

BOLTON REMEMBERS THE WAR

Transcript of interview with Nellie Shaw (NS) • Women's Land Army

Interviewed by Ken Beevers (K) 14.09.2005

K: Firstly, could you tell me your name?

NS: Nellie Shaw.

K: And where were you born Nellie?

NS: At 17 Markland Hill Lane, 1925.

K: What's your maiden name?

NS: Hart.

K: And what did your parents do?

NS: My Father was a lamp-lighter and by the time my Mother had me, I was the fifth child, so I don't think she did anything at that time. A bit of washing I think she did.

K: And you lived in Markland Hill Lane?

NS: Yes, and when I was nine months old, we moved to number 13, and I lived there 'til Ken and I bought a house after we were married.

K: So, which school did you go to?

NS: Church Road, then Whitecroft Road.

K: And can you remember when War broke out?

NS: Yes, it was a Sunday morning and we were in church.

K: Which church?

NS: Delph Hill Methodist. This probably had nothing to do with it, but my friend and I had fallen out and War was declared and we just went to each other and you know, 'Me Dad'll go!' she said. So I remember that Sunday morning vividly, really

K: After that... the week after that?

NS: Well, I started work.

K: You would be 14 then wouldn't you?

NS: I was 14 when I started work, it was about 9th September when I started work

K: Whereabouts?

NS: Chesro, which belonged to Tootal Broadhurst Lee's, and we made dresses and I was there until January 1942, when I went in the Land Army.

K: If we can just talk a bit about Chesro first. This was part of Tootal's wasn't it?

NS: Yes.

K: So, did you go to the Continuation School?

NS: Yes.

K: Can you tell me anything about that?

NS: I was only there for three sports days, and I was sports champion each year. Oh, it was smashing, because we had more things for gym than we'd had at school. Really... wall bars, we never had at Whitecroft Road, although at Whitecroft Road we had a swimming pool. There was playing fields... we always went for games, cookery, sewing, and everybody went from all parts of the mill, so the classes were all mixed, classes of various abilities.

K: Were those in the evening or during the day?

NS: No, during the day. You went one morning and one afternoon, but you didn't go in school holidays, because the teachers there still got the same school holidays that the schools had. So I went Tuesday morning, and Thursday afternoon to school, plus the fact that we didn't work on Saturdays either at Chesro. It was a five day week.

K: Were you a machinist?

NS: Yes.

K: Can you remember any of the teachers at the school?

NS: Miss Tyson, Miss Stoddart... Mr Jenkins was the headmaster. Oh, and also you saw the doctor regularly. You saw the nurse regularly. There was a dentist who you saw regularly... and they really looked after the workers.

K: What do you remember of Mr Jenkins?

NS: (laughs) He used to split me and my friend up because we talked (laughs)... Because there were some very slow ones in the class, so when we'd finished we used to chat, and we used to get moved. Mind you, I used to talk anyway. He was very nice, but he always used to tell us about 'O young Lochinvar is come out of the west, Through all the wide Border his steed was the best' and I can still remember it to this day, I don't know why he did that...

K: He said..?

NS: It was this poem and he was for everlasting saying it... We had a good cookery room, for cooking, oh and also, if you wanted, there was a flat that belonged to the school and we used to paint it... It was teaching a bit of do it yourself, gosh, I've not thought about that for ages.

K: I'm quite interested in the school, because, it's a bit unique and it's good to talk to people who've been to it.

NS: I loved it, I think I liked the sports and games and things, you know, but...

K: So, by 1942, did you have to enlist in something? Did you have to volunteer for something?

NS: No.

K: Not necessarily?

NS: No, and I really don't think I would have had to anyway. I was only seventeen at the time that I went, and in any case you had to be eighteen before you were called up. I really don't think I would have had to, because, other people that worked with me just stayed there at Chesro, so I don't think I would have been called up at all.

K: So what made you want to do something?

NS: I fancied working on a farm!

K: Had you already had some experience of that?

