

# RADWAY: IN OUR OWN WORDS

AN ORAL HISTORY OF OUR  
VILLAGE



This work is a spoken history of eight people who have lived some or all of their lives in the village of Radway in Warwickshire, recalling their memories of the years between the World Wars in this small rural community.

Interviews, transcription and editing have been completed by Valerie Davies (née Norton)

It was made possible by a grant from Warwickshire County Council



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**An Oral History of our Village**

**Collected and edited by Valerie Davies**



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## **INTRODUCTION**

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Most of this is direct quote, written in plain type. Sadly, due to technical problems, some of Henry's contribution was not recorded so some of his story is made from the interviewer's notes.

This work has been funded by Warwickshire County Council

This project was entirely the brainchild of Richard Gray, who sadly did not live to see the completed version.

This book is dedicated to his memory.

## SECTION 1 – FAMILY, INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD

**Eileen Atkin (née Richards)**

**M**Y NAME IS EILEEN ATKIN and I was born in 1928 in Northend. There were seven of us; at 14 three of them had left home as they always did. One went to second horseman at Upton House; another brother was an apprentice jockey, my sister went into service up in London. That just left the three of us, Amy, Ada and myself. After Frank and Ashley, there was Arthur, who went as a footman to Little Kinton in the Big House; because he didn't like to get dirty. He didn't like horses; he didn't like the smell of them. I suppose eventually if things had gone, he would have been a very good butler, because that is what they did in those days. I was the youngest in the family and now there are just three of us left.

The Richards family came from Ireland, but we didn't hear much about my dad's family at all, they didn't talk about it. But my mother was a real Warwickshire lady; she was born in Northend, her maiden name was Noon.

We came to Radway about 1935, because my dad got a job with a man that was a horse dealer, he used to get the horses from Ireland that were a bit rough and my dad and the other stablemen used to get them fit and sharp and very nice looking; then you would sell them on. After that, Easons came to Radway and had a house built. He was a miller from Manchester; when his house was built he started to get the stables done and a couple of cottages. My dad had already got the job there, but there wasn't a house ready, so we rented the little house in the corner (Dale Cottage) belonging to Mrs Norton.

We rented a bungalow at the bottom of Edgehill belonging to the Horse Trader, we lived in that bungalow for a bit; when my dad got the job at Easons, we had to come out of that bungalow and that's when we rented Norton's house.

The Norton family were next door and we children used to mingle in together. But my brother, Arthur, was a bit naughty; Mrs Norton used to play the piano and she had a dog, a spaniel I think. When she played the piano, this dog used to howl and I expect we used to set it off as well. It was a lovely time in my life up there.

We didn't live in that cottage long, probably about a year. Then we went down into the village; there is a nice stone house on the corner by the pond or



*Eileen's brother Frank with their parents at the cottage in Radway*

opposite the pond; then there is a thatched house that has had a lot done at it now; Eason's drive, then there was a house, thatched; then we lived in the next thatched one. So, we lived there and that was very nice. My dad had an allotment; they used to have the Horticultural Show.

The allotments were up the top where they are now. We had a Horticultural Show, I remember that; he had First Prize for his potatoes – as a child, you remember these things. We also had a lovely bed of Dahlias, those deep red ones. We lived there quite happily. There was sledging when the winter came.

We didn't have running water in our cottages; no one did at that time. We didn't have electricity in Radway; it did come eventually when we were in Butlers Marston. No sewerage either, Butlers Marston the same. But anyway we all survived.

My sister Amy went into service for the Starkeys, but she got rheumatic fever there because it was cold there in those kitchens. They were dreadful, like dungeons. So that would have been when Doctor Mickey would come to Radway, to see her. He told them at the big house that if she came back, she was never to kneel and she wasn't to do too much and she was to be looked after. He told the Starkeys that it wasn't good for a young girl.

As children we didn't have household jobs to do; my mum wasn't that keen on cleaning but she always did the washing; that seemed to be the thing, we always had clean clothes, sheets and stuff like that. They used to spend all morning in the washhouse with the copper boiling the clothes up. How clean it must have been with everything boiled; it sterilised everything.

### **Enid Young (née Norton)**

**I** WAS BORN AT EDGEHILL in 1922. My parents were Roland and Gladys Norton and I had two brothers who were younger than me. I started school at Ratley. I had almost no contact with Radway in those days; our family life was focussed in and around Ratley. I had distant relations in Radway but I wasn't aware of them.

My grandmother died and we went to live with my grandfather, (Raymond Smith at Old Leys Farm) whose home was a remote farm between Radway and Northend and we lived there for two years and he then remarried and we moved then to Radway. I think I was 10 when we moved. I think Old Leys Farm was officially in Northend.

### **Henry Boswell**

**I** WAS BORN HERE, IN TYSOE; my father was a farmer. He had farmed in Gaydon and then at Butlers Marston, where Faulkners are. I was born in 1917, I shall be 95 on 29th January (2012).

My early life in Tysoe was lived at Sunrising (Rupert Cottage) mostly and I walked to Tysoe School. We were six in the family; I had two sisters and three brothers, I was youngest but one, I had a younger sister.



I had relations in Radway; my uncles (Charlton) at Great Grounds Farm, my uncle (actually second cousin) Ray (Smith) at Old Leys. I went regularly to visit at Old Leys with my father. He was a good carpenter.

The Boswell family came from Sulgrave; they are a well established family with a Coat of Arms and there has been a book written about them.

## Lloyd Welsby

**I** WAS BORN IN THE GRANGE COTTAGES Radway in what is now known as Tysoe Road, but was then called the Farnborough Road. My father was stable jockey for Captain Pease, who lived in Radway House, where Starkey's now live. The Welsby family were not in Radway; my father ran away from home, which was in Wales, to become a jockey because he was mad about horses. He came from Llandaff, Cardiff.

He didn't come directly here. First of all he was in the Wiltshire and Berkshire area, where a lot of the race horses are. Then eventually he got this post with Captain Geoffrey Pease.

My mother's family were Bodicote people; my mother came here when she was 10 because my grandfather came with Col. Starkey. The Starkey family were at Bodicote House. My grandfather was, at one stage, chauffeur to Col. Starkey's father. I believe that before the Starkey's came here, they lived somewhere in the Warwick area. That was Col. Jack Starkey; then they moved here and my grandfather came here. My mother went to school in Radway.

I was born in 1932. I went to school in Wiltshire and I was a very unhappy boy, being a stranger I wasn't very happy at all. But then when we came back we lived in a wooden bungalow down the lane.



*Lloyd as a young boy*

This was demolished during the war; it was dead opposite the stone barn that used to be down the lane. It belonged to a gentleman called Dennis Adams, who was the local coalman. When we came back, my father went for quite a period to work at Gaydon Aerodrome, they were building it. He was still working with horses, driving a cart delivering building materials. My mother worked as housemaid at the Grange.

## Carol Cook (née Cherry)

**M**Y NAME IS CAROL COOK NOW, I was Carol Cherry. I was born on 1st June 1931 at the Ellen Badger Hospital in Shipston; my parents were living at Idlecote. My father came from Lower Boddington and my mother from Upper Boddington.

At Idlecote Dad was farming and I think my mother was looking after children. They came to Radway in 1934; I was about 3 years old. My grandparents moved here to the White House and we moved down to the cottage, which is now called Westcote House; we called it Westcote Farm. It was my 'Cherry' grandparents living here; we all moved here from Idlecote together.

## Benn Townsend

**M**Y FATHER HAD A SMALLHOLDING IN TYSOE, one of the council ones. I was born in one of the council houses in Avon Crescent. My grandmother was ill and she always had to have people dancing attendance on her; my mother was expecting me and there had been quite a heavy snow and I was taken to Radway with them as I was a baby.

She told me that Grandma Townsend said, 'you've got to get him back to Tysoe', to my father. So he had to pile us all in the pony and trap and we all came back. As a result of that I got back to Tysoe and I developed mumps, whether that was anything to do with being moved I don't know. But my birth was certainly registered in Tysoe.

Then, how I came by my name; my name is B E double N. My parents were staunch Liberals and they took The News Chronicle, which was the Liberal paper; a national paper that is long since gone. The Parson asked my father, 'what's his name?' He hadn't thought of one, he picked the headline up off from the News Chronicle, it was something about Wedgewood-Benn's father, he was given a title. Apparently the vicar said, 'is that Benjamin?' He said, 'no, B E double N'.

My grandparents had a smallholding, and very few people knew this, but it was supposed to be shared between my grandmother and my father when my grandfather died; which my mother's mother restocked it and she did that twice. It was on condition that my father had a living off it.

Whether he did or not is a debatable point. That was down the bottom of the lane going down through the old church yard. It belonged to Ida Carey those buildings did, there were a lot more buildings there then, they've fallen down now. Ida Carey rented that to my grandparents...

It was the recession, 1930 the Great Depression; my father was moving around for work, he would go for miles and miles. When Ford Motor Company came to England in the late 20s early 30s; he and a guy named Fred Holton - who was somehow mixed up with the family - they biked to Dagenham to look for work. They became labourers on the site at Dagenham. I don't know how long they stayed there but they were labourers on that site, so that's how desperate they were.



*A young Benn*

They had to get out of that smallholding so we then moved to Kinton; we had two or three properties in Kinton. One was the Mill House, the Rouse family had the Mill; and we had one or two more properties, basically council houses. We lived in Mill Crescent for a while and then we moved back to Radway. I was five when we came back to Radway, 1936.

## Terry Gibbins



*Terry (the youngest) on the left, Mrs Gibbins second from the right*

**M**Y PARENTS WERE WILLIAM GIBBINS AND RHONA GIBBINS. They had lived at Westcote, but I was born in Radway. I knew Granny Gibbins well, she came from Rugby originally; I don't think that there have been generations of Gibbins' in Radway. My mother's maiden name was Rogers; her family were out Rugby way somewhere too. I am the youngest and the only one left of eight of us.

When Dad came out of the Great War, he decided to build and he built the bungalow in 1922; this was fine until they commandeered the land for the 'Camp'. They came along and turned him out one day, just like that, onto the street, without finding him anywhere else to go. That was 1944. At that time all the spare accommodation was filled with the evacuees; but as luck would have it, some evacuees who had come to Easons' during the war after being bombed out in London, bought Silo Cottage and they let us rent that temporarily.

Because they wanted it back and Dad didn't want to leave the village, we moved up to some stables temporary and then Oriel Cottage came onto the market and we had that. When my dad built the bungalow, it was the first working-class residence that had a bath and a flush toilet in Radway and folks used to come down to see it.

My father was a self-employed builder; he didn't travel far, mainly worked locally – for what we'd call the 'toffs' in Radway. He also built the shop in Radway; that was at the Silver Jubilee of King George V in 1935 because we hung the bunting from the scaffold poles across to the Institute. Mum didn't work with a large family to look after.

My siblings were older and started leaving home; Wal got married and Ken married in 1936, when I was 12. Vic and Doug were married in 1940 during the War; Kath was married in 1935. Mostly we stayed locally; my one brother moved to Coventry and Ken was there when the air raids were on.

## David Townsend

**M**Y FATHER WAS BORN IN RADWAY, of course. My Mum came from London; both her parents were Irish, they came over and lived in Devon, I think it was; my mother did anyway. They evidently got divorced or separated, they were Catholic. Mum went to school in London; eventually she went down to Devon somewhere with an aunt, who was a nursing sister or matron. From there she got in touch with or worked for a lady named Mrs Hunt, who moved to Radway and she came up as a companion more or less, I think it was and lived jointly with her and Careys, Mrs Carey, at the top. That's where she met my Dad.

My Dad's family were all Radway through and through, Gran was a Mander. We moved back to Radway, I say moved back because initially we were at Radway. Blanche was born in Radway at the Grange when my Dad worked for Earl Haig. Then we moved all round the Wrekin because Dad came out of the First World War and wanted to go into horses. That's what he was doing with Earl Haig.

I would think that the Townsends in Radway would go back as far as my Grandmother and Granddad; it's a bit of a mystery, they came from Tysoe somewhere. My Dad was born into a family of 11, all born in Radway and that's as much as I can tell you about that.

They went to the other side of Banbury, Soulden Wharf, that's where he went to start breeding horses. Firstly that, then he came back and went building; because my uncle Frank was a stone mason at the quarry. My Dad went labouring or building with Frank Williams, who married his sister, aunt Annie; and then the war came and my Dad was here, there and everywhere, he had to go where the work was.

