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Speaker 1: [00:00](#) Thank you for coming here today in this interview. So what is your name?

Speaker 2: [00:04](#) My name is Jean frame.

Speaker 1: [00:08](#) What year were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:11](#) 1936

Speaker 1: [00:13](#) well, where were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:15](#) In Hammersmith? In London.

Speaker 1: [00:19](#) What did your parents do for a living?

Speaker 2: [00:22](#) My mother cleaned houses and my father was a builder's laborer.

Speaker 1: [00:28](#) Describe what your local area was like for you as a child. Before the war started,

Speaker 2: [00:36](#) it was a fairly deprived area. It was where people could afford to rent a house. Um, unlike now. So if you are on a poor income as a builder's laborer, you could get one of those houses for as little as maybe two or three pounds a month.

Speaker 1: [00:56](#) How did you, you and your family feel when war was declared?

Speaker 2: [01:02](#) For me, I didn't understand. My mother was absolutely terrified because they'd already gone through a first world war, the 1914-18 war, which my father was in, but he was too old for the second world war. But they were both very terrified because they'd seen what had gone before.

Speaker 1: [01:23](#) What was it like to live in London when war broke out?

Speaker 2: [01:28](#) The first few months, nothing changed much. It was pretty much the same. But then when we started getting bombings come over, they were mainly night bombings. We never had day like raids at all. Um, then they started bringing shelters in. You could have an indoor shelter or one built in your garden where they don't call it the garden and out and lowered the shelter into the garden.

Speaker 1: [01:56](#) What did your parents do during the war?

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- Speaker 2: [01:59](#) My mother was just a housewife. She went to work when she could. Um, my father was carrying on, doing his building work where he could, but at night he used to what they call Firewatch. So you went to another department store, which was British home stores at the time in King street, Hammersmith. And he was on the roof and they were looking for fires where they could Spotify or so the fire brigade could get there quickly and save someone's life by putting the fire out.
- Speaker 1: [02:31](#) How did you feel when you first found out you were going to be evacuated?
- Speaker 2: [02:38](#) I was more one of the fortunate ones because a lot of children were sent away straight away by their parents. I was an only child and my parents were very reluctant to let me go alone. Eventually the war office, let a parent go with a child. So your father or your mother could go with you. So I went with my mother.
- Speaker 1: [03:00](#) Tell us about the journey on the first evacuation.
- Speaker 2: [03:05](#) I think for me it was exciting because, um, I haven't been on a long journey. I went to Manchester though to get on a big train and go to Manchester. I didn't really know where we were going, but as long as I was with my mother, I felt quite secure.
- Speaker 1: [03:23](#) Who were you evacuated?
- Speaker 2: [03:26](#) I was evacuated with a lovely family. We went to Manchester in the North to a village called Roe green. It's in Worsley and I stayed in a house where's a lady and her husband who were retired, but their sons were both in the second world war, one within France and one was in Germany. And it was just my mother and I and they made us very welcome.
- Speaker 1: [03:54](#) How did you feel when you last saw your parents when you were going away?
- Speaker 2: [04:00](#) Again, for me it was more upsetting for my mother and then the, she cried a lot because unfortunately you couldn't get fined in the days if you didn't go to school. Not like now. My mother couldn't read or write, so she was very upset and felt very vulnerable. Being away from my father. Um, I didn't know that. I wasn't gonna see in the game for at least 18 months, but for my mother it was very traumatic.

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- Speaker 1: [04:29](#) Tell us about the things you took with you.
- Speaker 2: [04:35](#) Very small. Really just a small bag. Um, like a little case. I think there was some awful wooly underwear in, which was a type of thing we wore. Then a couple of skirts and I think a couple of tops, a coat, a big coat, a pixie hat, which is similar to the photograph behind where their little hat, where you tied it under the chin called pixie hearts. Um, and I have my gas mask. We didn't go very far with our, our gas mask.
- Speaker 1: [05:07](#) What's, why you fit. What were your feelings at first?
- Speaker 2: [05:12](#) When I got to the destination, um, I was a bit confused because we were all sent to a village hall and they'd done their very best. They made us a meal of porridge, um, when we could get porridge in the second world war, we had sugar on it. When we could get sugar, they'd sorted it, which we weren't used to. I think it might have been a Northern thing. Um, we sat there for a while and then we were delegated a family. So people who were going to house evacuees or their parents would come forward and volunteer their house or a room in our house to take you in.
- Speaker 1: [05:52](#) Describe how you ended up with your first host family.
- Speaker 3: [05:58](#) They, this very nice couple. Mr and Mrs Cunliffe. Um, they came and introduced themselves and then we walked across the green to where their house was and we were shown, my mother and I are shown our bedroom and we became part of that community.
- Speaker 1: [06:16](#) What was life like with your host family?
- Speaker 2: [06:20](#) For me, absolutely wonderful. They made us very, very welcome. We were introduced to, um, the Sunday school teacher where I used to go every week. Um, we were introduced to a lady who was teaching us London kids, as you might call it, how to knit and crochet and make things, which I'd never done. So, um, we had, um, a big goose in her garden as a pet. So for me, yeah, it was, it was a good time. It sounds hard, but it was a good time.
- Speaker 1: [06:56](#) What was the house like?
- Speaker 2: [06:58](#) It was an ordinary standard house, um, a terrorist house. Um, I think it had three bedrooms, um, a normal house with a lovely