NS: No... (laughs) Well my brother had a farm, but I never did anything on it. I mean, there was a bus stop at the farm gates and the drivers and conductors used to come for glasses of milk. And if the cows were in the yard, they used to have to take me to the dairy to get the milk. I mean I wasn't into cows or anything before this, but I loved it!

K: So, to you this was an opportunity to work on a farm?

NS: And I suppose, at the time, I thought well, if I eventually do something I might as well be... I don't think I would have...

K: Did you have to fill a form in to apply or what?

NS: Well, I've forgotten really, but I suppose I sent off a form, and then you get letters back. You had to be examined by your doctor, which was nothing like going into the Forces. I just went to see him and he said 'Oh, you're fit enough.' That was it. I wasn't examined or anything. But then again, it was your own doctor that knew you, and he hoped I got to a place 'flowing with zee milk and honey.'

K: And so it transpired that you went to your brother's farm?

NS: Yes, as I think I said before... I had applied to join the Land Army before they were thinking of having help. When Jack decided he wanted help and applied for a Land Girl and I just said, you know, that I'd applied to join the Land Army... so when I got my papers it was to go to the Oldham's Farm.

K: Had he had men working for him who's gone in the services?

NS: No, he hadn't, they'd only just got the farm... that's what I was trying to reckon up in my head. They'd only had the farm a short while. I should think they'd only gone in the farm that summer, the summer previously.

K: Which farm was it?

NS: The Oldham's Farm.

K: The Oldham's Farm. And how many people worked there as well as you?

NS: Just me, it was just a small dairy farm really.

K: So when did you get issued with a uniform? And where did you collect it from?

NS: You know. I can't remember... It came through the post.

K: You can't remember, but you did have a uniform?

NS: Oh yes.

K: Which was?

NS: Three shirts, six pairs of knee high stockings, a lovely overcoat, a hat, a tie with all stripes that said WLA, WLA, WLA... green pullover, corduroy riding britches but those that finish at the knee, we must have had two pair of those. And then when you were lucky, you got gabardine ones, which you saved for best. Overalls, and a coat - I think these days they'd probably call it a milking jacket, but it was fine for taking milk... Boots, you didn't get gumboots, you bought your own. Oh, sturdy brown shoes and a black mac. We were covered for everything, yeah, we were. They were replaced every year! I really can't remember how. You never had tatty shirts, or anything like that. You sort of got half a dozen pairs of stockings every year, so they must have sent us fresh shirts and fresh stockings, and probably a fresh pullover. You had the same coat all the time.

K: And did you live at the farm?

NS: No. I lived at home. So I used to catch the bus at quarter past six in the morning, and I caught the half past six Belmont bus from town, so when I got off the bus, which was near Wilkinson's Sanatorium, walked up the path. If it was summer, I used to bring the cows in on my way, and if it was winter, unfortunately you mucked out when you got there, and then we milked. There was no machines. There was no electric on the farm either.

K: So what kind of lighting was it then?

NS: Oil lamps. And in the house, it was those that you see nowadays, fancy with electric bulbs in, you know, the things, the long funnel and the mantle on, until, they got fixed with Calor gas. And then I used to milk... Well we both used to milk. And then after you milked you had your breakfast, cooled your milk, got it into kits, and went delivering.

K: Delivering the milk? By horse and cart?

NS: It was the milk float for about twelve months, and that's the horse that I had photographs with. Then he got a van! So, not that first hay time the next one came around, I must have been driving because I took it on my own at busy times. I don't know, surprisingly enough when I went to this school to tell them, one little boy put his hand up and said 'You wouldn't have to pass a driving test would you?' I said 'No, I didn't'. Because you didn't at that time. So, there were milk jugs left on doorsteps. We'd very few bottles, or otherwise the door was just left open and you walked in and put the milk in. No, I enjoyed that bit.

K: What did you keep the milk in?

NS: Kits.

K: Kits?

NS: Well, when you'd milked, you put it in the dairy that was like a wall with a hole in, and on one side of it there was a tank I suppose you could call it, and then on the other side was to the cooler. And you poured your milk in this thing, and then it went through and then it, there were sieves, and then it came down the cooler, so that by the time it went in the kit, it was cold. Because it's quite warm, you know, when you milk, and then it was cold. And then you put your kit in your van, and then you had pint measures, quart measures and...

