

Australians at War Film Archive

Rose Bandel - Transcript of interview

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<http://australiansatwarfilmarchive.unsw.edu.au/archive/860>

Tape 1

00:40 **Good morning, Rose.**

Good morning.

Now, I'd like to start today by asking you if you could tell us where you grew up and where you were born?

Well I was born in Melbourne in Victoria. And I was born at the Melbourne Hospital, the Women's

01:00 Hospital in Melbourne [Royal Women's Hospital]. And I lived in Rae Street, Fitzroy when I was very until I was the age of about five. But then my Mum was very interested in show business, so she wanted me to be an entertainer with my sister. My sister Marie she was older than me and we started going to all these, to dancing schools, IVMs [?]

01:30 and May Dance. They were very big dancing school people in those days they taught dancing. And we learned to acrobat, which was tumbling, which is more like gymnastics these days. We learnt to dance and sing. Mum wanted us to - she had us taught everything. So we were in pantomimes in 1930, 'bout 1938 we were in a pantomime which was called, I think it was called Mother Goose, along those lines, ,

02:00 at one of the big theatres in Melbourne. But Mum was just sort of, Mum was just so interested in showbiz that she sort of, us girls were wrapped in it too. The idea was that we wanted to be in showbiz too. But right at the age of five Mum had me in a competition in a Shirley competition. She - cause Mum was a great dressmaker made all our costumes and everything and she put me in this competition for Shirley Temple [child actress in Hollywood], cause I had blonde hair and all curls and

02:30 all that sort of thing. And she put me in actually for the dress, for the best dress of Shirley Temple Competition. So we were at the competition and apparently Mum was talking to a lady and I wandered up onto the stage and they were judging for the most like Shirley Temple and I won it. And the lady come over to Mum and said, "Look your little girl has just won the competition for the most like Shirley Temple." She said, "But I didn't enter her in for that!" She said, "I entered her in for the dress."

03:00 But she said, "You've won it!" So I won a lovely photograph which I've got a today. A photo of me in that outfit and as Shirley Temple. So I think that was more or less the start of show business. So we went on and I had, we went to dancing lessons and then by the time I was oh what was I? About six. I was singing. I went into competitions. Well they had lots of talent quests and things like that and they used to call me Baby Rose

03:30 McLachlan. I entered a lot of these talent quests singing Beneath the Lights of Home. I can remember the number Beneath the Lights of Home. And then from then on I went to that was 'bout 19 yeah 1936 and then after that we did lots of shows because my sister and myself and another girl we formed a troupe the three of us and we called ourselves the

04:00 Three Kessels. So we went into lots of shows and did lots of, well they did lots of talent quests. And they used to have before the movies they used to have shows on before the movies and we did a lot of that sort of thing so as the Three Kessels. And we used to go down to the beach and my sister reminded me about this. She said we used to go down to the beach and we'd be rehearsing on the beach and the people used to be amazed at seeing these three girls doing such a wonderful act down

04:30 on the beach. And that's where we used to rehearse because the sand was nice and firm so we could sort of acrobat and tumble on the sand in those days. And then around about, it was, we were entertaining in Melbourne and doing lots of shows as the Three Kessels and a troupe came out from overseas and they'd been all over the world and they were a troupe of acrobats called the Wallabies. And they came out to do the Tivoli [Theatre]. Now three of the girls that were in

05:00 that troupe were Australians so the three girls wanted to pull out of that because they'd been all over the world. So the man that had that troupe was called Digger Pugh and there was his wife and his daughter and his and a little boy who was only about three. So he came to see us because they wanted

three girls to go in so he came to see us and auditioned us and he put us into the troupe. Well we did. Is

05:30 that bad? [interruption]

Rose you were telling us about the influence of your mother on your entertaining. I'm wondering what she did as an entertainer?

No she wasn't in the entertainment, in the business, but her father was quite a brilliant pianist, and he used to play in, they were sort of like bars I suppose in their day sort of hotels and things

06:00 that and he was used to entertain with the piano. , So apparently I think that's where it sort of came from. But she was very interested in, she was just interested in the entertainment business. She was, she used to sing, she used to love to sing but she never ever, she wasn't professional. she didn't learn singing or anything like that but I think she just had that bug. I think she wanted to give us girls something a little bit different. Cause in the early days they were, my Dad was,

06:30 he worked in a boot factory so we were quite poor. We didn't have a lot of money or anything like that. And Mum used to go out to work. She'd go out and do cleaning, house cleaning things like that for us to be able to go to dancing. that's where she got the money from to put us into the schools and I think it was just that after Depression days and all that I think things were so bad and they went through such a bad time that they didn't want us

07:00 kids to have that . She wanted to give us something sort of thing and that's what I think it was all about and she felt that probably in show business that that would do something for us . We'd have something out of that. But show business wasn't in those days, people thought that going into show business was dreadful . But it wasn't really. We had lot of a great life as I can. I

07:30 think I had a wonderful life because it was, I just loved it. I didn't even want to go to school. I just didn't want to go to school. I loved being in shows and dancing and singing and tumbling. I must have been a bit of a show off really for it. So that's what it was all about. But -

Well I'm wondering you've just mentioned school where did you go to school?

I went to school in. Well after we lived in Rae Street Fitzroy

08:00 in the early days and as I said from there, we were there til I was about five and then we went to Northcote and we lived in Northcote and I went to school in Northcote. The Catholic school in Northcote but I'm afraid I just didn't like school. I didn't want to go to school but I had to go didn't I? I did a certain amount of schooling. Not a lot but I did a certain amount because we started to go in to.

08:30 After that after we did all the Kessels and that the three of us working together we went into army shows and things like that and we were doing shows for the army and all that. But then that's where I sort of got ahead there because I was I'm trying to think. It was 1930- 1940 that we started to do army shows called

09:00 the Melody Makers and we used to go to all the camps. Like there was Balcombe, Seymour, Puckapunyal, Flinders Naval Base. We worked at the Heidelberg Hospital to Americans. Where else? And also we went to one camp 'cause I was only young and I and there were Japanese, they had Japanese prisoners. And I can always remember coming in and they were in, they had them behind wire and they had all their

09:30 little gardens. They had all their gardens like vegetables and all that and I think that must have been Cowra. Because we used to go away and stay overnight and we used to travel in the big. We had transport they were the army transports that we used to go in and we used to stay in the barracks. We had the barracks they had them all lined up. All the girls and the guys from the show used to all be in separate quarters . And we used to, after the shows we used to go into

10:00 the officers' quarters and they used give us, they used to have lots of supper and all that sort of thing for us. And we used to see, we used to entertain the soldiers and the officers always used to sit up the front always and all the other guys at the back. Can tell one funny story, it was a little bit rude but we were doing a show and lass who was the singer she was singing away there and at the finish they just kept clapping and clapping and clapping the soldiers are going, "oh-oh-oh,"

10:30 and they kept bringing her back. And she had a lace top of and one of her straps underneath had dropped so she was showing a little bit of bare skin there and the soldiers were loving every minute of it and they were clapping to bring her back. And that's a true story. So that that was in one of the camps. I can't remember which camp it was. But yes we had, it was great. And that's why I missed a lot of schooling actually. because we were late home

11:00 from shows and that and I used to sing. I was a singer and I used to do dancing and acrobating and all that in those days in those shows.

Well it's very unusual for a child so young to be joined up in an entertaining troupe?

Entertaining troupe.

I'm wondering you mentioned that it wasn't very acceptable or it was a bit...

I think people thought that it was wrong as far as the school was concerned. Well I was with the nuns

- 11:30 and I s'pose they thought it was quite wrong for a young girl to be doing this but I just loved entertaining. I mean from a young child I was always up dancing. I'd do things like, I'd come out and everybody'd, Mum and the family would be there and I'd have dressed myself up as Carmen Miranda [singer and actress] and come out and be dancing as Carmen Miranda and I was always doing something entertaining. I was always up and dancing and doing something I was I was so wrapped in it. I
- 12:00 just that's what I wanted to be. So then we sort of, after the army or the army shows I trying. I'm sort of all a bit back to front really. But then we went to, as our troupe they arrived out here and that was 19 must have been 1941 and the three of us joined that and then we went to Sydney and then we did the Sydney Tivoli and the Brisbane Cremorne theatre which was called the Tivoli in
- 12:30 those days. And then we come back to Sydney after that. But while we were in Brisbane we saw all the sailors all sailing down the Brisbane River on the boat and we were waving to all the, 'cause they were going away. And then we come back to Sydney. Or actually while we were in Brisbane they used to, because of the Welfare [Department inspectors] I wasn't supposed to be in the theatre after 9-o'clock at night and they used to pop me into these big baskets. They had the great big baskets with
- 13:00 all the costumes in so they used to pop me in there and put the costumes on top of me and close the basket on me until the Welfare had gone cause I wasn't supposed to be in the theatre in those days. So that was just some of the things that happened. And then we got back to Sydney and we were to go onto USA [United States of America] that was in the contract. Now the three of us were going as apprenticeships. We were given an
- 13:30 apprenticeship for 3 years and we started at 10 shillings a week. The second year it went to a pound a week and the third year it went it went up 10 shillings each year. And Mum hadn't actually signed. I've got the contract it's all in here, I've still got it. And Mum actually didn't sign because we were supposed to come back to Melbourne before we were to leave and Mum wasn't sure that she wanted us to go. So by the time we got back to Sydney
- 14:00 Marie and I were a bit, my sister and I were a bit homesick so Marie go. I was very homesick and Marie got through to Mum and said, "Look Mum, we want to come home. We don't want to go away and it looks as though Mr Pugh is planning to leave from Sydney and not Melbourne. So Mum panicked a bit and she went to Actors Equity who. Gerry Clawson was the man from Actors Equity and he used to run it. And she got onto Gerry and Gerry got straight
- 14:30 in touch with Digger Pugh in Sydney. And actually the photo's up there actually we were right down at the Domain and we were all practicing, and we were all rehearsing for that night show. And Digger said, "Well look your Mum's been in touch with you and you have to go home." So Marie and I were very thrilled at that so and we packed up and we left. And they left the following Thursday for the USA and they landed at
- 15:00 they were at Hickam Field in Pearl Harbor when the bomb, and they were in the bombing of Pearl Harbour which we would've been if we'd of gone. So we were very happy that we hadn't, we didn't go on with it. But

So all of your both of your sisters came home?

They weren't two sisters. The other girl was a, her name was Joan, Joan Willoughby. No she was there was only Marie and I and Joan we were the Three Kessels but we, the three of us all worked together in the early days and the three of us went into the show but she

- 15:30 went on. Her mother let her go. She was only 17 and her mother let her go over to the USA. But then Equity us going back into Equity and telling them they brought Joan home. Equity made her come back as well. So she went on to entertainment too. She finished up with a very good, a very big act called the Calroys [?] and they finished up touring all over America so she sort of went and continued on in show business too. And we came back to Melbourne and
- 16:00 my sister she went, actually Gerry Clawson was a, had an adagio [dancing] act and his wife was very sick so Gerry got Marie my sister to work with him. So she worked the two of them they worked as an adagio act and they did Tivoli. They went back to Tivoli and did all the Tivolis again after that. Well then I decided that I wanted to take up saxophone. I wanted to do more music. I had learnt piano in the early days. So I
- 16:30 started to play saxophone, I learnt sax and then I started to. I went into competitions there was 3DB [radio station] which they had a very big amateur contest and it went on for weeks and weeks. Well I entered that playing the sax. I played Intermezzo actually. A classical number Intermezzo on that and I think I was 12 then. And I won it. I won it outright and I was paid
- 17:00 I won 15 guineas. And from there on I sort of went, people got in touch with me and I did lots of work all around Melbourne as a saxophonist. And I worked in a Chinese girls band, Thelma Quong's band and did lots of, at the age of 12 and worked all in like did all the big Chinese balls and everything like that. And then I, Gerry came back

- 17:30 then and they came back and he started doing all the shows for the Enso The Enso show [shows for the armed services] all the army shows. So his show we started with Harlem Holiday I think it was called Harlem Holiday. So I went into all those shows then and we did lots of comfort shows for all the, to raise money for the soldiers again. So I was back into that. So I was entertaining. I was singing and playing the sax and tumbling and that doing like a contortion act and all that with that.
- 18:00 So that went on til 19 I think it was after 1945 somewhere like that. So I was still doing shows and working at that age right through until I was 15. Then at 15, I probably left out a few things. But at 15 a show was called a show for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind was going in 19, it started in 1920
- 18:30 round about the 1920s and the blind people used to go round and sell the tickets for it and it toured all over Victoria. So a gentleman came to see my Mum by the name of Alf Broadway and Alf had been in show business all his life. Had had big shows going. His own shows but he was managing this show for the Royal Victorian Institute for the Blind. So he wanted a girl to join his show. It was an 8 person show and he
- 19:00 wanted a girl that could sing, dance , do quite a few things. So I was, so he came out and the agent sort of told him about me. So he came out to see Mum and Dad and Mum said. Oh well, Mum didn't want me to go actually for that time. She didn't want me to go on tour for some unknown reason at that age. I don't know she sort of got a little bit perhaps. My sister had gone she'd left and gone to America and 'cause she married a Marine
- 19:30 and my brothers were there but she seemed that she missed me a bit. But anyway my Dad said, "No." He said, "Let her go. It's an opportunity we'll put her into it." So I went out on tour with the Blind Concert Party and I toured all over Victoria with them. There was another girl contortionist and all there were eight acts in it. And Alf Broadway had a son called John and he was a juggler. He turned out to be a very big entertainer. He finished up in Paris and everywhere. He worked all over the world. And John wanted
- 20:00 me to, they wanted me to work with John. So I joined the show and I started juggling in those days then. I started to learn to juggle and to work with him so I worked with, I started to work with him. Then after that I was in the show there for about 18 months and we were in Ballarat. And Dennis who had been in the show before me and left and gone to a show over in South Australia. Well he happened to be back in Ballarat when we arrived up there and he invited us round to
- 20:30 his house for supper after the show. And he had a friend 'cause one of the guys in the show turned out to be Dennis' friend. So he came to see the show and he went back to Arch and he said, "That little girl on the saxophone," he said, "I'm going to marry her." and that's what he told Arch that night. So then about 6 months later Dennis joined the show and then we started working together and went on from there. I played sax. He played banjo
- 21:00 and I did all, we did the act together. And he was a magician as well. So that was sort of how the love story started. But the early days was, I'm just trying to think of other things that we did. We did so much that I'm just trying to think of other things that we did in the...

I'm just wondering you mentioned your father being involved I think in the World War I?

Yes well

- 21:30 Dad was one of the original Anzacs. And he landed on Gallipoli on, actually I've got a photo there with a letter a letter written on the back of it of him and he said that he'd been 3 months or 4 months in fighting in the front line and he'd gone to, they went to Alexandria he was in Alexandria and having a break. But yes he was one of the original Anzac's. He never ever said much about it. He did say that
- 22:00 they used to fill them, they used to give the young guys, fill them up with rum for them to go into battle. And he said, he never said much about it but I've sort of read the book now on it of really what did happen. So I've realised why they didn't talk about it because it was dreadful, it must have been terrible. And he died in, I lost him in 1948 he passed away when I was 15 and
- 22:30 he died of cancer but he was, and the gas. They said it was the [mustard] gas and all that from the army days from Gallipoli. And I forget exactly what the name where they really landed the 1st always numbers for the Divvies] Division but they were almost wiped. He said they were all nearly wiped out. They were just butchered it was dreadful. Bodies everywhere he said it was terrible. And the only thing he did talk about was trenches. He said they were shocking,
- 23:00 there were rats and everything in it and they didn't get enough to eat and there was not a lot of water for them and they were in trenches with mud and it was just dreadful terrible. So and they really, I think that's why a lot of them died early because they just, it was so bad that they really sort of interfered with their health so.

Well I'm just wondering I know that you were very young but I'm just wondering

- 23:30 **whether he was difficult to live with because of his war experiences?**

Yes he used to. Actually he was a drinker after that, used to drink a lot. And I put it down to that and he

was the most wonderful father through the week but on the weekends then he would drink. And even when the marches [Anzac Day marches]. He would go into the march he wouldn't, he never ever marched he didn't march but he always went in.

- 24:00 But he never sort of spoke about it. It was just as if. If you ask him questions he would just sort of, he would clam up, he'd sort of get a dreadful look on his face that he just didn't want to; it was something that he didn't want to talk about. Apparently it must have been just so bad for them. And I can always remember my brothers and that used to try and ask him about it but he wouldn't talk. And apparently all the men or most of them from the 1st Division
- 24:30 that. Apparently the British were very bad to them. They sent them to the wrong area or something I think that was the story I don't know. I don't know whether that's right or not. But I think they sent them to the wrong part of and just demanded them to go in and they were just sort of, the British officers were apparently dreadful to the Australians. In fact they'd sort of talked to them as though they were from the while they were all the
- 25:00 what am I trying to say? That they were the convicts. They were the lower people lower class for in the army sort of. The British were above them and all that. And that's the attitude that I sort of got from it. Whether it was right or not but I don't know. But I think if you read the books and that now. And I was very upset because I went and got his papers from Canberra and he
- 25:30 I s'pose I can say it, he did defect and apparently he's not the only one of, apparently there were lots. I was a bit upset about it and that's why I sort of delved into the story to sort of get an answer to it and when you read the story that Kyle I think it's Mr Kyle I've just read the story and it does give you an answer to what went on and they didn't blame them for what any of them did in Gallipoli because it was
- 26:00 so bad. So I think.

I'm wondering if you were aware of your father's actions when you were a young child?

No I didn't understand it. I didn't understand it. Because he used to get quite drunk. He did get quite drunk and I put it down, now I realise I understand now that that's probably what it was all about. Well they went

- 26:30 through hell. That's exactly what they went through sheer hell. And that does upset me. That does. I didn't think I'd get upset like this. Oh dear. That is a bit silly isn't it?

Not at all.

Because it answered the questions that I

- 27:00 wanted oh dear. I'm not usually like this. I'm not usually emotional. I'm usually pretty strong. I'm a strong lady. Everybody says I'm very strong. After losing Dennis and everything. They sort of, I was so strong. But no I was very upset when I read the papers and my sister in America was too because I sent them over to her. And that's when I sort of delved into the story of the Anzac's to really find out.
- 27:30 I said, "No," it's not that, he was a strong man and I knew he wouldn't he wouldn't just walk away from something and my sister did too. So that's why I sort of went into the story and now it's sort of answered a lot of questions. And it really has upset me yeah. I did sort of get quite emotional about it all. It's old age. Yes so.

Well I can understand

- 28:00 **the burden of thinking that maybe your father was a coward?**

That's right yes. But then it answered as a child because I didn't understand why he used to get quite erratic sort of and he was quite erratic at times. Then that answers it because you read and you see what those men went through and they even, some of the men went mad.

- 28:30 They went complete, yeah mental. So when I read all this and you think, "Well heavens above," if only you'd realised when they were alive what the problem was. So yeah it was really, it has answered the questions for me and I'm thrilled and I'm going to send the book to my sister in America and tell her to read it 'cause it will answer for her too.

- 29:00 But she married a Marine. She left home at. Do you want her story too?

Well perhaps before we move on to hear her story you can just tell me, I'm wondering, you might not have understood at the time the effect on your mother?

No, no I didn't. Because Mum was she was a good woman and a hard worker . And she just wanted us to I feel as though

- 29:30 because they'd been through so much pain with the Depression and everything like that I think that show business was the lighter side of life and I think that's what the answer was and she wasn't to us to have that lighter side of life. Something that happiness, and because show business was, well you have to be gay you have to be happy you have to have a personality you have to go out on that stage and you have to win those people over and I

- 30:00 think that's more or less the life she sort of was looking at. Because the Depression days and everything they went through. Mum spoke about it and told us a lot about it and it was bad . They'd have to line up for food and then through the war the rations. I mean that was a dreadful problem the rations. Because if you ran out of rations or ration tickets well you had to wait until you got the next lot, your next coupons. And then Mum even dug a trench
- 30:30 in the backyard for us for the Japanese. 'Cause they were worried that the Japanese were going to get right through to Melbourne. And Mum, yeah she dug the trench in the backyard herself. My Dad wouldn't do it. He said no. He said, "No," he said, "You're just as safe lying down in the gutter." he said, Just lie down in the gutter." He sort of yes that's the way it. Yeah he said, "A trench is of no use ." But Mum dug it. She went out there and
- 31:00 she dug that trench herself in the backyard and well we all laughed about it afterwards. And she always said that she would never let the Japanese take us. She said, "I'll never let the Japanese take my daughters." So whether she had ideas if they got through if the Japanese had of won and got into our country and taken over because the war was a bit scary. I mean in those days the Japs were, well
- 31:30 they got into Pearl [Harbor] they got into Sydney Harbour . So it was just sort of through a mistake I think a mistake that they went to Pearl Harbor first and didn't continue on to Australia is what saved us. So in one way the Americans, actually the Americans did, them coming into the war saved us. So we really do have the Americans to thank for us having our country today. And Mum was very worried.
- 32:00 She was very worried about the Japanese. But...

