

Transcript of interview with Joyce Andersen 4 Jan 1987

Kathy: Right today is the 4th Jan 1987 and I am talking to Joyce Andersen We are going to find out all about you. Tell me where you born?

Joyce: I was born in a little village called Burton Salmon, in Yorkshire, England.

K: What date was that?

J: 21 Jan 1922

K: How old does that make you?

J: It makes me 65 this year

K: And what was it like in Burton Salmon?

J: Well it was a little place with about 7 houses where lived up up a long lane to the school, a church and a shop. One of these that sold everything you know. And there was about 50 kids in the school altogether I suppose 40 or 50 . There was no hot water, no taps, no electricity, no nothing. We got our drinking water from a pump at the end of a row of houses and you had to carry it in buckets and the other water we got in rain water tubs, you know, tanks.

K: And what about your brothers and sisters? How many did you have?

J: I had 2 brothers, William and Arnold (Bill and Arnold) and one sister Kathleen.

K: And what number are you?

J: I am number 2

K: What order do they come in?

J: Bill, me, Arnold and Kath is the youngest

K: And what about your parents, where were they born?

J: My mother was born in Cumberland, in a place called Ravenglass in Cumberland. My father was born in St Helens in Lancashire.

K: I thought he was Welsh? Is he not Welsh?

J: Both his parents were. But they went to live in Lancashire for a while and that is where Dad was born and Dad was the eldest and most of his family were born in Lancashire. Then they went back to Wales to live. They lived there for a long time.

K: I see, so he grew up in Wales?

J: Well most of his life I presume.

K: What did he do?

J: He ran away so many times to join the army and they brought him back every time till he - and he always put his age up and eventually he got in at, I think before he was 17 and he told them, put his age up again, so that time they let him stay there.

K: What was it like growing up in a little wee town? And did you stay there all your childhood?

J: I was there right until I was 14

K: And what was it like? Was it a quiet place or a busy place?

J: Oh yes, it was a little country place. We were surrounded by farms and farm houses and farmer families. Most of the kids their parents worked on the farms.

K: And what did your father do?

J: Well he couldn't do very much having only one arm?

K: And how did he lose his arm?

J: I the first World War.

K: What happened?

J: A shell exploded and he lost his arm and two fingers and (his left arm) and both legs were hit and he had one leg shorter than the other when they had finished with him.

K: Did he live on a benefit then?

J: Well he was on a pension, a war pension

K: It must have been quite hard in those days?

J: It was very hard because he only had about 2 pound or 2 pound and eightpence a week war pension and if he couldn't work and he went on unemployment they took his war pension into account and docked that much off. So actually my mother kept the lot of us on about 3 pound something a week.

K: I don't imagine you had many luxuries?

J: No, but we had a happy life. We always had plenty to eat. You made your own fun. I mean you didn't know any different did we?

K: How long did you stay at school?

J: Until I was 14. Most of us left at 14

K: Then what did you do?

J: Then I went to Leeds to look after a little boy. I quite enjoyed that.

K: Was that the first time you had been away from home?

J: More or less. They were a Jewish family, so it was quite interesting. Well I found it interesting anyway with all the different things they did and what they didn't do and by the time I went back home, Mum and Dad had gone down to Biggin Hill, Kent to live. So I went back down there and that was where I was when the war started.

K: Did you want to join the army or something or did you get forced into it?

J: Well, I wanted to something other than working in Woolworths. I hated it, so I decided to join the army.

K: Did you have any problems getting in?

J: No, No.

K: So what did you do there though?

J: Well I did all sorts. I worked in the cookhouse, worked in the sergeants mess, worked in the officers mess, officers batman. That was the best job cos you only got paid 10 shillings a week and if you worked for the officers you see, they used to pay you as well. It became quite interesting.

K: And you met your future husband during the war did you?

J: Yes

K: How did that happen?

J: I went to London The first time I had ever been to London and this girl I was with said if I wanted a nice cup of tea and a meal go to the New Zealand club. So went to the New Zealand club. I got to the door and walked right out. That's when Eric came out and took me in. We had a meal and that was it.

K: Did love bloom straight away?

J: Well not really I suppose. He used to ring me up at the phone box in camp every night, or every second night, when he could and I used to stand outside the phone box waiting for the phone to ring.

K: And did you like him being a Kiwi? Did that make any difference? Or did you want a Pommy boy?

J: No. Not really. I've got no regrets, put it that way.

K: You mum and Dad were happy about it?

J: Oh yes. They thought the world of him. My mother didn't especially when he tied her to the chair by her apron things and things like that!

K: And what happened to your husband? He had to leave the country?

J: He left England a month before Pat was born – June 1944.

K: So you got married when?

J: September the 7th 1943.

K: And then you had Patsy in July 1944 and Dad left before she was born.

J: That's right

K: So when did you see him again?

J: Feb 14 1945 in Wellington

K: And what was it like being on your own?

J: Well I wasn't really because I was with Mum and Dad.

K: They looked after you while you had the baby?

J: Oh yes. I lived at home.

K: How did you get to New Zealand?

J: On the Rimutaka. A New Zealand shipping company

K: And was there anyone of note on board?

