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

**Mill Street Memories – Roger and Sue Hale by John Smith**

If you would like to start off about when your family came to...

Well Mum and Dad moved down to the bungalows in 1939 when they got married, I was born 9 years later and I was down there then. Happy memories down there, good neighbours, good friends, it was a great place to live.

I went to school at Fordington St Georges.

The sweet factory... but you don’t remember that do you Rog?

Then they pulled them open houses down didn’t they and built flats at the back.

Everybody had to have a tree in their garden.

What just the bungalows?

No, every houses, that was why it was an avenue, I think. It’s because everybody had to have a tree in their garden but as the years went by, the trees stopped, either died or got took down but ours blew down in the wind and came across the bungalow.

Then we had Mrs Pitman next door and she used to come running round to my mum if it thundered and lightening and said “take your mirrors, take your glasses off, sit in the corner”.

You said your parents moved out during the war?

Yes, dad went to war, mum moved up with her mum, moved out of the bungalow, I don’t know how long it was for but somebody moved in there, I don’t know whether.. well it was furnished, there was all their furniture left in there because when they went back in, it was all trash, smashed up and everything but who it was that moved in there I don’t know, I think they knew who it was but I didn’t take it on-board, I was too young.

What was it like during the war, were you affected by it?

I wasn’t born during the war; I was born after the war. So I’m one of the younger ones, so I don’t know too much about it all.

Roger: I mean, I wasn’t born until 1942

Sue: I wasn’t born until 1948; I don’t know a lot about it, I know bits about it how we used to go down the playing fields when they put them down there, we all used to play in the avenue and one another’s gardens. You know, we were a friendly lot.

Did you have brothers and sisters?

No, just me. There was Mr and Mrs Board, they had a son but I was surprised looking back now, years ago look, there was only one bedroom in those bungalows but they all had children and we all managed with one bedroom but they wouldn’t let you do that in this day and age.

In the latter years, I had the bedroom and mum and dad had a bed settee which they used to put up and down every night to go to bed and put it back to normal by day.

Then when mum died and I lived with dad, I met Rog and we got married and we done a swap with the Cheeseman’s who lived at no.12 in a house, they came down to the bungalow and we went up to a house, so we had 3 bedrooms.

Was that in Hardye Avenue?

Yes, that was in Hardye Avenue and then dad died, the bungalow came empty again so we moved back down there until we came up here last year and lo and behold we’re living next door to Mr and Mrs Cheeseman’s son. A bit of a roundabout really. Amazing, you wouldn’t believe it really would you.

We had some great times, we had our dolls prams and our scooters, “don’t go no further than the end house” because of the road, you know, parents were strict in those days.

There was less traffic wasn’t there?

Yes but we weren’t allowed to go far down the avenue, otherwise you got told off.

Did your parents say much about, you know, the old days or anything, did they make any remarks?

Not a lot no. They didn’t say a lot. They loved it down here, obviously, they stayed there.

We used to go to Sunday school at the Mission on a Sunday and go to church down there in the evening. I got a feeling it was made into a bit of a youth club once upon a time. I have a vague recollection that it was – that we used to go to.

Not for long of course as it all came down. There was an old lady Mrs Eves, she was never sober, she was always drunk. We used to be frightened to death of her, run a mile.

Mr and Mrs Howe that lived up in the cottage up here and we used to be frightened of them if they were stood outside, we wouldn’t go by but they were a lovely old couple really. They used to frighten us when we were kids.

Of course, there was Mortimer’s shop, that was in one of the houses up in.... I don’t know which road it was in though – Lester Square perhaps? I’m not sure. We used to go up there.

The Cox family?

Yes

Aves

Hancocks

Scots, Gale, Smith, Cheeseman’s, Hallets, Corky’s and then there was us, there was Mrs Pitman, Mrs Board, Mr Hart, Mrs Voss, Mrs Downan, Mrs Basket, I can’t think of the other lady’s name in the end house.

What was there where Mill Stream House is now, can you remember? You know up......

Yes, that was all little old houses; there were little alleyways down through there.

So that was that part of Mill Street as well?

