hope I'm going to be able to do it, and of course I had a sister to have to keep up with, didn't I. Couldn't let her get the better of me. *I still tell her I was the best there.*
And I told myself, if my sister can do it, I can do it. *Not so good. Pardon.*

00.14.00: What were your first impressions of the building then?

Well, I had seen it on my interview already. They had taken me down to the place, to the shop floor where I'd have been actually working so that didn't. But when I went down on my interview day I think the vastness of the shop, and the noise more than anything, because you had all the noise of the machinery going on around you and compared to a shop it was noisy. But no.

00.14.37: So were both of you working in different sections?

No, together. Perhaps, not on the same line, but in the same place, area.

And did you find that helpful, you know, could you, was it nice?

Well it was nice because we walked to work together, and we, even if we weren't working on the same lines we'd always join up for our tea break at nine and our lunch at one o'clock or half past twelve, so, and then we'd walk home together, so, and being the same age, we'd always gone to school together, and it was just a continuation.

It must have been strange then when you went to Morris Motors (VSW006), and you went to the shop (VSW007) initially.

I don't think, I don't think I noticed that difference, because even in school we were in different classes. *And we had our own friends, so.*

00.15.35: Did you need qualifications to go into Morris Motors then?

Not onto the shop floor. If you went into the office, obviously, but for the shop floor, no.

But it helped if there was a recommendation like you (VSW006) worked there already.

My mother got my sister in, my sister got myself in *They ask you is there family there because a member of the family, would be better than an outsider.* You would get in before an outsider. Like when I went back to work in the evening then, after my son was born, he was a year old, and I went in the evening and I went back as a supervisor. Well then when my sister wanted a job in the evening then I just asked for her and, and I asked for my sister in

law and she had a job, and I asked for a friend and she had a job. *So you all asked, you got family working there.* You'll always get in if you've got family working there.

00.16.44: So you changed jobs didn't you while you were at the factory.

I changed jobs. I went back to work there in the evening, and as I say as a supervisor. I think there was about fifty working for me.

But there was no difficulty in getting back in?

No. It was just luck because they were just, at that time they hadn't had an evening shift before, and there was plenty of work, and they couldn't cope with the orders that were coming in. So they decided to start an evening shift, and I happened to, a friend of mine happened to read the advertisement in the Llanelli Star. And I thought, oh. If she hadn't mentioned it I wouldn't have known, so I said I think I'll try for it. So I went up.

00.17.31: Did you try for it because of the hours?

Yes. I couldn't go back in the day because there was no creche and I had no one to look after, after the child, so it was impossible for me to go back full time in the day, so the evening work suited me because my husband was coming home from work, and I could go out.

00.17.54: So if it wasn't for that job would you not have gone to do any other thing?

Not at that stage. Not with him. You know I couldn't have taken up a day job. The only difficult side I found, but I did fall lucky, was that I couldn't drive at that time, because women didn't drive, my husband took the car to work, and there were no like when we worked in the day, before we got married we walked to work. When we got married and moved further away there were works buses, because not a lot of workers had cars of their own in those days. So there was works buses, bussing the people in from different areas.

Even for the evening shift as well?

No. We didn't have that so, that would have been a difficulty for me. I'd have had to get two buses and start out so much earlier. But I did get to know a girl who was already working in another part of the factory in the evening because she had a child. And asked if I could have a lift with her, and gave her something. So I managed to get a lift. So I did that for about four years, and things went slack so they laid us off. And in that time..

About when was that would you say?

I started in the factory in 1962, I was there seven years. There we are Paul was, sixty nine, January ninety sixty nine. So I would have gone back in January 1970, and I would have been laid off in '74, March 1974. And he had gone to school, and I got a job in the local supermarket, the Co-operative.

So you were laid off?

I was laid off.

How did you feel about that?

Sad. Because we had a good shift going there. Between the maintenance men and the men that brought the materials there were about fifty working there.

00.20.30: So how many were laid off?