Mum and Dad married in 1912; before the First World War, Blanche was born in 1917, my eldest sister. The family were Blanche, Grace, Alma, A.N. Other, who died, Benn, Rosamund, myself and Brian. Four girls and three boys, but a boy died, where you tell me, he didn't live all that long I don't think. He's not mentioned on the family tree, these children just disappeared. He was definitely christened because his name was Geoffrey, but he was never talked about. I was born in 1933 in Kineton, when I was two and a half we moved to Radway.

When we came to Radway, Dad was building, building and decorating basically. It was a big family. In Radway we lived at The Drive, Colonel Starkey didn't like it, so he called it Drive Cottage; he said it was too grand. It was lovely there though. Mum was in service a lot before a lot of us were born evidently. She worked for Mrs Hunt as a lady in waiting, or whatever you'd call her; and then she worked at Carey's and I think that was when she finished. She went back part time because she liked Mrs Carey, they looked after Mum well.



*L to R:  
Brian, David  
and Benn  
Townsend*

My Dad worked on the Edgehill Light Railway for a while, but then he went labouring, farm labouring, building. It wasn't very forthcoming in the twenties. This is why they moved about a lot because if you finished a job you had to go; tied houses and one thing and another. They went to Soulden, but didn't stay there long because my Dad went bust. He went into working horses, not hunters or anything like that.

When we moved to Radway the war came of course. Blanche left home when she was 16 and worked in Fenny Compton, about the time I was born. She went to Fenny Compton, she was nannying; then she went to East Grinstead, nursing in a children's' home. She got married when the war came.

She was away before the war came and Grace took over because my Dad died in 1944. From then on Grace took us under her wing. She had left school and she was good. She worked in Banbury at the Swithgear and then she went to Pilsworths, one of the shops. She self-taught herself a lot and she got on very well. She finished managing a chain of hotels in Worcester. She went out with Jack Lewis (Kineton) he got killed in the war. She kept us all going. She worked for Iron and Steel at Ashorne during the war. She educated us all. Alma used to live with my Granny in Kineton because there were that many of us, so she had to move in with her.

I once set the house on fire: I had been sent to bed because I had been misbehaving, it was a lovely night and I sat in the bedroom looking out of the window. The window had bars and you could just pull them apart and get your head out - big windows; and I sat there looking out, watching kids down the rec. Anyway I saw a spider and I got a candle and it was crawling along these windows under the thatch. Well it never crossed my mind! I was chasing it, I wasn't going to kill it, just chasing it, it was going like the clappers. I got fed up and went to bed and all of a sudden all hell let loose; the roof had set alight. I don't know who saw it, my dad came home, wherever he was, he must have been local. He had to up to Uncle Frank to get a ladder and then he pulled all the thatch out. He was talking to mum downstairs and thought 'I'm going to cop it now, I'll bet'. Anyway, she must have thought that he'd given me a good hiding but he didn't.

He came in and I covered myself up with the eiderdown and he went to take his belt off, but he didn't. He gave me a good talking to. Of course, he thatched it, he was a handy man, he thatched it again and everything. Dad never gave us the belt; you'd get a telling off and a tanning if they thought fit, but I can't ever remember my dad lifting his hand to us. My mother would, but not viciously; it was chastisement.

## Group memories

We went to Banbury for hospital. The local Doctor had a surgery - Dr Rake - very good doctor. The Kinton Doctor, Dr Oldmeadow, came as well as Dr Rake and rode a horse to do his rounds. *Benn* - "I used to hold his horse and he gave me sixpence every time."

The Doctor had to be paid. *Benn* - "I remember my mother sending me up there when I had measles and she gave me half-a-crown to pay Dr. Rake. I don't think he ever gave anyone an invoice! When Dave had measles, he (Dr. Rake) came to the house and he asked for a bowl of soapy water and he washed the spots off - Dave had our sister's make up on. He was a good doctor though."

When Frank Townsend broke his leg coming down Edgehill, he went to Banbury Hospital for treatment. There were ambulances, albeit a bit Heath Robinson.

Babies would be born at home - Lloyd, Benn and Dave were all born at home. The midwife would come. *Lloyd* - "My aunt, Miss Taylor, was the midwife when I was born. It was all administered from Upton. The Doctor would have been called if there were any complications. My aunt delivered babies in Radway, Ratley, Tysoe, Oxhill, Edgehill and all round there. She had an Austin 7 car - I went miles with her in that Austin 7 car. The car belonged to the organisation at Upton, but can't remember what it was called." She did do other things as well as maternity, a bit like the District Nurse.

*Benn* - "Nurse Cox had a motor bike and sidecar. She came from Kinton and she attended Mother when I was born."

*David* - "My mum used to take us to Ida Carey, she ran the Scout Group in the 20's, the Careys' were Christian Scientists; I was swinging on the railing one day and one of the spikes on the gate went into my arm. So we went to Ida Carey and she dressed it and plugged it and when Doctor Rake came a fortnight later, he said 'I couldn't have done a better job myself'. She also treated me when I fell on some gravel and she treated (brother) Brian when he cut his leg. It used to cost you to go to the Doctor and we couldn't afford it." People didn't generally go to Mrs Carey; it was just that Mrs Townsend knew her well.

The group are not aware of anyone in the area having polio. They used to play in the ponds around the village but we never caught anything. They were immunised against smallpox as small children, and later on against TB, but the other things including polio came later.

They remember one child died, from a Jewish family, he is buried at back of Church on un-consecrated ground, no memory of other child mortality.

Pork lard sandwiches were a favourite, not dripping, lard from the leaf, it was especially nice on toast. On an average day pig meat would be eaten as almost every house had a pig. Some sort of meat would be eaten on most days. Every bit of the pig would be eaten, even the ears and toe nails. The nails were singed off on a big bonfire.

*Benn* - “We (children) used to wait for Jim Wills , who worked at Lewis’ (butchers). On Thursday afternoons when they closed early, he would go round and kill all the local pigs. We used to follow him so that we could be there when the pigs were killed. Today it would be considered barbaric. They just threw it on its side and cut its throat then pump the leg to get the blood out.”

They would have home-grown veg, never bought, and there were always plenty of vegetables.

The only time you saw a car in Radway was Easons or Starkeys and they had chauffeurs. There was a petrol pump in the village by the shop. *Benn* - “Bob Mainwaring (snr) was chauffeur and handyman he lived at Hemp Cottage. The children used to run after him to see under the bonnet.” The tank from the old petrol pump may still be under ground by the old shop - they don’t think it was ever dug out. Starkeys had a petrol tank - this may still be under the Grange cottages (under Richard Gray’s house!)

There was always a shop - it generally supplied all needs including rations. A family could get most things either from there or from various delivery vans that visited the village - Greenhills stores from Kineton, Heritages’ from Tysoe for groceries and bread, Chandlers’ in Kineton, Grimes’ ironmongers, Coleman’s greengrocers, Hutchins, Bachelor the baker. Coal came from Hutchins’, Dennis Adams delivered the coal for Hutchins’.

Having a shop provided a place for people to meet regularly. There has never been a pub in the village in the lifetime of these gentlemen, but there was in times gone by - the Castle is actually in the boundary of Radway.

## SECTION 2 – SCHOOLING

### Eileen

I WENT TO SCHOOL AT KINETON, we came from Northend to Kineton – goodness knows how we went there, but I remember going to school at Kineton when I was six. I must have gone there for a few months and then we came to Radway with Mrs Gill and Miss Robertson.

Miss Robertson was lovely, but Mrs. Gill was a bit handy with the ...! But there were some naughty boys there; they were farm boys, I suppose they couldn't help it because they came from a farm and their shoes used to be mucky and muddy.

Of course, you'd have a fit if you saw them coming in really, wouldn't you? It wasn't the kids' faults really; they should have had some clean shoes. But anyway she used to get this cane out; we had the old oil lamps in those days, there was no electricity. Sometimes this cane used to hit these lamps and we all used to think 'My god, she's going to set fire to us now!' Oh, it was hilarious!



*Eileen, Ada and Amy; behind them stands a groom and their mother and father*

When I left Radway School, I went to the Butlers Marston School, which wasn't very good. One thing about Radway was, they did teach you, it was a good school. In between times, when my dad had died, I went to live with my brother out by Pevensey Bay, Polegate; and I went to school there for a while. When I went to school there I could keep up with everybody and I was a bit farther advanced. Really I was so surprised with myself; I could see the sums being set before me and I thought, 'Oh I know that'. Radway was about the best standard of education that I had, I went to Butlers Marston and it was useless. My dad had died; mum was very unhappy, very unhappy; so we used to travel a lot. We used to go up and down to Dartford to my sister; it was wartime and nobody bothered much (about schooling) and we spent quite a lot of time in Dartford. I didn't have much education after that.

### Enid

WHEN WE MOVED to Radway I was at Radway School, I had moved there when we left Edgehill. Miss Robertson taught the tiny ones, so I didn't have her; I don't remember the name of the teacher. I left Radway School when I was almost 12 and then I went to Banbury; to Miss Mellors School. I went to Banbury on the bus; we had to walk to Edgehill to get the bus. We left home to walk to Edgehill about quarter to eight and we got back to Edgehill about five o'clock.



'We' was me and my brother Geoffrey. There were just us two children from Radway who did that.

I was a bit separated really; as a ten year old, the others had already got their friends and it wasn't easy to break in. I still had my friends at Edgehill and I was more likely to go to Edgehill to them.

The children I remember being at school with are Freda Hann (née Read), Blanche Crockford, there were some twins whose name I forget, Betty Price (née Gardner). There weren't many of us in the school; I can't remember the names of the boys much. I didn't play with the boys much; we were all together in the same playground, but we (boys and girls) tended to be separate.

## Henry

**H**ENRY REMEMBERED TYSOE SCHOOL being a very good school, some students stayed on to 17 and moved on to college. The Headmaster was Mr. Horne. But he gave the cane for bad behaviour; Henry had the cane a couple of times. It left a welt on the palm of the hand.

He left school at 15 and went to work at Old Leys Farm for Ray Smith.

## Lloyd

**I** had started school at Radway and I hadn't been at school all that long when we moved away to Wiltshire. So I came back to school at Radway with Rosie Robertson. Mrs Gill was the other teacher; she was a horrible person, she should never have been allowed to teach children. She was useless; as far as I can remember all she thought about was keep going out to the toilet so she could smoke.

I used to get the cane at school, from Mrs Gill and from Miss Parkinson; she could lay it on Miss Parkinson could! From what I can remember, it was reasonably fair. There were some that had it a lot and it was always put in a register.

My schooldays from the age of 9, or before that, were very happy when I was in Radway. From the age of 9 I was always with my grandfather on the farm at the Grange. As soon as I came out of school - straight there. It was all I thought about, getting out of school and going to my grandfather.

I finished school when I was 14 and I did all my schooling at Radway. It was quite normal; some went to Kineton, a few went to Stratford, but it was quite normal to stay at Radway. This would have been fine if we'd have had a good teacher.

The best schooling I had, I suppose, was when the evacuees came to Radway. When there were two teachers come from Coventry; one was called Polly Parkinson, she lived in the little old cottage over there (beside the recreation ground); and the other one was a bloke by the name of Mr. Taylor. They were good teachers in comparison to what we'd had; and very strict. So I did quite a bit of my schooling in the Village Hall, because the School wasn't big enough. Both buildings were used for school.

I can't remember when Mrs Gill left: I think, if my memory serves me right, the Governors ousted her and I believe that old Mrs Douthwaite took a big part in that; and rightly so. Then for my last year or two, we had a teacher who used to push-bike from Wormleighton. His name was Mr. Hole; at lunch times, he'd have his sandwich and he'd go walking along the road. From what I can remember of him, he was a little bit eccentric, probably had been a very good teacher in his time and he was a wonderful musician.

We didn't finish school with any exams or anything like that.

## Carol

I STARTED SCHOOL IN RADWAY about 1936. Miss Robertson was the infant teacher and Mrs. Gill was the seniors' teacher. I was happy enough at school; certainly I liked Miss Robertson, I got on very well with her. Mrs Gill was a bit strict, but it was just as well.

I left Radway School when I was 11 because I wasn't clever enough to pass the scholarship. I moved then to Rinoby in Banbury in Dashwood Road; it was a private school. Dad had to take me to Tysoe to catch the bus because there were no buses at that time from Radway.

At Radway School there were a group of us, all around the same age, who were friends; there was Benn Townsend, he's a little bit older than I am; John Chapman; Agnes Tutor; Lloyd Welsby, he was a little bit younger than me; Ruby Major; Elaine Lancaster. Then the war came and the evacuees moved in. I didn't really have a best friend, I lived on the farm about a mile from the village and I didn't mix all that much. I loved being on the farm.