And what do you think she might've been able to do with you?

I don't know. I don't know whether she meant that, I know a terrible thing to say, whether that she would do something to us but she said she would never. Because the atrocities you heard so much of the atrocities of the Japanese were dreadful. Dreadful. They did dreadful things 'cause they were just animals. They were just like

- 32:30 animals really. Because they used to throw the babies up and catch them on bayonets and we saw all that, I saw some of that even as a child I can remember some of the movies. I saw some of the movies afterwards with that they let them through and showed the Japanese for what they did so I went to. And I do remember that as a young girl. And also the air raid sirens going and Mum had to put all the
- 33:00 black. We had to have black up against the windows and that. Which I s'pose really was scary but we sort of went through it all. You sort of still continued on. And we still continued on doing shows and all that sort of thing. So life went on. Mum tried to keep life as normal as possible in those days.

And what did you think lying in the gutter was going

- 33:30 **to do?**

Well Dad said that you were safer, just as safe lying down in a culvert sort a thing. He said you were just as safe there as to be going into a trench. So perhaps he was right I don't know. Perhaps that's the way he felt.

And did you think that that might've been a bit odd him saying that?

Well at the time I didn't because I was so young. I didn't think. Cause at

- 34:00 my age you sort of, as a child you don't realise how bad it was. But I do remember the things that were going on and what was happening. But as a child I think you don't sort of stop I think to. Well you don't understand that it's really so bad. You sort of like today you talk to the, well I talk to the family today about what's happening in our world today and they can't, they don't
- 34:30 seem to understand it. They think I'm silly 'cause I get worried about terrorism and I get worried about what's happening in our country because I feel that down the years that things are going to change so much for our way of life or their way of life. I won't be around. But for their way of life and I think it's going to get, I don't think it's going to get better. I think we had the good days. I think the good days of Australia are gone and I don't think they'll ever come back. I really don't.

- 35:00 **Well I'm just wondering as a young child with your mother digging a trench in the back garden how did you react to having a trench in the back garden?**

Well in a way I s'pose we were scared. We were scared and worried. But I don't think we really understood the whole idea of what was happening. I don't think we realised it was so bad. That you had to have a trench sort of thing and I think us children

- 35:30 just sort of treated it as, "Oh well it's a big hole in the backyard." And Mum used to grow all our vegetables always. She used to dig the garden and she had all the fresh vegetables always in the backyard for us. As a way of getting food and getting and having good food sort of thing.

I'm just wondering I'm not sure I'm just imagining children with a big hole in the back garden

36:00 **might've just played in it?**

Well probably we did but I was sort of always either practicing. I was always doing something. I was always either learning, having lessons for singing or going out and having dancing lessons or tumbling lessons and had piano lessons so my life was pretty full and my life was pretty full right through in fact. I never ever had, I never went out to any.

36:30 I never went out to a ball. I never had many friends because I just practiced all day. I mean when I played saxophone I used to practice eight hours a day. I was on it and I was just dedicated to it. And really what my idea was, I wanted to be in a symphony orchestra. But that changed after I went into the show and I went into the variety side of show business. So life changed completely and I never ever had, I never had friends not many friends not even school friends. I

37:00 didn't sort of mix a lot with. And a couple of girls would come over and say, "Look can Rose go out somewhere with us today?" But I used to say, "No I don't want to go," I said, "I want to practice," and that's what I did. I sort of dedicated it to my show business. And so I sort of, my life was all show business. I never, Dennis was my first boyfriend and that was it, and I married him at 21

37:30 and I met him at 16 so that was it. So yes it was I s'pose, it was an interesting life in lots of ways. I mean it's a strange life isn't it? A bit different to everybody else. The ones that went to school and that was it but I sort of had an exciting life. And I used to have a wonderful life even in 1945 when we were doing all those shows with Gerry

38:00 Clawson and that. He used to run the Seamen's Mission as well and all the sailors and everything and all they would all come off the ships and come to the Seamen's Mission. Well we used put a show on at the Seamen's Mission for them and all that as well. So we were entertaining all the time in those days. And the army's I just loved it. I just loved every minute of it I just loved being in show business.

Well I'm wondering, you've mentioned a little bit of

38:30 **growing up in the years of the Depression and I've heard plenty of stories of kids not having shoes and having trouble getting food?**

Well we were always well dressed. We always had. We were poor but Mum managed to always keep us well dressed and how she did that. I can always remember as a child in it was early, very early I was only. I was in a pram so I'm going back

39:00 and it might sound strange but I do remember it as clear as a bell. And a lot a people say, "Oh no you couldn't remember that," but I did. And my sister and Mum, I was in a pram my sister was alongside it and she was pushing me to some place, taking me to some place and I dunno where it was, to leave us while she went out and did washing. Washing and ironing for people. So I always remember

39:30 that. And another thing, she had another, another friend, Patricia Anne was her name and she was an author. She used to write for the Herald. The Sydney Morning Herald. Not the Sydney Morning Herald it was the Melbourne Herald it'd be and I dunno whether Mum, I think Mum used to go to her place and, clean her house

40:00 and she became a very good friend to Mum and I think she helped Mum in lots and lots of ways. Because her husband, they used to print books and all that sort of thing. And they had a big place here in Sydney too, right down on the, I know the building because when Dennis and I came over here to Sydney, Mum said, "We'll go and see Patricia Anne and her husband because they're well up in

40:30 and they may be able to help you in show business." . And Patricia Anne she was the first woman to, she went through to the top of Australia or something. Or was it? Something with the camel or something. I've got photos of her and everything, I've got it all there but I can tell you exactly what she was. I remember now that's where Mum used to go and clean and do and she was wonderful to Mum. So I think she actually helped Mum with money

41:00 for us to be dressed and fed and all that sort of thing . In fact she wanted to take Mum; apparently she wanted to take Mum for a trip overseas with her in those days. But she was a writer and everything. Actually I've often thought that I should get in touch with the Herald and say, "Well look why don't you write her story because her story was very interesting." And her son, he was in the navy and he died of cholera

41:30 at the age of about, I think he was only about 28 or something like that, but he went overseas too and he died of cholera so. But she was a very interesting lady apparently and she was such a good friend to Mum. So I think that's where we sort of got a lot of our clothes and being able to have costumes and all that sort of thing so. 'Cause Mum always spoke about her and I'll always remember that she had these beautiful German dolls

42:00 and they were all...

00:37 **Rose you were talking before we had a little break about growing up in the Depression and how your mother would get clothes from a friend. I'm wondering can you tell me a bit more about how you got costumes for your shows?**

01:00 Well Mum used to make all our costumes. Mum made them all and she used to put all spangles and everything like that on them. She did all the sewing and actually she had very bad eyes. My Mum had very bad eyes and her glasses were so thick and she used to smock our dresses. Smocking in those days was very popular. Do you know what smocking is? It's all like the fancy smocking on the girls' frocks. And Mum used to smock all our little frocks for us to wear and she actually

01:30 would have the smocking right up like this to her eyes and she'd even prick her nose, with the needle, she'd have needle pricks in her nose as she was doing all the sewing. And she made all our costumes. I know Marie had in one pantomime, was about 12 costumes. And I can always remember one set where she was a butterfly and great big wings and Mum sequined the whole lot of them for her. I mean she was wonderful with making clothes. And as I said before when I won the Shirley

02:00 Temple competition that was the outfit, she made the whole outfit. Even the hat. She would make hats and everything for us. She was a very capable lady. She was a fabulous cook. She was a great cook. Great cook, I mean the food was always very tasty. Even though it mightn't a been the best of cuts of meat but it was always cooked nicely for us. Yeah she was a good lady

02:30 and a great Mum in lots of ways.

Well you've mentioned that she dug a trench in the back garden and was quite frightened of the Japanese invading and at that time both Sydney and Melbourne were undergoing blackouts. Can you tell me a bit about what you remember about those blackouts?

The searchlights would be going and we'd black the house out. And

03:00 then we used to sit and listen to the radio so that was our entertainment. The radio was the main thing and there were all those shows on. And I can't remember the names of the shows but they were all lots of comedy shows and we used to sit and listen to those and I think that's entertainment. And you always found in the tough times entertainment always comes to the fore because it took people away from what was happening and I think that's

03:30 what even with the radio in those days. We'd all sit and listen and we'd have the fire going and we'd just sit and listen to the radio. And Mum, Dad and the lot of us. And then we'd sit there too and every night we'd play cards and things like that to entertain us and keep our mind off anything, that was I think, Mum. Mum kept us sort of always busy and I think that was the answer, and sort of kept to the lighter side of life if she could

04:00 to get us through all these dramas that were going on and not to worry us that anything might happen. At times, as I say before, at times she used to get down about it all because as she said she used to get worried about the Japanese with the girls because how they treated their women. So I think that was always in the back of her mind I think us looking after us girls. But

04:30 yes it was rather, I s'pose it was scary but I think Mum kept it, that made it, "Oh this is what we just have to do," and that's the way we get through it. And put radios on and let us listen to the shows and things like that to make take our mind off it all and not worry.

And how did your brothers react to you being involved in performing?

Performing? They never ever said much about it. And funnily enough

05:00 my brother, the brother next to me, Bobby, the second youngest, Bob should've been an entertainer because Bobby was a comedian. A natural born comedian and I think through his life that that's what he would've liked to have been. But he never ever, Mum sort of didn't put them into anything like that. I don't know why. But it was strange that she sort of looked after us girls I think a little

05:30 bit more than what. Oh she looked after the boys but perhaps she thought boys didn't go into show business or something, it was more of a girls sort of so I don't know. I don't know. But no they just went on their own way and did jobs and got married and just had their normal life, sort of. But I just worked. I've said I've worked

06:00 from the time I was what about what six I was entertaining. I've worked from then right down even today I'm still working. So I've gone through a lot but it's been a great life I reckon. There's been some exciting times like after meeting Dennis and then we, what did we do then? There was a, I worked

06:30 in the blind show with Dennis and then we left there and we went to South Australia. And there was a Blind Concert Party in South Australia and we worked in South Australia and we went right up into the outback and even worked to the Aborigines and all that in those days. I mean we'd worked out on stage and you couldn't see anything, all you could see is white teeth, nothing else, so they were all the Aborigines there. No white people. Then we sort of, what'd we do after that? Oh we entertained.

07:00 I'm just trying to think how the years are going now. After that we, let me think for a moment. Yes we did South Australia and then we came over to Sydney and we worked all the hotels and all that because

all the hotels were working in those days. The clubs were just like tin sheds and they're not like today. There were clubs and they were only like big tin sheds and we worked some of those. And then we got a call to go back to

- 07:30 the Blind Show because Alf Broadway wanted to leave and they asked Dennis to take the Blind Show over. So we went back and we took over the Blind Show and managed that for 'bout five years we did that and managed that. Taking the show all through Victoria. And they used to call it The Little Tivoli show because we'd come into the halls and we'd set up the lights and things. And they'd never ever seen lights before in the country areas.
- 08:00 In fact we went into areas that were, that had gas and we turned the gaslights on to entertain. But Dennis decided then to make lights so he built his own coloured lights and set them all up and we put all curtains up and everything else. And we used to arrive in the town of a morning and set it up and then we'd do the show that night and lots of times we were billeted out. We'd stay at lovely farms and things like that and that we did that for many years. Then after that
- 08:30 I did get married. I got married at 21. So I must have been married. I must have been married before the Blind Show. The Blind Show must have come after the marriage because we got married and then we were doing all the shows at the Plaza Northcote. The Plaza Northcote was having shows in those days and we worked those and there from then we worked with people like Toni Lamond [entertainer] lots of the
- 09:00 big names. Like Andy Williams. There was comedians like Ike Delavale Who's Ike Delavale? There's a story on him that Mo McCackie [Comedian Roy 'Mo' Rene, known for his radio show 'McKackie Mansions'] that he stole. Mo McCackie stole his make up. I dunno if you've ever heard of Mo McCackie but Mo was a great famous comedian. And we have the MO Awards. The MO Awards [show business awards for variety performance]? Well that's where the MO Awards that means that's Mo. Well Mo McCackie was a comedian and he was on the Tivoli and everything, a very big comedian and.
- 09:30 That's what you do remember in those days too is that there was a lot of comedy even in the Tivoli days. During those days it was all comedy and everything. Lots and lots of gags and things like that to keep people happy because taking people away from what was going on in the world. And Mo and yes Ikie was with us and there was a story. Ikie always said that that was his make up.
- 10:00 He worked with Mo in the early days as young entertainers and that he stole that, Mo stole Ike's make up. But Ikie was a very good entertainer. But there were people like, I'm just trying to think of some of the names that are here today that we worked with like there was Syd Heylen. Who was Cookie. [Syd Heylen played the character of Vernon 'Cookie' Locke in the Australian TV series A Country Practice.] He was, in those days he worked, and the Blind Show the Blind Concert Party had lots of people that went in it. Barry Crocker [singer/entertainer] was in the Blind
- 10:30 Concert Party. It was a show that was great for entertainers. And you're grounded because you worked for 12 months. 11 months of the year you worked six nights a week, so doing that for quite a few years you turned out a polished performer. Because you sort of had every type of. You were entertaining children, you were entertaining adults, you were entertaining everyone and it taught you everything. You knew the ropes, were a wonderful way to learn on that show. So lots of entertainers were
- 11:00 well polished when they left the Blind Concert Party . But as you see I'd already been, I was well, I was really an entertainer well before I went into it so I was well polished. But just trying to think, oh then we did the Plaza Northcote and from there we got married. We got married then. And we were married at the theatre. We were married at five o'clock at night
- 11:30 and the all the people came from the theatre. All the entertainers. There were Dinks and Trixie and lots of people like that. They were a famous act in those days. There was Morrie Barley [?]. There were lots of big names like that and they all, they all came to our wedding and they all clapped us as went, walked down the aisle and as we went back from the aisle they all clapped us. And we were back on stage that night at eight o'clock and at the finish of the night they brought me down in my wedding gown. I even
- 12:00 had a wedding gown, managed to get a wedding gown in the time. We already had a booking to go to Tasmania with Diana Barrymore and Robert Wilcox [American entertainers]. That was the Barrymores, they were out here from America and that's why we decided to get married. So we said we'd get married before we went over to Tassie on this tour. And so we got the wedding all ready in a week. The wedding was organised in a week
- 12:30 so and course all the people from the show arrived at the wedding and I come down in my outfit and all that. Threw confetti on me and all the rest of it. And it was strange, we were doing a bit illusion called stretching a girl and my head was stretched six up my head six foot up this way. My hands six foot that way that way and my legs out that way. And it was a bit rude actually but when they got my head down there and Buster Fiddess was a comedian. He was very well
- 13:00 known, a big comedian. Buster finished up on television quite a bit, name a lot of people knew Buster and a wonderful comedian. And Buster's working with us and Buster said to me, "Now do you give in?" "Do you give in Rose, do you give in?" And of course I'm saying, No, no, no, no." And Dennis said. No that's right Buster said, "Do you give in Rose?" And Dennis said, "Well she will tonight because it's our

wedding

- 13:30 night," which is a bit rude. And Buster said to the audience and he used to. Buster used to have this hair just standing straight up like this in the air. But he went down to the audience and he said, "Now do you know what, do you want to know what he said?" "Do you want to really know?" And he told the audience. Well there was a big roar. He said they've just been married tonight. And there was a great, a round of applause and everything for that one. That was our wedding
- 14:00 night so. Our wedding. We went over to Tasmania with Diana Barrymore and all the company and there was ballet and all the acts that were in it. And Diana Barrymore opened on stage that night, the place was packed and they were doing a scene from Romeo and Juliet. She walked out on stage and somebody heckled her and she just looked up at them and swore at them. Well in Tasmania. Tasmania was a bit,
- 14:30 they were a little bit conservative. So they all got up, the audience got up and walked out on her. She was thrown out of every hotel in Tasmania. So she eventually got sent back. She stayed; they just gave her away and sent her back. Well we were all left over there in that show over there in Tasmania. Ballet girls with no money. Locked out of their digs [lodging] and Dennis and I on our honeymoon. The
- 15:00 band leader had put money into the show as well for her to have her come over. His wife they're rushing into us every five minutes banging on our door to come in and talk about what's to do. They're having fights and everything was going on. But in the end what happened Dennis, 'cause we were the only ones with money so Dennis and I we got all the ballet girls home. We brought them all back to Australia and the entertainers and we paid all. Or it was Australia because
- 15:30 Tassie's still Australia but we brought them back home and they all worked and they all paid us back. They paid us our money back afterwards after that. So that was our wedding. So an exciting wedding. Never a dull moment in show business. Later on in the years we toured in New Zealand with Bobby Breen. Bobby Breen was a very famous boy entertainer. He put out a record
- 16:00 The Rainbow on the River and older people would remember Bobby Breen and we toured with him all through New Zealand, a wonderful tour. By 19 I'm going up where am I '57? We were working all right through we were doing shows everywhere. We were sort of all over. We went to America in 1960 . Darren was born in 1963 we went to America in 1965 and
- 16:30 Marie had a friend over there that had a nightclub and they were going to put us on, we were to open there. So we went over and we got in touch with Equity and we got in touch with the union and all the rest of it and yes we paid our union fees \$165 in those days each. And spoke to the people in New York and they said oh yes, everything would be alright. So we were organised to open up at the nightclub and
- 17:00 the Equity man in Denver went to the Immigration and said that we didn't have a Green Card so we weren't to work. So Immigration got in touch with us and said that we would be deported if we worked. So the only thing we could do was to work and be paid by gift vouchers. So they gave us gift vouchers to work to go into shops and we bought that and we had a Vegas. A true story, I've
- 17:30 still got the agent's card. A Vegas agent she come up to see us work because we did an army show and went and entertained the boys again over in America. And she came to that show and to see us and we could've worked in Vegas. We dunno what would've happened from then on. We could've stayed in America perhaps and worked. But we couldn't get a Green Card
- 18:00 because in those days it was just almost impossible. Because you had to be meritoriously grandiously different to anything in the United States to be able to work over there. You had to go through the unemployment as well. The, employment agency and they couldn't find anyone to do what we were doing because we did we opened with a musical act. We did ventriloquism and we did illusions and we were a complete novelty act. So
- 18:30 there was nothing over there with a girl with a sax player and all the rest of me being a soloist and all the rest of it. So we passed all that but we just couldn't, still couldn't get our Green Card. And unfortunately Dennis took very sick so I said to Dennis, "Let's go." I said, "Let's go home." So we come back to Australia again and we had work. Work was all organised here so we went, by that time clubs had started. So the big boom of the Sixties was right through the clubs. So we worked all the clubs and everything like that as
- 19:00 well. We did every club that was going. All the television shows. Well we did the TV shows I mean when television first started I'm going back now. The Graham Kennedy Show. That opened that, when did that start? That would be 1950 something. 'Bout '58 or something like that. Somewhere round about that. We did all those. The Graham Kennedy Show and then later on we did all Mike Walsh Shows.
- 19:30 The Ernie Sigley Shows. Oh Sydney Tonight with all sorts of people on that one. The Mary Hardy Show. In Melbourne Tonight was Graham Kennedy. The other one I think was the Penthouse Show with Mary Hardy. I might've got that wrong the name but we did all those. We did all Johnny Young shows. So our whole life has just been our whole life was entertainment right through and Dennis wanted to be. Den was a magician. Is it alright if I talk about Dennis? Dennis
- 20:00 was a magician from the time he was nine he started to do magic and he did ventriloquism. He did and

he was a George Formby [British singer] impersonator and people would remember George Formby. As a matter of fact I've got some lovely, some letters from George Formby's wife that Dennis's mother wrote to her about Dennis doing George Formby impersonations and she wrote some letters back to Dennis and I've got those letters. And