Well, first of all, there were some laid off in the September before. And then another lot went in the January and then I was the last, one of the last to go in the March.

Did you know it was coming?

Yes.

And how did you feel about that?

Sad. Because I enjoyed it.

And you'd seen other people going before. That must have been quite sad for you, both of you seeing people leave.

We were hoping that, you know things had been slack there before and some of the workers had got laid off, and then it would pick up again, but unfortunately this time we had to go and I was sad but then I got a job then. My son started school in the May, and in the September I had a job in the local supermarket, the Co-op. And I had a part time job there while he was in school.

00.21.26: Did that suit you?

Yes, because he was in school then, because when I worked in the evenings he wasn't in school then, so I had him all day. Whereas if I'd gone back to evening work then, he'd have been in school all day, I'd have been doing evening work, and I wouldn't have seen him and I wouldn't have like that. But I had this job while he was out at school, and the hours were while he was at school, and I could drop him in school, and just two minutes further along the road and I was in work. Well, that was in the September. The following March I had a letter telling me that the evening shift in the car factory was starting up again, and for me to go up and see them. And I just wrote a letter saying I was now working, had a part time job in the day, which suited me better so I didn't go back.

00.22.18: But did you miss the work?

Yes.

What did you miss about being there?

I miss, even to this day, I will always say the happiest place I worked in. I worked in the superstore for thirty years, until I retired at sixty, thirty years. And I enjoyed working there but I'll always say the happiest place I've ever worked is in the car factory.

00.22.45: What made it a happy place do you think?

It was the fact that it was such a steady, you went in early. When I got married and moved further away, I was up at six every morning. I was out on the road by half past six, twenty to seven, catching a bus, the work's bus. But you started, you went in, you knew when you were finishing, you knew if you did overtime it was up to you. If you wanted overtime on a Saturday, you did it. You had your set fortnight's holiday, you had all your bank holidays. And we were happy there. You know it was a happy place to work. We all knew each other and you know it was a happy place to work in. We all knew each other and you know it was a happy place to work in. With shop work it, I was happy there, I still meet up with all the people I work with. We meet up once a month for a, and we have a meal, and we've had happy times. But that changed, and it got a very, very stressful place to work in. As the, when I started there in the shop, you started nine o'clock in the morning. The shop would

open. You'd close at half past five. Shut at one on a Saturday, half day. But once they started opening until seven, then ten, and then opening all day Saturday, all day Sunday.

It's endless then isn't it?

Endless, and the pressures that are put on you then to work those hours, and it became very, very, very, more a very stressful place to work in. Perhaps, if I'd was in that same factory, later in life, perhaps that would have got more stressful, I don't know. The only thing I know is that it was a lovely place to work in and I will always say it, if I got to say, those were the days that were my happiest.

00.25.11: Can I just ask you were talking about being a supervisor, were a supervisor over men who worked there as well?

Yeah. Not a lot. As I say, the majority were the women, and they were all then, in the evening shift they were all married women who'd had children, and came back in the evening. And there was no single girls there. It was all married women. And.

So the single girls worked in the day?

They worked in the day. And like, there was no creche, the married woman with the child, the only time she could go to work was in the evening when her husband came home from work. So they were all married women with children ..

But they were experienced women.

Not all of them. You know, some of them were, but there was a lot of them that we had to train up and there was good and bad. That was frustrating, but that's how it goes isn't it.

00.26.13: If somebody found that they couldn't do the work, then would they give up? Do you know?

They didn't give up but I don't know, but I always found that the ones that were perhaps a bit slower or just couldn't grasp it, they didn't seem to worry about it really. *One of the girls couldn't and she was put on the tinsel (?) machine all the time because she couldn't do the work and they just kept her there, and it was an easy job. But the ones that were working like us, we had the hard jobs, we were given the hard jobs you see. And I'm thinking who's the dullest?* And say then there'd be an evening shift the majority as I say the majority of the workers in the, in our area were girls. But perhaps I'd have a man, a maintenance man. If there was a break down on the machines, there'd be perhaps a boy on a machine cutting what we called the gills for the radiators, and there'd be a man labourer who would bring the tubes from the acid tanks around, supplied them with the tubes for. So I would say one, two, three.

