[00:00:00] **Interviewer:** Um, okay, so this is the Community Brains Industrial Estates Heritage Project. It's the 11th of April, and I'm with Glynis Hill at her home in Ewell. Glynis is a former employee of Gala Cosmetics and Yamaha, um, Glynis, do you mind just for the tapes stating your name and your date and place of birth?

[00:00:21] **Glynis Hill:** Glynis Hill. I was born in Chelsea in on the 14th of January, 1949.

[00:00:29] **Interviewer:** Great. Um, so before we go into the Industrial Estates and Gala, um, do you mind just talking a little bit about, uh, your links to this local area, um, the, the, the Kingston and, and and Surrey area? Have you, have you been here long?

[00:00:44] **Glynis Hill:** Um, I've been married 55 years this year and, um, my husband and I moved to Tolworth quite near to Gala Cosmetics in October, 1968 when we got married.

[00:00:58] **Glynis Hill:** Um, [00:01:00] we originally from Fulham and Hammersmith, although I grew up in Australia. I came to Hammersmith in 1960. Um, and then we moved to Tolworth in Surrey when we got married.

[00:01:17] **Interviewer:** Yeah. And, and have you always liked it round Tolworth?

[00:01:20] **Glynis Hill:** Yes.

[00:01:20] **Interviewer:** Um, have you got fondness for the area and, and have you seen it change much over the years?

[00:01:24] **Glynis Hill:** Yes. Have seen it change a lot. The, the big, um, tower was there when we moved in, but various, um, local businesses have come and gone. There was quite a few shoe shops in Tolworth, um, Broadway, and I think there was an Etams. Um, and a Woolworths when we first moved there. Of course, that's all changed now.

[00:01:52] **Interviewer:** Yeah. And in terms of the Cox Lane, the Cox Lane sort of industrial estate, um, were you aware of that before you started work at Gala or was Gala the [00:02:00] first sort of,

[00:02:01] **Glynis Hill:** Uh, as far as I remember, Gala, um, I, I started there probably two to three weeks after I got married, so I think. I probably just looked locally for, for businesses that I could walk to.

[00:02:12] **Glynis Hill:** Cause I used to walk from my house under the subway to the other side of the road. That subway flooded every year when there was a lot of rain. Um, and I went for the interview there and started, I would imagine the middle to end of October 68.

[00:02:31] **Interviewer:** Okay. Yeah. Yeah. Um, yeah. Do you, did you remember much about your, your interview or your, your, your, your first sort of few days there?

[00:02:40] **Glynis Hill:** Um, the interview was quite funny cuz I wrote down next of kin and I put my parents' name down and I'd only been married two weeks and Mrs. um, Lewis said you usually put your husband down. So that was a bit embarrassing. Um, and she had an office next, right next to Mr. Picker [00:03:00] and my office was next to hers.

[00:03:02] **Glynis Hill:** So we were quite close to his office.

[00:03:06] **Interviewer:** Yes. So who, who, who is Mrs. Lewis?

[00:03:08] **Glynis Hill:** Uh, Mrs. Mary Lewis was Mr. Picker's secretary of many years, I believe. Um, probably more of a, a personal assistant as well.

[00:03:19] **Interviewer:** And what was the role that you were, um, interviewed for and ended up doing?

[00:03:22] **Glynis Hill:** Well a junior secretary, I suppose, to Mr. Picker and working for Mrs. Lewis to stand in from her when she was away. And to help out.

[00:03:33] **Interviewer:** Sure, sure. Um, I mean, do you, what do you remember about the, kind of the work environment? Uh, it was, it was an office you were in, presumably, rather than the, the factory floor, which was, was that in the same building?

[00:03:46] **Glynis Hill:** Yes, I think it was. I don't remember much about the factory. I, I assume I would've seen it. Um, I was on the ground floor. As you went in the building on the left, Mr. Picker's office was from the front door um, [00:04:00] uh, entrance. Um, our offices were on the left of the building on the ground floor. Miss my office, then Mrs. Lewis, then Mr. Pickers. His office was a large area, um, and he sat quite a long way back in the office and was surrounded by lots of artwork, none of which I can remember being young, but obviously in later life, I, I realize how interested he was in art and. Um, I wished I remembered more about it now, to be honest, but, um,

[00:04:36] **Interviewer:** I mean, what do you remember about him as a, as a personality and as a, as a, as a leader of the organization?

[00:04:42] **Glynis Hill:** Uh, he was quite a serious man. Um, always very smartly dressed in nice suits. Um, and he, his office was very large and I was very nervous about sitting in front of him, taking dictation. But he was very pleasant. [00:05:00] He had a lovely office with lots of artwork around the walls. Which I'm afraid I don't remember too much about and wished I had I'd taken more notice now.

