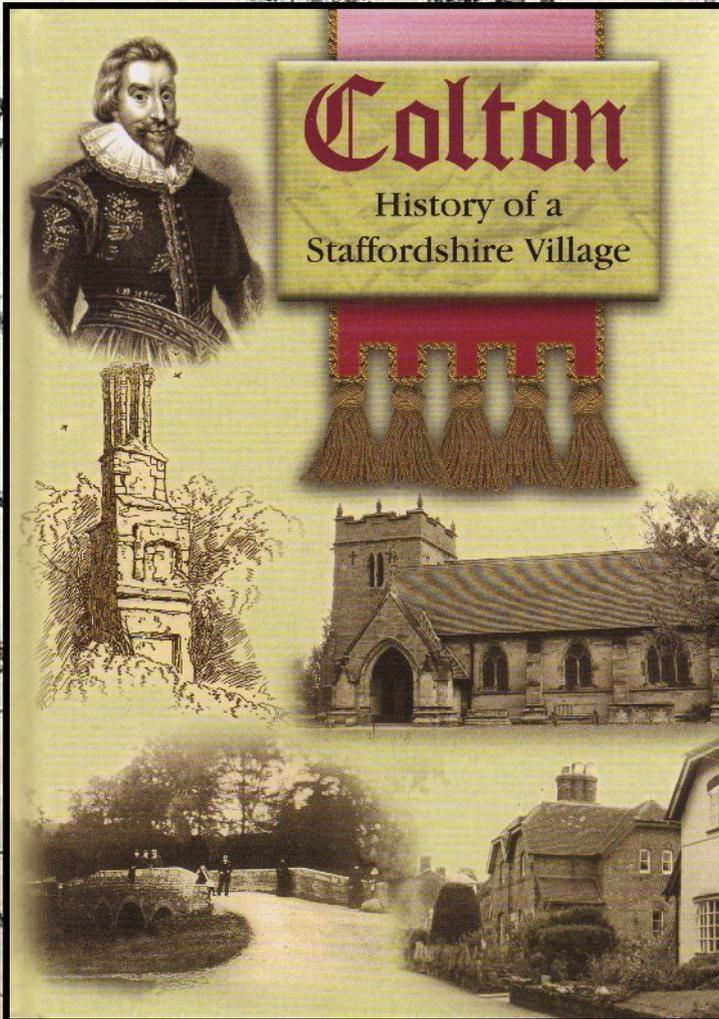


# All Our Stories

## Volume II

Stella Lycett & Malcolm Williscroft. Charlie & Cynthia Webb

Colin Norman. Harry Bull



### Colton

History of a  
Staffordshire Village



Heritage Lottery Fund  
All Our Stories Project  
Supporting  
Colton History Society

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# Colton History Society

## All Our Stories

### Volume I I

Stella Lycett & Malcolm  
Williscroft

Charlie & Cynthia Webb

Colin Norman

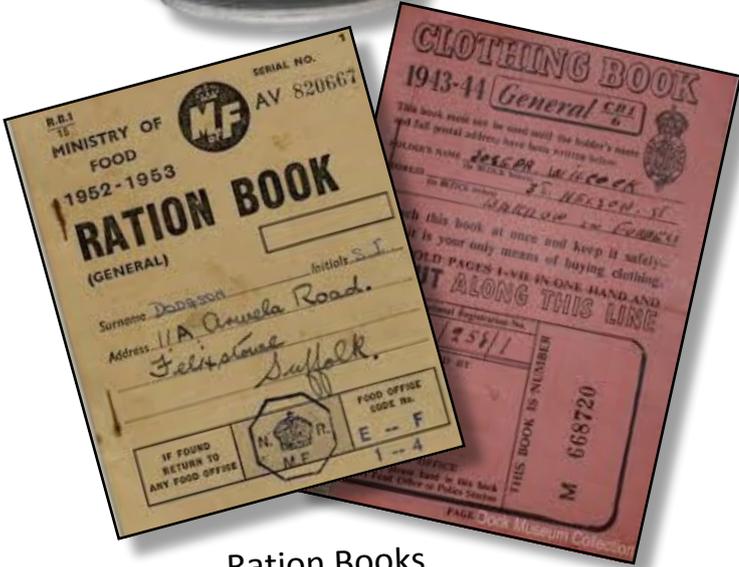
Harry Bull



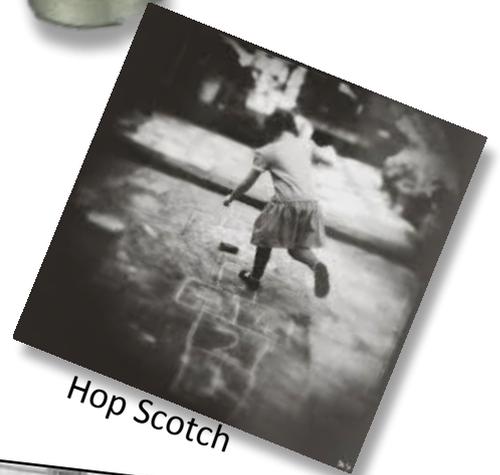
Chamber Pot



Carbide (gas) Bicycle Lamp



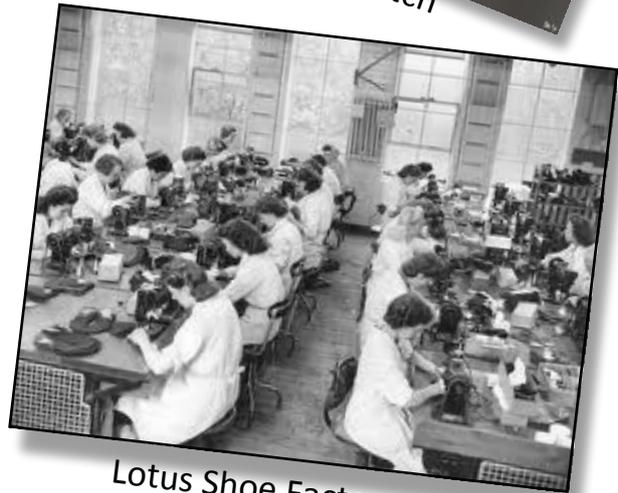
Ration Books



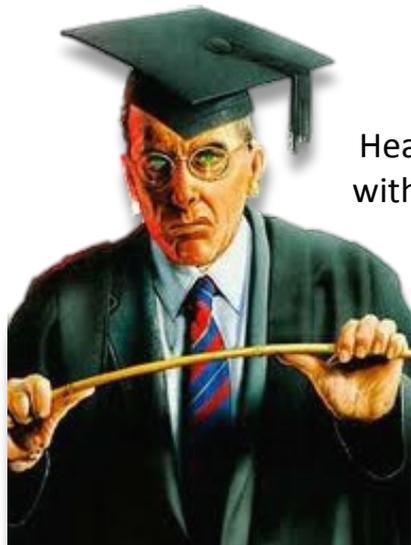
Hop Scotch



Mobile grocery shop



Lotus Shoe Factory Stafford



Headmaster with his cane



Milking cows by hand

# Colton History Society

## All Our Stories



## Stella Lycett & Malcolm Williscroft's story

**Malcolm Williscroft & Stella Lycett**

S1: Marion Vernon  
S2: Malcolm Williscroft  
S3: Stella Lycett  
S4: George Vernon

S1: This recording is being made for Colton History. George and Marion Vernon are interviewing Malcolm Williscroft and his sister, Stella Lycett, in the Alms Houses, Bellamour Way, Colton on March 8<sup>th</sup> 2013.

Right, shall we start with Malc then? Can you tell me a little bit about when you were born and where you were born. Were you born in Colton?

S2: No. I was born at Wiltonten(?), Cannock, but I come here when I was a month old.

S1: One month old. And when were you born?

S2: February 6<sup>th</sup> 1935.

S1: 1935. Yes. So you came here when you were one month old and have you lived here all the time?

S2: All the time, yeah.

S1: And where were you born Stella?

S3: St. Michael's Hospital, Lichfield.

S1: In Lichfield, and when was that?

S3: That was on 14.11.53.

S1: '53. Right so there's a big gap between you.

S3: Yeah.

S3: Nineteen year. Yeah, 19 years.

S1: Yes. So we'll start with Malcolm and then we'll bring you in a little bit as we go along. Is that okay?

S3: Yes, that's fine.

S1: Because you're not going to have the same memories are.

S3: No.

S1: Alright. So Malcolm when you were born, right. What do you remember about your family? Were you the first born? Have you got any other brothers and sisters?

S2: I was the first born. Then I've got a second sister, Josie, she's the second oldest. And then Ken, and then Stella's the youngest.

- S1: Right. So there's four of you in the family eventually.
- S2: Four in the family, yeah.
- S1: And do you remember the sorts of things that you used to wear when you were little? What did you used to wear, do you remember?
- S2: Oh. [Laughs]
- S1: How did you keep warm? So, let's just go back a bit. Where did you live in Colton?
- S2: Up Two Rose Villas.
- S1: Oh you lived in Two Rose Villas.
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: Yes. So did you live there all your life till you moved here?
- S2: Yeah, I did. Yeah.
- S1: So what was the ... how did you keep warm in the house? Was there a fire or a range?
- S2: Just an ordinary fire, like that. And then we watch it in the wintertime, you had to chop the sticks, get all the coal in ready for it.
- S1: Yeah.
- S2: Then you got up in the morning, it was freezing cold with no hot water. You had to get the ashes out, then lay the ... put the paper on. What we used to do was roll the paper up like so it wouldn't burn so fast so it would catch the sticks. Make sure the sticks was warm.
- S1: Who used to do that when you were little?
- S2: Make sure your sticks was dry and then when you got them going, put a little bit of coal on to start it going, like, ar.
- S1: That's quite an art, isn't it, lightening a fire, yes.
- S2: In the back kitchen there was a big boiler which heat the water, the fire used to heat the water to do the washing and all of that.
- S1: So you'd got running water when you moved here?
- S2: Oh yeah. Running water, yes.
- S1: Yes, that's good. That makes a big difference. And then you heated the water. So did that go up to ... did you have a bathroom in those days?
- S2: No, it was a bath in front of the fire.
- S1: Yes, I thought it might have been.

S4: Zinc bath was it?

S3: Tin bath.

S2: In front of the fire.

S4: Which water did you bath in then? Did you bath in soft water?

S3: Yes. Tubs.

S4: It had to be soft water with ...

S2: Oh yeah. There were two tubs outside to get the soft water from and then you had to put the warm water in.

S1: Yeah. Who would fetch the water in? Who used to carry the water?

S2: Me.

S1: You? Did you? What about when you were a child, who would have bucketed it then for you to have a bath when you were little?

S2: Who used to?

S1: Carry the water.

S2: Oh me mam used to bring it.

S1: Your mum, yes.

S2: Me mam when I was a little toddler, yes. She used to. I used to sit watching, you know, like.

S1: Yes.

S4: Did you all get in the bath together?

S2: No, no. We bathed separately.

[Laughter]

S1: Even as children you did just one at once.

S2: It was, yeah.

S1: One after the other, yes.

S4: Did you have fireplaces in the bedrooms, Mal?

S2: Yes, there was a small fireplace in the bedroom, yeah.

S4: Did you ever use them then?

S1: No.

- S2: Just the one downstairs, like, and the one in the back kitchen to warm the boiler up for the hot water we had. Yeah.
- S1: What do you remember about washday when you were a little boy?
- S2: Oh [Laughs]. Mangle job. We had an old-fashioned mangle.
- S1: In the back kitchen?
- S2: It was. We would use mangle when it was a fine day.
- S1: Yeah.
- S2: When it was wet like inside, but on fine days outside with the washing like. And I had to mangle while me mam did the sheets, like. Wash it like that.
- S4: Were they wooden rollers?
- S2: Wooden rollers, aye. Like that. And then outside peg it out. Ain't enough water out of that so there was two screws on top of it ...
- S1: Tighten it up.
- S2: ...tighten it up a bit more. Until I tightened it up that much it was doing this? [Laughs]
- S1: So hard.
- S2: Yeah, we was all watching.
- S1: Your mum didn't go to ... she worked in the house did she?
- S2: In the house, yes.
- S1: And did your dad work?
- S2: Oh yes. He worked down at ... for me granddad, Granddad Williscroft.
- S1: Right. As a carpenter or ...?
- S2: Carpenter and that. And he used to do all the funerals and that, make the coffin, wotsit like, at funerals.
- S1: What was your granddad's name?
- S2: Ben.
- S1: Used to make the coffins and things.
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: And was he very good? And was he very good at making things from wood?
- S2: Oh yeah. He used to make carts and all that, you know, like.
- S3: A wheelwright as well wasn't he.

S2: A wheelwright, yeah.

S4: Wooden wheels he used to do?

S3: Yes, wheels.

S2: My granddad when in Shropshire [06:35] used to have a place at Rugeley as well like. As well as the one down here. Where Keith lives.

S1: Yes. So what about when you were little? You came along 19 years later Stella.

S3: Yes.

S1: Had things changed for eating and so on?

S3: Not a lot really. No. No. We had the black-leaded grate in the kitchen with the copper on the side. And as Malcolm said, I still had the tin bath.

S1: Really?

S3: And that, yeah. It was really cosy and, it was quite nice really, relaxing.

S1: Yes.

S3: Yeah, so ...

S1: Did you still have the water from outside when you were little as well? Nice soft water to bath in.

S3: No. I'm not sure. We had the water butts there but I'm not sure ... I can't remember.

S1: No. I know my mum always used to do soft water for our hairs. We always had to wash our hair in soft water. Yes.

S3: I remember mother getting out of the copper. You know, so presumably she got the cold from outside.

S1: Yes. You did have cold water running then?

S3: Yes, we had cold water running.

S4: And did you take over Malcolm's job and do the mangling?

S3: No, that had gone thank goodness. We had a twin tub in those days.

S4: Who used to do the dolly tub?

S3: No.

S2: Oh yeah, I've done that.

S1: Do you remember the electricity coming to Colton, Malcolm? Because obviously Stella's remembering a twin-tub which was plugged in.

S3: But we didn't have any streetlights did you when you was younger.

S1: No streetlights.

S2: At one time there was no streetlights at all.

S3: No.

S2: If you wanted to go out when it was dark you had to have a torch or a candle what was .... You know. No streetlights.

S1: Where was your toilet when you were growing up?

S2: Outside.

S1: Yes. So if you went out there in the dark it ...

S2: Yeah. Oh aye, you had to have a torch to go yeah.

S1: And what light did you have in the house? Did you have lanterns?

S2: Electric light.

S1: Oh you always had electric did you?

S2: Electric light.

S3: Oh right.

S1: Oh right, I wondered if you have any oil lamps.

S3: No. Miss Rotchell did, she was all oil. She never had electric put in.

S1: Never ever had electricity put in?

S2: We always had a Victorian bucket job. You had to go up the garden and dig a hole in the garden ...

S1: Yeah. Empty it.

S2: Empty it in the garden. Make sure when you went to do another make sure you dunna dig the one up as you'd already ...

S1: A different place. Did you grow nice vegetables on that?

S3: We did!

S2: Filled buckets like that. I carried them up that garden many a time, the bucket. You had to just watch it, one or two falls.

S4: A bit of really good manure.

S3: We still had that toilet when I was little as well.

S2: It grew a lot where we dug. Our grocery store .

S3: Newspaper for toilet roll. Used the newspaper.

S2: Newspaper, you know, to wash yourself up.

S1: Was it ripped up ready?

S3: Yes, ripped into squares and put on a hook.

S2: Ah yeah.

S3: Pots under the bed for at night time.

S1: The night time, yeah. I thought it might be.

S2: Yeah. Those are what they used to call the 'good old days'.

S3: It was cold in them houses. You had blankets and a lot of blankets. We always had hot-water bottle every night.

S2: We had a hot-water bottle.

S1: What sort of a hot-water bottle did you have Malcolm?

S2: Yeah, a rubber one.

S1: A rubber one. Oh right.

S4: That was modern!

S1: That was quite modern then. No shelf out of the ...

S3: No, no. Or them water ones. Yeah we had hot water bottles.

S1: So how did you celebrate Christmas when you were little? Malcolm, let's start with you again. How ...

S2: Oh, we always, me dad always made sure we had a good Christmas. We all got together round a big table at home. Ar, all of us and really turkey or whatever. Everything really he got us. Ham, and ... oh ar, he made sure we had a good Christmas. Oh ar.

S1: Yes. And did he grow his own vegetables?

S3: Yes.

S1: So you'd have home grown things to eat with it, would you? Veg and potatoes?

S2: Beans, peas, taters, and all that lot, yes.

S1: And did you have ... what did you do for presents when you were ... think back to your earlier Christmases. Would you hang up a stocking or what would you do?

S2: Hang a wotsit up, a stocking. At the end of the bed we used to hang a sock. An apple, an orange and whatever.

S1: And what would be ... an apple, an orange ...

S2: Some.. like, sweets and whatever. And a little toy me dad used to make.

S1: Did he. Yes. What do you remember having?

S2: What?

S1: A toy. Can you remember anything he made you?

S4: Your most treasured one?

S1: No. Not now.

S2: I can't .... Don't know. I can't think.

S1: If you think about it tell me later. What about you Stella? Had Christmas changed much? Did you still hang a stocking on the bottom of your bed?

S3: No, I had presents.

S1: Just had a pile of presents?

S3: I had a pile of presents, yeah.

S1: And things have changed from perhaps one little homemade toy when you were little.

S3: Yes.

S3: He enjoyed Christmases. He made a big effort me dad did. They always used to dress a tree like Christmas Eve.

S1: Yes. Christmas Eve.

S3: Yeah. And Christmas Eve evening the whole family got together. You know, my sister and me brother and their families and we had a family get together on Christmas Eve. Like a family party.

S1: Right. How lovely.

S3: But the television was never on. It was always card games like, or dominoes. The men used to play.

S2: Oh ar.

S1: What card games would you play, do you remember?

S3: Yeah, used to play card games and dominoes.

S2: Dominoes.

S3: I can't remember what you used to play.

S1: I think the men used to play dominoes.

S2: It wasn't Whist was it?

S3: Whist?

S2: Whist. I recall Whist.

S1: How nice. And would you eat and drink then as well?

S3: Yes, we had a laid out tea and that. All the meats and ...

S1: So your mum was busy.

S3: Very busy.

S1: Yes. Did she like having a full house?

S3: Yes, I think so. Yeah, she enjoyed it.

S2: Oh loved it, yeah.

S1: Because you were the baby weren't you?

S3: I was yes. I was the youngest.

S4: That's while she had a pile of presents!

S3: That's it.

[Laughter]

I was the spoilt one apparently.

S1: What do you remember as your favourite presents? Do you remember a favourite present?

S3: I suppose bicycle really.

S1: Did you. Did you have a bicycle Malcolm? Did you have a bicycle for Christmas?

S2: No, I didn't. I had a bicycle, not for Christmas.

S1: And that just shows you the difference between ...

S3: The difference, yeah, in 19 years.

S1: Yes. What a difference things were between the ... obviously the war and so on between the two.

S3: That's it, yes.

S4: You talked about the television; do you remember when you first had a television?

S3: No.

S1: Was it always there for you?

- S3: I think it was, yes, for me.
- S4: Was it a big screen?
- S3: No. It was only like a small one.
- S4: Nine inch.
- S2: We had a television, Ferguson. My granddad Williscroft bought it us.
- S1: A Ferguson?
- S1: How old would you have been then about, do you know?
- S2: I was born in '35 ... I think he bought it for one of me birthdays but I can't just think now.
- S1: No. Perhaps when you were a bit older.
- S2: A bit older, yeah. But I can't just think now how old I was like, but I know it was Ferguson and that was the first television we had. It was Ferguson he bought us like.
- S1: So you say that you'd got a range in the kitchen, was your mum still using the range to cook, Stella, when you were little?
- S3: Yes, when I was little.
- S1: Didn't have an electric cooker then?
- S3: No, she didn't. No. And we used to keep the chicks at the front 'cause me dad had chickens for the eggs and the meat. And he'd get the chickens from the farm at Little Haywood, you know, where the chickens .... And they'd have them in a cardboard box in front of the range with a hot-water bottle and a blanket over to keep them warm.
- S1: Yes.
- S2: When we had them from Colwich.
- S3: Colwich, yeah.
- S2: Vernon's. Vernon's poultry farm.
- S3: Those poultry farms.
- S2: Vernon's poultry farm. Wotsit ... I don't know whether it still going now but we had always had from there when we wanted some chickens.
- S3: He always bought the chicks from there, put in the, to keep warm.
- S1: You always went there. So you kept quite a few?
- S2: The name was Vernon's.
- S3: Yes.

S2: Poultry farm, yeah.

S3: And a cockerel. Quite a few laying hens and a cockerel, known as Victor.

S1: Did you used to lock him up at night, shut him up at night so he didn't ...

S3: We had to put him away, yeah, well there was a fox around.

S1: Yes. So you always had plenty of eggs growing up?

S2: Oh yeah.

S3: Used to sell some of the eggs as well. So, yeah, we had ... it was alright. And the vegetables were always in the garden. And mother had like just a littler flower plot, you know, so she could have roses and things like that. But the main top of the garden as for chickens and veg.

S1: Yes.

S3: And a big shed at the top.

S1: And what was your favourite meal? Do you remember growing up when you were little?

S3: Favourite meal? It was trotters.

S1: Was it really?

S3: Pork's feet. Pig feet, yeah. I remember that me and my father used to love 'em. That was ...

S1: Isn't that special memory.

S3: Yes.

S1: Do ever cook them now?

S3: No. No.

