

Tape 578

Lady Jones, Miss E Bagnold

IT IS DECEMBER 1978 AND THIS IS MR LIDDLE TALKING TO LADY JONES, MISS ENID BAGNOLD WITH REGARD TO HER EXPERIENCE IN THE FIRST WORLD WAR.

FOR ANY RESEARCHER LISTENING TO THIS TAPE HE OR SHE OUGHT TO CONSULT A DIARY WITHOUT DATES BY ENID BAGNOLD WHICH IS AN AUTO-BIOGRAPHICAL ACCOUNT OF THAT PERIOD OF HER EXPERIENCE DURING THE FIRST WORLD WAR. MUCH OF HER BIOGRAPHY OR AN OUTLINE OF IT CAN BE GATHERED FROM WHO'S WHO OR FROM THE FRONT PIECE INSIDE OF THIS BOOK. SO I WILL NOT GO THROUGH THE NORMAL FORMALITY OF ASKING YOU WHEN YOU WERE BORN.

May I speak? Can I say something? Drop the Miss all the time. Omit the Miss. Just have Enid Bagnold saying.

Certainly. Well, Enid Bagnold would you tell me please when and where you were born?

I was born in Rochester, Kent.

In what year?

In 1889.

And what was your Father?

My Father was a Colonel in the Royal Engineers. He was Colonel A H Bagnold, CB, CMG.

Where did you go to school?

I went to Priors Field which was run by Mrs Huxley who was the Mother of Julian Huxley and Trevellyn Huxley.

And from school?

I went to Germany and to Paris for a year and a half or 2 years.

To widen your education?

Yes. When I was about 17 or 18.

What may I ask were you doing in the years immediately prior to the First World War? Between shall we say 1910 to 1914?

Well, we lived. I don't know whether you know Shooters Hill. Its below London. South of London. We lived there. My Father was working at Woolwich Arsenal then as a Royal Engineer, as a Colonel and I went first of all to Walter Sickert the painter and worked there with him for a year on drawing and went about in London a great deal. Entered London life a lot and was very much befriended by Baron and Baroness De Mangey who knew everybody in London. That is about all.

And when war broke out were you still pursuing the widening of your artistic experience?

Yes.

That is what you were doing?

I was simply working with Walter Sickert and I had great friends there. I can't remember their names. Its all in my auto-biography. You haven't got my auto-biography?

No, I haven't.

Well, you ought to have got that really.

Yes, I respect that. Well, the outbreak of the war?

Everything in my life is in there.

The outbreak of the war. How quickly did you become involved in doing some war work?

Well, I did war work at The Royal Herbert Hospital at Woolwich and after that just before the war ended. I went to France.

As a FANY?

Yes, as a FANY. That is all in that book.

But tell me first of all about your work in the hospital. What sort of work were you doing?

Well, everything is in that book really. I can't say it as well now as I did then.

But I am anxious to make some record in your voice.

Well, as a VAD. I was working with the nurses there.

General duties?

Yes, general duties.

And what was it that made you feel that you could contribute still more by becoming a First Aid Nursing Yeomanry woman and going to France. Why did you want to go to France?

Well, everybody wanted to go I suppose. I mean we all wanted experience of this great bloody new war as had been, you know one didn't imagine war was going to happen at all ever again.

And did you do driving for the FANY's or continue your nursing?

I drove.

You drove?

I drove all the time, yes. Ambulances.

Do you remember what sort of an ambulance?

No, I can't remember now. Great big ambulances. One of them broke down and I was left out all night and that is in another of my books. Everything is in my books. A book called A Happy Foreigner has got the whole story of what I did. Well, that is really the story. That one.

A Diary Without Dates?

Yes, and The Happy Foreigner has everything that I did after the war. At the end of the war and afterwards.

Were you driving in what was called a convoy?

Yes.

Do you remember which convoy it was?

No.

Was it the Calais convoy?

No, it wasn't. We slept at Metz I think.

You were behind the Verdun front?

Yes, that is right and then we rolled up, our convoys rolled up behind the German Armies as they were seized and then slept, I was the first woman to sleep in Metz. In the fortress.

Is that mentioned in a Diary Without Dates?

No. That is all about The Herbert Hospital. The Metz experience is all in A Happy Foreigner.

Did you take advantage of using your artistic talents which were developing at the same time as your work either in the hospital in Woolwich or in France or were you so busy that there was just no possibility? Did you do any art work when you were a nurse or a FANY?

Art work, yes, I did it before and after.

But you did not do any art work in France though you may have done some in Woolwich during the war and you only go to France right at the very end of the war?

Yes, that is right.

Well, thank you very much indeed.