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long back garden, which went down onto a railway line, um, on a village green, which was totally different from my house in London.

Speaker 1: [07:22](#) What was school like?

Speaker 2: [07:26](#) Um, it was different because, um, I'd only had one year at school in London, but I had 18 months in Manchester, so I began to lose my, uh, English London accent. So instead of saying to someone, for example, would you like to look at my book? I was getting an accent, which said, Luke Duke, because it's a Northern accent. Um, the children were just children. We were all children. So for them, the only difference was that they'd never been in a London during the bombing, which was fortunate. And we had,

Speaker 1: [08:09](#) how were you treated in your new area?

Speaker 2: [08:13](#) Very, very well. Very well. Uh, suddenly someone, um, I've heard stories where a lot of the children went to homes where it was very difficult for them. Um, but for me, no, it was, we were treated very, very well. We were fed far better than we could have been in London because being in a village, they were still able to grow a lot of the food.

Speaker 1: [08:39](#) Tell us, tell us some of your experiences in the countryside.

Speaker 2: [08:46](#) We were introduced to different friends of theirs and we were taken to a very pushy place one day to visit some relatives called hayfield. I, if it's still called of that. I know it's just beautiful fields of lavender, which I'd never seen because I'd hardly left London. Um, we made a pair of this goose, which was lovely until it became Christmas time. And we'd heard a rumor. Um, the goose was going to be our Christmas dinner, so as rebellious London kids plus the local kids, um, we decided we weren't going to eat Christmas dinner. We couldn't keep our goosey Ganga, which we did and she never got killed. She still remained out. Pat might still be around for all I know.

Speaker 1: [09:33](#) Tell us about any friends you made.

Speaker 2: [09:37](#) I didn't keep in touch with any of the school friends I may have because I was only there 18 months. But the family we were with, we continue to keep friends right up until suddenly they died. My parents used to, we used to do Christmas cards every year. We wrote to each other. My father used to write to them

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and they wrote back. We got pictures of their family. My Sunday school teacher wrote to me frequently, uh, when her son went to school right up until when her son got married. Yes. We kept in touch for a very, very long time. But bear in mind now my age, those people were adults then, so they would be what, over a hundred by now.

Speaker 1: [10:20](#) What happened to your family in London while you are away?

Speaker 2: [10:25](#) Well, fortunately most of my family were fine. Um, my uncles that were in the war, um, a couple never came back. One got killed in France, one got killed in Italy. Um, my grandparents were fine and my father, um, my grandmother was okay as well. Um, some were less fortunate, but as my family we were okay except for my uncles that were in the wall.

Speaker 1: [10:54](#) Can you tell us about any times you saw or communicated with your parents while you were away?

Speaker 2: [11:04](#) That again, was rather difficult for my mother. Um, because we had no telephones as such. We didn't have a telephone in London. Um, my mother could not read or write because she never went to school. Um, so she used to have to get a friend to write to my father and in return she would read my father's letter to her. But bear in mind I was only six or seven. So for me, I just, this was again, part of your life that you think is ongoing.

Speaker 1: [11:37](#) Tell us about any more evacuations you experienced during the war.

Speaker 2: [11:42](#) No, that was all, um, while I was in London during the war. Um, obviously we didn't stay in our house at night. We went into the shelters. Um, sometimes we went to the underground station because my mother sometimes thought it was safer there so you could go into the tubes and down and she felt safe there. Um, we had an indoor shelter built when my mother then decided, this is why we were in London, that she would get buried alive if the ceiling fell down or the roof. So we borrowed next doors shelter where we were overcrowded. But theirs was in the ground?