K: So, if no-one was in..?

NS: Yeah, you just went in, we had one elderly lady who was blind, and she was lovely. She used to knit, and she used to wait until I'd got there and say 'Have I dropped a stitch?' and I used to pick it up for her. Or if she'd been shelling peas or anything, I used to look through if there were any not quite right. Because we got there about dinnertime - milkmen didn't set off at six o'clock in the morning in those days, because you'd to milk first.

K: So more or less the whole work, from getting there in the morning was milking and delivering until dinnertime?

NS: You got home dinnertime and then you'd to wash all your cans and things and then the afternoon was spent doing what you had to do outside, which was muckspreading - which I didn't do a lot of. We also grew potatoes, kale and wheat, which normally dairy farmers wouldn't do, but we had to do, because the War was on. You had a digger for potatoes, it threw them up, but you had to pick the potatoes, and if it was muddy, you left your gum boot behind! The kale

you cut, and then of course, wheat came at the back end, when the harvester used to come round. When it was hay time in the summer, Irish... You used to get Irish men then come hay time, and you always got the odd man or a friend trotting up doing something. You know horrible jobs like taking lant out and things. There was one bloke who didn't mind doing that! And did I mention the mucking out? When you got there in the winter that needed doing, and also at teatime.

K: How many acres was it?

NS: I don't know how many acres... I would think about fifty, if you think of a small dairy farm, but I don't really know. We had about thirty-odd or forty cows.

K: What time did you finish in the evening?

NS: Well, I used to catch the quarter to seven bus on Belmont Road.

K: So it was a long day.

NS: So I was actually out of our house thirteen hours every day. And in summer, when you'd finished, because it was double summer times... when you was hay making you could work later, so it was later than that. I had one half day off a week.

K: Which day was that?

NS: Well it was either Saturday afternoon or Sunday afternoon. Saturday afternoon always in winter because I played hockey, so that was my off day gone then. But sometimes it was Sunday. Like after I'd started going out with Ken.

K: What's this about double summer time. Was it just another hour?

NS: It was another hour at night, it was darker in the morning.

K: To enable... err?

NS: Well, I really think it was for farmers to get their work done. It used to be light really quite late. I mean I could be coming home sometimes at ten o'clock. I had a bike, too at one time. So if my half day was on a Sunday, I used to come home on my bike. It's a long time since I've looked back on these years, and it's sixty years ago.

K: So you never really had any other Land Girls to talk to, did you?

NS: No, not on the farm, only those I met on the milk round.

K: Oh, you would meet some on the milk round?

NS: Oh yeah, this friend I've got in Australia, came actually from Manchester. She lived in. So yeah.

K: She was on another farm?

NS: She was on another farm, well she was on a milk round and I was on a milk round and your paths crossed. Plus farmer's sons you got friendly with. There was one who always gave me his toffee coupons! (laughs)

K: Were there a lot of farms around..?

NS: There was a lot of, like small farms like that you see, I suppose you would call... not like these with hundreds of acres. They were just one-man farms, really, I suppose you could say.

K: Are there any still here that you remember, any farms?

NS: Well the Harricraft, of course, I remember very well, but now that's Smithills Open Farm. I actually was there the other night and saw a new farmhouse. Boy, that's altered. There were lots of farms up Belmont Road.

K: So you saw other Land Girls... Who, if you like, supervised you, I mean, apart from the farmer, who was your..?

NS: The farmer was your boss, your farmer paid you.

K: But if you had any problems, what would have done? Who would you have contacted?

NS: Well, I should imagine that it would have been the WVS at Watermillock, I never had any problems, so I wouldn't really know!

K: You would be with family wouldn't you?