Yes, houses. There was an old lady down there and she used to smoke one of these pipes where they had a rubber tube and it would go underneath and come out the end, funny looking thing to smoke this pipe – she did.

But, yes, that was all houses down there. Up on the riverbank there were houses, down over the slope that was all houses.

Rog: What place caught fire... up in the bank wasn’t it?

That was old Mrs Hallet’s houses, a thatch place. I don’t know how it caught fire but then she moved down into the bungalow no.13.

Rog: Where Mr and Mrs Mogeridge is now, you take shopping every week.

Rog: The only houses left I think are the three cottages on Mill Street.

Yes, have they got an order on them or something that they can’t be pulled down? Because there was a house, where Mrs Eves used to live, the junk lady, just passed there, there was an opening and there was Mrs Larcombe - she used to live there, I can’t remember who else lived there. There were 2 or 3 houses down along there and then 1 in the front. All these little houses were all squashed up together; there were a lot of them down there really.

Then along the front there, there was Mrs Sprules, Mrs Brewer, Mrs Passion, can’t remember all their names. That must be old age, my memory must be going.

Rog: Along the other end, Standish... when you go down the avenue, past the Mill and below the cemetery.....

There were houses there and there were houses up on the top, where the cremation part is, in the front of the cemetery now, that was houses up there.

Rog: did they belong to Mill Street...

Yes, I think so. There were 2 or 3 houses up there, I used to go up some steps and then they knocked it all down and built the crem there. Because the garage was on the other side of the road, the petrol garage. I don’t know what was there before that, I don’t think there was anything, just fields.

Rog: going back over 150 years, the map that we’ve got shows houses on that side, opposite the cemetery where they’ve now got houses, where the petrol station used to be, before the petrol station, I think there were houses there. Because they had quite long gardens towards Lubbecke Way.

I don’t know if I can remember there being any houses there but...

We used to go over the swimming baths in the water over there, years ago.

Kids still do don’t they?

Do they?

Yes, they still go there in the summer

Rog: Did you go ice skating as well?

No

Rog: There are some photographs of the farmer, flooding the field in the winter and there’s people skating.

The hatches aren’t out there anymore are they? No they’ve gone

Rog: Well, there’s still the big one there. They don’t work as hatches but there’s the big one there, what’s it called 12, the one you go over to Cokers Frome. That’s still there but just to walk over it, it doesn’t open or anything.

We used to go out across there.

To do a bit of fishing?

Yes, minnowing, we used to go minnowing, catch minnows didn’t we.

My brother and I, we used to go to the Moule Institute, to Sunday school on a Sunday, she used to give us our books, make sure we got our stickers but sometimes Mr Gray used to say we’ll do a bit of fishing and we used to go up along and where you can catch a nice trout and whisper the chap in the big house, just down from the prison there...

Friary Cottage – where the Mill used to be

Yes.

Friary Cottage I think it’s called, it’s still there

Rog: Gray used to catch a nice trout with a hand line.

They used to milk the cows there; they used to have a hut out in the field there. We used to go out there mushrooming.

Rog: Yes, you used to get big mushrooms out where they used to milk the cows out across the field. Once I went there and looked across and saw a lot of white and as I got closer, they were mushrooms like that and I didn’t have a bag to put them in so I took my coat off and thought to myself “if I don’t have them, somebody else will”.

You had to watch the big plate size ones, if you turn them up; they had the maggots and that.

Daubeny, he used to take us further along the field where there were cows along the road and we used to always be afraid that one was going to turn up the avenue so when it was time to take the cows in for milking, we used to go on indoors, because we were always afraid that one would come up the avenue and the rest would follow.

Rog: Daubenay’s Farm, Fordington Farm, up along the hill there, where Church Acre is, next to the church.

There were loads of farms weren’t there. We were talking about the Mill Stream up towards Friary Mill, can you remember when there weren’t allotments there?

Yes, it was fields across there. I don’t know why they put allotments there because they always got flooded and the caravan park, did that used to be fields as well I think.

Did there used to be a rope works there or something or tent works?

Tents, where those flats are now, Swanbridge Court, that used to be where they used to sell caravans under the tent works there, that all used to be there.