S1: And what about Malc, what was your favourite meal?

S2: My favourite meal? Well, I reckon anything that was going.

S1: Anything at all!

[Laughter]

I thought you were going to say trotters as well. What would you have with the trotters?

S3: Just on there own. It wasn't a meal as such. It was just something extra.

S1: Really.

S3: I've got good memories of me and my father eating these trotters.

S1: Yes. And did your mum used to do things like make tripe and things like that as well?

S3: Yes, we had tripe and onions.

S2: Did you

S3: She did jams, marmalades, did all her own baking.

S2: Yeah.

S3: We had beastings as well from the farm. You know, the beastings.

S1: And what would they do with the beastings? Did you cook it in the oven?

S3: Yes, just pop it in the oven to set, to set it. I think she might have added a bit of sugar or something.

S1: Did you like that as well?

S3: Yes. Yeah, I liked the beastings.

S1: It's something you don't hear of today do you.

S3: No you don't. She was a good cook my mother was.

S1: How would they keep the food ...obviously when you were born Stella there was electricity, did your mum have a fridge in those days?

S3: No.

S1: Certainly not when you were little. So how did they keep the food fresh?

S3: We had a what's called the pantry, and it was a long settle that they used to put all the food on there. And then we had a wooden, what do you call it, cupboard ...

S2: Cupboard, ar.

S3: With a grilled front to put the meats in that in.

S1: Yes. Did you call it a safe, a meat safe?

S3: No.

S1: Just a cupboard?

S4: Was that inside the house?

S3: Yes, that was inside the house. Yeah. That's how it used to be. My mother always used to have the red cabbage salting in there, and the pickles in there and that. It was quite cool in there. Until fly a got in.

S1: Yes!

S3: And me dinner started walking. Me dad said 'that's it, we're having a fridge'.

S2: Yeah.

- S1: I can imagine. And what about buying food. Obviously you were fairly self-sufficient with the chickens, but you also had pork because you had pig's trotters and so on. So where would you mum have done the shopping? Was there a shop in the village, or did you go shopping?
- S2: Rugeley.
- S1: In Rugeley.
- S2: She used to do the Co Op and then Dean's butcher's shop, used to be where the town hall is under the clock. There used to be butcher's shop there next to it, like. Harry Dean his name was who used to run it then.
- S1: Was he a local fella?
- S2: Well as far as I ... well, he, as far as I know he's Rugeley, like. But that's as far as I know. I think he was, I couldn't say for sure.
- S1: And how did she get to Rugeley, Stella?
- S3: When I was little we had the green bus, and always had three market days, Tuesday, Thursday and Saturday. But the Co Op van used to come out
- S2: Aye.
- S3: The fishmonger van used to come out.
- S1: Fishmonger as well, yes.
- S3: Yeah. And a meat man used to come to out.
- S1: Right. Was there anybody who came round when you were little? Do you remember if anybody came round?
- S2: Well, I remember Jack Parker, he used to live where Jim Bailey lives. He used to come with his fish. And he used to have a store in Rugeley like.
- S1: Right.
- S2: Yeah. Under the clock at the town hall like. Yeah. He used to ... when he come round with his fish, he used to park outside Malt House Farm and he'd shout 'Fish alive oh, Fish alive oh'.
- S1: Really! And then did your mum used to buy some sometimes?
- S3: And who used to bring the milk round on the cart?
- S2: And then Marion Webb.
- S3: Yeah, that's it.
- S2: They used to farm Boughey Hall Farm.
- S1: Right.
- S2: She used to come round with a horse and trap with so many churns in it, like, and then you'd go out with your can or whatever, a tall jug, and say how much you want, a pint or a quart and that. And then if they run, had got enough, go back to the farm and get some more churns and come back and finish off.

S1: Yes. Did you have cream from them as well or just milk? Do you remember buying cream?

S2: No, I think she only just did the milk.

S3: I can't remember. That's your age group. That's you age.

S2: No. I don't think we did wotsit.

S1: Did you have a milkman delivering when you were ...

S3: No, Malcolm worked at the farm. Mr Price's farm. So then we had the milk straight from the farm.

S1: Straight from the farm. Right. Yes.

S3: That's where we got the beastings from as well.

S1: Oh, I see. And was that unusual to get the beastings? Were you lucky to get that?

S3: I think so, really.

S1: Yes. They wouldn't have been sold on ...

S3: No, they couldn't be sold because it's the first milk after calving.

S1: Yes, I thought it was. Yes.

S3: So it can't be used to go into the milking thing at all.

S4: What did you pay for your milk in those days then, do you remember?

S2: Yeah, you had to pay for it.

S3: Took it out of his wages, I think.

S1: You mean when ...

S4: How much would it have been?

S2: Well it wouldn't have been all that much in those days.

S4: Just a few pence?

S2: A few pence like.

S1: Did you mean Marion, when you pay Marion Webb?

S2: Yeah. Because she had a shoulder bag with what money in it to give the change if we wanted any and ...

S1: A leather bag?

S2: In a bag, like. A bag. Yeah.

S4: They'd have been 12 pennies in a shilling those days.

S2: Pardon?

S4: Twelve pennies in a shilling in those days.

S2: Yeah it was. Yeah. Oh aye, you had to buy your milk.

S1: Right. I'm going to move on to school now. So obviously different times. You went to school in Colton?

S2: In Colton, yeah.

S1: What do you remember of your school days?

S2: Oh, you mean like going on holidays or ...

S1: Going down to school, did you enjoy it?

S2: Oh yes! Yeah. The headmaster was Mr Broughton when I went and then we had one day a year at Rhyl. We had a day out at Rhyl.

S1: One day.

S2: One day at Rhyl.

S4: How did you get there?

S2: Bus.

S4: On a bus.

S2: Yeah. I think it was Nichols's bus from—oh where ...

S4: [Whispers] Stafford.

S1: Was that from Stafford?

S2: No, from Milford.

S1: From Milford, yes.

S2: Yeah. Yeah. But you only just had the one day. But not all of school, only the senior class went.

S1: Oh right. The older ones.

S2: Yeah.

S4: And that was your annual holiday?

S2: Yeah. And the others had to stop, they still had to go to school, like, all the seniors went to Rhyl for the day the others had to go to school.

S1: They weren't very pleased. And what did you learn when you were at school?

S2: Oh wotsit, how to read and write.

S1: Yeah. Mainly just the three Rs.

S2: The three Rs, wotsit, like. Yeah.

S1: And what about you leaving school? Did you stay at Colton school till ... how old were you when you left?

S2: I was 11 when I ...

S1: Eleven.

S2: ... and I went to Colwich school up till I was 15...

S1: Oh you stayed till 15, yes.

S2: ...and I left when I was 15. Yeah.

S1: And did you like Colwich as well, was it good?

S2: Yeah, yeah. It was alright, yeah.

S1: Did you do more things there?

S2: Pardon?

S1: Did you do extra things there?

S2: Oh yeah, I did woodwork and all that like. You know there was a woodwork lesson every wotsit like, every week.

S1: Are you good at woodwork too?

S2: I'm not very good at woodwork, no.

S1: Not like your dad?

S2: No, not so good as me dad [laughs] or me Uncle Maurice.

S1: And Stella, when you went to school was it still Mr Broughton?

S3: Yes, and Mrs Toy and Mrs Shaw.

S2: Oh aye.

S3: Mrs Toy was at the Juniors, first stage and then there was Mrs Shaw and Mr...I think it was Mr Broughton that did the other stage.

S1: Do you have happy memories of school?

S3: I do yes, yes. It wasn't anything like it is now, the school, you know. It was quite a lot smaller. You had a north room, which is—I've forgotten what it is now. But those were just like the two rooms and then you had the north room and that.

S1: Right.

- S3: Yeah, it was all right. And you had May pole dancing. My dad made the May pole for the school.
- S1: Did he, yes.
- S3: Yeah. We had the May pole dancing and like tennis, not tennis, like rounders something like that.
- S1: Yes. Did they have a May Queen in those days?
- S3: I think they did, yes, as far as I can remember.
- S1: Yeah. And how old were you when you left Colton, 11 as well?
- S3: Eleven and then I went to Broadacres at Hixon.
- S1: Hixon, yes. And did you enjoy that?
- S3: Yes, yeah it was fine. We did a lot more there. There was geography, maths, English, home economics, which they don't do now in the schools I don't think.
- S1: So you learned to cook ... did you do a lot of cooking at home with your mum as well? Did you learn a lot?
- S3: Yes a bit. Yeah, I've learnt a lot from my mother.
- S1: Yes.
- S3: A lot of the old-fashioned ways I've learnt as well, you know. And we had badminton and netball—I was in the netball team...
- S1: Right. Oh were you.
- S3: ...at secondary school.
- S1: Did you play matches and things?
- S3: Yes. We had matches. I was a goalie but I wasn't very good. We always lost!
- S1: Do you remember any games you used to play at school? Do you remember doing games in the playground, what sort of things did you play when you were there?
- S3: We had hopscotch.
- S2: Oh aye, we had that and cricket and football and that like, yeah.
- S4: Were you allowed to play conkers?
- S3: Yes, we always used to play conkers.
- S4: And marbles?
- S2: This is a conker 7 and all that, this is a conker 8.
- S3: Yeah, I used to play conkers.

S1: Did you do any skipping?

S3: Yes. Yeah we did the skipping.

S1: Do you remember any of the rhymes you used to sing? Did you used to sing rhymes while you were skipping?

S3: I can't remember that now.

S1: Did you have a big rope and ...?

S3: Yes, there was one in the middle. Yeah we used to do that as well. But I can't remember the rhymes.

S1: No. Interesting isn't it, yeah. Right, so let's think about the school holidays. Did you ever actually go away on holiday?

S3: I did, yeah. We always had a week's holiday.

S1: Did you, and where did you go to?

S3: Great Yarmouth, Skegness, Rhyl.

S2: Aye, we went Rhyl, went Yarmouth. That's about it won't it, Great Yarmouth and Rhyl.

S1: Where would you stay when you went on holiday?

S2: We didn't go anywhere else.

S3: It varied really. Once we stopped in a chalet and father didn't like that. So after that it was more or less caravans.

S1: Caravans, yes. Would you have had holidays when you were little Malcolm?

S2: Yeah, wotsit, yeah.

S1: Always went on holiday?

S2: Yeah.

S1: Oh you were lucky, yes. Did you go to the seaside?

S2: Yeah, yeah.

S1: Always, all your life?

S2: Yeah.

S4: Did you have a car to go in?

S3: No we went on the train.

S2: Train, aye.

S3: Train or bus.

S1: From Rugeley?

S2: Yeah.

S3: Yes. No, me mother didn't drive and me father didn't drive.

S1: Neither of them drove. Never?

S1: No.

S3: So you all had to rely on public transport.

S1: Yes. And what did you do in the school holidays when you weren't away, six weeks holidays? What would you play or would you be working or what would you be doing in the holidays? Do you remember, with your friends?

S2: Well, I liked to play football and all that, and rounders, what we called rounders.

S1: Did you do any working on the farms or anything like that?

S2: When I was on school holidays?

S1: Yeah, in the school holidays.

S2: Only after I left school.

S1: You worked when you left school.

S3: What about potato picking?

S2: Pardon?

S3: Didn't you go potato picking?

S2: Oh aye, yeah, I did you're right. I used to go to Mellors.

S1: Yes.

S2: Then I went once to—now I can't just think where, but the name was Wardles, like, over wotsit way or Hixon way and that way.

S1: Hixon way, yes.

S2: And I went tater picking there once.

S1: How would you get there? Would the farmer come and fetch you?

S2: Yeah, yeah. Well we used to ... do was walk up the ...

S1: Up the road to Mellors. I meant if you went ...

S4: To Mellors, yeah.

S2: Walk up the road whereas if you went to Wardles they come and fetch ...

S1: They came and fetched you, yeah.

S2: And you have to have a pass. They give you a wotsit, you had one week for potato picking.

S1: Right.

S2: And the headmaster ...

S3: 'Cause you went with the school as well apparently.

S2: ... gave you this card ...

S1: Ah, from school. You went in school time.

S2: Yeah. To give the farmer every wotsit day you went you had to tick it...

S1: Get it ticked off.

S2: ...to say you was been ...

S1: So you'd got your mark.

S2: ...like. So you give it back to the headmaster when you finished one week's tater picking and he'd look through it and if there was one day missing he'd have you in his office and say 'You, Williscroft ...' or Smith, or whatever like '...what happened there? You missed a day there, why didn't you go?' You had to explain why you didn't go. Oh aye, you had a card every time you went tater picking when you were at school you see. And then the farmer would mark it like, you know, because it would be on the card, what's your name and then tickets. You was here. And if they hadn't he'd leave it blank.

S1: Yeah.

S2: And the next day you went Wednesday he's got a bloke there. Of course, as soon as you handed it back to the headmaster he'd got all through 'em.

S1: All through them, yes. And would you get paid for doing that?

S2: No, we didn't get paid.

S1: No money at all?

S2: No, no. Just went potato picking to ...

S4: Did you get paid at Mellors?

S1: No, he was just saying he didn't get paid.

S2: Oh we did aye. Yeah. Aye, sorry I did yeah.

S3: I think that's when we went with my mum at Mellors.

S2: Not at the other one. Oh aye, he'd soon want to know why you missed a day.

S3: School didn't ...

S1: So your mum ... sorry, go on. The school organised the other one that didn't get paid.

S3: Yes, that didn't get paid and that was through the school.

S1: Ah I see, right.

S3: When we went with my mother potato picking we did get paid then, you know.

S1: And did you go as well?

S3: Yes, I went as well. Yeah. And strawberry picking and gooseberry picking.

S1: Yeah. What do you remember in the school holidays other than that when you were out and about with friends? Did you do that or were you a home bird?

S3: No, I was ... Diane Peak, we was really, really close. Very close, and we ran all over the village except the top end. We didn't go up the top end.

S1: You didn't go up the top.

S3: No, because apparently there was a tramp up there so we didn't go up there.

S1: Ah so you were frightened to go.

S2: I was frightened to go in there.

S1: Would you go over the fields and ...?

S3: Yes, we went down the fields. We'd take the horse as well.

S1: Who had a horse?

S3: Diane. It was like a cobb; it's a heavy horse. We never had a saddle or anything, we just rode him. If you fell off he just stopped you know.

S1: If you fell off he stopped! Did you have a bridle?

S3: Yes, we had a bridle.

S1: But not a saddle.

S3: No saddle, no.

S4: What was it like riding bear back?

S3: It was all right. A bit uncomfortable, yeah.  
I think we fell off more times enough [33:51]. Yeah. We used to be out for hours and hours, down the fields, down the brook, for bully heads [34:01].

S1: Yes.

S3: I don't think you can get bully heads down there now.

S1: Yeah. And did you take a fishing net with you or just look for them?

S3: Yeah, we'd have a fishing net, yeah.

S1: Did you put them in a jar?

S3: And go down the back ...

S4: Did you have a jam jar?

S3: Yes .And then, yeah, it was just playing tricks on people as well sometimes.

S1: Did you. What sort of tricks?

S3: Well there used to be the conker tree across the road by the big house and that was Diane's grandma's. And we would get the conker leaves and sort of thread them so we'd just got the veins and we'd hide behind the wall and if somebody came past we'd just go 'ooohh'.

S1: Did you!

S3: Oh dear ...

S1: Happy time.

S3: ...and we'd go in the greenhouse and do mud pies. They'd make mud pies in there.

S1: Did you, yeah.

S3: Yeah, it was happy times when I was young.

S1: Yes. Did you have something to make them out of or ...did you have some moulds of any kind, jelly moulds?

S3: No, no. We just made mud pies and just threw up the wall.

S1: Oh did you. Yeah.

S4: Who's wall?

S3: Mrs Clarkson's. A really nice woman [laughs]. Oh dear.

S1: What was the social life like in the village? Was there anything organised for the children in the holidays? Or was there anything organised for your parents? Did your mum and dad go down to anything in the Reading Room or anything like that?

S3: No, my mother was joining the WI all the time.

S2: Oh, my mother did aye.

S3: And I think he had the Produce Guild then when I was little.

S1: Right. Yeah.

S3: No, I don't think so.

S1: No children's clubs or anything like that?

S3: No, I never went to any. As I say, I was up Mrs Peak's most of the [35:49] time.

S1: Do you remember anything about the church or going over to the church? Did you go with the school or did you go ...?

S3: I was in the choir.

S1: Were you, yes.

S3: Yeah, I was in the church choir so we had choir practice on a Friday. Mr Tolson and Mrs Tolson. And then we could go down there and play tennis if we wanted to.

S1: At the Tolson's?

S3: At the Tolson's.

S1: Everybody who was in the choir or just anybody in the village?

S3: There was a quite ... nearly all out the village. Yeah.

S1: How many would be in the choir in those days? Was it big?

S3: Yes, it was quite big. Both rows were filled and some at the front.

S1: Mainly children?

S3: Some adults, yeah. But a lot of children.

S1: And who played the organ in those days?

S3: Oh goodness. I can't remember.

S1: No. Not Mr Ravenscroft?

S3: I don't think so.

S1: No.

S4: Did somebody have to pump the organ to ...?

S3: I don't know.

S2: Oh I did that.

S4: You'd do that. Did you?

S1: Did you go to church regularly?

S2: I used to go when wotsit like, to pump the organ every Sunday like, yeah. And wotsit was the organist then, Cecil Ravenscroft, Ruth's dad, ar.

- S1: He was, Cecil.
- S2: He had a little square box like that with a lead weight on it and you pump it right down to the lead weight got to the bottom, you'd stop and have a, but you'd got to watch the lead weight going up as you didn't go right up the top else you'd got no music to come ... So when it got to about that far off the top you'd pump again.
- S1: Started again, yeah.
- S2: Yeah. He was organist then when I was ...
- S4: Did you sing in the choir?
- S2: No, no. I wasn't in the choir, no.
- S1: He was quite a character wasn't he Cecil.
- S2: Oh yeah.
- S1: Do you remember him well.
- S2: Oh yes, yeah.
- S3: Yes. Yes. He used to walk all the paths, all the footpaths ...
- S2: We used to walk all the fields.
- S3: ...to keep them open.
- S2: Yeah, he had ar. But of course, what they did say in them days is you have to walk them every so often to keep them open, you know, like.
- S3: Yes, that's what Mr Ravenscroft did to keep the pathways open.
- S2: And he used to walk them regular like, aye. Quite regularly he'd be [38:09] an organist there. Yeah.
- S1: So do you remember going to church? What do you remember about church services or did you go to Sunday school?
- S2: Oh yeah, I went to Sunday school. Miss Rochel used to take us at Sunday school, yeah. When the weather was good we ... there was one winter, of course, in them days winters were worse than what we have now. We couldn't get cause of snow drifts, so we couldn't get to ... Miss Rochel used to take us at wotsit, yeah. Wotsit, like, you know.
- S1: Did you have Miss Rochel as well, Stella?
- S3: No. No.
- S1: No. Did you go to Sunday school?
- S3: Yes, I think so. Yes.
- S1: And do you remember any big festivals, like Easter or fetes or anything?

S3: Yeah, we used to have fetes. And then you had the traction engine rallies.

S2: Oh I remember at wotsit, yeah.

S3: In Mr Price's field. That was really good.

S2: Yeah.

S3: Yeah, we'd have fetes and ...

S1: Was your mum involved in that or your dad or did you just go to it?

S3: No, I don't think so. We just went to it. As I said, me dad made the May pole for the May pole dancing and that, which he used in the fetes as well.

S1: Oh right, yes. Did they used to have a fete at May Day then, around that time?

S3: Yes, I think so. Yeah. You had the different stalls with different things on and that.

S1: Yeah. So we know that your dad worked, and you Malcolm, you worked on the farm?

S2: Yeah I worked on two. I worked for a bloke by the name of Herbert Saunders at the Wilmer and then of course he passed away and his wife sold the farm to Mr Price and then I went over and worked for Mr Price. I finished me working days there...

S1: So you stayed there all the time at Bellamour.

S2: ...at Bellamour.

S3: Yes.

S1: And what did you do on the farm?

S2: Well.... milk the cows and get the silage in and all that wotsit like, yeah.

S1: So you saw a big change in farming over those years did you?

S2: Oh yeah. Yeah.

S3: Mr Saunders was a horse and cart wasn't it.

S2: Yeah. Saunders ...

S3: Yeah, he was a horse and cart.

S2: ... he had a horse and cart.

S1: Horse and cart to start off with then. And horse to pull the plough?

S2: Yeah.

S3: His name was Dobbin, wasn't it?

S2: Yes. Yeah.

S3: That's all I can remember.

S2: Scuffling, we did ... what she on about what you do, well in them days it was all leg work.

S1: Yes.

S2: And of course then Mr Saunders he passed on, so they'd still got the horse and Mr Price had it right up to the end of its days.

S1: Did he, yes. Looked after it.

S2: Yeah, he looked after it. Took it across the lodge, put it in a field there when he had it.

S1: It worked hard.

S2: Till the end of his days like, ar.

S4: And then did you have a tractor?

S2: Pardon?

S4: Did they have a tractor after him? After the horse?

S1: A tractor? Did Mr Price start then having tractors?

S2: No he didn't have the horse to work for him. He had ...

S1: He just kept it, yes.

S3: Till its retirement I think.

S2: To see his last of his days out, like. Oh aye, there was always tractors at Bellamour.

S1: Yes.

S2: But not at the Wilmer always wotsit like.

S1: I understand. Yes.

S2: Oh aye, he just had it for a favour to Mrs ... because he didn't want to have it put ...

