

# Social Care Institute for Excellence

## Interview Summary Sheet

## Title Page

**Ref no:** C1597/15

**Collection title:** Care Leavers' Stories

**Interviewee's surname:** Godfrey

**Title:** Mrs

**Interviewee's  
forename:** Mary

**Sex:** Female

**Occupation:** Retired florist

**Date of birth:** 1948

**Dates of recording:** 15.07.13

**Location of interview:** Social Care Institute for Excellence, 2-4 Cockspur Street, London, SW1Y 5BH

**Name of interviewer:** Rahma Mohammed

**Type of recorder:** Canon XF 305

**Recording format :** .mxf

**Total no. of tracks:** 2

**Mono or stereo:** Stereo

**Total Duration:** 2:52:35

**Additional material:**

**Copyright/Clearance:** Full clearance

**Interviewer's  
comments:**

C1597/15 Mary Godfrey

Track 1 [02:00:49] [Session: 15<sup>th</sup> July 2013] [00:00:00] Mary Godfrey [MG], introduces herself, born 26/12/1948, MG talks about her reasoning for being interested in this project, talks about her current life, lives in Buntingford, talks about her journey through Barnardos, mentions witnessing her father's death at age 3 in 1952,[00:02:04] talks about the age difference between herself and her mother [M], talks about how hard it was for M after her father's death, explains why she went into Barnardos, talks about M's jobs, talks about M's random appearances to take her back home to live with her mother, talks about the different Barnardos homes that she was placed in, describes the role of the matron, [00:04:53], briefly mentions the corporal punishment she received, talks about her matron being unloving, talks about the married couple being introduced to run the village home in 1958, talks about her cottage being the first to trial the new house parents, felt very excited by this prospect, children were farmed out into different cottages, really wanted to go back and be reunited, Mr and Mrs ward (Auntie Pauline [AP], Uncle Ron [UR]), came with 2 daughters, AP became social worker, UR was excited about this new life he was embracing, great Christian ethic with Barnardos, 15 went MG left Barnardos home, given a hostel, got a job as a florist, felt very young, talks about leaving school and her naughty behaviour at school, mentions her teachers telling her to work hard, was excited that her teachers believed in her, AP didn't want her to continue living with them, MG didn't get along with UR, describes their relationships and gives examples, felt UR was inspirational but they had a personality clash, had fears of moving [00:16:32],

Track 1 [cont. from 00:16:32], mentions being at numerous schools, lived at many homes between the ages of 3 and 6, describes relationship with other children in the cottage, wanted to be part of the immigration party of 1963, invited but didn't go, talks about Barnardos ethic, aged 13 when asked to go to Australia, couldn't leave her mother, in 1956 aged 7 matron told MG she was going home for good, date was 16<sup>th</sup> December 1956, M took another housekeeping job, describes first Christmas MG remembers staying with M, was in a refuge in Luton [00:23:31], only had the clothes on their back, describes how she lived with M, used to beg for cigarettes for M, moved back to Barnardos, talks of M giving her a corset string as a keepsake, tells a story of how she lost M's corset string, describes M's constant problems, recalls singing to M to make her notice her, M had so many secrets, talks further of M's problems, M was in Barnardos, same village and same age as MG, discloses M's early life prior to her birth [00:34:54], M had a daughter and left her, talks of M's relationship with her father, father had children, talks of her grandmother, MG talks more of her father's children, talks more of her father's death, describes a typical day at Barnardos, lists chores that were done, illustrates the Christian ethic at Barnardos [00:49:23], recalls seeing the very first episode of Coronation Street, talks about what was done for entertainment, talks more about the corporal punishment received, was dared to run away and describes how this was done, caught by the police, talks of what would happen during Christmas [00:58:07],

