

I was 18 when the war began and I was called up when I was 19, and then I think the lady thought there wasn't much fright in me so she got me in the Ministry of Food. And it was a safe haven, we really didn't know there was a war going on as far as the fighting was concerned. I mean the things applied to us, I mean the food rush and the things we had to go without, but to me it was a paradise. I'd gone from Ferndale to Colwyn bay, the first thing I looked at was the pavements, which were white, and ours were black, in those days this was coal, ashes everywhere. I was fortunate enough to get into a lovely digs with 9 other girls. They'd come into, commandeered the hotels and the public schools there, and they'd commandeered all the hotels and the offices because there were 4,000 civil servants evacuated from London. So we more or less took over the town, as well as the army. It was a very lively place, and I must say, and I'm very guilty saying this, but I enjoyed the war. But that garden photograph, you could see the joy in our faces, I know we weren't involved in all the terrible things that went on, we never heard a bomb, we could see Liverpool on fire then from over the wood you know, but we didn't have any dramatic events, life was very pleasant, plenty of social life there, dances, pictures, theatres, concerts, the lot. There were all sorts of lovely things going on which we were invited to of course. And Lord Beveridge came to speak to us, the Beveridge Plan which we thought was utopia at the time, the beginning of the NHS, that's what he told us, how everything would become free.

We were 10 girls in the digs, with a very good landlady and landlord, and because she had 10 ration books, the food wasn't too bad. Then the Ministry said that when the war finished we'd have a day off, and for the first time in my life I went to London. We got on the first train to London in the morning, and we were there for the V-day celebrations, and we stayed overnight and we came home. Then a few months went by and the V-J came, they called it V-J cause that was the end of the Japanese war. In the garden of the house that I lived in, which was a lovely 3-storied house, we all gathered together and had a photograph taken, and you can see the joy in our faces, that it was all over, and we all held the Union Jack. We kept in touch until all of them died. There's two of us that are still alive, my friend is in a nursing home in Yorkshire and so far I've been able to go up and see her every year. I'm 93 at Easter time, and I'm very thankful I'm as good as I am.

The big sway came after the war, straight after the war. I was in Colwyn Bay, which had been a liberal constituency for donkey's years. And a chap came straight from the navy, and he became Justice Lord M. Jones but he came to speak to us, and it was a Labour vote back. He was absolutely marvellous, my friends who were all conservatives in London voted for him because he was a charismatic man, and a good speaker, and he swayed it. And I think that happened throughout the country then, they had the Labour vote because of what had gone on before. That was the last time, except for Blair's fall, you know when things have gone too bad they go for something different. And that's gonna be again, when the Conservatives get too bad which they are, we will go back to labour.

In my youth, everybody was either strong Labour or strong Liberal – in North Wales they were strong Liberal weren't they? And down here it was all Labour – you don't hear people talking about politics at all now! I mean all we're doing is watching the box for help... politics, question time, and a bit of a push when it's time for the elections, but nobody talks about it any other way.

Well my generation, perhaps are more royalist than others, I think youngsters are not as interested as I always was. I had a friend who would look at The Court Circular every morning during the war, she was London born and bred. Londoners are very into the Royals. Well, I don't know about now, because they have such a mixed race in London, they can't be feeling the same but the old Londoners were all for the Royalty. But judging by the crowds they drew, for Kate and Williams there's still a big crowd there for them.

When I stopped working in the 80s for the social services we dealt with all sorts of people, separated wives, one parent families, people who were sick, the unemployable but we didn't deal with any druggies. The worst people that came into us were the drunks. I never knew anyone to come to our counter who was drugged. But as soon as I left, they started to come in because I remember meeting my old colleagues and them saying to me "You'd be horrified". The worst I had were tramps and drunks.