S1: No, he gave it a good ending. Yeah.

S2: He wanted to wotsit like, so he had it and put it in one of the fields back of the lodge right up till the end of his days, like.

S1: What did you most enjoy doing on the farm?

S2: Oh, everything.

S1: Everything. You loved it?

S2: Yeah, yeah.

S1: Did you work long hours, Malc?

S2: Oh yeah, especially in the winter. Yeah.

S1: What time would you start?

S2: What, in the morning? About six o'clock when you milk the cows.

S1: Because of course you'd have been milking by hand.

S2: No machine there wotsit.

S1: Originally, when you started?

S2: Wotsit, ar.

S1: Oh right, always machine.

S2: Ar machine wotsit when I started at Bellamour like.

S3: What about when you was at Wilmer? That was hand milking wasn't it?

S2: Yeah. Aye, at Wilma. But at Bellamour ...

S3: But Mr Price was machine.

S2: ...was a milking machine, yeah. Aye. It was all right, healthy like, but it was hard one but it was healthy.

S1: Healthy. Yes.

S2: You was out in the fresh air all...

S4: What time did you finish at night?

S2: Well it was ... well in the summer wotsit, like, you had all the harvest to get in, it would be ten o'clock at night.

S3: Yeah.

S2: Something like that, you know, like. Oh aye. Because you all the harvest to get in and that.

S3: Because I used go down in the school holidays as well.

S1: You used to go in school holidays?

S3: Yeah. To Mr Price's and to the Wilmer. I wasn't very old when I went to the Wilmer.

S4: Do you remember the weather being different?

S2: Oh yeah, a lot different. The winters are not half as bad as they used to be years ago.

S4: Or the summers?

S2: Well, the summers was ... it was all right in the summer. You know warm and wotsit like, but the climate seems to changed to what it used to be like.

S1: Yeah. I think you right.

S2: Yes.

S1: Stella, you used to go down and help on the farm in the summer sometime at the harvest.

S3: Yes.

S1: What would you do?

S3: Just potter around really. Sometimes when I was old enough they let me drive the tractor.

S1: Did they?

S3: Until it ran away with me. It was an old massive grey Massey Ferguson and I had to stand on the brakes but it still wouldn't stop.

S4: How did you stop it?

S3: It did stop in the end.

S1: It just stopped itself.

S3: Yes. I was getting closer and closer to the road.

S1: Gosh, that was frightening.

S3: But I used to go with Malcolm as well in the milking at Mr Price's. Watch him doing the milking. I'd give him the feed. Before they came into the stalls they had some feed put in and they'd go straight to the stalls. So that was my job. Yeah, it was all right.

S1: And you, yourself then, when you left school you left Hixon, what happened then? What did you decide to do?

S3: I worked at Stafford in an office.

S1: In an office, yeah. Had you got office skills already?

S3: No it was answering the phone and posting the post and that. Used to send it out.

S1: How did you get there?

S3: Mr Preston took me. Yeah, Charlie Preston. He'd give me a lift in and I'd get the bus back in the evening.

S1: Did he used to work over there?

S3: At Stafford, yes. He went in more or less the same time so I got a lift in with him.

S4: The bus would bring you back to Rugeley?

S3: Rugeley.

S4: Then walk home?

S3: Yes. Yeah.

S1: Across the fields did you walk?

S3: Yeah, sometimes.

S1: Did you enjoy working there?

S3: Yes it was alright. It was totally different though from ... I was used to a village life.

S1: I was thinking that. Where did most people go to work? You know, where did people find employment? Where would most people work? There were quite a lot of people on the farms...

S3: Yes.

S1: ...but as that became more mechanised I suppose they had to find other jobs.

S3: There was a tan yard as well, wasn't there?

S2: Oh, there was a tan yard, yeah. But that was took down ...

S1: In Rugeley that was?

S2: In Rugeley, yeah. Yeah.

S1: Did you know anyone who worked there Malcolm?

S2: No, me dad worked there.

S1: Your dad worked there?

S2: He did didn't he. Yeah, he did ar.

S3: Umm.

S1: Yeah. Did he at one time.

S2: Yeah, he were working at the tan yard at one time a day. Yeah.

S1: What would happen if people couldn't find a job? Was there help from the government or in those days when you were little? Was that ...?

S2: Well, you'd have to sign on the dole, what they call the dole. And then they went down and got so much. Not a lot but a bit to keep you going.

S1: A bit, yeah. Yes. I'm going to move on to thinking a little bit about health now. Did they ever have doctors or any dentists or anybody coming round to the schools when you were there, Malcolm?

S2: Yeah. Dentist Duck.

S1: Dentist Duck!

- S2: Dentist Duck his name was. And he was a dentist duck and all.
- S1: Was he. What do you mean ...?
- S2: Warned the day before he was coming round to have a look at your teeth. 'Dentist Duck's coming tomorrow.' You went to school next day, there was one, two, three, four, five or six missing!
- S1: Was there? Frightened.
- S2: Because they were frightened. Oh, he was a right ... he used to smoke and he'd got all nicotine on his fingers. Aye, bald head he was just a bit of hair around the side. No one would knock him. And he always brown wotsit on his fingers.
- S4: Did he frighten you?
- S2: Well, they called him a dentist but he used to pull your teeth, ar.
- S1: What did he do?
- S2: Yeah, wotsit would say the dentist is coming, there'd be one or two missing, ar.
- S4: How did you ... was it painful when he pulled your teeth out then?
- S1: Did you have one pulled out?
- S2: I had one... he just got a bit of stuff and just dabbed it on your, sort of round your gums and 'swffff'. Aye, oh ar.
- S4: Yeah.
- S2: They finished him at the finish. Stopped him.
- S4: Why was he called 'Duck'?
- S2: I don't know. We always known him as Dentist Duck. Whether that was his name, proper name I don't know. We always known him as Dentist Duck. Used to call him Dentist Duck.
- S1: He didn't come round when you were there then Stella, you escaped that.
- S3: No, no, thank goodness!
- S1: So do you remember anyone being ill in the family? You know, were you ill yourselves either of you when you were young?
- S3: I had measles. I had it in my eyes and I remember I had to be in a dark room, wear sunglasses, and the light had to be shaded. And I couldn't go out of that room for at least a week.
- S1: Right. Was it going through the school?
- S3: Not as far as I know. No. Just remember being in this dark room and me mother said I'd had measles. I wasn't very old; I think I was about seven.
- S1: Right. When you were ill did the doctor come out to you?

S3: Dr Dillon, yes. Those were the days when the doctors did come out. You had your proper family doctor, he knew you from toddler to old age sort of thing.

S1: That's changed now.

S3: That has changed. Yes.

S1: Do you remember any home remedies? If you got a cold or something what would your mum do?

S2: Honey and lemon.

S3: Honey and lemon and glycerine, something like that.

S2: Oh, warm honey and lemon, yeah.

S3: But Malc said you used to have a bread poultice or something.

S2: Oh aye and bread poultice if you got a boil on the back of your neck, there was a bread poultice like, cloth, and warm the bread up and put it in the cloth then put another one over it. If it was a bit too hot and have it on the back of your neck, you'd just jump out the chair. [Laughs]

It cured it.

S1: Did it. Did it make it burst? What would it do?

S2: It would come up and then it would all burst, you know. But it didn't go wotsit, it didn't go ... ar, we called them bread poultices because they used bread to wotsit. You know, aye.

S1: Do you remember any other things like that at all? I mean now we just go and buy everything over the counter don't we.

S3: Yeah, we do.

S2: Yeah.

S3: No, I can't remember anything else. I remember we always used to have honey, lemon and glycerine.

S1: What would happen if you cut your leg? Would you bandage it up or ... do you remember?

S3: Yes.

S2: Iodine they used to use.

S1: Iodine.

S2: Iodine, yeah. Put some on, and it's good stuff like. But by God it didn't half make it sting.

S1: It did.

S3: And warm cod liver oil for an ear ache.

S2: Aye, cod liver oil.

S3: I know me mother used to use warm cod liver oil if you'd got an ear ache.

S1: Ear ache. Pour it into the ear?

S3: Yes.

S1: Or put it ...

S2: Ear ache, yeah. Warm it up a bit on the grate.

S3: It was a bit too hot once for Malc. Totally floored him.

S2: Put the bottle on the grate and warm it up and then just ... make sure it wasn't too hot like.

S1: Did you used to take cod liver oil as something to take to ...?

S3: Yes.

S3: And malt.

S1: How would you have that, a spoon of malt?

S3: Yeah, malt. We used to have malt.

S1: On the spoon?

S3: Yes.

S1: Did you like the malt?

S3: Yes. A loved it!

[Laughter]

S1: And did you like the cod liver oil?

S3: No.

[Laughter]

Because you didn't have the capsules, you had to have the oil. You didn't have the capsules.

S4: Did you ever graze your knees Malc?

S2: Oh yeah, yeah.

S4: Were you in shorts for a long time?

S2: Yeah, I was in shorts, yeah.

S4: Until when?

S2: Till I was about 14 I think it was.

S4: So you'd graze your knees.

S2: Something like that, ar.

S1: Nearly till you went to work.

S2: Work, ar, yeah.

S4: Amazing.

S1: And you Stella, I mean when you were young did you wear trousers much?

S3: Yeah, I think I did.

S1: Yes. By the time that you were growing up ...

S3: Yeah, jeans and that.

S1: ... you had warmer clothes.

S3: Yes. Malcolm always had a balaclava.

S1: Balaclava, yes.

S2: Oh ar, yeah.

S4: With long socks?

S2: With long socks, ar, right up to the knees.

S1: Your balaclava, did you wear that when you went to work?

S2: Oh yeah, because in winter months, like, yeah.

S1: Did your mum knit anything?

S3: Oh yes. Knit jumpers, scarves ...

S2: Oh, knit jumpers, scarves, ar. She did a lot of knitting, didn't she?

S3: ... gloves. Yeah. Did a lot of knitting. Cardigans. Yeah did a lot of knitting.

S1: And did she make clothes for you as well?

S3: No. No. Just the knitting.

S2: No.

S4: Did you pass down your clothes?

S3: Did you pass down? I'd got no one to pass mine to!

S1: Did you pass them down to your brother ...

- S2: No, I don't think we did. I don't think I passed my down to Ken. I dunno know, no I can't remember doing wotsit.
- S1: Well my last main topic really just to chat about this morning, very interesting, is not going to effect you Stella 'cause it's the war. Right.
- S3: Yes.
- S1: But do you have any memories of the war at all?
- S2: The evacuees and all of that.
- S1: The evacuees, yeah.
- S2: Coming from London 'cause me mam had one.
- S1: She did, did she, yes.
- S2: Wotsit. Then there used to be the American soldiers.
- S1: Tell me just a bit about the evacuee first. How many ... did quite a few come to the village?
- S2: Evacuees? Yeah, went to find out who'd ... the one that was, you know, come from London.
- S1: The one that you had came from London?
- S2: London, yeah.
- S1: Was it a girl or a boy?
- S2: Lad. Boy, yeah.
- S1: What was his name, do you remember?
- S2: No, I don't know what ... I couldn't tell you now. No.
- S1: No. Was he the same age as you or?
- S2: Well he probably would be sort of my age now because Schuler is still around like, yeah.
- S1: Yeah. Did you get on well with him?
- S2: Yeah. Yeah. He was alright. We went wotsit like. And then we had the American soldiers about. They had the ... well of course they call the Americans one wotsit ... they had white Americans staying in the big house and the coloured Americans was up at Blithfield Hall?
- S1: Were they separated?
- S2: Oh aye, they separated, yeah. Wouldn't have ... didn't have coloured with the whites. The white Americans was down here, the big house, and the coloured Americans was up at Bagots hall, ar.
- S4: Were they under canvas the black Americans? Did they have to sleep under canvas, under tents?
- S2: The whites slept in the big house.

- S1: But what about the black Americans did they ...
- S2: Well as far as I know they slept in because I don't know much because you didn't see them much knocking about because they didn't on ...
- S1: And what about the food during the war? Did it make a big difference to you or because you were, you know, you were quite self-sufficient at home weren't you. Did it not make so much difference to you food-wise?
- S2: Yeah. We did watch it like. Yeah. It was alright, you know, like, but it was all rationed you see during the war. You was only, if you go to the butcher shop you were only allowed so much a week and that was your lot and if you ran out it was no good running again. They just give you enough for the week wotsit, you know, like.
- S1: I suppose if you kept chickens at your house though you were always able to have some meat weren't you?
- S2: Yeah. Yeah. And eggs.
- S1: And eggs as well.
- S4: Did you ever keep a pig?
- S2: No, we never had any pigs.
- S3: The pigsty was there when I was little, on the backyard.
- S1: Oh there was a pigsty?
- S3: Oh yeah, in the backyard. Yeah, the whole row had pigsties. Yes. Apparently one did, years ago he always kept a pig. 'Cause apparently you could eat everything of the pig except the squeak—that's what the saying was.
- S1: That's what they always said.
- S3: That's what they said, yeah.
- S1: Is that right?
- S3: Yeah. Any scraps went to the pig.
- S1: Yes. Yes.
- S3: Yeah, we've still got the sties.
- S1: But nobody kept one in ... but your mum and dad didn't ever keep one.
- S2: No, no.
- S1: Who lived in the house before they lived there, do you know?
- S3: It was the laundry apparently for the big house, Rose Villa and that.
- S1: Yes. Was it all one house originally?
- S3: Yes. It was like the laundry for the big house and ...

S1: For Bellamour?

S3: Yes. We had the great big hooks from the ceilings and me dad took those out. It's where the pulleys would go up to dry the washing. And then you had the big wash house out at the back with the copper, big copper in it. I suppose that's where they did the washing itself.

S1: But your mum never used any of that. Oh did your mum use that copper for washing?

S3: Not that, that was my granny's side. When I was little it was divided into two. We was here and me granny was next door. So that copper was me granny's. And me mother had her copper in the back kitchen.

S2: Outhouse didn't it.

S3: Yeah, granny did. But the pigsty was there and the great big coal place was there as well. I think Gwen's probably still got it.

S1: So did your mum grow up in the village?

S3: No, she came from Hednesford. She was in service at Colton.

S2: The cottage up at Winns [58:40] farm up around Hamley. She was at service at Winns ...

S3: That's how me mum and dad met because me mother was in service ...

S2: ... then Arthur was in service. That's how me dad met her. Ar, yeah.

S1: Well is there anything else you'd like to tell me about?

S3: Oh yeah, the bombs that dropped here in the war.

S1: In the war?

S3: The troop line. The railway line.

S1: You tell me Stella.

S3: Well, apparently he did have bombs drop ...

S2: Oh ar, yeah, the bombs ar.

S3: Because the Trent Valley line was the main line to the front line for the troops.

S1: Right. Yes.

S2: I forgot about that.

S3: And Trent Valley was a stop off and what I've been told, that the pub landlord there used to rob the troops. Instead of giving them the cigarettes with ten pack or something he'd give them six.

S1: Oh, did he?

S2: Oh ar.

- S3: Which was scandalous, because they was off to war on the front line, you know.
- S2: What was his name, he was called Gisel Taylor [59:51].
- S3: Gisel Taylor.
- S2: They nicknamed Gisel Taylor, because what he used to do. They used to stop down here and go to pub buy their packs, of course they reckoned they come back with a pack, got on the train ...
- S1: And then they'd gone.
- S2: ... going. They don't want a fag, they don't look, when they opened it up it was half empty. He took so many fags out. Of course, it was too late for them to do ought then.
- S1: Was it just a stop off, just stop for a short stop and then carried on again.
- S3: Yes. Short stop, and then they carried on again to the front line.
- S2: Yeah, they just carried on.
- S3: That's why the Germans tried to bomb it, because it was the troop line to the front. There was one fell at Mrs Saunders's, Wilma farm, that cracked the house didn't it?
- S2: Oh Saunders's, ar. Wilmer, yeah, it did. It dropped in the bottom ...
- S3: That cracked the house.
- S2: ...bottom of the garden it dropped.
- S3: Malc thinks there was one that was dropped on the Martlin.
- S2: There was one dropped in the Martlin over here and I think they reckon they never got it 'cause it was in quicksand.
- S1: Right.
- S3: So it had moved.
- S1: So it's still there?
- S3: Might be, yeah. Because me mother always said that there was down the bottom fields doing some fencing and he came back there was a notice on the gate 'Do not enter, unexploded bomb'!
- S2: Ar.
- S1: That was a mean trick, wasn't it.
- S2: They tried to get it out but they couldn't, the one in the Martlin because it must have been because quicksand was in there like.
- S3: It was moving.
- S1: Do you remember the air raids?

S2: Oh yeah, yes. Were black outs, you know, wotsit. Black the windows; anybody who didna they'd get into trouble.

S1: Who used to check them? Who used to come round and check? Did you have a warden?

S2: No, we didn't have one.

S3: I don't know that.

S3: No, I can't. I don't ...

S1: You don't remember one, no?

S2: No, I don't think so but they had to make sure all the wotsits, yeah.

S1: Did you have ...

S2: Because the one that they dropped over at Wilmer way, I heard Saunders say they reckon the farmer he went out with a naked light. It was one of the German, wotsit course, and he was working for the railway, you know. And he dropped this bomb and it landed right in the bottom of Saunders's garden. ?? [1:02:27]. It split the house ...

S3: Straight down the middle.

S2: ... down the wotsit like, ar. He told me that, that Saunders himself.

S1: Did you have an air raid shelter?

S2: No, no. I can't remember one.

S1: What did you do when there was an air raid then? Where did you go when there was an air raid?

S4: Did you hide under the bed?

S2: Well [laughs], yeah. We hadn't got no air raid shelters round here had we.

S1: What did you do when you heard the siren go off then? Just stay wherever you were?

S2: Yeah. Well there wasn't much you could do. No air raid shelter.

S1: Just ignored it.

S2: Wotsit, yeah. Oh ar. But that's what they reckon anyway how they dropped the one at the Wilma. How he come out with this naked light, German bomber was over, they dropped like, you know.

S1: Anything else you'd like to tell us Stella before ...?

S3: Can I just have a look at the piece of paper?

S1: Yes, of course.

S3: I put a few things down. Make our own soaps. There used to be big blocks of green soap for the washing. Didn't have washing powder or anything like that. I can remember that.

S1: She used to make her own. How did she make it?

S3: Well she bought the big blocks and if there was any little bits left she'd save them all and then she'd put them in the pot with a drop of warm and render them down to make another block.

S1: Exactly, yes. Economy. Very economical.

S3: Then she'd use that for washing. She was very economical. Yeah, there was no waste. Because, as I say, like Malcolm says, they had the rationing, you know, so nothing went to waste at all. Nothing.

S2: No.

S3: Oh Tin Can Lurky we used to play.

S1: Was that the game?

S3: Yeah.

S1: Tell me about that game then.

S3: Pin button we used to play.

S2: What, darts?

S3: No, Tin Can Lurky.

S1: Tin Can Lurky.

S2: Oh aye, Tin Can Lurky!

S1: And how did you play that?

S2: Well what they do, put a tin can in the middle of the road and you get one, what they call on, you kick it, and find another one and touch him and he was on next and it was Tin Can Lurky.

S1: Right. Like a chasing game?

S2: Kick the wotsit. Yeah, ar. Called it Tin Can Lurky.

S1: And what was the other game?

S3: We used to pin the buttons to the window ...

S2: Dunna go on about that.

S1: Oh go on, tell us Malcolm.

[Laughter]

That was naughty wasn't it. That sounds like a naughty game.

S2: We used to play what the call Pin and Button. You get a long string of cotton with a needle or whatever, put a button on it, go round what, stick it right in the end of somebody's corner of the window. Make sure it was

sat. And if it was the end house you nipped round the corner. You pull this cotton and the button would go 'ding, ding, ding' on the window, you see, and he'd come out, open the door, nobody about, shut the door. And then ...

S1: Ping, ping, ping.

S2: ...pull it again, ting, ting, ting. But they couldn't see nobody 'cause we ...

S1: And did you take it out eventually and run away.

S2: Yeah.

S1: Yes. Oh. How often did you do that, often?

S2: All the time or two until somebody chased us. If they twigged what was ...

[Laughter]

S1: Yeah. You got caught. Ah thought you'd be out playing games. You said you weren't but I thought you would be.

S2: Oh ar.

S3: I've got here tied handles together.

S2: Oh, the door handles.

S4: On either side of the street.

S2: Tied door handles together and then knock the doors, they couldn't open it to see who was here. Of course, they find out they couldn't of course because the string was stopping them.

S1: You were naughty. Were you naughty at school as well?

S2: [Laughs] Not too bad. If you did ...

S1: Were you naughty at school?

S2: Not too bad because if you did you'd get the cane.

S1: Did you ever have the cane?

S2: Once, when I was at Colwich school.

S1: What did you do?

S2: Wotsit, like. Fighting.

S1: Fighting, yeah. As boys do.

S2: Headmaster ... well, I wanna. Me and another lad weren't but these other two was but we got the cane as well because we was egging them on. We was watching them saying 'go on, give it him, go on', you know. Of course, who should walk around the corner but the headmaster. He said 'hey, Williscroft ...' so-and-so, I forget what his name was '... in my study'.

S1: I notice that in every case when you talk about the headmaster talking to you he called you by your surname.

S2: Yeah, Williscroft, ar.

S1: And what about the girls, where they called by their Christian name?

S2: I think they was, yeah.

S1: Into my office.

S2: Yeah, by his second name, in my office.

S1: How many strokes did you get?

S2: Three.

S1: On your hand?

S2: On me hands, ar. He says 'that'll teach you to ...'