And the White Hart’s gone now.

Lott and Walne’s gone now, well it’s still there but it’s not Lott and Walne’s now.

And the Exhibition, they’ve all gone now and The Swan of course.

Of yes, we used to have good times there.

Rog: used to have a game of darts, I used to say to Walt on a Sunday – “go down and have a game of darts” and the winner would buy the round and once we went down there and Walt come in and come out and I thought to myself – he was a good sportsman, football – Monkton Rovers.

You could go out in those days and not lock the front door, you could trust anybody.

Rog: you daren’t now.

Sue: no, not now, especially down Hardye’s Avenue now. I think it’s worse than when it was Mill Street.

Rog: It had improved when I was first on the committee, we had all those druggies down there as well, at least they haven’t got them now.

I can remember when my dad dug out in the garden, he came to water underneath.

Rog: you got the river going down.

Sue: Recently, a couple of years ago when we were down there, if we had a lot of rain, the bedroom carpet come up and it was damp, so whether that was the water underneath there, little springs perhaps, I don’t know.

Rog: the recent problem down at the old mill with the ground floor flats having water, isn’t because it’s from the actual stream, its coming up from underneath.

When they put the new bathrooms on the bungalows, they put the tubes down, they had a firm come down because what was there wasn’t strong enough for foundations so they put concrete down before the bathroom floors were put down. They had machines with big tubes, banged them down into the clay ground, firm up the Midlands.

Sue: as we said earlier, those roofs were flat roofs but dad put the tiled ones on there. He done all that with his mate. I can remember watching him doing that, I don’t know what year that was about 53/54.

We’ve got a record of that

Typist Note: I’ve missed some of the interview here as there is a lot of interference – I can’t make out what Sue and Roger are saying.

2 years ago when they had the floods down by Mill Stream House, one of the houses there was out for a year

Sue: we had to get out then, we had to get out 2 or 3 times because of the flooding.

Rog: went around Sue’s cousin in Kings Road.

Sue: in recent years we’ve had to get out about 4 times because of the flooding.

Rog: we had sandbags delivered; we did put them up against our door.

All of the land around here is really the same as around Cokers Frome, it’s just..... all water land

Sue: we’ve had so much rain it’s going to start coming back again, seeping up through everywhere.

Rog: we’re certainly happy here anyway.

Sue: I didn’t want to move from down there but anyway, it’s just one of those things but I’m glad we did. No regrets.

You mentioned in the beginning out the delivery of bread and milk and that, where did all of that come from?

The bread came from the co-op but where the co-op was... well there was a co-op up Great Western Road I think and the milk but it burnt down and they used to have the tills where they used to shoot across the ceiling, put the money in and shoot it across....

They used to deliver the bread and the milk...

So did the bread come from the co-op as well?

Yes

On a horse and cart?

I don’t remember that.

Rog: I do because I used to drive the horse.

Sue: we used to have the old fashioned vans but...

Rog: before that, we used to have to catch the horses in the morning and hitch them up.

Did you have newspapers delivered or did you have to collect them if you wanted them?

No, we used to collect it, I think we only had one if someone went to town or something. There was a Barbers shop under the flats down there.

Rog: as you come by the old mill when you cut through...

Sue: there’s a door there...

Rog: you got a bridge across, just there. More often than not if you went down there dinner time, you used to sit there and have your hair cut eating a sandwich.

Sue: that was my auntie’s brother had that.

When did that go, can you remember? Was that when they re-designed the mill?

Sue: I think it must have been yes. It was a lot of years ago. I can remember how the old mill used to be. They used to let us go under their fish shed with our little jam jars but yes, that’s going back a lot of years. I used to go down there and get cigarettes for mum and dad in the barbers shop.

Where was the newspaper shop?

There wasn’t one down here. On the cross, we used to have bakers.

What, where the shop is now?

Yes, that used to be the bakers shop, I can’t think what it was called and up round the corner there used to be a grocers shop, what was that called Rog?

Rog: on the other side of St Georges Road?

