*Typist’s Note: The interviewer’s comments have been underlined for ease of reading*

**Mill Street Memories – Gladys Baskett (now Gladys House) by Frank Voss**

Frank: Now Glad, I know you come from a big family down Mill Street. Were you born down there?

Glad: Yes, I think I was born in 3 Hardye Avenue but I’m not quite sure. I remember our Mum had 16 kids altogether. She had 3 lots of twins. I was a baby so I don’t really know the older ones being the youngest of course.

Frank: You were born in 1943?

Glad: Yes.

Frank: Your mum and dad must have gone into those houses when they were new.

Glad: Yes

Frank: They were built in the 30’s I think.

Glad: I was brought up with electric and hot water. The only thing that they had which was old was a hearth a big black one and I remember our dad having chickens and he used to have them all around the hearth because they had to be kept warm.

We had an open fire after that, got rid of the range. There were still open fires up in the bedrooms.

Frank: They weren’t very warm houses were they?

Glad: No, all you had was a bit of a rug between the two double beds. They were big houses mind. The two biggest rooms – one had mum and dad in and me and our Pat and Peg and whoever in the other.

One part of me can remember – definitely not Walt because he’s that much older than me and I can’t remember Bill being at home, although I can remember Bill getting married because I was his bridesmaid and Keith was his pageboy but I can’t remember Len being home.

Frank: They must have been at least 16 years older than you though.

Glad: Well, they’re all in their 80’s by now. Our Walt, if he was still here, he would be coming up around 90. Bill’s about .....

Frank: I think Bill was born in 1927, so that’s 16 years older than you, that would make him 88ish himself.

Glad: I think he’s coming up 88 this year. I think Doris is 2 years older than him, so she’s got to be about 89.

Frank: She’s still alive?

Glad: Doris? Yes. It was happy down there, I wouldn’t go back to live there now though.

Frank: I think what was good for us was that we knew everybody, it was quite friendly.

Glad: Yes, it was a lovely community.

Frank: You’re the Basketts, your mum was related to the Browns and the Damons and the Pashens and so you had a lot of distant relations.

Glad: Oh Yes, all down Gregory’s Buildings were relations. You had Hazel Brown which was a cousin, you had Florrie Brown who was a cousin, you had Auntie Annie which was our mum’s sister, you had auntie Elizabeth who was our mum’s sister and auntie Beak, she wasn’t there, she was up Holloway Road. We thought her and mum were twins because they were so much alike.

Frank: I always called her Auntie Beak because the Brown’s are related to me as well, so distantly, we’re related too.

Glad: If you did a what you call it on the telly, you’d be surprised who you would be related to, wouldn’t you?

Frank: It’s no good talking about the war with you because you were too young. Your earliest memories must be probably late 40’s when you were 5 or 6 years old?

Glad: Yes, I can remember when my dad bought our first telly, I was about 7 I think and of course, you were only allowed to have it on for so long and you weren’t allowed to have it on at night. He always had a wireless on and he used to like the cricket – you weren’t allowed to speak.

Frank: The radio was pretty good though, on Sundays, we used to listen to Family Favourites and...

Glad: Yes but you never minded that did you?

Frank: ...Archie Andrews

Glad: I never used to bother with that.

Frank: We all know you’re era was jumping on, it was the 50’s rock and roll. I remember you because you were dancing all of the time – jiving!

Glad: I used to love our dancing, me and Pat or me and Barbara. We used to sing to the Everley Brothers, sing in harmony.

Our John, John Damon, I remember, him and me used to love dancing together and they used to have the hall where the dinosaur place is.... I can’t remember what it was called.

Frank: No, I can’t remember. There used to be quite a few parties and weddings going on down there.

Glad: Every week me and our John used to go dancing there, we didn’t win anything. Did you know Regan Marten at all? Did you go?

Frank: Yes but I didn’t go.

Glad: Well, I’m going on to a different subject I suppose, I’d better not.

Frank: Well he wasn’t Mill Street.