S1: And what did you mum say and dad say when you got home, did you tell them?

S2: Well, they just said serves you right.

S1: Oh you told them. Shouldn't fight, yeah.

S3: You had a Home Guard as well didn't you Malc? There was a Home Guard in the village?

S2: Dad was in the Home Guards.

S3: Yeah, can you remember who else was it?

S1: Oh your dad was in the Home Guards.

S2: Yeah, he was, yeah. No I'm not sure, the drill hall at Rugeley. Wanna none of them guards here.

S3: Oh well.

S1: You went to Rugeley to do that did he?

S2: Rugeley, ar, but he was in the Home Guards, yeah.

S1: What did he do being in the Home Guard? What did he do?

S2: Well, he was at wotsit. I know he was in the Home Guards, he were training and that lot I couldn't say for sure, no.

S1: You're not sure, no.

S2: Not sure about that one.

S1: Okay, no that's fine. No.

S2: But he was in the Home Guard and I think he the headquarters was in the drill hall at Rugeley.

S1: Yes. I understand, yeah.

S3: And in winter, as I say, the winters were a lot harder even when I was little. You had six-foot snow drifts and that. And we all used to go sledging. The whole village would go up the Martlin sledging.

S2: Oh ar.

S3: I can remember sledging.

S1: Did you dad make you the sledge?

S3: Yeah, he made the sledges. Yeah, me dad made the sledges.

S2: Yeah.

S3: And was it, Luke and George Mellor had a six-man sledge.

S2: Oh ar, he did, yeah. We had it once to sledge up the Martlin. All piled on and one would push it to start it going and then he'd jump on, stand on the back, you come roaring down, round the hill and of course it would hit the ditch, just before you got to the hedge there was a ditch like. Hits the ditch. But the only trouble was it was a heavy one. The hardest part was pulling it back up.

S1: That's right.

S2: Back up again [laughs].

S3: The Martlin used to be full of people sledging in winter.

S1: Well thank you ever so much you two. That's so interesting.



# Colton History Society

## All Our Stories



## Cynthia & Charlie Web's story

**Charlie and Cynthia Webb.**

S1: Marion Vernon  
S2: Charlie Webb  
S3: Cynthia Webb  
S4: George Vernon

S1: This recording is being made for Colton History Society. George and Marion Vernon are interviewing Charlie and Cynthia Webb at their farm, Hamley Cottage Farm in Jerome's Lane, Colton, on Thursday, 4<sup>th</sup> April 2013.

Right we'll start with Charlie then.

S2: Yeah, okay.

S1: Charlie can you tell us a little bit about where and when you were born and a little bit about your family.

S2: I was born on June 9<sup>th</sup>, 1945 at Lichfield and my first home was at Boughey Hall Farm, Colton.

S1: Right, how long did you live there for?

S2: I lived there for nine months till we moved up to this farm.

S1: Up to this farm when you were just nine months?

S2: Yeah.

S1: Yes. And did you have brothers and sisters?

S2: Two sisters.

S1: Older than you?

S2: One younger and one older.

S1: Right. So there was just one other child when you were born?

S2: Just one, yeah.

S1: Obviously you don't remember Boughey Hall from then but who was living in Boughey Hall at the time you were born?

S2: Me grandfather. He bought it in 1920 from, oh I forget who... the Whitgreaves.

S1: The Whitgreaves?

S2: Yeah, from Mosley Old Hall.

S1: Oh right.

S2: Near Wolverhampton

S1: So why did they sell it? Do you have any idea?

S2: They sold this farm and Banisters up the back. It used to all belong to them. I don't know why they sold it.

S1: You don't know why.

S2: They sold several farms round about.

S1: Right.

S2: That was in 1943 that was, they sold it. And my father bought it.

S1: Your grandfather?

S2: No, me father.

S1: This one, this one is?

S2: Yeah, this one.

S1: Oh sorry. I've been talking back about Boughey Hall at the moment.

S2: My grandfather bought Boughey Hall in 1920.

S1: 1920, and who did he buy that from?

S2: That was from the Whitgreaves.

S1: That one was from the Whitgreaves. Yes. So he was a farmer?

S2: He was a farmer, yeah.

S1: And did he grow up on a farm as well?

S2: He did yeah, ar. He came from Blithbury to live there.

S1: Did he?

S2: Yeah.

S1: So he did well to buy a farm.

S2: Oh yeah. He did, yeah.

S1: And was it one big house then?

S2: One big house.

S1: It's been divided into two now.

S2: It has, yeah. It was one big house. Although my aunty, who ... my aunty lived there as well. Two aunties lived there as well, and my grandma. But it was one big house to start with and then they divided it into two.

S1: Later on, yes.

And so that was a lovely old farm house, wasn't it?

S2: Oh it was, yeah. Tall chimneys.

S1: Yes. And did it have ... do you remember what sort of farming they did? Was it a mixed farm?

S2: Dairy farming mainly. Yeah.

S1: Was it linked to the Marion Webb who used to go out with the milk?

S2: That's right, yeah. It was one of my aunties, she lived there.

S1: Right.

S2: Yeah. Used to go out with milk every day.

S1: Yes. With the horse and cart.

S2: With the horse and pony and cart, ar, yeah.

S1: What acreage would have been?

S2: About 100 acres I think it was.

S1: Right, yes. And how many cattle would there have been?

S2: Oh, I don't know. I don't really know.

S1: No. Of course it would have been milking by hand, would it, in those days or were there machines?

S2: I don't know whether they had a machine there. My father used to milk by hand so I think they did milk by hand, yeah.

S1: Yes. Yes.

S2: My grandma, granny, used to go out and milk as well with them.

S1: Yes. Start early I bet.

S2: Oh, probably yeah. They used to have to take the milk to the station in them says hadn't they.

S1: Did they? In the cart?

S2: Yeah. In the cart to catch the train.

S1: In big urns?

S2: In big churns, yeah.

S1: Churns, yes. Well. Yeah, quite a life that was, wasn't it.

S2: It was.

S1: And do you have any recollection—someone in the History Society said that when they were doing the renovations, 'cause it's all been changed now and they've changed some of the barns into housing and so on.

S2: They have yeah, ar.

S1: And when they were digging out they thought they found some sort of ponds out to the side, on the left-hand side of the barns there. Do you remember any ponds there?

S2: There was a pond down at Boughey Hall, yeah.

S1: Yes. Oh you remember the ponds.

S2: I remember the pond down Boughey Hall. I remember skating on it when we were children.

S1: Do you? Yes. So was it quite a big pond then?

S2: Not that big, no. It wasn't very deep I don't think. Pretty shallow I think it was.

S1: So it was quite safe to skate on.

S2: Yeah, oh yeah.

S1: And did they used to keep ducks and things there then? Would they have kept ...

S2: My father used to keep ducks, but whether they had any down at Boughey Hall I don't really know, no.

S1: Alright. So now I'm coming to you moving then. So your dad moved up here to this farm.

S2: Yeah, that's right.

S1: And this one was bought from? At the same time as Bannisters did you say? It was sold at the same time.

S2: It was sold to at the same time as Boughey Hall and Bannisters in 1920 but then my father bought it in 1943. But it belonged to Mrs Parker then.

S1: Right.

S2: Graham Parker. It's some relation to Graham Parker.

S1: Right. Right. So, and you moved in and he started to work. And what sort of farm was that then?

S2: Dairy farm.

S1: Another dairy farm. Of course he knew all about dairy farming I suppose.

S2: Oh yeah, ar.

S1: So what was it like as a child growing up? Did you join in the farm work?

S2: Oh I did a bit, yeah, ar. I used to help my father a bit.

S1: Yes. What did you used to do?

S2: Well I'd help him in the garden and ... mainly the garden and driving the cattle about. Used to took up the main road, across the main road. Used to help sending them across there.

S1: Right.

S2: Send them up while he ...

S1: The fields on the other side.

S2: The fields on the other side, yeah.

S1: Yes. Up to feed. And did your sisters help as well?

S2: A little bit, yeah.

S1: Yeah, and your mum?

S2: Yeah, she used to help a lot she had.

S1: Yes. What would your mum do?

S2: Help him do the milking.

S1: Yes. And was it just dairy, you didn't do any arable at all?

S2: He did grow a bit of corn, yeah.

S1: Oh right. So that was a lot of work at harvest time was it.

S2: Oh it was, aye, yeah.

S1: Did you get extra help in sometimes?

S2: Occasionally, my father used to have extra ... well, we used to have extra help as well at times.

S1: Yes. What did you used to do? Get local farmers, or local children, or ... how did it work?

S2: Well, me uncle Bernard moved in down the lane here and he worked for us for two years.

S1: Right. Oh always worked for you.

S2: Then there was a ... my father had another chap who used to live down the lane here. He used to come and help him occasionally. And a chap out the village used to come out ... Yates's. Do you know Yates's?

S1: Oh yes, which one? Gerald?

S2: Gerald, yeah. He used to help my father.

S3: So your dad died when you were young didn't he.

S2: Died when I was ten, yeah.

S1: Your dad died when you were ten. Yes, oh that was sad. So how did your mum cope then?

S2: Mr Sargeant, who used to be on the corner here. Do you remember Sargeant, who used to have the bungalow up the village?

S1: Yes.

S2: Yeah, Mr Sargeant used to help my mother a lot; and his son Eric.

S1: Right. Yes. So she decided she was definitely going to keep the farm ...

S2: Keep it on for me, yeah.

S1: Yes. That was good wasn't it.

S2: Yeah. It was yeah.

S1: So when they came into the farmhouse when you were little growing up, did you have running water here?

S2: No we didn't no. No electricity or running water.

S2: Really? So what was that like? Where did you get the water from?

S1: Out the pump.

S2: Just outside.

S1: Yeah, ar. There used to be a well in the garden.

S2: And a well?

S1: Oh right. Which did you drink, the pump water or the well water?

S2: It was the same water.

S1: Oh it was the same. It was just from the well pumped up to the house.

S2: That's it, yeah.

S1: Right, yes.

S2: So we drank the well water. Yeah.

S1: Did it taste nice?

S2: Oh I can't remember.

S1: You don't remember that.

S2: No. We had the water laid on in 1952.

S1: Right. Oh so you were quite young.

S2: I was only about seven then.

S1: Yes. Right. Okay. So how was the house heated then?

S2: Coal and paraffin.

S1: Right. And you didn't have any electricity?

S2: No electricity, no.

S1: When did that come? When did you get the electricity do you remember?

S2: 1955.

S1: Right, yeah. And what did you have till then, lamps?

S2: Just lamps, yeah. Paraffin lamps.

S3: No TV.

S2: No.

S1: No, nothing like that.

S3: No electric train set, which he really, really wanted when he was a little boy.

S2: I did aye. [Laughs]

S1: Did you. Yes.

S4: You've got one now I bet, haven't you?

S2: I've got one now, yeah. I'm too old to play with it now!

S1: And who used to do the cooking?

S2: Mother used to do the cooking.

S1: Right. And what was your favourite meal?

S2: Ooh, I can't remember.

S1: Nothing special.

S2: Nothing special really, no.

S1: What sort of ... would you eat your main meal in the middle of the day or in the evening?

S2: Middle of the day. Yeah.

S1: And what would you have mainly?

S2: Oh I can't remember now.

S3: Vegetables out of garden usually.

S2: Vegetables I suppose.

S1: Yes. And did someone grow locally the vegetables?

S2: My father used to grow a lot of vegetables in the garden, yeah.

S1: And did you do any?

S2: In the garden, yeah. I used to help him a bit in the garden. But he died when I was ten and I used to have to do the garden after that.

S1: So you did it. Yes.

S2: Yes.

S1: Keep your mum going with potatoes and things like that.

S2: Yeah, oh yeah. I used to grow some vegetables in the field sometimes as well.

S1: Right. What did they grow?

S2: Potatoes and carrots.

S1: Yes.

S2: Turnips sometimes.

S1: Did you have any beef stock, did you have meat that you reared yourselves?

S2: We didn't have meat for the house that we reared our self, no.

S1: No.

S3: You had chickens, ducks and rabbits.

S2: Had chickens and ducks and rabbits yeah. Yeah.

S1: Yes. So that would be ... that would be mainly what you would eat probably was it?

S2: Probably a lot of what we ate, yeah. We had the eggs.

S3: Duck eggs.

S1: Plenty of eggs, yes.

S2: I've had ducks as well, duck eggs.

S4: Lots of hens did you have?

S2: Quite a few hens, yeah, ar.

S1: Just all around?

S2: Yeah, ar.

S3: His mum used to do them for the packing station, didn't she?

S2: Used to take the eggs to the packing station, yeah.

S1: Oh you had a lot then. Oh so where they cage ... were they in a barn or were they just wondering free?

S2: My father had them wondering free but we had some after in a barn.

S1: Right. And so she'd send those off to be sold.

S2: To the packing station, yeah.

S1: Yes. Lots of different bits to it, wasn't there. Yes. Where would she do shopping your mum?

S2: In Rugeley, yeah.

S1: How would she get there?

S3: She had a man come round in a van didn't she?

S2: Ar, she had a chap come round in a van.

S1: Right.

S2: Take the orders and they delivered a lot of it.

S1: Right, who was that, do you remember?

S2: Mason's.

S1: Right. Yes.

S2: Yeah. She used to go into Rugeley on her bike for any other bits and pieces she wanted. We used to go, when we were children we used to go on the bike as well.

S1: On the bikes.

S2: In the carrier on the back of my mother's bike.

S1: Oh did you!

S2: And after when I was growing up, my sister would ride on the cross bar on my father's bike.

S3: You used to go to church like that.

S2: Aye, used to go to church like that.

S1: And where did you go to church?

S2: Rugeley. Catholic school, St Joseph's.

S3: St. Joseph's.

S1: Right. Yes.

S3: And you'd call in at Boughey Hall on the way back.

S2: Called at Boughey Hall on the way back to see me granny, and me aunties and me uncle.

S1: And would your mum go as well or would that be... would she be cooking the Sunday dinner at home?

S2: Oh she went as well.

S1: She went as well, yes. Nice.

S4: What time of day was that?

S2: Eleven o'clock. Yeah.

S1: So where did you go to school, in Rugeley or in Colton?

S2: In both. Went to Colton school until I was nine then went to Rugeley until I was 15.

S1: Right. Which school in Rugeley?

S2: St. Joseph's, the Catholic school.

S1: And that was for secondary children as well in those days?

S2: Yeah, secondary school, ar.

S1: Where was that?

S2: By the church, by St. Joseph's church.

S1: Yeah. What did you wear for school then? Did you have a uniform then?

S2: No just me ordinary clothes.

S1: Ordinary clothes, yeah. Did you enjoy it?

S4: Did you have shorts or long trousers?

S2: Had shorts when I was at Colton then had long trousers after that.

S4: To go to Rugeley.

S2: Yeah, ar.

S1: Do you remember your teachers?

S2: Oh yeah I do, yeah.

S1: And what you learned. And what lessons did you have?

S2: Oh all sorts of lessons.

S3: Didn't like PE did you?

S2: Maths ... didn't like PE much, no.

S1: What did they do in PE then?

S2: They used to have a lot of running at Colton school. Races.

S1: Yes. Just up down the field or ...?

S2: Up and down the playground.

S1: Right. You didn't like that?

S2: Oh I liked the running, yeah. I didn't like PE much there but I liked the running.

S3: I think it's when you got to St. Joseph's you didn't like PE 'cause they made you wear shorts and you didn't like them.

S2: Oh that was for football.

S1: Oh right. Not a football fan.

S2: No, not a football fan at all. Used to play a lot football at St. Joseph's.

S1: Did they? Had a team?

S2: Yeah, they had a team yeah.

S1: Yeah. Did you ever misbehave? Did you get punished at school?

S2: Oh yeah, now and again.

S1: Did you? What did you do?

S2: Got the cane!

S1: Oh did you.

S2: Oh yeah.

S1: Yes. Where would you have the cane, on your hand?

S2: On your hands, yeah.

S1: What did you do? Can you share it!

S2: Well I got the cane off Mr Broughton at Colton school for spelling pavement wrong when I was nine.

S1: For spelling the word wrong?

S2: Yes, spelling words wrong when I was nine.

S1: Oh dear. Did you have to have spelling tests or how did ...

S2: Oh used to have spelling tests, yeah.

S1: Gosh, that was a bit severe wasn't it!

S2: It was, ar.

S3: And he passed his Eleven Plus as well did you.

S2: Aye, yeah.

S1: Where did to you take the Eleven Plus from? From Colton?

S2: From Colton ... no from Rugeley.

S1: Yes. I see.

S2: Took it at St ... Aelfgar.

S1: Right. So you left Colton school when you were nine? What's your most vivid memory of being at Colton school? Do you have a particularly vivid memory of it?

S2: Quite a few memories I suppose.

S1: What particularly?

S2: When I was in the top class and me sister fell out the bench!

S1: Did she? Were you were in the same class as your sister?

S2: For a while, yeah. Till we left there, both left at the same time.

S1: Right.

S2: She went to Stafford Convent after that. She passed her Eleven Plus and went to Stafford Convent.

S1: Right. And what did you think about falling over. Did she get told off for that or was she looked after? Were the girls treated differently to the boys do you think?

S2: No, I don't think they were treated any different, no.

S1: Did they get the cane as well?

S2: I don't think the girls got the cane, no. I don't think so anyway.

S1: No. What games do you remember playing at school? Do you remember any games?

S2: Used to play Cowboys and Indians.

S1: Oh right. Yeah. Would the girls join in as well?

S2: No with Cowboys and Indians, no.

S1: What did they do?

S2: Oh I don't know what they did.

S1: They were just not in the thinking.

S2: No.

S1: Quite boisterous were you with your games do you think, the boys?

S2: Oh a bit. Not that much.

S4: Did the boys and girls play together?

S2: No they didn't.

S4: No, separately.

S1: Did they have separate playgrounds?

S2: No they didn't have separate playgrounds.

S1: Did the school organise any trips when you were there?

S2: Not when I was there, no.

S1: No. Did you have any holidays yourself? Did you go away at all with the farm, was that ...?

S2: Oh went, ar, one or two. Well two or three holidays, yeah.

S3: Not with your dad though. It was after dad had died wasn't it.

S2: Went with me mother to Rhyl when my father was alive.

S3: Oh yeah you left your dad at home. I remember her telling me.

S1: Oh I see. You left your dad at home to look after the farm and you went with your mum.

S2: That's right, yeah.

S1: Where would you stay in Rhyl?

S2: Stopped in a cabin.

S3: Little chalet thing.

S2: Little chalet thing, yeah, ar.

S1: I bet you enjoyed that didn't you.

S2: Oh it was very nice. It was the first time as we'd been on ...

S3: Didn't your mum go with a friend, Mrs Reynolds was it?

S2: She came with us on holiday when we went on holiday to Rhyl. Yeah.

S4: How did you get to Rhyl then?

S2: On the train.

S4: Steam train?

S2: Steam train, yeah, ar. We used to like watching the steam trains.

S1: Yes. Did you used to go down and watch them in the holidays and things sometimes.

S2: When we'd go into Rugeley we used to watch them when we were going to Rugeley, along by the railway line there. Yeah.

S1: Did you make your mum stop on the bikes so you could have a look?

S2: No.

S1: No? Oh I used to love watching ...

S3: Didn't you go with Uncle Bernard to watch the trains?

S2: On holiday yes.

S3: No to watch the trains as well.

S2: No that was my Uncle Jo that was.

S3: Oh right.

S1: Uncle Jo. Did you have a lot of uncles and aunts?

S2: Quite a few because me mother and me father's parents had five or six children. Six I think they had.

S3: Your father's parents, your mum had two brothers didn't she.

S2: My father's parents. That's right, yeah.

S1: So quite ... lots of cousins as well?

S2: Oh yeah.

S1: What do you remember about school holidays then? Did you have working holidays here on the farm or did you ...?

S2: Aye, used to help with the work.

S1: Were there machines to help your dad with the farming? And for your mum later obviously after your dad died.

S2: Mother had more machinery than my father had.

S1: Yes.

S2: Yeah, me father had the horse.

S1: Right. And used it for ploughing and all sorts.

S2: My uncle used to do quite a bit of the ploughing. A lot of the tractor work.

S1: Oh he had a tractor, yes. And what machinery did your mum have then?

S1: Right.

S3: Somebody else used to come and do the work with the binder, was it.

S2: Oh Mr Sargeant used to do the ... come up with the binder.

S1: Right.

S3: I think he used to plough didn't he.

S2: Aye, used to do the ploughing, and sow the corn.

S3: This would be Eric Sargeant.

S1: Yes. And when did you leave school? When did you actually finish school?

S2: 1960.

S1: 1960. And did you then take over the farm with your mum full time?

S2: Yeah

S3: He used to do a lot of work before he went to school. He didn't get to school until about 11 o'clock.

S2: I did yeah, ar.

S3: Your mum said the wag man came round.

S1: Was that right.

S2: Aye, he did right.

S3: And she said if all the children were as bright as my son we'd be out of a job. She was a bit of stickler was his mum.

S1: Was she?

S2: Oh yeah, she was. A bit of a character.

S1: I supposed she needed help at home didn't she, with the farm?

S2: Oh yeah she did.

S1: Did you prefer that to the school work anyway or did you just ...

S2: Oh I did, I preferred the farm work, yeah.

S4: How did you used to get to school then?

S2: On me bike.

S4: You used to have to go on your bike.

S2: Aye, yeah.

S1: So you missed quite a lot of early morning lessons.

S2: I did, yeah. [Laughs]. When I was at Rugeley school I did.

S1: Were you glad?