Sue: Yes, you know on the corner, you’ve got flats that used to be a grocers shop and a butchers shop. We used to have another grocery shop and then we had another grocery shop in the last 3 years down opposite the phone box that used to be a grocery shop that was in the latter years.

Typist Note: the shop in St Georges Road (in the 1970’s early 1980’s was the VG and the butcher’s shop was Pitman’s. The grocery shop on Fordington Cross opposite the phone box, in the 1980’s was called Sparks.

Rog: is that on the same side as The Bull?

Sue: Yes, I think it was called Pikes?

Rog: did that later become a launderette?

Sue: yes it did. It’s a house now.

Rog: I remember it being a launderette when I came here 30 years ago.

It didn’t last very long

Sue: the grocery shop was there a long time. As I said, the bakers used to bake bread on the premises where the paper shop is now and we had a grocery shop up around the corner. A little lady used to have that with her brother. My cousin will remember what it was called.

Rog: the cows coming down the hill every day.

Sue: I know, I hate cows anyway but as I said, we used to be afraid of them coming up the avenue; although there were 2 posts there they could still come up through.

Yes, different from the traffic now, that Kings Road is very hard.

Rog: specially this weekend as its Dorchester Show.

Where did you say you went to school?

Sue: The little school over here, St Georges Infant School and it was just across the road here. You got the houses here, the houses up there and then you got the alleyway and the other side of the alleyway was the school, where the flats are now, that was the school.

Of course, isn’t that called Old School Lane Now?

Yes. We used to go to school there.

Did you (Rog) go to school there as well?

No, as a family, we came from Wincanton to Dorchester in 1952. We lived in Allington Road when we came to Dorchester first. Then, when I used to go to the Moule Institute on a Sunday, because we were in the choir up the church. Mother used to do our classics and things. Many years in the choir.

Sue: we used to go to church every Sunday when we were kids; Sunday school in the morning.

So did you go to the Church as well as the Mission or the Church after...?

Sue: when the Mission went, we went to the church. What year was the Mission pulled down?

I can’t remember

I can remember when the flats were built there, I think that was the early 60’s I think. My mum was still alive then.

Rog: there was a lot of movement was there in the 50’s and 60’s wasn’t there, a lot of houses pulled down and people moving up to Old Poundbury.

Sue: we had a bathroom, cos then we had a bath in the kitchen, we had a boiler in the kitchen, a brick boiler, old fashioned, the toilet in the kitchen, a larder and a coal hold and a mangle to put the washing through; we used to have a curtain across the bath.

We had a proper bath on legs with a toilet next to it and over the other side a coal hold to put the coal in and a larder to put the food in.

Rog: what did you cook on?

Sue: Gas, I can remember when we still had gas lighting down there as well. Then they put electric in, it was lovely and warm when we had electric put in.

Rog: was that the town gas from the other side of Salisbury Field?

Sue: I think it was, we used to go there to do our PE from our school, we used to go over to the gas place because they had a hall there.

Rog: was that the old school?

Sue: St Georges school.

Rog: There used to be a school over behind Salisbury Field, on Woods’ land now, actually its part of where their depository is.

Sue: Yes, we used to use that hall there for our PE there from St Georges. The school that was there went up to Maud Road.

Rog: I saw a photograph from not all that long ago, proudly showing the New Maud Road School which of course has been wound down now.

Sue: Yes, it’s all flats now. Used to catch a bus up to school.

We left Modern School in 1957

Rog: Which school was that then?

Sue: Modern, which was right up the end of Coburg Road.

Rog: Is that what is now the girls school?

Sue: I get muddled up now.

It’s a Middle School, before you get to Hardye’s.

Rog: what did you think of your school days, were they happy?

Sue: I hated them. I think going out to work was the best thing I’ve ever done.

Our class used to spend a lot of time on the garden plus we dug out for the swimming pool, the outside one which isn’t there anymore but we helped dig that out and the rest of the time we seemed to be on the garden, growing vegetables.

Rog: of course now, they’ve got a big fancy swimming pool up there now, haven’t they?

Sue: Yes

They’ve got a six lane one, quite a big pool

Rog: I’ve never been in it but it’s supposed to be very nice.