Frank: Going back to the late 40’s – it must have been 48/49 when you started up the infants school?

Glad: Yes, I was 5. I can remember old Sophie’s... I used to call her Mother Riley, there was sawdust on the floor

Frank: in our time, there was only that shop and Muttimore’s up Shorts Lane.

Glad: You still had rations.

Frank: Yes, they came off in 1953.

Glad: I remember having them and going off to get....

Frank: You were 10 years old.

Glad: Yes, I remember being younger than that and going up there and buying sweets. I used to like it when they had this paper and it was a square bit and it would go down like that and you’d put the sweets in, I loved that.

Frank: like a cone.

Glad: Yes, another thing I used to love doing was when they used to do the tarmac, I used to pop the bubbles.

Glad: I was lucky because all 3 of our boys went to that school, I was so chuffed when they... even though it wasn’t for long, they all went to that school.

Frank: Mine did too and my father went there.

Glad: How old is your daughter and son then?

Frank: my daughter was born in 1967

Glad: same as Mark. What about Neil?

Frank: He’s 45 years old.

Glad: Same age as my Andrew. I remember when you lived down there in the flat and your Jean used to do my hair because I used to live in a flat down Durnover Court. It was a lovely little school and the Moule Institute where they used to have something going on up there didn’t we. I know we’ve got to live with the times, course we have but I think our days were more... people didn’t worry about what other people had.

Frank: No, that’s because we never had anything did we.

Glad: No, we got fed well.

Frank: It might not be luxuries what we have to eat now but we always had meat and vegetables. We didn’t have sweets very often did we? We had homemade cake but not bought cake did we? I can remember the bread pudding that my mum used to make. I’m sure your mum used to make bread pudding.

Glad: Ohhh, our mum was a good cook actually.

Frank: You wouldn’t through a bit of bread out, they throw it out now don’t they.

Glad: Oh no. They can’t be bothered nowadays, they’re too busy. I noticed that when we go up Mark’s and that that they’re always busy, they haven’t got time for nothing. They go to work, come home, their kids go to school... you know.

Frank: You can buy a cake already ready.

Glad: Oh Yes, our Mark is a chef so he can cook when he’s off the oil rigs so the kids still know what it’s like to have homemade stuff.

Frank: You remember Mrs King was up the school when we used to have a lie down and have a sleep in the afternoon?

Glad: Oh, remember our Mary working there? My sister, can you remember?

Frank: What giving out the milk? Yes.

Glad: I can remember like yesterday and going in there and my big sister was there. We used to have these big, old blankets and we used to have to go to sleep.

Frank: I never used to go to sleep.

Glad: Nor did I but all of us were on the floor, it was lovely.

Frank: We had free milk though didn’t we?

Glad: Yes

Frank: In small bottles, about a third of a pint.

Glad: They didn’t do orange squash did they?

Frank: I can’t remember, we never had orange squash. Our lemonade was crystals mixed with water in those days.

Glad: We used to have milk everyday didn’t we? Were there dinners there?

Frank: I never had them.

Glad: I don’t think they did them there.

Frank: We could be home in 3 or minutes anyway.

Glad: Yes, years ago, people didn’t have cars did they so it would be people who took their kids there that couldn’t walk the distance. No, I don’t think there were any meals there. I used to take.... I don’t even know if we took a sandwich.

Didn’t we used to have a biscuit?

Frank: I can’t remember if I’m honest. Most of the parents didn’t work.

Glad: No, our mother never worked

Frank: Nor did mine. Their job was to clean the house and cook the dinner, not being horrible to women but that was their job.

Frank: A few people can remember people sitting outside their houses on a chair, peeling the potatoes and talking to the next door neighbour doing exactly the same thing. Everybody wore an apron.

Glad: Me and Keith, when it was our birthday in July, instead of having anybody down for a party, my mum used to say that we could have a bath because we only had a bath on a Saturday – no other day. She used to do us some sandwiches, jelly and I don’t think I had a cake but me and Keith used to sit in the front garden and had our little picnic for our birthday and it was lovely.