So there were males jobs and female jobs really.

So there would only be about two men in the evenings, and perhaps a young boy. A young boy would run the machine for cutting what we call the gills. The others say forty, forty five girls would be women there.

00.27.54: Was your pay the same as your sister's then when you started?

When I started there, because I was the same age as my sister, it went not by how long you'd been there, it went if you were eighteen, you were paid say you were paid a penny ha'penny, that's what some were, a penny ha'penny, half a penny for making a radiator. Whereas if you were eighteen you might get two pence for it, the old, not our two pence today, tuppence

then, and I used to think that was a little bit unfair because we were doing the same work, turning out the same radiator, and yet we were getting less. I used to think that was unfair, because we were doing the same job, doing the same radiator, and we were only getting paid for the amount you did. So I thought to pay us less was a bit unfair.

00.28.59: And with your wage packet then like your sister, you were giving some to your mother were you?

I gave my mother some for keep, and then as you say we bought our own clothes , and because we already had boyfriends, engaged which everybody did in those days, saving, saving for the future then isn't it, saving to get married, saving to get a deposit for a house, and we never went out on a Friday night for clubbing or disco dancing.

What did you do, did you go to the cinema?

I'd go to the cinema on a Saturday night, and that was my weekly treat.

00.29.43: I asked your sister about unions. There was a union in the factory, did you find them helpful to you at all?

Well, I can't say, because I had no call to to engage the Union. The only thing we would say the Union said there was a strike for some reason, we'd abide by what he said, but personally, I had no call to use the Union. In the shop I did, we used the Union a lot in the shop. A lot.

In the shop, conditions were worsening weren't they?

They got tougher as the longer hours came. And of course, we had contracts, original contracts and they were trying.

They were trying to change them weren't they?

They were trying to get us to do things that weren't in our original contracts. What it was, the more hours they opened, they still wanted to retain the same number of staff, but trying to stretch you. And things, it got much more stressful in the shop in latter years.

00.31.00: The strikes that took place in the factory, can you remember what they were about?

Mainly over pay and conditions, mainly, what was a sore point with the men workers more than anything, and yet, as Heather said a man can be doing the same job as you and get a lot more for doing it, but we just accepted it, that's how it was. The men would go on strike because, again, in Oxford, say we had two pence for a radiator, they could be having as much as three, four pence for doing the same work up in Oxford, and the same applied for the men's jobs. So what the men were doing here, the men up in Oxford were getting a far greater wage.

00.31.52: So they might strike down here because of that?

Yeah. Or if there was a strike up in Oxford for better conditions, well it could then spread and we could be dragged in.

So we would lose money then wouldn't you?

Yeah. If they went out on strike we didn't get paid.

That's tough isn't it?

Yeah.

Do you feel that you were treated fairly while you were there?

Yes. Going by the rules of today. Like as I say today, if a woman was doing the same job as a man, she'd get the same pay today. But because that wasn't a rule of the factory really, it was a general thing throughout the country that women got paid less than men. And I think it still goes on. *In some places.* To a certain degree in places.

That did change in some places though didn't it? It might have, did it start in the car industry? Is it in Dagenham?

Not in our time. Not in the time I was there.

00.33.01: And how do you feel you got on with the shop steward and the bosses and all these people?

Well, as I say, I never personally had to deal with the shop steward so I can't say that I had any dealings with him. If he came and spoke, he'd speak in general to all of us and explain why there was a strike on or whatever. The bosses themselves, they'd come down and they'd bring visitors round. I can remember the bosses coming round and they'd stand and watch you. And bringing Japanese visitors over.

I remember that'. But they'd just stand there. They'd watch you working.

Did you feel nervous?

No, not really because you're so used to doing the work, you know. It was a repetitive job where you did it and you just did it automatically, so no, you didn't feel nervous, you just carried on.