- 20:30 Dennis was an all round entertainer. He did everything. A wonderful magician. A card manipulator. He was a banjoist. He played violin. He played guitar. All string instruments. A wonderful, wonderful entertainer. You speak to anybody today they said everybody thought what a marvellous entertainer he was. And he walked on stage he was like me. It as just as though we were meant to be. Because I loved show business and he loved it. And that was his
- 21:00 whole life and that was my whole life. We weren't interested in, we bought a home and everything else, we bought a home. But we weren't interested in, all we wanted to do as long as we were working on stage we were happy. And people used to say to us that you could see that we loved each other so much. Getting emotional. Sorry. Yeah it's hard. Even today it's hard.
- 21:30 He was one of the best. And yes he played all string instruments. He was brilliant. Just a brilliant man. He did psychology. He never stopped learning. He was always trying to better himself if you know what I mean. He did hypnotherapy. He was a hypnotist. Did it on television on the Don Lane Show but he would not. He
- 22:00 wasn't a stage performer with the hypnosis. He got all his, he did all his certificates. I've got all his certificates and everything for hypnosis. And he was just interested in everything and bettering himself all the time. Even to the day I mean to the day he died he was still learning. He had books he'd take into hospital and still reading and learning to do with show business, all about the Houdini [escapologist] days and that. And he'd built all his own gear and all he ever dreamed
- 22:30 about was having his own magic show. His own two and a half hour show. Well he did that, he brought back the first big magic show for many, many years. Many, many years. And we put that into the clubs and it was very successful. It was called Kazaam and we had ballet and entertainers in it and we opened. Actually we opened the Newcastle Workers [Club] with it and their new room and
- 23:00 10,000 people went through in that week just to see the show. And they were lined up like the old days they used to line up for shows and they were lined up right out down the street coming in. 'Cause they'd never seen anything like it before. Because we were doing levitations and sawing in half. Oh-oh. Every illusion that you can dream of which I've.
- 23:30 Yeah so he made he did. He developed, he put the show on and it was very successful. We went on, well we did Kazaam for many, many 'bout 16 years and we finished up using leopards and panthers in the show as well. We went to New Guinea with it. We took it over to New Guinea and they'd never ever seen a leopard there the nationals had never seen a leopard over there. And we arrived over there and they had us
- 24:00 on the back of a truck with the leopard and all the nationals from all around coming all looking. Looking at this leopard and we entertained at the Islander Hotel over there with Kazaam. Which was absolutely, it was quite wonderful really to see them and how they reacted to it. But yes we had we did we just did so much. We went through every phase of show business. Even to the rock and roll
- 24:30 days we still continued on, our act was still, we sort of went through every area if you know what I mean. And we were still modern whatever came up we were still sort of, we fitted into it. We were sort of able to adapt to it and Den was very good with. I mean we even worked discos with all the young ones and he even performed before those and the young ones loved him 'cause he had that personality and could communicate
- 25:00 with those with the young ones as well the old people. We entertained in all sorts of, like we entertained. We did so many charity shows like for Red Cross and everything like that. We were always there for the telethons. We did the telethons and everything else. We're always ready to do the right thing if somebody needed something. And they'd say, "Look we've got a show on and we're raising money for this one and that one," and
- 25:30 we've got some nice letters and things back from people thanking us for it and that. So we're sort of, yes we just loved working. And we just loved show business. We were successful. We were really very successful in Australia. An Australian act that could honestly say they never ever did anything else. Never worked anywhere else, worked in Australia all those years in show business and I think it's a bit good. Because
- 26:00 usually a lot had to go to other jobs they could not survive but we must have had, well I dunno whether I'm praising me talent. We must have had talent. We must have been good. We must have been a good act to have lasted all those years right up until 10 years ago 11 years ago. So we did have a wonderful life. The early days were I s'pose the early days were good too really I s'pose. It's been an exciting life for
- 26:30 me right through and I still love it. I even finished up when Dennis passed away I still worked at. We used to do a club the Blacktown RSL [Returned and Services League] and we used to do a promotion for them on a Sunday and then when Dennis passed away they said to me would I come in and do all their

promotions for them. So I worked for them for eight years, nine years doing all the promotions all the microphone work

27:00 and anything that had to be done in the club so. And they put me on their books cause they thought so much of Dennis and I s'pose myself . And yeah when Den passed away they almost closed the club it was almost. You've never seen anything like it. They all thought so much of him, the entertainers and everything all were all there. They all loved Dennis he was a lovely man. So but life goes on doesn't it?.

27:30 And I was very strong and I said well I up and I kept working and now I'm still doing a little job. And I believe that's the only way to go. I think once you get to. Once you give in and say well I'm old and I don't intend to get old. I think once you say you're old that's the finish. And I keep up with all the young ones . And I still

28:00 dress young and I'm 72 and I think I'm doing great. How much time have we got left? Where will I go now? Will I go back or will I still continue on?

I think that we will go back but before we do I've just got one question. During the Sixties I'm wondering whether you and Dennis ever performed to troops during the Vietnam years?

No. No funny enough I dunno why that

28:30 why with all that we were doing I dunno why. Whether we were ever asked to do it or not or there was some reason that Dennis didn't want to do it because of his army days. Whether he wasn't he didn't want to go over and do it. I don't know why. I don't know why we ever didn't. We were offered to do, we were going to go to Russia

29:00 and there was a big show to go to Russia at one time representing Australia and we were asked to do that but it fell through for some reason. That was through the government I dunno what that was all about. But that fell through. But that was with I think it was ATA [recording label] that's Col Joy's [singer] people I think they were organising all that and we were asked to do that. But that wasn't in I don't think that was that was nothing to do with army or anything like that. But I dunno what happened with Vietnam but it might have been that

29:30 Dennis might have been asked and he just probably didn't want to.

Well you've just mentioned Dennis had army years himself. Can you tell me about that?

Well he was young. As he said he tried to join the air force and he was medically unfit because he had polio and he had one leg smaller than the other and course they wouldn't take. They just said no you're medically unfit and I've even got his certificate, the medically unfit certificate.

30:00 Well then when Japan came into the war he joined the army he went into the army. Well he wasn't they wouldn't send him overseas because he wasn't fit enough for overseas. So he was here, he was in Australia all the time but he was. He always told me about the first night in the barracks and they put him into it was in Melbourne and he said he thinks he was in Phar

30:30 Lap's [Australian race horse] stall. But they were all in the stalls in some area. I dunno where it was but they were horse stables. And he said they were all very young and I mean Dennis was very was young and his mum, he was very close to his mum and sort of he was a type of boy he wasn't an outgoing if you know. He wasn't

31:00 he was an entertainer the same as me. Well he started in entertainment learning when he was a child and he started doing shows when he was about 12 the same way . So he all he wanted to do was to be an entertainer. So he was the same he practiced, he practiced. If you could have seen what he did manipulations it must have taken years of practice with that. Doing magic with his hands card tricks. He could sit down here and entertain you for hours with cards.

31:30 And I mean he could play a game of cards with you and give you five aces. five aces four kings and whatever. I mean his manipulations used was unbelievable. With all the other not as well as everything else he did in with magic . So he really his life was the same. He was just an entertainer and he went into the army as an entertainer. And he was George Formby and they used to call him George. As I say they used to call him George Formby and he always used to say when they did the parade and all the rest of

32:00 it. He'd say, "present." "George Formby," they'd say to him. He'd say present sir. And he entertained. He entertained the troops and he even, he has the same certificate as me as thanking him for all the work he did in the army. And they did quite a big magic show called Black Magic and it was put on by the army and it was all the army people in it. The girls and all that. What they call them AWAS [Australian Women's Army Service] weren't they in those days yeah? And yes they worked it the

32:30 show with him. And it's all private even on the program it's private this one and sargeant that one and all of them and they put the whole big magic show on and apparently it was wonderful. Dennis did the big guillotine in it. The big guillotine illusion . So yeah so that was apparently it was very successful. And then Dennis he entertained the troops a lot apparently right throughout and here in Australia as well. Not

- 33:00 overseas or anything but just here in Aussie. So he was doing camps as well apparently so. And he never ever said much about the army days . But I know that his mother had his clothes. He was the best dressed soldier in the army. He was immaculate and his mum used to. And even the captains and the, all of those they used to say,
- 33:30 "Oh who does, who looks after your clothes Dennis?" Because his mum, there were knife pleats in his pants. He looked immaculate all the time so. That was in the army yeah so that was Dennis in the army. The army finished and he got out of the army, well then he went straight into showbiz. Straight onto showbiz. He worked in Melbourne in the theatres and things like that and everything in Melbourne so,
- 34:00 and then he had his own show that he took out in South Australia. That was like before I met him sort of thing so he was entertaining sort of right through, the same as I was sort of thing. So yes I think it was a meant-to-be love story really wasn't it? Just two showbiz people . And a life that was wonderful because we never ever argued. We worked together day and night. If Dennis was making magic I was down there with him.
- 34:30 We just practiced all the time. We both, well we were never apart until I had Darren and that's the only time I was apart. We were apart when I had Darren and went into hospital. Which was wonderful too because they said I would never have children. And I had Darren and we'd been touring through Victoria when I had Darren doing the Blind Show and
- 35:00 that's when I left. We finished the Blind Show in 1962 because after I had Darren. No I went back and after that and I gave it away after that because I didn't want to tour anymore and that's when we come to Sydney. But yes I had, 'cause being all over touring, all over Victoria I wouldn't give up, I wouldn't give up touring. I just kept going. I was a bit. I went out on tour with Dennis right up til
- 35:30 eight months and I was doing an act with him, a magic act and I dressed as Citrinin girl [?] with a uniform on. Just to cover me and big long pig tails and I used to come out of the audience and he was doing a magic show a magic act and I'd come out of the audience and say, 'Well look I could do that.' But he would do the trick the right way but I had the trick and I'd do it the wrong way sort of thing. So it was comedy all the way through. So I stayed working with him right through. And
- 36:00 all the people that knew us, because we were so well known right throughout Victoria naturally because we'd been touring for so, on and off for so many years and meeting so many wonderful people that when I had Darren, I had him at the St John of God Hospital at Ballarat. In the end they had to bring me home because the blood pressure was going. And they said, the doctor said, "Listen you can't have the baby out on tour. You have to come back ," and my blood pressure was a bit bad so they put me into hospital. But anyway Darren,
- 36:30 I had Darren and the place was just chock-a-block with flowers. You've never seen flowers like we had. I had to give them to everybody. They came from all over Victoria and cards. Beautiful cards because they used to these people used to wait. The Blind Concert Party these people in the country used to wait for that to arrive every year. And it was just like a big the big night for them. They'd all dress, people would all dress and come to it and they loved
- 37:00 every minute of it and we had so many friends and all these beautiful cards. I've still got them all. I've kept them all and beautiful letters congratulating me after having Darren. Wonderful it's sort of absolutely fabulous. So Darren's birth was just something. It was absolutely terrific. And then I said we would never leave him. I said, "I'm not going to be like a showbiz mum and put the
- 37:30 children away and show business goes on and they go off on their," and we took him everywhere with us. We toured on, we did cruising. We went on all the, we were first on the Minwa [Malwa?] to go into China and I took him with me and he went everywhere with us right through. Yeah so we toured to Japan I dunno how many times. Hong Kong. Mexico. All into the United States cruising and all
- 38:00 that doing entertaining on the ships as well. Which was absolutely wonderful and we were on the P & O and we were even on the Oriana when it was first and second class so that's going back a bit. Darren wasn't with us then. That was beforehand we did that. And yes that was wonderful because they used to dress in evening wear that was black tie and everything and evening gowns. The women would all come down for dinner in their evening gowns. Absolutely stunning which
- 38:30 you don't see today. No it doesn't happen today. I mean and even show business you were always glamour. It was always glamour. You were always, but today, show business well, it's a different story isn't it? I mean they go on with holes in their jeans and just a lot of the. I feel a lot of the glamour, a lot of glamour was taken out of show business there for a while. But when you see the young girls like. the lass what's her name that's
- 39:00 just made that record? She's got the cancer [she is referring to a singer named Delta Goodrem]? What's her name? I can't think of her name. Beautiful girl. But, when you see her you say well glamour's coming back. She's absolutely fabulous . A wonderful entertainer. And Dennis was and it's strange even with. Dennis used to look at people and he could pick people if they're going to make it. And 'cause we did the Johnny Young show and all that and there was Danni Minogue [singer] and all of those and he said, "Rose \
- 39:30 \You watch Kylie Minogue,[singer]" and he said, "She will be the biggest thing that is ever hit Australia." And how true. And she was only a little girl. See he sort of, he was always ahead of himself.

He was always, he could always sort of he was always. I dunno what it was. Everybody said he was before his time. He was a clever man so. But Kylie Minogue he said yes she will and she was only

40:00 a little girl just hardly singing he said but she will be the biggest. And it's happened really he was right. Same as he said about Indonesia. He said 20 years ago. Every time we pulled into Jakarta and that and he said, "Rose in years to come this is the country we have to watch." He said this is where if anything ever happens in Australia he said this is where it will come from. How true.

40:30 It's a bit scary when you think about it isn't it. And they're all he was very, very bright a guy.

You must miss him a lot?

I do. Lots and lots and lots. Oh god. What 40 years day and night. That's like what?

41:00 hundred years isn't it yeah. 10 years he's gone. I'll never get over it no. Never no. I mean how many marriages today or I mean marriages just don't last today do they? And how many even I mean I

41:30 don't know we sort of all the marriages in our day we sort of worked as a team. The older women. The older people. We did, we worked as a team. We'd have our say I mean, we'd have our opinions. We still both had our opinions but we worked, we just clicked and we just were a team and that was it. So it was all meant

42:00 to be. I think somebody up there sort of said yes these two'll.

Tape 3

00:31 **Rose I was wondering if I could take you right back to the time when you were performing as one of the Three Kessels.**

Right.

And just tell me a little bit about what you were actually performing?

Well we did the three like a trio act and more like balancing and tumbling. We did a lot of like flips and flip backs and somersaults and all that

01:00 and tinskies [?] which my wordings are probably different to what they use today in the, well it's more like gymnastics. But even, I mean I remember now even going back it was quite, people thought that even tumbling, it wasn't right for young girls to even to acrobat and tumble in those days either. They weren't really keen on it. In fact at one time there they tried to stop it. But that was later on,

01:30 later on in years. I remember that they tried to stop it. So they sort of were a little bit, oh I dunno. I dunno what they thought but they were trying to stop people, young children. I dunno whether they thought they were doing harm to themselves or what. But that did happen that they did try to stop people tumbling and all that and doing acrobats. But we did like a sort of a balancing routine and Marie and they used to take my hands and legs and do a flip

02:00 overs with me and we'd do all balancing like trios. I was sort of on Marie's shoulders and things like that and one would be out front. Or I'd be on Marie's legs out front and Marie would be on Joan's shoulders and things like that. It was all sort of balancing tumbling act. And I used to do 14 flips, well 14 flips and a somersault at the end of it. That's what I got up.

02:30 I was really a fast tumbler. And actually now I never ever finished that story. That troupe that we took over from I think I said I went to Sydney and Brisbane and all that. Well when they were in England they performed before the Führer, before Hitler. And I've got the write up too of it. Yeah so we didn't but they did the other troupe when they were away. But they were

03:00 classed as the world's best acrobats so we were taking over so we must've, we had to be very good tumblers to be able to be in the troupe. But the Three Kessels we did all the theatres and lots of shows before the movies which you'd do a show before the movie come on. And they've started to do that now actually. In fact one of the girls now she wants me to go and

03:30 see her show on Sunday down at the Canterbury Hurlstone Park RSL, Donna Lee [singer and entertainer]. She's, Chris Marshall? Remember Chris Marshall on the television? Do you remember Chris Marshall that had a musical day? Donna Lee her. Well she's got a show going now too with Doris Day and she's performing. What she does she comes out and performs and has and then has the movie on afterwards. So she does all the Doris Day routine and then the movie comes on

04:00 afterwards. So she's actually gone back to the old days of the movies. Of all what used to happen and I always say everything it's all just a circle. Everything even entertainment it's just a circle isn't it? It's like fashion. But yes we were in lots of competitions and things like that through the days through those early days. And Mum used to come with us when we were going into the theatres and all that she'd be there with us to make sure we

04:30 were dressed the right way and everything .

What would you be wearing for shows? What were your costumes?

Well we'd just wear like little skirts. And little tops and things. Just little short two piece things . But when we joined. When we, well I've got the photo up there of the troupe when we did the Tivoli Sydney and Brisbane. The girl

05:00 whose place I'd taken she was bigger than me and they didn't have a costume ready for me so I had to wear a little like just it was just like a little bubbly swimsuit type of thing but it was a costume in those. Today it's a swimsuit but in those days it was a costume . So yes it was sort of like leotard styles of things with little skirts and all that on . I remember my first performance in a pantomime I was the Little Drummer Boy. I was all dressed in as the Little Drummer Boy and we did it at the Kings Theatre in Melbourne. And I can always remember I

05:30 come down these stairs, I was at the top and I had to walk down all these stairs playing this drum. So and that's in the very early days. Trying to think of other things that trying to get back my memory on some of the shows. When we were doing the shows for the camps I was on a swing and they had me a blue and a pink outfit. It was satin. A blue satin with pink flowers on it and I was

06:00 on the swing singing. swinging in something it was called and the swing used to go out. They used to set the swing and everything up. The girls, the ballet girls'd all be around dancing and that so. Yes that was with Harlem Holidays I think it was called. The program's in there.

How, just going back to the start, how would you learn all of the acrobatics?

Well we went to teachers that taught

06:30 it. But they used to put us in a, like into a belt and they'd have the straps going over and they'd hold onto one side. Well the chap used to hold onto one side and you were belted up. So you'd do it. They'd say now I want you to do a flip. It was each side I think they had us on both sides now when I come to think. And we'd flip over and to give you your confidence and the belt you had a swivel on here and you'd go over or you'd [do] your back flips or whatever you were

07:00 learning. And that's how you started sort of thing. That's how they taught you. Gave you that confidence and showed you what to do and all that. And back bends and everything. But I also did a bit of contortion work as well. I mean in the shows. Later on in the later years I did contortion work. Which was more just the one out, bending down with glasses of water on me head getting down onto the floor and going through hoops and all that with the water and all this still on the head and all the rest of it

07:30 sort of. And what else did I used to do with it? I did quite a few things with in the contortion style with more or less kind of bending and your legs coming up over here and all that sort of thing. Can't do it today but I'd give it a go if I could.

I wonder as a kid was it frightening learning the acrobatics was it?