[00:05:10] **Interviewer:** Yeah. And he, he was, he was American, is that right?

[00:05:12] **Glynis Hill:** He was American, yes.

[00:05:13] **Interviewer:** Yeah.

[00:05:13] **Glynis Hill:** Yes.

[00:05:14] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Um, and, um, yeah, what sort of roles and jobs did you have for, for, for Stanley?

[00:05:21] **Glynis Hill:** Well, one of my jobs was to ring and check if the names of a lipstick color were available, as the names they chose at the factory or in the office meetings could not be used if another brand had it.

[00:05:35] **Glynis Hill:** Um, And I remember Mary Quant and her husband coming to meetings all the time in Mr. Picker's office. I assume we had to serve tea and coffee. I don't remember too much about that.

[00:05:50] **Interviewer:** And do you remember what she was like as a, as a person?

[00:05:53] **Glynis Hill:** No, not really. I just remember her hairstyle and black and white outfits. Striding past [00:06:00] my office, I suppose.

[00:06:01] **Interviewer:** Yeah, I mean, at the time, did the, did these brands mean anything to you outside of work? Were were, were you wearing Mary Quant makeup or were you interested in it?

[00:06:10] **Glynis Hill:** I was interested, yes. Um, I think they did, um, Miner's, Outdoor Girl, as well as Mary Quant, and I'm, I'm not sure if there was a product called Gala as well. But I did wear Mary Quant false eyelashes. I think I've still got some in a little box.

[00:06:30] **Interviewer:** How, how old would you have been when you, when you had this job?

[00:06:32] **Glynis Hill:** Oh, I was 19.

[00:06:33] **Interviewer:** 19. Right. And, and, and was sort of makeup sort of an important, important thing for, for, for teenage girls at that time?

[00:06:40] **Glynis Hill:** Yes, yes. Oh yeah. We used to have, um, we were allowed to purchase very cheaply mixed bags of makeup.

[00:06:49] **Glynis Hill:** I'm not sure if that was weekly or monthly. So that was always something we got excited about to see what we were gonna get in these bags. [00:07:00] Um, I don't remember too much what was in the bags, but I guess lipsticks and eyeshadows, etc.

[00:07:07] **Interviewer:** Yes. Um, we, we, yeah, we've, we've interviewed a few Gala employees and they all mentioned the, the goody bags.

[00:07:13] **Glynis Hill:** Yeah.

[00:07:13] **Interviewer:** Um, yeah, it sounds like it was a nice little perk of the job.

[00:07:16] **Glynis Hill:** Yeah.

[00:07:17] **Interviewer:** Um, and in terms of the, the work culture, I mean, do you remember much, was there much of a social culture among employees?

[00:07:26] **Glynis Hill:** Um, yes, I think there was, must have been a canteen there. Cause I, I used to meet, meet up with friends and one, one girl I knew lived locally to me as well.

[00:07:34] **Glynis Hill:** We became friends through working at Gala and I was in contact with her for many years but have lost contact now. Um, I think she worked in sales, which I believe might have been upstairs.

[00:07:49] **Interviewer:** Yeah. I mean, how many. Like how many offices were, were, were they spread across multiple floors, these offices? Did they?

[00:07:56] **Glynis Hill:** Yes, I think so. I'm not sure how tall the building was. It didn't [00:08:00] look that high. Um, when I looked back on an old photo recently, I saw, but there was an upstairs and I, I guess the factory was beyond that.

[00:08:13] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah, I think we've, we've spoken to people who've said there were actually multiple sites. There was a, there was a, a Site A and a Site B for, for Gala as well.

[00:08:21] **Interviewer:** So yeah, I think they did, they did spread out a bit. Um, but yeah, um, we, we, we gathered there was a culture of Christmas parties as well. I mean, do you remember much about Christmas parties?

[00:08:32] **Glynis Hill:** I do remember. Um, one party. Um, and Billy Fury was on the, he was the cabaret. Um, I wished I remembered more about him, but, uh, that was probably, that might have been my first year there, or maybe the second year, I'm not sure.

[00:08:50] **Glynis Hill:** So it would've either been 1968 or 1969.

[00:08:54] **Interviewer:** Right.

[00:08:54] **Glynis Hill:** Cause I was there for two years, so I would've left probably soon after that.

[00:08:59] **Interviewer:** And [00:09:00] he was a big, big star at the time.

[00:09:01] **Glynis Hill:** He was. Yeah.

[00:09:02] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. Yeah. I wonder how, um, how that came to happen. I wonder if it was personal, personal contacts with Mr. Picker or,

[00:09:09] **Glynis Hill:** I don't know. He was English I believe, wasn't he? Billy Fury?