The evacuees came with two teachers, a man and a woman. One was Miss Parkinson and the man's name was Mr. Taylor. What they did was split us up into ages and so we were in groups together, evacuees and Radway children, in classes of around the same age. I was one that Mr Taylor taught down in the Hall. I always remember, of course it wouldn't do now, that if anybody was naughty, and I never was of course, he used to take his slipper off and put them across his knee and give them a smack. But he was alright, he was fair, he was very nice. Miss Parkinson lived in the house that used to be called 'Mycott', next to the Hall. I think that the village children and the evacuees mixed quite well on the whole.

They insisted that I stay on at school until I was sixteen, much to my disgust. The headmistress of the school I was attending then was taken ill and she couldn't carry on anymore and I was then fifteen. Dad would have been quite happy to let me stop at home but Mum wasn't. She said, 'you will not'. I was sent then to Stratford Modern; that meant that Dad had to take me to Pillerton to catch the Kinton bus. Janet Baker (later Mrs D. Townsend) and Brenda Faithful also travelled on that bus and we used to walk up to school together. I was only there about twelve months, long enough for me.

## Benn

I DIDN'T GO TO (INFANT) SCHOOL in Kineton, I started school in Radway; I went to school straight away as soon as we moved. Mrs Gill was the head teacher and Miss Robertson was the teacher in the Infants. Mrs Gill was vicious, it was a scandal; she always sucked up to the people who had money like the farmers. She treated people differently; there was definitely a barrier there.

I was one of the naughty boys, I had the cane several times; I had it for talking in class, being late in lines, you had to form lines up when you went back into school. I had the cane when I was an Infant; one of the senior girls called Ada Richard was walking us back down to the village, like they have a bus these days, and drop people off at their various places. Before I got to our place, I could see something going on at the Green where the council houses are now built and I broke away from the lines and next day I got the cane. I was about 6 then; it's a bit brutal, but I don't think it did me any harm to be honest with you. She put real venom into it when she did it.

When I was a schoolboy my friends were Jack Chapman, Lloyd Welsby, Melville Read, who now longer lives in the village but is Freda Hann's brother and Brian Douthwaite. I was very friendly with Bernard Norton in my teens, but he wasn't at Radway School when I was, he was older than me. Apart from that there are people who moved out of the village, the Tudors for instance; they were a welsh family who came down to work for Cherry's.

I went to Kineton School and then on to Stratford; I went and sat the 11plus, needless to say I didn't get through it. I was offered at the age of thirteen, I don't know if anyone else was offered this, the chance to sit an exam which I think was for people of a standard that they thought might have got through. We had to go to Warwick School, the public school, to sit this entrance exam. Well, we were in that main assembly hall and we were stood shoulder to shoulder - my dad had died and one of my older sisters, Grace, took me. She bought me a suit and everything, a suit with long trousers. Well, I had never seen so many college blazers in all my life, it was crammed. They were evacuated from all over so no wonder there were no places. There was a system whereby if they came from a Grammar school they got the places. So I eventually went to the High School in Stratford, the Hugh Clopton School. Dave went there and also Brian, we went there and I left at the age of sixteen, just short of my 16th birthday, it was January 1946. Then I went to Automotive Products in Leamington, AP as it used to be called, as an apprentice.

I biked to Kineton and caught the bus; my older sister Grace was unofficially engaged to Jack Lewis, who was the butcher's son - he was killed in the war, at Casino - so we used to leave our bikes in Lewis' garage. We did that when we went to school as well. In winter, we were wet through before we got on the bus. It's incredible when you think about it; you can't really believe it all happened.

It was a long day going to school; the bus left Kineton at 5 to 8 and went round all the villages picking up. It ended up in Stratford and then we had to walk up onto the Alcester Road.

## Terry

**I** WENT TO RADWAY SCHOOL when I was 5 until I was 14. I didn't go on to another school. My best friend was Jim Fleming, Barbara's brother; we were great friends until we were called up.

## David

**I** WENT TO SCHOOL AT RADWAY when I was three; Rosie Robertson was junior teaching and Mrs Gill was head teacher. Miss Turner had left. I was 13 when I left Radway School and I went to Stratford, to Hugh Clopton Modern Secondary. Benn and Alma went to Kinton School, but myself, Brian and Ros went to Radway. Then we all finished off at the secondary school at Stratford except Ros, who Grace sent to Dashwood Road at Banbury.

I left school when I was 16. I left with no qualifications they didn't do things like General School Certificate. The only exam you took, if you were lucky, was at the junior school in the village to get to Stratford Grammar school and only two ever took that. You had to be recommended, it depended whether you got on with the teachers didn't it!

Everyone seemed like my friend when I was young in Radway; there was the Chapmans, Ruby Major, Pete Major, Mick, Ken Major. The Gibbins's were a bit older. The Lees girls, who were comparable ages to us. We all used to mingle in together, boys and girls.

Sport was my main subject at school; I used to like school, I couldn't stick arithmetic or geometry. Geography, history and sport and gymnastics and religious instruction, I loved it. I didn't know what to do when I left school. If you went to school at Stratford, you either worked at the NFU or worked in a shop and the headmaster at our school - I didn't like him at all - all he was interested in was the Stratford kids, which was fair comment in a way. The country lads he didn't want to know.

## Group memories

Normally there were around 30-40 children in the School, although numbers increased when the evacuees were in the village. Attendance at school was compulsory with ages from 5 to 14 if you stayed on there. There would be no break if you left school at 14, you would go straight into work.

Children came from Arlescote; the Haynes', Arnold's Farm and the Lancaster Girls from Linden Farm. Children came from Westcote in later years; there was a nursery at Westcote, there were several nurses there, they were a draw for the young men of the village.

It was age 5 to about 9 in the infant room and then you went into the big/senior room. Different age groups would be doing different things in the same room. In the infants they had a sleep in the afternoon; there were canvas beds. There didn't seem to do a lot of work in the infants; but they were taught to read and start writing.



*Eileen and Carol play the Ugly Sisters in Cinderella*

*From left to right: Eileen, ?, Tom Adams, Benn, Carol, Joyce Taylor, Roy Moore, Mick Major, ?, Brian Reed, John Moore, Una Gibbins, Alma Townsend, and Ada Richards as the Fairy Godmother.*

*David* – “What I remember is the farmyard; there was a farmyard there and you basically learned your maths from there. There were sacks with measurements like bushels and pecks and measurements of water and it was a good way to learn; Miss Robertson was good at that.” Then it was in at the deep end in the big room; Mrs Gill used to sit with her skirt over the fire guard teaching.

School hours were 9.00am to 3.30pm for infants and to 4.00pm for the seniors. Children went home for dinner (there were no School dinners – they probably wouldn’t have eaten them properly as there was good food at home). Cooked dinner was eaten at lunchtime; in some families e.g. Townsends’, *Benn* and *David* – “Mum would cook at lunchtime for children and again for dad coming home at night.”

*Lloyd* – “My meal was with my parents at 12 o’clock, because they worked in the village and my granddad used to come back from the Grange at 12 o’clock.”

There was no homework done after school; no one had it. There were no after school clubs or activities; children made their own entertainment. *David* – “When Joe Hole was there we persuaded him to lend us some stumps and a cricket bat”.

Some of the gentry in the village had a governess. Major Derby at Radway House had a son Adrian, who went to a private School in Lighthorne Road in Kineton. The Starkeys always had a governess. A few children went to Miss Mellor’s private school in Dashwood Road, Banbury – Enid and Geoff Norton and Ros Townsend.

## SECTION 3 – PLAYDAYS

## Eileen

THE NORTON CHILDREN had a couple of ponies and we used to have rides on those. It was a lovely time in my life up there. Mr Norton had a croquet lawn on the front lawn; there was always a croquet set set up – all the mallets and everything was there for us children. We just used to run in and out and it was lovely. Then my brother came back from the racing stables and he wanted to see if the ponies could jump. He set up all these jumps round the Green and we had a lovely time up there.

There was another old lady who lived up there; she had a magic lantern show. She used to invite all us children to go and see the pictures that came up on the screen. I think it was the house next to the Chapel. She used to invite us all in there and we used to sit and watch. It was such a long time ago, about 75 years; and that magic lantern was still magic then. Then there was Mrs Carey, I think she was an opera singer. She had a daughter, Armourella; she used to like us children too. She had a pony and trap and red hair; we loved her. She would invite us into this trap and we used to go down the fields with her dogs. She would hide things around the field and the dogs would go and find them. So that was another day out; so it was all very nice when we lived up there.'



**School pantomime  
1939**

*At the back:  
Benn, Una Gibbins,  
Melville Reed.*

*Front row:  
George Vickers, Tom  
Padbury, Francis  
Adams, Lloyd, Brian  
Douthwaite, David,  
Adrian Prosser, Howard  
Adams, John Chapman,  
Carol.*

She (Mrs. Gill – schoolteacher) would do a pantomime; there's a girl called Sally, down on one of the farms that has been built on now, she has got some photographs of the pantomime that we did. Carol used to live on the other little farm down there; I can remember going to her birthday there, I suppose they must have fetched us, but she had nice parties. We had a very nice time in Radway I must say.

We (children) were just all together (playing), there weren't any best friends really; we just played around. We had to amuse ourselves with what was about; there was nothing to do there. There was no Brownies, no nothing; because there weren't many children. We just used to play around – that's it.

My dad used to have the puppy foxhounds and he used to bring those on and of course that took a lot of our time. They are lovely affectionate things. But they weren't allowed to come into our garden; there was a gate into the stables that my dad used to go through, but we were not allowed to let those puppies into the garden ever; they had to stay in that yard. And yes, I suppose the time just passed away.

Living at Radway, when dad worked for Eason's, we had the use of a car. As mum said, it was the best job they ever had. The car was a perk and I think the wages weren't bad because we seemed to be quite well off there. We used to go see my granddad in Northend and we'd often find him in the allotments.

We used to go to Fenny Compton, we had relations there; a very small man and he was a tailor. His wife always used to make homemade lemonade and caraway cake when we used to visit them. This Uncle Skipper at Fenny Compton had a penny farthing bike; he was only small and how he got up on that bike – I've no idea.

## Enid

**O**NE THING THAT I enjoyed very much, I could amuse myself for hours if I could get hold of a magazine, particularly a woman's magazine with fashions, I loved to cut out these pictures of women and make up outfits. That was my particular interest. I enjoyed playing with dolls and doll's prams and suchlike – girly things.

## Henry

**A**S A SMALL CHILD – there were a number of houses at the top of the hill, before Lord Bearstead (owned Upton House) it was Samuels then, there were a lot of houses for employees and there were a lot of children there that we used to play with. I did come into Tysoe, but it was a two mile walk; Norman Matthews in Tysoe was a friend of mine. We went up the hill (to play) more so than come to Tysoe. We played tops, whips and tops in them days.

Henry began riding as a very small child, before he went to school. He started on a donkey and graduated up to ponies. He would sometimes ride to Old Leys Farm with his father on a pony and him on his donkey. There were no cars, but the family would use a pony and trap, which could seat 4 people.

Walking was the main form of transport; there were no motors about then, you didn't see a motor more than once a day go down that hill.

At home the children had to help; he mostly worked in the garden. They grew their own vegetables and had chickens.

## Lloyd

**I**N MY SCHOOL YEARS I didn't used to hang around (with friends) too much, because about the age of eleven I went to work on a Saturday and some evenings in the gardens at the Grange with Mr. Crockford for 6d an hour. I was already earning money at 11. Also on a Saturday, I used to go up to Church Farm, Mr. Berry, especially at harvest and haymaking time and help him. I was paid the same price, 6d an hour. At that time Mr Berry farmed a lot of the land down here that is now WD (War Department) land; he was the biggest grain grower in Radway.

There was no combining; everything would be brought up to the yard and put in ricks and thrashed. I used to be the person who brought the full load of corn from the field with the horse and cart and then took the empty one back. They used to have a series of three; so there was one being filled, one being brought to the rick yard and then the empty one to be took back and there would be a full one to bring up. So that's what I used to do; I used to walk miles.

The money that I earned did not go into the family, it was my money.

There were a few other boys working at that age, but not many. I've always been a very practical person, so work has never bothered me one little bit; I used to love it. The hours I worked at the Grange for nothing with my grandfather – feeding cattle in the winter and I used to help him clean out the pigs and all this sort of thing – I never ever got paid for that, I did it for love.

I spent my boyhood with men rather than kids quite a lot. In actual fact, my father disapproved of children running about the street; I did used to sneak out, but that was how it had to be. Sometimes if it was dark and I sneaked out to have a game in the village, I used to have to go back and go to my grandmother's, so it looked as though I'd been at my grandmother's all the time.

My father was very strict but never cruel; I can't actually remember him laying a finger on me but if I was chastised I was chastised by voice, threatened; never beaten.