NS: Yeah, it works both ways you know that. (laughs) You don't take advantage. I mean I was never off sick, would never have dreamt of... and on the other hand, we'd both been dancing. It must have been when New Year's Eve was on a Sunday, because you didn't dance on Sundays. And it started at twelve o'clock, so we danced through until about five or six, got a taxi home and I changed into my uniform and went to work! But that afternoon I went to bed, which was one

advantage of working for your sister, although I should imagine any farmer would have done over Christmas and New Year, let you have a bit of leeway. Yeah, I really don't know. I think the WVS used to come up to the farm, I think they did initially.

K: It does say 'each county had an organising secretary and local representative. The rep. had to ensure that all the girls within their area were content, but disciplined.'

NS: I really can't remember anybody coming up to the farm to ask me if I was content, but, on the other hand, we used to go to Watermillock on the Thursday night, and I suppose if anything was worrying you, you could talk then, because the WVS were there then.

K: So, Watermillock. Have you been there recently?

NS: Ah, yes.

K: Was it as grand as that inside?

NS: No. Well, we used to go in at the entrance and we used to go into a room there, so really we didn't see a lot of it, because I have an idea it was a storage place.

K: Well, evacuees were sent there.

NS: To Watermillock?

K: Yes, and also when there'd been anyone displaced in an air raid, they were also taken there.

NS: Never saw any of those, but for a couple of hours on a Thursday night, who would really?

K: And all the transport, sort of drivers and women drivers were...

NS: Went from there... yeah...

K: It was a big place, but you only went in a little part of it did you?

NS: Yeah, we didn't get the run of it.

K: No. So you saw other Land Girls there?

NS: Yeah, and funnily enough, I can't really remember a lot of them. Because, as I say, Wynn and I were quite friendly, and we used to tootle off together and...

K: What was your favourite job?

NS: I liked milking, I didn't like it afterwards when they moved farms and had electric, and had machines, but erm... I used to like milking, I really liked it all!

K: Obviously, you didn't have much time off, and you played hockey in your time off, but what else did you?

NS: I went to the Palais. I went to the pictures. You see, if I was going out at night, I just went on the bus to town. I just got off and met my friend there. Which wasn't the Land Army Girl, it was my friend from being young. Well, I had a lot of friends! We were still in concerts at Church, I still went to Church. They used to pray for all the forces and men by names and our Edith and I sat there. And in the summer I played rounders. I suppose you could say, in a kind of way, it was just like a job, but you were in the Land Army. You had your clothes provided. You worked long hours - I mean Edith finished at Saturday dinner-time.

K: Yes, she was more in the office wasn't she?

NS: She was.

K: What about the blackout? You used to go to work in the dark and go home in the dark often.

NS: And then when you were driving in the dark - which sometimes I have done - and your van had these black tin things over the lights, with little strips and they came out at the top so your light didn't shine up.

K: Like louvers?

NS: Yeah, but they didn't move like louvers, do, they were just slits.

K: So you couldn't see much?

NS: Couldn't see much at all, no. But then again you didn't have the petrol. You couldn't go out sort of thing in your van. But I can remember being on the ring road one night and I thought 'This is ridiculous! You can't see.'

K: So what speed did you go at?

