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Speaker 1: [00:00](#) What is your name?

Speaker 2: [00:02](#) My name's Maureen Larkin.

Speaker 1: [00:06](#) What year were you born?

Speaker 2: [00:08](#) 1932.

Speaker 1: [00:11](#) Why were you born

Speaker 2: [00:13](#) in Battersea in London?

Speaker 1: [00:16](#) What did your parents do for a living?

Speaker 2: [00:20](#) My mother didn't work, but my father was worked in a, in a shop and, um, it was a decorating and hardware shop.

Speaker 1: [00:41](#) Would you like to add a little bit more onto that or

Speaker 2: [00:44](#) no, I think that was about it. That's where he worked.

Speaker 1: [00:51](#) Describe what your local area was like for you as a child before the girls started.

Speaker 2: [00:59](#) Well, they area, so the local area, the local area. What? It was fine.

Speaker 1: [01:05](#) Yes sir. How the people were before the goal.

Speaker 2: [01:12](#) It was a normal, a working class area in Battersea. Um, fairly poor. It wasn't M not a painful, there was no cars or anything like that. People couldn't afford cars or holidays or anything like that. So, um, and it was in a triangle. It's was shaped in a triangle and other sway roads there so that you could go around in a, in a trauma angle.

Speaker 3: [01:54](#) Yep.

Speaker 1: [01:56](#) How did you and your family feel when the war was declared?

Speaker 2: [02:02](#) Very apprehensive because we didn't know what to expect. We thought it was almost the end end of the us sort of thing, you know? And it was very frightening, very frightening indeed that people carried on with their jobs and everything. So we know, I guess we didn't really know what was going to happen. So you

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know, there was no bombing or anything like that at the beginning of the war. So, but we were people where he got no children were evacuated if I want you to be, it wasn't compulsory if that parents wanted to be at that time, they couldn't

- Speaker 3: [03:00](#) [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [03:08](#) I think, I can't think of any other failings.
- Speaker 3: [03:12](#) I don't know.
- Speaker 1: [03:17](#) What was it like to live in London one day?
- Speaker 2: [03:24](#) It was nothing happened to begin with. I know, I got separated with my oldest sister, older married sister and her baby son. Um, there was no dog MIMO air rights or anything to start with. And I don't think we really felt they shortage of food at the beginning, but at the very beginning it was only a bit later on that people noticed it when my [inaudible] and that became, came into force.
- Speaker 1: [04:16](#) What did your parents do during the war?
- Speaker 2: [04:22](#) I can just carry it on as normal. My father went to work and my mother was at home mostly when she was trying to get food, it gone queue up in shops for food and things. Um, but they stayed in London all the time. I didn't go anywhere.
- Speaker 1: [04:52](#) How did your family prepare for the war?
- Speaker 2: [04:59](#) I had um, an Anderson shelter put into the garden side of that. We could go into it. When the bombs started. They had, my father made shutters so that he could put them up up the windows to protect the glass when the bombs fell.
- Speaker 3: [05:27](#) Mmm.
- Speaker 2: [05:29](#) And then they started to grow vegetables and things like that. So late half fresh, fresh vegetables to eat cause she couldn't get loads in the shops either.
- Speaker 1: [05:50](#) In what ways did your life change with the war?

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- Speaker 2: [05:54](#) I'm sorry, what? In what ways did your life change when war broke out? Well, they change at the very beginning, Darby and evacuated the, after about six weeks, my father bought us back because the conditions were so bad where we were. And I did go, didn't go away again. That's all. Um, my school was closed and I had to go to another school eventually and school lessons were interrupted with bright and sometimes I could go to school and sometimes I couldn't.
- Speaker 3: [06:51](#) Did you, did you want to adjust the volume on the audio? Remember to do it in between so you can turn off. Do you want to make it louder? So it's an to four o'clock then please don't do it while she's talking. Remember doing the tape? Okay. Yeah. Okay. Okay. Sorry.
- Speaker 2: [07:09](#) How did the food shortages affect you?
- Speaker 3: [07:14](#) Okay.
- Speaker 2: [07:16](#) Um, I, my mother always managed to feed us. We didn't go to Phil rarely, but it was with great difficulty. As I say, we grew our own vegetables.
- Speaker 3: [07:33](#) Mmm.
- Speaker 2: [07:35](#) I know she stood in queues for hours. If there was something came into the shops to get things for us. Um, our diets changed because you couldn't get eggs or bacon or anything like that and you had very small rations of butter.
- Speaker 3: [08:05](#) [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [08:06](#) but we just, she just made do, I don't know how she did it, but she did. She managed to feed us somehow or than tell us about any experiences of women you've faced, experiences of bombing you faced, bombing. We were very fortunate. We didn't have, um, we didn't have any bombs drop near us where I lived.
- Speaker 3: [08:51](#) Mmm.
- Speaker 2: [08:54](#) The only bad experience was that was one day we will, my mother and I were coming down the road. There was no warning on or anything and the German aircraft came down and started and shooting at us. Fortunately a neighbor saw what was happening and because we started running and uh, she

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pulled us into our house out of the way. So we were lucky we didn't get hurt. We didn't have the bones was, we could hear them going off obviously in the air rights, but none actually fell in here. Us. How did you feel when you first found out you were going to be evacuated? Yeah, I can't really remember. I was, I was going with my sister, my oldest sister. So I think I was quite happy to go. It was more like, I probably thought it was more like a holiday than anything else and going away from home, but I can't remember anything else about it.