I used to knock about with David Townsend quite a bit; I'm a bit older than him; and with Melville Read. I was friendly for a bit with a lad called Howard Adams, who was the son of Dennis Adams, but they moved away, his father bought a farm somewhere and they went farming.



*Lloyd dressed up as a sweep in the village fete*



There were a lot of evacuees; we had one boy with us; a lad by the name of Ted Sprackling. His sister was with Mrs. Thacker. There was some fall out over his sister, so their mother took them both away. Took them back to Coventry I assume. It's something that doesn't really register with you when you are that sort of age - the reason why. I wasn't sorry that he went because he wasn't that .... I remember that we used to have a bath on a Saturday night; in a tin bath in front of the fire and I remember that my mother had put the boiling water in and not put the cold in; and he went and pushed me in it. I never forgave him for that.

We used to fight them (the evacuee children); they were a bit different, yes. They were more - I don't know - more adventurous than us I suppose. But, until very recently, the visitors' book in the church - there was one of them used to come back most years and sign the book. His name was Ludford. That was a family that came; they lived in a wooden bungalow, it's gone now, opposite the churchyard in the orchard there. There were two boys and the mother lived there; the father was in the Forces.

## Carol

**I** ALWAYS HELPED ON THE FARM from a young age, I used to help feed the lambs and I had pet lambs. Dad worked mostly with the cows, we had about 30 milking cows at that time; my grandfather was about then as well and I did spend an awful lot of time with him; in fact we were almost inseparable. Later on I had a pony.

## Benn

**A**DRIAN PROSSER WAS THE STUD GROOM'S SON; he was a friend of mine. We had a big circle of friends. We played things like hide-and-seek; we used to go in the woods, all manner of games we used to play. We played outdoors; I can't remember doing anything indoors with other people's children. I think it was a strict thing. When school had finished and it was wintertime, unless you were a carol singer or something like that, or making a bonfire, you were inside. You weren't allowed to make a bonfire during the war because of the blackout.

When we were inside in the winter we used to do family games, there was no television, you listened to the radio if you were lucky. If the battery ran down you were without it for a week, you had to take it to Kington to have it re-charged. That's another thing -we used to get nets and catch newts. It was a poor village. There was no such thing as ash collection ever body had a rubbish dump in the garden, the ash heap we used to call it.

It was very much a community until the outbreak of war and then we had the evacuees come in; Radway would never be the same again. The war changed everything. There were a lot of evacuees; some, the families moved in - one was the Ludfords, they had a big bungalow in the garden of Colonel Osbourne's house on the lane up to Westend, they backed onto the church lychgate, the one round the corner. They were Coventry kids, their mother lived with them and their father used to come at the weekend. He worked for one of the munitions factories, he didn't have to go in the forces, it was a reserved occupation.

The two Ludford boys, Stan and Dennis, were particular friends. There was Bob Mander, he was a bit older than me; he went to Kineton school when I did. There was quite a circle of friends there, the Tudor family, we called him Taffy, and Adrian Prosser and another guy called Walls, who seems to have disappeared off the face of the earth. The Reads, The Majors, who were related to the Chapmans, who were related to the Nortons.

I used to go to Kineton Youth Club – my friend Bernard Norton and I went everywhere together for years. He got me back into rugby – when I was at Stratford High school we played soccer, but we had a guy come back from the Forces, he'd been a rugby player, he was called George Waite and he introduced rugby and for two seasons I played rugby and I loved it. I told Bernard about this and he said, 'I'm at Banbury, why don't you come up there?' So I did. As a result of that I had another social life in my late teens.

Being with horses and riding horses was something we did; it was a good time, I had a great youth really and that was all the rugby and getting around. And I used to drive Bernard's Morris 8; Mr Norton would have gone mad if he had known! I remember once – Johnny Groves used to come through the village going to Arlescote; he had an old Austin 7 saloon with a metal carrier on the back and this thing used to have a load of hay on it.

Bernard and I were coming back up from the camp way, they hadn't closed the road completely then, and Johnny Groves was coming down and I was driving and I shouldn't have been because I was far too young. We took every scrap of hay off the cart – I can see Bernard now, he was screaming 'let's get cracking, get out of here now'. My social life was with Bernard, we used to go everywhere in that Morris 8; the things we got up to in that is nobody's business. We used to go to the cinema, dances – Wincolls at Banbury.

Mischief, but all clean fun! When P.C. Settafield retired, he had been a friend of dad's and I was home on leave, he came up to the house and said, 'I just want you to know that I am retiring and going back to London. I am glad Benn's here because I want to congratulate him'. I said 'what do you want to congratulate me for?' He said 'if I had pinched you every time I should have, I'd be a superintendent now!'

## Terry

**I**N FREE TIME WE mainly played 'foxes-and-hounds' in Edgehill woods, chasing around and hiding. We spent absolutely hours up there; there was nothing else much to do, it was our main pass time. We'd meet up with a gang from Ratley; there was always a bit of rivalry, but we played with them up the wood, we got on all right.

We didn't get up to much mischief; only carving our initials on the tree trunks, there used to be a lot of trees in Edgehill woods with my initials on! We dared not get into too much mischief because if we did, we got a good hiding. It's different today – you can't touch anybody. Mum did the punishment – with the copper stick, that was her favourite 'weapon', discipline was very tight.

Right from when you were old enough we had to dig the garden to make a contribution; right up to the War, we were virtually self-sufficient. We had a big garden, pigs in the sty, we had chickens. The only time we bought meat was at the weekends; but that was all they could afford – sometimes we went without our Saturday Spending, because they couldn't afford to give it to us. It was really, really tight – they go on today about things being tight, but they've never been so well off and I'd say that for the pensioners as well. I think we were content and most people in Radway were in the same boat.

(In later years) we used to go to Banbury to the 'pictures' occasionally on the bus; sometimes we would have to get out up the hill and help push the bus up! There was a bus on Saturdays so that you could go in, go to the pictures and get back on a later one. There was the occasional dance in the village and an occasional Whist Drive.

There was an amateur dramatic group; Vic (brother) was in that; they used to put plays on in the Village Hall. I didn't really get involved because at that time I wasn't old enough.

## David

**W**E ALL USED TO MINGLE IN together, boys and girls. We used to make our own entertainment and it was fun. We used to spend all our time in the woods, Edgehill woods. My Dad always said 'as long as you behave yourselves, you can go.' But he said 'Edwin Reason and Ted Haydn were chief woodmen and if I hear anything!' They worked in the woods and they had a big workman's shed in there in those woods. You could go up those fields into the woods and do exactly what you wanted as long as it wasn't mischievous; they would have known.

We used to play soccer, cricket; at night we used to play tinnit, things like that. Someone else called tinnit another name. You all get together and pick someone out and they are 'on'. You had a tin can and you put stones in it and threw it as far as you could. Then you all scattered and they had to count to a hundred before they started looking for you. If you got back to where you started from before you got the tin, you threw it again; oh it was good fun actually. We used to follow all the hunts. That was our main entertainment; we never got into any trouble really.

The only trouble was when the evacuees came. There were loads to start with, I couldn't tell you offhand; there were 30 or 40. They were distributed all round the village. Mrs White had two they were very nice; Holt their name was. There were two down at Eason's; I think one of them finished up at Mainwaring's and various other places. But after a while they were shipped back, about 90% of them went back to Coventry. The lads were typical town lads, up to mischief; it split the village really. They brought two school teachers with them; there was Mr Taylor, who was injured in the early part of the war and Polly Parkinson, she was a real tartar, she had a niece with her, they lived in Mycott. We had to get on with them, but you didn't click like you did with your own mates in the village.

The worse thing they did, well we all used to go scrumping, that's a countryside habit anyway. They went down to the Postmaster's garden, opposite the Post Office by the Institute was his garden, it was full of produce and they took everything up and slung it all over the streets. They paid for it in the end I think. They didn't fit in. Thank goodness a lot of them went back. .

Initially at Radway we used to play football for Ratley, the juniors. Then it was Kineton Wasps when you weren't playing for the school. I used to play cricket and football for the school at Stratford. I didn't play cricket for a village team, just for the school.

I joined the Church choir because I liked singing and I enjoyed that, but then again I was a Methodist and they were C of E. Four of us were there, Brian Douthwaite, Lloyd Welsby, Mal Reed and Malv's brother, who was four years older than us and myself; that was the Boy's section. Tommy Griffin was choir master; Ernie Taylor, Lloyd's Grandfather was a choir man, his uncle and old Bob Mander. We weren't allowed to mix in with the village life at the Institute as they called it, none of the Methodists, it was all the intermingling 'other lot' that used to go there. It was annoying really. On a winter's night I would sit in candlelight and do reading or play board games until you felt you couldn't see.

We had to do chores; I helped in the garden, but it wasn't a very big garden and it wasn't very good either. It was an old wheelwright's house and the village undertaker and the garden was all full of bones and ash, nothing grew out there much. The front garden was nice, a little border. I used to do the washing up, chop sticks, get the coal in. Because there was no electricity, it all had to be done in the dark or half-light with candles.

## Group memories

There was no football team, but some played for Ratley. Children played cricket on the footpath in Buffen, because it was the most level piece of ground in the village; but none of this was connected to school.

### *Ratley football team 1951*

*Back l to r:  
Tom Burson,  
Gerald England,  
Henry, Mick  
Major.*

*Front l to r:  
Bernard Norton,  
Pete Major, Les  
Jeacocks, Trevor  
Griffin, Chris  
Munoz, Dan  
Batchelor, Jim  
England.*



*Benn* - “Here in this rec we would have two teams playing and another four teams waiting to join in.” *David* - “There were some good footballers from here - Terry Gibbins, Pete Major, Bob Mander was the best one, and Fred Mander.” It was the old story; they had no transport, so they couldn’t get anywhere.

Alec (*Benn* and *David*’s Uncle) was a good cricketer, played for Banbury 20 Club; they would come and pick him up. A few exceptional players had trials for football teams. There was some entertainment at the Camp during the war period. Otherwise there was a trip to the Pantomime once a year; a coach load. Generally trips were not organised by School, but, *Dave* - ‘I did go once to Stratford with School to see A Midsummer Night’s Dream. This was probably a one-off’.

There would be a Sunday school trip once a year and a separate Church and Chapel outing. Some examples of trips are - Barry Island; *Lloyd* went on this trip and was dropped off at his Father’s parents near Llandaff. They also went to Skegness. *Frank Townsend* organised Methodist Church trips; the coach would go round villages and pick up from the Chapels. These were long distances, but there was hardly any traffic in those days, so you could ‘sail’ along. It would be usual to use *Reg Rouse’s Co.*



*Methodist Sunday School trip to Skegness 1937/8*

- 1 *Brian Townsend*
- 2 *Arthur Chapman*
- 3 *Ruby Major*
- 4 *Adrian Prosser*
- 5 *Ros Townsend*
- 6 *Mr. Townsend*
- 7 *David, Benn and their cousin Edward Townsend*

The children would dig up pig nuts in the rec; *Lloyd* - “We should make an issue of that; they would still be here if the grass didn’t keep being mowed.” There are still some pig nuts in Radway; they are in the Field that *Carol (Cook)* sold to the conservation people. Pig nuts are not protected, but there is a movement to try and have them protected. *Benn* - “One of my chores was to bring my grandparents pigs down to this playing area to root for pig nuts; sometimes as many as three pigs together.”

*Lloyd, Benn* and *David* - “We played ‘tig’; we played that anywhere - on the street, here (in the rec), anywhere. One person was singled out to be ‘on’ and they had to run around and try and tig somebody else; when you touched them, you ‘tiggered’ them and it was their turn to run round and do the same thing. All ages played tig; from 4 to 15 and both boys and girls, although not all girls were allowed out to play in the street. Generally boys were more inclined to be allowed out than the girls.

A similar game was ‘tinnit’, played with a tin placed in the middle of the road and this was played in the dark, this would be in the evening and there were no street lights. We would hide and someone would come and find you; if the person who was hiding could run out and get hold of the tin and throw it, the person who was ‘on’ was still ‘on’, he couldn’t get any relief from searching for the others. We also called it ‘tin-i-aki’. The tin had stones in it so that it rattled when thrown. If you caught someone, you threw the tin and the other person had to find the tin before continuing to search for the others. The big blokes used to play as well. These games were the only entertainment that we had.”

*Lloyd, Benn and David* again – “In the woods we just roamed about and made huts and climbed trees. We tended to have little gangs in the woods and there would be ways of being accepted into a gang. *David* – “There was a six-foot drop at the top of Buffen and you had to crawl along the bough of the yew tree and drop down to be in this gang. I got to the end of the drop but I wouldn’t let go....” *Benn* – “We pulled his trousers down to make him drop, but he still held on. When the men came down through the woods from the quarries, they found him.”