Speaker 3: [12:23](#) Yes.

Speaker 1: [12:27](#) What did you do when there was an air raid?

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- Speaker 2: [12:32](#) When there was an air raid? Um, they were usually all night air raids. So you would hear the air raid warden, you'd hear the siren go and it was a long, long siren. And you usually prepared because you always had your bag and your personal belongings and they were just small belongings, like your Russian book or your purse or any bit of money that you had. And then when the air raid started, you would find a shelter. Uh, if you were out, you went into the nearest underground or the nearest shelter that you could find. Um, but as I say, I was born into this war. I knew no difference, but obviously the adults dead.
- Speaker 1: [13:18](#) What was it like when the bombs were falling
- Speaker 2: [13:22](#) again? It was noise. It was bangs. And because I'd heard it night after night and I knew the next morning what would happen is that we would come out of the shelter and you can imagine going and wondering if your house was still there because a lot of people's houses weren't. They were hit and they were just flattened. So everything that was in that house had gone. And then you had the, the government found you the best accommodation they could from that time on.
- Speaker 1: [13:54](#) Tell us about any friends or family who were injured during the war.
- Speaker 2: [14:00](#) Uh, there were a few neighbors. Um, not really pleasant sites. Um, my grandmother lived in the next couple of streets. She lived in an area called Fullam. We were in the borders of Hammersmith. And when my mom and I came out of the shelters in the morning, we used to go and try and find my grandmother, but on the way to the shelters, um, the streets did have bodies, I'm afraid. And they were covered over because these people had either been out when there was a bombing, decided not to take shelter from shelters or any refuge. Um, again, it, to me it was a normal childhood.
- Speaker 1: [14:42](#) What did, what did you and your family do when you heard bones?
- Speaker 2: [14:50](#) Oh, to me it was quite normal, but my mother just fell to her knees and she prayed all the time. She just prayed, please keep us safe to the morning. And she was absolutely terrified to be honest. I can remember now, but it was an every night occurrence. So to me it was what she normally did and she always would while the war was on.

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- Speaker 1: [15:12](#) What's why you, what were your feelings when you came back to London after being differentiated?
- Speaker 2: [15:19](#) When I came back in, the wall was still on. Um, and suddenly the doodlebugs, I don't know if you've heard of those B bombs, what it was, they had a plane come over with bombs and you heard the drone and then the engine of the plane stops and it's kids in the shelter. We counted, but we never made it to 10 because you'd start to count and maybe got to five or six and then there's an explosion. It could be that building that's behind us or it could be a mile up the road because of the loud expanse of the noise. You really weren't sure if it was on your doorstep or in two or three streets away. Um, but as kids, when the air raid had finished, we collect his shrapnel. They were bits that fell off bombs and pains and it was a collection. It's like kids collecting these days. We rushed out, our playground was the streets and we collected shrapnel.
- Speaker 1: [16:21](#) What were your feelings about your family?
- Speaker 2: [16:26](#) In what respect? When you came back off? Oh yeah. Oh no, no, no. When I came back bone, my, my mother was with me. Um, I think as far as I can remember, I was a bit distant from my father. Um, very minor Moni, about six years old. Uh, not even six maybe. Um, yes. Um, I'd been away from him for like 18 months. Um, but yeah, it's that same past. It's in past and we would just like back to normal. Like those 18 months getting didn't happen.
- Speaker 3: [17:13](#) How,
- Speaker 1: [17:14](#) how has London changed while you were away?
- Speaker 2: [17:17](#) Dramatically because buildings, I mean, there was a school called flora gardens. It was just flattened to the ground. Um, where there used to be places that I knew where maybe my childhood friends, we all played. They were buildings that were just flattened. They'd been bombed badly. So yes, it changed a great deal. Great deal.
- Speaker 1: [17:41](#) How did your host family feel when you were leaving?
- Speaker 2: [17:46](#) Everyone hugged and cried because they'd been come part of our life and given us such a wonderful time. They, they were just wonderful people. So yes, we all cried and hugged each

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other. And, um, again, I didn't know why we were leaving them really.

Speaker 1: [18:06](#)

How did you celebrate the end of the war?

Speaker 2: [18:11](#)

Well, basically everybody went mad. Um, there was an awful lot of Canadians and Americans and everything over here. And I remember going with my parents, um, up to Trafalgar square and there were big celebrations and everybody was just going mad. It was just so wonderful. I mean, we just couldn't believe that it had ended, you know, it was wonderful. Wonderful.