No. No. No. I can always remember. Well I was really I was something. I used to go over

08:00 to the, we had a park across the road over and when we lived in Northcote was near the Merri [train] station it actually was. And there was a park and I was telling the gentleman too when I was talking to him that time [Archive researcher] that in those days if it was hot we would all go over to the park. The families, which you couldn't do today, the families in the street would all pack up. It was so hot in the houses that we'd all go over to the park and all stay the night in the park. With all the kids all just running around

08:30 and playing and I can remember all that. And I used to go over and that's where I used to practice. I used to do me flips and all that over there and I was, I used to love it. I just loved it. Just even today to go and see a circus the adrenaline goes. The adrenaline goes just seeing them work . I sort of get and even Darren and them said it, he said, "Oh I see," things that we did sort of thing. He said, "You can see it you get so excited don't

09:00 you Mum?" . And I said, "Yes well it's that what I did." I said today I would have probably been in the Olympics. So you never know I might've won a gold medal. But yes I just loved work. I just loved entertaining I s'pose. I loved everything I did. So Mum did the right thing by us. She certainly did. She was good. Looking after

09:30 us and working. So she worked hard when you think about it don't you? Hey yeah. When you think about it she must have really cleaned a lot, to do, to be able to afford to do. Because Dad only earned four pound a week I know that. We did have a funny. I did have a funny story though too. That we had a two storey house in Ray Street this was in the early days and Mum rented the top

10:00 storey out to these people and they were from England. They'd arrived from England and Mum rented it to 'em and they were always saying they didn't have enough to eat and not enough money and all this going on. So Mum sort of , helped them out a lot and Marie reminded me all about this. And I can remember Mum. I don't sort of remember them but I can remember Mum telling me about it. But Marie sort of

- 10:30 gelled the brain a little bit. Anyway cause Dad was a great Labor man and army and all that he was a Labor man in those days. And these people were sort of, she was looking after them. Then all of a sudden people were coming up the back stairs. They'd have meetings and people coming up the back stairs. So Mum said to Dad, she said I don't know. She said, "We've got all these people coming in upstairs.
- 11:00 I dunno what's going on." And Dad said, "Well check it out." So Mum said, "Alright." She said, "I'll go up and see." So she spoke to the woman and the woman said, "Look you we're having a meeting. Would you like to come up?" So Mum said, "Yes alright yes I'll come up and have a listen." Mum went upstairs to have a listen. They were Communists. Communists and what they were saying that, "It doesn't matter how long it takes us that we will be in every area and
- 11:30 we will take over," in other words. The Communists. So Mum come downstairs to Dad and said, "They're Communists. They're Commos." So he went up kicked them out. Kicked them out that night. 'Cause Dad was, army and all that. And the English I mean after what they did to 'em I. Now I found out what the reason was now see. Now reading, finding out and reading the books of the stories of the Anzacs
- 12:00 gives me the answer to a lot of things that happened in our life sort of thing. So naturally Dad hated the English. He used to call 'em I won't say what he used to call em but that was the reason why. Because of them they were treated so badly over in Gallipoli. So that answered the question there. So Dad just kicked them out but unbelievable see. So the Communism thing and Dad was. We often laugh about it to Mum. Mum bein'
- 12:30 kind to them and everything and they were taking the food and stuff off her and yet they were quite well off. They were looked after and Mum said at the meeting they said that everybody that joined they would not have any problems. See you get into people during the Depression I s'pose and vulnerable people that were, didn't have money and all the rest of it, that they would be looked after and fed and well looked after if they joined
- 13:00 the Party. But my Dad, I could imagine my Dad. God he it would have been a riot apparently. But I don't remember cause I was very young then, I was very young. But Mum did tell me the story and then Marie. Funny enough Marie. I was speaking to Marie 'cause I talk to her nearly every day in America I won't tell you the phone bills. But I talk to her all the time and she said yes that's a good story Rose. She said, "You want to remember
- 13:30 that one." So I dunno whether it was interesting or not. But it's a true story. Yeah so what else happened in those days?

I wonder going back to all the acrobatics and bits that you were doing did the three of you ever have any injuries?

Well I did. What actually happened after we did the Tivoli and we come back to Sydney I was rehearsing and this is why I actually started saxophone. I

- 14:00 was rehearsing and I fell on the back of my neck and knocked myself out and I was a little bit of a mess . And Mum said, "Well that's it Rose don't do it anymore. Don't just don't tumble." And I was starting to baulk a bit which was. Baulk was which I'd go for a trick and I'd stop. See I was getting older so probably I was getting a bit. When I was younger I was just and I was getting just that little bit older and probably I was getting a bit
- 14:30 frightened with it. So apparently, and when that happened Mum said, "Well look." I said, "I don't want to do this anymore." I said, "I don't want to do the fast tumbling anymore." So I did contortion work which was just slow and all that sort of stuff. And I said I didn't want to so I said I wanted to learn something else and that's when I took up the sax. So I put all my energy then into learning that and that's, how old was I? Twelve.
- 15:00 Twelve when I won the 3DB thing. Then I was on Dick Fair's Amateur Hour [radio show] which was a very big show. And that's in; I don't know what age I am there. But that I was third I come third in that, but that was all over Australia. That was Dick Fair and Dick Fair was very well known on radio and all that in those days. I did lots of shows with radio people. I did shows for Edgely and Door [?] that there used to be shows going into the
- 15:30 Zoos of an afternoon for the people for them to sit there and be entertained. And they'd have the big bands there and everything going and I worked with Edgely and Door who was. Edgely who brings out all his father. His father. So I worked for them doing shows all around Melbourne. I did lots of. Well once I worked at once I won that 3DB show I got so much work. I was
- 16:00 paid. I was paid a guinea or something like that two pound and things like that for working. So I sort of started earning money in those days with that. But like with the acrobating as I said I was under apprenticeship with that. That was 10 shillings a week then went to a pound then 30 shillings. And you've never heard of an apprenticeship an apprentice entertainer have you? Today apprentice entertainer. I mean entertainers are just it's a different story
- 16:30 altogether so. Yes that was what else happened in those days just let me think.

I just wonder talking about payment I guess as a child performer what were you doing with the money that you were earning?

Well Mum had that. Mum sort of I s'pose put it back into all our clothes and looked after us and everything that way. We didn't I don't suppose you

- 17:00 saved in those days . And I'm still not a saver and I ruined my son. But he's a good boy anyway I'm very lucky. Yes well when I was earning the money. When we was in the Blind Show I was earning good money. What did I get in those days? It must have been about 10 pound a week and all found [including accommodation and food]. All our accommodation and everything found. Well we used to
- 17:30 I used well I used to spend I s'pose. I was young and I'd buy clothes and all sorts of things with it whatever I wanted. But we saved. When I was with Dennis we did save once. Dennis sort of took over cause I stayed with Dennis once I sort of I met Dennis when I was 16 and we were touring all the time then so I sort of, I didn't live with him. We lived separate but I still was with him all the time
- 18:00 . And then we got, 'cause he was I must admit he was one of Australia's gentlemen I must admit that. And he actually adored me so it was a real love story. So we got engaged. I s'pose I was about 18 when I got engaged and then we got married at 21. But we just toured and he looked after me. And my Mum absolutely loved him. She just loved him. She said
- 18:30 he was just so good. And he was and she always said he'd look after my little girl. Because I was a little girl even when I went out on tour. Well the first time I went out on tour I was just like a very, very young. I wasn't worldly. Even though I'd done all what I had done even as a child, toured and all that I was still very young, still a little girl. Because the people that we were with
- 19:00 Digger Pugh and his wife that took me to the guy I went on with when we were doing the Wallabies, they were called the Seven Imps. They had two names. The Seven Imps. Sometimes they used the Seven Imps. And sometimes they'd use the Seven Wallabies. Well that was the husband the wife, and they had two children the daughter and the little boy. So they looked after us. They really looked after us, they were wonderful people and they were, we couldn't speak too highly of them. So I was still very young
- 19:30 even when I met Dennis. In fact when I went out on tour I was actually calling bulls cows and I didn't, I wasn't really up in the world at all. And still in little short dresses with bows in my hair and everything. Mum had kept me. Well see Marie was in the American days and Marie was sort of, she was on the Tivoli as a soubrette [a standard young female character in opera & theatre] as well in the early days and that and Marie sort of I s'pose sort of had a bit of a faster life.
- 20:00 And Mum sort of kept to me. She hung on to me sort of thing and kept me younger sort of. And in lots of ways and, no I just wasn't, I s'pose, I wasn't worldly. But I'd done all these things but I still wasn't. Well a lot a people think she's a bit precocious and which today the kids are. If you see them in shows 'cause kids today are entirely different. it's even the ones in show
- 20:30 business are entirely different. They are a little bit they're. Well I think they grow up much faster these days than in our days.

I was going to say you hear a lot about child performers of any era I guess maybe being exposed to alcohol or sex or at a very early age?

No, no, no. I must admit that I didn't come across and with Marie. See Marie was with me

- 21:00 all the time and Marie was older so she sort of, she looked after me she did. She really looked after me with it. She was always and even today I think she's always treated me more like her daughter. Because even today she still calls her daughter Rosie. And Sandy's her daughter's name but she'll say, she'll be on the phone and I'm talkin' to Rosie oh Sandy. And even today she still does it. We were very close.
- 21:30 When I was working in the Blind Show days and costume wise I had beautiful costumes. She sent them all out from America for me gorgeous
- 21:38 (interruption)
- 21:44 And even to Marilyn Monroe's that she wore when it blew up the one she got the yeah. It was blue. Pale blue, dark blue and pale blue all the cording
- 22:00 pleated. The same style. Yes she sort of, we're still very close. Very, very close . She's not real well now. She's just had a one of these what is it? Not a pacemaker. Defib [defibrillator]. It's like a pacemaker but it's a new one out that they, it's a better one again that they've got. It cost \$106,000. \$106,000 for 22-hours in hospital. It's unbelievable isn't it?
- 22:30 **You were mentioning the costumes that she would send out to you. What were some of your favourite costumes as a kid I guess some of the ones your Mum would make?**

Mum would make? Well we had, just trying to think. Cause I was so young and I can't. With the pantomimes see I'm in the pantomimes and I'm trying to think. I can remember Marie's. I can remember Marie's big, her butterflies and it was green and it was georgette and Mum sequined it all. I

- 23:00 remember that as plain as day but funny enough. But I do remember the dresses that we had in our very early days and at the time Mum didn't have much money and that. And Marie had one and I can remember it as plain as day, and Marie had one and I had one, and it was like a blue twill, heavy, and we hated it. And they were down to here which wasn't like Mum. But it was awful and I still remember
- 23:30 that one and I don't know why we ever had it because she was into. We did all the showbiz and it was all lovely things but for that one I dunno what happened there. I dunno where that come from but I remember it for some reason or other. It might have been in the days she was wheeling us up to the crèche. That's what I think it was it was it's come back, a crèche. She used to put us in the crèche when she was going and that's when we were very young. But
- 24:00 19' she said, it's 1936 I think it I, she said the first pantomime she said it was. Around 1936 I think we did our first pantomime. So it'd be before that but I can remember that for some reason or other, that dress. But costumes. What else did we? I can't even remember what I wore even in the Kessels. The Three Kessels that we
- 24:30 had on. It'd be little skirts and little tops and two piece things in those days that we'd be wearing, and all little leotards and all that. What I actually, what I wore in the Tivoli was that up there. That in the photo there. Up there up the top that's what I wore. But I remember backstage. It was an old man at the Cremorne Theatre and he was a lovely,
- 25:00 lovely man he was a friend to me. And he had toys over the years people'd given him lovely toys and that. And he had lots of toys in the room at the back and I used to go and sit in there with him and talk to him and he let me play with all these toys of a night while I was waiting for them to, before I went home and that. Because I'd do I would work before I had to work before nine o'clock but they did another spot after nine o'clock. And that show was with Jenny Howard [English comedienne] and
- 25:30 Percy King [English variety star]. But that was the first time, Jenny had the first show, Jenny Howard came out to Australia. So was 19' I dunno what year that was but anyhow. 1941 yeah I do know '41. So it was Jenny and Percy and it was, and I can still remember backstage at the Tivoli in Sydney. Now that act didn't go on to Brisbane with us but they were a fabulous
- 26:00 Spanish dancing act. I can remember her costumes they were beautiful all frills and that and she was gorgeous. Gorgeous looking girl. And big rose in her hair and jet black and pulled back. But he used to flirt with the girls in the ballet and they used to fight and I can remember that as plain as day. They used to fight like, back on the, 'cause I'd be sitting on the back stairs and they'd come down the back after working and they'd be fighting with each
- 26:30 other and I do remember that as plain as day. But some of the other things. We went down to, we visited when we were in Sydney, we visited circuses, other big shows that. There was a big circus in town I got that photo somewhere too. We went and visited them and had a look at the circus to see them working. What they were doing.

What was your favourite thing to watch I guess in the shows that you were in but when you weren't performing how much would you get to

- 27:00 **watch of the rest of the show?**
- Well I couldn't see because I had to stay. I wasn't allowed to go. And you weren't allowed to go to the wings, I wasn't allowed to see anything that. I wasn't allowed to watch the shows from the sides or anything because that was a no-no. I mean in those days if you went to the wings and you were seen at the wings before your act was on you were fined. They would, yeah they'd take money out of your pay if you were caught. Oh yes it was very strict. They were very strict
- 27:30 with you. Today it's a different story altogether. But yeah they wouldn't allow us to. You'd have to, you'd be in your dressing room and then you'd do your spot and then they'd come back to the dressing room. But I used to go and sit with the, I'd sit in the little room with the, especially in Queensland I sat with the old man. I'll always remember him. He was a lovely old man very nice to me and there was nothing. I never ever had anything
- 28:00 sexual or anything like that nothing. I was well looked after I can honestly say. And I was so innocent. I was so innocent when I was married so that's the truth.

I wonder was it hard as a young kid not being able to go and watch the rest of the show? Was it something you wanted to do?

- Probably something I wanted to do. But probably be that they just wouldn't allow me. 'Cause they wouldn't let me go out the front 'cause I was too young to be sitting out in the seats
- 28:30 on my own. So they wouldn't allow that. But I used to go to a lot of the Tivoli when we were in Melbourne before we did Tivoli. And we used to go to the Tivoli a lot and we used to sit up in the Gods. Right up the top they were called the Gods. The Gods were the last seats to go sort of thing and they were sort of for the cheap, cheap, cheap, cheap, cheap seats and the public used to have to line up for those. You couldn't reserve them. And you'd have to go up so many flights of stairs
- 29:00 to get to the Gods so there used to be crowds of people and I used to get a bit claustrophobic. And I can always remember standing outside when we were going to see the Tivoli show and Marie said, well

Mum and Marie were there and they said, "Hold onto my hand," Mum said. And I said, "Alright." Well as the crowd went that way I went that way. And I'll never forget it they were screaming at me as if to. But we eventually went in and I said, "I'm not goin' in." I was sort of really claustrophobic. And even doing magic illusions cause I'll show you some of the

- 29:30 boxes and things that I went into so tiny that I still I was still that way and even to get in a lift today I still get claustrophobic. In fact the kids will tell you I'll walk up stairs rather than go into lifts and things like that. I s'pose it, what it was because I was so tiny that everybody up there all around me I was down here. So I was closed in. So I think this is what a lot of it was. But I had to get over it to work
- 30:00 the magic with Dennis I really had to. So Dennis'd say, "You'll be right," and push me head down in and then lock me in it so. But I think I put that down to, I can remember the boys. When we had the two storey house Mum had a trunk upstairs in the house and I can remember them putting me into it and 'cause, and locking and sitting on me. So I feel as though that's probably where it all.
- 30:30 And then and I was so tiny, what they used to do to me? We used to have the old lines, the clothes lines out the back? And they used to put me on the line and then prop me up and I'd be hanging on the lines. They did, they were good brothers but they were all things that went on in those days. That's probably, we played and all that so. Yes that was in, that was when I was very, very young. Can always remember that. But I feel as though that's really why, probably, I was, I got frightened and claustrophobic
- 31:00 is because of that, with them putting me in that trunk when I was very young yeah. But yes we did the magic. Dennis used to make, well as I said before, used to make all the magic and he'd make the magic to fit me. Like if you bought magic from England. If you brought magic from America or anything which was actually said. When we did the full show there were entertainers here that said they've gone to America and just bought green eyes it is they've just gone and bought all
- 31:30 their illusions. And actually Dennis built the illusions when we were in. When we were in the Blind Show he used to, one year it'd be an Indian he'd do a complete Indian fakir of magic. The next year it was like a complete circus trainer and then we'd do he did a complete drunk act. He did a bar act, he did all sorts of different acts. But he built all that on the road and we'd get into the halls in the daytime and he would go back and he would be building
- 32:00 for the next year. He'd have the show going but he'd be building all the illusions and stuff for the next year. So we had all those illusions all ready to go when we started the big show so. Then he built another lot or about another dozen illusions in that. We used to do a. With the big show we used to do like a cooking trick and they'd push me down in, they'd cook me in the pot.
- 32:30 Put me in the pot and then they'd take me over here, they'd, I'd be cooked and then they'd take me over to. Or they'd race over here to the, what's a name the grinder thing. Oh glory I've lost it. Now wait a minute I've got to get me story right because I got photos of it all. I used to go down into the pot and then come out of this thing over another box over her . So, but I've got it all
- 33:00 on photos so you can actually see and then I'll explain it to you. But then we'd have, we had girls on big platters which were a bit risqué because they were the topless girls. But they were like, one was a lobster and one was what was? One was a lobster and another platter over and she, one was something else. But all dressed like this. One was like ice cream and all that sort of thing and then Dennis would come out and produce doves and all that too.
- 33:30 And ducks. Yeah and he'd do where'd the, the illusion where did the ducks go and he'd put the duck in and vanish the duck and all that and then bring it back. And that's what else did we do in that in the cooking? It was a whole cooking trick Then we did another trick with a big buzz saw and that was done too, this was later on in years and it was done to Along Came Jones [song title] and I was thrown,
- 34:00 I was dressed all as a like in the old fashioned outfit and I come out and the singer would sing, then along came Jones. And they threw her on the railway line and they've got me and they throw me on the buzz saw, the big buzz saw, great big one. And then what they do, as they bring the cloth over the feet and the cloth over the head. The buzz saw would go through first and then after, once it'd go through they'd put a cloth
- 34:30 over the feet end and a cloth over the head and one of the girls would pick that part up and walk that way and the other pick the part up and walk this way and they'd do that to the death march and that was how we'd finish it. But what we did to make it, what Dennis did to make it realistic on the buzz saw he had it, sounds dreadful. Went and got brains and all stuff like that and fake blood. So as the buzz saw went through me I had a fake on here and in the fake we had all the
- 35:00 the brains and stuff like that and he had the bottle at the back with the fake blood. So as the buzz saw was going through he would press the button. All this would come up. All this it looked like entrails coming up, pardon me, and the blood would all spurt out. Well we did this at Revesby Workers Club, so that, I mean it was in later years. We did this in Revesby Workers Club and it was the first half of the finale. Well
- 35:30 after it and I'm screaming. I'm screaming as this is all happening. Cause there was a bit bustle and all of a sudden as they're closing the curtains on the two the girls walking off the two pieces there's dead silence. Everything went silent for quite a while then all of a sudden everybody went blah-blah-blah-blah. Everybody started to talk is it real? Is it real? Is it real? They really thought they'd made a blue

and gone

- 36:00 through me. But that was Dennis' way of making that so it was interesting with the magic. He was good yeah he was good. Good days.

Can you remember I guess as a kid any shows that really shocked you or worried you?

Oh well we went to the Tivoli show. The Tivoli shows used to be pretty risqué because Mo McCackie was pretty risqué yeah very risqué. He used to do which

- 36:30 did I dunno. But I went to them, but I never ever thought anything wrong what I mean, it was. I don't know what. I don't know, I never thought or no Mum thought well I shouldn't be seeing this or anything.

What sort of risqué?

Oh well they did sort of gags where that they were really risqué gags when you think about it. And I'm just trying to think with girls undressed and all the rest of it. And he

- 37:00 did use lots of bad words in those days . He used to swear a lot. But even though I heard those words I never ever, I s'pose never registered with me. Not like today see kids are brighter today because of television and you hear the swearing and all that like going on now so it's an entirety. But I never ever and it didn't register with me and I used to go to all the Tiv shows so. And they were and they had girls on stage

- 37:30 , they had the models and all that. The topless models, yeah so. But no I don't know why we never, too I s'pose we were all, I was innocent. But Mum never said anything. But that was for us to go and learn I s'pose to see other performers entertaining. I s'pose that's really why Mum took us to the Tiv to see how

- 38:00 other acts worked and gave us an insight of how to perform as well.

Can you tell me about, I guess the view from the God seats, how the stage was set up and what you'd see?

Yes. Well what you'd see, they in a circle like that, and you were sitting right up as though you were going to. It was like this you were going to topple over and there was the pit down there and all the band was down in the pit and then the stage area. Beautiful theatres in those days.

- 38:30 Lots of velvet curtains. Beautiful red rich velvet curtains and things like that and lighting and scenery. Some of those acts were absolutely amazing. They had a flying ballet and all those sort of things and I mean they do flying today but they did it in those days. And some of those entertainers were, and some of the balancing acts and some of the adagio from overseas were absolutely magnificent . Great. Great performers . Terrific performers. All variety.

- 39:00 All variety. Cause that's what we were Vaudeville. We were a Vaudeville act. That's what they. In fact I think we were last of the, pardon me, last of the variety acts here, in Australia still working. But

As a kid I guess, sitting there watching those shows, what were you hoping to do as a performer?

Oh well. To be in the bigger shows. Well just

- 39:30 to work all shows. I mean you just loved, didn't matter what show you did you loved I loved performing. Even when I was playing sax and I went into the band and Mum, that got a bit tiring. Mum did stop me from that because it was late nights and. Well I was still doing late nights with other shows but at that age, and it was all around the city and things were getting a bit. Things happened more in those days than they did in the earlier days. And Mum, as I said, got a bit tired of that.