- NS: Oh it wouldn't go very fast, it was an old van. (laughs) Well, anyway, in the dark you couldn't go fast - you couldn't see.
- K: Did you ever break down?**
- NS: Yes.
- K: And what did you do then?**
- NS: Well, you're going to think I'm silly, but you used to put half a crown in. I have known it to break down, and... I mean, I'm not mechanically minded at all, but, there was an instance, where, I should imagine it was a fuse or something, and this thing was put in to get us home. And I've changed a wheel. The first little van we had was a real old little rattler, and then we had like an Army ambulance, which was really smooth and lovely - canvas top, step at the back which you stood on when the driver stopped and you nipped off. And then we had a state of the art, wooden, what were they called? You know, those with wooden sides and wooden doors all down the side? I've forgotten it.
- K: So there was no difficulty getting a vehicle?**
- NS: No. Plus the fact there was no difficulty learning how to drive. I take one of my granddaughters into town on a Tuesday. And I said to her one night, she was saying 'Oh Grandma, can't you get through these lights?' I said 'I dread to think of the time when you're going to start driving' because there were very few traffic lights and very few cars on the roads when I started. It was a doddle! It's different today.
- K: Do you remember any air raids?**
- NS: No, not really. I can remember an aeroplane coming down between Belmont Road and Blackburn Road. Is it Dunscair Gold Club round there? I'm sure it was round there a plane came down, because we walked across to see what we could see. And if there were air raids over Manchester or anything we just slept through them. I mean I can remember there being one at the bottom of Daubhill. I know the name of the street, I should do, but I can't remember it. I can't remember being in town and having to go in any shelters. When I was at work, we used to go right down through all the mill and into a cellar or something, when I was at Chesro... if the siren went. We actually came off very lightly round here. So no, I can't remember it disrupting me at all.
- K: And you say you didn't have any food shortage really?**
- NS: I suppose we didn't have as much as we might have done... Well I don't know, my Mother always had to be careful, but there was usually eggs for breakfast, or cheese or something, or...
- K: Did you say your brother was a butcher?**
- NS: (laughs) I had a brother was a butcher. My brother who worked at the grocers...
- K: And you were on the farm. Did you make cheese or anything?**
- NS: No.
- K: Just purely milk, and the things that you...**
- NS: Yes, butter occasionally, but I didn't do it. When the harvesters came, when they used to come with this combine harvester thing, I mean, it wasn't like it is now... They drive down a field and bales come out at the back and everything's done in one thing. You used to put them in stoops and things and then when they're harvesting they're all being moved and these little field mice are running out, I do remember that.
- K: Were you treated just the same, as if you were a man?**
- NS: I think so, I don't think... I suppose I didn't cart heavy sacks around, but I did cart pretty heavy sacks around and things, yeah. I did just do what there was to do, I don't think... I mean at hay time I used to be forking hay up on the wagon, and I was pretty strong. Wheeling barrows, you know, and things... I supposed there were some jobs I probably couldn't do. Must have been. I don't think I ever went muck spreading, although I drove the tractor with it on, I wouldn't have been able to manage to back it though with the wagon on the back, into these openings. I think they're very clever.
- K: When you were working, you were quite high up weren't you on this farm? You could look down on Bolton? So was it true it was always smoky, apart from Bolton Holidays?**
- NS: Yeah, but you were just used to it, so in those days I suppose you wouldn't even think it's smoky... No, like now when you look you can see everything, I suppose that it wasn't the same then, but it was always the same, so you didn't see, apart from Bolton Holidays as you say. But usually, around Bolton Holidays we were very busy. We didn't have chance to stop and stare.

K: You'd be harvesting?

NS: No, haymaking. Harvesting's later, yeah.

K: And working 'til very late?

NS: Pretty late, yes, because of this extra hour. Well, I mean, this last summer it's been light at half past nine hasn't it? I mean in those days it would be half past ten. And if the hay was ready to get in, you got it in, mm... Never worried me, working, I really think I must have loved it.

K: What about when the War ended, do you remember VE Day?

NS: (laughs) Funnily enough I didn't know until I was at the bus stop in town. We didn't have a radio at home. Just when did it end?

K: Well it was May 1945, May the 8th.

NS: About what time would it be?

K: I think there was an announcement earlier in the day.

NS: I'm sure I didn't know...

K: It was expected from the night before, I think. Did you have a party or anything?

NS: I can't remember any celebrations actually on the day... But then again, I couldn't have a day off if they gave anybody the day off.

K: No, what about afterwards?

NS: We didn't have a street party in Markland Hill Lane, we had a party at the Conservative Club at the New Barn...End of the War party, which was very good. At Church we had welcome home parties, and by this time we'd started being able to dance, you know, you couldn't dance in Methodist Churches. So we'd started having a Monday night dancing. So we had welcome homes there, which we very good, but we didn't have a street party. I was all organised though and we had one down there. VJ Day night I can remember better, because, We went to the Queen's Park, I think there were fireworks in Queen's Park, by which time Ken was home.