*David* – “No-one would help you! These old yew trees that were along the wood have gone now; just become old and rotted and other trees fallen on them. We would play marbles in the school playground. We went sledging if it snowed; up Buffin or Hill Ground; no one broke their leg; we were fit country boys! Now the children do not play football in the rec, because it is too rough, but we played there all the time.

We went out to play in all weathers, the rain didn’t keep us in; Mother would dry our clothes. There was no bus shelter then, but we would congregate in Charlton’s cart hovel (Great Grounds Farm). Godfrey (Mr Charlton) didn’t say anything to us as long as we didn’t do any damage. We would jump onto the wagon, up onto the rafters and along the iron bar above his garage, he probably heard us if he was in the garage. It wasn’t a very big cart hovel, it had about three bays; we played hide and seek in amongst the farm implements. Basically we were playing in a farmer’s building and he didn’t mind, but part of the excitement was that you didn’t let them know that you were there. We didn’t do it in other barns because we knew that the farmers wouldn’t like it.”

*David* – ‘Malv Read and I were birds nesting in the woods and Mr Douthwaite caught us and told us off’. Some farmers were friendly and didn’t mind the children playing on their land; others would like to have fenced us out.

Bird nesting was a common hobby; we would always take one egg and no more and we stuck to that. We would blow the egg and save it for our collection. There wasn’t any fishing, except eels in Starkey’s lake; we would look for tadpoles.

## SECTION 4 – CHURCH

### Eileen

**W**E WERE CATHOLICS; Father Flannery had his church in Avon Dassett, which is a big church; so he had to look after that and Kineton. When he came from Avon Dassett to go to Kineton, he'd come round Radway, pick us all up and take us to church. It was good then – all these rich Catholics; when it was Easter you had all these lovely Easter Eggs, beautiful Easter Eggs. On the way home again, he used to say, 'You'd better take these in with you'. So we always had loads of Easter Eggs. I never found being a Catholic alienating in the village; I didn't notice it. It didn't enter your head, I don't think.

Father Flannery knew that my dad liked a drink and my mum liked a gin and peppermint; so on the way up towards Avon Dassett after church he would park at the top of the hill and we'd walk along to the 'Tower'. We'd sit on that wall; they had a piano in the pub and my dad used to play the piano a bit and it was all very jolly. My mum said it was the best job they ever had; it's sad, very sad that my dad had to die. But yes, he used to drop us off there and then we'd walk down the hill down into Radway. We used to have a packet of crisps and some Vimto.

### Enid

**O**UR FAMILY WAS VERY MUCH INVOLVED with the Methodist Chapel in Ratley when we lived in Edgehill and when we lived with my grandfather, we went to Ratley. Then when we moved to Radway we joined the Methodist Church there. A normal Sunday would be morning and evening service; and we had Sunday school before the morning service. By the time that we went to live in Radway I was at an age when I was expected to help; so I was never actually a Sunday school scholar. I was always helping because I could play (the organ) a bit. I used to help with the tiny ones. That was my introduction to Sunday school – I was never a 'naughty scholar'! I suppose that I always had a lot of responsibility when I think about it. My mother taught me to play the piano from an early age. There were no social events for the children, just Sunday school; there were things in the week for adults.

My father was a Methodist local preacher, he played the organ and I think that he held every office within the Methodist Church. My father would travel around to preach; usually the family wouldn't go with him unless they were invited, if it was a special event or something.

### Henry

**T**HE FAMILY WERE METHODISTS and went to chapel at Tysoe every Sunday and the children attended Sunday school as well. Sometimes he would accompany his Grandmother to Ratley Chapel on a Sunday afternoon; they would have tea with the lady who looked after the chapel and stay on for the evening service as well.

**Lloyd**

**W**e were a church-going family; from the age of nine I sang in the church choir, until I left school when I was 14. We used to go to choir practice with Miss Ida Carey in the little old green shed up the ‘Top-end’ by the pool, every Wednesday night. She was on the harmonium; it was a good choir, there were quite a few evacuees in that choir, especially those like the Ludford’s who had come as a family. There were quite a lot of the village lads in it; I think David Townsend was in the village choir; and there were quite a few of the men.

My grandmother and grandfather always went to church on Sunday; I used to go to Sunday school and sing in the choir, so there weren’t many Sundays that I didn’t go twice.

I continued in Lighthorne Church Choir when I was there up until the time that we got married. My grandfather used to go and stoke the Church fire and many a time I’ve been down there on a Saturday night at eleven o’clock – when I was older – with him, stoking the fire up so that it be kept lit overnight.

**Carol**

**W**e were a Methodist family. I went to Sunday school, my teacher there was Frank Townsend; Elsie Townsend used to come down and fetch me. I can’t say I was a very good attender; it depended on whether my parents were going to the service. Often I just went to Chapel with them.

We always had the Chapel Anniversary on Easter Monday; we used to get people out from Banbury. Mrs Frank Townsend always cut a ham for the tea, we always had ham sandwiches- it was quite an event.

**Benn**

**M**y family were very involved with the Methodist Chapel. My grandfather, who I never knew, but he was a very well respected man in the village – I always remember Ken Gibbins telling me once that my grandfather was ill and they were playing the traditional Boxing Day football match; the married men verses the single ones; and the death bell went – I can remember the death bell going – and they stopped the game and said ‘that’s Mr Townsend’ and they stopped the game and trooped off the field.

**Terry**

**W**e were a Methodist family; I had to go to the Sunday school every Sunday. There used to be the occasional ‘rummage sale’ in the Village Hall to try and raise funds.



## David

**O**UR RELIGIOUS LIFE WAS THE MAIN STORY. When they built Radway Chapel, now this is what my uncle Frank had got down. Raymond Smith and my Granddad did that, how they acquired the land I don't know because we've seen various things about this. They were the founders of the Chapel. My Granddad was George, he died in 1926. The ordinary Primitive Chapel was somewhere else, so I was told; it was a hut basically; and as we understand it Ray Smith had the land, but I don't think he lived in Radway, he lived in Northend. He was a good preacher.

The Chapel and Church in Radway were split; they hardly ever spoke. They wouldn't let the kids play with us sometimes. The Catholics, it was worse, there weren't any Catholics, well probably a couple. The Chapel kept us going, my uncle Frank was the Sunday School Teacher, then Enid Norton, then Uncle Frank's daughter Elsie, but she didn't stay long.

It was Sunday school in the morning, then Chapel, Chapel at Ratley in the afternoon - they only had one service, then Chapel again at night. It was good. Chapel was our main social life; there was no social life in the village for the kids other than playing about. It grew on you and Radway Chapel thrived.

Of course, the 'bun struggle' was the big day, the Easter Tea; all the Church kids were all envious. They used to have the Village Hall, service on Sunday morning, Sunday afternoon and night; and Monday they had the 'bun struggle'. We had go to Chapel first then go down the Village Hall; my uncle Frank and aunt Alice used to do that mainly; and either my dad, my gran would put a pig down and it was ham sandwiches and cakes. And they used to come from all over the option.

Geoffrey Charlton's wife was a big Methodist; they came from Wolverhampton or the back end of Birmingham. Edward's and Astell's, they all used to come down, all the Churches local. My uncle Owen, my dad's brother, used to cycle from Rugby with his family. Roll up on the bikes at my gran's. It was terrific. It was classed as the Anniversary; things changed after the war, after a while the Chapel just got less and less.

(But then) .. it was nearly always full and we couldn't skive off after Sunday school, we had to go and sit in the Chapel as well. My Mum didn't go a lot, as I said, she was Catholic originally. But her Dad put her in a convent in London and as soon as she saw what it was, she scarpered and did a runner. That's why she went down to Devon and that's why she wouldn't have anything to do with Catholics.

The Catholic priest used to come down and when my uncle Alec lived in Mycott, at the bottom of the drive there. Alec was in the Fleet Air Arm and he came home and the Catholic priest was there one day and he nearly threw him out. And he did it again, he wouldn't have him. They used to come down for tithes and Alec wouldn't have it; he was a bit of a gambler. He was a super bloke, but he got into a lot of trouble gambling and hadn't got any money; and yet he still wanted his tithes the old Catholic priest...!

Then I started going to Kineton Chapel, they had a Youth Club. Bernard Norton went, Benn used to go, I went for a bit, Brian went for a bit, Ros never went. But I stuck it out and then I started going out with Janet and I used to go to Kineton Chapel then. If you sang too loud in Kineton Chapel, they all looked at you. Tom Lewis was the worst one, I used to let go and he would look.

The Methodist Church has remained part of our life. My mum was very religious, too religious really; my dad had died anyway, but I always used to go with my dad on Sunday morning. When I go now I can remember where everyone used to sit; on one side there would be Bernard and Geoff Norton, Mr Gardner, Mr Crockford, Sonny Williams and my dad and me. On the other side, my Gran in the back seat, my aunt Alice in the next one. Mrs Charlton and Cherrys up the other side; here would be 10 or 15 people. That's why I like the small Chapels.

## SECTION 5 – WORK

### Enid

I HAD CERTAIN DUTIES to do at home; I had to dust and help with the beds and washing up etc. It was quite a bit but there were two younger brothers! I left school when I was fifteen; there were no kind of qualifications.

I think I did a little job, I can't remember exactly what and then my mother became very ill and I had to look after her and the family, of course. She was ill for a long time; she had a type of rheumatic fever, which meant that she was confined to bed; she had to have a fire in the bedroom and all her meals taken to her. That was a problem because she didn't want to eat. The Doctor came regularly; it was a very difficult time.

One brother was working and the other was still at school; he was at school in Banbury and had to cycle to Tysoe to get a bus. I had a lot of responsibility. My father was an engineer at the stone quarries.



*Enid in 1945*

When my mother was well again, I worked at the stone Quarries in the office. I walked up the hill; that was the easiest way to get there. I carried that on until I got married and then I went to part-time work and carried that on until John was born in 1949.

### Henry

H E LEFT SCHOOL AT 15 and went to work at Old Leys Farm for Ray Smith. He did various tasks including walking the stallions around the district to various other farms. He would sometimes walk to Tysoe, Oxhill, Whatcote and Idlecote; or out to Gaydon and Harbury. Mr Gibbins would also walk the stallions out, sometimes going out to the Cotswolds and staying away over night.

He worked at Old Leys for about 5 years until he was 20 and then went into the Police force. One of his motivations was to earn more money, Police pay was favourable compared to farm work. He worked on the beat, walking around Birmingham. It was more isolated than today, you would be on your own with no means of communication (mobile etc), so more vulnerable to attack.

### Lloyd

W HEN I LEFT SCHOOL, for the first six months I went to work for Sammy Grimes, down in Kineton. I was basically a slave, but it didn't worry me – I was working. I push biked with two four-gallon cans on the front of one of those carrier bikes that shops used to have, to Combroke at the age of 14!

Up the (Pittern) hill and down the hill into Combroke. I was delivery boy on some days; if any one came to the shop for paraffin I used to hop up the steps and fill the can for them. All for ten shillings a week and a cake for being a good boy.

My last job on a Saturday afternoon was to go up to Mr. Baker, the baker and get some cakes for him; and he used to give me one along with my ten shillings. I did that for six months until my aunt's husband came out of the air force and started up in business in the building industry at Lighthorne. So then I went to live with them and learn the trade; I used to come home at weekends. That's where I met Jean in Lighthorne; and where I started carpentry. I learned carpentry and joinery as an apprentice. Unfortunately, I wasn't a bound apprentice, so I had to go into the forces at eighteen. I was called up for National Service.

## Carol

**I** DID ACTUALLY WANT to go to an agricultural college, but that didn't materialise; so that I had got something, I did about 18 months of typing and bookkeeping and accounts. I was an only child and I think that they were happy for me to stop at home. I was on the farm after that, which is what I really wanted to do.

## Benn

**T**HE WAR HAD BEEN OVER a few months when I started at AP. I made a mess of that - having no father to say 'you will do so and so, and so and so'; I used to ignore my sisters by that stage - and all my friends were going in the army. I thought 'I'm going in the army'. But I could be deferred, which was stupid of me really because I didn't get my indentures. But when I came out I told my boss that I went to work for what had happened and I went on a condenser of a training programme; I got to go to 'tech and I got my engineering qualifications, so it didn't really hold me back.

Without my father I hadn't been as disciplined and mother had her hands full - I was thirteen when my dad died; I lacked having a father; it hit me hard, I really felt it. I was close to my sister Blanche, who died last year at the age of 91 - she had a good innings. Looking back on it, I had to work very hard to get back to where I should be.