S2: I weren't sorry.

S3: He was taught by the nuns at school wasn't you.

S2: Aye, we was, yeah.

S1: Were the lessons interesting?

S2: Oh I can't like school.

S1: You quite like it. You just liked the farm better.

S2: I liked the farm better yeah.

S1: And so you more or less gradually took over the running of the farm from your mum did you?

S2: That's right, yeah.

S1: And when did you get married then you two? How did you meet your wife?

S3: Oh now, that's interesting because I met Charlie through Eric Sargeant. Because Eric and Kathleen when they got married they came to live next door to my mum and dad at Stowe-by-Chartley. Of course I was starting to learn to drive and Kath came out with me in the car, you know, to learn to drive. And she said, 'I know,' she said 'we'll get Charlie to come down and take you out for a few lessons.' So I thought, Charlie? I'd got an uncle Charlie in a flat hat and I thought oh my goodness. Pictured somebody in a flat hat, you know, when you're only 17. [Laughs]

Anyway this nice young chap came down. He was a friend of Eric's you see and I used to go and babysit Eric's children because they had a little girl called Gillian at the time. And I used to go around

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*Colton History Society – All Our Stories.* *Charlie & Cynthia Webb*

and babysit for them when they went out. So of course, you know, Charlie came down and one thing led to another and we started going out didn't we then.

S2: We did, ar.

S3: And I say about three and half years later we got married.

S1: Do you think she was matchmaking?

S2: I think she was.

S3: I'm not sure really. I don't know really. I know they thought a lot of Charlie when he was younger because they'd grown up—Eric and Colin Sargeant and Dorothy, Dorothy Atkins.

S1: Yes. I suppose they thought a lot of you as well.

S3: I think they did because I looked after their little girl.

S2: They did, ar.

S1: They wouldn't have let just anyone look after ...

S3: That's right, you know. And they used ... my mum used to look after Gillian if, you know, if they'd got to go out anywhere and I was, you know, at work. Because I started work when I was 15.

S1: And what did you do?

S3: I worked at Lotus in Stafford. The shoe factory, yeah.

S1: And how did you get there?

S3: First of all I used to go on the bus, till I was 17 and a half when I passed my driving test. But I used to walk a mile every day to catch the bus. Used to go out at quarter to seven in the morning to catch the bus from Hixon to Stafford. And other than that it was Stowe ... I used to go down to Amerton to catch the bus down there, which was equally as far. You know, when it was dark in the morning. Eric would sometime come along in his lorry, 'cause he had a lorry at the time. He used to work for Jack Hunts. He used to cart corn about.

S1: Right.

S3: And, you know he knew who I was walking up or down the lane, whichever the case may be; 'do you want a lift?'

S1: That was nice. I bet you were glad.

S3: I was!

S1: And what did you do there?

S3: At Lotus? I was what they call a 'post trimmer', which was you actually put all the heel work and things like that in the shoes. There's a knife underneath comes round and cuts all the leather into the shape of the heel. If we hadn't got enough work at that I used to do what they call 'post stitching', which was all the fancy work on the shoes.

- S1: Right. Did you enjoy it?
- S3: I did, yeah.
- S1: You worked with nice people around you?
- S3: I did, yes. You know people from Rugeley and Stafford and roundabout, you know. But, yeah.
- S1: Yes. A lot of shoe factories ...
- S3: And the money was actually very good. I used to earn more than my father and he worked at English Electric he did at the time. But I used to earn more than my dad. [Laughs]
- S1: So you were having driving lessons so you could drive to work were you?
- S3: I did, yes.
- S1: And were you hoping to get a little car of your own then?
- S3: Yes we did. My dad and I bought a little car between us. My dad couldn't drive and so we bought the little car and I used to take my mum shopping, you know. Or we'd go out for a drive on a Sunday evening, you know. Because I had a younger brother who is ten years younger than me.
- S1: Right.
- S3: So, you know, me mum always used to say 'oh take Andy out for a little drive' you know.
- [Laughter]
- S1: And when did you learn to drive? Did you drive before you could drive on the road? Did you drive the tractor?
- S2: Yes, I used to drive the tractor, yeah.
- S1: How old would you have been when you started doing that?
- S2: Started driving the tractor? Ooh about 11/12.
- S1: So you'd take it out on your own. Just go and get on the tractor and drive around and do jobs?
- S2: My uncle used to .. and Mr Sargeant used to start me off.
- S1: Yes, to get going. Yes. And then did you take driving lessons for a car later?
- S2: No I didn't take any driving lessons, no.
- S1: Did you pass a test then?
- S2: Aye, I passed the test for the car yeah.
- S1: You could already drive. Yes. Amazing.
- S4: How did you reach the tractor pedals at 11?

S2: Oh I managed it alright!

S3: He was quite tall then.

S4: He must have been.

S1: Were there tractors in those days which didn't have a cab on?

S2: Oh yeah, there was yeah. Very few of them had cabs on.

S1: Did you think it was quite dangerous really to be driving a tractor around or did you ...

S2: Oh I used to think it was a bit dangerous, yeah. It would tip over fairly easily.

S1: Did you ever tip one over?

S2: No, but Colin Sargeant tipped one over. Lucky to be alive.

S1: Gosh. Was that on a slope or something?

S2: No. Fooling about in the fields.

S1: Oh was he! Did you learn to plough or anything like that?

S2: I did, yeah.

S1: Ever go into any ploughing matches or anything?

S2: No never been to any ploughing matches, no.

S1: Just learned to plough.

S2: Just learned to plough yeah.

S1: So looking at the hours, you know we're talking about work now. Let's thing about your working life. As a farmer your working life would be a very long day wouldn't it?

S2: Oh yeah.

S1: What time would it start?

S2: Ooh I don't remember, eight o'clock I think. I never used to start very early.

S1: No. You didn't have to get the milking done really early then?

S2: We did for the one time, we used to pick it up. Used to have to start before that then.

S1: Yes right.

S3: It got easier as you got older because, I mean, everything changed. When it was churns it was a different thing but when we had the bulk milk tank it was refrigerated anyway so, you know, they came whatever time they wanted to come and pick it up.

S1: Right.

S3: But it made life a lot easier when with the bulk milk tank and the milking parlour didn't it?

S2: Oh yeah.

S1: Did they come every day to pick up the milk?

S2: Oh yeah, every day.

S3: Yeah.

S2: Every other day for a while, but most of the time it was every day.

S1: Mostly, yes. So your day would be get up and ... would you work first and then come back for breakfast? Or would you have your ...

S2: You'd work first then come back from breakfast.

S1: What would you have for breakfast?

S2: Bacon and egg.

S3: It was usually egg and bacon, yeah.

S1: So after you got married did you start working on ... did you still work at ...?

S3: Oh no, no I didn't, no. Because I lived at Stowe-by-Chartley before I married Charlie, and when I came to live up here, no gave up work all together then.

S1: Work of that kind?

S3: That kind, yes! [Laughs]

S1: Took on a different kind.

S3: A different role.

S4: What year did you get married then?

S2: 1972.

S3: 1972 yes.

S4: And how old would you be then?

S3: I was 21. I got married I was 21 and a half when I got married, wasn't we? Well I was!

S1: Yeah. And so that was a very different way of life for you.

S3: Well yes because I came to live with my mother-in-law. We all lived in the same house together but mother-in-law would insist—well it was her house so she did what she liked with it—but she insisted that we had our own separate kitchens. Oh she was very good like that, yes.

S1: So did you divide the house up?

S3: Yes we did. Yes, we did. She still had a ... we shared the bathroom of course. You know, because we had children after that but ... so she shared the bathroom and, as I say ...

[Phone rings]

S1: So you'd come back for your breakfast and then you'd go out.

S2: Yeah.

S1: And would you be up early working the same, with him?

S3: Oh no, no. His mum always used to go out. She always used to say that they could have a chat while they were outside. She never used to see him the rest of the day, you see, with him now being married with his children.

S1: Just for the morning.

S2: Just for the morning yeah.

S3: She always used to like coming out to help you with the cows, didn't she?

S1: Yeah, aye. Bring me a drink out.

S3: She liked the cows.

S1: So you did cooking separately to your mum and ...

S3: Oh yes. Yes.

S1: So she would cook just for herself by then?

S3: Yes, yes. We used to do a Sunday dinner for her but, you know, as she got older she, well, she always used to have a Sunday dinner, hadn't she, with us.

S2: She did, ar.

S3: With Charlie and I and the children.

S1: Yes.

S3: But she always liked to go out and help him with the cows. Yeah, help him with the milking. I think she went out more for a chat than anything else.

S1: Yes.

S3: Yeah. So.

S1: I suppose the change in the milking with the milking parlour and so on made a massive difference to the workload didn't it?

S2: Oh it did, aye, yeah.

S1: Yes. Did you like having that or did you prefer the hands on before?

S2: I liked having the milking parlour.

S1: Having the machinery, yes. What other things have changed? I mean, tractors have changed a lot.

S2: Oh they have, yeah.

S1: Did you think that was good?

S2: Oh yeah.

S3: Farming was always very labour intensive years ago.

S2: Always used to be, yeah.

S3: Whereas now it's all mechanised. I mean, even as regards, we used to make a lot of hay didn't we?

S2: We did, yeah.

S3: But of late, last what would you say, ten/fifteen years or more, it's been all silage hasn't it.

S2: No it hasn't been that long.

S3: Hasn't it?

S2: No.

S3: Oh well, Charlie knows. But it's more, you know, it's done off a tractor seat these days. There's no sort of, I mean we still did it the old-fashioned way.

S1: Did you used to do it with scythes?

S3: No, no, no.

S2: Oh no.

S1: Not that old fashioned.

S3: No, not that old fashioned, no. Charlie used to do all his own mowing and bailing and what-have-you.

S1: Yes. Turning it over and ...

S3: Yeah. When it came to silage, you know, when we decided to go over to silage we got contractors in, didn't we, to do it.

S2: Yeah.

S1: I see. Yes.

S3: So they'd and Charlie did those, you know, cart it home. The big bails and that was that. So it made his life a lot easier really.

S2: It did, yeah.

- S1: Because that's quite heavy work wasn't it?
- S2: Oh it was, ar. Yeah.
- S3: Yeah. Very labour intensive. As I say, we used to have get people to come and help us to get the bails. I used help Charlie when I was a lot younger. My mother-in-law used to look after the children.
- S1: Yes.
- S3: You know, I used to do a lot of the tractor driving and we used to do a lot of carting it together didn't we?
- S2: Yeah.
- S3: Carrying the bails in. Especially when it was thundering and lightening up the big fields and that. You know, looking over Rugeley and you'd see all the thunder and lightening coming across.
- S1: Oh gosh! And you needed it to rush and get it all in.
- S3: You'd be soaked by the time you go home. You know, with a big load of hay. But, as I say, it's all changed in that respect as regards the fact that a lot of the jobs these days are mechanised.
- You know, Charlie did a lot of hedge laying and hedge cutting.
- S1: Oh yes.
- S3: Where nowadays the contractors come and do it.
- S1: Is that right? So you get people to come in and actually do that for you.
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: How often do they come to do that?
- S2: Every year. Once a year.
- S1: Do they just ... they tend to just slash the hedges now, not the skill that you used to have if you used to lay the hedges. Did you lay them?
- S2: I have laid one. At the end of the lane there.
- S3: You used to .. with a brushing hook you used to cut the hedges, hadn't you.
- S2: Used to do, ar, by hand with a brushing hook.
- S3: I remember that. You used to collect them all up and bonfire and what-have-you. But now of course it's done with these big slashing machines and they chop it all up.
- S2: Very fine.
- S3: So there's nothing to be cleared up any more.
- S1: Right.

- S2: No.
- S3: So, you know, he doesn't do that job any more either. No. It used to take a while didn't it to do all the ones up the Hamley fields.
- S2: It did, ar.
- S1: In the olden days, or earlier, you would do most things yourself really wouldn't you?
- S2: A lot of it, yes.
- S1: You'd have a lot of different skills. Whereas what you're saying now is that now you buy in the skills that you need to have done.
- S2: Some of them. Some of them, yeah.
- S1: Some of them. What is still done by farmers themselves nearly always?
- S3: I suppose mainly the milking isn't it?
- S2: Yeah.
- S3: I mean, some people have got these new-fangled gadgets, you know, these automatic cluster removers and things like that. But the majority of farmers still milk with milking parlours.
- S1: Yes. And then buy in the other things.
- S3: Yes. A lot of farmers these days get contractors to do a lot of their work because the machinery is too ...
- S2: Expensive.
- S3: ... you know, too expensive to buy.
- S1: Exactly. What would a tractor have cost when you started farming? Do you remember what you would have to pay out for a tractor?
- S2: About £500 and some odd pounds.
- S1: Would that be a new one?
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: And what would a new tractor cost today?
- S2: Ooh I don't know. About £70,000 or something like that. I don't really know what the price of the new ones is.
- S3: So of course it's a lot of money to outlay if you're only going to use it for your own purposes.
- S1: Exactly.
- S3: You need to do a lot of work with it to get your money's worth out of these things so that's why people have contractors these days. You know, it's not worth buying the machinery when somebody

else will come and do it quicker. Because you've still got the same jobs to do. If you're a dairy farmer you've still got your jobs to do every day as well as doing the extra jobs.

S1: Is it sometimes a bit frustrating? You say it's harvest time, I don't know if, you say you did have some corn at some time.

S2: Used to, yes. When me dad was, well after me dad died.

S1: And would you get contractors in then to harvest it?

S2: Yeah, do the harvesting yeah.

S1: So would that be a frustrating sometimes if you could see the weather turning and its ready and you're still waiting in the queue?

S2: I don't suppose I found it that frustrating.

S1: Not really, no.

S2: No.

S1: Just took it as it came.

S2: Yeah. A bit frustrating with the weather for haymaking sometimes.

S1: Yes. Yes. Do you remember the weather effecting the farming over the years a lot?

S2: Oh yeah. A lot yeah.

S1: Any particularly bad seasons that you remember?

S2: 1967, it was a very dry year. No, '76 I think it was. A very dry year.

S3: Yes. Caroline was about three wasn't she? Two/three.

S2: Yeah.

S1: What happened then to farmers.

S2: Very dry. No grass at all for the cattle.

S1: Right. What did you have to do?

S2: I'd feed them hay.

S3: Feed it what we'd just made that particular about a fortnight previously or two or three weeks previously. We had to fetch it all on a trailer and feed it down the field to them didn't we.

S1: Straight away.

S2: Yeah.

S3: It was absolutely parched. The fields were really brown.

S4: The sun shone for two months, didn't it. July and August.

S2: It did, aye.

S3: They were really brown.

S2: Remember that do you?

S3: Of course when you've got dairy cows, you know, they've got to be fed a lot.

S2: You must be a similar age to me, are you?

S4: Yeah.

S2: I'm 67, yeah.

S1: Yeah. That's the same age as me. I'm 67. Yeah.

Right, I'm going to just move on a little bit then. Do you remember ever being ill when you were little growing up at all.

S2: I remember when I was growing up I had mumps.

S1: Right. Was that quite bad to have at the time?

S2: No, not too bad. No.

S1: Would you see a doctor then?

S2: Saw a doctor but there's no treatment they give you for mumps.

S1: No. You don't remember ... did your mum ever have any special way of keeping you fit. Did you ever have to take cod-liver oil or anything? Did she have any ideas ...

S2: Used to have cod-liver oil when we were kids.

S1: Did you?

S2: Yeah, ar.

S1: Anything else?

S2: Nothing else that I can think of, no.

S4: Did you have stay in bed?

S1: When he had mumps?

S2: No, no.

S4: No.

S1: Managed to be off school though, I bet.

S2: It was after I left school that was.

S1: Oh was it? Oh you were quite old by the time you had the mumps.

S2: Oh about 17 or 18.

S1: But you didn't have it that badly then.

S2: No, oh no.

S3: I don't think you broke any bones when you were a child either did you.

S2: Broke my arm when I was little.

S3: Oh there you go.

S2: When I was about four.

S1: Oh did you? How did you do that?

S2: Falling off some bails.

S1: Were you playing or working?

S2: Playing. I was only about four.

S1: So what happened ... where did you then?

S2: Went to Stafford hospital.

S1: Right. And they put it in a ...

S2: In a sling, yeah, ar.

S1: And a plaster for you.

S2: Yeah, oh plaster, aye, yeah.

S1: Did the dentist ever come into school for you?

S2: I never went to see the dentist at school. I think they did come into the school occasionally yeah.

S1: Do you remember anybody else? Any health visitors or anybody? I know I've heard about the 'wag man'. So that was somebody who came out for any bad attendance wasn't he?

S2: That's right, yeah.

S1: So he was on the button. Any other health visitors, any nurses or ...?

S2: We used to have the health visitors come round every now and again, yeah.

S1: At school was that?

S2: At school, yeah.

S1: Do you have any memories of the war at all?

S2: No, I was too...

S1: You're too young aren't you.

S2: ...too young, yeah.

S1: After the war I mean, really the effects of the war.

S2: Oh I remember the rationing, yeah. Sugar was on ration, and sweets were on ration.

S3: But your mum told me ...

S1: And did you... I was just going to say ...

S3: Yeah, I was going to say me mum, my mother-in-law, as I say, she always used to say that the children, you know, after the war, the rationing went on for quite a while. So they couldn't get sweets, but she says they never really went short of anything ... because they always grew a lot of fruit trees and fruit in the garden and stuff like that.

S2: Mother used to make sweets as well.

S3: She always used to make ... yeah, and she used to make coconut ice and things like that, didn't she.

S2: Yeah.

S3: Yeah. And she said they always had a lot of fruit pies and things like that. You know, stewed fruit I suppose. Because I say in them days everybody grew their own things, and you as regards the meat, as you were going on about earlier on, she said they always had plenty of eggs, vegetables, fruit, you know. And as I say, they kept chickens, ducks and rabbits in the loft, didn't you

S2: Aye.

S3: Well a loft in one of the old sheds! They used to have a lot of rabbits up there, didn't you.

S2: We did, ar.

S3: So, you know, as well as the ducks and the hens and what-have-you, they had rabbits as well.

S1: So they had rabbits in hutches, not just wild?

S3: No, they weren't in a hutch; they were sort of loose.

S1: But they were farmed rather than just going out and shooting the wild ones.

S2: That's right.

S3: Yeah. They were farmed. As I say, they had this loft over the top of one of the old sheds and I believe they used to keep them up there.

S2: That's right, yeah.

- S3: I never saw them myself but it's what I've been told.
- S1: Yes. And they didn't have any evacuees during the war here but you did say at one point there might have been ...
- S3: According to mother-in-law telling me again—because she did tell me a lot of things—and as I say, she said that it was one Christmas, I think she said, that they had some Hungarians that were here. They asked at the local church where they went to, St. Joseph's if anyone could have some people for Christmas sort of thing. And she said she had two, I think. It was two was it?
- S2: Two, yeah.
- S1: Do you remember that?
- S2: I do, yeah.
- S3: And she says, you know, they were never short of meat so they could feed them and what-have-you. And it was during the Hungarian Uprising, yeah.
- S1: Yes.
- S3: So that's basically, you know, all she told me. You know, they were all sitting round the table, one or two words they could pick out and vice versa.
- S1: Yes.
- S3: There wasn't a lot of conversation I don't think but I think they did try to play sort of games with you and that.
- S2: They did, ar, yeah.
- S1: Were there girls or boys that you had?
- S2: Two men.
- S1: Oh men. Oh they were adults.
- S2: Oh yeah, they were ar.
- S3: I think they lived up on the Chase didn't they?
- S2: In a camp up on the Chase.
- S1: I see. But they were asking people just to have them over for Christmas.
- S2: That's right.
- S1: To make it a bit special for them. Yes. What year would that be? Do you remember?
- S2: Oh dear.
- S1: How old would you have been?
- S2: About 12/13 I think.

S1: Yes. So it was just after your dad had died?

S2: A year or two after, yeah.

S1: Yes.

S3: 'Cause it would have been the late 1950s then, wouldn't it?

S2: Probably yeah. Mr Sargeant used to tell me that he had somebody, prisoners of war were helping him on the farm.

S1: Right.

S3: 'Cause they lived on the corner down here.

S2: That's right, yeah.

S1: Just at the corner of your lane here?

S3: Just on, you know the big house, the three-storey job? Yeah, although it wasn't then. They never used to use the top storey had they?

S2: No.

S3: It's a lot of work been done on it over the years since the new people bought it quite a few years ago.

S1: So they lived on the two floors and ...

S3: They just lived on the two and, as I say, they didn't bother with the top floor did they then?

S2: No.

S1: Didn't use it for storage or anything like that.

S3: No, I don't think, no.

S2: I think they used it to store a few apples in it.

S3: Oh did they.

S1: And what sort of farm was that?

S2: Dairy farm.

S3: That was a dairy farm as well.

S1: Dairy farm as well.

S3: They all were around here. There was lots of dairy farms around here. But there's nothing left now. There's no dairy farms around here now.

S1: There's not is there.

S3: Because there was all those up at the pool, you know, at Stockwell Heath. And there was Parkinson's at the top there wasn't there.

S2: Yeah.

S3: Or Jones's as it was then.

S2: Jones's, ar.

S3: And there was Sargeant's on the corner here and, as I say, they were all dairy farms round here.

S1: Yes. Why have people got out of milking?

S3: Because it doesn't pay. And it's got a lot of labour in it.

S1: It is indeed, yes.

S3: So, you know, it's a lot of work for very little return.

S1: So the smaller farms can't keep up with the bigger ones, I suppose. In trying to compete ...