K: Were you married then, or..?

NS: No.

K: And he was in the services was he?

NS: He was in the Navy but I wasn't going out with him... Not 'til he came home, but I've always known him, yeah. He was home... He got de-mobbed quite quickly, Ken, and certainly he got de-mobbed in 19... I'm saying quite early, it would be April 1946-ish. Yeah, but he'd been wounded and he'd had meningitis, and anyway we went down to Queens Park.

K: So how long did you continue working as a Land Girl?

NS: Well I came out in... I've got my card here! It was April 1947. And I sort of... I was enrolled there, 4th of December 1942, so it was like four years and three months. I could sign on after the War ended and I could have come out and I signed on, I suppose for another twelve months and you got an extra week's holiday. I only used to get one week's holiday, and you got an extra week's holiday, if you signed on for another twelve months.

K: And you enjoyed it anyway, and presumably your brother needed you?

NS: I enjoyed it. They had another Land Girl after I left. No, I started going out with Ken, and you have no time for courting. You've no afternoon. He had a little car and we could never go out or anything. And I thought 'well, I've done enough, I'll go back to work.'

K: So you went back to Chesro's?

NS: So I went back to Chesro.

K: What was the pay like, as a Land Girl?

NS: (laughs) I don't really know!

K: Well, were you worse off?

NS: No, I wasn't worse off than I was at Chesro. I suppose just I used to just get my spends the same. Margaret paid, and they used to take some out for my keep, because I mean, I had breakfast, dinner and tea there and the rest they'd give my Mum and I had my spends, but I was alright.

K: Probably the difference was you were working a lot longer for it, that's all.

NS: Well yes, yeah. And our jobs were open for us at Chesro, when you went back. And you used to get a bonus every year, and they even paid your bonus when you were in the Forces (laughs). And it was nice. I still played hockey for them during the War, for Tootal's.

K: So that was the end of your farming then, 1947?

NS: Well yes, but, at hay time I still went up, and then even when they moved to Great Harwood, because they built on their farm, you know.

K: What year did they..?

NS: They moved when our Geoffrey was one, so, they moved in '51. We still used to go at Bolton Holidays, and I still used to go on the milk, and I still used to strip the cows out but I didn't like putting units on.

K: Yeah, because they'd gone electric had they... They went to Great Harwood and moved away from Bolton?

NS: Yes, and they've been there ever since.

K: Have they? Still at that farm?

NS: No, still on the farm no. Jack and Margaret retired and Graham had the... they had three sons. The youngest had the farm but its all been sold now, sold the fields and somebody has it... I think they've just made a posh house

K: Was it a bigger farm?

NS: It was bigger than the one they had in Bolton and it was their own, whereas this was rented from the Corporation, that's why they had to get off it.

K: That's why they could build a school, because of the Corporation..?

NS: Yeah, which is now closed. And my brother had a farm - the butcher, and I'll have to think, because, he had Great Lever Dairy Farm when he got married, so why was he butchering then? Because they built on his farm, he finished up at Prince Rupert, Lever Edge Lane, and they built on his farm. The name's still going with the Prince Rupert pub. And they finished up near Kirkham, so they both went out of Bolton, off the farms. And his daughter's still farming, so it's still in. Another brother married a farmer's daughter, so it was in the blood I think, you know.

K: So, no doubt, you could still milk a cow, could you?

NS: Well, I think it's something that probably never leaves you. And also, my sister who was on the farm, never could milk. So, I mean, I could start now and my fingers would still go... (laughs) but Margaret could never milk a cow, but it was the best thing that ever happened, because otherwise she'd had been out there milking, as she was they started putting units on. No, I think I just fell into it.

K: So, if it had not been for the War I don't think you would have probably have done it would you?

NS: No, probably not. I had another friend who went in the Land Army, and at one stage she was a rat catcher.

K: As part of her duties?