00.34.06: And like your sister, you were wearing a uniform were you?

Yes, yes.

It was the same as your sister's.

Yes, dark (green), very heavy duty cotton, heavy, heavy duty cotton which got very grubby due to the acid. Very grubby.

So, the same as your sister you had to be careful. Did you wear gloves then?

Yeah. We all had rubber gloves, otherwise. You could have a new pair, you were allowed one pair a week, or your had to go down and actually show the pair you had, that they were, you know, unusable before you could get another pair.

They were rationed were they?

Yeah. You could have them on two minutes and there'd be a hole in them and there'd be acid is on the tubes you'd be using, it was on the plates there, you'd put a plate top and bottom.

They were all dipped in acid and the plates were quite sharp so you could have a cut and the acid go in that and you had a septic finger.

How did you treat that then?

Sterilise a needle, and pierce it and squeeze the puss out. So what we used to do, we used to get tape, the big coils of copper came in and they'd have tape to tape them down. We used to save all the tape, and tape all your fingers up to stop them going into holes.

So you were making your own.

Making your own. And we were issued, you had to take the empty tin with you, and you'd go over to the surgery and you were issued barrier cream to put on your hands.

00.35.58: There was a surgery there was there?

With a nurse, and a doctor would come once a week.

00.36.04: So what would the doctor come for?

Well if there were works injuries, he would, or say you'd been on sick for a number, one or two weeks, they'd call you in then to see the works doctor.

That must have been quite nerveracking?

Yeah. And of course there was a full time qualified nurse there.

She was there every day?

Yeah.

Were her services called upon quite regularly?

Yes. There were some sort of accidents, every day of the week really, whether you know, if your plating, one was very sharp or something, you could have a slice across your finger. You'd have to get a, go over the surgery then. You'd have to have a pass, you couldn't leave the shop floor, you'd have to have a pass to go over the surgery and then have it cleaned and a plaster put on it. Otherwise the acid would be in it straightaway.

00.37.05: Did she ever send people to hospital?

Yeah. When there was accidents, or if someone was ill.

00.37.12: Were they quite strict with sickness and things, you know if somebody was off work.

Yeah. You'd have warnings if you were... *You'd have to take a paper in.* If you were off on sick you had to have a doctor's paper to cover you.

00.37.30: And your sister was mentioning the factory was cold, did you find it cold there?

Very cold in the winter. As I'd say you'd have to have your overcoats on, and scarves on.

00.37.44: How did you find the facilities generally in the factory?

Well, I don't suppose we thought about it really because, I mean, we're talking of. Well, Heather would have gone there in 1959, and I would have gone there in 1962. You know, you didn't have shower rooms and rest rooms, and our tea breaks were at our place of work. We didn't have, ten minutes we had at nine o'clock.

You didn't go to the canteen, not long enough was it?

Ten minutes you had/*Ten minutes you had.* I mean we started at half past seven, the hooter would go, and at nine o'clock it would go. Ten past nine it would go again. Well, you know you just had enough time to run to the loo and back. And you just grabbed a cup, we'd take our own flasks, save queuing on the trolley and you'd have it at your place of work.

00.38.50: You didn't mind that routine then?

No. We'd all sit down, chatting and laughing. It was just, you know .

And you mentioned, is it at eleven o'clock they played ...

Eleven o'clock Workers' Choice would come on, and it would be on until about, an hour it would be on, and then it would come on two till three in the afternoon. And everyone would be singing, singing away as we were working.

00.39.15: We talked about the noise earlier.

It was noisy there.

But they didn't provide anything for your ears?

No, no.

Did you get the chance to chat. Your sister was saying she was so busy that she wouldn't be able to chat a lot while she was doing her work.

No, you wouldn't have time.

00.39.39: Do you think you've suffered any long term effects of working there?

No, I've just got wonderful memories.