S3: And not only that ...

S1: ... with the supermarket ...

S3: ...there's so many rules and regulations and, what would you call it, rules and regulations.

S2: Inspections.

S3: Inspections and red tape, and goodness knows what. As I say, it's just not worth the bother any more.

S1: No.

S3: No. And they don't really want, you know, they're very picky about whose milk they pick up these days. You're probably limited to which company you sell your milk to—is that right, Charlie?

S2: Yeah, aye.

S3: Because they, you know, the bigger ones just don't want to know the small...there's too much running about for them. You know, as regards fuel, diesel I suppose and what-have-you. So you're limited who you can sell your milk. So you have to get what price you can for it. And it's not always the best.

S1: And when did you go out of milking here?

S2: Only two years ago, wasn't it.

S3: A couple of years ago.

S1: So you managed to keep till then.

S2: Yeah.

S1: Was that partly because you're retiring or did you retire because you went out of the milk?

S2: No, I wasn't very well.

S1: Oh right.

S3: He had a stroke.

S1: Oh right.

S2: Yeah.

S3: So he wasn't very well. He was in hospital for quite a few weeks, wasn't you.

S2: I was, aye.

S3: About nine weeks.

S1: So that pushed it forward, the retirement.

S2: Yeah, it did.

S3: Yeah, yeah.

S1: So are you really retired now or do you still go out and do ...

S2: I still do a bit of pottering about, yeah, ar.

S1: I didn't think you could leave it all together. And your son-in-law does quite a bit of farming round here for you know does he?

S2: He does. Yeah.

S3: Yes, he does. Yeah.

S1: That's Caroline's husband.

S3: Carline and Charlie Bannister, yes. Yes, as I say, he's got some animals here at the moment so.

S1: What has he got here?

S3: He's got about ... he keeps all fat beasts. You know, he's got a bull and, as I say, he's got quite a lot of Hereford heifers. So, of course, they run with the Limousin bull. And he does buy a few calves in but, you know, I think he's got about 120 now, hasn't he, 110.

S2: About that, ar.

S3: 110-120. But not a lot of shedding at the moment. He's still in the process of putting some more shedding up.

S1: Here, on your ...?

S3: No, at his own place. But we had our shed, and we used to have 40 cows in cubicles.

S1: Right.

S3: And we had a feed area as well. So of course it was all empty when our cows had all gone...

S1: Yes. Was that sad, to get rid of the cows?

S2: A bit, aye. Yeah.

S1: Did you know them personally?

S3: He's still got one.

S2: Oh aye, I knew them all personally, yeah.

S1: All with names?

S2: Yeah. I didn't have names but I knew them all.

S3: No, we have still got one and she has got a name. But in respect she does actually belong to my son-in-law now. But Charlie still looks after her.

S4: So what's her name?

S2: Lucy.

S3: Her name is Lucy.

S1: And do you still have milk from her for yourselves?

S2: No, not now no.

S3: No. She hasn't had a calf for about four or five years.

S2: Too old.

S3: Yeah, she's just a pet.

S1: Aw. And does she come out in the fields outside?

S3: Oh yes! She will be when the weather gets nicer, yes, she'll be outside.

S1: Have you always had dogs to help with the farm or cats?

S2: Not always had ... used to have cats years ago.

S1: Right.

S3: Used to have a lot of cats at one time.

S2: We did, ar.

S3: We had about 13 at one time. We haven't got a cat at all now.

S1: No.

S3: Since we got married we've had Labrador dogs, haven't we.

S2: Ar, three of them.

S3: They're just pets.

S1: But not working dogs.

S2: No.

S3: No. The children used to help a lot with the farming when they were younger.

S1: Did they?

S3: Umm. They'd come home from school and get their clothes changed and get into their old clothes, you know, their jeans and the like.

S2: Mainly Carrie, wasn't it.

S3: Caroline would always be outside helping her dad.

S1: Really, yes.

S3: Tracy had always got the books. She always like the books did Tracy. Tracy was one of the ... I'm not sure about Fiona, what she really wanted to do.

S1: Caroline was always set for farming then?

S2: Oh she was always keen on farming.

S3: She was! Yes, always.

S1: It was fortunate she fell in love with a farmer wasn't it?

S3: Well they all married into farming actually. Caroline married the boy next door, as you know. And Tracy, the middle one, she married a farmer's son from Dunston, and Fiona married another farmer's son from Sutton Coldfield.

S1: Did they all belong to Young Farmers or something!

S2: Only one. Sam belonged to Young Farmers didn't he.

S3: Yes, Tracy belonged to Eccleshall Young Farmers. And Sam he belonged to Lichfield Young Farmers.

S1: There we go.

S3: There we go.

S1: So this farm's going to keep going? They'll keep it going? You can stay here, you haven't got to move or anything.

S3: No we own the place so we haven't got to ... no, we can please ourselves what we do.

S1: Which is lovely, yes.

S3: Yeah.

S1: Right, well, thanks ever so much. Is there anything else you want to add? Anything ...

S2: Not that I can think of.

S1: No.

S3: No, not that I can think of.

S1: Thank you ever so much that was really interesting.

[END OF TAPE]

[Additional recording]

S1: Do you have any knowledge of the Webb family, as it's an old Colton name isn't it?

S2: It is ar. Used to be Webbs up at Hamley house where Brandon lives now.

S1: Right.

S2: From about 1650. But whether they were any relation I don't really know.

S1: Right.

S2: Webbs have been in the village, supposed to be Mr Webbs new house, Brandon's place is.

S1: Oh right.

S2: It's in the ...

S3: Hamley House.

S1: Hamley House?

S3: Hamley House Farm.

S2: Hamley House yeah. Did you ever have that book ... read that book from about Colton, 'Colton and the De Wastenev Family'?

S1: Yes.

S2: Aye, it's all in there about Colton, about the Webbs.

S1: Right. And do you know how long ... when did they go to Boughey Hall?

S2: 1920.

S1: That was when they went into it.

S2: When they bought it, yeah.

S1: But according to mother, me father learned his farming up ... my granddad learned his farming at the Bannisters up the Mount when he was little.

S3: What year was it your mum and dad got married?

S2: 1942 I think it was. Yeah, 1942.

S3: And your mum lived there for two or three, well a couple of years before they had Pauline, your older sister.

S2: No, only about 12 month I think.

S3: Well, a year then. Lived there for a year before they had Pauline and they all lived together at Boughey Hall. With the Webb family.

S1: You were saying they had big chimneys on the top of the house, what was ...?

S3: Mother-in-law told me that the chimneys were so wide you ride a bicycle round inside them. She said they were absolutely enormous. I presume they were the inglenook-type chimneys.

S2: They were, yeah, ar. I remember that just.

S1: Did they have huge fires in there?

S2: Oh yeah, they did have yeah.

S1: In the winter time.

S2: A big room it was, it took a lot of heating.

S1: What would they burn on the fire?

S2: Coal and wood.

S1: Wood from the farm?

S2: Yeah.

S3: And when they first met, she saw this article in the *Farmer's Weekly* ...

S1: This is your ...

S3: This is my mother-in-law. My mother-in-law, like Charlie's mum and dad.

S1: What was her name?

S3: Her name was Haynes, and she was a Land Army girl and she lived in Wolverhampton.

S1: Right.

S3: What was the name of the farm that she was on?

S2: Oh, I don't know. It was in Finchfield in Wolverhampton, but I can't remember the name of the farm.

- S1: At Finchfield?
- S3: Finchingfields or something it was called.
- S2: Finchfield.
- S3: Finchfield, yeah. As I say she was a Land Army girl during the war and she used to look after the cows, milk the cows. And she used to have to take the bull over the railway line and what-have-you, didn't she.
- S1: Oh aye, she did ar.
- S3: Yes. Phoebus his name was, and she used to lead him over the things. And all the pedigree papers, they used to have to fill them all in and what-have-you with the marking and that of all the things. She did all that. So of course she was well-heeled for marrying a farmer.
- So she saw this article in the *Farmers Weekly*; you know somebody wanted to write to somebody or other with the same interests, and she wrote to Harry Webb. And, as I say, one or two letters went by I presume like, and they agreed to meet one another. She used to cycle, him and her, didn't they?
- S2: They did, aye.
- S3: They used to meet at—was it Hednesford?
- S2: Hednesford, yeah.
- S3: They used to meet at Hednesford on their bicycles and that's how she met.
- S1: That was their courting.
- S3: That was it, yes.
- S2: That was it, yeah.
- S3: And as I say, they were brought together through the *Farmers Weekly*. So, and as I say, she lived in the town herself. So of course when they came ... she lived at Boughey Hall for a little while, you know, and then when Charlie was nine months old they came and his dad bought this place and they came to live here. And of course she, you know, she'd got no bathroom, no nothing, had she Charlie?
- S2: No, she hadn't.
- S3: There was no bathroom, no running proper water or anything, whereas she'd lived in the town and she'd all these ...
- S2: She had it all.
- S3: ... things, you know, and she came to live here. She must have thought she'd come to the back of beyond
- S1: It must have been quite a shock.
- S2: It must have been yeah, ar.

S3: Yes.

S1: Yes. With two children to look after ...

S3: With two small children, yes.

S1: ... and another on the way soon after.

S3: Yes, two small children yes. Because Paul ...

S1: Did you used to bath by the fire?

S2: Yeah, ar. Old tin bath by the fire, yeah.

S1: Yes.

S3: So, you know, toilet down the yard or what-have-you whereas she was used to having everything inside. You know and things like that. It must have been really hard for her to get used to living here.

S1: Do you remember your grandparents very well?

S2: Oh yeah.

S1: And your aunties?

S2: Yeah.

S1: Did you know your great grandparents?

S2: No! No.

S3: Your grandfather was bedridden for a while, wasn't he?

S2: Aye, he was, yeah, down at Boughey Hall, yeah.

S3: I don't think Charlie even knew really why but at that sort of age you don't question, no.

S2: I never saw much of him.

S3: He was always in bed.

S1: That's your grandfather. So who did the work on the farm then?

S2: Me father did.

S1: And after you came here did they still ..?

S3: He did have other brothers didn't he. He did have, your father Harry had other brothers.

S2: Aye, he had one other brother.

S3: Yeah, so he must have stayed and done the work.

S1: Did he live at the house as well?

S2: He lived there as well, yeah.

S3: What was his name then?

S2: Jack. John.

S3: Oh Jack.

S1: John, nicknamed Jack?

S2: That's right, yeah.

S3: There was Gerty and Marion, as we say, we've already spoken about Marion.

S1: Yes, yes.

S2: And Winnie.

S3: And Winnie was, yeah. Were they all still single or were they ...?

S2: Well Winnie got married and ... must have got married before, before mother and dad. Went to live at Chase Town, yeah.

S3: Yeah, so there we are.

S1: Thanks again.



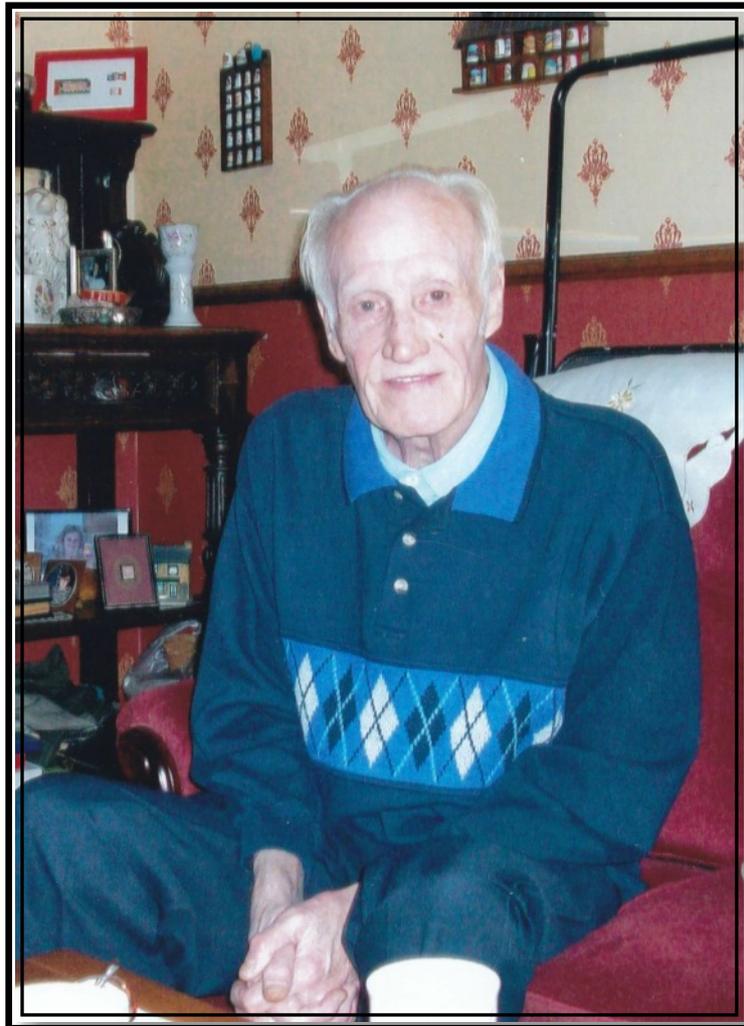


Generations  
of a bygone age



# Colton History Society

## All Our Stories



## Colin Norman's story

**Colin Norman.**

S1: Maureen Dix  
S2: Colin Norman  
S3: Nona Goring

S1: This recording is being made for Colton History Society. Maureen Dix and Nona Goring are interviewing Colin Norman on ... what date is it?

S2: It's the ...

S3: Tenth. It's the 10<sup>th</sup> of April.

S1: Tenth of April 1950... 2013.

S2: Yeah.

S1: Right Colin, I want to ask a few questions about life at home. Can you tell me about your family, where and when you were born?

S2: Well I was born on 23<sup>rd</sup> of June 1939 at Margaret Eva Cottage, Colton. And I've got two brothers, which are actually both passed away now, Watty Norman and Bob Norman.

S1: And what do you remember about your neighbours?

S2: My neighbours? Well, the Ravenscrofts, I remember he was a garden fanatic and he used to be digging his garden at midnight every night. And I remember mum shouting 'Cecil, if you don't go in I shall chuck me pee pot over you!' She said that you know. 'Cause they were there digging, at midnight! Of course Rose is still around and the other one.

S1: Yes, yes.

S2: And then there was the Coopers up the road. We didn't have ... well I didn't remember much about them. Not the Coopers, but the Ravenscrofts I remember.

S1: Yes. Do you think the winters were harder when you were a child?

S2: I think they was actually. Yeah. I think they was. Especially 1947 when we had the snow. I remember the road up to Stockwell Heath being covered. We walked over the field over the hedges. It was oh, yeah. We even built an igloo, me and Gerald Yates, by the long style and it was solid and we packed it out and it was like a camp it was, yeah.

S1: And what did you wear to keep warm?

S2: Well we had woolly jumpers and scarves and what-have-you round our necks. And I think we still had short trousers on, yeah, in them days.

S1: Did you have chapped knees?

S2: We did have chapped knees, yes we did. Oh. I remember it well.

- S1: And what did you do for baths and general hygiene?
- S2: Well me mum, me dad used to get the water from the well. Me mum used to put the water on for me dad, 'cause he worked at the pit, to have a hot bath in the tin bath. And when he got out we got in! That's how we used to have the baths, yeah.
- S1: And who did the washing and cleaning around the house and what did that entail?
- S2: Me mum did the washing and cleaning. She didn't have a Hoover then, it would be just a brush and pan and what-have-ya. I think me mum did all the cleaning.
- S1: And how did you celebrate Christmas?
- S2: Well I think me mum used to have a chicken, cook a chicken and what-have-ya, and we had presents. Not very good presents; an apple, a banana in a stocking I think it was, or what-have-you.
- S1: So you had a special meal at Christmas and what do you remember about meals for the rest of the year?
- S2: Just basic, you know, what-have-you. A bit of bread and jam and what-have-ya.
- S1: And I assume it was your mum who did the cooking...
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: And where did she cook?
- S2: Cook it on a black-leaded grate.
- S3: My mum did as well.
- S1: Yes, and mine.
- S2: Up where the kettle used to swing round and always on the boiler. And I always remember my mum saying 'There's somebody coming. There's a stranger on the bar.' Like a little black flag. 'A stranger. Somebody who we haven't seen for ages is going to call.' Stranger on the bar.
- S1: And did it work out?
- S2: It did actually. Yeah, it was funny that, oh fancy seeing you. We wondered when you was coming 'cause you've been a stranger on the bar. Yeah.
- S1: And what was your favourite meal?
- S2: Used to have homemade chips, I think it was. Fish and chips.
- S1: And did your family grow your own food or rear your own ...
- S2: Well me dad used to start digging Good Friday, always on a Good Friday, weather permissible, he dug the garden and put his early potatoes in and his rows of carrots and lettuce and what-have-you. Because it was a massive big garden. Always Good Friday he started and then we used to eat out the... 'cause we had apple trees as well in the garden.

- S3: Yeah.
- S1: And how did you keep the food fresh or store it?
- S2: Well it was always stored in the back kitchen where we used to have a great big square marble thing where we used to put an aluminium bucket with the cold water in 'cause he got it from the well, and the food was stored round that to keep it cool.
- S1: Lovely. And where did your family buy food and other items that you couldn't ... that you hadn't got, you know?
- S2: Well I think me mum used to come into Rugeley.
- S1: How did she travel there?
- S2: On the bus I think it was. Yeah.
- S1: The green bus. Where did you go to school?
- S2: Colton school.
- S1: And were your school days happy?
- S2: Well in some way, but the teacher Mr Broughton, he was a bit of a—what do you call it Mr Broughton was?
- S1: He always crops up!
- S2: I know. I always remember him say, you remember "Dim Early"
- S3: I do, he were my brother-in-law.
- S2: Yeah. "Dim Early", I don't know how you got a name like that from 'cause you're always late! He always said that. And Greville Dawkin lived across the road from the school; he was always late as well. Used to pick him out.
- S1: What did you wear to school?
- S2: Short trousers and ... you know, normal things, I think really, if I remember.
- S1: What lessons did you have, if you can remember?
- S2: Oh we had maths and reading and what-have-you. The girls did sewing and boys did knitting. I learnt how to knit at school. Yeah, yeah.
- S1: So, what lessons did you have. I've just asked that I haven't I.
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: Do you remember your teachers, other than Mr Broughton?
- S2: I can't think who the other one was. 'Cause I left there at eleven and went to Colwich school. I think it was only Mr Broughton that did the teaching at Colton school.

- S1: Yes. I think Mrs. Shaw came just before we ...
- S2: Oh yes, ar, Mrs Shaw. I remember now, yeah.
- S3: She came in 1945.
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: Yes.
- S3: That's when I started school.
- S1: Were there punishments if you misbehaved?
- S2: Yes, used to get the cane. Yeah.
- S1: And how old were you when you left Colton school?
- S2: I left Colton school at 11 and went to Colwich school on my bike. And me mum ... after there for about nine months, me mum said you are silly Colin there's a bus that goes to Colwich school. Go on the bus. So I did do. And then six month after that me mum decided to move from Colton to live in Albion Street, Rugeley. So instead of me changing school I used to bike it from Rugeley all the way to Colwich! And I used to do errand running for George Mason's as well at night time, yeah.
- S1: What games do you remember playing at school?
- S2: Tip it and run. We used to have a thing, knock it and then run. And rounders, we used to have a game of rounders. And football, we used play football in the street and get told off.
- S1: Yeah. And did the school organise any school trips?
- S2: Not that I can remember. May have done but I can't recall. Of course you're going back a bit you see. Yeah.
- S1: But I remember going to Rhyl once.
- S2: Oh ar, we went to Rhyl once, yeah. I can remember now, we went to Rhyl once, yeah. That's about all.
- S1: Right. What did you do in your school holidays? What do you remember about that?
- S2: Well school holidays we just ... ooh can't remember really. I know in the autumn time we used to go helping the farmer tater picking and what-have-ya.
- S1: So how did you spend the days? Did you play games with your friends?
- S2: Played games with a friend. We used to go for walks, we used to primrosing, we used to go violating, daffodiling as well. Go and collect the daffodils, yeah. You not allowed to do that any more.
- S1: Did you go on holiday?
- S2: I can't remember actually going ... oh I did! Yes, me mum and dad took me to New Brighton right. And I wanted to go paddling in the sea, I hadn't got a swimming costume, so me mum pulled the vest down between the legs and fastened with a safety pin! I always remember that.