Frank: You had a crab apple tree in your garden didn’t you?

Glad: Yes. Not only that, the place was always nice and clean and tidy. The gardens were beautiful... always tidy. Lily Gall she would go up and down the road, bless her heart.

Frank: All the whites were white back then, the washing. It wasn’t grey, it was white.

Glad: My mum had a .... like your mum did I expect, I remember Mrs Downing, they used to have a ........ it smelt beautiful, a voile where the water would come up, I can see our mum putting these tongs down and pushing them and they had to do everything by hand. Putting the thing over the bath... a spinner, put the clothes in ....

Frank: A mangle?

Glad: Yes, that’s right. The washing was all white.

Frank: It was always on a Monday. For dinner we always had cold meat if there was any left with a few fried potatoes and bubble and squeak.

Glad: That’s what we used to have. On a Sunday, we had... I can’t remember what our luxury was. It must have been meat.

Frank: My memory is that on Sunday, everybody seemed to have had a fried breakfast or a bacon... You used to smell it. The rest of the week, everybody had gone to work or whatever, so you didn’t have anything, we might have had porridge in the winter.

Glad: We used to have bread delivered. We used to fight for who was going to have the crust.

Frank: I was the only one, so I had the crust!

Glad: I remember, we used to have a milkman – Tommy Marris, we always had lovely bread, always fresh.

Frank: The bread only came from around the corner anyway, on Fordington Cross.

Glad: I remember when me and our Keith and our Colin, I think it went from Colin to Pat and from Pat to me and Keith but our Keith was a miserly little monkey, we used to deliver milk all around look. Our dad used to make butter.

Frank: Later on in life, I was one of the boys carrying that up there and I used to bring home a big can when I was about 14/15.

Glad: We used to go around with a big jug like this, it was a big jug and I think it was sixpence.

Frank: You had to strain it through a tea towel.

Glad: We had to go all around Gregory’s Buildings, so what we did was make that our first go because it was too far away. Our Dad used to let us have the money.

Frank: Yes, he had it for nothing, because they used to milk the cows in the market.... they couldn’t throw the milk away so they gave it away.

Frank: I had a gallon bucket to bring home.

Glad: I can see myself out by the back door because it was more so.... my brothers had more or less gone away and it was just me and Pat and Keith and Colin. We used to sit out by the back door and I can see him going like this trying to get the butter all nice and ....... Beautiful.

Frank: Now and again, we used to buy a tin of milk and shake it for over an hour to get it like cream because nobody could afford a tin of cream in those days.

Glad: I can remember when I used to go up town with mum, I used to hate it when she started talking, you can understand kids of today don’t want their parents to start talking. You couldn’t say nothing see, my mum would not... but she liked talking. At Fletcher’s, down the bottom of town, going in there and he would always put on the (whispering here, I can’t hear what she’s saying), it’s the same with home colonial. I remember the guy’s name – Ron. Is it Home Colonial? Opposite the clock.

Frank: No, Home Colonial was round in South Street

Glad: County Stores?

Glad: I remember our mum going in there and this guy called Ron always used to give her a few extra rations.

Frank: we used to go into Home Colonial.

Glad: Our mum did but I remember there was a cafe across the road and we would always go in there for a cup of coffee or something, I don’t remember what I had.

Glad: Do you remember the Milk Bar?

Frank: I never used to go in there but I remember it.

Glad: Oh, we used to get told off. I was only about 15. It had a bad name I think. That’s where we used to go and jive and all down there.

Frank: Did you go to Saturday morning pictures?

Glad: We used to go to both, didn’t we. The Palace down the bottom. Can you remember they used to have on a Saturday morning, they used to have you going on the stage?

Frank: A bit of a talent thing? Yes.

Glad: I remember singing “a lovely bunch of coconuts”. I remember our Colin, he used to go from picture to another, he’d see one film and then go up to the Palace...