Speaker 3: [10:28](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [10:33](#) how did you feel when your parents said goodbye? I don't know. I think I just accepted it that I was going away and um, as I say, I was going with my sister so I wasn't going on my own so I was quite happy. Tell us about the things you took with you, you learned on how to type very much with you at all. Just a change of clothing. That's all.

Speaker 3: [11:15](#) [inaudible]

Speaker 2: [11:20](#) what things did you have to leave behind? What did I have to leave behind, if anything? Any books and games and toys or anything like that. I won't have to be left behind. Couldn't take those with you? Yeah, I had a small little bag to type [inaudible] that's all. Tell us about your journey. I can't remember the journey. It was on a train. It was packed with people and growing ups and children. That's all I can remember. And then we were taken to houses and put into houses to let them, I can't remember the anything else on the journey. Who are you evacuated with? My sister and her little boy, he who was nearly a year old. Tell us about the place you evacuated to. It was a bad big house and it was right on the sea front. And when we got there, there was, must've been about eight or 10 people left there with their children and we had to share the bedrooms with um, they saw the PayPal, it was probably about eight people in a bedroom and they had straw mattresses on the floor. That was the only bedding they had. And there was no food there at all. And it was pretty, pretty awful. That was to start off with, we were there for about three or four days

Speaker 2: [13:55](#) and then eventually we did get to go to a house. Well there was an old lady and her husband and she would give us, um, breakfast. She let my sister do some washing and then she would want us out of the house all day and give us a meal about five o'clock at night and then we had to go to our bedroom that

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we shared and, and that was it. We had to be out of the house all day.

Speaker 3: [14:40](#)

[inaudible]

Speaker 2: [14:47](#)

what were your first impressions? Not very good. Not very good. It was very, very miserable being away from my parents. We didn't have enough food and we had to just walk around the streets of East Berlin during the day.

Speaker 1: [15:26](#)

How did it feel waiting for your new post foster parents?

Speaker 2: [15:33](#)

So wait until the new parents.

Speaker 1: [15:36](#)

How did it go when they went to the new place? How'd it feel when you went to your new place while you were going to be Oh,

Speaker 3: [15:55](#)

well

Speaker 2: [15:58](#)

yeah. It wasn't any better than the first place we went to. And how after about six weeks my father came and collected us and took us back to London and I never went to [inaudible] again. I was in London, [inaudible] in the wall.

Speaker 1: [16:20](#)

What was it like living in London during the war?

Speaker 2: [16:31](#)

Now repair heads during the war when it was very quiet, we didn't have any air rights or anything. And there are other times when I couldn't go to school because of the air. Right. And, and then the latter part of the war, it was quite frightening because when they had the new weapons, which just exploded and there was no warning or anything like that, it was these big, huge explosions that was frightening. You just accepted it. You had to say accept what was happening and you couldn't do anything about it. We survived.

Speaker 3: [17:49](#)

How did you celebrate V E D

Speaker 2: [17:52](#)

Oh, they die. Some neighbors bought their piano out into the street and we list a bit bone fire and it was singing and dancing and everybody had their lights on and let them stream out into the street. It's quite fun and everybody was so relieved. It was really great.

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- Speaker 3: [18:23](#) [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [18:28](#) big celebrations at night.
- Speaker 3: [18:39](#) Looking back, how do you think your experiences as an evacuee have affected your life? Um, that's a difficult one. I suppose
- Speaker 2: [19:03](#) earlier on when I was much, much younger, he was always more careful with the way you boat food and um, spent shell money on the food and that, um, you learned to make do, you didn't buy so many clothes or things like that. But um, then latterly, you know, you just forgot all about it didn't have any effect at all.
- Speaker 3: [19:50](#) What are your strongest memories from the wall?
- Speaker 2: [19:58](#) Sleeping in the air, right. Shelter. Nice offs are now in the garden. Um, the explosions that towards the end of the war, which were very frightening, you didn't, you didn't expect them. And um, she'll teach of food and, and things that she couldn't do. You couldn't, you couldn't go Hawaii on holiday or anything like that. He couldn't go even go out for the day. He couldn't go into the park or anything that because she didn't know what was going to happen. Your parents didn't like to let you go. So you know, that was, that was the worst part.
- Speaker 3: [21:07](#) Is there anything that we haven't talked about or discussed about that you might want to tell us?
- Speaker 2: [21:22](#) No, I think, I think I've covered most things. If you asked me most of the questions, I've covered them. I think there's anything else. Not unless anybody else has got any questions that they want to ask.
- Speaker 4: [21:43](#) So we might ask questions, but if you could still answer in this direction just for the sake of the film. So you need to hold onto any question from the tape.
- Speaker 3: [21:50](#) Um, how did it feel like leaving your parents, your parents behind?
- Speaker 2: [22:02](#) Oh sorry. Side 30 PSI. Yeah, I didn't like leaving them, but it wasn't so bad because I was going with my system. So that was a great help.