- S3: How lovely.
- S2: Yeah. Going to New Brighton and no swimming costume, pulled me vest down and fastened it with a safety pin.
- S1: What was the social life in the village like?
- S2: Well it was quite alright really. Everybody got on with everybody and I think everybody else knew everybody else's business. If a stranger come you could see the curtains move. 'I wonder where he's going?' Yeah.
- S1: Oh dear. Do you remember church services and Sunday School?
- S2: Yes, we used to go to Sunday School, yeah. I forget who the vicar was at church. No, I can't remember who he was. You was made to go to Sunday School. Umm.
- S1: And did you get the little stamp?
- S2: Yeah. I got the little stamp. I always remember me and Gerald Yates sitting on Mrs Challenor's' steps. You know where Mrs Challenor used to live? And a black man walked up the road and Gerald says to me: 'Bloody hell Colin there's a bloody black man comin'', and I said 'Yeah, Gerald, a bloody black man.' He says, 'Shall we throw a bloody stone at 'im?' I said 'ah, let's through a bloody stone at him.' And a voice in the letterbox, Mrs Challener, said: 'Don't you dare Colin Norman, Gerald Yates! I heard what you say, you must not throw stones.' Yeah, must not through stones.
- S1: Oh lovely. And did your parents have paid employment?
- S2: Well me dad worked at the pit so, yeah, he got paid for doing that.
- S1: And did your mum not work?
- S2: No, me mum not work, no. She used to have a stall in the market, Rugeley town market. I forget what she used to ...oh, she used to sell clothes and what-have-ya and one at Uttoxeter market I think.
- S1: Good. Yeah, so what hours did your father work or your mum?
- S2: Oh, he did shift work, days and afternoons I think it was, yeah, at the pit.
- S1: And how did he get to work?
- S2: Cycle with the old gas-turbine light on the front. Yeah.
- S1: When did you leave school and what did you do then?
- S2: I left school at fifteen, Colwich school. And being as I was an errand lad for George Mason I went to work in George Mason's shop for a two-year apprenticeship and I served on the bacon counter, the butter counter, the cheese counter and the confectionary counter. That's when they had, you took money off the people, put it in a cup, pulled a thing and whizzes into the office and what-have-you.
- S1: Where did most people find employment?
- S2: Well most of it was either the pit or on the railways I think it was, yeah.
- S1: Do you know what happened if they didn't find employment?

- S2: I don't really know really. They just kept looking and looking.
- S1: It was pretty good. You could usually find a place to work wasn't it.
- S2: Yeah.
- S1: Do you remember being ill yourself or other members of your family.
- S2: Not really, no, I don't think I was ever ill. No. No.
- S1: Good. 'Cause the next question is what treatment were you given.
- S2: I always remember once having toothache and the dentist come to pull it out at home then, and I shot under the bloomin' sideboard. And he says: 'Come on out Colin, it's not going to hurt.' I said, 'If he's going to rip that tooth out he'll hurt me' and I kicked him and God knows what. They only used to put a bit of tincture on your tooth and yank it out, didn't they. Oh.
- S1: Did you remember Dentist Duck at school?
- S2: Oh yeah, Dentist Duck. Yes, I remember him. He was another one. Yeah, I could have killed him I could!  
[Laughs]
- S1: Did you see a doctor very often?
- S2: Not very often, no, no.
- S1: And do you remember any home remedies?
- S2: Home remedies ... not really. We did have one. Me mum used to cup of tea with mint in, I think it was, for something. I don't know what it was for but used to put mint tea. Garden mint. Sure she did.
- S1: And do you remember any health visitors coming to your house or the school?
- S2: I remember, who was it, I can't think of the health visitor's name.
- S3: Used to have the nit nurse, didn't you, at school?
- S2: Yeah, the nit nurse. There was a ... I can't think of the man who used to come round and if you was off school, wagging it and ... Mr ...
- S1: Mr. Stokes.
- S2: Mr Stokes, that was it ar, yeah.
- S1: In war time did life change a lot during the war?
- S2: I don't think it did really. No we just carried on as normal.
- S1: And did you see or have any contact with any soldiers?
- S2: Well, I remember a car overturning in a ditch along the Colton road and his light shone up into the air. And the Jerries were coming over and dropped bombs and dropped 'em along the Rugeley field but it was that wet they never went off, right. And I remember the soldiers digging these bombs out and I

went to watch 'em—great big massive bombs—and I said 'do you like apples?' They said yes, 'well I'll go and get you some apples.' So I went and pinched the apples off my dad's tree and got told off for taking the soldiers the apples

S1: So, the next question was did any bombs drop near here?

S2: Yeah, there was, yeah. And I remember like silver tickertape, collecting that. That was dropped by aircraft. Yeah.

S1: And do you remember rationing and how that ...?

S2: Yes, I remember rationing I do. 'Cause I always used to go and get me sweets from Miss Williscroft's, right. And she used to have an Austin 7 car, the registration DOP 686, I remember that! And I used to say to her, 'Miss Williscroft, are lollipops on coupons?' She said, 'Of course they are Colin.' I said, 'They're not, they're on sticks! I always remember saying that to her. Are lollipops on coupons? Yes. Ah they're not, they're on sticks. Well they was on sticks, lollipops was.

S1: How did it effect your family, the rationing?

S2: Well we just managed to carry on as anything like, you know. I always remember when the rationing stopped and we had something, apples and oranges and what-have-ya, and they was all wrapped in little smooth bits of paper and we used to use that as toilet roll, yeah. Oh it was lovely it was. Instead of using the newspaper. You used to wipe your bum and have Daily Herald stuck on your backside!

S1: Thank you very much, that was very interesting and you'll be getting a little disc with it on.

S2: I don't know whether, 'cause that there is 'Evacuees War' by Tony Towner.

S3: Oh wow!

S2: Right. This was me mum when he came from Reading and at the village hall, and me mum—there was only about three of them left to be evacuated—and me mum took this Tony Towner in. I don't know whether he ... he came to the Colton Village Historic society. Whether he left one of them I don't know. And that one is memoirs of me eldest brother, Bob Norman.

S3: That looks interesting.

S2: That's very, very interesting that is. Now I'll lend you them if you like.

S3: Lovely.

S2: You can have a look through them.

S1: Very nice.

S3: Yeah.

S2: Because ...

S3: Well is it all right if we take a copy?

S2: Yes, it will be all right love.

S3: And he'll send them straight back.

S2: That Tony Towner, me mum had him for three years from five, six, had him till he was eight years old. And he was warned never to go sliding on the pool at Stockwell Heath. But as a boy, you took no notice and he went across the ice and he fell in. And Vic Hardcastle, remember Vic Hardcastle from AVH, pulled him out with a stick and saved his life. It's all in there. Yeah.

S3: Brilliant.

S2: But what me brother wrote about on his memoirs is quite interesting about Colton. Yeah.

S1: Yes I think it's lovely when people do take the trouble to write it down.

S3: Yeah, to write it down yeah.

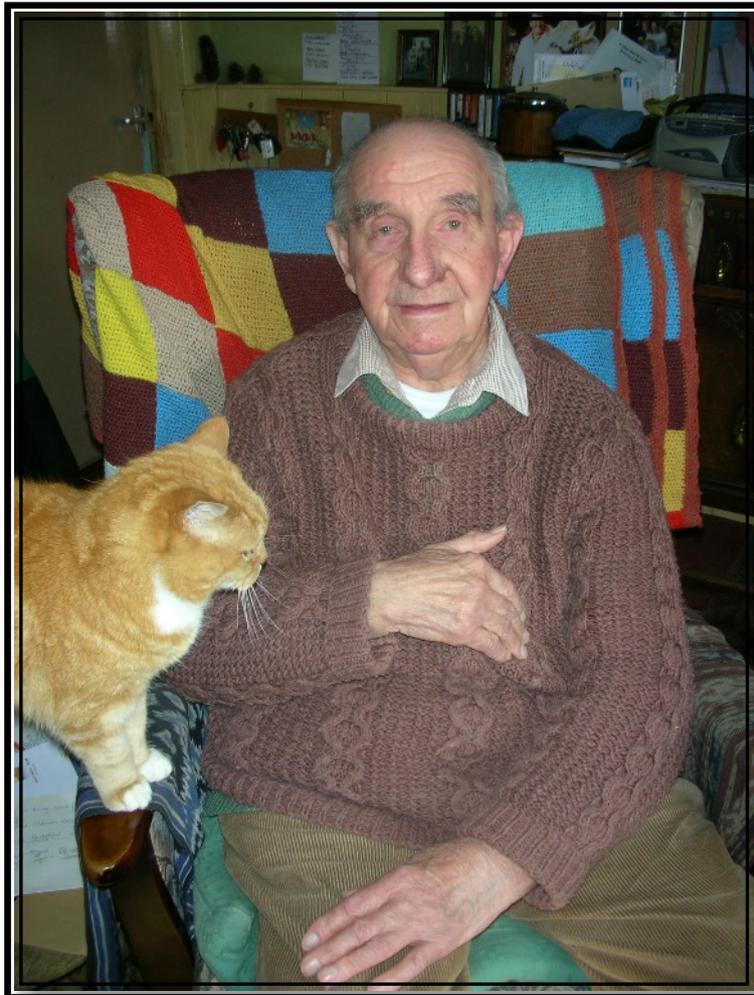
S2: And I always remember the well where we got the water from. Blanch Ravenscroft used to have to unhook the windlass and steady the roller as it went down and she let it go one day and it all went down. And they had to get grappling irons to get it back up and I went to watch and me mum says 'don't you go down there because if ever they bring that crocodile up out of that well he'll eat ya!' And I was petrified, I wouldn't go. 'Cause she had warned never go near the well 'cause there was a crocodile in it. I don't know.

S3: Oh lovely.



# Colton History Society

## All Our Stories



## Harry Bull's story

## Harry Bull

S 1 Marion Vernon  
S 2 Harry Bull  
S 3 George Vernon

S1 Right then Harry, can you tell us a bit about your family, when you were born, where you were born ...

S2. Yes I was born here, lived here all my life. My parents lived here as soon as they got married but my grandparents...my father's parents, were here. When they got married they came to live here.

S1. Did you have any brothers or sisters?

S2. Yes.

S2. I was late in life, I was late, yes.

S1. So you were the baby of the family?

S2. That's right, yes. My parents bought the cottage from a doctor who lived at Hamley Lodge up above here. 1919 he offered it to them. I think he was going back to London to live. Dr. Holland was his name. Cause I came along after 1921 didn't help!

S1. And where did your parents live before that then? Where did your parents' live before they bought the cottage?

S2. My mother said they lived next door, Bleak Cottage. And she said that my grandparents thought this was a better place, so they moved over paid rent, but I can't tell you who they paid rent to, my mother never said, they did pay a rent and later on, as I say, this doctor was going back to London and he gave them a chance to buy it, and I believe the sum was £100. In 1919, that's on the will. I've got the will.

S1. That's interesting.

S2. From then on like, I went to school. My father died when I was eleven. I carried on to school and my mum stopped here like and managed most of that lot. My other brothers were over at Birmingham side. They was twenty odd years older than me. And I went to Colton school til I was fourteen.

S1. Did you enjoy your school days?

S2. Well some classes were good and some were not. You know top class wasn't very good, it was too hard for me.

S1. Oh was it? And do you remember your teachers at all?

H. Yes. There was .. the first one in the infants was a Miss Hulme, then that was followed by a Miss Allerton who I got on better with. Then I went into the best class at the school – was Miss Edgington. She was teacher there and she married a Colton lad, name of Jones, Donald Jones and he lived in Martlin Cottages, he was brother to Dolly Jones. She married him and I found out after they lived ... went over to Newport at .. Shropshire, Edgmond I think the village were, I found out, somebody was talking, like. She was the best teacher there. Then I went up to Mr Broughton's class – not very nice at all. And I won't say what I think ..

S1. Oh yes go on, why wasn't it very nice? What was it you didn't like?

S2. He was a bit critical. I think he ... he didn't really, he didn't give anybody time to pick things up, you know.

S1. Right. Not encouraging.

S2. If you had a lesson he'd spend the whole morning if one of us weren't catching on, he was that sort of fellow you know. Anyway ..

S1. Did he used to punish you?

S2. Well, in some sort of a way, but he was fond of the ruler and the cane, but he was very sarcastic. But anyway I left there.

S1. Did you do any gardening or what sort of ...

S2. Oh yes he had a nice garden there, a lovely big garden, but one or two like myself who were not very clever, we always had the weeding job.

S1. You had to do the weeding

S2. No, we wasn't allowed to set anything, only allowed weeding. Quite true this is.

S1. Oh yes, I'm sure it was, yes. What did you wear for school?

S2. Oh, shorts and a, mostly a jersey.

S1. Was it a uniform or..

S2. Oh no, no, nothing so posh as that. No we had me old jersey, the jersey in those days, I remember, had a bit of a tie to them, and the rest were ... pair of shorts, socks that me mother had made, boots, never shoes, always boots. Sometimes we had a pair of clogs, for the winter for the bad .. you know when the .. on the hard roads I think. Not so much the winter, the clogs, for the weekend to save the shoes.

S1. Right. And how did you go to school?

S2. Walk all the time, I walked all the time.

S1. Across the fields or along the lane?

S2. Along the lanes mostly. We used to come back sometimes when the weather was nice, across the fields, mostly in the lane.

S1. So were there many people living around you as you were growing up?

S2. No er, there was a lad next door my age, Alfred, Alfred Jones. He was younger brother to Sammy. The whole family lived there, after, Sammy Jones' family, and Lil who is in the village now, she's Sammy's sister, she lived there, she moved off to her Aunt to live. I didn't remember, but I remember the lads.

S1. And did they walk with you in the morning to school?

S2. Alfred did. He was the only one up here and there was some up here er ...children of the Parr family. They used to go down 'til they moved to Colton.

S1. Oh where did they live? In the cottages, or.

S2. Yes in the cottage up here, up the Park Lane. I took Reg who's down there now, I was allowed to take him to school.

S1. He was younger than you, was he?

S2. Yes a bit younger than me. That's right.

S1. 'Cause there wasn't the traffic in those days, was there, no danger from traffic.

S2. There was a farmer had a car, he farmed at Crab Tree Farm, Mr Kent, his name was, used to farm at Crab Tree Farm

S1. And he had a car?

S2. He had a car then, a Ford car I believe it was. I think he was about the only one. Mr John Winn farmed Hamley House farm and my father worked there. But when my father got married they say on the wedding er he was employed by the railway when they put another line in down there. Yes he was employed there

S1. At Trent Valley?

S2. At Trent Valley, yes. 'Cos mother did say she missed the railway wages, they were a bit more than the farm, she did say that and I know it's true because it's on the wedding certificate. Employee British Railroad, whatever it was, LMS wasn't it those days would have been. Yes that's right. And that's how I know that but then, er, course he worked on the farm all his life 'til he passed away, you know. Yes he worked for Mr John Winn, that's the only one I remember him working for, I should imagine he must have worked around you know, 'cos he was, seemed to be capable of doing anything. He had two cows in the back .

S1. Oh did he? Two of your own cows?

S2. Yes, two of his own cows and he rented some of the Land Trust ground, and he kept them on there and they used to .. my mother used to take ... sell milk at the top of the village, sometimes, or rear some calves in the back garden. Yes, that's right.

S1. So they were just for milk, not for eating, your ..

S2. Well, he'd sell the calves later on, you know, when he'd reared them, so far, but I think that was due to .. they took on the .. buying this house, I think. They got the money get from somewhere.

S1. That's right.

S2. Up above here there was a Mr Charles Yates who lived at Hamley Lodge. He was a butcher and a knacker man as well, both like. They moved over towards ... just before the war I think they moved, over towards Rochford way..... and they had some sort of ..... and as I said Mr Kent was at Pear Tree Farm, no not, Crab Tree Farm, and the farm that's .... Park Farm now, there was no building there at all. But the bungalow was built just at the beginning of the war. There was a man from Stafford side, he had it built and the poor chap died. Yes. And Mr ..what's his name now ... Charles, they moved over there, Vince's parents moved over there, and they farmed that. I don't know who it belonged to, but Mr George Mellor used to farm it years ago. George Mellor, senior, George's Dad like, he farmed that years ago.

S1. When there was no house there.

S2. No house. This Mr ...Yarlet way, Stafford, he had it built and poor chap he had an accident at work at Yarlet, and he died poor chap. Very nice, he was, young chap. I'm just trying to think of his name, that guy.

S1. Never mind. And tell me about your childhood. Did you have running water taps, where was your toilet? What was life like when you were little?

S2. Oh yes, I'll tell you what I was very fond of when I was going to school, and that. I spent a lot of time round the farm with the farm workers, and I was very keen on following them if they was going mowing grass, 'cos there was always a rabbit or two about.

S1. Did you catch them yourself?

S2. No, poor things got cut .. in the mowing machine, see, a very sad end. I didn't like that but there was a rabbit there.

S2. To bring home for dinner.

S2. Yes, the chap who used to do the mowing he worked for John Winn and I'll tell you where he lived at Hamley Heath. That was where he lived with his family. Mr. Tom Yeomans his name was and he lived there and they used some of the buildings for the farming 'cos he farmed two places, Mr.Winn did, he farmed both places. It's going as Hamley Heath now, it's up for sale at the moment, they made a barn conversion up there, haven't they? That's right. And I used to go with him, and I used to follow farm people a lot. And I'll tell you another job I had, was taking some of the farm horses up to the top of the village, there was a man up there who used to shoe horses, his name was Mr Haywood and he lived in the big house, I don't know the name of the big house, but he had a yard there, and a furnace for the horse .. to shoe the horses

S1. Would that be where Mr Grimley lived later?

S2.That's right. I don't know the name, I've never known the name of that place. And they had a yard there, Mr Hayward, and I do believe he was a .. a ..for the pits, you know.

S1. For the colliery?

S2. A colliery miner, that's right. He worked for the ...

S1. For the pit ponies?

S2. Ponies. that's correct, and he found that, he used to find the horses a bit heavy, they were very heavy then, and I used to take one or two up there which wouldn't be allowed today, of course, on a Saturday morning, that was my job, Saturday.

S1. I bet you enjoyed that

S2. 'Course I knew the old waggoner up there, very well, big pals, you know. He used to often go by and I'd shout him from the window, "Which field are you going to, Tom?" and he'd name the field up Newland and I used to go up there.

S1.How old would you be then?

S2. Oh before me Dad died, ten, eight, ten, nine or ten you see. Go up there, I'd spend a long time with him you know, going round. I enjoyed that.

S1. So did you have any time for games or did you mainly just..

S2. Oh yes I .. we used to play some ... we didn't have much game at school, he wasn't a game man

S1. Wasn't he?

S2. No, oh no. He was anti sport I think – Mr Broughton. And I was football mad.

S1. Oh were you?

2. Oh yes. My oldest brother took me to see Aston Villa play by the time I was about eleven. I used to go and stop over. He lived at Witton. Before he went farming, he went farming over at Canwell my eldest brother, he was there until he retired. Yes that's right.

S1. So did you play football?

S2. Oh yes. I played, when we were at school, I played for the village team for a while after the war until I had my illness.

S1. Where did they play?

S2. On the Martlin, the far side of the Martlin, it goes up to a copse up that way. It was a Mr Bloor had the Martlin Farm then, not the Martlin Farm, the Colton Hall Farm, Mr Bloor. They must have got permission. I'll tell you who used to run the football show then, Mr Fred Hardcastle. He was a councillor in the village. Oh he was the head man, Fred was.

S1. Did you win some games? Did you ever win?

S2. We won one or two, yes one or two.

S1. 'Cos it's just a little village isn't it, I mean ..

S2. It was just a sport, just a sport you know.

S1. Just for fun, not a league or anything ... just friendlies.

S2. Well they were in a league, in the Stafford amateur league at one time or some of the leagues, Rugeley District.

S1. What position did you play?

S2. Centre half usually, I think. I used to play any position really, I was quite fond of it you know.

S1. You were obviously very fit.

S2. Oh yes, non-smoker, non-drinker, I suppose that's a record is it, eighty-seven?

S1. And you were out weren't you, in the fields and walking all the time.

S2. Oh yes, walk for miles. I'll tell you what I used to do. I'm on myself a bit too much, but .. I used to run down to the shop for a packet of cigarettes and if I got the cigarette card I thought I'd been well paid. And sometimes I got the ha'penny change. It was 20 Players them days were eleven pence ha'penny, but most of them had Woodbine or the cheaper sort.

S1. Who did you go and fetch them for?

S2. Some of the farm workers. A lot of them smoked you know.

S1. I think more people smoked in those days didn't they?

S2. There was quite a few smoked, yes, surprising. And as I say I went to school until I was fourteen and my first job was with a veterinary surgeon in Rugeley, Mr Thompson.

S1. Really. What did you do there?

S2. I worked as handyman and one thing or another, gardening, looking after the dogs, cats, and anything that was needed there.

S1. And where was that, which road? Do you remember?

S2. 12, Church Street he lived at, and I was there 'til I went in the army. And I saw him .. I didn't see him much after that because he went over to Wales, he retired. Well that's who I worked for. I had five happy years there, good years, you know.

S1. And then you got called up there, from there?

S2. Yes I got called up at nineteen, and then I went in the army and wandered round, Royal Artillery I was with, and we landed on the French coast in June 1944, and in ten months time we was in Hamburg, so it took us long enough didn't it. Our lads were grumbling, said it's time we was at home never mind going to Hamburg. But Hamburg, we got up there ,,,, I got a leave just before the finish, you know, the end of the war, I was on leave at the time. And I got back up there

S1. Was that the only time you came back, just once?

S2. Yes that was the only time. When we got there, when we got to France, Winston Churchill declared two extra days leave and I was over there which wasn't very happy, but anyway it was glad it was all over.

S1. Oh yes, I'm sure you must have been. I expect

S2. That's right, what else could have happened round here?

S1. Well, what I'd like you to do is to think about, perhaps a little bit, about what life was like at home, as well, it's interesting to know what you've been doing, but also, who did the chores at home, did you help do the chores?

S2. No, no, I was no chore lad, no at all. I used to do a bit of gardening, but, my father was a very, ... I'll tell you what my Dad had in the garden, he had mangolds, 'cos he grew mangolds for his stock. And in the winter mother and I used to wash, we used to have them in a clamp, mother and I used to wash them, mangolds in warm water, so he could push them through the pulper for the cattle to eat and that was what they did, and most of that garden was nearly all mangolds and potatoes, and things like that.

S1. And did he grow some vegetables for you as well?

S2. Oh yes he grew vegetables as well but it was mostly on mangolds. We had one or two fruit trees, you know and I've always kept a few fruit trees. And I'll tell you another thing that was up here, I used to find jobs at, the old Barracks.