Speaker 1: [18:36](#)

Looking back, how do you think your experiences as an evacuee have affected your life?

Speaker 2: [18:45](#)

I think it affected today in a, in a different way that it, it made me a little bit more caring. It may be appreciate things and that I didn't have and I think it was the closeness of everybody. Um, everyone was so close. For example, I'll give you an example. If my mother would queue up for ages, and it sounds silly now, but if she queued up long enough, she may be able to get two sausages because the rationing was, um, if our neighbor managed to get a couple of bags, we would get them a sausage or they'd give us an egg. That's just an example of the closeness we had. Nobody had a lock on their front door or their back door, so you could always go into someone's house. Nobody. But then we didn't have anything for anyone to steal. I mean, the only people that stole, and that's going to happen in any lifetime was when the shops were bombed and the front of the windows came out. You would get looters in there. They would still real little radios or whatever they could get, but that will go on through times, sadly, and had gone on before, but not for individuals. And I just felt that it was part of my life that I wouldn't have wanted, not have the experience of

Speaker 1: [20:09](#)

what are your strongest memories from the war?

Speaker 2: [20:14](#)

Again, what I've just said, it was the closeness of people with suddenly, somehow we've lost a little way down the line, which I hope we're getting back now. I think to be experienced in it more from my daughter and my grandchildren that we are experiencing is this caring more now, which we lost somewhere along the line, but we did have it back then.

Speaker 1: [20:36](#)

What was your experience like? How w how if it was a spirits in this school, in the country of San Fernando?

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- Speaker 2: [20:45](#) Um, I think it was pretty much the same. Um, I think education is pretty much the same anywhere in a country. I mean I've had the experience of living in America and my grandchildren there have a different, slightly different education to here and the schools are slightly different in a different layout, but basically it was pretty much the same. Yeah. How old were you when you got evacuated? Um, well, three, four property. Um, I'd only had a few months of schooling on it. So just about five, just coming up to five, just over five, you know, they weren't quite so strict on it in those days as date. You know, I think I went to school pretty much ran about four and a half. How old were you when you came back to London? Well, I had 18 months, so I was, um, I have about six and a half. Yeah. Coming up to it was pretty, it was only a few more months or a year left on the war. So, yeah.
- Speaker 4: [21:53](#) Right. So I, I've, I've talked to Jean already so I took some notes. So, um, there's a couple things you told me, which I haven't talked about. So, um, tell us about the incident with your dad. What he did during the war. Tell elicited that, that whole story about what his job was in the [inaudible].
- Speaker 2: [22:05](#) Yeah. Yeah. Okay. Well, in the first world war, um, there was no age barrier. The second world war, you have to be 18, but in the first world war, and my father and my grandfather fought in the same war with my grandfather being late fifties, and my father being like 18 and 19 or whatever. I'm in the second world war. My father was too old to go in the second world war because there were restrictions. I had to be 18 then, whereas an uncle of mine went to war in the first world war 15, um, because the parent got a war pension and they needed the money. There was no social services, there was no benefits. So, um, but my father in the second world war, he was, he used to Firewatch as I think I mentioned before on British home stores. Um, but it was a rather sad incident up there, um, on the top of the roof with a shed.
- Speaker 2: [23:13](#) And it had paint. And in those days they weren't, the colorful paints you can get now is either Brown or green and they were, why they painted in Brown or green, I don't know, may have been a reason. Um, and my father and his friend Joe used to take it turns in making a cup of tea under awful circumstances. I mean, there was no washing up or anything. It was just boil a kettle and you've got a cup wherever it was. Um, and the bomb hit the top of the roof and new shed was blown apart. But on this particular night, um, my father had changed places because this chap wanted a cup of tea earlier. Suddenly his friend got

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killed as the bomb hit the shed. And my father got splattered in paint. But I think that was the worst time of my life because I remember it vividly.

Speaker 2: [24:02](#) They arrived at the house in the morning to tell my mother, I'm sorry, but your, your husband got killed last night on the roof and cause my grandfather and everybody, and we went to the hospital that was being run by some American nurses. They were very, very pleasant. But when we were shown in and we were getting the sympathy of my father's friend's wife, we discovered that it was my dad that was alive and her husband was the one that died. And these experiences were so common in those days because sometimes people weren't identifiable after a bombing. Um, and when they started cleaning the paint off of my father, we realized that it was him. Yeah. So yeah, that was probably one of the most traumatic moments because my mother just collapsed in the whole way. My grandfather came flying round, you know, and, um, I don't know, it was really understanding it all. But you know, when your parents, your mom is so upset about something, obviously you've become part of that emotion.