- 40:00 But yes I just loved doing all shows. It didn't matter what I did, as long as I was out there in front of the people. I mean I was singing, what I was singing when I was, well I must have been, Marie said I was 6, I started singing in stage. And winning everything that I went on and another thing with the Kessels too if we went into, there were competitions and if we went

- 40:30 into the competition, all the other kids that were in the competitions. 'Cause a lot of them did a lot of the same performers. Say, "We haven't got a leg to stand on today the Kessels are on." So we had a reputation. We built up a quite a big reputation in those days. With our act with the three of us. So we must have been very good so. Yes. I'm just trying to think back of some of the things

- 41:00 with of Dad and Mum. What else happened?

Tape 4

- 00:31 I was wondering Rose, we were talking a little bit about the shows that you would go and

watch at the Tivoli.

The Tivoli yes.

Was there a particular performer or star that you looked up to, that you wanted to be like?

Well not really. I didn't even know, well I used to admire the, like anybody that was tumbling. Oh well like I would be, well I think, I can't remember, I dunno whether the

- 01:00 DePaul's or any of those worked. They worked the Tivoli but I dunno whether I saw them or not. I've got all the programmes I've got all their programmes. All the programmes of the Tiv. But I just liked any, if there was an acrobatic act or a balancing act or anything like that was coming out well I'd be there. Mum and I, we'd be there to see it. But I can't remember
- 01:30 the acts that I really could say that I admired. I loved all the acts. There was, I can see the, can't remember their name either. There was one act, it was a fabulous act, they were a skating act that I remember. And she was in, and I was backstage for that because I saw how that worked. So that must've been one of the acts that was in the show in one of the Tivoli shows that
- 02:00 we did. Because they put their arm. They were in a, it was like a big circle like a great big circle, thick circle like that and they were roller skates and they did a lot of roller skating out front. And then she went into this and then she sort of stood that way and then she start sliding like this and her arm. Her arm went out the back and they had a gadget at the back that wound her so it looked as though she was spinning.
- 02:30 But the gadget was, do you know what I mean? And she looked as though she was goin' like this but it was the other thing was sort of turning around right like with it. But that was one of the acts that I can remember and the balancing acts that were with us that we worked with. But as far as the shows going, when I went to the Tivoli all the shows. I can remember beautiful adagio acts and things like this and Mo. Mo McCackie I remember him.
- 03:00 Who else did I see there? I just can't think. I can't think about the, I'm just trying. I can see myself sitting in the Gods. I can see myself going into the Tivoli and how many times I don't know.

How much of a big deal was a show at the Tivoli, I just want to know?

Oh it was the tops. To work the Tivoli you were big time. To hit the Tivoli was it. Because they were all, a lot of them. But in the war days

- 03:30 they weren't the imported acts that's when the Australians got a chance. See in the war days it was more of the Australian acts that got. They didn't have as many. Whereas it used to be nearly all imported acts. But they didn't have as many they might've had one or two or one big name or something or a big act come through. But it was mainly more they put more of the Aussies in. So actually it was good because a lot of the Australians were seen. A lot of the Australian entertainers were seen that wouldn't have
- 04:00 been, wouldn't have got on at the Tivoli without the war sort of thing. So it set a lot of them up. So it was just wonderful, the Tivoli was and why they ever. Oh I s'pose times changes and the entertainment changed and theatres. Different things started and so I s'pose that's why it all stopped. And they started
- 04:30 closing the theatres and things like that. Show business sort of went a little bit quiet. Sort of got very quiet for a while. But now today I mean there's we're getting lots of shows and things now. Not the variety shows. Variety just died. And the trouble is the younger ones didn't take it on. A lot of them didn't do the, what happened in those days the acts that went in those days. I'm just tryin' to think of some of the wonderful acts. But the skating act always stuck in my mind.
- 05:00 That really must've, I must've been thrilled with it, thrilled watching it. But levitation you'd always wondered. Oh I'd better not tell you how it's done had I? We did levitation. You asked me if I ever got hurt doing anything in my younger days, I didn't. But I only that time after I come back from Sydney. I did get hurt doing magic with Dennis. Like we were doing a three swords suspension. Which is,
- 05:30 you balanced on one sword. There were three swords put up and you balanced on one and I didn't, the gimmick wasn't on and I fell from that, knocked out cold. Had to carry me off stage. Another time they did a leg chop. They were doing the sawing in half the leg chopper with like a big blade that come down and chopped your leg off and somebody had changed the gimmicks. Somebody being smart in the show thought they'd be and change the gimmicks. That came down and it luckily it sort of, as Dennis pressed it went
- 06:00 that way so I more or less instead of getting the blade I got the edge the timber part of it. Which I was sort of in a bad way with that for a while. So yes another time we did levitation at the Plaza Northcote in 1950. 1952 we were doing the levitation and as I'm rising I'm on it and with that it's the gimmick that goes out the back, pardon me, and as I'm
- 06:30 rising all of a sudden I go (sound effect) and head for the floor. And what had happened, it was a big gimmick at the back of the cloth and it had guy ropes, big guy ropes attached to it and one of the ballet girls raced across and tripped over and knocked the guy rope and knocked me and I was heading for the floor. Well we had a stage hand called Nelson and he was a huge man and he was backstage and

- happened to be standing there and he. And I mean it was a heavy prop at the back and he held it and
- 07:00 then all of a sudden I started to come back up again. Started to rise again and then he put the hoop and all that over me. Well Nelson held onto it until we did the whole, he knew the illusion and he held on until we did the whole illusion. But I wouldn't be here today if Nelson hadn't have been there. Because it would've gone. That had a gimmick it had a big iron bar. Today the levitation's not done like that. It had a big iron bar that went out through the back and it was attached
- 07:30 to me and I was on it. It was like a frame effect come around it was all iron. But that would've, I would've just gone. Like that would've gone right through me, it was very dangerous. Very dangerous. Yes I was very lucky, very lucky that Nelson was standing there. But the lass that, and it's funny story too. The lass that tripped over the prop, it broke and hit her leg and she was in a bad way bruised. And
- 08:00 strange thing, she died of cancer about four years later and we often think whether that big knock was anything. See years ago they used to say knocks used to give you cancer and things like that. But it might be a different story today. So you don't know do you? You don't know if it's triggered something off in her. And I can always remember Dad was a bootmaker as well too. And he used to do; it was a clicker so he leant on the iron
- 08:30 here all the time and the cancer he had stomach cancer and that was terrible. But then the army said the gas and everything from the trenches and everything probably did all that. But yes so but that was dreadful. But when Dad. I'm getting all over the place aren't I? But when Dad died they gave him a beautiful army funeral.
- 09:00 The flag on his and they all marched, all his mates marched in front of it. And I was what 15 at the time I remember that as plain as day. So that was, and funny enough I'd gone out on. I'd gone out on tour with the Blind Show then and I was out for 'bout six weeks and before I left Dad was as well as could be
- 09:30 yeah. And the cancer went through him in six weeks. When I got back and Mum had, we lived in a, it was sort of a shop frontage and used to have to come through that and into our house. And when I got through there was the one bedroom and Mum had had the door locked because Mum kept Dad home. She wouldn't let him; she looked after him right until the last minute. And by this time he was. Cause he was a very thin man then. There was nothing left of him.
- 10:00 And I've walked in and she hadn't told me that he was sick and I walked and she kept the door shut and she just opened it and I walked into it and saw him in the bed. And oh it was terrible, terrible to see him. And he died two days later. But in those days they couldn't give him anything to stop the pain so it was terrible. He screamed and I mean he was a strong man. He used to go and have his. He was so strong he used to go and have his teeth pulled without
- 10:30 anything. He used to go down to the, he says, "I've got to go and get a tooth out today." and he'd go down in Melbourne at, I can't think of the name of the street now, but they called him the butcher the dentist. But Dad used to go in there and boom-boom. So he was pretty strong he was. Well he was a strong man and yeah he screamed all night, all night until early hours of the morning. And Mum just went berserk. She went
- 11:00 raced up to the doctor and she said, "You've got to do something. You've got to do something." The doctor came down and he passed away. But yeah that was pretty strenuous for me because Mum was gone, Marie wasn't there. And the boys sort of they were, the boys were off on their own and I was only there with Mum and I looked after. I did everything. I had to handle the whole funeral and everything so that was just a bit, a bit
- 11:30 what's a name. But it was beautiful, I must admit they really gave him the full works for it. The army did. The [Department of] Veterans' Affairs looked after it for him . So it was great that way.

You've mentioned your mum coming to the shows but did your dad and brothers come and see you and Marie perform?

- 12:00 Not Dad. I don't ever remember Dad being there. And it's funny I don't remember my brothers being there. So I think Mum and us we were sort of all, I dunno. I dunno what went on there but Mum. Dad, no Dad didn't come to see us, I can't remember my Dad. I think he was very proud of us. But he was like this, he was I mean, I'd come home from school and even Marie, I can remember Marie. But Marie wasn't allowed to bring her friends.
- 12:30 Dad would never let her have friends in the house and I remember that. And if I, when I did go to school I would have to be home at a certain time and I would always remember I was late home one afternoon and Dad really gave me a hiding [beating] for that. And I was to be home at certain time and that was it. 'Cause I can remember my, some of the kids that used to go down to, they used to call it Ruckers Hill I
- 13:00 think. And they'd all go down there after school and swing on some of the trees and things like that as kids did in those days and I was never allowed. I was always, well I did want to go to that but I was never allowed to go. Dad, I had to be home and that was it. So, but he was a pretty, I dunno whether it was the war that did it to him or not but he was pretty strict in lots of ways. And he gave the boys a hard time. He really did give the boys a hard time I remember that. But
- 13:30 I think that's to do with all the, of what they went through. Changed their whole life. And when it's all

said and done we all, it changed our lives in lots of ways probably. It changed the boy's lives. They've all settled down now. They were a little bit wild. The two boys were a bit wild. But they've got lovely families and they've really happy and everything over in Victoria. But Dad was difficult he was difficult to

- 14:00 sort of live with. And I blame it for the war. Now I know, I know 'cause the poor devils they've gone through hell on earth, wasn't it really? When you think about it. Have you ever read what they actually went yeah. So you probably know what I'm getting at and I really think that changed our lives in lots of ways too as far as Dad being concerned and we lost him early too. So we didn't have Dad. But Mum
- 14:30 did marry again years and years later. She wouldn't go and live with anyone. She never lived with any of us and she married twice after that. We often wondered, we used to say what are you doing Mum? . But she married twice but that was Mum yeah. And she was, in her later life she met a lovely man and he was the second that'd be the
- 15:00 third husband but he was a lovely man. He really was. She had a great life towards the end. She had, she was well off. She lived on farms, he was a farmer. And they had lovely properties down in Bairnsdale and she used to get out on the tractor and out there and driving the tractor and all sorts of things. She was really a great woman in lots of ways. She sort of, she'd
- 15:30 hop into things. And I'll tell you what she did do for us. I dunno where I've put it. But she sat down when she was with Harry and she wrote a whole show for Dennis and I and called it the Fabulous Bandels. The whole programme from start to finish. From the opening the music and what, how the acts went.
- 16:00 Like Dennis would come on. I'd come on and play my sax while Dennis changed to come back on and do his magic. And the whole, and I found it recently too. And I thought unbelievable. It must have taken her I dunno how long to do it. But she wrote the whole show for us to do. And that was in and called it the. And set out like the brochure, like how to put the brochure out and everything for our publicity and that. But she was just showbiz. She just loved show
- 16:30 business wonderful. Had ideas for it, for selling the show and everything else. And yeah, I just not so long ago I found that and actually, I dunno what I've done with it. But the program was all there. It's probably in my trunk. Cause I've got a trunk in there and that's still full of all our publicity and everything so it's probably in there. Yes.

I'm wonder, I mean as a child this is almost a dream life of this...

It is

- 17:00 **...fun performing and...**

That's right it's, yes to me it was wonderful it was exciting life in one way. But probably at that age I didn't realise, I'd just think, "Oh well I'm goin' off to do a show this is it." And loved it. Just, it was just what I was brought up. I was just brought up to be in show business and that's. Mum must've put showbiz in our head. Must a thought that she was,

- 17:30 I dunno, I s'pose it's given us something. It's just given us and she succeeded. Because Marie was wonderful. Marie was a wonderful singer as well and a dancer and she did, before she met Gerry or was that after Gerry? No Gloria. Now Gloria Dormer's [Gloria Dawn?] a very well known entertainer here. Well Gloria was at the Tivoli theatre in Melbourne and then Marie was in the Tivoli. She must've been in the ballet then and then
- 18:00 she was. No she must, or did she do soubrette then? But she finished up going to South Australia and as a soubrette. The Tivoli sent her over to South Australia to do the Tivoli in South Australia as a soubrette, that's right. And when Marie got over there she didn't like it. So Marie decided that she was coming home. So she got as far as the border and she didn't have a permit. Because in those days you had to have a permit to get from across the border.
- 18:30 So she didn't tell Mum. Up and up she went, she was off. And she got to the border and luckily it just shows you. I mean today you be petrified wouldn't you. But she got to the border and she was stuck and she happened to speak to a lady, a family and they got her across the border for her to continue on by train home to Mum yeah. So, and that's another
- 19:00 little story for the days of the war because you couldn't go from state to state unless you had your permit. You weren't allowed out.

I wonder how you saw, what other changes did you see? You mentioned a few bits and pieces but during the war, I mean, as a child how did you see people around you changing?

Everybody I think people were all a bit more. People were, what was it? They were scared. I

- 19:30 mean people were worried. Because they had their sons and all that going away and everybody was worried. But I s'pose with us doing entertaining and that Mum kept us sort of busy with it all and probably didn't, she didn't, probably didn't harp on that side of the, that the war was on. She was worried and built the trench and all that sort of thing.

20:00 But with people, yes everybody was just it was sort of a. Everybody was just worried. And all you're worried about was I s'pose living because of your rations and everything like that, your food and things like that. So everybody was just I s'pose it was a frightening time in one way.

20:30 Very frightening but I don't think as children. Children you don't realise exactly what it's, what was really happening.

What would you as kids get up to during the blackouts what would you do?

Well we just, well you weren't allowed outside. You couldn't go outside. Because once you closed up you stayed in. But we used to sort of try and see, we'd look at the searchlights and try and

21:00 see those. But you'd get into trouble if you, there was a lot of trouble if you didn't have your windows blackened out and all that. And I'm trying to think of the, what else? On the day we used, I didn't play that much with children. I was sort of I can't even. See I didn't have girlfriends or anything like that. I had a couple a schoolfriends that would often

21:30 come over. But they gave up on me because Mum didn't want me to go out and sort of do anything like that. It was more stay home and practice. Just practice showbiz. So I was always with, I was sort of with Mum most of the time. And I think that's why Dad sort of later on pushed me into the Blind Show. Because Mum was sort of holding onto me in lots of ways. And yet she

22:00 let me know, what you don't understand is she let me go see. So it was strange wasn't it? And I s'pose she thought that was an opportunity the Tivoli. I s'pose she thought, "Oh this is what we've worked for and here it is." It's like a, so it was I s'pose really. It was absolutely wonderful opportunity she thought as you'll see the contract and all that, she just s'pose, thought. Then all of a sudden she started thinking about it while we were away and she said no she wanted us back. She didn't want us to go on any further.

22:30 But he did say that he was going to take us back to Melbourne. But he had the idea of to leave from Sydney but he didn't. He was supposed to be taking us back to Melbourne and I can't understand what happened there. I think it was through Mum, we were lucky that Mum decided, that she wanted us back, that we went back home. But I can't remember, that was,

23:00 they didn't, they were very good to us. I mean Digger he was very good. He finished up going back to England. Oh another thing he had was photos. He had photos of when they did some shows and he had some army war, the big from the German days, some big Germans coming off a boat and he got photos of them. And he sold them after the war I know that and made a lot of money on

23:30 them. But he showed us those and I can remember that. And I dunno who they were. I can't remember who they were. Cause he had, I mean we'd never seen, he had cameras, had a film camera and we'd never seen. I mean that was amazing to see that in those days. And of course I s'pose that was all big deal for Mum and all of them. And seeing the girls performing all over the world in Europe and in England and everything I s'pose that's why she thought, "Well this is

24:00 this is too, for us two an opportunity. I can't let them miss out on this one." and that's why she let us go with him. But he had something to do with the Germans. And funny enough I read something about it just recently just, and I thought yeah that sounded like one of the names that was coming off that boat that Digger Pugh took, the photos. But he said, "Well this is all hush, hush." So he got it all on the

24:30 quiet and as I said they performed before the Führer [Adolf Hitler] and they were told. He did Charlie Chaplin act and they said he was not to do it because the moustache might offend the Führer . Yeah so they were a fantastic act. It was a little bit of self, it was a big thing to be in it, in that troupe. And I can see where Mum, I

25:00 think probably she was broken hearted that we went and she couldn't cope. We only did Sydney and Brisbane; she couldn't cope without being with us so that's why we came back. She couldn't let us. She'd let us go but probably she couldn't. She wouldn't let us leave the country that's it. So it was, yes I dunno. She was perhaps, had a hard life in some ways too with Dad. Probably Dad was, and that's to

25:30 do with the war because it's happened to the Vietnam people [veterans] here now hasn't it? I mean look how many marriages broke. So we were pretty lucky that they stayed together even for all those years afterwards so. So Dad had two brothers. Three brothers he had that went with him. There was Arthur went. He had another brother Arthur and Uncle Bill he went as well. They were four, oh no Uncle Roy didn't

26:00 go. There were the three, Arthur, Oh yes Chick. Uncle Chick and Uncle Mac. Uncle Mac and Uncle Mac. Dad, Uncle Mac, Uncle Roy and Uncle Bill and they all went. They all went the four boys all went but they weren't in Gallipoli. They all joined later. They were later in, they went later so. They all went to France I think and that but

26:30 they were later on. But Dad was the first one. And apparently Dad was in Sydney at the time when he joined up so. So...

With all the excitement of touring and also just everything that was going on in your home how hard was it to settle into school when you were actually there?

Well I didn't like school. I was, and then another thing about school

- 27:00 too was that my brothers were before me and Marie was before me. Even though Marie was older she'd left but she was older, but she had been through the school. And they used to say to me you're not as good as your sister. Or you're not as good as your brother. And I wasn't interested see. So I just said, and I used to say, but I want to be in show business. Well the nuns just didn't understand that and I can remember going to school. They had a, they did
- 27:30 a play and I was dressed as, what did I come up in one of my outfits? Now if only I could think of that. I can remember that because I wore one of the outfits that I'd been wearing in the army concerts. And the nuns were horrified so it must have been a little bit brief. So I do remember that now. So they must have been, it must've been brief. So that was one of the costumes that I'd had from the camp shows.
- 28:00 Yes but I, school no I just, I wasn't interested. I did certain amount of it. After I got back from Sydney well then I did schooling until I was what would I be? I was 14 and I was still doing, going to school and then, and I did my, what did we have those days? It wasn't...
- 28:30 You actually went how they go to sixth class now then you go into high school from now. Well we went up to eighth class. We called it eighth class in those days and I did my School Certificate. So I actually got through that. So I must've had a bit of schooling but I hated it. In fact when I was a little one and when Mum sent me to school I used to get as far as the park and then I'd sit on there, sit
- 29:00 on the park, open up my bag, tear my books up and start at tumbling and practice tumbling on the park. "I'm not goin' to school." "Not goin' to school no." "Not going to school I wanted to tumble." So they'd have to come and take me off, come and get me. Mum'd come and get me and take me up the school. Kids'd come home and they say, "She's torn her books up and she's over there on the park." But I didn't think I was a naughty girl, a naughty little girl at all. But that was it
- 29:30 I loved it. What was I wasting my time in school when I could be dancing and singing ?Although I learnt, I did learn piano from the nuns. They taught me music. But they knew I did, they did know I did camp shows and things. They used to be a bit annoyed about it. They used to growl about it. It's a wonder they didn't I s'pose like it's a wonder they didn't report Mum
- 30:00 to welfare and all that. Probably it's a wonder they didn't. But they didn't, they were quite nice. But I must've got a bit of schooling anyway. I must've done some, got through some of it. But I hated it. I detested it. And then later on, now when I think about it I think I should've gone onto college and that but why?
- 30:30 Why? I've had a great life haven't I? What would I have been? I don't think I would've sat in an office would I? No, no, no. I think I had a great life.

