



Edith's Story, Chapter 4

I was very lucky, I came to a very good family. They had two elder daughters and one that was 12 and a half and I was 11 and we've been together ever since. The whole family took me in as a part of the family, not just them, all the cousins and everybody and I'm still very friendly with them. In fact my adopted sister lives below. And my sister wasn't quite as lucky, she stayed until we got engaged which is 63 years ago, she was in, she went back to my cousins on the continent who came back from the war and life's been here since.

What were you allowed to bring with you or what could you carry?

A little case. We had a little case between us. I had a doll and we both had little rings on and I had a necklace of my mother's that she gave me but it was very tiny and I don't think they'd have found it if they'd have stripped me. But we, they didn't take much notice of the size we were, they were more interested in the older girls when they came on the train. The customs said "Everything you've to declare, what have you got, you can't take that with you". They just took a bracelet from somebody I think, as far as I can remember.

And can you remember your parents as you were leaving?

Yes. My father had a stern face, that's all I can remember. My mother was crying if I remember rightly. We tried to all look out of the window as we were going but we were too small, we couldn't get to the window. The bigger girls got there before us. But it was all like an adventure to us. I don't think we realised what was happening. We knew we were leaving our parents but I don't, I'm quite sure we didn't have an inkling what was going to happen. And as I say you come to a – the first thing that struck me about Leeds was how dirty it was. And I can always remember everything seemed black to me because it was evening when we got here and everybody was sort of curious and three days later we went to school. We went to Cowper Street and my sister went to, she stayed with me the first few days in school and the same time some twins came from, they came back from Cardiff, they weren't from abroad. But we were all hurled together and we couldn't speak a word of English and not many of them spoke German but we soon learned. And I think it's because I never mixed with a lot of foreign people after I came here, that's why I haven't got an accent. But I didn't have an accent straight away.

And what was the reaction of the other children at school to you?

Well we were different because we had – our hair was shorter, and a lot of them, a lot of the foreign children that came had plaits. In school there was about half a dozen refugee children, some younger, only one younger than us and the rest were a similar age to me or a bit older.

You were saying about joining your new family, you sort of implied that they treated you very much like another daughter

Yes they did yes. No different. He, Mr Craskin was, he made a coat for his daughter, he made one for me. There was no difference. I was lucky, maybe that's why I am how I am because a lot of children weren't as lucky. My sister was in the family who the little girl had a bit of trouble, she used to be poorly and then the husband got poorly and they wanted her to do more housework and things like that and my cousin said "No, you come and live with us" so she went over to Belgium. They put her through school, she learned French and she married a Frenchman and they have two girls and six grandchildren.