Anyway, I went to Lockheed (AP) and eventually joined Lucas, I had 17 years on export there travelling to various parts of the world and then I left and started my own business in engineering.

## Terry

**A**GED 14 I LEFT SCHOOL and I went to Hemp Close, working in the garden for ten shilling a week; I gave nine of that to my mother and I had a shilling for myself. I couldn't do a lot with a shilling. Us kids, we used to buy a packet of Woodbines for two and a half pence; we shouldn't have done and we daren't tell our parents.

I stayed with my gardening job until the War broke out, and then they sent me to Gaydon to help build the aerodrome. It was like war-work; they controlled you. I was 15, just coming 16 when the War broke out. Then they sent me to the workshop for the Warwickshire agricultural place - they used to do all the ploughing; that was in Dunn's equestrian building in Chadshunt. I cycled to Gaydon and to Chadshunt. I stayed there until about 1942; then they asked me if I'd go to Stratford to the Western Farm Implements on the Alcester Road. I went there for about 18 months and then they called me up. Well I volunteered actually because I could have got off because of the agricultural work I was doing.

They were sending these Minneapolis combines and tractors in cases over from America and we were going out onto the farms and assembling them and getting them working, so it was essential food production.

## David

I HADN'T GOT A CLUE what I wanted to do. No-one approached us at school for leaving school, 'what do you want to do?' or anything like that, not until the very last minute; and I left school and I hadn't got a job. I didn't know what to do and Grace said 'fancy going into the piano trade?' Because I liked music and I said yes. She knew Gerald Forte and I got a job there as an apprentice tuner and repairing in Leamington. That went haywire because it turned out that the manager at the Leamington shop and his two sons ran it; they were all piano tuners and they wanted a gopher, but I enjoyed it because it was repairing.

I travelled to Leamington by cycle to Kineton and got the bus, five and a half days a week. We'd have to rush to Kineton because we were always late. But from going to school, we had to cycle to Kineton to get the bus to school. That's where Janet (my wife) and I met initially. Going to work was no different, but at least when we went to work we got good bicycles. You all had bicycles in those days but you had to make them up your self - couldn't afford them, or we couldn't anyway. Grace bought her own bike and she used to cycle to Leamington to work or to Kineton. But I boned her bike because she had moved out to Leamington. If I wanted to save the bus fare, I used to cycle all the way through to Leamington.

## SECTION 6 – WARTIME

**Eileen**

**B**UT UNFORTUNATELY, VERY, VERY SAD, my dad got cancer, therefore he died and so did the job. My dad is buried at Radway. My brother came from the racing stables; he came thinking he could take my dad's job on then we'd keep the house. But of course, he was used to race horses, which is very different to old, steady hunters. I'm afraid he fed them too well and they got frisky. Poor old Mr. Eason was getting on a bit in years and he couldn't cope with these horses; he thought he was getting on a nice steady horse; he got on and shot off too. Oh dear, so that was the end of my brother looking after those horses. Therefore we had to find somewhere to live.

That's when we came to Butlers Marston. I was 10 when we left Radway, because the war broke out in the September.

We had left Radway before the war started; I think we must have only been there about four years. But in that time we had three houses.

When the war broke out my brothers had to go in the army and the navy; one went in the factory.

They hadn't started building the army camp when we were at Radway, but it came soon after. Radway had electric street lights before other villages, but I think it was Roland Norton, who might have been a councillor, who said that they had rates from the army camp. So they were able to do a little bit more.

**Enid**

**I**DON'T KNOW MUCH ABOUT THE 'CAMP' being built; I'm not aware of much disruption in the village as the camp was built, in fact it brought a lot to the village as it provided employment. The men billeted in the village did not affect us. The evacuees did; we had some children of five or six, who didn't even know how to use a toilet. We had several with us at 'Ferndale'; we only had one at a time. The problem was that you would just get a child settled, used to you and the parents would come and take them away. We couldn't persuade the parents to keep away and give them a chance; all very natural, of course, concerned about them. There was a lot of coming and going of the evacuees.



*Eileen with her older sister Amy*

There were a lot of them; I don't remember families, just children. I didn't make friendships with these children, I was about seventeen and they were much younger than I was. I quite enjoyed having the children. My mother was much better by then, but they were hard work as everything about them was so different. I felt desperately sorry for them actually, being torn away from their families.

## Henry

**H**E JOINED THE ARMY IN 1942 until the end of the war. He landed in France on D Day and stayed in Europe heading towards Russia until the end. He came back on leave to home once and also was sent back to do a tank course. His journey across Europe was mainly in a tank.

## Lloyd

**A** LOT OF CAD WAS BUILT towards the latter part of the War. That happened after the evacuees coming; they came first. The soldiers were billeted where Douthwaite's farm is now and the Officers were at the Grange while they were doing the building. We used to get down there - playing up at night. Some of the older lads used to drive the dumpers and all sorts of things. Oh yes, it was a playground at night - the part nearer to us. The soldiers were perfectly alright; the Village Hall got used more for dances then than it has ever been. I probably didn't have as much contact with them as some of the chaps in the village because, as I said, I had other interests.

There were always manoeuvres here, with soldiers that weren't actually billeted here; that road up towards the Westend is where they used to park all the lorries up there. Because the trees were overhanging and they also put the camouflage nets over them. To be quite truthful, the War didn't affect me very much as a person; we were never ever short of food, we always had a good garden, my grandfather always had a pig and we used to keep chickens. So, really, there were a lot of people in Radway, apart from butter and sugar and a bit of cheese, who hadn't much shortage as I could see. It didn't affect me anyway; some people might tell you differently. There was always a good allotment along there. I was quite young when the War was on, I left school in 1945/6, something like that, so it was almost over.

## Carol

**T**HE BUILDING OF THE CAMP didn't make much difference to me, because we were far enough away from the village. There were a lot of soldiers billeted in the village but we didn't have any on our farm. The Italians were here too, they were in one of the sheds on the camp; that was later and after the war, they were POWs. I had quite a bit of contact with them; one was an Italian professor and he could speak six languages. Had I had any sense I could have learnt a lot of foreign languages; but of course I didn't, my one thought was to get on the farm! The POWs used to work on the farms; we had some; there was an organisation and I think you paid something for them and they worked for the day.

The Italian POWs were well behaved; they used to have every bicycle that they could muster and they used to go over to Tysoe quite a lot. I well remember that we kids were playing out and our house was near the road and it started to rain; one Italian came and they didn't like the rain, he wanted to come into the dry.

There was a bombing range; it was on our farm land. Before they built the bombing range, there was just below our land a place where the Home Security used to make decoys and it was amazing actually, what they would make. Nothing was known about it, it was all secret, but we could look over the hedge and one I know was – they had long area of pipes and when they set it off, it looked like a station on fire. But that faded out when the bombing range came, possibly not many people knew about it; we could look down and see it, but most of the village wouldn't have done.

At first they sent three RAF men and they were billeted at Mrs Guire's, that's Ivy Lodge, where Dunnes are now. Their names were Arthur Hutt, Roy Rascall and Eric Jenkins. When Eric came out of the RAF, he lived at Shipston after the war and I remember that he used to show gladioli, we did see him from time to time when he did his showing. Arthur called round once after the war, he was living in Leicestershire and I think Roy married a Ratley girl. They were the first people to come to the bombing range, they were sent to get it ready. Then they used to send out a lorry with workmen from Morton -in-the Marsh.

Eventually they built the quadrant, which is still standing now. That was for plotting the bombs when they dropped them. The daytime bombs were smoke, the night time ones were flash. The daytime ones weighed eleven pounds and the night time ones fourteen pounds. I have got bits of bombs in my garden now. They plotted the bombs from the quadrant and there was another quadrant further down. There weren't an awful lot of planes coming in; they were Wellington bombers and they would come in batches and being there all the time you got used to them. You could guess how high they were; and if you were down in the quadrant you could hear them say, 'I'm bombing from so-many feet', it was quite interesting. They were just over the garden so I was quite involved. You got to know the chaps; at first they had no means of cooking any food or anything like that, so they used to come up and use Mum's stove, which was a four-burner oil stove at the time. You gradually got used to them.

Later the chaps working on the range, by this time they had some means of living and a shed where they could cook and live. They would say 'there's no bombing tonight, you can put the cows down.' Then if they heard from Moreton that they were going to bomb, we had to dash down and move the cows. Those old cows got used to being moved about.

Beside the bombs, there was a photoflash; which they used to photo as it went off. We had one go through the roof of the Dutch barn. We had just finished that night, we were growing corn then and we had just topped it up and put the last sheaf of corn in. I had gone to bed and Mum came and said, 'you had better get up'. I remember going to the backdoor and seeing the whole Dutch barn on fire. Now that burned for about three days and they had four or five fire engines and they completely drained Starkey's pool. But they did manage to stop it from spreading to the other buildings.



We lost all our harvest and hay. Another time we were shearing sheep up above the road in a little field with trees, so we were sheltered and in the cool and the sheep were in the cool. This particular morning it had rained, so the fleeces were a bit damp when we had sheared them; so we spread them out in the field to dry; well it was alright, then there was a bomb not far from us, then another one. So someone went down to the quadrant pretty quick and it turned out that they thought the fleeces were the target.

Another time, I was at school and we had a bomb through the roof and the base of the bomb landed on my bed. Another time, we had a bomb through the galvanised tin roof of the cow shed and it landed just behind a cow. And until they dismantled the sheds, the hole was still there in the cow pen. You couldn't get a film in those days so you couldn't get a picture of it.

During the war, we had two bombs in one of our fields; neither field had ever had any water before, but the bombs holes filled up with water. Down at Crabbs Castle, they had almost twice as big a crater as we had, but their water was salt. Our water was alright and the animals could use it as a pool. Actually there were four bombs, two twos. The other two were in the next field bordering the camp land, but they weren't so deep and nothing really happened there.

I remember the bombing of Coventry; I remember hearing the planes go over, I suppose it was frightening, but I was too little to be worried. We did have a plane come down in the village; Dad was out watering the cows for the last time, which he always did about ten o'clock time, and he heard the machine gun fire and looked up and he said he saw this plane on fire. He went into Mum and said if you want to see a plane come down, come and have a look. She had a look and said oh that child's in bed, so she came and got me down. I didn't actually see it; it was down when I got down stairs. All I saw was the flames. It came down on Douthwaite's land on the other side of the village; it didn't do any damage.

Wartime rationing didn't affect us as much as most people; we had always got eggs, we had always got milk. We had a garden; we were luckier than most.

## **Benn**

**I** LEFT RADWAY AND WENT TO KINETON SCHOOL when I was nine. I cycled back and forth then. Radway, in those days, in winter was a sea of mud; they issued all the school kids with wellingtons free of charge. That was at the outbreak of war, in the 40's when they were building the camp. The army came and they took over all the stables, because they had to sell the horses off; the horses went to war, that was a waste of time if they took the poor devils over there, they shot them over there, there was no use for them. They weren't going to have cavalry charge anymore were they?

The stables were converted to billets for the army. There were wooden bungalows all over the place, where Gibbins' lived and there was one further down, where another Adams family lived; Dennis Adams, then he moved up by where my Uncle Frank lived, which is Lees House.

## Terry

**I**T WAS TERRIBLE WHEN THE CAMP CAME; to get out of the village on your bike, you had to carry your bike out on to the main road because it was a foot in mud, every road was, terrible. You couldn't push your bike through it - mud, mud and more mud. They took the village over; it was once rumoured with this camp that they were originally going to bore into the hill - it was very strongly rumoured. Then I think they changed their minds. They came and set up a camp right next to our bungalow, Nissan huts and that and they kept all the tractors and earth moving vehicles in that field at the back of our bungalow. We were right in it.

We hadn't got room for evacuees at the time so we never had any evacuees ourselves; but there were quite a few in the village. They mingled quite well; we had great fun with them, but I can't remember their names now. They joined in and there was quite a community spirit. I think they were well accepted in Radway; quite a few of my age have still got connections.

First of all I joined the Home Guard at 16. There was a Radway, Ratley and Edgehill group; Colonel Osbourne was in charge. The night the plane came down we had been out on night exercises. I had just got home and having a bit of supper and we heard this rat-tat-tat and I went outside to have a look and we could see this traceable going into this German airplane. All at once it burst into flames and started coming down and it frightened me to death; I thought it was going to land smack on the village. Of course we were called out straight away and I had the job of standing guard over that all night. The rest had to go searching for the crew because there was only one crew left with the plane; there were two who had bailed out because we could see them in the moonlight. It was a Heinkel One Eleven and it was still on the secret list.

I stood on guard over it all night and I went home and had some breakfast and changed and went back up in civvies and they wouldn't let me near it because it was on the secret list - a new German development. It caused quite a bit of excitement.