I wonder Rose you're mentioning a few of your costumes, did the rationing during the war ever effect you?

Well I dunno how Mum, what happened with Mum. She must've got coupons for the pantomimes and things like that. So I dunno how she made the costumes and could buy the materials but

- 31:00 that I can't answer because I can't answer it. Because we had lots of costumes when we did the pantomimes and things. And even in the camp shows but whether the, when we did the camp shows, I'm just wondering whether the organisers might've supplied the costumes in those days. So that could've been the answer there. I think Gerry did. I know, I think with Gerry Clawson, I think with his and the one that the Melody
- 31:30 Makers that we were in, the first one was the Melody Makers, well that was I thought. When I spoke before I thought it was Gerry but it wasn't. It was Daisy. George and Daisy Forcina [?] they were and their son Ken. They did the Melody Makers and we did the camp shows in 1940 it must've been then. And I've got an idea they must've supplied our costumes for that. Although I would've had costumes back from
- 32:00 my working anyway and from pantomimes and things like that. So probably we used those in the shows too. But I don't know how Mum managed it. When we were doing early pantomimes, how Mum managed with all the rationing and everything. Whether they supplied, they might've given them. See they might've been able to, I don't know they might've been able to ask for extra for
- 32:30 extra coupons perhaps for things like that, because at least you were doing something for the public sort of thing. Because entertainment was the thing they, once like war entertainment was it. That's what kept everything going. As you know with the boys overseas. Look at Bob Hope [American comedian known for entertaining troops]what he did. So that was the main thing to keep the boys happy. Well even today
- 33:00 they still go out and do it don't they? Entertainment was the answer. Because it was. Although I do remember the Armistice when war was over. People just went mad. People just went berserk. They danced. They screamed. And I can remember the boys, the paper boys, my brother was a paper boy and I can remember the paper and it was 'It's over!' It's over yeah

33:30 war's over. It was really I s'pose I feel it today but I s'pose we all felt it then. We felt that even though we were kids, children all that it was a relief that what we'd been living in it was over so. We must've sort of realised in some ways that it was, things were terrible. So yeah it was fabulous that was.

What did you do that day?

34:00 Well we were all, all of us out in the street just dancing, everybody was. Everybody was, it was just unbelievable. Just oh. But I tell you what, we used to listen to Churchill [Winston Churchill, Prime Minister of England] and that talking which I know remember. Dad'd tune in and he'd give a message and things like that, can I remember that. On the radio they would, we'd listen to what was happening. I know Dad

34:30 listened to the war a lot probably because of that. But I do remember that the radio going and lots of army. Like the Andrews Sisters in those days. Do you remember the Andrews Sisters? [American girl singing group] And they would sing all that and they'd have them on the radio and all that. We'd listen to them singing. And they'd what Bugle

35:00 Boy yeah. Something Bugle Boy [Boogie Woogie Bugle Boy] they used to sing and yes so we sort of, we were getting news of all, you were listening to news and things, I can, that all happened. So there were worrying times, but we sort of had our good times. You'd still go out and go to the pictures and things like that or go to shows and watch. So...

35:30 **What were some of your favourite songs around that time? I guess growing up?**

Growing up? Oh let me think now. I used to sing what's the number? It's in there I told you before, I've forgotten it now. It's written in there anyway. Rose, little Rose McLachlan [?] singing Beneath the Lights of Home because that was. And I'll tell you who we used listen to, Vera Lynn [singer]

36:00 and We'll Meet Again. She used to sing the We'll Meet Again numbers and who else what else? Marie used to sing numbers like Verlea [?] and Oh My Beloved Daddy I think that was another one. But I can't even remember the music that we used, even for our act. Now I can't remember the songs.

36:30 But they'd probably be listed there the numbers that we did. The songs and that we did in those days. And it'd probably tell you a lot of the. In the programmes it'd probably tell you what the acts were, what the singers and all that were singing too. No I'm a little bit; I'm trying to think of some of the songs, the numbers. You're in the Army. Mum used to sing to me when I was a little girl

37:00 and she used to sit at the table and I can always remember Mum singing it was something to do with your Father. Something to do with Dad, your Father. It was a song about your Father from the war, from the First World War. But I used to sit there with her and I'd cry and it was so sad, I can remember and I used to cry. I used to sit with her and after every time she'd sing it tears'd

37:30 be running down my cheeks. But yes I can remember some and funny I was thinking I was trying to think of the song My Mother's I dunno. My Father's something or My Mother's something it was [?]. But it was a war number from the First World War I know that. And she used to sing to me and I used to cry every time it happened she'd do it for me . But I can't remember the songs.

How did Beneath the Lights of Home go?

38:00 I can't, now wait a minute.

\n[Verse follows]\n Beneath the lights of home I can see your smiling face.

Oh you've got me. Beneath the, I can't sing. I can't sing it now. But no. It's too many, many, many, too many years. What I was, how old was I? I was what six. So that one's yeah. I remember the song. I remember the song. I remember Libby Bart [?].

38:30 They're all numbers like they used to sing you'd be far better off in a home those sort of things the army songs. And oh I know. I've lost it. I've had it and I've lost it. We used to sing You're in the Army Now. You're in the Army Now. Things like that. And what else was it there?

39:00 I had the number. There was all the old war songs. And always Vera Lynn's We'll Meet Again.

\n[Verse follows]\n Don't know where don't know when.\n But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.\n

That one. I'll always remember her singing that one. Oh I know The White Cliffs of Dover. That's another one. Yes the White Cliffs of

39:30 Dover.

\n[Verse follows]\n There'll be blue birds over the White Cliffs of Dover tomorrow.\n When the...

Oh I can't remember but that was another one. The White Cliffs of Dover. What other numbers ? Well I used to sing. I was always singing so. Because I did every year we

40:00 used to do, years after we used to do the Anzac Day so we used to do all the songs and all that for the

old diggers and all that. We'd put, we'd do shows always on Anzac Day and I used to get up and sing all those numbers. And that's not so long ago so I should be, I should remember them all.

What songs would you sing at the Anzac Day?

We'd sing all the old songs. And all the

\n[Verse follows]\n

40:30 Nursie come over here and hold my hand. Nursie da da da da da da da da.

And all the old diggers would sing it . Yes let me think of some of the others. All of them. We used to do them all. It's funny how sort of things come into your mind. I can't. What other numbers we did? Cause Den and I used to play them too. Banjo and sax. We used to do them on

41:00 that as well. You'd be Far Better of in a Home there was that one. What's the one they used to do to with marching too, all the soldiers? Yes there was a song the soldiers all used to do when they were marching to things that we used to do too.

Tape 5

00:30 **Rose so what are the other songs that you remembered over lunch?**

It's a long way to Tipperary. It's a long way to go. And I'm laughing outside. Laughing on the inside. I'm laughing on the outside. Cause I'm still in love with you. And I'll be seeing you with all I've forgotten the words. La-la da-da-da-

01:00 dum-da-dum. That was a very old one. I remember that one yeah. There were some of the old numbers we used to do. And my costume too. My costume now we've got was. When I was with the Three Kessels we had they were a black and gold but with little puffed sleeves and they were midriff they'd come under here and the little flared skirt, what I did say. But yes so that was our

01:30 costume that we wore with the Kessels. And also with our costumes Mum did work. She used to go out and as I said before, do the washing and all that and work with Patricia Anne clean her house and everything. And apparently Patricia Anne was very good to her and that's how she managed to keep us dressed and everything and made us, and take us dancing and all that. But

02:00 I can't think of any other numbers so.

Well I'm wondering if you could tell me a bit more about the Melody Makers and what you did in that show?

The Melody Makers were. It was run by George and, George and Daisy Forcina [?] and their son Ken was in it. And we went all around the camps doing shows and I was singing in that. And

02:30 also I used to acrobat as well. I used to do a tumbling as well. And dance and there was, there used to be the girls they used to have the ballet girls and that and often I'd do a little routine with them as well out in front. But then we'd all go to the, went to all the different camps with this show. And...

And how did you find the troops responded to you being a child performer?

Oh they

03:00 used to. They, oh they thought it was wonderful. And they used to come and talk to us afterwards. I mean we always used to go and they'd have refreshments and that for us after our shows, and the soldiers would come up and talk to us and they'd talk about their families and things like that and ask. Well they all sort of thought I was cute. That was it. I was a cute little girl. So they were all very nice and they used to just chat to us afterwards and thanked us

03:30 for coming and doing the show. It was all, but it was just I s'pose it was wonderful really to be able to give them a bit of family, sort of seeing families and girls and all that. And because they were missing their own, missing their own children and all that sort of thing. So it was nice for them to talk to, to have someone there and they'd say I

04:00 sort of brought back their own home life . So yeah it was, they were all lovely. All the soldiers always used to be great to talk to and that, very nice.

And how did you gather the material to put your show together?

Well we'd all used. They rehearsed because they were all different acts. So we'd all get together and we'd have an opening and we'd always have a finale. So they were more like variety shows. There would be singers and

04:30 dancers and we did a few chainers [?] as well. Which chainers [?], which is of the whole, all the girls and that in it together. And they used to have a finale. We'd always all finish up as a finale at the end of the

show. And we'd have singers and well have magicians too in those days too and. I'm just trying to think of some of the acts. We had a lovely one of the shows, the camp shows that we did I'll always remember we had Matt. Matt Veeta [?] was his

05:00 name and he was a harpist and the boys used to love it. And he'd sit there and he was a little man. And he looked like DeVito the little. Yes what's his name DeVito [American actor, Danny DeVito]. Just looked like him and he used to sit there with this harp and play these beautiful, I can see him today. Absolutely beautiful. Beautiful classical numbers all on this harp. And they used to, the boys used to absolutely adore it. I mean it wasn't only just the girls dancing and all that. They

05:30 loved everything. They really loved all the entertainment. Because it took 'em out of themselves. It took all the worry of where they were ending up or what was going to happen to them and it gave them, it was a like. Well as the old saying it was the entertainment that's what bought life to them and gave them I s'pose a bit of hope that, and making them think, "Well everything's not all army and it's not just strict rules." It

06:00 gave 'em a chance to relax and to sit down and enjoy something. Something different and brighten their life a bit. Cause when all's said and done the army it was pretty strict wasn't it.

I've heard stories from other performers during the wartime about the kind of mobile stage that they used to move around on. Can you tell me about your stage?

We were, a lot of the times we just worked in the, like they had the mess.

06:30 It was like the mess and that. And sometimes at the camps had halls in them as well. But we did one show, and I remember that one and it was on the back of a big, like a big, just like a trailer type of thing and it poured with rain. And all the army guys they were all sitting out with, holding up they still sat there. They sat there right through holding up tarps over them and they had to

07:00 put the tarp over us for us to perform. But it was pouring with rain but the show still went right through, they still and the boys still sat there and watched it. And they used to be so they were so enthusiastic. They loved it. Anything to brighten their lives. I think that's I mean when you see, even with like the ones that went overseas and all that. I mean, I think that they were well you see, that they were wrapped that people have come

07:30 all that way to go and entertain them. And actually taking risks too. Which we didn't do. We were just more or less for the comfort ones at home and all the one's that were in hospital and things like that. The one Heidelberg Hospital was Americans. We entertained the Americans there. And they were very good too

How would you set up in a hospital?

Well they'd have areas there were areas that

08:00 you could work in and they'd give us sort of rooms off that we could go and change and all that sort of thing . But it's amazing what they'd come up with. And we'd go into, even afterwards we went into a lot of vet places where the veterans had come back to and that and they used to, and we used just sort of do it on the floor in down on, just down on the floor in front. But a lot of places did have a lot of the camps

08:30 did have their mess halls. Big mess halls for them and we could go, we worked in those and that. And lots of times we finished up afterwards we'd sort of, they'd put on refreshments and then other times we'd go into the officers' mess too afterwards too and talk to the officers as well. They would entertain us too and talk to us . So yeah it was

09:00 well it was exciting. It was all very, it was all well organised and we weren't allowed to take photos. They wouldn't allow us to take photos. And Mum had to sign giving us permission to go into the camps and that. But the one with the Japanese I, it must have been Cowra. It had to be Cowra wouldn't it? And it's as plain as day. I can see them as plain as day. And I can remember

09:30 thinking, "Gee they're well looked after." They were well looked after. They weren't, and they didn't seem that unhappy but I can see them smiling at you. But that was, it had to be Cowra because we went up and stayed. Some of the places we went up and stayed overnight in the camps and in the barracks. Because, and they had the beds and they were funny and they

10:00 used to collapse. So I mean they'd apparently, they were set so that when we got in they'd all go clunk-clunk-clunk and, just as a joke to the entertainers. They had 'em all set up funny. But I can remember that

Well I've also heard stories about troops giving wolf whistles to people on stage?

Oh yes. Oh yes. There was a lot of that. A lot of wolf whistles and a lot of

10:30 whoa-whoa and all this sort a business . They were wonderful, wonderful audience. Every entertainer would tell you soldiers are the best to entertain.

Why is that?

Because of it's I s'pose, taking them away from the army. It's taking them away from all that because I mean a lot of them, I mean they weren't all happy in the army so they just had to be there. Cause a lot of

11:00 them were taken in weren't they? So a lot were not happy people in there and so probably hated it but for something light and it sort of gave them a bright light in their life sort of thing. It brightened the whole thing up for them. It took 'em away from it, from the everyday drudge of army life. So I think that's really what it was all about so. But all entertainers will tell you to perform before soldiers absolutely fabulous. And they enjoyed everything.

11:30 Loved everything, all of it. They loved, didn't matter what was on, whether it was classical. In fact they enjoyed the classical, pardon me. In fact the classical girls, a singer used to kill she used to go a riot 'cause they just. They enjoyed good music and everything so, because there were musicians and all sorts in amongst them anyway and all walks of life isn't it when it's all said and done. So they would've, that's why there were one's there loved

12:00 it. But they loved everything and it didn't matter. And they applauded and they showed us that they appreciated everything we were doing. But...

Well I'm wondering how the war affected your show?

In what way?

Well I'm thinking of the type of material that you performed?

Well they used to sing, there used to be girls and that would impersonate the Andrews Singers

12:30 singing songs like We're in the Army now. We're in the Army now and all those sort of songs and that, and so they used a lot of all sorts of things like that as well. And they'd sing songs like You'd be Far Better off in a Home and things and all those sort of things. So they still did army sort of songs. As well as their own, as their own repertoires and all that sort a thing

13:00 yeah.

Well you hear stories about some of the war songs being quiet melancholic?

Yes but they seemed to, the soldiers seemed to. They'd have their times when they probably, it would remind them of their loved ones so a little bit of thoughts of home and all that sort of thing so they'd still like those. Like I'll be Seeing You and all those sort

13:30 of songs. They, it's natural they'd be, they'd love those songs because it's perhaps thinking of their loved ones and their families and everything. And they'd probably like to, it would back lots of memories for them I suppose. Yes they seemed to like those as well that. So they didn't want all light material. No and they didn't get it because everything, it was always varied in

14:00 lots of ways, the singers the dancers the tumblers and all that, the acrobats and all that and the musicians work. So they got a bit of everything, a very good variety of entertainment. If you see the ones that went overseas it was always the variety in that as well.

Well I'm wondering how if you recall it doesn't matter if it's not precise it but roughly

14:30 **how big was your Melody Makers Troupe?**

Well

Just roughly?

Just roughly? I'm trying to think. I'm not quite sure. I am really not quite sure. There was a lot of us. There were the ballet girls like, the ballet girls. There would've been the band. Sometimes have the three piece band or a four piece band. Well there was me cause I was out as a soloist in lots of things.

15:00 And then there was Kenny. Kenny Forcina [?] he used to he was a Formby impersonator like Dennis too, George Formby impersonator. There would've been the girl singer. Can't think of her name Marie something or Maree something. But yeah singer. Well it was quite a few. A good full big bus load of people in it. So there was fair

15:30 amount in the shows.

And where would the band sit when you were performing?

Oh down the front or down on the side. Or if there was enough on, if you had stages you'd get side stage or most of the time they'd get down the front or on the sides somewhere. You really had to fit into whatever. Whatever camp you went to you had to work to that so. You had to work what

16:00 amenities they had. But it's amazing what you could work on actually. You could if you could have seen, with our large Kazaam show, which we had quite a few people in that, and it was amazing. We went into small bowling clubs and even had the leopard on stage so I mean it's amazing what you can do when

you have to.

Well I'm just wondering with the Melody Makers if you recall using microphones or any kind of technology like that to help you?

- 16:30 Well I must've because I used to sing and I would've had to have a microphone and they were great big microphones. That's right they were those big, big massive microphones that's right. I had to have a mic to sing so they must've had the microphones in those. And I can remember the old mics I can remember those. They were when you went into and into the radio stations and things like that. They, I mean they'd almost hide your face the microphones of those days. So what else did they,
- 17:00 what else did we have in props? We had props and things like that for the chainers [?] and things, I used to carry things. And make settings to give it a little bit, something a little bit different. But it all depends on what areas we had. Because you couldn't, sometimes you'd just work, you'd just sort of be bang-bang-bang-bang-bang-bang-bang with not much to fill in. You couldn't because there wouldn't be enough room. But yeah the mics I remember the old

- 17:30 the mics . They were massive big things.

And I'm wondering if you ever suffered from nerves?

I can only remember once playing up on, being not wanting to work and that was when we were doing the Kessels. I must have been sick because we went into the show and I just didn't want to go on that night for some reason or other. So, which was, just wasn't

- 18:00 me. And it's a funny story actually because I got out there and I didn't want to, I just decided I wasn't working. I must have been sick. I must have been feeling a bit off as a child. Children get a tantrum and I must have had a tantrum. But we used to do, we'd go into a pose and it was all very pretty and everything else and I'd go into a pose and go like this. And I was all making faces and everything else and Marie and them and Joan would go to take hold of me to
- 18:30 do different lifts and things like that and I'd go. "I'm not goin'. I'm not. No no no no." And all the audience started to laugh and it was, it was a talent quest actually this one and apparently they thought it was a comedy and we won. We won that night again. Because they thought that we'd turned it into comedy and it was only that I just didn't want to work. And I remember that and it was at theatre
- 19:00 up in. It's the main street that you come into Melbourne if you're coming off the highway. Comes down right down into Melbourne. It's a big street and it's a big long street and it goes right through as if you were coming out to Sydney. I can't think. I know the name of the street and there was a theatre there. That's where it was. It's as plain as day. But Marie and Joan never ever forgave me for that I'm afraid. They were really upset yeah.
- 19:30 But we won and it was a, we afterwards I sort of laughed and they laughed cause it was funny. It was really funny. But that's the only time that I ever remember being, I never ever wanted to go on I must have been just in a tantrum for some reason or other.

It is quite extraordinary that you've never really suffered from nerves?

Well in later years I did.

- 20:00 I used to get all hyped up and especially during the Kazaam show and all that sort of stuff. In, when we were doing our big shows and things like that, because I used to sort of have to, I'd be telling the band. I'd be telling them what was going on. And organising the girls backstage and making sure everybody was on at the right time. So I was sort of always the nervous one in that. But I was never nervous when I worked with Dennis. When we went on with our act we used to open up with our musical act and I was never. Once
- 20:30 I with Dennis it was just. Well everybody used to say we were so polished and very, it was a good act. Even the agents say today it was the best act in Sydney. So that's. But as a child I don't think I knew actually what nerves were. I think I'd been dancing and singin' to people for so long. I mean even
- 21:00 before I really went on stage I was always, as I said before, dressing up as Carmen Miranda and all this sort a thing so. So I sort of, not precocious but I just liked to perform so. And I'm still a bit of a show off I s'pose. It's still in me yeah.

Well I'm wondering if you can tell us a bit more about being with your sister during the Kessels and the Melody Makers?

- 21:30 **How did that affect your relationship with your sister performing with her on stage?**

We were very close. We were always very close. Cause she sort of looked after me all the time. She looked after me. And no we were always close with the three of us. We just sort of went out and did shows and things and we did the three of us were very close. Joan and Marie. And Joan and Marie were very close. As a matter of fact Joan and Marie. Marie went to America to live and then Joan

- 22:00 finished up in America and they used to meet up once. Joan was still doing shows and with the Calroys [?] who were a big act in those days and they used to meet up with each other up until quite a few years

ago and Marie. Marie tried to find Joan just recently and apparently she must've passed away. So they were friends for all their lives. So...