[00:09:11] **Interviewer:** I, I believe so. Yeah. Yeah, yeah. Um, but yeah. Yeah, it'd be interesting to know, um, how that, how that came about. Um, and when you think back to this time, um, was the mo, do you, do you recall this time fondly? Did you enjoy the job, um, in general, or, or was it not to your tastes?

[00:09:30] **Glynis Hill:** No, I did love it. I did like it, yes. Um, but after two years I just wanted to do something different in different offices, so I moved on.

[00:09:39] **Interviewer:** Sure. What did, what did you enjoy about it?

[00:09:42] **Glynis Hill:** Um, the contact, um, with, well seeing the Mary Quant come by and, um, I enjoyed the phone calls, finding out about the makeup names, and obviously all the letters I had to type for Mr. Picker. [00:10:00] Um, and I got on well with Mrs. Lewis. I enjoyed working for her. It was a nice environment.

[00:10:07] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. You did, you, did you make friends among your, your colleagues?

[00:10:11] **Glynis Hill:** Yes, I did. Yes. Yes. As I say, one girl in particular I kept in touch with for many years.

[00:10:19] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Um, and, uh, were you, were you around when the, when the factory closed?

[00:10:27] **Interviewer:** I mean, that, that happened a little later. So I imagine, I imagine that was, that was after you left?

[00:10:31] **Glynis Hill:** No, that would've been after I left. I, I must have left in about 1970.

[00:10:37] **Interviewer:** Okay. Yeah. So, so it was two, two years you had there?

[00:10:40] **Glynis Hill:** Yes. Two years.

[00:10:41] **Interviewer:** Yeah.

[00:10:41] **Glynis Hill:** Roughly.

[00:10:42] **Interviewer:** Yeah. And, uh, what, what, what did you go on to do afterwards?

[00:10:47] **Glynis Hill:** I worked in other offices, um, as a secretary locally. Um, I, I, I moved along to, um, uh, I've [00:11:00] forgotten it.

[00:11:02] **Interviewer:** That's all right. That's alright. Right.

[00:11:03] **Glynis Hill:** Yamaha.

[00:11:04] **Interviewer:** Uh, Yamaha

[00:11:04] **Glynis Hill:** Did you, did you want me to mention that yet or not?

[00:11:06] **Interviewer:** Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah. Yeah. We, yeah, we can, you can, we can talk about Yamaha. So Yamaha also on the,

[00:11:11] **Glynis Hill:** On the estate. Yeah. Further along the road. Um, and I worked in sales there as a secretary to the sales manager. The first day of that job, um, was at the boat show. I had to get on the train and go to London and sit in a little office with him and take dictation and then go back to the office, type it up, and go back the next day with the letters.

[00:11:34] **Glynis Hill:** There was no computers in those days.

[00:11:38] **Interviewer:** Yeah. And how did Yamaha compare to Gala as a place to work? Did you, did you like it as much? Did you not like it as much?

[00:11:43] **Glynis Hill:** Um, probably not as much because in sales there was lots of phone calls and you had to find out information. Um, on the pro, you know, when the products were coming.

[00:11:55] **Interviewer:** Um, yeah. And so when you think about the industrial [00:12:00] estate, um, you know, having been employed at, at Gala and at Yamaha, um, I mean, do you, do you, do you have any reflections on the industrial estate? It's sort of role within the, within the town?

[00:12:11] **Glynis Hill:** It was convenient to get to for me in particular. Um, and probably lots of other people cuz there was you know, lots of houses around that area. So I think it probably employed a lot of local people.

[00:12:27] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Um, and did you, did you ever interact with any of the other organizations on the industrial estate? Were you aware of them?

[00:12:34] **Glynis Hill:** I did work as a temp temporary secretary at, um, a building next door to Galas when I left.

[00:12:40] **Glynis Hill:** Can't, can't remember the name of it I'm afraid. It was directly next to them, I think on the left. Looking at the front, um, but I didn't stay there long.

[00:12:51] **Interviewer:** Great. So unless there's anything else that, that you can recall about your time, either at Gala or Yamaha or about the industrial state more broadly, um, um, if there's [00:13:00] anything else that you don't think you've mentioned.

[00:13:01] **Glynis Hill:** I remember Mrs. Lewis, Mr. Picker's secretary, used to make milky coffee in her office on a small Calor gas burner for Mr. Picker. I can remember it was really nice. Um, you wouldn't be allowed to do that now, of course, with health and safety.

[00:13:17] **Interviewer:** Yeah. Yeah. But, but back then it was okay.

[00:13:19] **Glynis Hill:** Yeah. It used to smell lovely. I remember bubbling away.

[00:13:23] **Interviewer:** Oh, lovely stuff. Um, okay, Glynis, thank you. Uh, yeah. Thank you so much for your time.

[00:13:28] **Glynis Hill:** Thank you.