00.39.50: And how about the banter in the factory, you know you were saying earlier that there were some preconceptions from people who said that there might be swearing there, or that factory girls were common and all this. But you were saying that people didn't swear and stuff.

They didn't swear.

But was there joking and banter?

Laughing and joking in plenty.

About what normally, about the work, or what happened outside work.

Let's put it this way, on a Saturday morning, when we worked over time, and the unattached girls had been out on a Friday night, there was a lot of fun going on on a Saturday morning.

00.40.35: A bit of gossip is it.

Yes.

00.40.40: And what did your husband think of you working in the factory then?

Was he supportive?

Well, we were courting when I decided I was going to go, and he wasn't happy at all. He didn't want me working in a factory.

What would he have preferred that you did then?

That I'd stayed in the shop.

Even though the money was less?

Yeah.

But you managed to persuade him.

I didn't persuade him, I just told him I was going and that was it. And of course, when the money was coming in he was quite happy. He was quite happy for me to go back in the evenings. I think he could see the money it brought us. I mean, well you compare, you know, I started off one pound ten shillings at fifteen. I think I had a five shilling rise, so you know, by the time I was seventeen I was having two pound. And Heather then was having about four pound odd, without a Saturday morning.

Yes, double.

I know that two pound doesn't sound much now, but in those days two pound was a lot of money. *You'd get a lot for two pound.* I mean she was having two pound more than me. She was having two pound more than me. I was only having two pound for working longer hours than her.

00.42.01: And when you moved to the factory then you were doing the same hours.

Same hours, same work, same exactly.

00.42.09: So would the both of you do a Saturday morning at the same time?

Oh, yes. I wouldn't let her earn more than me. And work on till six in the evenings. Whatever overtime they offered, we did it. *We done it.*

And did you take sandwiches as well for your lunch or did you have food there?

Sandwiches and a flask of tea.

I've asked Heather already about, you know, annual holidays and about the shut down. And you said it was in July was it?

In July.

The last two weeks in July? Because I think a lot of factories took the same time off didn't they?

And then we just had like Christmas Day and Boxing Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and I think it was then, Whitmonday it was then. And that was all. There was no, you know, what is it, the summer holiday, the last Monday in August. There was none of that. And there was no stop week between Christmas and the New Year.

Because now it's shut down really isn't it.

Yeah, shut down now, but not then. That's all we had was the fortnight in the summer. That was the only shut down and then Christmas Day, Boxing, New Year's Day, Good Friday, Easter Monday, and Whitmonday.

But you did get paid for those?

We got paid for those. And when we first went there it was still under Nuffields. And we used to have the bonus every year.

In money?

In money. Oh, and the excitement when they came with the slip, telling you how much bonus you had because it all went by how long you'd been there, how much you'd earned because it was piece work then, so the more you'd earned, the more bonus you got.

00.44.07: So there were incentives for working hard then?

Yes, in those days. But then they stopped it, they stopped those bonuses once it went over to British Leyland. They stopped that. That was a Nuffield, it was Nuffields first see when we started then. *Morris Motors, then Nuffields, then British Leyland. Not it's Calzonic.* Nuffield's it was but it was known as Morris Motors. Nuffield's were ... but once it went over to British Leyland then the bonuses stopped then. But the excitement when that came round once a year.

00.44.42: I can imagine. Di you spend it on something specific or did you save it?

Save it.

00.44.51: I was asking your sister about any social activities organized in work. But you were in the same type of position.

Yeah, we didn't. The only thing they did was on the last day before breaking up for Christmas, it would be Christmas Eve if it was in the week, or if Christmas was on the weekend, it would be on the Friday. Nobody worked, everybody finished at twelve o'clock. And people did used to take a little drink in, and at twelve o'clock they'd stay on for an hour and have a bit of fun.

But there'd be no work.

No work done. If you didn't want to stay on you could finish at twelve. But Christmas Eve it finished at twelve. For those who wanted to go home you could go home but for those who wanted to stay, they and just have a chat for an hour, and they'd bring a little drink in, and have a bit of fun.