Talking about the Home Guard - up the Knowle, on the left hand side, up the bank there we buried cases of Molotov Cocktails as a line of defence. To this day I don't think they have been dug up - I've never heard anyone say anything. I could give some idea of where the area was, but I couldn't say exactly where it was; there a lot of trees fallen down, some grown!

Our Home Guard post was on top of the Tower, the lookout post. The night they dropped those three bombs down the valley - they had the RAF practice range and they dropped three bombs down there - I wasn't on that night, but if our chaps had been informed that it was a German plane, they could have shot it down because it came quite low over the Tower.

Others in the Home Guard were Mr Jeffs; Ken Gibbins; Jim Flemming; Arthur Douthwaite; with us and Ratley, there was enough to form a platoon. Colonel Osbourne was in charge and he was there when we buried these Molotov cocktails, because I helped to dig the hole! That was 1940 when we were threatened rather.

I volunteered for the navy – I don't know why I chose the navy – I just thought I would like to. My brothers had been in the forces; Ben was in the air force, Doug was in the air force, Wal was in the army.

That's what was annoying about Dad (...s situation), three of us were in the services, who would have been at home, and they didn't get any help – I think it was disgusting. What would happen today in those circumstances – there would be hell to pay! They were just put out on to the road. They saved the best bits of furniture and put them in the garage down there; when the army took it over, this was all smashed up. I think they were treated absolutely disgustingly, terrible. There was an article (in the paper) at the time about Dad and he'd been in the Great War. As I said, when he came out, he couldn't get anywhere to live, so he built the place.



*Terry in uniform*

I started my naval training at a place near Blackpool; I think I was the only local boy to go in the navy at that time. Mr. Douthwaite was taking Brian down to Kineton and he took me down to Kineton to catch the bus; I took the bus to Leamington and then a train from Leamington up north, they had a training camp there. I did my six-weeks navy training and then they sent me on a course to RAF Kirkham to be an ordnance engineer or an ordnance mechanic. I was at Kirkham for about six months and I got through it all right so they posted me down to Lee-on-Solent. While we were down there, these buzz bombs were going so we had to a duty tracking them.

Then they sent me back up to Scotland to do my probationary training; I worked on all sorts of aircraft. I worked on Hellcats, Seacats, Seafires, Avengers; they had all those up there. Then they formed a fresh squadron, which I was in. HMS Ocean, the aircraft carrier was coming back from Greece; it came into Rosyth. Dockyard and they were going to give it a quick turn round and our squadron was going out to Japan. Everything was sailing through, but before the ship was ready for seafaring again, they dropped the atom bomb; stopped everything! So we never went.

It's difficult to believe, but they had all these American aircraft, Hellcats, Wildcats, Avengers up there, it was a real depot for all the aircraft and they didn't know what to do with them. The Yanks said that any aircraft that were damaged or incomplete or non-flyable you have to pay for but any aircraft that is fly-able, you don't. They didn't want them back; eventually they loaded them onto ships, took them out to sea and dumped them! It's terrible.

I didn't mind because I had the job of being the air gunner; these aircraft had to pass their certificate before they accepted that they were fly-able, so all I did was go up in these aircraft and test the turret, the electric turret, to make sure that everything worked. It was quite an experience, up over the North Sea there. We had a target; a little island out in the mouth of the Forth there, out in the sea a bit, as a target. We used to have to fire the guns at that. I enjoyed that, it was the best part of my service life.

## David

**W**E WERE ALL DOWN THERE watching these army lorries, they came from Douthwaite's through the village, right up the 'top end' up to the chapel; lorries with troops in. My mum spent that first night they came in the kitchen doing roast taters and we took them down and gave them to the troops. They were so good to us. They commandeered all that land and built the camp in the forties. The Engineers who had designed it and carried out the work lived in Radway at the back of Douthwaite's.

Where the bungalows are now, there were about 14 Nissan huts and a mess and some toilets and that was it. Then some more came and they lived at the bottom of Buffin and they dug the camp out and built that, all those sheds and they built Marlborough Farm camp and all their work houses and their food was dotted all over from Langdon Lane in Radway all across to Cherrys'; by the oaks, where Bernard Norton found that aircraft. We all got involved in that, going up there and getting glass and making rings and little airplanes out of the Perspex. This plane crashed in Hill ground, which belonged to Douthwaite's, it was the field second from the end next to Knowle end. There was a big copse in the middle and it crashed in there. We didn't know anything until we woke up, of course we tried to go up but they wouldn't let us near it. It was just wreckage.

Old 'Nobby' Moore, Moores from Arlescote. He came back from the Tower one night; I don't know which night it was - the night after - drunk as a lord and he found one of them dead in the woods. Bernard Norton found the one down the Oaks. I think it was a Junkers, it wasn't a heavy bomber. Some people say he was good and tried to miss the village, but he wasn't, he tried to hit the woods and set it on fire. He came from Coventry; he was going straight for the woods. Whether he couldn't get up over, I don't know. We found the tin with his dinner in it; they looked after them in those planes!

They cleared the plane away in no time; there were remnant, bits and pieces that you could pick up - Perspex. No end of little model airplanes were cut out of that. We made rings out of it - burn holes in it with a poker, you see. It was an experience.

Then they dropped the stick bombs down at Cherrys' because that bombing range was there for the trainers at Shennington. That went from Cherrys', all the way up Edgehill and killed a couple of beast at Radway.

The war made life exciting; we used to go up the camp; we weren't starving, we were all self-sufficient in Radway really; and we used to go up there and get friendly with the blokes. They used to teach us rifle drill, all sorts of things, we lapped it up. Around the age of 10 or 11 were the most interesting times for me; they had built the camp. The MT section was up there and if they were going in for a meal, they'd say 'come in lad and have a meal'. They used to feed us left, right and centre. And if the man serving you your meal didn't give you jam with your bread and butter they used to play hell. We lived better than the troops did. All the kids used to go up there and afterwards, if you were still hanging about, - in the forces, a slab cake would be in a big tin cut up - and any that hadn't been touched, we would go over to the other side of the MT section and sit in a dumper and eat it.

We used to go to the pictures on the camp, if the Orderly Sergeant or anyone came round; we used to get under the chairs. We used to go and watch them training; they had two squares, Radway House had two stables; the first lot up the drive at the back of the lawn, red brick ones that had a quadrant in it. Then up the back a little bit more were the old wooden ones and they used to have all the workshops in them. The lads lived in some of the stables and others lived up the back with the workshops. They would make you anything you wanted; our Brian had a rocking horse for Christmas, we would never have thought of having one. I used to like lorries and they made me a tip up wagon. It really made Radway.

But there were some horrible blokes in Radway in a way; one family it transpired had nicked two rifles and four bayonets. The troops used to let you work with them, but someone had to pay for them. It wasn't until after the war that we found out, but we knew where they were buried and they got them out. I bet they are still in their houses. We used to go down the fields when they were building the camp and drink their condensed milk, they used to leave it in there, but they would have only binned it. We lived very well out of them. Some of them used to come to Chapel and they'd come down home and meat was rationed and sausages would fall out of their tunics. There were only one or two grumpy ones up there; they were mostly well bred blokes, surveyors and things like that. They used to fill Radway Chapel every Sunday night. We used to have an hours' hymn singing after Chapel and it was always full of troops.

## **Group memories**

There were woodsmen working in the woods; they were employees of Bearsteads; Ted Haydn and Edward Reason. Along the spinney towards the Knowle was the woodman's hut, by where the tanks were for the water supply to the village. When it was VE Day, the children pinched all their corded wood and built a bonfire and when the soldiers came down from 'the tower' they set fire to it.

## SECTION 7 – AFTER THE WAR

### Eileen

**M**Y SISTERS GRADUALLY GOT MARRIED. My sister Amy married a Czechoslovakian soldier, they went to Czechoslovakia and it was very poor, but luckily enough, her husband had a brother in America. He had some saw mills, and if you had somebody that could sponsor you, you could get to America. This is how we have my sister in America. She went first, he had a job to get there, but he got there in the end. She had six children and now she is living with her daughter and she is very happy.

After the war, one of my brothers went to work for the Post Office, on the telephones when they were manual; the other brother went into a factory and my other brother went back to horses. They did what they wanted to do.

My husband was at Compton Verney and I met him at Kineton dance. I thought, 'He looks a nice fellow, he's got some nice shoes!' What a silly thing to think about! Isn't it funny what you think about when you are young! He had come from Newcastle on Tyne. We didn't go together very long, then he was de-mobbed from the forces and he lived with us. I don't think my mother thought much to that; I think she thought, 'you'd better get married'. It wasn't the thing to then was it - dreadful! So, we got married very quickly, we lived with mum for a while and then we got a little cottage. About three years afterwards, Julia appeared. I was 21 when Julia came. We had a nice life. It was all very nice at Radway I must say.

### Enid

**I**DIDN'T REALLY GO OUT to social events, but I had lots of 'boyfriends'. We had different groups of servicemen billeted in the village, not particularly in the area of the village where we lived, but in the other part where they had stables and things like that; they were billeted. Two or three of them came to the Chapel; well my parents were always very generous hearted and invited them in and that was how I met my husband.

He came from Luton and after the war he went back to Luton. When we were married he came to live in Radway. We were married in 1947.



*Enid on her wedding day*

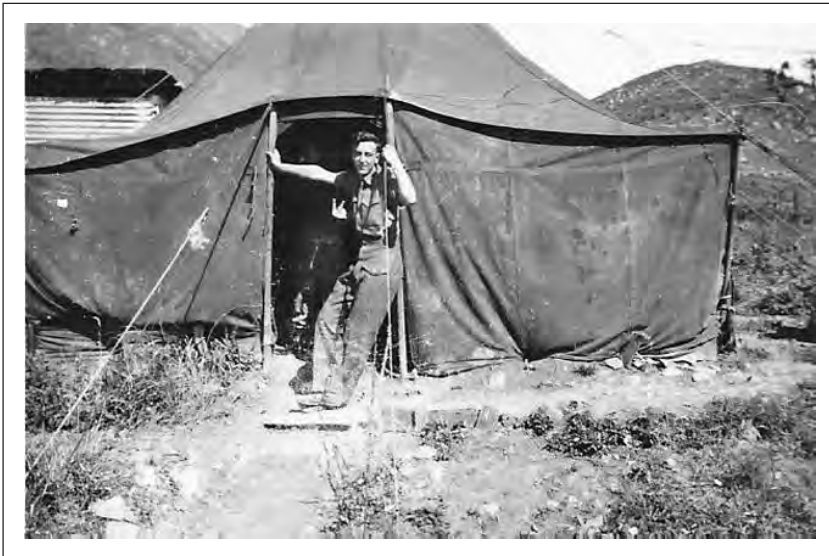
### Henry

**F**ROM THE ARMY HE RETURNED TO THE POLICE in Birmingham, but didn't like it - he found it worse than the army and decided to return to farming. Although his pay had been made up while he was away on active service.

At first he worked with his brother at Arnolds Farm and later found enough capital to buy Great Grounds Farm. Great Grounds had been farmed by his mother's family, the Charltons, who had bought it and travelled from the north with all their animals and equipment. But much of Great Grounds and Valley Farms had been lost (through compulsory purchase) when the army camp had been built early in the war. Henry met his wife at Wardington, through farming-based socialising.

## Lloyd

I WAS CALLED UP FOR NATIONAL SERVICE; firstly I went to Budbroke barracks at Warwick for the first six weeks; as far as I was concerned it was a long long way and it was the worst posting I had in as much that I knew that if I disobeyed, I could get home. I could get down to the racecourse, straight through Warwick hitch a lift home. It was forbidden of course unless you got leave. I was much happier when I was then moved to York to do this training for Korea because I knew I couldn't get home. I did a spell in Wiltshire then on the ship and off I went.



*Lloyd in  
Pusan, Korea  
1951*

I was in Korea for fourteen months; in the front line for nine of them. It was very hard. I was twenty when I came home. The experience did change me of course, but luckily, as I've already explained, I had always been used to work; it was very hard for those people who had led a soft life. I spent hours out there putting barbed wire down; I've laid miles of barbed wire in Korea - it's probably still there - the reason I did so much was that I was a person who was practical and I could do it. Some of them probably did it on purpose saying, 'we can't do this'. But as far as I was concerned, while I was doing that, I wasn't doing anything else.

I got on very well in the army with my superiors because I wasn't afraid of doing anything. But it was a bad place - yes. I befriended one or two people at different times and then you'd find that they go and do the dirty on you. There is an awful lot of stealing goes on in the army and you'd find that they'd steal your stuff, your kit and that sort of thing.

