

***Miss Doris Jones is a long-standing resident of Bridge, who worked on local farms, and loved horse riding.***

Interviewer – *Can I call you Doris?*

Yes, everyone else does, being one of the oldest inhabitants in Bridge.

*Can you work out how long you have lived in Bridge, how many years you have been here?*

I suppose we came here in 1940.

*Where did you live before?*

In Deal. I was born in Canterbury. My mother and father got married and grandma let us have one of her houses in Canterbury in Albert Road. Then my father, do you know Best Lane in Canterbury (yes) on the corner was a place owned by Hart & Co. Well my grandfather had shares in that. That's how it was, my father ended up being in the outfitting line. He didn't really want to be in that line. He would either liked to have been a sign writer, or a watchmaker. But they were both on the bread line in those days and my grandfather had shares in Hart's Shop and business, and my father's older brother, he went there as an apprentice at the shop (he obviously didn't take up the boot part of it). Anyway, he was killed on his bike on his way to Canterbury. He had a racing bike; I suppose they were new then. Because my father would never let me have a bike with drop handle bars. Anyway, he was killed, and so my father, who had just left school, was put in, in his place. Well, while he was there, my mother's brother who worked with him in Hart's, he got on quite well. He went to work for Hepworth's and he became the manager of Hepworth's at Ryde (Isle of Wight). Anyway, he said to my father, "why don't you work at Hepworth's" because my father thought it was time he got something else. So he applied and he got the position of Manager at Deal. He opened the shop in Deal for them and he shut the shop in Deal for them when the war broke out. That's how it was. We lived there until the war, my sister and I were just kids then, and we were getting shelled and what have you, and the shops in Deal were shutting, and things were getting not very nice. And grandma said, because she was living here on her own, "why don't you come and live with me. So we moved here, we put out furniture in store Did you know Maslin, Captain Maslin, with the horses?

*I have heard of him*

He lived opposite, and up Conyngham Lane on the left, by the opening to the school, well opposite there are the new houses (well they are new to me), there was all stabling there and it belonged to somebody who farmed, and Maslin's had it as a riding school, so I grew up with that (you might have known Betty Maslin). They lived in Ivy House; you know the double fronted house next to what is called Ivy House too. Mas lived over there and his brother and wife lived in Ivy House and, how I am leading up to this is because, his brother got a job, no it was Mas, got a job at the headquarters of the ARP, what is now called King Charles Walk.

*Were the ARP headquarters up there then?*

The Control Room, it was. And Mas, how he managed it I don't know, but he got a job there. I think the riding school had to pack up because he had most of the horses at livery, and he used to buy and sell. Mas got the job as storekeeper and clerk, and made one hell of a mess of it. Anyway, when we came here he said to my father, because he wanted to get back in the army, don't think he fancied just being a storekeeper and clerk, would he ... To cut a long story short, my father took the job in the Control Room as storekeeper and clerk and managed to get them straight, and we took the house over from George. Because his wife

had gone in the Wren's, so we took over that house. That is how we became to be firmly in Bridge. And of course we moved out of here and Grandma was left here on her own.

*So Ivy House, which one is that? Is it called Ivy House again now, is it?*

Well, it used to be all covered in ivy. I did have some nice photos of it.. Oh, we did love that house, we still do. We did wonder at the time whether we would buy that and sell this but this had been in the family too long and it was like cutting off your arm. That is how it was. We actually came back here in 1940 into Bridge and moved on from there.

*How old were you at that time? You were a child were you?*

I had just left school, I was 16.

*Where did you go to school by the way?*

In Deal at the Parochial. I was good at needlework and that and I worked in a needlework shop until we came here. Then I was just at home doing this and that. Then there were several people in Bridge who took it in turn to man the phones. Because at the control room the idea was that two of them had to be there at a time, and my father sent us up to say that there was another person if we were needed sometimes. Because I remember that the phone used to ring and the message was, well he answered it, and he had a list of all the head wardens of the villages around and he had to speak into the phone saying "Bridge Control speaking, air raid warning red". During the battle of Britain, of course, it was terrific. He just about put the phone down and it went again "air raid warning yellow". Then it went off and a little while after it came on red again.

