

Diane Catstrey

Oral History Interview – Summary and Data

	Time-coded summary
Track 1 0.00	Introductions. DC's maiden name was Parry. 9 in household. 2 bedrooms and an attic. Washhouse across the yard. Communal bucket on landing for emptying potties. No running water in house. Cold water in washhouse and boiler in corner.
2.30	Describes the washhouse. Backed on to Crocketts factory (soda water factory). Mother died at 53. Part time job at Diglis Hotel for Mrs Gregory and sister Mrs Lewis at Talbot Hotel. Story of gift of suckling pig. 'We were the poorest in the street but our house was never empty... as if the hotel was in our kitchen!'
6.10	Describes main room with metal table used as a black board for maths. Dad taught them counting and crib. Radio in front room. First experience of TV. Watching coronation at Mrs Brace's house (neighbour in yard).
8.03	Bath night on Friday night. 'People knew when the Parry's were having bath night!'
9.24	Recalls gas lights in the house (electric came in mid 1940s). Oldest brother studied in attic by candlelight. This brother later worked at Archdales and then Exdales.
11.40	Describes bedrooms and sleeping arrangements. Comparison with new council house in Warndon which they got in mid 1950s. Describes sitting out in the yard/ lane. Names all people in the yard. Everyone had a bike.
14.30	Games in the streets. Crocketts had 2 factories, one by British school and one off their yard. At this one they bottled Guinness. Recalls helping out with bottling and labelling (aged 7).
16.58	Crocketts drivers were Joey and Ted Hunt, with horse and cart. Recalls Mrs Nichols and her sister May from Providence St coming to work in rubber aprons. The muck heap.
18.30	Playing in Bowling Green Terrace, Nash's Passage. Creating ice slides in winter. Went to mortuary at Tallow Hill for swings. Also to the canal at back of Hardy and Padmore in Foundry Street (<i>Note: she misnames the factory here but later corrects herself</i>). They called it 'The Old Irons' (as it had old iron mouldings dumped in canal). Fished here for 'nazguls' (mayfly larvae?).
20.20	Describes Hardy and Padmore, and shops in Carden Street. Only one shop was open on Sunday, Lebon's. Mrs Price's shop (bottom of Nash's passage), Mrs Humphrey's (corner of Temperance and Charles Streets), Mrs Hill's (Bowling Green Terrace – mainly sweets).
22.15	Description of the inside of Mrs Price's and Mrs Humphrey's shops. Other shopping was done in Shambles. Went to certain shops for certain things because of price, lists them.
24.30	Butchers in the Shambles and Market Hall. DC's family used Harvey Smith's. Gathered groceries in big basket, spuds first, the rest on top. Pea picking after