*Lloyd (on the right) again in Korea*



So you could never really trust anyone; the only people that I trusted were my two sergeants. They were the only two people that I really trusted. I liked some of the others quite a bit but I could never really trust them.

It was a great relief to get out; I've never regretted getting out of the army. The only trouble then was I had to do three years as reserve in the Territorial Army. You had to go two weeks per year to a camp. Some people went on Reserve, but if they went on reserve they were the most likely to be recalled, such as for Suez and incidents such as that. If you went on the TA, if there had been another war, you would have been recalled; but you had to do a fortnight's camp all in one and then some hours that were at weekends during the year. Which was a farce; for the simple reason that I had done the real thing and I didn't need to play at it. It was cruel. They were trying to tell you what to do, but they were people who had never been in the proper army.

The only thing that came out of it, when you were on the TA, the actual camp there was a lot of sport played. That was a big saving grace that was; there were one or two lads around here - one at Fenny Compton and at Warwick there were a couple of lads - that I got quite friendly with; because they were in the same tent. Oh, and there was Melville Read, he wasn't in Korea with us, but because he had to do Territorial, he was at the same place as well. So that was all right as far as the social side of it was concerned. Several lads locally had served in the forces, but I was the only one round here that saw active service; I was just one of the unlucky ones. I was in the first group of National Servicemen that had to do two years; up until I went in they had only done eighteen months. From day one we were earmarked for Korea if it kept going that long - which it did.

So aged twenty I came back here and to Lighthorne to my old job. I learnt more once I started work as a carpenter and joiner than ever I did at school; I had a fantastic teacher and that became a lifetime's career until I retired.



With the family I had, I couldn't have lived on just a carpenter and joiner's pay, I had to buckle down and go up the ranks and so from a reasonable age I became foremen and on to building manager when I retired. Never great big salaries like they get today, but it was the only way I could survive; and also doing jobs for people at night.

I had a motorbike first; that's how I used to get to and from Lighthorne to work. Then I had an old Austin 7 when we were married; wonderful little car! It would go where cars of today won't go. We'd been married about two years and were expecting Nicholas (first child). We lived at Chapel Cottage; it was our first home, rented from Mrs. Norton. We were living there when the first three children were born and I think Jean was expecting Jeffrey when we moved; we have been in this house (10 The Green) ever since, which is over 40 years.

The village has changed an awful lot in my lifetime; not structurally too much, but there are very few 'old Radway' people live here now; 'young Radway' people can't afford to live here - this is the point, they can't. I would have liked to have seen a small percentage of affordable houses; so that some of our youngsters, if they'd have wanted to, - they wouldn't all have wanted to, - could have stayed. When I did the houses for the Developer I worked for at Great Grounds Farm; Mr. Boswell offered enough land to build nine affordable units in exchange for planning permission to do some of what he achieved in the end. But unfortunately, most of the people who had got good houses and could afford to live in the village made such a fuss that it didn't materialise.

I have been on the Parish Council; I was Chairman of the PC for at least twelve years and on the PC for a lot longer than that. I was the founder member of the Cricket Club because I had the opportunity to buy the equipment from Shutford; when I was working in Banbury, the person who had run Shutford Club when they finished, had the bats and stumps and everything - the bag of equipment - and he wanted to get rid of it. I paid £20 of my own money; and from that £20, Radway Cricket Club was formed.

I called a meeting in the Village Hall and said what I had done; 'were they agreeable? Was anyone interested in forming a Cricket Club?' There was good support; it was 'the thing' when we first started. The first year we played as nomads, getting a game where we could away from home. The next year, because Boswells had got involved and interested, Mr Henry Boswell let us play down in one of his fields. I made a wicket as best I could in one of the fields and we had some great games down there. Then, I negotiated with the vicar because half of the allotments were abandoned - there were only about two people along there - could we have it if it was finally finished with? Mr Bob Mills had been ploughing half of it. So that's how that came about; he went to the 'powers that be' and we agreed a price to have it.

Bernard Norton was a big instigator with me; he signed a lot of the documents and we met the Land Agents and agreed the rent. After that it was at least two or three year's hard slog to get it into a field. I did most of the work - Brian Douthwaite ploughed it reasonably level and then I spent two years trying to get a wicket in the middle. I was putting in up to forty hours a week along there, which soured my marriage for a bit! My wife still has the book where she recorded the hours I spent (on the cricket field), forty hours she has got on one week!

The first thing I did for the Church – when Sarah got married – was relay the path from the gate up to the church because it was in such a terrible state. Four or five years ago I made some new gates to put up at the church. John Boswell provided the oak and I made them and put them up; it was all for Radway. I used to run the flower shows, but I never wanted to take office in the Garden Club. As far as the Village Hall is concerned, I am still caretaker of the Hall, I look after it. It used to be more of a social village – with whist drives, social evening, concerts and all sorts of things.

## Carol

**T**HERE IS A STORY TO HOW I met my husband. I had become interested in old time dancing; this started at one of the Church Harvest Festivals. They always used to have a bit of a social evening after the sale and Victor (Gibbins) got me up on the floor, I was about 21 and I'd never danced a step. I got interested and they had some classes in old time dancing up at Ratley W.I. and although I wasn't a member, when they had an open day I used to go there with Mrs Charlton. Then, we got to know Alf and Pat who were the instructors and eventually Victor and I used to go to the Church House in Banbury. Ken and Rene Gibbins used to go as well. It so happened that we were haymaking and we had a breakdown and Dad wanted some parts. We dealt with a firm called Bywaters, which has gone now; the chap on the phone said could we go and pick these things up. I went in to pick the parts up when I went in to dance.



*Carol and Sid Cook on their wedding day*

I spoke to this chap and that was that. A couple of weeks later Dad needed more parts and this chap asked where I was going, I was obviously dressed up. He said he liked old time dancing and he asked 'where do you go?' I told him. A couple of weeks later I was with Dorothy Norton, even though the Nortons did not approve of her going; I said, 'that's the chap from Bywaters over there!' And it all went from there.

We knew that Dad was pretty poorly, he (Sid) was an agricultural engineer so he fitted in well and he came into the farm then. We had moved up to the White House when I was about 17. My grandparents had lived here; Gran lived here on her own; Gramp died in '43 and labour was getting a bit tight then. We needed some labour, so we moved up here before I was married and that gave us a workers cottage.

Sid and I ran the Sunday school from when Margaret Gibbs gave it up (about 1957). We also ran a Youth Club, but I can't really remember when we started that. But Sid was very keen on the Youth Club and he did a lot in the Youth Service afterwards. We always enjoyed dancing, but we didn't attend Victor's dancing classes as he had 'modern sequence', whereas we did 'modern' or 'strictly ballroom'.

## Benn

I WENT INTO THE FORCES as National Service in 1949. I went to Germany and several places in this country. The Korean War broke out and service was extended twice, I finished up doing almost three years. I was well into the last 6-month extension and they sent me to the 8th Hussars, which were going to Korea. I was trying to tell them, there's a saying in the Cavalry 'If you're going to join a regiment, never join an Irish one'. The Hussars are an Irish Regiment!

I couldn't get through to them that I didn't have time - by the time I got there it would be time to come back. Anyway we got to Aden and this adjutant had me in and said 'I don't know what you are doing here'. I said 'I have been trying to tell the Orderly Room that for the last number of weeks, I should never have come'. As soon as I got there, I got the advanced party to come back. People who went say I missed a lot, but I don't know. I did almost three years, with two six-month extensions.

My wife came from Stratford-upon-Avon and I met her in Southsea on Nelson's flagship. I was on a weekend trip run by Stratford Blue (Bus Company). My friend said, 'do you fancy going on it' and I went. I was 20/21.

## Terry

I DIDN'T GET DE-MOBBED until 1946 in Guildford; I got a new suit and was sent home. I came back and I worked in a garage for about six years, that was Turner's at Harbury; I knew him and he had said to me, 'when you come out, come and work with us'. Of course, the wages weren't very good; I was getting five pounds something per week then. Someone offered me a job driving a lorry for twelve pounds fifty a week, I wanted to save up to get married, so I took it; it was a big difference.

I was courting Greta at that time; I first met her in 1947, she was from a Tysoe family and we met at dances mostly. There used to be lots of dances around then; there was always one somewhere at the weekend. We got married in 1950 and moved into Oriel Cottage, Radway, with Mum and Dad who were still living there.



*Terry and Greta*

Most of the family had moved on, but Ben was still there then, he wasn't married then, but he married soon after. We stayed in Oriel Cottage until 1996, when we moved to Tysoe.

Old Mrs. Elliot and Mrs. Neal, they were sisters, lived there (Oriel Cottage) and it was a real mess. They had lived there for years and years because Mr. Elliot used to be chauffeur to Mrs Guire. They had done nothing to the cottage and when we had it, it was a terrible mess.

All the time I had I spent doing it up; I had to put a bathroom in, put mains water in, had to put the sewerage in; just got it nice and I wasn't capable of looking after the garden! The Deeds to that house go back to 1672, I think it is; we had them back to 17-something, but we went to the Records Office at Warwick and saw these other Deeds. There is a Quaker burial ground in the back garden.

## David

I WANTED TO GO IN THE RAF; I started off at RAF Cardington in Bedfordshire, everyone went there; it was a big reception unit. We all went up there on a train, I rode straight into the camp. I met a lot of local lads actually. From there, they sorted you out and you went square bashing. I went to West Kirby. In the RAF you went as individuals, you never went as a group like they do in the army. I went up to West Kirby and finished my National training and thought, 'what do I do for a trade? My brother, Brian, was in admin; he said 'do the same as me Dave it's quite a good number really'. So I thought I'd go into Clerk Organisation; I stuck with clerical work and then I went to Melksham, Number Two School of Radio Training that was; in station headquarters there. I volunteered because they had stopped National Service. I was 21 in 1954 when I joined up. I went to Melksham and my brother was in at RAF Cosford, in the end, I got to Cosford from Melksham, he was in Home Command and I was in Tech Training. That was as near as we got.

But I got put down for overseas; they sent me out to Aden, Steamer Point RAF Aden from Southampton on the boat - I was last bloke off. This Warrant Officer said 'who are you lad?' and I told him and he said 'well you're not on my list'; anyway I never arrived; it sounds stupid saying that, but when you're in the RAF, you have to arrive - they give you a card. No one knew I was there so I wasn't getting paid. So I had a month's holiday. A message came 'proceed to RAF Akrotiri on first available aircraft'. Well there was only military aircraft in Aden, so I got on a Hastings and flew up to Nicosia. I was walking down to the tents because we were under canvas, and (my brother) Brian was walking up the road. I said 'where you going?' He said 'I'm going home on leave. I said 'typical'.

They were just building RAF Akrotiri, it was all a mess, it was all canvas, they were building married quarters and I started walking. It was a dickens of a camp; took me a long time to walk one end to the other and I took a fortnight to 'arrive'.

Anyway, I settled there and we lasted there together and just before I got de-mobbed, I was in charge of the Airport Location and Forms Section. I came home in 1957; I was in Cyprus for eighteen months roughly.

I went back to my old trade, the piano trade. The chap that taught me was in business on his own, Dale Forte had closed down, and I started working for him he said 'you'll have to go self employed' and I thought no I don't want that. I was living with Benn in Stratford, he had just got married, and he said 'I'll get you a job at Lockheed'. So he told me who to write to and I got a job there and I went there for three years. I did odd work for Reg Muin in the piano trade in the mean time because we had got married and were living in Cubbington.

I met Janet on the school bus; she was at the Hugh Clopton Girl's Grammar School and I was in the Boy's High School bit. We got married in '58 and we had a flat in Leamington and then we bought a new bungalow in Cubbington. It was nice there.

I was doing well at Lockheed, I worked in the Service Department and they moved to Banbury. Well I didn't want to, so I went into Export Sales.

It was quite good, but me and Janet wanted a business and we saw one at Honily it was a good little shop. We were going in for it and then heard that it was closing down and they shut it. Janet's aunt and uncle lived in Rugby and they had a garage and she wanted someone to go in and help her after her husband died.

We entered into a partnership with her, which went all haywire because she didn't keep to her word, so we bought it off her. We bought the garage in 1967, but from 1966 I was working there and travelling.

That was it; we stayed there for 30 years.



*David and Janet*



Our eight contributors are:  
Eileen Atkin (née Richards)  
Enid Young (née Norton)  
Henry Boswell  
Lloyd Welsby  
Carol Cook (née Cherry)  
Benn Townsend  
David Townsend  
Terry Gibbins





**INSCAPE**



**Inscape Solutions Limited**  
Ashby de la Zouch, LE65 1RL  
+44(0) 1530 222657  
info@inscape-solutions.co.uk

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