Frank: Do you remember your older brother going off for his National Service?

Glad: No, I don’t know because Bill was a lot older.

Frank: Colin?

Glad: I remember Colin... I remember Len being in it but I can’t remember Len going. I remember Len getting demobbed and Colin (he was my favourite brother) you see, I remember him going, he was in the Medical something, in the Army. I remember Jack just about. I definitely remember Len coming home, I was young and didn’t take a lot of notice.

Frank: Like where you grew up, the houses weren’t bad but in Mill Street itself they was a bit..... it wasn’t the people, it wasn’t their fault but they were coming to the end of their time weren’t they.

Glad: Do you remember where Nigel Lucas lived? As you go up Mill Street, it was that side. You only had to open the door and you were in there. The same as Gregory’s buildings.

Frank: The worst places I thought, was where the Harrison’s lived. Next door was the Buckley’s wasn’t it.

Glad: The Irish. Yes, she was called ‘right, red and no drawers’.

Frank: They were falling to bits.

Glad: I think it was Colin that used to go about with them, Nippy Harrison. Our Jack used to go about with Sammy.

Frank: And Tubby. I don’t know his real name.

Glad: No, nor do I. They used to live... you know those houses that are what I call The Swan, did they live at the back of there?

Frank: The Harrison’s were on the end of Shorts Lane. It was just dirty. It wasn’t their fault, those houses had been there about 100 years before that at least. Our ancestors could have lived in that exact house. Do you remember how narrow it was?

Glad: Yes, what are those houses like, where.... do you remember Michael Turnbull?

Frank: Yes

Glad: He lived up......

Frank: Up by Chapel Square. He’s the oldest, all his younger brothers are called Membury’s aren’t they?

Glad: That’s right, he’s got a sister and she was brought up by her granny.

Frank: That’s right. Never seen much of her. Then you had Alan, Roy, Hazel and they’re all Membury’s. Half brothers and sisters.

Frank: He’s your age.

Glad: Yes, was there 2 or 3 houses there?

Frank: I think it was 2 but I can’t remember who else lived there. I remember Mrs Vallard was the other side of the road, almost opposite.

Glad: That was a bit of spare ground there wasn’t it?

Frank: Yes, next to the chapel.

Glad: You had these houses where you went up a bit further, we used to make helluva noise going up there with a ball. When you get up past where Hardye Avenue ends at the top, you had some houses go back......

Frank: That’s right, coming back towards Turnbulls, just before you get to Mushroom Bridge and then the road twisted a little bit, it was very close because there were some allotments in front of where the Otten’s lived.

Glad: There was a big shed there wasn’t it?

Frank: Yes.

Glad: I don’t know what the shed was for.

Frank: Don’t know. I think they belonged to the Bailey’s and a few sheds alongside the river.

Glad: That’s right because you could still see.... our John was big John and there’s 2 Damon’s you see. Our John is big John and this other John was little John. If you go up by Mill Street and go up towards where you were just saying about where that Bridge is, you could see the wall where the houses were, you had to come down some steps.

Frank: His father was Gency, Gency Damon.

Glad: I remember going down there, they were only small houses.

Frank: Little John lives in Cyprus.

Glad: Really, I wouldn’t know him if I saw him anyway.

Frank: No, we wouldn’t recognise him. In Mill Street, we were altogether but we’ve spread out along....

Glad: When you leave home, get married and have kids, you’re not far away mind sometimes but just far enough away. Even people round here, I don’t know half of them not really. I know where you lot lived up Eddison Avenue but when you all left....

Frank: In Mill Street at that time in the 50’s, you knew everybody. We can’t remember know because we’re getting on but at that time, we could walk up there and say hello to everybody.

Glad: I remember when they first put the swings up, we were allowed to go over there because there was hardly any traffic round there and I remember going on that. I wouldn’t go on the roundabout but I remember when they first went up there.

Frank: I can as well because I moved opposite by then. We moved there in 55.

Glad: Where did you live before that?