Track 1 [cont. from 00:58:07], mentions taking communion, describes the Christmas dinner, talks of her birthdays at Barnardos, tells a specific story of a particular birthday, boarded a ship for a Christmas party, recalls the privileges she received, talks further of her school life, didn't fit in, moving affected her reading ability, Barnardos gave her a tutor who taught her to read, talks of the children at her school, tells a story of a particular child [01:09:46] lists her close friends, continues to talk about her mother and when she demanded MG back, MG got a boyfriend at 15, made her mother jealous, describes her boyfriend's relationship with her

mother, was an avid reader, ponders what she used to value, wouldn't have changed the way she grew up, moved to a hostel in Ealing [01:21:18], describes the hostel, cried as she didn't want to go, details moving there, details her time there, a new girl arrived, MG was so happy that she hugged her, never got to hug or kiss anybody in Barnardos, talks of the other girls attitude towards her, details a lovely Welfare Officer [WO] she had, talks of her misery at the hostel in Ealing, briefly talks of her mother's WO, speaks of her relationship with her WO's, mentions marrying her boyfriend, been married at 15, describes her relationship with her children, talks of how she put her troubles behind her [01:37:52], talks of her mother in law, Joy Day Godfrey [JDG], JDG was always loving towards MG, describes her relationship with JDG, learnt many valuable lessons from JDG, cared for JDG in her old ages, gives an example of JDG's kindness, illustrates JDG's relationship with her mother, talks of her wedding day, mother didn't look at her, mother focused on herself, MG asked her father in law to walk her down the aisle, talks more of her mother's jealousy of JDG [01:48:48],

Track 1 [cont. from 01:48:48] talks of her mother's death on New Year's Day 1974, mentioned they were estranged at the time of her death, hadn't spoken to M for 6 months, became difficult and bitter, talks of M only caring about herself, mentions that she became hysterical when M left, M was theatrical, speaks of the lack of benefit system and welfare state in 1952/1953 [01:58:28], talks of what she would have changed, talks about returning to Barnardos, children's homes closed in early 1970's [02:00:49] [MG requests break] [ten-minute comfort break]

Track 2 [00:51:46] MG shares the story of how she met her husband, talks of her husband's views of her being in a Barnardos children's home, talks of her husband's caring character, MG shares what she thought would happen in her future, thought she would be a nun, talks of the importance of the Barnardos Christian ethic, talks about wanting to make a difference [00:08:47], shares why she gives talks for Barnardos, expresses her children's views of her being in care, lists positive aspects brought from being a Barnardos child, talks about the impact of friendship, continues to talk about JDG, describes her fond memories of JDG, could talk to AP but she had other children to look after, talks about the children she bonded with at Barnardos, recalls making a girl cry at Barnardos who was grief stricken, talks more about this girl, mentions a documentary released by BBC about Barnardos kids, made people want to see their records, talks about when she received her records, recalls wondering whether living in a foster placement would have been better for her, never received encouragement, achievements weren't acknowledged [00:19:46], UR suggested MG become a machinist in a factory, shows that her potential wasn't realised, ended having a successful business, talks about her previous ambitions for the future, talks about how being in Barnardos impacted her motherhood, recollects hurting her daughters feelings unintentionally, family means everything to her [00:25:12],

Track 2 [cont. from 00:25:12], Talks about her relationship with her brother and sister in law, wished she had showed her children more affection, couldn't hug or kiss her children as child, talks about what she would have told her mother, talks of the affection M showed her, talks about her view of a normal childhood [0:30:29], hadn't spoken about Barnardos until 5 years ago, there is a lot of interest in her story, talks about feeling ashamed, talks of the advice MG would have given herself in the hostel, couldn't talk to anyone, advice MG would give to young people in a similar situation she was in, talks of the other children contacting their parents, talks further of her half siblings, mentions why she hadn't stayed with her half siblings, talks of their impressions of MG being in Barnardos, mentions M's estranged brother who came to her wedding [00:39:39], planned to go to Australia with friends for their

50<sup>th</sup> birthday in 1999, didn't go as MG's husband was taken ill, talks of her ambitions for the future, recalls being 4 years old and M introduced her to her boyfriend, M brought welfare officer to resolve an issue with M's boyfriend, talks of the bonds of people who have been in care, retrospectively felt as though she was in a big family, speaks of the day trips taken with Barnardos, talks of what MG would thank Barnardos for most. [00:51:46] End of interview [02:52:35] in duration