	school. Went on back of lorry after school to Kempsey. Also dug potatoes. Home at 8.30/9 pm.
27.30	Going to the coke works. Dad had built a truck. Got ¼ coke in truck, and ¼ in sack. Describes route to gas works yard. Got ticket. Got coke from man nicknamed 'Dummy'. Sometimes did second run for a neighbour.
29.35	Cleaning the cellar for teacher Mrs Patterson in Fort Royal Hill. Visited Fort Royal Park for fun.
31.00	Tells story of their cellar which had archway into next door's. DC told it was a catacomb of passages to the cathedral.
32.30	Stores kept in cellar cupboard. DC's dad made a canning machine. Describes this in detail. Canned plums, damsons, pears, tomatoes. These were boiled in washhouse to seal/ preserve and stored in gran's room.
34.40	Dad had two allotments, first at Perry Wood, later Stanley Road. Describes her dad as a 'gentle giant', well respected at Metal Box. First at Perry Wood and then York Place. Recalls parties in the canteen at Perry Wood. Also went to Christmas parties in the Cottage Homes, Wyld's Lane (for orphans). It was tough. Compares to today.
37.40	DC was very good table tennis player (city & county player). Played at YMCA in High. Also at St Helen's old church hall, at back of Heenan and Froude's (engineering company). DC also joined the TA. 'Dad was whitening my shoes for table tennis and polishing my boots for TA!'
40.00	School days. Passed to grammar school aged 9, so went to Stanley Rd school for a year and then to grammar school. Hated the grammar school so left and went to Christopher Whitehead which she loved. Describes the route there, through a farm in New Road, belonged to Price family.
43.11	Walking to her granny's in Tybridge Street (Granny Parry). Describes exact route. Story of taking brother in push chair but lost control of it down steep steps at bottom of Copenhagen Street near loading bay on river. These grounds were a tip then.
44.10	Opposite this was the 'Hollywood flats' (Deansway, by Dent's Glove Factory) – this was very poor housing. Brother climbed the St Andrew's steeple spire to get birds' eggs.
45.25	Granny Parry lived in Russell Terrace – DC's dad was one of 5 boys. Describes going through park to Russell Terrace, then up to Henwick Halt to watch the trains and back. Ritual every Sunday morning.
46.50	Describes where her granny was in Russell Terrace (opposite pavilion) and evacuating through bedroom window in floods. Very often flooded the cellar. Describes house & back yard.
49.30	Commercial units in this area – King Goodwin's had a warehouse. Few houses on left of Tybridge St, more in Hylton Road (later all pulled down).
Track 2 0.00	In the Blockhouse are, the factory by the British school was the Kolynos Factory (?) a pharmaceutical factory which made tablets (<i>Note: Kolynos was toothpaste, later bought by Colgate</i>). Side door exited on to alley which went past school playground and was called Devil's Alley.

1.10	Providence Tin Box factory (Metal Box) DC called Williamson's. Recalls the girls' stacking tins. Story of her accident in St Paul's Street running into sheet metal. Stitched up on the premises.
3.30	Went to Doctor Griffiths in Shaw Street on the Cross. Dispensary next to it. Dentist in Friar Street. Bad memories of dentistry.
5.00	St Paul's school was in 2 parts. DC doesn't recall an infant's school. The playground was off Spring Gardens.
6.08	The Old England Pub in Providence Street (on corner of Blockhouse St) was their local. Also, this was the first pub DC applied to take over when married. Tells this story. Pub was down for demolition. Took over the Vauxhall on Rainbow Hill in 1969.
9.00	1956/57 when DC left Blockhouse and moved to Warndon villages. Good memories of Blockhouse. Weekend treat for parents was the Greyhound at top of Nash's Passage.
10.00	Whenever she goes down City Walls Rd, she imagines where her house was: 'I'm just going over the cellar now!'. The house is literally under the carriageway now. Digresses and talks about a patch of ground and pear tree in alleyway behind King Charles House (we look at the map together).
12.48	DC and family were allocated a new house, sister stayed in Nash's passage. DC stresses that this was a good area. First houses in passages were the 'police houses'. 1 st one - Mr and Mrs Price (he was a fireman), 2 nd house - Mrs Timpson (she was in police), next house also police.
14.30	DC's first job at Norton's, working for Alderman Norton (chair of governors at Christopher Whitehead). Then went to Kays and then MEB. Explains what she did at Norton's (a confectionary warehouse, also sold tea). Describes where it was (Bank St, behind Boots, by it was basket maker Stoksey's and pub Berkeley Arms.)
17.50	Opposite Nash's Passage was Marsham's tyres in Blockhouse and next to it a woodworking place. Marsham's had a little stage outside it that they acted out things on.
19.20	Ends with favourite memories of walking everywhere, babysitting at 7 or 8 years of age, sharing supplies in the war. A few war memories – sirens and going under the metal table in main room during air raids. Moving to new council house in Warndon Villages, second family in Rydal Close. Story of taking a 3-tonne truck up there. DC's mum died soon after moving there aged 53.
24.50	Interview ends.