Frank: Holloway Road

Glad: Oh yes. I used to like the old fashioned ice-cream. When I was living at Hardye Avenue, we used to say “are you going up top to play”. When I used to say that, people used to say what do you mean by that? I said “that’s what we say, I’ll see you at the top”. They used to have an ice-cream van there, they were lovely.

Frank: If you said “I’m going up top” I would know what you were talking about. “I’m going out Swimmo’s” we knew what that was or “round cliff” we knew where that was. Or “out Bugie” that’s obviously Bockhampton Path. “Up bank” was going up the river at the bottom of the town.

Glad: One of the Downton girls has got our house – Sheila. Other than that. Mrs House used to live in a bungalow, Mrs Pitman, the Eve’s the Coxes, Scotty.

Frank: Ex Army tailor, he used to do everybody’s trousers.

Glad: He was ever so nice.

Frank: You used to knock on his door and he’d say to come back in a couple of days, you could change your trousers for about 2 shillings or something.

Glad: She was a lot taller than him wasn’t she?

Frank: Yes, Scotty was only short.

Glad: You had Michael Gail, he’s gone now hasn’t he?

Frank: Then I think over... Andrews, the Cheeseman’s

Glad: The Smiths.

Frank: It might have been Smith rather than Andrew’s. Next to Cheddar. Then Michael Hallett.

Frank: Mrs McCorkey, then you had the flats where Barbara Rogers lived.

Glad: They’re still there but I know one of the guys that lives where Mrs McCorkey used to live.

Frank: The parents didn’t cause much trouble did they?

Glad: No, my mum and dad used to go down there (The Swan), me and Keith would get over the wall across the road there and swing on the... they had these old black posts and swing on them and wait until our dad brought us out a bottle of lemonade or something. Our dad’s pub was the Rimmer’s.

Frank: The Union Arms.

Glad: That’s the one. Was their name Rimmer?

Frank: Yes, Sid Rimmer.

Glad: That’s why I call it Rimmers.

Frank: In those days, if you were a landlord of a pub, you seemed to stay for ages and ages, years but now they seem to change every 6 months. Yes it was Sid Rimmer.

Glad: I used to have a thrift club up there, I used to pay about 2 and 6.

Frank: Used to have a little jug and bottle, you’d tap on the window and get a packet of crisps perhaps. Crisps tasted better than they do now.

Glad: Of course they do. All the Hallets used to go up there didn’t they?

Frank: Yes

Glad: We used to get the club out. There was a woman and a bloke and the bloke always had long hair....

Frank: Not many people had long hair, men especially.

Glad: I can’t really picture him but he was a thinnish guy, tall. I remember him after the Rimmers left. When we used to pay our thrift club there. My mum and dad used to go out every Saturday night, they were never late because the pub shut at 10pm.

Frank: There was never any trouble was there?

Glad: No, not with drink. I remember our Len used to come up with his wife’s mum and dad and brother and kids and we used to have to look after his kids. They always used to go up there but they were never late.

Frank: We had to get up and go to Sunday School anyway.

Glad: I used to like it. Christian Endeavour on Tuesdays and Thursday’s, do you remember that?

Frank: Yes, I used to try and get out of that but I couldn’t get out of a Sunday.

Glad: I used to play up. Miss Oates. There was Miss Churchill, Miss Oates and there was David.... friends with David Forrester... he had a sister called Sylvie.

Frank: Moxom.

Glad: Yes, she was a school teacher. I remember they being there but I remember going to Christian Endeavour. I tell you what, I remember when they used to have christenings down there because I remember our Anne was christened down there in the chapel. It was lovely, me and our John used to go up around.... there was a side door and you used to have to go upstairs into the roof, it was horrible. Me and our John used to go up there and play records. It was all happy.

Frank: I think this is what made the Sunday School outings so exciting because we never had anything else to look forward to.

Glad: That’s right, I really enjoyed going to chapel, it wasn’t like a church, it was a nice big building and we used to go in the mornings and then again in the afternoon and I think it was in the evening as well.

