

Interviewer - *I'm talking to Dawn and Audrey on 18th October 2012 in Dawn's house in Union Road. I'm going to start by talking to Dawn Crow (née Clements).*

Dawn, were you born in Bridge and did you grow up in the village?

I was born in Brewery Lane and I lived there until I got married at 19 then I moved away to Womenswold. I moved away for a very short period of time then I came back again to Bridge.

Have you stayed here the rest of the time in Bridge?

I have. My daughter was two when we moved here and she's now fifty two so I've been here fifty years.

That's a long time. So tell me about growing up and where you went to school.

I went to the old Bridge Primary School in Patricbourne Road. It's since been sold and is a private house. I went there until I was eleven. I didn't pass the 11+ and so I went on to Sturry Secondary. We were picked up by the bus in the morning and went through the villages to school. I left when I was fifteen.

What do you remember about school?

It was rather small and crowded. We used to have nature walks, which I liked, and ordinary lessons, but it was generally just an infant school.

Was there a school uniform?

I think we wore a gym slip; it might have been a navy blue gym slip. I must have some photos somewhere. I think it wasn't that you had to have it. You had what your parents could afford.

Now I think (probably when you moved up to secondary school at Sturry) you were quite an athlete weren't you?

Well it was different from today. We had to do sports; you didn't have a choice. My speciality was the 100 yards and the 150 yards race (it was yards then, not metres) and the relay race, where I either started with the baton or I finished with it. I was a good sprinter and I also liked the high jump.

I think you're hiding your light under a bushel a bit because I think you won a number of cups. Your daughter tells me you did.

I can't really remember; but perhaps I did. Sport was part of the school curriculum and I did it because you had to. But I did enjoy sport and it's sad that so many sports fields have been sold off. Some children never get the chance to enjoy sports - and then they wonder why children these days are so obese.

Do you still have friends in Bridge who you've known since you were a child?

Oh yes, Audrey, Win Tamsitt, Marian next door, her sister and Mrs Jones down the road. I've got lots of friends. There's quite a few of us still living here.

When you weren't in school where were you playing? You talked about the river Nailbourne.

Well I think it's right, they say you remember what you want to remember. We did seem to have nice summers. We used to go round there and play in the river.

Where's there?

By the Nailbourne across the field. The Long Meadow.

Near Bridge Place Country Club was that?

Yes, we skirted the Country Club. We spent a lot of our time there, and as Audrey said, we often used to go for walks or bike rides. We didn't have much else. There was Sunday school. We used to have an outing every summer, when were taken to the seaside and there were concerts, and I was a Girl Guide.

Where were you taken for your Sunday School outing?

I think it was Minnis Bay. My Mum and Dad used to take me to Folkestone and places like that. We'd catch the bus because we didn't have a car.

Yes, I was going to ask you if you went into Canterbury very much.

We did on some Saturday mornings to the cinema. I suppose I went with my brothers or my younger brother. I do remember we went there on a Saturday.

When you left school, what did you do then?

What did I do first? I went to work at the Weavers' Restaurant on the King's Bridge in Canterbury. I used to take people round and tell them the history of the Weavers', which was probably not all true! I also worked in Price's the grocer's shop – H.G. Price on Bridge High Street - and I worked in the garage behind the Plough & Harrow, doing Fred's bookings and general office work.

But the nice thing was you worked locally.

I also worked in the butcher's shop - but that was after I was married. I used to deliver the meat to customers. I was there about 42 years. So many people used to call me "Dawn from the butcher's". People used to say, "Go and ask Dawn from the butcher's, she'll know".

What did your Mum and Dad do?

My Mum used to do a paper round at some point, don't ask me when. My Dad was a lorry driver. He worked for Yeoman's but he did also work for Mr Johnson next to the old school, at Brookside Lodge. That was a sort of transport depot. They had a taxi service as well. They had to have identity cards in the war didn't they? I've got my Dad's identity card from the war. You had to give some form of recognition. He didn't go in the army because he'd had rheumatic fever and he'd got very bad feet, so that's why he was in the Fire Service during the war.

That was the Fire Service here in Bridge behind the Plough?

Behind the Plough and Harrow, yes.

Your grandparents, did they live in Bridge?

Yes. My grandad was in the First World War, but after he came out of the army he was gardener at Bifrons House and he and my grandmother lived in Upper Bifrons Lodge, (at the

top of what is now Bridge slip-road), which was part of the Conyngham estate. He was a lovely granddad. I never really knew my grandmother because she was bedridden and I was only very young. My Mum's sister lived there with my Granddad until they moved away to Southampton..

Can you remember the times when the whole village would come together?

There were always lots of concerts and flower shows. And we went to film shows in the Village Hall - but the projector did seem to break down rather a lot! We also had dances. but I was older then.

Dances in the Village Hall?

In the Village Hall. My Dad played the drums and John Stone played the piano accordion. They were lovely evenings. Now you don't need to have a partner to go dancing do you? They do this 'line dancing'.

What can you remember about wartime?

I can only just remember it because I wasn't very old but I remember the siren going. You got out of bed and rushed down to the shelter, the Anderson shelter, in our back garden, which we shared with somebody, further down the road. She used to come up with her son and a little dog. When the siren went, my Dad would have to go off because he was in the Fire Service. My mother would go out to the shelter with her tin hat. I remember the time when there was a surprise raid on Canterbury. One Saturday afternoon it was; they just swooped over. My brothers had been to the Scouts at Bishopsbourne and they were climbing trees and waving when they saw the planes but when they saw the machine gun they didn't think it was a good idea! My Dad was walking across the field at the bottom of our house dragging wood for the fire when these planes swept over.

I remember the barrage balloons all along the road to Canterbury and I remember the guns up Bridge Hill, which used to go off.

I believe there were a lot of soldiers billeted around Bridge?

There were several places around the village where they were: up Bridge Hill and through the park. My brothers were always going to see the soldiers. I take it they were there for the invasion. It was all very 'hush hush'.

You were talking about the Pig Club. Can you tell us a bit more about that? Was that during or after the war?

I think it was during the war, and it might have been before that. The villagers collected the vegetable peelings (swill) and took it round behind the butcher's shop (where Laurie Wakeham has his shop now and where Ray Andrews used to have his car repair shop at one time). The swill was boiled up in big coppers, to provide feed for the pigs. I think the pig-sties were at the back of the Red Lion. The pigs were slaughtered at Christmas and everyone received a joint.

Did you say there was a farm called Daddy Fagg's farm? Where was that?

The farmhouse was opposite the White Horse, where the terrace of Georgian houses are now. He had chickens and there were ducks on the water; and cows used to graze as far as the river.

You talked about the Fair in Daddy Fagg's Field?

The fair was held either in Church Meadow or the lower part of Union Road, because the ground there was flatter. All the village turned out. It was a big event for the village and one that everyone looked forward to.

How much land did Daddy Fagg farm?

All the land (where the houses are now in Western Avenue and Union Road) belonged to him. They were all his fields, as far as the mill at the top of Union Road, and where the Mill Centre is now (where the Scouts have their headquarters).

Where was the mill?

The mill was where Corral's is now, and beside it was a coal yard, because Mr Lemar was the coalman.

Has life in the village changed very much?

There used to be a time when you knew everybody in village, but you don't any more. I walk every day and people say 'hello' or 'good morning'. I don't always know who they are, but they do speak. I think Bridge is still a friendly village

Dawn, thank you very much. You've told us a lot about your life in the village.