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- Speaker 4: [22:22](#) What are you, what are you, when you were in Eastborne, did you have a sense that you were with lots of other evacuees? Did you have a relationship with anyone else or
- Speaker 2: [22:31](#) nah. Nah. No. There was no relationship or toll
- Speaker 3: [22:38](#) questions.
- Speaker 4: [22:42](#) I'll, I'll ask one and all of you, if this thinking, so you came back to London after six weeks and you were living in Battersea, which was possibly one of the most dangerous places in London to live. Come, come back over here. Come sit over, come on. You can, you just fell across country that you to stand up. Um, so you've come back to Battersea, which had some of the worst problem damage. Was there any discussion, if you could answer this way, if it, was there any discussion about you being evacuated again? I mean, cause that sounds like a dangerous place to be.
- Speaker 2: [23:08](#) No, no, no, no. They always, my parents always said that I wouldn't let me go out again. Not after the first six variants cause I wouldn't, you know, they wouldn't trust where I was going or anything.
- Speaker 4: [23:26](#) Do you remember when you were back in Battersea again, if you could answer this way, when you were back a message, did you get a fee? Would they lots of other children who'd come back and who were then staying in London or people would you,
- Speaker 2: [23:37](#) it was all, there was always children. I don't know if they'd been to Hawaii, but I mean there was always children in my rotted and next door. It was a young girl next door and you supply together and um, they were, they're all, all the way through the war as well. They, they didn't go away. There's lots of children around.
- Speaker 3: [24:09](#) Sure.
- Speaker 4: [24:10](#) If you could answer this direction just to have you look towards him when you ask any other questions. Nice. Sam Scott question. Yeah. How did you feel when you saw your parents again?
- Speaker 2: [24:23](#) How did I,

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- Speaker 4: [24:25](#) so when you saw your parents again?
- Speaker 2: [24:27](#) Oh, very happy, very happy in date. Um, I was glad to be home and um, and I didn't want it to go away again, you know, either
- Speaker 3: [24:53](#) when you woke up, did you make any friends, make any friends?
- Speaker 2: [25:01](#) Did they make any friends? Not when I was away. I didn't make any friends, no. I have plenty of friends at home, but not when I was away. I didn't get the chance to, cause I didn't go to school or anything like that and there was no, no other children in the vicinity. So, uh, it didn't have a challenge too.
- Speaker 3: [25:39](#) When you got there, did you have to like go five to the house? One of the first ones I picked
- Speaker 2: [25:49](#) when I got there. Did I have to
- Speaker 3: [25:52](#) well taken?
- Speaker 2: [26:05](#) I think, yeah, I think there was a, we did a fair amount of walking. I know when we were there
- Speaker 3: [26:14](#) [inaudible]
- Speaker 2: [26:16](#) I can't remember exactly Wayne or, or where, but you know, June, every day we walked.
- Speaker 4: [26:35](#) Did you, did you know that you were going to Eastborne or did you fall? Did you just got on the train? You didn't know where you're going? Could you say a bit about that please?
- Speaker 2: [26:44](#) And didn't, we weren't told anything. I all where we were going, we didn't even know when we got there the way we were because obviously it was stations, names were Blacktown for security purposes and it was a fine place to send us, um, uh, on the English channel. The gentleman's suggestion only had took us the channels from France and they would've been there. I was met us.
- Speaker 4: [27:34](#) And the last question is nice. A see all of it. Yup. Um, why do you think you were treated like the smile first parents in the first six weeks?

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- Speaker 3: [27:46](#) I mean, um,
- Speaker 4: [27:47](#) what did was she treats them that way. Why were you treated that way, do you think when, you know, when you went to Eastborne yeah. Why do you think you were treated like grand new six weeks you had that?
- Speaker 2: [28:05](#) I, I, it was up to the local authority to make arrangements for looking after us and they just didn't bother. I just took us from the train to the house and, and left us there. Um, unless the women that were there, if I hadn't done my, uh, Fass I would have probably been left there. There wasn't even any milk for the babies and the, and the young children. Nothing I told it was, it was pretty dire. Um, anything else you want to talk about? You've covered sort of a lot of stuff that's been a thing. So I think I've covered most things. And with the actual evacuation? Yeah. Did I have a family? Oh, did I lose any? No, I was very fortunate. Very fortunate in the, no, I didn't.
- Speaker 4: [29:37](#) How about in the local area or in any of the bombing rights in Battersea did, did you lose anyone?
- Speaker 2: [29:42](#) Did anyone get injured then? No. No. None of the neighbors. So anything like that. Al little triangle, um, didn't get a couple of bombs dropped down, talked on that, but, um, there was no quite damaged. Um, yeah, I will always try him for the railway and clapping junction.