Frank: I remember our mother going in the evening.

Glad: I’m sure it was 3 times a day on a Sunday. I enjoyed it.

Frank: we used to get an apple and an orange at Christmas didn’t we?

Glad: Oh Yes and they used to do thanksgiving day, used to take an apple down there or our dad used to grow his own veg so I.....

Frank: they always have a big harvest festival didn’t they? It was a big thing then. Even my father would find the biggest couple of potatoes, scrub them up clean.

Glad: I don’t quite remember what I took but we took something, may have been potatoes

Frank: or a bunch of carrots or something.

Glad: I don’t remember having a lot of fruit.

Frank: No, we had apples but we used to go scrumping to get them.

Frank: I don’t think we had bananas growing up.

Glad: I think we had more vegetables and homemade stuff and on Sunday we had jelly and a bit of bread and butter, nothing else.

Frank: I wasn’t allowed to eat my jelly unless I had some bread and butter with it.

Glad: Our dad, when I was going to work, if I was off, I used to work at the old Damers Hospital and I used to have a day off during the week, I wasn’t allowed to stay in bed and if I came down in my dressing gown, he wouldn’t have that. We used to have do some cleaning for mum and that but if I said that I didn’t want my dinner, my mum used to cook dinnertimes see, she wasn’t allowed to do any other. She had to cook dinner times, teatime was teatime, dinnertime was dinnertime. My boys get confused because I say dinnertime and they say “no, it’s lunchtime”.

Frank: We had breakfast at say 7am, dinnertime was at 12-12.30pm and teatime was at 5pm.

Glad: I remember when I used to come home from work and my mum bless her heart did egg, chips and boons, well you know what that’s like when it’s all dried up. She would put it on the table and I would say “oh god”. Dad would say “aren’t you hungry?” I’d go “yes” and he would say “eat that then because if you’re hungry, you’ll eat that if you’re not then don’t”. He would not let us have anything else, he would say “your mother cooked that”. Every day was the same.

Frank: I know what you mean because parents now, they might cook say 3 different meals for their family, in our day, you cooked one meal and that was for everybody. If you didn’t like it you went without.

Glad: Now they make all 3 meals and freeze it. Years ago we had the old locker and a mesh thing to put the meat it to stop the flies. When you think, how healthy was it really?

Frank: I know what you mean, not healthy compared with what they’re saying today but you never had the illnesses then that you do now, so I don’t know.

Glad: I didn’t mean it like that, alright, our mum used to fry chips and fish and god knows what. We used to have a lot of fat but when you used to put your meat in an old... mesh... I can see it, to stop the flies getting in there.

Frank: It used to have a metal frame with some gauze on to put over the meat or in the larder, you had a window with a wire mesh to stop any flies getting in there. Most old kitchens had those fly catchers hanging down from the ceiling didn’t they, with about 50 flies stuck on it.

Glad: Susan Caddy, she used to have a bottle right up until she was 4 years old.

Frank: that’s another name...

Glad: For some reason she didn’t work for donkey’s years, she’s married to one of those Hell brothers, one of the twins. Who else was in the big house opposite Mr Bell. A big guy wasn’t he?

Frank: We would have known their names just like that a few years ago.

Glad: I remember Mrs Pitman and Mrs Howe and Voss, Downings...

Frank: You turned down, coming down to the bottom of your gardens and you had the Lowes lived down there.

Glad: I’ll tell you who lived at the bottom of our garden – he used to do a turkey for our dad. He used to pluck it for Christmas... oh, nearly had it then.

Frank: Not far from you was the Haskins, but to get to their place, you had to go up Shorts Lane where the Bowerings....

Glad: Mrs Marchant, she used to live up there didn’t she?

Frank: Right behind you I think.

Glad: She was the other side of our fence.

Frank: Up Shorts Lane. You had the Bowerings, the Liddiards,

Glad: Mariam Goodchild,

Frank: Mariam Goodchild was sort of in Leicester Square I think.