Sue: A couple of people used to keep chickens, didn’t they down there. I remember Mr Cox he had a cockerel, a flippin’ cockerel, first thing in the morning it used to make a heck of a racket.

About 4.30 he started

Sue: that was before you (Rog) came down there.

People used to threaten to cut his throat

Sue: Yes, noisy creature and he had chickens.

Frank Cox used to go up to Dorchester Market helping there and then he used to go dealing....

Sue: he used to go with Mr Basket that was before your time.

Rog: He used to deal in a bit of meat. He used to go and buy the meat from Sid Lear and then sell it round the people who wanted meat.

So, did many people keep chickens?

Sue: yes they did, quite a few kept chickens down there and Mr Voss, lived next door to us, he used to keep budgies out the back, lot of them had chickens but they did years ago. Eggs and things and then they didn’t lay. My gran used to have a china egg if they didn’t lay an egg, she used to put the china one in there, 9 times out of 10 they would lay an egg.

What work did your families do?

Sue: my dad was a roofer.

What firm did he work for?

Sue: he was self-employed. When he came out of the army, he went up the brewery for a bit, not for long and then he went as a roofer. He did that until he was 75. Not full time so much as part time. He then decided to give up, but when he gave up, that was it more or less; he sort of gave up everything.

Then I had a bad illness and he never really got over the shock of it. He had alopecia and everything.

Rog: Sue was taken in 77/78, New Year’s Eve and Sue was on life support in Weymouth & District for 7 weeks and I lost her a couple of times. Penicillin, they thought she was allergic too but Penicillin saved her life.

They flew in plasma from Portsmouth. Couple of nights, my brother and I we stayed down the hospital and I’d go down at least 3 times a day, every day.

Sue: how many miles did you do?

Rog: 750 miles I done, in all those weeks I was going back and forth.

Did you recover quickly or did it take you months or years

Sue: years and years and years. Even now to this day, you know, I’m not 100% but I’m grateful, I’m alive, that’s the thing to be grateful for. Each day is a blessing, I’ve had a lot of years really considering. I’ve been lucky.

One of the things that I’ve asked already but there is a form, which I’ll get to at the end, do you mind giving your date of birth?

Sue: No, not at all

You mentioned your brother, where does he live?

Rog: Graham recently moved from Wyke Regis up to Castle Park, Barrow Close. Just over a month ago.

Sue: They’re up here now which is quite nice.

You mentioned earlier on about playing children’s games outside and that, in those days...

Sue: Yes, skipping, hula hoops, dolls, dolls prams

Did you do hopscotch?

Sue: yes, we used to play hopscotch.

What about outings, did you go on any outings?

Sue: yes, Sunday school outings we used to go on, which wasn’t very often but I know they always used to have one at Christmas and we used to go to a pantomime, perhaps at Weymouth or somewhere. We always used to look forward to them, in the summer and one at Christmas. Summer, we usually used to go to the seaside and at Christmas we used to go to a pantomime.

Rog: used to have a bob for the bug house on a Saturday morning, the Palace.

Sue: The pictures.

I remember the Palace down.....

Rog: I always remember we went to an outing when we were in the Church; we went and saw a film called the Red Beret.

John Wayne wasn’t it?

Rog: No

Sue: Who was it then, you can’t remember can you?

Was it about the Marines or something?

Rog: Yes, the marines. The chap was in the film about the black dog to do with the world war planes, umm, Dambusters.

Oh, Richard Todd

Rog: yes, Richard Todd.

Sue: I don’t watch them sort of films.

Rog: good film that was our treat.

How often did you go to the pictures? Once a week or less than that?

Rog: most Saturday mornings, mother used to give us a bob to go, they used to put on Westerns and all sorts of.... used to enjoy Saturday morning pictures, especially if it was a wet morning.

Did you ever go on any holidays?

Sue: we never did no. We used to have what was called a run-about ticket if we had a holiday, it was about 2 and 6 and you could go anywhere on the train. We had one, one year and we went to Swanage.

Was this anywhere in Dorset?