*So you worked in the Control Room did you?*

Well no, I just sat. Luckily I was never asked to do anything but it was the case of having another person there. I suppose in case it was bombed or something. Anyway (what was I going to say), oh I know, one of the people was his old mate, Uncle Harvey, who was the same age as my father. He had the shop down in the village and he said to my father he knew I was doing nothing so he said would I like the job. Well I didn't really want it, I had got used to being a bit free. Anyway, I did want to start riding again and this girl in Canterbury, she had still got a couple of horses, so I was there for about a year. There was Bert, Harvey and Sybil. Sybil was the daughter. Her husband's name was Reynolds. Reynolds had been in the grocery line, he was pretty good at it. So, he ran the shop down here.

*Which was the shop, was it the one next to Skippers?*

Yes, it was Skippers. It was a big shop. Yes they ran it, and Uncle Harvey he used to go out and get orders and things.

*He used to deliver?*

Well, they used to go round and get the orders, bring them back to the shop. Then we get the orders out and put them into boxes and then he used to take them round.

*By the way, was that by van was it?*

Yes, by van, it was by horse when my father was a kid. Where was I leading on from there ...

*Well, you worked at the shop for a year?*

Yes, then I joined the land army. Of course, I was in the land army until I retired.

*So how long was that? How long did you spend in the land army?*

I think I was in the actual land army for about eight years. I have still got the armband with the things on them, you know. Then, of course, the land army stopped being the land army and I just went on working at Renville's. I was at Barham for four years.

*Which farm at Barham?*

Do you know Barham very well, do you know Railway Hill? (Yes) Well right at the top of Railway Hill is Sussex Farm, I was there. I lived up there with Miss Quested for four years.

*Did you specialise on the farm at all? Did you do any particular job?*

No, a bit of everything really. I suppose, basically, I actually started because first off when I went in, I had to go for three weeks I think it was, training. That was at Kerr's at Blean. Then I got sent to Barham.

*So you spent quite a bit of the war at Barham, did you?*

Yes, I suppose most of the time. Although when we had the blitz on Canterbury, I was down at the shop then (in 1942).

*Then after that you worked at Renville?*

Yes, and I stayed at Renville's until I retired.

*Did you by any chance know ... My father's cousin was a great friend of a lady called Queenie Miller, does that ring a bell?*

Oh, that was the people before, because my father knew Queenie Miller because they were the owners of Renville's back when my father was young, because they used to do a bit of socialising and my grandparents used to go up to the farm and Queenie used to make quite a bit of a fuss of my father because he was a little mite then.

*She lived later on in the Grove, the old houses in the Grove in Barham.*

I was in the Grove for a while. Yes, I had a room, it was the one nearest (can't remember her name). I lodged there.

*Was it one of the big Victorian houses?*

Yes, because I had the top room. Did you know Charlie Vanner? (No). They were butchers, two of them, Charlie and Frank. And Charlie went in the war, so Mrs Reynolds let me have his room.

*So Bridge, back in wartime. It was quite different from peacetime I know. In a sense you were working away from home. Did you come home at weekends? Did you get leave? I suppose you did?*

Oh yes. As I said, I lived with Mrs Reynolds for about a year, she died. Did you ever know Cecil Lyons?

*Again, these are names, I don't know them personally.*

He was quite well known round here. He had a bit of a farm at Denton. Mostly it was a car breakers yard he had. Because that is what my nephew ... because I got quite friendly, of

course, with Cecil and Olive and I wasn't quite sure because all round those places, they are not easily got at are they. I cycled a lot, I used to cycle to and fro, this is just a thing we always laughed about. My sister's youngest son, I think he was born driving. I mean when he was a tiny mite, he would take the stool and pretend he was driving. He must have only been about two. My brother-in-law, we went one day out in the car and Nelson said to me "this is where Cecil lives you know, just round here". We went down this lane and came upon this ... well at that time Philip's eyes were sticking out like chapel hat pegs and said "cor is that his place" and he said "are they all his cars" and he was only a little kid and said "oh lucky devil". It was absolutely heaven, it couldn't have been better.

*That was the great love of his life, obviously cars.*

Still is! He is always up to his ears in cars. Even in his spare time he goes out, what you call them a marshal on the racetracks. He is building himself a car at the moment I think.