NS: Mm, she was on Anglesey. I was a youth worker for a long, long time and Florence still goes to the lad's club. And somebody, for a joke, once put a rat in the fridge behind the snack bar up at Brightmet and waited for her squeal, and she just looked at it, you know, like this... I don't think if it had been a real one she'd had squealed! But I would. But you know, that time she was coming home on leave on the train and somebody was saying to her '...and I saw a Land Girl with long nails' and she said 'I did this so they couldn't see mine' because at that stage she wasn't doing the hard... in the summer they had to go out in the fields, but yeah she was in a hostel.

K: And what were her conditions, all right?

NS: She loved it too, she didn't come out until the Land Army folded up. She just stayed in. I can't think of anything else, as I told you I'm not very good at these things.

K: I suppose Wartime Christmases and birthdays were just the same, were they?

NS: Well, they were. You just worked. If you had cows you had to be there morning and night anyway. So, go back to Christmases... We always went to my Mum's - well I was there at my Mum's - but the sisters that were married with children, well a brother and a sister, always used to come to my Mum's, Christmas Day. So... well, I presume I would milk and then come home, I wouldn't have half a day. But, you see, it's things like this that I've forgotten. Mind you, I'm eighty

I forget things. And as I say when I went dancing late on New Year's I was there in the morning, milking my cows. I'd just get half day, my own half day. I never had any extra holiday. We probably didn't work as hard during the day, I don't know.

K: Is there anything we haven't covered that you want to talk about? Wartime? Bolton just carried on as normal did it?

NS: Well it did really. We were just far enough away from Manchester, weren't we? One funny incident, I was waiting for the bus on Belmont Road, and it was dark, and a wagon was coming down the road and it stopped. And even in those days you didn't have lifts, and this wagon stopped and he sort of leaned over and opened the door, 'I'm sorry, I'm waiting for the bus, I'm meeting my friend on the bus.' This voice said 'Get in Nellie!' and it was my cousin! But even then, you didn't sort of nip in to wagons even then.

And that was something else you see, I used to meet somebody else on the bus. She was going into town to go to night school and we just used to go to the Odeon for a coffee and then I'd come home. That was on one night a week, I should think. Pictures, of course, you always queued up for, so it didn't really matter. After I'd started going out with Ken we just went to the Royal, on St George's Road it's now a big music place. We've had a walk round while we've been in ordering stuff. They always used to show Westerns, but that was the only cinema we could get in by the time I'd finished on a Saturday night. The Lido only charged half price when I went there. But a lot of other things didn't treat us as Forces. Erm... we went to London once. When I'd signed on and I could have more holiday, we went to London, and Edith had leave and her friend had leave, and we went to London. And we were staying in a YWCA and they wouldn't let me stay there at weekend. My Mother didn't know. And I had to stay in a Church Army hostel, because they had to keep the space for Forces travelling through London, and we were all three sharing one room, and the bed remained empty, but I couldn't stay in it, because I wasn't in the Forces. And we went to the pictures once, and we'd met these boys when we were dancing and, this lad said 'Three halves and me' and oh, the cashier didn't half tell him off! Flew the... Edith said, just a minute, 'She doesn't know herself whether she's in the Forces or not.' You know, because he was, sort of, 'I'm paying full for me', and she thought I should be half price as well. So we never really quite knew, and they all got gratuities when they'd finished. There was no gratuities for Land Girls. So we didn't really know, and as I say it's only just recently, this last year or two there's been a monument, I think it's in Coventry, towards the Land Girls, and they've been invited to erm... and it was the Queen Mother's birthday, the first time the Land Girls walked, I think! Yeah, so that's why we were the 'forgotten army.'

K: Which birthday was it?

NS: The last one, where they had this big procession and everything, and choirs and all sorts.

K: Is that when she was a hundred?

NS: Yes.

K: That doesn't seem fair.

NS: A lot of people were probably more in danger than us... Well I don't know, some of the Land Girls were working in... like Florence was a Land Girl, she was near Valley which was an Air Force base, so just because I was here, doesn't mean to say all Land Girls were as sort of secure as me. We did a darned good job actually. Not a bit like that film that came on the television recently, nipping into the barn with your farmer and whatnot!

I should think that's about it.

ENDS