

Florence and Reg Transcript

R: I'm Reg. And I'm 74 next birthday.

F: I'm 79 and my name's Florence. This is my second husband

(Where did you used to go to in Brighton)?

R: 'Regent's Dance Hall' which is by Boots the chemist on Queen's Roads. That was the Victor Sylvester School down there.

F: I used to go to Alan Deans which used to be more or less opposite The King and Queen Pub. Right on the opposite side of the road it's now an insurance place and it used to be a club for anybody. It was lovely place. Very friendly. And a nice dance floor.

(Why did you used to go to Regent's dance hall?)

R: It was, just a general dance hall and I took my first medal there and was presented it by Victor Sylvester Jnr. That was where Boots is now. There used to be the Regents Cinema was there, and the floor above that was a great big dance hall. That's where I first learned to dance.

(How old were you when you learned to dance?)

R: 17

F: oh, 50

(What dances did you enjoy the most?)

R: Waltz and quickstep.

F: Social dance, they used to do social dance. To get everybody friendly. It's similar to a waltz but not as hard as a waltz. And then I was learning the cha cha when my husband first... when we got together, when he proposed to me. And I forgot everything then! It went completely out my head!

(Who did you used to go with?)

R: Just myself. Used to go to the Victor Sylvester School then you met friends up there.

F: I met my husband at a dance hall. First of all I did (used to go by myself) yes.

(What kind of people used to go there?)

R: My own age group, 16, 17. They had a manager and three teachers. And they did private lessons there as well.

(Was there class difference at the dance hall?)

R: I don't know we were all working class down there I suppose.

F: Same where I used to go. People were very friendly. I think people were more open. It was easier. Like today, people aren't so friendly. I don't know why.

(What was it like waiting to ask girls to dance?)

R: what was it like? Just used to see a partner and go and ask her to dance. They weren't allowed to refuse.

(How did it feel when someone refused?)

R: I don't know. You'd just go away and find someone else.

(How does it feel to be asked, or just the waiting?)

F: The waiting makes me nervous. To be asked is nice.

(What is your favourite part of the evening?)

R: Favourite part of the evening? The instruction I suppose. You used to have a dance instructor there. To instruct you. One week they'd be doing the waltz, the next week they'd be doing the foxtrot. And the tango. And the quickstep.

(Was it expensive?)

R: It was seven and sixpence. Three half pounds, what's that today?

F: I don't know Reg! I can't work it out. Very very cheap! Probably cost you four or five pounds today. There is nowhere in Brighton to go dancing. Not now. It's a shame.

(Did you tend to drink when you went dancing?)

R: No, alcohol wasn't served.

(What did you do after dancing?)

R: After dancing? Go home.

F: Well the time you finished dancing, you're tired.

R: I was 17 at the time; my Gran picked me up at the station. I would have to be not late.

(What do you miss the most about dancing in Brighton?)

F: Making friends, meeting people. But I find people are not so friendly today as those years ago.

(What is your most memorable event in Brighton?)

R: I suppose, the street parties after the war. After the war they had victory parties and each street had a party that all the children were invited to and they used to put tables out on both sides of the road, close the road off and then all the families get together would put a spread out for the kids

F: Union Jacks and all that. They used to put union jacks up, do the streets up. Respect to the Queen of course

R: She wasn't on the throne! George the second

F: Oh well whoever was there then, yeah King.

(Is there anything else you would like to mention?)

R: In Brighton there was several schools of dancing. You had the Alan Dean over there where my wife went. You had the Court School of Dancing down the end here, which where I went.

F: He went there. And that was it wasn't it? Oh there used to be Sherrie's! Sherrie's was another dance place on the seafront but people used to get there and fight.

(So how long have you been living in Brighton?)

R: I've been living in Brighton since I was 3. We lived in Momford and we got bombed out 2 or 3 times up there and Mum and Dad decided to come to Brighton and they moved down here and we ended up near the station.

(Has it changed a lot since the 1950's?)

F: Oh Gosh, yes! 'Cause we used that have the mods and rockers down on the seafront. They sort of didn't like each other, Oh dear. Yeah. But on the whole it's pretty good in Brighton isn't it Reg?