00.45.50: Is there any event or visit that stands out in your mind, looking back? This is for both of you now. Is there any day that, you know you think back to the whole time you were there. Is there any day that sticks out in your mind?

Yeah, for me.

00.46.09: So which one would that be?

The day that the Personnel Officer brought my notice to me.

Was it a man or a woman?

A woman. And then that last day when I walked out of there. I still get upset by it. After all these years.

00.46.30: When you finished though there were other people finishing at the same time.

No. Because there was nobody else pregnant at the same time as me.

Right.

Even now, I still get upset by it.

Was she sympathetic?

Yeah. She was doing her job. I knew it was coming but still. *She was very strict she was. She was strict. She didn't have any sympathy for you, you know – the way she spoke.*

Was she married herself?

No.

She didn't have children then.

No. That will always stick in my mind.

00.47.08: So what did she actually say?

Well, she just obviously she'd spoken to the supervisor. You know, obviously I was pointed out as to who I was. And she came on to me and asked me, and said 'can I have a word with you'. So I stopped my work and went to one side.

Did you realize what it was when she said that?

Yea. Well, I knew it was coming because I was coming up to my six and a half months.

Did they have a date for you then? Did they know which date the baby was due?

Well, yeah. You had to tell them. You had to give them that you see. You gave that information. The supervisor would, she'd already have had that information because you'd have had your date given to you by your doctor, and then they knew when the six and a half months was up. We weren't allowed to work a day after.

00.48.09: So when she gave that to you was that your last day, or did you have to work, how long after did you have to work?

That week. I think most probably she came on Monday, and I'd have to finish on the Friday.

It wasn't much notice though was it?

No, but we all, we knew it was coming and you know, although you know it's coming and although you're looking forward to the baby it's still upsetting when you enjoyed working somewhere, and I did. I enjoyed every minute of it, and I didn't want to leave. I didn't want to finish.

00.48.50: Was there something you didn't enjoy? Even when we work somewhere we like, there are some things we don't like aren't there? Is there anything in your mind do you think, 'oh I didn't like doing that aspect of the work,' or 'I didn't like something..'

There was only one thing that wasn't quite fair. But because we all had to do it in turn. If you were kept on the same one all the time, it could have been very frustrating but because you did in turns, you rotated, you could have been very frustrating. But because you did it in turns you rotated, you were a line of six girls. And there'd be this conveyor and there'd be four jigs in it, which you were building up the radiators on. *You had to do it in turns.* And there was two tables here and two girls would put plates, top and bottom on those radiators once they came off the jig. Well the machine would cut the gills, come down the conveyor, the one on the front would get all the gills. The others wouldn't get any. *So they had to have boxes then.* They had to have boxes on the side which, you were much slower. *So that's why we had to do it in turns.* You'd start on the top and then go down the line, and the you'd go off and do your plating week. And come back on. *So we had to do it in turns which is fair.* So you'd be seven to a line actually, four jigs, two plating and one filling magazines with

tubes for the machines. But the one on the front got all, so when we're on piece work, she got all, the most, because she was having all the gills. The others were slower because they had to work from the box. But yet you were only being paid the same. *We did it when the machine would break down because the front girl had to have the box as well you see.* And what they did they had men coming down, timers, to time people, timekeepers.

00.50.53: Like time and motion

Times and motion. They'd come down to time you to price. *So we had to go slow then.* But they'd time it off the one in the front, and that wasn't fair because they were getting all the materials.

It was like a false reading then.

False reading. So that's the only thing you know. But because they rotated round you know, there was no jealousy then. There was no nastiness. *Because we all had to do our turn on it.*

00.51.30: So it evened out in the end.

But I can't say I disliked that because it was fair, because we rotated. But no, there was no aspect of the job that I didn't like.

00.51.42: So what do feel, apart from earning wages, you know, what did you get out of working there those years, do you think?