Well I'm wondering, you've mentioned that your sister was a war bride. What were your impressions of her

22:30 **husband-to-be?**

He was nice. Well he was lovely. He was the nicest man. You couldn't have wished for a. And he's still lovely. He's still the nicest man. And he looked after her and he's been a wonderful husband. They are just, I'll show you a photo and they are just the happiest couple. Like we were lucky. Both Marie and I were lucky with our men. We both got great guys. Oh he adored her. 'Cause she was beautiful. She had the most gorgeous

23:00 figure and she was a beautiful looking girl and he just. Well they came out here. They came and had three years with us in, after they were married and they had one little boy then and Dwayne. And Dwayne always wanted to come back to Australia. He always called himself an Aussie. "I'm an Aussie." and actually it's very sad he just passed away just recently. He was 50 something.

23:30 54 and he had an asthma attack. In fact they gave him two needles. They gave him a pneumonia needle and an asthma needle. They gave him two needles together and he had a heart attack in the middle of the night from them and he died. They couldn't, he was gone. But he was only a baby. He was only about two or three when he was out there with them. And John was one of those that would go in and he came out

24:00 here to study. That's what he studied through the army and that and he did some of his studying out here. And he used to go into town and he would buy, he would come home with two or three beautiful frocks for Marie. Just picked, go in and buy 'em. He was just, he just adored her and he still adores her and it's a wonderful marriage.

Well you do hear stories about the World War II and the Yankees being a bit oversexed and over here. I'm wondering what your impression

24:30 **of this Yankee soldier or Yankee Navy?**

He was a Marine. Yeah. He just wanted to marry Marie straight away. And they would've been married but they didn't have time. They had to leave on. He left on the boat and they kept writing to each other and writing and writing and then he said. When he went. When Marie went over there and the family Marie said, "I'm going down to New York." She was going down to see a friend in New York and

25:00 the family. She still loved him and I think that's why she went to America because she still loved him. And the family said Marie got on the train to go down to New York and he. Well she apparently didn't get on the train. Apparently went to the station and the mother said to John he said, "You love this girl." And he said, "Yes she's my first love and she's the love, I really do love her." And his mum said, "Well

25:30 look you'd better go." Well go and he went after her and he got her from. She didn't go down to New York. She come back, she stayed, come back home with him and they married in America then. But yes they had a great. No he was a. I don't think there was. I dunno, I don't think that they were, the Americans were just sort of, was over sexed or anything like that. I think they were just

26:00 like normal army men that had been out on the out, well at war and it was time to let their hair down, whether it was Americans, Australians or Germans. And I think you would've found that in every part of the world. Like my, I must admit my Dad did say that they went into Egypt and had fun with the girls. Or went in somewhere I remember them saying that. But I do remember him saying that they were given the girls over there were injected

26:30 with a disease for the soldiers to get. Now that's a fact. Now that was what he said and I think it was. I dunno what it was but it was some. They said the girls were definitely set up and some of them were brought to the front line he said. So I dunno whether that ever come out in the archives or anything like that but I do remember him saying, telling Mum that. So I

27:00 dunno. I dunno whether it's right or wrong so. It mightn't, you might have to keep that out but that was the story. That's what they did say. But as far as the Americans hitting Australia. I can remember them, remember as plain as day and I don't think that, I just think they were boys just looking for family. Because they were, a lot of them were so young and

27:30 they just wanted someone to talk to and someone to be nice to them. I S'pose some of them, naturally there'd be the girls to go down that went down and probably there's always girls from everywhere isn't there? When it's all said and done in every country and they were organised for girls, for the army in every country. It doesn't matter I mean that's just a normal natural thing. I think the army's probably organised things as well for them . Because it's life isn't it. But I didn't think

28:00 the Americans were. I just thought John was lovely, a lovely man and he's proved it. He's got four beautiful children and they're still together and I know there were a lot of war brides and there were a lot of Americans that come out and did marry girls and they had a lot a trouble. They got over there and I know, I do know of one case that this is a true story of a war bride. And she went over and married,

- 28:30 married into the Mormons and of course an Australian girl not wearing lipstick and not wearing makeup and no jewellery and moving into that sort of life was, she finished up mental. So she was quite mentally ill and the family had to bring her home. And it was a long time before they could, she really came good. She was, well she never ever really came good. She was still always, pardon me,
- 29:00 a little bit off because of it. Because of their way of life. So that must've been a bit of horrific for her. That was a different, she was a war bride. So there's been a lot of, probably a lot of stories like that that went into different cultures and things like that over there. The different, a different way of life to our way of life. So that was that happened.

I'm just wondering as a young teenager during the war years

29:30 **whether you were impressed by the uniforms?**

No I never ever thought. 'Cause I wasn't interested in boys you see because I never. I wasn't interested in anyone until I met Dennis. So I never ever sort of went out to dances or, and I was, I'd never been to school dances and I no. No I wasn't. Whether I'm strange or something was wrong

- 30:00 with me. I just no. I just had no interest in. And I just looked at John and thought what a lovely, he was nice. He was just so nice so I just talked to him just as, well like a brother sort of thing that was to me. No he was because my. As I said I met Dennis when I was. Well I met him in the show at 15 and then I was 16 when I started going with him so, and that was my first boyfriend and I didn't. In fact I didn't think of boys. I sort

- 30:30 of grew up in that, the time I grew up was when I went into the Blind Show. I was a little girl when I went in but there was another girl in the show, Joyce, and she was a bit older than me, but I more or less started to grow up then. Not for boys or anything like that. I didn't go out looking at boys or anything like that. We were well looked after. We'd do a show and we'd be taken home to the wherever we were staying. But no I didn't

- 31:00 have any really.

Well I was just wondering how your mother or your family reacted to your older sister starting to going out with an American?

With the Americans. Well Dad went, Dad wasn't very happy. But then he met Johnny and when Johnny came. Marie had gone out with another American, one other American and I forgot his, forgotten what he was. She had gone with another American before John.

- 31:30 But when John came home Dad didn't want Americans around. But John stayed at the place at our home for, it was a few nights. But John came in with American cigarettes and sat down and he said, "Hi Pop" and "Have a cigarette." 'Cause Dad oh he smoked I dunno how many cigarettes a day . And all made all those rolled himself.

- 32:00 And John said, "Well would you like some American cigarettes?" And then he won Dad over. So Dad, he thought a lot of him too actually. He thought he was a nice guy. And they used to sit and talk. But Johnny was that type of person. If he walked in here today you would love him. He's a lovely man. Just got that nice person. He's another one like Dennis; he was just got that nice personality with him yeah. No I don't know I think a lot was with the Americans I think a lot,

- 32:30 there was a lot of jealousy. Because people coming in and think they were taking their. I remember that there was a lot of jealousy because they thought that they were taking the girls from their boys. But well it happened in Germany. It happened in wherever you went in Europe it happened so. No I can't, I thought we were very lucky anyway. Very lucky we had them I think.

Well I was wondering if Marie

33:00 **had a Australian boyfriend before she got Johnny?**

Yes actually she did. She did have an Australian boyfriend and I'm glad she didn't marry him. He used to live across the road from us, pardon me. Just over the road and up and now I, pardon me. And no she did the right thing. He was the

- 33:30 only boyfriend she had. But he wasn't a very. He was nice. He was a nice guy but no. No he wasn't Marie's type no. She did the right thing. She's had a great life so everything's worked out well for her.

Well I'm just wondering if at the time you were conscious or aware of any other significant sort of American influence? What did the

34:00 **Yanks bring to Australia?**

Their chewing gum. They brought some wonderful chewing gum. Which was like one was Black Jack or something. As a matter of fact I was only talking to my son about it the other day. I said, "I wonder if they've still got some of that wonderful chewing gum that we had in the war days." But when I was over there I didn't see it. But there was, so it was wonderful. That's what we did love. I loved the

- 34:30 chewing gum that we got from them . From John yeah. But I can't think of anything else that really

changed us or anything. I can't believe. They were just normal young boys in the army just like our own and looking for some warmth from people I think. But there was a bit of hate there was a bit of jealousy with the Americans.

- 35:00 But as you know I can't say anything against them because I've got my brother-in-law and I love him as much as Marie so.

Well I'm just wondering about your brothers and how he responded to the Yank?

Well they were alright with him. They loved John. They loved, both of them loved John. They thought he was wonderful. And when they came out and lived with us for three years they all got on well together. And the little

- 35:30 one, Dwayne he was, well everybody loved Dwayne. He was the most gorgeous little boy. But Dwayne was always Aussie. And even Marie's sons call themselves Aussie. They love Australia. They've been out. They've all been out for trips and that. They all love Australia. And they all say why did you ever leave for Mum? Why did you ever leave? When John and them all come back they all said why didn't you stay? Why didn't you stay? 'Cause they think Australia's wonderful. But they've all done well so.

- 36:00 So it's lots of memories and lots of I dunno what to say.

Well it is interesting to hear about your sister being a war bride and I'm just wondering if there was an element of glamour attached to an American Marine?

There may have been. Probably

- 36:30 with girls. The uniform I think any uniform sort of attracts girls doesn't it? Girls love uniforms 'cause I mean they look, men do look really look nice in a uniform. I don't think I think any girl would say well he looks nice doesn't he. But I think she just met him and just fell in love with him and that was it she sort of and she was only young. She was only young so. I think she was, I dunno how old she was 21 or something

- 37:00 or 22 or something like that, when she went over. I can't remember when she went to the States. I just do remember her leaving. I do remember when she went and I can see her goin', she went up the stairs of the plane and she was waving to us and Mum was a bit upset that she was goin' away on her own. But Marie was sort of she,

- 37:30 Marie was a different girl to me. She was more confident if. More yeah she was, oh well I s'pose more grown up I s'pose that's what it is isn't it? So yeah.

Well you've mentioned that you've. I mean, speaking of confidence you've mentioned that you really never suffered from nerves. I'm wondering how easy was it for you as a young child performer to learn your material?

- 38:00 I was quite confident in that. I mean I was well, I was always eager to learn. So I was confident in my show biz work, working. I wasn't shy in that way, but I was shy in other ways.

Well you do hear stories of performers being quite shy off stage but completely different on stage?

On stage. And funny you should say that because Dennis and I.

- 38:30 People never ever took us, when we were off stage they never ever took us as performers. In fact we went out on a show once and the comedian there was an act, he was an overseas act. And Dennis and I are sitting there and he's saying who. He said to the comedian what do they do? What do they do? Because we were very down to earth people. Because we didn't go into show business like a lot a show people. They live it. It was their whole

- 39:00 life. Once we walked off stage we were Dennis and Rose again and back to our normal life. And this comedian said this act said, "What do they do?" This comedian said, What do they do?" "You just wait." He said, "You just wait until they walk on stage and then you'll see what they do." It was once we walked on stage the light was on. But no, people didn't take us for, because we lived a family life. We're still for Darren. We were just lived a normal life and didn't have

- 39:30 any airs and graces about us, as though we were. Like show people are inclined to, they thought they were just a little bit above. Today they do. They think they're a bit above everybody else. They're not. And no we were just. We were doing a job. That was our job. Well like a person goes to work five till nine. nine till five that was it. We went out, do our job and then come home and then we were back to family again. Just do our normal things. But not, we weren't, we didn't get into

- 40:00 any of the, well I could tell you we didn't get into any of the parties. We never went any. We didn't do any of the drinking. In fact I hadn't had a drink, I was about 35 when I had my first drink. And Dennis wasn't a drinker. Den would have a, he would go like places if we were working like television and all that, sometimes you'd go back into the back, they'd have a little bit of a get together afterwards and they'd have drinks. But Dennis would

- 40:30 take a whiskey and would just sit there. He'd sit on that. And even in the shows we went to New

Zealand. We toured New Zealand for ten weeks and we had ballet and everyone with that. They were quite big shows. Lots of performers in it. There was Prince Rena Taci [?] he was one of the. A big Prince from New Zealand. He was a singer and there was John Hawe [?] who was a. He was he still works in New Zealand. He's a well known western singer over there. And Bobby Breen [Canadian singer].

- 41:00 And ourselves and Larry Cole [?] was a comedian and we toured over there both islands. So we got invited to lots and lots of homes afterwards and it was amazing how people, this is later in life and it was amazing how they thought, because they were ballet girls even to that day, that they could just invite the ballet girls home and have a good time. And all the kids said, "Oh Darren oh Dennis you look after us tonight and watch
- 41:30 the drinks." And Dennis. One of them would try to slip them a drink and he said, "That's it, c'mon girls we're off." Boom-boom we all stood up. Out we went. But he looked after. He made sure that the girls were well looked after always. No, no, no lots of people think that it's all drink and sex and everything else. But sometimes you didn't have time; you were too tired for anything. Too tired from working. But it does go on I must admit.
- 42:00 It does go on. And now I think worse these days. The younger generation...

Tape 6

- 00:35 **I was wondering Rose you mentioned a little bit to Kathy [interviewer] about performing at the POW [Prisoner of War] camp in Cowra. I was just wondering if you could tell me, I guess what you saw of the inmates there and...**
- The Japanese? They were behind, excuse me, the wire. We had actually, we walked past them. That's
- 01:00 what I can under. We came in and walked past them and they were behind the wire and they had, there was their gardens and there seemed like there was little huts or something there as well. And some of them were kicking playing some sort of ball thing. They had something that they were playing around with. But it's as plain as day and they didn't seem unhappy. They seemed as though they were well looked after and well fed and everything
- 01:30 else. But you'd have thought they would've had 'em in. Whether that was just their out. They had 'em out there in the daytime or whatever and they went somewhere else I don't know. But no I can see 'em as plain as day, the Japanese and they were they weren't unhappy. They weren't really. I s'pose they were unhappy but.
- I wonder, considering they were considered the enemy at the time how did you feel especially as a young girl?**
- As a young girl? I s'pose
- 02:00 I was probably frightened as I walked past but I can't remember. I just sort of, I probably was, because Mum had spoken about the Japanese and all that. I must've been frightened. I must've been a bit scared. That would have only been normal I think. Because you heard with the war and everything else and the Japanese and that coming were in it and all that. And what they were doing and everything. So we must have been
- 02:30 a bit frightened. But I can't remember. I, all I can remember is walking past them and the camp and I couldn't remember where it was. I couldn't remember and I thought it must have only been Cowra because. But I dunno whether you could. Probably you could check through on that from some. Trouble is half the people are gone now. They're all; everybody is dying off so it's terrible. But they didn't look
- 03:00 worried. But they broke out didn't they. Yeah. They broke out at Cowra so I don't know. I don't know, but I was very young so it's, and it's a long time ago.
- I'm wondering, you mentioned the army camp crowds and the soldiers that you'd often get a lot of wolf whistles and that. I'm just wonder if that attention ever,**
- 03:30 **ever seemed a bit inappropriate? Whether you felt there was?**
- No I don't think so because they were appreciating it. That was their way of showing appreciation of what they were seeing. It's only normal, natural for the men, for the men to wolf whistle and that in those days. And the girls loved it anyway so. The ballet would love it so the older
- 04:00 girls probably, naturally would love it. But it wasn't for me. They weren't wolf whistling to me cause I wasn't in anything, I was just a little girl going out and singing and dancing. And I wasn't in brief costumes. As Marie said to me, I was never in brief costumes. She said Mum, I was always had little shoulders and little sleeves and things in, and all that so she said I wasn't in
- 04:30 anything. I asked her about that one because I wasn't sure of what my costume was in that. The one we did the Kessels and I wasn't sure and she told me that. That it was gold and black and gold so. And had

she said it was midriff. But it wasn't. Which I did say it was midriff. I must've remember it was midriff but she said it wasn't rude or anything. Nothing to be worried about a little girl in sort of thing. But costuming,

05:00 I don't think in those, I don't think we wore anything brief even in our pantomimes we'd be in brief costumes there. They were a little bit more conservative a bit in those days to what they are now. I mean. They work in a G-string now don't they?

I wonder did you hear about any of the older girls I guess getting a hard time from soldiers during the show?

No.

05:30 No I never ever heard any. We never ever had any trouble because that would've stuck in my mind. Because I would've gone home and told Mum and Mum would've said, "Well that's it." But they never had any trouble. They were well organised. There was always officers there and everything. It was just well organised all those camp shows. I didn't find any unless other camps show did, I don't know. But we didn't. And it was like George and Daisy Forcina [?]

06:00 they were the husband and wife and the son and they were older too. So they were more the, they weren't, you wouldn't have picked them as show people as real show people if you know what I mean. They were sort of down to earth sort of people, not the outgoing type of show people. Some of the ones that are over the top a bit. So they made sure that everybody was. And some of those girls were very young. Some of the ballet girls were young too see. Well Marie, how old would Marie have been? Marie was

06:30 still young so they would not have been allowed to. No there was nothing ever went on at the army camps. Anyway it would have been stopped. I dunno whether you've ever heard of anyone talking about that but we never ever found it. We never found it. And we did a lot of camps. And Marie's girl friend that lives in America too, Rita, she was with me too

07:00 in the, she danced with me in some of the camps and that. So that's, she lives in Texas so. And she's writing a book actually. She's just writing her book on her life yeah. She married an American too but hers didn't work out. And she's got two boys and that over there. But she never ever, she didn't come back to Australia.

What was, I mean as a kid

07:30 **I wonder if there's an audience that stands out as possibly the worst crowd you played to?**

Well I would say that would be a club. A bad club. And where they're all drinking and they're all. But I can't. I couldn't say that we'd ever worked it. Oh well I s'pose you could say you went you'd died. Every act's died at some time or other so I don't suppose you could say you never ever

08:00 died. But I can't remember anything too big a disaster if you know what I mean. I can remember one actually. It was a show out at. And it was a what's a name. There was a good comedian with us too. He's passed away now. I've got Alzheimer's. I'm sure I've got Alzheimer's I can't think of his name now either. But he was an excellent comedian and it was a club

08:30 and he went out and worked and nobody listened to him. And he came off and he said, "Well good luck." And we went out and did our act and nobody listened to us. So I do remember that one and it was a club. And it was out towards Hornsby way. So I can't remember which one it was. It was only a small club anyway. But nobody bothered to listen to us. So we all did our act and went and got our money and off we went. We didn't worry. But the idea is though, with show business if

09:00 you're, Dennis was one of those that he would work until he got them. He was. But this one you couldn't. This was bad it was a bad day. But Dennis was always one, it was very seldom that he didn't win them over. He didn't get through to them. He just had that charisma. But there's always I s'pose, there's always a time that you had times and then you're feeling a bit off and you don't want to be working. And you're up there blowing the sax and getting into boxes

09:30 and zig-zag things and having your stomach pulled across and all that. So, but you still work and you still smile. And Dennis when he did the zig-zag girl. That's when your hand and you've probably seen it. The hand, the foot and we actually brought that into Australia. We were the first to use it. And they pulled stomach over here. And Dennis, I'd get if I was feeling a bit down I'd get, and I'd be all smiles like that and he'd turn me around and I'd say hurry up and get me out a this I can't.

10:00 And as soon as we'd turn, pardon me, and as he'd whiz it around I'd be the big smiles would come again. Or he'd say, "You're getting too fat you've got to lose weight." He couldn't get me into the boxes. We used to joke a lot on stage that was it. We used to laugh a lot. But do it sort of as we were moving around and that yes. And they were lots of funny times. I'm just trying to think of some of the things

10:30 that did happen.

I wonder, as a child performer was there a time when you just didn't want to keep doing you know when you were bored with what you were doing?

No not. No not really no. I can't remember ever being bored. But I as a child I can't ever remember being bored and I was never bored later on as I got older I was never bored. I always,

11:00 I was the one that got the work for us over the years. If I saw a show where there was entertainment. I'd say, "Well we'll work that." And I'd keep at it until I got that job. And that's how we kept working all our life. We did lots of shops together Dennis and I did lots of shopping centres and things like that too. But no I was never bored. I was never bored as a child. My life was probably too full to be bored

11:30 . I'd always be and I used to read a lot. I used to read a lot of, about musicians and things like that. Used to read lots of books and things. No I can't remember being bored. Or saying, "What am I going to do with myself today?" or anything, No.

How did you teach yourself to play saxophone? Or why the saxophone to begin with?

Well I don't know. It was just an instrument that I decided I wanted to learn.