Speaker 3: [25:10](#) [inaudible] chip card.

Speaker 2: [25:11](#) Did your house get bombed? Um, yes. Well, we had our windows blown out and um, my mother was very furious one day because our kitchen ceiling fell in because it was a Sunday and it was a winter Sunday, so it was getting dark. And that was when, although they didn't die, they started to get a bit braver bombing us during daylight. My mother was getting the dinner out of the oven and very mine, how the food shortage was whatever this roast Jenner was supposed to be. It wasn't like you would get today and suddenly the ceiling fell in and it went all into the tray of food that she pulled out the oven and she just brushed it all off and we ate it because that's all we would have had that day. But you know, I've lived this long eating grit from ceilings and lime and whatever else. So maybe it wasn't such a bad thing. It built up my immunity. Maybe. I don't know.

Speaker 3: [26:06](#) How about, how about drink Jane, if you need, have you been talking a lot? So

Speaker 2: [26:09](#) it's what I do both

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Speaker 3: [26:11](#) questions. Many more questions. Have you got any more stories or any, any, any particular incidents you remember or maybe life when you were evacuated? Anything that sort of, anything that stands out for you?

Speaker 2: [26:34](#) Only once we were taken to Blackpool and I don't know why because there were no lights. Um, but it was going to be a big event and I think was a big disappointment because everyone was excited about going to Blackpool and I didn't know what to expect because there wasn't much excitement during the second world war for us as outings and the kids, I was evacuated wares and um, kids in Manchester, they were all excited about going to Blackpool. Probably one of the biggest disappointments really. Cause I didn't know what while we were there, not like now where it's all beautiful lights and everything cause the bigger thing. Um, I think I appreciated how I probably wouldn't have got these skills if I hadn't been evacuated that I learned to. So, um, I learned to crochet. I learned to do Croft as much as we knew about crafts, but very mind we haven't, we didn't have the facilities that crop people who've got today, the special glues and all these things because everything was a shortage in the second world war.

Speaker 2: [27:39](#) Everything. Um, yeah, I think, um, the different events that they, um, put on, you know, like we did, um, Christmas show. We tried to make the best of Christmas. Um, tiny little fates and things on the village green. They tried to do as much for the kids as we could. Um, yeah, it was things sad really to say that it was a happy time for me. But any other questions you get to see Blackpool tower? Well I guess I must've done, but it was obviously not very memorable because thank you so much. Excitement. You know, I'm going to Blackpool, I'm going to Brightpoint probably a biggest [inaudible] of my life. I've never been since. Maybe I should go and see what it's really night now. Oh, I've got a question. You said the windows were blown out cause like wind up instead of not in Europe.

Speaker 2: [28:45](#) As soon as that's done. Well it seemed we didn't know but I don't know too much glass inside. It seems to, so it shattered and then, you know, we were left with the frames but it was some glass inside, but there was an awful lot outside. And I notice that in lots of buildings as well. Um, mainly it was ceilings coming down, you know, um, a lot of roof damage of course, you know. Um, but as I say on that one occasion, I do remember what the daylight raid, um, because I think, uh, they were getting desperate that they were looking for landmarks. They

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want you to hit places that would hurt London, like Buckingham palace, Westminster Abbey, the museums, anywhere where there were valuable things where they could hit us worse. So during sort of blade of Dunoon, while it was still daylight, because at night we had complete and you could get fine.

Speaker 2: [29:44](#)

So when you pulled your curtains, if you just had a slitter of blight, you would get a Firewatch, Watchman banging on the door, kill that light in a big loud voice. So obviously during the day time they got a better fixture on where these buildings were. But I was walking with my mother in the King street, which is the main shopping center in Hammersmith. And we saw this plane coming over and someone shouted out, it's a Gerry plane, which is what they nicknamed the Germans, Jerry's. And we saw these guns starting to fire and they were obviously ready to go wherever they were going to go. And we would just grab by herself, Haitian army couple and pushed into a doorway to say this. So, um, but nobody got hit there because they weren't aiming for us at the street. They just had us as like almost like a flight path so they could see where they were going. Fortunately, it didn't hit many big buildings. I don't think they, I don't if they hit bucket and Polly, so I'm not sure my history is not that good on, on that sort of thing, or Westminster Abbey. But if they did, they didn't do much damage, you know? So.