Glad: Well her house was sort of.....

Frank: Right on the corner

Glad: ... and the Liddiards was a sort of courtyard.

Frank: Opposite Muttimores.

Glad: Yes. Can you remember Janet and Francis Forsey. They used to live by the Swan? They used to sing at Christmas time. I think they lived with their gran. I’m not talking about Hardye Avenue now, I’m talking near the actual Swan.

Frank: Kings Road, it’s still Mill Street to me.

Glad: Yes, they were sort of back to back with Sam somebody... Tubby Harrison and Sammy Harrison. They lived by Durnover Court.

Frank: A lot of people worked up the brewery too didn’t they? They used to leave in the morning and walk up the brewery.

Glad: The Downings, the way they used to walk on, Bill in front and George behind.

Frank: Never walked together those two brothers, never speak to each other.

Glad: No. Poor old Nora. I can remember she got out of that family alright. The other ones took too much notice of their brothers. I remember she was a bugger she was. I remember Bill, we used to call him cockbird, because of his hair. We were so chuffed that she got out of it, she would have been the same as poor old Flossie, same as George and same as Hilda is now.

Glad: Our dad used to put a swing up in the shed with rope and we used to swing on it, what we used to do for pleasure – unbelievable.

Frank: Who was next door on the other side of you was it Smith?

Glad: No, Foxwelsh, something like that. Then you had Colin Smith.

Frank: I remember him because he died quite young.

Glad: So did Mary.

Frank: Then on the corner there was, Spurrells on the end, the brewers, then us, then the Halletts and the Passions and then the Legges.

Glad: Yes, my auntie Mary used to live there.

Frank: I think it was the Spurrells on the end and then the Brewers.

Glad: I can’t remember what they looked like at all.

Frank: Right next to the sweet factory.

Glad: That’s where (whispering) used to work. Obviously, if it was there now it wouldn’t be the same.

Frank: Those sweets were always boiled sweets, they used to bring the wasps, all that sugar boiling away.

Glad: What else did they make, was it just sweets?

Frank: Well, we never had any...

Glad: We did, our Patch used to bring home a jar of sweets, it was either humbugs or something like that.

Frank: Sometimes, they used to break a jar and put them out, so we could help ourselves.

Glad: I’ll tell you who else lived up there, she was a dentist’s secretary, Miss.... she went to chapel. Miss Oates used to live up there.

Frank: In that time though, in the 40’s, I can’t remember much because I was only 5 in 1950 but in the 50’s the chapel was the hub of everything wasn’t it?

Glad: Oh yes, we were going there....

Frank: Not for the men but for the women, it was like a women’s institute type of thing, they all went. Sunday school for us kids.

Glad: It’s not like religion. I’m chapel not church. I think chapel is more down to earth, not too much in your face.

Frank: I know exactly what you mean because I’m the same.

Glad: Chapel was more friendly.

Frank: Our Sunday school teachers were just as good as a vicar. They told us the scriptures just as good as him up St Georges. We knew the stories of the bible, old and new testament off by heart.

Glad: I’ve still got a little bible in there.

Frank: I can remember them giving bibles out.

Glad: When do you think they gave them out?

Frank: It had to be in the 50’s.

Glad: I reckon our dad had it.

Frank: My mother used to make me carry mine to chapel everytime.

Glad: It had to be in the 50’s, I suppose.

Frank: in 53, it was getting near the end of Chapel, before they started moving people out and pulling it down.

Glad: When did they pull it down.

Frank: I can’t remember the exact date, it must have been around there because by say 58-59 it was all gone. They started building the flats then.

Glad: I remember when I was first married, we came back to our house to get changed and go on honeymoon, I remember looking over and seeing.... we had to climb up the pole to get indoors, I remember the flats were there then, that was 1966 and those flats had been there a few years then. Mick Buick lived in those flats.

Frank: I lived in the next block.