12:00 And I went and had lessons. I was at lessons once a week. And I just wanted to play sax for some reason or other, just out of the blue I s'pose. I probably saw somebody playing sax and thought this is what I want to do sort of thing. And that's what I did. And I was determined to learn to play it. But as I said before, once I started working with Dennis all the ideas of being in the symphony orchestra and I dunno whether they even had

12:30 saxophones in the symphony orchestra in those days. So I wouldn't ever know. They do today. They have every instrument. But I just wanted to be a classical musician and that's what I did. I studied it the classical side of it. But then I went into all, I went into I'm Alabama Bound and all that sort a stuff after that with banjo and. And we used to do numbers like Leave us Strumming and all those sort of things too. We'd throw in a classical

13:00 number as well in our act as well. But no there weren't many girl saxes. There was another girl that played sax, Beryl Wright. She was very good too. She did quite a lot of work to but I don't know. For some reason or other I clicked and sort of I s'pose winning the 3DB amateur hour and winning that, that was a start and

13:30 that went right throughout Victoria so you were well known you were known right from then. And then work came through. I started getting shows as well from that. And it just went on and on and on from that so.

I wonder what sense there was either from people around you or from yourself that maybe show business wasn't a particularly stable career?

Oh no they all said

14:00 that. Everybody said that. Like the family on Dad's side, "What does she want to go into show business for?" They never thought. But after they saw us on television and all those sort a places they started to change their minds a little bit. And could see that we were well established and everything like that. Oh no it was Mum. It was Mum but the rest of the family no nobody was. And people used to say, "Well she should have a job," or, "She should be doin' that." But we got through we were never hungry

14:30 and we did well. We bought a home in Ballarat and we had our first. No our second home was Lakemba. We built a home in Ballarat for Dennis' mother to live in 'cause he adored his mum. And then when she passed away we sold that and we bought a place in Lakemba. Just down from here and we actually opened Roselands [shopping centre]. When it was built we opened the big opening here with the Zig-Zag. And

15:00 yeah so no we've had a good life. And I never ever went, I could always get what I wanted and always buy what ever I wanted because we earned lots. We did earn lots and lots of money. And Dennis kept all our receipts. And I just found them the other day and I sorted them all out and I can't believe what we did with it. We must've lived the good life.

15:30 So we must've had a real. We must've lived the good life. 'Cause our home in Lakemba we'd say, "Well what say we change this now?" "We'll paint and that lounge is." And we'd ring up the other St Vincent DePaul and ask them to come out and take the furniture and then we go out and buy new furniture and re-do all the house out again. And we always had the new car. So we were well established and we did well. We

16:00 did well. But I think towards the end of life wasn't the best. Towards the end of his life things went a bit wrong so. But that's life.

I wonder when you were first starting out I mean probably when you were doing the Blind Institute

The Blind Concert Party yeah?

I just wonder if there was a sense that maybe it wouldn't last you forever. That you it was OK while you were a teenager but... ?

No I never thought of that

- 16:30 because I just thought I'd go on forever. I just thought that I would make a living with show business. Perhaps I was a bit naive but that's what I thought. And I well I'd sort of been earning money from the time I was what. Well let me think now. Well I was earning money from around about eight I s'pose right through.
- 17:00 I thought that this was it. Well that was my job. That was my job it wasn't. It was my life it was my job so to me that was a job. Show business was a job and there's a many a showbiz person and not big names and that lived on show business right through. But I must admit we did do well. We did do well; we made good money and everything at it yeah. And big money, I mean when we had the leopard we, at the
- 17:30 a Thursday night which I s'pose I can say money can I? I mean they would pay out at Roselands \$2,000 for a 20-minute spot and that's going back like early '80s. So it was good money. So we were making, and every act in Sydney knew that we did that. We were always working and we worked in every area. Now we didn't like, what happens with entertainers they perhaps they work, they would only pick
- 18:00 the bigger places to work. They wouldn't work, they'd starve, rather starve than make a living sort a thing, at anything else. They would and when we started doing shopping centres and things like that they all looked started to look down on us as though we were, "Oh shopping centres." And because Dennis was always ahead of himself and he studied all what went on in America and everything else and he saw entertainers working in America and that, doing shopping centres and read all about that. So he went to the shopping centres
- 18:30 and started shows for the children and everything and the adults as well. We did adult shows and for the children as well. And so we went into every area of show business. So that was a living. It was a job. We weren't big stars. We weren't, well we were in one way because in one way we were quite well known. And television we were very big on television. We were the only sight act on TV that was,
- 19:00 that worked TV and, but if what I mean. We didn't think big. We didn't think big, we were working. We loved our art and we were happy and that's the way it went. We just, we would do anything. I mean then Dennis did, he studied the stars, what is it?
- 19:30 Astrology. He studied all that and went right into that. Well he organised big astrology shows all throughout the shopping centres and designed all the big, all the plaques and everything that were hung. And they were called. One was called Futurescope and another one was called, that was one of the ones that went into Roselands and actually it won an award for throughout the shopping centres throughout,
- 20:00 that was throughout the world. And that promotion won an award for the manager of Grace Brothers [department store]. It was Roselands. He was in Grace Brothers in the city. That's where he managed but he organised the shows up here at Roselands in those days. I've forgotten his name now. He was a lovely man. So he was, we were always working on what we could do to keep
- 20:30 to make a living. But we sort of, well we were just worked. We thought, "Well other people can do that so we'll do that." And we were and he was successful or we both were successful in all areas. What we took on in show business we were successful, what area we went into.

I wonder when you were especially around your late teen years when you were with the Blind Concert Party I wonder how you were looked upon

- 21:00 **by other women of your age being in show business?**
- In show business? I dunno. I think a lot of the country people thought it was a bit wrong that young girls were out in shows. But then again we were with Alf Broadway who had been in the show for so many years. Running the show for so many years and his wife was in it as well. So it was so well known and they
- 21:30 were so well known through the country that they accepted it because they knew that Alf would be and Ettie would be looking after us. Which they did, they looked after us. They took the two girls but they, she was Joyce was only Joy was only young. And they looked after us. They made sure that we were never out on our own or anything like that. We finished our show and we were taken home in the bus. We finished our show we all got into the bus and home we went. We were there for the morning and off we went again.
- 22:00 Probably some of the people probably thought that young girls out in a show that wasn't good. But we were well looked after. They were lovely people him and his wife they were great. But then we took it out ourselves. I was older then when Dennis took it on and managed it, and they called it the Little Tivoli when we had it. The Little Tivoli Show. Cause where we were we were so conscientious with our work that we
- 22:30 put the money we were earning ,we put it back in because we had beautiful costuming. I'll show you we even had everybody in a uniform. We got them dressed so that when we arrived in a town that everyone'd said it didn't look like show people all comin' down all after the night before and all like this. We were all well dressed and looked great when we all walked into the town. So it had a little bit of prestige to it. So we kept it that way. So he was always

23:00 he was, Den was good. He had great ideas. But a lot of shows they'd come you'd see the showies [show people] coming in and they looked dreadful. And people'd say "Showies." But we had quite a, we were thought a lot of right throughout the country.

I was going to say Rose the reason I ask that question about how you were looked

23:30 **upon by the other women you hear from you know as society became more conservative in the fifties I just wondered if there was a stigma attached to being a young unmarried woman in show business?**

No. No I don't never, no really I didn't. I didn't feel any of that. No I didn't. I don't think anybody.

24:00 No. I probably, but it didn't probably didn't register with me. Because I just worked. I never thought that I was doing anything wrong or there'd be any stigma oh well there was anything against it so. No I don't think so.

I wonder during the war there were other concert parties especially ones of soldiers

24:30 **and service people I just wonder if you were aware of them and what you saw of the other concert parties?**

No I didn't see any of the. We were aware of them but I didn't see any. I was actually in two. I was in the Melody Makers and then there was Gerry Clawson and the Harlem Holidays I think it was called. I've got the programmes of them there. But I was in two lots of camps shows so. They were the only ones but there were

25:00 others that, oh there were so many that went out through the years. There's shows going on all the time. I do know that. But I didn't see any of them. We didn't see any of them so. We never ever went to see them. But there were lots of shows I know that. Lots and lots of shows going out. It was pretty busy for show people actually yeah. Pretty busy for show people.

25:30 **How often would you be performing shows at camps?**

Well from what I can remember I was out a lot through the weeks. I mean sometimes it'd be 2 or 3 a week and then you might go another time and it'd only be one week and then another time you'd go. I can remember going lots. It was lots and lots. We went everywhere and we did lots and lots of camp shows.

Was it hard as a kid to kind of be feeling happy and wanting to perform

26:00 **every time you had to?**

Well I must've just been. Just must've got up and said, "This is it I'm off to work." "I've got to do it so I'm off." I was probably trained from earlier in the earlier days through Mum and Mum probably that it was a normal. Normal to do it so off I'd go. And I can remember in the buses and that. We used to have a lot a fun on the bus. We'd all be joking and laughing and I can remember that. With the girls and all that

26:30 and all the guys and everything that were in the show. But they were good fun shows you know what I mean. They were fun days. There was nothing morbid or anything. Nothing wrong with it, we did nothing. I loved it. Actually I loved it.

Looking back what

27:00 **kind of life skills did show business give you as a, because you started so young and it must've been so many formative years in show business. I just wondered what kind of skills it gave you or how it shaped you as a maturing adult?**

Adult? Well I don't think I ever properly. I don't think I ever matured properly. I think I'm still a child. And the trouble is I've been looked after. I think I've been,

27:30 Mum did keep me sort of. Even though I was in show business and everything else and going out and away and that Mum still kept her eye, kept and watched after us. But, and I was still very young when I went out, well as I said, with the Blind Show but I don't think I ever properly, I've really matured. I really don't. I think I'm still a kid and I still think of myself as 16 so.

28:00 Yes. I don't think I've ever grown up. Darren said I've never, "Mum you've never grown up Mum," so. And Dennis always looked after me. I was always, although I s'pose I did mature. I s'pose really when you think about it I was, it taught me I was confident for work and organising all the jobs and all that sort of thing so really I was maturing in that way but. But I always think young.

28:30 **I was wondering also Rose what advice would you give a young person who maybe even Natasha who wanted to enter show business what could you say?**

Not to do it now. No it's a different lifestyle now. I mean we had. In our day we sort of there were vaudeville shows. There were shows that you could go out on tour with. There

29:00 was so much happening in show business in those. I mean vaudeville it was the big thing. But today it's a tough game now. And I mean even for people that work clubs there's no work in the clubs for them now. I mean when we. We started to work in the clubs and that we would do seven shows a week. I mean seven shows on a weekend. You'd be goin' morning, afternoon and night and like people and the Rex. We did the Rex [Rex Hotels] circuit and we'd do

29:30 there were five hotels and you could do them in one night. One after the other. I mean there was so much work around there was always something happening. But today it's not there. It's not there. There's no grounding for them. And there's, nobody's learning variety. See variety's gone. It hasn't continued on. No-one's learnt the variety.

What do you think changed that or?

I think it's just the different eras.

30:00 Different eras come through like your rock and roll came through and it's just I s'pose it's just life has just changed. The world moves, things move on and new things start so. And other things die off it's like anything I guess in life. But today I mean. Today show

30:30 business is an entirely different scene. I mean it's big business now. It's the managers and it's all so organised. And it's, if you're a pop star yes. And if you can make it as a pop star you're doing well

I wonder Rose is it a sad thing that it's changed for you? Do you get nostalgic for the good old days?

Oh yes we often talk about that. You talk about the good old days yeah definitely. Lots

31:30 of us get together and, pardon me. Yeah. Lots of us get together and I'm sorry about that. And talk about the old days yeah the good old days. And they were wonderful days. Wonderful days. And it will never come back because it's just a different era now. Different life. Different, everything's much faster and everything's. The young

32:00 ones don't want to do it. They all want to be stars but they don't want to work. They want to walk in they want to be a star tomorrow that's it and it doesn't happen. It's a lot of hard work. A lot of hard work. And to be polished and to be perfect and we'll see how many get to the top. How many have we got today? You can count them on your hands really can't you? I mean Kylie Minogue's,

32:30 I mean and those and I that's from all the management. It's not so much talent is it really. But we had to work in our days and we had to, you had to practice. You had to, you really had to be perfect before you were out there. But today they've got all the instruments, are now they can well, they can make a voice for if they want it.

33:00 And it happens, I mean they bring some of the overseas acts out and they're, it's all been mechanically fixed up so their voice is perfect. But put 'em out in a club to sing or put 'em out on their own and they can't sing. So it's all it's a different. Show business is different now. It's even like magicians where we had to make it work on

33:30 stage. Today they've got lasers and they can make a person appear that's not there, it's just all, it's a different. Like show business is just entirely different.

What was it that you loved most about show business?

I loved the excitement of working and the excitement of getting a job and thinking, "Well that's a nice place to work I ought to work there." Just the whole, the

34:00 excitement we loved it. It was an adrenaline, it was I s'pose like people drink it was our outlet. Show business was our outlet and that's how once we got out there we were, we lived and it was life. Yes we lived it. We loved it. I think to have lasted as long in it we had to. I don't

34:30 think there's too many acts, too many entertainers, married couples that did do what we did. I don't think it's what. Well mine's what nearly 60 years of show business and working all the time and not doing anything else. I never ever had another job. Dennis never had another job so we made our living with show business. So and for an Australian act to do it in Australia I think it's, for all those years is something.

35:00 And I'm pleased somebody might know or might read about it too.

Why was entertainment so important during the war do you think?

For the morale of the soldiers. For the morale. And it brightened everybody's life. They would and they put more shows on. See if you find that in London during the war the shows still went on. The bombs were falling but the show still went on. And the entertainers still there and they

35:30 still went on and sang their numbers and did everything but they didn't run or anything. They just entertained. And it was the morale for the people. Not only the soldiers, for the people too. It took them, made them forget what was going on around them. So it was entertainment was wonderful and entertainment is wonderful for people it really is. And it's a shame that the younger ones they don't.

36:00 **I wonder Rose we were just talking about how important entertainment was during the war?**

Well as I said. I said, it's because of, it was for the morale of the people and the soldiers because they. As I said before in London like, all the Blitz and all the rest of it and all the bombs falling well the entertainment went on and it stopped the people thinking about it. I mean

36:30 even when they were down in the trenches down in the Underground there. I mean people would get out their guitars and singing and instruments would come out and they'd all sing and I think it was just to show that, well they're not going to do it they're not going to put us down. They're not going to kill us. They're not going to. We're going to we're strong and we'll survive. I think that's what it was all about, we'll survive. And it gave them that it

37:00 and that was what it was all about for the people who. It took them out of themselves and gave them something else to think about.

I wonder how much in your own way the two concert parties that you were with during the war felt that they were helping the war effort?

Well we all did because we felt that this was our bit. We over there and we felt that we were helping we were doing our bit

37:30 with the soldiers . So I think that's what it was all about. That everybody felt that, well we'll help we'll do it this way. We'll entertain. We're entertainers so we'll entertain.

I wonder how that made you feel as a young girl still being part of the war effort?

Well I thought it was. Actually when my certificate, they sent that to me I thought it was wonderful. I thought it was wonderful to have. And in

38:00 other words I felt that we were appreciated too of what we'd done. And I think it was, well I think it was wonderful, absolutely terrific, and I enjoyed every minute of it. And oh well and I s'pose there're not too many little girls that have, would've had my sort of, had my life. Not many little girls

38:30 so I think I was very, very lucky. I'm very lucky to have seen all and to have met a lot of the boys that we did meet. And I think it was, we just loved entertaining them. And there was always, the whole show was always fun. It was fun. Pardon me. Even backstage we all laughed we all joked and there was always a lot of hilarity going on. There was always a lot of fun with it. It was, nothing was ever

39:00 dull or anything like that. So to a little girl it was probably, I was probably in awe with it all at that age so. And I didn't think I was special. I didn't think I was special or anything. So yes they were, in some ways they were the good days. They were the good days even though it was the war and it's something we don't want to see again and it's something you don't want your own

39:30 children to see. Or well it would be a different war anyway now so. I think it'd be a quicker war this time.

I wonder, our tape's just about to run out Rose but before we finish is there anything else you'd like to say? Any final words? Anything we haven't covered?

I think we've just about covered everything. Well, all I can say is that Mum did the right thing by us. She looked after us she did the

40:00 right thing by us. She must've known that this is what we wanted. That that's what I wanted anyway. Because I just went through life and I did everything I wanted to do and I feel as though we had a very successful life. A very happy life. And no it was, well it's been a great. Well what can I say? It's just been a one big great life one.

40:30 And it's been a very, very happy life. I couldn't say any more.

No regrets about a life in showbiz?

No way. No way. No. No. Do it all over again. If I had to do it again I would do it all over again. And I wouldn't change a thing. Wouldn't change anything no. No.

That's wonderful. Thank you so much for your time today Rose.

That's alright. Well I hope I've given you

41:00 some information anyway so.

No it's lovely

00:30 **Saxophone solo**

01:00 **Saxophone solo**

01:30 **Saxophone solo.**
No. Oh bad.

02:00 I've forgotten it. There's a lot of a few wrong notes. Oh jazz girl jazz

02:30 Saxophone solo.
Well I get about that much.

03:00 Saxophone solo.
I can't get it. I've forgotten it. I can't remember the rest of it. Struth oh dear.

03:30 Saxophone solo.

04:00 Saxophone solo.
I've lost the numbers too. I couldn't get any more it's terrible. Oh dear. The poor old sax has had it like me.

04:30 saxophone solo.
What else do I know? I can't even play that now. I've lost me numbers. It's the Alzheimer's set in already.

05:00 Saxophone solo. I've lost it.

05:30 See I can't play them anymore. What am I doing? Can you get anything or...
That's fantastic.
What did it sound like? Even with all the crook notes.
Can you sing us a song?
Oh dear now. It's funny

06:00 Sometimes it's very hard to sing after you've blown because you open your throat. Your throat opens playing the sax. What's the one? Well,

\n[Verse follows]\n I'll be seeing you.\n And all the old familiar places.\n
Hang on a minute.
Round Leister Square. It's a long, long way to Tipperary. And my home's right there. I think that's it.

06:30 My goodness me.
What else do you remember?
Oh like We'll meet again.

\n[Verse follows]\n We'll meet again, Don't know where, Don't know when.\n But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.\n Keep smiling through. Just like you always do.\n Till the blue skies chase the dark clouds far away.\n And we will just say hello to the folks that you know .\n Tell them I won't be long.\n They'll be happy to know that as we saw you go.\n You'll be singing this song.\n

07:00 We'll meet again. Don't know where. Don't know when.\n
But I know we'll meet again some sunny day.\n
Gee I haven't been singin' for years. Playing saxophones and all that sort.

07:30 Don't tell me you want me to acrobat now. I can do the splits for you.
OK Go.

\n[Verse follows]\n Oh Nursie come over here and hold my hand.\n Nursie come over here I'm and. I've lost it.\n Nursie come over here and hold my hand.\n Nursie come over here and understand.\n

08:00 I feel shy. Oh no I've lost it. I've lost that one. I knew it too I know 'em as well as anything. So stupid. What's another one. I'm trying to think of those days. I did 'em all, sung them all and I can't remember them.

Is there one about you should be in a home or you'd be better of?

Oh yes. You're far better off in a home. What comes after that. Oh you're far better off in a home.

08:30 oh you're far better off, far better off. You're far better off in a home. Yeah that was another one. Let me think. If I'd have thought of this I could of got them all out and had them for you because I. See the brain's not working. Long way to Tipperary. Oh

\n[Verse follows]\nPack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile.\n

09:00 Don't da da da da da da da da da.\n Life boys that's the style.\n What's the use of worrying. It never was worthwhile.\n So pack up your troubles in your old kit bag and smile, smile, smile.\n

That was another one yeah.

09:30 Oh there was

\n[Verse follows]\n There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover, tomorrow when the world is free.

Something like that. That one that was about all I remember of that too now. I hope nobody's listening to this singing.

\n[Verse follows]\n There'll be love and laughter and peace ever after tomorrow when the world is free.\n

10:00 The valleys will. The lilies will bloom again. The valleys will da-da-da. La-da-da-da-da-da. In this old little room again. Or something oh yeah.

Oh no that's that one There'll be blue birds over the white cliffs of Dover. I can't think of that one either now.

INTERVIEW ENDS