As I say ... *Satisfaction.* Yes, the money was the biggest thing, you've got to say. You know, that is what we all go out to work for. And of course that it enabled us to save for a deposit to buy a house, furnish a house, buy a little car, and subsequently I moved, and bought a second. Sold that house obviously, but because.. *And over the years the money went up so it was quite good.* So you know, because we were able to do all those things and we were a nice crowd of people.

And your were making something weren't you?

It was repetitive work, but some might think that's boring but it wasn't, because you'd build the radiators, then you'd stop to clamp it, then take it out. You know, you were so keen to get on to do the next one, especially when you were on piece work. But even when the piece work stopped, you still had a target to meet. *You had a target to do. If I had finished or something early, I'd help the others then see. I'd give them a hand.*

But it was your own target.

No. *They give you the target.* And what we did then, they set the target.

But it was for the individual

No, it was for them all.

PART TWO: TRANSCRIPTION OF VSW007.2.2

As I say when it was piece the one in the front earned the biggest money. Then the next one, and the next one, and the next one. But when it became that you had to do a target, the one in the front would reach her target first obviously, but then that one person would always then help the one on the last one of all.

00.00.29: So you had to be able to work together.

We all did that because when the next one came round the one who is on the bottom this week will be on the top next week. So she would help and that was an understanding between us all. And it worked. *It worked well.*

00.00.44: But what if you got somebody, I know you said the girls were great, but what if you got somebody who was awkward? It does happen sometime.

It does happen sometimes that you get the odd one that is awkward.

Could you sort of pull them along?

Everybody knew that one was awkward.

00.01.04: You've just got to put up with it.

You've got to put up with it and ... But what we found was that if a particular radiator, there was a big order for it, all the best workers would be on that line. So you were all of equal, the only thing that differentiated you was the fact that the one on the front was getting all the materials. But basically, you were all good, quick workers, and so you would all ... *We'd all help each other really ...* Help each other then. You weren't carrying anybody. You were carrying people for the fact that they weren't, they were on the end of the line and not getting the materials. But when, the following week, that person would be on the top, that person would be helping you. So it worked well. The people who perhaps weren't so quick, they would be on the lines that weren't in such demand, and most probably they'd be working with people of their own .. *Slower pace...* Of their own level sort of thing.

00.02.16: Would they be getting less then?

Well, when it was piece work they'd get less because obviously ... *they weren't so quick . Because when we were in piece work, we couldn't help each other.* You just carried on working for yourself. *You just carried on working for yourself to get as much as you can. But once it came to the hour, the target you had to do in that time, well of course, if I was on the front I'd be finished early, so I was helping everybody else then.* And then, they'd all each their target, but I suppose when people are slower that one on the front wouldn't get to help the ones behind because she'd be struggling to meet her target herself. *If there's somebody slower on the front you see she's not using as much gills so more gills are coming down the machine then, because she's not so quick, you see. And if the fast one is there, well obviously the others don't any you see.* But there was never any hard feeling or animosity. It was just a nice place to work.

00.03.20: And last question, did you feel you were valued?

Yes. I did.

And VSW006, what would you say?

I suppose I did. I think they showed that they valued you by putting you on the lines where they wanted to get the work. If they had a big order, they would say right. *I felt I was valued because I was a good worker. And I say I'm a good worker, and I was a good worker there.* And I will say the same. *So I felt I was doing well for the factory, and I suppose in a way they were good to me.* And the supervisors, we were valued by them, because we were good workers and we did do good work, and we never lost time. We were reliable and the supervisors did value you for that.

If Morris Motors hadn't existed then, what do you think you would have ended up doing?

Most probably I would have ended up staying in the shop, and earned a pittance. *I don't know what I would have done. I ended up as a carer, I done caring for fourteen years before I retired and that was a stressful job you know. I loved the people. They could be quite funny, you know, miserable and things sometimes but you had to carry on and take no notice of them and they all liked me. And I was sorry to go there. But if Morris Motors hadn't I don't know what I would have done, because I always had it in my head from the word 'go' I wanted to go to the factory.*

Thank you very much.