J: Yes lots. We had a lovely trip. We had the Duke and Duchess of Gloucester on the ship, so we knew we were safe as houses. They couldn't bomb them. 8 /12 weeks of laziness on board ship. And I still keep in touch with the girl I shared the cabin with. Grace Renwick. She lives in Glenfield.

K: And what happened when you got here?

J: I hated it.

K: You hated New Zealand or you hated the train?

J: I hated it all because it was so different.

K: Tell me about the first Maori you saw. What happened?

J: Well, I mean I got here and there was about 6 letters waiting here from my mother. Of course the first thing I did was to howl my eyes out, but all the houses looked like little dolls houses, like little bungalows. Cos we had 3 stories in our houses.

K: How long did it take you to settle into New Zealand?

J: Quite a few months I think really. Cause to start with I left England a feet deep in snow and I arrived in Wellington and believe it or not it was a beautiful sunny day. And it was sunny right through for months and I didn't even realise it was winter when winter arrived. I wasn't used to it. But after the first couple of years I suppose I wouldn't have gone back there to live, not for anything.

K: And all your children were born here in New Zealand?

J: Except for Patsy

K: Tell us about them?

J: Patsy was born in England.

K: What sort of kid was she like?

J: She was very good as a baby, she was very good growing up. She was a good kid

K: And who did she marry?

J: Peter Burton

K: And how many kids has she got?

J: 4

K: And how old are they?

J: Gabrielle is 18 now and Matthew is 16, Donovan is 14, today and Rene will be 9 next month

K: And who was your next one?

J: Susan

K: And what was she like as a child?

J: She was a pain in the neck (Laugh). She was a little horror. Stubborn as a mule. Love to have her own way and always in trouble in school. Could have done a lot better at school but couldn't be bothered. That's Susan.

K: And what's happened to her? She's got a couple of Kids?

J: But no husband to go with it.

K: So who are the kids?

J: Scottie is 7 next month and Katie will be 3 next month

K: And who came next?

J: Michael

K: Your first boy. Was he a good baby?

J: He was very good but he was a good baby and kid, but he didn't talk till he was 5.

K: Why was that?

J: Well they think he had a brain injury at birth and it affected, not the brain part of his brain but the moveable, because he was very slow with anything to do with his hands. I think he still is but he has terrific brain power on him.

K: And what does he do these days?

J: He works at Huttons. He has been there 18 years now.

K: And what did he do of note when he was a child about 13?

J: When he won the dishwasher? Oh yes that was a thrill.

K: How did he do that?

J: In a quiz show at the Waikato Winter Show. He was 13, From 2. Oh that was a thrill that was. A dishwasher. Very exciting. Well I didn't really need it because I had 6 of them anyway but it was a thrill. It really was. It was something I would never have had otherwise.

K: And what is Mike doing these days?

J: Still working. Joined the coin club. Makes a mess with records and books.

K: And what about the next one Karen. What's she up to?

J: She was quite a gorgeous kid and a baby.

K: I thought she cried a lot when she was a baby?

J: Well the first 12 months. I could have dropped her on her head out the window and wouldn't have regretted it. But I mean as she grew up she was quite a god kid.

K: Is she married?

J: Yes. She married Rex. They had Mandy, Simon and Bobby. Mandy is 13. Simon would have been 11 and Bobby is 8.

K: Simon died didn't he? He had Leukaemia?

J: Yes that's right. He died a month ago. 5 weeks ago.

K: What sort of kid was he?

J: He was a character, but he was a lovely character. He was a little horror but he was a lovely one. It is very sad.

K: And who's next?

J: John The bane of my life!

K: Why?

J: Well as a baby he was a good little baby. Ate and slept but as he got bigger, as he grew, he got into more mischief than all the others put together.

K: He was always injuring himself wasn't he?

J: Yes, he was always cutting one foot, the same foot. If you could walk on a bottle of broken glass John could find it and chopped his toes with the garden shovel, but he was always in trouble with me. He's go out and put the hose on the dry washing and he would mix everything in the cupboards up together. He'd get sugar and salt, jam and hone and coffee all mixed into together. He was the bane of my life that one.

K: And he grew up. And what does he do now?

J: Well he works at the booking office at Road Services. He married Helen and they have Jason and he is 5 and Erica is 3. But he is quite a responsible citizen now. Who would have thought he would be? (laugh).

K: And what about your last one?

J: Oh she was nice. She was a good girl right through. As a baby and as she grew up. I mean you were never any trouble were you? Never seemed to get into any scrapes at al. you always seemed to do all the right things at the right time.

K: And who did she marry?

J: Ross. And Debbie is 10 and Sarah is 8 nearly and Philip is 5. And that's it.

K: If you could sum up your life what would you say life was like for you? Was it a good life?

J: Anything I would change? No not really.

K: Even the hard things?

J: No. I mean everything is sent to try you and if you didn't go through those well what sort of a life would it be if you had it easy all the way.

K: And what a message for your great grandchildren when they are listening to this in 2040?

J: I can't imagine it. I wouldn't know what sort of place the world would be like in those days. I mean we think the world was in a funny way now but in years to come it must have altered considerably.

K: Is there anything you wanted to say or is that it?

J: No I think that is about all you need.

K: Well, thank you very much