*Let's talk about horses. I know it's your great passion. You started off at Captain Maslin's place, was it? Is that where you learned to ride?*

Oh no, I managed to ... There was a man in Deal called Goyler. His father was a greengrocer. Anyway they had got a greengrocers shop. Oh, I used to haunt anybody who had a horse. It's the only thing I have ever thought about when I was small. He didn't go in for breeding, but he had bred one or two Dartmoor ponies, I think they were Dartmoor ponies. So that's how I started riding with Cecil. When we came here I got in touch with a Miss Jath. They had stabling years ago, my mother used to talk about them, in Chantry Lane, so I used to ride with her. When we actually moved here, then of course Mas used to buy and sell horses, and he used to put them in the field at the back of .... (I have to stop and think of what was there before). He had the field that my grandfather used to have which went at the back of those houses over there, which of course has been built on. That is why I never ever went anywhere at the weekend because when I came home from work, if Mas saw me coming in he'd shout across "I've got another pony up there if you would like to go over". And, of course, there was no stopping me.

*Did you go to competitions or did you just enjoy riding? Did you compete?*

Oh Lord no. I am no good at competing at anything. Mind you, I am not a good loser for one thing. My sister's daughter-in-law (showing photographs here). She goes driving, I call them carts. They have got a name I think.

*Where does they live?*

Martin, not Martin Mill, right in the middle of nowhere. Unfortunately it's too off the beaten track. In any case, I couldn't ride now anyway.

*Yes, so you just enjoy riding?*

Yes, well Mas got me a pony, and I ended up with two (there are my two ponies). I used to keep them in the park. When I was at Barham, we had cows there, that's what I was with really. They ran this little Sussex Farm, and they had got the old milk float pony. I used to go around with him.

I used to take the milk down in the churns down to the end of Railway Hill and turn round at what was a little farm on the corner. It isn't now, is it? I used to leave the churns on the cement block there and pick up the empty ones and bring them back up.

*Were they picked up by lorries? (Yes). Can we talk a bit about this house?*

Oh this house? I had wondered if it used to be an old Hall house once, but it had been one house then it was made into two then it went back to one. Anyway whichever it was, they had a terrific fire and it was burnt to the ground except, I presume, the main structures of it, because we have got the same shape of fireplace down in the cellar and apparently, when it was rebuilt (I can't remember the names of the original owners) they put mathematical tiles instead of all brick like it was originally. That's why you know we have a square bit at the end of the house, that is the only part of it that was still the old original part of the house.

*I guess a lot of the houses in Bridge, they were maybe burnt down or knocked down and built back up again, because there have been houses along here for centuries hasn't there, I guess?*

Well, you can't imagine it somehow. You see the houses that the Sergeant built, like those two and the other two across the road, which were his own design, I suppose those houses over there were ... well he lived in one of them, so they must have been cottages then, and he must have had them built up.

I have got a picture here, which you would probably be interested in. These are all Canterbury – ah that one is Bridge.

*And that's your house on the left hand side with the railings?*

Well, we were all railings. And that girl is my father's oldest sister; he only had the one sister then.

*I am sure I have seen that photograph somewhere before.*

Ah yes, well they borrowed it for the exhibition. You see there, that was the old original house, a big house anyway. It was a sort of manor house.

*And a lot closer to the road than the houses there now?*

And you can just see my father's brother in the gateway. Now that was the big house. You know where Ailsa used to live.

*What did the brother do? You mentioned the brother in the gateway, your uncle.*

Let me see, Bert was the oldest brother. I think Rose was the eldest child. Well, either her or Bert. He had Brickfield Farm.

*So he became a farmer?*

Well, sort of. He only had a handful of cows. I think he did have a little milk round. He was very happy go lucky and a really jolly soul; that was Bert. Then Fred was the next one – that one in the picture there. He was going to go in for horticulture but he got sent to the war and I think it was only a matter of months and he was one of the first ones that was killed. His name is on the war memorial. Oh George, he was killed on the bike. Albert, Frederick, Arthur, George, that's how I remember, the same names as the Kings. I knew Uncle Bert, he was a real lad he was.

*Thank you, Doris.*