S1. Where was that?

S2. Where Mr. Sutcliffe's bungalow is. And most of the people up there relied me for sticks.

S1. Was that a row of houses there, the Barracks?

S2. Yes, it was called the Barracks. There's a picture in the Colton book.

S1. Yes, I've seen that picture, with the ladies all sitting outside.

S2. That's right. I don't say they was there, they didn't look, they look a bit too posh. But when I was there they was glad of me to go and fetch a few stick. They had some coal house each end, three, and I used to go and chop some sticks for them. Elder sticks and that, and light the fire, but they had very steep stairs, you know, very steep it was, it was unsuitable for old people.

S1. Was it meant for old people?

S2. Well there was, I think so, I think that was the idea of it. Lands Trust must have had it done. And there was an old lady there, my Mum used to go and make her bed, name of Hannah Williscroft, and er she used to walk to Colton on a Sunday and have, stop there and have dinner with a Miss Parker, and she was in her eighties then. And I think she ended up with going to her son away up Cheshire somewhere and I believe a relation of hers lived up Manor Way, Cissie Williscroft, well she was a Mrs Avis. She said her granny died in her nineties, she used to call her Granny, I used to call her Granny because my Mum used to go and make her bed for her. And in the wintertime, I suppose it would have to be after my father had passed away, I used to go up there and sit with my mother, and she always had half a rice pudding with nutmeg in for me. She said, "Here you are lad; get some of that down you". She was lovely. They were nice old girls, you know. It's a shame really how they had to live and fend for themselves.

S1. So did they have the toilet inside the house, there.

S2. No it was top end of the garden, coming towards the field in a zinc shed, zinc sheeting and that. It was very, very out of the way. And they was ... talking about toilets there was one down here we call half-way house now, and that was outside toilet, that was.

S1. Was that your toilet?

S2. Yes that was ours.

S1. Half way down the garden?

S2. Well it was just half way. We used to call it half way.

S1. Yes, yes. And did that join on to next door's toilet as well?

S2. Yes they was back to back yes and er

S1. Did you have running water in the house?

S2. No we didn't have running water 'til, now when did it come ... it was after Colton. I think it was the late 30s I'm not sure.

S1. Right and what did you do for water up 'til that point then?

S2. We had a pump down here, we shared a pump.

S1. Right; the two cottages?

S2. The two cottages shared a pump down here and the well was filled in when it was all taken up, you know. That's right.

S1. Right. Who used to fetch the water then?

S2. I used to fetch, or my mother used to fetch it as well, in a bucket. And later on, I'll tell you what she had, she had a pipe going to the ... it was called the wash house then, it's the bathroom now, she had a small pump in there that took it from the well.

S1. To save having to carry the water to the wash house.

S2. That's right, yes

S1. So how was the water heated in the wash house?

S2. Oh an old boiler, yes that was the wash boiler that was, in the corner. It is in the bathroom now that one, yes that's right.

S1. Fire?

S2. But I'm just trying to remember when the water came to Colton .. came to Stockwell Heath. I think it must have been in the thirties, late thirties, some time like that. Surprised I forgot it like. We didn't have the electric 'til in the fifties, you know, 1950s.

S1. So what did you have for lighting, and cooking and everything?

H. Paraffin and then later on I had a Tilly lamp, it gave a better light than that; I got that from Mr Rowland when I came home, you know, a Tilly lamp.

S1. In Rugeley, Mr. Rowland

S2. Yes, that's right. And it warmed the room up a little bit because it had got a mantle and it was a strong mantle. It wasn't like the Aladin lamp. It was a strong mantle and it allowed a bit of pressure. That's right, yes.

S3. Which day was wash day, Harry?

S2. Monday. Well any day was wash day here, George, nearly any day but it was mostly Monday, yes, that's right.

S3. Did it last all day?

S2. Most of the day, I think, yes. The drying was the problem. To dry things, wasn't it, you know, yes.

S1. So it would be hung out if it was nice weather, and if not, did your Mum used to dry it round the fire?

S2. Oh yes she used to dry a bit round the fire and in the back place. We had no fire at the back at all.

S1. Did you have just the one fire?

S2. Just the one fire and there was a fire in the parlour. There were fireplaces up .. but they were never used in my day, we had a fireplace up in the bedroom,.

S1. Was it cold upstairs?

S2. Oh it was very cold, very cold. We had an old black range here and I used to have the iron rail, used to have the shelf out of the oven wrapped in a blanket and put in bed, before you went to bed that was.

S1. So did your Mum cook on here?

S2. Yes, she cooked on a range there, yes an old range.

S2. Did you have a kitchen as well? Was this the living room?

S2. That was the only .. we had no electric see then. We had a cooker one side and a place for a bit of wood, it should have been for wood but it was for water. It was made for water. I remember water in it but it got so bad and thin we had to leave it alone and we used to put wood in to bur.., to dry it, you know, but it was for water really.

S1.. Right. So you got hot water to draw on?

S2. Well it was warm water. I wouldn't call it hot. We had a little paraffin stove for heating the water on.

S1. So what did you do for baths and so on?

S2. We used to ... have a zinc bath in front of the fire, and perhaps some water in the boiler, from the washing boiler. That was it.

S1. That you'd bring across. And would you all have the same bath? Would you take it in turns?

S2. Well there was only me and me mother here, like, you know and there was no other children here.

S1. But your Dad was here for the first eleven years

S2. Yes, me Dad must have had a bath the same. But I always remember jumping in this bath and having a bath, you know. Ay, it was the only way like.

S1. Did you help carry the water through?

S2. Oh yes. I helped Mother carry the water and that, you know, or a good kettle on the fire, that's right.

S1. How often would you have a bath?

S2. About once a week.

S1. And wash your hair?

S2. That's right.

S1. Just looking .... Thinking about life then ... you grew quite a few things, vegetables and things, where would you get other things from – your butter and meat?

S2. Oh I see what you mean. We used to have the co-op come round then, on the co-op, Charley Dilley – it's in the Colton Book, that is. Me mother used to write an order down on a book and give it him and he'd bring it the next week.

S1. And that was from Rugeley was it?

S2. Yes from Rugeley. It was a horse and a big dray they used to have.

S1. There were shops in Colton as well, weren't there?

S2. Oh there was two shops still – Mr Upton and Miss Williscroft, but he used to bring it all parcelled up and while he was, when he was next door, she'd undo the parcel and check everything, and it was nearly always right, hardly anything wrong... and it was all parcelled up in a big brown parcel, you know marvellous, really.

S1. Wonderful service.

S2. Started just afore the war, Wheeldon's green bus service, and they had quite a good service then, two or three times a day to Uttoxeter, you know – made a good service.

S1. Did you go to Uttoxeter a lot?

S2. Not much, no. I went after the war more when I used to go to market a lot. I used to take Mark to the market when he was growing up, you know, Wednesday when he was away from school.

S1. Did your Mum bake her own bread, Harry, or ..

S2. No, I can't remember her baking any bread, George, no.

S1. So you used to have that from the co-op?

S2. All from the co-op yes. I don't know if anyone else come round at that time. They did one or two come round after the war but the co-op was the main one that came round, you know. Biddles stores might have come, I don't know, they had a shop in Rugeley, but I don't ever remember trading with them, it was always co-op. They had a very good co-op then you know. They was well supplied. They had their own bakery in the town, the co-op did. They'd got everything there, you know. My mother always had good service from them. They used to have a bit of a show in the reading room, a film show, showing you what they was doing in their factories, you know.

S1. Did they?

S2. Yes. And when you left they used to give you a small parcel of food, or one or two things.

S1&S3. Like a promotion / advertising ..

S2. That's right, yes. No Sky television then!

S1. Did you used to go often to the reading room?

S2. Oh yes, I used to go to one from four o'clock to seven and then there was a lady in ...it used to be called Webbs cottage – I didn't know that until I saw it in the book – where Frank Ballard lives now, I used to go there for my tea and my mother used to walk down and she and Mrs Williscroft and that lady whose name was..... we used to go to the evening show for the adults and children, you know, and that was our big day then when the co-op came that day, just one day a year.

S1. Did you go to the reading room at other times as well?

S2. Not very often only for ...

S1"1. They used to put dances on?

S2. No I never went dancing – I hadn't got time for dancing. I was too busy and as I say it was the old reading room now, and the only time I went was when I changed for football. There was a room for the visitors and one for the home team, you know.

S1. Oh you used to get changed there and then walk across.

S2. Yes. I always remember at one football match, they was a team came from the Chase, a lot of miners, and he was a marvellous ... mouth organ and he could make it talk. And I'll tell you he used to play – that one about Amy Johnson.

S1. I don't know that one, I don't think.

S2. Aye there was one about Amy Johnson and he could play it a treat this chap could. He'd get this mouth organ and he'd play "Amy, wonderful Amy" it was called, when she flew to Australia, didn't she, Amy Johnson.

S1&S3. Yes. She did, but I don't remember the song

S2. She did do, she was the first lady to ..and there was a tune about her. I think he come from Hazelslade this team and he was marvellous on the mouth organ, you know.

S1 Did you have refreshments after your football match, a drink or anything, squash?

S2. We might have had a cup of tea and the away team if they were dirty had some warm water in a bath tipped over them!

S1. Were you musical, Harry, talking about the mouth organ?

S2. No I'm never musical, no, I've never been musical George.

S1. Were you in the church choir, or ..

S2. I think I had a spell in the church choir just before one Christmas, but I think it was only for the half-crown that was handed out! I think that's what .. I remember, the old man next door was in and he said "come and join us" and I said "what for?" and he said "Well you get half a crown at Christmas" and I think I went to one or two sessions there, that's all, you know. I've never been a .. not leaning to the church, you know, never have done that, somehow, you know. I don't know what else I can tell you now.

S1. Well what about clothes? If you needed to buy clothes, where would you buy clothes from, would you ... ?

S2 Oh, clothes – in Rugeley. Sometimes me Mother used to get some from the co-op. I'll tell you another shop – I had my first suit from there – or my long trousers I suppose, a little shop where Smiths are now. There was a little bank there and trustee shop in Bees Lane and then there was a little inlet and then there was a shop there called Craners, that was, and he always had children and my mother bought me my first pair of long trousers there.

S1.How old would you have been when you went into your long trousers?

S2. About fourteen, and I think they was about nine and eleven pence halfpenny (9:11½d) or something like that.

S1.. Ten bob!

S2. Aye. It seemed a terrific sum, didn't it? I remember seeing these trousers in the window and me mother took me in ..

S1. What colour were they?

S2. Brown, just a brown, nothing posh you know and that was my first, when I went to work, you know. That's right, ah. Yes, Craner his name was, next to .. the bank was called the District bank, I think, .. yes that's right.

S1. Did you have many holidays as a child, or any holidays?

S2. Oh I just went the odd day. Mr Broughton used to have an odd day at Rhyl. We went up on the train. We all paid so much, I forget what we paid, and took a bit of spending money with us, and then went and made ourselves ill at Rhyl for half an hour or so, you know!

S1. Only a little while there?

S2. Oh ah, my word, an hour or two you know! It was a nice day out.

S1.. Was that the first time you saw the sea?

S2. Yes, the first time. That was before I was eleven, you know. I think I went up about twice from school, you know and took a bob or two with me to spend. And the lad next door, he went like. They used to get a good trip on. I don't know whether they had any money from anywhere else, but we paid into it, for that you know.

S1. And did the parents go as well or just the children?

S2. No, mostly the children. I can't remember parents going. There might have been one or two but we was old enough to look after ourselves, you know.

S1. So that was a steam train you went on.

S2. Oh yes, oh aye, a steam train.

S1. Was that the first time you'd been on a steam train?

S2. Yes ... oh no, no. I'd been up to Birmingham when I was younger, with my mother up to Birmingham, you know, cos me brother lived at Witton, that way. He started there and then as I say when he left there he went to Canwell Council and developed, farmed a council holding there at Canwell.

S1. So what if someone was ill. Did you used to try and manage not to call the doctor or did you just call ..?

S2. Well we managed as much as we could, but we used to call the doctor out if we could. There was a doctor up at the Laurels called a Dr. Payton. He used to come out, but me mother used to often walk up there if there was anything wrong with us to get something for us, or to the chemists perhaps, you know.

S1. Did you have to pay for the doctor to come out in those days?

S2. No, I don't think there was ... I forget what it was them days, but I can't remember them paying for anything, they must have paid in a card or something. I'll tell you what my father was in, and, the Forresters' Friendly Society, that's still going and I've been in that from a junior, you know, and I followed me Dad, and I've always had money from that if I've been ill. And me Dad used to get so much, that was the only thing in

those days, the Friendly Society, and I think he got about five shilling in those days, but I've been in it and er, I think the most I've ever got was twelve shilling. You know you had to ..

S1. It was like an insurance.

S2. Yes it was an insurance, you paid so much a year for it, you know. It was a very good society and never failed to pay. Very good, they were, still going. I still hear from them. Their place is at Southampton, but, they didn't have branch, they called them courts, those days, Forrester's courts. That's right. There was a big one in Rugeley. I tell you a building they used to own is where the Post Office is now, or near where they are .. it was their building at one time, yes.

S1. Do you remember the pond freezing up, Harry?

S2. oh yes, we used to have some good times on there. It wasn't so ... the grass never grew in then ...I'll tell you why, George: the herd from here used to be taken up and they used to walk through there and mess and do their urine and then go into the fields behind Park Lane. There was never any grass on there 'cos it was all killed wasn't it. the cows used to walk through and it was all bare when it was frozen and in the winter ... Yates used to provide, Charles Yates was the man for that, provide the lanterns for the lads, we all used to go skating and playing sort of ice hockey on there in the winter. Oh, my word.

S1. Did you have your own skates?

S2. Oh, never had skates, no nothing like that.

S1. Just sliding

S2. Just sliding – hobnail boots or shoes. And we used to have anything for a stick and a stone for the puck. No end of lanterns there, there used to be. We had some good fun on there and that was the reason ...

S1. Always in the evenings then, always in the dark?

S2. Always in the dark, oh yes, never had time in the day.

S1. No, that's right.

S3. So it froze very hard then, you could stand on it.

S2. Oh, very hard, oh terrific. We had some very hard winters then. Yes. We had some very hard winters. It seemed to be the same every winter then George, you know, you never had a mild spell, you know, such a ... you never had a mild spell at all somehow...it started very early.

S1. Did you ever go sledging over on the Martlin as well?

S2. Oh yes, I went tobogganing, yes down into that hedge in the bottom, you know.

S1. I've been down to the hedge, yes

S2. It caused a lot of trouble that did, didn't it. I'll tell you what we used to have, it was a good idea then, mind you it was a bit .. , we had a zinc sheet, turned up at each end, a good zinc sheet. Oh we used to get quite a few on there.

S1. And a good speed?

S2. Oh, speed

S1. I can imagine.

S2. After the first few runs it's like ice. Used to hit that bank at the bottom, put somebody at the front who didn't know and hit that bank at the bottom. It should never have been allowed really.

S1. Do you remember any bad accidents?

S2. No not really, no. I don't remember anybody, you know, being hurt. I think the lad at the front used to try and swerve it a bit. I think we had some string or rope at the front, and the lad at the front, if we'd got a big lad, he'd start and pull it, pull it round a bit, you know. Ah, very good fun that was.

S3. Did your clothes keep you warm, Harry?

S2. Pardon?

S3. Your clothes, did they keep you warm in the icy weather?

S2. No, not really, George. You was a bit cold, you know, but it wasn't too bad. But we had some fun up there, on there.

S1. Did you used to have seasons for games, like the season where you played hop scotch and the season.

S2. Oh yes. And then there was the bowling one wasn't there. They had a bowler, they had a wheel out of a bike

S1. Oh, right.

S2. When the spokes were all out, they used to call it bowls

S1. Like a hoop

S2. And you hit it with a stick and run along the side of it. Aye, they used to call it bowls.

S1. And did you do anything like marbles?

S2. Oh yes, we was always playing marbles in the school playground. Oh yes.

S1. And did the girls skip or did you all do skipping?

S2. I never did skipping. The girls did the skipping.

S1. The girls did.

S2. And we used to have that bowling thing, you know.

S3. Did you play your marbles into a hole?

S2. Yes, into a circle as well. And then we had a row out of twos. You put two each, and then you had what they call a tor, a brick, not too big, and we used to throw them, and if you hit any you had them, such things like that.

S1. And did you ever play .. we used to call them snobs, some people call them five stones ... did you ever play that game?

S2. No, I can't remember, Marion, I can't remember that. We used to play the marbles in the school. Quite enjoyed the game of marbles we used to have, you know.

S3. What about whip and top, Harry

S2. One or two of them had a whipping top, they used to buy them at the local, but that wasn't, that didn't sort of appeal to me, whip and top, you know, somehow. They used to sell them, quite a few, Miss Williscroft did when she had them, but I always preferred a bit of football and cricket.

S1. Oh did you play cricket as well?

S2. Local team, not a .. we didn't have a team; one or two of the local lads used to play up at Mellors farm, in a field at the top there. Yes, that's right.

S1. So do you have any memories of particular local characters, at all? You look back and think, Oh I'll never forget him or her, you know. I mean you've told us about quite a few, anybody else at all?

S2. About who?

S1. Any characters in the village, or ..

S2. Oh yes, quite a few characters really but ,, This chap up here was a bit of a character, Charles Yates. He was a butcher and a knacker man, you know, and a terrific voice he'd got on him, used to frighten people, yes. And on a Friday, he used to have a stall on Cannock market, and on a Friday, he used to make sausage, and he used to say, "Hey, Bully" I got to know him a bit you know, he wasn't half as bad as he'd said he was, "Come here and turn this sausage machine for me, I'm making some sausage, and a few swear words as well which I won't repeat, but anyway I used to turn this sausage machine, it was marvellous how he could link them, he was about twenty-odd stone, a proper butcher, and I'd turn this machine for him – he was a character, he was.

S1. And did he sell his meat locally?

S2. Pardon?

S1. Did you buy your meat from .. did your mum buy meat from him?

S2. No, oh no. He never sold it locally.

S3. He wasn't the one who ran the butcher's shop in the village then, was he, cos there was a butcher's shop there?

S2. No, no he came from Rugeley, he did. No, he came from Rugeley, that man. Chap named Dagos. I've just remembered that. He had a corner where Colton Lodge is, right on the corner.

S1. Yes, near the Greyhound, where the Greyhound is.

S2. That's right. I remember him being there when I went to school, you know.

S1. So how did you meet your wife?

S2. When I was in the army. We was in the same road, you know. Well we were protecting them really. She had a younger sister who was very fond of chocolate, so she visited me more than my wife did. That's how I met. And her Auntie came to live up here to look after my mother after the war. She'd lost her husband and

Joan's father had remarried again. She came to live up here to look after us and then Joan followed on, you know. It was forty-six years ago

S1. Forty six years ago.

S2. Ah, Forty six years ago, that's right.

S1. Well, Harry, is there anything else you'd like to tell us before I switch this machine off?

S2. I don't think so, I'm trying to think.

S1. Anything else George?

S2. Not as I know to.

S1. No? I think that's been really really interesting.

S2. Well, it's been a lot about me but ..

S1. That exactly what we wanted. Thank you so much, you know, for spending the time

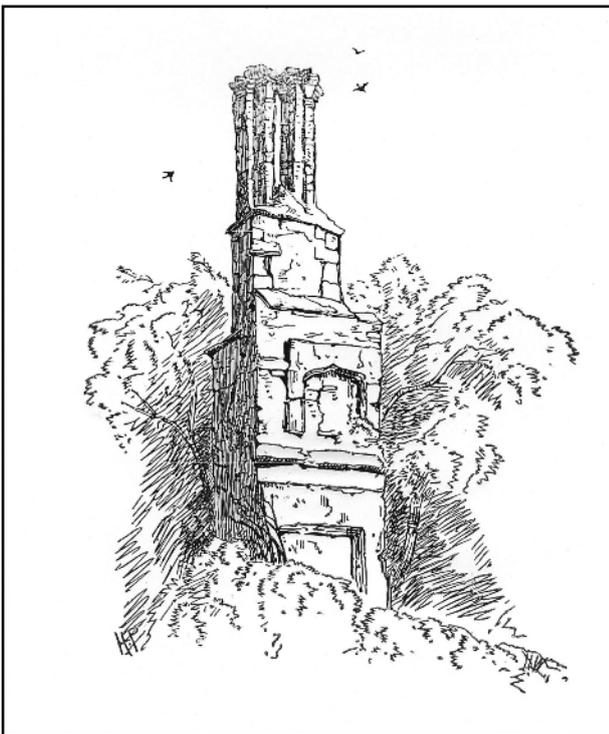
S2. Thank you.



Colton Mill



Old Park



Little Hay Manor Chimneys



Bellamour Old Hall

# All Our Stories

With acknowledgements and thanks to all of those who  
shared their memories with us

Barbara Kendrick

Lynn Collins

Colin Norman

Maureen Dix

David Bradbury

Nev & Alma James

Dorothy Bradbury

Nona Goring

Gwen Johnson

Olive & Frank Ballard

Harry Bull

Peggy Banister

Jack & Irene Brown

Peggy Peat

Keith & Hilda Williscroft

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Sam & Pete Jones

Les Kendrick

Sheila Bergin

Lilian Redmond

Stella & Malc Williscroft

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## All Our Stories

Bev Croft

Marion Vernon

Bill Brown

Maureen Dix

Gill Sykes

Nona Goring

John Garstone

Philip Charles

Liz Craddock

Shirley Carter





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