Sue: Yes, we went to Swanage and we came back and it was when Coronation Street had just started on the telly. My mum wanted to get back to see Coronation Street, so that was ok. You had to change train at Wareham to come back to Dorchester, so we got on the train to come back to Dorchester and my dad said “cor, I’d laugh now if we went back to Swanage” and my mum said “well, I wouldn’t because I want to see Coronation Street” and what did we do.... we went back to Swanage. I’ll never forget that for as long as I live, there was one train left at Swanage to come back to Wareham and my mum kept saying “now, are you sure we’re on the right train this time?”.

It was so funny, she wasn’t very happy and missed Coronation Street. It was the way dad said it.

Not many people can say they went to Swanage twice in a day on the train.

What year did you say you actually took over the bungalow?

Sue: We got married in 1975

Rog: We moved in August 92.

Sue: No, no we didn’t. We were there when we got married first. 1975 we took over the bungalow. 75 when we went to see Mr Edwards to see if we could take it over and he said yes, of course you can, no problem. Then when did we move into the house, what year?

Rog: We had 17 years up no. 12

Sue: 76 wasn’t it?

Rog: Yes, then we had 21 years down the bungalow.

Sue: how many years was that up no.12?

Rog: 17

Sue: My brain won’t work. 1992 then. No, we must have moved in 76 up to the house then.

Rog: Yes

You moved into the bungalow in 1972 and then in the house in 1977.

Sue: I was in the bungalow anyway till about 76 I reckon and then we swapped over and went to the house. Then we had the house that dad died in and we said that the house was too big for just the two of us, let somebody else have a three bedroom house and the bungalow came empty. I didn’t know if I wanted to go and live there or not, I couldn’t make up my mind. So anyway, I went down to see .......................................................................................................................................................................................................................................................... till last year.

(Typist Note: Sorry, there is so much buzzing at this point, I cannot hear what Sue is saying).

Rog: I used to take all the back for beans, carrots and spuds.

Did your dad ever grow vegetables?

Sue: oh yes, granddad used to do the garden, he had the whole lot, even outside the front door, it was all vegetable garden, all down the back was vegetables. He used to be a shepherd and when he retired he done the garden, he used to sit in the shed on a Friday and have a pipe of baccy and a glass of cider during a break.

....................................................................................................................(Typist Note: and again, I can’t hear the interviewer because of the noise).

Sue: he lived in a house (too much interference).

Off Kings Road

Sue: yes down there with his son and his wife but previous to that he was a shepherd and he lived at Maiden Castle Farm.

Rog: we’ve got a photograph of him meeting the Queen.

So was he a shepherd all of his life?

Sue: Yes and I love sheep. My cousin, he was a shepherd but sadly he died. I should have been a shepherdess because I just love sheep. If I see a sheep.......

Did he live on the farm?

Sue: yes he did

Rog: one time, he had one of those wooden huts.

Sue: yes, a shepherds hut.

Rog: with the metal windows.

There’s a fellow who lives out Lower Waterston, he still makes them, shepherds huts.

Sue: he used to be up there day and night when they were lambing. He had two sheepdogs but they were never allowed indoors, they had kennels outside where they stayed, they were working dogs.

Rog: they were collies weren’t they?

Sue: my cousin was the same, he had two dogs but they were never allowed..... always out in the kennels, all winds and weather whatever they were outside. They had to be hard to do the job they done – the dogs.

He lived till he was in his 90’s so it didn’t do him any harm.

No, my great grandfather was a shepherd all of his life. I come from Northumberland, which is very like Dorset, very rural country. He lived up in Northumberland.

Well of course that’s where a lot of people came to Mill Street from, all of the Fordington area because when they got chucked out from being farm labourers, because there was nowhere for them in Dorchester and the only place was Mill Street. They were all private, Mr Lester was one of them of course, who gave the name to Lester Square. He was one of them that owned a lot of the houses around there.

Anyway, we’re going to produce down by Mill Stream, on the grass there, have you seen the.... up on Fordington Green, there’s a sort of display thing up there. It’s just opposite the Church, anyway, we’re going to have one of those to show the old streets of Mill Street. It’ll show a map of all the old houses in Mill Street, people will be able to see what it was like.

Is there anything else?

No