Glad: You knew everyone in those flats, we knew Sean Belt and Anne Belt, Monica Clark or Brown whatever her name was and you and Jean, Jean used to do my hair for me when I first moved down there. It was so friendly down there wasn’t it?

Frank: Yes, it has all changed now.

Glad: I speak to the young girl across the road with the kid and Rosemary Studley, she lives on the end, I call her Studley but it’s Rice (SHE’S MY MUM!), I speak to her and I know the people in the house next to her but opposite here that was the Webbers, Anne and Tony bought that. I don’t think I would want to live back down there, it would do nothing for me.

Frank: All through these recordings, we’ve found that the community spirit, especially connected to the chapel kept everybody together. Once that was gone, it went, nobody moved on, some went to other chapels but not everybody.

Frank: You obviously went to work and got married....

Glad: my first job was, I was 15 and I worked at the Antelope Hotel, washing up. I had a promotion and became a chambermaid. There was this guy, we made friends, he was a chef and he would swear all the time. When you came out of the kitchen, you had to go down the stairs, I went down with a pile of plates and he came out and I dropped the whole lot because he would scare you. That was my first job and then my dad made me leave because when I was cleaning in the kitchen, in the cupboard, they had a mirror, well, I had my sweeping brush in there and when I went to get it out, the mirror came down and it cut my finger, I remember my mum taking me up the hospital straightaway, then I think dad made me leave. If that was done now, you would get compensation.

My first actual proper job was out in the laundry at Herrison.

Frank: You were still living at Hardye Avenue?

Glad: Yes, then my other job at Damers Hospital, that was where I was actually married, that was when I was courting Gerald, if I had a split duty in the hospital I would go 8-1pm and go back at night, I used to go to Barbara’s – she always had bubble and squeak on a Monday.

Then I think from there, there was girl at Damers Hospital, she was a lazy little monkey but anyway, she had a note on her wall ‘Millers Porkpies – brilliant money”, I went there one day, one whole day and I cried. I got on the bus, went there, got hit by a sausage, I come home and me and Carol Rogers, we went straight to the telephone kiosk by the Exhibition there, phoned up Miss Scammell and asked her if we could have our jobs back. Within a fortnight, we had them back.

I was up there for a few years, then I got married and from there, I didn’t work for a while and then we moved into the flats. We stayed with his mum for about 3 months and moved to the flats and we were there until Mark was about 11 months old.

Frank: You had a family so you couldn’t go to work.

Glad: I think I gave up work for a bit, until I had Mark because Gerald had shift work, he would come home with snow on him, like a snowman, come in the flat and frighten me. He would come into the bedroom all covered in snow, he would walk sometimes from Weymouth.

Other than that, my other job was odd little jobs, mainly pubs, Bakers Arms. When we moved up to the Bakers Arms when Mark was 11, we had a railway house and the Bakers Arms became our local. I did do cleaning in there and I cleaned the Exhibition and before them I cleaned the White Hart. From there, I went to the Bull to clean and from the Bull I went up to the hospital where I stayed for 19 years.

Frank: In other words, you never left Fordington.

Glad: In those days, if you wanted another job, you could leave a job just like that. You could afford to leave it.

Frank: I think that Mill Street as it is now, if you took all the people from our time and put them in, we would all be happy because it’s not the buildings it’s the people. If you take one of us and put us there, we wouldn’t be happy.

Glad: I think you’re right. We didn’t want a lot out of life, we had a happy upbringing, our dad was strict but we did not abuse our parents.

Frank: I think all of us had a good hiding.

Glad: more so the boys than the girls. I remember our Pat once, she came home a bit late and I used to wait for her because I didn’t like going to bed on my own, she came in a bit late and our dad came down the stairs and said “where have you been?” he hit her and I said “don’t you hit her”, Ohhhh god, didn’t I get a clip around the head.

Frank: I think it was an unwritten law that you left the swearing outside, never swore in the house in front of your mother.

Glad: Jack did, he was a monkey. I suppose it’s alright for boys to say it but not for girls which is fair enough.